

Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2013



Technical Notes

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The Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ) 2013 is a new, annual dataset for Scotland. SSCQ provides reliable and detailed information on the composition, characteristics and attitudes of Scottish households and adults across a number of topic areas including equality characteristics, housing, employment and perceptions of health and crime.

The SSCQ gathers survey responses from identical questions in the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, the Scottish Health Survey and the Scottish Household Survey into one output. The pooling of Core Questions results in an annual sample of around 21,000 respondents, providing unprecedented precision of estimates at national level. This sample size enables the detailed and reliable analysis of key national estimates by country of birth, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age and sex, marital status, education level and economic activity, as well as tenure, car access and household type. SSCQ also enables a detailed sub-national analysis by Local Authority, urban-rural classification and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. A guide to content is provided on page **Error! Bookmark not defined..**

The Scottish Surveys Core Questions in 2013 covered:

self-assessed general health disability and long-term conditions smoking perception of local crime rate perceptions of police performance highest qualification held economic activity household type housing tenure	car access country of birth ethnicity religion marital status sexual orientation gender age
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Further questions are under development for inclusion in future, covering income, caring responsibilities and mental well-being.

Publication of the SSCQ 2014 is planned for spring 2016, following the publication of the 2014/15 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey. Re-weighted tables for 2012, including full breakdowns by variables covered in this release, will also be published in spring 2016.

Jamie Robertson, Sarah Martin, Michael Davidson, Julie Wilson
- together with numerous colleagues past and present who, along with our contractors, have helped deliver each of the surveys as well as this methodological transformation

Surveys Branch, Strategic Analytical Policy Unit

Office of the Chief Statistician and Strategic Analysis, The Scottish Government

Foreword by Scotland's Chief Statistician

I am pleased to welcome this first Official Statistics publication of the Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ), which pools responses from the major population surveys in Scotland.

One of the key aims in recent years has been a review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the surveys, in providing impactful information of public value. A range of stakeholder consultations, including Beyond 2011 (NRS) and the Long Term Strategy for Population Surveys 2009-2019 (Scottish Government) have driven the strategic approach to align methodologies and harmonise questions between surveys where possible – with a view to obtaining a pooled sample of core variables spanning several surveys. This evidence feeds the user need for local data identified in consultations, and offers an unprecedented, rich resource for analysis by socioeconomic and equality groups. This will be used to support single outcome agreements by Community Planning Partnerships, and widely to measure demographic change across the public sector.

The SSCQ now provides us with an immensely valuable collection of characteristics and attitudes of Scottish households and adults across a number of topic areas including equality characteristics, housing, employment and perceptions of health and crime.

I would like to thank our contractors who have been implementing the Long Term Strategy for Population Surveys since 2012 to provide this data. Most importantly, I would also like to thank the 21,772 people who gave their time to participate in the Scottish Crime and Justice, Health and Household Surveys in 2013. The information they have provided is invaluable delivering the evidence for the development of equality, health and justice policy in Scotland.

Roger Halliday

Chief Statistician for Scotland

Scottish Government Strategy and Constitution Directorate

Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2013	1
Foreword by Scotland’s Chief Statistician.....	2
1 Source surveys and core questions.....	4
1.1 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) technical notes	5
1.2 Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) technical notes	5
1.3 Scottish Household Survey (SHS) technical notes.....	5
2 Weighting.....	6
3 Confidence Interval Calculations.....	7
4 Variable list	7
5 Statistical Disclosure Control	8
5.1 Recoding of Geographical Identifiers	8
5.1.1 HBA – Health Board Areas	8
5.1.2 SIMD5 – Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintiles	9
5.1.3 UR – Urban Rural 2 fold scale	9
5.2 Recoding of Individual Characteristics	9
5.2.1 Presentation of Data on Country of Birth	9
5.2.2 Presentation of Data on Ethnic Group	9
5.2.3 Presentation of Data on Religion	9
5.3 Survey weighting variables.....	10

1 Source surveys and core questions

Three large-scale Scottish Government population surveys are published separately as National Statistics:

- Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS)
www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/crime-and-justice-survey
- Scottish Health Survey (SHeS)
www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Health/scottish-health-survey
- Scottish Household Survey (SHS)
www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002

Further information on Population Surveys in Scotland can be found here:

www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Surveys

Since the beginning of 2012 each of the surveys has included a set of 20 core questions that provide information on the composition, characteristics and attitudes of Scottish households and adults across a number of topic areas including equality characteristics, housing, employment and perceptions of health and crime. Responses on these questions from all three surveys have been pooled to provide the Scottish Surveys Core Questions dataset with a sample size in excess of 20,000 responses.

Full details of the questions are available on the Scottish Government website.¹

The first set of pooled response tables for the year 2012 were published as data under development here: www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Surveys/PooledSample2012

Following further consultation and methodological development, the 2013 dataset is now published as Official Statistics as the Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2013. The website contains further information, the main report and supplementary tables.

www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Surveys/SSCQ

The SSCQ 2013 publication was pooled from the third and fourth quarter year² of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2012/13 and all four quarters each of the Scottish Health Survey 2013 and the Scottish Household Survey 2013. Responses from adults aged 16 and over were included. Due to the different sampling nature to suit the primary aims of each survey, the number of respondents vary between different SSCQ questions. The questions were hence batched into three groups: household questions, individual questions and crime questions, and three different sets of weights calculated to ensure representative results. Sampling, weighting and pooled sample numbers are described separately for each survey below.

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/SurveyHarm>

² This equates to half the SCJS sample and enables a consistent sample size in each SSCQ publication for 2013-15, while the SCJS is produced biennially on a financial year basis. From 2016/17 onwards, the SCJS will be produced annually, which will enable data pooled on a calendar year basis. A revised set of 2012 tables will pool the first and second quarter of SCJS2012/13 and will be released in spring 2016. This will replace the 2012 publication which currently pools the first three quarters of SCJS2012/13 by calendar year.

1.1 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) technical notes

Sampling, survey response and weighting are described in full in the SCJS2012/13 technical report: www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/crime-and-justice-survey/publications/SCJS2012-13-TR

Briefly, the survey consists of a simple random sample, designed to achieve a minimum effective sample size of 750 interviews in the eight Police Force Areas (PFAs), enabling robust analysis at this level. One random adult per household was interviewed and asked all SSCQ and SCJS questions.

The response rate was 67.7%, resulting in 12,048 interviews during the 2012/13 financial year field work. Of these, 6,226 interviews (completed in the second two quarters of the financial year) were pooled into the SSCQ 2013 dataset. The subset was re-weighted to be in itself representative of the adult Scottish population distribution, as described for the SCJS publication.

1.2 Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) technical notes

Sampling, survey response and weighting are described in full in the SHeS 2013 technical report: www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/12/6634/downloads

The SHeS sample is clustered in each calendar year and unclustered over four years. All adults and up to two children in each household are eligible for interview. Only one adult in each household was asked the crime and household questions, to remain in line with the SCJS sampling procedure. The SHeS sample is boosted by participating health boards (Ayrshire & Arran, Fife, Grampian and Eilean Siar in 2013). It is further boosted to interview children in further households. These households were excluded from the SSCQ dataset as equality questions were not asked.

The response rate was 66.3%, and 3,259 households were interviewed in the main and health board boost samples. 4,894 resulting adult interviews were pooled into the SSCQ 2013 dataset. Of these, 3,251 were asked the crime questions. The subset of households (excluding the child boost), and adult respondents were re-weighted to be representative of the Scottish private household and population distribution, as described for the SHeS publication.

1.3 Scottish Household Survey (SHS) technical notes

Sampling, survey response and weighting are described in full in the SHS 2013 technical report: www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/PublicationMethodology/Methodology13

The SHS consists of a simple random sample with a target minimum effective sample size of 250 per local authority. The SSCQ household questions are asked of the highest income householder or their spouse/partner, and one adult is randomly selected to answer the individual and crime questions, in line with the other two surveys.

67.5% of eligible households responded, leading to 10,652 household interviews. The response for the random adult interview was 62.8%, yielding 9,918 interviews. Weighting is fully described in the SHS technical report and no further weighting required for the SSCQ.

2 Weighting

Datasets from the three source surveys were combined into three new SSCQ datasets: SSCQ household variables (20,743 responses), SSCQ individual variables (21,038 responses) and SSCQ crime variables (19,395 responses), see **Error! Reference source not found.**

Each variable response category in each of the surveys carries a different design effect. If we were solely seeking the most efficient estimate for each variable separately then separate scale factors could be derived for each one. However, this would restrict the use and understanding of the dataset. Rather, for each constituent survey dataset the design effects were estimated for each response category and then the median design effect over all response categories for all variables was used as the representative design effect of that survey. These design effects were then used along with the sample sizes to calculate the effective sample sizes (neff) and scaling factors for combining the three datasets.

Table 1: Numbers of sample and effective sample pooled from the source surveys

Question Group ³	SCJS		SHeS		SHS		SSCQ	
	sample	neff	sample	neff	sample	neff	sample	neff
Household responses	6,226	5,666	3,259	2,365	10,652	8,848	20,743	16,741
Individual responses	6,226	4,769	4,894	2,365	9,918	6,752	21,038	13,164
Crime responses	6,226	4,647	3,251	1,615	9,918	6,600	19,395	12,416

To combine the data the scale factors were applied to the grossing weights for the individual surveys (described in section 1). The neff of each survey contribution formed the basis for the scaling factors:

survey A weight scaling factor = $\text{neff}(\text{surveyA}) / (\text{sum of three survey neffs})$.

The weights were then re-scaled to be proportionate to effective sample size contribution of each survey and used as pre-weights.

The three pooled SSCQ datasets were then weighted again to be representative of National Records of Scotland population estimates.

³ See section 4

3 Confidence Interval Calculations

All three of the source surveys are stratified to ensure sufficient sample sizes in the smaller local authority areas. In addition, SHeS is clustered in each annual fieldwork period and, while this effect cancels out over each four-year period, it must be accounted for in producing annual results.

Confidence intervals should therefore be calculated accounting for stratification (by LA) and clustering (by the “CLUSTER” variable) and the resulting design effects (for example by using *surveyfreq* in SAS).

4 Variable list

Group	Variable name	Label
Individual	ageband	Respondent age group
	Sex	Respondent sex
	BirthCountryBand	Country of Birth
	EthnicGroupBand	Respondent ethnic group
	ReligionBand	Respondent religious group
	MaritalStatusBand	Respondent marital status
	TopQualBand	Respondent highest qualification
	ILOempBand	Respondent employment status
	smokingBand	Respondent smokes
	GenHealthBand	Respondent self-assessed general health
	LTConditionBand	Respondent long-term limiting health condition
	pooled_ind_wt	Adult grossing weight
	pooled_ind_wt_sc	Scaled adult weight
Household	HType	Household type
	hType2a	Household type
	tenureBand	Household tenure
	outtenBand	Household tenure
	CarAccessBand	Household access to car
	pooled_hh_wt	Household grossing weight
	pooled_hh_wt_sc	Household scaled weight
	Crime	CrimeAreaBand
POLCONA		Conf in police to - prevent crime
POLCONB		Conf in police to - respond quickly to app calls and inf from public
POLCONC		Conf in police to - deal with incidents as they occur
POLCOND		Conf in police to - investigate incidents after they occur
POLCONE		Conf in police to - solve crimes
POLCONF		Conf in police to - catch criminals
pooled_crim_wt		Adult grossing weight
pooled_crim_wt_sc		Scaled adult weight
Geography	LA	Local authority
	HBA	Community Health Board
	UR	Urban/rural indicator
	SIMD5	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation: quintile groups
	CLUSTER	Cluster variable

5 Statistical Disclosure Control

GSS Disclosure Control Guidance for Microdata Produced from Social Surveys (September 2014) cites principle 5 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics for guidance on the publication of microdata under EUL, requiring that: *“official statistics do not reveal the identity of an individual or organisation, or any **private information** relating to them, taking into account other relevant sources of information.”* *“Information relating to an individual should be considered by a producer of statistics to be ‘private’ if it was provided with the expectation that the information would be kept out of the public domain. Survey pledges provide respondents with assurances that the information they provide will remain confidential.”*

Furthermore, the guidance states that “arrangements for confidentiality protection are sufficient to protect the privacy of individual information, but not so restrictive as to limit unduly the practical utility of official statistics”.

Private information is defined in the [National Statistician’s Guidance: Confidentiality of Official Statistics](#) as being information that:

- relates to an identifiable legal⁴ or natural person, and
- is not in the public domain or common knowledge, and
- if disclosed would cause them damage, harm or distress

Three methods were used to disclosure control the main data set: re-coding, banding and variable removal.

- Re-coding is used on categorical variables to collapse responses categories together into larger groups to hide small number of respondents in some of the smaller groups.
- Banding is used on numerical variables such as age, where discrete values are grouped sequentially, e.g. where a respondent was aged 80 or over their age was re-coded as ‘80+’
- Variable removal was used to remove:
 - sensitive variables;
 - variables used to calculated summary variables which can be disclosive if not recoded, or used to help identify respondents in combination with other variables.

5.1 Recoding of Geographical Identifiers

5.1.1 HBA – Health Board Areas

HBA follows the health board area boundaries pre 1st of April 2014 and when combined with LA create small pockets of respondents in very specific geographies. HBA has been recoded to align with LA as per the change to health board boundaries implemented on the 1st of April 2014.

⁴ A ‘legal person’ is a company, enterprise, or other organisation that has a legal identity. A ‘natural person’ is a member of the public. Where the term ‘individual’ is used in the Code it means both legal and natural persons, both living and dead.

5.1.2 SIMD5 – Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintiles

Analysing SIMD quintile data zones, there 7 unique data zones across Scotland and if a respondent in the survey sample is from these data zones it could lead to their identification. As a result SIMD5 has been recoded to adsorb these 7 unique data zones into a neighbouring quintiles within LA.

5.1.3 UR – Urban Rural 2 fold scale

Analysing urban rural two fold data zones in combination with SIMD quintile data zones and LA data zones reveals 36 rare Scottish data zones (< three data zones per variable combination), and if a respondent in the survey sample is from these data zones it could lead to their identification. As a result, UR has been recoded to adsorb these data zones into the rural category for urban responses and vice versa for a rural responses for the 36 unique data zones.

5.2 Recoding of Individual Characteristics

5.2.1 Country of Birth

The country of birth of respondents is collected in minute detail by the pooled surveys. Reporting on the data in this way would uniquely identify, and therefore potentially disclose the identity of, participants from a range of countries. For this reason, country of birth has been provided as follows:

- Scotland
- England, Northern Ireland, Wales, Great Britain/United Kingdom (Not Otherwise Specified)
- Elsewhere / DK

5.2.2 Ethnic Group

Ethnicity of respondents is collected in considerable detail by the contributing surveys to the SSCQ. Ethnic groups have been collapsed into the following categories:

- White - Scottish
- White - British
- White - Other
- Minority Ethnic
- DK / Refused

5.2.3 Religion

Religious groups have been grouped into the following categories:

- None
- Church of Scotland
- Roman Catholic
- Other Christian
- Another Religion / DK

5.3 Survey weighting variables

The following weighting variables were rounded to two decimal places to increase uncertainty in the estimates calculated by users:

- pooled_ind_wt
- pooled_ind_wt_sc
- pooled_hh_wt
- pooled_hh_wt_sc
- pooled_crim_wt
- pooled_crim_wt_sc

5.4 Cluster variable

The variable CLUSTER has been anonymised using a random interger to prevent disclosure. The number is therefore meaningless other than as a grouping variable for clustered sample units.