The Labour Force Survey – Fieldwork and Data Collection

Matthew Steel
Outline

• A Brief history
• The sample
• The questionnaire development process
• Users and uses
• The importance of the interview
The LFS - a brief history

• 1973 – EU regulation (treaty of Rome)
• Every 2 years until 1984
• Annual until 1992
• Seasonal quarters from 1992
• Calendar quarters from 2006
• Enhancements/Boosts from 2000
• APS since 2004, uses LFS waves 1 and 5 and boosts – largest sample size for analysis at Local Authority level
The sample

- Approximately 41,000 responding UK households every quarter
- This equates to 105,000 individuals
- Representative of the whole UK population
- Each case weighted by age, sex and geography
- 62 million people ÷ 105,000 = 590
- Therefore each interview is equivalent to 590 people

- APS contains around 160,000 unique households...
- ...and around 300,000 unique individuals
The process (every quarter)

1. Design, prepare & test survey – LFS Team
2. Conduct survey / collect data – SSD (Field)/IM Titchfield
3. Assemble & check data – IM Newport/LFS team
4. Disseminate data – Internal & External users
Process points

Respondent

Interviewer

Data Collection/IM
  Titchfield

LFS (inputs)
  Newport

SOS Newport

LFS (outputs) IM Newport

Users (internal and external)
Processing and preparing the data

- Data received from IM
- DV’s created (main LFS and Eurostat)
- Outputs team check and test the data
- Inconsistencies investigated
- Weighting applied
- Re-weighting undertaken annually (September)
- Eurostat Ad Hoc Module processed annually
- Datasets created
- Disseminated to clients and public
- Ad hoc queries investigated
The questionnaire design cycle (annual): responding to customer needs

Jan / Feb
Consult with ONS, OGD

Mar / Apr
Agree plans for question testing
Prepare cognitive exercise

May
Cognitive test

June
Report cognitive results to SG

July
Agree DR questionnaire

August
DR briefing & fieldwork

September
DR debrief / report

October
Agree questionnaire with SG

Oct / Dec
Programme questionnaire
Testing the new/amended questionnaire

• LFS research team:
  Blaise programming and testing (routing etc.)
  interviewer instructions

• Survey management:
  testing questionnaire (routing etc.) for FtF and TU
  interviewer instructions

• Field:
  feedback from FEL and interviewers on what is not working in the questionnaire
How is questionnaire content decided?

- EUROSTAT regulations -
  core questions
  ad hoc modules
- Requests from ONS
- Requests from OGD
- All requests have to be approved by the LFS Steering Group
How is question wording decided?

New / amended questions
- Cognitive testing
- LFS ‘dress rehearsal’

Existing questions
- Eurostat definitions/requirements (ad-hoc modules)
  e.g. did you do any paid work in the 7 days ending Sunday the (ref week)
- Discontinuities in analysis and reporting
  e.g. Consistency for time series and trend analysis (step-change)
- Sponsored questions/old questions
  e.g. Specific measurements for government departments
Who uses the LFS?

Academic Researchers
Media
General Public
Research Organisations or Institutes
Trade Union Congress
Employers Association
Local Authorities
Other Govt. & NGOs

Bank of England
DCLG
DWP
Cabinet Office
Other Business Areas
Office of the Prime Minister
Parliament
HLMSW

Home Office
HM Treasury
EuroStat
DfT
ONS
BIS
WAG
SG
Low Pay Commission
UK Data Archive
LFS data service

European Parliament
European Commission
European Central Bank
International Labour Organisation
OECD
World Bank
National Statistics Institutes

Other Business Areas
Academic Researchers
Media
General Public
Research Organisations or Institutes
Trade Union Congress
Employers Association
Local Authorities
Other Govt. & NGOs

Home Office
HM Treasury
EuroStat
DfT
ONS
BIS
WAG
SG
Low Pay Commission
UK Data Archive
LFS data service

European Parliament
European Commission
European Central Bank
International Labour Organisation
OECD
World Bank
National Statistics Institutes

Other Business Areas
Academic Researchers
Media
General Public
Research Organisations or Institutes
Trade Union Congress
Employers Association
Local Authorities
Other Govt. & NGOs

Home Office
HM Treasury
EuroStat
DfT
ONS
BIS
WAG
SG
Low Pay Commission
UK Data Archive
LFS data service

European Parliament
European Commission
European Central Bank
International Labour Organisation
OECD
World Bank
National Statistics Institutes

Other Business Areas
Academic Researchers
Media
General Public
Research Organisations or Institutes
Trade Union Congress
Employers Association
Local Authorities
Other Govt. & NGOs
Main UK uses of the data

- Monitoring the situation – what’s happening?
- Evaluating policies – are we/they meeting targets?
- Designing policies
- Answering questions
- Topical issues:
  - The downturn – who and where - construction, banking, …
  - Migration, agency workers, benefits, qualifications
  - NEETS, poverty

*National and local*

*Government, companies, media, the public*
*UK statistics & ONS – high esteem*
Labour market statistics
March 2011

Date: 16 March 2011
Coverage: United Kingdom Theme: Labour Market

For November 2010 to January 2011:
The employment rate was 70.5 per cent and there were 29.16 million employed people.
The unemployment rate was 8.0 per cent and there were 2.53 million unemployed people.
The inactivity rate was 23.3 per cent and there were 9.33 million inactive people aged from 16 to 64.
Total pay (including bonuses) rose by 2.3 per cent on a year earlier.
Regular pay (excluding bonuses) rose by 2.2 per cent on a year earlier.

Employment (Tables 2 to 4 and 8)
The working age employment rate was 72.7 per cent in the three months to June 2009, down 0.9 percentage points on the three months to March 2009 and down 2.0 percentage points from a year earlier. The working age employment rate for men was 76.0 per cent, down 1.2 percentage points on the previous quarter. The working age employment rate for women was 68.8 per cent, down 0.5 percentage points on the previous quarter.

Employment of Foreign Workers: Focus on Earnings
This article presents estimates of median earnings for migrants (defined as people born outside the UK), and compares them to people born in the UK, using the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Alternative definitions for migrants are considered by Clancy (2008).

- The earnings for non-UK born people in Managerial and Professional occupations are consistently higher than earnings of non-UK born employees.

Vacancies (tables 21 and 22)
There were 427,000 job vacancies in the three months to July 2009, down 26,000 from the three months to April 2009 and down 203,000 from a year earlier. There were 1.6 vacancies per 100 employee jobs, down 0.1 on the previous quarter and down 0.8 over the year.

Redundancies (tables 23 and 24)
In the three months to June 2009, 277,000 people had become redundant in the three months before the Labour Force Survey interviews, down 9,000 from the previous quarter but up 150,000...
The employment rate and the number of people in employment have fallen. The number of vacancies has fallen. The number of unemployed people, the unemployment rate and the claimant count have all increased. The number of inactive people of working age and the inactivity rate have increased. Growth in average earnings, excluding bonuses, has fallen but earnings growth including bonuses has increased.

The employment rate for people of working age was 72.7 per cent.
# NOMIS data - Bournemouth

## Labour Supply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Bournemouth (numbers)</th>
<th>Bournemouth (%)</th>
<th>Bournemouth (%)</th>
<th>South West (%)</th>
<th>Great Britain (%)</th>
<th>Great Britain (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All people</td>
<td>81,300</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically active</td>
<td>75,300</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In employment</td>
<td>64,200</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (model-based)</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Males

- Economically active: 43,400 (79.5, 84.1, 82.6)
- In employment: 39,900 (72.8, 70.1, 75.3)
- Employees: 32,400 (59.7, 63.5, 62.1)
- Self-employed: 7,100 (12.8, 14.1, 12.8)
- Unemployed: 3,600 (9.2, 7.1, 8.0)

### Females

- Economically active: 37,900 (70.3, 72.8, 70.2)
- In employment: 35,400 (65.6, 69.5, 65.5)
- Employees: 31,800 (59.6, 61.9, 59.8)
- Self-employed: 3,300 (9.7, 6.6, 5.3)
- Unemployed: 2,500 (6.6, 5.3, 6.5)

Source: ONS annual population survey

---

## Labour Market Profile - Bournemouth

The profile brings together data from several sources. Details about these and related methodology are given in the definitions section.

All figures are the most recent available.

- Resident population
- Employment and unemployment
- Economic inactivity
- Employment by occupation
- Qualifications
- Earnings by residence
- Out-of-work benefits
- Jobs (Total, Self-employed, etc.)
- Suicide prevention
- VAT registered businesses

More links...

- National Statistics
- Neighbourhood Statistics

[www.nomisweb.co.uk/home](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/home)
Media coverage

The Daily Mirror

Unemployment rises towards 2.5m

By Angela Monaghan

UNEMPLOYMENT now stands at 2.47m after rising slightly in the three months to August compared with the period to June, according to statistics published yesterday, but the rate of increase has started to slow.

It compared with a 2.34m rise in the previous quarter and was 326,000 higher than 12 months ago. Average weekly earnings excluding bonuses fell by 0.2% in the three months to August compared with a year earlier, down from 2.3% to the end of June. However, Chris Huhne, the energy and climate change secretary, said he was not concerned by the figures because they were compiled before paltry increases to the minimum wage.

The Daily Telegraph

Joblessness sees slowest jump in a year

Chancellor George Osborne said there had been an improved outlook for the labour market and that rising employment was making progress towards the government's target of creating 1m new jobs and 1m new apprenticeships.

City AM

Toll slows... as thousands seek work

Forecast is for 3m on dole in months

The Sun

88,000 join queue

The Sun
Academic studies

• Crossing the tracks? Trends in the training of male and female workers in Great Britain
  Jones, MK Latreille, PL Sloane, PJ
  BRITISH JOURNAL OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
  46 (2) 268 - 282 (2008)

• Employability and earnings returns to qualifications in Scotland
  Gasteen, A Houston, J
  REGIONAL STUDIES
  41 (4) 443 - 451 (2007)

• Long-term health conditions and disability living allowance: exploring ethnic differences and similarities in access
  Salway, S Platt, L Harriss, K Chowbey, P
  SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH & ILLNESS
  29 907 - 930 (2007)

• Trial by fire: a multivariate examination of the relation between job tenure and work injuries
  Breslin, FC Smith, P
  OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE
  63 (1) 27 - 32 (2006)
The importance of the interview

- Without the interviewers there is no LFS
- LFS data is widely used across government, academia and by the public
- Asking the questions - accuracy of the measure/estimate
- Each interview, in effect, reflects 500 people
- The LFS data has a massive impact on our society
THANK YOU

Any questions?