What is it?

Last year your household kindly agreed to be interviewed for the *Living in Britain* study, which has now been renamed as *Understanding Society*.

Understanding Society is the biggest study of its kind in the world – and we'd very much like you and the people you live with to be involved. By spending just a short time answering questions about your experiences and opinions you will help us paint a unique picture of life in the UK and how it's changing.

What is it for?

The information from the survey will help us learn more about each other, and will help people who analyse and design policies to make better decisions about how to improve everyone's lives.

Why am I being interviewed again?

Your household's help in the past was greatly appreciated and because the study is concerned with how people's lives change over time we would really like to interview you and your household again.

What do I have to do?
To join in, all you have to do is answer some questions about your life and your opinions. The interview will take around half an hour per person but it could take up to an hour depending on your circumstances. It will cover some of the key areas of life such as health, families and employment.

Who do you want to talk to?
We would like to talk to everyone aged 16 and over who lives in your home. If parents give their consent, we would also like young people aged 10-15 to complete a short questionnaire on-line.

Are you new to this household?
You are being asked to take part because you are now living in the household of someone who is taking part in *Understanding Society*. Without having your information, we cannot gain a complete understanding of how household and family circumstances may be changing. We hope you agree to take part as your help would be greatly appreciated.

How many people are being asked to take part?
This is the largest social research project of its kind – we're asking 80,000 people in 40,000 households to take part.

What will you do with the information?
The results of the survey will be used for research purposes. The results are strictly confidential and we operate under the rules of the Data Protection Act. You can ask to see your details at any time or to have them removed from our database. The data made available for analysis will be anonymous and individual people or households will not be identifiable from it.

Who is running it?
Researchers at the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex are running *Understanding Society* together with NatCen with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council.

What do I get out of it?
Each person in the household who takes part will receive a gift voucher. Each young person aged 10-15 will also receive a £3 gift voucher. As a member of *Understanding Society* you will also have access to study findings and research updates.

How do I find out more?

For more information visit: www.understandingsociety.org.uk/participants

How to contact us?

If your household's contact details have changed since you were last interviewed please let us know by calling Freephone **0800 252 853**, writing to **FREEPOST RRXX-KEKJ-JGKS, *Understanding Society*, University of Essex, Wivonhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ** or emailing **contact@understandingsociety.org.uk**

P2823/IP2/IL/DS

All you need to know about Understanding Society

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P2823/IP2/Information Leaflet/vA

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Information on adding education records

Understanding Society

US-education-records-01V5.indd 1 21/11/08 15:12:19

Introduction

Government departments and agencies collect a range of information about all of us for administrative purposes. This is so they can provide education and other services to us when we need them. While we can learn about people's lives, economic circumstances, experiences, behaviour and beliefs by asking direct questions, it can sometimes be easier to obtain some of this information from government departments. This leaflet explains more about this. Please take a moment to read it.

What information would be added?

Education Records including:

- National tests and formal assessments, for example SATS and GCSEs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Standard Grades in Scotland
- Basic information on pupils like demographic characteristics or special educational needs
- Courses taken

From:

- In England, the Department for Children, Schools and Families.
- In Wales, the Welsh Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.
- In Scotland, local education authorities as well as the Scottish Government Education Directorate
- In Northern Ireland, the Department of Education and the Education and Skills Authority.

Who will use it?

Like your survey responses, the additional information would be used by academic and social policy researchers for non-commercial statistical analysis. Any sensitive information would only be made available to them under restricted access arrangements which make sure that the information is used responsibly and safely. Names and addresses are never included in the results and no individual can be identified from the research.

Your permission – what does it cover?

Any information can only be released with your permission. In order to access the information, we will provide some necessary personal details such as your name and address to the government departments and agencies holding the information. These details will only be used to identify your information. Before the departments and agencies send any information you have authorised back to us, your name and other details will be removed. None of your survey responses will be disclosed to these sources for any other purpose.

Like the answers you have given us in the survey, the information from other sources will be completely confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Your current or future dealings with any of the departments or agencies will not be affected.

How long does your consent last?

We would like to add information relating to your present, past and future circumstances. We are not putting an expiry date to this consent as we do not know exactly when we will obtain and add the information. We will remind you regularly of the permissions you have given, and you are free to withdraw your consent at any time.

What about your children's information?

We would like to add information on your child(ren) from birth up to age 16. We need to seek parental consent to add information on your children aged under 16. We understand that some children would be able to make this decision on their own behalf. You should make the decision that represents your child's wishes and best interests. You could discuss this with your child, and you can withdraw your consent at any time. Once your child reaches the age of 16 we will ask your child directly.

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What about data security?

Your name and address will always be confidential. Your anonymous records and your anonymous survey answers will only be used for research and statistics. We are very security conscious and all of our systems are password protected and accessed by a small number of authorised staff. The information we need to exchange with the government departments and agencies will be sent via secure transfer systems. We implement the most up to date data security protocols and procedures. Your personal details will be secure at all times.

What if you change your mind?

If you wish to withdraw your permission at any point in the future, please write to **Freepost RRXX-KEKJ-JGKS, Understanding Society, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ** stating: " I < your name>, currently living at < your address and postcode> am a participant on *Understanding Society* and I wish to withdraw my permission for administrative education data to be added to my survey data." Please sign and date your letter.

You may choose to withdraw only part of the permissions you have given. To withdraw permissions you have given on behalf of your child(ren), you need to include their full name in your letter.

Thank-you

If you have any questions or concerns, just call our **Freephone number 0800 252 853** or write to **Freepost RRXX-KEKJ-JGKS, Understanding Society, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ**

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Understanding Society

Information on adding administrative health records

US-health-consent-01V5.indd 1 21/11/08 15:11:52

Introduction

The National Health Service (NHS) maintains routine medical and other health-related records on all patients accessing the health services so they can provide health services to us when we need them. While we can learn about people's lives, well-being, experiences, and behaviour by asking direct questions, it can sometimes be easier to obtain some of this information from administrative records. Administrative health records may also help us to keep in touch with you and keep our records up to date.

We would like to ask for your permission to add information from administrative health records to the answers you have provided in the interview. This leaflet explains more about this.
Please take a moment to read it.

What information would be added?

The information to be added is collected for administrative purposes by the NHS and held within statistical health databases by the NHS, the Departments of Health, the General Records Offices and the Office for National Statistics. The information may include, for instance:

- Admissions or attendances at hospital (including dates of admission, discharge or attendance, diagnoses received, treatments and surgical procedures, waiting times).
- Records of specific conditions such as cancer or diabetes (including type of condition)
- Health registration details (including name of the Health Authority registered with, NHS numbers, and if a person who took part in the study were to have passed away, the date and cause of death).

Who will use it?

Like your survey responses, the additional information may be used by academic and social policy researchers for non-commercial statistical analysis. Any sensitive information about specific health conditions or treatments would only be made available to them under restricted access arrangements such as legally binding licences, which make sure that the information is used responsibly and safely. Names, addresses and NHS numbers are strictly confidential and are not available to those using the data for statistical analysis. No individual can be identified from research findings.

Your permission – what does it cover?

Any information can only be released with your permission. In order to access the information, we will provide some necessary personal details such as your name and address to the NHS and government departments holding the information. These personal details will only be used to identify your information. Before any information you have authorised is sent back to us, your name and other details will be removed. None of your survey responses will be disclosed to the NHS or government departments for any other purpose.

Like the answers you have given us in the survey, the additional health information will be completely confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Your current or future dealings with the NHS or any government department or agency will not be affected.

How long does your consent last?

We would like to add information relating to your present, past and future circumstances. We are not putting an expiry date to this consent as we do not know exactly when we will obtain and add the information. We will remind you every three years of the permissions you have given, and you are free to withdraw your consent at any time.

What about your children's information?

We would like to add information on your child(ren) from birth up to age 16. We need to seek parental consent to add information on your children aged under 16. We understand that some children would be able to make this decision on their own behalf. You should make the decision that represents your child's wishes and best interests. Please discuss this with your child as appropriate. You can withdraw your consent at any time. Once your child reaches the age of 16 we will ask your child directly for their permission.

US-health-consent-01V5.indd 3 21/11/08 15:11:52

What about data security?

Your name, address and other personally identifying information such as your NHS number will always be strictly confidential. Your health records and your survey answers will only be used for research and statistics. We are very security conscious and all of our systems are password protected and your personal details can only be accessed by a small number of authorised staff. The information we need to exchange with the government departments and agencies will be encrypted and sent via secure transfer systems. We implement the most up to date data security protocols and procedures. Your personal details will be secure at all times.

What if you change your mind?

If you wish to withdraw your permission at any point in the future, please write to **Freepost RRXX-KEKJ-JGKS, Understanding Society, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ** stating: " I < your name>, currently living at < your address and postcode> am a participant on *Understanding Society* and I wish to withdraw my permission for administrative health data and health registration details to be added to my survey data." Please sign and date your letter.

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