

### Family life

Young people aged 10 – 15 are more likely to talk about things that are important to them with their mum than their dad. 38% talk to their mum 'most days' about things that matter to them while 19% talk to their dad 'most days' about things that matter to them.

If young people were worried or upset about something and they wanted to talk about it, most would want to talk to their mother about it (65%), whilst more would talk to a brother or sister (13%) than talk to their father (8%). Only one in fifteen young people say that they would not talk to anyone in their family.

Nearly all young people feel supported by their family – 79% say that they feel supported in most or all of the things that they do, whilst just 1% say that they do not feel supported by their family.



### Kids online

90% of young people aged 10 – 15 access the internet at least once each week and just over half of all young people do this every day, with girls using the internet daily more than boys. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of young people said they belong to a social website such as Bebo, Facebook or

MySpace. Girls spend more time on these sites than boys. Five in ten girls and four in ten boys who belong to a social website spend between 1 and 3 hours chatting or interacting with friends on a normal school day. 70% of young people use a computer for their schoolwork at least once a week

### Keep in touch

Thanks again for taking part in *Understanding Society*. We hope you think these early findings from the survey are as interesting as we do. If you want to know more about the survey you've helped with or about these and other findings, take a look at the website at [www.understandingsociety.org.uk/participants](http://www.understandingsociety.org.uk/participants) where you can also update your details if they have changed.

We are always very pleased to hear from you. You can call the *Understanding Society* team on **0800 252 853**. Colette Lo and Sandra Jones will try to answer any questions you might have.

You can also email us at [understandingsociety@essex.ac.uk](mailto:understandingsociety@essex.ac.uk)

Or you can write to us at

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*Understanding Society* is an initiative by the Economic and Social Research Council, with scientific leadership by the Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex, and survey delivery by the National Centre for Social Research.



# Participants' Update 1

Providing valuable new evidence about people's lives, behaviours and beliefs in the UK

## First findings from *Understanding Society*

What you tell us matters! And to thank you for taking the time to participate in this really valuable and important survey, we want you to be the first to know about what we have found out. If you want to know more, please take a look at the special website we have created for you and all the other people who are taking part at [www.understandingsociety.org.uk/participants](http://www.understandingsociety.org.uk/participants). While you're on the website, why not use your personalised invitation login to check and update your details. If you have moved and you tell us your new address details, we'll send you £5 as a thank you for keeping us up to date.

When we interviewed you recently, we asked you questions ranging from how environmentally friendly you think you are to whether you were feeling the pinch as the credit crunch began to take hold. All your responses are now being used by researchers in their analysis. Here are some of the things they are finding that we thought you might find interesting.

More detailed findings are available on the website. [www.understandingsociety.org.uk/participants](http://www.understandingsociety.org.uk/participants)

### Are you green to go?

We were keen to find out about your attitudes towards the environment and how this affects your day to day life, such as how much energy you use around the house.

16% of people are either environmentally-friendly in most or everything that they do. Those aged 55 and over were over three times as likely to be environmentally-friendly than those aged 16-24.

Almost three-quarters (74%) of households always separate their rubbish for recycling; this is higher among those households who own their accommodation (84%) than those who rent (62%).

Fewer than one in a hundred households has solar water heating or solar panels for energy. *Understanding Society* will provide vital information on longer term trends in the coming years.



### Managing your money

At the moment we are all experiencing a 'credit crunch' and the continuing fall-out from the banking crisis. With your help on *Understanding Society*, we are uniquely placed to be able to see the effect the financial situation is having on people in all types of circumstances.

28% of you said you were 'living comfortably' and 33% of you were 'doing alright'. However, a 27% of you are 'just about getting by' and around 12% are finding things difficult.

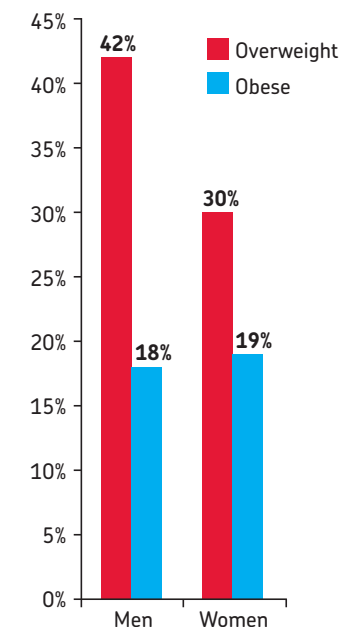
One-quarter of people (25%) thought that looking ahead they would be financially better off one year from now. A sixth (16%) thought they would be worse off. With the data from *Understanding Society* we will be able to see what impact the economic crisis is having on people's lives in the longer term, which types of people remain relatively unaffected and which are most badly affected by the financial downturn

### Putting on weight?

Much has been said recently about the growing problem of obesity. We asked you to tell us your height and weight, and with this information we can calculate the Body Mass Index or BMI. BMI indicates whether someone is underweight, normal weight, overweight or obese. Here's what we found.

Men are more likely to be overweight than women. Approximately 42% of men are overweight for their height, compared to 30% of women. A similar proportion of men (18%) and women (19%) would be considered obese.

Of those aged 16-24, 18% are overweight and a further 7% are obese. Amongst those between the ages of 25 and 34, about three in ten are overweight and 14% are obese. The least healthy age appears to be 45-64 where six in ten people are either overweight or obese.



### Work stress

There is a group of people who work long hours, have long commuting times to and from work, and have a lot of pressure in their job. Perhaps you are one of them!

The average number of hours worked in a week, for those in employment, is around 32. But this particular group of people work around 43 hours a week. They also spend an average of 35 minutes travelling to work, a third more than the time of other working people (24 minutes).

About 1 in 3 men and 1 in 8 women are in this group of work-pressured people.

**This group of people work an average of an extra 11 hours per week**