

# British Cohort Study (1970)

2008-2009 Follow-Up

Deposited with the UK Data Archive

**A Guide to the Dataset**

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Compiled by

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## **PREFACE**

This document has been prepared to accompany the deposit, with the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex, of the dataset from the 2008-9 follow-up of the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70), a continuing, multidisciplinary, national, longitudinal study.

The elements of the deposit, to which reference will be made throughout this document, are identified below. Users are advised that they will need to consult all elements of the documentation to gain a full understanding of the data.

**The Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS) request that any work which is based wholly or in part on analysis of British Cohort Study data includes the following acknowledgement:**

**“The analyses in this work are based wholly or in part on analysis of data from the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70). The data was deposited at the UK Data Archive by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies at the Institute of Education, University of London. BCS70 is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).”**

**CLS also request that the term ‘BCS70’ be included when compiling keywords to accompany any publications based on analysis of the study’s data.**

### **BCS70 2008-2009 First Data Deposit:**

| <b>Title</b>  | <b>Format</b> |
|---|---------------|
| British Cohort Study (1970) - Data collected in 2008/9 (at age 38)      | SPSS          |
| British Cohort Study (1970) 2008-2009 Follow-Up– A Guide to the Dataset | PDF           |
| BCS70 2008-2009 Follow-up: Questionnaire Documentation                  | PDF           |
| BCS70 2008-2009: Technical Report                                       | PDF           |

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## 1. Introduction

This document accompanies the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) 2008-9 follow-up dataset which has been deposited with the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex. The key aim of the User Guide is to provide an overview of the data collected in the most recent sweep of the study and to provide potential users with the information they will need to commence their analyses.

The follow-up took place between October 2008 and May 2009. The BCS70 survey was designed by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies of the Institute of Education, University of London (CLS), and the fieldwork was carried out at the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen). The work was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Interviews were conducted via telephone and lasted 25 minutes on average.

In total 11,843 cohort members were issued to interviewers and 8,874 were interviewed. Full details of fieldwork procedures can be found in the BCS70 2008-9 Technical Report: [www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/bcs2008techreport](http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/bcs2008techreport).

In total the deposit includes 3038 variables including a series of derived variables which will be of use to many researchers (see Appendix 1 for a full list of derived variables). A number of key variables which will be frequently used are highlighted in Section 2.1.

The interview collected updated information about household composition, housing, relationships, births and other pregnancies, adopted children, absent children, parents, family income, economic activity, education and qualifications, health and smoking. A more detailed summary of the interview content and the full questionnaire documentation can be downloaded from the following page on the CLS website: [www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/bcs2008questionnaire](http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/bcs2008questionnaire). The CLS website also includes a web-based data dictionary which can be used to search for relevant variables by keyword: <http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/datadictionary>.

All cases in the dataset are identified by a unique identifier (see Section 2.1) which is consistent across all British Cohort Study datasets available from the UK Data Archive so the data can easily be linked with the data collected in previous waves. Questionnaire documentation, technical reports and user guides relating to previous sweeps of the study is all available from the CLS website: [www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/bcs70](http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/bcs70).

### 1.1 BCS70 Background

The 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) is a continuing, multi-disciplinary longitudinal study which takes as its subjects all those living in England, Scotland and Wales who were born in one particular week in April 1970.

BCS70 began when data were collected about the births and families of just under 17,200 babies born in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in a particular week in April, 1970. Since 1970 there have been seven attempts to gather information from the whole cohort (although subjects from Northern Ireland, who had been included in the birth survey, were dropped from the study in all subsequent sweeps). With each successive attempt, the scope of enquiry has broadened from a strictly

medical focus at birth, to encompass physical and educational development at the age of five, physical, educational and social development at the ages of ten and sixteen, and then to include economic development and other wider factors at 26, 29, 34 and now at 38 years.

The previous follow-up of the cohort took place in 2004-5 and the core survey took the form of a 50 minute face-to-face interview which included a self-completion questionnaire and an assessment of literacy and basic skills. For a one in two sample of BCS70 cohort members, information was also gathered from and about the children living with them.

The 2008-9 follow-up is comprised of a twenty-five minute telephone interview. As in all recent follow-ups the main aim is to update information gathered in previous surveys in order to explore the factors central to the formation and maintenance of adult identity in each of the following domains:

- Lifelong learning
- Relationships, parenting and housing
- Employment and income
- Health and health behaviour
- Citizenship and values

## **1.2 Survey Design**

A number of organisations were involved in the development and delivery of the 2008-9 follow-up.

**Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS)** – CLS are an ESRC resource centre based at the Institute of Education, University of London and have been responsible for the study since 1991. CLS were responsible for the development of the 2008-9 survey and commissioned the fieldwork.

**Funders** – The 2008-9 survey was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

**Advisors** – The content and design of the 2008-9 survey was developed in collaboration with a number of advisory panels comprised of researchers, policy-makers and funders.

**Fieldwork subcontractors** – Following competitive tendering the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) were selected to conduct the 2008-9 survey on behalf of CLS. NatCen assisted CLS with the development of instrumentation, conducted the fieldwork and carried out initial data preparation (including coding and post field editing) and documentation. NatCen also conducted the follow-ups in 2000 and 2004-5.

## **2. The 2008-9 Survey**

The 2008-9 follow-up took the form of a 25 minute telephone interview. The interview collected updated information about household composition, housing, relationships, births and other pregnancies, adopted children, absent children, parents, family income, economic activity, education and qualifications, health and smoking.

Most of the questions included in the 2008/9 follow-up were also included in the 2008-9 follow-up of the NCDS cohort. In addition many of the questions had been included in earlier waves of the two studies, which will allow for the study of life-cycle effects by making comparisons across the sweeps of BCS70 and for the study of cohort effects by making comparisons with the NCDS cohort.

Full details of the CATI program can be found in the following which also accompanies the data deposit:

BCS70 2008-9 Follow-up: Questionnaire Documentation

### **2.1 Key variables**

Table 1 below provides details of some of the key variables which may be of interest. The majority of these variables were also included in the Age 34 survey (variable names listed where applicable) so can be compared longitudinally.

The case identifier used on the file is 'bcsid' which replaces the old case identifier 'keyl'. In August 2008, all historic BCS70 datasets were re-deposited at the UK Data Archive with the old case identifier 'keyl' replaced by a new identifier 'bcsid' meaning that this identifier can be used to link the data longitudinally to earlier sweeps.

The reason for changing the case identifier was to improve the security of the data and increase safeguards on the confidentiality of cohort members.

All datasets carrying the old serial numbers should normally be deleted within three months of receipt of the revised data by the researcher.

For more details on this change, download the CLS Confidentiality and Data Security Review document available from the CLS website:

<http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/studies.asp?section=00010002000300010005>



**Table 1 - Some key variables**

| Information                    | BCS70 2008-2009 Variable name | Variable label   | BCS70 2004-2005 Variable name |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Identifier                     | bcsid                         | bcsid serial number  | bcsid                         |
| Sex                            | bd8sex                        | CM's sex   | bd7sex                        |
| Legal marital status           | bd8ms                         | CM's legal marital status  | bd7ms                         |
| Cohabitation status            | b8cohab                       | Whether CM cohabiting as a couple  |                               |
| Spouse / partner               | bd8spphh                      | Cohort member lives with a spouse or partner                             | bd7spphh                      |
| Natural children               | bd8nchhh                      | (Derived) Number of cohort member's natural children in household        | bd7nchhh                      |
| Non-biological children        | Bd8ochhh                      | (Derived) Number of cohort member's non biological children in household | bd7ochhh                      |
| Household size                 | bd8numhh                      | (Derived) Total number of people in household                            | bd7numhh                      |
| Accommodation                  | b8accom                       | Type of accommodation  | b7accom                       |
| Number of rooms                | bd8numrm                      | Number of rooms in the house   | b7numrms                      |
| Tenure                         | b8ten2                        | Home ownership / tenure status   | b7ten2                        |
| Mother alive                   | bd8maliv                      | (Derived) Whether CM's mother alive (incl prev swp data)                 | bd7maliv                      |
| Father alive                   | bd8paliv                      | (Derived) Whether CM's father alive (incl prev swp data)                 | bd7paliv                      |
| Non-residential relationships  | b8othrea                      | Whether CM is currently in a non-residential relationship                | b7othrea                      |
| Receipt of state benefits      | bd8stbe                       | Whether receiving any of state benefits specified (on card)              | -                             |
| Economic activity              | bd8ecact                      | (Derived) CM's current economic activity                                 | bd7ecact                      |
| Net pay                        | b8CNetWk                      | Computed : weekly amount of take-home pay                                | -                             |
| Partner's economic activity    | Bd8potha                      | (Derived) CM partner's current economic activity                         | bd7potha                      |
| Highest academic qualification | bd8achq                       | Highest Academic Qualification (1991,2000,2004,2008 data)                | bd7achq                       |
| Health                         | b8khlstt                      | CM self-assessment of health   | b7khlstt                      |
| Registered disabled            | b8khldsl                      | Whether CM registered disabled   | b7khldsl                      |
| Health limits activities       | b8khlit                       | Whether health limits everyday activities                                | b7khlit                       |
| Smoking                        | bd8smoke                      | Smoking frequency  | bd7smoke                      |

### 3. BCS70 2008-9 Dataset

The first dataset for the BC70 2008-9 follow-up (has been supplied to the UK Data Archive) in the form of an SPSS dataset as follows:

British Cohort Study (1970) - Data collected in 2008/9 (at age 38) – FIRST DEPOSIT.

Details of the CATI program can be found in the following, which also accompany the data deposit:

BCS70 2008-2009 Follow-up: Questionnaire Documentation

### **3.1 Variable names**

As noted above, the interview was conducted using CATI and as such the variable names in the dataset are based on those automatically allocated by the CATI program (Blaise).

Within Blaise, each question has a variable name (rather than number), made up of a maximum of 8 characters, and this is used as the root of the variable name on the dataset. Where the question is repeated (eg: the same question is asked for each birth, relationship, job, qualification, etc reported), Blaise automatically allocates a number suffix (eg: name, name2, name3, name4).

Unfortunately, where the variable name in the Blaise program was originally more than 6 characters long, Blaise truncates the name to allow for the suffix. As a result, there is not always a simple match between the Blaise program documentation and the data.

As many of the questions asked in the core interview were identical to the questions asked in the 2004/5 sweep the variable names allocated by Blaise were also identical. In order to ensure that variable names in the 2008/9 data are different to those in the 2004/5 data, all variables in the interim 2008/9 data set have been given the prefix b8. In some cases the variable names have also been truncated in order to limit the name to 8 characters. Where a variable was included in the 2004/5 sweep the variable name has, as far as possible been kept identical for the 2008/9 sweep although prefixed with “b8” rather than “b7”.

In addition it should be noted that a number of derived variables have been included in the deposited dataset. Names of these variables are given the prefix “bd8” and variable labels are given the prefix “(Derived)”. A list of all derived variables in this deposit is provided in Appendix 2.

A number of variables are automatically derived within the CAPI program. These variables have the usual “b8” prefix but the variable labels are “prefixed” with “(Recoded)”

### **3.2 Variable labels**

The variable labels included in the dataset are also initially derived from the CATI program. In exporting the SPSS dataset from Blaise, labels based on the wording of questions were automatically allocated. The variable labels in this interim dataset have been individually reviewed by CLS and where necessary, have been modified in an effort to ensure that labels are comprehensible and accurate.

### **3.3 Value labels**

The value labels are similarly derived from the Blaise program or printed questionnaire. Value labels have been individually reviewed and amended where necessary.

### **3.4 Missing values**

Missing values are consistently labelled as follows (unless otherwise stated):

- 9 = Refusal
- 8 = Don't Know
- 2 = Schedule not applicable
- 1 = Item not applicable

For some variables, additional missing values may occur. They will be in the range -3 to -7 and have been labelled to indicate the reason the data is missing.

### **3.5 Variable order**

The order in which variables appear in the dataset will broadly follow the order of sections, and of questions within sections of the CATI interview. However, the order is determined by the structure of the Blaise program, which does not necessarily hold each question in the order in which they are put to the respondent. This change in order is typically, but not exclusively associated with question sequences which are repeated to produce grid-like data structures (eg: birth, relationship, job, qualification histories, etc).

### **3.6 Value labels**

The use of CATI has served to ensure that the values should be within the specified range for each variable. As part of our assessment of data quality the range of values for all variables has been checked and updated where necessary.

### **3.7 Consistency**

Again, the use of CATI should ensure that all filters have been correctly and that the data is consistent throughout.

### **3.8 Relationship histories**

Post-fieldwork editing and cleaning of the relationship history data collected in the previous sweep of the study (the 2004-5 follow-up) revealed that there were a number of problems with the routing of the questions in this module which lead to flaws in the information obtained about the period between the 1999/2000 follow-up and the 2004/5 follow-up. Details of the problems are provided below:

1. Cohort members who were cohabiting at the time of the 1999/2000 follow-up and also cohabiting at the time of the 2004/5 follow-up but with a different partner, they were not asked about the end of the relationship they were having with the person they were cohabiting with at the time of the 1999/2000 follow-up.
2. A number of cohort members who were cohabiting at the time of the 2004/5 follow-up, reported that their current partner was the same partner that they had at the time of the 1999/2000 follow-up, but at the time of the 2000 survey reported not having a partner.

3. When recalling details about previous partnerships, cohort members who were not married at the time they moved in with an ex-partner but who subsequently did get married, were not asked whether they got divorced or when.
4. In both the 1999/2000 follow-up and the 2004/5 follow-up there were a number of cohort members who reported being married or living with their current partner in the relationship history module but did not report a spouse or partner in the household grid.
5. There were also a number of cohort members with missing information about their marital and/or legal marital status at the time of the 1999/2000 follow-up or the 2004/5 follow-up.

Cases where any of the above applied were flagged as 'repair cases'. A revised introduction to the relationship history module was triggered for these cases where it was explained that when they were interviewed as part of the 2004/5 follow-up there was a problem with the data that was collected about their relationship history and that as a result it was necessary to recollect. These cohort members were then asked for a full relationship history from the date of their 1999/2000 follow-up interview through to the date of their 2008/2009 follow-up interview.

The raw relationship history data as collected is not included in this deposit. The data has been presented as ex-partner variables, current partner variables and new partner variables.

Ex-partner variables relate to spouses or civil partners that the cohort member had separated from at the time of the last interview but had not divorced or legally dissolved their relationship.

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| b8EPEndY | If Amended Year Stopped Living With Ex-Partner As A Couple   |
| b8EPEndM | If Amended Month Stopped Living With Ex-Partner As A Couple  |
| b8EPDiv  | Whether Divorced Ex-Partner                                  |
| b8EPDivY | Year CM And Ex-Partner Legally Dissolved Their Relationship  |
| b8EPDivM | Month CM And Ex-Partner Legally Dissolved Their Relationship |
| b8ExpNo  | Number Of Ex-Relationship In Lastg/ Repair Swp               |

Current partner variables relate to partners that the cohort member was living with as a partner at the time of the last interview:

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| b8CPStY | Year CM Started Living With Current Partner At Last/Repair Swp         |
| b8CPStM | Month CM First Started Living With Curr Partner At Last/Repair Swp     |
| b8CPSex | Sex Of Current Partner At Last/Repair Swp                              |
| b8CPMSL | Previous Marital Status Of Current Partner At Last/Repair Swp          |
| b8CPSep | Whether Current Partner Had Legally Separated At Last/Repair Swp       |
| b8CPAge | Age Of Curr Partner (Last/Repair Swp) When Started Living With CM      |
| b8CPMC  | Whether CM And Current Partner (At Last/Repair Swp) Got Married        |
| b8CPMCY | Year CM Got Married To Current Partner At Last/Repair Swp              |
| b8CPMCM | Month CM Got Married To Current Partner At Last/Repair Swp             |
| b8CPMCC | Whether Married To Curr Part At Last/Repair Swp Before Living Together |
| b8CPRTg | Whether CM And Curr Partner At Last/Repair Swp Still Live As A Couple  |
| b8CPHwE | How The Relationship With The Current Partner At Last/Repair Swp Ended |
| b8CPEnY | Year Stopped Living As A Couple With Curr Partner At Last/Repair Swp   |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| b8CPEnM  | Month Stopped Living As A Couple With Curr Partner At Last/Repair Swp |
| b8CPdiv  | Whether Divorced Current Partner At Last/Repair Swp                   |
| b8CPMoY  | Year Current Partner At Last/Repair Swp Died                          |
| b8CPMoM  | Month Current Partner At Last/Repair Swp Died                         |
| b8CPDvY  | Year CM And Current Partner At Last/Repair Swp Legally Dissolved Rel. |
| b8CPDvM  | Month CM And Curr Partner At Last/Repair Swp Legally Dissolved Rel.   |
| b8CPMore | Whether Any More Rels. Since Current Partner At Last/Repair Swp       |

New partner variables relate to any new partners that the cohort member has had since the time of the last interview:

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| b8nsty01-05 | Year CM First Started Living With Partner          |
| b8nstm01-05 | Month CM First Started Living With Partner         |
| b8nsex01-05 | Sex Of Partner                                     |
| b8nmsl01-05 | Previous Marital Status Of Partner                 |
| b8nsep01-05 | Whether Partner Had Legally Separated              |
| b8nage01-05 | Age Of Partner When First Started Living With CM   |
| b8nmc01-05  | Whether CM And Partner Got Married                 |
| b8nmcy01-05 | Year CM Got Married To Partner                     |
| b8nmcm01-05 | Month CM Got Married To Partner                    |
| b8nmcc01-05 | Whether Married To Partner Before Living Together  |
| b8nrtg01-05 | Whether CM & Partner Still Live Together As Couple |
| b8nhwe01-05 | How The Relationship With The Partner Ended        |
| b8neny01-05 | Year Stopped Living With Partner As A Couple       |
| b8nenm01-05 | Month Stopped Living With Partner As A Couple      |
| b8ndiv01-05 | Whether Divorced Partner                           |
| b8nmoy01-05 | Year Partner Died                                  |
| b8nmom01-05 | Month Partner Died                                 |
| b8ndvy01-05 | Year CM And Partner Legally Dissolved Rel.         |
| b8ndvm01-05 | Month CM And Partner Legally Dissolved Rel.        |
| b8npmo01-05 | Whether The CM Has Any More Rels. To Report        |

### 3.9 Unfolding Brackets

A feature of the income questions (gross and net) in NCDS8 is the use of a series of questions referred to as 'unfolding brackets' which are triggered if a respondent refuses or is unable to provide an exact answer. The questions are designed to elicit a minimum and maximum value which define a range or "closed band" within which the actual value lies.

On entering the unfolding brackets, respondents are asked to say whether they have more, less or about the same as a particular value. This question is repeated using different values (which will be a lower or higher value depending on the answer to the preceding question).

The procedure stops at the point when either an upper and lower bound is provided, the respondent refuses or says "don't know", or the respondent places themselves in the top or bottom bracket.

The unfolding bracket questions are randomly ordered for each respondent such that any possible 'anchoring' effects (i.e. where people use the suggested figure as a reference point and make adjustments to it to reach their answer) from the procedure are averaged across the distribution, and the bracket values are selected on the basis of the density of the underlying financial variable.

The unfolding bracket variables have not been included in this deposit but are available in a separate file available from the archive.

### **3.10 Reference dates for retrospective data/histories**

The 2008/9 follow-up gathered retrospective information on housing situation, relationships, pregnancies, economic activity and qualifications. The majority of cohort members had participated in one of the last two follow-ups which took place in 1999/2000 and 2004/5. For such cohort members the reference date for retrospective questions was the date of their last interview. For the small number of cohort members who had not participated in either of these follow-ups the reference date was generally the 1st January 2000; the exception to this was the pregnancy history module which for these cohort members used their 16th birthday as the reference date so that a full pregnancy history was collected.

### **3.11 Further information**

Queries about any aspect of the interim data should be sent to CLS using the feedback page on the CLS website: [www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/feedback](http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/feedback).

#### **4. Survey development and piloting**

Each element of the 2008/9 follow-up was rigorously tested prior to the commencement of main-stage fieldwork. The 2008-9 BCS70 follow-up survey was comprised of a sub-set of the questions which form the 2008-9 NCDS follow-up survey. The 2008-9 NCDS survey had been subjected to two pilots (an initial pilot with specially recruited members of the public and a dress-rehearsal with a small sub-sample of cohort members) by the time the content of the 2008-9 BCS survey was finalised. The 2008-9 BCS70 follow-up survey was comprised of a sub-set of the questions which form the 2008-9 NCDS follow-up survey and as the questions had already been tested twice (albeit in the face-to-face format rather than on the telephone) it was felt sufficient to run just one pilot of the telephone interview.

This pilot took place with a sub-sample of cohort members between 2<sup>nd</sup> June and 29<sup>th</sup> June 2008 and was a full procedural test of all survey instruments, documents and procedures prior to main stage fieldwork. The pilot sought to measure the length of the interview and to identify any routing or filter errors within the program. It was also important to identify any problematic questions (in terms of comprehension or sensitivity) and any administrative or procedural difficulties.

The pilot was generally very successful with a total of 73 interviews being conducted; the CATI interview was well received and the procedures were found to work well. The key issue was that the interview was considerably longer than its target length, and although it was agreed post-pilot to extend the interview length by five minutes (from 20 to 25 minutes) it was still necessary to implement substantial cuts in advance of the main stage of fieldwork.

## 5. Fieldwork

### 5.1 Fieldwork period

Fieldwork ran between October 2008 and May 2009.

### 5.2 Issue of sample and fieldwork waves

The sample was issued to the fieldwork contractor in two batches.

The first (and largest batch) was issued in advance of the main stage of fieldwork and was comprised of 11,579 cohort members who had either:

- 1) Participated in the 2000 follow-up or the 2004-5 follow-up and had not subsequently died, emigrated or permanently withdrawn from the study (n=10,926).
- 2) Not participated in any of the above but had confirmed their address by responding to a birthday card mailing or in some other fashion since 2000 (n=653).

The second batch of sample was issued to the fieldwork contractor in December 2008 and was comprised of 264 previously untraced cases for whom new contact details had been obtained from a tracing exercise conducted in collaboration with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

Sample was subsequently issued to interviewers in 5 overlapping waves. The first batch of sample was issued to waves one to four and the second batch of sample was allocated to wave five (although wave five began in advance of wave four. A 'mop-up' wave was included at the end of fieldwork in order to attempt to interview as many of those who had been difficult to contact in the earlier waves as possible.

| Wave         | Fieldwork start date           | Number of cohort members |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Wave 1       | 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2008   | 3,474                    |
| Wave 2       | 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2008 | 3,473                    |
| Wave 3       | 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2009   | 2,316                    |
| Wave 4       | 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2009 | 2,316                    |
| Wave 5       | 12 <sup>th</sup> January 2009  | 264                      |
| Mop-Up Wave  | 30 <sup>th</sup> March 2009    |                          |
| <b>Total</b> |                                | <b>11,843</b>            |



### 5.3 Making contact

Each wave of fieldwork was preceded by the mailing of an advance letter which advised cohort members that an interviewer would be attempting to make contact via telephone shortly. The letter was accompanied by an information leaflet containing further details about the 2008-9 follow-up, a calendar to be used during the telephone interview to aid recall of the timing of events and a book of showcards to refer to during the interview.

On making successful contact with the cohort member, interviewers either conducted interviews there and then if it was convenient or made arrangements to call back at another time.

In cases where after sufficient attempts interviewers were unable to make contact with the cohort member on any of their issued personal telephone numbers (home, work or mobile telephone numbers) then telephone supervisors instructed them to attempt to trace the cohort member by contacting 'stable contacts' and making use of any additional 'tracing' numbers which had been provided. If it was established that a cohort member had changed address then the new occupants of that address were asked if they could provide any updated contact details. Telephone unit staff also attempted to trace cohort members using online telephone directories.

Where the interviewer failed to find the cohort member the case was passed back to the CLS tracing team for further investigation.

### 5.4 Pre-fieldwork tracing

Between follow-ups efforts are made by CLS, through the mailing of an annual birthday card and other activities, to maintain contact with as many members as possible. Prior to fieldwork, the CLS Tracing Team attempted to obtain a current address for as many cohort members as possible.

The methods used by the CLS tracing team in advance of fieldwork include the use of:

- Contact details previously provided by the cohort member (for themselves and for relatives and friends)
- Other information contained in study records
- Telephone number databases
- Postcode databases
- Electoral register databases

In addition to the efforts of the tracing team, a major tracing exercise of cohort members was undertaken in September 2007 in collaboration with the DWP. DWP attempted to match the details of cohort members who had not been contacted for some time against benefit records. Where details of cohort members were matched to DWP records, tracing letters were sent by DWP where an address different to that held by CLS was identified. Those receiving benefits were sent an opt-out letter and those not receiving benefits were sent an opt-in letter.

Updated contact details collected via this method was not obtained until after fieldwork had started; previously untraced cases for whom new contact details became available were therefore allocated to Wave 5. If contact details were obtained via DWP tracing for cohort members already issued then these new details were provided to NatCen so that interviewers could use them to help with their tracing efforts.

### **5.5 Briefing**

All interviewers involved in the 2008-9 follow-up attended a half-day briefing in advance of commencing work on the project. The briefings covered the background to BCS70, contacting and tracing procedures, the CATI interview and collecting contact information.

## **6. Data coding and editing**

The use of CATI provides for the incorporation of an extensive range of checks on validity, range and consistency and as such the amount of post-fieldwork editing is minimal.

The CATI interview includes a number of questions where precodes are provided for answers but provision is also made to record additional information where the precode 'other' is used. These questions were reviewed by both the NatCen and CLS teams in order to identify appropriate coding frames. Where possible, the code frames employed matched those which were employed for corresponding questions in the 2008-9 follow-up of the NCDS cohort; however at times it was necessary to adopt study-specific codes. Coded responses are included in the data set.

## Appendix 1: Derived variables

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| bd8achq1  | (Derived) Highest Academic Qualification CM obtained in 2008 survey        |
| bd8anvq1  | (Derived) Highest NVQ level from an academic qualification in 2008 survey  |
| bd8aghm1  | (Derived) Highest academic qualification in 2008 survey - GHM measure      |
| bd8anyvoc | (Derived) CM has obtained a vocational qualification since last interview  |
| bd8vnvq1  | (Derived) Highest NVQ Level from a Vocational Qualification in 2008 survey |
| bd8ms     | (Derived) marital status - de facto  |
| bd8spphh  | (Derived) Cohort member lives with a spouse or partner                     |
| bd8nchhh  | (Derived) Number of cohort member's natural children in household          |
| bd8ochhh  | (Derived) Number of cohort member's non-bio children in household          |
| bd8numhh  | (Derived) Total number of people in household                              |
| bd8malive | (Derived) Whether cohort member's mother alive (incl prev. data)           |
| bd8palive | (Derived) Whether cohort member's father alive (incl prev. data)           |
| bd8numrm  | (Derived) Number of rooms in the house                                     |
| bd8ecact  | (Derived) Cohort Member's main activity                                    |
| bd8potha  | (Derived) Partner's / spouse's main activity                               |
| bd8stbe   | (Derived) In receipt of State Benefits (b8inc03 to b8inc06)                |
| bd8smoke  | (Derived) Smoking habits   |