

18 March 2004

Coverage
Great Britain
Theme
Social and Welfare

Living in Britain - the 2002 General Household Survey

Seventy-two per cent of women aged 16 to 49 used at least one form of contraception in 2002, a figure that has remained relatively constant since the mid-1980s. However, there have been variations in the use of different types of contraception, especially sterilisation, which has become more popular among older women (aged 45 to 49) but less popular in younger age groups (aged 25 to 39). This information is published today by the Office for National Statistics in *Living in Britain*, the report of the 2002 General Household Survey.

Other key findings include:

Contraception

Trend patterns in the use of surgical sterilisation of women or their partner varied according to the woman's age. Forty-four per cent of women in 2002 aged 45 to 49 used sterilisation (of either the woman or her partner) as a method of contraception compared with 35 per cent in 1986. Over the same period there was a fall in its use among the 25 to 39 age group. For example, among women aged 30 to 34 sterilisation as a method of contraception fell from 25 per cent in 1986 to 13 per cent in 2002.

Table 2

In 2002 the three most common methods of contraception used by women aged 16 to 49 were the contraceptive pill (used by 26 per cent of women), sterilisation, of either the woman or her partner (21 per cent) and the male condom (19 per cent). These have remained the most common methods of contraception since 1986.

Issued by
National Statistics
1 Drummond Gate
London SW1V 2QQ

Telephone
Press Office 020 7533 5702
Email press.office@ons.gov.uk
Public Enquiries 0845 601 3034

Contact
Leicha Rickards 020 7533 5303
Email leicha.rickards@ons.gov.uk

Internet
www.statistics.gov.uk

The report is available free on the National Statistics website:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=5756>

There has been a small increase from 23 per cent in 1986 to 26 per cent in 2002 in the proportion of women aged 16 to 49 using the contraceptive pill. Trends in the use of the pill varied by age group. Between 1998 and 2002 there has been an increase in the proportion of women using the pill among 16 to 17 year-olds (17 per cent to 24 per cent), 30 to 34 year-olds (24 per cent to 28 per cent) and 45 to 49 year-olds (three per cent to nine per cent). In all other age groups the level of use remained similar.

Table 1

There has been a steady growth in the overall proportions of women whose partners use condoms, from 13 per cent in 1986 to 19 per cent in 2002 but this increase was not seen in all age groups. There has been a decline in condom-use among the partners of women aged 45 to 49 (16 per cent in 1986 to 12 per cent in 2002). Since 1986, condom use has remained fairly constant among women aged 35 to 44 but increased among women under 35.

Table 3

Consumer durables

Seventy-three per cent of households in 2002 had access to a car or van. In 1972 just over half (52 per cent) of households had access to a car or van. This proportion had increased to 71 per cent by 1995, and has remained at about this level since then.

The proportion of households with two or more cars or vans has increased substantially from the early 1970s to the mid-1990s, since when it has levelled out. In 1972, eight per cent of households had two cars or vans and one per cent had three or more. By 2002 these percentages had increased to 22 per cent with two cars or vans and five per cent with three or more.

Table 4

There has been a steady increase in the ownership of consumer durables since the early 1970s, with ownership of some household items (such as a washing machine and a freezer) remaining relatively constant since 1998 at a high level.

In 2002 most homes had central heating (93 per cent of households), a television (99 per cent of households), telephone (99 per cent of households), washing machine (93 per cent) and a freezer (95 per cent). The percentage of households with access to a dishwasher, tumble drier and microwave continued to rise.

Between 1998 and 2002 the percentage of households with home entertainment items, such as a CD player and a video recorder has increased:

- video recorder – 85 to 89 per cent;
- CD player – 69 to 83 per cent;
- home computer – 34 to 54 per cent.

In 2002 almost a third of households (32 per cent) had a DVD player. This was the first time the GHS had asked a question about ownership of DVD players.

Table 5

In 2002, as in previous years, lone-parent families were less likely than other families with dependent children to have access to more recent consumer durables such as home computers (56 compared with 80 per cent), the Internet (36 compared with 68 per cent), and mobile phones (83 compared with 91 per cent). Lone-parent families were also less likely to have access to a car or van.

Table 6

Smoking

Twenty-six per cent of people aged 16 and over were cigarette smokers in 2002.

The percentage of adults who smoked cigarettes fell substantially in the 1970s and the early 1980s (from 45 per cent in 1974 to 35 per cent in 1982). After 1982 the percentage of smokers fell more gradually until the early 1990s, since when it has levelled out at around 26 to 28 per cent.

Cigarette smoking was more common among men than women. In 1974 just over half (51 per cent) of men smoked cigarettes compared with 41 per cent of women. Since then, the difference in the proportion of men and women who smoked has reduced, although it has not disappeared completely. For example, 38 per cent of men and 33 per cent of women were cigarette smokers in 1982 compared with 27 per cent of men and 25 per cent of women in 2002.

Although, overall, a greater proportion of men smoke than women, this was not the case for those aged 16 to 19. In this group, 29 per cent of young women were cigarette smokers compared with 22 per cent of men. As in previous years, cigarette smoking was more common among people aged 20 to 34 than in other age groups. For example, 38 per cent of people aged 20 to 24 and 34 per cent of people aged 25 to 34 were smokers compared with 15 per cent of those aged 60 and over.

Table 7

Filter cigarettes continued to be the most widely smoked type of cigarette. There was an increase in the 1990s in the proportion of smokers who said that they smoked hand-rolled cigarettes. Among men the proportion increased from 18 per cent in 1990 to 33 per cent in 2002. Among women it increased from two per cent to 13 per cent during the same period.

Hearing

Sixteen per cent of people aged 16 and over reported hearing difficulties in 2002.

Between 1979 and 2002 the percentage of adults with hearing difficulties increased from 13 to 16 per cent. Most of this change occurred between 1979 and 1992, mainly among the oldest age group, and has remained relatively stable since.

Men were more likely to report hearing difficulties than women at all ages. In 2002 19 per cent of men had a hearing difficulty compared with 13 per cent of women. Between 1979 and 1998 the proportion of the oldest men reporting a hearing difficulty rose from 42 per cent to 53 per cent but this has now levelled off at 52 per cent.

In 2002, as in previous years, the likelihood of adults reporting a hearing difficulty increased with age. For example, 44 per cent aged 75 and over had a hearing difficulty compared with 28 per cent of those aged 65 to 74, 18 per cent of those aged 45 to 64 and six per cent aged under 45.

Table 8

The percentage of adults wearing a hearing aid has doubled from two per cent in 1979 to four per cent in 2002. Men aged 75 and over were more likely to wear hearing aids than women in the same age group (23 per cent compared with 17 per cent in 2002). The likelihood of a man aged 75 and over wearing a hearing aid almost doubled between 1979 and 2002 (12 per cent and 23 per cent respectively). Over the same period, the proportion of women aged 75 and over wearing a hearing aid rose from 12 per cent to 17 per cent.

Table 9

The use of a hearing aid does not necessarily overcome people's hearing problems. Of the four per cent of adults who wore an aid in 2002, 62 per cent reported continuing problems with their hearing.

Of all the hearing aids in use, including those only worn occasionally, 75 per cent were obtained from the NHS and the remaining 25 per cent were obtained privately.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. A paper version of the report will be available by April 2004.
2. The General Household Survey (GHS) is a multi-purpose continuous survey carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). It collects information on a range of topics from people living in private households in Great Britain. The survey started in 1971 and has been carried out continuously since then, except for breaks to review it in 1997/1998 and to re-develop it in 1999/2000. Many of its results are published in the *Living in Britain* report. The survey presents a picture of households, families and people living in Great Britain. The survey information is commissioned by various government departments and is used to contribute to policy decisions and for planning and monitoring purposes.
3. The interview comprises a household questionnaire, to be answered by the Household Reference Person or spouse, and an individual questionnaire to be completed by all adults aged 16 and over resident in the household.
4. Interviewing took place during the period April 2002 to March 2003. For ease of reference, this press release generally refers to this period as 2002. For 2002/2003, the survey response rate was 69 per cent, with an achieved sample size of 8,620 households and 20,149 people of all ages. For further information on the survey's sample design and response see Appendix B of the *Living in Britain 2002* report.

5. In common with any sample survey, sampling errors are calculated for some of the main survey variables. See Appendix C of the *Living in Britain 2002* report
6. A major methodological change for the 2000/2001 data set was the introduction of weighting and grossing. First, weighting to compensate for non-response in the sample based on known under-coverage in the Census-linked study of non-response (Foster, 1994). Second, the sample, which has been weighted for non-response, has been grossed up to match known population distributions (as used in the Labour Force Survey).
7. Figures are based on weighted data for 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2002. The substantive chapters of the report present data for 2002/2003 in weighted form only. Unweighted and weighted bases are given. The unweighted base represents the actual number of people/households 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. Where 1998 figures are quoted in the text they are weighted. For more information see Appendix D of the *Living in Britain 2002* report.
8. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
9. **National Statistics** are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. Crown copyright 2004.

Table 1 Trends in use of the pill as a usual method of contraception by age: 1986 to 2002

Women aged 16-49									Great Britain	
Age	Unweighted						Weighted		Weighted base 2002 (000's) = 100%*	Unweighted sample* 2002
	1986	1989	1991	1993	1995	1998	1998	2002		
Percentage of women who used the pill										
16-17	20	19	16	20	25	17	17	24	606	215
18-19	42	39	46	42	37	41	43	46	482	161
20-24	55	48	48	50	49	52	53	53	1,506	485
25-29	38	36	42	44	41	41	42	45	1,582	539
30-34	21	22	25	29	29	24	24	28	2,007	704
35-39	8	12	11	16	20	18	18	20	2,121	754
40-44	4	4	4	7	9	9	10	10	2,001	689
45-49	1	3	2	4	3	4	3	9	1,794	671
All aged 16-49	23	22	23	25	25	24	24	26	12,100	4218

* Trend tables show unweighted and weighted figures for 1998 to allow direct comparison between 1998 and 2002 and to give an indication of the effect of the weighting. For the weighted data (1998 and 2002) the weighted base (000's) is the base for percentages. Unweighted data (up to 1998) are based on the unweighted sample. Bases for earlier years are of a similar size and can be found in GHS reports for each year.

Table 2 Percentage of women and partners sterilised for contraceptive reasons: 1986 to 2002

Women aged 16-49									Great Britain	
Age	Unweighted						Weighted		Weighted sample 2002 (000's) = 100%*	Unweighted sample* 2002
	1986	1989	1991	1993	1995	1998	1998	2002		
Percentage of women and partner† sterilised										
16-24	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	2,594	861
25-29	6	7	8	5	7	5	4	3	1,582	539
30-34	25	23	21	21	18	17	17	13	2,007	704
35-39	42	40	38	34	32	33	33	29	2,121	754
40-44	48	47	50	47	45	42	43	40	2,001	689
45-49	35	37	47	47	46	50	50	44	1,794	671
All aged 16-49	23	23	25	24	24	23	23	21	12,100	4218

* Trend tables show unweighted and weighted figures for 1998 to allow direct comparison between 1998 and 2002 and to give an indication of the effect of the weighting. For the weighted data (1998 and 2002) the weighted base (000's) is the base for percentages. Unweighted data (up to 1998) are based on the unweighted sample. Bases for earlier years are of a similar size and can be found in GHS reports for each year.

† Refers to the woman's partner whether in the household or not.

**Table 3 Trends in use of the condom as a usual method of contraception by age:
1986 to 2002**

<i>Women aged 16-49</i>							<i>Great Britain</i>			
Age	Unweighted						Weighted		<i>Weighted base 2002 (000's) = 100%*</i>	<i>Unweighted sample* 2002</i>
	1986	1989	1991	1993	1995	1998	1998	2002		
Percentage whose partner† used the condom										
16-17	6	6	10	17	13	18	18	23	606	215
18-19	6	12	15	22	26	21	22	21	482	161
20-24	9	14	14	18	21	23	24	30	1,506	485
25-29	13	17	19	21	20	23	24	24	1,582	539
30-34	15	19	17	18	20	20	20	22	2,007	704
35-39	15	16	20	17	16	18	18	17	2,121	754
40-44	14	16	13	14	16	15	14	13	2,001	689
45-49	16	15	12	12	14	10	10	12	1,794	671
All aged 16-49	13	15	16	17	18	18	19	19	12,100	4218

* Trend tables show unweighted and weighted figures for 1998 to allow direct comparison between 1998 and 2002 and to give an indication of the effect of the weighting. For the weighted data (1998 and 2002) the weighted base (000's) is the base for percentages. Unweighted data (up to 1998) are based on the unweighted sample. Bases for earlier years are of a similar size and can be found in GHS reports for each year.

† Refers to the woman's partner whether in the household or not.

Table 4 Cars or vans: 1972 to 2002

<i>Households</i>										<i>Great Britain</i>			
Cars or vans	Unweighted								Weighted				
	1972	1975	1981	1985	1991	1995	1996	1998	1998	2000	2001	2002	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Households with:													
no car or van	48	44	41	38	32	29	30	28	28	27	28	27	
one car or van	43	45	44	45	44	45	46	44	45	45	44	45	
two cars or vans	8	10	12	14	19	22	21	23	22	22	23	22	
three or more cars or vans	1	1	2	3	4	4	4	6	6	6	5	5	
<i>Weighted base (000's) = 100%*</i>									24,450	24,845	24,592	24,529	
<i>Unweighted sample*</i>	11624	11929	11989	9963	9910	9758	9158	8636		8221	8989	8620	

* Trend tables show unweighted and weighted figures for 1998 to give an indication of the effect of the weighting. For the weighted data (1998 and 2000 to 2002) the weighted base (000's) is the base for percentages. Unweighted data (up to 1998) are based on the unweighted sample.

Table 5 Consumer durables, central heating and cars: 1972 to 2002

Households

Great Britain

	Unweighted									Weighted				
	1972	1975	1981	1985	1991	1993	1995	1996	1998	1998	2000	2001	2002	
Percentage of households with:														
Television:														
colour	93	96	<u>74</u> ⁹⁷	<u>86</u> ⁹⁸	<u>95</u> ⁹⁸	<u>95</u> ⁹⁸	<u>97</u> ⁹⁸	<u>97</u> ⁹⁹	<u>98</u> ⁹⁸	<u>97</u> ⁹⁸	<u>98</u> ⁹⁹	<u>98</u> ⁹⁹	<u>99</u> ⁹⁹	
black and white only	..	..	<u>23</u> ⁹⁷	<u>11</u> ⁹⁸	<u>4</u> ⁹⁸	<u>3</u> ⁹⁸	<u>2</u> ⁹⁸	<u>2</u> ⁹⁹	<u>1</u> ⁹⁸	<u>1</u> ⁹⁸	<u>1</u> ⁹⁹	<u>0</u> ⁹⁹	<u>0</u> ⁹⁹
satellite/cable/digital	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	18	29	29	40	42	44
satellite*	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	26
cable*	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14
digital*	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	28
Video recorder	..	..	..	31	68	73	79	82	85	85	88	88	89
DVD player	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	32
CD player	..	..	..	..	27	39	52	58	68	69	77	80	83
Home computer	..	..	..	13	21	24	25	27	34	34	45	50	54
Access to internet at home	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	33	40	44
Access from home computer	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	31	37	42
Other access	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	6	5
Microwave oven	..	..	..	..	55	62	70	74	79	78	83	85	87
Refrigerator†	73	88	93	95	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Deep freezer†	..	..	49	66	83	86	89	91	93	92	93	94	95
Washing machine	66	71	78	81	87	88	90	90	92	91	93	92	93	
Tumble drier	..	..	23	33	48	49	51	51	52	51	54	54	54
Dishwasher	..	..	4	6	14	16	20	20	24	23	26	28	28
Telephone (fixed or mobile)	42	54	75	81	88	90	93	94	96	96	98	98	99	
fixed telephone**	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	93	93	92
mobile telephone**	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	58	70	75
Central heating	37	43	59	69	82	83	86	88	90	90	92	92	93	
A car or van	<u>43</u> ⁵²	<u>45</u> ⁵⁶	<u>44</u> ⁵⁹	<u>45</u> ⁶²	<u>44</u> ⁶⁷	<u>45</u> ⁶⁸	<u>45</u> ⁷¹	<u>46</u> ⁷⁰	<u>44</u> ⁷²	<u>45</u> ⁷²	<u>45</u> ⁷³	<u>44</u> ⁷²	<u>45</u> ⁷³	
- more than 1	<u>9</u> ⁵²	<u>11</u> ⁵⁶	<u>14</u> ⁵⁹	<u>17</u> ⁶²	<u>23</u> ⁶⁷	<u>23</u> ⁶⁸	<u>26</u> ⁷¹	<u>24</u> ⁷⁰	<u>28</u> ⁷²	<u>27</u> ⁷²	<u>28</u> ⁷³	<u>28</u> ⁷²	<u>28</u> ⁷³	
Weighted Base (000's)										24,450	24,575	24,592	24,529	
= 100%††														
Unwgt'd sample††	11663	11929	11718	9993	9955	9850	9757	9156	8636		8213	8989	8618	

* Data only available from 2002.

† Fridge freezers are attributed to both 'refrigerator' and 'deep freezer' from 1979 on.

** Data only available for 2000, 2001 and 2002. Percentages for fixed and mobile telephones sum to greater than 100 because some households owned both.

†† Trend tables show unweighted and weighted figures for 1998 to give an indication of the effect of the weighting. For the weighted data (1998 and 2000 to 2002) the weighted base (000's) is the base for percentages. Unweighted data (up to 1998) are based on the unweighted sample.

Table 6 Consumer durables, central heating and cars by family type: lone-parent families compared with other families

<i>Families with dependent children*</i>		<i>Great Britain: 2001 and 2002 combined</i>	
Consumer durables	Lone-parent families	Other families	
Percentage of households with:			
Television			
colour	99	100	
black and white	0	0	
satellite/cable/digital	48	62	
Video recorder	94	98	
CD player	92	96	
Home computer	56	80	
Access to internet at home	36	68	
Microwave oven	90	94	
Deep freezer/fridge freezer	96	99	
Washing machine	97	99	
Tumble drier	58	72	
Dishwasher	17	46	
Telephone (fixed or mobile)	98	100	
fixed telephone†	81	95	
mobile telephone†	83	91	
Central heating	92	96	
Car or van - one or more	52	93	
<i>Unweighted sample**</i>	1283	3873	

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

† Percentages for fixed and mobile telephones sum to greater than 100 because some households owned both.

** Weighted base not shown for combined data sets.

Table 7 Prevalence of cigarette smoking by sex and age: 1974 to 2002

Persons aged 16 and over

Great Britain

Age	Unweighted									Weighted				Weighted base 2002 (000's) =100%*	Unweighted sample* 2002
	1974	1978	1982	1986	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	1998	2000	2001	2002		
Percentage smoking cigarettes															
Men															
16-19	42	35	31	30	28	29	28	26	30	30	25	22	1,089	349	
20-24	52	45	41	41	38	39	40	43	42	41	35	40	37	1,384	420
25-34	56	48	40	37	36	34	34	38	37	38	39	38	36	3,292	1063
35-49	55	48	40	37	34	32	31	30	32	33	31	31	29	5,491	1884
50-59	53	48	42	35	28	28	27	28	27	28	27	26	27	3,374	1241
60 and over	44	38	33	29	24	21	18	18	16	16	16	16	17	4,931	1880
All aged 16 and over	51	45	38	35	31	29	28	29	28	30	29	28	27	19,561	6837
Women															
16-19	38	33	30	30	32	25	27	32	31	32	28	31	29	1,122	388
20-24	44	43	40	38	39	37	38	36	39	39	35	35	38	1,586	510
25-34	46	42	37	35	34	34	30	34	33	33	32	31	33	3,704	1282
35-49	49	43	38	34	33	30	28	30	28	29	27	28	27	6,175	2207
50-59	48	42	40	35	29	29	26	26	27	27	28	25	24	3,516	1333
60 and over	26	24	23	22	20	19	17	19	16	16	15	17	14	6,134	2231
All aged 16 and over	41	37	33	31	29	28	26	28	26	26	25	26	25	22,236	7951
Total															
16-19	40	34	30	30	30	27	27	29	31	31	29	28	25	2,211	737
20-24	48	44	40	39	38	38	39	39	40	40	35	37	38	2,971	930
25-34	51	45	38	36	35	34	32	36	35	35	35	34	34	6,996	2345
35-49	52	45	39	36	34	31	30	30	30	31	29	29	28	11,666	4091
50-59	51	45	41	35	29	29	27	27	27	28	27	26	26	6,889	2574
60 and over	34	30	27	25	21	20	17	18	16	16	16	17	15	11,065	4111
All aged 16 and over	45	40	35	33	30	28	27	28	27	28	27	27	26	41,798	14788

* Trend tables show unweighted and weighted figures for 1998 to give an indication of the effect of the weighting. For the weighted data (1998 and 2000 to 2002) the weighted base (000's) is the base for percentages. Unweighted data (up to 1998) are based on the unweighted sample. Bases for earlier years are of similar size and can be found in GHS reports for each year.

Table 8 Difficulty with hearing, by sex and age: 1979, 1992, 1995, 1998 and 2002

<i>Persons aged 16 and over</i>							<i>Great Britain</i>	
Age	Unweighted				Weighted		Weighted base 2002 (000's) = 100%*	Unweighted sample 2002*
	1979	1992	1995	1998	1998	2002		
Percentage having a hearing difficulty								
Men								
16-44	6	6	7	7	7	7	9,703	3157
45-64	19	20	23	24	23	22	6,246	2297
65-74	31	36	39	34	34	35	2,193	829
75 and over	42	45	48	53	53	52	1,465	568
All aged 16 and over	15	17	18	20	18	19	19,607	6851
Women								
16-44	5	4	5	5	5	5	10,748	3699
45-64	12	11	13	13	13	14	6,705	2573
65-74	24	21	20	21	21	22	2,475	892
75 and over	39	41	41	40	40	38	2,352	803
All aged 16 and over	12	12	13	13	13	13	22,280	7967
All persons								
16-44	5	5	6	6	6	6	20,452	6856
45-64	15	15	18	18	18	18	12,949	4870
65-74	27	27	28	27	26	28	4,668	1721
75 and over	40	43	44	45	45	44	3,817	1371
All aged 16 and over	13	14	15	16	16	16	41,886	14818

* Trend tables show unweighted and weighted figures for 1998 to give an indication of the effect of the weighting. For the weighted data (1998 and 2000 to 2002) the weighted base (000's) is the base for percentages. Unweighted data (up to 1998) are based on the unweighted sample. Bases for earlier years are of similar size and can be found in GHS reports for each year.

Table 9 Wears a hearing aid, by sex and age: 1979, 1992, 1995, 1998 and 2002

<i>Persons aged 16 and over</i>							<i>Great Britain</i>	
Age	Unweighted				Weighted		Weighted base 2002 (000's) = 100%*	Unweighted sample 2002*
	1979	1992	1995	1998	1998	2002		
Percentage wears a hearing aid								
Men								
16-44	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,703	3157
45-64	2	3	2	2	2	2	6,246	2297
65-74	7	11	9	8	8	9	2,193	829
75 and over	12	20	21	23	23	23	1,465	568
All aged 16 and over	2	4	3	4	3	4	19,607	6851
Women								
16-44	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,748	3699
45-64	2	2	2	2	2	2	6,705	2573
65-74	6	6	6	5	5	7	2,475	892
75 and over	12	17	16	15	15	17	2,352	803
All aged 16 and over	2	3	3	3	3	3	22,280	7967
All persons								
16-44	0	0	0	0	0	0	20,452	6856
45-64	2	2	2	2	2	2	12,949	4870
65-74	6	8	7	6	6	8	4,668	1721
75 and over	12	18	18	18	18	20	3,817	1371
All aged 16 and over	2	3	3	3	3	4	41,886	14818

* Trend tables show unweighted and weighted figures for 1998 to give an indication of the effect of the weighting. For the weighted data (1998 and 2000 to 2002) the weighted base (000's) is the base for percentages. Unweighted data (up to 1998) are based on the unweighted sample. Bases for earlier years are of similar size and can be found in GHS reports for each year.