

Labour Force Survey, 1981

UKDA study number:1888

Series Title

Labour Force Survey Series

Principal Investigator

Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. Social Survey Division

Sponsors

Employment Department
Commission of the European Communities

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Series:

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Depositors:

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Prior to 1990 the depositor was Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. From 1990 the depositor is the Employment Department.

Abstract:

The first *Labour Force Survey* (LFS) in the United Kingdom was conducted in 1973, under the terms of a Regulation derived from the Treaty of Rome. The provision of information for the Statistical Office of the European Communities (SOEC) continued to be one of the reasons for carrying out the survey on an annual basis. SOEC co-ordinated information from labour force surveys in the member states in order to assist the EC in such matters as the allocation of the Social Fund. The survey was carried out biennially from 1973 to 1983 and was increasingly used by UK government departments to obtain information which would assist in the framing of social and economic policy. By 1983 it was being used by the Employment Department (now the Department for Work and Pensions) to obtain information which was not available from other sources or was only available for Census years. From 1984 the survey was carried out annually, and since that time the LFS has consisted of two elements:

- a quarterly survey conducted in Great Britain throughout the year, in which each sampled address was called on five times at quarterly intervals, and which yielded about 15,000 responding households in every quarter
- a 'boost' survey in the spring quarter (March-May), which produced interviews at over 44,000 households in Great Britain and over 4,000 households in Northern Ireland

Users should note that only the data from the spring quarter and the 'boost' survey were included in the annual datasets for public release, and that only data from 1975-1991 are available from the UK Data Archive. The depositor recommends only considered use of data for 1975 and 1977 (SNs 1757 and 1758), as the concepts behind the definitions of economic activity changed and are not comparable with later years. Also the survey methodology was being developed at the time and so the estimates may not be reliable enough to use.

During 1991 the survey was developed, so that from spring 1992 the data were made available quarterly, with a quarterly sample size approximately equivalent to that of the previous annual data. The *Quarterly Labour Force Survey* series therefore superseded the annual LFS series, and is held at the Data Archive under GN 33246.

Main Topics:

The basic set of LFS questions sought information about household composition: i.e. for each usually resident individual member of the household, the relationship to the head of the household, sex, age, marital condition and nationality. For persons above the statutory school-leaving age information was sought about the main economic activity, any secondary economic activity, and economic activity one year previously. For unemployed persons questions were asked about the type of employment sought, duration of unemployment and method of seeking employment, previous employment status and industry and whether or not registered as unemployed at an official employment office. In the 1981 survey, a separate section on housing was included for the Department of the Environment to provide basic information and to assist in the assessment of the impact of the 1980 Housing Act. A section was also included to identify home based workers in preparation for a follow-up survey to be conducted by the OPCS for the Department of Employment.

Coverage:

Dates of Fieldwork: 1981

Country: United Kingdom

Spatial Units: Standard Regions

Observation Units: Individuals; Families/households

Universe Sampled:

Location of Units of Observation: National

Population: All persons normally resident in private households in the United Kingdom

Methodology:

Time Dimensions: Repeated cross-sectional study biennial from 1973 to 1983, annual from 1984

Sampling Procedures: Stratified multi-stage sample; for further details see annual reports. Until 1983 two sampling frames were used; in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, the Valuation Roll provided the basis for a sample which, in England and Wales, included all 69 metropolitan districts, and a two-stage selection from among the remaining non-metropolitan districts. In Northern Ireland wards were the primary sampling units. In Scotland, the Address File (i.e. post codes) was used as the basis for a stratified sample. From 1983 the Postoffice Address File has been used instead of the Valuation Roll in England and Wales.

In 1984 sample rotation was introduced along with a panel element, the quarterly survey, which uses a two-stage clustered sample design.

Number of Units: 105000 (target)

Method of Data Collection: Face-to-face interview; Telephone interview; (from 1986)

Weighting: See documentation for details

Language(s) of Written Materials:

Study Description: English

Study Documentation: English

Access:

Access Conditions: The depositor has specified that registration is required and standard conditions of use apply. The depositor may be informed about usage. See [terms and conditions of access](#) for further information.

Availability: UK Data Service

Contact: [Get in touch](#)

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1984

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29 November 1996 (2nd Edition)

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