

Life Opportunities Survey factsheet

What is the Life Opportunities Survey?

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) is a new national survey sponsored by ODI. It aims to collect information on people's life opportunities, covering areas such as work, education, social participation and the use of public services. The survey also aims to identify the reasons why people do not take part in work or leisure activities that they would like to, or why people experience difficulties with using public services.

Why does the survey matter?

The LOS will be an important source of information to help government improve life opportunities in a range of life areas. It will ask a range of questions about working life and leisure time, including the activities people like to take part in and the use of public services. It will explore the day-to-day problems people face in society, and the reasons for those problems. For example, are there difficulties faced when using public services? If so, are these due to transport, cost, accessibility of buildings, attitudes of others, lack of support and assistance or something else?

The government will use the information provided to

- measure the level of choice people have over their work and leisure activities.
- identify the reasons why people may be limited in their life opportunities.
- target policies and resources to where they are most needed.

The LOS will be used to inform policy designed to improve services for everyone, ensuring that more disabled people can participate in society as much as they would like to.

How will the survey work?

The survey is being conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which is the government department responsible for collecting and publishing official statistics about the UK's society and economy. LOS is conducted throughout the year with interviews taking place in a random sample of 37,500 households across Great Britain. All sectors of society are represented

ensuring that its results reflect the general population. The information collected will also feed into the wider national Integrated Household Survey of which the LOS forms a part.

ODI intends to run the survey again in future years by interviewing the same people. This will help us to understand how people's lives have changed and enable us to see whether life opportunities are really improving.

Can anyone take part?

As it is not possible to ask everyone in the country to take part in the survey, a random sample of addresses is selected to represent the entire country. If your address has been selected you will receive an introductory letter which contains information about the survey and details about how we will contact you.

It is important that we use a random sample to ensure we get a cross-section of the community. We are interested in people from all age groups and all parts of the country, whether families or those who live on their own. By doing this we will have a much better understanding of the opportunities available to everyone in Great Britain, disabled and non-disabled.

Participation in the survey is entirely voluntary and information collected will be kept confidential. The survey will also be accessible to disabled people with alternative formats provided and interviewers trained to help people take part.

When will the results be available?

The Life Opportunities Survey started in summer 2009 with first results expected in autumn 2010. This page will be updated to show the latest developments.

Further information

- www.odi.gov.uk/disability-statistics-research/life-opportunities-survey.php