

## K SHAPING OUR SURROUNDINGS

### Main messages

UK population projections indicate a growing and ageing population up to 2031. The number of households in England and Wales is projected to rise by 19% between 1996 and 2021 – the main reason is the change in the size and age structure of the population, but changing family structures and life styles also play an important part.

The need to accommodate new housing will put pressure on green land. In 1997, 55 per cent of new homes (including conversions) in England were built on previously developed land, and there is a target of 60 per cent by 2008. Between 1986 and 1998 new retail floorspace was dominated by out-of-town shopping centres and retail park developments.

In 1999, nearly 4 per cent of grade I and II\* buildings and monuments were at risk through neglect or decay.

Despite recent declines in vehicle crime and burglary, the level of recorded crime increased substantially between 1970 and 1998. In 1998 fear of crime was common, particularly among women. In a survey in England in 1997/98, many householders reported problems in their area related to crime, vandalism and hooliganism, litter and rubbish, graffiti, and noise, although the prevalence of these problems had decreased since 1992.

### Relevance

Attractive streets and buildings, low levels of traffic, noise and pollution, green spaces, and community safety are fundamental to a good quality of life whether in a city, town, or village.

New developments must be planned in ways which revitalise our urban areas, ensure thriving rural communities, conserve the historic environment and maintain the character of our townscapes and countryside.

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.* (7.54-7.76)
- Forthcoming Urban white paper
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998<sup>1</sup>

### Other related issues/indicators:

Total and social investment as a per cent of GDP (**H2**); Social investment as a per cent of GDP (**B5**); Index of local deprivation (**E2**); New business start-ups net of closures (**E4**); Traffic congestion (**G4**); People finding access difficult (**J1**); Access to services in rural areas (**J2**); Access for disabled people (**J3**); Participation in sport and cultural activities (**J4**); Individual action for sustainable development (**T9**)

<sup>1</sup> 1998, ISBN 0-10-543798-0

Objective	Ref no.	Indicator		Data used	Change since		Specific targets/goals
					1970	1990	
Re-using previously developed land, in order to protect the countryside and encourage urban regeneration	H14	New homes built on previously developed land (headline)		1989-1997	...	≈	60 per cent of new homes built on previously developed land by 2008 in England
Bring empty homes back into use and convert buildings to new uses	K1	Vacant land and properties and derelict land	Vacant dwellings	1981-1998	...	≈	
			Derelict land	1974-1993	≈	≈	
Shopping, leisure and entertainment, offices and other key town centre uses should, wherever possible, be located within existing centres	K2	New retail floor space in town centres and out of town		1965-1998	X	X	
Contextual indicators	K3	Population growth		1971-1998	na	na	
	K4	Household growth		1971-1996	na	na	
Ensure that development takes account of history and look for opportunities to conserve local heritage	K5	Buildings of Grade I and II* at risk of decay		1998-1999	...	...	
Attractive streets and buildings, low levels of traffic, noise and pollution, green spaces, and community safety	K6	Quality of surroundings		1992-1997/98	...	✓	
	K7	Access to local green space		To be developed	...	...	
	K8	Noise levels		1990	...	...	
Reduce both crime and fear of crime	H8	Level of crime (headline)	Violent crime	1970-1998/9	X	X	Reduce growth of crime relative to its long run rate. Reduce car crime by 30 per cent by March 2004 in England and Wales
			Burglary/ Vehicle theft		X	✓	
	K9	Fear of crime	Physical attack	1984-1998	...	...	Reduce fear of crime in England and Wales by March 2002
		Burglary/ theft of car	...		≈		

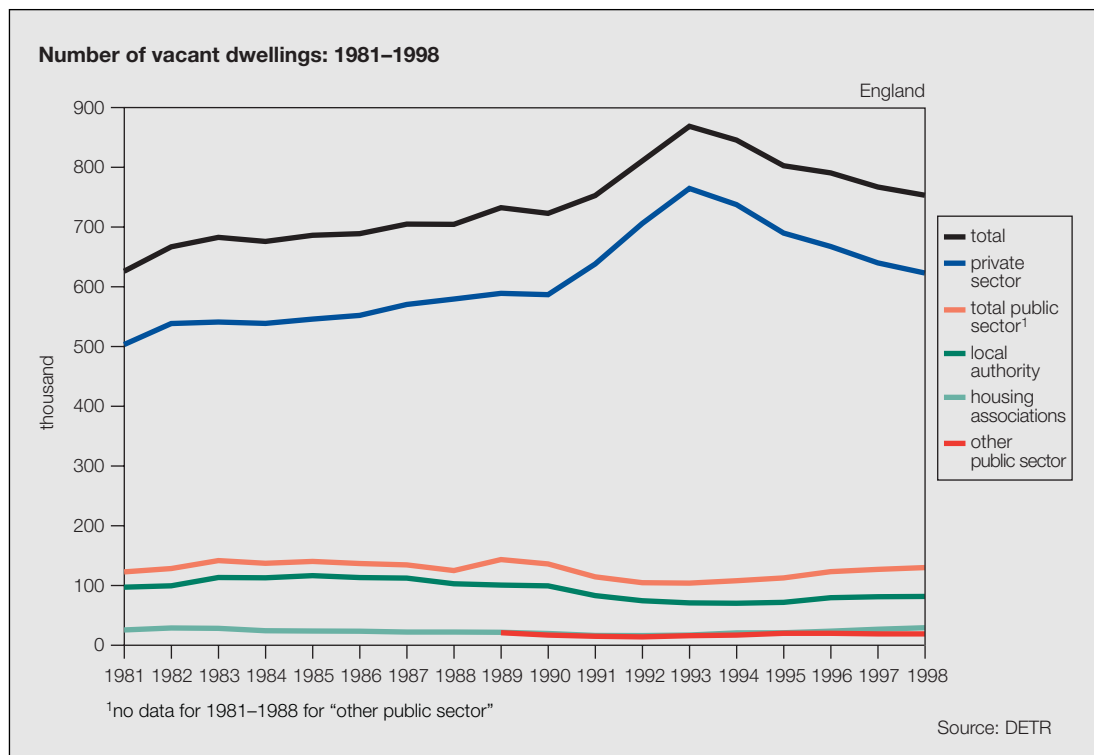
Key	
✓	significant change, in direction of meeting objective
≈	no significant change
na	not applicable, in cases where the indicator is for contextual purposes
X	significant change, in direction away from meeting objective
...	trend is uncertain or no quantitative data available

**Objective** Bring empty homes back into use and convert buildings to new uses

**Indicator** Vacant land and properties and derelict land

**K1**

a. Vacant dwellings



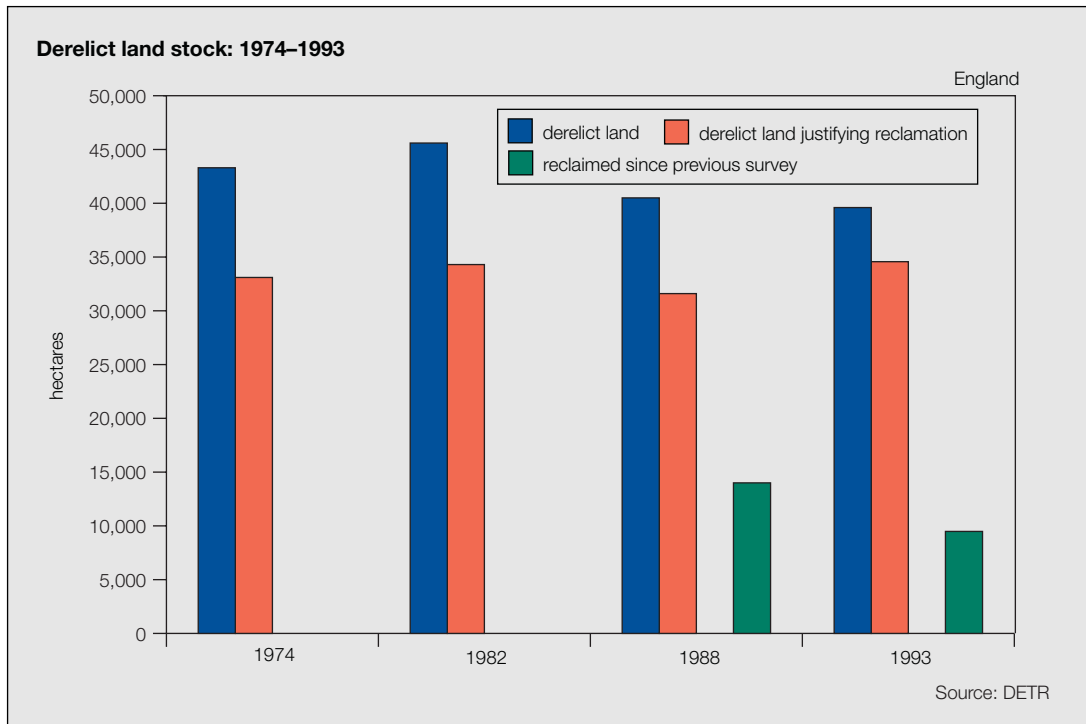
The number of vacant dwellings in England in 1998 was 753,000, which was 3.6 per cent of the total housing stock.

**Relevance** To protect the countryside by minimising new greenfield development and encourage the momentum of urban regeneration, there is a need to re-use previously-developed land, and to bring empty homes back into use.

**Trends** The number of vacant dwellings in England rose from over 626,000 in 1981 to 870,000 in 1993, since when there has been a decline to 753,000 in 1998. Of all vacant dwellings, four fifths are private housing. Some 4 per cent of all private housing stock are vacant, higher proportions than in public sector housing where they constitute about 3 per cent and in local authority housing about 2 per cent.

**Background** The stock of land and buildings available for recycling is continually being added to, as well as being developed. A proportion of dwellings may be vacant for short periods between purchase and sale or re-let and are necessary for the effective operation of the housing market. Some others may be vacant for longer awaiting demolition or renovation.

## b. Derelict land

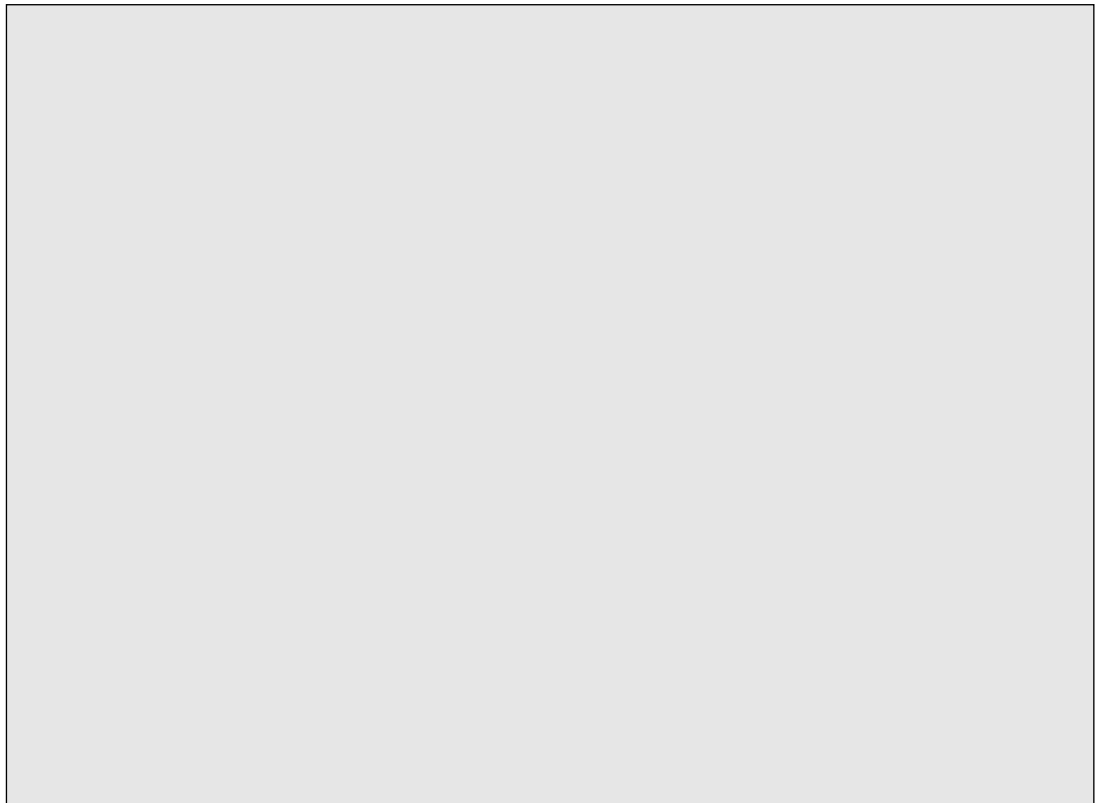


**There were about 40,000 hectares of derelict land in England in 1993, of which nearly 35,000 hectares justified reclamation. Between 1988 and 1993, nearly 10,000 hectares were reclaimed.**

- Relevance** Dereliction and vacant properties may be symptoms of wider problems, but can themselves promote a spiral of degradation. Reclamation and regeneration of derelict land can help to revitalise local environments.
- Trends** In 1974 there were 43,000 hectares of derelict land in England. By 1982 this had increased to 46,000 hectares but subsequently, with reclamation, it declined to around 40,000 hectares in 1988 and 1993. The National Land Use Database – a new survey, which is not quite comparable with the earlier ones because some types of sites have been excluded – has now provided an estimate of 17,300 hectares of derelict land in England in 1998 which would need some form of remedial work before redevelopment.
- Background** The stock of land and buildings available for recycling is continually being added to, as well as being developed. Of the derelict land reclaimed between 1988 and 1993, the most common use was for sport and recreation (37 per cent); the next most significant uses were for industry and commerce, and agriculture and forestry.

**Objective** Shopping, leisure and entertainment, offices and other key town centre uses should, wherever possible, be located within existing centres

**Indicator** New retail floorspace in town centres and out of town **K2**



Between 1986 and 1998 new retail floorspace was dominated by out-of-town shopping centres and retail park developments. Almost twice as much new floorspace has been created outside towns than in town centres over this period.

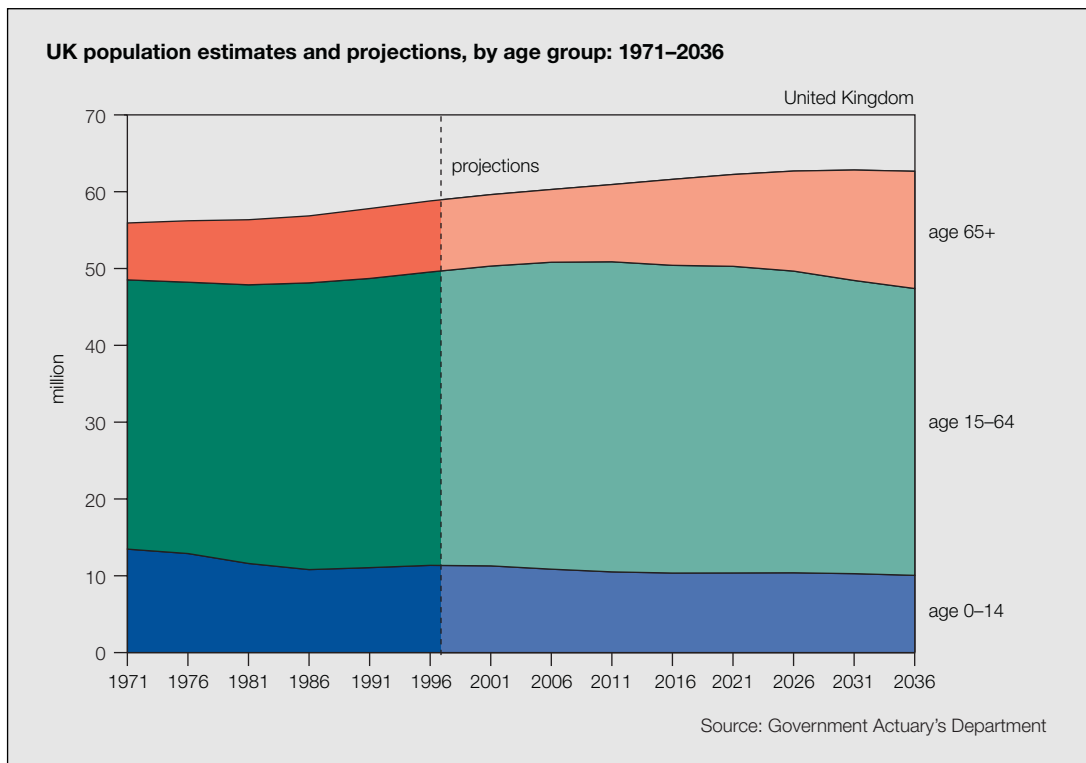
*Relevance* Development of out-of-town shopping centres has an adverse effect on the vitality of urban areas. It diverts trade and reduces prospects of future investment in town centres. This can reduce the availability of and access to facilities, particularly to those without cars. People travelling longer distances to out-of-town centres, often in cars, can cause increased congestion, pollution and noise.

*Background* The creation of new retail floorspace is influenced by the economic situation. The number of new out-of-town planning developments is likely to decrease in the future due to planning policy guidance issued in 1993.

**Objective** Contextual indicator

**Indicator** Population growth

**K3**



**The overall population of the UK is estimated to be 59.2 million in 1998, and is projected to rise gradually to 62.2 million by 2021. In the longer term, the population is projected to decline after 2031.**

**Relevance** The pressure on all resources increases as the population increases.

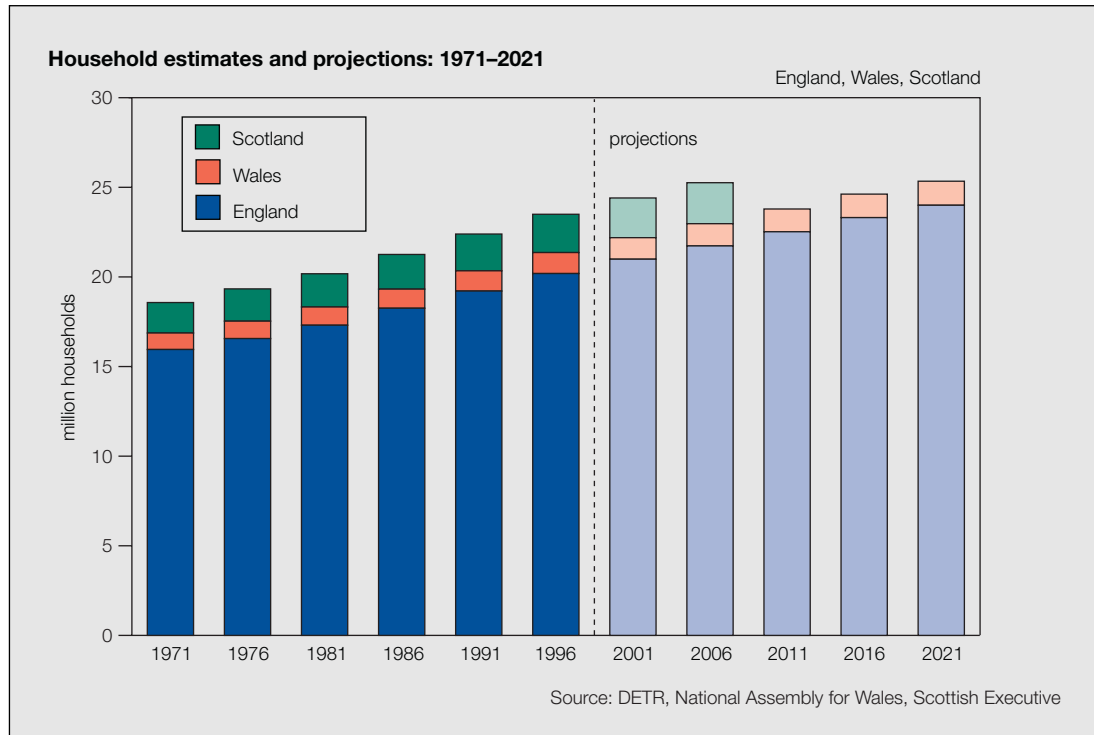
**Trends** The age structure of the population is projected to change significantly, mainly as a result of past fluctuations in the number of births. The projection indicates an ageing population; those over 65 are projected to increase from their current level of 9.3 million, to 15.3 million in 2036.

**Background** Projections are made by rolling forward the existing population each year, adding births, subtracting deaths, and adding net in-migration. They therefore depend on the assumptions chosen for each of these factors; they become less certain the further into the future they are projected. The projections shown are 1996-based; a new set of 1998-based national projections is due to be published before the end of 1999.

**Objective** Contextual indicator

**Indicator** Household growth

**K4**



The number of households in England and Wales is projected to rise by 19% between 1996 and 2021. The main reason is the change in the size and age structure of the population, but changing family structures and life styles also play an important part. There are large regional variations, with increases of about 25 per cent in the south but only 10 per cent in the north of England.

**Relevance** The need to provide a decent home for everyone, together with the trends in household formation, have resulted in development pressure in certain parts of the country. This has implications for land use.

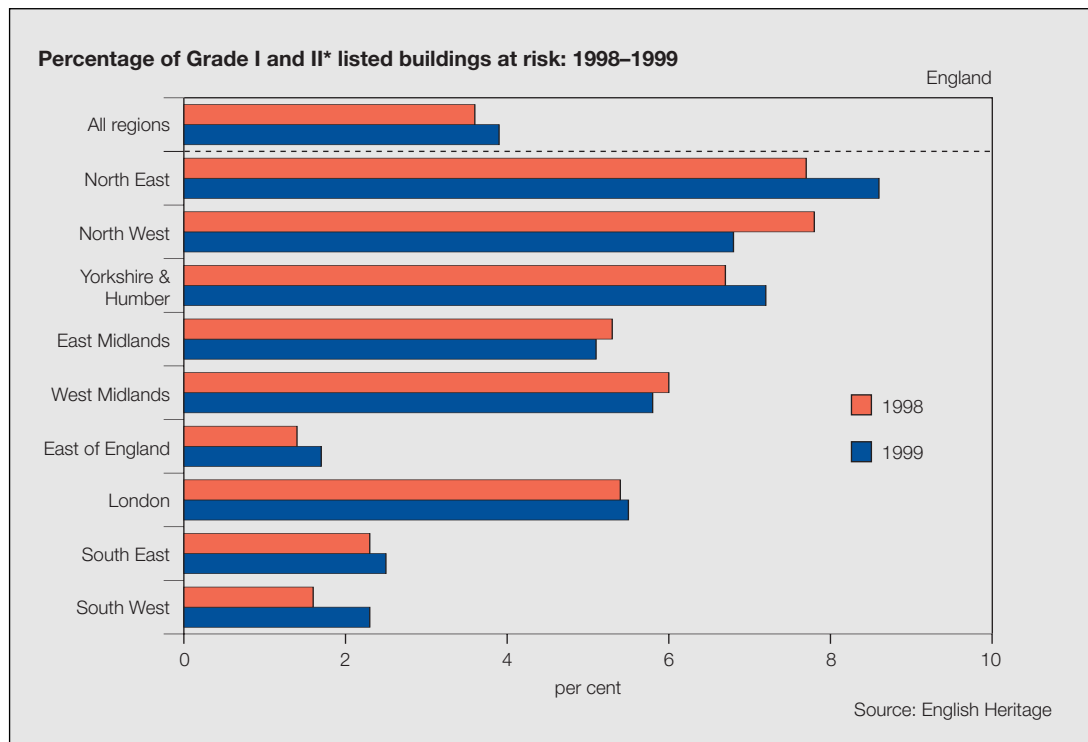
**Trends** Growth in the number of households has outstripped population growth for many years. Household numbers are still projected to rise in most areas, even where the population is falling. An increasing proportion of people who live by themselves has supplemented the historic trend of decreasing family size. The proportion of households formed by one person living alone was under one-fifth in 1971 and is projected to rise to around a third in each of the three countries. Migration patterns contribute to differential household growth across the country.

**Background** These are demographic projections, based on assumptions that past trends (in household formation, marital status, and population) continue into the future.

**Objective** Ensure that development takes account of history and look for opportunities to conserve local heritage

**Indicator** Buildings of Grade I and II\* at risk of decay

**K5**



**In 1999, nearly 4% of grade I and II\* buildings and scheduled monuments in England were considered to be at risk through neglect or decay. The percentage is lower in the south and east (2%, excluding London), but higher (7%) in the north.**

**Relevance** The extent to which historic buildings and structures are in poor to very bad condition is an indicator of the state of health of the built environment, urban regeneration and the creation of sustainable communities. New development needs to look for opportunities to conserve the local heritage.

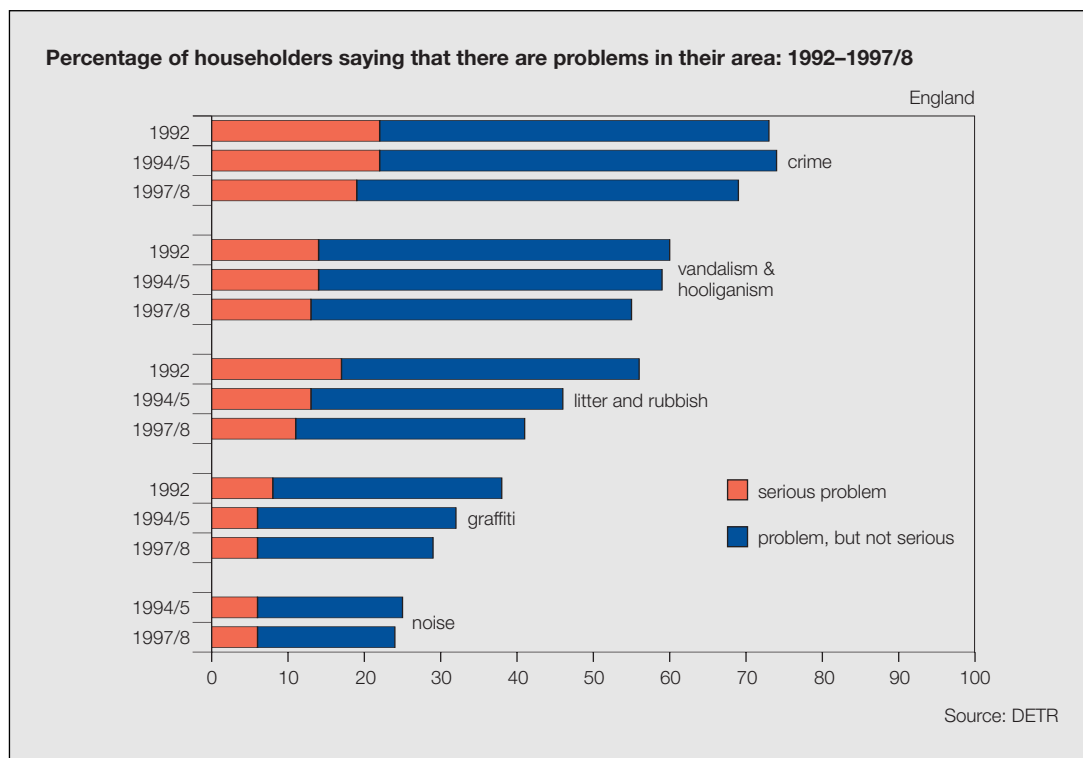
**Trends** Information on national trends is not yet available, but the total number of listed buildings vulnerable or at risk in Greater London has reduced by about 4% per annum between 1991 and 1999. Part of the small increase in buildings at risk between 1998 and 1999 is likely to be due to improved reporting. About 70 buildings (about 5% of those at risk) have been removed from the 1998 Buildings at Risk Register as their futures have been secured.

**Background** Since 1998, English Heritage has published an annual Buildings at Risk Register bringing together information on all the Grade I and II\* listed buildings and scheduled monuments known to be 'at risk' through neglect and decay, or vulnerable to becoming so. There are about 30,000 Grade I and II\* listed buildings in England, which make up about 8% of all listed buildings. The extent of risk for the remaining 92% (ie grade II) of buildings is likely to be higher.

**Objective** Attractive streets and buildings, low levels of traffic, noise and pollution, green spaces, and community safety

**Indicator** Quality of surroundings

**K6**



In a survey in England in 1997/98, 69 per cent of householders said that crime was a problem in their area, including 19 per cent who said that it was a serious problem. Other problems often mentioned included vandalism and hooliganism (55 per cent), litter and rubbish (41 per cent), graffiti, and noise.

**Relevance** Quality of surroundings is fundamental to a good quality of life. Noise, litter, graffiti and vandalism may be symptoms of wider problems, but can themselves promote a spiral of degradation. Crime reinforces social exclusion and decline.

**Trends** The proportions of householders reporting these problems were lower in 1997/98 than in 1994/95. For most of the problems, a pattern of decreasing prevalence was also evident between 1992 and 1994/95.

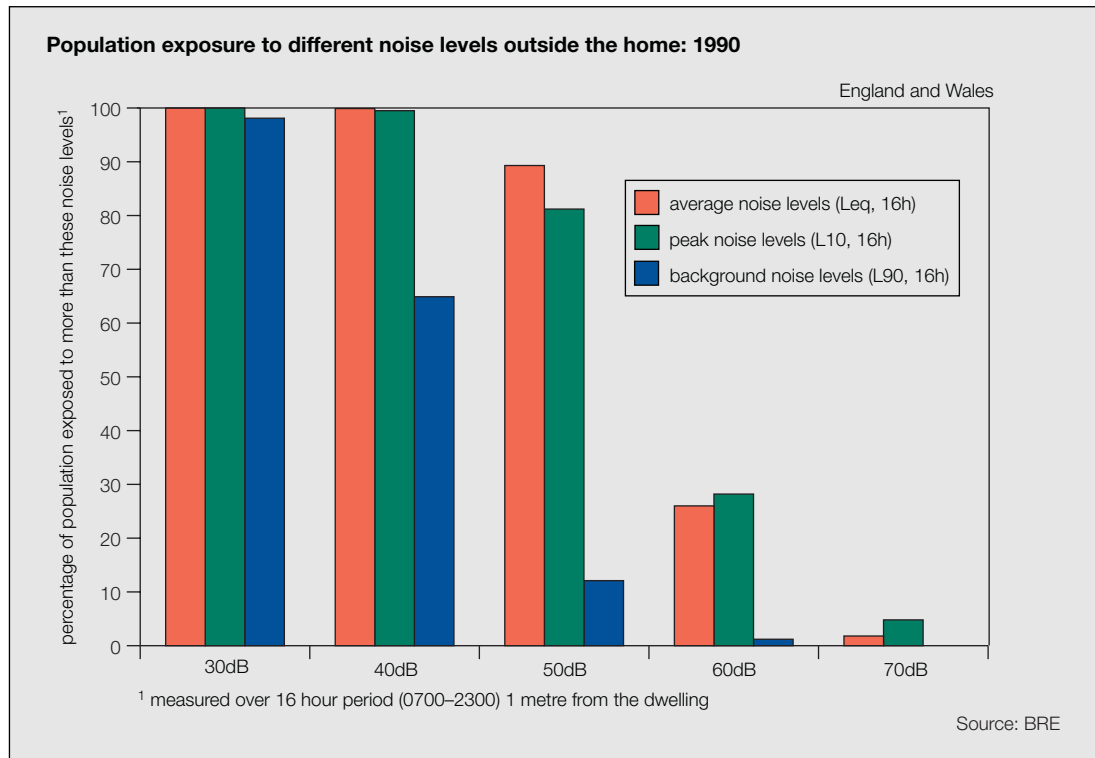
**Background** The type of area in which people were living was one of the most important factors related to the perceived number of problems in the area – households living in areas consisting mainly of council estates and low-income areas had the highest problem count. Figures have been taken from the 1997/98 Survey of English Housing.

<b>Objective</b>	Attractive streets and buildings, low levels of traffic, noise and pollution, green spaces, and community safety	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Access to local green space (to be developed)</b>	<b>K7</b>
<i>Relevance</i>	Local green spaces are fundamental to a good quality of life whether in city, town, or village.	
<i>Background</i>	<p>Open space and wildlife habitats in and around our towns and cities need to be improved. More green spaces should be created – providing places for community activities or local nature reserves, as well as formal parks and gardens – and better use should be made of those that already exist.</p> <p>No comprehensive and validated data exist on the extent of urban green spaces, but the National Land Use Database should provide some information for England, probably by 2001. Categories such as outdoor recreation, woodland and grassland will be included in the database, but the extent of public access will not be identified. Surveys of the public, focussing on the extent to which individuals felt they had good access to local green spaces, could provide a useful source of information. Developing indicators on the quality of urban green spaces will not be easy.</p>	

**Objective** Attractive streets and buildings, low levels of traffic, noise and pollution, green spaces, and community safety

**Indicator** Noise levels

**K8**



**In 1990, over a quarter of the population in England and Wales were exposed to high noise levels outside their homes (over 60 dB) and five per cent of the population were exposed to very high noise (over 70dB).**

**Relevance** Low noise levels, as well as low levels of traffic and pollution, attractive buildings and streets and green spaces, are important for a good quality of life. Noise can cause annoyance and stress.

**Trends** Only limited evidence is available on past trends in ambient noise levels. This suggests that population exposure to different noise levels has not changed significantly in the twenty years or so prior to 1990. In the case of traffic noise, reduction in noise levels from individual vehicles has been offset by increased traffic.

Noise complaints are increasing, however, but this may be because people are becoming less tolerant to noise. Most noise complaints relate to domestic premises and involve noise from TV/radio/hi-fi equipment, and barking dogs.

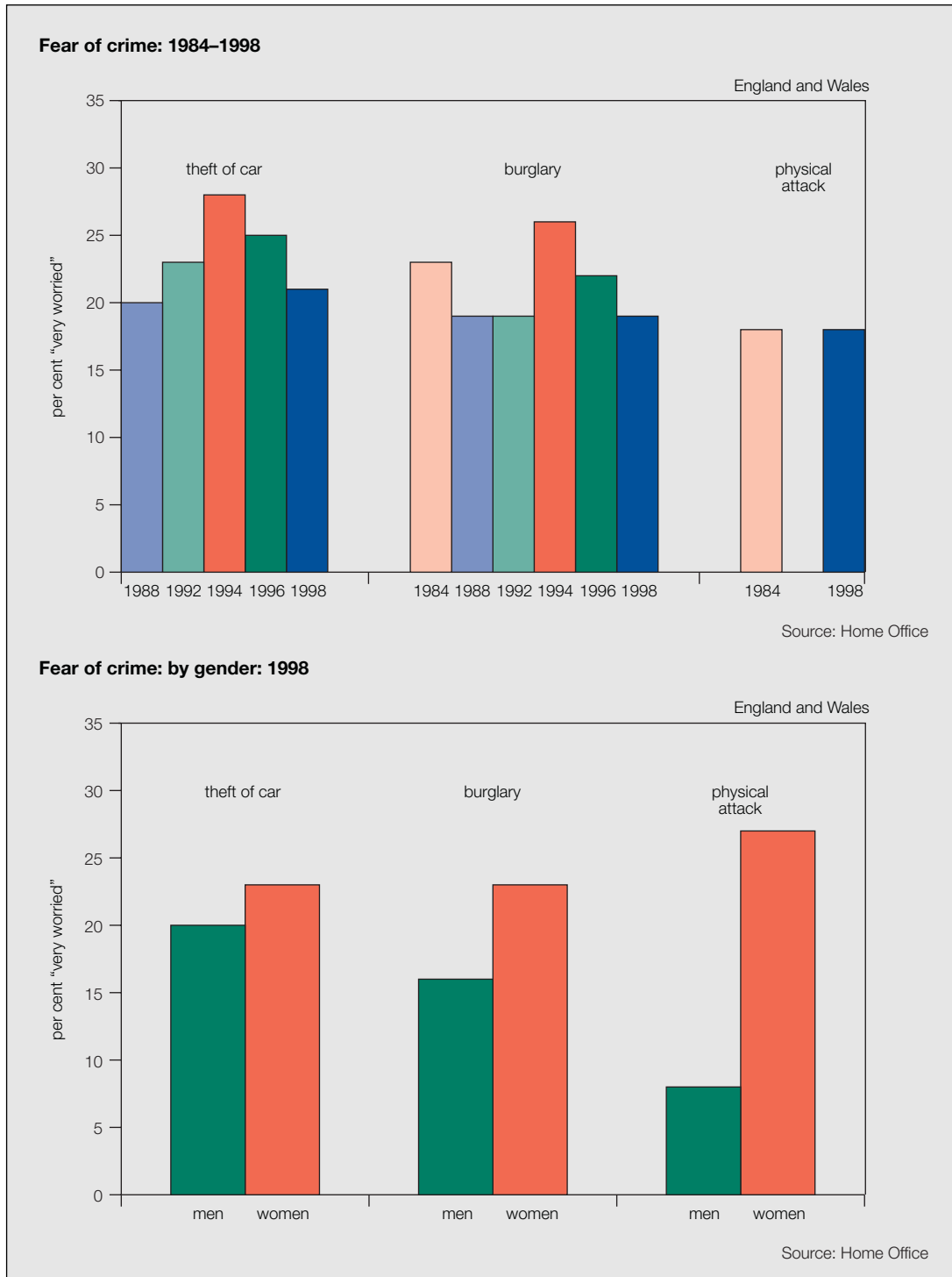
**Background** Noise levels are measured in decibels on the A scale, dB(A). Three measures are shown; Leq which measures average noise levels, L10 which is the noise level exceeded for 10 per cent of the time and L90 which is the noise level exceeded for 90 per cent of the time. The information given is from the National Noise Incidence survey undertaken by BRE in 1990. New information on population noise exposure will be available from a repeat of this study by BRE, which is currently under way.

WHO have recommended that general daytime outdoor noise levels of less than 55 dB(A)Leq are desirable to prevent any significant community annoyance. At night, a lower level is desirable to meet sleep criteria; depending on local housing conditions and other factors this would be in the order of 45 dB(A) Leq.

**Objective** Reduce both crime and fear of crime

**Indicator** Fear of crime

**K9**



**Fear of crime is common, particularly among women. In 1998 over a quarter in England and Wales were very worried about physical attack. Following rises up to 1994 in the levels of fear of crime there is evidence of some falls in more recent years.**

**Relevance** Fear of crime can cause real anxiety that affects people’s quality of life. It can have a negative effect on behaviour with people reluctant to walk or to take public transport.

<i>Targets and goals</i>	The government is committed to reducing fear of crime by March 2002 in England and Wales
<i>Trends</i>	Women are more worried about crime than men, particularly about physical attack. Overall, worry about having a car stolen and about burglary increased between 1988 and 1994. This has fallen and in 1998 stood at levels similar to those ten years earlier. Fear of physical attack is at the same level as it was in 1984. Crime surveys in Scotland and Northern Ireland reveal similar patterns to those in England and Wales in recent years.
<i>Background</i>	<p>People tend to over-estimate the problem of crime. For example four out of five people in the 1998 British Crime Survey thought that at least half of crime is violent whereas it is a fifth of the crime the survey measures.</p> <p>A number of factors increase people's anxiety about crime. These include being a victim of crime or seeing signs of disorder in their area, such as vandalism and litter. Vulnerability also affects fear of crime (eg. old age and ill health).</p> <p>The similarities in the trends in this indicator and the headline crime indicator (H8) suggests there are some links between changes in fear of crime and overall levels of crime. The offences included in this indicator broadly mirror those illustrated in the headline indicator. However, work is in hand to consider overall measures of changes in fear of crime, so future indicators may be revised.</p>