

# British Social Attitudes 2024: User Guide



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# Contents

|                                              |           |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1. British Social Attitudes</b>           | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>2. Accessing the data</b>                 | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>3. What topics do the datasets cover?</b> | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>4. The sample</b>                         | <b>9</b>  |
| Selection of individuals                     | 10        |
| <b>5. Fieldwork</b>                          | <b>11</b> |
| Advance mailings                             | 12        |
| Incentives                                   | 12        |
| <b>6. Weighting the data</b>                 | <b>13</b> |
| <b>7. Analysing the data</b>                 | <b>16</b> |
| Derived variables                            | 17        |
| Multi-code variables                         | 20        |
| Open-ended questions                         | 21        |
| Notes on other variables                     | 21        |
| <b>8. Further information</b>                | <b>22</b> |

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# 1. British Social Attitudes

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The British Social Attitudes survey has been running since 1983. During that time, we have surveyed more than 120,000 members of the public, each year asking over 3,000 people a range of questions about their attitudes on a variety of topics ranging from welfare and the economy to politics and healthcare. (The survey was not run in 1988 and 1992 when we ran the British Election Study series, which included relevant attitudinal questions.)

The British Social Attitudes (BSA) surveys inform the development of public policy and are an important barometer of public attitudes used by opinion leaders and social commentators. The topics we cover in each survey are determined by the interests of our funders, some questions have been asked every year, others every couple of years, and others less frequently. Repeating some questions over time means that we are able to provide a unique insight into how social attitudes have changed during the last four decades.

Each year we publish a report, freely available online, using the data we have collected to present a compelling picture of Britain's social, moral and political attitudes. Our latest report based on data collected in 2024 is our 42nd. The report chapters can be found on the BSA website: [natcen.ac.uk/british-social-attitudes](https://natcen.ac.uk/british-social-attitudes)

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# 2. Accessing the data

Users from non-commercial organisations can download the data directly from the UK Data Service. Access to the data will require logging in via a university or research organisation, or otherwise registration. You can download the data as SPSS or STATA files, or as a TAB file. Data is archived around a year after the completion of fieldwork (giving time for analysis and reporting).

Commercial organisations must notify the National Centre for Social Research by email ([BSA@natcen.ac.uk](mailto:BSA@natcen.ac.uk)) stating their intended use and seeking permission for download. Permission to download may incur a charge. UKDS will be monitoring usage and providing NatCen with usage reports.

# 3. What topics do the datasets cover?

From 2020, the British Social Attitudes has been administered with a mixed-mode design of web and CATI (telephone interviews).

In 2024 the survey covered the following topics:

**Table Error! No text of specified style in document..1 BSA 2024 Topics and corresponding funders**

| Topic                                           | Funder                              |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Household composition, age and sex              | National Centre for Social Research |
| Employment                                      | National Centre for Social Research |
| Tenure                                          | National Centre for Social Research |
| Internet usage                                  | National Centre for Social Research |
| National identity and ethnicity                 | National Centre for Social Research |
| Religion                                        | National Centre for Social Research |
| Disability                                      | National Centre for Social Research |
| Education                                       | National Centre for Social Research |
| Benefits and income                             | National Centre for Social Research |
| <b>Unfunded module</b>                          |                                     |
| Social care funding                             | National Centre for Social Research |
| Attitudes to private/state schools              | National Centre for Social Research |
| Flexible working contracts                      | National Centre for Social Research |
| Taxes, government spending and responsibilities | National Centre for Social Research |
| Assisted dying                                  | National Centre for Social Research |
| Tobacco and cannabis                            | National Centre for Social Research |
| Poverty, inequality, and cost of living         | National Centre for Social Research |
| European Union                                  | National Centre for Social Research |
| Immigration                                     | National Centre for Social Research |
| Military spending and threats                   | National Centre for Social Research |
| Climate change and housing                      | National Centre for Social Research |
| Prejudice and inequalities                      | National Centre for Social Research |
| Voting, trust and political systems             | National Centre for Social Research |
| 2024 general election vote                      | National Centre for Social Research |
| Monarchy                                        | National Centre for Social Research |
| <b>Welfare module</b>                           |                                     |
| Benefit fraud                                   | Department for Work and Pensions    |
| Benefits eligibility                            | Department for Work and Pensions    |
| Trust in the DWP                                | Department for Work and Pensions    |
| Accessing DWP services                          | Department for Work and Pensions    |
| Disability benefits                             | Department for Work and Pensions    |
| Housing and welfare                             | Department for Work and Pensions    |
| Poverty                                         | Department for Work and Pensions    |

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|                                                        |                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Retirement and pensions                                | Department for Work and Pensions                      |
| <b>Health and Social Care module</b>                   |                                                       |
| Satisfaction with health and care services             | King's Fund & Nuffield Trust                          |
| Health and care spending                               | King's Fund & Nuffield Trust                          |
| NHS priorities and principles                          | King's Fund & Nuffield Trust                          |
| <b>UK identity and impact</b>                          |                                                       |
| Sense of belonging in the UK                           | Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government |
| Perceptions of impact relating to being part of the UK | Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government |
| <b>International Social Survey Programme</b>           |                                                       |
| Internet usage                                         | Economic and Social Research Council                  |
| Online political interaction                           | Economic and Social Research Council                  |
| Digital technology and the internet                    | Economic and Social Research Council                  |
| Robots and artificial intelligence                     | Economic and Social Research Council                  |

A wide range of background and classificatory questions are always included. A number of the same questions are asked most years, enabling us to track change over time.

# 4. The sample

In 2024 the sample for the British Social Attitudes survey was split into 8 versions.

The table below illustrates the modules, their corresponding versions and the number of complete and partial responses achieved.

**Table 4.2 BSA 2024 Module versioning and number of achieved responses**

| Module                                          | V1 | V2 | V3 | V4 | V5 | V6 | V7 | V8 | Responses achieved |                   |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--------------------|-------------------|
|                                                 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | Full completes     | Partial completes |
| Classification                                  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 3992               | 128               |
| Attitudes to private/state school               |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1042               | 32                |
| Flexible working contracts                      |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1042               | 32                |
| Taxes, government spending and responsibilities |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 986                | 36                |
| Social care funding                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1039               | 33                |
| Assisted dying                                  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1007               | 32                |
| Tobacco and cannabis                            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 996                | 34                |
| Poverty, inequality and cost of living          |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1038               | 35                |
| European Union                                  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 990                | 30                |
| Immigration                                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 990                | 30                |
| Military spending and threats                   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 986                | 36                |
| Climate change and housing                      |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1039               | 33                |
| Prejudice and inequalities                      |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1007               | 32                |
| Voting, trust and political systems             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1039               | 33                |
| General election vote                           |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 3992               | 128               |
| Monarchy                                        |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1039               | 33                |
| International Social Survey Programme           |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1485               | 44                |
| DWP                                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 2950               | 96                |
| Nuffield/King's Fund: NHSSat, CareSat           |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 3024               | 99                |
| Nuffield/King's Fund: Rest of module            |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 961                | 34                |
| DLUHC                                           |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1038               | 35                |

The British Social Attitudes survey is designed to yield a representative sample of UK adults aged 16 or over. This is the first year the survey included 16- and 17-year-olds, as well as those living in Northern Ireland. Since 1993, the sampling frame for the survey has been the **Postcode Address File (PAF)**, a list of addresses (or postal delivery points) compiled by the Post Office. For practical reasons, the sample is confined to those living in private households. People living in institutions (though not in private households at such institutions) are excluded, as are households whose addresses are not on the PAF.

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A sample file of non-clustered addresses was produced from the PAF. 25,979 total addresses were then allocated to a main sample (N=21,649) and a reserve sample (n=4,330). The reserve sample was not issued in 2024.

### **Selection of individuals**

Up to two individuals aged 16 or over living at the selected addresses were eligible to take part. The invitation and reminder letters contained two unique access codes allowing any two adults aged 16+ living within the household to log in and complete the survey.

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# 5. Fieldwork

Fieldwork was carried out between 16<sup>th</sup> September and 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

Fieldwork used a mixed-mode design, offering the choice of both web and telephone survey completion. The fieldwork period was the same for both modes. The invitation and first reminder letters sent to respondents encouraged participants to take part online, while giving them the option to take part by phone if they wanted to. The letter and first reminder emphasised the option to take part by web. The second reminder letter made the option to take part by phone more explicit.

Telephone interviews were conducted by interviewers from NatCen’s Telephone Unit. Before fieldwork, interviewers attended a briefing to familiarise themselves with the questionnaire and the study. A total of 41 interviews were conducted via phone and 4079 completed via web.

Each address was allocated at random to one of eight versions of the questionnaire covering different topic areas. All versions of the questionnaire collected key demographic information.

The mean interview length for each version of the questionnaire was:

|           |                        |
|-----------|------------------------|
| Version 1 | 27 minutes, 55 seconds |
| Version 2 | 26 minutes, 34 seconds |
| Version 3 | 30 minutes, 35 seconds |
| Version 4 | 28 minutes, 17 seconds |
| Version 5 | 28 minutes, 42 seconds |
| Version 6 | 29 minutes, 48 seconds |
| Version 7 | 36 minutes, 03 seconds |
| Version 8 | 30 minutes, 03 seconds |

The push-to-web approach for BSA 2024 allowed up to two people per household to participate in the survey. When taking into consideration the estimated number of eligible adults per address and the estimated proportion of deadwood or ineligible addresses the individual and household level response rates can be calculated.

**Table 5.3 BSA 2024 response rate**

|                                                                    |                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Issued sample                                                      | 21,649 addresses |
| Estimated proportion of deadwood/ineligible <sup>1</sup>           | 10%              |
| Estimated number of eligible addresses                             | 19,484           |
| Estimated number of eligible adults                                | 36,046           |
| Number of fully productive individual interviews                   | 3,992            |
| Number of partially productive individual interviews               | 128              |
| Number of addresses with at least one productive (full or partial) | 3,237            |

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<sup>1</sup> Estimate based on BSA 2019 % of ineligible

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|                                                        |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Number of productive individual interviews per address | 1.27  |
| Unadjusted household response rate <sup>2</sup>        | 14.9% |
| Adjusted household response rate <sup>3</sup>          | 16.6% |
| Estimated individual response rate                     | 11.1% |

### Advance mailings

Sampled addresses were sent an advance letter on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, inviting adults aged 16 or over and resident at the household to take part in the survey. Up to two adults could take part in each household. Participants had the option to complete the survey via web or by telephone. Non-responsive households were sent three reminder letters, which included the access codes for the web survey and the BSA telephone contact number.

### Incentives

On completion of the survey respondents were offered a shopping voucher to be sent via email or post. In 2024, we conducted an incentive experiment to test whether varying the value and timing of the incentive would have a positive impact on response rates. The sample was divided into three equal groups: Group 1 was offered a £10 voucher upon completion of the survey, Group 2 was offered a £15 voucher upon completion, and Group 3 was initially offered a £10 voucher, which increased to £15 in the second reminder letter if the survey had not yet been completed.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The number of households with at least one response as a proportion of all issued addresses

<sup>3</sup> The number of households with at least one response as a proportion of all the eligible sample (i.e. adjusted for deadwood/ineligible)

<sup>4</sup> Group 1 had a 15% household response rate, Group 2: 17%, Group 3: 16%.

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# 6. Weighting the data

Certain subgroups in the population are less likely than others to respond to surveys. This is referred to as differential non-response. These groups can end up being under-represented in the sample, which can bias the survey estimates. Weights are applied to the BSA survey that are designed to correct for these biases. Such non-response could occur within households as well as at the level of the selected postal address. Separate non-response models were constructed to deal with each of these elements of non-response. Finally, calibration weighting was used to adjust the profile of the responding sample so that it matched the population in terms of age, sex, education, tenure, ethnicity, economic activity (employment status) and region.

To minimise non-response bias, data should be weighted in all univariate analyses. Weighting is also recommended for multivariate analysis. The file is not pre-weighted: before running any analysis, please “switch on” the NatCen computed weight (**BSA24\_final\_wt**).

The different stages of the weighting scheme are outlined in detail below.

## Selection weights

Oversampling and stratification within the sample design led to an uneven probability of address selection. To account for this, address selection weights (W1) were calculated as the inverse of the selection probabilities for each of the 21 strata, so that the weighted number of addresses in each stratum was in the correct proportion.

Individuals in households with more than two people aged 16 years or over have a lower probability of selection than households with one or two 16+ people. These were accounted for in the within-household non-response modelling.

## Non-response model

Specific subgroups can be over-represented in samples, biasing survey estimates. Non-response can occur at the household level (no one responds) or within households (only one or two people respond from a multiple occupancy household). If information on non-responding addresses is available, the probability of a household responding can be modelled to generate a non-response weight. Expected responses within households can similarly be modelled. Thus, non-response weights have two components: 'between household' and 'within household,'.

'Between household' response was modelled using logistic regression, with the dependent variable indicating whether or not anyone at each selected address responded to the survey. Responding addresses were coded 1 and non-responding addresses were coded 0. The model was run weighted by the selection weights (W1). A number of variables that described the character of the area in which a selected address was located, including aggregated census data and deprivation indices, were considered for possible inclusion in the response model.

The variables found to be related to household level response, once the other predictors included in the model had been controlled for, were: region, percentage of owner-occupied properties in the Output Area (quintiles), the percentage of residents in the postcode sector that have a degree

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(quintiles), the percentage of residents aged 65+ in the postcode sector (quintiles), the percentage of ethnic minority residents in the postcode sector (quintiles) and Output Area Classification (eight categories). The model shows that the likelihood of response increases with higher rates of home ownership, higher rates of degree level education as well as in urban areas. The full model is shown in Appendix Table 2. The model generated an estimated probability of responding for each selected address. From this model, the between household non-response weight was calculated as the inverse of the estimated response probability for each responding address (W2). A composite weight (W3) was then calculated as the product of W1 and W2.

Non-response within households was also modelled using logistic regression, with the dependent variable indicating whether each responding address had one or two responses to the survey. Addresses that contained only one person aged 16+ and addresses from which there was no response were excluded from this stage of the non-response modelling. The model was run weighted by the composite weight (W3). As well as the area-level information used in the previous model, additional household-level variables (gathered from the survey responses that were received), such as household size, tenure, whether anyone in the household has a degree, and income, were also considered for possible inclusion in the model. The variables found to be related to the probability of receiving two responses, once the other predictors included in the model have been controlled for, were: the number of people aged 16+ in household (capped at 4), household tenure, whether someone in the household holds a degree, and total weekly pre-tax household income. The model indicates that the probability of having two respondents per household decreases in non-owner-occupied households, in households where no occupants hold a degree, and where there are a greater number of occupants aged 16 and above.

The predicted probability from this model was used to estimate the expected number of completed surveys in responding households. This was calculated as  $(1-p) + 2p = 1+p$ , where  $p$  is the probability of two responses.

The within household non-response weight (W4) was calculated as the ratio of the number of people aged 16+ in the household (capped at 4) divided by the expected number of responses for each responding household, i.e.  $\text{numad} / (1+p)$ , where  $\text{numad}$  is the number of people aged 16+ in the household (capped at 4). This was then combined with the previous composite weight (W3) to create the pre-calibration weight.

## Calibration weighting

The final stage of weighting was to adjust the pre-calibration weight so that the weighted composition of the sample was in line with the best available population estimates of the characteristics of people (16+) in the UK.

For the UK population aged 16 years and over the data were weighted so that the sample matches as closely as possible the 2023 mid-year population estimates published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2023) for age, sex and region, and the latest ONS Labour Force Survey (ONS, 2024) estimates for education, ethnicity, economic activity and housing tenure. The demographic composition of the original and final weighted sample, and how these compare with the population estimates, is shown in Table 4.

The calibration weight (**BSA24\_final\_wt**) is the final weight used in the analysis of the 2024 survey; this weight has been scaled so that the total sample size is unchanged. The range of the final calibrated weights is between 0.09 and 8.32.

An 18+ GB weight was also produced (**BSA24\_final\_wt\_GB18**). This weight excluded respondents from Northern Ireland and those aged 16–17 years from the dataset and calibrated the remaining sample to the 18+ GB population benchmarks as detailed above. This weight was used to assess whether the full UK 16+ weight could be reliably applied to subgroup analysis (specifically, for estimates based only on 18+ GB respondents) to ensure continuity with previous BSA years. To assess this, estimates for 18+ GB respondents were compared using the main weight (UK 16+) and the 18+ GB weight. The differences found were minimal, providing reassurance that applying the main

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weight (UK 16+) had little impact on key estimates for the 18+ GB population so could be used reliably.

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# 7. Analysing the data

BSA provides a compelling account of the public's economic, political, moral and social attitudes over the last 42 years. It can be used to provide an annual snapshot of the public's attitudes through an analysis of a single dataset or to create a narrative of the public's attitudes over a period of time by analysing several datasets.

A number of questions have been repeated over the years. Unless the question wording has been changed, the original variable name has been retained. Questions have been optimised for web and telephone modes, as per 2020 to 2023. The 2024 survey data used very similar methods to 2020 to 2023, so comparisons can be made here however caution is needed when presenting findings from BSA 2024 alongside survey years before year 2020, as differences between years may be due to the change in survey mode. In 2024, individuals living in Northern Ireland as well as those aged 16 and 17 were included in the survey for the first time. Prior to 2024, the survey only included those aged 18 and over and living in Great Britain. Given the small numbers involved, this change is unlikely to have a significant impact on survey estimates. As outlined in the weighting section, a separate weight (BSA24\_final\_wt\_GB18) calibrated to the GB 18+ population was created, which can be used if desired. Comparisons against the main UK 16+ weight found little difference on key estimates for the GB 18+ population, which means we are confident that the main weight (BSA24\_final\_wt) can be used to compare 2024 data against previous BSA years.

Please note that the data must be weighted in all analysis. The file is not pre-weighted. Before running any analysis, please weight the data using the NatCen computed weight (BSA24\_final\_wt). As long as the weight is included when specifying the sample design, the complex sample procedures will ensure that the data is weighted; however, other procedures may not weight the data automatically.

Versions 1 to 8 are geographically unclustered but up to two people in each household are able to take part, so the sample is clustered at the household level. When using complex sample procedures we would recommend using the variable *BSA24\_strata* or region (GOR) as the stratification variable, and household serial (PSU) as the cluster variable.

Unlike some other surveys, on British Social Attitudes responses of 'Don't know' or 'Prefer not to answer' are considered to be valid responses and should be included in the base for analysis.

There are a number of identification variables that users may find useful in analyses. These are listed below. In addition, there are a number of potentially useful derived variables that are outlined in the following section.

**Table 7.4 Demographic variables**

|          |                        |
|----------|------------------------|
| DVSex24  | Respondent's sex       |
| RAgeCat  | Respondent's age group |
| RaceOri4 | Respondent's ethnicity |
| ReligSum | Respondent's religion  |

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|           |                                                 |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------|
| REarn     | Respondent's total gross individual income      |
| HEdQual2  | Respondent's highest educational qualification  |
| MarStat6  | Respondent's marital status                     |
| TenHhl    | Respondent's tenure                             |
| ReconAct  | Respondent's economic activity (priority coded) |
| HhlAdGpd  | Number of adults in household (grouped)         |
| HhlChlGpd | Number of children in household (grouped)       |
| BestNatU2 | Nationality that best describes the respondent  |

### Derived variables

The following derived variables are included in the datasets as standard:

#### Age

RAgeCat (DV) splits respondents into eight age categories, pulling information from RespAge (asked to all respondents) and Ragebnd (which collects banded age from respondents who refused to give an answer at RespAge).

RageCat2 groups respondents' age into three categories (16-34, 35-54, 55+).

#### Sex

The DVsex24 variable categorises respondents by their sex. It is a DV based on the questions RspSx21 and Sx212. Data was also collected on respondent gender, however this has not been included in the archive dataset for disclosure reasons.

#### Disability and effect on daily life

DisActDV splits respondents into three categories: i) they have a disability which affects their daily life ii) they have a disability but it doesn't affect their daily life and iii) they don't have a disability. The DV is computed using variables DisNew3 and DisAct2.

#### Region

The dataset includes a region variable [GOR], which categorises cases into 14 regions, formerly the Government Office Regions. [GOR] combines Inner London and Outer London into one region. Earlier datasets between 2003–2016 use GOR2 (although GOR\_ID is also available); from 2000-2002 the equivalent variable was [GOR]. Before 2000, (1983–1999) [StRegion] was the variable denoting region. It should be noted that the coding of these variables are not the same, and that [GOR2] splits London into 'outer' and 'inner'. Users should be aware of potentially small sample sizes for regional subgroups, and the implications that has for analysis.

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## Standard Occupational Classification and National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification

Respondents are classified according to their own occupation, not that of the 'head of household'. Each respondent was asked about their current or last job, so that all respondents except those who had never worked were coded. Just as in 2023, respondents were asked to self-code their current or last job into an 8 category variable (EmpOCC). An employment status variable that captures information on employment status and supervisory status has also been derived (EmployB) based on REconAct and REconFW.

An employment status variable that captures information on employment status and size of organisation was also derived (EmplStatDV) based on questions collecting information on whether an individual is:

- an employer, self-employed or an employee (EMPSTAT);
- size of organisation (Employ); and
- supervisory status (Superv).

The National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) was derived from a combination of information on occupation and employment status. In the dataset this variable is called 'RClassGP'. It is important to note that the NS-SEC variable may have been derived differently in past years, and to take this into account when comparing findings from previous survey years.

For some analyses, it may be more appropriate to classify respondents according to their current socio-economic status, which takes into account only their present economic position. Respondents can be allocated to one of the following categories: "in full time education/training", "in work, waiting to take up work", "on maternity or paternity leave", "unemployed", "retired" or "other" using the data recorded at REconAct.

## Income

The BSA dataset includes a standard measure of household income [HHIncome], with respondents asked to place themselves into banded income quartiles. The bandings used are designed to be representative of those that exist in the UK and are based on household income figures from the Office for National Statistics. REarn asked respondents currently in work to place themselves within estimated earnings quartiles.

## Attitude scales

Since 1986, BSA surveys have included two attitude scales which aim to measure where respondents stand on certain underlying value dimensions: left–right and libertarian–authoritarian. Since 1987 (except in 1990), a similar scale on 'welfarism' has also been included. Some of the items in the welfarism scale were changed in 2000–2001. The current version of the scale is shown below. A useful way of summarising the information from a number of questions of this sort is to construct an additive index (Spector, 1992; DeVellis, 2003). This approach rests on the assumption that there is an underlying – 'latent' – attitudinal dimension which characterises the answers to all the questions within each scale. If so, scores on the index are likely to be a more reliable indication of the underlying attitude than the answers to any one question.

Each of these scales consists of a number of statements to which the respondent is invited to "agree strongly", "agree", "neither agree nor disagree", "disagree" or "disagree strongly". The items are:

### Left–right scale (5 items) [leftrigh]

*Government should redistribute income from the better off to those who are less well off.* [Redistrb]

*Big business benefits owners at the expense of workers.* [BigBusnN]

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*Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth.* [Wealth]

*There is one law for the rich and one for the poor.* [RichLaw]

*Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance.* [Indust4]

**Libertarian–authoritarian scale (6 items) [libauth]**

*Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional British values.* [TradVals]

*People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences.* [StifSent]

*For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence.* [DeathApp]

*Schools should teach children to obey authority.* [Obey]

*The law should always be obeyed, even if a particular law is wrong.* [WrongLaw]

*Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards.* [Censor]

**Welfarism scale (8 items) [welfare2]**

*The welfare state encourages people to stop helping each other.* [WelfHelp]

*The government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes.* [MoreWelf]

*Cutting welfare benefits would damage too many people's lives.* [DamLives]

*The creation of the welfare state is one of Britain's proudest achievements.* [ProudWlf]

*Around here, most unemployed people could find a job if they really wanted one.* [UnempJob]

*Many people who get social security don't really deserve any help.* [SocHelp]

*Most people on the dole are fiddling in one way or another.* [DoleFidl]

*If welfare benefits weren't so generous, people would learn to stand on their own two feet.* [WelfFeet]

The indices for the three scales are formed by scoring the leftmost, most libertarian or most pro-welfare position, as 1 and the rightmost, most authoritarian or most anti-welfarist position, as 5. The “neither agree nor disagree” option is scored as 3. The scores to all the questions in each scale are added and then divided by the number of items in the scale, giving indices ranging from 1 (leftmost, most libertarian, most pro-welfare) to 5 (rightmost, most authoritarian, most anti-welfare). The scores on the three indices have been placed in the dataset.

In constructing the scale, a decision had to be taken on how to treat missing values (“Don't know” and “Not answered”). Respondents who had more than two missing values on the left–right scale and more than three missing values on the libertarian– authoritarian and welfarism scales were excluded

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from that scale. For respondents with fewer missing values, “Don’t know” was recoded to the midpoint of the scale and “Not answered” was recoded to the scale mean for that respondent on their valid items.

The scales have been tested for reliability (as measured by Cronbach’s alpha). The Cronbach’s alpha (unstandardised items) for the scales in 2024 are 0.83 for the left–right scale, 0.79 for the libertarian–authoritarian scale and 0.88 for the welfarism scale. This level of reliability can be considered ‘good’ for the left–right, libertarian and welfarism scales (DeVellis, 2003: 95–96).

### **Multi-code variables**

Where a respondent was given the opportunity to give more than one response at a question, we have created binary variables for each response option available. These binary variables record the number of respondents who chose that response option. If a respondent answered “don’t know” or refused to answer a multi-code question, the “don’t know” or “prefer not to answer” response has been included at each of the binary variables.

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### Open-ended questions

Questions that had an “Other – Please specify” option have been back-coded into the questions’ existing categories. Where the answers in the free-text did not fit into any of the existing categories new categories have been created if a sufficient number of responses could be grouped in that category; otherwise responses have been coded as “Other specific answer not in code-frame”, “Vague or irrelevant answer” or “Editor unable to code”.

The following variables were back-coded:

| List of back-coded variables |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| TenHhl                       | NatIdGB     |
| ISSP_UrbRur                  | NationU     |
| PartyFW                      | Vote        |
| BFPnshNew                    | HEdQual2    |
| UBAFW                        | Maininc5    |
| PenFreeUseWhy                | HIncDif4    |
| Sexualit                     | NHSPriority |

Please note that some other variables have been back-coded (e.g. REconAct, BestNatU, RaceOri3). These variables are not present in the dataset but were used to derive some DVs that are included in the data.

### Notes on other variables

Note that some variables end with the suffix ‘\_Archive’. These variables have been edited, for example collapsing some categories together, to ensure the data is not disclosive.

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# 8. Further information

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For more details on the methodology, please refer to the BSA 42 technical report which is available on the NatCen website: [natcen.ac.uk/british-social-attitudes](https://natcen.ac.uk/british-social-attitudes)

For further information on anything contained in this booklet please contact: [\*\*bsa@natcen.ac.uk\*\*](mailto:bsa@natcen.ac.uk)



