NON-RESIDENT PARENTAL CONTACT

Based on data from the National Statistics Omnibus Survey for
The Department for Constitutional Affairs
October 2003
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Final Report

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1. Very small bases have been avoided wherever possible because of the relatively high sampling errors that attach to small numbers. In general, percentage distributions are shown if the base is 30 or more. Where the base is smaller than this, actual numbers are shown within square brackets.

2. A percentage may be quoted in the text for a single category that is identifiable in the tables only by summing two or more component percentages. In order to avoid rounding errors, the percentage has been recalculated for the single category and therefore may differ by one percentage point from the sum of the percentages derived from the tables.

3. The row or column percentages may add to 99% or 101% because of rounding.

4. Unless otherwise stated, changes and differences mentioned in the text have been found to be statistically significant.
Summary

1 Introduction

- Non-resident parents are respondents who have had a child from a previous relationship which has broken down and the child lives with the other birth parent. Resident parents are respondents who live with a child from a previous relationship and the other birth parent does not live with them.
- The achieved sample comprises of 649 respondents who were resident parents and 312 respondents who were non-resident parents. There were 26 respondents who were both a resident parent and a non-resident parent.
- The majority of resident parents were female while the majority of non-resident parents were male.
- Approximately half the parent sample were aged between 31 and 40 years. A larger proportion of the resident parent sample were younger than the non-resident parent sample.
- Most parents had either one or two children from a previous relationship.
- In total, parents reported on contact arrangements for 1,506 children.

- Analysis of the data, within this report, has been carried out at the child level.

2 Baseline figures for contact between child and non-resident parent

- Contact between the non-resident parent and their child can take a number of different forms and can be divided into two categories: direct and indirect contact. For the purposes of this report direct contact is defined as face-to-face contact between the child and the non-resident parent, whilst indirect contact includes all non face-to-face contact such as telephone conversations, letters, emails, etc.
- Overall, at least half of all children had some form of contact (direct or indirect) with their non-resident parent at least once a week.
- 43% of children in the resident parent sample and 59% of children in the non-resident parent sample had direct contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week.
- A further nine per cent of children in the resident parent sample and 18% of children in the non-resident parent sample had indirect contact at least once a week.
- A fifth (21%) of children in the resident parent sample and a tenth (10%) of children in the non-resident parent sample had direct contact with their non-resident parent less than once a week.
- Less than a twentieth of children have indirect contact less than once a week (4% for children in the resident parent sample and 3% of children in the non-resident parent sample).
- A quarter (24%) of children in the resident parent sample and 10% of children in the non-resident parent sample have no direct or indirect contact with their non-resident parent.

3 Frequency of contact with the non-resident parent

- There is an apparent correlation between the frequency of direct contact and indirect contact between the child and the non-resident parent. Therefore, children who saw their non-resident parent at least once a week were most likely to also have indirect contact at least once a week.
• Distance between the non-resident parent's home and that of their child is an important factor governing the frequency with which the child has direct contact with their non-resident parent. Indirect contact between the child and their non-resident parent does not appear to be as dependant upon the distance between the non-resident parent and child's homes as direct contact.

• Non-resident parents who had been separated for three years or more were less likely to have direct contact with their child at least once a week than those who had separated from the child's other parent less than three years ago.

• Children whose parents had been separated for at least three years were also more likely to never have contact with their non-resident parent than children whose parents had separated more recently.

• The age of the child appears to have little influence over the frequency of contact between the child and the non-resident parent.

• Within the resident parent sample, contact between the child and their non-resident parent was more likely to be influenced by whether or not the responding parent had had children in their current relationship, whilst within the non-resident parent sample the frequency of contact was more likely to be affected by whether or not the responding parent was currently in a relationship.

• Respondents were asked where the non-resident parent had contact with their child. The majority of children, in both sample groups, met their non-resident parent at the non-resident parent's home.

• Contact centres were used by less than one per cent of children in both sample groups as a location to meet their non-resident parents.

• Over half of all children stay overnight with their non-resident parent. However, children whose non-resident parent responded to the survey were more likely than children whose resident parent responded to the survey to stay overnight with their non-resident parent.

• There was a large discrepancy between the two samples in the proportion of children for whom the non-resident parent was paying maintenance. Non-resident parents were paying maintenance for almost two-thirds (63%) of the children in the non-resident parent sample compared with only 39% of the children in the resident parent sample.

4 Satisfaction with frequency of contact

• Overall, the parents of children in both sample groups were satisfied with the contact arrangements with almost half saying that they were 'very satisfied'.

• Only one-in-twenty parents of children in both sample groups were 'fairly dissatisfied' with the contact arrangements.

• Responding parents of children in the non-resident parent sample were more likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with the contact arrangements than responding parents of children in the resident parent sample.

• On the whole children's parents were more likely to be 'very satisfied' with the contact arrangements if the non-resident parent saw the child frequently.

• The proportion of children whose responding parent said that they were dissatisfied with the contact arrangements increased as the frequency of direct contact fell.

• Satisfaction with the contact arrangements among the responding parents of children whose non-resident parent did not have direct contact with the child was very different in the two sample groups. Over half the responding parents in the
resident parent sample were 'very satisfied' with the arrangements while only 6% of responding parents in the non-resident parent sample were 'very satisfied'.

- In general, satisfaction with contact arrangements does not appear to be influenced by the distance between the non-resident parent's home and that of the child.
- When asked how contact arrangements could be improved, the most popular contact improvement, in both sample groups, was that the non-resident parent should have more direct contact with their child.

5 Contact arrangements with the non-resident parent

- Contact arrangements between the non-resident parent and their child can be agreed in a number of ways. They can be agreed both formally or informally. Informal arrangements include the parents agreeing between themselves that the non-resident parent will have contact with the child every Saturday or parents have no set contact arrangements and deciding on a weekly basis. Formal contact arrangements are those negotiated by a mediator or lawyer or ordered by a court.
- The majority of children had the contact arrangements with their non-resident parent informally arranged. Over half of the children from both samples had the contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents.
- The nearer the non-resident parent lived to the child the more likely it was that the contact arrangements were informally agreed between the parents. This pattern is reversed for informal contact arrangements that were never agreed: the nearer the non-resident parent lives to the child the likelihood that the informal arrangements had never been agreed decreases.
- Contact arrangements are more likely to be informally agreed between parents if the parents had been separated for less than three years.
- In general, the more frequently the child has some contact with their non-resident parent the more likely it is that the contact arrangements were informally agreed between parents. This pattern is reversed for informal contact arrangements that were never agreed between the parents: the less often the child has contact with their non-resident parent the more likely it is that the informal contact arrangements have never been agreed.
- On the whole, responding parents who had informally agreed the contact arrangements between themselves were mainly satisfied.
- Satisfaction with contact arrangements that had been ordered by a court was low.
- Responding parents of children in the non-resident parent sample said the main improvement they would like to see to the contact arrangements was better communication with the other parent.
1 Introduction

This report presents the results of the module on non-resident parental contact carried out on behalf of the Department for Constitutional Affairs, as part of the Office for National Statistics Omnibus Survey.

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.
♦ Provide baseline data for future comparisons.

1.1 Sample
The sample included parents of:
♦ children aged 15 years or younger;
♦ birth children;
♦ children separated from one parent because of relationship breakdown.

The sample excluded:
♦ widowed parents;
♦ parents of children at boarding school;
♦ parents separated from their children because of state intervention, for example, those in care.

Non-resident parents are respondents who have had a child from a previous relationship which has broken down and the child lives with the other birth parent. Resident parents are respondents who live with a child from a previous relationship and the other birth parent does not live with them.

1.2 Fieldwork
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. This module was offered as a self-completion module. The Omnibus ran to capacity in April and July which meant that the module could not be included because of the additional time it could add to the length of interview. Therefore a different approach was taken for these two months: the Omnibus Survey asked a few questions to identify the sample of interest, then follow-up telephone interviews were conducted by the ONS Telephone Unit.

The National Statistics Omnibus Survey is a multi-purpose survey based on a representative sample of adults aged 16 or over, living in private households in Great Britain. The Omnibus Survey interviewed 13,506 adults during the seven months between April 2002 and November 2002. Questions about non-resident parental contact were only asked of respondents who were non-resident or resident parents, therefore the results of this report are based on 935 adults who met the criterion. The majority of respondents used the self-completion method of answering the module of questions on the Omnibus Survey. Self-completion was used to encourage honest answers and to avoid potential embarrassment on the part of respondents.
1.3 Respondents to the module
The achieved sample comprises of 649 respondents who were resident parents and 312 respondents who were non-resident parents. There were 26 respondents who were both a resident parent and a non-resident parent.

The majority (93%) of resident parents were female while the majority of non-resident parents were male (89%). Approximately half the sample of parents were aged between 31 and 40 years (53% of resident parents and 47% of non-resident parents). A larger proportion of the resident parent sample were younger than the non-resident parent sample: 26% were aged under 30 years compared with 15% of the non-resident parent sample. Therefore a larger proportion of the non-resident parent sample were older than the resident parent sample: more than a third (38%) aged 41 years or over compared with less than a quarter (22%) of the resident parent sample.

Most parents had either one or two children from a previous relationship. Three-fifths of respondents had one child (59% of resident parent and 62% of non-resident parents) and approximately a third of respondents had two children from a previous relationship (31% of resident parents and 29% of non-resident parents). Less than one-in-ten parents had three children (8% of resident parents and 6% of non-resident parents) and only one per cent of resident parents had four children and three per cent of non-resident parents had four or more children from a previous relationship.

In total, parents reported on contact arrangements for 1,506 children. Nearly half the children were aged 11 to 16 years (49% of the non-resident parent sample and 42% of the resident parent sample). A third were aged between 6 and 10 years (32% of the resident parent sample and 35% of the non-resident parent sample). Children aged over 10 may have different contact arrangements to younger children as they may influence the contact arrangements. There was an even split of male and female children in both samples.

1.4 Analysis
Although the survey data were collected from interviews with parents, analysis of data has been carried out at the child level. This approach has been taken because parents may have had more than one resident or non-resident child and contact arrangements may have been different for each child. Therefore parents' behaviour and attitudes are reported as characteristics of the child.

Results have been presented separately for the non-resident parent sample and the resident parent sample. It is necessary to show the results from the two samples separately because there was a possibility that the Omnibus Survey could have interviewed a child's resident and non-resident parent. Therefore if the results were combined for the two samples there would be a chance that the same child would be included twice in the data.

Logistic regression analysis has been used in the report to provide a measure of the effect of various variables on the frequency of contact between the child and their non-resident parent. Unlike the crosstabulations presented elsewhere in the report, logistic regression estimates the effect of a variable while controlling for the confounding effect of other variables in the analysis.
Details about the Omnibus Survey are given in Appendix A and the questionnaire is shown in Appendix B. Appendix C details the statistical terms used in this report and their interpretation.
Baseline figures for contact between child and non-resident parent

One of the primary purposes of the survey was to provide the Department for Constitutional Affairs with baseline figures for contact between the child and the non-resident parent from which levels of contact can be monitored over time. In order to effectively monitor change over time the associated 95% confidence intervals for these baseline percentages are shown in Tables 2.1-2.4. Chapter 3 'Frequency of contact with the non-resident parent' contains further analysis of the frequency of contact between the child and non-resident parent and the factors that may influence the frequency of contact.

2.1 Contact between child and non-resident parent

Contact between the child and non-resident parent can be divided into two forms: 'direct contact', that is face-to-face contact and 'indirect contact' such as contact via the telephone, mail, email etc. Data relating to frequency of contact in this chapter has been priority coded so that any form of contact at least once a week takes priority over contact less than once a week and direct contact within each time frame takes priority over any indirect contact during that period:

1. 'Direct contact at least once a week'
   (for example, a child who speaks to their non-resident parent every day on the telephone but sees them only once a week)
2. 'Indirect contact at least once a week'
   (for example, a child who has two or three emails a week from their non-resident parent and sees them only in the school holidays)
3. 'Direct contact less than once a week'
   (for example, a child who speaks to their non-resident parent once a fortnight on the telephone and sees them once a year on holiday)
4. 'Indirect contact less than once a week'
   (for example, a child irregularly receives letters from their non-resident parent but never has direct contact with them)

Forty-three per cent of children in the resident parent sample and 59% of children in the non-resident parent sample had direct contact at least once a week with their non-resident parent. A further nine per cent of children in the resident parent sample and 18% of those in the non-resident parent sample had indirect contact at least once a week.

A fifth (21%) of children in the resident parent sample and a tenth (10%) of children in the non-resident parent sample have direct contact less than once a week with their non-resident parent and less than a twentieth of children in both samples (4% and 3% respectively) have only indirect contact less than once a week.

A quarter (23%) of children in the resident parent sample and a tenth (10%) of children in the non-resident parent sample have no direct nor indirect contact with their non-resident parent.

Overall, at least half of all children had some form of contact (direct or indirect contact) with their non-resident parent at least once a week: half (52%) of children in the resident parent sample and three-quarters (77%) of children in the non-resident
parent sample. However, only three-tenths (30%) of children in the resident parent sample and just over a half (54%) of children in the non-resident parent sample had both direct and indirect contact at least once a week with their non-resident parent. Within both sample groups, fewer than three in ten children stayed over night with their non-resident parent at least once a week: 20% of children in the resident parent sample and 27% of children in the non-resident parent sample.  

*Tables 2.1 - 2.4*
3. Frequency of contact with the non-resident parent

Contact between the non-resident parent and their child can take a number of different forms and can be divided into two categories: direct and indirect contact. For the purposes of this report direct contact is defined as face-to-face contact between the child and the non-resident parent, whilst indirect contact includes all non face-to-face contact such as telephone conversations, letters, emails, etc.

Figure 3.1 Frequency of direct contact

3.1 Direct contact

Around one in ten children had daily direct contact with their non-resident parent (8% of children whose resident parent responded and 11% of children whose non-resident parent was the respondent). A third (34%) of children whose resident parent was interviewed and just under a half (48%) of children whose non-resident parent responded saw their non-resident parent at least once a week but not every day. Slightly fewer than one in five (18% of both samples) children saw their non-resident parent at least once a month. A further twentieth of children saw their non-resident parent only in the school holidays or once every three months (4% of children whose resident parent responded and 5% of children whose non-resident parent responded to the survey). A similar proportion, 6% of children whose resident parent was the respondent and 4% of children whose non-resident parent was the respondent, saw their non-resident parent once or twice a year and 3% and 1% respectively saw their non-resident parent less often than once a year. Just over a quarter (27%) of children whose

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1 Respondents who were resident parents were asked how frequently the non-resident parent contacts their child both directly and indirectly.
resident parent responded to the survey compared with 14% of children whose non-resident parent responded never see their non-resident parent. There is an apparent inconsistency between the two samples about the frequency with which the child has direct contact with their non-resident parent.

**Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1**

**Figure 3.2 Frequency of indirect contact**

![Bar chart showing frequency of indirect contact]

### 3.2 Indirect contact

The inconsistency between the two survey samples is more obvious when parents were asked about the frequency of indirect contact between the non-resident parent and their child. In some circumstances and situations the frequency of indirect contact between the non-resident parent and their child may be more difficult for the resident to assess than direct contact (for example a resident parent may not be aware of all telephone conversations or emails between the non-resident parent and their child) and this may explain some of the differences between the results from the two sample.

Amongst the sample of children whose non-resident parent responded to the survey half (53%) had indirect contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week but not every day and a further 18% had daily indirect contact. Six per cent had indirect contact with their non-resident parent once a month and one tenth (10%) had indirect contact less often than once a month. One eighth (12%) of these children had no indirect contact with their non-resident parent.

Among the children whose resident parent responded to the survey slightly more than a quarter (28%) had indirect contact at least once a week but not every day with their non-resident parent and only 12% had daily indirect contact. An eighth (13%) had indirect contact with their non-resident parent at least once a month and a further 18% of children had indirect
contact less frequently than once a month. Three in ten (29%) children in this survey sample reportedly never had indirect contact with their non-resident parent.

**Table 3.2 and Figure 3.2**

### 3.3 Relationship between direct and indirect contact with non-resident parent

Table 3.3 shows that there is an apparent correlation between the frequency of direct and indirect contact between the child and their non-resident parent within both samples. Therefore children who saw their non-resident parent at least once a week but not every day were most likely to also have indirect contact with them at least once a week but not daily. Among children in the resident parent sample, two thirds (67%) of children who had indirect contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week but not every day also had direct contact with them at least once a week but not daily. Similarly, half (52%) of children in the resident parent sample who had indirect contact with their non-resident parent at least once a month also had direct contact at least once a month. Among children who had no indirect contact with their non-resident parent four-fifths, in both sample groups, also had no direct contact with their non-resident parent (80% of children in the resident parent sample and 83% of children in the non-resident parent sample who never had indirect contact with their non-resident parent).

**Table 3.3**

### 3.4 Distance between child's home and non-resident parent's home

Unsurprisingly, the distance between the non-resident parent's home and that of their child appears to be an important factor governing the frequency with which the child sees their non-resident parent. Consequently, children who lived within ten miles of their non-resident parent were those most likely to see their non-resident parent daily. Over an eighth of children who lived within ten miles of their non-resident parent saw them every day (14% of children whose resident parent responded to the survey and 16% of children whose non-resident parent was the respondent).

Within the non-resident parent sample the relationship between frequency of direct contact and distance between the child and the non-resident parent is much clearer than within the resident parent sample. The results from this sample suggest that frequency of contact decreases as the distance between non-resident parent and child increases. Therefore, children who lived less than 10 miles from their non-resident parent were those most likely to see their non-resident parent on a daily basis (16% compared with 6% of children who lived 10 miles but less than 50 miles from their non-resident parent and 1% of children who lived 50 or more miles from their non-resident parent). Children who lived less than 50 miles from their non-resident parent were most likely to see them at least once a week but not every day: more than six in ten (63%) children who lived under 10 miles from their non-resident parent's home and half (49%) of those who lived 10 miles but less than 50 miles from their non-resident parent's home saw them at least once a week but not every day. Children who lived 50 miles or more from their non-resident parent's home were most likely to see their non-resident parent at least once a month: the proportion of children who lived 50 miles or more from their non-resident parent's home who saw their non-resident parent at least once a month was almost twice that of children who lived 10 miles but less than 50 miles from their non-resident parent and four times that of children who lived under 10 miles from their non-resident parent (43%, 22% and 10% respectively).

Among both sample groups children who lived 50 miles or more from their non-resident parent's home were those most likely to never see their non-resident parent. Within the resident parent sample this proportion is more than twice that of the same proportion among the non-resident sample (45% compared with 20%).

**Table 3.4**
Perhaps unsurprisingly, indirect contact between the child and their non-resident parent does not appear to be as dependant upon the distance between the non-resident parent and child's homes as direct contact. In fact among the non-resident parent sample there would appear to be very little difference in frequency of indirect contact by distance between the child and non-resident parent other than that children who live within 10 miles of their non-resident parent are twice as likely as those who live 10 miles but less than 50 miles, or 50 miles and over from their non-resident parent to have daily indirect contact with their non-resident parent (24%, 13% and 12% respectively). However, among children in the resident parent sample a pattern was evident: children living less than 10 miles from their non-resident parent's home were more likely to have daily indirect contact than children living further from their non-resident parent; children who lived less than 50 miles from their non-resident parent were twice as likely to have weekly indirect contact with their non-resident parent than children who lived 50 miles or more from their non-resident parent; and children who lived 50 miles or more from their non-resident parent were those most likely to have no indirect contact with their non-resident parent.

*Table 3.5 and Figure 3.3*

**Figure 3.3** Frequency of indirect contact by distance child lives from non-resident parent among children in the resident parent sample

When both indirect and direct contact is taken into account, as Table 3.6 shows, children who lived less than 10 miles from their non-resident parent were more likely than children who lived further from their non-resident parent to have direct contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week (62% of children in the resident parent sample and 78% of children in the non-resident parent sample who lived less than 10 miles from their non-resident parent). However, among children who lived 10 miles but less than 50 miles from...
their non-resident parent the proportion who saw their non-resident parent at least once a week was still large: 41% of children in the resident parent sample and 56% of children in the non-resident parent sample. Following this pattern, (among children in the non-resident parent sample only) children who lived 50 miles or more from their non-resident parent were less likely to have weekly direct contact with their non-resident parent than children who lived nearer to their non-resident parent, but almost six in ten (57%) had indirect contact at least once a week.

Table 3.6

3.5 Factors influencing frequency of contact

Length of time since parents separated
Responding parents were asked how long they had been separated from their child's other parent and answered using the following frame:

1. Less than one year
2. One year to less than two years
3. Two years to less than three years
4. Three years and over
5. Never in a relationship with the other parent

It would appear that non-resident parents who had been separated for three years or more were less likely to have direct contact with their child at least once a week than those who had separated from the other parent less than three years ago. For example, among children in the resident parent sample only a third (32%) of those whose parents separated three years ago or more saw their non-resident parent at least once a week compared with over half of children whose parents separated less than three years ago (70% of children whose parents separated less than a year ago, 64% of children whose parents separated one year but less than two years ago, and 56% of children whose parents separated two years but less than three years ago). Whilst this pattern was similar among children in the non-resident parent sample the proportions of children who had direct contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week was much larger than the same proportion in the resident parent sample for each of the separation period groups. Therefore among children in the non-resident parent sample just over a half (53%) of those whose parents had been separated for at least three years had direct contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week compared with around four-fifths of children whose parents had separated more recently (79% of children whose parents separated less than a year ago, 84% of children whose parents separated one year but less than two years ago, and 79% of children whose parents separated two years but less than three years ago).

Children whose parents had been separated for at least three years were also more likely never to have contact with their non-resident parent than children whose parents had separated more recently. Again among children in the resident parent sample, over a quarter (28%) of children whose parents separated at least three years ago never have contact with their non-resident parent compared with around one in ten children whose parents separated less than three years ago (11% of children whose parents separated less than a year ago, 12% of children whose parents separated one year but less than two years ago, and 10% of children whose parents separated two years but less than three years ago). Furthermore, within the resident parent sample six in ten (59%) children whose parents described themselves as never having been in a relationship with the other parent never have contact with their non-resident parent.

Table 3.7

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2 This finding was not observed among children in the resident parent sample.
Age of child
The age of the child appears to have little influence over the frequency of contact between the child and their non-resident parent. Children in each age group were most likely to have direct contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week. However, the proportion of children aged 11-16 years who had direct contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week was smaller than for younger children: for example, among children in the non-resident parent sample only half (51%) of children aged 11-16 years had direct contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week compared with two-thirds (67%) of children aged 0-5 years and 6-10 years. Within both samples the proportion of children in each age group who had no contact with their non-resident parent was very similar. Among children in the resident parent sample around a quarter of children in each age group had neither indirect nor direct contact with their non-resident parent (24% aged 0-5 years, 21% aged 6-10 years, and 25% aged 11-16 years). The proportion of children in the non-resident parent sample who had no contact with their non-resident parent was smaller, but again similar in each age group: around one tenth of children in each age group had neither direct nor indirect contact with their non-resident parent (8% aged 0-5 years, 10% aged 6-10 years, and 11% aged 11-16 years).

Table 3.8

3.6 Further analysis
Logistic regression has been used in this report to produce relative risk ratios to predict the odds of a child being in a specific group as compared to a baseline group. This enables the effect of various factors on the frequency of contact between the child and their non-resident parent to be explored. The following variables were entered in the model: age of the child, distance between the homes of the child and their non-resident parent, and the length of time the child's parents had been separated. Analysis by distance between the homes of the child and their non-resident parent does not include children or parents who lived abroad as these groups were too small for any meaningful analysis. Similarly, analysis by length of separation does not include parents who had never been in a relationship because the sample group was too small.

The results from the model show that age of the child does not appear to have an impact upon the frequency of contact between the child and their non-resident parent.

Distance between the child and their non-resident parent
Results from the model show that distance between the homes of the child and their non-resident parent have a significant impact upon the frequency of contact between the child and their non-resident parent. Children who lived less than ten miles from their non-resident parent were more likely to have direct contact at least once a week than children who lived further away. Similarly, children who lived fifty miles or more from their non-resident parent were those most likely to have no contact with their non-resident parent.

Children who lived ten miles or more from their non-resident parent were more likely to have indirect contact than direct contact at least once a week than children who lived within ten miles of their non-resident parent. Within the resident parent sample, children who lived between 10 and 49 miles of their non-resident parent were four times more likely to have indirect than direct contact at least once a week than children who lived within ten miles of their non-resident parent. Similar findings were found among children in the non-resident parent sample: children who lived between 10 and 49 miles of their non-resident parent were four times more likely to have indirect than direct contact at least once a week than children who lived within ten miles of their non-resident parent. The odds of a child having indirect contact rather than direct contact at least once a week with their non-resident parent increased
among children who lived 50 miles or more from their non-resident parent. Children, within
the resident parent sample, who lived at least 50 miles from their non-resident parent were 30
times more likely than those who lived less than ten miles from their resident parent to have
indirect contact than direct contact at least once a week. Within the non-resident parent
sample the same odds were higher: children who lived at least 50 miles from their non-
resident parent were 58 times more likely than those who lived less than ten miles from their
non-resident parent to have indirect contact than direct contact at least once a week.

Within the non-resident parent sample only, the model also showed that there was a
significant difference between the likelihood of children who lived 50 miles or more from
their non-resident parent and those who lived between 10 and 49 miles from their non-
resident parent having indirect contact rather than direct contact at least once a week. Children
who lived 50 miles or more from their non-resident parent were 14 times more likely to have
indirect contact than direct contact at least once a week than children who lived between 10
and 49 miles from their non-resident parent.

Contact less frequently than once a week would also appear to be affected by the distance
between the child and their non-resident parent. Within the resident parent sample the odds of
a child having contact less than once a week than having direct contact at least once a week
rose as the distance between the child and their non-resident parent increased. Children who
lived between 10 and 49 miles from their non-resident parent were three times as likely to
have direct contact less often than once a week than direct contact once a week compared
with children who lived within 10 miles of their non-resident parents. The odds of having
direct contact less often than once a week than having direct contact at least once week was
23 times more likely for children who lived 50 miles or more from their non-resident parent
than those who lived less than ten miles. This pattern was continued for children in the
resident sample living at least 50 miles from their non-resident parent when compared with
those living between 10 and 50 miles from their non-resident parent: children who lived at
least 50 miles from their non-resident parent were 9 times more likely to have direct contact
less than once a week and 63 times more likely to have indirect contact less than weekly than
direct contact at least once a week compared with children who lived between 10 and 49
miles from their non-resident parent. Within the resident parent sample, children who lived at
least 50 miles from their non-resident parent were 166 times more likely to have indirect
contact less frequently than once a week than direct contact at least once a week compared
with children who lived within 10 miles of their non-resident parent. The difference between
children who lived between 10 and 49 miles of their non-resident parent and those who lived
nearer in terms of likelihood of having indirect contact less often than once a week rather than
direct contact at least once a week was not significant.

The bases of the groups of children who had direct contact less than once a week, and those
who had indirect contact less than once a week were too small within the non-resident parent
sample to allow the model to produce meaningful relative risk ratios and therefore for this
sample group only the two groups have been combined. Within the non-resident parent
sample the difference between the likelihood that children had contact with their non-resident
parent less than once a week rather than direct contact at least once a week was significant
only for children who lived 50 miles or more from their non-resident parent. Compared with
children who lived within 10 miles of their non-resident parent, children who lived 50 miles
or more were 10 times more likely to have some form of contact less often than once a week
than direct contact at least once a week.
Within both samples children who lived fifty miles or more from their non-resident parent were more likely than children who lived nearer to have no contact with their non-resident parent. Among children in the resident parent sample, the likelihood of children who lived at least 50 miles from their non-resident parent to have no contact with their non-resident parent than to have direct contact at least once a week was greater when compared with children who lived within ten miles of their non-resident parent (38 times more likely) than when compared with children who lived between 10 and 50 miles from their non-resident parent (24 times more likely). Within the non-resident parent sample the difference was also significant when comparing children who lived less than 50 miles from their non-resident parent: children who lived at least 50 miles from their non-resident parent were 24 times more likely to have no contact than direct contact at least once a week with their non-resident parent when compared with children who lived within 10 miles of their non-resident parent. When compared to children who lived between 10 and 49 miles from the non-resident parent, children who lived 50 miles and over from the non-resident parent were eight times more likely to have no contact with their non-resident parent than direct contact at least once a week.

**Length of time since parent's separation**

Whilst the model found length of time since parent's separation to have a significant effect upon frequency of contact between children the findings were slightly different within the two sample groups. Within the resident parent sample children whose parents had been separated for three years or more were four times as likely to have direct and indirect contact less frequently than once a week than have weekly direct contact when compared with children whose parents had been separated for less than three years. Similarly, these children were five times more likely than children whose parents had separated in the last three years, to have no contact with their non-resident parent than to have direct contact at least once a week.

Within the non-resident parent sample, significant differences were only found for children who had contact with the non-resident parent less often than once a week: children whose parents had been separated for three years or more were four times as likely to have contact less frequently than once a week than have weekly direct contact when compared with children whose parents had been separated for less than three years. Children whose parents had been separated for at least three years were eight times more likely to have no contact with their non-resident parent than direct contact at least once a week when compared with children whose parents had been separated for less than three years.

**Tables 3.9-3.12**

### 3.7 Characteristics of the responding parent

The frequency with which the child had contact with their non-resident parent does not appear to be related to the age of the responding parent. Additionally, sex of the responding parent would not appear to influence frequency of contact in either of the sample groups. However, it should be remembered that the composition of the two sample groups were heavily sex specific: the non-resident parent sample largely comprised of children whose non-resident parent (the responding parent) was their father, whilst the resident parent sample largely comprised of children whose resident parent (the responding parent) was their mother.

Crosstabulation by region of residence of the responding parent also showed no statistically significant differences in the frequency of contact. Similarly, ethnic group of the responding parent (which may or may not be the same as either the child or the other parent) would not on the whole appear to influence the frequency with which the child had contact with their non-resident parent. The only difference in frequency of contact by ethnic group was found
among children in the resident parent sample: children whose resident parent was white were
more likely than those whose resident parent was non-white to have weekly direct contact
with their non-resident parent (44% compared with 32%).

In general the socio-economic group of the responding parent does not appear to influence the
frequency of contact between the child and their non-resident parent. The only statistically
significant difference was found among the resident parent sample where children whose
resident parent was in the lower occupations socio-economic group were more likely than
children whose resident parents were in the higher or intermediate occupations groups to
never have contact with their non-resident parent (30% compared with 16% and 12%
respectively).

Tables 3.13-3.17

**Whether responding parent had a new partner**

Respondents were asked whether or not they were currently in a relationship and if so whether
they have had a child within this current relationship. Within both sample groups whether or
not the responding parent currently had a new partner appeared to be a factor that influenced
the frequency of contact between the child and the non-resident parent. However, the findings
were different within the sample groups: contact between the child and non-resident parent
were more likely to be influenced by whether or not the responding parent had had children in
their current relationship within the resident parent sample whilst within the non-resident
parent sample the frequency of contact was more likely to be affected by whether or not the
responding parent was currently in a relationship.

Among the resident parent sample, children whose resident parent was currently in a
relationship but had not had children in that relationship were as likely as those whose
resident parent was not currently in a relationship to have direct contact at least once a week
with their non-resident parent (47% and 48% respectively). Fewer than one in five (16%)
children whose resident parent was currently in a relationship and had had a child within that
relationship had direct contact at least once a week with their non-resident parent, whilst two-
quarters (40%) had direct contact less than once a week with their non-resident parent (compared
with 22% of children whose resident parent was currently in a relationship and had not had a
child in that relationship and 14% of children whose resident parent was not currently in a
relationship).

Within the non-resident sample, children whose non-resident parent was not currently in a
relationship were more likely to have direct contact with their non-resident parent at least
once a week than children whose non-resident parent was currently in a relationship. Three-
quarters (76%) of children whose non-resident parent was not currently in a relationship saw
their non-resident parent at least once a week compared with around a half of children whose
non-resident parent was currently in a relationship (53% of children whose non-resident
parent was currently in a relationship and had not had a child within that relationship and 48%
of children whose non-resident parent was currently in a relationship and they had had a child
in that relationship). Furthermore, children whose non-resident parent was currently in a
relationship were three times more likely than children whose non-resident parent was not
currently in a relationship to never have contact with their non-resident parent (12% of
children whose non-resident parent was currently in a relationship but had not had a child in
that relationship, 14% of children whose non-resident parent was in a relationship and had had
a child in that relationship compared with 4% of children whose non-resident parent was not
currently in a relationship).

Table 3.18
3.8 Characteristics of the responding parent in situations where the non-resident parent has no direct contact with their child

The parents of children who did not have direct contact with their non-resident parent were most likely to have been separated for at least three years: 73% and 83% respectively of children in the resident parent sample and non-resident parent sample who did not have direct contact with their non-resident.

Unsurprisingly, given that the child's father is most likely to be the non-resident parent, within both samples the parent that the child was no longer in direct contact with was their father.

It would seem that among the resident parent sample the presence of a new partner for their resident parent did not affect the likelihood of the non-resident parent having no contact with the child. Therefore among children in the resident parent sample who no longer had direct contact with their non-resident parent, they were almost as likely to be living with a resident parent who currently had a partner as living with one who did not (for example, 55% of these children lived with a resident parent who did not currently have a partner). Whereas the presence of a new partner for the non-resident parent appears to increase the likelihood that the child will no longer have contact with the non-resident parent: among children in the non-resident parent sample who did not have direct contact with their non-resident parent only 12% of these children had a non-resident parent who did not currently have a partner.

Table 3.19

3.9 Location of direct contact

Respondents were asked where the non-resident parent had contact with their child and on the whole the findings from both sample groups were very similar. The majority of children, in both sample groups, met their non-resident parent at the non-resident parent's home (70% of children whose resident parent was the respondent and 86% of children whose non-resident parent responded). Furthermore, the non-resident parent's home remained the most popular site of contact regardless of the frequency with which the child saw their non-resident parent.

Over a quarter of children in each sample group saw their non-resident parent at their resident parent's home (28% of children in the resident parent sample and 26% of those in the non-resident parent sample). Perhaps unsurprisingly, this location for direct contact was most popular among children who saw their non-resident parent every day: over half of children who saw their non-resident parent every day met them in their resident parent's home (62% of children in the resident parent sample and 56% of those in the non-resident parent sample). The proportion of children, in both sample groups, who saw their non-resident parent in their resident parent's home more than halved between those who saw their non-resident parent every day and those who had direct contact at least once a week but not every day. For example, among children in the resident parent sample the proportion who saw their non-resident parent in their resident parent's home fell from 62% of those who had daily direct contact with their non-resident parent to only a quarter (26%) of those who saw their non-resident parent at least once a week but not every day.
A 'place of leisure' was the second most popular location for direct contact to take place between the non-resident parent and their child for both sample groups. Three in ten (29%) children whose resident parent responded and four in ten (39%) children whose non-resident parent responded to the survey met their non-resident parent at a place of leisure. One fifth of children met their non-resident parent at a relative's or friend's home (22% of children in the resident parent sample and 21% of children in the non-resident parent sample). Children whose non-resident parent responded to the survey were twice as likely as those whose resident parent responded to meet their non-resident parent at school (8% compared with 4%).

Contact centres were used by less than one per cent of children in both sample groups as a location to meet their non-resident parents.

3.10 Overnight stays with the non-resident parent
Over half of all children stay overnight with their non-resident parent. However, there was a large difference between the proportion of children in both sample groups who stay overnight with their non-resident parent. The Survey found that children whose non-resident parent responded to the survey were more likely than children whose resident parent responded to the survey to stay overnight with their non-resident parent: four-fifths (81%) of children in the non-resident parent sample compared with three-fifths (60%) of children in the resident parent sample. Slightly fewer than one third of children in both sample groups stay overnight with their non-resident parent at least once a week (28% of children in the resident parent sample and 32% of children in the non-resident parent sample).
A third (33%) of children in the non-resident parent sample stay overnight with their non-resident parent at least once a week compared with only 20% of children in the resident parent sample. Similarly, the proportions of children who stay overnight in the school holidays/every three months was much larger in the non-resident parent sample than in the resident parent sample (9% compared with 2%).

Around a twentieth of children in both sample groups stay overnight with their non-resident parent once or twice a year (7% of children in the resident parent sample and 5% of children in the non-resident parent sample). However, children in the resident parent sample were more likely to stay overnight with their non-resident parent less often than once a year than children in the non-resident parent sample (4% compared with 1%).

Table 3.21 and Figure 3.5

Figure 3.5 Frequency of overnight stay

![Frequency of overnight stay](image-url)

Among children in the resident parent sample those who had direct contact with their non-resident parent less than once a month were half as likely as those who saw their non-resident parent more frequently to stay overnight with them. For example, 71% of children in the resident parent sample who had direct contact with their non-resident parent every day stay overnight with them compared with only a third (32%) of those who have direct contact less often than once a month.

Within the non-resident parent sample the relationship between frequency of direct contact and likelihood that the child stays overnight with the non-resident parent is not as clear. Whilst the smallest proportion of children that stay overnight with their non-resident parent were those who have direct contact with their non-resident parent less often than once a month (62%) the differences between this proportion and those for children who had direct contact more frequently were not statistically significant. However, children in the non-

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3 The difference between the proportion of children who saw their non-resident parent at least once a week and those who saw their non-resident parent at least once a month was statistically significant.
resident parent sample who have direct contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week but not every day were those most likely to stay overnight with them. Almost nine in ten (87%) children who saw their non-resident parent at least once a week but not every day also stay overnight with them compared with, for example, 71% of children who have direct contact with their non-resident parent every day.

In general the likelihood of a child staying overnight with their non-resident parent does not appear to be influenced by the distance between the non-resident parent's home and that of their child. The exception to this being that children in the resident parent sample who lived less than 10 miles from their non-resident parent were more likely than those who lived 50 miles or more from their non-resident parent to stay overnight with them (65% compared with 50%). This difference was not evident within the non-resident parent sample.

The length of time that the child's parents had been separated had no effect on the likelihood that they stay overnight with their non-resident parent.

Within the non-resident parent sample there would appear to be a relationship between the age of the child and whether they stay overnight with their non-resident parent. Just under two-thirds of children aged six and over, in the resident parent sample, stay overnight with their non-resident parent (63% aged 6-10 and 64% aged 11-16) compared with only a half (51%) aged 0-5. Whilst a similar pattern appears within the non-resident parent sample the difference between the proportions of children aged 0-5 and six and over are not as large and not statistically significant.

### 3.11 Maintenance payment

There was a large discrepancy between the two samples in the proportion of children for whom the non-resident parent was paying maintenance. Non-resident parents were paying maintenance for almost two-thirds (63%) of the children in the non-resident parent sample compared with only 39% of the children in the resident parent sample. This discrepancy between the samples may be caused by the parent's perception of 'maintenance payment'. It is possible that respondents who were the resident parent may have perceived 'maintenance payment' to mean a formal regular payment made by the non-resident parent whilst non-resident parent respondents may have been more likely to define 'maintenance payment' more broadly to include irregular contributions, gifts etc. made either to the resident parent or directly to the child.

Children who had direct contact at least once a week with their non-resident parent were more likely to receive maintenance payments from them than children who had direct contact less often. For example, among children in the resident parent sample, 53% of those who had direct contact at least once a week with their non-resident parent had maintenance paid for them compared with only 41% who had direct contact less than once a week. Within both samples the differences between the proportions of children who had indirect contact at least once a week and whose non-resident parent was paying maintenance for them and the corresponding proportions of children who had direct contact with their non-resident parent either weekly or less often were not statistically significant.

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4 The difference between the proportion of children who saw their non-resident parent at least once a week and those who saw their non-resident parent at least once a month was not statistically significant.
Children who had no contact with their non-resident parent were those least likely to be receiving maintenance payments. Only one tenth (9%) of children in the resident parent sample and a quarter (25%) of those in the non-resident parent sample who had no contact with their non-resident parent received maintenance payments from their non-resident parent.

At present any resident parent who is claiming state benefit (other than child benefit which is paid to all parents irrespective of income) is required to use the Child Support Agency to acquire maintenance payments from the child's non-resident parent. State benefit was being claimed by four in five (80%) parents of children in the resident parent sample.

Table 3.23

Figure 3.6 How maintenance arrangements were agreed

Despite the difference in the proportions in both samples reporting that the non-resident parent pays maintenance for the child there was agreement between the two samples in how the arrangements for maintenance were agreed. Over half (56% of both samples) of all maintenance agreements were made informally between the child's parents. Around three in ten maintenance agreements were made through the Child Support Agency (28% of children in the resident parent sample and 30% of children in the non-resident parent sample for whom maintenance was paid). Slightly more than an eighth of each sample had their maintenance agreements made through a lawyer or a court (14% of children in the resident parent sample and 13% of children in the non-resident parent sample for whom maintenance was paid). One per cent of children in each sample had had the maintenance payments made by their non-resident parent agreed through the Family Mediation Service.

Table 3.24 and Figure 3.6
4. Satisfaction with frequency of contact

Respondents to the survey were asked how satisfied they were with the current contact arrangements between the non-resident parent and their child. They were asked to answer using the following frame:

1. Very satisfied
2. Fairly satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Fairly dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

The categories 'fairly dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied' have been combined because of the small bases associated with them.

Although the survey data were collected from interviews with parents, analysis of data is carried out at the child level. This approach has been taken because parents may have had more than one resident or non-resident child and different contact arrangements for each. By carrying out analysis at a child level, contact arrangements for all children can be included. Therefore parents' behaviour and attitudes have been analysed separately for each child.

Figure 4.1 Satisfaction with contact arrangements
4.1 Satisfaction with contact arrangements

Over all, the parents of children in both sample groups were satisfied with the contact arrangements: almost a half of both groups saying that they were 'very satisfied' with the arrangements (47% of parent responses in the resident parent sample and 45% of those in the non-resident parent sample). Similarly, the proportion of children whose responding parent said that they were 'fairly satisfied' with the contact arrangements were very similar in both sample groups (25% of children in the resident parent sample and 24% of children in the non-resident parent sample).

Only one in twenty parents of children in both sample groups were 'fairly dissatisfied' with the contact arrangements (6% of parent responses in the resident parent sample and 5% of parent responses in the non-resident parent sample). However, responding parents of children in the non-resident parent sample were more likely to be 'very dissatisfied' with the contact arrangements than responding parents of children in the resident parent sample (17% compared with 12%).

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1

4.2 Relationship between satisfaction with contact arrangements and frequency of contact

There would appear to be a relationship between the frequency of direct contact between the non-resident parent and their child and the responding parent's satisfaction with the contact arrangements. On the whole children's parents were more likely to be 'very satisfied' with the contact arrangements if the non-resident parent saw the child frequently. Therefore the proportion of children, in both sample groups, whose responding parent said that they were 'very satisfied' with the contact arrangements fell with frequency of contact. For example, among children in the resident parent sample, the proportion whose responding parent said that they were 'very satisfied' with the arrangements fell from three-quarters (75%) of those who saw their non-resident parent every day to only a quarter (24%) who saw their non-resident parent less often than once a month. However, the percentage rose to 58% for children who never saw their non-resident parent.

Within the resident parent sample, the responding parent of a third of children who saw their non-resident parent less frequently than every day said that they were 'fairly satisfied' with the contact arrangements: 33% of children who saw their non-resident parent at least once a week but not every day, 35% of those who saw their non-resident parent at least once a month, and 32% who saw their non-resident parent less often than once a month. This finding was also reflected in the non-resident parent sample.

Unsurprisingly, this pattern is reversed for the proportion of children whose responding parent said they were 'dissatisfied' with the contact arrangements. Consequently, the proportion of children whose responding parent said that they were 'dissatisfied' with the contact arrangements increased as the frequency of direct contact fell. Within the non-resident parent sample, for example, the proportion of children whose responding parent said that they were 'dissatisfied' with the contact arrangements rose from 6% of those who saw their non-resident parent every day to 36% of those who saw their non-resident parent less frequently than once a month. The same pattern was found among children in the resident parent sample.

Satisfaction with the contact arrangements among the responding parents of children whose non-resident parent did not have direct contact with the child was very different in the two sample groups. Among children in the resident parent sample group who never saw their non-resident parent over half (58%) of their responding parents (the resident parent) said that they were 'very satisfied' with the contact arrangements. Among children in the non-resident parent sample, where the non-resident parent was the respondent, only 6% of the responding
parents of those children who never saw their non-resident parent were 'very satisfied' with the contact arrangements. Conversely, the responding parents of children in the non-resident parent sample who never saw their non-resident parent were almost three times as likely to say that they were 'dissatisfied' than the responding parents of the same group of children within the resident parent sample (60% compared with 22%). Furthermore, the responding parents of children in the non-resident parent sample who never saw their non-resident parent were at least three times as likely to be 'dissatisfied' with the contact arrangements as the responding parents of children who saw their non-resident parent at least once a month or more frequently. These parents were also just under twice as likely to be 'dissatisfied' with the contact arrangements as the responding parents of children who saw their non-resident parent less frequently than once a month.

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2

Figure 4.2 Satisfaction with contact arrangements by frequency of direct contact
4.3  Relationship between satisfaction with contact arrangements and distance non-
resident parent lives from child
In general, satisfaction with contact arrangements does not appear to be influenced by the
distance between the non-resident parent's home and that of the child, the only difference was
found within the non-resident parent sample. Responding parents of children in the non-
resident parent sample who lived less than ten miles from their non-resident parent were more
likely to say that they were 'very satisfied' with the contact arrangements than the responding
parents of children who lived a greater distance from their non-resident parent. Of children
who lived less than ten miles from their non-resident parent 53% of their responding parents
were 'very satisfied' with the contact arrangements compared with just over a third of children
who lived further from their non-resident parent (36% of children who lived ten miles but less
than 50 miles and 37% of children who lived 50 miles or over from their non-resident parent).

4.4  Improvements to current contact arrangements
Responding parents who said that they were neither 'very satisfied' nor 'fairly satisfied' with
the contact arrangements were asked how the contact arrangements with their child (and the
non-resident parent) could be improved. Respondents' answers were recorded verbatim and a
coding frame developed once all the data had been collected. Included in this frame were the
following improvements associated with frequency of contact between the non-resident parent
and their child:
♦ The non-resident parent should see their child
♦ The non-resident parent should see their child more often
♦ The non-resident parent should contact their child more often
♦ The non-resident parent should have their child to stay overnight more often
(Further analyses of all the answers given at this question are included in Chapter 5 of this
report.)

The most popular contact improvement, in both sample groups, was that the non-resident
parent should have more direct contact with their child. Parents of children in the resident
parent group were twice as likely as parents of children in the non-resident parent sample to
mention that increased direct contact would improve the current contact arrangements (34%
compared with 17%). A tenth of the responding parents of children in both samples said that
if the non-resident parent was to see their child this would be an improvement to the current
contact arrangements (11% of both samples). Responding parents of children in the resident
parent sample were almost three times as likely as the responding parents of children in the
non-resident parent sample to say that their contact arrangements would be improved if the
non-resident parent had more frequent indirect contact with their child (11% and 4%
respectively). Four per cent of responding parents of children in the resident parent sample
and nine per cent of those in the non-resident parent sample thought that the arrangements
would be improved if the non-resident parent had their child to stay over night more often.

Among children in the resident parent sample, responding parents of those who never saw
their non-resident parent were least likely to think that the contact arrangements could be
improved by the non-resident parent seeing their child more often (for example, 17%
compared with 52% of children who saw their non-resident parent at least once a month).
Children who saw their non-resident parent less frequently than once a month were those
most likely to have a responding parent who thought that the contact arrangements could be
improved by the non-resident parent having more indirect contact with their child (23%
compared with less than one in ten children who either saw their non-resident parent more
frequently or never saw them at all). Unfortunately the non-resident parent sample is too small to cross-tabulate improvements to contact arrangements by frequency of contact.

Table 4.4 and Figure 4.3

Figure 4.3  Proportion of children whose responding parent said that they would like the non-resident parent to have more contact with the child
5. Contact arrangements with the non-resident parent

Contact arrangements between the non-resident parent and their child can be agreed in a number of ways. They can be agreed both formally or informally. In this report, contact arrangements have been divided into the following categories:

1. Informally-agreed contact arrangement - e.g. parents agreed between themselves that the non-resident parent will have contact with the child every Saturday.
2. Informal contact arrangement, not agreed - e.g. parents have no set contact arrangements and decide on a weekly basis etc. when the non-resident parent will have contact.
3. Formal contact arrangement negotiated by a mediator or lawyer.
4. Formal contact arrangement ordered by a court

These contact arrangements include both direct contact (face-to-face contact) and indirect contact (all non face-to-face contact such as telephone conversations and letters). The contact arrangements are inclusive of situations where the child has no contact with their non-resident parent.

Although the survey data were collected from interviews with parents, analysis of data is carried out at the child level. This approach has been taken because parents may have had more than one resident or non-resident child and contact arrangements may have been different for each child. Therefore parents' behaviour and attitudes are reported as characteristics of the child.

5.1 Type of contact arrangement with the non-resident parent

The majority of children had the contact arrangements with their non-resident parent arranged informally (85% of children whose resident parent responded and 81% of children whose non-resident parent responded). Furthermore, over half of the children (60%) from the resident parent sample and half of the children (50%) from the non-resident parent sample had these contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents. Approximately a third of children (35%) whose resident parent responded and one fifth (21%) of children whose non-resident parent responded had never agreed the informal arrangements.

A small number of the sample had the contact arrangements formally agreed. One-in-twenty children had the contact arrangements with their non-resident parent negotiated by mediators or lawyers (6% of children whose resident parent was the respondent and 5% of children whose non-resident parent was interviewed). Over one-in-ten children (13%) whose non-resident parent was the respondent and just under one-in-ten children (9%) whose resident parent responded had the contact arrangements ordered by court.

There is an inconsistency between the two samples about whether informal contact arrangements were agreed. When compared to the non-resident sample, it appears that the resident parent sample were more likely to say that the informal contact arrangements were not agreed and less likely to say that the informal contact arrangements were agreed between their parents. However when both types of informal arrangements are combined, the same proportion of both samples (four-fifths) said that the contact arrangements were informal.

*Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1*
5.2 Age of child

Table 5.2 shows that older children from the resident parent sample were less likely to have had their contact arrangements informally agreed between parents but more likely than younger children to have never had their informal contact arrangements agreed between their parents. Over two-in-five children (42%) aged 11 to 16 years had their arrangements informally agreed between their parents compared with 55% of children aged under 11 years. However, 41% of children aged between 11 and 16 years had not had their informal contact arrangements agreed compared to one-in-three (31%) children aged under 11 years. This pattern is not evident among the sample of children whose non-resident parent responded.

Children aged 5 years and younger whose resident parent responded to the survey were less likely than older children to have had the contact arrangements ordered by a court (4% compared with 10% for children aged 6 years and over). Again, this finding was not apparent within the non-resident parent sample. Younger children in the non-resident sample were less likely to have had the contact arrangements negotiated by mediators or lawyers however this finding is not significantly significant.

5.3 Distance between child's home and non-residents parent's home

The nearer the non-resident parent lived to the child the more likely it was that the contact arrangements were informally agreed between parents. However, this pattern is reversed for informal contact arrangements that were never agreed: the nearer the non-resident parent lives to the child the less likely it is that the informal arrangements had never been agreed.
Around two-thirds of children whose non-resident parent lived less than 10 miles away had the contact arrangements informally agreed between parents (60% of children whose resident parent responded and 65% of children whose non-resident parent was the respondent). The further the non-resident parent lived from the child the more often the informal contact arrangements were never agreed. A quarter (25%) of children from the resident sample who lived less than 10 miles away from their non-resident parent had never had their informal contact arrangements agreed compared with half the children (50%) who lived 50 miles or over from their non-resident parent. This pattern is mirrored among children whose non-resident parent was the respondent however the differences are not statistically significant for this sample. Among the resident parent sample, the informal contact arrangements for children whose non-resident parent either lived abroad or the resident parent did not know where the non-resident
parent lived were most likely to have never been agreed between the parents (60% of children in this sample group). The base of the non-resident parent sample is too small to allow comparisons with the resident parent sample.  

Table 5.3 and Figure 5.2

5.4 Length of time since parents separated
Contact arrangements are more likely to be informally agreed between parents if the parents had been separated for less than three years. Two-thirds of children whose parents had separated less than three years ago had their contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents (67% for children whose resident parent responded to the survey and 68% for children whose non-resident parent was the respondent).

Children in the resident parent sample whose parents had separated 3 years ago or more were more likely to have had the contact arrangements ordered by the court than children whose parents had separated less than three years ago (13% and 2% respectively). This pattern was evident for children from the non-resident sample but was not statistically significant.  

Table 5.4

5.5 Frequency of contact
In general, the more frequently the child has some contact with their non-resident parent the more likely it is that the contact arrangements were informally agreed between parents. This pattern is reversed for informal contact arrangements that were never agreed between the parents: the less often the child has contact with their non-resident parent the more likely it is that the informal contact arrangements have never been agreed.

Just under three quarters of children who have direct contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week had the contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents (73% of both samples). Whereas, children who had no contact with their non-resident parent were less likely to have the contact arrangements informally agreed between parents (12% of children whose resident parent responded and 33% of children from the non-resident sample).

The less often contact took place, the more likely it is that the informal contact arrangements were never agreed between the parents. Nearly half the children (47%) from the resident parent sample who had indirect contact with the non-resident parent less than once a week had never had the informal contact arrangements agreed between their parents compared with 19% of children in the same sample who had direct contact at least once a week. Children who had no contact with the non-resident parent were those most likely to have never had the informal arrangements agreed between their parents: nearly three-quarters (72%) of children whose resident parent was the respondent and nearly half (49%) the children whose non-resident parent was the respondent.

Formal contact arrangements were more likely to have been made for children who had either direct or indirect contact with their non-resident parent less than once a week. Among the non-resident parent sample, a quarter (26%) of children who had contact less than once a week with their non-resident parent had the contact arrangements ordered by a court compared with one-in-ten children (11%) who had contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week. Similarly among the resident parent sample, 15% of children who had direct or indirect contact with their non-resident parent less than once a week had the arrangements ordered by a court compared with 5% of children who had contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week. This pattern is mirrored in the resident parent sample for contact arrangements negotiated by mediators or lawyers. Children from the resident
parent sample who had direct or indirect contact with the non-resident parent less than once a week were more likely to have had the contact arrangements negotiated by mediators or lawyers than children who had direct and indirect contact at least once a week (8% and 5% respectively).

5.6 Further analysis
Logistic regression can be used to predict a dependent variable on the basis of independent variables. In this report, logistic regression was used to produce relative risk ratios for factors that could impact on the frequency of contact a child has with their non-resident parent. Each relative risk ratio predicts the odds of a child being in a specific group as compared to a baseline group. The variable entered in the model was type of contact arrangement.

There is a significant difference in frequency of contact between children who had never had their informal contact arrangements agreed and children who had the contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents. Those children who had never had the informal contact arrangements agreed were more likely to have less frequent contact with their non-resident parent than children who had the contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents.

Children who had never had the informal contact arrangements agreed were more likely to have indirect contact with their non-resident parent at least once a week than to have direct contact once a week when compared with children who had the arrangements informally agreed between their parents (children from the non-resident parent sample were five times more likely and children from the resident parent sample were twice as likely).

Looking at children from the non-resident parent sample, those who had never had the informal contact arrangements agreed were six times more likely to have contact (direct or indirect) less than once a week than to have direct contact at least once a week when compared with children who had the contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents. Similarly, in the resident parent sample, when compared to children who had the contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents, children who had never had the informal contact arrangements agreed were six times more likely to have indirect contact less than once a week than direct contact once a week.

The analysis shows that when compared with children whose contact arrangements were informally agreed between their parents, children who had never had the informal contact arrangements agreed were more likely to have no contact with the non-resident parent rather than have direct contact once a week (children from the non-resident sample were eleven times more likely and children from the resident sample were fifteen times more likely).

In the resident parent sample, contact arrangements ordered by a court have an impact on the frequency of contact. Children who had the arrangements ordered by a court had less frequent contact with their non-resident parent when compared to children who had the arrangements agreed informally between parents. When compared to children who had their contact arrangements informally agreed between parents, children who had their contact arrangements ordered by a court were four times more likely to have indirect contact at least once a week or have direct contact less than once a week than have direct contact once a week. Comparing the same groups, children who had their contact arrangements ordered by a court were 32 times more likely to have indirect contact less than once a week and 18 times more likely to
have no contact with the non-resident parent than to have direct contact once a week. This is echoed for the non-resident sample but the results are not statistically significant.

Contact arrangements negotiated by mediators or lawyers was a significant factor for children from the resident-parent sample when examining children who had no contact with their non-resident parent against children who had the arrangements informally agreed between their parents. When compared to children who had their contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents, children who had their arrangements negotiated by a mediator or lawyer were 18 times more likely to have no contact with their non-resident parent than have direct contact at least once a week. This pattern was evident for the non-resident sample but was not statistically significant. 

5.7 Characteristics of the responding parent

Male parents within the non-resident sample are more likely to have informally arranged the contact arrangements than female parents within this sample. Children with male non-resident parents were more likely to have had the contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents than children with female non-resident parents. Children of male non-resident parents were also more likely to have never agreed the informal contact arrangements (23% of males compared with 10% of females). Conversely, nearly a third (31%) of children whose non-resident parent was female had the contact arrangements ordered by a court compared to one-in-ten children whose non-resident parent was male (11%).

The following analysis has been undertaken looking at the characteristics of the responding parent. Data on parents’ characteristics were only collected for the responding parent and refer to that respondent. It should be noted that characteristics may not necessarily be the same as the child's or the other parent.

Responding parents were classified by the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification. Children from the non-resident parent sample whose responding parent was in the intermediate occupation group were more likely to have never had their informal contact arrangements agreed between parents (33% compared with 21% for higher occupations and 16% for lower occupations). Parents from the intermediate occupation group were also less likely than those from the lower occupation group to have informally agreed the contact arrangements between parents (49% and 65% respectively). These patterns were not evident in the resident parent sample.

Children whose responding non-resident parent was in the higher occupations socio-economic group were more likely to have had their contact arrangements negotiated by mediators or lawyers than children whose responding parent was in the lower socio-economic group. For example, amongst children in the non-resident parent sample, 10% of those whose non-resident parent was in the higher occupations socio-economic group had their contact arrangements negotiated by mediators or lawyers compared with 3% of children whose parent was in the lower occupations socio-economic group. Furthermore, within the non-resident parent sample the following differences between the socio-economic groups were found. Children from the non-resident sample whose parent was in the higher occupation group were less likely than other non-residents to have had the contact arrangements ordered by a court (7% compared with 13% for intermediate group occupations and 16% for lower occupations). These patterns were not mirrored in the resident sample.
Table 5.10 would suggest that ethnicity may be a factor contributing to how the contact arrangements are agreed between parents. Within the resident parent sample children whose resident parent was non-white were less likely to have informal contact arrangements agreed between their parents and more likely to have informal contact arrangements that have never been agreed between their parents when compared with children whose resident parent was white. Nearly a third of children in the resident parent sample (31%) whose resident parent was non-white had their contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents compared with half (52%) the children whose resident parent was white. Over half (58%) the children in the resident parent sample whose resident parent was non-white had never agreed the informal contact arrangements compared with a third of children whose resident parent was white (33%). This pattern was reversed for children from the non-resident sample but was not found to be statistically significant.

The contact arrangements for children from the resident parent sample whose resident parent was white were more likely to have been negotiated by mediators or lawyers than children whose resident parent was non-white (6% and 2% respectively). This pattern is mirrored for children from the non-resident parent sample: 6% of children whose non-resident parent was white had their contact arrangements negotiated by mediators or lawyers whilst no children whose non-resident parent was non-white had had their contact arrangements agreed in this way.

Informal arrangements were most likely to have been agreed between parents with qualifications, whereas parents with no qualifications were more likely to have never agreed the informal arrangements. Over half of children, in both samples, whose responding parent had qualifications had had their contact arrangements informally agreed between their parents (53% of children in the resident parent sample and 66% of children in the non-resident parent sample) compared with 38% of children in the resident parent sample and 48% of children in the non-resident parent sample whose responding parent did not have qualifications. Children of respondents who had no qualifications were more likely to have never had their informal contact arrangements agreed than respondents with qualifications (46% compared with 33% for children whose resident parent responded and 30% compared with 17% for children whose non-resident parent was the respondent).

5.8 Satisfaction with contact arrangements

Parents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the contact arrangements. They were asked to answer using the following scale:

1. Very satisfied
2. Fairly satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Fairly dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

The categories 'fairly dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied' have been combined because of the small bases associated with them.

Overall, there was satisfaction with the contact arrangements. Approximately 70% of parents of children in both groups reported satisfaction with the contact arrangements - that is they were either satisfied or very satisfied (72% of parent responses in the resident parent sample and 69% of parent responses in the non-resident parent sample). This is discussed further in Chapter 3 of the report.
On the whole, responding parents who had informally agreed the contact arrangements between themselves were mainly satisfied. These parents were less likely to be dissatisfied than parents of children who agreed the contact arrangements by other methods (82% of parent responses in the resident parent sample and 87% of parent responses in the non-resident parent sample were either satisfied or very satisfied with the contact arrangements).

Within the resident parent sample, the responding parents of children who had never agreed their informal contact arrangements or those that had their contact arrangements negotiated by mediators or lawyers were less likely to be very satisfied with the contact arrangements than
parents who agreed the arrangements in other ways (37% for both subgroups compared with 55% of parents of children whose arrangements had been informally agreed between parents and 44% of parents of children whose arrangements were ordered by court). This pattern is not evident for the non-resident sample.

Satisfaction with contact arrangements that had been ordered by a court or negotiated by mediators or lawyers was low, especially amongst parents from the non-resident parent sample. Over half (57%) of the parents of children whose non-resident parent was the respondent and 26% of parents of children whose resident parent responded to the survey and had their contact arrangements ordered by court were dissatisfied with the contact arrangements. Over a third (38%) of parent responses for children whose non-resident parent responded and had their contact arrangements negotiated by mediators or lawyers were dissatisfied with the contact arrangements compared with a quarter (26%) of parents of children whose resident parent responded to the survey and had their contact arrangements negotiated by a mediator or lawyer.

The length of time the parents were in a relationship has no significant impact on the satisfaction the parent has with the contact arrangements.

Responding parents of children in the non-resident parent sample who were not currently in a relationship stated twice as often as often as parents who had repartnered and not had children that they were very satisfied with the contact arrangements (60% compared with 33%). In the resident sample, responding parents who were not currently in a relationship stated more often than parents who had repartnered and not had children that they were very satisfied with the contact arrangements however this was not statistically significant.

In both samples, parents who had repartnered but had not had children were less likely to report satisfaction with the contact arrangements than parents who had repartnered and had a child or parents who were not currently in a relationship. In the resident sample, 68% of parent responses reported satisfaction compared with 77% of parent responses for parents who had repartnered and had children and 73% of parent responses for parents who were not currently in a relationship. In the non-resident sample, 58% of parent responses reported satisfaction compared with 74% of parent responses for parents who had repartnered and had children and 82% of parent responses for parents who were not currently in a relationship.

Satisfaction with contact arrangements among the responding parents in the non-resident sample who had repartnered but not had children was lower than among other parents. These parents were more likely to be dissatisfied than respondents who had repartnered and had children and respondents who were not currently in a relationship (31% compared with 16% and 12% respectively).

5.9 Improvements to contact arrangements
Responding parents who said they were neither 'fairly satisfied' nor 'very satisfied' with the contact arrangements were asked how the contact arrangements with their child (and the non-resident parent) could be improved. The answers were recorded verbatim and a coding frame was devised.
The coding frame was as follows:

1. Non-resident parent to see child
2. Non-resident parent to see child more often
3. Non-resident parent to contact child more often
4. Better communication between parents
5. Non-resident parent to have custody
6. Child to stay at non-resident parents home more often
7. Contact arrangements to be honoured
8. Nothing can be done to improve contact arrangements
9. Other

Figure 5.4 Improvements to contact arrangements

Increase in contact between the child and their non-resident parent were popular improvements mentioned by parents of children in both samples. These are discussed in Chapter 3 of the report.

Responding parents of children in the non-resident sample said the main improvement they would like to see was better communication with the other parent (31%). Less than one-in-ten (7%) responding parents in the resident sample saw this as a way of improving contact arrangements.

Responding parents of children from the non-resident parent sample reported that custody of the child would improve the contact arrangements (9%) and a small number (3%) said that the contact arrangements being honoured would improve the contact arrangements. None of the responding parents in the resident parent sample stated this as an improvement to the contact arrangements.
Fourteen per cent of parents of children in the resident parent sample who stated that they were not satisfied with the arrangements, reported that nothing could be done to improve the contact arrangements. All of the responding non-resident parents gave at least one improvement that they would like to see to the contact arrangements.

There are a large number of responses in the 'other' category and most of these relate to very specific improvements to contact arrangements. Unfortunately therefore these answers cannot be reported for reasons of confidentiality. 

*Table 5.16 and Figure 5.4*
APPENDIX A:
THE OMNIBUS SURVEY

The Omnibus Survey is a multi-purpose survey carried out by the Office for National Statistics for use by Government departments and other public or non-profit making bodies. Interviewing is carried out during eight months of the year (two months each quarter) and each month's questionnaire covers a variety of topics, reflecting different user's requirements.

The sample

A random probability sample of 3,000 private households in Great Britain is selected each month using the small users' Postcode Address File as a sampling frame. One hundred new postal sectors are selected and are stratified by region, the proportion of households renting from local authorities and the proportion in which the head of the household is in Socio-Economic Groups 1-5 or 13 (that is a professional, employer or manager). These stratifiers are obtained from Census data. The postal sectors are selected with probability proportional to size and within each sector 30 addresses are selected randomly.

Within households with more than one adult, one person aged 16 or over is randomly selected for interview. No proxy interviews are taken.

Fieldwork

Interviews are carried out face-to-face by interviewers trained to carry out a range of ONS surveys. The Omnibus Survey uses computer-assisted interviewing which has well documented effects on the quality of the data. Advance letters are sent to all addresses giving a brief account of the survey. Interviewers must make at least three or four calls at an address at different times of the day and week. As with all ONS surveys, a quality check on fieldwork is carried out through recall interviews with a proportion of respondents.

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 on behalf of the Lord Chancellor's Department, now the Department for Constitutional Affairs. This module was offered to respondents as a self-completion module. The Omnibus Survey ran to capacity in April and July and was unable to carry the entire module in these months because of the additional time it would add to the overall interview length. Consequently, the Omnibus Survey asked a few questions in these months to identify eligible respondents for the non-resident parental contact module and then follow-up telephone interviews were conducted by the Telephone Unit at ONS. The same quality standards are applied to interviews conducted over the telephone as those conducted face-to-face.

Weighting

Because only one household member is interviewed at each address, people in households containing few adults have a higher probability of selection than those in households with many. Where the unit of analysis is individual adults, a weighting factor is applied to correct for this unequal probability of selection.

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5 An address receives less than 50 items of mail each day.
Overall the number of telephone interviews made up a small percentage of the total sample for this module of questions and whilst there was a small drop out rate between the Omnibus Survey face-to-face interview and the telephone interview these respondents did not vary demographically from the main Omnibus Survey. Therefore, after consultation with the Methodology Unit at ONS the same weight has been applied to the whole dataset. The data in this report is based at the child level so the weight was recalculated and standardised and applied to the dataset.

Percentages shown in this report have been calculated using weighted data, whilst the bases in the Tables are the number of actual cases within each category (unweighted totals).

Response Rates

The small users' Postal Address File includes some business addresses and other addresses, such as new and empty properties, at which no private households are living. The expected proportion of such addresses, which are classified as ineligible, is about 11-12%. This figure is removed before the response rate is calculated.

The overall response rate for the April, June, July, August, September, October and November 2002 cycles of the National Omnibus Survey was 70% as shown in Table A.1.

Table A.1: Household level response of the Omnibus Survey for the months in which the non-resident parental contact questions were asked (April, June, July, August, September, October, November)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set sample</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineligible addresses</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible addresses</td>
<td>19250</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td>4192</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Contacts</td>
<td>1552</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieved interviews</td>
<td>13506</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The full module was only asked of respondents who were non-resident parents or resident parents. Non-resident parents are respondents who have had a child from a previous relationship which has broken down and the child lives with the other birth parent. Resident parents are respondents who live with a child from a previous relationship and the other birth parent does not live with them. Table A.2 shows that 90% of respondents eligible for the module (that is those who were either a resident or non-resident parent) answered the full set of questions (a total of 938 interviews).
Table A.2: Response to the full module - April, June, July, August, September, October, November

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omnibus achieved</td>
<td>13506</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible for screening questions (All respondents except widowed respondents)</td>
<td>11788</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to screening questions</td>
<td>11667</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents with child from previous relationship</td>
<td>1043</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full interviews achieved</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB  (i) On the April and July Omnibus Survey, a sample was established and follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with respondents who agreed to recall: response was not affected by the telephone recall.
APPENDIX B:  
COPY OF THE PAPER QUESTIONNAIRE

Below is a copy of the full module that was used for the National Statistics Omnibus Survey. The same questions were administered for the telephone interviews.

Module 310 - Non-resident parental contact

Ask if: Respondent is not widowed

M310_Intr

The next set of questions are being asked on behalf of the Lord Chancellor's Department and are about children who may not be living with you at present or who live with you but not with their other birth parent.

1. Self-completion accepted and completed
2. Completed by interviewer
3. Section refused

Ask if: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.

M310_NRC

(May I just check,) Do you have any children under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent?

INTERVIEWER: INCLUDE ONLY BIRTH CHILDREN. DO NOT INCLUDE ADOPTED OR STEPCHILDREN WHO ARE NO LONGER LIVING WITH YOU.

ONLY INCLUDE CHILDREN WHOSE MAIN RESIDENCE IS WITH THE OTHER PARENT.

1. Yes
2. No
3. Own child adopted/fostered - SPONTANEOUS

Ask if: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or complete by interviewer.

AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

M310_NmA

How many children do you have under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent?

1..15
Next set of questions asked separately for each child

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.  
**AND:** Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

**M310_1**

Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/ Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.

How old is this child?

0..15

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.  
**AND:** Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

**M310_2**

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/ Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

Is this child a boy or a girl?

(1) Boy  
(2) Girl

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.  
**AND:** Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

**M310_3**

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/ Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

How often do you usually see this child? Is it...

**RUNNING PROMPT**

(1) Every day  
(2) At least once a week  
(3) At least once a month  
(4) Only in the school holidays/or once every three months  
(5) Once or twice a year  
(6) Less often, or  
(7) Do you never see this child?
ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent
AND: See child less often

M310_3a

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/ Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

(May I just check,) When did you last see this child?

(1) Less than a year ago
(2) One year but less than 5 years
(3) 5 years but less than 10 years
(4) 10 years and over

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

M310_4

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/ Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

How often do you usually contact this child by letter, phone, fax, e-mail or send them cards or presents on special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas? Is it...

RUNNING PROMPT

(1) Every day
(2) At least once a week
(3) At least once a month
(4) Only in the school holidays/or once every three months
(5) Once or twice a year
(6) Less often, or
(7) Do you never contact this child?
ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.  
AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

M310_5

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/ Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

How far away do you live from this child?

DISTANCE BETWEEN YOUR/RESPONDENTS HOME AND THE CHILDS HOME IN MILES

(1) Less than 10 miles
(2) 10 miles to less than 50 miles
(3) 50 miles to less than 100 miles
(4) 100 miles to less than 150 miles
(5) 150 miles and over
(6) Child lives abroad
(7) Don’t know

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.  
AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent  
AND: See child at least once or twice a year OR see child less often but have seen child in last 10 years.

M310_6M

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/ Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

Where do you spend time with this child?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

SET [7] OF
(1) At your home
(2) At the other parent’s home
(3) At a relative/friend’s house
(4) At a contact centre
(5) Place of leisure, ie shops, restaurant, cafe, leisure centre
(6) School
(7) Other - please specify

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.  
AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent  
AND: See child at least once or twice a year OR see child less often but have seen child in last 10 years.  
AND: Other reason at M310_6M

Spec1

PLEASE RECORD OTHER PLACE YOU/RESPONDENT MEETS THIS CHILD

STRING[225]
ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer. AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent AND: See child at least once or twice a year OR see child less often but have seen child in last 10 years.

M310_7

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/ Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

How often does this child stay overnight at your home? Is it...

RUNNING PROMPT

(1)  At least once a week
(2)  At least once a month
(3)  Only in the school holidays/or once every three months
(4)  Once or twice a year
(5)  Less often, or
(6)  Never

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer. AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

M310_8

SHOWCARD C310_8

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/ Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

(Thinking about arrangements for seeing this child and for contacting this child by letter, phone, e-mail or card and fax.)

How satisfied are you with the current arrangements?

(1)  Very satisfied
(2)  Fairly satisfied
(3)  Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
(4)  Fairly dissatisfied
(5)  Very dissatisfied
ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.

AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

AND: See child at least once or twice a year OR see child less often but have seen child in last 10 years.

AND: not satisfied or very satisfied with contact arrangements

M310_9

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

How could the contact arrangements you have with this child be improved?

INTERVIEWER: RECORD VERBATIM.

OPEN

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.

AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

AND: See child at least once or twice a year OR see child less often but have seen child in last 10 years.

M310_10

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

Were the contact arrangements agreed between you and the other parent, negotiated by a mediator or lawyer, ordered by a court or never formally agreed?

(1)  Agreed between parents
(2)  Negotiated by mediators/lawyers
(3)  Ordered by a court
(4)  Never formally agreed
**M310_11M**

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/ Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

Why do you not spend time with this child at your own home?

**INTERVIEWER: DO NOT PROMPT**

SET [9] OF

1. Distance
2. Unsuitable accommodation
3. Choose to meet elsewhere
4. Not agreed by other parent
5. Court order
6. Difficult with handover arrangements
7. More convenient to meet elsewhere
8. To keep address confidential
9. Other - please specify
**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.  
**AND:** Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent.  
**AND:** See child at least once or twice a year OR see child less often but have seen child in last 10 years.  
**AND:** Non-resident parent does not see child at own home.  
**AND:** Other reason at M310_11M

**Spec2**

PLEASE SPECIFY OTHER REASON WHY YOU DO/RESPONDENT DOES NOT MEET CHILD AT YOUR OWN HOME

STRING[225]

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.  
**AND:** Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

**M310_12**

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

Do you pay child maintenance for this child?

(1) Yes  
(2) No

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.  
**AND:** Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent  
**AND:** Does pay child maintenance

**M310_13**

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

How did you agree the arrangements for child maintenance for this child? Was it...

**RUNNING PROMPT**

(1) Informally between self and former partner  
(2) Through the child support agency  
(3) Through a Family Mediation Service  
(4) Through lawyer or court, or  
(5) other arrangement?
ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent
AND: Does pay child maintenance
AND: Other arrangement at M310_13

Spec3

PLEASE SPECIFY OTHER ARRANGEMENT MADE TO PAY CHILD MAINTENANCE

STRING[225]

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

M310_14

(Thinking about your eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere/ Thinking about your next eldest child whose main residence is elsewhere.)

ASK OR RECORD

(May I just check,) How long is it since you separated from the child's mother/father?

(1) Less than year
(2) One year to less than two years
(3) 2 years to less than 3 years
(4) Three years and over
(5) Never in relationship with other parent

End of set of questions
**M310_15**

May I just check, are you currently in a relationship?

(1) Yes  
(2) No

**M310_16**

Has this relationship caused problems with contact between you and your child(ren)?

(1) Yes, all of the time  
(2) Yes, some of the time  
(3) Never

**M310_17**

May I just check, have you had a child in your current relationship?

(1) Yes  
(2) No

**M310_18**

Has having a child caused problems with contact between you and your child(ren) from a previous relationship?

(1) Yes, all of the time  
(2) Yes, some of the time  
(3) Never
ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
AND: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household

M310_RC

(May I just check,) Are any of the children aged under 16 who live with you from a previous relationship of yours? Please do not include adopted or step children.

(1) Yes
(2) No

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
AND: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household
AND: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

M310_NmB

How many children do you have under the age of 16 from a previous relationship that live with you?

1..15
Next set of questions asked separately for each child

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
**AND:** Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household
**AND:** Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

**M310_19**

Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.

How old is this child?

0..15

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
**AND:** Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household
**AND:** Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

**M310_20**

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

Is this child a boy or a girl?

(1) Boy
(2) Girl

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
**AND:** Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household
**AND:** Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

**M310_21**

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

How often does the other parent usually see this child? Is it...

RUNNING PROMPT

(1) Every day
(2) At least once a week
(3) At least once a month
(4) Only in the school holidays/or once every 3 months
(5) Once or twice a year
(6) Less often, or
(7) do they never see this child?
(8) Other parent is deceased – do not prompt
**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.

**AND:** Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household

**AND:** Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

**AND:** Other parent is deceased and more than one child from previous relationship living in household

---

**M310_Dec**

**ASK OR RECORD**

(May I just check,) Are all the children by the same father/mother

(1) Yes
(2) No

---

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.

**AND:** Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household

**AND:** Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

**AND:** Other parent is not decease

**AND:** Non-resident parent sees child less often

---

**M310_21a**

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

(May I just check,) When did the other parent last see this child?

(1) Less than a year ago
(2) One year but less than 5 years
(3) 5 years but less than 10 years
(4) 10 years and over
ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.  
AND: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household  
AND: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them  
AND: Other parent is not deceased

M310_22

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

How often does the other parent usually contact this child by letter, phone, fax, e-mail or send them cards or presents on special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas? Is it...

RUNNING PROMPT

(1) Every day  
(2) At least once a week  
(3) At least once a month  
(4) Only in the school holidays/or once every 3 months  
(5) Once or twice a year  
(6) Less often, or  
(7) do they never contact this child?
**M310_23**

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

How far away does the parent live from you and this child?

**DISTANCE BETWEEN YOUR/RESPONDENT'S HOME AND THE OTHER CHILD'S PARENT'S HOME IN MILES**

1. Less than 10 miles
2. 10 to less than 50 miles
3. 50 to less than 100 miles
4. 150 miles and over
5. Parent lives abroad
6. Don't know

**M310_24M**

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

Where does the other parent spend time with this child?

**CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

SET [7] OF

1. At your home
2. At the other parent's home
3. At a relative's house
4. At a contact centre
5. Place of leisure, ie shops, restaurant, cafe, leisure centre
6. School
7. Other - please specify
8. Don't know
**Ask if**: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.

**And**: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household

**And**: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

**And**: Other parent is not deceased

**And**: Non-resident parent sees child at least once or twice a year OR see child less often but have seen child in last 10 years

**And**: Other reason at M310_24M

**Spec5**

PLEASE RECORD PLACE THE OTHER PARENT MEETS THIS CHILD

STRING[225]

**Ask if**: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.

**And**: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household

**And**: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

**And**: Other parent is not deceased

**And**: Non-resident parent sees child at least once or twice a year OR see child less often but have seen child in last 10 years

**M310_25**

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

How often does this child stay overnight at the other parents home? Is it...

**Running Prompt**

(1)  At least once a week
(2)  At least once a month
(3)  Only in the school holidays/or once every 3 months
(4)  Once or twice a year
(5)  Less often, or
(6)  Never?
ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.

AND: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household

AND: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

AND: Other parent is not deceased

M310_26

SHOWCARD C310_8

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

(Thinking about arrangements the other parent has for seeing this child and for contacting this child by letter, phone, e-mail or card and fax.)

How satisfied are you with the current arrangements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fairly dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.

AND: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

AND: Other parent is not deceased

AND: not satisfied or very satisfied with contact arrangements

M310_27

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

How could the contact arrangements be improved?

INTERVIEWER: RECORD VERBATIM.

OPEN
ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.

AND: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household

AND: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

AND: Other parent is not deceased

M310_28

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

Were the contact arrangements agreed between you and the other parent, negotiated by a mediator or lawyer, ordered by a court or never formally agreed?

(1) Agreed between parents
(2) Negotiated by mediators/lawyers
(3) Ordered by a court
(4) Never formally agreed

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.

AND: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household

AND: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

AND: Other parent is not deceased

AND: Child does not see non-resident parent at non-resident parent’s home

M310_29M

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

Why does this child not spend time at the other parents own home?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT PROMPT

SET [9] OF

(1) Distance
(2) Unsuitable accommodation
(3) Choose to meet elsewhere
(4) Not agreed by other parent
(5) Court order
(6) Difficult with handover arrangements
(7) More convenient to meet elsewhere
(8) To keep address confidential
(9) Other - please specify
(10) Don't know
ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
   AND: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household
   AND: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them
   AND: Other parent is not deceased
   AND: Child does not see non-resident parent at non-resident parent's home
   AND: Other reason at M310_29M

Spec6

PLEASE RECORD OTHER REASON WHY OTHER PARENT DOES NOT MEET THIS CHILD AT THEIR HOME

STRING[225]

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
   AND: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household
   AND: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them
   AND: Other parent is not deceased

M310_30

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

Does the other parent pay child maintenance for this child?

(1) Yes
(2) No
**M310_31**

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

How did you agree the arrangements for child maintenance for this child? Was it...

**RUNNING PROMPT**

1. Informally between self and former partner
2. Through the child support agency
3. Through a Family Mediation Service
4. Through lawyer or court, or
5. Other arrangement?

**Spec7**

PLEASE SPECIFY OTHER ARRANGEMENT MADE TO PAY CHILD MAINTENANCE

STRING[225]

**M310_32**

(Thinking about your eldest child who lives with you./ Thinking about your next eldest child who lives with you.)

ASk OR RECORD

(May I just check,) How long is it since you separated from the child's mother/father?

1. Less than year
2. One year to less than two years
3. 2 years to less than 3 years
4. Three years and over
5. Never in relationship with other parent

**End of set of questions**
**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed and elected for self-completion or completion by interviewer.
**AND:** Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household
**AND:** Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them
**AND:** Other parent is not deceased

### M310_33

**ASK OR RECORD**

May I just check, are you currently in a relationship?

(1) Yes  
(2) No

### M310_34

Has this relationship caused problems with contact between the other parent and your child(ren)?

(1) Yes, all of the time  
(2) Yes, some of the time  
(3) Never

### M310_35

**ASK OR RECORD**

May I just check, have you had a child in your current relationship?

(1) Yes  
(2) No
M310_36

Has having a child caused problems with contact between the other parent and your child(ren) from a previous relationship?

(1) Yes, all of the time
(2) Yes, some of the time
(3) Never
Below is a copy of the questions used on the National Statistics Omnibus Survey in April and July to obtain a sample suitable for the telephone follow-up interview.

Module 310 - Non-resident parental contact

(April and July Omnibus Cycles)

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed

**M310_Intro**

The next set of questions are about children who may not be living with you at present or who live with you but not with their other birth parent.

(1) **PRESS ENTER TO CONTINUE**

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed

**M310_1**

(May I just check,) do you have any children under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent?

INTERVIEWER: INCLUDE ONLY BIRTH CHILDREN. DO NOT INCLUDE ADOPTED OR STEPCHILDREN WHO ARE NO LONGER LIVING WITH THE RESPONDENT.

ONLY INCLUDE CHILDREN WHOSE MAIN RESIDENCE IS ELSEWHERE. DO NOT INCLUDE CHILDREN WHO ARE TEMPORARILY ABSENT, SUCH AS THOSE AWAY AT BOARDING SCHOOL.

(1) Yes
(2) No
(3) Own child adopted/fostered - SPONTANEOUS

**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed

**AND:** Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

**M310_2**

How many children do you have under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent?

1..15
ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed
AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

M310_3

(Thinking of all the children you have who are not living with you,) How often do you usually see (at least one) this child (of these children)? Is it...

RUNNING PROMPT

(1) Every day
(2) At least once a week
(3) At least once a month
(4) Only in the school holidays/ or once every three months
(5) Once or twice a year
(6) Less often, or
(7) do you never see this (these) child(ren)?

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed
AND: Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

M310_4

(Thinking of all these children,) how often do you usually contact this child (these children) by letter, phone, fax, e-mail or send them cards or presents on special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas? Is it...

RUNNING PROMPT

(1) Every day
(2) At least once a week
(3) At least once a month
(4) Only in the school holidays/ or once every three months
(5) Once or twice a year
(6) Less often, or
(7) do you never contact this (these) child(ren)?

ASK IF: Respondent is not widowed
AND: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household

M310_5

(May I just check,) is the child (are any of the children) who lives (live) with you from a previous relationship of yours? Please do not include adopted or step children.

INTERVIEWER: INCLUDE ONLY BIRTH CHILDREN. DO NOT INCLUDE ADOPTED OR STEPCHILDREN.

(1) Yes
(2) No
Ask if: Respondent is not widowed
And: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household
And: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

M310_6

Ask or record

How many children under the age of 16 do you have, who live with you from a previous relationship?

1..15

Ask if: Respondent is not widowed
And: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household
And: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

M310_7

(Thinking of all the children under 16 who live with you from a previous relationship,) How often does the other parent usually see (at least one) this child (of these children)? Is it...

Running prompt

(1) Every day
(2) At least once a week
(3) At least once a month
(4) Only in the school holidays/ or once every three months
(5) Once or twice a year
(6) Less often, or
(7) do they never see this (these) child(ren)?

Ask if: Respondent is not widowed
And: Respondent is parent of a child aged under 16 in household
And: Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

M310_8

(Thinking of all the children under 16 who live with you from a previous relationship,) How often does the other parent usually contact (at least one) this child (of these children) by letter, phone, fax, e-mail or send them cards or presents on special occasions such as birthdays or Christmas? Is it...

Running prompt

(1) Every day
(2) At least once a week
(3) At least once a month
(4) Only in the school holidays/ or once every three months
(5) Once or twice a year
(6) Less often, or
(7) do they never see this (these) child(ren)?
**ASK IF:** Respondent is not widowed

**AND:** Have a child aged under the age of 16 from a previous relationship whose main residence is with the other parent

**OR:** Respondent has child aged under 16 from a previous relationship who lives with them

**M310_9**

Would it be alright if we contacted you again about this subject sometime in the next three months?

**INTERVIEWER:** PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU RECORD THE TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR RESPONDENTS WHO GIVE PERMISSION IN THE ADMIN BLOCK.

(1) Permission given

(2) Permission refused
APPENDIX C
STATISTICAL TERMS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

Standard errors

The standard error is a measure of the degree to which a percentage (or other summary statistic) would vary if repeatedly calculated in a series of samples. The standard error provides a measure of variability and is used in the calculation of confidence intervals and statistical significance tests. In this survey, simple random sampling did not take place; rather, a multi-stage stratified sampling design was used. To take account of the design of this survey, standard errors and confidence intervals (see below) were calculated using STATA. However, this does not affect the interpretation of the standard errors or their use in the calculation of confidence intervals.

Confidence interval

The estimate produced from a sample survey will rarely be identical to the population value, but statistical theory allows us to measure the accuracy of any survey result. The standard error can be estimated from the values obtained for the sample and allows the calculation of confidence intervals which give an indication of the range in which the true population value is likely to fall.

It is common when quoting confidence intervals to refer to the 95% confidence interval around a survey estimate. This is calculated at 1.96 times the standard error on either side of the estimated percentage or mean since, under a normal distribution, 95% of values lie within 1.96 standard errors of the mean value. If it were possible to repeat the survey under the same conditions many times, 95% of these confidence intervals would contain the population values but, when assessing the results of a single survey, it is usual to assume that there is only a 5% chance that the true population value falls outside the 95% confidence interval calculated for the survey estimate. The 95% confidence interval for the difference between two percentages is then given by:

\[ (p_1 - p_2) \pm 1.96 \times se(p_1 - p_2) \]

If this confidence interval includes zero then the observed difference is considered to be a result of chance variation in the sample. If the interval does not include zero then it is unlikely (less than 5% probability) that the observed difference could have occurred by chance.

Multinomial logistic regression

Logistic regression can be used to predict a dependent variable on the basis of independent variables. Multinomial logistic regression handles multicategory responses. The number of categories involved at each variable used in the analysis is more than two and multinominal logistic regression takes this into account. The logit model for nominal responses was used. The variable categories could be considered to be ordinal but for this analysis were treated as nominal.
In this report, logistic regression analysis has been used in the analysis of the survey data to provide a measure of the effect of various variables on frequency of contact. Unlike the crosstabulations presented in the report, logistic regression estimates the effect of a variable while controlling for the confounding effect of other variables in the analysis.

Logistic regression produces an estimate of the probability of a factor occurring when a child is in a certain group compared to a reference category. This effect is measured in terms of relative risk ratio for factors that could impact on the frequency of contact a child has with their non-resident parent. Each relative risk ratio predicts the odds of a child being in a specific group as compared to a baseline group. For example, Table 5.7 shows that children who had never had the arrangements formally agreed between their parents were 4.7 times more likely to have indirect contact at least once a week with their non-resident parent rather than direct contact once a week when compared to the reference group of children who had arrangements formally agreed between parents.

The number of responses from the non-resident parent sample who had either direct contact less than once a week or indirect contact less than once a week was too small to provide appropriate analysis. For this sample, direct and indirect contact less than once a week have been combined. In both samples, analysis by distance between the homes of the child and their non-resident parent does not include children or parents who lived abroad as these groups were too small for any meaningful analysis. Similarly, analysis by length of separation does not include parents who had never been in a relationship because the sample group was too small.

In addition, analysis at the child level involves potential clustering, whereby parents who have more than one child will be represented more often than parents with one child. The logistic regression analysis was undertaken in the statistical package, STATA which takes accounts of any potential clustering.