

ELSA

English
Longitudinal
Study of
Ageing

Health and lifestyles of people aged 50 and over

This leaflet gives you more information about the content of the study, and answers questions you may have. If you have any queries or need to contact us, please call freephone 0800 652 4574

What is the study about?

The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) explores the health, lifestyles and financial situation of people as they grow older. 13,500 people aged 50 and over, and their partners, have now taken part in the study.

You may have helped us previously with the study, for which we are most grateful, and we hope that you can help us again. Alternatively, this may be the first time we have approached you to take part. By talking to as many people as possible, we can ensure that we get a full range of experiences.

Participation is voluntary, though we do hope you will take part and contribute to our understanding of the experience of growing older.

Why are you important?

You are invaluable to our study. We are gradually building up a picture of people living in Britain aged 50 and over. Although the study will not be of direct benefit to you, the information you provide will help us to collect good quality data to ensure the government provides health care and pension systems tailored to people's needs.

What does the study involve?

An interviewer from NatCen will come and visit you in your home to conduct the interview.

When the interviewer visits they will ask you questions about things we believe to be important in the lives of people aged 50 and over. If you are already a member of the study, you will be familiar with the content of the interview. Topics covered include health, housing, work, retirement, pensions and the quality of life.

The fourth round of interviews includes a visit by a registered nurse or midwife. This should be a familiar experience for those of you who took part in the second round. If you agree, a nurse/midwife will visit you and ask to take a variety of health measurements such as:

- Blood pressure
- Height and weight
- Blood sample.

Your interviewer will give you a leaflet which tells you more about the nurse visit. If you agree to give a blood sample, the nurse/midwife will ask you for your written consent.

Your participation is, of course, entirely voluntary, so you are welcome to change your mind at any time. Your interviewer and nurse/midwife will be happy to address any questions you may have.

The interview is both varied and interesting, and we hope you will enjoy the experience. It can be arranged according to your needs and availability. Agreeing to participate now does not commit you to continuing. You can change your mind at any time and let us know that you no longer wish to take part.

Who is paying for the study?

Half of the funding has come from a number of UK government departments. The other half has been provided by the National Institute on Aging from the United States who also fund a parallel study in the USA.

Who is carrying out the study?

The study is being carried out by some of Britain's leading research organisations in health, economics and social research:

- National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)

- Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London
- Institute for Fiscal Studies
- Cambridge University

Is the study confidential?

We always take great care to protect the confidentiality of the information you give us, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The study results will never be in a form that can reveal your identity. Your name and address will only be known to the researchers at the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and will not be stored with the information you provide.

We also obtain information about the health and economic circumstances of some of our respondents from the National Health Service Central Register, the Cancer Registry, the Hospital Episodes Statistics register, the Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs. You may already have given us permission to obtain this information, but if not, we may ask for your consent to do so during the course of the interview. If you agree, we would link these details to what you

have already told us in the survey. We may also use this information to help us keep in contact with you in the future. Like everything else you have told us, the information will be completely confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

Who can I contact about the study?

If you have any more questions, or would like to inform us of a change in your circumstances such as a new address, please contact us on the freephone number 0800 652 4574.

Alternatively, you can write to:

Chris Shaw
National Centre for Social Research
Kings House
101-135 Kings Road
Brentwood
Essex CM14 4LX

You can find out more about the study, or contact us, via the ELSA web site:

<http://www.natcen.ac.uk/elsa/>