

Social Trends – ONS's flagship publication for social reporting



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Outline

- Overview – aim, audience, history
- Brief tour of Social Trends
- Social Trends and social reporting – some issues

Overview of Social Trends

- ONS's flagship social report
- draws together statistics from ONS, other government departments and organisations
- to paint broad picture of society today, and how it has been changing
- unique product
- part of portfolio (Regional Trends, Neighbourhood Statistics, etc)

Short history

- First published 1970
- Quarterly pilot 1998 not continued)
- 38th annual edition 8th April
- Regularly refreshed
- Business process re-engineering
- Focus group and other user research

Aim of Social Trends

- launched in light of "the growing realization in Parliament, the Press and elsewhere that economic progress must be measured, in part at least, in terms of social benefits"
- "to help public understanding and discussion of social policy"

Social Trends aimed at wide audience

- policy makers in public and private sectors
- service providers
- people in local government
- journalists and other commentators
- academics and students
- schools
- general public

Annual release day

- one of busiest days in ONS media calendar
- detailed press coverage
- often simply described as ONS's survey of modern society
- numerous references in media and on other websites around the world

China Daily Post

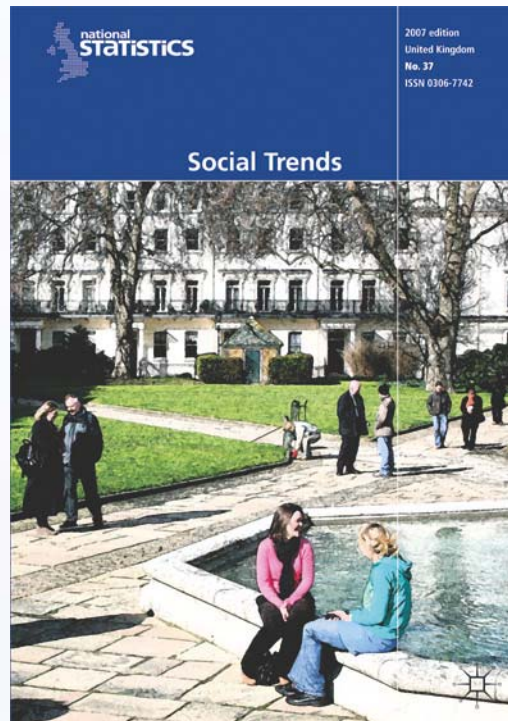
- reported Social Trends as “a must read for anyone working in advertising, marketing or social policy”

Social Trends is a compendia publication

- statistics in it not new
- adds considerable value to ONS and wider government statistics outputs
- provides second wave of coverage to each output
- does so in context of bigger picture
- prompts interest in ONS outputs from new users

Social Trends 37

2007 edition



On-line version with data tables

- <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/socialtrends37/>

Social Trends 2007

The underlying theme in this year's edition is children and young people. Children are living in an increasing range of family structures and participating more in education. They are also very much in touch with today's digital age of mobile phones and the internet. However, today's young people are still not flying the nest and considered are some of the issues which may be influencing these decisions.

The population of the UK is still growing but family sizes are shrinking. Homes with fewer bedrooms are being built but increases in housing density are placing increasing pressure on the land and environment. More years are spent in poor health, and obesity is rising, but our attitudes towards our lifestyles may be changing. More opportunities for sport are being provided through schools and we are taking more holidays abroad than ever before.



About the Report

Social Trends draws together social and economic data from a wide range of government departments and other organisations to provide a comprehensive guide to British society today, and how it has been changing.



► [Download full report & data](#)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ► Population | ► Households & families |
| ► Education & training | ► Labour market |
| ► Income & wealth | ► Expenditure |
| ► Health | ► Social protection |
| ► Crime & justice | ► Housing |
| ► Environment | ► Transport |
| ► Lifestyles & social participation | |

Social Trends contains 13 chapters

- each focusing on different social policy area
- described in tables, figures and text

Social Trends contains 13 chapters

- population
- households and families
- education and training
- labour market
- income and wealth
- expenditure
- health
- social protection
- crime and justice
- housing
- environment
- transport
- lifestyles and social participation

Content of Social Trends

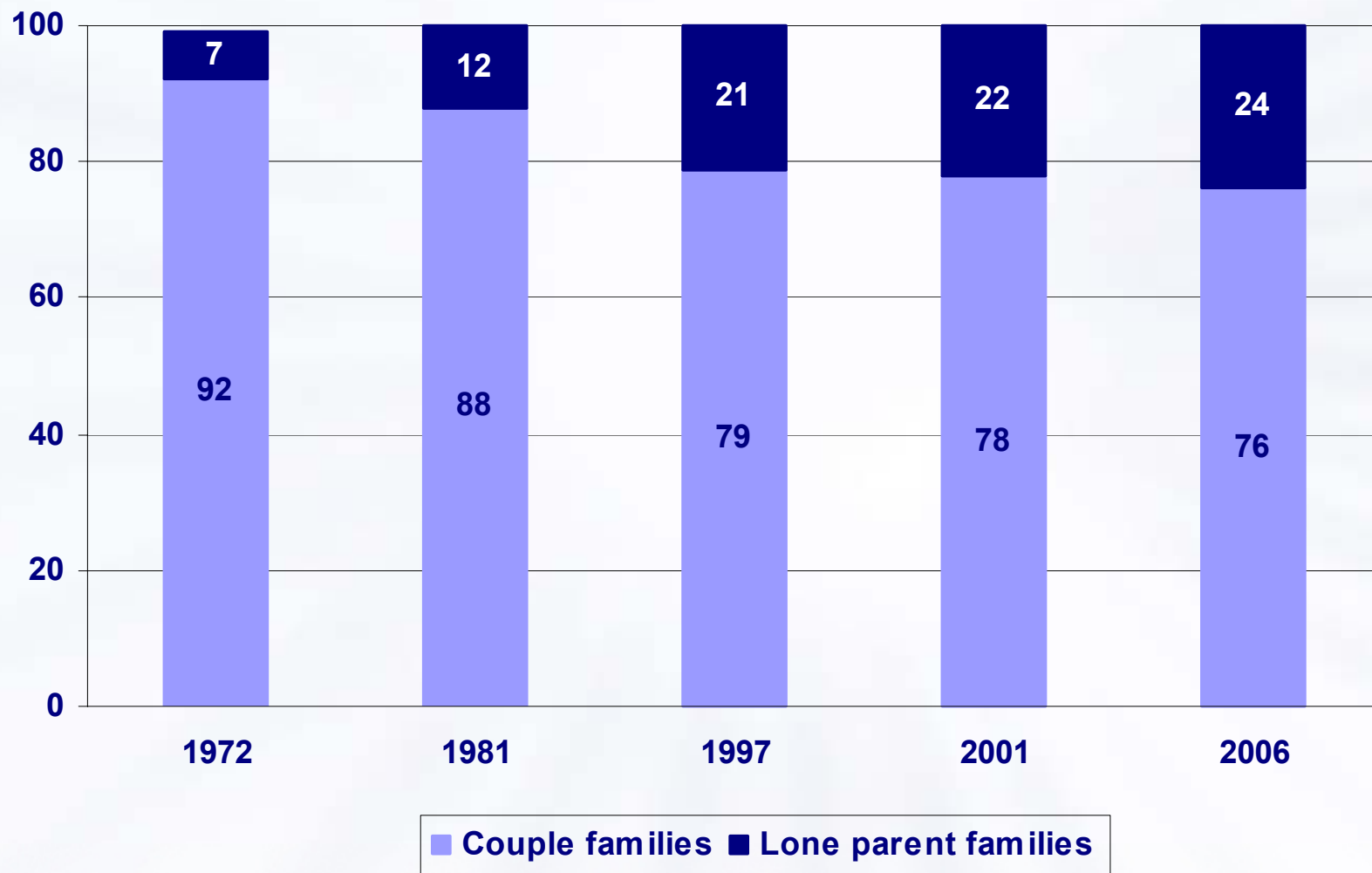
- chapter headings remain fixed
- content reviewed each year
- over half of tables and charts in Social Trends 38 new compared with the previous edition
- seek to preserve topicality
- some articles (not ST37)

Family structure

Great Britain

Percentages

Dependent children: by family type



Each year has underlying theme

- to help structure and focus the volume
- ST37 – children and young people
- ST38 - societal wellbeing

Social Trends team

- now based in Newport (South Wales)
- work relocated from London in 2006/07
- core team of 8 data managers, authors, editor and project manager
- supported by publications, press and other data managers
- integral part of ONS's social and economic analysis and reporting activities
- ST team contributes to other analysis and reporting, including equalities

Social Trends and social reporting issues

- Comprehensive
- And selective (and how to select?)
- Timeliness and topicality
- Attitudinal data, especially life satisfaction
- How analytical? - by independent ONS
- Frameworks, social accounting
- “So what does it all add up to?”

Thank you!

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