Diversity and different experiences in the UK

National Statistician's Annual Article on Society

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Equality is recognised nationally and internationally as a key aspect of progress in society and ONS is continuing its tradition of measuring societal well-being. This article provides an overview of diversity in the UK and then examines the experiences of different groups in relation to overall trends in economic well-being, health, education and employment. The article focuses on differences by ethnicity, disability, socio-economic and household status with some examples of gender and age differences.

Over the last few decades, the UK population has grown, become older and, while the majority ethnic group is White British, is becoming more ethnically diverse. Disability prevalence is stable but there is some evidence of an increase in the proportion of people experiencing disabling mental disorders. The proportion of people living on their own in Great Britain has increased over the last 20 years (from 10 per cent in 1986 to 13 per cent in 2006) and a quarter of all children now live with a lone parent, almost double the proportion 20 years ago.

On average in the UK we are richer, but there is evidence that inequality in income distribution has increased over the last two decades. People living on their own are more likely to be living in homes which are defined as non-decent than other groups and lone parents are more likely to be living in poor quality environments. While estimates of children living in poverty have stayed relatively stable over the last three years, children in Pakistani or Bangladeshi households are more than twice as likely to be living in poverty than average (58 per cent compared with 22 per cent).

We are living longer and, since 1930, infant mortality rates in England and Wales have fallen from 60 to 5 deaths per 1,000 live births. Compared with other groups in England and Wales, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups report higher rates of poor health and ethnic minority groups are twice as likely to be in-patients in mental health wards than others. In England and Wales, babies born inside marriage with fathers in semi-routine occupations experience twice the infant mortality rate of those with fathers in higher managerial occupations. People living in deprived areas have double the suicide rate of the rest of the population in England and Wales. Children living in deprived areas in Great Britain are more than twice as likely to have mental health disorders than children in wealthy areas.

On average more children are achieving five or more good GCSEs or equivalent in the UK and fewer working age people in the UK have no qualifications (13 per cent in 2007 compared with 17 per cent in 2001). However, while their attainment is improving, children from Black ethnic groups in England achieve the lowest results at GCSE and are more likely to be excluded than other groups. Children eligible for free school meals in England have lower

achievement at school and higher rates of unauthorised absence than children not eligible for free school meals.

We are increasingly likely to be in work and while pay for women is converging with men's, in 2007 the pay gap between men and women's median earnings was still 13 per cent. Of 19 year olds in England and Wales, those with a disability or health problem were nearly three times as likely to be Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) than those without. Half of all working age disabled people in the UK were in work, but only a quarter of those who suffer from depression were working.

In conclusion, while there is some evidence of progress in reducing inequality – equal pay for women and educational attainment for some ethnic minority groups for example – there are also examples for particular ethnic groups, disabled people and socio-economic groups where disadvantages have persisted.

We plan to produce a regular series of articles which provide an overview of the latest statistics on aspects of society and also focus on one specific topic – for this report the topic is equality as an important aspect of societal well-being. The most up-to-date data from a range of sources have been used and where possible with UK coverage. A number of developments are also described which will improve the information available on equality for the future.

Not all statistics contained within this publication are national statistics because it is a compilation from various sources, similar in approach to its sister publication Social Trends.

1. Introduction

From its inception in 1970, *Social Trends* had the objective of measuring progress in society. This was set out in the first edition given 'the growing realisation in Parliament, the press and elsewhere that economic progress must be measured, in part at least, in terms of social benefits'.[1]

Thirty eight editions of *Social Trends* on, the objective of developing measures of societal well-being alongside economic well-being continues to be a priority in the Government Statistical Service.[2] We are actively working with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other international organisations through the 2007 Istanbul declaration which is promoting debate on what 'progress' means and how a shared view of societal well-being can be produced based on high quality statistics.

While the definition of measures of societal well-being are still being debated, OECD recognises that 'distributive issues' are factors to be considered and equity or equality feature in existing frameworks for measuring societal well-being.[3] A measure of gender equality also features in the suite of indicators underpinning the UN Millenium Development Goals[4] which are recognised by the OECD as a step in the direction of measuring societal progress.

At a national level, economic well-being and equality of opportunity are both identified in HM Treasury's commitment 'to raise the rate of sustainable growth, and achieve rising prosperity and a better quality of life with employment and economic opportunities for all'. At the same time, the UK Government's sustainable development indicators recognise that 'social justice is about tackling inequalities'.[5]

ONS and its predecessor organisations have a long history of measuring inequalities and we welcomed the recent focus on improving coherence in measuring equality across Government. Last year, the Cabinet Office's *Equalities Review*[6] proposed an equality measurement framework and subsequently ONS led a cross-government *Review of Equality Data*[7] and proposed a number of recommendations which would improve the equality evidence base underpinning this measurement framework.

Reducing inequality is likely to remain a key policy concern. A recent report by the Cabinet Office concludes that 'there remain persistent gaps between the life chances of people from different backgrounds starting from birth and continuing throughout their lives. This is key future challenge for Britain.'[8]

This article provides an overview of diversity in the UK and then describes variations for diverse groups in the context of overall trends. Section 2 of this article explores the information we have on changes in diversity in society with particular emphasis on ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability and household status. In each case, issues relating to children have been addressed. Sections 3 to 6 focus in turn on economic well-being, health, education and employment (and caring as a contribution to the economy). Each section looks at overall trends in that domain before turning to the variation in outcomes or life chances for different ethnic groups, socio-economic groups and for disabled people. We have also reported on differing outcomes relating to gender and age of individuals where particularly relevant. Section 7 looks to future developments which will contribute to improving the equality evidence base.

2. A diverse population

The UK population is growing (Table 1), ageing and becoming more diverse. As diversity increases, the nature of diversity within different groups in UK society is changing and different groups continue to have different experiences and outcomes.

Table 1 **Population estimates, UK**

millions

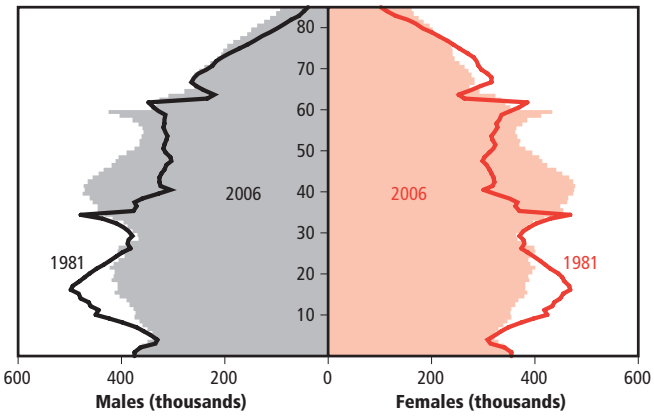
mid-1981	mid-1986	mid-1991	mid-1996	mid-2001	mid-2006
56.4	56.7	57.4	58.2	59.1	60.6

Source: Mid-year population estimates (ONS, General Register Office for Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency)

Age

The population is ageing (Figure 1). In 1981, 22 per cent of the UK population was aged under 16 while 15 per cent of the

Figure 1 **Estimated age structure of the UK population: mid-1981 and mid-2006**



Source: mid-year population estimates (ONS, General Register Office for Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency)

Table 2 **Percentages of people by ethnic origin, UK, 2001 and 2007**

	2001	2007
White	93	90
Mixed	1	1
Asian or Asian British of which	4	5
Indian	2	2
Pakistani or Bangladeshi	2	2
Other Asian	0	1
Black or Black British of which	2	3
Black Caribbean	1	1
Black non-Caribbean	1	1
Chinese or Other	1	2

Figures may not add up because of rounding.

Source: Labour Force Survey (ONS)

population was aged 65 and over. In 2006, 19 per cent of the population were aged under 16 and 16 per cent of the population were aged 65 and over. In 2006, 4.5 per cent of the total population were 80 years and over compared with 2.8 per cent of total population in 1981.

By 2031, it is projected that the UK population will be 71.1 million, with 18 per cent of the population aged under 16 and 22 per cent of the population aged 65 and over. It is also projected that 2.9 million people will be aged 85 or more in 2031 compared with 1.2 million in 2006 and around 0.6 million in 1981.[9]

Ethnicity

The UK is also increasing in ethnic diversity (Table 2). While the population is predominantly White and White British remains the majority ethnic group, the proportion of White individuals has decreased from 93 per cent in 2001 to 90 per cent in 2007.

Ethnic diversity also differs geographically across the UK (Table 3). Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are not as ethnically diverse as England; in 2007, 97 per cent of individuals in Wales and Scotland and 99 per cent of individuals in Northern Ireland were White compared with 88 per cent in England. London is particularly diverse with only 65 per cent of individuals from White groups.

The age profiles of different ethnic groups vary with most ethnic minority groups having a younger age structure than the White British population (Table 4 overleaf). The Mixed, Black African, Other Black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups have the youngest age profiles and the White Irish group has the oldest profile.

In 2006, 21 per cent of babies in the UK were born to mothers themselves born outside the UK (compared with 15 per cent in 2001).[9] Primary school age children in 2007 show a greater degree of ethnic diversity than the total population (Tables 3 and 5). In England, 19 per cent of school children in maintained schools were from non-White ethnic groups; in London 53 per cent were from non-White groups.

Socio-economic status

The trend towards more managerial and professional status jobs in the UK economy has continued over the last seven years (Table 6).[10] For example, 33 per cent of working age people were in managerial and professional work in 2007 compared

Table 3 **Percentages of people by ethnic origin, by country of residence within the UK and London, 2007**

	UK	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland	London
White	90	88	97	97	99	65
Mixed	1	1	1	0	0	2
Asian or Asian British of which	5	5	1	2	0	14
Indian	2	2	0	1	0	5
Pakistani or Bangladeshi	2	2	1	1	0	5
Other Asian	1	1	0	0	0	3
Black or Black British of which	3	3	0	0	0	12
Black Caribbean	1	1	0	0	*	5
Black non-Caribbean	1	2	0	0	0	7
Chinese or Other	2	2	1	0	0	7

Figures may not add up because of rounding.

*Source: Labour Force Survey (ONS) * Sample size too small for reliable estimates*

Table 4 **Age structures for different ethnic groups, GB, 2006/07**

Percentages

	Under 16	16-64	65 and over
White British	18	65	17
White Irish	6	68	26
Other White	13	73	13
Mixed	52	46	2
Indian	20	72	7
Pakistani	32	63	5
Bangladeshi	37	58	5
Other Asian	26	70	4
Black Caribbean	21	66	13
Black African	34	64	2
Other Black	35	57	8
Chinese	17	79	4
Other ethnic group	23	72	5
All ethnic groups	19	65	16

Figures may not add up because of rounding.

Source: Annual Population Survey (ONS). 'All ethnic groups' includes those who did not state their ethnicity

with 31 per cent in 2001. Fewer people were in routine or semi-routine work (22 per cent in 2007 compared with 25 per cent in 2001).

Analysis of data from the *National Child Development Study* and *British Cohort Study* suggests that intergenerational social mobility measured by adult earnings was lower in the UK for children born in 1970 compared with children born in 1958.[11] More boys born in 1970 (38 per cent) remained in the lowest income quartile as adults than boys born in 1958 (31 per cent). Further analysis suggests that the decrease in intergenerational social mobility that occurred between these 1958 and 1970 cohorts is not ongoing, but neither has there been any significant improvement.

The UK population is growing and becoming older. While White British remain the majority ethnic group, the UK is becoming more ethnically diverse. Children in England are more ethnically diverse than other age groups. Over half of school children in maintained primary schools in London (53 per cent) are from non-White ethnic groups.

There has been a rise in the proportion of working age people in the UK (excluding full-time students) who have never had any paid work (apart from casual or holiday work) from 2 per cent in 1997 to 3 per cent in 2007.[12]

Disability

The proportion of people reporting a limiting longstanding illness increased in Great Britain between 1975 and 1995 but since then, despite the ageing population, has stabilised at

Table 5 **Ethnicity of children in maintained primary schools, England, January 2007**

Percentages

	White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Chinese	Any other ethnic group	Unclassified	Numbers of all pupils
ENGLAND	81	4	8	5	0	1	1	3,304,370
LONDON	47	8	18	21	1	5	1	484,060

Figures may not add up because of rounding.

Source: SFR30/2007 (Department of Children, Schools and Families)

Table 6 **Percentages of working age people classified by National Statistics Socio-economic Classification. Age 16–64 for men, 16–59 for women. UK, not seasonally adjusted, 2001 and 2007**

	Higher managerial and professional	Lower managerial and professional	Intermediate occupations	Small employers and own account workers	Lower supervisory and technical	Semi-routine occupations	Routine occupations	Never worked unemployed and nec
2001	10	21	11	7	9	14	11	17
2007	11	22	10	8	9	13	9	19

Figures may not add up because of rounding.

Source: Labour Force Survey (ONS)

Table 7 **Proportion of people who reported a limiting longstanding illness, disability or infirmity[b], GB**

Percentages

1975	1985	1995	2005[a]	2006[b]
15	17	19	19	19

(a) 2005 data includes last quarter of 2004/5 data due to survey change from financial to calendar year.
(b) Respondents were asked the question 'Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? By long-standing, I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time? Yes/No'

Source: General Household Survey (ONS)

around 19 per cent of the total population (Table 7). This is reasonably consistent with other recent estimates which give disability rates at around 18 per cent of the population over the last few years.[13] The proportion of the working age population with a disability in 2007 was 19 per cent.[12]

Of all those reporting limiting longstanding illness in Great Britain (whether of not they had significant difficulty with day-to-day activities), there was a small increase over the last ten years in the proportion with underlying mental rather than physical conditions (4 per cent in 1996 to 5 per cent in 2006).[14]

There was also an increase in the proportion reporting mental illnesses and behavioural disorders as the medical reason underlying claims for incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance from 33 per cent in 2001 to 41 per cent in 2007 (Table 8).

Disability prevalence rates have been stable for the last decade at around 19 per cent with some evidence of an increase in the proportion of people reporting mental health conditions.

In Census 2001, the highest rates of reported limiting longstanding illness or disability in England and Wales were for Pakistani and Bangladeshi men and women (Figure 2) with higher rates for women in all Asian and Black groups.

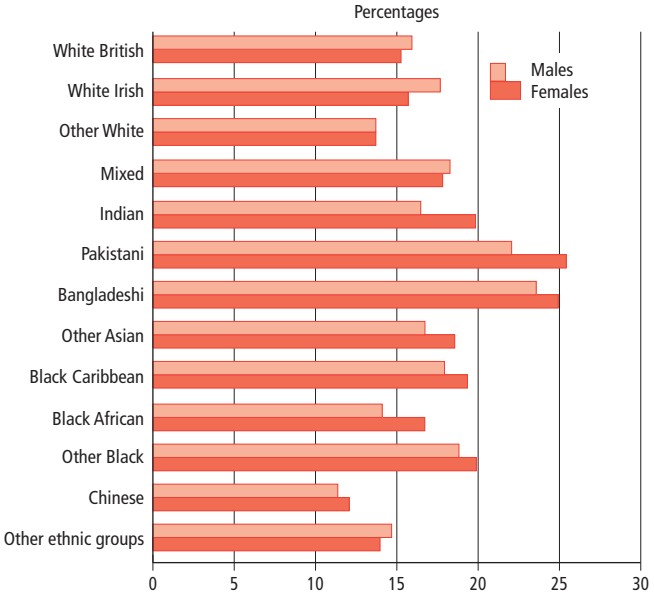
Table 8 **Combined Incapacity benefit and Severe Disablement claimants by type of medical reason, GB, 2001 and 2007**

Percentages

	2001	2007
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	33	41
Physical	67	59
Total claimants (millions)=100%	2.8	2.7

Source: Benefit statistics (Department for Work and Pensions)

Figure 2 **Age standardised rates of long-term illness or disability which restricts daily activities: by ethnic group and sex, England and Wales, 2001**



Source: Census (2001)

Household status

Over the last 20 years, the proportion of people living alone has increased from 10 per cent in 1986 to 13 per cent, or around 7.5 million people, in 2006 (Table 9).

Over the last 20 years, the proportions of both younger women and younger men living alone in Great Britain have doubled

Table 9 **People in households by type of household and family, GB, 1986 and 2006**

Percentages

	1986[a]	2006
One person	10	13
One family households		
Couple		
No children	22	24
Dependent children	44	37
Non dependent children only	12	9
Lone parent	8	12
Other households	5	5
All people in private households (millions)=100%	54.5	57.7

(a) The private household population in 1986 is estimated from Labour Force Survey data (1986–1988). All other results are from the General Household Survey
Figures may not add up because of rounding.

Source: General Household Survey and Labour Force Survey (ONS)

Table 10 **Proportion of men and women living alone by age, GB, 1986 and 2006**

Percentages

	1986	2006
Women aged between 25 and 44	4	8
Women aged 75 and over	61	61
Men aged between 25 and 44	7	14
Men aged 75 or over	24	32

Source: General Household Survey (ONS)

(Table 10). While the proportion of older women living alone in Great Britain has remained stable over the last 20 years, the proportion of older men living alone has increased, nevertheless women aged 75 or over are almost twice as likely to be living alone as men aged 75 or over in 2006.[14] In Northern Ireland, there are similar patterns for younger people living alone but a decrease in the proportion of older men living alone.

The proportion of dependent children in Great Britain living with a lone parent has almost doubled over the last 20 years (from 14 per cent in 1986 to 24 per cent in 2006) although just over three quarters of all children live with two parents.[14]

Inter-ethnic marriages make up a small proportion of all marriages. There were 10.3 million married couples in England and Wales in April 2001, and 2 per cent were couples from different ethnic backgrounds (219,000) with most (198,000) including a White person. The most common combination was a White and Mixed couple, which represent 26 per cent of all inter-ethnic marriages. For individuals who classified themselves as Mixed, 78 per cent of marriages were inter-ethnic. Other Black individuals, largely young Black people born in Britain, were the next most likely to be married to someone outside their ethnic group, followed by Black Caribbean people. Almost five in ten Other Black men (48 per cent) and three in ten Black Caribbean men (29 per cent) were married to women outside the Black ethnic group, in most cases White women.

People from Indian (6 per cent), Pakistani (4 per cent) or Bangladeshi (3 per cent) backgrounds were least likely of ethnic minority groups to be married to someone from a different ethnic group.

Other key aspects of diversity

We recognise that in understanding diversity and equality in the UK, it is also important to consider religion and belief, sexual orientation and transgender status.

Single person households and lone parent families continue to increase in Great Britain. Around 13 per cent of the population, or 7.5 million people, lived alone in 2006, an increase from 10 per cent in 1986. The proportion of children living with a lone parent has almost doubled over the last 20 years (from 14 per cent in 1986 to 24 per cent in 2006) although just over three quarters of all children live with two parents.

In Census 2001, 77 per cent of the population of Great Britain identified with a religion, with 72 per cent Christian, 3 per cent Muslim, 1 per cent Hindu and 1 per cent other religions. Of the remaining 23 per cent, 15 per cent identified with having no religion and the remaining 8 per cent did not respond to the question.

There are no comprehensive official statistics on sexual identity but currently it is estimated that the lesbian, gay men and bisexual population is between 5 and 7 per cent of the total population.[16] There are also no official statistics on transgender people.

Although there are some data available on outcomes relating to religion/belief, this has not been considered in this article. It is difficult to compare equality of outcomes by sexual orientation and transgender status because of the relative paucity of data for these groups across the domains considered here.

3 Economic well-being and standard of living

Overall trends

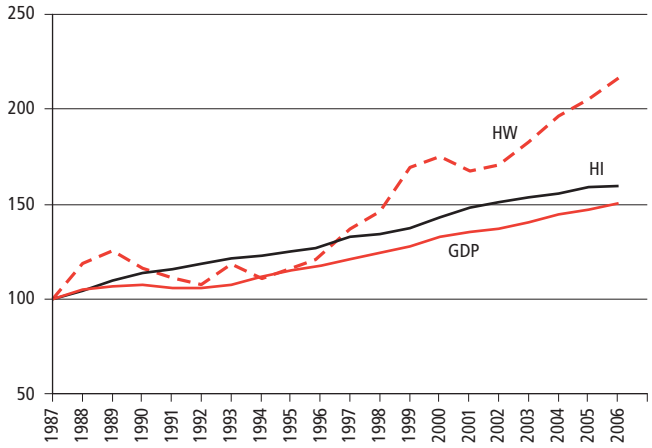
Over the last 20 years, UK wealth and income per head have grown at rates faster than GDP per head. This is shown in three different measures adjusted for inflation in Figure 3 overleaf.

Over the period 1987 to 2006, GDP per head in real terms has grown by around 50 per cent. Over this time real household disposable income per head has grown by around 60 per cent and real household net wealth per head by around 116 per cent.

In 2007, over three fifths of adults (63 per cent) in England reported being very or fairly satisfied with their future financial security.[17]

Between 1996 and 2005, the numbers of non-decent homes in England fell from 9.1 million to 6.0 million, with the proportion of non-decent homes falling from 45 per cent to 27 per cent.[18]

Figure 3 **Gross Domestic Product growth per head (GDP), real household disposable income per head (HI) and real household net wealth per head (HW), UK**



Source: UK National Accounts and Population Estimates (ONS)

Table 11 **Estimates of children living in poverty. UK[a]. Millions in below 60 per cent median household income before housing costs**

96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.8

(a) Figures are for UK from 1998/99 onwards, previous figures are for GB only.

Source: Households Below Average Income (Department for Work and Pensions)

Estimates of the numbers of children living in poverty in the UK have been relatively stable at around 2.8 million for the last three years (Table 11).

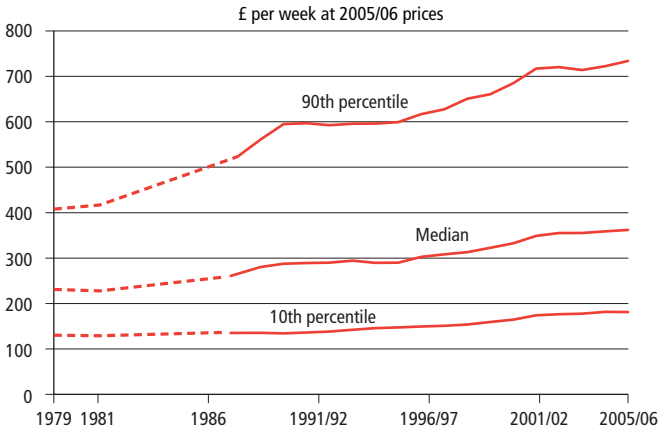
On average, we have become richer over the last 20 years in the UK and in 2007 63 per cent of adults in England reported being very or fairly satisfied with their future financial security.

Estimates of children living in poverty in the UK have been relatively stable at around 2.8 million for the last three years.

Variations

In 2007, while 63 per cent of adults in England reported being very or fairly satisfied with their future financial security overall, there was variation between age bands with lowest satisfaction reported by 16 to 21 year olds (50 per cent) and highest by those aged over 60 (78 per cent).[17]

Figure 4 **Distribution of real[1] disposable household income[2], UK/GB[3]**



1 Adjusted to 2005/06 prices using the retail prices index less council tax/domestic rates.
2 Equivalised household disposable income before deduction of housing costs, using OECD equivalisation scale.
3 Data for 1994/95 to 2001/02 for Great Britain only.

Source: Households Below Average Income, (Department for Work and Pensions)

Real household disposable income per head measures how people's income has been changing on average. However, income is not evenly distributed across the population and people at different points of the income distribution may experience different levels of income growth. This is demonstrated by looking at how incomes have changed at the different percentiles and at the median of the population where inequality increases as the percentiles move away from the median. Between 1979 and 2005/06, the income of UK households at the 10th and 90th percentile and at the median all increased in real terms (Figure 4). However, in 1979 the households at the 90th percentile had an income three times greater than the households at the 10th percentile, whereas in 2005/06 the ratio was four to one. This increase in inequality took place mainly between 1979 and 1990/91, when the incomes of the households at the 90th percentile increased by almost 50 per cent, compared with 3 per cent for the households at the 10th percentile. Between 1995/96 and 2005/06, incomes for households at the 90th percentile remained around four times the incomes at the 10th percentile.

In UK households where the household reference person (HRP) was in a managerial or professional occupation, average spending in 2006 was almost double that where the HRP was long term unemployed or has never worked. The highest spending per head was in households where the HRP was White and the lowest in households where the HRP was Asian.[19]

Table 12 **Non-decent homes[a] and poor quality environment[b] by type of household, England, 2005**

Percentages of all households of each type

	Non-decent homes	Poor quality environment
One person households		
Under 60	35	20
Aged 60 and over	34	14
One family households		
Couple no dependent children		
Under 60	25	16
Over 60	23	11
Couple with dependent children	22	16
Lone parent with dependent children	26	23
Other multi-person households	28	21
All households	27	16

(a) A decent home is one that:
- meets the current statutory minimum for housing
- is in a reasonable state of repair
- has reasonably modern facilities and services
- provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort, that is has efficient heating and effective insulation.

(b) A home is regarded as having a poor quality environment if it is assessed as having significant or major problems relating to upkeep, management and misuse; road traffic or other transport; or abandonment or non-residential use.

Source: English House Condition Survey (Communities and Local Government)

Seventy-three thousand 'households' in England were accepted both as homeless in 2006/07 and in priority need (22 per cent less than in 2005/6). Priority need was determined by the presence of dependent children (55 per cent) or a pregnant woman (a further 12 per cent).[18] Around one-third (33 per cent) were households where applicants were judged vulnerable by local authorities for reasons including mental illness, physical disability, domestic violence, old age or those leaving care, custody or the armed forces.

People living on their own were most likely of all other groups in England to be living in non-decent homes (Table 12). Lone parents were more likely to be living in non-decent homes (26 per cent) and poor quality environments (23 per cent) than couples with children (22 per cent and 16 per cent respectively).

Between 1979 and 2006, there was evidence of a small increase in inequality by income distribution in the UK. In 2005 people living on their own in England were more likely to be living in non-decent homes than other groups and lone parents were more likely to be living in non decent homes and poor quality environments than couples with children.

Table 13 **Children in a household with an income below 60 per cent of median (before housing costs) by various family and household characteristics, UK, 2005/06**

Percentages

	Percentage	All children (millions)
Lone parent	35	3.2
Couple with children	18	9.6
All adults in work	8	7.3
At least one adult in work, but not all	28	3.4
Workless household	60	2.1
No disability in family	20	9.7
One or more disabled children, no disabled adults	20	0.9
No disabled children, one or more disabled adults	33	1.8
One or more disabled children, one or more disabled adults	24	0.5
White	19	11.1
Mixed	26	0.1
Asian or Asian British	44	0.9
of which		
Indian	26	0.3
Pakistani or Bangladeshi	58	0.5
Black or Black British	33	0.5
Chinese or Other	31	0.2
All children	22	12.8

Figures may not add up because of rounding.

Source: Households Below Average Income (Department for Work and Pensions)

In 2005/06, children were most at risk of living in poverty if they lived with a lone parent, if the household was workless, if adult members of the household were disabled or if they were from Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Black ethnic groups (Table 13).

In the UK in 2005/06, children in Pakistani or Bangladeshi households were twice as likely to be living in poverty than average (58 per cent compared with 22 per cent). The risk of living in poverty is higher for children in families including a disabled adult and no disabled child (33 per cent) or a disabled adult and a disabled child (24 per cent) compared with families including no one with a disability or no adult with a disability (both 20 per cent).

4 Health

Overall trends

Average life expectancies in the UK at birth have increased steadily over the last century. In 1901, males born in the UK could expect to live for around 45 years and females for around 49 years compared with 77 years for men and 81 years for women in 2006.[20]

In 2006, 91 per cent of males and 89 per cent of females of all ages in Great Britain reported 'fairly good' or 'good' health.[14]

In 2006, less than a third of adults in England (28 per cent of men and 32 per cent of women) consumed the recommended daily intake of five or more portions of fruit and vegetables per day but this was an increase from 22 per cent for men and 25 per cent for women in 2001.[21]

The proportion of adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain who smoked cigarettes has fallen from 46 per cent in 1974 to 22 per cent in 2006.[14]

Infant mortality rates in England and Wales have fallen from 60 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1930 to 5 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006.[22]

On average we are living longer in the UK and infant mortality rates in England and Wales have fallen from 60 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1930 to 5 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006.

Variations

There is increasing life expectancy at birth in the UK but there was no significant change in the number of years spent in poor health between 2001 and 2004 (Table 14).

In 2004–06, the UK local area with the highest male and female life expectancy at birth was Kensington and Chelsea (83.1 years and 87.2 years respectively) and the lowest was Glasgow City (70.5 years for males and 77.0 years for females).[20] A recent report on health inequalities in England concludes that while there is improvement in life expectancy across social groups, there is no narrowing of the inequality gap between the most disadvantaged areas and the national averages.[23]

Some ethnic groups reported higher rates of poor health than average in Census 2001 (Figure 5). After age standardisation, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in England and Wales reported the highest rates of 'not good health' in 2001 (around 17 per cent and 16 per cent respectively) and Chinese men reported the lowest rates of 'not good health' (around 6 per cent) which matches very closely the relative proportions reporting limiting long-standing illness or disability shown in Figure 2. Women reported higher rates of 'not good health' than men in all Asian and Black groups.

Factors indicative of healthy lifestyles vary significantly between groups.

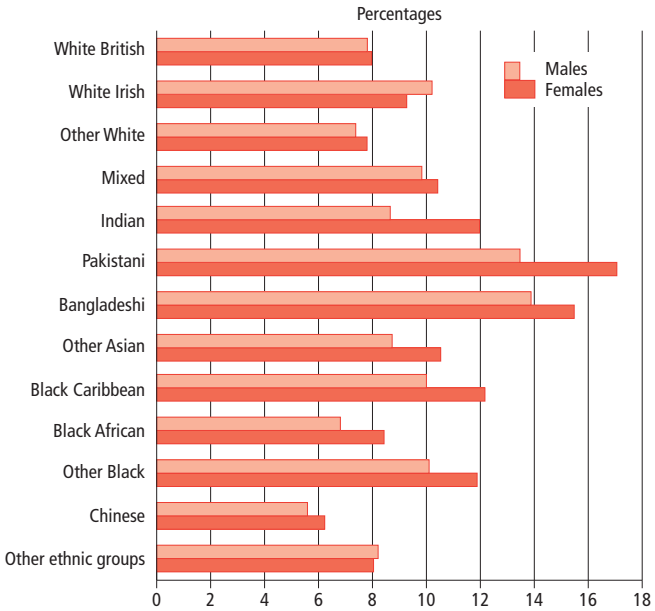
The prevalence of smoking among people in routine and manual occupation households is nearly twice that of people in managerial and professional households (Table 15).

Table 14 **Life expectancies at birth and years spent in poor health by gender, UK, 2001 and 2004**

	2001	2004
Life expectancy at birth (males)	75.7	76.6
Life expectancy at birth (females)	80.4	81.0
Years spent in poor health from birth (males)	8.9*	8.7*
Years spent in poor health from birth (females)	10.5*	10.7*

*Source: ONS and Government Actuary Department. *Changes over time in years spent in poor health from birth for males and females are not statistically significant*

Figure 5 **Age-standardised 'not good' health rates by ethnic group and gender, England & Wales, 2001**



Source: Census 2001 – England and Wales (ONS)

After age standardisation, Pakistani and Bangladeshi men and women in England and Wales reported the highest rates of 'not good health' in 2001.

Table 15 **Smoking prevalence by socio-economic group, GB, 2006**

Percentages

	Routine and manual occupation households	Managerial and professional households
Men	32	17
Women	28	14

Source: General Household Longitudinal Study (ONS)

In 2006, there was also variation by socio-economic status in the proportion of men who consumed more than the recommended levels of alcohol on at least one day in the week before interview with 44 per cent of men in managerial and professional occupation households doing so compared with 35 per cent of men in routine and manual occupation households. Women in households in which the household reference person was from managerial and professional groups were also most likely to exceed the recommended limits with 40 per cent having done so, compared with 26 per cent of women in the semi-routine and routine groups.[14,15] In general, the higher the level of gross weekly household income, the more likely men and women were to exceed the recommended amounts (Table 16).

In 2005/6, the middle fifth of the UK population by income consumed more processed potatoes and potato products per person per week than any other quintile group (around 293 g compared with 210 g for top fifth) and less fresh fruit and vegetables not including potatoes (around 1589 g compared with 1800 g for top fifth).[17]

Diets that are high in fats and low in fresh fruit and vegetables can contribute to a person being overweight or obese.

Table 16 **Percentage drinking more than the recommended daily amounts by gross weekly income, GB, 2006**

	£200 or less	Over £1,000
Men	32	51
Women	20	47

Source: General Household Longitudinal Study (ONS)

Table 17 **Suicide rates in England and Wales from 1999–2003 per 100,000**

	Most deprived areas	Least deprived areas
Men aged 15 and over	25.4	11.9
Women aged 15 and over	7.4	3.6

Source: Death registrations (ONS, General Register Office for Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency)

Male obesity prevalence in 2006 in England was 24 per cent (compared with 13 per cent in 1993) and female obesity was 24 per cent (compared with 16 per cent in 1993).[21]

Mental health issues and suicides vary by age, ethnicity and deprivation.

One in five people in mental institutions in England and Wales are from ethnic minority groups compared with around one in ten in the wider population.[24]

Suicide rates in the most deprived areas in England and Wales from 1999 to 2003 were more than double those in the least deprived areas (Table 17).

Suicide rates in the most deprived areas in England and Wales from 1999 to 2003 were more than double those in the least deprived areas and individuals from ethnic minority groups were twice as likely to be in mental institutions in comparison with other groups.

Average infant mortality rate in England and Wales for 2005 was 5 per 1,000 live births. The mortality rate for married parents was 2.7 infants per 1,000 live births for infants with fathers in the large employers and managerial occupations. The mortality rate for infants with unmarried parents and fathers in semi-routine occupations was 6.8 per 1,000 live births (Table 18 overleaf).

In 2005, babies with fathers in semi-routine occupations were more than twice as likely to die in the first year of life compared with babies with fathers in managerial occupations. The prevalence of mental health disorders among children in deprived areas in Great Britain in 2004 was more than twice that in wealthy areas.

Table 18 **Infant mortality by socio-economic group, England and Wales, 2005**

Rates per 1,000 live births

	Births inside marriage	Births outside marriage[a]
Large employers and higher managerial occupations	2.7	3.1
Higher professional occupations	3.8	3.6
Lower managerial and professional occupations	3.4	3.9
Intermediate occupations	5.0	5.4
Small employers and own account workers	3.9	4.3
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	3.4	4.3
Semi-routine occupations	6.1	6.8
Routine occupations	5.8	6.2
All occupations	4.3	5.5

(a) Births outside marriage but jointly registered by both parents.

Source: Health Statistics Quarterly 32. Report: Infant and perinatal mortality by social and biological factors, 2005 (ONS)

Table 19 **Prevalence of mental disorders among children by gender and ACORN[a] classification, GB, 2004**

Percentages

	Boys	Girls
Hard pressed	17	12
Moderate means	14	9
Comfortably off	10	6
Urban prosperity	9	6
Wealthy achievers	7	5

(a) A Classification of Residential Neighbourhood (ACORN) is a classification combining geographical and demographic characteristics from Census to distinguish different types of people in different areas of Great Britain. The analysis shown here uses the five highest level ACORN categories. Further information on ACORN can be found at *www.caci.co.uk/acorn/*

Source: Mental Health of Children and Young People Survey (ONS)

The prevalence of mental health disorders among children aged 5 to 16 in 2004 was twice as high in 'hard pressed' areas compared with 'wealthy' areas (Table 19).

5 Education and skills

Overall trends

The proportion of three and four-year-olds enrolled in schools in the UK rose from 21 per cent in 1970/71 to 64 per cent in 2006/07, although this is slightly down from a peak of 65 per cent in 2003/04.[25]

An increasing number of pupils in the UK are achieving five or more good GCSEs or equivalent (59 per cent in 2007 compared with 45 per cent in 1996).[25]

Permanent exclusion rates are decreasing. In 2005/06, there were around 9,600 permanent exclusions from school of children in England and Wales compared with 12,800 in 1997/98.[25]

In 2007, 69 per cent of all working age people in the UK had a qualification at level 2 or above which is an increase of 5 percentage points since 2001.[26] The proportion of all working age people in the UK with no qualifications has fallen from 17 per cent in 2001 to 13 per cent in 2007.

An increasing number of pupils in the UK are achieving five or more good GCSEs or equivalent (59 per cent in 2007 compared with 45 per cent in 1996) and 69 per cent of all working age people in the UK had a qualification at level 2 or above. The proportion of all working age people in the UK with no qualifications fell from 17 per cent in 2001 to 13 per cent in 2007.

Variations

For pre-school children, analysis from the *Effectiveness of Pre-school and Primary Education project* suggests that a basket of indicators identified with a strong Home Learning Environment (HLE) have more effect on a child's development than parental income, qualifications or ethnicity but boys and children from some ethnic groups are more likely to experience poorer HLE's.[27]

Of the 9.8 million pupils attending compulsory age schooling in the UK in 2006/07, 270,600 (2.8 per cent) had statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Coordinated Support Plans in Scotland.[25]

Girls continue to outperform boys at all stages of education. In 2006, 64 per cent of girls in their last year of education in the UK achieved five or more good GCSEs or equivalent compared with 54 per cent of boys. This is rise from 51 per cent for girls and 41 per cent for boys in 1996.

In England, a bigger proportion of pupils from all ethnic groups achieved five or more good GCSEs or equivalent in 2007 compared with 2003, with the exceptions of pupils from Traveller of Irish Heritage groups (42 per cent to 16 per cent) and Gypsy/Roma groups (23 per cent to 14 per cent) (Table 20 overleaf), although it should be noted that very small numbers of pupils were recorded in these two categories.

Table 20 **Pupils achieving 5 or more A*–C GCSEs or equivalents by ethnic group, England**

Percentages

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
White	51	52	55	58	60
White British	51	52	55	58	60
Irish	60	58	63	61	63
Traveller of Irish Heritage	42	30	23	19	16
Gypsy / Roma	23	14	15	10	14
Any other White background	52	55	59	60	59
Mixed	49	50	55	56	58
White and Black Caribbean	40	40	44	47	49
White and Black African	48	47	56	57	58
White and Asian	65	66	67	69	70
Any other mixed background	52	52	59	59	61
Asian	53	55	59	61	63
Indian	65	67	70	72	74
Pakistani	42	45	48	51	53
Bangladeshi	46	48	53	57	58
Any other Asian background	59	60	64	65	64
Black	36	39	45	48	53
Black Caribbean	33	36	42	45	49
Black African	41	43	48	51	56
Any other Black background	34	36	42	47	50
Chinese	75	74	81	80	83
Any other ethnic group	46	48	54	56	57
Unclassified	47	47	50	52	52
All Pupils	51	52	55	57	59

Source: Department of Children, Schools and Families

In 2007, Chinese pupils were most likely to achieve five or more good GCSEs or equivalent (83 per cent) and pupils from Black ethnic groups least likely (53 per cent). For children receiving free school meals, which is often used as a proxy for deprivation, 36 per cent achieved five good GCSEs or equivalent in 2007 compared with 63 per cent of other children.[25]

In England in 2006/07, unauthorised absences were more likely for children eligible for free school meals compared with the rest of pupils, with 2 per cent unauthorised half-days recorded for children eligible for free school meals compared with 1 per cent of other pupils.[28]

For 2005/06, the estimated rates suggest that pupils from Gypsy/Roma, Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean groups were among the most likely to be permanently excluded from schools in England (although it should be noted that a very small number of pupils were recorded in the Gypsy/Roma category). These were more than three times the rate for White pupils (44, 41 and 36 pupils per 10,000 respectively compared with 13 pupils per 10,000 for White pupils).[29]

In England, 59 per cent of pupils achieved 5 or more good GCSEs or equivalent in 2007 with Chinese pupils most likely to achieve five or more good GCSEs or equivalent and pupils from Black ethnic groups least likely to. GCSE or equivalent attainment is rising for all groups with the exception of pupils from Travellers of Irish Heritage groups and Gypsy/Roma groups (although there are a very small number of pupils in these categories).

For 16 to 18 year olds in England, 10 per cent were not in employment, education or training (NEET) at the end of 2006.[24] Of 19 year olds in England and Wales, those with a 'disability or health problem' were nearly three times as likely to be NEET than those without (23 per cent compared with 8 per cent).[25,30]

In 2007, 47 per cent of those in the UK without qualifications were in employment compared with 80 per cent of those qualified to level 2 and above.[12]

In 2007, there were slightly more working age men in the UK qualified to level 2 and above than women (70 per cent compared with 68 per cent). The gap has narrowed from 68 per cent of men compared with 59 per cent of women in 2001 and this reflects the higher attainment of young women compared with young men. Working age people from Chinese groups (72 per cent) and White groups (70 per cent) were the most likely to be qualified at this level or above in 2007 and working age people from Asian or Asian British groups were the least likely to be. Working age people from Asian or Asian British groups were also more likely to have no qualifications than the average for all groups, with 21 per cent compared with 13 per cent. For non-disabled adults in the UK, 11 per cent had no qualifications compared with 25 per cent of disabled adults.[26]

For children receiving free school meals, 36 per cent achieved five good GCSEs in 2007 compared with 63 per cent of other children. Nineteen year olds in England and Wales with a disability or health problem were nearly three times as likely to be Not in Employment, Education or Training than others.

In 2007, working age people in the UK from Asian or Asian British were more likely than average to have no qualifications (21 per cent compared with 13 per cent). Disabled adults in the UK were more likely to have no qualifications (25 per cent) than non-disabled adults (11 per cent).

6 Employment and caring

Overall trends

UK employment rates have risen over the last ten years from around 73 per cent in 1997 to 75 per cent in 2007[12]. Seventy per cent of working age women worked in 2007, up from 69 per cent in 1997. More men were working than women in 2007 (79 per cent) up from 77 per cent in 1997.

Carers also make an important contribution to the economy. The 2001 Census was the first to collect information on the provision of unpaid care in the population. In 2001 there were approximately 5.5 million adults aged 19 and over in Great Britain providing unpaid care, constituting approximately 13 per cent of the population living in private households.

Working age employment rates in the UK have risen from 73 per cent in 1997 to 75 per cent in 2007.

Variations

Despite convergence over the last 35 years in employment rates, women continue to be more likely to work part-time and have lower median earnings. While the gender pay gap has fallen year on year in the recent past, reducing by nearly 25 per cent in the last ten years, the pay gap between men and women's median earnings is still 13 per cent.[31] The patterns of occupations remain quite different by gender with only 11 per cent of women employed as managers (compared with 19 per cent of men) in 2007.[12] It has been suggested that there may be as much as a 40 per cent penalty in employment for mothers of young children, where employment penalty is a measure of the disadvantage that groups face in the labour market.[6]

In 2007, there were around 3 million workless working age households in the UK from a total of 18.8 million working age households. The proportion of working age people in workless households was highest for the Chinese ethnic group (25 per cent) and lowest for the Indian ethnic group (10 per cent) with the average around 12 per cent (Table 21).

Table 21 **Proportion of working age people from different ethnic groups in workless households, UK, 2007**

	Per cent[1]	Thousands
White	11	3,364
All other ethnic groups	19	655
Mixed	21	53
Asian	16	256
Indian	10	70
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	21	143
Other Asian	16	42
Black	21	167
Black Caribbean	20	68
Black African	23	93
Other Black	22	5
Chinese	25	46
Other	23	134
Total[2]	12	4,214

1. Percentages are based on working-age people in households with known economic activity status.
2. Total includes people with unknown ethnic origin

Source: Labour Force Survey (ONS)

Fifty per cent of working age disabled people in the UK were in work in 2007, compared with 80 per cent of non-disabled people. Disabled people made up around one eighth of all working age people in employment. There was variation according to type of disability with only 26 per cent of those with depression in employment compared with 63 per cent of those who have difficulty in hearing.[12]

In Great Britain in April 2001, 10 per cent of White British adults and adults from Indian and White Irish backgrounds were providing informal care to relatives, friends and neighbours, compared with less than 4 per cent for people

In 2007, there were around 3 million workless working age households in the UK out of 18.8 million total working age households. The proportion of working age people in workless households was highest for the Chinese ethnic group (25 per cent) and lowest for the Indian ethnic group (10 per cent) with the average around 12 per cent. Around half of disabled people are in work, representing an eighth of all working age people in employment, although only around a quarter of people suffering from depression were working.

In 2001, children from Indian. Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds were most likely to be carers (2 per cent) compared with 1 per cent of White British children.

from Mixed and Black African groups, probably reflecting the older age structures of White and Indian groups compared with others.[32]

In 2001, 109,000 children under the age of 16 in Great Britain were providing some informal care.[32] Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani children were the most likely to be carers; around 1.5 per cent of each group. For Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups this may reflect the higher rates of poor health among adults from these groups. Among White British children, 0.9 per cent were providing care. Black African children were least likely to be providing care at 0.7 per cent.

7 Looking to the future

This article has described overall trends in society and then experiences of different groups. This complements other reports which provide more detail on some aspects of equality.[33] We plan to produce a regular series of articles which provide an overview of the latest statistics on aspects of society.

There are considerable improvements which can and should be made in the way equality is measured. The report from the Review of Equality Data made 22 recommendations for improvements and work is well underway to take these forward, steered by a cross-government group.[7]

In the medium term, we anticipate improvements in the information collected on sexual identity as a result of a project underway in ONS which will lead to the development of a question or set of questions which can be used in social surveys and for equality monitoring.

In addition, agreement on a family of questions on disability for social surveys and equality monitoring and the new Disability Survey will considerably aid the understanding of outcomes for disabled people.

There is also more to be done to make clearer distinctions between the different dimensions of religious diversity – affiliation, practice and belief – and to better understand the extent and significance of each.

Both the Millenium Cohort Study and the English Longitudinal Study are due to report over the next year or so with the third wave of longitudinal data and these are likely to prove invaluable alongside other longitudinal surveys and cohort studies for improving our understanding of the dynamics of inequality.

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