

BIS Self-employed Survey 2015

Technical Summary

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Technical summary

1.1 Introduction

The Self-employment Survey (SES) is an ad-hoc survey that was administered by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The survey is a short computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) survey designed to collect more detailed data on the self-employed. The sample consisted of individuals who had identified themselves as self-employed and consented to take part in further research when previously taking part in the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Data was collected covered a six week period from September to October 2015.

1.2 Aims

The LFS has shown that the number of self-employed people in the United Kingdom increased by over half a million between 2010 and 2015¹, accounting for over a quarter of the growth in total employment over that period.

The self-employed are a heterogeneous group with diverse circumstances and barriers to success. The more detailed data collected from the SES will enable BIS and others to develop a deeper understanding of the self-employed population, and ultimately to improve policy that affects the self-employed and help unlock improvements in productivity.

Note

1. For the latest LFS tables showing estimates of the number of people in self employment in the United Kingdom see Table EMP01 available at:
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-389924#tab-Employment-tables>

1.3 Sample and Sample Design

Eligible sample

The eligible sample for the SES comprised individuals who when completing their final wave of the LFS in 2014 had:

1. Identified as being self-employed in their main job.
(*stat* = 2 and *everwk* = -9, equivalent to the derived variable *statr* = 2)
2. Specifically not objected to re-contact, or had not answered the re-contact question and someone in the individuals household had specifically not objected to re-contact.
((*recallp* or *recallh* = 2) or (*recallp* or *recallh* = -9 and *recallp* or *recallh* = 2 for someone in the household = 2))

For more information on LFS variables please see the [Labour Force Survey User Guides](#)

This provided a total eligible sample of approximately 4000 individuals. Approximately 70% of these had not specifically objected to re-contact, 30% had not provided an answer or been asked the re-contact question but someone within their household had specifically not objected to re-contact.

Issued sample

From this eligible sample of approximately 4000, a sample of 2503 individuals was issued.

The size of the issued sample required was based on eligibility and response rate assumptions that reflected previous LFS follow up surveys conducted by the ONS.

In order to maximise response, it was ensured that individuals who had completed their final wave of the LFS most recently and those individuals who had specifically not objected to re-contact were included within the issued sample. Approximately 80% of the issued sample had specifically not objected to re-contact.

Only one individual per household was selected at random from households with multiple self-employed members. Any individuals with missing contact details were also not included.

1.4 Questionnaire Design and Development

Design

The SES questionnaire (see Annex 1) was developed by ONS Social Survey in consultation with BIS (from an initial set of questions). The questionnaire was programmed into CATI format using BLAISE. The layout and interviewer instructions followed standard ONS format to assist the telephone interviewers in administering the questionnaire accurately and smoothly.

The questionnaire consists of 50, mostly closed questions. A complete interview was expected to last an average of 20 minutes.

The questionnaire was roughly split into six sections that asked questions regarding:

- Self-employment type
- Entry to self-employment
- Future in self-employment
- Benefits of self-employment
- Challenges of self-employment
- Administration related to self-employment

Individuals who report being no longer self-employed were asked one shorter section which sought information regarding why they were no longer self-employed.

Testing

Due to the limited time frame in which to execute the SES it was not possible to conduct a formal pilot or any form of cognitive testing, other testing procedures were instigated during the development of the questionnaire to promote quality:

- Expert reviews were undertaken at various stages of the development process.
- Experienced telephone interviewers trialled the questionnaire. The ONS Telephone Unit were well placed to provide their expertise in testing the questionnaire to ensure its suitability for a telephone interview.
- All telephone interviewers were briefed on the survey and provided with written reference materials prior to the commencement of live fieldwork (See Annexes 1 and 2).
- A pause and review exercise was undertaken after a small amount of interviewing had been undertaken to confirm that there were no significant issues being encountered with the questionnaire or survey processes.

1.5 Data Collection

Methodology

The SES was conducted as a CATI by a team of experienced telephone interviewers from the ONS Telephone Operations Unit.

Telephone Operations Unit

The Titchfield based ONS Telephone Unit includes a team of around 200 highly skilled interviewers who use up to date methods and technologies to schedule and manage cases, in order that data is collected as quickly and efficiently as possible. The team is mainly utilised on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) but also conducts a range of ad hoc surveys and keep in touch exercises each year.

Interviewer Training and Briefings

Interviewers were allocated to the survey and attended a survey specific briefing day on 9th September 2015, a few days before the commencement of data collection on the 14th September.

The briefing covered;

- Background to the survey and sponsor.
- Approaching respondents.
- Survey documentation.
- Questionnaire content.
- Demonstration of the questionnaire (mock interview).
- The importance of high quality data and a high response rate.

The briefing further covered any non-standard or difficult concepts and sections of the interview which were considered most likely to cause problems. Interviewers were provided with scenarios of how different types of self-employed individuals may respond to the survey. This more practical element was intended to ensure that interviewers were conversant with the wording and routing of the questions and other aspects of the questionnaire.

Interviewers were provided with a printable version of the questionnaire (see Annex 1) and a summary of the briefing presentation.

Interviewers also took part in review sessions and a post data collection debrief. The briefings were supported by ONS Telephone Unit Managers and Researchers from ONS Social Survey Division.

Length of interview

Interviewers informed respondents that the interview would last around 15 minutes. Overall, median interview length was 17.8 minutes. This was broadly in line with expected interview length.

Respondents who were still self-employed received a more detailed interview for which the median interview length was 18.9 minutes. Respondents who were no longer self-employed or now self-employed in their second job received a shorter interview for which the median interview length was 7.6 minutes.

1.6 Response Rates

The SES yielded a total of 1423 complete responses.

The overall response rate was 57% (Table 1). Response rate refers to the percentage of the total issued sample who gave a complete interview.

Table 1: Response Rate summary

Type	N	% of issued sample
Complete interviews	1423	57
Partial interviews	33	1
Non contact	528	21
Refusals ¹	486	19
Ineligible ¹	33	1
Total issued sample	2503	100

Table note

1. It is possible that a proportion of refusals were actually due to ineligibility. However, it is not possible to accurately ascertain this information. Ineligibility refers to individuals who agreed to take part in the survey but who reported they had never been self-employed previously.

Reasons for Refusal

Reported reasons for refusals included:

- Outright refusals.
- Contacts who could only agree appointments outside the field period.
- 'Gatekeepers' reporting that the responsible person was busy or away.

Reasons for Non-contact

Approximately 21% of the overall response constituted non-contacts. Reported reasons for non-contacts include the following:

- Wrong number.
- Unobtainable.
- Message left with another person.
- Answer phone.
- No reply (no one answered the phone).

Measures Taken to Maximise Response

Throughout the survey, measures taken to ensure as high response rate as possible included the following:

- Ensuring the quality of contact details was high prior to the start of the survey.
- Use of advance letters which were sent out approximately 1 week before fieldwork. Respondents who said they had not received the letter were asked for their email address and immediately sent an electronic copy.
- The ONS Survey Enquiry Line (SEL), a free phone number was available to respondents that had any queries or questions to ask before and during the data collection phase.

- An electronic copy of the questionnaire was emailed to contacts who insisted they wanted to know the nature of the questions before participating in the survey.
- Excellent training given to interviewers with good supervision and support from managers.
- Follow-up calls; potential respondents that did not yield a productive response outcome were all contacted at least 6 times.

Achieved sample profile: Complete interviews only

Tables 2 to 5 show the unweighted profile of the achieved sample, by key demographics.

Table 2: Achieved sample by sex

Sex	N	% of achieved sample
Male	896	63
Female	527	37
Total	1423	100

Table 3: Achieved sample by age band

Age band	N	% of achieved sample
16 to 24	16	1
25 to 34	92	6
35 to 44	266	19
45 to 54	390	27
55 to 64	419	29
65 to 74	212	15
75 and over	28	2
Total	1423	100

Table 4: Achieved sample by region

Government Office Region	N	% of achieved sample
North East	42	3
North West	95	7
Merseyside	19	1
Yorkshire and Humberside	104	7
East Midlands	90	6
West Midlands	112	8
Eastern	173	12
London	173	12
South East	274	19
South West	176	12
Wales	64	4
Scotland	101	7
Total	1423	100

Table 5: Achieved sample by self-employment status

Self-employment status	N	% of achieved sample
Still self-employed	1228	86
Now self-employed as their second job	16	1
No longer self-employed	179	13
Total	1423	100

1.7 Data Validation

Data validation started during the data collection phase which involved Telephone Unit Managers undertaking random checks on completed questionnaires before they were sent to the ONS Social Survey researchers for further validation.

As with most survey checking procedures, the different types of potential anomalies that were central to the validation process comprised:

- Routing checks; to ensure routing of questions were followed.
- Consistency checks; to determine whether linked responses in different parts of the questionnaire were consistent with each other.
- Plausibility checks; to determine whether a response was valid given other information collected about that case.
- Undertaking basic frequency checks and cross tabulations.

A SPSS and SAS data file was provided to BIS on an encrypted and password protected CD. The data file provided for the SES comprised a total of 1248 variables, 180 variables from the SES and 1068 variables that had been requested by BIS to be matched from the Annual Population Survey (APS) January to December 2014. Please note that demographic information was obtained from the APS and checked but not re-collected on the SES.

1.8 Weighting

The SES was conducted as a follow up study to the LFS. This approach enables weighting of the SES data using the Annual Population Survey (APS) and the matching of SES data to that collected on the APS.

The APS

The APS consists of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) waves one and five for the UK, plus data from the annual Local (Area) Labour Force Survey (LLFS) also known as the LFS boost for England, Scotland and Wales. Respondent interviews are conducted at quarterly intervals in the LFS and annual intervals on the LLFS. This wave pattern ensures no person appears more than once in an APS dataset.

Further information on the APS can be found in the [Labour Force Survey User Guides](#)

Matching the SES to APS

The SES dataset includes 180 variables collected from the SES matched to 1068 variables from the APS.

It was not possible to match all SES cases back to the APS. A small number of LFS follow up cases were individuals who had completed their last wave of the LFS at a wave other than waves one and five and so are not included within the APS. For example, individuals who had become aged 75 or above at wave two, three, or four and were therefore ineligible to complete a further wave of the LFS. These cases have received a weight, however do not have values for the supplementary APS variables.

Weighting the SES data

A total of 1423 individuals appear on the dataset. These complete cases were weighted to the 2014 APS person data set. A single set of person level weights are included on the SES dataset.

The principle of using weights is to make analyses representative of the target population, and to lessen potential biases which may be present when using unweighted data. Such unweighted analysis would be subject to the effects of non-response and other non-sampling errors which weighting attempts to overcome.

When no weights are applied to the data, analysis results will be based on the actual number of cases within the dataset. Unweighted analysis will not reflect selection probabilities.

Using the weight will ensure estimates are representative of the target population - self-employed people within the UK population aged 16 and over in 2014. The weights for all respondents will sum to the estimated total number of people in this target population both overall and within subgroups by age, sex and region.

Analysing the data

For further information regarding confidence interval testing please see the [LFS user guides](#). Note that the design effect, the extent to which the expected sampling error in a survey departs from the sampling error that can be expected under simple random sampling, has not been calculated and accounted for within this survey.

Annex 1: Self-Employment Survey 2015 Questionnaire

Introduction

Hello, my name is (interviewer name) from the Office for National Statistics. Can I just confirm, am I speaking to {participant name}

We are carrying out a survey for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills about self-employment. We are addressing this survey to households who agreed to be contacted again when taking part in the Labour Force Survey previously.

Your views about self-employment are very important in helping the Department to understand the challenges faced by people who are or have been self-employed.

I would like to assure you that, in accordance with the Official Statistics Code of Practice, all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used by the Department for research purposes only. It will not be possible to identify any particular individual in the results.

The interview will take around 15 minutes.

Are you happy to go ahead with the interview?

- 1. Yes ☐ Continue with the interview.
- 1.2. No ☐ Thanks and close the interview.

(ASK ALL)

- 1. Can I check whether you are still self-employed in your main job?

Prompt as necessary

Q1

- 1. Yes
- 2. No – not self-employed any more
- 3. No – it's now my second job
- 4. No – I've never been self-employed

Section A: Type of self-employment

(IF Q1 = 1)

INTRO A: I would like to first ask you some questions about your self-employment status.

(IF INTRO A)

2. Which of the following describe the nature of your self-employment

Individual prompt – Code all that apply

Q2_1 to Q2_6, Q2other, Q2main

1. Running my own business (business owner or partner)?
2. Doing freelance work?
3. Sub-contractor or contract worker?
4. Work through an agency?
5. Employed on a zero-hours contract?
6. Other – please specify **[SPONTANEOUS ONLY]**

(IF Q2 = 4)

2a) Can I ask how you are paid when you work through the agency?

Running prompt

Q2agency, Q2agencyother

1. Paid as a self-employed contractor by the businesses you work for
2. On the payroll of the businesses you work for
3. On the payroll of the agency
4. Paid through an umbrella company (also known as a payment intermediary)?
5. Other **[SPECIFY]**

(IF Q2 = ANY)

3. Roughly how many different clients do you have over the course of a normal month?

Prompt as necessary

Q3

1. 1
2. 2-3
3. 4-9
4. 10 or more

(IF Q3 =1 to 4)

4. And how much of your business would you say comes from your main client:

Code first that applies

Q4

1. All of it?
2. At least three quarters of my business?
3. At least half of my business?
4. At least a quarter of my business?
5. Less than a quarter of my business?

6. Don't have a main client?

(IF Q4 = 1)

4a) Do you work exclusively for that client all of the time?

Q4allmain

1. Yes
2. No

Section B: Route of entry into self-employment

(IF Q1 =1)

INTRO B: For the next set of questions, I'd like you to think back to when you were first starting out in your current self-employment or business.

(IF INTRO B)

5. Just before you actually started in this self-employment, what was the main thing you were doing? Were you:

Running prompt

Q5

1. Self-employed doing something different/running a different business
2. Working for an employer in a paid role
3. Working for an employer in a voluntary or unpaid role
4. In training or education
5. Retired
6. Not working, but actively looking for work
7. Not working and not looking for work?

(IF Q5 = 1 – 4)

6. Were you full time or part-time?

Q6

1. Full time
2. Part time

(IF Q5 = ANY)

7. Which of the following do you think are advantages for you of being self-employed rather than working as an employee:

Individual prompt – Code all that apply

Q7_1 to Q7_6, Q7main

1. Earn more money?
2. Pay less tax?
3. Have more independence?
4. Have more time or flexibility?
5. Get more job satisfaction or greater challenge from your work?
6. None of these.

(IF Q5 = ANY)

8. Did any of the following contribute to you taking up your current self-employment:

Individual prompt – Code all that apply

Q8_1 to Q8_10, Q8other

1. Couldn't get a job as an employee in the type of work I wanted in my local area?
2. Employer at the time wanted me to move into self-employment?
3. Needed to work round childcare or other caring commitments?

4. Previous job came to an end (including redundancy)?
5. Gave you an opportunity to work around a health issue?
6. Continuation of a family business?
7. Saw a specific gap in the market or business opportunity?
8. Being self-employed is normal for the job you do?
9. None of these.
10. Any other circumstances – **[SPONTANEOUS]**

(IF Q5 = 2 or 3 AND Q8 NOT EQUAL 2)

9. Did you start earning money from your business or self-employment while you were still working for your employer?

Q9

1. Yes
2. No

(IF Q5 = 2 or 3)

10. And at the point you stopped being employed did you still do work or business with or for your previous employer?

Prompt as necessary

Q10

1. Yes, all of my work was with my previous employer
2. Yes, most of my work was with my previous employer
3. Yes, some of my work was with my previous employer
4. No

(IF Q5 = 1 to 7)

11. When you were starting out in your current self-employment or business, did you look for advice or support?

Q11

1. Yes
2. No

(IF Q11 =1)

12. Was the advice or support:

Running prompt

Q12

1. Formal – e.g., from government or from private organisations such as employment agencies or accountants.
2. Informal –e.g., from family or friends
3. Both or a mixture?

(IF Q11=1)

13. And how well would you say your needs for advice or support were met:

Running prompt

Q13

1. Met well
2. Met to some extent
3. Not met at all?

(IF Q11 = 2)

14. Why did you not seek advice or support? Was it that:

Individual prompt – Code all that apply

Q14_1 to Q14_4

1. Didn't know who to ask?
2. Didn't know what to ask about?
3. Didn't know where to look?
4. I already knew everything I needed?

Section C: Choice between self-employment and other types of employment

(IF Q1 =1)

INTRO C: I would now like to ask you some questions about your future plans.

(IF INTRO C)

15. Do you expect to leave self-employment in the next 3 years?

Prompt as necessary

Q15

1. Yes, in the next 6 months
2. Yes, in the next year
3. Yes, in 2-3 years time?
4. No plans to leave in next 3 years

(IF Q15 = 4)

16. Can I ask what you think you would probably be doing if you weren't in self-employment? Would you be:

Running prompt

Q16

1. Working for an employer in a paid role
2. Working for an employer in a voluntary or unpaid role
3. In training or education
4. Retired
5. Not working, but actively looking for work
6. Not working and not looking for work?
7. Not sure what would do

(IF Q15 = 1 – 3)

17. And what do you intend to do when you leave self-employment? Are you going to:

Running prompt

Q17, Q17other

1. Work for an employer in a paid role
2. Work for an employer in a voluntary or unpaid role
3. Take a break from working to study
4. Take a break from working for family reasons
5. Retire?
6. Other– **[SPECIFY]**

(IF Q17 = 1 or 2)

18. Why are you going to work as an employee?

Prompt as necessary - (prompt for main reason)

Q18, Q18other

1. I don't expect my business to survive
2. Would be financially better off
3. It would be more fulfilling or I want a career
4. More security
5. Will have finished what I wanted to do in self employment
6. Being self-employed makes it hard to get credit or mortgage etc
7. A job on the payroll has arisen or is likely to arise at an existing client.
8. Other – specify

(IF Q18 = 7)

18a) What is particularly attractive about this compared to your previous self employment?

Prompt as necessary - (prompt for main reason)

Q18payroll, Q18payrollother

1. I don't expect my business to survive
2. Would be financially better off
3. It would be more fulfilling or I want a career
4. More security
5. Will have finished what I wanted to do in self employment
6. Being self-employed makes it hard to get credit or mortgage etc
7. Other – specify

(IF Q15 = ANY)

19. How many employees do you currently have? Do you have:

Prompt as necessary

Q19

1. None
2. 1
3. 2-4
4. 5-9
5. 10-49
6. 50 or over

(IF Q15 = 3 or 4)

20. Do you expect to take on more (IF Q19 = 2,3,4,5 or 6) or any (IF Q19 =1) employees in the next 3 years?

Q20

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

(IF Q19 = 1)

21. And could I ask what is the main reason for you not currently having any employees?

Prompt as necessary

Q21, Q21other

1. Not enough business or work
2. Cash flow too uneven
3. Too much extra cost
4. Too much extra administration
5. Don't know how to go about it or too complicated
6. Too much risk or responsibility
7. Can't find the right people
8. Never thought about it or not relevant to me
9. Other issue – specify

Section D: Benefits of self-employment

(IF Q1 =1)

INTRO D: I would now like to ask you about your life in self-employment.

(IF INTRO D)

22. Do you think being in self-employment means you are now financially better off, or worse off compared to if you were an employee doing something similar?

Q22

1. Better off
2. Worse off
3. About the same **[SPONTANEOUS RESPONSE ONLY]**
4. Don't know **[SPONTANEOUS RESPONSE ONLY]**

(IF Q22 = ANY)

23. Do you think being in self-employment means you have more job satisfaction or less job satisfaction than if you were an employee doing something similar?

Q23

1. More
2. Less
3. About the same **[SPONTANEOUS RESPONSE ONLY]**
4. Don't know **[SPONTANEOUS RESPONSE ONLY]**

(IF Q23 = ANY)

24. Do you think being in self-employment means that overall your life is better or worse than if you were an employee doing something similar?

Q24

1. Better
2. Worse
3. About the same **[SPONTANEOUS RESPONSE ONLY]**
4. Don't know **[SPONTANEOUS RESPONSE ONLY]**

(IF Q24 = ANY)

25. What other sources of income do you have besides your earnings or dividends from self-employment? Do you have:

Individual prompt – Code all that apply

Q25_1 to Q25_10, Q25other

1. Other employment or partnership income?
2. Rental or other property income (other than from my business)?
3. Trusts, interest or dividends?
4. State pension?
5. Private pension?
6. Tax credits?
7. State benefits?

8. Income from a partner or other family members?
9. Other – [SPECIFY]
10. None

(IF Q25 = 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 or 9)

26. Would you choose to be self-employed if you didn't have that other income?

Q26

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

(IF Q26 = ANY)

27. Which of these options best describes the extent to which you rely on your income from self-employment:

Running prompt

Q27

1. I only have enough income because I get tax credits(only include if Q25=6) and state benefits as well [**ONLY INCLUDED IF Q25 = 6 or 7**] [**IF Q25 NOT EQUAL 6 or 7 DO NOT INCLUDE OPTION**]
2. It allows me a basic standard of living and not much more.
3. It allows me to maintain the lifestyle I expect.
4. It allows me a bit of extra money for luxuries.
5. I don't rely on this income?

(IF Q27 = 1 to 5)

28. Have you ever had to rely on financial support from family or friends due to not earning enough in self-employment?

Prompt as necessary

Q28

1. Yes, initially to get the business going
2. Yes, from time to time through the life of the business
3. Yes, often through the life of the business
4. No

(IF Q28 = ANY)

29. And have you had to rely on other support from family or friends, such as helping out in the business or helping with childcare or other caring responsibilities?

Prompt as necessary

Q29

1. Yes, initially to get the business going
2. Yes, from time to time through the life of the business
3. Yes, often through the life of the business
4. No

(IF Q29 = 1,2 or 3)

30. And what sort of help was it? Was it:

Individual prompt – Code all that apply

Q30_1 to Q30_5, Q30other

1. Helping out in the business?
2. Advice on the business?
3. Childcare?
4. Other caring responsibilities?
5. Other

(IF Q29 = ANY)

31. Which of the following forms of business networks, if any, do you consider yourself part of?

Individual prompt – Code all that apply

Q31_1 to Q31_6, Q31other

1. A social media business network such as LinkedIn?
2. A local Chamber of Commerce?
3. A formal business network e.g. one that meets regularly?
4. An informal business network that meets socially to discuss mutual business interests?
5. Other form of network? **[SPECIFY]**
6. None of the above

(IF Q31 = ANY)

32. In your day to day work do you regularly work or co-operate with other self-employed people or businesses?

Prompt as necessary

Q32_1 to Q32_3

1. Yes – working on the same jobs or projects as a team
2. Yes – referring people on or sharing clients for different jobs
3. No

(IF Q32 = ANY)

33. Roughly how many days holiday did you take off in the last year, excluding public holidays and weekends?

Record number of days

Q33

(IF Q33 = ANY)

34. Roughly how many days did you not work in the last year because you were too ill to work?

Record number of days

Q34

Section E: Challenges of self-employment

(IF Q1 = 1)

INTRO E: I would now like to ask you about your opinion on some of the potential challenges of being self-employed.

(IF INTRO E)

35. To what extent are the following aspects a problem for you as a self-employed person?

Please answer by saying if they were 'a big problem or something of a problem or not a problem'

Q35_1 to Q35_8

1. Not knowing how much income I will have from month to month
2. Not getting paid if I fall ill or for taking time out for personal reasons
3. Not having enough customers or clients or work
4. Not having security of being a paid employee
5. Struggling to balance work and family life
6. Not being able to save enough for the future
7. Isolation or working alone
8. Having to understand how to do the paperwork - e.g. comply with tax rules and reporting

(IF Q35 = ANY)

36. Has being self-employed caused you difficulties in the last 5 years when attempting to apply for any of the following financial products?

Please answer with 'Yes, has caused difficulties/No, has not caused difficulties/I haven't applied for this in the last 5 years'

Q36_1 to Q36_7

1. A mortgage
2. Rental accommodation
3. Credit card
4. Personal loan
5. Business loan
6. Personal insurance
7. Business insurance

(IF Q36 = ANY)

37. Do you have or do any of the following to help you plan for a potential drop in income when you may be too ill to work:

Individual prompt – Code all that apply

Q37_1 to Q37_6

1. Have insurance?
2. Have savings you could use?
3. Allow for it when you work out my rates/prices?
4. Rely on my partner's or other family members income?
5. Try not to take time off with illness?
6. None of the above

(IF Q37 = ANY)

38. Thinking about retirement plans, which of the following apply to you:

Individual prompt – Code all that apply

Q38_1 to Q38_9, Q38other

1. I plan to sell the business to fund my retirement?
2. I will rely on my state pension?
3. I will use partner's income (or pension)?
4. I have a pension from previous employment?
5. I have a pension I pay into while self-employed?
6. I will live on rental or sales income from property I own?
7. I have other financial investments?
8. I haven't made any plans?
9. Other **[SPECIFY]**

Section F: Administration related to self-employment

(IF Q2 = 1,2,3,6 or IF Q2 = 4 AND Q2a =1)

INTRO F : Lastly, can I ask you some questions about the structure of your main self-employment or business:

(IF INTRO F)

39. What legal structure do you use for your business or self-employment? Are you:

ONLY ONE LEGAL STRUCTURE SHOULD BE SELECTED, IF RESPONDENTS HAVE MORE THAN ONE BUSINESS OR SELF EMPLOYMENT, PLEASE REFER TO THEIR MAIN SELF EMPLOYMENT. IF RESPONDENT STILL HAS DIFFICULTY SLECTING A SINGLE OPTION PLEASE RECORD RESPONSE IN OTHER AND SPECIFY

Running prompt

Q39, Q39other

1. Registered with HMRC as a sole trader
2. Director in a limited company (including community interest company)
3. Partner in a limited partnership
4. Partner in an ordinary partnership?
5. Other [SPECIFY]

(IF Q39 = ANY)

40. Have you ever had a different legal form?

Q40

1. Yes
2. No

(IF Q40 = 1)

41. What was the previous legal structure:

Running prompt

Q41

1. Registered with HMRC as a sole trader
2. Director in a limited company (including community interest company)
3. Partner in a limited partnership
4. Partner in an ordinary partnership?
5. Other – please specify

(IF Q39 = 2,3,4 or 5)

42. How many other directors (**IF Q40 = 2**) or partners (**IF Q40 =3 or 4**) are there in the business?

ENTER NUMBER

Q42

(IF Q42 = GREATER THAN ZERO)

43. And how many of these actually work in the business?

ENTER NUMBER

Q43

(IF Q40 = ANY)

44. Has your business ever been registered for VAT?

If Yes, Read out options

Q44

1. Yes, always has been
2. Yes, registered after the business was already running
3. Yes, but not anymore?
4. No, never has been

(IF Q44 = ANY)

45. Has your business ever been registered for Pay As You Earn?

Prompt as necessary

Q45

1. Yes, always has been
2. Yes, registered after the business was already running
3. Yes, but not anymore?
4. No, never has been

(IF Q45 = 1 or 2 OR Q19 = 2,3,4,5 or 6)

46. Workplace pension reforms are now being implemented, they started in 2012 and are happening in stages until 2018. They mean that all employers will have to automatically enrol all eligible workers into a qualifying pension scheme. Before this survey, were you aware of this?

Q46

1. Yes
2. No

(IF Q46 = 1)

47. Do you think Automatic Enrolment affects you?

Do not read out

Q47

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

(IF Q47 = 1)

48. To what extent do you think it will be a problem for you to follow the rules for Automatic Enrolment:

Running prompt

Q48

1. A big problem
2. Something of a problem
3. Not a problem?

(IF Q48 = 1 or 2)

49. Which of the following areas do you expect to be problematic?

Individual prompt – Code all that apply

Q49_1 to Q49_5, Q49other

1. Cost of contributions?
2. Cost of administration?
3. Time required to deal with the administration?
4. Don't understand it?
5. Other [SPECIFY]

(IF Q45 = ANY)

50. Have you ever had a business bank account that you use for this business?

Running prompt

Q50

1. Yes, always had one
2. Yes, got one after the business was already running
3. Yes, but not anymore?
4. No, never had one

Section G: No longer in self-employment

(IF Q1 = 2 or 3)

51. When did you stop being self-employed as your main activity?

Enter year and month

Q51_year, Q51_month

(IF Q51 = ANY)

52. What is your main activity now? Are you:

Running prompt

Q52

1. Working for an employer in a paid role
2. Working for an employer in a voluntary or unpaid role
3. In training or education
4. Retired
5. Not working, but actively looking for work
6. Not working and not looking for work?

(IF Q52 = 1,2,3)

53. And is that full time or part-time?

Q53

1. Full time
2. Part time

(IF Q52 = 3,4,5 or 6)

54. Why is it that you are no longer self-employed in your main job?

Don't read out, code all that apply

Q54_1 to Q54_8, Q54other

1. Too old to carry on working
2. Health problems or too much stress
3. Don't need the income
4. Business failed or was going to fail or not making enough money
5. Caring responsibilities (incl. childcare)
6. Needed or wanted more qualifications
7. Just wanted a break
8. Other – specify

(IF Q52 = 1 or 2)

55. What was the main reason you became an employee?

Prompt as necessary

Q55, Q55other

1. I didn't expect my business to survive
2. I thought I would be financially better off
3. I thought it would be more fulfilling or I want a career

4. I wanted more security
5. I finished what I wanted to do in self-employment
6. Being self-employed made it hard to get credit/mortgage/etc
7. I was offered a job on the payroll at the place where I was working
8. Other – specify

(IF Q55 = 7)

56. What was particularly attractive about this compared to your previous self employment?

Prompt as necessary

Q56, Q56other

1. I didn't expect my business to survive
2. I thought I would be financially better off
3. I thought it would be more fulfilling or I want a career
4. I wanted more security
5. I finished what I wanted to do in self-employment
6. Being self-employed made it hard to get credit/mortgage/etc
7. Other – specify

(IF Q52 = 1 or 2)

57. When you were self-employed as your main activity, was the organisation that you now work for one of your clients or customers?

Prompt as necessary

Q57

1. Yes – a main client
2. Yes – occasional client?
3. No

(IF Q52 = ANY)

58. When you were self-employed as your main activity, to what extent were the following a problem for you?

For each I would like you to answer 'a big problem/something of a problem/not a problem'

Read out if necessary

Q58_1 to Q58_8

1. Not knowing how much income I would have from month to month
2. Not getting paid if I fall ill or had to take time out of work for personal reasons
3. Not having enough customers or clients or work
4. Not having security of being a paid employee
5. Struggling to balance work and family life
6. Not being able to save enough for the future
7. Isolation or working alone
8. Having to understand how to do the paperwork - e.g. comply with tax rules and reporting

(IF Q58 = ANY)

59. And which of the following other sources of income do you now have:

Individual prompt – Code all that apply

Q59_1 to Q59_10, Q59other

1. Any income from employment or self-employment?
2. Rental or other property income?
3. Trusts, interest or dividends?
4. State pension?
5. Occupational or private pension?
6. Tax credits?
7. State benefits?
8. Income from my partner or other family members?
9. Other – specify
10. None

Re-contact question

(IF Q1 = 1, 2 or 3)

60. Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your views are feeding into a body of research that is very important in helping the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) to understand the circumstances and needs of people in self-employment. BIS might carry out follow-up research over the next year as part of this research project, and it would help greatly if we could speak to you again on this matter. Would you be willing for the BIS, or an organisation working on their behalf, to re-contact you over the next 12 months for further research as part of this project?

Q60

1. Yes, would be willing.
2. No, not willing

(IF Q60=1)

61. Can you confirm the address we have for you is correct?

Q61, Newadd1 to Newadd5, Newpcode

Can you confirm the phone number we have for you is correct?

confirmtelno, newtelno

(IF Q1 =4 or Q62 = ANY)

Express thanks and close.

CONTACTS

This guide

For information about the content of this guide. Contact the Social Surveys Data Advice Relation Team

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