

Douglas Tharby – SHS Interviewer

SHS User Day, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2018

I was recently invited to attend the above event in the Scottish Government's impressive building at Victoria Quay. As the Scottish Household Survey is in its 20<sup>th</sup> year it was great to meet up with the real users of the data that we generate.

'Knowing who we are and how we work and live' is the result of all of our efforts and that in itself is motivation to get those valuable interviews from even the most reluctant of respondents. Did you know that our SHS covers 9 of the National Indicators (NI) in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework? If ever there was point and purpose to an interviewer's work this must be one of the best examples.

The programme brought the SHS and SHCS teams together with a wide variety of users and potential users of the data generated from our fieldwork.

A number of core questions are asked the same way in all three Scottish Government cross-sectional surveys (SHS, Scottish Health Survey and Scottish Crime and Justice Survey) to give a total sample of 20,000 by Local Authority covering 650 of the electoral Wards. Data from all three surveys for these questions is pooled, to provide better estimates at national and local level (collectively this is known as the Scottish Survey Core Questions).

Those 'dots' on the cover of the 2016 report each represent a Sampling Point<sup>1</sup> and our part in this.

The main programme included some 'optional' sessions and I elected to attend the following:

Scottish House Condition Survey: Data demo  
Data Uses: SHS Travel Diary and Transport Modelling  
Data Uses: Culture and SHS

The first session highlighted the need for us to secure that all important Surveyor appointment. This we really do need to secure if we can as it is used to compare all the local authorities in Scotland dealing with such issues as fuel poverty, energy efficiency and housing quality (disrepair and dampness being major issues). There is a Scottish Quality Housing Standard which has no fewer than 57 indicators. One of those indicators was weather tightness, given the long winter that we have just gone through this must be a very valuable piece of information to have available and on a postcode by postcode basis as well!

The second session was on the Travel Diary. This as we all know can be quite simple, such as covering a Sunday when some respondents do very little out of the home preferring to do chores and chill out to venturing afar, to the situation where quite complicated journeys such as I had on my recent Supervision where the respondent remembered 'things' as a later stage in the data collection and hence journeys had to be revised and our patience to be tested. From our diary there are inputs into various transport and demand models which are essential to assessing demand and increasingly those all challenging emissions. Those journeys and the detail within really does make a difference. Not just the typical weekday either but the more unusual where several modes of transport are involved.

The last session, I was indeed Co-presenter with Russell Whyte, Historic Environment

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<sup>1</sup> As each dot on the map can represent hundreds of households there is no risk of identifying which households have taken part in the survey from this graphic. Intentionally, the year is not specified.

Scotland. We looked at the questions that come up in the current script as Cult 3. This relates to the current NI 41. All those options for events and places visited in the last year. How often has this caused a silence on the part of the respondent and the remark that perhaps they are indeed a 'boring person who does not do much'. This year some changes reflect the increasing use of 'catch up' services on TV and the increasing impact of the internet upon our daily lives.

User Day at an end, hope that you enjoyed this short report. Good luck with finding your SHS respondents and maybe see you soon.

April 2018