

**Current methods and future proposals for minimising attrition in longitudinal UK-SILC**

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*Abstract*

A challenge faced by the United Kingdom (UK) and all member states in producing longitudinal Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) is attrition across the four waves. Attrition reduces precision of statistical estimates and can also potentially lead to increased bias. In the 2008-2011 UK-SILC longitudinal operation, 5,417 households were initially selected to form the rotation group intended to be retained in the operation for four years. In the first wave 3,002 household interviews were successfully achieved but only 1,390 of the original households provided successful interviews in all four waves. The UK is continuously investigating ways in which to reduce its rate of attrition for SILC.

This paper will outline the current methods and approaches adopted by the UK in order to minimise attrition between waves as well as new research being conducted with the aim of further minimising attrition. Existing practices in operation in the UK to reduce attrition include: offering financial incentives for successful interviews; conducting a telephone based 'keeping in touch' exercise with sample households between annual interviews; collecting various forms of information from respondents to aid contact; and sending regular and concise explanatory documentation to both interviewers and respondents. Future research the UK is looking to conduct includes: reviewing the financial incentive and how it is administered; analysing interviewer practices; holding focus groups with interviewers achieving various response rates; reviewing methods to improve engagement with respondents; and conducting a follow-up survey with non-responders to better understand the drivers of non-response.

It is hoped that the information presented in this paper will stimulate discussion and offer the opportunity to share positive initiatives which have served to reduce attrition in the SILC operations of other member states.