

## J ACCESS

### Main messages

Householders without a car were much more likely to report access difficulties to certain key amenities than those who had a car, according to a survey in England in 1997/98. People aged 75 and over, and those living in very rural areas, had more access problems than other groups. Basic services such as a general store, post office, doctor, and daily bus service are often not available in rural areas. In 1996, around 40 per cent of people with a disability reported difficulties with accessing goods and services.

The quality of the housing stock improved over the period 1986 to 1996, in terms of the number of homes judged unfit to live in. The number of households in temporary accommodation increased throughout the 1980s.

The number of fuel poor households in England decreased by a fifth between 1991 and 1996.

### Relevance

There is a need for better access to services with less need to travel. The dominance of the car limits choice and opportunity, constraining the transport options available, particularly for those without a car. Inadequate public transport and services which are difficult to reach add to hardship for the least well-off. Access is a key issue for disabled people. The arts and sport make a significant contribution to quality of life and should be accessible to everybody. Everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. Decent, energy efficient homes contribute to social cohesion, improved health and better use of fossil fuels and other resources.

The extent to which the key objectives identified in the Strategy are being achieved, as reflected by the indicators, is illustrated in the following table.

### Key strategies

- *A better quality of life. A strategy for sustainable development for the UK. (7.33-7.53)*
- *An new deal for transport: Better for everyone.* The Government's white paper on the future of transport<sup>1</sup>
- Forthcoming Rural white paper
- Forthcoming Urban white paper

### Some other related indicators:

How children get to school (G2); Distance travelled relative to income (G5); New retail floorspace in town centres in and out of town (K2); Household growth (K4); Quality of surroundings (K6); Access to local green space (K7)

<sup>1</sup> July 1998, ISBN 0-10-139502-7

Objective	Ref no.	Indicator	Data used	Change since		Specific targets/goals
				1970	1990	
Need better access to services	J1	People finding access difficult	1997/98	...	...	
	J2	Access to services in rural areas	1991-1997	...	≈	
Ensure that disabled people have access to a wider range of goods, services and facilities	J3	Access for disabled people	1996	...	...	
Arts and sport should be accessible to everyone	J4	Participation in sport and cultural activities	1987-1996	...	≈	Increase participation of adults taking part in regular sporting activity to 37% by 2002 and create 6,000 new sports facilities in the next 10 years in England
Reduce the proportion of unfit housing stock	H7	Homes judged unfit to live in (headline)	1986-1996	...	≈	
Ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home	J5	Temporary accommodation	1982-1998	...	≈	
		Rough sleepers	1992-1998	...	✓	Reduce the number of people sleeping rough by two thirds by 2002 in England
Improving significantly the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation	J6	Fuel poverty	1991-1996	...	✓	To install energy efficiency measures in 1 million buildings by 2002

**Key**

✓ significant change, in direction of meeting objective

≈ no significant change

na not applicable, in cases where the indicator is for contextual purposes

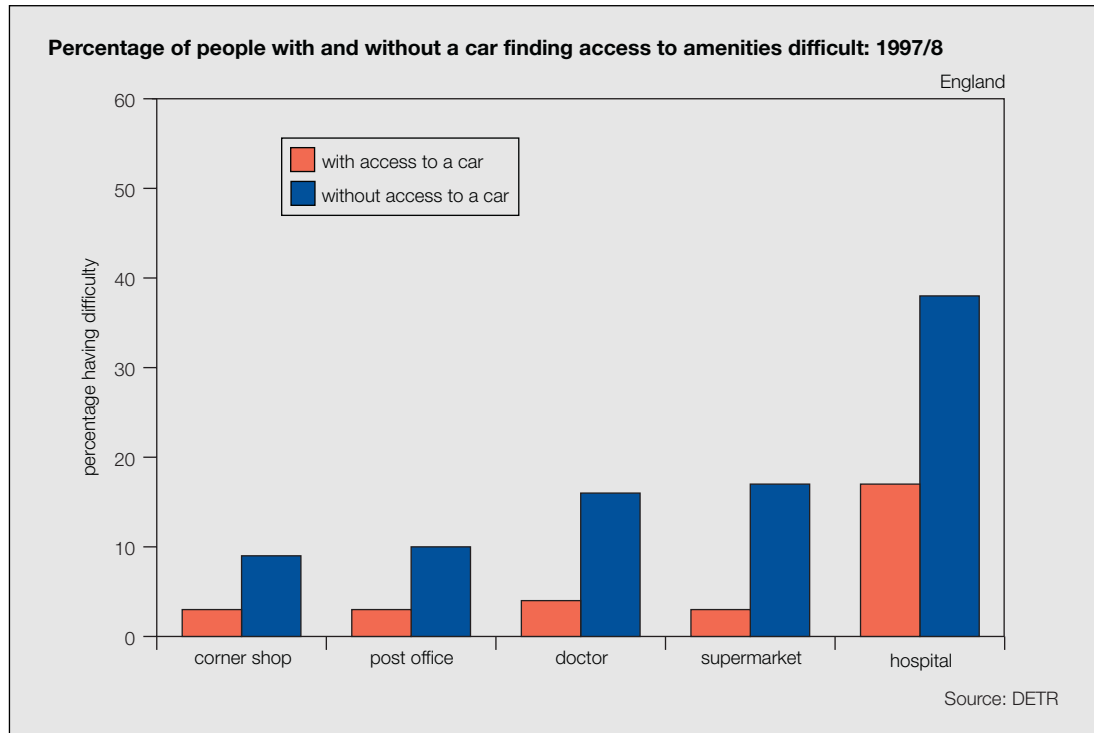
✗ significant change, in direction away from meeting objective

... trend is uncertain or no quantitative data available

**Objective** Need better access to services

**Indicator** People finding access difficult

J1



Householders without a car were much more likely to report access difficulties to certain key amenities than those who had a car. In a survey in England in 1997/98, 38 per cent of householders without access to a car said it was difficult to get to a hospital, 17 per cent said it was difficult to get to supermarkets, and 16 per cent said it was difficult to get to the doctor.

**Relevance** Easy access to basic services such as a supermarket, post office, doctor, clinic, chemist or launderette, at reasonable prices, by means other than a car is an important element of sustainable development.

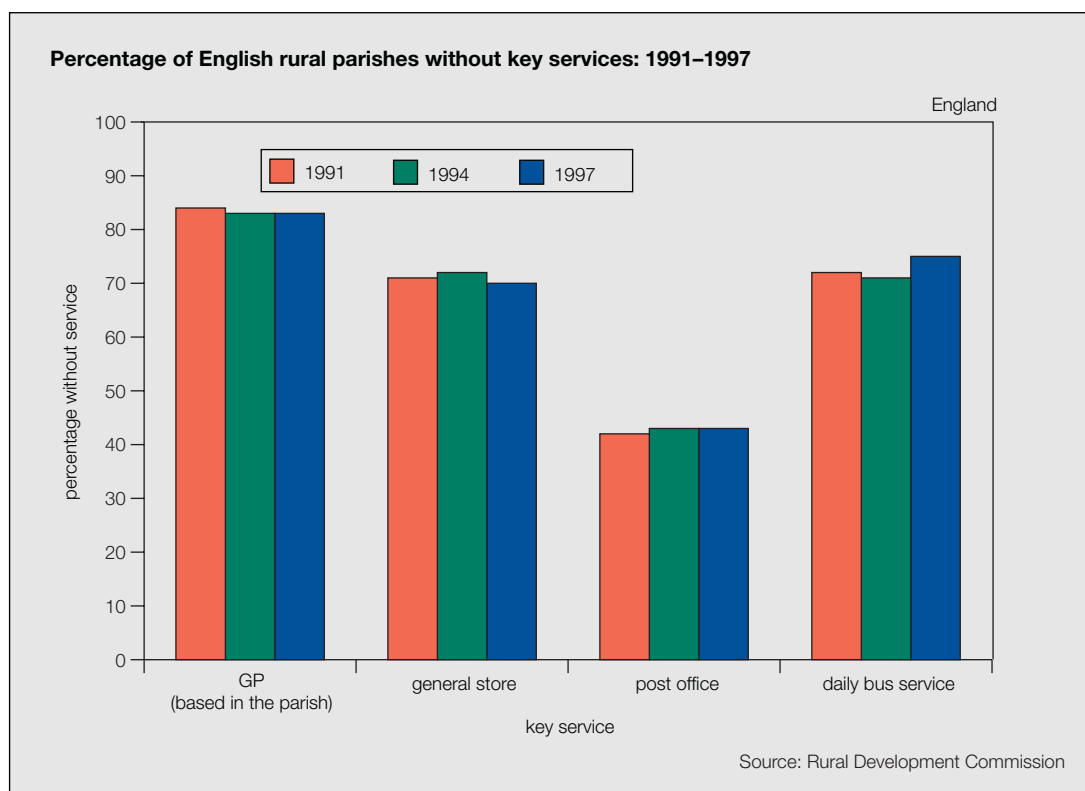
**Trends** The proportions of all householders reporting difficulty getting to these amenities has reduced slightly since an earlier survey in 1994/95.

**Background** The larger proportion of householders reporting difficulty with access to hospitals is probably because hospitals serve larger catchment areas than the other amenities identified and many people have to travel further to get there. People aged 75 and over, and those living in very rural areas, had more access problems than other groups. This indicator is based on responses to questions in the Survey of English Housing.

**Objective** Need better access to services

**Indicator** Access to services in rural areas

J2



**In England in 1997, 70 per cent of rural parishes had no general store, 43 per cent had no post office, and over 80 per cent had no general practitioner based in the parish. 75 per cent of rural parishes did not have a daily bus service.**

**Relevance** Better access to services with less need to travel is a sustainable development objective. The dominance of the car limits choice and opportunity, constraining the transport options available, particularly for those without a car. Inadequate public transport and services which are difficult to reach add to hardship for the least well-off.

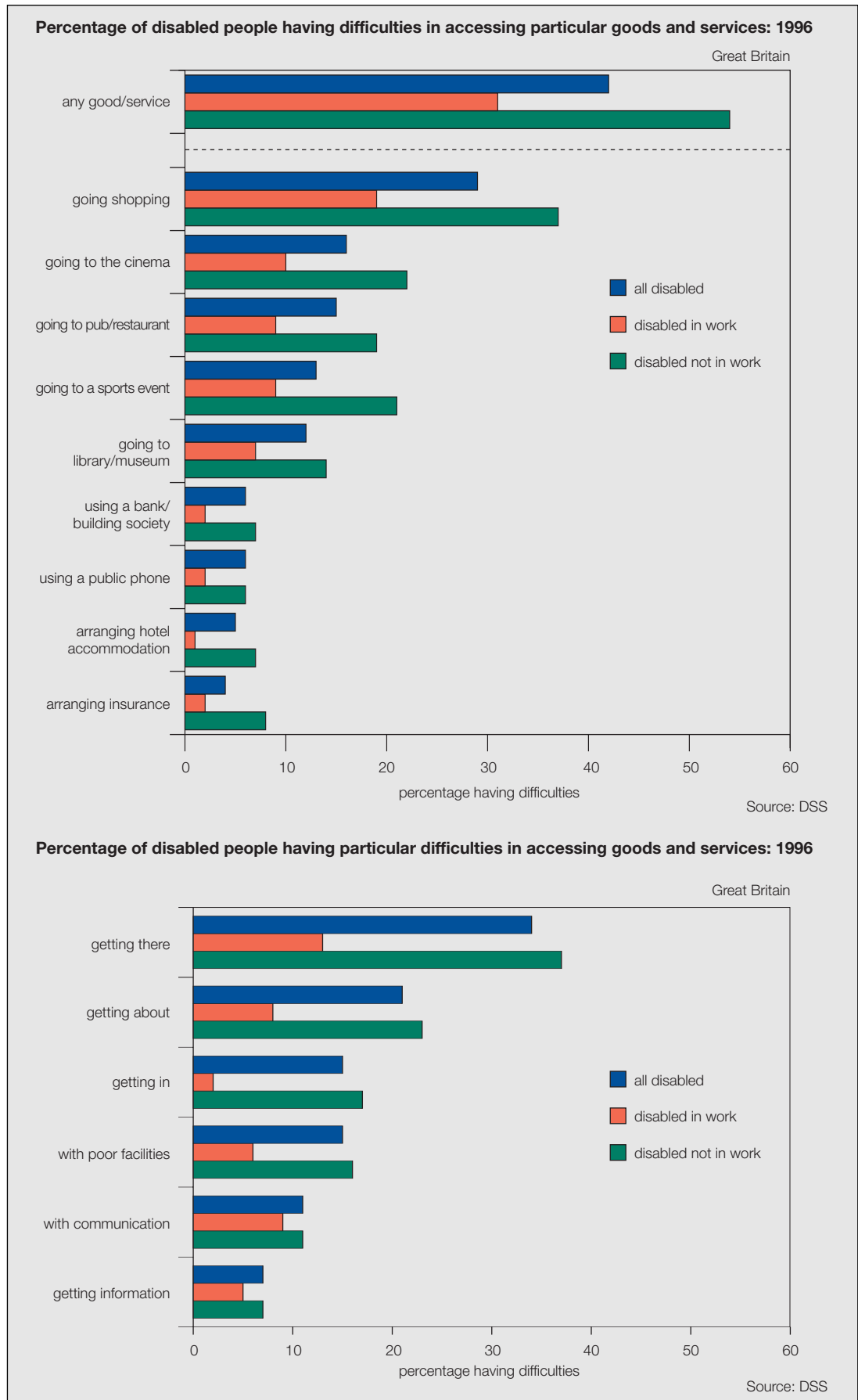
**Trends** There has been relatively little change over the period from 1991 to 1997 in the proportions of rural parishes without services such as a post office, a permanent shop of any kind, and a general practitioner based in the parish. On access to other amenities, 49 per cent of rural parishes had no school for any age group in 1997, and 28 per cent had no village hall or community centre.

**Background** The data are drawn from surveys of the availability of services in rural parishes in England (parishes can contain more than one village). Those parishes with smaller populations are most likely to be without services. For example, 59 per cent of parishes with under 1,000 population were without a permanent shop of any kind in 1997, compared with 1 per cent for larger parishes with a population between 3,000 and 9,999.

**Objective** Ensure that disabled people have access to a wider range of goods, services and facilities

**Indicator** Access for disabled people

J3



A 1996 Department of Social Security survey on disabled people showed that one fifth of the population had a disability which would bring them within the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act. Around 40 per cent of them reported difficulties with accessing goods and services. Shopping is the single activity with which they have the most difficulty, particularly those who are not in work. Getting there, getting about and getting in are the major difficulties.

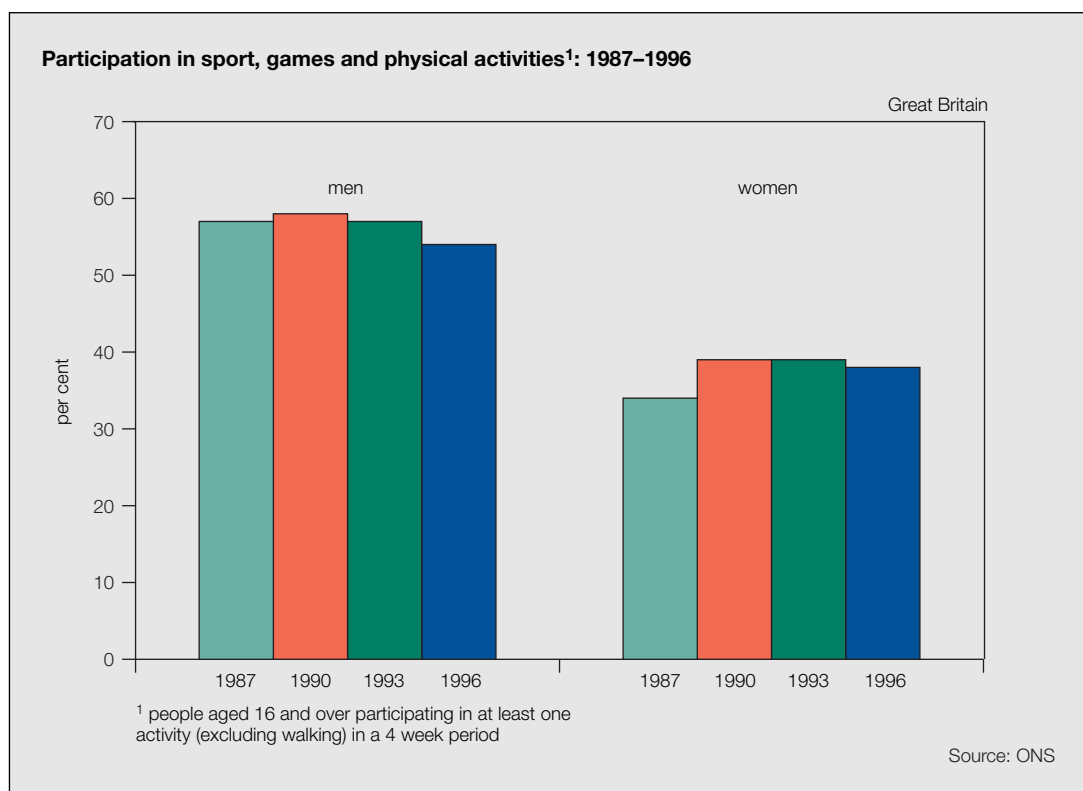
*Relevance* There is a need for greater access for disabled people to goods and services, where this is currently impossible or unreasonably difficult.

*Background* The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 includes provisions to prevent discrimination against disabled people in the provision of goods, facilities and services. A 1996 DSS survey gave initial baseline findings on the extent of difficulties experienced by disabled people. It is intended in future to monitor changes in the experience of disabled people to check on the effectiveness of the legislation.

**Objective** Arts and sport should be accessible to everyone

**Indicator** Participation in sport and cultural activities

**J4**



**Participation rates in sport, games and physical activities were relatively stable between 1987 and 1996, but there are marked differences in the participation rates for men (54 per cent in 1996) and women (38 per cent in 1996).**

**Relevance** Taking part in the arts, sport and recreation has beneficial social, economic and health impacts. The aim is to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities and strengthening the creative industries. We also need to encourage participation by all groups in society as part of urban and rural regeneration and in combating social exclusion.

**Targets and goals** Sport England aim to increase participation of adults aged 16 or over taking part in regular sporting activity from 31 per cent in 1993 to 37 per cent in 2002, and create 6,000 new sports facilities in the next ten years. They also plan to extend their TOP programme, which provides a foundation for childrens sport, to 25,000 schools and 5 million children by the end of 2002.

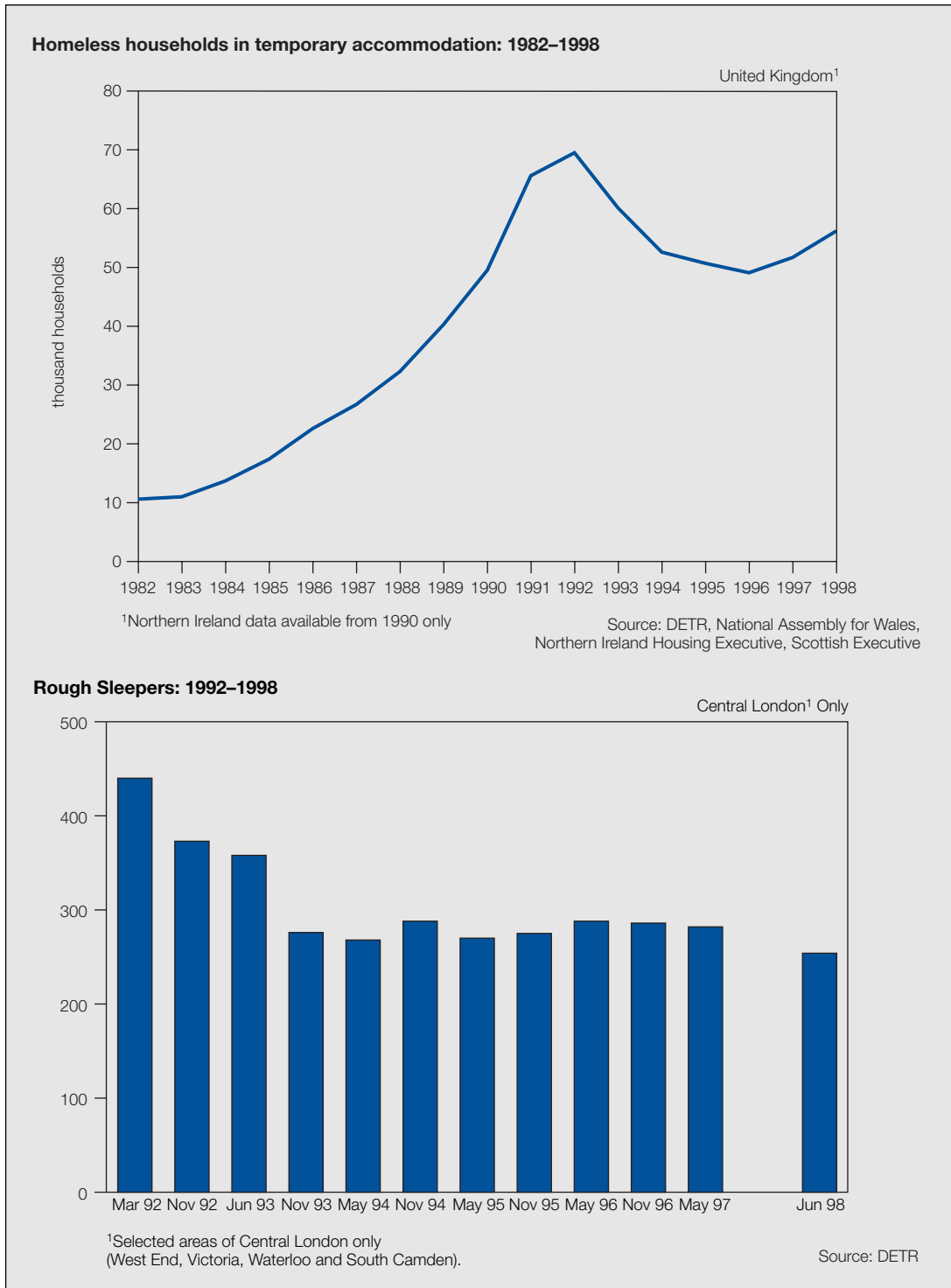
**Trends** Rates for men are higher than for women in every age range. They also vary markedly by socio-economic group, from 63 per cent for professional people down to 23 per cent for the unskilled manual group.

**Background** The survey covers only sports, games and physical activities. Walking has been excluded from the indicator of overall participation because it is such a widespread activity. An indicator is being developed which will measure activities such as visiting museums and galleries, going to the cinema, and reading books.

**Objective** Ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home

**Indicator** Temporary accommodation/Rough sleepers

**J5**



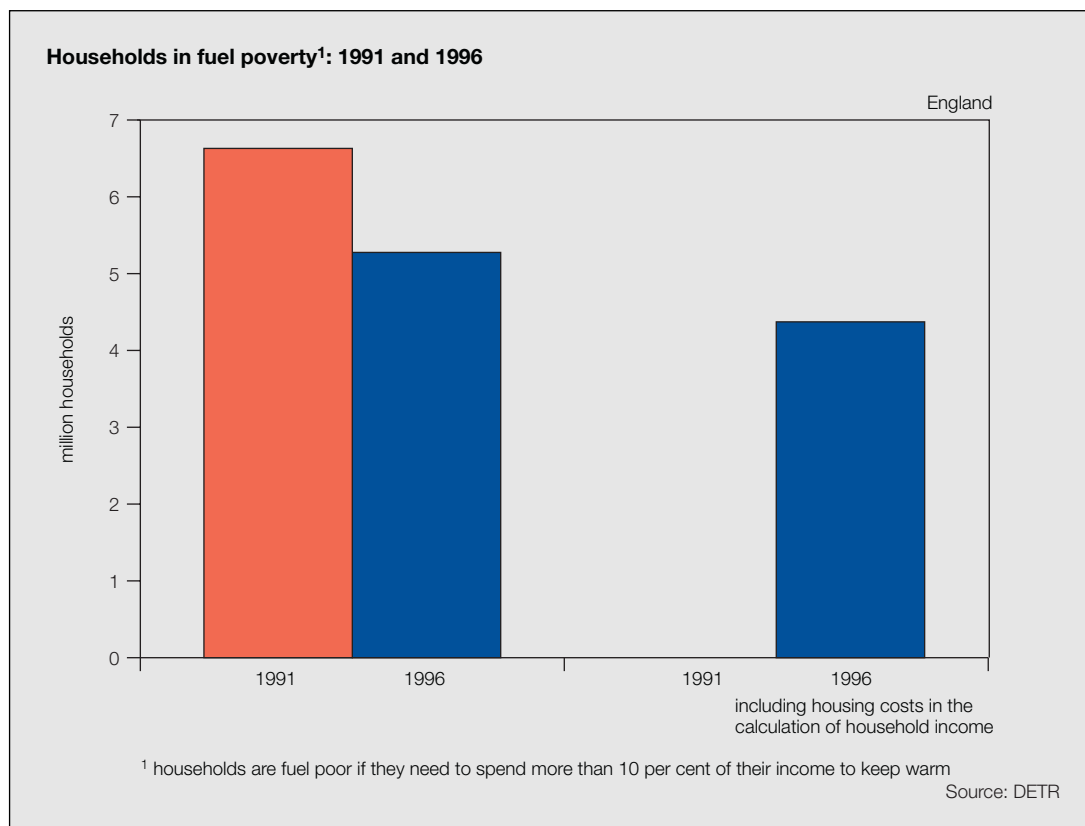
**The number of households in temporary accommodation increased throughout the 1980s. The number of rough sleepers in Central London has remained stable in recent years.**

<i>Relevance</i>	Housing is a key component of a decent quality of life. Living in temporary accommodation can bring uncertainty and instability. The numbers in temporary accommodation may reflect a lack of affordable housing in the area. People who sleep rough are amongst the most vulnerable in society.
<i>Targets and goals</i>	In 1998 the government announced a commitment to reduce the numbers of people sleeping rough in England by two thirds by 2002.
<i>Trends</i>	The number of households in temporary accommodation rose steeply throughout the 1980s and peaked in 1992. From 1992, it declined until early 1997. During the following two years it increased and by mid 1999 had returned to the level of mid 1993. The number of people sleeping rough declined rapidly in 1992 and 1993 after which levels have remained about the same. The winter shelter programme has considerably reduced the number sleeping rough during the winter months.
<i>Background</i>	<p>Since 1978, under the homelessness legislation, local housing authorities have been required to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless people who fall within a 'priority need' group (e.g. families with dependent children). Until 1996, the main statutory duty was interpreted as an obligation to secure permanent accommodation. In areas of high pressure, in England, many authorities placed people in temporary accommodation pending availability of a permanent solution. Since 1997, in England, the main homelessness duty has been to accommodate temporarily for up to two years. More than 40 per cent of people in temporary accommodation are in London, where the pressure on affordable accommodation has increased significantly since 1996. The situation in London has been worsened by a continuing increase in the number of asylum seekers requiring temporary accommodation.</p> <p>In June 1998 there were an estimated 1,850 people sleeping rough in England on any single night, including around 620 in Greater London of which around 370 were in the central London area.</p>

**Objective** Improving significantly the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation

**Indicator** Fuel poverty

**J6**



**Over 4.3 million households in England (22 per cent) were ‘fuel poor’ in 1996, needing to spend more than 10 per cent of their income on fuel to keep warm. Nearly 800,000 households (4 per cent) needed to spend more than 20 per cent of their income on fuel.**

**Relevance** Cold homes are associated with ill health and impaired quality of life. Insulation and heating improvement measures reduce heating costs so that vulnerable households can afford to keep warm.

**Targets and goals** To install energy efficiency measures in 1 million buildings by 2002.

**Trends** The number of fuel poor households in England fell between 1991 and 1996 by 20 per cent. This reduction appears to stem mainly from improvements in the general economy, a fall in fuel prices and higher income benefits.

**Background** Fuel poverty is caused primarily by a combination of low income and poor energy efficiency in the home. Dwelling size is also a factor with households in the worst degree of fuel poverty tending to occupy accommodation which is larger on average than the non fuel poor.