

# Time Use Study – Your Diary Booklet

Please check your letter to see which days you should take notes for and write them in the boxes below

**Day 1**  
from 4 am

**Day 2**  
from 4 am

## Why should I use this booklet?

We would like to know how you spend your time in detail. Keeping notes will **help you to remember** what you did accurately. You will then be able to **easily add this information** into the **online diary** available at [time-diary.ons.gov.uk](http://time-diary.ons.gov.uk).

## What hours are included?

Your diary starts at **4am** and runs for **24 hours** until 4am the following day. **All of your time** needs to be accounted for, including the time spent sleeping.

## How much detail should I record?

We would like to know what your **main activities** were throughout the day, and about any other activities you did at the same time.

## What activities are worth including?

Everything you do matters. We have included a **list of common activities** you can refer to (**see leaflet**). Noting the activity's code (e.g. 1 = sleeping) will make it easier to tell us later. If there is 'personal time' you do not want us to know about, you can use code 74.

## What should I note down?

Please make notes about:

- **What** your activities were. Your main activity and other activities you did at the same time
- **When** your activities took place
- **Who** you did your activities for or with
- **How much you enjoyed** your main activity
- **How well you slept**
- If you **used any devices** during the activity (e.g. a smartphone, tablet or computer)

## Main Activity



**Main Activities** are those that take up most of your attention, for example: making dinner from 7.00pm to 7.10pm.

Main activities cannot overlap and need to account for all 24 hours of your time.

Main activities can be recorded in your diary only in multiples of 10 minutes (10, 20, 30, 40, 50). If a main activity does not start or end exactly on a multiple of 10, round it up or down to the nearest 10 minutes, being careful not to leave any gaps.

If you did one main thing after another all during less than 10 minutes, record the activity that took the most time (**rounding it up**) and add any others as 'secondary activities'. See example page.

## Secondary Activity



**Secondary Activities** are the things you do alongside main activities. For example, listening to music and checking the phone (two secondary activities) while making dinner (main activity).

They can overlap between them, as well as go alongside multiple main activities. For example, listening to music in the background throughout the entire morning.

Each secondary activity lasting at least 5 minutes should be recorded. You can record activities for 5-minute periods (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, etc).

**TURN THIS PAGE AND HAVE A  
LOOK AT AN EXAMPLE**

# YOUR DIARY DAY TIME LINE – FROM NOTES TO DATA THAT MATTERS

What's a day *really* like? Your answers will help our understanding of what day-to-day life is like and how things such as leisure time, childcare, or ways of working have changed.

## Main Activities

1. Sleeping  
4.00 – 6.00

5. Eating a meal, eating out, take-away (e.g. breakfast, lunch, dinner)  
6.00 – 6.30

24. Using a dishwasher or washing up  
6.30 – 6.40



2. Washing, dressing, using the bathroom and self-grooming  
6.40 – 7.00

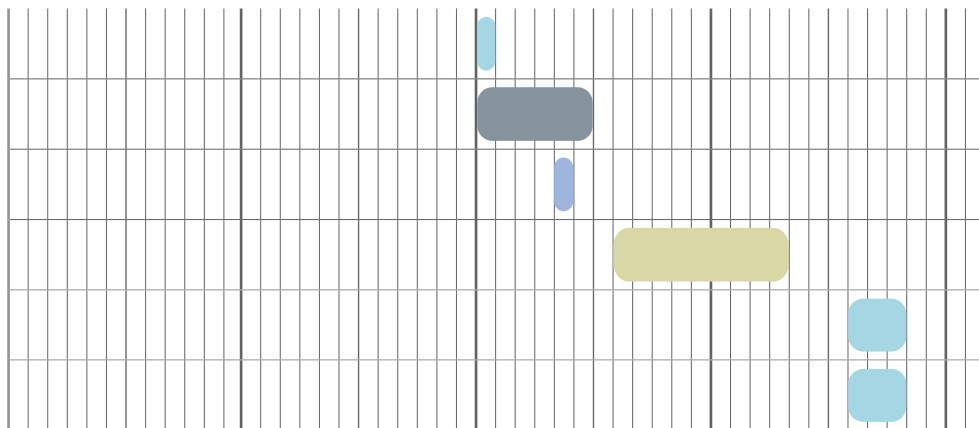
34. Feeding, washing, dressing or preparing meals for children  
7.00 – 7.20

16. Travelling to or from paid work (e.g. commuting, to attend a conference, to visit clients)  
7.20 – 8.00

## Secondary activities & device type

0400      0430      0500      0530      0600      0630      0700      0730      0800

- 53. Checking email
- 47. Watching TV and DVDs
- 57. Writing, texting or emailing 
- 49. Listening to music, podcasts, audiobooks, talk shows, radio or news 
- 7. Drinking (e.g. tea, coffee, alcohol)
- 41. Buying something, shopping



## EXAMPLE PAGE - This is just an example. Your day might be very different to this and that's what we want to understand.

### DAY 1 - Tuesday 12th March

Time	Code	Main activity (for every 10-minute period of the day or longer)	Enjoyment (1 to 7)	Time	Code	Secondary activity (5 minutes or longer)
4am- 6am	1	<i>Sleeping</i>	5*			
6am - 6.35 (rounded down to 6.30)	5	<i>eating breakfast</i>	6	6.00 - 6.05 6.00 - 6.30 6.20 - 6.25	53 47 57	<i>Checking emails on the phone Watching the news on tv Texting using the phone</i>
6.30 - 6.40	24	<i>clearing breakfast</i>	3	6.35 - 7.20	49	<i>listening to the radio using a tablet</i>
6.40 - 7.00	2	<i>washing/getting ready</i>	3			
7.00 - 7.20	34	<i>Getting child ready for school</i>	6			
7.20 - 8.30	16	<i>travelling to work (by train, and walk to train station and from train station to office)</i>	2	7.35 - 7.50	41 & 7	<i>Buying and drinking coffee</i>
8.30 - 1.30pm	8	<i>Work from office</i>	4	10 - 10.30 11.00 - 11.05	49 2	<i>listening to podcast Used the toilet</i>
1.30 - 1.50	21	<i>walk to cafe</i>	3	1.35 - 1.45pm	51	<i>Checking Facebook (using mobile)</i>
1.50 - 2.30	5	<i>Having lunch</i>	5	2.10 - 2.30	7	<i>Coffee with colleague</i>

The main activity duration was rounded down as only 10-minute slots are allowed for main activities.

\* How well did you sleep?

## EXAMPLE PAGE - CONTINUED

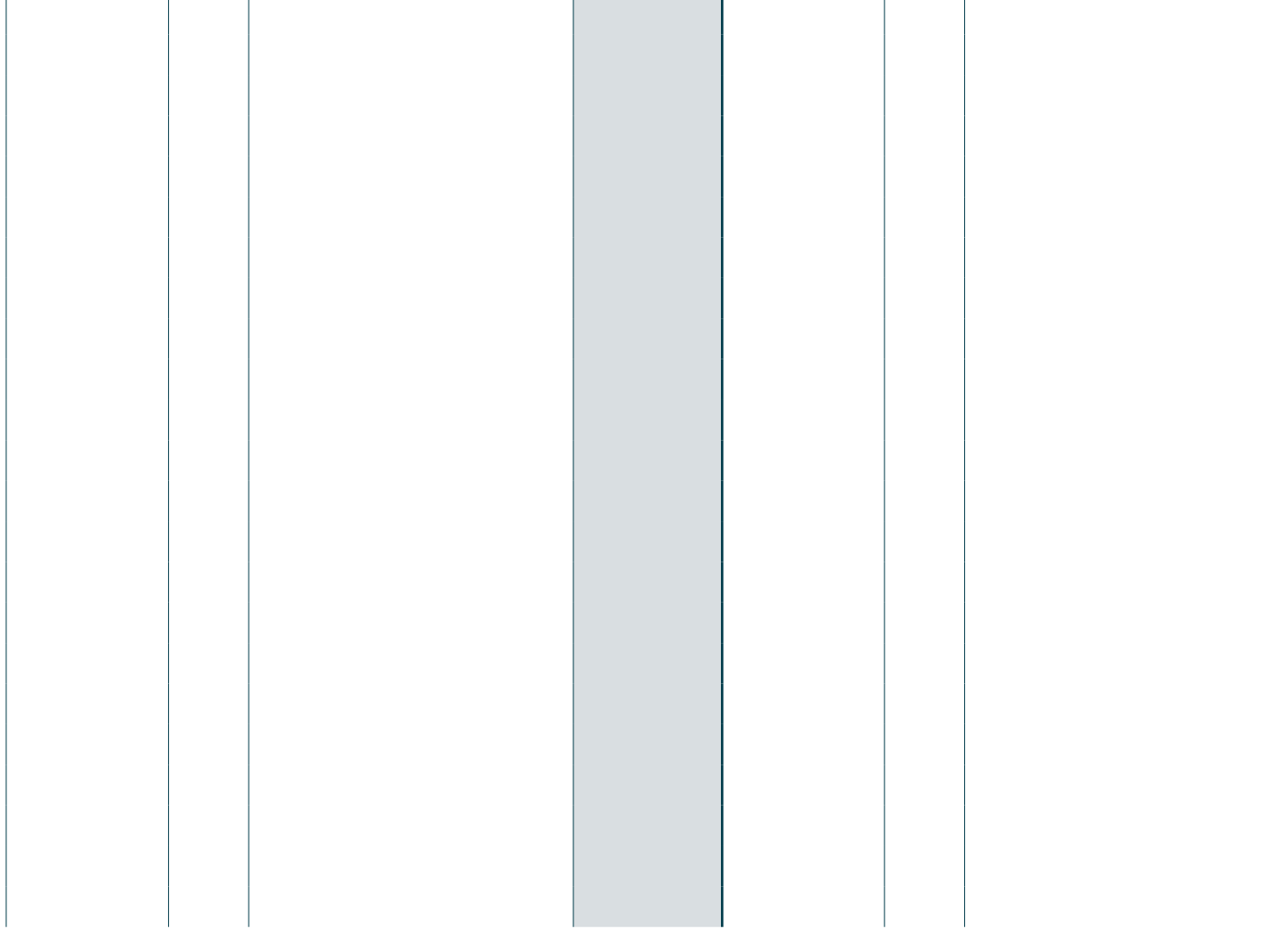
Time	Code	Main activity (for every 10-minute period of the day or longer)	Enjoyment (1 to 7)	Time	Code	Secondary activity (5 minutes or longer)
2.30 - 6pm	10	Work from a café	1	3.40 - 3.45 4.30 - 4.35	48 48	checking mobile checking mobile
6.00 - 7.00	16	Travelling home (Travel by train)	2	6.10 - 6.30 6.30 - 6.45	56 54	Chatting on mobile Reading book
7.00 - 7.08 (rounded up to 7.10)	4	Make dinner for self	1	7.00 - 7.10 7.00 - 7.05	49 48	Listen to radio Checking the phone
7.10 - 7.30	5	Eat dinner	5	7.10 - 7.30	47	Watch tv (news on standard TV)
7.30 - 8.40	73	Using laptop to write a blog	6	7.30 - 8.40	47	Watch tv (Netflix)
8.40 - 9.00	23	Clear up kitchen	1	8.45 - 9.00	49	Listen to radio
9.00 - 9.40	2	Bath	7			
9.40 - 10.00	2	Get ready for bed	5			
10.00 - 10.20	47	Watch tv (Netflix)	7			
10.20 - 10.50	61	In bed resting - awake	7			
10.50 - 4am	1	Sleeping	6*			
END						

The main activity duration was rounded up as making dinner was the main activity for the 10-minute slot from 7.00 to 7.10.

\* How well did you sleep?

MY DAY 1 - \_\_\_\_\_

Main activities				Secondary activities		
Time	Code	Activity description (for every 10-minute period of the day or longer)	Enjoyment (1 to 7)	Time	Code	Activity description (5 minutes or longer)
START 4am-						



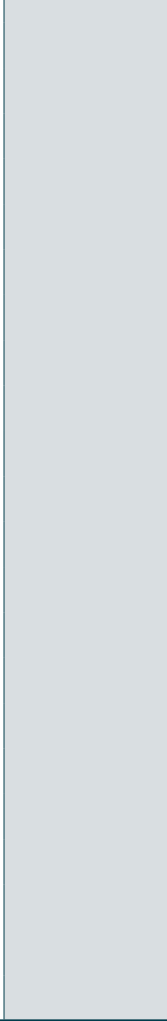
**MY DAY 1 - *continued***

Main activities				Secondary activities		
Time	Code	Activity description (for every 10-minute period of the day or longer)	Enjoyment (1 to 7)	Time	Code	Activity description (5 minutes or longer)



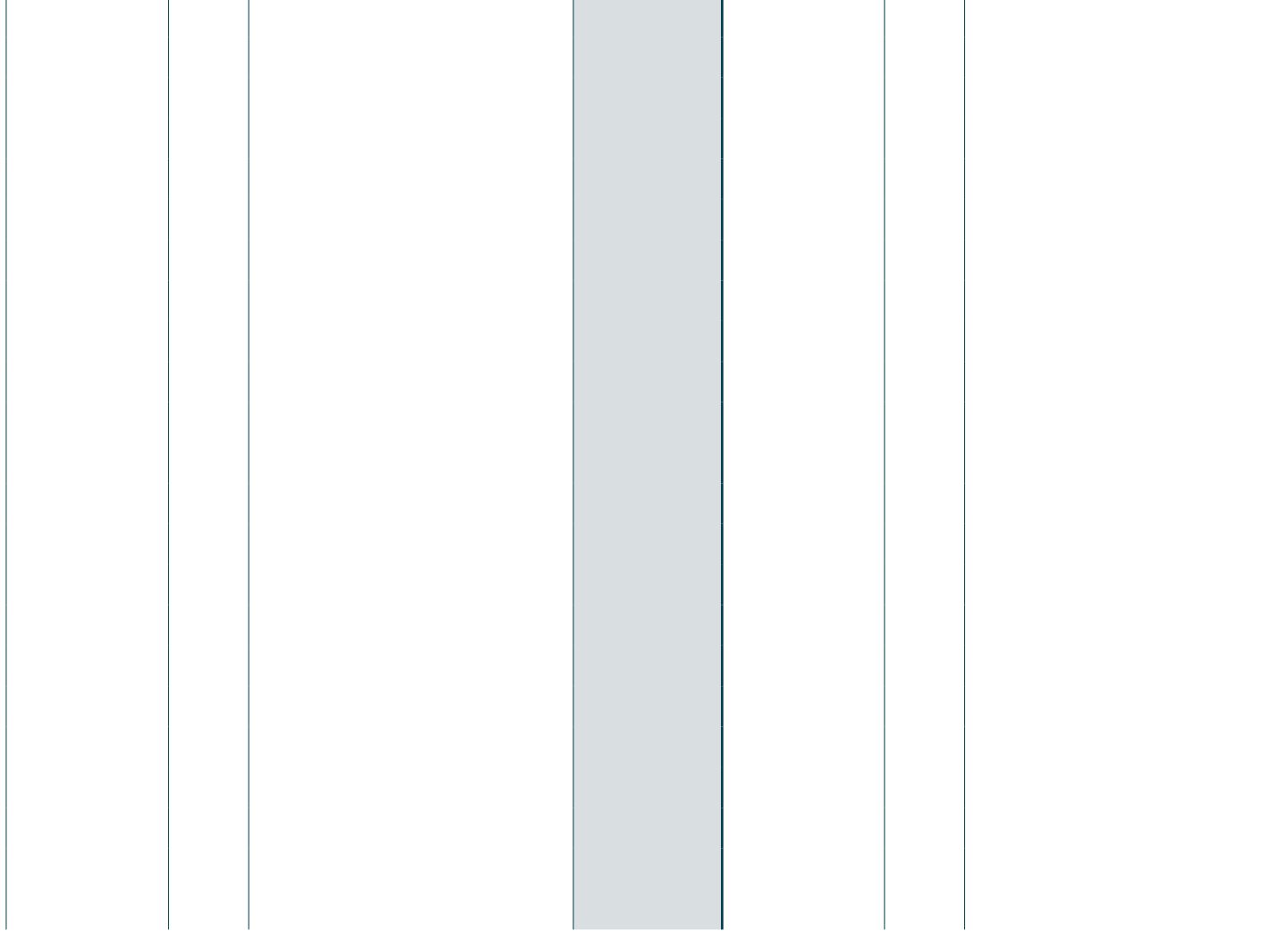
**END**

**- 4am**



MY DAY 2 - \_\_\_\_\_

Main activities				Secondary activities		
Time	Code	Activity description (for every 10-minute period of the day or longer)	Enjoyment (1 to 7)	Time	Code	Activity description (5 minutes or longer)
START 4am-						

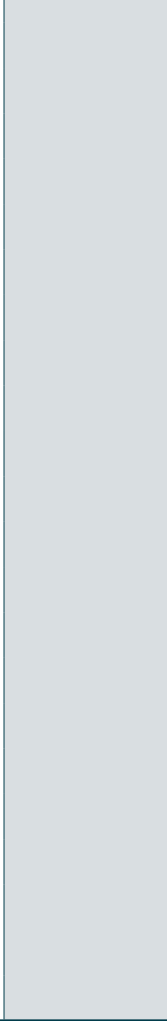


**MY DAY 2 - *continued***

Main activities				Secondary activities		
Time	Code	Activity description (for every 10-minute period of the day or longer)	Enjoyment (1 to 7)	Time	Code	Activity description (5 minutes or longer)

**END**

**- 4am**



# Everything we do, we do through time.

**We count time in seconds, minutes and hours. But how we spend them differs for every one of us – and these differences matter.**

Some of us multitask, while others complete activities one at a time.

And because of the way our brains work, memory alone doesn't give us an accurate view of the past.

## **So, where does your time *really* go?**

Carry this memory aid with you on your allocated days and jot down notes to find this out!

Time use research is a social science interested in patterns of human behaviour. It helps us to understand how we live today and how our leisure, childcare and ways of working have changed.

We hope you'll enjoy taking part in this study and helping us to build a picture of time use in the UK today.

## Any questions? Please get in touch.

@ [OpinionPanel@natcen.ac.uk](mailto:OpinionPanel@natcen.ac.uk)

☎ 0800 652 4569

We can only use your information if you enter it online.  
Please do not post this booklet back.