



Understanding  
Society

Dear

You may have already heard about Understanding Society – it's the biggest study of its kind in the world.

Understanding Society is important as it gives you a voice on issues that matter, like how the recession is affecting people in different parts of the country, or whether we are leading a healthy lifestyle. Your point of view is vital. It ensures that the study represents people of all ages and backgrounds across the UK. No-one else can take your place as no-one else has your particular mix of circumstances.

Understanding Society asks about subjects such as health, caring for others and how you spend your leisure time.

If you have any questions at all about Understanding Society and your involvement in it, please don't hesitate to call us on **01206 872957**.

Results from previous years have generated widespread interest. You can read more about what has been found so far, and where the study has featured in newspapers and on TV, at [www.understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk). You can also follow us on Twitter [@usociety](https://twitter.com/usociety).

We'd like to send you updates about how the information you give in Understanding Society is being used, so please either give your interviewer your email address or write to [contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk](mailto:contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk)

Understanding Society makes your voice heard and your help is always much appreciated.

Many thanks for taking part,

**Professor Nick Buck**

Director, Understanding Society  
Institute for Social and Economic Research  
University of Essex

To say "Thank You"  
for taking part, we'll  
send you a £10 voucher.

**Contact us:**

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[understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://understandingsociety.ac.uk)  
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**01206 872 957**

## Why are you important?

Without your unique input, the survey will be less complete. We can't simply replace you with someone else as the people taking part were selected scientifically to represent the whole population. No-one else has your unique combination of circumstances and in a very real way you are personally vital to the success of the study. The strength of Understanding Society is that it talks to the same people each year so we can see how things like the economic situation and the way our society is changing affects your life. The study is your study and is about issues that affect you and everyone in our diverse society.

## About the study.

Long-term studies like Understanding Society help us find out about issues that matter to all of us – how the recession is affecting people in different parts of the country, what standard of facilities you have – or don't have – in your area, our attitudes towards health and the environment. The information collected can inform Government policy and is used by academics, policy-makers and researchers working for charities and the voluntary sector in this country and abroad.

## The interview.

An interviewer will be in touch soon to arrange a convenient time to interview you and other members of your household. The interview will last around an hour. The interviewer will be carrying a photo ID. If it's not convenient when your interviewer calls, please feel free to choose a day and time which is easier for you.

## Young people in the house?

If there are any young people aged 10-15 in your household, I hope they will be willing to complete a short questionnaire about their hobbies, friends, school life and hopes for the future. Each one will receive a voucher as a thank you for completing the questionnaire.