

LFS to LMS. Our journey modernising the Labour Force Survey... so far

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is the largest regular social survey in the United Kingdom. Its purpose is to provide information on the UK labour market, which can then be used to develop, manage, evaluate and report on labour market policies. It has been running since 1973.

The main estimates of employment and unemployment in the UK are taken from the LFS, and around 600 field interviewers and 200 telephone interviewers regularly work on the LFS. They survey a random sample of almost 45,000 UK households every 3 months.

For the past few years ONS has been in the process of modernising social surveys, and what started as an online longitudinal survey test in Blaise 5 has rapidly developed into the “Labour Market Survey” (LMS), the proposed long-term replacement for LFS.

Since its inception, the LMS has constantly evolved. The sample has increased in size, telephone collection has been added, and a whole ecosystem of software solutions has been built to support it. In this paper I plan to talk about the project to date from a Blaise 5 perspective. I will be highlighting the challenges and how we’ve overcome them through innovative use of the features that Blaise 5 offers, and giving an overview of our future plans for the survey.