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BRITAIN AT A GLANCE

From media trends to the ageing population, to violence in Britain...

ADOLESCENCE

JUST OVER ONE IN ten of the UK population is aged between 10 and 19 years. Within this group, and in contrast to the population as a whole, boys outnumber girls. There are over 94,000 more males than females in the age range 10-14 and some 77,000 more in the age range 15-19.

In terms of education, the performance gap between the sexes is widening. Recent national statistics show that only 34 per cent of males achieved two or more A-Level passes compared to 44 per cent of women. More women than men go into further and higher education than men – 2.9 million compared to two million.

However, the UK's teenage girls are also clear leaders in another field. In most of Western Europe teenage birth rates have fallen rapidly since the 1970s, but UK rates have remained at 1980s levels or above.

The UK has the highest rates of live births to teenage girls in the EU, with an average of 26 births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19. This is nearly 19 per cent higher than Latvia, the country with the next highest rate. Cyprus, Slovenia, Sweden and Denmark have the lowest rates at around six live births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19.



AGEING

THE UK'S POPULATION IS getting older. Around one in six people are now aged over 65 compared to one in ten in 1950. In the 1960s there were fewer than 300 centenarians. Today, more than 6,000 people are more than 100 years old and this is predicted to increase to 39,000 by 2036. Life expectancy is at record levels. Boys born this year can expect to live to 76 years while girls can look forward to their 81st birthday.

Women aged 50-plus currently outnumber men by over 1.5 million. But the ageing gap between the sexes is narrowing. In 1961, there were 28 per cent more women than men aged 50 or over. In 2005 this figure had fallen to 16 per cent and trends suggest the gap will continue to narrow.

But living longer does not always mean living better. Seventeen per cent of pensioners are estimated to be living in relative poverty. Women fare worst. Women aged 65 and over have a personal income which is only 57 per cent of that of their male counterparts, and nearly twice as many women as men aged 65 and over live on income support.



CITIES

WITH MORE THAN 7.5 MILLION inhabitants, London is the UK's largest city by far and the most populous city in the EU. It's home to 12 per cent of the UK population and, at 86.6 people per hectare, has substantially the highest population density of any other UK city. (Edinburgh has 17 people per hectare, Chester has 2.6).

But what's a city? Originally it was a European urban settlement containing a cathedral and the seat of a bishop. Now it's more a question of population size. In the UK, there are 66 cities, 22 of which have achieved the status since 1900. Of these cities, 50 are in England, six in Scotland and five in each of Wales and Northern Ireland.

Cities differ in composition. Leicester is the most ethnically diverse, with a white population of 60.5 per cent. In terms of age composition, Sheffield and Leeds are the oldest with 20 per cent of their population aged 60 or over.

Are cities a popular place to live? Possibly not, according to a survey by Channel 4. It finds that six of the worst ten places to live in the UK are cities. Only one city, Winchester, is rated in the top ten UK locations.

UK capital cities
and population,
2005

London	7,521,900
Edinburgh	457,830
Cardiff	319,700
Belfast	267,999

COMPETITIVENESS

THE UK IS CURRENTLY ranked tenth in the world in terms of competitiveness by the World Economic Forum's Growth Competitiveness Index, which attempts to measure a nation's economic environment, its technological capability and its institutional infrastructure as contributors to competitiveness.

- The UK exports over £325 billion of goods and services. Significant export sectors in the UK economy include chemical manufacturing, electrical equipment production and transport equipment, which account for over £8 billion worth of exports each.
- The UK's largest companies are concentrated in particular industries – 23 per cent of all UK enterprises with a £50 million-plus turnover are in manufacturing.
- The UK is the leading financial centre in Europe, if not the world, according to a report by the Treasury, with particular strength in foreign exchange trading.
- Higher education is a competitive export market. Universities UK reports that overseas students studying in UK universities are worth around £3 billion in tuition fee income and spending on goods and services.
- 'Off shoring' is affecting call centre and software development employment. The CBI says this increases UK competitiveness and productivity.

Growth Competitiveness Index 2006 (By Rank)	Switzerland	1	US	6
	Finland	2	Japan	7
	Sweden	3	Germany	8
	Denmark	4	Netherlands	9
	Singapore	5	UK	10

ECONOMY

THE UK'S ECONOMY IS the world's fifth largest behind the US, Japan, Germany and China. The UK's people are the world's twelfth richest with an average annual income estimated by the World Bank at £19,840. The UK was worth £6 trillion in July 2006 with housing representing over £3.5 trillion of these assets.

But both the UK's balance of payments and its balance of trade are in deficit. This means that the financial flow out of the country was greater than that coming in (a deficit of £8.4 billion in the second quarter of 2006) and more goods and services were imported than exported (a deficit of £4 billion in September 2006).

The government borrowed £36 billion for the financial year 2005/2006. Its overall debt stood at £529.1 billion. Total personal debt stands at £1.258 trillion, of which personal consumer credit stands at £212 billion and mortgages at £1,046 trillion.

There are over 1.6 million VAT-registered enterprises in the UK. Over 94 per cent of these employ fewer than 20 staff. Around 74.5 per cent of people of working age are in employment but only one in five people of working age who are not working are classified as unemployed.

Average weekly wages UK, 2006	Men	£487
	Women	£387
	In London	£572
	In North East	£399

ETHNIC MINORITIES

IN THE 2001 CENSUS, 92.1 per cent of the UK population described themselves as white (though not necessarily British). The remaining 7.9 per cent (4.6 million) belonged to non-white ethnic minority groups. During the last 50 years the UK has become increasingly ethnically diverse: between 1991 and 2001 there was a 53 per cent growth in the ethnic minority population.

Around half of the non-white population in 2001 were Asians of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or other Asian origin. A quarter were black and 15 per cent of the non-white population were from the mixed ethnic group.

Forty-five per cent of the UK's minority ethnic population lives in London. The second largest proportion lives in the West Midlands (13 per cent). In the North East and the South West ethnic minority people make up only two per cent of the population.

Due to a high net birth rate and the demographics of international migrants, the UK's ethnic minority population is younger on average than the white population. Women from ethnic minorities are much less likely to be employed than white women (see page 96). As a consequence ethnic minority households are more likely to have lower incomes than white households.



HIV AND AIDS

ESTIMATES SUGGEST THAT THERE are more than 63,500 people living with HIV in the UK and a third of these have not yet been diagnosed. Worldwide, more than 38.6 million people are estimated to be living with HIV. Of these 10.3 million are aged between 15-24. And half of all new HIV infections – almost 6,000 per day – occur among this age group. More than 15.2 million children under the age of 17 have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS in 2005, and this number is projected to double by 2010. The population of Botswana, one of the worst affected countries, will be 31 per cent smaller than it would have been in the absence of AIDS by 2015, according to United Nations estimates.

In the UK, men who have sex with men remain the group most at risk of becoming infected with HIV, accounting for 45 per cent of those infected. But infections acquired heterosexually account for much of the rapid rise in the numbers of new HIV diagnoses in the UK, 4,049 in 2005 compared to 840 in 1996. The majority of people diagnosed with HIV in the UK are between the ages of 25 and 39.

HIV infection, transmission routes	45% sex between men
	41% heterosexual sex
	2% mother to infant
	5% injecting drug use
	2% blood/tissue transfer
5% indeterminate	

HOME LEARNING

TEACHING CHILDREN OF SCHOOL age at home appears to be gaining in popularity. In England and Wales, evidence is anecdotal, but in Scotland home schooling increased by 39 per cent last year. It's hard to establish whether home-taught children outperform their school-taught peers academically. US research suggests home-taught children do, but it's not clear that home education is the cause of these differences. Those home-schooling their children may themselves be more academically able than average.

But home learning is not just for kids. The Open University has over 173,000 students. The OU offers qualifications from certificate through to doctorate level and has Europe's largest MBA programme. Attempts to establish an 'e-university' in the UK, offering courses on-line, have floundered, attracting 900 students at a cost of £50 million. The government now publishes guidelines for the amount of homework to be set for pupils – reaching a maximum of 2.5 hours per day for Year 10 and 11. But a recent survey of 2,000 parents reported by the BBC finds that two-thirds believe their children bring too much schoolwork home.

Government homework guidelines	School years	Homework
	1 & 2	1 hr a week
	3 & 4	1.5 hrs per week
	5 & 6	30 mins per day
	7 & 8	45-90 mins per day
	9	1 to 2 hrs per day
	10 & 11	1.5 to 2.5 hrs per day

HOUSING

BRITAIN HAS 25 MILLION dwellings according to national statistics and more than 80 per cent of UK households live in a house or bungalow, with semi-detached and terraced houses being the most common type of dwelling. In 1900, 10 per cent of houses were owner-occupied. By 2004, 70 per cent were owner-occupied, with the remainder being let privately or through local authority or housing associations. There are just over 257,000 holiday or second homes abroad with almost half of these being located in Spain and France.

Owner-occupation was highest in the South East, East Midlands and East (75 per cent) and lowest in London (58 per cent) and Scotland (67 per cent). The South West region and Wales had the highest percentage of homes owned outright (34 per cent) and the South East outside of London had the highest proportion owned with a mortgage (44 per cent). London had by far the highest proportion rented from the private sector (17 per cent).

House prices have risen in all regions and average increases in England and Wales in 2003/4 were almost 12 per cent overall. Increases were greatest in Wales at 22.4 per cent and lowest in London at 6.1 per cent. Although increases in London were the lowest, it is still the most expensive place to buy a property.

Average UK house price 1936-2005	1936-45	£774
	1956-65	£2,784
	1976-85	£21,998
	1996-2005	£111,061

HUMAN RESOURCES

EMPLOYERS ARE STILL EXPERIENCING recruitment difficulties, according to a recent survey. Over 85 per cent of UK organisations surveyed bemoaned the lack of specialist skills and required experience in their search for new recruits. Data also show that some three quarters of organisations are finding it difficult to retain the employees they already have as they are wooed by offers of promotion and new careers elsewhere, or driven away by dissatisfaction with pay or career opportunities.

Could employers do more to make their workplaces attractive? One in three employers are still failing to provide their staff with any training at all. And the average length of time spent in training appears to be falling. Where training's concerned, size matters. Ninety-five per cent of organisations with 100 or more staff arranged training in the past 12 months, but less than half of small firms followed suit.

The average spend per year on training per employee is currently £469, but firms with less than 100 people spend more on training (£898) than those with more than 500 employees (£344).



JUSTICE

HOW WELL IS THE justice system in England and Wales working? According to the National Criminal Justice Board, 15 per cent more offences were brought to justice in 2005 than in 2002. But fewer than 40 per cent of people have any confidence that the justice system is effective at reducing crime and only 27 per cent believe it is effective in dealing with young people accused of crime. Moreover, low confidence persists despite an increase of 83 per cent in the total number of offenders sentenced to custody between 1993 and 2003, and a 31 per cent increase in the length of custodial sentences.

The UK has a prison population rate of 145 prisoners serving a custodial sentence per 100,000 of the population. That's pretty high compared to Nepal, which holds just 29 out of every 100,000 citizens in jail. But the UK is positively lenient compared to the US, which keeps 726 out of every 100,000 citizens behind bars. The Russian Federation holds 652 prisoners per 100,000 of its population and Cuba incarcerates 487 people per 100,000 population.

Costs per prisoner England and Wales	Category	Costs per day
	High security	£118
	Male juvenile	£100
	Male remand centre	£71
	Female open	£67
	Male open	£56

MEDIA

THE AVERAGE PERSON IN the UK spends just over two and a half hours per day watching TV, video or DVDs, or listening to music. In contrast people spend an average of 40 minutes reading and only 10 minutes on sports and outdoor activities.

News is still the most popular television programme, watched by 93 per cent of people over 16. Factual programmes are the second most popular, attracting 84 per cent of people. Access to digital TV is rising rapidly with a satellite service connected in 32 per cent of households.

Among newspapers, *The Sun* is still the most popular national newspaper, attracting eight million readers – close to 17 per cent of the UK population. The most popular broadsheet is the *Daily Telegraph*, which is read by just over two million. In a recent survey, 72 per cent relied on the TV for news compared to 13 per cent who relied on newspapers and 11 per cent who gleaned news from the radio.

Although the proportion of homes in the UK with an internet connection has grown, less than one fifth of lower income households have a home internet connection compared to 87 per cent of the highest earning households.

Household internet connection by type	2003	2005
	Broadband	8%
Dial-up	40%	25%

PARENTING

RISING A CHILD FROM birth to age 21 is now estimated to cost more than £165,000, which is in the same region as the cost of an average UK house. Perhaps no surprise then that around one in five UK women don't have any children, compared to one in 10 in the mid-1940s. At 1.79 children per woman, UK fertility is higher than the EU average. But the UK is some way behind Ireland which, with 1.99 babies per woman, is the EU's most fertile spot.

More than one fifth of dependent children in the UK live in lone parent families, double the figure for 1981. In September 2006, the Child Support Agency (CSA) was handling 1.4 million cases. A report into the CSA's operation concludes that only a third of these lone parents receive any maintenance payments and that £3 billion of payments are outstanding. The CSA is now being abolished.

Working mothers still spend more time on childcare than working fathers, but things are changing. Fathers now spend eight times more time on childcare than they did 30 years ago and one third of childcare is now carried out by dads. In Europe, only Danish dads now boast more time caring for their kids than the Brits.

England and Wales most popular babies' names, 2006	1 st	Jack	Olivia
	2 nd	Thomas	Grace
	3 rd	Joshua	Jessica
	4 th	Oliver	Ruby
	5 th	Harry	Emily

TRANSPORT

WALKING AND CYCLING MAY be the healthiest form of transport, but both are experiencing long-term decline. Between 1989 and 2005 the average distance walked has fallen from 380 to 315 km per year. The distance travelled by bicycle was 58 km in 2005, a decrease of 16 per cent from 1995.

In contrast, from 1980 to 2004 total traffic on UK roads increased by 81 per cent. The UK currently has 375,000 km of road; the UK transport system supports 61 billion passenger journeys and 250 billion tonne-kilometres of goods are moved per year. Each day there are 72,000 international air and rail business passenger journeys made to and from the UK and 60,000 long distance domestic business trips. Transport is responsible for roughly eight per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions in the UK.

Congestion charging has cut traffic in central London by 18 per cent and congestion by 33 per cent since February 2003. Pollution from nitrogen oxides and particulates has been cut by 12 per cent in the congestion zone. Cycling in central London has increased by one third.



VIOLENCE

MORE THAN 2.4 MILLION violent incidents occurred in England and Wales in the year 2005/06, according to the British Crime Survey. In the same period, the number of violent crimes recorded by the police stood at just over one million, indicating that 50 per cent of violent crime goes unreported. Official figures claim that by 2005/06 levels of violent crime had decreased by over 43 per cent from a recent high level in 1995. In 2005, 765 homicides took place, a decrease of 12 per cent from the previous year. Homicide accounts for 0.06 per cent of recorded violent crime. And, on average, 150 people (120 women and 30 men) are killed each year by a current or former partner. Overall, one in four women and one in six men will experience domestic violence during their lifetime. Just under half of the incidents of domestic violence are committed by a perpetrator under the influence of alcohol.

Violent crime in the UK costs more than £21 billion a year. Violence against the individual accounts for two-thirds of this total cost and is equivalent to more than £19,000 per individual. Domestic violence costs more than £5.8 billion per annum.

Adults most at risk of violence 2005/6 % of victims	All adults	3.4
	Separated people	5.5
	Men aged 25-34	5.5
	Women aged 16-24	7.0
	Men aged 16-24	12.6