

# Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2015

## Technical Notes

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## What is the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey?

The Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey was launched in the autumn of 1998. Its mission is to monitor the attitudes and behaviour of people in Northern Ireland annually to provide a time-series and a public record of how our attitudes and behaviour develop on a wide range of social policy issues. The survey is run on a modular format and while two modules are repeated every year (*Political Attitudes* and *Community Relations*) the rest of the survey varies annually, with all the modules designed to be repeated in years to come.

The survey aims to provide:

- ☐ A local resource for use by the general public; and
- ☐ A data source for a more theoretical academic debate.

We would like to thank the funders for the 2015 survey who have been most supportive of the overall aims of the project, in particular Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). We would also like to thank all the respondents to the survey.

### Links with other surveys

The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey is a direct descendent of the Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey (NISA) which ran from 1989 to 1996. NISA was a sister survey to the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA), and, by running the same modules as BSA, it provided a time-series of social attitudes allowing comparisons with Britain. Against the background of the new political arrangements in Northern Ireland it was agreed that the new Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey would be better served by cutting its links with its British counterpart. NILT now carries on the tradition of a time-series of attitudes but has shifted the focus away from comparisons with Britain. It is largely Northern Ireland focused, it is social policy focused, and it is designed to be used by the wider public in Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, every year includes a substantial component which either continues an old NISA time-series, or replicates a BSA module.

### Ethical approval

The 2015 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast.

## **Technical details of the 2015 survey**

### The overall design

The 2015 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey involved 1202 face-to-face interviews with adults aged 18 years or over. The main interview was carried out using computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) and the respondent was then asked to complete a self-completion questionnaire.

The self-completion questionnaire was completed using the following three methods:

- CASI method – the respondent completed the self-completion on the iPad.
- CAPI method – the interviewer completed the self-completion on the iPad.
- Traditional pen and paper method – the respondent completed the self-completion on paper booklet.

In 1998, 1999 and 2000, the Young Life and Times Survey ran alongside the adult survey and interviewed young people aged 12 to 17. However, this methodology was reviewed in 2001. Leading on from this, the Young Life and Times restarted in 2003, but with a different methodology from before, and not linked to the adult survey. (Full details on the Young Life and Times Survey can be found at [www.ark.ac.uk/ylt](http://www.ark.ac.uk/ylt))

### Survey content

The survey consists of a number of different modules, each based on a specific topic. The modules included in the 2015 survey are:

***Introductory questions***

***Informal care***

***Social care***

***Community relations***

***Minority ethnic groups***

***Data sharing and privacy***

***Political attitudes***

***Background***

### Pilot and mainstage fieldwork

All interviews were conducted by Perceptive Insight interviewers in the respondents' homes. Pilot interviews with 30 respondents were carried out during 22<sup>nd</sup> August – 6<sup>th</sup> September 2015. The main stage of the fieldwork was undertaken during the period 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015 to 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015. Respondents were asked to complete a CASI (Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing) questionnaire. On agreeing to complete the CASI questionnaire, the respondent was shown how to use the interviewer's iPad to enter answers by completing some example questions. If a respondent did not wish to complete the self-completion questionnaire on the iPad they were given the option to complete a paper version. The paper self-completion questionnaire was completed and handed back to the interviewer at the time of the main interview. If a respondent could not complete the self-completion questionnaire on the iPad or by paper, due to literacy or health issues, the interviewer completed the self-completion questionnaire on the iPad where consent was granted by the respondent.

Advance Letter

An advance letter was issued by Perceptive Insight to all sampled addresses prior to the interviewer calling at each address. The letter explained the purpose and rationale for the survey as well as contact details for the Perceptive Insight staff managing the project.

Sampling design

The sample for the 2015 survey consisted of a systematic random sample of addresses selected from the Postcode Address File (PAF) database of addresses. Private business addresses were removed from the database prior to sample selection. A total of 2,350 addresses were selected for interview.

The Postcode Address File (PAF) provides a good sampling frame of addresses, but contains no information about the number of people living at an address. Further selection stages were therefore required to convert the listing of addresses to a listing of individuals from which one person (the 'selected respondent') is chosen to complete the questionnaire.

The person to be interviewed was randomly selected using the 'next birthday' rule. The interviewer asked the householder to list the birthdays of all members of the household eligible for inclusion in the sample: that is, all persons aged 18 or over living at the address. The person with the next birthday, at the time of the call, was the person with whom the interview was to be conducted. Where the selected respondent was not available, an appointment was made to call back to interview them at a more suitable time.

Response rate

**Table 1.1** shows the status of addresses, and the number of addresses in scope.

**Table 1.2** shows the breakdown of response

**Table 1.3** shows the response rate for the self-completion questionnaires.

<b>Table 1.1 Status of addresses</b>		
Total addresses issued	Ineligible (eg vacant/derelict/commercial)	Total in scope
2350	176	2174

<b>Table 1.2 Breakdown of response</b>		
	Number	Percent
Total co-operating	1202	55
Fully co-operating	1202	55
Partially co-operating	0	0
Refusal to co-operate	574	26
Non-contact	398	18
Total	2174	

<b>Table 1.3 Completed self-completion questionnaires</b>	
Number of main stage interviews	1202
Number of self-completion achieved	1202
% of self-completion achieved	100

Sampling errors and confidence intervals

**Table 1.4** sets out sampling errors and confidence intervals at the 95% confidence level relating to a Systematic Random Sample design as used in the survey. Note that the margin of error for all sample estimates is within the parameters of  $\pm 2.8\%$ .

<b>Table 1.4 Sampling errors and confidence intervals for key variables (unweighted data)</b>				
		%	Margin of Error	95% Confidence Limits
<b>Age</b>	18 – 24	8.7	1.59	7.1-10.3
	25 – 34	14.4	1.98	12.4-16.4
	35 – 44	15.2	2.03	13.2-17.2
	45 – 54	15.1	2.02	13.1-17.1
	55 – 64	14.2	1.97	12.2-16.2
	65 and over	31.4	2.62	28.8-34.0
<b>Sex</b>	Male	44.8	2.81	42.0-47.6
	Female	55.2	2.81	52.4-58.0
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	32.1	2.64	29.5-34.7
	Married/Civil Partnership	41.5	2.78	38.7-44.3
	Separated	5.3	1.27	4.0-6.6
	Divorced	6.7	1.41	5.3-8.1
	Widowed	13.9	1.96	11.9-15.9
<b>Religion</b>	Catholic	37.5	2.74	34.8-40.2
	Protestant	40.1	2.77	37.3-42.9
	None	16.8	2.11	14.7-18.9
	Other	1.6	0.71	0.9-2.3
	Refused/Don't know	4.0	1.11	2.9-5.1

Data preparation

Main survey data was collected via the snap computer aided interviewing package. This was converted to SPSS format prior to analysis. All paper based data (self-completion modules) were also entered via the snap package and again converted to SPSS. All data were subject to an extensive range of inter and intra variable logic checks.

### Deriving social class variables

Occupational information was derived using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 2010. The SOC2010 information was also used to derive the National Statistics Socio-Economic (NS SEC) and the ISCO 08 COM variables both of which are contained in this data set.

### Getting the data

Survey results are put on the Internet six months after the end of fieldwork (<http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt>), with frequencies for every question and a breakdown by age, gender and religion on offer.

A 'query' service or helpline is run for those who need additional tables or have any query about the survey. Users can contact the Life and Times team directly (see Contact Information on page ix). The funders of the survey receive the dataset somewhat earlier than the public (three months after the end of fieldwork). Nonetheless, one of the guiding principles of the survey is that the information is made available to all and that no one person or organisation has ownership of the results. The web site also allows users to download the data in order to carry out their own particular statistical analyses.

### Using the data

The documentation provided here is not a traditional 'technical report' and is designed to be easy to use rather than technically exhaustive. Users who intend to carry out sophisticated statistical analyses or to manipulate the data to investigate particular features may well want to come back to us for more precise details on the survey set-up.

The data have been tested extensively, but if you do find anything that looks like a mistake, please let us know as soon as you can.

**Please note that all analyses of the adult data should be weighted in order to allow for disproportionate household size. The weighting variable is called *WTFactor*. The only exceptions are the few household variables (for example, tenure and household income), which do not need to be weighted.**

## Notes and Errata

### Categorisation of Religion

At the back of this documentation is a list of other variables on the dataset. This includes the variable RELIGCAT, which categorises the variable RELIGION into 3 groups: Catholic, Protestant and No religion. The original RELIGION variable has been removed from the dataset in order to protect anonymity of respondents.

The Protestant category within the RELIGCAT variable was created by grouping together the following denominations:

- Church of Ireland/Anglican/Episcopal
- Baptist
- Methodist
- Presbyterian
- Free Presbyterian
- Brethren
- United Reform Church (URC)/Congregational
- Pentecostal
- Church of Scotland
- Elim Pentecostal
- Reformed Presbyterian
- Non-subscribing Presbyterian
- Salvation Army
- Church of Nazarene
- Jehovah's Witness
- Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon)
- Other Protestant
- Other Christian
- Protestant – no denomination
- Christian – no denomination

From 2008, the demographic and socio-economic questions asked in the NILT survey have been harmonised to match those used in large-scale government surveys. Thus, some of these will be different to those asked in previous years of NILT. However, this harmonisation will increase comparability between NILT and other surveys.

### Confidentiality

In order to maintain confidentiality, demographic variables relating to other people in the household are excluded from the dataset, as is the RACE2 variable. Variables relating to religion are also excluded, and are replaced by the following recoded versions of these variables:

Variable	Recoded version
RELIGION	RELIGCAT
FAMRELIG	FAMRCODE
PRTNRRLG	PRTRCODE

However, tables of results for these variables can be found on the NILT website ([www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2015))



**Comparison of household characteristics**

		NILT 2015*	CHS 2014/15	Northern Ireland Census 2011
<i>Characteristics of sampled households</i>			All households	
<i>Tenure</i>	Owned outright	40	37	32
	Owned with mortgage/co-ownership	22	31	35
	Rented Local Authority	17	11	12
	Rented other***	18	20	18
	Rent free	2	1	3
	Refused	1	-	-
Base=100%		1,202	2,521	703,275

\* Household characteristics are based on unweighted data from the NILT survey

\*\*\* 'Rented' includes rented from a housing association and rented privately

**Comparison of individual characteristics (weighted data)**

		NILT 2015	CHS 2014/15	Northern Ireland Census 2011
			%	
<i>Individual characteristics</i>			18+	
<i>Sex</i>	Male	47	47	49
	Female	53	53	51
<i>Age</i>	18-24	12	10	13
	25-34	15	17	18
	35-44	14	17	18
	45-54	18	18	18
	55-64	15	16	14
	65 and over	26	22	19
Base=100%	n		4,670	1,380,100
<i>Marital Status</i>	Single	31	29	36
	Married/Civil Partner	51	56	48
	Widowed	9	6	7
	Divorced/Separated	8	8	9
	Refused/ Don't know	-	-	-
Base=100%	n	1,202	4,670	1,431,540

**Individual characteristics – NILT 2015 (weighted data)**

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over	All
	%					
Single	95	57	34	15	7	32
Married/Civil Partner	4	38	55	69	57	51
Divorced/separated/ widowed	1	5	11	16	36	17
Base=100%	146	176	170	393	310	1202

**Individual characteristics – CHS 2014/15**

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over	All
	%					
Single	99	54	25	13	7	29
Married/Civil Partner	1	43	66	70	63	56
Divorced/separated/ widowed	-	3	9	17	31	15
Base=100%	485	780	815	1560	1030	4,670

**Stated religious denomination**

	NILT 2015 (weighted)	CHS 2014/15**	Northern Ireland Census 2011
	%		
Protestant	41	47	48
Catholic	39	42	45
Other or no religion*	17	9	6
Missing/refused	3	1	1
Base=100%	1,202	6,216	1,108,63

\* Include 'no religion' and religion not stated

\*\* Supplemented from household membership

**Finding a module in the questionnaires**

	Main Questionnaire	Self-completion questionnaire
<i>Introductory questions</i>	A1 – A8	
<i>Informal care</i>	B1 – B18	
<i>Social care</i>	C1 – C17	
<i>Community relations</i>	D1 – D34	SC1
<i>Minority ethnic people</i>	E1 – E17	SC2 – SC14
<i>Data sharing and privacy</i>	F1 – F17	
<i>Political attitudes</i>	G1 – G9	
<i>Background</i>	H1 – H31	

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**Other variables on the dataset**

<i>WTFACOR</i>	<b>Weighting variable for number of adults in the household</b>
<i>ADULTNO</i>	<b>Number of adults in the household</b>
<i>HOUSEHLD</i>	<b>Number in each household</b>
<i>RAGECAT</i>	<b>Age of respondent (categorised)</b>  1      18-24 2      25-34 3      35-44 4      45-54 5      55-64 6      65+
<i>RELIGCAT</i>	<b>Religion of respondent (categorised)</b>  1      Catholic 2      Protestant 3      No religion
<i>NSSECRESP08(Re                  spondent)</i> <i>NSSECPART08                  (Partner)</i> <i>NSSECHHLD08                  (Household)</i>	<b>National Statistics Socio Economic Classification (NS SEC)</b>  1.1    Large employers and higher managerial occupations 1.2    Higher professional occupations 2      Lower managerial and professional occupations 3      Intermediate occupations 4      Small employers and own account workers 5      Lower supervisory and technical occupations 6      Semi-routine occupations 7      Routine occupations 8      Never worked and long-term unemployed 9      Not classified
<i>URBRUR</i>	<b>Whether the respondent lives in an urban or rural area</b>