

# Reference Group Quarterly Newsletter

August 2010



Life Opportunities Survey Update

## List of useful words

This list tells you what some of the words used in this newsletter mean.

**Data Linkage** – We now ask people if we can link their LOS answers to details about their benefits from the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP). These details include information on whether they receive benefits that they are entitled to. This allows us to understand more about how disabled people manage financially. Data linkage is a useful way to use existing information the government has already collected. The linked data are confidential and names are never published. We collect written consent from respondents before we do this, and this can be withdrawn at any time. An information leaflet is also given to every respondent we ask. All of our interviewers carry Easy Read versions of the-leaflet and the consent form.

**Fieldwork** – the collecting of research information.

**In-depth Interviews** – an interview that is conversational, but based on a list of topics.

**Innovative** – new, never done before.

**Office for Disability Issues (ODI)** – this is part of government. Its job is to make sure all the different government departments make things fairer for disabled people.

**Office for National Statistics (ONS)** – a government department that reports directly to Parliament. Its job is to make sure government has really good information and facts about people's lives. They do surveys of people to find out information.

Government uses this information to think about how it spends public money, what laws it should make, what it should do about barriers to education, work, transport and other things.

**Participant Observation** – this involves the researcher directly observing the respondent's life.

**Qualitative Research** – looks at 'why' and 'how' and aims to produce more in-depth information than can be achieved solely through standard survey interviewing. **In-depth interviews** are an example of qualitative research.

**Respondent** – someone who provides information to a researcher, for example in response to a questionnaire, or in the course of an interview.

**Response Rate** – the proportion of people who agree to take part in a survey interview.

**Royal Statistical Society** – The organisation which promotes public understanding of statistics and supports people who use statistics.

**Survey** – this is when many people answer the same questions about their lives or certain issues. The results are put in a report.

**Wave one** - first time that the participants are approached in a longitudinal survey.

**Wave Two** – the second time that the participants are approached in a longitudinal study.

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### **Interim results report**

The first year of LOS **wave one** interviews has been completed. The interim report outlining the findings from the first year of **wave one** is due to be published this autumn. We will send you the results when they are available.

Report writing is now underway. Chapters of the report will describe the findings from each section of the LOS questionnaire.

We will also make the executive summary available in Large Print, Braille, Audio, Contour raised tactile printing or Easy Read on request.

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### **Qualitative Projects**

The **qualitative** project has made the LOS **survey** more accessible. It has encouraged many disabled **respondents** to discuss the LOS topics in their own way. This work is being done by an independent research company.

**Fieldwork** is now complete – 70 **in-depth interviews** have taken place, including 30 with **respondents** for whom the main LOS **survey** was not accessible.

**Fieldwork** using video interviews is also complete – 15 **participant observation** exercises have taken place.

We have received a draft report describing the findings of the in-depth interviews and video interviews. We hope to publish the final version of the report alongside the main LOS report in the autumn. We also plan to present the findings to Reference Group members at the next meeting.

## Life Opportunities Survey Year 2, Quarter 1 Update

**Wave two** has started and fieldwork is progressing well.

- July **fieldwork** received a **response rate** of 64.3 per cent
  - 6854 interviews with **respondents** aged 16+
  - **Data linkage** received a consent rate of 70.7 per cent
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### Quote of the quarter

"The LOS has won an award! The award has been given by the **Royal Statistical Society**. It recognises the innovative approach LOS has taken in measuring disability across Great Britain.

The award also reflects the use of improved data collection methods, in order to ensure the **survey** is accessible to respondents with impairments.

This is a team award which reflects everyone's efforts, that is, the Reference Group, **ODI** and **ONS**. It's great that LOS is receiving recognition for all the hard work that everyone involved has put in over the past few years. Well done everyone!"

(Tom Howe, Life Opportunities Survey Manager)

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### Reference Group Meetings

We have decided not to go ahead with the sub-group meeting scheduled for September. We were planning to take forward ideas for communicating the interim findings from LOS. However, we



need some more time to develop the ideas discussed with you at the last Reference Group meeting. We plan to discuss this further with you at the next full Reference Group meeting instead.

There will also be a presentation of the interim findings at the next Reference Group meeting. We will send you the press release and ONS report when this becomes available, before the next Reference Group meeting.

We will confirm the date of this meeting later this year.

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## Update from the Office for Disability Issues (ODI)

**ODI** is currently focusing its work on the delivery of interim results from the LOS.

This involves developing plans with **ONS** for checking the interim results. As there is such a vast amount of information collected by the **survey**, it is important to be sure that the results are correct and that no mistakes have been made.

Once the results are published, we will start the more detailed analysis of results. We will work over the next few months to develop ideas for analysis. This will involve finding out what the most important questions are that we want to answer using LOS.

ODI would like the help of the Reference Group with this. We would therefore like you to send us your ideas on what we could analyse. You could think about:

- what have you always wanted to know about the experiences of disabled people that could be answered by LOS?
- are there particular topics that should be analysed as a priority? If so, why?

Please email your ideas to [los@ons.gov.uk](mailto:los@ons.gov.uk) by the end of September.