



General Household Survey 2005

Definitions and terms

Appendix A

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Definitions and terms

Definitions and terms used are listed in alphabetical order

Acute sickness

See **Sickness**

Adults

Adults are defined as persons aged 16 or over in all tables except those showing dependent children where single persons aged 16 to 18 who are in full-time education are counted as dependent children. The GHS interviews all people aged 16 and over in private households.

Bedroom standard

This concept is used to estimate occupation density by allocating a standard number of bedrooms to each household in accordance with its age/sex/marital status composition and the relationship of the members to one another. A separate bedroom is allocated to each married couple, any other person aged 21 or over, each pair of adolescents aged 10 to 20 of the same sex, and each pair of children under 10. Any unpaired person aged 10 to 20 is paired if possible with a child under 10 of the same sex, or, if that is not possible, is given a separate bedroom, as is any unpaired child under 10. This standard is then compared with the actual number of bedrooms (including bedsitters) available for the sole use of the household, and deficiencies or excesses are tabulated. Bedrooms converted to other uses are not counted as available unless they have been denoted as bedrooms by the informants; bedrooms not actually in use are counted unless uninhabitable.

Central Heating

Central heating is defined as any system whereby two or more rooms (including kitchens, halls, landings, bathrooms and WCs) are heated from a central source, such as a boiler, a back boiler to an open fire, or the electricity supply. This definition includes a system where the boiler or back boiler heats one room and also supplies the power to heat at least one other room.

Under-floor heating systems, electric air systems, and night storage heaters are included.

Definitions and terms

Where a household has only one room in the accommodation, it is treated as having central heating if that room is heated from a central source along with other rooms in the house or building.

Chronic sickness

See **Sickness**

Cohabitation

See **Marital status**

Co-ownership or equity sharing schemes

Co-ownership or equity sharing schemes are those where a share in the property is bought by the occupier under an agreement with the housing association. The monthly charges paid for the accommodation include an amount towards the repayment of the collective mortgage on the scheme. The co-owner never becomes the sole owner of the property, but on leaving the scheme usually receives a cash sum.

See also **Tenure**

Dependent children

Dependent children are persons aged under 16, or single persons aged 16 to 18 and in full-time education, in the family unit and living in the household.

Doctor consultations

Data on doctor consultations presented in this report relate to consultations with National Health Service general medical practitioners during the two weeks before interview. Visits to the surgery, home visits, and telephone conversations are included, but contacts only with a receptionist are excluded. Consultations with practice nurses were excluded prior to 2000, but since then are identified separately. The GHS also collects information about consultations paid for privately.

The average number of consultations per person per year is calculated by multiplying the total number of consultations within the reference period, for any particular group, by 26 (the number of two-week periods in a year) and dividing the product by the total number of persons in the sample in that group.

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Drinking

Questions about drinking alcohol were included in the General Household Survey every two years from 1978 to 1998. Following the review of the GHS, they have been included every year from 2000 onwards. However, the questions on drinking behaviour in the last 12 months are still being asked every two years.

Since 1998, the GHS has measured the maximum daily amount drunk last week. This is in line with the government's advice on sensible drinking which is now based on daily benchmarks rather than weekly consumption. Regular consumption of between three and four units a day for men and two to three units a day for women does not carry a significant health risk, but consistently drinking above these levels is not advised.

The questions are asked of all people aged 16 and over in the household with a self-completion form offered to those aged 16 or 17. Respondents are asked on how many days they drank alcohol during the previous week. They are then asked how much of each of six different types of drink they drank on their heaviest drinking day during the previous week. These amounts are added to give an estimate of the maximum the respondent had drunk on any one day.

Economic activity

Economically active

People over the minimum school-leaving age of 16, who were working or unemployed (as defined below) in the week before the week of interview. These persons constitute the labour force.

Working persons

This category includes persons aged 16 and over who, in the week before the week of interview, worked for wages, salary or other form of cash payment such as commission or tips, for any number of hours. It covers persons absent from work in the reference week because of holiday, sickness, strike, or temporary lay-off, provided they had a job to return to with the same employer. It also includes persons attending an educational establishment during the specified week if they were paid by their employer while attending it, people on Government training schemes and unpaid family workers.

Persons are excluded if they worked in a voluntary capacity for expenses only, or only for payment in kind, unless they worked for a business, firm or professional practice owned by a relative.

Definitions and terms

Full-time students are classified as 'working', 'unemployed' or 'inactive' according to their own reports of what they were doing during the reference week.

Unemployed persons

The GHS uses the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition of unemployment. This classifies anyone as unemployed if he or she was out of work and had looked for work in the four weeks before interview, or would have but for temporary sickness or injury, and was available to start work in the two weeks after interview.

The treatment of all categories on the GHS is in line with that used on the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Economically inactive

People who are neither working nor unemployed by the ILO measure. For example, this would include those who were looking after a home or retired.

Ethnic group

The GHS introduced the current National Statistics ethnic classification in 2001. The classification has a separate category for people from mixed ethnic backgrounds. In the previous system, people with these backgrounds had to select a specific ethnic group or categorise themselves as 'other'.

Household members are classified by the person answering the Household Schedule as:

- British, other White background;
- White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Other Mixed background;
- Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other Asian background;
- Black Caribbean, Black African, Other Black background;
- Chinese; or
- Other ethnic group.

Family

A GHS family unit is defined as:

- a) a married or opposite sex cohabiting couple on their own; or

Definitions and terms

b) a married or opposite sex cohabiting couple, or a lone parent, and their never-married children (who may be adult), provided these children have no children of their own.

Persons who cannot be allocated to a family as defined above are said to be persons not in the family – i.e. as ‘non-family units’. In general, GHS family units cannot span more than two generations, i.e. grandparents and grandchildren cannot belong to the same family unit. The exception to this is where it is established that the grandparents are responsible for looking after the grandchildren (e.g. while the parents are abroad). Adopted and stepchildren belong to the same family unit as their adoptive/step-parents. Foster-children, however, are not part of their foster-parents’ family (since they are not related to their foster-parents) and are counted as separate non-family units. See also **Lone-parent family**.

Full-time working

Full-time working is defined as more than 30 hours a week with the exception of occupations in education where more than 26 hours a week was included as full time.

Government Office Region (GOR)

Government Office Regions came into force in 1998. They replaced the Standard Statistical Regions as the primary classification for the presentation of English regional statistics. Standard Statistical Region was retained for some long term trend tables up to 2000. See also NHS Regional Office.

GP consultations

See Doctor consultations

Hospital visits

Inpatient stays

Inpatient data relate to stays overnight or longer (in a twelve month reference period) in NHS or private hospitals. All types of cases are counted, including psychiatric and maternity, except babies born in hospital who are included only if they remained in hospital after their mother was discharged.

Outpatient attendances

Outpatient data relate to attendances (in a reference period of three calendar months) at NHS or private hospitals, other than as an inpatient. Consultative outpatient

Definitions and terms

attendances, casualty attendances, and attendances at ancillary departments are all included and a separate count is made of attendances at a casualty department.

Day patient

Day patients are defined as patients admitted to a hospital bed during the course of a day or to a day ward where a bed, couch or trolley is available for the patient's use. They are admitted with the intention of receiving care or treatment which can be completed in a few hours so that they do not require a stay in hospital overnight. If a patient admitted as a day patient then stays overnight they are counted as an inpatient.

Household

A household is defined as:

a single person or a group of people who have the address as their only or main residence and who either share one meal a day or share the living accommodation. (See L McCrossan, *A Handbook for Interviewers*. HMSO, London 1991.)

A group of people is not counted as a household solely on the basis of a shared kitchen or bathroom.

A person is in general regarded as living at the address if he or she (or the informant) considers the address to be his or her main residence. There are, however, certain rules which take priority over this criterion.

Children aged 16 or over who live away from home for purposes of either work or study and come home only for holidays are *not* included at the parental address under any circumstances.

Children of any age away from home in a temporary job and children under 16 at boarding school are *always* included in the parental household.

Anyone who has been away from the address *continuously* for six months or longer is excluded.

Anyone who has been living continuously at the address for six months or longer is included even if he or she has his or her main residence elsewhere.

Addresses used only as second homes are never counted as a main residence.

Definitions and terms

Household Reference Person (HRP)

For some topics it is necessary to select one person in the household to indicate the characteristics of the household more generally. In common with other government surveys, in 2000, the GHS replaced the Head of Household with the Household Reference Person for this purpose.

- The household reference person is defined as follows:
- in households with a *sole* householder that person is the household reference person;
- in households with *joint* householders the person with the *highest income* is taken as the household reference person;
- if both householders have exactly the same income, the *older* is taken as the household reference person.

Note that this definition does not require a question about people's actual incomes; only a question about who has the highest income. The main changes from the HOH definition are described in Appendix A in 'Living in Britain 2000'.

Household type

There are many ways of grouping or classifying households into household types; most are based on the age, sex and number of household members.

The main classification of household type as used in Chapter 4 tables uses the following categories:

- 1 adult aged 16-59
- 2 adults aged 16-59
- small family - 1 or 2 persons aged 16 or over and 1 or 2 persons aged under 16
- large family - 1 or more persons aged 16 or over and 3 or more persons aged under 16, or 3 or more persons aged 16 or over and 2 persons aged under 16
- large adult household - 3 or more persons aged 16 or over, with or without 1 person aged under 16
- 2 adults, 1 or both aged 60 or over
- 1 adult aged 60 or over

The term 'family' in this context does not necessarily imply any relationship.

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GHS tables covering Chapter 3 also use a modified version of household type which takes account of the age of the youngest household member. 'Small family', 'large family' and 'large adult household' are replaced by the following:

- youngest person aged 0-4
- 1 or more persons aged 16 or over and 1 or more persons aged under 5
- youngest person aged 5-15
- 1 or more persons aged 16 or over and 1 or more persons aged 5-15
- 3 or more adults
- 3 or more persons aged 16 or over and no-one aged under 16

The first two categories above are combined in some tables.

Households are also classified according to the family units they contain (see Family for definition), into the following categories:

- One family households* containing:
 - married couple with dependent children
 - married couple with non-dependent children only
 - married couple with no children
 - cohabiting couple with dependent children
 - cohabiting couple with non-dependent children only
 - cohabiting couple with no children
 - lone parent with dependent children
 - lone parent with non-dependent children only
- Households containing two or more families
- Non-family households containing
 - lone parent with dependent children
 - lone parent with non-dependent children only
 - 1 person only
 - 2 or more non-family† adults.

Some of the above categories are combined for certain tables and figures.

** Other individuals who were not family members may also have been present*

† Individuals may, of course, be related without constituting a GHS family unit. A household consisting of a brother and sister, for example, is a non-family household of two or more non-family adults.

Definitions and terms

Income

Usual gross weekly income

Total income for an individual refers to income at the time of the interview, and is obtained by summing the components of earnings, benefits, pensions, dividends, interest and other regular payments. Gross weekly income of employees and those on benefits is calculated if interest and dividends are the only components missing.

If the last pay packet/cheque was unusual, for example in including holiday pay in advance or a tax refund, the respondent is asked for usual pay. No account is taken of whether a job is temporary or permanent. Payments made less than weekly are divided by the number of weeks covered to obtain a weekly figure.

Usual gross weekly household income is the sum of usual gross weekly income for all adults in the household. Those interviewed by proxy are also included.

Lone-parent family

A lone-parent family consists of one parent, irrespective of sex, living with his or her never-married dependent children, provided these children have no children of their own.

Married or cohabiting women with dependent children, whose partners are not defined as resident in the household, are not classified as one-parent families because it is known that the majority of them are only temporarily separated from their husbands for a reason that does not imply the breakdown of the marriage (for example, because the husband usually works away from home). (See the GHS 1980 Report p.9 for further details.)

Longstanding conditions and complaints

See **Sickness**

Marriage and cohabitation

From 1971 to 1978 the Family Information section was addressed only to married women aged under 45 who were asked questions on their present marriage and birth expectations. In 1979 the section was expanded to include questions on cohabitation prior to marriage, previous marriages and all live births, and was addressed to all women aged 16 to 49 except non-married women aged 16 and 17. In 1986 the section was extended to cover all women and men aged 16 to 59. In 1998 all adults aged 16 to 59 were asked about any periods of cohabitation not leading to marriage. This section was extended in 2000 to include the length of past cohabitations not ending in

Definitions and terms

marriage and what people perceived to be the end of the cohabitation (the end of the relationship, the end of sharing the accommodation or both).

Marital status

Since 1996 separate questions have been asked at the beginning of the questionnaire to identify the legal marital status and living arrangements of respondents in the household. The latter includes a category for cohabiting.

Before 1996, unrelated adults of the opposite sex were classified as cohabiting if they considered themselves to be living together as a couple. From 1996, this has included a small number of same sex couples, unless otherwise stated in the table.

Married/non-married

In this dichotomy 'married ' generally includes cohabiting and 'non- married' covers those who are single, widowed, separated or divorced and not cohabiting.

Living arrangements (de facto marital status)

Before 1996, additional information from the Family Information section of the individuals' questionnaire was used to determine living arrangements (previously known as 'defacto marital status') and the classification only applied to those aged 16 to 59 who answer the marital history questions. For this population it only differed from the main marital status for those who revealed in the Family Information section that they were cohabiting rather than having the marital status given at the beginning of the interview. 'Cohabiting' took priority over other categories. Since 1996, information on legal marital status and living arrangements has been taken from the beginning of the interview where both are now asked.

Legal marital status

This classification applies to persons aged 16 to 59 who answer the marital history questions. Cohabiting people are categorised according to formal marital status. The classification differs from strict legal marital status in accepting the respondents' opinion of whether their marriage has terminated in separation rather than applying the criterion of legal separation.

Definitions and terms**Median**See **Quantiles****National Statistics Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC)**

From April 2001 the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) was introduced for all official statistics and surveys. It replaced Social Class based on occupation and Socio-economic Groups (SEG). Full details can be found in *'The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification User Manual 2002'* ONS 2002.

Descriptive definition	NS-SEC categories
Large employers and higher managerial occupations	L1, L2
Higher professional occupations	L3
Lower managerial and professional occupations	L4, L5, L6
Intermediate occupations	L7
Small employers and own account workers	L8, L9
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	L10, L11
Semi-routine occupations	L12
Routine occupations	L13
Never worked and long-term unemployed	L14

The three residual categories: L15 (full time students); L16 (occupation not stated or inadequately described) and L17 (not classifiable for other reasons) are excluded when the classification is collapsed into its analytical classes.

The categories can be further grouped into:

Managerial and professional occupations	L1-L6
Intermediate occupations	L7-L9
Routine + manual occupations	L10-L13

This results in the exclusion of those who have never worked and the long term unemployed, in addition to the groups mentioned above.

The main differences users need to be aware of are:

Definitions and terms

- the introduction of SOC2000 which includes various new technology occupations not previously defined in SOC90;
- definitional variations in employment status in particular with reference to the term 'supervisor';
- the inclusion of armed forces personnel in the appropriate occupation group;
- the separate classification of full-time students, whether or not they have been or are presently in paid employment; and
- the separate classification of long term unemployed who previously were classified by their most recent occupation.

This change has resulted in a discontinuity in time series data. The operational categories of NS-SEC can be aggregated to produce an approximated version of the previous Socio-economic Group. These approximations have been shown to achieve an overall continuity level of 87%. Some tables on smoking have used this approximation.

NHS Regional Office

Between 1996 and 2002, there were eight NHS Regional Offices in England, which together with Scotland and Wales were part of the administrative geography of the Department of Health. Each office was divided into approximately 100 District Health Authorities (DHAs) which, from April 1999, were in turn separated into Primary Care Organisations. In April 2002, Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) replaced the DHAs, and between April 2002 and June 2003, four Directorates of Health and Social Care replaced the NHS Regional Offices in the organisational hierarchy. Since July 2003, the structure for health administration in England has consisted of 28 SHAs that report directly to the Department of Health, and manage the NHS locally. Although NHS Regional Offices were no longer in use at the time of the survey, it has been used in this report for purposes of consistency and for comparison of results with previous years.

Pensions

The GHS asks questions about any pension scheme, either occupational or personal, that the respondent belonged to on the date of interview. It is quite possible that some respondents may have held entitlement in the occupational pension scheme of a previous employer or a personal pension scheme in the past. The GHS measures current membership and not the percentage of respondents who will get an occupational or personal pension when they retire.

In April 2002 the State Second Pension (S2P) was introduced. The new pension reformed the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS) to provide a more generous additional pension for low and moderate earners, certain groups of carers and

Definitions and terms

people with a longstanding illness or disability. Since 1988, individual employees have had the option of contracting out of the S2P (formerly SERPS) by starting their own personal pension plan. Some respondents may be contributing to both an occupational and personal pension scheme.

From 2001 to 2002, the GHS asked employees whether or not they had arranged their own personal/stakeholder pension. If they answered 'yes', they were asked a supplementary question to establish whether it was a personal or stakeholder pension. In 2003, these two questions were replaced with a multiple response question that allowed the respondent to select one or more of the following answers:

- A personal or private pension or retirement annuity
- A Group Personal Pension (this is a collection of personal pensions arranged by an employer for a group of employees)
- A Stakeholder Pension arranged through your employer (who may or may not contribute to such a pension)
- None of these
- Don't know

Some of the change in the proportion of employees with a personal pension in 2002 and 2003 may be due to the different ways respondents were asked about personal pension arrangements.

Questions on personal pension arrangements for self-employed persons did not change.

The majority of tables show data for men working full time. This is because the sample sizes for male employees working part time and self-employed men working part time are too small to give reliable estimates.

Qualification levels

Degree or Degree equivalent, and above

Higher degree and postgraduate qualifications

First degree (including B.Ed.)

Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates (including PGCE)

Professional qualifications at degree level e.g. graduate member of professional institute, chartered accountant or surveyor

NVQ or SVQ level 4 or 5

Definitions and terms

Other Higher Education below degree level

Diplomas in higher education & other higher education qualifications

HNC, HND, Higher level BTEC

Teaching qualifications for schools or further education (below Degree level standard)

Nursing, or other medical qualifications not covered above (below Degree level standard)

RSA higher diploma

A levels, vocational level 3 & equivalents

A level or equivalent

AS level

SCE Higher, Scottish Certificate Sixth Year Studies or equivalent

NVQ or SVQ level 3

GNVQ Advanced or GSVQ level 3

OND, ONC, BTEC National, SCOTVEC National Certificate

City & Guilds advanced craft, Part III (& other names)

RSA advanced diploma

Trade Apprenticeships

GCSE/O Level grade A*-C, vocational level 2 & equivalents

NVQ or SVQ level 2

GNVQ intermediate or GSVQ level 2

RSA Diploma

City & Guilds Craft or Part II (& other names)

BTEC, SCOTVEC first or general diploma et

O level or GCSE grade A-C, SCE Standard or Ordinary grades 1-3

Qualifications at level 1 and below

NVQ or SVQ level 1

GNVQ Foundation level, GSVQ level 1

GCSE or O level below grade C, SCE Standard or Ordinary below grade 3

Definitions and terms

CSE below grade 1

BTEC, SCOTVEC first or general certificate

SCOTVEC modules

RSA Stage I, II, or III

City and Guilds part 1

Junior certificate

YT Certificate/ YTP

Other qualifications: level unknown

Other vocational or professional or foreign qualifications

No qualifications

Excludes those who never went to school (omitted from the classification altogether).

This is not a complete listing of all qualifications. In particular, it does not give all the names which have been used by BTEC or City and Guilds. Neither does it give names for vocational qualifications from other awarding bodies besides BTEC, City and Guilds, RSA and SCOTVEC, although it should cover the majority of vocational qualifications awarded.

The qualification levels do not in all cases correspond to those used in statistics published by the Department for Education and Skills.

Quantiles

The quantiles of a distribution, eg of household income, divide it into equal parts.

Median: the median of a distribution divides it into two equal parts. Thus half the households in a distribution of household income have an income higher than the median, and the other half have an income lower than the median.

Quartiles: the quartiles of a distribution divide it into quarters. Thus the upper quartile of a distribution of household income is the level of income that is expected by 25% of the households in the distribution; and 25% of the households have an income less than the lower quartile. It follows that 50% of the households have an income between the upper and lower quartiles.

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Quintiles: the quintiles of a distribution divide it into fifths. Thus the upper quintile of a distribution of household income is the level of income that is expected by 20% of the households in the distribution; and 20% of the households have an income less than the lower quintile. It follows that 60% of the households have an income between the upper and lower quintiles.

Relatives in the household

The term 'relative' includes any household member related to the head of household by blood, marriage, or adoption. Foster-children are therefore not regarded as relatives.

Rooms

These are defined as habitable rooms, including (unless otherwise specified) kitchens, whether eaten in or not, but excluding rooms used solely for business purposes, those not usable throughout the year (eg conservatories), and those not normally used for living purposes such as toilets, cloakrooms, store rooms, pantries, cellars and garages.

Sickness

Acute sickness

Acute sickness is defined as restriction of the level of normal activity, because of illness or injury, at any time during the two weeks before interview. Since the two-week reference period covers weekends, normal activities include leisure activities as well as school attendance, going to work, or doing housework. Anyone with a chronic condition that caused additional restriction during the reference period is counted among those with acute sickness.

The average number of restricted activity days per person per year is calculated in the same way as the average number of doctor consultations.

Chronic sickness

Information on chronic sickness was obtained from the following two-part question:

'Do you have any longstanding illness, disability or infirmity? By longstanding I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time.'

IF YES

Does this illness or disability limit your activities in any way?'

Definitions and terms

'Longstanding illness' is defined as a positive answer to the first part of the question, and 'limiting longstanding illness' as a positive answer to both parts of the question.

The data collected are based on people's subjective assessment of their health, and therefore changes over time may reflect changes in people's expectations of their health as well as changes in incidence or duration of chronic sickness. In addition, different sub-groups of the population may have varying expectations, activities and capacities of adaptation.

Longstanding conditions and complaints

The GHS collects information about the nature of longstanding illness. Respondents who report a longstanding illness are asked 'What is the matter with you?' and details of the illness or disability are recorded by the interviewers and coded into a number of broad categories. Interviewers are instructed to focus on the symptoms of the illness, rather than the cause, and code what the respondent said was currently the matter without probing for cause. This approach has been used in 1988, 1989, 1994 to 1996, 1998 and 2000 to 2003.

The categories used when coding the conditions correspond broadly to the chapter headings of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). However, the ICD is used mostly for coding conditions and diseases according to cause whereas the GHS coding is based only on the symptoms reported. This gives rise to discrepancies in some areas between the two classifications.

Smoking

Questions about smoking behaviour have been included on the GHS in alternate years from 1974 to 1998, and every year from 2000 onwards. The questions are asked of all people aged 16 and over in the household with a self-completion form offered to those aged 16 or 17, where appropriate.

Information on tar yields is only collected for manufactured cigarettes. Tar yields are provided by the laboratory of the Government Chemist.

Socio-economic classification

See National Statistics Socio-economic classification

Definitions and terms

Step-family

See **Family**

Tenure

From 1981, households who were buying a share in the property from a housing association or co-operative through a shared ownership (equity sharing) or co-ownership scheme are included in the category of owner-occupiers. In earlier years such households were included with those renting from a housing association or co-operative.

Renting from a council includes renting from a local authority or New Town corporation or commissions or Scottish Homes (formerly the Scottish Special Housing Association).

Renting from a housing association also includes co-operatives and charitable trusts. It also covers fair rent schemes. Since 1996, housing associations are more correctly described as Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). RSLs are not-for-profit organisations which include: charitable housing associations, industrial and provident societies and companies registered under the Companies Act 1985.

Social sector renters includes households renting from a local authority or New Town corporation or commission or Scottish Homes and those renting from housing associations, cooperatives and charitable trusts.

Private renters include those who rent from a private individual or organisation and those whose accommodation is tied to their job even if the landlord is a local authority, housing association or Housing Action Trust, or if the accommodation is rent free. Squatters are also included in this category.

Unemployed

See **Economic activity**

Weighting

All percentages and means presented in the tables are based on data weighted to compensate for differential nonresponse. Both the unweighted and weighted bases are given. The unweighted base represents the number of people/households interviewed in the specified group. The weighted base gives a grossed up population estimate in

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thousands. Trend tables show unweighted and weighted figures for 1998 to give an indication of the effect of the weighting.

A full description of the method of weighting and the effects on data are in Appendix D.

Working

See **Economic activity**