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17/12/2016

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## Winchester wins top spot as UK's best place to live

**Winchester has been named the UK's best place to live, according to the 2016 Halifax Quality of Life Survey.**

The local authority district of Winchester (which includes the City of Winchester) scooped the top spot based on residents' health and life expectancy, employment and earnings, and high scores in personal well-being surveys. People who live in Winchester also have access to a good number of leisure facilities for socialising and downtime.

The Orkney Islands have taken second place, followed by Wychavon in Worcestershire, Derbyshire Dales and Hambleton in North Yorkshire.

### **10 reasons why Wintonians have the best quality of life in the UK:**

- The **employment rate**, at 83.1%, is significantly higher than the national average (73.7%), while gross weekly earnings of £824 are 27% higher than the UK average (£646)
- A high proportion (96.6%) of residents report being in good or fairly **good health** compared to a national average of 94.6%
- **Life expectancy** for men is higher than the UK average (79.5 years) at 82 years. Whilst the women of Winchester live more than two years longer than in the rest of the UK (85.3 years against 83.2 years)
- **Crime rates** are among the lowest in the country, with a burglary rate of 11.5 per 10,000 people compared to an average of 28.7 for the rest of the UK.
- Latest ONS figures indicate the Winchester adult population is among the **happiest, satisfied, content** and the least **anxious** in the UK scoring highly in the Personal Well-Being Survey with a top 30 ranking in each category.
- Moreover, in their leisure time they have a good **number of pubs** – 12 per 10,000 adults – and **health & leisure facilities** – two per 10,000 adults, above the national average of 10.1 and 1.4 respectively.

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The new research incorporates some key changes since last year's survey, including two new categories – number of pubs<sup>1</sup> and the availability of health clubs and leisure centres<sup>2</sup> – as well as some methodological changes in the ONS Personal Well-Being Survey, in order to refresh Quality of Life Survey rankings with a broader scope.

**Martin Ellis, economist at Halifax, said:** “Looking across a wide range of indicators considered by our research, residents of Winchester in Hampshire enjoy the best quality of life in the UK, benefiting from a combination of above average weekly earnings, low crime rate and good health. On the other hand, there is a cost associated with a high quality of life with house prices in Winchester 9.7 times the average annual local income – significantly higher than the UK average of 7.2.

“With more and more emphasis being placed on achieving a good work-life balance, the 2016 Halifax Quality of Life Survey includes a leisure category for the first time. This has had an impact on the rankings, especially at the top.”

## QUALITY OF LIFE QUICK FACTS

- **The highest weekly average earnings** are in Kensington & Chelsea, at £1,273 per week (p/w), followed by City of London (£1,106 p/w) and St Albans (£1,018 p/w). The UK average is £646 per week.
- **The lowest average annual rainfall** (525 mm) is in Castle Point in Essex. Eight of the 10 driest districts in the UK are in the East of England. The UK average annual rainfall is 869.9 mm. **The sunniest place in the UK** is the Isle of Wight where residents enjoy an average of 36.9 hours of sunshine a week, above the national average of 29.7 hours per week.
- Access to **superfast broadband** is measured by the proportion of premises able to receive 5 Mbps (mega bits per second). In over half (56%) of local area districts 95% of premises are able to receive or have access to superfast broadband. They include several areas in Greater Manchester (such as Manchester and Trafford), York, and Ards in Northern Ireland.
- Adults (16 and over) in Mid and East Antrim in Northern Ireland have the highest average rating for **life satisfaction** in the UK. Based on a score out of 10, the adults in this area had an average rating of 8.4. The UK average is 7.7.

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## **Majority of the top 50 are in the South but northern areas are well represented**

Nearly two-thirds (32) of the top 50 best places to live in the UK are in southern England, with 18 in the South East, a further six areas in the East of England, five in the South West and three in London. These areas include South Cambridgeshire (6<sup>th</sup>), Purbeck (7<sup>th</sup>), St Albans (8<sup>th</sup>), Wokingham (9<sup>th</sup>), Chiltern (10<sup>th</sup>), West Oxfordshire (11<sup>th</sup>) and Hart (26<sup>th</sup>).

The remaining 18 are in the East Midlands and West Midlands (both 5), Yorkshire and the Humber (4), Scotland (2), Wales and the North West (both 1). These areas include South Northamptonshire (16<sup>th</sup>), Stratford upon Avon (21<sup>st</sup>), Ryedale (29<sup>th</sup>), Monmouthshire (37<sup>th</sup>) and Harrogate (41<sup>th</sup>).

Areas in the South tend to score highly on weekly earnings, weather, health and life expectancy. Meanwhile, areas in the north tend to receive high ratings on low house price to earnings ratio, environmental measures such as low population densities and low traffic flows, as well as smaller primary school sizes. Northerners believe themselves to be less anxious and happier than in those living in the south, whereas southerners responded as more satisfied and content in life.

## **Orkneys takes second place**

The Orkneys in northern Scotland takes second place, traditionally performing well on employment (87.6%). The overwhelming majority of adults (96.6%) enjoy good or fairly good health and residents live in relative safety with the Orkneys having the lowest burglary rate in the UK.

Other factors keeping the Orkneys amongst the leading pack include; low amount of traffic on the roads, with just 142 cars per square kilometre, compared to the UK average of 9,419; a low population density with 22 residents per square kilometre compared to the national average of 268. It may be a remote location, but residents appear to be the least anxious and amongst the most happiest and satisfied in the country – with a large number of pubs to choose from (20 per 10,000 adults).

Wychavon, Derbyshire Dales and Hambleton – the other members of the top five – all score strongly in the Personal Well-Being Survey as well as long male and female life expectancy.

Both Derbyshire Dales and Hambleton have one of the highest employment rates (87.7%) and 45.1% of adults, on average, have a higher level of qualification (such as a degree, NVQ level 4 and above or professional qualification) compared to a national average of 35.6%.

All three also have a relatively large number of bars and pubs, but especially Derbyshire Dales with 27 per 10,000 adults, whilst Wychavon has the third highest number of health and fitness clubs – 3.5 per 10,000 adults.

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Former winner of the past five years – Hart – has dropped to 26<sup>th</sup> in the 2016 survey. This is mainly due to the inclusion of the two new categories – number of pubs and the availability of health clubs and leisure centres – as well as some methodological changes in the ONS Personal Well-Being Survey. Hart has also dropped, relative to other local authorities, on average earnings and employment rate – categories where it normally scores very highly.

## Key facts

### Labour Market

- **Employment** is highest in the Shetland Islands, at 89.4%, ahead of Stroud (88.8%) and Derbyshire Dales (87.7%). The UK average is 73.7%.
- **The highest weekly average earnings** are in Kensington & Chelsea, at £1,273 per week (p/w), followed by City of London (£1,106 p/w) and St Albans (£1,018 p/w). The UK average is £646 per week.
- **The proportion of adults (16 years and over) with the highest level of qualifications gained** (such as a degree, NVQ level 4 and above or professional qualification) is the highest in the City of London (94.8%), followed by Richmond upon Thames (70.4%), and Wandsworth (69.6%) – all significantly above the national average of 35.7%.

### Housing

- **The biggest homes** are in Uttlesford in Essex, Chiltern, South Buckinghamshire and Rutland, which all have an average of 6.4 habitable rooms. The smallest homes are in the City of London, Tower Hamlets, and Westminster (all below 4.0 habitable rooms). The average number of habitable rooms in the UK is 5.5.
- Access to **superfast broadband** is measured by the proportion of premises able to receive 5 Mbps (mega bits per second). In over half (56%) of local area districts 95% of premises are able to receive or have access to superfast broadband. They include several areas in Greater Manchester (such as Manchester and Trafford), York, and Ards in Northern Ireland. Across all areas of the UK, the majority of households have a good level of broadband access (i.e. a download speed of 2Mbps is regarded as the minimum for good broadband service).
- Only one area in the top 250 in the country has an **average house price to earnings ratio** which is below the UK historical long-term average of 4.0; Copeland (3.6). The highest ratios are: City of London (16.7), South Buckinghamshire (14.8) and Brent (14.5). The national average is 7.2.

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## Urban Environment

- The four most sparsely populated areas are all in Scotland. The Western Isles and Highlands jointly take the top spot for lowest **population density**, with just nine people per square kilometre (pp/ km). Followed by Argyle & Bute (13 pp/km), Shetland Islands (16 pp/km) and the Orkney Islands (22 pp/km). At the other end of the scale, the most populated areas per square kilometre are all in London: Islington (15,179pp/km), Tower Hamlets (14,762 pp/ km), Hackney (14,158 pp/ km) and Kensington and Chelsea (13,143 pp/ km). The UK average is 268 pp/km.
- The emptiest roads are mostly in Scotland. The lowest **traffic levels** are found in the Western Isles with just 71 vehicles per square kilometre, Highland (105 vehicles/km), Argyll & Bute (133 vehicles/km) and Orkney Islands (142 vehicles/km). The UK average is 9,408 vehicles/km.
- Orkney Islands has **the lowest burglary rate per 10,000 people (2.3)**, followed by Western Isles (4.8) and the Shetlands (6.0). The national average is 28.7 per/10,000.
- Seven of the 10 areas with **the lowest CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** are in London. The lowest emissions are found in Tower Hamlets (1.0 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per household) and Newham (1.1 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per household), followed by Hackney, Southwark and Barking & Dagenham, (all 1.2 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per household). The national average is 1.7 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita.

## Physical Environment

- **The lowest average annual rainfall** (525 mm) is in Castle Point in Essex. Eight of the 10 driest districts in the UK are in the East of England. The UK average annual rainfall is 869.9 mm.
- **The sunniest place in the UK** is the Isle of Wight where residents enjoy an average of 36.9 hours of sunshine a week, above the national average of 29.7 hours per week.

## Health

- **The healthiest districts** are all in the South, with Hart, Wokingham and Isles of Scilly all having 97% or more households rating themselves in good or fairly good health. Six of the top 10 areas are found in the South East, with the remaining found in the East of England (2), South West (1) and Scotland (1). In the UK as a whole, 94.6% of households rate themselves as in good or fairly good health.

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- **Life expectancy for males at birth** is highest in Kensington and Chelsea (83.3 years). The UK average is 79.5 years.
- **Life expectancy for females at birth** is highest in Chiltern and Camden (both 86.7 years), against the UK average of 83.2 years.

## Education

- **Primary school class sizes** are smallest in Scotland, with nine of the 10 local authority districts with the smallest primary school classes here. The Western Isles has the lowest in the UK with 17.0 compared to a national average of 26.9.
- **Seven of the 10 areas with the lowest secondary school pupil teacher ratio areas are in Northern Ireland.** The Western Isles has the lowest secondary school pupil teacher ratio of 13.2 compared to 20.7 across the UK as a whole.
- **The best GCSE results** in England are in Sutton (81.1%) and Kingston upon Thames (80.6%) Both are above the UK average of 70.1%.
- **The highest average school (both secondary and primary) spend per pupil** is in the Orkney Islands (£9,281) – twice the UK average of £4,626.

## Personal Well-Being

- **Personal well-being is based on four categories – life satisfaction, worthwhile, happiness and anxiety:**
  - Adults (16 and over) in Mid and East Antrim in Northern Ireland have the highest average rating for **life satisfaction** in the UK. Based on a score out of 10, the adults in this area had an average rating of 8.4. The UK average is 7.7.
  - With a rating of 8.6 (out of 10) adults in Mid and East Antrim also believe what they do in life is **worthwhile**, the highest average rating in the UK. The national average is 7.9.
  - The **happiest** adults are in Mid and East Antrim and the Western Isles in Scotland, both with an average rating of 8.2 – significantly higher than the UK average of 7.5.
  - Adults in Orkney Islands are the least **anxious** with an average rating of 1.9. The average for the UK is 2.8.

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## Leisure

- Eden in Cumbria has the highest number of pubs per 10,000 adults (28.3) followed by Derbyshire Dales (26.7). The national average is 10.1. Cornwall comes out top when looking at the total number of pubs in a local authority with 620.
- For the active, Islington is the place to head to for health and fitness clubs where there are 6.3 clubs per 10,000 people. The national average is 1.4.

**Table 1: 2016 Halifax Quality of Life Rankings – the top 50 Local Authority Districts in the UK**

| Local Authority        | Region                   | Rank 2016 |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Winchester             | South East               | 1         |
| Orkney Islands         | Scotland                 | 2         |
| Wychavon               | West Midlands            | 3         |
| Derbyshire Dales       | East Midlands            | 4         |
| Hambleton              | Yorkshire and The Humber | 5         |
| South Cambridgeshire   | East of England          | 6         |
| Purbeck                | South West               | 7         |
| St Albans              | East of England          | 8         |
| Wokingham              | South East               | 9         |
| Chiltern               | South East               | 10        |
| West Oxfordshire       | South East               | 11        |
| South Hams             | South West               | 12        |
| South Oxfordshire      | South East               | 13        |
| Tonbridge and Malling  | South East               | 14        |
| West Dorset            | South West               | 15        |
| South Northamptonshire | East Midlands            | 16        |
| Waverley               | South East               | 17        |
| Shetland Islands       | Scotland                 | 18        |
| Horsham                | South East               | 19        |
| City of London         | London                   | 20        |
| Stratford-on-Avon      | West Midlands            | 21        |
| Eden                   | North West               | 22        |
| Windsor and Maidenhead | South East               | 23        |
| Malvern Hills          | West Midlands            | 24        |
| Mole Valley            | South East               | 25        |

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|                      |                          |    |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Hart                 | South East               | 26 |
| Mid Devon            | South West               | 27 |
| Rutland              | East Midlands            | 28 |
| Ryedale              | Yorkshire and The Humber | 29 |
| Lichfield            | West Midlands            | 30 |
| Richmond upon Thames | London                   | 31 |
| Rugby                | West Midlands            | 32 |
| Richmondshire        | Yorkshire and The Humber | 33 |
| Guildford            | South East               | 34 |
| Uttlesford           | East of England          | 35 |
| Maldon               | East of England          | 36 |
| Monmouthshire        | Wales                    | 37 |
| Babergh              | East of England          | 38 |
| Vale of White Horse  | South East               | 39 |
| Rushcliffe           | East Midlands            | 40 |
| Harrogate            | Yorkshire and The Humber | 41 |
| Mid Sussex           | South East               | 42 |
| Reigate and Banstead | South East               | 43 |
| Westminster          | London                   | 44 |
| Wiltshire            | South West               | 45 |
| Harborough           | East Midlands            | 46 |
| East Hertfordshire   | East of England          | 47 |
| West Berkshire       | South East               | 48 |
| Wycombe              | South East               | 49 |
| Aylesbury Vale       | South East               | 50 |

Source: Halifax December 2016

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**Table 2: Local Authority District with the Best Quality of Life in each region in 2016**

| Local Authority      | Region                   |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Winchester           | South East               |
| Derbyshire Dales     | East Midlands            |
| South Cambridgeshire | East of England          |
| Wychavon             | West Midlands            |
| City of London       | London                   |
| Purbeck              | South West               |
| Hambleton            | Yorkshire and The Humber |
| Monmouthshire        | Wales                    |
| Orkney Islands       | Scotland                 |
| Eden                 | North West               |
| Mid & East Antrim    | Northern Ireland         |
| Northumberland       | North East               |

Source: Halifax December 2016

**Table 3: Local Authority District with the Best Quality of Life in each category in 2016**

| Group                                  | Variable  | Local Authority District                                      | Region   |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Labour</b><br>(UK average is 73.7%) | <b>Highest employment rate: 89.4%</b>   | Shetland Islands  | Scotland   |
| (UK- £646 per week)                    | <b>Highest gross weekly Earnings: £1,273</b>  | Kensington and Chelsea  | London   |
| (UK – 35.6%)                           | <b>% of adults (16+) with highest qualification gained: 94.8%.</b><br>This includes graduate and post postgraduate degrees, NVQ level 4 and above, and professional qualifications. | City of London  | London   |
| <b>Housing</b><br>(UK – 5.5)           | <b>Highest average number of rooms in house: 6.4</b>  | Uttlesford<br>Chiltern<br>South<br>Buckinghamshire<br>Rutland | East of England<br>South East<br>South East<br>East Midlands |
| (UK – 97%)                             | <b>Largest % of houses with central heating: 100%</b>   | East Ayrshire   | Scotland   |

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| (UK – 7.2)  | <b>Lowest House price to earnings ratio: 3.6</b>   | Copeland   | North West   |
| (UK – 94%)  | <b>% of households with more than 5Mbps: in 56% of LADs, 95% of premises have broadband speed in excess of 5Mbps</b> | Newcastle<br>Liverpool<br>Leicester<br>Norwich<br>Brent<br>Southampton | North East<br>North West<br>East Midlands<br>East of England<br>London<br>South East |
|   |  |  |  |
| <b>Urban environment</b><br>(UK- 268 per sq/km)           | <b>Lowest Population density per sqr km: 9</b>   | Western Isles<br>Highland  | Both Scotland  |
| (UK- 9,408 cars/km)                                       | <b>Lowest traffic flows per square km: 71 cars /km</b>   | Western Isles  | Scotland   |
| (UK-28.7 per 10,000 people)                               | <b>Lowest burglary rate per 10,000 population: 2.3 per 10,000 people</b>   | Orkney Isles   | Scotland   |
| (UK – 1.7 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> emissions per household) | <b>Lowest Total Consumer CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions: 1.0 tonnes per household</b>                                      | Tower Hamlets  | London   |
|   |  |  |  |
| <b>Physical environment</b><br>(UK – 869.9 mm per year)   | <b>Lowest average annual rainfall: 525mm</b>   | Castle Point   | East of England  |
| (UK- 29.7 hours per week)                                 | <b>Highest average weekly sunshine hours: 36.9 hours</b>   | Isle of Wight  | South East   |
| <b>Health</b><br>(UK – 94.6%)                             | <b>Highest % of residents in good health: 97.4%</b>  | Hart   | South East   |
| Male life expectancy<br>(UK -79.5 years)                  | <b>Longest Male life expectancy at birth for males: 83.3 years</b>   | Kensington and Chelsea   | London   |
| Female life expectancy<br>(UK -83.2 years)                | <b>Longest Female life expectancy at birth for males: 86.7 years</b>   | Chiltern<br>Camden   | South East<br>London   |

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| <b>Education</b><br>(UK-26.9 pupils per class)                              | <b>Lowest average number of pupils in primary school class: 17.0</b>   | Western Isles                      | Scotland                     |
| <b>Secondary Education</b><br>(UK – 20.7 pupil to teacher)                  | <b>Lowest secondary school pupil – teacher ratio: 13.6</b>   | Western Isles                      | Scotland                     |
| <b>Secondary Education Exams</b><br>(UK- 70.1%)                             | <b>Highest % of 15yr olds with 5 or more GCSEs A-C grade: 97.9% (in Scotland % of 15yr+ olds with 5 or more SCQFs A-C grade)</b> | East Dunbartonshire                | Scotland                     |
| <b>Per pupil spending (primary &amp; secondary) – (UK-£4,626 per pupil)</b> | <b>Highest per pupil spend: £9,281</b>   | Orkney Islands                     | Scotland                     |
| <b>Personal Well Being</b><br>(UK- 7.7 from 10)                             | <b>Highest Life Satisfaction rating out of 10: 8.4</b>   | Mid & East Antrim                  | Northern Ireland             |
| (UK- 7.9 from 10)   | <b>Highest Worthwhile rating out of 10: 8.6</b>  | Mid & East Antrim                  | Northern Ireland             |
| (UK- 7.5 from 10)   | <b>Highest Happiness rating out of 10: 8.2</b>   | Mid & East Antrim<br>Western Isles | Northern Ireland<br>Scotland |
| (UK- 2.8 from 10)   | <b>Lowest levels of Anxiety rating out of 10: 1.9</b>  | Orkney Islands                     | Scotland                     |
| <b>Leisure</b><br>(UK-10.1 per 10,000 people)                               | <b>Number of pubs per 10,000 population: 28.3 per 10,000 people</b>  | Eden                               | North West                   |
| (UK-1.4 per 10,000 people)  | <b>Number of fitness &amp; Health clubs per 10,000 population: 6.3 per 10,000 people</b>   | Islington                          | London                       |

Source: Halifax December 2016

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## Notes to editors:

The Quality of Life index aims to quantify where living standards are highest in the United Kingdom by ranking local performance across a range of indicators covering the labour market, the housing market, the environment, education, health, personal well-being and leisure. The index has been produced at a local authority district level.

The quality of life reading for each local authority has been created by summing scores across 26 variables within 8 broad groups.

Each local authority district is given a score out of 10 for each variable contained in the index. Scores within each of the broad groups are averaged and then the seven group scores are summed to create an overall quality of life score.

Note:<sup>1</sup> The British Beer & Pub Association represents Britain's brewers and pub companies, members account for some 96% of beer brewed in Britain today, and own more than half of the nation's pubs. These members are from international brewers, to market-leading managed pub companies, the nation's largest tenanted pub companies and historic family brewers.

<sup>2</sup> health clubs and leisure centres covers commercial health & fitness clubs and the other local authority leisure centres, local authority swimming pools with gyms and universities with access for the public. Source: Leisure intelligence analysis supplied by John Turner Leisure Marketing Limited t/a Leisure Lists

## See separate technical note for more information on methodology of index and data sources.

| Group             | Variable   | Period covered  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Labour            | Employment rate %  | Jul 2015-Jun 2016   |
|                   | Gross weekly Earnings £s   | April 2016<br>Northern Ireland (NI) – April 2015, NISRA (both up rated by average weekly earnings index to August 2016)             |
|                   | % of adults(16+) with highest qualification gained                                       | 2011 Census data  |
| Housing           | Number of rooms in house   | England & Wales 2011 ONS Census Data<br>Scotland – Housing Conditions Survey 2009/11<br>Northern Ireland November 2015 Halifax data |
|                   | % of houses with central heating and sole use of bathroom                                | England & Wales 2011 ONS Census Data<br>Scotland – housing Conditions Survey 2009/11<br>NI – Halifax Data to November 2015.         |
|                   | House prices to Earnings ratio   | 12 months to October 2016   |
|                   | Broadband speed is based on % of premises able to receive 5Mbit/s (mega bits per second) | OFCOM 2016  |
| Urban environment | Population density per square km   | 2015 – ONS  |
|                   | Traffic flows per square km  | 2015  |
|                   | Burglary rate per 10,000 population  | British Crime Survey 2015/16; Northern Ireland 2014   |

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|                             | CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions per tonne per capita                        | 2013 Department of Energy and Climate Change (covers period 2005-2014) NI Local and Regional CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions Estimates for 2005 - 2013 |
| <b>Physical environment</b> | Average annual rainfall mm  | Met Office Average 2009/2013   |
|                             | Annual sunshine hours   | Met Office Average 2009/2013   |
| <b>Health</b>               | % in good or fairly good health                                       | 2011 Census  |
|                             | Life expectancy at birth for males                                    | England, Wales & Scotland 2012/14; Northern Ireland 2011/13  |
|                             | Life expectancy at birth for females                                  | England, Wales & Scotland 2012/14; Northern Ireland 2011/13  |
| <b>Education</b>            | Number of pupils in primary school class                              | England and Wales 2016, and Northern Ireland 2015/16; Scotland 2015  |
|                             | % of 15yr+ olds with 5 or more GCSEs A-C grade or Scottish equivalent | 2014/2015 England; 2014/15 Wales; Scotland 2014/15; Northern Ireland 2014/15   |
|                             | Average state school (primary and secondary) spending per pupil       | England 2015/16, Scotland 2014/15 and Wales 2016/17; NI 2013/14 – 2015/16  |
|                             | Secondary school pupil teacher ratio                                  | England 2015 (adjusted class size data), Wales 2014 and Scotland 2014  |
| <b>Personal Well-Being</b>  | Life Satisfaction   | April 2015-March 2016 ONS  |
|                             | Worthwhile  | April 2015-March 2016 ONS  |
|                             | Happiness   | April 2015-March 2016 ONS  |
|                             | Anxiety   | April 2015-March 2016 ONS  |
| <b>Leisure</b>              | Number of Pubs  | 2016 British Beer and Pub Association  |
|                             | Number of Fitness & Health clubs                                      | 2016 Leisure intelligence analysis supplied by John Turner Leisure Marketing Limited t/a Leisure Lists   |

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