

Radiological Habit Surveys:**About the survey:**

- The University of Stirling is undertaking a Habits Survey in the area around the Dounreay nuclear licenced site this year, 2025, on behalf of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). This is to check that SEPA's environmental radioactivity monitoring programmes are optimised for collection of environmental samples at the right locations and frequency to assess the impacts of authorised radioactive waste discharges from the site.
- SEPA are required to do these survey's every five years around all nuclear sites in Scotland which will involve the University of Stirling staff undertaking a face-to-face questionnaire with individuals within the survey area around Dounreay. This requires a team spending two weeks in the area speaking to individuals around various locations.
- The habit survey questionnaire consists of Phase 1 (face-to-face questionnaires) and Phase 2 (follow-ups for some individuals surveyed).
- Habits surveys are a study of food consumption and occupancy levels, and the results of the survey are made publicly available.

Part of the habit survey also requires that we undertake an initial postal survey, therefore we will be posting out 2000 postal surveys within 20 km of the Dounreay nuclear site to help us to understand people's interactions with the local environment. This helps us plan our Phase 1 fieldwork campaign e.g. ensuring we include popular areas we may have missed.

Survey area:

Terrestrial survey area – this is a 5 km radial from Dounreay nuclear site boundary extending to Crosskirk in the east and Red Point in the west

Marine survey area – this is the aquatic waters and intertidal areas of the Pentland Firth extending from Dunnet Head in the east to Armadale Bay in the west

Timescale of the survey:

Phase 1 – face-to-face questionnaires with the public 6th June to 12th June (outwith the school holiday period) and 3rd July to 9th July (within the school holiday period).

Phase 2 – follow-up questionnaire in Autumn 2025 to a small, selected sample to verify and validate their questionnaire.

For Phase 1 of the survey, we will use two main methods to interact and achieve questionnaires with individuals, these are:

- Pre-arranged 'meetings' through communicating with local groups (arranging focus groups with relevant local groups e.g. gardening, fishing etc)
- Ad-hoc – approaching individuals or groups undertaking activities during the face-to-face survey periods

Habit survey questions:

Questions focus on the following areas, (the postal survey follows a similar structure):

- Routes and modes of transport passing the site
- Recreational - terrestrial and marine activities i.e. the types, location and duration of leisure activities
- What clothing is worn for different activities e.g. individuals fishing – gloves, outdoor swimming – wetsuit
- Types of food consumed and where they are sourced (local shop, home grown)
- Wild food consumption, e.g. brambles, berries, mushrooms, rabbits, fish, seaweed, venison, poultry, game
- Do individuals grow their own food and if so, where e.g. allotment or garden
- Whether individuals make produce e.g. elderflower cordial, and whether any produce (including game) is gifted/sold
- Whether individuals are aware of any other unusual or unreported habits