


# All you need to know about Understanding Society





# What is it?

*Understanding Society* is the biggest study of its kind in the world – and we'd very much like you and the people you live with to be involved. By spending just a short time answering questions about your experiences and opinions, you will help us paint a unique picture of life in the UK and how it's changing.

# What's it for?

The information from the survey will help us learn more about each other, and will help people who analyse and design policies to make better decisions about how to improve everyone's lives. In the past, studies like this have contributed to changes in the law, given insights into human psychology, and helped doctors treat illnesses more effectively.

# Why me?

Your household's help in the past was greatly appreciated and we would like to continue to find out how your household and family circumstances change over time. Getting involved is completely voluntary and we hope you will be able to help us make the study a success.



### What do I have to do?

To join in, all you have to do is answer some questions about your life and your opinions. The interview will take from 30 minutes to an hour, depending on your circumstances. It will cover some of the key areas of life such as health, employment and leisure.

### Who do you want to talk to?

We would like to talk to everyone aged 16 and over who lives in your home. With parents' consent, we would also like young people aged 10-15 to fill in a short questionnaire.

### Are you new to this household?

You are being asked to take part because you are now living in the household of someone who has previously taken part in the survey.

Without your input, we won't be able to gain a complete understanding of how household and family circumstances may be changing. We hope you agree to take part as your help will be greatly appreciated.

### How many people are being asked to take part?

This is the largest social research study of its kind in the world – we're asking 100,000 people in 40,000 households to take part.

## How do I find out more?

If you'd like some more information on the survey: visit [www.understandingsociety.org.uk/participants](http://www.understandingsociety.org.uk/participants), email [contact@understandingsociety.org.uk](mailto:contact@understandingsociety.org.uk), call the University of Essex on Freephone 0800 252 853 or write to **FREEPOST RRXX-KEKJ-JGKS, Understanding Society, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ**. We'll be really pleased to hear from you.

### What do I get out of it?

Each person in the household who takes part will receive a gift voucher; including young people aged 10-15 who complete a self-completion questionnaire. As a member of *Understanding Society* you will also have access to study findings and research updates.

### What will you do with the information?

The results of the survey will be used for research purposes. The results will be kept strictly confidential and we operate under the rules of the Data Protection Act. You can ask to see your details at any time or to have them removed from our database. The data is anonymous – it will be impossible to identify individual people and households from it.

### Who is running it?

Researchers at the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex are running *Understanding Society* together with NatCen, with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).



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