

Notes to tables

1. **Harmonised outputs:** where appropriate, tables including marital status, living arrangements, ethnic groups, tenure, economic activity, accommodation type, length of residence and general health have adopted the harmonised output categories described on the National Statistics website. However, where long established time series are shown, harmonised outputs may not have been used.

2. **Classification variables:** variables such as age and income, are not presented in a standard form throughout the report partly because the groupings of interest depend on the subject matter of the chapter, and partly because many of the trend series were started when the results used in the report had to be extracted from tabulations prepared to meet different departmental requirements.

3. **Nonresponse and missing information:** the information from a household which co-operates in the survey may be incomplete, either because of a partial refusal (eg to income), or because information was collected by proxy and certain questions omitted because considered inappropriate for proxy interviews (eg marriage and income data), or because a particular item was missed because of lack of understanding or an error.

Households who did not co-operate at all are omitted from all the analyses; those who omitted whole sections (eg marriages) because they were partial refusals or interviewed by proxy are omitted from the analyses of that section. The 'no answers' arising from omission of particular items have been excluded from the base numbers shown in the tables and from the bases used in percentaging. The number of 'no answers' is generally less than 0.5% of the total and at the level of precision used on GHS the percentages for valid answers are not materially affected by the treatment of 'no answers'. Socio-economic classification and income variables are the most common variables which have too many missing answers to ignore.

4. **Base numbers:** The reliability of estimates with a small base were investigated. Shaded figures indicate the estimates are unreliable and any analysis using these figures may be invalid. Any use of these shaded figures must be accompanied by this disclaimer.

5. **Percentages:** A percentage may be quoted in the text for a single category that is identifiable in the tables only by summing two or more component percentages. In order to avoid rounding errors, the percentage has been recalculated for the single category and therefore may differ by one percentage point from the sum of the percentages derived from the tables.

The row or column percentages may add to 99% or 101% because of rounding.

6. **Conventions:** The following conventions have been used within tables:

- .. data not available
- category not applicable
- 0 less than 0.5% or no observations

7. **Statistical significance:** Unless otherwise stated, changes and differences mentioned in the text have been found to be statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

8. **Mean:** Throughout the report the arithmetic term 'mean' is used rather than 'average'. The mean is a measure of the central tendency for continuous variables, calculated as the sum of all scores in a distribution, divided by the total number of scores.

9. **Weighting:** All percentages and means presented in the tables in the substantive chapters 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 thousands. Trend tables show unweighted and weighted figures for 1998 to give an indication of the effect of the weighting.

Missing answers are excluded from the tables and in some cases this is reflected in the weighted bases, ie these numbers vary between tables. For this reason, the bases themselves are not recommended as a source for population estimates. Recommended data sources for population estimates for most socio-demographic groups are: ONS mid-year estimates, the Labour Force Survey, or Housing Statistics from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. See Appendix D for details of weighting.