

Important information for BRES practitioners

There are a number of points which are important to note when using the BRES data in the VML. This document is intended to address some of the most common issues which arise when researchers access the data, and to offer advice on best practise. This is intended to be a living document which will capture responses from the BRES team in relation to some common, or relevant, questions raised in relation to the BRES microdata.

1. Always use the weighted employment variables/Why are there negative employment values?

The `weighted_totempee` value represents the local unit estimate used to aggregate up to produce published results. That is to say the BRES published tables on the ONS website and the estimates on NOMIS are all aggregated up from the `weighted_totempee` value. This can be considered to be the "true" estimated value. **The unweighted totempee figure can be different and in some cases can actually be a negative value.** This occurs when the returned value for the sample is actually greater than the universe estimate for the domain.

As the domain estimate is "constrained" to the overall universe total (i.e. the sample should in theory not exceed the universe domain total) the BRES system deals with this by reducing the `totempee` value for all non selected local units in the domain in question, in some cases making them a negative value. As local units can obviously not have negative employees a secondary process in the BRES system recalculates this `totempee` value as a `weighted-totempee` value, resolving the negative value issue.

For this reason we recommend users use the weighted totempee value, not the totempee value. If they used the unweighted value any analysis would not match official published BRES estimates.

2. What is the difference between the 'response_type' and 'type' variables?

The `response_type` relates to the status of the `parent_ruref`. So `fullyenum` means it has been sent a BRES form while `sample` (perversely) means it has not. If you look at the associated `response_type` variable this is based on the status of the `individual_luref`. Here you have R = responded and E = estimated. They will not always correspond. You could have a situation where an `ruref` which has been selected (`type = fullyenum`) has not actual responded to the survey so all its associated `lurefs` would have an E = estimated `response_type` against them.

Conversely you could have `lurefs` with an R = responded `response_type` where the `type` variable is `sample` (not selected). This may be down local unit restructures, but not exclusively. We also operate an overlap with other ONS surveys, so although a `ruref` may not have been sent a BRES form (`type therefore = sample`) we have taken on real returned data via this overlap (so `response-type = R`).

We also have `rurefs` that are selected but do not return all their `lurefs` (partial responders). They will be `type = fullyenum` but have a `response_type` variable of both R and E, depending on which `lurefs` they provided data for and which they did not.

Whilst this can be confusing, **it is recommended that users only use the response_type variable.** (taken from the `luresponders` file, this will show if it is real returned local unit data (R) or an estimated figure (E)).

3. The variable 'marker' has values of b, B and R. What do the 'b' and the 'B' represent?

Both b and B stand for birth - so basically a birth of a local unit (or ruref) onto the IDBR and thus into BRES results. There is no real difference between the fact that one is a capital b and one is not - it is a quirk of the BRES results system coding. R = restructure.

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