
1970 BRITISH COHORT STUDY: AGE 50 SURVEY

Your guide to taking part



BCS70

1970 British
Cohort Study

50

YEARS OF LIFE
& SCIENCE

WELCOME TO THE AGE 50 SURVEY!

Over the past fifty years, you – and over 17,000 study members like you – have been telling us the stories of your lives. Together, the information you have provided represents the lives of your whole generation, and is creating one of the most valuable research resources of its kind anywhere in the world.

Each time you take part, BCS70 becomes even more valuable. This guide will answer any questions you may have about the Age 50 Survey. Please read it carefully before your interview. The Age 50 Survey will involve:

 paper questionnaire

 face-to-face interview

 short online questionnaire about your diet.

WHY IS BCS70 SO IMPORTANT?

Every time we visit you, we add the information you provide to what you told us before. This allows scientists to determine how our past experiences shape our future. Here are just a few examples of what the study has found.

READING FOR PLEASURE

When you were a child, we asked your mother about your reading habits. We also tested your vocabulary, spelling and maths as you grew.

We found that those who read for pleasure made more progress in every area

than those who rarely read – even in maths! This research received widespread press coverage, and has helped to shape policies on reading and libraries.

TRACKING THE RISE OF HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Obesity is one of the biggest public health problems of our time. We compared information from BCS70 to three studies of other generations to see how being quite overweight might be driven by social inequalities.

We found that for the Baby Boomers and your generation – Generation X- your family's social class made little difference to your weight in childhood. However, for Generation Z those born in the year 2000-1, clear social inequalities have emerged: those from lower social classes were more likely to be overweight. Today, the obesity epidemic disproportionately affects those who are less advantaged.

BIRTH WEIGHT AND BALANCE

In the very first BCS70 survey, we recorded your birth weight. At age 10, we tested your balance by asking you to stand on one leg.

Researchers found that babies who were heavier at birth were more likely to have good balance at age 10 – an important indicator of good overall health. When we last visited you in your mid-40s, we tested your balance again to see how life experiences might affect balance as you get older.



SO WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Within the next few weeks, your interviewer will be in touch to answer any questions you have and book your face-to-face interview at a time that suits you. As always, the interviewer will be fully trained, and experienced in conducting research. Your participation is, of course, entirely voluntary.

If you don't want to take part this time around please contact the NatCen research team by email at bcs70@natcen.ac.uk or on Freephone **0800 526 397** between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm (Monday to Friday).



BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW: PAPER QUESTIONNAIRE

Once you have booked your face-to-face interview, the interviewer will send you a paper questionnaire in the post. If possible, we would like you to complete it **before your interview**.

The paper questionnaire will include questions about wellbeing, physical activity and leisure activities. It will take about 30 minutes to complete. Your interviewer will collect the questionnaire when they visit you to conduct your interview.



YOUR FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW

In the interview, we will ask you about some familiar topics, including your relationships with friends and family, your employment and income, and your physical and mental health. We will also ask some new questions about smartphone usage, so it would be great if you have yours ready when we visit.

For more private questions, you will have the opportunity to fill in the answers by yourself on the interviewer's laptop.

The interview will take around 80 minutes to complete. As always, if at any point there's any questions that you don't feel comfortable answering, you can just tell the interviewer you want to skip that question.



AFTER YOUR INTERVIEW: ONLINE DIETARY QUESTIONNAIRE

Lastly, we would be grateful if on two days after your interview you could complete an online questionnaire about what you ate and drank the day before.

The questionnaire will take around 15 minutes to complete on each day. The days will be allocated to you during your interview. Your interviewer will give you more information about this when they visit.



MORE INFORMATION

ADDING OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

Many of you have already given us permission to add information about you from health records held by the NHS, and economic records held by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Your health records will help us understand what causes illnesses and conditions, and how they could be prevented.

Your economic records will help give us deeper insight into how people's finances affect different aspects of life.

If you haven't already given permission your interviewer will ask you about this. They will provide full details and answer any questions you may have.

We would also like to ask your partner (if you have one) if we can add their records, if they haven't already given permission. The experiences of those you live with have a big impact on you, so this information would give a more accurate picture of the factors affecting your life.

WHO CARRIES OUT THE SURVEY?

BCS70 is run by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS), a research centre in the UCL Institute of Education. The Economic and Social Research Council funds the survey.

The Age 50 Survey is being conducted by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and Kantar, two of Britain's largest social research agencies.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The BCS70 Age 50 Survey has been approved by an independent group called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your safety, rights, wellbeing and dignity.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA SECURITY

The information you provide will be treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and used for research purposes only. This means that the data we collect from you is kept separately from information which could identify you. When reports using the data are published, care is taken to ensure that no information which could identify an individual is included.

The data controller for this project is University College London (UCL). A data controller refers to the party that determines the way personal data is processed, and for what reason. The UCL Data Protection Office provides oversight of UCL activities that process personal data, and can be contacted at: data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

The legal basis used to process your personal data is performance of a task in the public interest.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is processed, please contact the UCL Data Protection Office in the first instance using the email address above. If you remain unsatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Contact details, and details of data subject rights, are available on the ICO website at: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Your data will be stored securely and retained until no longer required by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies.

Participation in this research is not compulsory and you have the right to withdraw at any stage. More information about privacy and confidentiality is available on the BCS70 website: <https://bcs70.info/faqs/#privacy-and-data-protection>

SUPPORT AND ADVICE

If you need support or advice on any of the topics in the survey the following organisations may be able to help.

SupportLine: 01708 765 200
Citizen's Advice Bureau:
03444 111 444

WHO TO CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

Your interviewer should be able to answer any further questions you might have, but if you need more information or want to make a complaint, please contact NatCen:

 Freephone 0800 526 397

 bcs70@natcen.ac.uk

You can also find out more at

 www.bcs70.info

 bcs70@ucl.ac.uk

 0800 035 5761

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