Children with a non-resident parent

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Abstract

This article presents the findings of an Office for National Statistics (ONS) Opinions survey on children with a non-resident parent, carried out in 2008/09. It creates estimates of the number of children who have a non-resident parent, and compares these with ONS Labour Force Survey data. Other results explore the direct contact arrangements between children and their non-resident parent, and the partnership status of resident and non-resident parents, all of which are compared with previous studies.

Results from the Opinions survey suggest that there were 3.3 million dependent children in Great Britain who had a non-resident birth parent at the end of 2008. Like many household surveys, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) cannot provide an equivalent figure because it does not collect information on birth parents living in different households from their children. However, as a proxy for children with non-resident parents, LFS can be used to estimate children living with one birth parent (children living with one widowed birth parent are excluded because they are assumed not to have a non-resident parent). Accordingly, the LFS shows that the number of dependent children in Great Britain living with one non-widowed birth parent rose from 3.2 million in 1999 to 3.8 million in 2009. The proportion of dependent children living with one non-widowed birth parent also increased from 27 per cent to 30 per cent.

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Introduction

Since most government social surveys, including censuses, are conducted at the household level, official statistics on families tend to focus on the nuclear family, which restricts membership of a family to individuals that live within the same household¹. However, the nuclear family is only one way of organising family statistics, and relationships outside the household are an important area of study for anyone trying to understand contemporary families. One relationship outside the household occurs when children have a birth parent who is non-resident (that is, the child and parent have a different usual residence – see **Box one**).

The Office for National Statistics often receives queries asking for estimates of the number and/or characteristics of parents. As with the term ‘family’, there are different ways to define parents,

Box one Children with a non-resident parent

Different definitions of non-resident parents are found in the literature, in part due to the different ways in which information may be collected (for example the different wording of survey questions). In the case of this research, the definition below aims to take into account existing population definitions (based on residency), in addition to definitions found in the broader research and policy literature.

Definition of non-resident parents

The definition used here is: ‘Adults who are **not** usually resident in the same household as at least one of their birth children.’ In this article, children means dependent children, defined as those who are under 16-years-old or aged under 19 and in full-time education, but not those who have formed their own family, through marriage, cohabitation or the birth of a child¹⁴.

The reason for a parent not being resident may be because the parent has never lived in the same household as their child (or children) or because they have ceased to live in the same household following separation or divorce. It may also be through choice that partners do not live in the same household (sometimes referred to as ‘living apart together’)¹⁵. Being a non-resident parent therefore relates to current living arrangements, although a non-resident parent may have previously had one (or more) spells of living with the child’s other birth parent. Based on this definition, the filter question used to identify households containing children with non-resident parents in the commissioned survey (see Box two) was:

‘Considering all dependent children in this household, do they have any living parents who are not usually resident in this household?’

Shared residence

Some children share a residence approximately evenly between both their natural parents. As such, it could be argued that they are usually resident in more than one household. This was considered during the design of the questionnaire. However, it was important for this research to be consistent with population definitions elsewhere, while also avoiding undue complexity. It was also felt that respondents were capable of defining usual residence (with guidance from the interviewer), even if there is an argument against this being the case. This issue arises in other surveys of non-resident parents or non-resident children.

but the most common statistical definitions can be split broadly into (a) birth parents, sometimes referred to as natural parents, and (b) resident parents. In many cases, it may be that users of statistics would prefer statistics on birth parents, but the difficulty with calculating statistics on birth parents is that most surveys or sources of information are household-based and collect information only on relationships within the household. Information is not generally collected on non-resident parents, and this is why there are currently no official statistics providing the number of birth parents living in the UK.

There is a growing requirement for new statistics that reflect the complexity of 'family' relationships, including relationships outside each household. Such statistics should bridge the gap between different definitions of parents. Since a number of children do not live with both their birth parents, one way to do this is to create statistics on non-resident parents. However, a crucial issue to consider is the level at which analysis is carried out. This article chooses to focus on the child level, that is, children with a non-resident parent, rather than at the parent level, i.e. estimating the number of non-resident parents. The main reason for this is because of the way that data are gathered, and the need to avoid double counting. Estimating the number of non-resident parents would require a separate set of questions asking whether or not children in each household shared the same non-resident parent. Further complications arise when adults are both resident and non-resident parents (of different children), and this issue is also avoided by focussing analysis at the child level.

Research on children with non-resident parents informs policy relating to families and children, including child welfare, benefits, childcare and family law. Furthermore, information on non-resident parents is important for anyone using household surveys, not least because it suggests a population group that may be missed or incompletely studied (depending upon survey design and research context). There is a large body of existing research on children with non-resident parents, especially relating to sociology, psychology, law, and public policy². However, the focus of this article is to present a demographic overview. The most relevant comparative research is therefore any large-scale quantitative research that looks at the population of children with a non-resident parent in the constituent countries of the UK.

Previous research and aims of this study

To provide nationally representative statistics, previous research has commissioned Omnibus, or what are now called 'Opinions' survey modules³. In 2003, an Omnibus module was carried out for seven months, aiming to gauge the level of contact between children and non-resident parents⁴. That study was followed up by another set of modules asked over six months in the Omnibus/Opinions survey between 2007 and 2008⁵. However, these surveys were not used to prepare estimates of either the number of non-resident parents or the number of children with non-resident parents. The same is true for Omnibus modules on contact after parental separation which ran for six months in 2006 and 2007⁶. The research in this article creates estimates for the number of children with a non-resident parent using more recent Opinions modules carried out in December 2008 and January 2009.

Other than the Opinions survey, previous research on non-resident parents has made use of longitudinal sources including the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)⁷, and British Household Panel Survey (BHPS)⁸. There have also been several studies focussed on non-resident parents in Scotland^{9,10}. Nevertheless, rather than creating national estimates, most previous research

has focussed on the characteristics and behaviour of non-resident parents and their families, particularly with a view to understanding children's needs and parental responsibilities following parental separation¹¹.

The research in this report seeks, in the first instance, to create a reliable estimate of children with a non-resident parent, and discuss how this estimate might be evaluated and improved in the future. Results are then further explored to provide a demographic overview of children with a non-resident parent. Given the restrictions of available data, largely because of the Opinions survey coverage, this research covers Great Britain rather than the UK as a whole¹².

There are several demographic factors that have led to recent rises in the number of non-resident parents in Great Britain. One of the most commonly cited is an increase in family dissolution. However, it is important to remember that parents may be non-resident for a variety of reasons, and in a variety of situations. For example, some parents may have never lived in the same household as their child (or children), while other parents may choose dynamic living arrangements (that may change over time), including shared residence (see Box one).

Although previous research captures non-resident parent contact arrangements in more detail, this research asked about overnight stays so that users of statistics (as well as gaining contextual information) are able to estimate how likely or unlikely it is that social surveys (or censuses) fail to capture children at their usual residence. This issue has been raised elsewhere, for example in research by Toulemon that discusses the difficulty of surveying children with variable living arrangements (sometimes referred to as 'two homes')¹³. If the number of children with a non-resident parent increases (as suggested later in **Table 5**), it may become more difficult to obtain a representative sample of children using existing survey methods. For example, it may become more likely that children are included as members of the household by both birth parents, even when both birth parents live separately. When interpreting the findings presented here, it is worth bearing in mind that there are likely to be fewer non-resident parents than there are children with a non-resident parent. What is true for one parent may therefore be true for more than one child. It might also be worth considering that from a non-resident parent's point of view, it is their child or children that are non-resident – that is, not living in their household.

This article investigates non-resident parents from a demographer's perspective. New data are analysed (see **Box two**), and compared with previous research in order to estimate the number of children with a non-resident parent living in Great Britain. In addition, the characteristics of these population groups are explored and discussed, including the implications for household survey design and interpreting statistics on families and households.

Estimates from the Opinions survey

The response rate for the survey was comparable with other government surveys¹⁷, and both months of the Opinions survey obtained a similar response to the filter question used to identify households containing dependent children with non-resident parents. Around nine per cent of all interviewed households were identified as such (**Table 1**)¹⁸. Of course, this percentage is different when considering only those households with (dependent) children, of which 28 per cent contained children with non-resident parents.

The results of these recent Opinions modules can be used to calculate a household estimate. Table 1 shows the combined results of the two modules after applying household survey weights¹⁹.

Box two New data from the Opinions Survey

As part of this research, ONS commissioned a module of the Opinions survey (previously known as the Omnibus survey) to be run for two months, in December 2008 and January 2009. In the Opinions survey, one selected respondent is chosen at random from all adults aged 16 and over in the household, and this person must be the one to complete the interview. Therefore, they may not necessarily be the parent of children in the household, for example they could be an older sibling, or not related. Nevertheless, in cases where the respondent was not the parent of children in the household, they answered on the parent's behalf. Appendix **Table C1** shows that this occurred in around one quarter of interviews.

The survey first sought to identify those households containing children who had non-resident parents based upon an agreed definition (see Box one)¹⁶. The total number of Opinions survey respondent households was 2,216 (1,086 in December 2008 and 1,130 in January 2009) of which 190 (100 in December 2008 and 90 in January 2009) contained at least one dependent child with a parent not usually resident in the household. This was equivalent to approximately 9 per cent of households that were surveyed (unweighted).

The survey questions and unweighted responses are available in the Appendix. Children with non-resident parents in the household were identified (and counted), before the following information was gathered for each child in the household with a non-resident parent:

- Relationship between resident and non-resident parent
- Duration of non-residency
- Distance from non-resident parent
- Amount of (direct) contact
- Frequency of overnight stays (child with non-resident parent)
- Frequency of overnight stays (non-resident parent with resident parent)

The last of these attempted to capture the scenario where a (partial) residential relationship was still maintained between a child's birth parents.

It is worth noting that these are survey estimates, and that the Opinions household weights are not constrained to the total number of households in the population²⁰. Despite this, taking an average of both months, approximately 2.1 million households (in Great Britain at the end of 2008) were estimated to contain at least one dependent child with a non-resident parent. This is equivalent to around nine per cent of all households in Great Britain. Of course, some of these households will contain a mixture of children with and without non-resident parents.

The Opinions modules ask for the number of dependent children in each household that have a non-resident parent, and results of this question can be combined with the weighted household estimates in Table 1²¹. The results, shown in **Table 2**, suggest that there were 3.3 million dependent children in Great Britain that had a non-resident parent at the end of 2008. Of these children, some will share the same non-resident parent.

Table 1 Whether households contain dependent children with non-resident parents¹, Great Britain

Households (millions)

	Households (weighted ²) ³	Per cent of all households	Counts (unweighted) ⁴
Households with dependent children that have:			
– at least one child with non-resident parents	2.1	9	190
– no children with non-resident parents	5.4	22	466
Households with no dependent children	17.3	70	1,560
All households	24.9	100	2,216

Note:

- 1 Based on response to the filter question: Considering all dependent children in this household, do they have any living parents who are not usually resident?
- 2 Household weights are not constrained to the total number of households in the population
- 3 Average of December 2008 and January 2009 results
- 4 Sum of December 2008 and January 2009 results

Source: *Opinions survey modules (December 2008 and January 2009)*

Table 2 Dependent children with non-resident parents: Opinions, Great Britain

Number of dependent children in household with a non-resident parent	Opinions modules (average of Dec 2008 & Jan 2009)	
	Households (millions) ¹	Dependent children (millions) ²
One	1.2	1.2
Two	0.7	1.3
Three	0.2	0.7
Four or more ³	0.0	0.1
Total	2.1	3.3

- 1 Household weights are not constrained to the total number of households in the population
- 2 Calculated by multiplying the number in the household by the household estimate
- 3 There are a small number of households with four or more.

Source: *Opinions survey modules (December 2008 and January 2009)*

Other sources of estimates

Like other social surveys, results from the Opinions survey will be affected by sampling error, so it is useful to compare the Opinions results with those from other surveys. Unfortunately, since non-resident parents are not resident in the household, standard household relationship questions do not capture them directly, and this usually prevents the creation of non-resident parent estimates. One way to resolve this issue is to assume that any child living with only one birth parent actually has a non-resident parent. This method has the advantage that it can make use

Table 3   **Dependent children living with birth parents, Great Britain**

Number of birth parents in the household	Number of dependent children (millions)	Per cent
None	0.16	1
One	3.88	
One: parent is not widowed	3.77	30
One: parent is widowed	0.11	1
Two	8.72	68
Total	12.76	100

Source: Labour Force Survey (April to June 2009 household data)

of standard household survey relationship questions, but it is complicated by the fact that some children will have two non-resident parents, for example foster children²². Also, some children's parents may no longer be alive, which means that some children living with only one birth parent may not have a non-resident parent, particularly if that parent is widowed²³. A final consideration, depending upon the estimate being created, is that there may be issues with migration²⁴. Bearing all these issues in mind, it is nevertheless possible to use Labour Force Survey (LFS) household survey data to estimate the number of dependent children living with only one birth parent²⁵. This estimate can then be compared with Opinions estimates of the number of children that have a non-resident parent.

Table 3 shows estimates of dependent children according to the number of birth parents that lived in the same household. In 2009, there were 12.8 million dependent children in Great Britain. Of these, 8.7 million (68 per cent) lived with both birth parents, 3.9 million (31 per cent) lived with one birth parent and 0.2 million (1 per cent) lived with neither of their birth parents.

As mentioned above, a potential assumption might be that any child living with only one birth parent actually has a non-resident parent. However, it is possible to refine this assumption by excluding dependent children living with one widowed birth parent (just under 1 per cent of all dependent children, and just under 3 per cent of dependent children with one birth parent). Another group that it might be reasonable to exclude is children who have no birth parents in the household. The main reason for this would be because it is difficult to know the living arrangements for these children, and therefore difficult to know whether they have any non-resident parents. For the most part, it is expected that these children are fostered or living with relatives that are not their parents. According to the LFS they represent just over 1 per cent of all dependent children. Further research would be required to show whether it is appropriate to exclude this group of children when creating a statistic for comparison with the Opinions results. Unfortunately, there is no easy way of knowing whether these children do in fact have a non-resident parent, let alone whether they have contact with that parent.

Considering the above, the rest of this article uses LFS estimates of children who live with one non-widowed birth parent, which are assumed to be equivalent to estimates of children with a non-resident parent. The LFS estimates thereby exclude children with no birth parents, as well as those who live with one widowed birth parent. According to the LFS, there are an estimated 3.8 million dependent children with one non-widowed birth parent, and this result is shown alongside the Opinions results in **Table 4**.

Table 4 **LFS and Opinions survey estimates compared, Great Britain**

Number in household	LFS (Apr to Jun 2009)		Opinions (Dec 2008 & Jan 2009)		Difference (millions) ²
	Dependent children with one non-widowed birth parent (millions)	Per cent	Dependent children with a non-resident parent (millions) ¹	Per cent	
One	1.4	37	1.2	36	0.2
Two	1.4	38	1.3	40	0.1
Three	0.6	16	0.7	20	-0.1
Four	0.2	6	0.1	3	0.1
Five or more	0.1	3	-	-	0.1
Total	3.8	100	3.3	100	0.4

1 Calculated by multiplying the number in the household by the household estimate

2 LFS minus Opinions (hence negative means that Opinions estimate is larger)

Table 4 compares the Opinions results in Table 2 with the LFS results in Table 3. It is clear from Table 4 that there are differences between the two sources, including a difference of 0.4 million in the total number of children with a non-resident parent (assuming that the LFS estimates are equivalent). Explanations for the difference include:

- The Opinions survey interviews only one individual per household, and this individual may have limited knowledge of the characteristics of household members, for example they may not be aware that children have a non-resident parent. In addition, some respondents may deny that there are children with non-resident parents because they feel the information is sensitive or private. LFS results are derived and will not be affected by these issues.
- Estimates from the LFS are based on the prospective assumption that any dependent child that lives with only one non-widowed birth parent is equivalent to a child who has a non-resident parent. In some cases this may not be correct.
- LFS estimates are weighted counts using results from the household relationship grid, whereas estimates from the Opinions survey are based on multiplying the number of children with non-resident parents in a household by estimates of the number of households. The two surveys also use different procedures to derive their household weights.
- Survey estimates from both sources are subject to sampling error, and this is expected to be larger for the Opinions survey because it has a smaller sample size²⁶.

These issues are no doubt reflected in the 0.4 million total difference between sources in the overall estimate of dependent children who have a non-resident parent. Despite this, there is some agreement between sources in the percentages in Table 4. Just over one third of all dependent children with a non-resident parent are the only child with a non-resident parent in the household. Around 40 per cent live with one other child with a non-resident parent, and the remainder live with more than one other child with a non-resident parent. For this last group (those living with more than one), there are notable differences between the two sources. This may be partly explained by the smaller sample size of the Opinions survey which makes it less likely to sample larger households (because they are less common). Further information on variation between the two

sources is shown in the Appendix. **Table B4** shows that estimates of the total number of dependent children using the Opinions data are larger than those from the LFS. Most of this difference between sources is for households with two dependent children, which suggests that Opinions may be more likely to identify particular family types. Unfortunately, without a complete relationship grid in the Opinions survey, it is difficult to investigate this further. For example, the lack of a relationship grid means it is not possible to construct estimates of the number of children with one non-widowed birth parent, the same method as used for the LFS data.

Change over time

As with most social statistics, there is intense interest in the extent to which estimates have changed over time. Unfortunately, it is not possible to make a long-run time comparison of estimates using these 2008/09 Opinions results. Previous Opinions (Omnibus) results have been used to compare the characteristics of contact between children and non-resident parents, including type, frequency and satisfaction, between 2002 and 2007²⁷. However, in order to see how population estimates change over time, it is necessary to use the LFS.

Table 5 shows a recent rise in the number of children in Great Britain with a non-resident parent, from 3.2 million in 1999 to 3.8 million in 2009. Although the total number of dependent children increased over the same period, the proportion of dependent children that had a non-resident parent also increased from 27 per cent to 30 per cent. This result compares reasonably with results from the Growing Up in Scotland Study (GUS)⁹, which showed that “overall proportions of children with a non-resident father have remained steady at 21 per cent (birth cohort) and around 26 per cent (child cohort)”²⁸. This result is based on longitudinal data for younger children who were all aged less than five, and it may be expected that the proportions for both cohorts will rise over time as the children become older. This suggests that the LFS results are in line with existing results for Scotland²⁹.

Table 5   **Dependent children living with one non-widowed birth parent, LFS data, Great Britain**

	LFS 1999 (Apr to Jun)	LFS 2009 (Apr to Jun)	Difference ¹
All dependent children living with one non-widowed birth parent (millions)	3.24	3.77	0.53
All dependent children (millions)	12.23	12.70	0.48
Percentage of dependent children with one non-widowed birth parent	27	30	

1 LFS 2009 minus LFS 1999 (hence negative means that 1999 estimate is larger)

Source: Labour Force Survey (April to June 2009 household data)

Further details on the LFS results are given in **Table 6**, which shows the number of dependent children in the household with one non-widowed birth parent. It shows that most of the change between 1999 and 2009 is accounted for by households with only one or two children living with one non-widowed birth parent. In the case of households with two of these children, they may not necessarily share the same resident birth parent (e.g. they may be the children of different adults in a couple stepfamily).

Table 6 **Dependent children living with one non-widowed birth parent: LFS data, Great Britain**

Number of dependent children in household with one non-widowed birth parent	LFS 1999 (Apr to Jun)		LFS 2009 (Apr to Jun)		Population difference ¹
	Dependent children (millions)	Per cent	Dependent children (millions)	Per cent	
One	1.05	32	1.40	37	0.36
Two	1.26	39	1.44	38	0.18
Three	0.59	18	0.59	16	-0.01
Four	0.23	7	0.24	6	0.00
Five or more	0.11	4	0.11	3	-0.01
Total	3.24	100	3.77	100	0.53

Source: Labour Force Survey (April to June 2009 household data)

Relationships and associated characteristics

The 2008/09 Opinions modules asked a number of questions about characteristics associated with non-resident parents. These included:

- The relationship between the resident and non-resident parent
- How long the parent had been non-resident
- How far away the non-resident parent lived
- Frequency of contact

The questionnaire is shown in Appendix A, and full results (combined for December 2008 and January 2009) are shown in Appendix C. For simplicity, unweighted results are presented, although there is typically very little (less than one percentage point) difference between weighted and unweighted results at the household level.

Overall, 74 per cent of respondents were the parent of the child that was being referred to by the interviewer. In other words, around one quarter of children with a non-resident parent were identified by someone other than their parent. This result is not unexpected given the design of the Opinions survey, where only one person per household is interviewed. It also indicates that at least three-quarters of the information collected should be the most accurate information available given that it is provided by the child's parent³⁰.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, there are a variety of reasons why a child's parent may not be resident. Without complete relationship histories for both birth parents, it is not easy to distinguish all pathways into non-residency. However, the Opinions questions do provide some insight (Q2a and Q2b – see Appendices). When interpreting these results it is worth considering previous research which shows that relationship status, for both resident and non-resident parents, will change over time³¹.

Figure 1 shows the four categories of relationship between resident and non-resident parents. Just over half (51 per cent) of children with a non-resident parent had birth parents who were divorced or married and separated. One quarter had birth parents who previously cohabited but were now

Figure 1 Resident parent's relationship with child's non-resident parent (Q2a and Q2b combined), Great Britain

Percentages shown : of all children with a non-resident parent

Source: *Opinions survey modules (December 2008 and January 2009)*

separated, and almost one fifth had birth parents that had never lived together. It is worth noting that there is additional uncertainty with these results because around one quarter were provided by someone who was neither the resident nor the non-resident parent (see Appendix Table C1).

The beginning of this article mentioned similar previous research using Opinions (Omnibus) modules. One of these was contact after parental separation, which ran for six months in 2006 and 2007³². The results of this research indicated that for resident parents, around 40 per cent had not married or cohabited with the child's non-resident parent. This is higher than the one fifth shown in Figure 1 that reported never having lived with the child's non-resident parent. However, there are differences between the surveys in the question wording. Of the 40 per cent in the 2006/07 study, one quarter responded that they were "in a relationship but not cohabiting" with the child's other parent. The remaining three quarters reported that they had a "brief relationship or no relationship". These responses are not necessarily equivalent to "never lived together", which is the response shown in Figure 1.

Again, the LFS can be used as an additional source for comparison, and to supplement the Opinions data by investigating the characteristics of children with only one non-widowed birth parent. **Figure 2** is derived using the legal marital status of the child's resident parent, and shows that 45 per cent are either divorced or separated. This is close to the 51 per cent shown in Figure 1, but it is important to note that following divorce between birth parents, the birth parent may form a new relationship and become married with a new partner. For the same reason, we cannot be sure whether it is the child's non-resident parent who is the other half of the divorce or separation shown in Figure 2; it may be a new partner. It is interesting to note that at least one eighth (12 per cent) of birth parents had married a new partner (Figure 2). Of further interest is the fact that this, and the others results presented in Figure 2, agree broadly with the results of research by Peacey and Hunt³². Their Opinions (Omnibus) data for 2006/07 indicated that among resident parents of children with non-resident parents, 41 per cent were single, 29 per cent were divorced, 14 per cent were separated, and 16 per cent were married and living with a 'new' partner.

Figure 2   **Dependent children living with one non-widowed birth parent: legal partnership status of resident parent, LFS data, Great Britain**

Percentages shown: of all children living with one non-widowed birth parent.

Note: 'New' partners are those that are not the parent of children with a non-resident parent. The category 'other' includes civil partners, is less than 0.1 per cent, and is not shown on the chart.

Source: Labour Force Survey household data, April to June 2009

To some extent, whether a resident parent has repartnered can be further investigated by looking at the family status of children living with one non-widowed birth parent, as in Figure 3. According to the LFS, 71 per cent of children (2.7 million) living with one non-widowed birth parent (in 2009) live in female lone parent families. The equivalent figures for other family types were: cohabiting couple, 12 per cent (0.5 million), married or civil partnered, 12 per cent (0.4 million), and male lone parent, 6 per cent (0.2 million). Figure 3 also shows that the proportion of children living in different family types was almost identical in 1999 and 2009.

It is important to note that the above figures are merely estimates of each child's family status at a given point in time. Each child's residential status (and the partnership status of their birth parents) may have changed a number of times prior to 2009. This research is not able to link relationship and residential histories with existing family status, and any of the existing statuses (in Figure 3) might be matched with any of the relationships between birth parents (indicated in Figure 1). For example, existing lone parents may have divorced or separated from the child's other birth parent, where separation may be with or without previous marriage, or they may have never lived with the child's birth parent.

Distance and contact

The Opinions results show that there is considerable variation in the contact arrangements and distance between children and their non-resident parents (for detailed results see Appendix C). Almost half (46 per cent) of non-resident parents live less than 10 miles away from their child, and a further 17 per cent live relatively close (from 10 to less than 50 miles). However, almost one tenth of non-resident parents live over 100 miles away while a further tenth live outside the UK. These results are broadly similar to results from the 2007 Scottish Child Contact Survey¹⁰, although a

Figure 3   **Dependent children living with one non-widowed birth parent: Family status of child and resident parent, LFS data, Great Britain**

Percentage (of all children living with one non-widowed birth parent)

Source: Labour Force Survey household data, April to June

larger proportion of Scottish resident parents (62 per cent) reported that the non-resident parent lived less than 10 miles away. This may reflect differences in Scottish residential geography (since the Opinions results are for Great Britain), as well as differences between the samples.

The Opinions modules asked questions on frequency of contact considering two alternatives: (1) the child stays overnight with the non-resident parent, and (2) the non-resident parent stays overnight with the resident parent and child. This does not consider contact where neither parent nor child stay overnight, but this type of indirect contact is covered by previous Opinions research²⁷. Also, it is known that there are inconsistencies in accounts of contact between the resident parent and the non-resident parent. This is shown in the previous Opinions research, so some caution should be taken when interpreting these more recent findings which are reported by the resident parent only.

Around four in ten (42 per cent) of children ever stay overnight with their non-resident parent, but the frequency of stays is very varied. Of those who do stay overnight, 43 per cent stay at least once a week, 25 per cent at least once a fortnight, 7 per cent at least once a month, and 10 per cent only in the school holidays. The remaining 15 per cent stay four times a year or less. The Opinions survey did not specify the exact period for which this data refers. For example, it was up to respondents to decide whether they were referring to average contact over the last twelve months or some other period. Nevertheless, as mentioned previously, information on overnight stays could be used to estimate how likely or unlikely it is that social surveys (or censuses) fail to capture children at their usual residence. Calculations would depend upon the survey being considered, but if the number of children with a non-resident parent has increased, as suggested in Table 5, it may become more difficult to obtain a representative sample of children using existing survey methods. It may become more likely that children are included as members of the household by both birth parents, even when both birth parents live separately. Arguably this is most likely to happen when children have a shared residence arrangement.

Figure 4 Dependent children with a non-resident parent: proportion staying overnight by frequency, Great Britain

Percentage shown: of all children with a non-resident parent

Note: The remaining 58 per cent (not shown on this chart) never stay overnight with their non-resident parent

Source: *Opinions survey modules (December 2008 and January 2009)*

Figure 4 shows that 18 per cent of children with a non-resident parent stay overnight with that parent at least once a week³³. For the other durations, the results are: 10 per cent stay overnight at least once a fortnight, 3 per cent at least once a month, 4 per cent only in the school holidays, 3 per cent once every three months, and 4 per cent once or twice a year or less. The remaining 58 per cent of children never stay overnight with their non-resident parent, although in some cases their non-resident parent may stay overnight with them³⁴.

The results in Figure 4 are similar to those obtained by previous Opinions research²⁷, where in both 2002 and 2007, around 20 per cent of resident parents reported that children stayed overnight with their non-resident parent at least once a week. Again, it is worth noting that non-resident parents did report that this figure was higher (27 per cent in 2002 and 30 per cent in 2007). The figure is also higher when considering all direct contact (including face-to-face contact without an overnight stay). In this case, resident parents in 2007 reported 36 per cent of children had contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week. This figure rose to 50 per cent when answered by non-resident parents.

In this new Opinions research, a separate question asked for the exact number of days (per week, month or year) that the child stays overnight. This can be used to prepare a consistent estimate of days per month (see Table C7 in Appendix C). One question that this information can be used to inform is the extent to which shared residence is prevalent across the whole population. Of those children who stay overnight with their non-resident parent, 14 per cent stay for between 10 and 20 days a month. This frequency, although subject to variation within the band (between 10 and 20 days), might be seen to indicate shared residence. Making this assumption means that around 6 per cent of all children with a non-resident parent have what can be broadly defined as a shared residence arrangement (14 per cent multiplied by the 42 per cent who stay overnight).

The last set of questions asked whether (and how often) the non-resident parent stays overnight with the resident parent and child. Due to time limitations, this question was not asked of all children (only those who did not stay overnight with their non-resident parent). As such, the results

should be treated with caution (partly because this subgroup may represent 'low contact' children and therefore may be biased). Nevertheless, they suggest that non-resident parents rarely stay with the resident parent and child (only 6 per cent of those who were asked ever stayed).

Discussion

This article has created and discussed estimates of the number of children living in Great Britain that have a non-resident parent. New results from the Opinions survey were analysed to give results based on questions that ask directly about non-resident parents. These results were then compared with a large-scale social survey, the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which does not ask direct questions about non-resident parents, but does contain detailed information on relationships within the household, including resident birth parents.

According to the Opinions results, approximately 2.1 million households in Great Britain at the end of 2008 were estimated to contain at least one dependent child with a non-resident parent. This is equivalent to around 9 per cent of all households in Great Britain. Using information on the number of dependent children with a non-resident parent in each household, the Opinions survey suggested that there were 3.3 million dependent children in Great Britain that had a non-resident parent at the end of 2008.

According to the LFS, the number of dependent children in Great Britain living with one non-widowed birth parent was 3.8 million in 2009, an increase from 3.2 million in 1999. Comparing this 2009 LFS figure with the Opinions figure for the end of 2008 gives a difference of 0.4 million between the two estimates (Table 4). As suggested throughout the article, there are various reasons for this difference, including differences between the surveys and the estimation methods used.

Nevertheless, these estimates can be used by policy makers and other users of statistics in order to set the context for discussions about non-resident parents. Furthermore, this research discusses demographic characteristics such as partnership and family status, for example showing that the family types of children living with one non-widowed birth parent have stayed almost the same over the last ten years. Having compared the Opinions and LFS results, and finding reasonable agreement between the two, it seems plausible that further investigation of the LFS could be carried out to make use of other data in the survey. For example, the labour market characteristics of household members could be investigated to help understand the households in which children with non-resident parents are likely to live.

Other issues raised by the research include implications for future social survey research. Growth in the number of children with a non-resident parent is one dimension of an increasing diversity of family forms, and in future it may be possible to improve data collection in order to capture better the variety of family situations in which children live. The 2011 Census plans to collect information on second residences, with one of the reasons for a second residence to be 'another parent or guardian's address'. The inclusion of guardians means that census data would cover a wider population than the one considered in this article, but this is one of several sources that might be exploited in the future to inform research on non-resident parents. Consideration of both residential and non-residential aspects of families is likely to be a requirement of future debates on the family. Children's living arrangements are not homogenous, and one example shown here is that some non-resident parents sometimes stay overnight with the resident parent. Of course, contact

between children and a non-resident parent has many dimensions, many of which are captured by research elsewhere. It is important for demographers to be aware of this, and for official statistics to continue to keep pace with these changes in society.

Key findings

- According to the Opinions results, approximately 2.1 million households in Great Britain at the end of 2008 were estimated to contain at least one dependent child with a non-resident parent. This is equivalent to around 9 per cent of all households in Great Britain.
- Different survey sources can be used to estimate the number of children with a non-resident parent. Recent results from the Opinions survey suggest that there were 3.3 million dependent children in Great Britain with a non-resident parent at the end of 2008.
- According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the number of dependent children in Great Britain living with one non-widowed birth parent rose from 3.2 million in 1999 to 3.8 million in 2009.
- Based on the LFS, the proportion of dependent children that lived with one non-widowed birth parent also increased from 27 per cent to 30 per cent.
- In 2009, the majority of these children were living in lone parent families (76 per cent), with the rest living in either a cohabiting couple family (12 per cent) or a married (or civil partnered) couple family (12 per cent).
- According to the Opinions survey, 18 per cent of children with a non-resident parent stay overnight with that parent at least once a week. A further 10 per cent stay overnight at least once a fortnight, 3 per cent at least once a month, 4 per cent only in the school holidays, 3 per cent once every 3 months, and 4 per cent once or twice a year or less. The remaining 58 per cent of children never stay overnight with their non-resident parent, although in some cases their non-resident parent may stay overnight with them.

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Appendix A

The Opinions questionnaire

[Ask only if the household contains dependent children]

The next set of questions are being asked on behalf of the Office for National Statistics and explore children's contact with non-resident parents. This research aims to enhance understanding of child-parental contact and to inform public policy.

Filter question:

Considering all dependent children in this household, do they have any living parents who are not usually resident in this household?

[If YES then go to Question 1; If NO then END, module not asked]

Question 0: How many dependent children are there in the household with any living parents who are not usually resident in the household?

[Now, questions are asked for each dependent child]

Question 1: Are you the parent of [child]?

[If YES go to Question 2a; If NO go to Question 2b]

Question 2a: Please describe your relationship with [child's] non-resident parent.

- We are divorced
- We are legally married but separated
- We were cohabiting but are now separated
- We have never lived together

[Now go to Question 3]

Question 2b: Please answer these questions as best you can on behalf of [child's] non-resident parent. Please describe [resident parent's] relationship with [child's] non-resident parent.

- They are divorced
- They are legally married but separated
- They were cohabiting but are now separated
- They have never lived together

[Now go to Question 3]

Question 3: For how long has [child] had a non-resident parent?

- Less than two years
- More than two but less than five years
- Five years or more

Question 4: How far away does [child's] non-resident parent live?

- Less than 10 miles

- 10 to less than 50 miles
- 50 to less than 100 miles
- 100 to less than 150 miles
- Over 150 miles
- Lives outside the UK

Question 5: Does [child] ever stay overnight with their non-resident parent?

[If YES go to Q6; If NO go to Q8]

Question 6: How often does [child] stay overnight with non-resident parent? (Please choose the closest option that describes what usually happens.)

- At least once a week
- At least once a fortnight
- At least once a month
- Only in the school holidays
- Once every 3 months
- Once or twice a year
- Less often than once a year

Question 7: What is the total number of nights that [child] stays overnight with non-resident parent [select response format used by respondent]

- (a) Per week?
- (b) Per month?
- (c) Per year?

As with the rest of this survey, your responses to the following questions are completely confidential, and will not be disclosed.

Question 8: Does [child's] non-resident parent ever stay overnight in this household?

[If YES go to Q9; If NO then END MODULE]

Question 9: How often does this non-resident parent stay overnight?

- At least once a week
- At least once a fortnight
- At least once a month
- Only in the school holidays
- Once every 3 months
- Once or twice a year
- Less often than once a year

Question 10: What is the total number of nights that [child's] non-resident parent stays overnight in this household? [select response format used by respondent]

- (a) Per week?
- (b) Per month?
- (c) Per year?

END OF MODULE

Appendix B

Response rates and source comparisons

Table B1 Opinions modules: response rates

	December 2008	January 2009	Both modules	per cent of set	per cent of eligible
Set Sample of Addresses	2,010	2,010	4,020	100	
Ineligible Addresses ¹	197	176	373	9	
Eligible Addresses	1,812	1,833	3,645	91	
Eligible Households	1,826	1,827	3,653		
Unknown eligibility ¹	5	4	9		0
No interview – non-contact	182	151	333		9
No interview – refusal	553	542	1,095		30
Interviews	1,086	1,130	2,216		61
Eligible Households	1,826	1,827	3,653		

¹ Includes a proportion of unallocated cases

Table B2 **Response to the filter question:**
Considering all dependent children in this household, do they have any living parents who are not usually resident?

	December 2008	January 2009	Both modules – unweighted results	per cent of all	per cent of all responses
Yes	100	90	190	9	29
No	244	222	466	21	71
All responses			656		100
n/a ¹	742	818	1560	70	
All	1086	1130	2216	100	

Note: All households with children responded to the filter question

¹ The response n/a means that there were no children in the household

Table B3 Whether households contain dependent children with non-resident parents, Great Britain

Households (thousands)

	December 2008	January 2009	Average of both modules	Per cent of all
Household contains:				
Dependent children – some with non-resident parents	2,253	2,020	2,136	9
Dependent children – none with non-resident parents	5,395	5,396	5,395	22
No dependent children	16,736	17,954	17,345	70
All households¹	24,384	25,370	24,877	100

1 Household weights are not constrained to the household population. Hence, these estimates contain a margin of uncertainty

Table B4 Dependent children in households: LFS and Opinions survey estimates compared, Great Britain

Number of dependent children in household	LFS (Apr to Jun 2008)		Opinions (Dec 2008 & Jan 2009)		
	Number of dependent children (thousands)	per cent	Population (dependent children, thousands) ¹	per cent	Population difference (thousands) ²
One	3,393	27	3,310	25	83
Two	5,737	45	6,273	48	–536
Three	2,432	19	2,387	18	44
Four	803	6	927	7	–124
Five	198	2	243	2	–45
Six or more	139	1	56	0	84
Total³	12,701	100	13,141	100	–440

1 Calculated by multiplying the number in the household by the household estimate (mean of Dec and Jan)

2 LFS minus Opinions (hence negative means that Opinions estimate is larger)

3 Household weights in the Opinions survey are not constrained to the household population. Hence the Opinions estimates contain an additional margin of uncertainty.

Appendix C

Opinions survey results (unweighted)

The following tables outline the results from the Opinions modules, combining the responses from December 2008 and January 2009. It should be noted that a separate response is given for each child, so percentages are of all children (with a non-resident parent) and not households (or families) containing these children. Response to the filter question and question zero are in the main article (see Table 1 and Table 2 respectively).

Table C1 **Q1: Are you the parent of the child?**

	Both modules	per cent
Yes	221	74
No	77	26
refusal	1	0
All	299	100

Note: A separate response is given for each child

Table C2a **Q2a: Please describe your relationship with the child's non-resident parent¹**

	Both modules	per cent
We are divorced	77	35
We are legally married but separated	34	15
We were cohabiting but are now separated	57	26
We have never lived together	46	21
Refusal	2	1
Don't know	5	2
All	221	100

1 This question is only asked if respondent is a parent of the child

Table C2b **Q2b: Please describe [resident parent's] relationship with the child's non-resident parent**

	Both modules	per cent
They are divorced	39	51
They are legally married but separated	1	1
They were cohabiting but are now separated	24	31
They have never lived together	9	12
Refusal	-	-
Don't know	4	5
All	77	100

1 This question is only asked if respondent is **not** a parent of the child

Table C3 Q3: For how long has the child had a non-resident parent?

	Both modules	per cent
Less than two years	53	18
More than two but less than five years	78	26
Five years or more	165	55
Refusal	2	1
Don't know	1	0
All	299	100

Table C4 Q4: How far away does the child's non-resident parent live?

	Both modules	per cent
Less than 10 miles	138	46
10 to less than 50 miles	50	17
50 to less than 100 miles	15	5
100 to less than 150 miles	13	4
Over 150 miles	21	7
Lives outside the UK	28	9
Refusal	2	1
Don't know	32	11
All	299	100

Table C5 Q5: Does the child stay overnight with their non-resident parent?

	Both modules	per cent
Yes	125	42
No	171	57
Refusal	2	1
Don't know	1	0
All	299	100

Table C6 **Q6: How often does the child stay overnight with non-resident parent?**

	Both modules	per cent
At least once a week	54	43
At least once a fortnight	31	25
At least once a month	9	7
Only in the school holidays	12	10
Once every 3 months	8	6
Once or twice a year	10	8
Less often than once a year	1	1
Refusal	-	-
Don't know	-	-
All	125	100

Table C7 **Q7: Total time child stays with non-resident parent**

	Both modules	per cent
Less than one day a month	21	17
From one to (less than) 10 days a month	83	66
From 10 to 20 days a month	17	14
More than 20 days a month	4	3
Don't know	-	-
All	125	100

Table C8 **Q8: Does the child's non-resident parent ever stay overnight in this household?**

	Both modules	per cent
Yes	10	6
No	161	94
Refusal	-	-
Don't know	-	-
All	171	100

Table C9 **Q9: How often does this non-resident parent stay overnight?**

	Both modules	per cent
At least once a week	5	50
At least once a month	1	10
Once or twice a year	3	30
Less often than once a year	1	10
Don't know	-	-
All	10	100

Table C10 **Q10: Total time non-resident parent stays with child**

	Both modules	per cent
Less than one day a month	1	10
From one to (less than) 10 days a month	4	40
From 10 to 20 days a month	5	50
More than 20 days a month	-	-
Don't know	-	-
All	10	100

References

- 1 A (nuclear) family is usually defined as a married or cohabiting couple (with or without children) or a lone parent. It should be noted that this definition is also in accordance with international population definitions. The UN Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses states that: *A family nucleus is of one of the following types (each of which must consist of persons living in the same household): (a) A married couple without children, (b) A married couple with one or more unmarried children, (c) A father with one or more unmarried children, or (d) A mother with one or more unmarried children. (Couples living in consensual unions should be regarded as married couples.)* See: Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2 (2008) unstats.un.org/unsd/Demographic/standmeth/principles/Series_M67Rev2en.pdf
- 2 For a recent example covering a number of these subjects, see: Hunt J and Roberts C, (2004) 'Child contact with non-resident parents', *Family Policy Briefing 3*, University of Oxford, ISBN 0-9541703-8-5.
- 3 In January 2008 the Opinions (Omnibus) Survey became part of the Integrated Household Survey (IHS) and changed its name to the Opinions Survey. Interviews are conducted with approximately 1,200 adult individuals (aged 16 or over) in private households in Great Britain each month. The Opinions Survey uses the Postcode Address File (PAF) of 'small users' as its sampling frame. The PAF is known to have higher coverage of private households than any other available frame.
- 4 In March 2004, the then DfES published research which aimed to (a) assess current levels, frequency and satisfaction with contact arrangements from the point of view of non-resident and resident parents and (b) provide baseline data for future comparisons. A module asking about non-resident parental contact was run on the National Statistics Omnibus Survey in April, June, July, August, September, October and November 2002. See: Blackwell, A and Dawe, F (2003) 'Non-resident parental contact: based on data from the National Statistics Omnibus Survey', for the Department for Constitutional Affairs: final report, ONS. Available at: publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/Parentreport.pdf
- 5 A module asking about non-resident parental contact was run on the Omnibus Survey in September, October, November, December 2007 and January and February 2008. It was carried out on behalf of the Ministry of Justice and the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The survey aimed to assess: current levels, frequency and satisfaction with contact arrangements from the point of view of the non-resident and the resident parent, the general

population's knowledge and awareness of where to go for information or advice on matters relating to child contact arrangements, the use of services among parents who had made a child contact arrangements, and to provide a comparison with data collected in 2002. See: Lader, D (2008) Non-resident parental contact 2007/08, Omnibus survey report, ONS, available at: www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_social/parentalcontact2007-08.pdf

- 6 ONS Omnibus Survey, Contact After Separation Module, July, October, November and December 2006 and January and March 2007. This module was asked on behalf of the Oxford Centre for Family Law and Policy, based at the University of Oxford, and the charity, One Parent Families, which merged with the charity Gingerbread in 2007. The focus was on children under 17 years old whose parents no longer lived together. See: Peacey V and Hunt J (2008) 'Problematic contact after separation and divorce? A national survey of parents', London: One Parent Families/Gingerbread, and also: www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=6151
- 7 Kiernan, K (2006) 'Non-residential fatherhood and child involvement: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study', *Journal of Social Policy*, 35(4), pp.651–669.
- 8 Ermish, J (2008) 'Child support and non-resident fathers' contact with their children, *Journal of Population Economics* (21).
- 9 Marryat, L, Reid, S and Wasoff, F (2009) 'Growing Up In Scotland: Sweep 3'. Non-resident Parent Report. Available at: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/01/21085002/0
- 10 Scottish Government (2008) 2007 Scottish Child Contact Survey, ISBN: 9780755970193. A Scotland-wide survey of adults to determine the nature of contact arrangements and how well these are maintained. A report on the findings is available at: openscotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/03/12145638/0
- 11 This work is policy linked, for example: Green Paper (2004) Parental Separation: Children's Needs and Parents' Responsibilities Cm. 6273, Department for Constitutional Affairs, Department for Education and Skills, Department of Trade and Industry, TSO, London.
- 12 Given the size of the population of Northern Ireland compared to Great Britain, statistics for the UK (which includes Northern Ireland) are unlikely to differ greatly from statistics for Great Britain. However, statistics for Northern Ireland (on its own) may differ considerably from the results in this report.
- 13 Toulemon, L (2008) BSPS Plenary presentation: Two-home family situations of children and adults in France and Australia: observation and consequences for describing family patterns, abstract available at: www2.lse.ac.uk/socialPolicy/BSPS/annualConference/2008/2008_plenary_abstracts.aspx
- 14 In theory, it is possible for a dependent child to be (a) the respondent in the Opinions survey, and (b) a non-resident parent. The 2008/09 Opinions survey did not suggest that any dependent children met the first of these conditions, and the absence of a direct question (asking whether individuals in the household were non-resident parents) meant that it was not possible to identify any who met the second.
- 15 Haskey J (2005) 'Living arrangements in contemporary Britain', *Population Trends* 122, pp 35–45.

- 16 It was decided not to ask questions of non-resident parents (i.e. parents who have children that do not live with them) in order to avoid double counting and, due to limited room on the questionnaire, to allow additional information to be collected about the population being surveyed.
- 17 The overall response rates (percentage of interviews achieved) for the Opinions modules were 60 per cent (December) and 62 per cent (January). This is based on the number of eligible households, with the total set sample of addresses (eligible and ineligible) equal to 2,010 for both months.
- 18 The proportion of households with no dependent children was larger in January than December (Appendix Table B2), which partly explains the larger number of positive responses to the filter question in December.
- 19 In order to obtain weighted estimates, Omnibus survey household weights were used (rather than individual weights). This was largely because the Omnibus survey asks questions of one household member only. As such, the weighting procedure is different from most other social surveys. In this case, the questions were designed to ask about all household members so that the household could be used as the principal unit of analysis. Furthermore, the modules asked about the number of children present in each household (with non-resident parents) so that the weighted household estimates could then be used to estimate the number of children with non-resident parents. This was felt to be more reliable than asking respondents whether they were non-resident parents (i.e. targeting the households with non-resident parents). In addition, it was not possible to use the individual weights in the Omnibus survey to create weighted estimates of dependent children because the individual weights are for the adult population (aged 16 or more).
- 20 The final household weight is the product of the household calibration factor and a rescaled design weight. Ideally this would be the total number of households in the population divided by the number of responding households in the sample. However the total number of households in the population is not known. The ratio is estimated by dividing the total number of people in the population by the number of people in all the responding households.
- 21 Household weights are used because individual weights are only available for the population aged 16 and over, whereas the population to be estimated is dependent children (including those under 16) with a non-resident parent.
- 22 With regard to children living with no birth parents, these may be foster children, looked after children, or children living with relatives (e.g. grandparents). In the household relationship grid, the relationship between adopted children and their adoptive parents should be treated in the same way as children and their birth parents (that is, their adoptive parents should be categorised as birth parents).
- 23 We are interested in non-resident parents that are alive, and it should be noted that this cannot be entirely established by investigating whether the resident parent is widowed because the parents may not have ever married. Furthermore, the parents may have divorced and one parent may have subsequently died.
- 24 Users of statistics may only be interested in non-resident parents living in the UK (or GB, Scotland, England and Wales etc – depending upon the geography of the estimate). This

cannot be fully established without comprehensive questions designed to capture non-resident parents and their existing residence (including whether they have migrated).

- 25 The source is April to June quarterly household data. The relationship matrix asks for each household member's relationship to every other household member. In this case, we are interested in counting the number of responses 'parent' for each child. It should be noted that there is a different response for step-parents and this was not included. It should also be noted that the household data are weighted based on mid-year 2007 population estimates.
- 26 It is desirable to create confidence intervals for survey estimates such as those presented. However, this was not done because of the additional work required to account for (a) the way that household relationships are collected and/or assumed, and (b) the survey household weighting structures. Neither of these factors allows the relatively simple creation of standard errors that is possible using individual-level weighted data.
- 27 Lader, D (2008) 'Non-resident parental contact 2007/08'. Omnibus survey report, ONS.
- 28 The study, which was launched in 2005, is following two cohorts of differently aged children through their early lives and beyond. Findings are based on data from interviews with the cohort child's main carer across the first three years of GUS. Although this report uses data from across the three sweeps, most of the detail on contact is taken from sweep 3, at which point data is available on 4,193 children in the birth cohort (who were aged about 2 years and 10 months at the time of the interview) and 2,332 children in the child cohort (who were aged about 4 years and 10 months at the time of the interview). Interviews for sweeps 1 to 3 were carried out between April 2005 and May 2008.
- 29 If required, the LFS results could be derived separately for Scotland.
- 30 That said, there are known differences in responses given by resident and non-resident parents, for example see: Lader, D (2008) 'Non-resident parental contact 2007/08'. Omnibus survey report, ONS.
- 31 For an example looking specifically at non-resident fathers, see: Bradshaw J, Stimson C, Skinner C, and Williams J (1999) 'Non-resident fathers in Britain', in: McRae S. (ed.) *Changing Britain: Families and households in the 1990s*, Oxford University Press, pp 404–426.
- 32 Peacey V and Hunt J (2008) 'Problematic contact after separation and divorce? A national survey of parents', London: One Parent Families/Gingerbread, (Table 2.2, p. 16).
- 33 This result is obtained by multiplying the figures mentioned above: 42 per cent ever stay overnight and 43 per cent of those at least once a week.
- 34 The sample is small, but this is reported to be the case for 6 per cent of children who never stay overnight with their non-resident parent. This result (6 per cent) is not for the whole population, but for a sub-sample with comparatively 'low' contact. It is therefore likely to be an underestimate, and should be treated with caution.