UK Data Archive

Study Number 6835

Rural and Urban Solo Living: Social Integration, Quality of Life and Future Orientations, 2007-2008

USER GUIDE
1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by ESRC to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project.

[Max 250 words]

This project investigates the experiences and expectations of the growing number of people living alone between the ages of 25 and 44, conventionally associated with partnership and parenting. It explores variations among and between solo-living men and women, in urban versus rural localities, and living alone through choice or chance. Only a very small minority, typically urban men with disadvantages such as low income and health problems, were relatively isolated at the time of the interview. Most solo-living men and women had rich social networks, active family and friendship ties and a high quality of life. Some, more rural than urban residents, had strong ties to their locality. Their lives typically contradict the view that solo living is symptomatic of an increasingly atomised society lacking ties to people and place. While a few are settled as living alone, the majority saw solo living as a phase that will end with living with a partner. Only a small proportion wanted partnership without co-residence or children. In paradoxical tension with this, many believed that the longer they lived alone, the more difficult it was to live with a partner. A larger proportion of women than men described themselves as in relationships on their way to becoming co-residential; men were more likely to be outside of relationships or perceive relationships as unsuitable for the long-term. All see living alone at older age as undesirable but this did not yet translate into plans to address the care and companionship gap feared in older age.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

a) Objectives

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to the ESRC.

[Max 200 words]

Aims and objectives:

To deepen knowledge of the experiences and perceptions of adults living alone in the period of adulthood normally associated with partnership and parenting including:

- To deepen knowledge of their social capital and quality of life and expectations and aspirations for the future (with respect to partnering, parenting, employment, migration, housing and leisure and their anticipation of needs in older age, such as for income and care.)
- To explore variations among solo-living adults by rural and urban localities and by gender, as well as by different routes into solo-living.
- To contribute to evidenced-based discussion of the implications of this growing population for the well-being of rural and urban localities and for policy makers and practitioners with responsibility for devising support to individuals, households and communities.
- To contribute to the evidence base of social theorising about individualism, social integration, intimacy, identity, sense of risk and social change.
b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with the ESRC. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder's institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. [Max 200 words]

A period of suspension of the project and consequent extension of the final date was agreed with the ESRC.

c) Methodology

Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. [Max. 500 words]

In the 25-44 years age span, men in urban areas are the most numerous group of people living alone in Britain but, for theoretical reasons, the research compares men and women from urban and rural localities by using the device of samples of matched size. The urban-rural comparison helps test the assumption that solo-living represents diminishing social ties to community, a phenomenon that should be exhibited in rural as well as urban areas. The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) was used to identify men and women aged 25-44 living alone in urban and rural locations across Scotland, who had agreed that they could be re-contacted for research purposes. Respondents were selected from large urban areas and all types of remote and rural areas to enable recruitment of appropriately sized matched samples. 485 individuals were thus identified and we sought their informed consent to participate through written and telephone explanations. It was hoped to recruit 200 from this pool in the time available but higher than anticipated non-contactable telephone numbers meant that the resulting sample was an achieved size of 140: 75 men and 65 women, 71 urban and 69 rural.

The first sweep of data was collected through semi structured telephone interviews, partially coded using the Bristol Online Survey at the time of interview (exported into Excel and SPSS) and digitally recorded, subsequently transcribed and analysed using the qualitative data package NVivo. Thematic analysis of this first stage was presented at a seminar to a mixed audience of academics, policy makers and service providers. A subset of respondents were then selected for follow up face-to-face interviews. Telephone interviews allowed a wide range of information to be collected as well as some depth but the follow-up interviews allowed more detailed exploration of emergent themes, subjective understandings and meanings. Interviews were again recorded, transcribed, and thematically analysed with the aid of NVivo. An end of seminar report was presented to an audience of academic researchers working on related topics. Secondary analysis of the 2005/6 SHS, the latest available dataset, was undertaken to provide representative information on the 25-44 age group and the whole working-age population in order to contextualise the qualitative findings. This contextualising includes comparisons with equivalently aged men and women living with others. We
also conducted secondary analysis of the European Social Survey and the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey to provide contextual pictures of international trends in solo living, and trends in attitudes to complement our own work. The final report was not web published because it is being reworked as a book to be published by Palgrave.

An accessible research briefing for wider audiences was web published in January and received much Scottish and some international media coverage. All research participants were sent a copy with a ‘thank you again’ cover letter.

The process of making data anonymous for archiving has involved the erasure of place names in rural localities. This unfortunately makes the material lose much of its richness but is an ethical requirement of our consent procedures.

d) Project Findings

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on ESRC Society Today. Any future research plans should also be identified. [Max 500 words]

Findings are summarised in CRFR Briefing 47, www.crfr.ac.uk itemised on ESRC Society Today. Underlying issues and international context are discussed in the Sociological Research Online article reported there. Findings with respect to fertility are in a paper resubmitted to Sociological Review.

Comparative analysis (using the Scottish Household Survey working-age population) of solo-living adults and those living with others shows key similarities in behaviour: (e.g. both are as likely to be caring for a sick, disabled or elderly person in another household) and differences in distribution of circumstances (more solo-living adults suffer a range of disadvantages and, among women, are highly educated professionals).

Interviews show that most solo-living adults, even those who had not chosen to live alone, were positive about the experience. Some raised the ‘sad and lonely’ stereotype to reject it; a small number felt both at times. Most had rich social networks including active family and friendship ties albeit sometimes geographically dispersed. Some had strong ties to local people and the locality itself and this was not the prerogative of long-term residents. In-migrants to rural areas often praised their friendliness and the security. The lack of local ties among in-migrants to urban areas was not a symptom of general social disengagement. A very small minority, typically disadvantaged urban men, were socially isolated.

The majority saw solo living as temporary, ending by living with a partner. A sense of security in their own home heightened a sense of risk in such a step. Only a small and diverse group wanted partnership without co-residence (women who no longer anticipated having children, a rural gay man seeking low visibility, non-resident fathers wanting to preserve time and space for children’s visits). In paradoxical tension with the ‘temporary phase’, many believed that the longer they lived alone, the more difficult it was to live with a partner. Most saw living alone at older age as undesirable but had no plan to address fears about care and companionship in older age. Issues around housing and care are of particular relevance to policy makers and practitioners.

Differences between the urban and rural samples were more marked for men. Rural men were more likely to be outside of a relationship (76% compared to 56% urban) and
to be fathers not living with their children (43% compared with 25%). Both rural men and women complained about the lack of suitable partners, although women were as likely to be partnered as in urban areas. Some rural women and rural gay men complained about impossibility of developing relationships without a sense of scrutiny.

Some gender differences between those living alone parallel those of young men and women living with others. For example, solo-living women were more likely than solo-living men to have friends with children and to spend time with the children of friends or relatives. Parenting is typically only considered possible in the context of having a partner but solo-living women were more successful at developing partnerships; men had less urgency with possible unintended consequences for fertility.

e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative’s objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. \[Max. 200 \text{ words}\]

3. EARLY AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

a) Summary of Impacts to date

Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on ESRC Society Today. This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. \[Max. 400 \text{ words}\]

Scientific Impact

The project has helped to establish the experience of solo living as a distinct research topic that overlaps with studies of single men and women, non-resident fathers and LATS (‘living apart together’) but is worthy of study in its own right. This has been achieved through conference papers; an end of award seminar to an audience of academics working in these related areas; the establishment of a solo-living network; the attempt, albeit unsuccessful, to gain COST funding for meetings of the international network; and publications. The research has helped to begin to unpack the interconnectedness of solo-living and fertility decline and the way the trend to solo-living draws on and fuels wider social changes in gender relations and family life (Sociological Research Online article, and article submitted to Sociological Review).

The study contributes to wider debate about changing gender relationships, family life and social integration. This will be full explored in the forthcoming book. The study clearly demonstrates that men and women are not setting out to live alone as pioneers of social change, nor are they turning their backs on family life or community engagement. The trend, nevertheless does have unintended consequences, including a contribution to delays in co-resident partnering which in turn contribute to decline in fertility.
Broader Impact
The CRFR Research Briefing 47, 'Living on your own', is written for a broader audience and has been circulated to the CRFR research users network which includes about 200 named individuals from non-academic user organisations across government, local authority and charities with an interest in research on families and relationships. After the first phase of data collection, a range of government, local authority and practitioner organisations were invited to an interim seminar focusing particularly on specialists in housing policy and provision. There is some evidence in our data of the link between demand for solo-living and 'hidden homelessness'. The recession is unlikely to depress the demand for solo living but it will reduce access to it, potentially exacerbating this.

The study has had wide media coverage including radio coverage on Radio 4, Radio Scotland, the Times, Herald, Daily Mail, Daily Express, Daily Record, Metro and some overseas papers. Some of this coverage focused more narrowly than we would wish on the idea that more men fare less well living alone than women but it was nevertheless possible to debunk some stereotypes of solo living in the process.

b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts
Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. [Max. 200 words]

The scientific impact should continue with the publication of the book and new academic papers. We plan further enhancement of the broader impact. Our data include themes around consumption, transport, travel and space which are yet to be published. Many solo-living adults inhabit houses with two or more bedrooms and value space to accommodate visitors sustaining family and friendship relationships; fathers without space regret the impact on their relationships with their children. We will produce a summary briefing on housing issues for the audiences who attended our interim seminar once an academic paper is completed.

The trend to solo-living creates increased demand for housing and other goods and services, challenging to government’s desires to reduce carbon footprints. We plan to explore further avenues of dissemination of our research that might trigger the need to think more imaginative of ways in which solo-living can be compatible with a shift to more sustainable ways of living, working with the trend. More imaginatively clustered housing, for example, might be able to accommodate flexible needs. We aim to discuss solo-living and carbon footprints with a range of practitioners and academics to explore maximizing the impact of this work and the appropriateness of further work.

You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.
[Date]

Dear __________

Rural and Urban Solo Living: Social Integration, Quality of life and Future Orientations

I am writing on behalf of a research team based at the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, University of Edinburgh. We are conducting a study, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), on the experiences and circumstances of people aged between 25 and 44 who are currently living alone. There has been a large increase in solo living in recent years, especially amongst people of working age, and the aim of this study is to increase our understanding of the expectations and hopes of people living alone in early adulthood.

The Scottish Household Survey team passed your contact details to us as someone who has indicated you would be willing to be contacted by researchers, and we would like to invite you to participate in this research through a telephone interview. Any information you provide will be anonymised (i.e. no-one will be able to identify you from your answers) and will remain confidential.

I’ve enclosed further information on the aims and objectives of the study and contact details for the research team. If you do not want to be contacted please email me or return the reply slip. If you are willing to be interviewed or would like to know more you need do nothing further at this stage. We will phone over the next few weeks to answer any questions you may have and to ask if you would be willing to be interviewed. If so, we will arrange a time for this convenient to yourself. If you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I do hope you will be able to help us as the success of this research very much depends on the contribution of people such as yourself. Thank you in advance for considering our invitation, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Roona Simpson,
Research Fellow.
Rural and Urban Solo Living: Social Integration, Quality of Life and Future Orientations

Living alone, or solo living, is a growing trend in many Western societies, particularly amongst people of working age. While not a new phenomenon, there are now a significant number of people living alone, whether by choice or chance. Solo living is more common in Scotland than elsewhere in the UK, increasing in recent years from 18% in 1971 to over a third (34%) of all households in 2004, and projected to increase to over two fifths (42%) by 2024. This has important implications not only for individuals, but also for many social policies. People living alone however are not all the same, and vary in terms of age, circumstances, and routes into solo living.

The aim of this project is to deepen our knowledge and understanding of the experiences and circumstances of people between age 25 and 44 living alone, and to compare people living in rural and urban locations. Telephone interviews are being carried out with two hundred men and women in different locations across Scotland. These interviews will discuss issues such as expectations and hopes for the future in relation to housing and place of residence, employment and leisure, and partnership and parenting. If there are any questions you do not wish to answer or if you change your mind about participating in the study at any time, that is absolutely fine.

This research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (http://www.esrc.ac.uk) and adheres to its ethical guidance. Any information you provide will have all personal identifiers removed prior to research findings being disseminated to academic, policy and other audiences through presentations and publications. At the end of the project an anonymised record of all interviews will be deposited with the Qualidata Archive at the University of Essex.

The research team are all experienced researchers based at the University of Edinburgh who have previously worked on various aspects of family and household change. If you have any questions about any aspect of the research, or require further information, please contact Roona by email (Roona.Simpson@ed.ac.uk) or by telephone (0131 650 3981) Mondays to Thursdays, 9am-5pm.

The CRFR research team:

Professor Lynn Jamieson  http://www.crfr.ac.uk/People/lynnjamieson.htm
Professor Fran Wasoff  http://www.crfr.ac.uk/People/franwasoff.htm
Dr. Roona Simpson  http://www.crfr.ac.uk/People/roonasimpson.htm

If you do NOT wish to participate in this study, please email Roona Simpson or return the slip below to:
CRFR, The University of Edinburgh, 23 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9LN.

Name: ..............................................................
Address: ...........................................................
I do NOT want to participate in the Solo Living project.
Signature: ............................................................
INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

These pages outline the various steps in conducting the interviews and include ‘scripts’ for introducing yourself/project.

All information is kept in folder on the shared space – to get to this go to Shared Space/Research Projects/Current Projects/Solo Living 2007. If you are having difficulty accessing this remotely, email or phone Roona. I will email you updated versions of this documentation. If you cannot access the Excel files for record keeping, keep notes and update these later.

Respondent details:
All contact information for respondents are in two Excel files in folder ‘Solo Living Restricted Area’.
1. ‘Solo Living contact details’ lists all information we hold on respondents – use this file to get address details, sex, age group, locality prior to starting interview – note these on your contact sheets.
2. ‘Solo Living Interview Record’ is used to monitor various stages of the interview. This is the file you will use to record interview progress.

Each interview is assigned a unique code when letters are sent out, using the initials of the interviewer to whom this respondent is assigned, number, and initials of respondents (so e.g. RS1JB for my first assigned respondent Jane Brown). All names with your initials are ‘pending’, except if they’ve opted out of being contacted – if so I will record this on the Interview Record file and let you know by email.

Interview Contact Details:
Available via Shared Space. These are for you to record each respondent’s details and monitor attempts to phone them. These sheets are really for your own record keeping so there is no need to return these.
- Recording each respondents details: the key information you note here you need for the BOS survey questions 1-4, and I suggest you complete this before starting the actual interview (that is, you effectively start the interview at question 5). You should also note their address, if they haven’t received the letter we can identify whether this is because their address details are incorrect/out of date.
- Monitor attempts to phone them:
  Note time and day, and if no answer keep trying at varying times/days. If no answer after five attempts, let us know.

Bristol Online Survey:
The url to access this for interview is: https://www.survey.ed.ac.uk/sololiving
You can also access this to ‘preview’ it online, once you are registered as a user. You also have a hard copy of the final version.
While BOS requires a welcome page, I have removed the introduction from this as you need to fill in interviewee details (q.’s 1-4) prior to starting interviewing – the Introduction script is below.
Please note – there is no ‘final submit button’ with BOS and the survey data will only be included in the analysis if you go through all the pages (the data is submitted for those which are incomplete, but not included in the results).
We are using BOS in part for ease of analysis, keep in mind many questions should be asked in a more ‘conversational’ way than might be suggested by the design format. Also note, as in any research on personal life, some topics may be especially sensitive. There is a list of support organisations below which you may wish to offer to send in particular circumstances.

Other notes – the final question is designed to end on a positive note rather than elicit new information, you can reword this as appropriate using your own judgement, perhaps “if you continue to live alone, do you think that you will be quite content and positive about this?” or some such.
EQUIPMENT

- Retell 650 Intelligent Recording Interface (IRI) Device
- Olympus DS-30 Digital Recorder
- Plantronics Telephone with Headset

*Instructions re setting up.*

**IRI:**

[Keep at least 30cm away from computers]

Start with this box – you will need:

- Power connector to mains: this plugs into ‘DC’ socket on left side of IRI. [You can also run off computer with USB sockets, but not both simultaneously].

- Black curly cable: this plugs into ‘TEL’ socket at back of IRI, and other end into the ‘Headset’ socket at back of phone.

- Mono cable (two provided): this plugs into ‘MONO’ socket at front of IRI and into top of Digital Recorder (into Mic/Remote socket, need to take off mike).

**NB:** Once IRI is switched on at wall the green power light will go on. The large button in the middle (with ‘on’ and ‘off’ to left and right) is the MUTE button, and pressing this will stop the respondent hearing you – if on a red indicator light will go on, however I have found this rather confusing so am warning you here.

Can adjust settings on IRI using mini screwdriver

- volume of voices (theirs/yours): adjust buttons C or D on right hand side, if you are too loud turn D clockwise to increase volume of respondent, if they are too loud turn C clockwise to increase your volume.

**PHONE:**

You need to assemble the handset – attach curly white cord into handset and into left side of phone.

You need to assemble the headset – this has a large flat connector that joins on to the black curly cable with large flat connector, the other end of which goes into the ‘HSET’ socket at back of IRI.

**DIGITAL RECORDER:**

There is a quick start guide which tells you how to turn on, record, play back and erase, however please spend some time reading the instructions and get acquainted with the various options – my notes here are summary only. There is also an online manual available with the software, and an index to what is on this on p.6 of the instruction manual.
Switch on/off via POWER/HOLD switch on right side (there is a power save, default at 10 mins, press any button to exit this).
REC, STOP and PLAY switches also on right side

4 recording modes – STQX best quality (NB reduces recording time to 4hrs 10 mins) – see p.30 in manual.

There are various ‘settings’ options – conference, lecture and dictation – I suggest selecting DICT (via Mic Sense on left side) – see p.31 in manual.

Stores files in Folders (A to E, though you can change Folder names), automatically assigns name – this comes up on display when you STOP recording.

LCD Display (see p.55) – battery symbol to let you know power left.
In Stop or Play back mode you will have Folder Name, Playback elapsed time/ file name. You can get additional info by pressing DISPLAY button below screen eg file length, and time stamp.
In Record mode you will have graphic info on remaining memory - in a ‘bar’, from E(mpty) to F(ull), and the recording time. Pressing DISPLAY additionally gives you remaining recording time in figures.

There is a Noise Cancel function if recordings are difficult to understand because of noisy surroundings (hopefully this won’t be an issue but if so see p.43 on manual)
There is also a Voice Filter function to cut low/high frequency tones during playback (see p.45). Note that not both the Noise Cancel and Voice Filter can be on simultaneously.

DSS Software (need serial no. to install – on CD sleeve)
Includes updated online instructions.

Batteries (2 x AAA)

Saving files to PC – see p.73.
(caution – note do not remove USB connection even if screen indicates you can – still being transferred while record/indicator light is blinking).
Interviewing:

1. Fill in respondent details on a Contact Sheet – available from ‘Solo Living contact details’ Excel file.

2. Have recording equipment in place, Bristol Online Survey online
   [https://www.survey.ed.ac.uk/sololivingv1/]

3. Before actually conducting the interview, remember to record details on BOS as per contact sheet (questions 1-4)

4. Telephone – if answered introduce self (script as below)
   [if not answered or machine note date/time on Contact sheet. Keep trying]

5. If willing to be interviewed, arrange suitable time [if not able to do it then]

6. Conduct interview as per BOS, starting from q. 5
   [keep in mind interview should be ‘conversational’, as far as possible]

7. Once interview completed, make a memo of immediate observations and key issues emerging from interview.

8. Note file name (automatically assigned on digital recorder) on Contact sheet.
   Record date conducted and file name on ‘Solo Living Interview Record’ Excel file.

9. Save recording on own computer and CD/memory stick [once the recording has been uploaded, this can be renamed using the interview code name], to be sent to CRFR. Record date posted/delivered on ‘Solo Living Interview Record’ Excel file. Please email Kathryn to let her know when a recording is posted so she can send it to transcriber.

   [CRFR will arrange transcription, and verbatim transcripts will be emailed to interviewer]

10. Listen to the recording and check transcript for any errors [Also note all identifying details should be disguised/removed].
    [once you have listened to the recording again, delete from your computer]

11. Produce brief analytical notes/summary of key points from interview
    [suggested pro forma for doing this below]

12. Return checked transcript and memo of immediate observations/brief analytical notes. Let Kathryn know this is there if this is to the shared space.
    Record date emailed on ‘Solo Living Interview Record’ Excel file.
What the interviews have to achieve:

The research focuses on the social capital, quality of life and present and future orientations of solo-living men and women aged 25-44 selected from contrasting urban and rural environments. These are the aspects of solo-living that are of the most immediate policy relevance while also having direct bearing on the more general issue of the relationship between living alone and the social well-being of different types of localities.

Research Aims

- To deepen knowledge of the social capital and quality of life of adults living alone in the period of adulthood normally associated with partnership and parenting.
- To explore their expectations and aspirations for the future including partnership, parenting, employment, migration, housing and leisure, and their consideration of future-changing risks impacting on needs at older ages, such as for income and care.
- To explore variations in social capital and social integration, quality of life and future orientations by different types of rural and urban localities.
- To explore variations in social capital, quality of life and future orientations by gender.
- To explore variations in social capital, quality of life and future orientations by routes into solo-living (for example, those who have never partnered, those who have been formerly partnered and those living ‘alone together’ in partnerships across households) and to compare those making transitions into and out of solo-living in this age group with those living alone for longer periods.
- To contribute to evidenced-based discussion of the implications of this growing population for the well-being of different types of rural and urban localities and for policy makers and practitioners with responsibility for devising support to individuals, households and communities.
- To contribute to the evidence base of social theorising about individualism, social integration, intimacy, identity, sense of risk and social change.
PRO FORMA FOR SUMMARISING INTERVIEW:

[Keep in mind gender, age band, locality, socio-economic circumstances]

Observations re Partnership:
History, experiences of; feelings about current status; open to change in future; children:

Observations re Social Networks/relationships with Friends and family:

Observations re embeddedness in area/community

Views about Future Provision – housing, financial, care.

Note any striking comments/issues raised:
“Hello, my name is [ ], I’m a researcher working for the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships at Edinburgh University, and I’m phoning about a research project we’re conducting— we sent a letter to you last week about this?

[if not received or doesn’t remember– check contact details, note any changes, explain about the project and ask if they would possibly be interested in participating and offer to send another letter – IF SO MAKE NOTE AND LET ROONA KNOW]

I’m phoning to ask whether you’d be interested in being interviewed as part of this project?

[If not available now, ask about what time available and arrange to phone back then]

To tell you a bit about the project, we’re interviewing people who are or have recently been living alone. We know there are some persistent stereotypes about what living alone is like, and commentators sometimes jump to conclusions about what solo living means in terms of how society is changing. A main aim of our research is to find out from solo livers themselves about the experiences of living alone, so that debates about social change can be better informed by the reality of people’s lives. We also want to use our research to provide information to people who plan support services, housing, leisure and so on.

We’re carrying out telephone interviews because we want to speak to people all over Scotland, and we’re hoping to interview at least 200 men and women from rural as well as urban areas. We’d like to interview people for about an hour at a time that suits you, and we’ll be asking questions about your circumstances, where you live, how you find the neighbourhood, the background to you living on your own, and some questions about your life and future plans, and it should take about 45 minutes to an hour.

As we explain in the letter, these interviews are anonymous. Your name and address is confidential and won't be revealed to anyone outside the research team. We tape record the interview so that we can type out what’s been said, and this typed version uses a false name, not your real name, and will be checked for details that might identify you, and these are changed or removed. At the end of the project the typed versions are going to be deposited in a University Data Archive for the use of future researchers.

Our research will lead to a report and articles, and in these we the pseudonyms and make sure that no details that might identify a person are revealed in any publications.

If you are happy to take part and there are any questions you don’t want to answer or anything you don’t want to talk about that’s absolutely fine, just tell me and I’ll move on., and if you change your mind at any point that’s fine as well.

So can I check whether you’re happy to be interviewed just now and have this recorded?

[If so] Just to add we know that our equipment doesn't work so well if someone's on a speaker phone.

[if not now – make note of date/time they specify, ring back then].
SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS:

Organisations offering support specifically to survivors of rape and sexual abuse.

**Rape Crisis Scotland:**
0141 331 4180
http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

**Abuse Not**
http://www.abusenot.org.uk

One-to-one and group counselling for people who have experienced sexual abuse throughout Fife. Confidential services and also advice and support to partners and families of survivors.

**Archway**
http://www.archwayglasgow.com/

Archway Glasgow exists to provide forensic services and support to those who have experienced rape or sexual assault.

**BeyondAbuse.org**
http://www.beyondabuse.org

An online community for survivors and organisations who support survivors of sexual abuse.

**Break The Silence**
01563 559558

A free and confidential support service for female and male adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and their partners. Opening hours: Monday, Wednesday and Thursdays 10am - 4pm

**Central Scotland Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Centre**
www.rapecrisiscentralscotland.co.uk

CSRC&SAC provides a free and confidential service of emotional support and practical information on legal and medical issues to anyone who has experienced rape, sexual assault and child sexual abuse. Support can be either long or short-term and is offered by telephone, letter, email or face to face and includes support for family and friends.

**Eighteen and Under**
http://www.18u.org.uk

A national charity which offers confidential support and information to young people aged 18 and under who have experienced abuse.

**Fife Rape and Sexual Assault Centre**
01334 655205

A Fife-wide independent charitable voluntary organisation providing support to anyone, male or female aged 12 years and over who has experienced rape or sexual assault at any point in their lives.
Kingdom Abuse Survivors Project  www.kasp.org.uk

Free and confidential support services for male and female survivors of child sexual abuse. Also specialist resource for other agencies.

The Lighthouse Sanctuary  http://www.thelighthousesanctuary.com

The Lighthouse Sanctuary aims to provide a safe, informative and supportive environment for survivors of abuse. The website seeks to provide survivors of abuse and their families/partners with information and resources for support. To provide people with a better understanding of the emotional, physical and mental trauma of living and surviving abuse. The message board is open to survivors of abuse to share experiences, and gain support from each other in a non-judgemental and understanding environment, there is also a section for family and friends.

Moira Anderson Foundation  01236 602885  
http://www.members.aol.com/sandra7510/MAF.html

Telephone support, counselling and groups for survivors of child sexual abuse. Training aiming to protect children from abuse. Assists families affected through the legal process.

Rape and Abuse Line

   Helpline answered by women most evenings7-10pm 0808 800 0123
   Helpline answered by men on selected evenings7-10pm 0808 800 0122

Confidential freephone helplines for women and for men affected by rape and abuse, and for their partners, family and friends. Answerphones will give next helpline opening times. Also face to face counselling service in the Highlands (depending on area),

Rape and sexual abuse health services in Glasgow

http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/sexualhealthdirectory/abuse/one/info.htm

A directory run by Greater Glasgow Health Board which lists information about rape and sexual abuse services as well as other support and information.

SASSIE Sexual Abuse Survivors' Support in Edinburgh  0131 220 4722

A women-only organisation providing free and confidential group support to female

Women’s Support Project  0141 552 2221  www.womenssupportproject.co.uk

Information and support for woman who have suffered violence, and for their family, friends and supporters. Provides support for women whose children have been abused.
From:  Saved by Windows Internet Explorer 7
Sent:  21 May 2009 13:02
Subject:  Online Surveys - Admin

Solo-Living Interview Schedule

WELCOME PAGE - NOTE TO INTERVIEWERS

Refer to Interviewing Guidelines before phoning respondent.

Make sure you have filled in the Interview Contact details on the Contact sheet, as you will need this for the next page.

Make sure you also have the Introduction sheet available to recap on project and ask again re respondent's consent.

Question 5 will be the first question you ask the respondent.

[Continue >]
Online Surveys

Develop, launch and analyse Web-based surveys

· MAKE SURE HAVE NOTED DETAILS PRIOR TO CONDUCTING INTERVIEW

Questions 1 - 4, information from Contact sheet

1. INTERVIEWER CODE:

2. Sex
   - Male
   - Female

3. Age Group
   - 25-34
   - 35-44

4. Locality
   - Large Urban
   - Remote Small Town
   - Accessible Rural
   - Remote Rural

· INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Initial Question checks whether respondent still living alone.
If yes, go to q.12 on employment.
If no, ask follow up questions re who living with and for how long.

· INITIAL QUESTION

5. [If I can start by checking] are you currently living alone?
   [if ‘no’] would you mind if I just ask a few quick questions about your change of circumstance?
   - yes
   - no

6. [If not living alone, get information on who lives with] Who is it you're living with now?

   - who is living there?
   - Record age and sex, and (if other relative) relationship
   - How long ago did this person start to live with you?
     - Less than 6mths
     - More than 6mths but less than a year
     - More than a year

   a. lodger [go to q.7]
   b. partner [go to q.8]
c. dependent child  
d. grown up child  
e. friend  
f. parent  
g. other relative

7. [Ask if the person is a lodger]
   - do you keep a separate existence from this person?
   - or, are you eating together and, in some senses, forming a household together?

8. [Ask if the person is a partner]
   - is this a new relationship?
   - or somebody you have been in a romantic or sexual relationship with for a long time?

9. Was deciding to live with this person
   - planned for many months?
   - planned for a few weeks?
   - something that just happened?

10. Do you think of this as
    - a temporary arrangement?
    - a long-term arrangement?
    - a case of just wait and see?

11. When you were living on your own, how long was that for?
    - less than 6 months?
    - more than 6 months?

   *If more than six months, proceed with the interview, adapting the questions accordingly.*
Solo Living Interview

The first section starts by asking some fairly structured background questions, beginning with employment.

**Main Interview Section 1**

**Employment**

12. Are you working at the moment?
   [if not forthcoming, probe - eg 'is that full-time?', 'as an employee rather than self-employed?' to fit category as below]
   [If in paid work - go to Q. 13, if not go to Q. 14]
   - full-time employee
   - part-time employee
   - self-employed
   - unemployed
   - permanently sick or disabled
   - in education
   - government work or training scheme
   - looking after home or family
   - Other (please specify):

13. [If employed] and what is your occupation or job title?

   a. How long have you been in your current job?
      - 0-6 mths  6-12 mths  1-2 yrs  2-5 yrs  more than 5 years
   b. Is your job temporary?  permanent?
   c. How many employees are there at your workplace?
      - less than 25  25 to 500  more than 500
   d. How many hours would you say you work in a usual week?
      - 0-16  16-40  more than 40
      [if appropriate, and adapt if necessary] And is that a regular 9-5 pattern?
   e. Thinking about travelling to work, how far is your work from your home?
      [if work from home probe why - choice/other]
      - work from home
      - easy walking distance
      - less than 30 minutes away by public transport, bicycle or car
      - more than 30 minutes away
   f. And in terms of work-life balance, are you happy with the hours you are working?
      - yes  no
   g. [Probe answer][if yes] 'If you won the National Lottery for example, would you still keep working as you are?'[if no] Why is that?

14. [If not working - and if appropriate, keeping in mind why not working]
   How long is it since your last job?
   Are you actively seeking work?
   What is the job situation like in your area?
   Would you consider moving somewhere else to work?

15. Thinking of your [current/last] job, would you say you thought of this job as a career

   - Yes  No
   And was this job
   - the kind of job you had been looking for?  or, were you looking for something else?  or were you not looking for anything in particular?

**Education**

16. Moving on to a few questions about your education,
   What age did you leave school?
   - under 16 yrs  16 yrs  18 yrs or over
   a. And after leaving school, did you go on to do further education or training [and if so] was that straight from school?
straight into further education
straight into higher education
straight into training?
go into further education at a later date
go into higher education at a later date
go into training at a later date

If further/higher education or training at a later date - probe when and why
So you went [back into education][undertook training] - can you say a bit about why? Was it work related?

b. And what were the last qualifications that you got? [Probe when and why if not obvious] (e.g.) Were these work related?

Health and disability

[Bear in mind may have answered this in response to employment question - if so rephrase to suit]
17. Can you tell me if you have any long-standing illness or disability?

yes no

[If yes]

Does this affect your ability to work?


Does this mean you need regular help or care?


And who provides this help?
(Probe to identify relationship and sex if not obvious, eg mother)
(select all that apply)

■ Relative
■ Friends or neighbours
■ Home help
■ District Nurse
■ Health Visitor
■ Other

Income / Financial Status

This section is about your income and resources
18. Do you have a car or any other transport eg van, motorbike?

19. What do you usually earn in a year (before tax)?
[Can say just need broad figure and that answers banded in categories]

• less than £6000
• £6000 to £10000
• £10000 to £15000
• £15000 to £20000
• £20000 to £25000
• £25000 to £30000
• £30000 to £40000
• more than £40000

20. Do you receive any benefits? [If so, which ones?]

21. Do you have income from any other sources? [Eg savings and investments, or rent from other properties?]

22. What kind of accommodation do you live in?

■ Bedsit
■ Flat
■ House or bungalow

How many bedrooms do you have? [If 2 or more, pick up in later questions about having people to stay]

1 2 3 4 or more

23. Do you own the property or rent it?

■ Own outright
■ Own with mortgage
■ Rent from council or housing association
24. Do you have debts other than a mortgage eg have you taken out any loans?

25. Taking everything together, how would you describe your financial situation? Do you feel that you manage
- very well
- quite well
- get by alright
- don't manage very well
- have financial difficulties

26. OK, thinking about the future, how do you feel about your future financial position?

Do you have a pension? [If so - whether private/occupational]
[Probe answer?]
- a private pension?
- a work pension?
- no pension?

[Feelings about future financial security]

Marital / Parental Status

[Intro] Now a few questions about your partnership status and history

27. What is your current marital status?
- married
- single - never married
- divorced or separated
- widowed

[If single - never married]
Have you previously been in a cohabiting relationship?
- Yes
- No

28. [If has cohabited, or married, separated, divorced or widowed]
How long were you living with your partner?

29. Have you had past sexual or romantic relationships that did not involve living together?

30. Are your sexual or romantic relationships usually heterosexual or same sex?

Do you think your sexuality or approach to relationships has any consequences for how you feel about where you live?
31. Do you have a sexual or romantic relationship with anybody at the moment? [NB will be asking questions re future intentions about partnership and parenting at end of interview]

   Yes  No

   a. Do you think of this person as a partner or as a 'serious' or long term relationship?
      Yes  No  Might Too soon to say  Off and On
      Other (please specify):

   b. How long have you been in this relationship?
      Less than 6 months 6 months to a year more than a year

   c. Do they live nearby?

   d. Have you considered moving in together?
      Yes  No (if no, follow up)

      e. (if no) Why is that?

32. Have you ever had children?

   Yes  No

   a. [If yes, list sex and ages eg F16 M10 etc]

   b. [If children < 16] And where do they live?

Route into Solo Living

33. [Route into solo living - how long, where from - may have been covered previously]

   a. How long have you lived at your current address?
      less than 6 months
      6 months to 1 year
      1 to 5 years
      more than 5 years

   b. Have you lived on your own all of this time? [may have been mentioned previously]
      All  Half  Less than half

   c. [If not all] Who else has lived there?
      Lodger  Partner  Dependent child  Grown up child  Friend  Parent  Other relative

   d. [If child, friend, parent or other relative, record age and sex] Can I ask how old? Were they male or female?

   e. How long is it since they left?
      0-3 months  3-6 months  6-12 months more than 1 year

   And before you started living alone, who were you living with? [may have been mentioned]
   (select all that apply)

      Mother  Father  Sibling  Partner  Child/children  Flatmates
      Other (please specify):

34. Can you tell me a little about how you came to be living on your own? [may have been mentioned]

35. [so] Would you say that living alone is something that you chose to do, or something that was either unplanned or the outcome of other choices?
Where you’re from, Local area

OK, a few questions about your background and then the area where you live

36. What is your parents' nationality?

   a. mother
   b. father

37. Thinking about your nationality or ethnicity, how would you describe yourself?

38. Were you born in Scotland? [may have been covered previously]
   - Yes  
   - No
   - [If not] where were you born?

39. When did you move to the area you live now? [NB - may have always lived there, if so ask whether ever moved elsewhere temporarily]
   - a. Why did you move there?
   - b. Would you describe where you live now as a rural or an urban area, or perhaps more of a suburb?
   - c. Were you brought up in a rural or urban area?

40. How do you like [name of area where living] or 'the local area', what would you say about it as a place to live?
   - [If not covered] Are there any aspects you dislike?

41. Do you spend time doing things locally socially, or in your leisure time - [e.g.'s shops/theatre/cinema/restaurants/pubs/clubs sport/walking/fishing/shooting (if appropriate)]

42. What is public transport like in your area?
   - Do you use it?
   - - Yes
   - - No
   - - [If not, why not? (eg prefer car, lack of services, inconvenient, too expensive)]

43. Are there many people who look as if they are from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the area where you live?
   - Yes
   - No

44. Do you think that it would be difficult for somebody to be known as gay where you live or would it not make any difference?
   - Yes, it would be difficult
   - No, it would not make any difference

45. Would you recommend this as a place to live to someone in similar circumstances to yourself?
   - Yes
   - No

Main Interview Section 2

That finishes the first section - the next questions about your relationships with family and friends, who you spend your free time with and what you do socially
Social Networks and Activities

46. We're interested in how close by the important people in your life are, friends or family or lovers? Could you list the most important people in your life; tell me who they are and whether they live nearby? [No need to fill in all the rows - only use as many as are mentione]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Where Lives</th>
<th>how often are you in touch?</th>
<th>And are you in touch mainly by phone or do you meet up in person?</th>
<th>spent time with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. key person</td>
<td>30min</td>
<td>every day</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. key person</td>
<td>2hrs</td>
<td>once a week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. key person</td>
<td>Far</td>
<td>every month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. key person</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>every few months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. key person</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>once a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. key person</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>every few months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. key person</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>once a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. key person</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>every few months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. key person</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>once a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. key person</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>every few months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. key person</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>once a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. key person</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>every few months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. key person</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>once a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. Can I just check some details about your family please. How many brothers and sisters or step/half brothers and sisters do you have?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

48. And do you have any nephews or nieces?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

49. If I can ask a bit more about your family [do not ask again about people who have already been named a important person ]

- [ ] Tell me about how often you see nieces and nephews?
  - [ ] involved daily or weekly
  - [ ] monthly
  - [ ] several times a year
  - [ ] not very involved

50. [If doesn't see family often] Is this because of where you live?

51. Would family ties be a factor in any future plans you have about where you live? [adapt wording if estranged from family]

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

52. Have any of your family been supportive to you, perhaps with financial help or with getting your house together or when you have needed a bit of support? [adapt wording if estranged]

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

53. Tell me a bit more about your friends and their family circumstances [NB want information on whether most partnered/unpartnered or parents/childless, what sex] (select all that apply)

- [ ] Most are in couple relationships
- [ ] Half and family and unpartnered

The following question is designed to get a sense of contact with family members - potentially sensitive,
Most no partner
Most have children
Half have children
Most childless
Most are men
Most are women
Half men and women

a. And how long have you known them?
(select all that apply)

☐ A long time [for eg since school or college]  ☐ Got to know more recently  ☐ A mix

b. [If friends have children] Do you tend to know and spend time with their children?
☐ Yes involved  ☐ A little bit  ☐ No

54. Thinking about friendships, do you have friends in the area that you see more or less every week?
☐ yes
☐ no but every month
☐ no

a. If yes, what sort of things do you do together (eg go to the pub)?

b. [If not covered] Do you socialise in each others' homes?

55. Would you say that you have friends from work or that you have met through work - people that you socialise with outside work?
☐ yes
☐ no

If yes, how often do you see them and what kinds of things do you do together?

56. [Don't ask this as list - for record keeping only] What about having people to stay with you? [probe whether friends or family, how often, whether regularly]

How often?
once a week  how often?  once a month  less than that

57. Would you ever consider having a friend or someone else move in temporarily eg a tenant or flatmate?
☐ yes
☐ no

If no, why is that?

58. Thinking about how you spend your holidays; if you go away, is this usually going somewhere with other people or on your own; to visit other people [if yes probe who] or on your own?
(select all that apply)

☐ go away alone
☐ go away with friends
☐ go away with relatives
☐ go to visit friends
☐ go to visit relatives
☐ don't go away

59. What about holidays conventionally seen as family holidays, like Christmas? How do you spend these?

60. What about your relationship with your neighbours? [do you see them often?]

61. Do you feel involved in your local area?

62. Are there people around that you could call on to give you occasional help you if you needed it, for example a friend or neighbour who would water plants if you were away?

63. If you needed more help eg you broke an arm and needed help around the house, is there someone who would help you with this?
64. I asked you earlier about your own health and care requirements - is there anyone that you provide care for or support any others practically eg helping neighbours with odd jobs (if yes, probe activities and time involved).

65. Do you have any hobbies or interests?

[If mentions sport, probe whether spectator and if so if socially, if participate whether solitary (eg fishing) or group activity (eg football)]
And is that as a spectator or do you play?

66. Do you have any pets?

- yes
- no

67. Do you use the internet other than for work, to keep in touch with people or to access websites or chatrooms? Where do you access it?
[probe use - how often, whether 'online socialising' through virtual communities - eg MySpace, blogging]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>use to keep in touch with people eg email or Skype</th>
<th>How much time do you spend on the internet each week?</th>
<th>Favourite websites or chatrooms?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>less than 5 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-10 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| a. at home                                         |                                                     |                                 |
| b. at work                                         |                                                     |                                 |
| c. elsewhere eg friend's or library                |                                                     |                                 |

68. Do you use texting
(select all that apply)

- to make arrangements with people you see regularly
- to keep in touch with people who live some distance away

69. The final question in this section, are there any organisations or groups that you are involved with?
[probe whether actively participating, rather than just member, and how frequently]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>which organisation or religious group?</th>
<th>every week</th>
<th>how often?</th>
<th>once a month</th>
<th>less</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. voluntary organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. religious or faith based activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. other organisations eg social club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70. How do you feel about the amount of time that you spend in contact with other people?

- Would you want this to be more or less in the future?
  - more
  - stay same
  - less

71. Thinking first about the friends you are most in touch with, are any of them living alone?

- Most
- About half
- Less than half

72. Do most of your friends know that you live alone?

- yes
- no

73. Is the experience of living alone something you've talked about to many other people?

- yes
- no

74. What do your family think about your living alone?

75. [If employed] Do your colleagues and employers know that you live alone?
(select all that apply)

- yes, colleagues
- no, colleagues
- yes, employers
- no, employers

Do they make assumptions about you because you live alone? (eg that you are happy to stay late at work at short notice, or work over Christmas)


76. Do you feel that other people make assumptions about you because you live alone and, if so, what are they?


77. Have you ever felt that living alone affects how people behave towards you, for example things you're invited to socially?


78. Do you think of solo-living as a particular lifestyle?


Lastly, some questions about the future

79. First a couple of questions about work
   [If employed] Do you see yourself remaining in your job for the long term?
   - yes
   - no
   a. [If not working] What are your expectations around work in the future

   
   b. Further details?


80. Do you think you might do further education or training in the future?

   - yes
   - no
   If yes, would that be for work or other reasons?


81. Can you imagine moving to another area, either because of your work, or for any other reason?

   - yes
   - no
   [If yes] and do you have any plans to move from the area?
   [if so, probe when, why, what type of area (urban/rural/other)]


82. Thinking about partnership, would you consider living in a couple relationship in the future [may have covered previously]

   - Yes
   - No
   [probe reasons]


83. And do you do any activities to meet partners, either on the internet or through things like dating agencies or supper clubs?


84. What about other people, would you consider sharing with a flatmate or tenant in the future?

   - Yes
   - No
   [probe reasons]


85. Do you expect to continue to live alone?

   - yes
   - no
   [probe why/why not]
86. And have you thought about whether you would like [more] children? [if yes, probe about whether with existing partner and role of this in changing living arrangements, or if single whether would do this on own and if so how - has respondent considered means, e.g. adoption/other?] 

87. Thinking about your current contact with family and relatives, is this something that you expect or want to change? 

88. Is there anything about your contact with friends you expect to change or want to change? 

89. Now the last couple of questions 
What, if any, do you think are the advantages of solo living? 

90. What, if any, are the disadvantages of solo-living? 

91. And finally, have you ever considered the positives and negatives of living alone as you get into retirement age? 

[PLEASE END POSITIVELY] And if you continue to live alone, do you think you will be proud of and celebrating your independence and self reliance?

Continue > Check Answers & Continue >
Final Page - Thank you and whether willing to be interviewed

Thank you for your time.

We may come back to ask whether we can interview you a second time, if you have no objections, though we're not interviewing all participants again - would that be okay, to contact you again over the next few months?

Do you have any questions?

Thanks very much again

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Top | Log out
AREAS/THEMES FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS:

Pre-Interview:

Listen to recording (shared space restricted area, ‘Transcribed Recordings’ folder, by Code)
– note significant events/dates for Time Line
– also personal detail re area covered in Topic Guide to ‘personalise’ questions.

Read Interviewees Immediate Observations/Pro Forma (shared space restricted area, 'recordings and transcripts' folder, 'PRINTED Transcriptions chkd' folder, then by Interviewer/Code)

Equipment: Digital Recorders with Kathryn, with instruction booklet.

After interviews make Immediate Observations notes re area (facilities, remoteness etc), home, how interview went, etc.

Upload recording of interview to shared space restricted area, rename (I’ve used the pseudonym for these – eg STEPHENMLU2). [NB If getting Kathryn to upload please tell her pseudonym of interviewee so that she can rename following this format]. Email Kathryn to tell her to send to transcribers.

Check transcript against recording, save anonymised version as well as original with detail re place names, etc.
[Intro self/interview – mainly open-ended questions on similar themes to telephone interview, some new topics, reminder can move on from any questions don’t want to answer. Interviews s recorded, anonymised transcripts to be sent to UK Data Archive].

In this interview we’d like to ask some questions to check about some of the areas we’ve already asked about, to make sure we’ve got the information correctly, but also some more questions open-ended questions about some topics, and some questions about new topics – these are mainly to do with your home, some questions about food and eating, again like with the previous interview if there are any questions you don’t want to answer that’s absolutely fine, just let me know and I’ll move on.

Ok, firstly some check questions and to see if anything has changed since we last spoke to you;

EDUCATION [Only if respondent’s education trajectory not clear from BOS]

Check whether last qual highest.

Can I just check, you said your last qual was….., do you have any other quals apart from any you got at school? [NB REWORD/MISS OUT IF NONE]

If returner to education, probe motivations

And why would you say you went back to education?
(if not forthcoming) Was it job related?

How did you find studying [when you were older/while working?] How did you manage financially?

[QOL] and would you say that returning to education was positive, that it added to your quality of life?

EMPLOYMENT/FINANCIAL SECURITY

Can I just check, you said you’ve
- been working as a [occupation/job title] for [time]
- haven’t worked for [time], for [reasons]
You also said [if future changes desired/anticipated, area low empl, health permanent etc - personalise]

Have there been any change in your employment situation?

You said before you felt your financial situation was [tel int]. I’m going to suggest some circumstances and ask how you think this would affect you financially and how you would manage [probe for detail re whether could borrow, who from?]
- say for example you had an unexpected expense, a roof repair that needed doing that wasn’t covered by insurance, or medical treatment not covered by the NHS?
- what about if you were to lose your job?

Are there people you feel could help you out?

Are there people you’ve helped out financially? [If involved parent] Do you contribute to your kids? Do you anticipate having to support anyone else financially in the future (parents)

[QOL question] – Do you feel that your income is enough for your wants, for the quality of life you expect?

[Long hours] In terms of work life balance, you said you are working [hours a week] [and refer to any comments made re consequence] – is that something you feel you could cut back on if you wanted to, or is it really a demand of the job?

[A question to get at work as identity – relate to answer on Nat Lott in tel int – eg ‘it seems like you get more from your work than just the salary, can you say a bit more about why your work is important to you?’ – or adapt Qual of life question]

How do you feel about job security [in your sector/at your place of work?]

What about financial security in the long term, [apart from pension contributions] are you able to put something by each month? OK, thinking about the longer term, [relate to pension provision/savings and assets], how do you feel about your future financial situation? Do you anticipate getting for example an inheritance and if so is this something that you build in to how you plan for the future
And we asked about your health last time, any changes since then?

OK the next section is asking you some questions about your home [reference any comments re area and ‘space’ of solo living]

[In what ways do you think your (house/home) contribute to your qol? What good things or perhaps bad things does it add to how you feel about your life?]

[What in your house makes it seem personal to you? Reflects your personal taste?] [Comment re ornaments/hobbies on show]

Can I ask about photos you have – do you have any out on display? [probe where] and who are these of? Do you have other photos? [where/who of?]

[asking about assets – importance of, who to be ‘left’ to] We asked before about your financial assets, we’d like to also ask about things that might be valuable to you. [probe ‘keepsakes’] Are there things that you it would be important to you to keep, say if there was a fire, what would you rush to save?

Have you considered who you’d like to have these things, for example have you made a will? [probe more re financial assets – who would get house, pension?]

CONSUMPTION/RESOURCES – MONEY AND TIME:

Some people say that living alone makes things more difficult financially as you only have your own income to cover household costs, but other people say living alone is easier as you only have yourself to please, what would you say about your own spending? [Can you think of a specific example that shows this?] OK, like the previous question about hh costs, some people say that living alone makes things more difficult timewise as you only have one person to do all the hh stuff (on top of working), but other people say living alone is easier as your time is your own and you only have yourself to look after. What would you say about how you get to spend your time? Do you think that would be different if you lived with others?
SOCIALISING IN HOME: [You said you [incidence and regularity] of
two, do you have people dropping by without making plans, [ad if so
how do you feel about it?]

Do s anyone else have a key to your home, and is that just for
emergencies or are you happy for them to let themselves in?

If it was somebody you didn’t know, say someone turned up at the door
saying they were doing market research or something like that, would you
invite them in?

What about tidiness, how important would you say this is to you?
Do you do your own cleaning? [If not, probe] How many hours do they
do for you? What difference does having [a cleaner] make to you?

What about other tasks that need doing around the house, sort of DIY, do
you do that stuff yourself?
[Note – asks about partner sharing tasks specifically below]

[GARDEN]
[If has] I see you have a garden, do you look after that yourself? Do you
enjoy it, is it important to you would you say?
[If none] Do you mind not having a garden?

[If children/others stay often] OK, I’m going to ask you a few questions
about [your children/people who stay with you regularly] and the time
they spend here.
[Personalise] you said you/children stay here [frequency] – do they leave
any of their things here? Do they have a key? [Why/why not]
[Ask about whether they contribute financially/practically?]

ACTIVITIES: Can you say a bit more about how you spend your free
time [relate to any mention of hobbies/other activities in tel interviews].
[probe why if NOT socialising, no hobbies/other activities – whether
work/ other reasons preventing? Pick up on motivation for any ‘civic’
type activities involved in] You said you take part in [tel int] is this
something that’s important to you?

PETS
[If has] I notice you have a [cat/dog/etc] – would you say having pets is
important to you? Have you always had pets?
[If not] We asked in the tel int whether you had a pet – is that choice, or
would you consider this at some point?
MIGRATION: If plans to move - more about type of area, if know anyone there, how envisages ‘settling in’ (getting to know others, etc).

FOOD: OK the next few questions are about food, what you like to eat, if you enjoy cooking, whether you eat out.
What sort of food do you like? Where do you shop, do you have a regular pattern about where you shop and what you buy?
Where do you normally eat if you’re eating in on your own?
Is healthy food important to you? Do you enjoy cooking? Do you often cook for others?
What about eating out is this something you do? With others? Do you ever eat out on your own? [who? Why/why not?]

Do you think food is important part of your quality of life?

SOCIAL NETWORKS/INTIMACY
OK, a few questions now about your relationships with other people.
I’ve asked you if there was someone you could go to if you needed financial help, is there someone you feel you can talk over personal matters with? Who is this? So would you talk about personal issues if something specific came up, or do you talk about things like how you’re feeling with this person/these people quite regularly?

We asked in the telephone interviews about whether you get or provide practical support for other people, we’d like to know about other types of care, whether there are people who kind of check up on if everything is OK with you, how you’re feeling? And do you do that for them/others?

Are these people that you’ve known for a long time? Do you find it easy meeting new people? [probe where/how – work/other]

What about if you want company, would it be easy to arrange to meet up with someone?

What about regular arrangements to see others, is this sort of mutual in terms of efforts made to meet up - so who is it that contacts the other person/people (travelling to meet up/visits each other?)

BIRTHDAYS: OK some questions about birthdays, can you tell me how you celebrated your last birthday? Are there people you expect to get cards or presents from?
What about other people’s birthdays, are there people you would always celebrate with or give a card or present?

HOLIDAYS: [refernece tel int] OK can you tell me about your last holiday, if you went away and whether this was with other people. [Typical/new/would repeat?]

PARTNERSHIP: OK the next section is asking some more questions about your partnerships.

Can I just check, you said you’d [Go through timeline of ex partnerships – if cohab how long for, who owned house, what happened to it when relationship ended]

[If in relationship] You said last time that you thought this was a [serious/casual, etc] relationship – has there been any changes? Can you tell me more about how this relationship came about – tell me the story of where/how you met?

[If partner stays] [Personalise] you said your partner stay here/Does your partner stay over [frequency] – do they leave any of their things here? Do they have a key? [Why/why not] Do you stay at theirs? Is there a pattern about how you divide up any tasks (like cleaning or cooking) when they’re here? [Why, why not?] And do you stay in your partner’s home? [Why/why not?]

In the telephone interviews we asked about family holidays things like Christmas [reference what said] – do you and your partner spend this together? Does he/she visit your family, do you visits theirs? Do you know what your/their family think of your relationship? Do you entertain/socialise as a couple (if so whose home, how organised – whose friends/family invited, who pays for food, who cleans up etc).

[And if you were thinking about cohabiting, what are the things that you would consider as possible advantages of moving in together, and possible disadvantages/ have you discussed these with your partner?]

[Question about partner’s financial situation – can I ask, does your partner own his/her own home? Are they working?]

Whether discussed whose home (why/why not), other practicalities (belongings; sharing financial/domestic).
Have you talked about these issues with your partner
(as part of current arrangement and as part of future plans to cohabit –
how they organise things – just ‘happened’ or outcome of discussion?)

Parenthood: (reference answer in tel int)
Have you discussed this with your current partner?

[Question about attitude towards planning for the future – relate to how
thought out this seems to be from tel/current interview, probe why/why
hot (personality type? Age – seems too far ahead?)}