

Survey datasets relevant to research on older people in Northern Ireland

February 2013

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Continuous Household Survey	4
Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey	5
Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey	7
Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2008 Teaching Dataset: Older people.....	9
Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey	10
Poverty and Society Exclusion in Northern Ireland, 2002-2003.....	12
Understanding Society.....	13

Introduction

This document provides a catalogue of key datasets relevant to research on older people's issues. It is hoped that this will provide an invaluable resource for researchers wishing to undertake secondary analysis on older people in Northern Ireland.

The catalogue is not a static document, and will be updated as necessary. For each dataset, the following information will be provided, as appropriate:

- **Survey title**
- **Time period:** when the survey began, how often it runs, when it ended
- **Background information:** aims of the survey, structure of survey
- **Funders:** who funds the survey
- **Sample:** how many respondents there are and how they were selected to take part
- **Classification of age:** whether age is available as age groups, or as actual age in years
- **Questions relating to older people:** inclusion of questions of specific relevance to older people's issues
- **Access:** details on how to access the data

This work was funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies

Contact details

If you have any queries or suggestions, please contact:
Paula Devine, ARK
School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work
Queen's University Belfast

Tel: +44 28 9097 3034
Email: p.devine@qub.ac.uk

Continuous Household Survey

Time period	Annual since 1983
Background information	The Continuous Household Survey (CHS) is designed primarily to meet the information needs of government departments in Northern Ireland. The survey aims to provide accurate information about the social and economic conditions of the population of Northern Ireland, and to provide a means of examining relationships between the main variables with which social policy is concerned and in particular of monitoring changes in these associations over time. CHS is modelled on, and is similar in form and content to, the General Household Survey (which is carried out in Britain by the Office for National Statistics). The main topics covered include education, employment, family information, adults' and children's health and housing. The questionnaire consists of both a household interview and an individual interview with each person aged 16 and over. Data is collected by personal interview using computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). Further information is available at http://www.csu.nisra.gov.uk/survey.asp2.htm and at http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/nichs/
Funders	Department of Finance and Personnel (Northern Ireland).
Sample	The CHS is based on a systematic random sample of 4,500 addresses drawn each year and the sample is effectively stratified geographically. The questionnaire consists of both a household interview and an individual interview with each person aged 16 and over.
Classification of age	Age in years is available within the dataset.
Questions relating to older people	No specific modules on older are included. A wide range of questions are asked on health, mobility and assistance from care workers.
Access	The CHS datasets, as well as questionnaires and technical notes, are also available from the Economic and Social Data Service (EDS) which is a UK data archive, at http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/chsTitles.asp Registration is required for ESDS.

Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey

Time period	Annual survey, running from 2001 to 2008.
Background information	The Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey (NIHPS), ran from 2001 to 2008, and was an extension of the long-running British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). NIHPS is a longitudinal survey, which followed the same group of people (the 'panel') over time. All respondents aged 16 or over within selected households were interviewed. NIHPS has been replaced by Understanding Society. The advantages of NIHPS over other surveys carried out in Northern Ireland are that: • it follows the same representative sample of individuals over a period of years; • it is household-based, interviewing every adult member (aged 16 years or over) in the sampled households; • comparable data are available for Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. NIHPS provides information on household organisation, employment, accommodation, tenancy, income and wealth, housing, health, socio-economic values, residential mobility, marital and relationship history, social support, and individual and household demographics. The questionnaire includes a face-to-face interview, followed by a self-completion questionnaire. Further information can be found at http://www.ark.ac.uk/nihps/
Funders	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and various Northern Ireland government departments.
Sample	Wave 1 of the NIHPS consists of around 2,000 households and 3,500 individuals drawn from across Northern Ireland. The same individuals are re-interviewed in successive waves and, if they leave their original households, all adult members of their new households are also interviewed. Children are interviewed once they reach the age of 16. However, not all of these households and individuals took part in every wave of data collection after that.
Classification of age	Age in years is available within the dataset.
Questions relating to older people	Whilst no specific modules on older are included, the longitudinal dimension to this survey makes it invaluable for exploring issues over time, such as poverty and health.

	The following standardised measures were included: • General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) • Activities of Daily Living (ADL) schedule • Short Form 36 Health Measure (SF36) • The Big Five Personality Traits measure.
Access	The NIHPS datasets, as well as questionnaires and technical notes, are also available from the Economic and Social Data Service (EDS) which is a UK data archive, at http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=5151 Registration is required for ESDS.

Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey

Time period	Annual survey, since 1998 (except 2011)
Background information	The Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey was founded in 1998 to monitor the opinions of people in Northern Ireland to social policy issues, and follows the tradition set by the Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey. Run by ARK (http://www.ark.ac.uk), the survey provides a time-series and a public record of how public attitudes and behaviour develop over time. Each year, the survey comprises 4 or 5 modules, with each module focusing on a particular topic. The range of modules varies each year, although all modules designed to be repeated periodically. Where possible, NILT participates in the International Social Survey Programme, whereby the same module of questions is asked in countries across the world, thus allowing for international comparisons. The questionnaire includes a face-to-face interview, followed by a self-completion questionnaire (completed on paper, or on computer).
Funders	There is a wide range of funders, including Economic and Social Research Council, Atlantic Philanthropies, and Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, among others.
Sample	NILT comprises a random sample of the population aged 18 years or over, living in private households across Northern Ireland. From 1998 to 2004, NILT interviewed approximately 1800 adults. Since 2005, NILT has interviewed approximately 1200 adults.
Classification of age	Tables of results for every question are available broken down by age group (see below). In addition, users can download the dataset, and carry out their own analysis. This allows users create their own classification of age.
Questions relating to older people	NILT has included several modules specifically focused on older people's issues: • Attitudes to Older People - asked in 2003 and 2008 • Dementia - asked in 2010 • Grandparenting and Family Life - asked in 2004 • Social Care for Older People - asked in 2010 The Attitudes to Older People module was simultaneously fielded in the Republic of Ireland – results can be viewed in the Surveys Online section of ARK (http://www.ark.ac.uk/sol)

Access	A wide range of materials are freely available on the NILT website (http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt): • Tables of results for every question, broken down by sex, age (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+), and religion (Catholic/Protestant/No religion) • Dataset in SPSS (including age variable) • Technical notes • Questionnaires • Publications • Teaching datasets Registration is not required for the NILT site. The NILT datasets are also available from the Economic and Social Data Service(ESDS) which is a UK data archive, at http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/niltTitles.asp Registration is required for ESDS.
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Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2008 Teaching Dataset: Older people

Time period	2008
Background information	This Teaching Dataset consists of an SPSS datafile that has been designed to be used on courses teaching quantitative statistical analysis in the social sciences. The data is a subset of the 2008 Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey. Questions are taken mainly from the Attitudes to Older People module, which focuses on attitudes and experiences of ageism and ageing, as well providing general sociological information for each respondent. . While the teaching dataset is a valid representation of the data, users should be aware that some of the variables have been simplified and the derived variables have been generated solely for teaching purposes. Researchers wishing to use the original NILT 2008 data should access the main datasets instead of this teaching dataset.
Funders	The creation of the teaching dataset was funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, who also funded the fielding of the NILT module.
Sample	The teaching dataset is a subset of the 2008 NILT survey, which comprises a random sample of 1215 adults aged 18 years or over, living in private households across Northern Ireland.
Classification of age	Tables of results for every question are available broken down by age group (see below). In addition, users can download the dataset, and carry out their own analysis. This allows users create their own classification of age.
Questions relating to older people	This teaching dataset focuses on questions from the Attitudes to Older People module, included in the 2008 NILT survey.
Access	The teaching dataset is freely available from the NILT website at http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/datasets/teaching/index.html Background information and instructions for use are also available. Registration is not required.

Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey

Time period	Annual survey, running from 1989 to 1996 (except 2002)
Background information	The Northern Ireland Social Attitudes (NISA) survey began in 1989 as an extension of the British Social Attitudes Survey, and ran until 1996. A set of core questions was included each year, covering areas such as defence, the economy and labour-market participation as well as a range of background and classificatory questions. Further sets of questions, or modules, on attitudes to other issues such as health, the environment or housing were included in the questionnaire less frequently. Thus, NISAS provided the opportunity to compare the attitudes of those living in Northern Ireland with the attitudes of people in Britain. In addition, a special module on Northern Ireland issues such as community relations was developed for the Northern Ireland questionnaire. NISA also participated in the International Social Survey Programme, whereby the same module of questions is asked in countries across the world, thus allowing for international comparisons. The questionnaire includes a face-to-face interview, followed by a paper self-completion questionnaire. Further information can be found at http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/research/nisas/nisas.htm The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey began in 1998, and is based upon NISA.
Funders	There was a range of funders, including Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU) and other government departments, along with Nuffield Foundation.
Sample	NILT comprises a random sample of the population aged 18 years or over, living in private households across Northern Ireland. NISA interviewed approximately 1000 adults per year (approximately 1500 in 1994 and 1995).
Classification of age	Tables of results for every question are available broken down by age group (see below). In addition, users can download the dataset, and carry out their own analysis. This allows users create their own classification of age.
Questions relating to older people	No modules were included that focused on older people's issues. However, relevant questions were included within modules such as public spending.

Access	A wide range of materials are freely available on the ARK Surveys Online website (http://www.ark.ac.uk/sol): • Tables of results for every question of every survey, broken down by sex, age (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+), and religion (Catholic/Protestant/No religion) • Registration is not required on SOL. The NISA datasets, as well as questionnaires and technical notes, are also available from the Economic and Social Data Service (EDS) which is a UK data archive, at http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/niltTitles.asp Registration is required for ESDS.
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Poverty and Society Exclusion in Northern Ireland, 2002-2003

Time period	2002-2003
Background information	The Poverty and Social Exclusion in Northern Ireland (PSENI) study had three objectives: • to provide a number of different measures of poverty and social exclusion which could be periodically updated • to provide data on the extent to which poverty and social exclusion varied across the dimensions specified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998 • to compare poverty levels in Northern Ireland with the results of similar research in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. The research comprised two stages. • The first stage explored what people in Northern Ireland considered to be basic necessities, and was conducted via a module fielded in the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey. • The second stage of the PSENI project involved a large survey of a representative sample of Northern Ireland households and individuals. This stage collected a range of demographic and social information, and measured the number of households lacking those items identified as necessities in the Omnibus module. A poverty threshold was then calculated which best distinguished between the poor and non-poor.
Funders	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the Department of Finance and Personnel and HM Treasury
Sample	A one-stage stratified or systematic random sampling method was used. Omnibus survey: 1,070 cases. Household survey: 1,976 cases. Individual survey: 3,104 cases
Classification of age	Age in years is available within the dataset.
Questions relating to older people	No specific modules on older are included.
Access	The PSENI datasets includes the Omnibus module conducted as the first stage of the research, and household and individual data from the second stage. These, as well as questionnaires and technical notes, are also available from the Economic and Social Data Service (EDS) which is a UK data archive, at http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=5339 Registration is required for ESDS.

Understanding Society

Time period	Annual survey, running since 2009.
Background information	Understanding Society (US) is a longitudinal household panel survey, and replaces the Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey. All respondents aged 16 or over within selected households are interviewed. The advantages of Understanding Society over other surveys carried out in Northern Ireland are that: • it follows the same representative sample of individuals over a period of years; • it is household-based, interviewing every adult member (aged 16 years or over) in the sampled households; • comparable data are available for Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. Understanding Society will provide valuable new evidence about the people of the UK, their lives, experiences, behaviours and beliefs. The topics covered by the survey include: standard of living measures, family relationships, environmental issues, health and wellbeing and psychological attributes. The questionnaire includes a face-to-face interview. Further information can be found at http://www.ark.ac.uk/nihps/us.html and at https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/
Funders	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and various government departments.
Sample	Wave 1 of the US consists of around 2,400 households and drawn from across Northern Ireland. All occupants aged 16 or over are interviewed, and these people are re-interviewed in successive waves. If they leave their original households, all adult members of their new households are also interviewed. Children are interviewed once they reach the age of 16. However, not all of these households and individuals took part in every wave of data collection after that.
Classification of age	Age in years is available within the dataset.
Questions relating to older people	Whilst no specific modules on older are included, the longitudinal dimension to this survey makes it invaluable for exploring issues over time, such as poverty and health.

Access	The Understanding Society datasets, as well as questionnaires and technical notes, are also available from the Economic and Social Data Service (EDS) which is a UK data archive, at http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=6614 Registration is required for ESDS.
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