

# 1 Introduction to the Survey

## 1.1 Introduction

### The Scottish Household Survey is:

- a face-to-face survey of a sample of people in private residences in Scotland
- interviewer-administered in people's homes
- voluntary
- Scotland-wide; covers all 32 local authorities
- essentially 3 surveys in one: Transport and Travel in Scotland survey, the Scottish House Condition Survey as well as the Scottish Household Survey
- long-running since 1999
- wide-ranging in topics covered, including evidence on the physical condition of Scotland's homes
- a provider of robust evidence on the composition, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of private households and individuals

The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is a continuous survey based on a random sample of the general population in private residences in Scotland. Questions are asked face-to-face by an interviewer in homes all over Scotland. Participation is voluntary, but is important in helping us make representative estimates for Scotland.

Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) is used to collect the survey data. This has a number of important advantages over 'pen and paper' interviewing techniques, including faster interviews, automatic edit checks and a quicker flow of information from the survey interviewer to the survey database.

The survey started in 1999 and up to 2011 followed a fairly consistent survey design. From 2012 onwards, the survey was substantially redesigned to include elements of the Scottish House Condition Survey<sup>1</sup> (SHCS) including the follow-up physical survey component. The SHS is now essentially 3 surveys in one: Transport and Travel in Scotland survey, the Scottish House Condition Survey as well as the SHS. The survey is run through a consortium led by Ipsos MORI.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.scot/SHCS](http://www.gov.scot/SHCS)

The SHS is designed to provide reliable and up-to-date information on the composition, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of private households and individuals, both nationally and at a sub-national level and to examine the physical condition of Scotland's homes. It covers a wide range of topics to allow links to be made between different policy areas.

The specific aims of the survey are to:

- Meet central and local Government needs for priority policy relevant data across a broad range of topics (including needs for continuing time-series of data collected the SHS and SHCS previously);
- Be understandable and useful to stakeholders and so lead to a high level of buy-in and use of the SHS;
- Have built in flexibility to respond to different data needs regarding geography and frequency (e.g. to provide some data annually at Local Authority level, and some biennially at national level), and changes to these requirements over time;
- Align with other surveys and data vehicles (in particular the Scottish Health Survey and Scottish Crime and Justice Survey);
- Produce high quality data in accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics<sup>2</sup> so as to provide data that is suitable for the production of National Statistics publications in a cost effective way;
- Permit disaggregation of information both geographically and in terms of population sub-groups (such as families with children or households in the social rented sector);
- Allow the relationships between social variables within households to be examined. This will support cross-analysis on a range of issues;
- Allow detailed follow-up surveys of sub-samples from the main survey sample, if required.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/)

## 1.2 Reporting

The SHS results have been reported **in a series of annual reports between 1999 and 2017**. The annual report is designed to act as an introduction to the survey and to present and interpret some of the key policy-relevant results at a national level. **Complementary local-authority tables** will be published soon after. Findings from the physical survey component and other house condition information will be published through a separate **Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) 2017 Key Findings** report usually scheduled for publication later in the year.

The SHS is the source of information on 14 of the 81 national indicators in the refreshed Scottish Government's **National Performance Framework**<sup>3</sup>. The SHS Annual Report provides estimates for 12 of these national indicators, an overview of these is in the Table 1.1.. One of the 14 indicators, State of historic sites, is based on the SHCS data, which will be reported on separately through the above-mentioned SHCS Key Findings report. The final indicator, Journeys by active travel, will also be reported on separately by Transport Scotland within their **2017 Transport and Travel in Scotland report**<sup>4</sup> which will also include the SHS Travel Diary 2017.

**Table 1.1: National indicators reported in the SHS report**

| National Indicator                                    | Topic                         | Chapter    |
|---|-------------------------------|------------|
| Satisfaction with housing                             | Housing                       | Chapter 3  |
| Perceptions of local area                             | Neighbourhoods                | Chapter 4  |
| Public services treat people with dignity and respect | Local services                | Chapter 9  |
| Quality of public services                            | Local services                | Chapter 9  |
| Influence over local decisions                        | Local services                | Chapter 9  |
| Access to green and blue space                        | Environment                   | Chapter 10 |
| Visits to the outdoors                                | Environment                   | Chapter 10 |
| Attendance at cultural events or places of culture    | Culture                       | Chapter 12 |
| Participation in a cultural activity                  | Culture                       | Chapter 12 |
| Places to interact                                    | To be reported on in SHS 2018 |            |
| Social capital  | To be reported on in SHS 2018 |            |
| Loneliness  | To be reported on in SHS 2018 |            |

<sup>3</sup> Information on the suite of indicators which comprise the performance framework can be found at <http://www.nationalperformance.gov.scot>

<sup>4</sup> [www.transportscotland.gov.uk/analysis/statistics/publications/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-previous-editions](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/analysis/statistics/publications/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-previous-editions)

Additionally SHS data is published through the Open Data Platform ([www.statistics.gov.scot](http://www.statistics.gov.scot)), which provides a range of official statistics about Scotland for information and re-use.

Whilst this publication focuses on a number of key results, the SHS collects a wide array of information and so the SHS Project Team can be contacted with any additional analysis requests or enquiries<sup>5</sup>.

## Glossary and annexes

Guidance on using the information in the report and a glossary with detailed definitions of some of the key terms are included as annexes. Additional annexes present results on the main classificatory variables used in this report and provide guidance on assessing confidence intervals and the statistical significance of the results.

### 1.2.1 Additional SHS Reporting

Further technical information on the SHS will also be published through the **Technical Reports**. The Technical Reports comprise of two documents; one providing details of the **questionnaire**<sup>6</sup> used during 2017 fieldwork; and a more detailed technical report detailing **the methodology and fieldwork outcomes**<sup>7</sup>. From 2017, an accompanying SHS ‘Key Findings’ report is also published.

A number of other Scottish Government publications covering previous years are also available. A comprehensive listing of all publications is available from the Scottish Government’s website<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> [shs@gov.scot](mailto:shs@gov.scot) 0131 244 1685

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/PublicationQuestionnaire>

<sup>7</sup> [www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/PublicationMethodology](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/PublicationMethodology)

<sup>8</sup> [www.gov.scot/SHSPublications](http://www.gov.scot/SHSPublications)

## 1.3 Comparability with Other Sources

In some cases the SHS is not the official source of statistics on a particular topic, such as income, employment or housing. The survey collects information on these topics to select the data of particular groups for further analysis or for use as background variables when analysing other topics. **The results are included in order to set the context for, and aid interpretation of the remaining chapters.** Where results are not the official source, this is indicated in the chapter introduction.

The Scottish Government conducts several major population surveys that are used to inform the policy debate in Scotland and in some instances the surveys can be complementary. The Long-Term Survey Strategy 2018-2022<sup>9</sup>, of which the SHS is a central element, aims to ensure that the Scottish Government's population surveys continue to meet key information needs while maximising the analytical potential of the data they generate. A guide is available providing more information on Scotland's surveys<sup>10</sup>.

There are also a number of Great British (GB) or UK surveys that include a Scottish dimension i.e. the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Annual Population Survey (APS), which provide statistics for Scotland on employment, unemployment and economic inactivity. The results from both surveys are available from the Labour Market pages of the Scottish Government website.

**Table 1.2: Overview of the preferred sources**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ)   | Demographic data (e.g. age, gender, religion, ethnicity or tenure)<br>Economic activity & qualifications<br>Disability/long term health condition |
| Scottish Health Survey (SHeS)            | Smoking<br>Health information   |
| Scottish Crime and Justice Survey        | Fear and Perceptions of crime<br>Confidence in the police   |
| Transport and Travel in Scotland (TATIS) | All transport information, including the Travel Diary results   |
| Family Resources Survey                  | Scotland level household income estimates   |

<sup>9</sup> Update on the previous survey strategy document (The Long Term Strategy for Population Surveys in Scotland 2009-2019) providing a progress report and details of planned activities over the next four years <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00533188.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/scotlandsurveys](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/scotlandsurveys)

The SHS will continue to gather information on a range of topics to **contribute** to the **Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ) pooled sample**. Pooling samples across the SHS, SHeS and Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) **enables detailed and reliable analysis of national estimates** by ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, education level and a wide range of other characteristics and estimates for low levels of geography, including local authorities. **The latest estimates for the SSCQ 2016 were published in April 2018<sup>11</sup>**, the 2017 data is expected to be published in 2019. The Scottish Government recommends that users refer to the SSCQ publication as the preferred source of local authority data for these questions.

**Table 1.3: Topics covered in the Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ)**

The Scottish Surveys Core Questions in 2017 covered:

|                                     |                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| disability and long-term conditions | housing tenure               |
| smoking                             | car access                   |
| provision of unpaid care            | ethnicity                    |
| mental wellbeing                    | religion                     |
| perception of local crime rate      | marital status               |
| perceptions of police performance   | sexual orientation           |
| highest qualification held          | gender                       |
| economic activity                   | self-assessed general health |
| household type                      | age                          |

There are some key demographic and contextual SSCQs for which data continues to be published in the SHS annual report at national level and will therefore also be published in the SHS local authority tables, as well as in the SSCQ. This includes gender, age, ethnicity, religion, economic activity and qualifications, disability/long term health condition, and tenure. **Due to its higher combined sample size, the SSCQ data on these questions will offer a higher level of precision for users seeking standalone estimates for these variables.**

Due to methodological difficulties banded household income is not currently reported in the SSCQ and will continue to be published in the SHS annual report and local authority tables as another key contextual variable. However, it should be noted that the Family Resources Survey is the preferred source of Scotland level household income estimates.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/SSCQ>

## 1.4 Survey Design

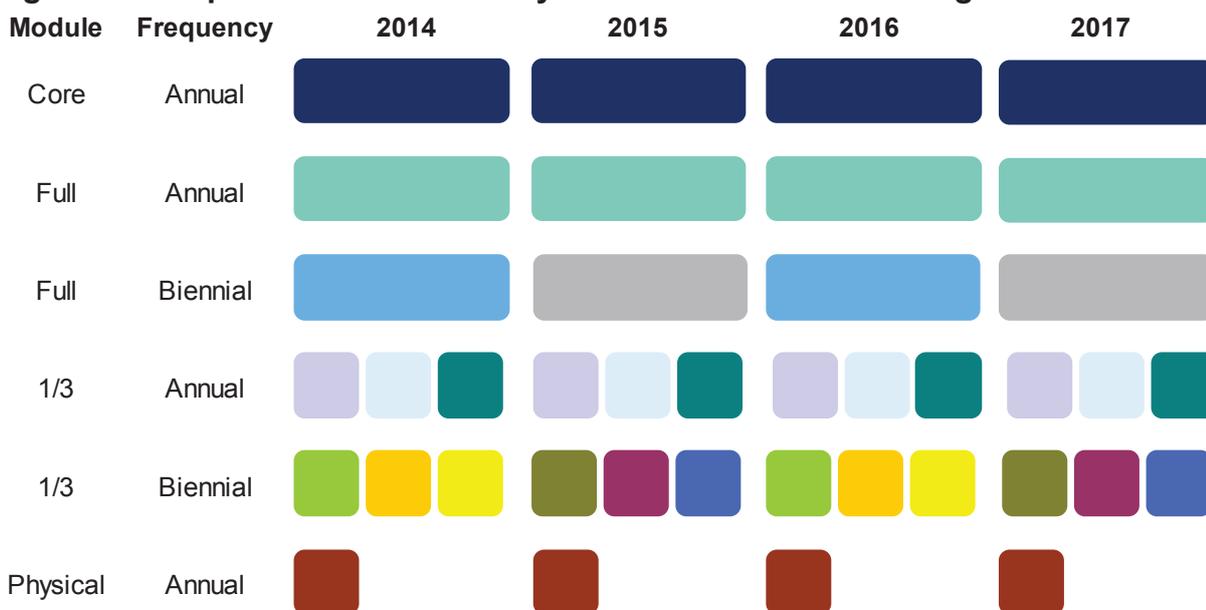
The current survey uses a **fully un-clustered core and modular structure**, meaning some questions are asked of the full sample and others of a one-third sub-sample. The overall **sample size is around 10,500** though improvements from the old survey design mean it is possible to obtain **local authority estimates on an annual basis** where sample sizes allow producing robust estimates.

Figure 1.1 provides a visual representation of how the core and modular design is structured within each year (between 2013 and 2017) and how this rotates and replicates across subsequent years. This includes a **“core” set of 20 questions which have been designed to be asked in consistent ways with other surveys**, such as age and gender. The subsequent **“modules” of questions have been designed to be flexible in terms of topic, frequency and geography**. For example, questions asked of the “full” sample and asked on an “annual” basis would be able to provide local authority level data on an annual basis. Similarly, questions might only be asked of “1/3” of the sample on a “biennial” basis (i.e. asked every second year). Such questions could only get national level estimates every second year.

The survey questionnaire itself is **structured in three main parts**:

- Household (including ‘Random Child’);
- Random Adult (including ‘Travel Diary’); and
- Physical inspection of dwelling.

**Figure 1.1: Representation of multi-year core and modular design**



The **household reference person, who is the Highest Income Householder (HIH)** or their spouse/partner, **completes part one of the interview ('Household')**. Details of all members of the household, including children, are collected during the household interview. This includes questions related to the composition and characteristics of the household, and involves capturing basic demographic information of all members of the household, such as gender, age and economic situation at this stage, as well as detailed information on dwelling characteristics as captured through the old SHCS. **The topics covered in the Household section of the survey are presented in Figure 1.2.**

Subsequently a child who is at school is selected from all household members under 16 (the 'Random School Child') and the household respondent answers questions about the school that child attends and the journey they make to go there.

**Figure 1.2: Topics covered in SHS 2017 Household component**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Household Composition  | People living in household, basic demographics   |
| Accommodation          | Property type, Tenure & Length of tenure, Ownership of property, Previous home   |
| Household Services     | Number of bedrooms, Internet access, Food waste/recycling  |
| Driving and Transport  | Cars, Fuel spend, Bicycles   |
| Health and Disability  | Long-term health condition/illness   |
| House Condition Survey | Noise, Responding to emergency, Repairs, Satisfaction with accommodation, Heating (including type of heating, control, cost, and suitability), Renewables, Energy Efficiency and Insulation, Adaptations |
| Household Employment   | Employment details including status, working patterns, type of work  |
| Household Income       | Householder/Spouse paid/self-employed/other jobs, Benefits, Other sources  |
| Household Finances     | Banking, Savings and investments, Standard of living   |
| Mortgages and Rent     | Mortgage & Rent, Household costs including service charges and council tax, Managing financially   |

Once the composition of the household has been established, one of the adults in the household is randomly selected by the interview’s computer to complete part two (‘Random Adult’)<sup>12</sup>. This covers behavioural and attitudinal type questions, such as satisfaction with local services, and captures further demographic information on the random adult. This element also covers the ‘Travel Diary’ component which asks about travel behaviours on the day previous to that of the interview day. In all households with a single adult the same person completes both parts, but as the number of adults in the household increases, the probability of the random adult being the same as the household respondent declines<sup>13</sup>. The topics covered in the Random Adult section of the survey are presented in Figure 1.3.

**Figure 1.3: Topics covered in SHS 2017 Random Adult component**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Adult Characteristics                                       | Basic demographics, Country of birth and date of entry   |
| Accommodation   | Housing experiences  |
| Neighbourhoods and Communities                              | Rating, Belonging, Crime & Police performance, Anti-social behaviour, Safety, Discrimination and Harassment, Involvement with Neighbours |
| Education   | Qualifications, Internet (including use and access, internet security)   |
| Travel and Transport  | Licence, Driving, Travel to work/education, Congestion, and Travel Diary   |
| Local government, Volunteering, Culture, Sport, Environment | Perceptions of local government and services, Volunteering, Culture, Sport, Greenspace and Visits to outdoors                            |
| Health, Disability & Caring                                 | Self-assessed health, Disability, Caring responsibilities, Smoking   |
| Employment  | Employment status & Government work scheme   |

<sup>12</sup> Adults who are household members but have been living away for the previous six months are excluded from the selection of the random adult. Children and students living away during term time are counted as household members but are excluded from the random adult and random school child selection.

<sup>13</sup> Where the same person completes both parts one and two (i.e. they are both the household respondent and selected as the random adult) the CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) script does not repeat the questions common to both sections. This means that these respondents are not asked for the same information twice.

If the household was selected to take part in the **physical inspection follow-up** the HH is asked if they would be willing to arrange an appointment for this at the end of the Household component of the survey. Such surveys are **conducted by professional surveyors through a visual and non-intrusive inspection of the dwelling**. The surveyor will assess the condition, design and energy efficiency of the home, with much of their time spent surveying the outside, but they will ask to see all the rooms inside. Results from the Physical Survey will be reported on separately later in the year in the SHCS report previously mentioned.

Further information on the SHS Questionnaire can be found via the relevant technical report on the SHS website<sup>14</sup>.

## 1.5 Sampling

Since 2012 **the SHS sample has been designed by the Scottish Government**. The sample design was coordinated with the sample designs for the Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) and the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) as part of a survey efficiency project and to allow the samples of the three surveys to be pooled for further analysis.

The SHS sample has been designed to provide the following:

- nationally representative sample of private households
- nationally representative sample of the adult population in private households
- annual publication of results at a local-authority level as well as Scotland.

To meet these requirements the target sample size for Scotland was 10,678 household interviews with a minimum local authority target of 258. From 2012 onwards the physical survey of the Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) has been incorporated into the SHS. A subsample of the main sample has been allocated to the physical survey, which has a target sample size of 3,004 for Scotland and a minimum target of 80 for each local authority.

**The sample is drawn from the small user file of the Postcode Address File (PAF).**

The overall design is a random sample, stratified to target a minimum of 250 interviews per local authority.

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<sup>14</sup> [www.gov.scot/SHSPublications](http://www.gov.scot/SHSPublications)

### **The main features of the design are:**

- First stage, disproportionate stratification by local authority;
- Within each local authority, second stage systematic random sampling was used to select the addresses from the sample frame with the addresses ordered by urban-rural classification, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) rank and postcode;
- Once the overall sample was selected, systematic random sampling was used to select the subsample for the physical survey.

As the samples for the SHS, SHeS and SCJS have all been selected by the Scottish Government since 2012, addresses selected for any of the surveys are removed from the sample frame so that they cannot be re-sampled for another survey. This has helped to reduce respondent burden and has facilitated the development of the pooled sample. The addresses are removed from the sample frame for a minimum of four years.

**The SHS response rate declined from 67 per cent in 2014 to 64 per cent in 2017 (the achieved sample in 2017 was 10,680).** Analysis carried out to date suggests that this has had minimal or little impact on the survey results. Further information on response rates and other such information will be available in the accompanying SHS 2017 Methodology and Fieldwork Outcomes report.