

Data Sources and Suitability

Summary



Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide information on the suitability of Scottish Household Survey (SHS) data for specific analysis and other sources of comparative information. The aim is to direct users to valuable sources of information and draw attention to any interesting aspects or peculiarities they contain so that future utilisation of the data is well-informed.

Summary

Description	<p>The SHS is designed to provide accurate, up-to-date information about the characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of Scottish households and individuals on a range of issues. The survey is specifically designed to support the work of the Scottish government's transport, communities and local government policy areas.</p>
Source	<p>Scottish Household Survey</p> <p>The survey is conducted as a two-part interview. The first is the "Household" element, asked of a householder (typically the Highest Income Householder) or their spouse/partner. The second is an "Adult" element, asked of a random adult within the household. Such information is referred to as the 'Main' dataset. There is also a 'Travel Diary' element which asks interviewees about journeys made on the previous day. A 'Culture and Sport' module was added for 2007-2008 to provide detailed national level estimates relevant to those themes.</p> <p>www.scotland.gov.uk/SHS</p>
Relevance	<p>The SHS is one of the large scale surveys conducted by the Scottish government and is of particular relevance in providing high quality information on the composition, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of households and individuals at national and sub-national level within Scotland.</p> <p>The SHS is used in tracking five National Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services delivered• Reduce the proportion of driver journeys delayed due to traffic congestion• Reduce the percentage of the adult population who smoke to 22% by 2010• Increase the percentage of adults who rate their neighbourhood as a good place to live• Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport <p>www.scotland.gov.uk/ScotlandPerforms</p>

Accuracy

Although the SHS sample is chosen at random, the people who take part in the survey will not necessarily be a representative cross-section of the population. Like all sample surveys the results of the SHS are estimates of the corresponding figures for the whole population and these results might vary from the true values in the population for three main reasons:

- The sample source does not completely cover the population because accommodation in hospitals, prisons, military bases, larger student halls, etc. are excluded from the sampling frame. The SHS provides a sample of private households rather than all households. The effect of this on the representativeness of the data are not known.
- Some people refuse to take part in the survey and some cannot be contacted by interviewers. If these people are systematically different from the people who are interviewed, this represents a potential source of bias in the data. Comparison of the SHS data with other sources suggests that for the survey as a whole, any bias due to non-response is not significant.
- Samples always have some natural variability because of the random selection of households and people within households. In some areas where the sample is clustered, the selection of sampling points adds to this variability.

Each of these sources of variability becomes much more important when small sub-samples of the population are examined. Without knowing the true values (for the population as a whole) of some quantities, we cannot be sure about the extent of any such biases in the SHS. However, comparison of SHS results with information from other sources suggests that they are broadly representative of the overall Scottish population, and therefore that any non-contact or non-response biases are not large overall. However, such biases could, of course, be more significant for some sub-groups of the population or in certain Council areas, particularly those that have the highest non-response rates.

Generally speaking, single adult and large adult households are under-represented, and single pensioner and older smaller households over-represented in the SHS.

Further information on the accuracy of SHS data are available through our Methodology and Fieldwork Outcomes report and in summary form in the Annual Report.

www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSPublications

In general, percentages in tables have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Zero values are shown as a dash (-), values greater than 0% but less than 0.5% are shown as 0% and values of 0.5% but less than 1% are rounded up to 1%. Columns or rows may not add to 100% because of rounding or where multiple responses to a question are possible.

In some tables, percentages have been removed from columns and replaced with ‘*’ where the base on which percentages would be calculated is less than 100. These data are judged to be insufficiently reliable for publication.

<p>Comparability</p>	<p>Core questions, providing standard information about the composition and characteristics of households, remain largely unchanged over time. However, the continuous nature of the survey and its modular design permits some flexibility, and the questionnaire has evolved over time.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSReview</p> <p>A Quarterly Trends publication is produced providing commentary, charts and tables on key trends within the SHS.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSPublications</p> <p>We undertake regular reviews of the SHS to ensure the data is meeting user requirements. This is driven through the use of the ScotStat Register, where we have put in place a specific 'Scottish Household Survey' topic of interest under 'Population and Household Surveys'.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/ScotStat</p>
<p>Quality Assurance</p>	<p>The SHS is a Scottish government National Statistics Publication and is underpinned by sound methods and assured quality.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice</p> <p>We produce annually a 'Methodology and Fieldwork Outcomes' report which provides information on the survey methodology, including sampling, data collection methods and limitations of SHS data. It also includes information on fieldwork targets and outcomes, data quality and weighting of the SHS.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSPublications</p>
<p>Data Available</p>	<p>We produce a Topics list document which provides a user-friendly access to the types of questions you are likely to find within each topic.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSTopics</p> <p>The SHS Annual Report 2007 was published in August 2008, and provides national level estimates along with estimates for the larger local authorities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSPublications</p> <p>To ease the process for requesting access to SHS data, we have produced a series of standardised guidance and pro-forma documents for access to Special Datasets, Follow-up Surveys, and SHS Lite.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSDataAccess</p> <p>Anonymised copies of the full and SHS Lite datasets collected in the survey have been deposited with the UK Data Archive, together with supporting documentation to facilitate wider access to, and analysis of, the information gathered.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSData</p> <p>A variety of indicators are published via Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics. For example, you will find indicators related to transport, community safety and health.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.sns.gov.uk</p>

<p>Geographical Availability</p>	<p>Although the SHS has a large sample that covers the whole of Scotland, it has some geographical limitations because of the sample sizes in small local authorities and because it is designed to be representative only at national and local authority level.</p> <p>In particular, the SHS is designed to be nationally representative every quarter, representative for larger Local Authorities (LA) every year, and all LA's (regardless of size) over a two-year period.</p> <p>It is not appropriate to undertake geographical analysis below local authority level since the sampling techniques used in some local authorities cannot guarantee representativeness in smaller areas.</p> <p>For information on our Data Release Procedures please see:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSData</p>
<p>Disaggregations</p>	<p>The main classificatory variables used within the SHS are summarised in the Concepts and Definitions section of this document.</p> <p>The Annual Report typically provides national level estimates using some combination of such variables. Unfortunately, not all disaggregations can be included so these are provided via supplementary web tables.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSPublications www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSData</p>
<p>Concepts and Definitions</p>	<p>The main classificatory variables used within the SHS are summarised in the Annual Report. This includes definitions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Current economic situation • Economic activity, qualifications and training • Gender • Highest level of qualification • Household income • Household members • Household type • Housing tenure • Long-standing limiting illness, health problem or disability • Marital status • National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) • Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation • Urban/Rural classification • Volunteering <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSPublications</p> <p>We are currently working on ways to standardise the presentation of such information, so hopefully such definitions will be provided directly on our website in the future.</p>

<p>Timeliness of Data</p>	<p>Following initial validation checks on the data, a short Quarterly Trends Statistics Publication Notice is published which gives a brief summary of some of the key trends from the survey. This ensures that we meet the National Statistics requirement for orderly release as soon as possible after compilation.</p> <p>Once we have published this key summary information, SHS data for the quarter are publicly available and can be used to answer requests for information, for example from policy colleagues, members of the public and in response to Scottish Parliamentary Questions.</p> <p>The arrangements for the publication of the data for the final quarter of the calendar year (and hence for the calendar year as a whole) are different. Following delivery of the final quarter's data, the first release of SHS results for the year as a whole is the Annual Report published in August. This gives a more detailed description of key trends from the survey, and is accompanied by detailed technical reports that describe the survey methodology and issues affecting interpretation of the survey data.</p> <p>Because of the specialised nature of the Travel Diary data, and the complexity of the processing required, release of this data follows later in the year.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">www.scotland.gov.uk/SHSPublications</p>
<p>Contact</p>	<p>SHS Project Team</p> <p>Address Scottish Household Survey Area 1-F (Dockside) Victoria Quay Edinburgh EH6 6QQ</p> <p>Email: shs@scotland.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Web : www.scotland.gov.uk/shs</p> <p>Telephone: 0131 244 8420</p>

	Datazone	Scottish Parliamentary Constituency	Local Authority	Health Board	Scotland
Main Survey			X		X
Travel Diary			X		X
Culture and Sport Module					X

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