# Introduction to the Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey Workshop

## **Navigating and using LFS documentation**

The LFS has extensive documentation to help you understand and use the data. This exercise is designed to show you to navigate and use the LFS documentation**.**

#### Task: Using the documentation, explore variables that can be used to answer a research question

Scenario: You are interested in zero-hour contracts. You want to carry out some exploratory analysis to find out who is reliant in zero-hour contracts. In particular, you are interested in: migrants, families and geographical differences.

#### Learning outcomes:

* Know what is in the different volumes of the user guide
* Know that some variables are only in some quarters and how to check using documentation
* Understand that variables have changed over time - how to identify a change
* Can use the documentation to identify if you need to access secure data
* Can identify what variables are in the longitudinal files
* Identify and manage multi response variables
* Can identify and understand derived variables

## Part 1: Variables relating to zero-hours contracts

### Locate the documentation

### Add information about different places documentation can be found.

**1.** This activity will start by looking at data available from the October-December 2020 Quarterly Labour Force Survey (SN 8777). [Start by navigating to the catalogue page for the dataset](https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=8777).

**2.** Navigate to the documentation tab.

### Review the Questionnaire (Volume 2)

Using the ‘LFS User Guide Vol 2. – Questionnaire’, locate any questions that collect information about zero-hour contracts. Hint: use the find function (CTRL+F) to search for ‘zero’.

*Question 1:**What is the name of the variable assigned to the question that asks about zero-hour contracts?*

Other useful information we find at this stage includes:

* The question is asked in all waves.
* The variable is available in the EUL dataset
* The question allows multi-responses. It will be important to know how multiple responses are handled in the dataset.

### Variables Details: Volume 3

You can find out more information about variables capturing zero-hour contracts by looking at ‘LFS User Guide Vol. 3 – Details of LFS Variables 2020’. Again, search the document for ‘zero’.

You will discover that Vol. 3 includes more variables with information about zero-hour contracts because Vol. 3 also includes details of derived variables.

Look at the details for FLEX10 on p.163. Here we can find out additional information including:

* The question is asked in all quarters and waves, but this is a recent change (since 2020)
* You can find out details about multiple response variables at the beginning of the user guide (see page 3).

Question – What does the (1-3) in the name FLEX10(1-3) mean

Question 2: What is the name of the derived variable that is labelled: Whether respondent works zero hours contract?

### Understanding Derived Variables (Volume 4)

How has FLEXW7 been derived?

You can learn more about derived variables by examining Vol. 4 - Standard Derived Variables 2016. Search for FLEXW7 and you will find the details on p.140.

How does FLEXW7 vary from FLED10? -

### Data Dictionary

Next, search the data dictionary for the derived variable for zero-hour contract workers. The data dictionary gives information about each variable in the named dataset, including position number, name, label, measurement level, and categories. Below is an excerpt from the data dictionary for the October-December 2020 QLFS.

Image showing details of entry in the data dictionary:
Pos. = 171
Variable = FLEXW7
Variable label = Respondent has zero hours contract
Value = 1.0 Label = Yes
Value = 2.0 Label = No
Value = -9.0 Label = Does not apply
Value = -8.0 Label = No answer

## Part 2 Explore options for analysis

### Identifying migrants to the UK and zero-hour contracts

Use the documentation to find and explore possible variables for identifying migrants to the UK. Can you identify migrants to the UK by their country of origin?

* Is it possible to examine country of origin?

For answer - Asks about nationality and country of birth – first code in relation to parts of the UK – then other countries. Data Dictionary – gives the categories of CRYOX7 in the EUL dataset

**Question 3.** What variables did can you find to control for migrants, families and geography in the analysis?

### Geographical differences

*Is it possible to examine geographical differences in relation to zero-hours contracts? With which datasets?*

What geographical variables are there? Which datasets are they in – for example, what geographical variables are present in the EUL version of the data?

Check to see if relevant variables are in the APS.

One way to find some of this information can be found in ‘LFS User Guide Vol. 2 – Questionnaire’. Have a look at the ‘structure of the question specification’ on page 5.

Another way is to check the data dictionary for the dataset.

### Movement in and out of zero-hours contracts

*Is it possible to examine movement in and out of zero-hours contracts?*

* Think about how often the question is asked check to see if it is relevant variables are in the longitudinal files?

### Households with 1 or more earners on zero-hour contracts

*Can we examine households with 1 or more earner on zero-hours contracts. Which dataset would we use and how might we do this?*

You may find it useful to consider Volume 10’s notes on creating a household variable.