ScotCen
Social Research that works for society

Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2013

User Guide

Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (SSA) 2013

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1   Overview of the survey

1.1   The *Scottish Social Attitudes* series

The *Scottish Social Attitudes* (SSA) survey was launched by ScotCen Social Research[1] in 1999, following the advent of devolution. Based on annual rounds of interviews with around 1,200-1,500 people drawn using probability sampling, it aims are facilitate the study of public opinion and inform the development of public policy in Scotland. In this it has similar objectives to the *British Social Attitudes* (BSA) survey, which was launched by ScotCen's parent organisation, NatCen Social Research, in 1983. While BSA interviews people in Scotland, there are usually too few in any one year to permit separate analysis of public opinion in Scotland.

SSA is conducted annually[2] and has a modular structure. In any one year it will typically contain three to five modules, each containing 40 questions. Funding for its first two years came from the Economic and Social Research Council, while from 2001 onwards different bodies have funded each year's individual modules. These bodies have included the Economic and Social Research Council, the Scottish Government and various charitable and grant awarding bodies, such as the Nuffield Foundation and Leverhulme Trust.

1.2   The 2013 Survey

The 2013 survey contained modules of questions on:
- Constitutional change (funded by Economic and Social Research Council and University of Edinburgh)
- Attitudes to government, the economy, health and social care services and social capital (funded by the Scottish Government)
- Attitudes to alcohol (funded by NHS Health Scotland)
- Attitudes to mental health (funded by the Scottish Government)
- Police reform (funded by Scottish Institute for Policing Research at University of Dundee)

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[1]   The Scottish Centre for Social Research was formed in February 2004 as the result of a merger between The National Centre's existing organisation within Scotland and Scottish Health Feedback, an independent research consultancy. In 2012 the Scottish Centre for Social Research became ScotCen Social Research.
[2] With the exception of 2008. Annual sweeps took places from 1999 to 2007 and again 2009 to 2014.

2   Data collection methods

2.1   Sample design

The survey is designed to yield a representative sample of adults aged 18 or over, living in Scotland. The sample frame is the Postcode Address File (PAF), a list of postal delivery points compiled by the Post Office. The detailed procedure for selecting the 2013 sample was as follows:

I.   110 postcode sectors were selected from a list of all postal sectors in Scotland, with probability proportional to the number of addresses in each sector for addresses in urban areas and a probability of twice the address count for sectors in rural areas (i.e. the last 3 categories of the Scottish Government's 6 fold urban-rural classification). Prior to selection the sectors were stratified by Scottish Government urban-rural classification, region and percentage of household heads recorded as being in non-manual occupations (SEG 1-6 and 13, taken from the 2001 Census).

II.   28 addresses were selected at random from each of these 110 postcode sectors

Interviewers called at each selected address and identified its eligibility for the survey. Where more than one dwelling unit was present at an address, all dwelling units were listed systematically and one was selected at random using a computer generated random selection table. In all eligible dwelling units with more than one adult aged 18 or over, interviewers had to carry out a random selection of one adult using a similar procedure.

2.2   Fieldwork

1.   Fieldwork for the 2013 survey ran between June and October 2013. An advance letter was sent to all addresses and was followed up by a personal visit from a ScotCen interviewer. Interviewers were required to make a minimum of 6 calls at different times of the day (including at least one evening and one weekend call) in order to try and contact respondents. All interviewers were briefed prior to starting work on the study.

2.   Interviews were conducted using face-to-face computer-assisted interviewing (a process which involves the use of a laptop computer, with questions appearing on screen and interviewers directly entering respondents' answers into the computer). The survey also included a self-completion section which was completed by the respondent by Computer Assisted Self Interviewing (replacing the paper self-completion questionnaire

used in previous years).   Table 1 (below) summarises the response rate and the numbers completing the self-completion questionnaire in 2013.

2.3   Response rates

The numbers completing each stage in 2013 are shown in Table 1.

2013 Scottish Social Attitudes survey response		
	No.	% of 'eligible' (in scope) sample
Addresses issued	3080	
Vacant, derelict and other out of scope [1]	339	11
Achievable or 'in scope'	2741	
Unknown eligibility [2]	9	*
Interview achieved	1,497	55
Self-completion completed	1,340	49
Interview not achieved		
Refused [3]	851	31
Non-contact [4]	187	7
Other non-response [5]	196	7

Notes to table
1   This includes empty / derelict addresses, holiday homes, businesses and institutions, and addresses that had been demolished.
2   'Unknown eligibility' includes cases where the address could not be located, where it could not be determined if an address was residential and where it could not be determined if an address was occupied or not.
3   Refusals include: refusals prior to selection of an individual; refusals to the office; refusal by the selected person; 'proxy' refusals made by someone on behalf of the respondent; and broken appointments after which a respondent could not be re-contacted.
4   Non-contacts comprise households where no one was contacted after at least 6 calls and those where the selected person could not be contacted.
5   'Other non-response' includes people who were ill at home or in hospital during the survey period, people who were physically or mentally unable to participate and who interviewers we unable to recruit due to a language barrier (although interpreting and translation services are offered for all languages).

Random question order

Some of the questions were asked in a randomised order, based on whether they had an odd or even serial number. This variable (OddEven) can be used to select the appropriate half of the sample for analysis.

3   Analysis variables

Most of the analysis variables used in SSA reporting are taken directly from the questionnaire and to that extent are self-explanatory. These include age, sex, household income, and highest educational qualification obtained. The main analysis variables included in the dataset which require further definition are set out below.

3.1   The Scottish Household Survey six-fold urban-rural classification (urindsc2)

The 6-fold version of the urban-rural classification is included on the dataset (urindsc2). Areas in this version are classified as follows:

	Area type	
1	Large Urban	Settlements over 125,000 population (Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh)
2	Other Urban	Other settlements over 10,000 population
3	Small, accessible towns	Settlements 3-10,000 population and within a 30 minute drive time of a settlement of 10,000 or more
4	Small, remote towns	Settlements 3-10,000 population and more than a 30 minute drive time of a settlement of 10,000 or more
5	Accessible rural	Settlements less than 3,000 population and within a 30 minute drive time of a settlement of 10,000 or more
6	Remote rural	Settlements less than 3,000 population and more than a 30 minute drive time of a settlement of 10,000 or more

3.2   National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC)

The most commonly used classification of socio-economic status used on government surveys is the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). SSA respondents were classified according to their own occupation, rather than that of the 'head of household'. Each respondent was asked about their current or last job, so that all

respondents, with the exception of those who had never worked, were classified. The seven NS-SEC categories are:

- Employers in large organisations, higher managerial and professional
- Lower professional and managerial; higher technical and supervisory
- Intermediate occupations
- Small employers and own account workers
- Lower supervisory and technical occupations
- Semi-routine occupations
- Routine occupations

See variable R2Class. The remaining respondents were grouped as 'never had a job' or 'not classifiable'. Note that where respondents were not economically active or were retired, but their spouse or partner was currently economically active, their spouse/partners' job details were collected instead of the respondents. The variable 'P2Class' indicates spouse/partner NS-SEC.

3.3   Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)[3] 2009 measures the level of deprivation across Scotland – from the least deprived to the most deprived areas. It is based on 37 indicators in seven domains of: Current Income, Employment, Health, Education Skills and Training, Geographic Access to Services (including public transport travel times for the first time), Housing and Crime. SIMD 2009 is presented at data zone level, enabling small pockets of deprivation to be identified. The data zones are ranked from most deprived to least deprived on the overall SIMD and on each of the individual domains. The result is a comprehensive picture of relative area deprivation across Scotland.

The SSA12 dataset includes a variable (nsimd) that indicates which SIMD quintile the respondent lives in (with 1 being the MOST deprived and 5 being the LEAST deprived) based on the SIMD scores for all data zones - not simply those included in the SSA sample.

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[3] See http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/Overview for further details on the SIMD

3.4   Party identification

Respondents were classified as identifying with a particular political party on one of three counts: if they considered themselves to be a supporter of that party, if they said they were closer to it than to any other party or if they said they would be likely to support that party in the event of a general election.

4   Weighting the data

The weights applied to the data are intended to correct for three potential sources of bias in the sample:

- Differential selection probabilities
- Deliberate over-sampling of rural areas
- Non-response.

Data were weighted to take account of the fact that not all households or individuals had the same probability of selection for the survey. For example, adults living in large households had a lower selection probability than adults who lived alone. Weighting was also used to correct the over-sampling of rural addresses. Differences between responding and non-responding households were taken into account using information from the census about the area of the address as well as interviewer observations about participating and non-participating addresses. Finally, the weights were adjusted to ensure that the weighted data matched the age-sex profile of the Scottish population (based on 2011 mid-year estimates from GROS). The main weight for use in analysis is '**Wtfactor**'.

4.1   Additional weights for urban-rural analysis

Since fewer people live in remote areas than in accessible rural areas, the survey boosted the number of respondents in some areas within the classification more than others. This means that people in different types of rural areas had different chances of selection, and thus it has been necessary to create additional weights for certain analyses of the rural boost of the sample.

For sampling an urban/rural variable based at postcode sector level was used.   E.g. if 60% of postcodes in a postcode sector were in Remote Rural areas then the postcode sector and addresses within it were classed as Remote Rural for the purposes of stratifying the sample. However, some *individual* postcodes within that sector might in fact

fall into Accessible Rural or another category. Therefore, this variable is not included in the final dataset. Instead, a new variable (Urindsc2) derived at the level of individual postcodes has been added on to the final dataset. This classifies respondents' addresses according to the 6-fold Scottish Executive urban-rural classification. If using this 6-fold urban/ rural variable the standard WTFACTOR weighting variable should be used.

The following 2-fold categorisations of urindsc2 are also included in the dataset (variable name in brackets):

Ministerial Urban/ Rural classification: categories 1-4/ categories 5,6 (**RURAL**)

Accessible/ remote classification: Categories 1-3 & 5/ categories 4,6 (**REMOTE**)

Accessible urban/ Rural or remote urban: Categories 1-3/ categories 4-6 (**URBANAC**).

If using ANY of these three variables, different weights should be used. These are:
>   WtRural (to use when analysing by RURAL)
>   WtRemote (to use when analysing by REMOTE)
>   WtUrban (to use when analysing by URBANAC)

4.2   Self-completion weight

In 2013, the response to the self-completion questions was 90% and the profile of respondents showed some variation by age from that of the overall sample. The dataset therefore contains a self-completion weight (**scwtfactor**) which should be used instead of **wtfactor** when analysing data from the CASI section of the questionnaire. If doing analysis including variables from both the CASI and the face-to-face section of the questionnaire, the self-completion weight should be used.

5   Documentation

The documentation files provided with the dataset are organised into the following sections

- Interview questionnaire and showcards
- Project instructions (contains interviewer and coding instructions).
- SPSS syntax for derived variables
- Excel file with variables by topic

6 SSA 2013 dataset

The SSA 2013 dataset consists of one SPSS file

SSA13.sav	1497 records	758 variables

The data file contains questionnaire variables, demographic variables (excluding variables used for administrative purposes and any variables which could potentially identify an individual respondent) and derived variables. Details of the question wording can be found in the questionnaire documentation.

7 Related publications

SSA reports using 2013 data:

- Who will turn up and who will stay at home?
- So Where Does Scotland Stand on More Devolution?
- The score at half time: Trends in support for Independence
- The Undecideds: Don't care or deeply conflicted?
- Is it really all about economics? Issues of nationhood and welfare
- Core module – attitudes to government, the economy, health and social care services, and social capital in Scotland
- Attitudes towards alcohol in Scotland

For the latest reports and blogs using SSA data, visit http://whatscotlandthinks.org/

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