GfK NOP

Technical note for HSE (04/04/07)

The sampling for this baseline survey used a multi-stage probability design, with Postcode Sectors as the Primary Sampling Unit (PSU). All Sectors in Great Britain (south of the Caledonian canal) were listed in a sampling frame with initial strata by nation/standard region – within this first stratification, there was another strata for local authority before the Sectors were ranked by proportion of the population living in the highest level National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) households.

A sample of 600 Postcode Sectors was then drawn systematically with a probability proportional to the size of the working population (as recorded at the 2001 census). In each sector, 56 addresses (60 in London) were sampled systematically from a random start point – the average clustering was around every 35-40th address within the Sector. Each sampled address was visited by interviewers who worked to a strict call pattern (6+ visits, including at least three in the evening or at the weekend). Wherever possible, addresses were screened for multiple dwellings/households and one of these was randomly selected for inclusion in the final sample. Each household was then screened to check for eligibility – potential respondents had to be in paid work away from the home for at least 7 hours (or the equivalent of one day) each week and they also needed to work for an organisation that paid their wages or salary (meaning that some of the self-employed were eligible for interview if they considered themselves to be working for an organisation, e.g. a builder who works exclusively on contract to a major house-builder).

Up to four interviews were conducted in each sampled household, with an average of 1.4 interviews per household across the sample. In total 9,127 interviews were conducted at over 6,500 addresses, between January and April 2006. The scale of the project meant that the fieldwork exercise was split with Ipsos-MORI – the two agencies have a long track record of sharing interviewing on very large social research studies.

The Employee Survey questionnaire was developed between the HSE and GfK NOP research teams, using an iterative process and then a two-stage pilot survey that included a cognitive testing element. A team of 15 interviewers worked on both phases of the pilot study (which included personal briefings and debriefings at each phase). About 120 test interviews were conducted using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) in November and December 2005. The initial coverage of the questionnaire was such that some very long interviews were inevitable – 90 minutes was not uncommon. In order to boost respondent co-operation, a £10 gift voucher incentive was offered to all respondents (at the main stage as well as the pilot). A large section of the questionnaire was concerned with asking

respondents in detail about the individual tasks that they undertook during the course of their job, with a total of ten task sections in all. A limit of four task sections was then placed on any one interview and the average length was kept to just below 55 minutes. In practice, little data collection was skipped via the prioritisation process for multi-tasking individuals and 86% of all identified tasks were linked to the relevant questions.

The universe for the Fit 3 survey does not quite mirror any other source of data, although information from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) provides the nearest match. In order to check the approximate representative-ness of the achieved sample profile, a comparison was made between the Fit 3 raw data and filtered figures from the LFS, in terms of sex, age, region, number of employees at the workplace, SIC and SOC. The differences were generally very modest but the LFS profile was used in some experimental weighting to assess its impact on the Fit 3 data. In practice, there was almost no effect on the raw results so it was decided that the employee survey data should be analysed in its original, unweighted, form.