

Lifestyles and social participation

- A digital television service was received by 57 per cent of households with a television in Great Britain in May 2005. This was up from 43 per cent in April 2003. (Table 13.2)
- In Great Britain, the proportion of households with a broadband connection rose from 8 per cent to 31 per cent between April 2003 and July 2005. (Figure 13.3)
- Nearly nine in ten adult viewers in the United Kingdom watched television every day of the week in 2003, with nearly a quarter of viewers watching it for two to three hours a day. (Page 192)
- The most borrowed authors from libraries in the UK were Danielle Steel (contemporary adult fiction), Jacqueline Wilson (contemporary children's) and JRR Tolkien (classic) between July 2003 and June 2004. (Page 194)
- UK residents made a record 42.9 million holiday trips abroad in 2004, an increase from 6.7 million in 1971; Spain was the most popular destination, followed by France. (Figure 13.13)
- Just under two thirds of adults in the UK gave money to charity in 2003. The average monthly donation was £12.32. (Page 199)

People engage in many different activities in their spare time. Some visit places of entertainment and cultural activity, such as the theatre and museums, or go away on holidays. Other activities involve interaction with technology, such as watching television or listening to the radio, and more recently the Internet. Although modern technology seems ever present, traditional forms of leisure, such as reading books or newspapers, remain popular. Many individuals participate in sports or exercise in their leisure time or use their free time for purposes other than entertainment, such as helping other people, participating in politics, or religious worship.

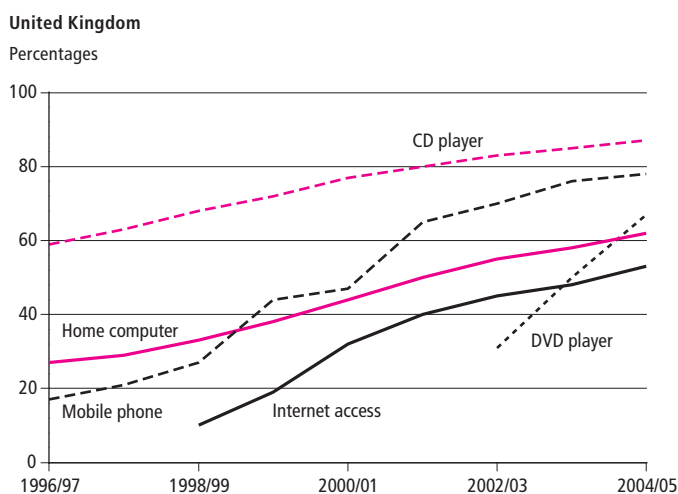
Media and use of information technology

A period of technological change has brought about the widening application of information and communication technology (ICT). Home ownership of CD players, DVD players, computers, Internet access, and mobile phones has risen substantially over the last five or six years (Figure 13.1).

Ownership of some products has grown more than others. The proportion of UK households with a DVD player has risen from 31 per cent in 2002/03 to 67 per cent in 2004/05, an average increase of 18 percentage points a year. Growth in ownership of CD players has occurred more slowly. In 1996/97, 59 per cent of households had a CD player compared with 87 per cent in 2004/05, an average increase of 3 percentage points a year. The spread of Internet connections and mobile phone ownership slowed in the last three years after a sharp rise in the late 1990s. Between 1998/99 and 2002/03 the percentage of households that had an Internet connection and a mobile phone grew, on average, 9 percentage points and 11 percentage points a year respectively. Between 2002/03 and 2004/05, the annual increase in home Internet connection and mobile phone ownership was 4 percentage points for both technologies.

There has been a sharp rise in the number of homes that receive a digital television service. The proportion of households with a television that did so in Great Britain rose from 43 per cent in April 2003 to 57 per cent in May 2005 (Table 13.2). Most of this increase came from greater access to digital terrestrial television, which rose from 6 per cent to 19 per cent of households. Satellite is the most widely used means to receive digital television. In May 2005, 32 per cent of households with a television had access to a satellite service, an increase of 3 percentage points since April 2003. The percentage receiving digital cable services has remained approximately the same. The highest growth in household digital television ownership occurred between the months of October and February, rising by 7 percentage points between October 2002 and February 2003, 5 percentage points

Figure 13.1
Households with selected durable goods¹



¹ Based on weighted data. Data for 1998/99 onwards include children's expenditure.

Source: Family Expenditure Survey and Expenditure and Food Survey, Office for National Statistics

Table 13.2
Household television service:¹ by type

Great Britain	Percentages		
	April 2003	April 2004	May 2005
Analogue terrestrial	52	46	36
Analogue cable	5	5	6
Digital terrestrial	6	12	19
Digital cable	7	7	6
Satellite	29	30	32
Any digital service	43	49	57

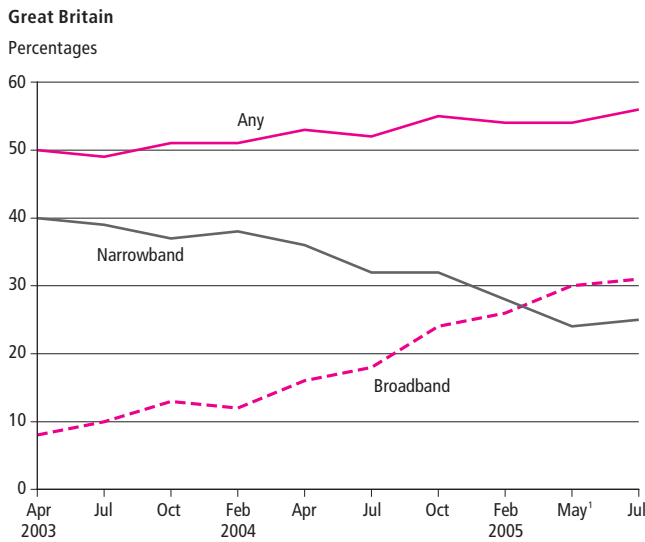
¹ See Appendix, Part 13: Television service.

Source: Omnibus Survey, Office for National Statistics

between October 2003 and February 2004, and 8 percentage points between October 2004 and February 2005. Together, these three periods accounted for almost three quarters of the increase in household digital television use over the period between October 2002 and February 2005.

Home broadband connections have almost quadrupled since 2003. The proportion of households in Great Britain with a broadband connection rose from 8 per cent to 31 per cent between April 2003 and July 2005 (Figure 13.3). Over the same period, the percentage of households with a dial-up (or narrow band) connection fell from 40 per cent to 25 per cent. Overall, households with an Internet connection of any type

Figure 13.3
Household Internet connection: by type



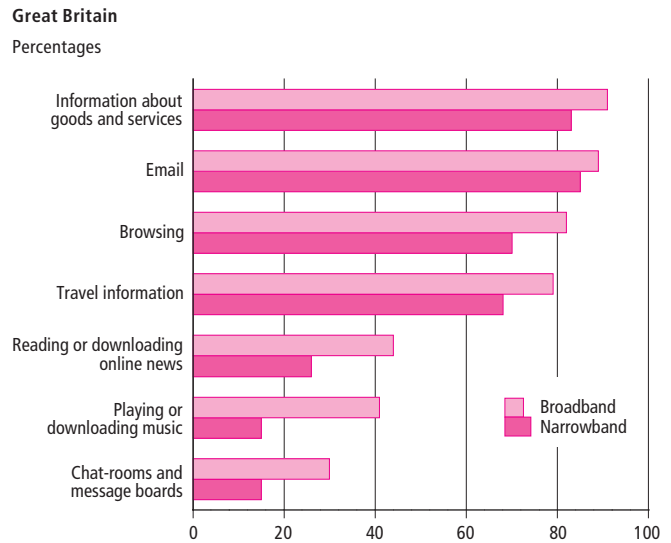
¹ From 2005 Internet access data was collected in May instead of April.
Source: Omnibus Survey, Office for National Statistics

have increased, from 50 per cent to 56 per cent of all households. In July 2005 broadband connections accounted for over half of household Internet connections.

When people go online, there are many activities they can engage in, of which the most popular in February 2005 were email and looking for information about goods and services (both 85 per cent) and general browsing (72 per cent). Broadband Internet users take part in a wider variety of online activities than users with a dial-up connection, although for many online activities the difference is quite small (Figure 13.4). Dial-up users accessed email at slightly lower levels (85 per cent) than broadband users (89 per cent). A smaller proportion of dial-up users (83 per cent) looked online for goods and services than broadband users (91 per cent). Differences in participation between broadband and dial-up users were greater for activities that can involve downloading larger material. Fewer dial-up users (15 per cent) downloaded or played music online compared with broadband users (41 per cent). Similarly, 26 per cent of dial-up users downloaded or read news online, compared with 44 per cent of broadband users.

Although the proportion of homes with an Internet connection has grown, in 2004/05 almost half of households in the United Kingdom did not have one. Higher income households are more likely to have a home Internet connection than lower income households (Figure 13.5). Among households in the top 20 per cent for income (or quintile group – see analysing income distribution box on page 76), 87 per cent had an Internet connection. This compared with 18 per cent of

Figure 13.4
Selected online activities: by home connection, February 2005

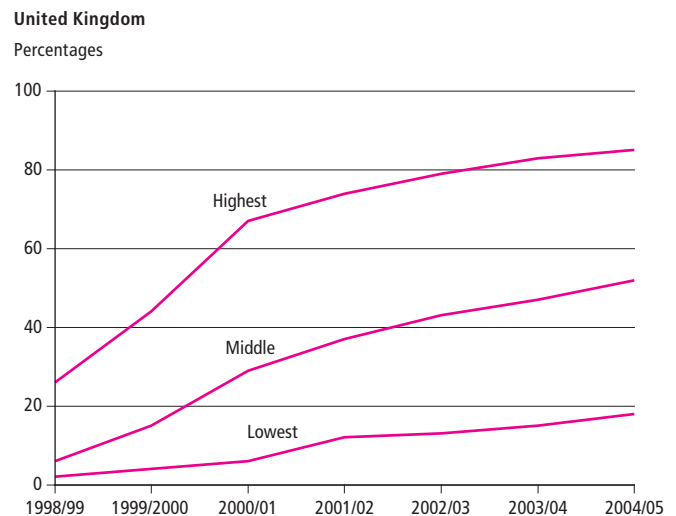


Source: Omnibus Survey, Office for National Statistics

households in the lowest quintile, a difference of 69 percentage points. The gap between the highest and lowest quintiles has widened since 1998/99 when it was 24 percentage points.

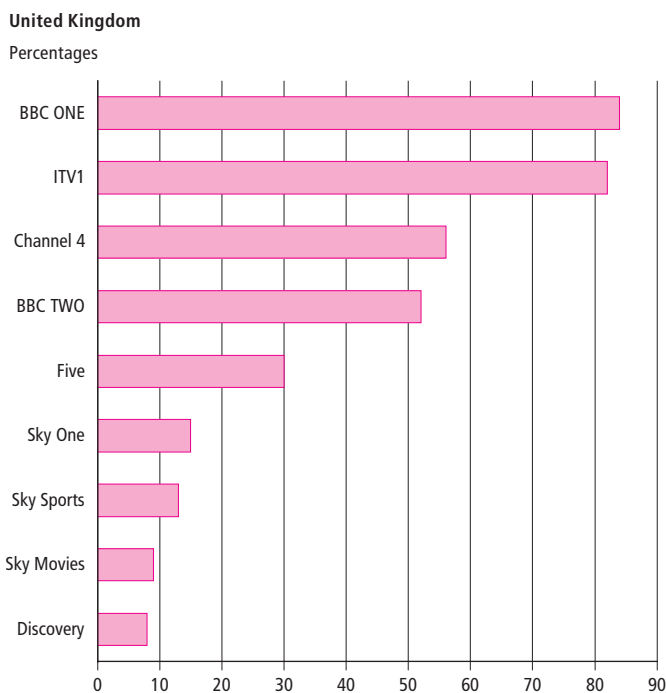
Younger people are more likely to go online. Of people aged between 16 and 24 in Great Britain, 89 per cent were Internet users (defined as having gone online in the three months prior to interview) in 2004/05. This compared with 16 per cent of those aged 65 and over. Although the rates of Internet use have been

Figure 13.5
Home internet connection: by household income quintile group



Source: Family Expenditure Survey and Expenditure and Food Survey, Office for National Statistics

Figure 13.6
Most frequently viewed TV channels,¹ 2003



¹ 'Other', 'None of these' and 'Don't know' are not shown.

Source: *The Public's View*, Ofcom

growing among all age groups, the gap in Internet use between younger and older adults has widened. Between 2001/02 and 2004/05 Internet use grew by around 15 percentage points among all age groups under 65 years old. For those aged 65 and over, Internet use rose by 7 percentage points.

Internet security has become a widespread concern for people who go online. In 2004/05, 46 per cent of Internet users in Great Britain said they had received too many junk emails, 24 per cent had received emails they considered obscene or offensive, and 36 per cent had received a computer virus. Only a small proportion of Internet users (3 per cent) suffered either a financial problem, such as fraudulent card use, or were aware of the unauthorised use of personal information by another person as a result of going online.

Television has traditionally played an important part in people's leisure time occupying around half of that time. According to the Broadcasters Audience Research Board (BARB) television viewing in the United Kingdom has increased slightly over the past decade from 25.6 hours per household per week in 1993 to 26.1 hours in 2003. Nearly nine in ten adults in the United Kingdom watched television every day of the week in 2003 according to Ofcom's *The Public's View* survey, with nearly a quarter of viewers watching it for two to three hours a day and

one in ten viewing for over seven hours. Over half of adults stated that they have one or two sets at home, while nearly one in ten said that they have five or more.

The top five channels watched most often by adults in 2003 in the United Kingdom were the major terrestrial channels, BBC ONE, ITV1, Channel 4, BBC TWO and Five (Figure 13.6). BBC ONE was the most watched channel with 84 per cent of adult viewers stating they watched it most often compared with the most popular digital only channel, Sky One, which was watched by 15 per cent of viewers. The annual share of viewers for each channel has changed over the last 20 years as more channels become available. According to BARB, 48 per cent of viewing was to ITV1 (including GMTV) and 36 per cent of viewing was to BBC ONE in 1984. The remaining share of viewing was to BBC TWO (11 per cent) and Channel 4 (4 per cent) as there were no other channels available. With the introduction of digital and cable channels in the mid-1990s there has been a gradual shift away from the traditional channels. By 2004 the annual share of viewing to BBC ONE and ITV1 (including GMTV) had dropped to 25 per cent and 23 per cent respectively. The other terrestrial channels (BBC TWO, Channel 4 and Five) had a viewing share of 27 per cent between them. The digital or cable channels had the remaining 26 per cent share.

According to Ofcom's *The Public's View* survey, nearly three quarters of adults in the United Kingdom in 2003 stated that television was their main source of national news. This was followed by 13 per cent stating that newspapers were their main source of national news and 10 per cent the radio. Nearly four out of five people (78 per cent) stated that television was their main source of world news followed by newspapers (10 per cent) and radio (7 per cent).

Radio is a secondary medium; it is listened to while people do other things such as commuting or working. According to a research study conducted by MORI on behalf of Ofcom in 2004, nearly six in ten people in the United Kingdom listened to the radio while getting up or having breakfast on weekdays. Other most popular times for listening to the radio on weekdays were travelling in the car (56 per cent) and travelling to and from work (46 per cent and 43 per cent respectively).

According to the Radio Joint Audience Research Limited (RAJAR), nine in ten people in the United Kingdom listened to a radio station for at least five minutes during an average week between June and September 2005. BBC Radio 2 was the most popular station, followed by BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio 1 (Table 13.7). The BBC attracted just over half the audience share (55 per cent), while commercial radio stations together had an audience share of 44 per cent.

Table 13.7

Share of radio listening: by station, 2005¹

United Kingdom	Percentages
All aged 15 and over	
BBC	
BBC Radio 1	9.4
BBC Radio 2	15.6
BBC Radio 3	1.2
BBC Radio 4	11.5
BBC Radio Five Live	4.6
BBC World Service	0.7
1Xtra from the BBC	0.3
BBC 7	0.3
BBC Asian Network UK	0.3
FIVE LIVE SPORTS EXTRA	0.1
BBC 6Music	0.1
BBC local/regional	10.7
All BBC	54.6
Commercial	
Classic FM	4.1
Total Virgin Radio (AM/FM)	1.5
talkSPORT (Talk Radio)	1.8
All national commercial	10.5
All local commercial	33.5
All commercial	43.5
Other listening²	1.9
All radio stations (=100%) (hours listened)	1,071,871

1 Quarter 3 fieldwork carried out between 27 June and 18 September.

2 Other listening includes non-subscribers to RAJAR, including student/hospital stations, foreign and pirate stations.

Source: RAJAR/IPSOS

Digital radio is growing in popularity as new stations launch and listening on new devices (such as the Internet) grows. At the end of 2004 there were 210 stations broadcasting on Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB), 85 on digital satellite television, 30 on digital terrestrial television and thousands available over the Internet. According to RAJAR in June 2005, 19 per cent of adults in the United Kingdom stated that they had listened to the radio online, compared with 14 per cent in the same period two years earlier. Just under a third (32 per cent) of adults had listened to the radio through a digital television in June 2005, compared with 20 per cent in June 2003.

Table 13.8

Readership of national daily newspapers: by sex, 2004–2005¹

Great Britain	Percentages		
	Men	Women	All aged 15 and over
The Sun	20	14	17
Daily Mirror/Record	13	11	12
Daily Mail	11	12	11
Daily Telegraph	5	4	5
Daily Express	5	4	4
Daily Star	6	2	4
The Times	4	3	4
The Guardian	3	2	2
The Independent	2	1	1
Financial Times	1	1	1
Any national daily newspaper	70	54	62

1 Data are for the period July 2004 to June 2005.

Source: National Readership Survey Limited

Almost two thirds of all people aged 15 and over in Great Britain read a national daily newspaper in the year to June 2005 (Table 13.8). *The Sun* was the most read paper with nearly one in five people reading it, followed by the *Daily Mail*. Men tended to read newspapers more than women; however the *Daily Mail* had a slightly larger proportion of women readers. The newspaper that had the greatest difference in readership between men and women was *The Sun* (20 per cent and 14 per cent respectively). The national daily newspapers with the smallest readerships were *The Independent* and the *Financial Times* (both had 1 per cent readership share). A larger proportion of people read Sunday newspapers compared with daily national papers (75 per cent). *The News of the World* was the most read Sunday newspaper with 19 per cent of people aged 15 and over reading it, followed by *The Mail on Sunday* (14 per cent).

Television guides such as *What's on TV* and the *Radio Times* made up six of the top ten most-read general weekly magazines. *Private Eye* was the most read fortnightly magazine in 2004–2005. The top weekly women's magazine was *Take a Break*, which was read by 12 per cent of women, followed by *OK!* and *Hello!* (8 per cent and 7 per cent of women respectively). The top three most-read women's monthly magazines were all supermarket titles; *Asda Magazine* was read by 16 per cent of women and *Sainsbury Magazine* and

Somerfield Magazine, both read by 8 per cent of women, followed by *Cosmopolitan* (7 per cent of women) and *Good Housekeeping* (5 per cent of women). *FHM* was the most read monthly men's periodical with just over one in ten males aged over 15 reading it, the majority being in the 15 to 44 age group.

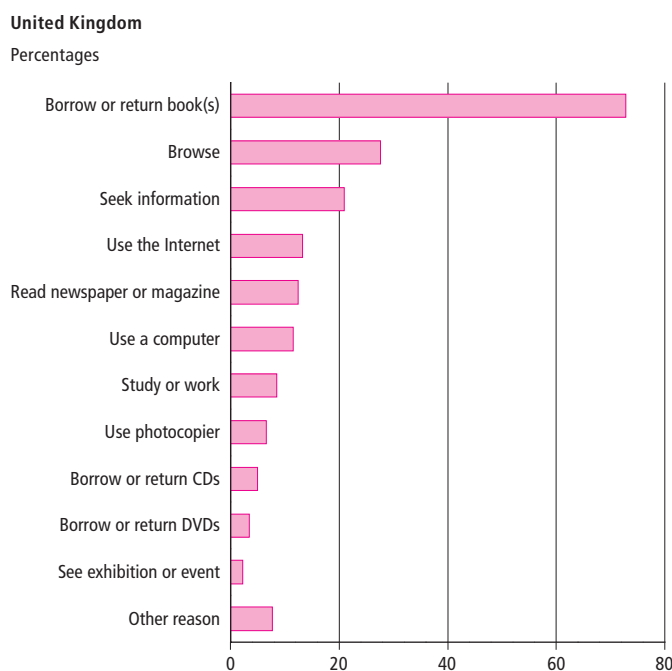
Although the number of visits made to public libraries in the United Kingdom in 2003/04 increased by 4.3 per cent over the previous year to 337 million, there has been a decline in book lending according to LISU Annual Library Statistics. In 2003/04, 341 million books were issued, a fall of 38 per cent since 1993/94. The proportion of children's books issued since 1993/94 has increased by 6 percentage points to 26 per cent of all books issued compared with adult fiction, which has declined by 6 percentage points to 49 per cent. In 2003 nearly half of adult library users were female and aged 55 and over. The most popular activity undertaken by library visitors was borrowing books (73 per cent), followed by browsing (28 per cent) and seeking information (21 per cent) (Figure 13.9). Using the Internet in libraries more than doubled between 2001 and 2003 (6 per cent to 13 per cent). In 1997/98, 12 per cent of libraries offered Internet services; this had risen to 96 per cent of libraries in 2002/03.

The most borrowed adult fiction books between July 2003 and June 2004 were *The King of Torts* by John Grisham and *Quentin's* by Maeve Binchy. The most borrowed children's books were *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by JK Rowling and *The Story of Tracy Beaker* by Jacqueline Wilson. Overall the most borrowed authors were Danielle Steel (contemporary adult fiction), Jacqueline Wilson (contemporary children's) and JRR Tolkien (classic).

Social and cultural activities

Nearly half of people in England who attended an arts or cultural event or venue in the 12 months before interview in 2003 visited a library. Nine out of ten people visiting a library did so at least twice in the previous year, and six out of ten people visited six or more times (Table 13.10). The most attended event was film, with almost nine out of ten film visitors going to the cinema or other film venues at least twice in the 12 months before interview. About three in five of those attending plays or drama (61 per cent), art, photography or sculpture exhibitions (59 per cent), and craft exhibitions (58 per cent) had done so more than once in the last 12 months. The main reasons given for attending at least one of the selected events were that people liked going to the specific event (36 per cent), they went to see a specific performer or event (19 per cent) or they went as a social event (18 per cent). The main reasons for not attending events were the difficulty of finding time (48 per cent) and cost (34 per cent).

Figure 13.9
Reasons for visiting a library,¹ 2003



¹ Percentages are of those who visited a library and do not add up to 100 per cent as respondents could give more than one answer.

Source: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

Overall younger people were more likely than older people to have gone to at least one arts event or cultural venue in the last 12 months. Over nine out of ten people aged 16 to 24 attended events compared with nearly five out of ten people aged 75 and over. People aged under 55 were most likely to have visited a cinema or other film venues, watched videos or electronic arts events or attended other live music events and carnivals in the 12 months before interview in 2003. People aged 55 to 64 were more likely than other age groups to have gone to musicals, craft exhibitions, classical music and opera.

The National Lottery which started in 1994 has funded around 185,000 social or cultural projects. Just over four in ten adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain participated in any of the National Lottery games every week in 2002 according to the National Lottery Commission. Levels of participation varied by age, with younger people aged 16 to 24 least likely to participate weekly in any of the National Lottery games (Table 13.11). Almost half (47 per cent) of people aged 16 to 24 had never played any National Lottery game compared with around a third (or less) of people aged between 25 and 64.

The most common reason people gave for not playing any National Lottery game was that the chances of winning are so small (65 per cent). Over a third (39 per cent) believed that gambling could be harmful; this was more common among

Table 13.10

Number of attendances at selected arts or cultural events in the last 12 months, 2003

England						Percentages
	Once	Twice	3 to 5	6 to 10	11 or more	All (=100%) (numbers)
Library	8	11	19	17	44	2,649
Film	14	19	32	20	15	3,354
Event connected with books or writing	43	23	20	8	6	494
Museum	26	28	29	11	5	2,208
Event including video or electronic art	57	23	12	3	4	409
Art, photography or sculpture exhibition	41	27	21	9	3	1,284
Play or drama	39	29	23	7	2	1,510
Musical	51	28	16	3	2	1,489
Culturally specific festival	61	24	13	1	2	474
Craft exhibition	42	26	23	7	1	1,134
Street arts or circus	66	22	8	3	1	652
Carnival	76	18	6	-	-	1,131

Source: Arts Council England

women (43 per cent) than men (34 per cent). Two in ten people (22 per cent) did not play the National Lottery because there were too many games to choose from. The National Lottery games were 'too expensive' for 17 per cent of people with the highest proportion (32 per cent) in the 16 to 24 age group.

The United Kingdom has almost 6,500 visitor attractions, including country parks and farms, historic properties, theme parks, zoos, gardens, museums and galleries, and places of worship. The top two visitor attractions that charged admission in England in 2004 were the British Airways London Eye, which had 3.7 million visitors, and the Tower of London, with

2.1 million visitors. The top visitor attractions that charged admission in Scotland in 2004 were Edinburgh Castle (1.2 million visitors) and Edinburgh Zoo (600,000 visitors), while in Wales it was Portmeirion (254,000 visitors) and Caernarfon Castle (202,000 visitors). The top attractions in Northern Ireland excluding country parks or gardens that charged admission were the Giants Causeway Visitor Centre (445,000 visitors) and the W5 interactive discovery centre (246,000 visitors).

Overall visits to free attractions in England rose by 3 per cent in the year to 2004, while visits to paid attractions remained stable. Museums and art galleries represent around a third of all attractions and recorded visits rose by 4 per cent in 2004,

Table 13.11

Participation in the National Lottery:¹ by age, 2002

Great Britain							Percentages
	16–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65 and over	All aged 16 and over
Every week	17	31	47	50	49	47	41
Two or three times a month	8	7	8	7	10	4	7
Once a month	10	9	5	5	3	5	6
Less than once a month	19	21	10	12	9	7	13
Never	47	32	30	27	30	37	33
All age 16 and over (=100%) (numbers)	275	379	381	331	260	398	2,024

¹ Includes Lotto, Thunderball, Hotpicks, Lotto extra and Instants.

Source: National Lottery Commission

Table 13.12**Annual change in visits to attractions: by type**

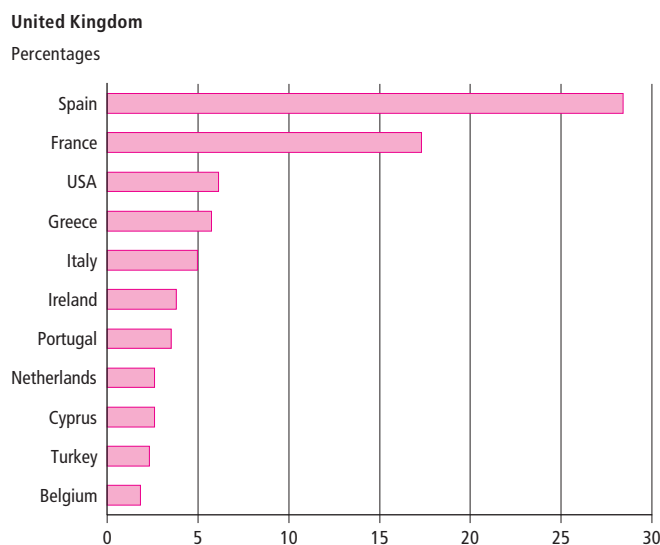
England	Percentages	
	2002 to 2003	2003 to 2004
Country parks	9	4
Museums/art galleries	1	4
Steam/heritage railways	3	3
Other historic properties	-2	3
Farms	13	2
Visitor/heritage centres	7	2
Wildlife attractions/zoos	1	1
Places of worship	-5	1
Historic houses/castles	4	-1
Leisure/theme parks	3	-1
Gardens	6	-6

Source: *Visit Britain, British Tourist Authority*

after remaining level between 2002 and 2003 (Table 13.12). Visits to country parks rose by 4 per cent and continued their recovery after their decline in 2001 following the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Visits to gardens fell by 6 per cent between 2003 and 2004; this was probably due to the unusually hot summer of 2003, which made visits to gardens very popular.

According to the 2002/03 Great Britain Day Visits Survey, eight out of ten adults had made a leisure day visit within the two weeks before interview. Half had taken a day trip to a town or city, while just over one in five had visited the countryside. Around one in ten people had visited the seaside and coast, or forests or woodland.

Residents of the United Kingdom made a record 42.9 million holiday trips abroad in 2004. Most holiday trips were taken between July and September, when more than twice as many were taken than during January to March. The number of holiday trips taken in 2004 increased by 17 per cent since 2000 and was a continuation of the rise in overseas holidays over the last three decades from 6.7 million in 1971. Nearly half (46 per cent) of the holiday trips abroad in 2004 were package holidays. Spain has been UK residents' favourite holiday destination since 1994. This continued in 2004 when Spain hosted 28 per cent of all holidays abroad, followed by France (17 per cent) (Figure 13.13). As in previous years, nine out of the ten most popular countries UK residents visited in 2004 were in Europe. The exception was the United States, which accounted for 6 per cent of all holidays (2.6 million visits). Trips to European countries were the shortest on

Figure 13.13**Holidays abroad by UK residents: by selected destination, 2004**

Source: *International Passenger Survey, Office for National Statistics*

average, because UK residents made more day trips here. A large proportion of day trips to France and Belgium were for shopping (48 per cent for both).

Sporting activities

In 2002 three quarters of adults in Great Britain had taken part in a sport, game or physical activity in the 12 months before interview and three fifths had done so in the previous four weeks. When walking is excluded these proportions fall to two thirds and two fifths respectively. Over the 12 month period before interview walking (46 per cent) was the most popular sports activity followed by swimming (35 per cent), keep fit/yoga including aerobics and dance exercise (22 per cent), cycling (19 per cent) and cue sports (17 per cent).

Men were more likely than women to have participated in at least one sport, game or physical activity, in either the 4 weeks or 12 months before interview. Four in ten men participated in an organised competition in the 12 months before interview, compared with one in seven women. Women participating in sports were more likely than men to have received tuition to improve their performance in a sport, game or physical activity in the 12 months before interview (45 per cent compared with 31 per cent).

There was a clear relationship between socio-economic status and participation rates in sports, games and physical activities in the four weeks before interview. In households where the household reference person was in a large employers and higher managerial occupation, 59 per cent of adults took part

Table 13.14

Top ten sports, games and physical activities¹ among adults: by socio-economic classification,² 2002/03

Great Britain											Percentages
	Large employers and higher managerial occupations	Higher professional occupations	Lower managerial and professional occupations	Intermediate occupations	Small employers and own account workers	Lower supervisory and technical occupations	Semi-routine occupations	Routine occupations	Never worked and long-term unemployed	All aged 16 and over	
Walking	46	48	43	34	31	29	29	25	22	35	
Swimming	24	20	17	13	12	11	9	8	8	14	
Keep fit/yoga	20	18	15	15	11	9	7	6	4	12	
Snooker/pool/billiards	9	9	10	10	9	9	8	7	6	9	
Cycling	12	13	11	7	8	7	6	7	8	9	
Weight training	11	9	7	7	5	4	4	3	3	6	
Running (jogging etc)	10	9	6	5	4	3	2	2	3	5	
Football	6	6	6	4	5	5	3	4	4	5	
Golf	10	9	7	4	5	4	2	2	0	5	
Tenpin bowls/skittles	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	1	3	

1 Includes activities in which more than one per cent of all adults participated in the four weeks before interview.
 2 Of the household reference person. See Appendix, Part 1: National Statistics Socio-economic Classification.

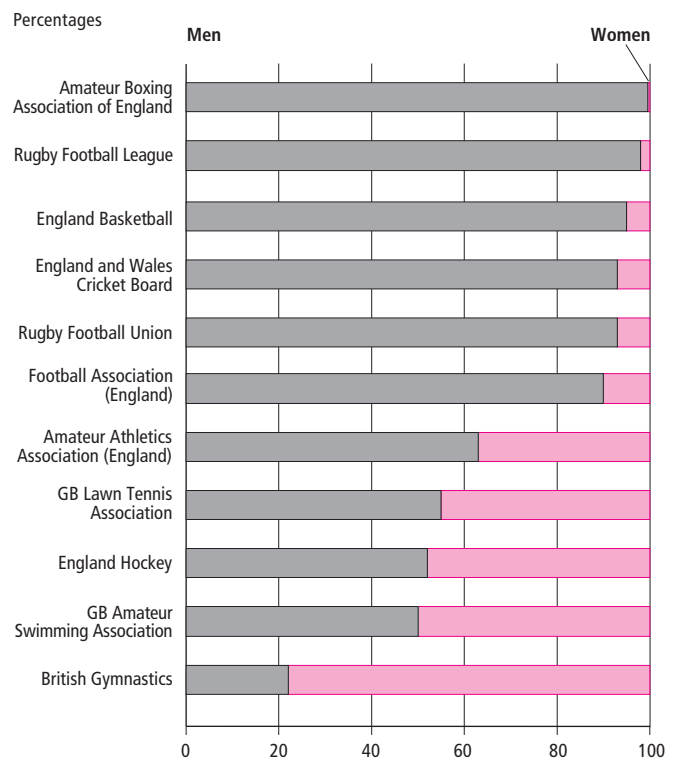
Source: General Household Survey, Office for National Statistics

in at least one activity (excluding walking) in the four weeks before interview. This compared with 30 per cent of adults in households headed by someone in a routine occupation. Walking was the most popular activity among all socio-economic classifications, but there were still large differences between the participation rates of adults within each occupation (Table 13.14). Those in large employers and higher managerial occupations were nearly twice as likely as those in routine occupations to go for a walk of two miles or more in the four weeks before interview (46 per cent compared with 25 per cent).

On average, women make up around one in four members of sporting organisations across England and Great Britain (Figure 13.15). There are large differences between organisations. Women dominate British gymnastics, accounting for 78 per cent of members, while less than 0.5 per cent of members in the Amateur Boxing Association are female. Football is the most popular female sport in England and in the 2002–03 season there were nearly 85,000 girls and women playing regular 11-a-side football affiliated to the Football Association; this was a rise from the 11,000 female players in the early 1990s. However men still dominate in the traditional male sports such as football, rugby, cricket, basketball and boxing where they make up over 90 per cent of the membership.

Figure 13.15

Membership of selected sporting organisations: by sex, 2004¹



1 Or most recent years.

Source: Governing bodies; Sport England

Political and social participation

The official turnout in the May 2005 General Election was 61 per cent, a small increase on the 59 per cent turnout recorded in 2001. The Labour Party retained control of Parliament after gaining 355 seats; they received 35 per cent of the vote, lower than any previously recorded share for a winning party. The Conservative Party won 198 seats and the Liberal Democrat Party, 62 seats. In 2005 turnout at the general election increased with age. Opinion poll data suggest that those aged 65 and over were twice as likely to vote as those under 25.

While there have been female Members of Parliament (MPs) since 1918, the numbers remained low for most of the last century. In 2005 a record 128 (20 per cent) of the 646 MPs elected were women; more than three quarters of these (98) represented the Labour Party. In the last three elections the number of female MPs has been around double the previous high of 60 in 1992 (Figure 13.16). The 15 minority ethnic MPs of both sexes elected in 2005 was also a record, but they still only represent 2 per cent of the total.

The Home Office Citizenship Survey (HOCS) records people's participation in civic activity in England and Wales. The survey found that the participation rates remained unchanged between 2001 and 2003. Nearly one in four (38 per cent) people had undertaken one form of civic participation in the previous 12 months, although only 3 per cent had done so at

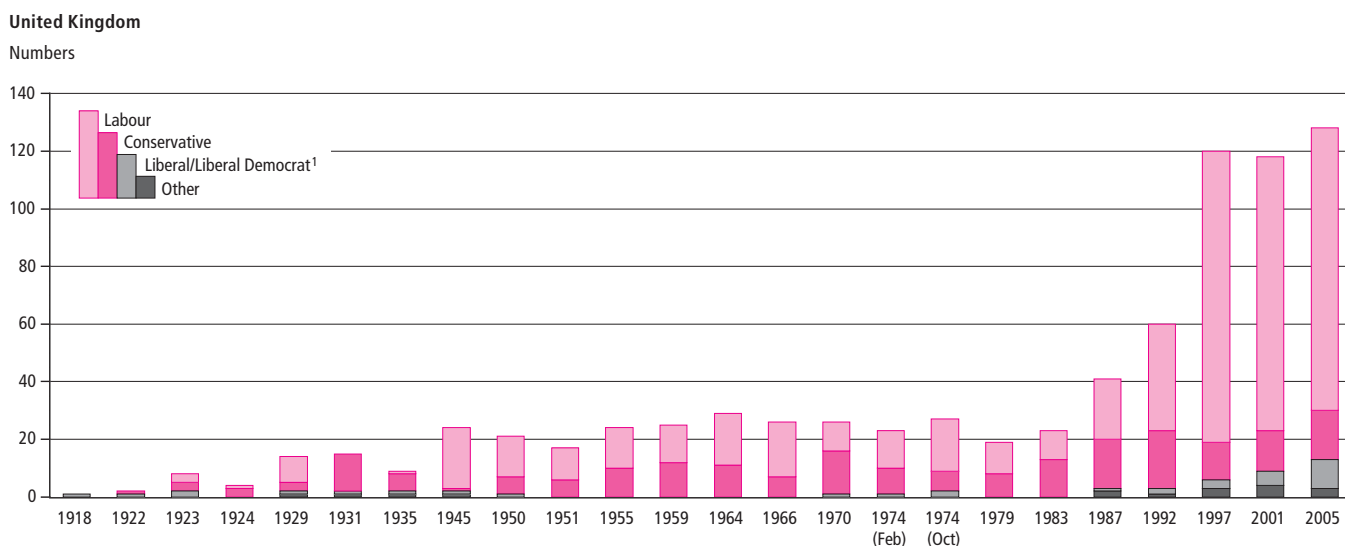
least once a month. The most common form of civic participation was signing a petition (68 per cent), followed by contacting a local councillor (27 per cent).

Those aged 25 to 64 had the highest rates of participation (43 per cent). It was lowest among young people aged 16 to 24 and older people aged between 65 and 74; participation among both groups was 30 per cent. There were differences in participation between ethnic groups, with those of mixed race being most civically active (42 per cent), followed by the White and Bangladeshi groups. Those of Chinese origin were the least active (24 per cent).

Civic participation was also associated with people's socio-economic classification. Participation among professional and managerial groups averaged 47 per cent, while for those in routine occupations averaged 31 per cent. Among people who had never worked or were long-term unemployed 21 per cent had taken part in at least one form of civic activity in the previous 12 months.

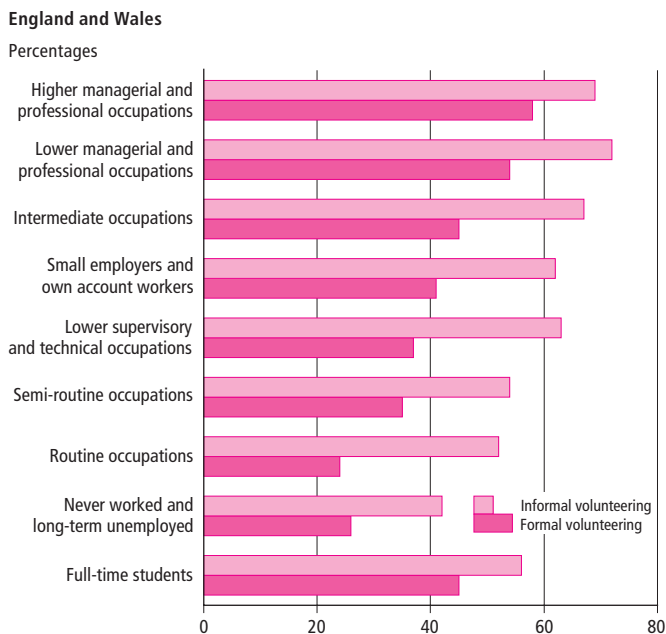
Volunteering is one of the ways in which individuals help their community, from formal volunteering activities such as organising an event to informal activities such as looking after a pet for someone. According to the 2003 HOCS, 62 per cent of people had taken part in at least one form of volunteering in the previous 12 months while 37 per cent had volunteered at least once a month. The most common types of informal volunteering were giving advice (44 per cent) and looking after

Figure 13.16
Female Members of Parliament elected at general elections



Source: House of Commons

Figure 13.17
Participation in volunteering at least once in the 12 months before interview: by socio-economic classification,¹ 2003



¹ Of respondents aged 16 and over. See Appendix, Part 1: National Statistics Socio-economic Classification. The data excludes respondents who had been unemployed for less than one year.

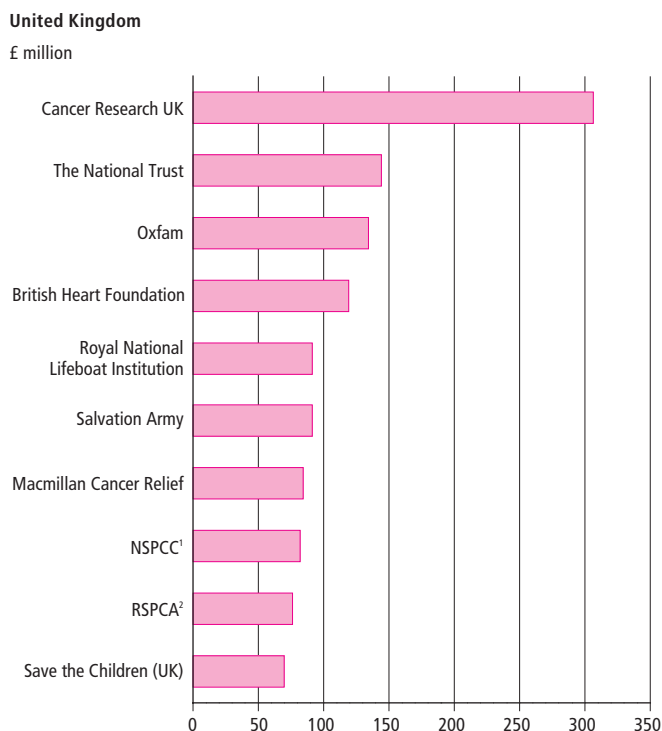
Source: Citizenship Survey, Home Office

a property or pet while someone was away (38 per cent). The most frequently reported types of formal volunteering were raising or handling money/taking part in sponsored events (53 per cent) and organising or helping to run an activity or event (49 per cent).

Rates of volunteering did not vary much by age, although participation in informal activities were higher among people aged 16 to 34. Participation overall fell for people aged 65 and over. Those in professional and managerial occupations had the highest rates of volunteering (Figure 13.17). They were a third more likely to participate in informal volunteering than those in routine occupations. Similarly people with higher educational qualifications were more likely to volunteer than those with no qualifications.

Charities derive their income in several ways, one of which is from individual donations. At the end of 2004 there were 166,129 registered charities in England and Wales and a further 17,864 active charities in Scotland. According to the Charity Commission the total annual income for all registered charities in the United Kingdom for 2003/04 was nearly £35 billion, £7.1 billion was received in individual voluntary donation for

Figure 13.18
Voluntary income of the top charities, 2003/04



¹ National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

² Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Source: Charities Aid Foundation

2003. Nearly 90 per cent of the money is raised by just over 7 per cent of the charities. The most popular charity was Cancer Research UK, which received £306 million, followed by the National Trust with £144 million (Figure 13.18).

Just under two thirds of adults gave money to charity in 2003. The average monthly donation was £12.32. Women were more likely to give than men, 71 per cent of women gave an average monthly donation of £13.55 per month compared with 60 per cent of men with an average £10.81. Less than 5 per cent of individuals gave more than £50 to charity each month, although these contributions account for more than half of the monies donated.

There are a variety of different ways to give to charity. The most popular was through street or door-to-door collections, while the most income was obtained from voluntary donations and grants. Gift aid allows charities to recover the income tax paid on a donation, thereby increasing the amount of the donation. Overall a third of the £7.1 billion in individual charitable giving was given tax-efficiently, although half of the Disasters Emergency Committee Tsunami donations were tax-efficient.

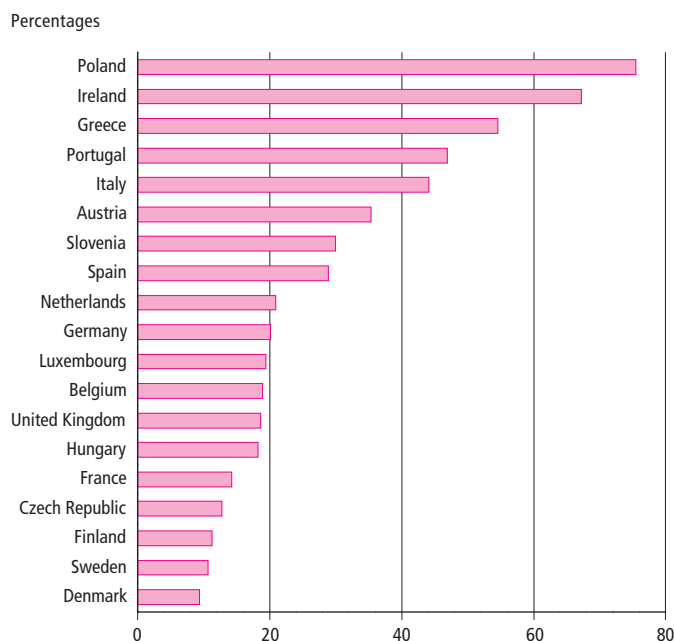
Religion

Attendance at religious services varies across Europe.

Figure 13.19 shows the percentage of individuals who attended a religious service irrespective of faith at least once a month for the EU nations surveyed. In 2002 the highest attendance was by people resident in Poland (75 per cent) and the lowest by people of Denmark (9 per cent). The countries with the highest rates of attendance all followed the Catholic or Orthodox religion, while the Protestant Scandinavian countries recorded the lowest rates. The United Kingdom is placed 13th with 19 per cent of residents attending religious services at least once a month. See Table 1.6 for further information on the religious groups in Great Britain.

Figure 13.19

Attendance at religious services: EU comparison,¹ 2002



¹ Respondents who replied 'at least once a month' when asked 'How often do you attend religious services apart from special occasions'.

Source: European Social Survey

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