

# Performance and Quality Monitoring Report

## October to December 2015

# Labour Force Survey

Please note: The content of this report is currently being reviewed to ensure the most relevant information is being included.

As part of this review, please could you provide feedback to the Labour Force Survey team on the report, particularly on which sections you find useful, which sections you rarely use and any other information you feel would be beneficial to include.

The email address is:  
[ifs@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ifs@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

Thanks.

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Summary of Quality</b>	
<b>1 Relevance</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Accuracy</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 Achieved Sample</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4 Response Rates</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5 Timeliness and punctuality</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6 Accessibility and clarity</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>7 Comparability</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>8 Coherence</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Summary of Methods</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Technical Definitions</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Website References</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>List of Tables/Figures</b>	
3.1 Achieved sample by type of household, GB & UK, OD15	4
3.2 Achieved number of household interviews, GB and UK, MM00 to OD15	4
3.3 Achieved number of person interviews, GB and UK, MM00 to OD15	4
4.1 Wave specific response rates, GB, OD15, excluding imputed households	5
4.2 Wave specific response rates, GB, excluding imputed households, MM00 to OD15	5
4.3 Wave specific response rates, GB, OD15, including imputed households	6
4.4 Composition of non-response, GB, OD15, including imputed households	6
4.5 Wave specific response rates, UK, OD15, excluding imputed households	7
4.6 Wave specific response rates, UK, OD15, including imputed households	7
4.7 Wave specific response rates, OD15, including imputed, by Region	8
4.8 Proxy response, GB, OD15	9
4.9 Income response rates by NS-SEC, GB, OD15	9
4.10 Summary of attrition by key characteristics, GB, OD15	10

Note: In previous versions of this document a table detailing sampling variability (previously Table 2.4) was included. Sampling variability (95% confidence intervals) can be found in the Sampling Variability' section (Table A11) of the [Labour Market Statistics Bulletin](#)

# Executive Summary

## October to December 2015

**Note:** Due to the move from processing the LFS on a seasonal quarter basis to processing on a calendar quarter basis from January 2006, all time series data have a break in series which corresponds to this change.

### Summary of achieved sample size

- The achieved sample size for the UK LFS during October to December (OD15) was 91,618 individuals in 38,741 households . Please note: that there were no NHS households in this period.
- Compared to the previous quarter (JS15) this represents a decrease of 1.5% in household interviews, and a decrease of 1.26% in achieved person interviews.

### Summary of response rates

[Please note that historical reports can be accessed on the ONS web site.](#)

In OD15 key response rates were as follows:

- The total response rate for GB excluding imputed cases (Table 4.1, page 5) was 45.2%. This is down 0.3 percentage points on the previous quarter.
- The response rate excluding imputed cases (Fig 4.2, page 5) was 54.8% in wave 1 and 40.9% in wave 5. This compares with 55.5% and 41.3% respectively in the previous quarter.
- The total response rate for GB including imputed cases (Table 4.3, page 6) was 51.2%, down 0.8 percentage points on the previous quarter.
- Of non-response in OD15 (Fig 4.4, page 6), Non-Contacts comprised 16.4% (down 0.3 percentage points on the previous quarter). Circumstantial Refusals were 10.5%, (up 0.05 percentage points). Outright Refusals comprised 53.5% (up 0.4 percentage points on the previous quarter) and other refusals comprised the remainder.
- The region with the highest accumulated response rate across the five waves (Table 4.7, page 8) was 'Rest of Yorkshire and Humberside' (57.9%). The lowest was 'Outer London' (47.2%).
- The overall proxy response rate (Table 4.8, page 9) is 33.4%. The highest proxy response rates occur in the 16-17 age group (88.4%), in males (38.3%) and in the non-white ethnicity group (42%).
- The average income response rate (Table 4.9, page 9) was 86.1%.
- The data on attrition rates are shown in Table 4.10, page 10. These data reveal in percentage change terms that those who drop out of the survey between waves 1 and 5, tend to be distributed fairly evenly by key characteristics, but are over-represented in the 20 - 29 age bands, in households with 6 or more people, those who were on a government training scheme and amongst those living in Inner London.

**Note:** Methodological changes in JM11 and JS10 have impacted response rates. From JM11 a proportion of initial interviews have been conducted by the telephone unit rather than face to face as an efficiency measure. Telephone interviews generally have higher levels of non-response. The removal of households with residents aged 75 and older after their initial interview from JS10 also impacts response as these households generally have high response rates. See the 'Questionnaire Changes' section below for more details.

## Executive Summary (Continued)

### Questionnaire Changes

As of April 2010 the state pension age for women changed in a stepwise fashion, going up by one month every two months, until 65 is reached in April 2020. The LFS has changed its definition of 'pension age' from April 2010 to be all those aged 65 and over irrespective of gender.

From JS10, households that only contain respondents aged 75 and older are removed from the sample after their wave one interview. This change was introduced to reduce the cost of the survey and reduce the burden on respondents. Households only containing individuals aged 75 or older are largely economically inactive and therefore the value of interviewing these households is greatly reduced when considering the main aims of the LFS. The wave one interviews from 75 plus households will receive a larger weight to make them representative of the UK population. This change results in around a 10% reduction in the household sample size and a 7% reduction in the individual sample size.

From JS10, the treatment of 'concealed multi-households' on the LFS has also changed. Previously if one sampled address turned out on inspection to be, for example, not one house but six flats, all six flats would be recorded as households and interviews would be attempted with each household. The number of households encountered could be in the hundreds. This was not a practical approach. ONS decided to harmonise the approach to multi-households across all ONS social surveys. From JS10 if a concealed multi-household is recorded only one household will be randomly selected to be interviewed.

Following a pilot run in JS10, from JM11 onwards a proportion of wave 1 cases (around 15-20%) have been interviewed by the Telephone Unit (TU) as opposed to the traditional face-to-face method (FtF). Sampled addresses are matched to telephone numbers in order to do this. Potential concerns associated with this approach are twofold; that response rates will fall as sampled respondents may be more likely to refuse a telephone survey, and that mode effects may be observed in the data collected. This situation will be monitored.

Details of Fieldwork Issues and New, Amended and Deleted questions can be found in Section 7 (page 14).

# SUMMARY OF QUALITY

## 1 RELEVANCE

*The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content*

### **Primary Purpose**

The primary purpose of the LFS is "the prompt publication of key aggregate, whole economy, indicators, for the integrated assessment of labour market conditions" (Review of the Labour Force Survey, ONS, 2002). The 'labour market' covers all aspects of people's work, including the education and training needed to equip them for work, the jobs themselves, job-search for those out of work, and income from work and benefits.

### **Users and Uses**

Users of LFS data often combine it with related data from other sources to provide an overall view of the state of the labour market. One of the most important users of this sort of assessment is the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, which sets interest rates in order to meet the Government's inflation target.

Other key users of LFS data are HM Treasury and the Department for Work and Pensions, because they are responsible for UK economic and labour market policy. They are interested in a variety of indicators of the state of the labour market, including the number of people in employment, the number of hours worked, and the number of unemployed people (defined according to the International Labour Organisation - ILO). They often analyse these series by age groups, by regions and by gender. Other Government users include the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Home Office, the Health & Safety Executive, the Scottish Government, and the Welsh Government.

At the international level, LFS data are used by the European Parliament, Council and Commission, the European Central Bank and DG Employment (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities). It is also used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Other users include local authorities, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the Employer's Association, the Confederation of British Industry, the Institute of Employment Studies, the Institute for Public Policy Research, the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, the Policy Studies Institute, the Institute for Fiscal Studies, academic researchers, the media and the general public.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

The strengths of the LFS are that it has the largest coverage of any household survey in the UK and can thus generate statistics for small geographical areas. In addition, the sampling errors are relatively small, as a result of the wave structure and the size of the survey. The survey covers a large range of employment-related variables and non-employment-related variables, allowing cross-linking analyses to be undertaken (e.g. earnings against educational attainment).

One of the limitations of the LFS is that the sample design provides no guarantee of adequate coverage of any industry, as the survey is not industrially stratified. The LFS coverage also omits communal establishments, except NHS housing, students in halls of residence and at boarding schools. Members of the armed forces are only included if they live in private accommodation. Also, workers under 16 are not covered.

## RELEVANCE

### **Key Definitions**

The definitions of the three economic activity groups - employed, unemployed and economically inactive - which are used in the LFS are the standard International Labour Organisation (ILO) definitions. It should be noted that although the LFS uses ILO definitions, these definitions are not interpreted and applied in exactly the same way in different countries. For example, although 'working age' is a common term, different countries have different statutory school leaving and retirement ages. However, Eurostat collects data from Member States and adjusts them to produce comparable estimates.

## 2 ACCURACY

*The closeness between an estimated result and the (unknown) true value*

The main threats to accuracy are sources of error, namely sampling error and non-sampling error, where non-sampling error includes: coverage error, non-response error, measurement error, processing error and model assumption error.

Many of the sources of non-sampling error are difficult to measure. However, the LFS publishes detailed response rates for all waves of the survey and an overall response rate, including time-series (Tables 4.1 - 4.6). Response rates are also published by Government Office Region (GOR) for each wave during the particular quarter (Table 4.7). The LFS also publishes proxy response rates (Table 4.8), response rates for income questions by National Statistics (NS) socio-economic classification (Table 4.9) and attrition rates (Table 4.10).

Surveys, such as the LFS, provide estimates of population characteristics rather than exact measures. In principle, many random samples could be drawn and each would give different results, due to the fact that each sample would be made up of different people, who would give different answers to the questions asked. The spread of these results is the sampling variability, which generally reduces with increasing sample size. A confidence interval is a range of values, defined by a lower and upper bound, which indicates the variability of an estimate. Statistical methods are used to calculate the sampling variability from which the confidence interval can be determined. For example, with a 95 per cent confidence interval, it is expected that in 95 per cent of the survey samples, the resulting confidence interval will contain the true value that would be obtained by surveying the whole population.

The LFS routinely publishes details of achieved sample sizes in terms of achieved number of household and person interviews (Tables 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3) and sampling variability for estimates of key variables. Sampling variability (95% confidence intervals) can be found in the 'Sampling Variability' section (Table A11) of the [Labour Market Statistics Bulletin](#)

### 3 ACHIEVED SAMPLE

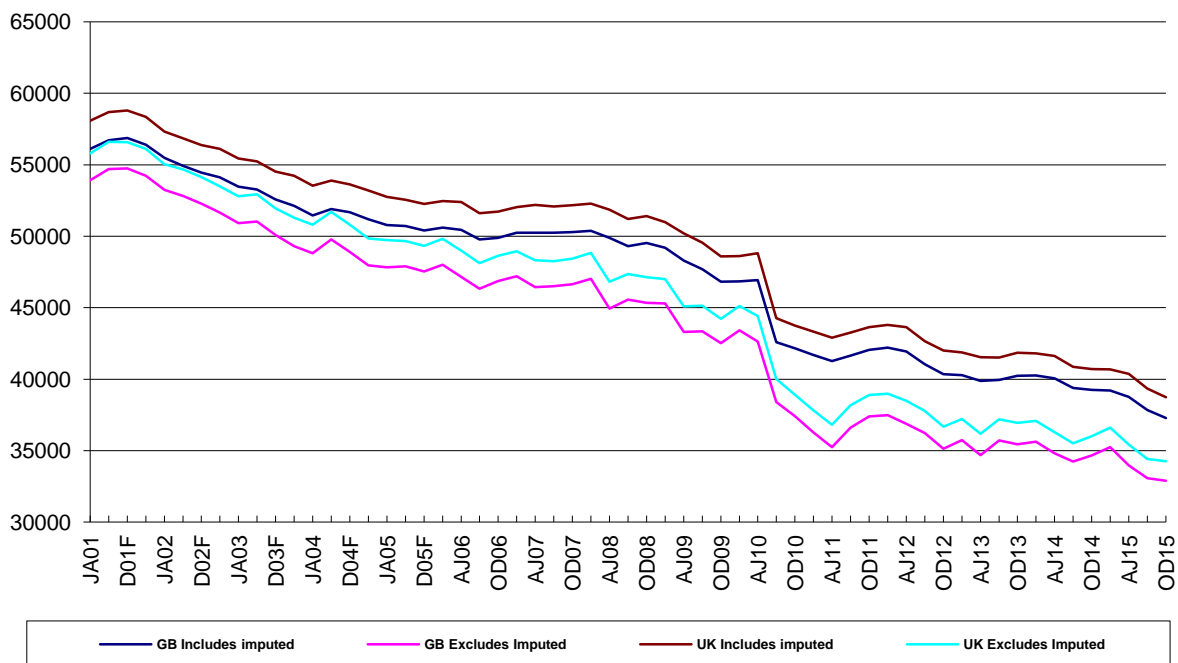
#### 3.1 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY

Achieved sample by type of household, OD15

	GB		UK	
	Includes imputed	Excludes imputed	Includes imputed	Excludes imputed
Private households	37,284	32,889	38,741	34,258
Individuals in private households	88,022	75,766	91,618	79,139
NHS Households	0	0	0	0
Individuals in NHS households	0	0	0	0
<i>Total households</i>	<i>37,284</i>	<i>32,889</i>	<i>38,741</i>	<i>34,258</i>
<i>Total individuals</i>	<i>88,022</i>	<i>75,766</i>	<i>91,618</i>	<i>79,139</i>

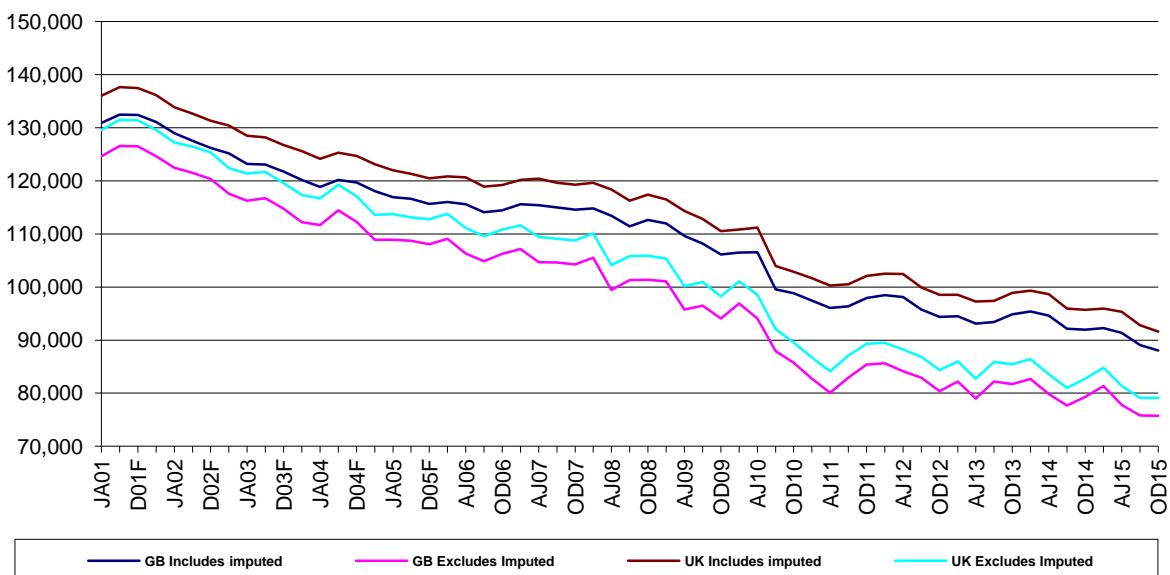
#### 3.2 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY

Achieved number of household interviews, GB and UK, MM00 to OD15



#### 3.3 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY

Achieved number of person interviews, GB and UK, MM00 to OD15





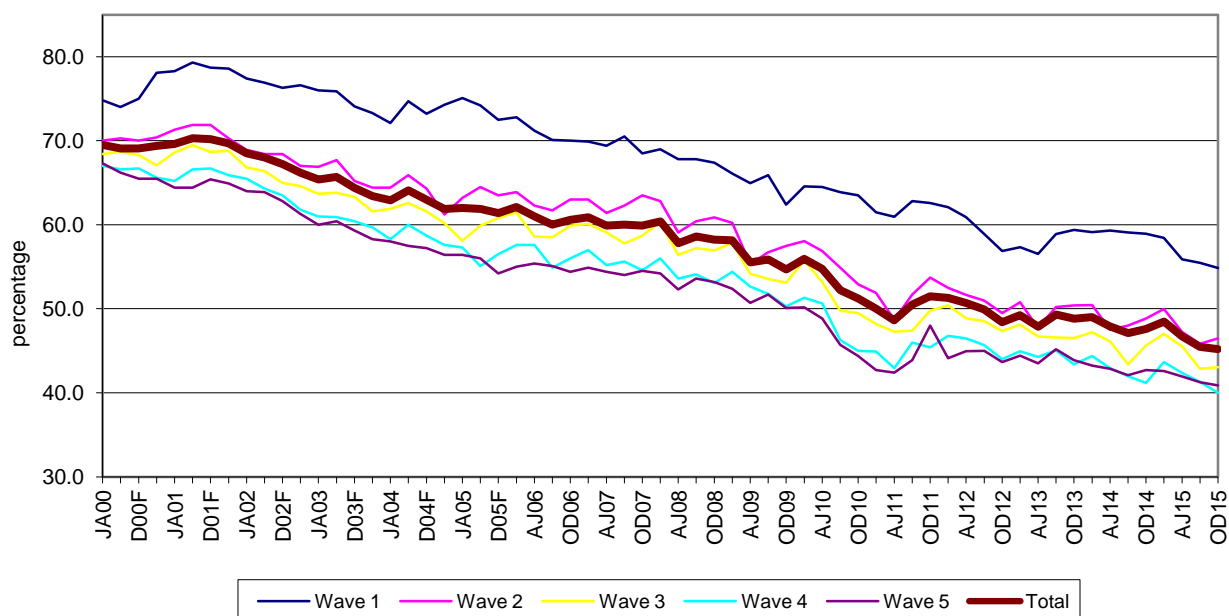
## 4 RESPONSE RATES

### 4.1 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY Wave specific response rates, GB, excluding imputed households OD15

	Wave 1 in OD15		Wave 2 in OD15		Wave 3 in OD15		Wave 4 in OD15		Wave 5 in OD15		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Eligible households found at selected units</b>	15,375	100.0	14,305	100.0	14,353	100.0	14,363	100.0	14,389	100.0	72,785	100.0
<b>Responding units</b>												
Total	8,433	54.8	6,651	46.5	6,179	43.1	5,745	40.0	5,880	40.9	32,888	45.2
Full	7,998	52.0	5,975	41.8	5,539	38.6	5,172	36.0	5,208	36.2	29,892	41.1
Partial	435	2.8	676	4.7	640	4.5	573	4.0	672	4.7	2,996	4.1
<b>Non-responding units</b>												
Circumstantial refusal	1,721	11.2	1,230	8.6	1,097	7.6	995	6.9	687	4.8	5,730	7.9
Outright refusal	2,679	17.4	3,466	24.2	4,073	28.4	4,345	30.3	4,439	30.8	19,002	26.1
Refusal to HQ	603	3.9	678	4.7	741	5.2	758	5.3	728	5.1	3,508	4.8
Non-contact	1,939	12.6	1,751	12.2	1,479	10.3	1,525	10.6	1,539	10.7	8,233	11.3
<b>Addresses not issued for interviewing</b>												
Refusal to re-interview	n/a	n/a	529	3.7	784	5.5	995	6.9	1,116	7.8	3,424	4.7
Co-operation rate		62.8		55.3		51.1		48.5		50.1		53.8
Contact rate		83.5		82.4		83.6		82.9		82.9		83.1

Note: Excludes households for which response has been imputed. The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for the quarter across all waves, based on all eligible, in-scope households. For a full definition of response categories and the method used to calculate the response rates, see Technical Definitions pg17.

### 4.2 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY Wave specific response rates, GB, excluding imputed households, MM00 to OD15



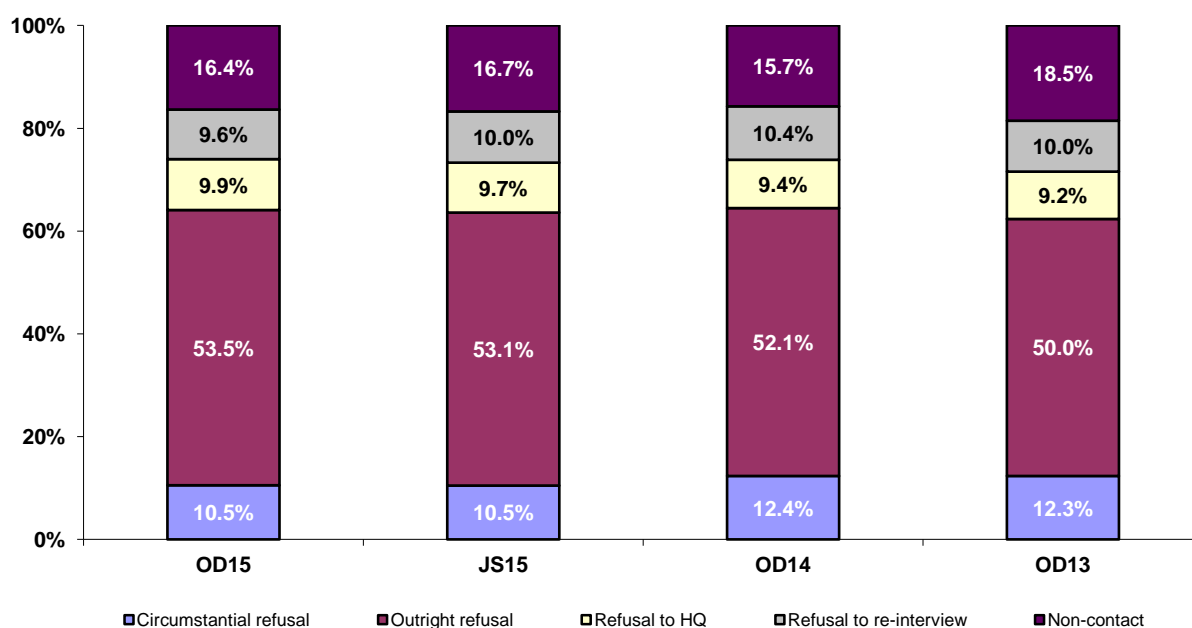
## 4 RESPONSE RATES

### 4.3 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY Wave specific response rates, GB, OD15, including imputed households

	Wave 1 in OD15		Wave 2 in OD15		Wave 3 in OD15		Wave 4 in OD15		Wave 5 in OD15		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Eligible households found at selected units</b>	15,375	100.0	14,305	100.0	14,353	100.0	14,363	100.0	14,389	100.0	72,785	100.0
<b>Responding units</b>												
Total	8,433	54.8	8,070	56.4	7,332	51.1	6,807	47.4	6,658	46.3	37,300	51.2
Full	7,998	52.0	5,975	41.8	5,539	38.6	5,172	36.0	5,208	36.2	29,892	41.1
Partial	435	2.8	676	4.7	640	4.5	573	4.0	672	4.7	2,996	4.1
Imputed	-	-	1,419	9.9	1,153	8.0	1,062	7.4	778	5.4	4,412	6.1
<b>Non-responding units</b>												
Circumstantial refusal	1,721	11.2	593	4.1	544	3.8	498	3.5	384	2.7	3,740	5.1
Outright refusal	2,679	17.4	3,466	24.2	4,073	28.4	4,345	30.3	4,439	30.8	19,002	26.1
Refusal to HQ	603	3.9	678	4.7	741	5.2	758	5.3	728	5.1	3,508	4.8
Non-contact	1,939	12.6	969	6.8	879	6.1	960	6.7	1,064	7.4	5,811	8.0
<b>Addresses not issued for interviewing</b>												
Refusal to re-interview	n/a	n/a	529	3.7	784	5.5	995	6.9	1,116	7.8	3,424	4.7
Co-operation rate		62.8		63.0		57.8		54.9		54.5		58.7
Contact rate		83.5		88.0		88.1		87.1		86.5		86.6

The total response rate is the cumulative response rate for the quarter across all waves, based on all eligible, in-scope households. For a full definition of response categories and the method used to calculate the response rates, see Technical Definitions pg 17.

### 4.4 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY Composition of non-response, Great Britain, including imputed households



Note: For definitions of the types of non-response, see Technical Definitions. Figures are based on the aggregate response for the quarter covering all waves.

## 4 RESPONSE RATES

### 4.5 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY Wave specific response rates, UK, OD15, excluding imputed households

	Wave 1 in OD15		Wave 2 in OD15		Wave 3 in OD15		Wave 4 in OD15		Wave 5 in OD15		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Eligible households found at selected units</b>	15,941	100.0	14,848	100.0	14,958	100.0	14,945	100.0	14,974	100.0	75,666	100.0
<b>Responding units</b>												
Total	8,737	54.8	6,908	46.5	6,445	43.1	6,009	40.2	6,158	41.1	34,257	45.3
Full	8,289	52.0	6,228	41.9	5,799	38.8	5,434	36.4	5,481	36.6	31,231	41.3
Partial	448	2.8	680	4.6	646	4.3	575	3.8	677	4.5	3,026	4.0
<b>Non-responding units</b>												
Circumstantial refusal	1,774	11.1	1,246	8.4	1,116	7.5	1,008	6.7	695	4.6	5,839	7.7
Outright refusal	2,810	17.6	3,511	23.6	4,095	27.4	4,362	29.2	4,452	29.7	19,230	25.4
Refusal to HQ	613	3.8	683	4.6	743	5.0	760	5.1	731	4.9	3,530	4.7
Non-contact	2,007	12.6	1,811	12.2	1,560	10.4	1,577	10.6	1,601	10.7	8,556	11.3
<b>Addresses not issued for interviewing</b>												
Refusal to re-interview			689	4.6	999	6.7	1,229	8.2	1,337	8.9	4,254	5.6
Co-operation rate		62.7		55.9		52.0		49.5		51.2		54.5
Contact rate		83.6		82.4		83.5		83.0		82.9		83.1

Note: Excludes households for which response has been imputed. The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for the quarter, based on all eligible, in-scope households. See Technical Definitions (pg 17) for a full definition of response categories and the method used to calculate the response rates.

### 4.6 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY Wave specific response rates, UK, OD15, including imputed households

	Wave 1 in OD15		Wave 2 in OD15		Wave 3 in OD15		Wave 4 in OD15		Wave 5 in OD15		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Eligible households found at selected units</b>	15,941	100.0	14,848	100.0	14,958	100.0	14,945	100.0	14,974	100.0	75,666	100.0
<b>Responding units</b>												
Total	8,737	54.8	8,348	56.2	7,628	51.0	7,089	47.4	6,955	46.4	38,757	51.2
Full	8,289	52.0	6,228	41.9	5,799	38.8	5,434	36.4	5,481	36.6	31,231	41.3
Partial	448	2.8	680	4.6	646	4.3	575	3.8	677	4.5	3,026	4.0
Imputed	-	-	1,440	9.7	1,183	7.9	1,080	7.2	797	5.3	4,500	5.9
<b>Non-responding units</b>												
Circumstantial refusal	1,774	11.1	606	4.1	556	3.7	508	3.4	390	2.6	3,834	5.1
Outright refusal	2,810	17.6	3,511	23.6	4,095	27.4	4,362	29.2	4,452	29.7	19,230	25.4
Refusal to HQ	613	3.8	683	4.6	743	5.0	760	5.1	731	4.9	3,530	4.7
Non-contact	2,007	12.6	1,011	6.8	937	6.3	997	6.7	1,109	7.4	6,061	8.0
<b>Addresses not issued for interviewing</b>												
Refusal to re-interview			689	4.6	999	6.7	1,229	8.2	1,337	8.9	4,254	5.6
Co-operation rate		62.7		63.5		58.6		55.7		55.5		59.3
Contact rate		83.6		88.0		88.0		87.2		86.5		86.6

Note: The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for the quarter, based on all eligible, in-scope households. For a full definition of response categories and the method used to calculate the response rates, see Technical Definitions (pg 17).

## 4 RESPONSE RATES

### 4.7 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY Wave specific response rates, OD15, including imputed households, by Region

	Wave 1 in OD15	Wave 2 in OD15	Wave 3 in OD15	Wave 4 in OD15	Wave 5 in OD15	Total
<b>Region</b>						
Tyne & Wear	58.4	57.5	57.4	49.4	50.8	54.8
Rest of North East	58.9	57.9	50.1	47.0	48.0	52.6
Greater Manchester	54.5	59.2	48.5	49.7	50.1	52.4
Merseyside	54.5	52.3	49.8	48.6	45.5	50.2
Rest of North West	52.2	55.0	49.0	51.9	44.8	50.6
South Yorkshire	51.9	54.5	51.1	48.1	42.6	49.6
West Yorkshire	57.9	65.8	53.6	49.1	53.1	55.9
Rest of Yorkshire and Humberside	58.4	64.0	59.7	53.1	54.0	57.9
East Midlands	57.7	56.7	52.1	47.3	48.1	52.4
West Midlands Metropolitan Council	53.2	55.5	47.5	41.0	38.3	47.2
Rest of West Midlands	58.4	60.3	54.5	49.7	46.7	54.0
East of England	56.6	55.9	51.9	47.7	45.6	51.6
Inner London	46.4	51.6	50.9	46.1	41.7	47.3
Outer London	53.0	50.4	47.6	44.2	40.3	47.2
South East	53.0	53.6	50.5	47.9	48.3	50.7
South West	57.3	57.8	51.7	48.7	48.0	52.7
<b>England</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>56.1</b>	<b>51.2</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>51.3</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>47.7</b>	<b>52.9</b>
Strathclyde	56.0	59.0	45.8	44.3	42.3	49.5
Rest of Scotland	50.2	56.7	49.5	46.0	45.6	49.7
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>52.7</b>	<b>57.7</b>	<b>47.9</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>44.2</b>	<b>49.6</b>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>53.7</b>	<b>51.2</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>50.6</b>

Note:

The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for the quarter, based on all eligible, in-scope households. Each wave reported here is an independent sample; for example, the wave 2 response in OD15 is based on response in that quarter plus the previous quarter (JS15) where it was issued as a wave 1 case.

## 4 RESPONSE RATES

### 4.8 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY Proxy response, GB, OD15

		All responses	Proxy	%
<b>Age</b>	Total (16+)	69,311	23,118	33.4
	16-17	2,157	1,906	88.4
	18-19	1,894	1,379	72.8
	20+	65,260	19,833	30.4
<b>Sex</b>	Total	69,311	23,118	33.4
	Male	33,271	12,758	38.3
	Female	36,040	10,360	28.7
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Total	69,311	23,118	33.4
	White	61,745	19,931	32.3
	Non-white	7,488	3,148	42.0
	Refused	78	39	50.0
<b>Economic activity (INECAC05)</b>	Total	69,311	23,118	33.4
	Employees	36,134	12,623	34.9
	Self-Employed	6,526	2,196	33.7
	Government schemes	120	39	32.5
	Unpaid family workers	130	27	20.8
	ILO Unemployed	2,093	760	36.3
	Inactive	24,308	7,473	30.7

Note: For definition of 'unpaid family workers', see Section 7 (pg 13).

### 4.9 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY Income Response Rates by NS-SEC, GB, OD15

	Wave 1 in OD15	Wave 5 in OD15	Total
<b>NS-SEC</b>	%	%	%
Higher managerial and professional	86.6	90.7	88.3
Lower managerial and professional	85.9	90.2	87.7
Intermediate occupations	83.5	90.4	86.4
Small employers and own account workers	90.0	85.7	87.5
Lower supervisory and technical	83.7	87.6	85.4
Semi-routine occupations	82.4	87.2	84.4
Routine occupations	79.8	84.3	81.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>84.2</b>	<b>88.9</b>	<b>86.1</b>

Note: The percentages in Table 4.9 are based on all eligible in-scope respondents at wave 1 and all eligible in-scope respondents at wave 5. The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for income for the quarter (wave 1 and wave 5), based on all eligible, in-scope respondents.

## 4 RESPONSE RATES

### 4.10 LFS QUARTERLY SURVEY Summary of attrition by key characteristics, GB, OD15

Column percentages

		Wave 1 in OD14	Wave 5 in OD15	Responds all waves	Non-responder
		Responds	Responds		
<b>Age</b>	<16	21.0	20.2	18.1	21.8
	16-19	4.9	4.1	3.8	5.6
	20-29	12.1	8.4	6.3	15.7
	30-39	13.4	11.6	10.2	15.1
	40-49	14.3	14.4	14.1	14.3
	50-59	14.6	15.6	16.1	13.6
	60-69	13.1	16.8	20.3	9.5
	70+	6.6	8.9	11.0	4.4
<b>Sex</b>	Male	49.1	48.8	48.7	49.3
	Female	50.9	51.2	51.3	50.7
<b>Econ Activity (INECAC05)</b>	Employees	39.5	39.0	38.4	40.0
	Self Emp	7.1	7.5	7.3	6.7
	GovTraining Scheme	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1
	UPFW(Unpaid Family Workers)	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
	ILO Unemp	2.6	2.1	2.0	3.1
	Inactive	25.7	29.5	33.9	22.1
<b>Number of people in household (TOTNUM)</b>	1	8.8	10.5	13.3	7.2
	2	30.2	33.9	36.6	26.7
	3	21.3	20.2	18.7	22.3
	4	23.4	22.1	19.4	24.6
	5	10.4	8.8	8.1	11.9
	6 or more	5.9	4.4	3.9	7.4
<b>Region (GOVTOR)</b>	Tyne & Wear	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.2
	Rest of North East	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.7
	Greater Manchester	4.8	4.8	4.5	4.7
	Merseyside	2.1	2.2	2.5	2.0
	Rest of North West	5.4	4.5	4.9	6.1
	South Yorkshire	2.0	2.1	2.0	1.8
	West Yorkshire	4.1	4.6	4.3	3.6
	Rest of Yorkshire and Humberside	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.0
	East Midlands	8.2	8.6	8.5	7.8
	West Midlands Metropolitan Council	3.4	3.4	3.0	3.4
	Rest of West Midlands	4.6	5.3	5.2	3.9
	East of England	9.5	10.4	10.9	8.7
	Inner London	4.2	3.4	2.8	4.9
	Outer London	7.5	5.5	5.2	9.4
	South East	14.4	14.8	15.5	14.1
	South West	8.1	9.0	9.6	7.3
Wales	4.7	5.3	5.4	4.3	
Strathclyde	3.9	3.4	3.4	4.3	
Rest of Scotland	5.4	4.9	4.6	5.9	

Note: The column, Wave 1 in OD14 Responds, shows the percentage of responders in each key characteristics category at wave 1. The column, Wave 5 in OD15 Responds, shows the percentage of responders in each key characteristics category at wave 5. A significant decline in the values between waves 1 and 5 denotes a higher rate of attrition than where values are consistent between waves 1 and 5 or higher at wave 5.

## 5 TIMELINESS AND PUNCTUALITY

*Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer. Punctuality refers to the time lag between the actual and planned dates of publication.*

### 3 Delivery dates of data

#### 3.1 To ONS Labour Market Division (LMD)

Scheduled delivery date for file: January 22, 2016

Achieved delivery date for file: January 22, 2016

Time lag between achieved delivery date and the end of the reference period: 20 days

#### 3.2 Data file for other users

Scheduled availability date for Regional Public & Government normal release user files: February 17, 2016

##### *Recipients*

Bank of England  
Department for Business Innovation and Skills  
Department for Communities and Local Government  
Department for Education and Skills  
Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Northern Ireland)  
Department for Media, Culture and Sport  
Department for Transport  
Department for Work and Pensions  
Department of Finance and Personnel (Northern Ireland)  
Economic and Social Research Council / Data Archive  
Health and Safety Executive  
HM Treasury  
Home Office  
Low Pay Commission  
Office for Standards in Education  
Office of Manpower Economics  
Scottish Government / Scottish Executive  
Small Business Service  
Welsh Government

## 6 ACCESSIBILITY AND CLARITY

*Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format(s) in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.*

The UK Data Archive at Essex University provides free access to the various LFS datasets and can be contacted via the website: <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk>

A highly disaggregated dataset, which covers a wealth of data for local areas, is available free from NOMIS: <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk>

The Social Surveys Team provide LFS data for a fee, and can be contacted by phone (01633 455678) or email: [socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

Labour Market data, including data from the LFS, are published every month through Statistical Bulletins These include text, tables and charts. Data contained within the Bulletins are available to download, free of charge, from the ONS website. All the main series contained within the releases are available from:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Labour+Market>

For questions relating to Labour Market statistics, please contact:  
[labour.market@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:labour.market@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

For general queries about the LFS, please contact:  
[lhs@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:lhs@ons.gsi.gov.uk)



## 7 COMPARABILITY

*The degree to which data can be compared over time and domain*

### **Background**

The LFS began in 1973 and was carried out every 2 years until 1983. Between 1984 and 1991, data were collected annually and the survey has been running in its present form, with quarterly sampling, since spring 1992. It is carried out under European Union Regulations which specify the way in which the survey should be conducted, the quality of the results that Member States supply to Eurostat and the timetable for supplying results. Although the LFS began as a survey designed to meet international obligations, its primary purpose is now (as stated in section 1, Relevance), "the prompt publication of key aggregate, whole economy, indicators, for the integrated assessment of labour market conditions" (Review of the Labour Force Survey, ONS, 2002).

### **Definitions**

The definitions of the three economic activity groups - employed, unemployed and economically inactive - which are used in the LFS are the standard International Labour Organisation (ILO) definitions.

**Economically active** - those aged 16 or over, who are either employed or unemployed in the survey reference week.

**Employed** - those aged 16 or over, who are regarded as in employment if they did at least one hour of work in the reference week (as an employee, self-employed, unpaid workers in a family business or participants in government-supported training schemes) and those who had a job that they were temporarily away from (for example, if they are on holiday).

**Unemployed** - those aged 16 or over, who are without work, want a job, have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks; or are out of work but have found a job and are waiting to start it within the next two weeks.

**Economically inactive** - those who are neither in employment nor unemployed. This group includes, for example, all those who are looking after a home or family, have a long-term illness or disability which prevents them working or are retired.

**Unpaid family workers** - those who are doing unpaid work in a family business.

## 7 COMPARABILITY

### Questionnaire Changes

**New questions for OD15:** SHFOTH is a temporary question as a follow up to SHFTYP.

PTCOATH is a temporary question as a follow up to YPTCIA.

**Amended questions for OD15:** HEAL, HEALTH and HEALPB were amended.

**Deleted questions for OD15:** ERNOTH was only a temporary question and is no longer required.

### Fieldwork Issues

No field work issues for this period.

### Methodology

See page iii for full details of methodological changes; in JM11 a change was implemented to move some wave one interviews into the telephone unit, rather than being face to face interviews as would normally be the case.

## 8 COHERENCE

*The degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but which refer to the same phenomenon, are similar*

### **Data Sources**

The LFS is one of a number of sources of data about the labour market. Some sources provide data which overlap with LFS data on employment, unemployment and earnings. ONS has published guidance about the strengths and limitations of each source in relation to these topics and has indicated which source is the most appropriate for different purposes. Details can be found in the Labour Market Guide, which can be accessed from the website:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Labour+Market>

### **Employment, Unemployment and Economic Inactivity**

The LFS is the source recommended by ONS for certain employment-related statistics (e.g. estimates of the number of people in employment or unemployed). The LFS is also a unique source of comprehensive, coherent information about economic inactivity, where it provides information separately about people who want a job and those who do not.

### **Number and Industrial Composition of Jobs**

The workforce jobs (WFJ) series provides estimates of the number of jobs in the UK economy and is the source recommended by ONS for both the number of jobs and the industrial composition of jobs. Workforce jobs consist of the sum of employee jobs, self-employment jobs, jobs in the armed forces and government-supported trainees. Civilian workforce jobs are available by geographical region, gender and broad industry. Total workforce jobs are available by gender and broad industry.

### **Earnings**

For estimates of change in earnings (e.g. pay growth in the economy), a non-LFS source, the Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) (formerly the Average Earnings Index (AEI)) is the most suitable source. It provides industry and whole-economy information, but excludes small employers, the self-employed and government-supported trainees. Pay, commission, bonuses, overtime and pay award arrears are included, but redundancy payments and benefits in kind are excluded. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) includes information about the levels, distribution and make-up of earnings and hours worked for employees in different occupations, industries, ages and regions. It should be used when the information required is not available from the AWE (such as for occupational groups, or regional analyses), and is the preferred source of the earnings of full-time employees, and of the average hourly earnings of all employees. The LFS should be used when the information is not available from the AWE or from ASHE, and is the preferred source of data about the earnings of part-time and low-paid employees. See below a link to the ONS guide to sources of data on earnings and income:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/articles-and-reports/a-guide-to-sources-of-data-on-earnings-and-income.pdf>

## SUMMARY OF METHODS

The LFS covers private households, including persons who are temporarily absent. The resident population comprises persons who regard the sample address as their main address, and also those who have lived in the dwelling for more than six consecutive months, even if they do not regard this as their principal dwelling. Persons absent for more than six months are not regarded as members of the resident population. A private household comprises one or more persons whose main residence is the same dwelling and/or who share at least one meal per day. Students living in halls of residence and pupils at boarding school are sampled via the private households of their parents. In Great Britain, an additional sample is drawn from persons living in National Health Service accommodation.

The year is divided into quarters of 13 weeks. Prior to January 2006, these were seasonal quarters: winter (December to February), spring (March to May), summer (June to August) and autumn (September to November). From January 2006, the LFS has been conducted on the basis of calendar quarters: Q1 - January to March, Q2 - April to June, Q3 - July to September and Q4 - October to December.

For most of Great Britain, the survey base is the Royal Mail's PAF (Postcode Address File), a database of all addresses receiving mail. The list is limited to addresses receiving fewer than 25 items of post per day, so as to exclude businesses. Because of the very low population density in the far north of Scotland (north of the Caledonian Canal), telephone directories are used as sampling frames, and interviews are carried out by telephone because face-to-face interviews would be too expensive. In Northern Ireland POINTER, which is the government's central register of domestic properties, is used.

In Great Britain, a systematic sample is drawn each quarter from the three sampling bases, yielding 16,640 PAF addresses, 75 telephone numbers for the north of Scotland and 36 units of National Health Service housing. As the PAF is broken down geographically, the systematic sampling ensures that the sample is representative at regional level. In Northern Ireland, a simple random sample is drawn, each quarter, from each of three strata, giving 650 addresses in all.

A rotation system comprising five waves is used. Respondents are interviewed five times at 13-week intervals and one-fifth of the sample is replaced each quarter. Interviews are carried out on a face-to-face (CAPI) or telephone (CATI) basis with the help of portable computers for the interviews in the first wave. In the far north of Scotland (north of the Caledonian Canal) and for interviews in the second to fifth waves, wherever possible, interviews are carried out by telephone.

## TECHNICAL DEFINITIONS

### Imputation

If a household (or someone within a household) is unavailable for interview, but was interviewed in the previous wave, responses from the previous wave are rolled forward. This is referred to as 'imputation'. Imputation is carried out to minimise non-response bias in estimates, while simultaneously improving precision by boosting the sample size. The rationale is that most LFS variables do not change from one quarter to another for most people. Responses are rolled forward for one wave only. Data are not rolled forward after a second consecutive non-response. Tables and charts (at person or household level) containing responses which have been rolled forward from the previous wave are denoted by the term 'including imputed'. Tables and charts which do not contain responses which have been rolled forward from the previous wave are denoted by the term 'excluding imputed'.

### Method of Calculating Sampling Variability

The sampling variability is the spread of results which would be obtained if different samples were drawn. A confidence interval is a range of values, defined by a lower and upper bound, which indicates the variability of an estimate. Statistical methods are used to calculate the sampling variability from which the confidence interval can be determined. For example, with a 95 per cent confidence interval, it is expected that in 95 per cent of the survey samples, the resulting confidence interval will contain the true value that would be obtained by surveying the whole population.

### Method of Calculating Response Rates

The response rate indicates how many interviews were achieved as a proportion of those eligible for the survey. The formula used is as follows:

$$RR = (FR + PR)/(FR + PR + OR + CR + RHQ + NC + RRI^*)$$

where RR = response rate, FR = full response, PR = partial response, OR = outright refusal, CR = circumstantial refusal, RHQ = refusal to HQ, NC = non contact, RRI = refusal to re-interview, \*applies to waves 2 to 5 only.

### Definitions of Response Outcome Categories

A **full response** denotes a household in which each household member has answered all applicable questions.

A **partial response** denotes a household in which questions were not completed because someone refused to be interviewed, refused part way through the questionnaire or refused to let someone else answer on his or her behalf. However, at least one question block must have been completed. If only part information has been collected for a one-person household, it is coded as a refusal or non-contact.

An **outright refusal** is a household which refuses to respond to the survey and the interviewer feels that there is no chance of an interview at the current or in any future wave.

A **circumstantial refusal** is a household where the respondent refuses to respond because of a temporary circumstance (e.g. going on holiday, too busy during the field period). A circumstantial refusal enables an interviewer to call back at the next wave.

A **refusal to HQ** is a household which contacts headquarters to refuse to participate in the survey in response to the advance letter.

A **non-contact** arises when an address is occupied, but where it has not been possible to contact any member of the household in the field period.

A **refusal to re-interview** is a household which takes part in the survey (at one or more of waves one to four) but which, when asked to take part in the next wave (waves two to five), refuses.

## TECHNICAL DEFINITIONS

### **Method of Calculating Income Response Rates**

The income question is asked at wave 1 and wave 5 only. Individuals aged 16-69 who are in employment in the reference week, form the sub-set of respondents who are eligible for these questions. The percentage response rates for the income questions are based on all eligible, in-scope respondents at wave 1 and all eligible, in-scope respondents at wave 5. The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for income for the quarter (wave 1 and wave 5), based on all eligible, in-scope respondents.

### **NS-SEC**

NS-SEC is the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification, which replaces previous classifications which were based on social class and social and economic group.

### **Proxy Response**

The LFS has to complete fieldwork to a tight timetable and interview as many of the sampled households as possible, which leaves limited time for recalls. LFS interviewers try to interview every adult (aged 16+) in each sampled household. However, when a household member is unavailable for interview, interviewers accept information by proxy from another responsible adult in the household. The proxy respondents are normally people living with a partner on behalf of their partner, and parents on behalf of their adult offspring who live with them.

### **Attrition**

Attrition is the term applied to respondents who begin the survey but subsequently drop out. It has been known for some time that these respondents tend to have different characteristics to those who remain in all waves of the survey, which can, therefore, result in attrition bias. For example, if respondents in a particular age band have a higher tendency to drop out (attrition rate) than respondents in other age bands, then they will be under-represented in subsequent waves of the survey and in estimates.

## WEBSITE REFERENCES

Labour Force Survey User Guides	<a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/labour-market-statistics/index.html">http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/labour-market-statistics/index.html</a>
Labour Market Statistics Statistical Bulletin	<a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nsc1=Labour+Market#tab-sum-pub">http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nsc1=Labour+Market#tab-sum-pub</a>
Labour Force Survey Summary Quality Report	<a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/quality-information/social-statistics/quality-and-methodology-information-for-the-labour-force-survey--lfs-.pdf">http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/quality-information/social-statistics/quality-and-methodology-information-for-the-labour-force-survey--lfs-.pdf</a>
Methodology for the Calculation of Sampling Variability in the Labour Force Survey	<a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/articles-and-reports/the-calculation-of-sampling-variability-for-the-labour-force-survey.pdf">http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/articles-and-reports/the-calculation-of-sampling-variability-for-the-labour-force-survey.pdf</a>
NOMIS	<a href="http://www.nomisweb.co.uk">www.nomisweb.co.uk</a>
Summary Quality Report for Labour Market Data Releases	<a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/quality-information/business-statistics/new-component.pdf">http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/quality-information/business-statistics/new-component.pdf</a>
UK Data Archive, University of Essex	<a href="http://www.data-archive.ac.uk">http://www.data-archive.ac.uk</a>