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ORKNEY CROWNED BEST PLACE TO LIVE IN THE UK

- **Orkney takes top spot in the UK for the first time, up from second place**
- **Shetland the only other Scottish location to break the top 50 in the UK**
- **Eilean Siar (Western Isles) named third most desirable place to live in Scotland**

Orkney has finally been crowned the UK's best place to live, following the past two years as runner up, according to the 2019 Bank of Scotland Quality of Life Survey.

The archipelago, famed for its spectacular landscapes and archaeological treasures, sealed the top spot based on Orcadians' high employment levels, low crime rate, strong exam results, smaller primary class sizes and good health and happiness scores.

Shetland, which takes second place in the Scottish table, is the only other location north of the border to break into the UK top 50 (38th, up from 70th last year). The Western Isles, Argyll & Bute, and Dumfries & Galloway make up the top five in Scotland.

Ricky Diggins, Network Director, Bank of Scotland, said: *"Orcadians will be thrilled to learn that not only is their home the best place to live in Scotland, it's now taken the crown for the whole of the UK. With Shetland and Eilean Siar coming second and third in Scotland, it's a clean sweep of the podium places for these island communities.*

"Their more remote locations may not appeal to everyone, but with benefits including high employment, low crime rates, smaller class sizes and more affordable housing, people around the country will now be dreaming of a life spent on the isles."

At a UK level, Richmondshire in North Yorkshire took second place, followed by Rutland in the East Midlands, Hambleton in North Yorkshire and Eden in Cumbria in fifth place.

What makes Orkney such a good place to live?

- Residents feel fit and well with more than nine in 10 (97%) reporting good or fairly good health
- Orkney is one of the most affordable places to live with an average house price of £173,349, standing at 5.2 times the average annual pre-tax local income, compared to the national average of 7.3
- Orkney has the highest employment rate with nearly nine in ten (88%) 16-64 year-olds in work and weekly average earnings of £671

Bank of Scotland press team:

Gregor Low: 07500 078 879 gregor.low@lloydsbanking.com

Kimberley Hamilton: 07557 257 298 kimberley.hamilton@lloydsbanking.com

- The latest ONS figures indicate adults living in Orkney are amongst the most happy, satisfied and content in the UK, with low anxiety rates
- Residents enjoy one of the lowest crime rates in the country, with 5.9 crimes per 10,000 population, compared to a national average of 44.1
- They also have smaller primary school class sizes (18.6) and excellent exam results (75% - SCQF Achieving 5+ at Level 4 or better)

Key findings of the survey

Labour Market

Employment is highest in Orkney 87.9%, ahead of Shetland (85.3%). The Scottish average is 73.6%.

The highest weekly average earnings in Scotland are in East Renfrewshire, at £900 per week (p/w), followed by East Dunbartonshire (£824 p/w) and Stirling (£775 p/w). The Scottish average is £647 per week.

The proportion of adults (16 years and over) with the highest level of qualification gained (such as a degree, NVQ level 4 and above or professional qualification) in Scotland is highest in Edinburgh (49%), followed by East Renfrewshire (45.2%), and East Dunbartonshire (44.6%) – all above the Scottish average of 35.1%.

Housing

The biggest homes in Scotland are in East Renfrewshire and the Western Isles, with both having an average of 4.9 habitable rooms. The smallest homes are in West Dunbartonshire (4.2), Glasgow City, Aberdeen City and Dundee City (all 4.3). The average number of habitable rooms in Scotland is 4.6.

Broadband speed is based on the proportion of premises able to receive 5Mbps (mega bits per second). West Dunbartonshire and Dundee fair best for internet access in Scotland (both 99%), closely followed by Glasgow and Edinburgh (98%) and Falkirk and North Lanarkshire (97%).

West Dunbartonshire has the lowest **average house price to earnings ratio** in Scotland (3.9), followed by Inverclyde (4.1) and East Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire (all 4.3). The Scottish average is 5.3.

Urban Environment

The UK's 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 Argyll & Bute (13 pp/km), Shetland (16 pp/ km) and Orkney (22 pp/km). The Scottish average is 70 pp/km.

Bank of Scotland press team:

Gregor Low: 07500 078 879 gregor.low@lloydsbanking.com

Kimberley Hamilton: 07557 257 298 kimberley.hamilton@lloydsbanking.com



The lowest **traffic levels** in the UK are found in the Western Isles with just 75 vehicles per square kilometre, Highlands (112 vehicles/km) and Argyll & Bute (142 vehicles/km). The Scottish average is 6,305 vehicles/km.

Western Isles has **the UK's lowest burglary rate per 10,000 people (1.5)**, followed by Shetland (2.6) and Orkney (5.9). The Scottish average is 36.5 per/10,000.

Glasgow has **the lowest CO2 emissions** in Scotland, with 1.4 tonnes of CO2 per household. This is below the Scottish average of 1.72 tonnes of CO2 per capita.

Physical Environment

The lowest average annual rainfall (804 mm) is in Dundee City. Eight of the ten driest districts are in East Scotland. Argyll & Bute is the wettest place in Scotland with 2,165 mm of rain. The Scottish average annual rainfall is 1,311 mm.

The sunniest place in Scotland is Aberdeen City where residents enjoy an average of 27.9 hours of sunshine a week. The Scottish average is 25.1 hours.

Health

Scotland's **healthiest districts** are Aberdeenshire (96.8%), Orkney (96.6%) and Shetland (96.5%). In Scotland, 94.7% of households rate themselves as in good or fairly good health.

Life expectancy for males at birth is highest in Orkney (80.3 years). The Scottish average is 77.9 years.

Life expectancy for females at birth is highest in East Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire (both 83.5 years). The Scottish average is 82.2 years.

Education

Across the UK, **Primary school class sizes** are smallest in Scotland. All 10 local authority districts with the smallest primary school classes are in Scotland. Western Isles has the lowest in the UK with 17.0 compared to a Scotland average of 24.1.

The best Scottish higher results in Scotland are found in East Dunbartonshire (81.0%) and East Renfrewshire (79.8%). Both are well above the Scottish average of 67.5%.

The highest average school (primary) spend per pupil is in Orkney (£9,662) – almost twice the UK average of £4,633.

Personal Well-Being

Personal well-being is based on four categories – life satisfaction, worthwhile, happiness and anxiety: Adults (16 and over) in Western Isles have the highest average

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rating for **life satisfaction** in Scotland. Based on a score out of 10, the adults in these areas had an average rating of 8.3. The Scottish average is 7.8.

With a rating of 8.4 (out of ten) adults in the Western Isles also believe what they do in life is **worthwhile**, which is above the Scottish average of 7.9.

The **happiest** adults in Scotland are also in the Western Isles (8.1), significantly higher than the Scottish average of 7.6.

Orkney comes out top with adults the least **anxious** with an average rating of 2.1 out of 10. The Scottish average is 2.8.

Leisure

Argyll & Bute has the highest number of pubs per 10,000 adults in Scotland (25) followed by Orkney (20). The Scottish average is 10.0.

Notes for editors:

Table 1: 2019 Bank of Scotland Quality of Life Rankings – Scottish Local Authority Districts

Local Authority	Rank 2019	Rank 2017
Orkney	1	1
Shetland	2	2
Western Isles	3	3
Argyll & Bute	4	6
Dumfries & Galloway	5	8
Aberdeenshire	6	7
Angus	7	10
Perth & Kinross	8	4
Scottish Borders	9	5
East Dunbartonshire	10	9
South Ayrshire	11	16
Highland	12	15
East Renfrewshire	13	11
East Lothian	14	14
Moray	15	18
Aberdeen City	16	17
Stirling	17	13
Midlothian	18	20
Fife	19	12
Edinburgh, City of	20	23
West Lothian	21	19

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Falkirk	22	22
Clackmannanshire	23	21
East Ayrshire	24	26
North Ayrshire	25	27
South Lanarkshire	26	24
Dundee City	27	29
West Dunbartonshire	28	28
Renfrewshire	29	25
North Lanarkshire	30	30
Inverclyde	31	31
Glasgow City	32	32

Source: Bank of Scotland December 2019

Table 2: 2019 Bank of Scotland Quality of Life Rankings – UK's top 10 Local Authority Districts

Local Authority	Region	Rank 2017	Rank 2019
Orkney	Scotland	2	1
Richmondshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	9	2
Rutland	East Midlands	3	3
Hambleton	Yorkshire and The Humber	28	4
Eden	North West	33	5
South Oxfordshire	South East	14	6
Cotswold	South West	46	7
Ryedale	Yorkshire and The Humber	12	8
St Albans	East of England	15	9
Derbyshire Dales	East Midlands	75	10

Source: Bank of Scotland January 2019

Table 3: Local Authority District with the Best Quality of Life in each region in 2019

Local Authority	Region
South Oxfordshire	South East
Rutland	East Midlands
St Albans	East of England
Wychavon	West Midlands
Westminster	London
Cotswold	South West
Richmondshire	Yorkshire and The Humber
Monmouthshire	Wales

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Orkney	Scotland
Eden	North West
Lisburn & Castlereagh	Northern Ireland
Northumberland	North East

Source: Bank of Scotland January 2019

Table 4: Local Authority District with the Best Quality of Life in each category in 2019

Group	Variable	Local Authority District
Labour (Scotland average 73.6 UK average is 74.2%)	Highest employment rate: 87.9%	Orkney
(Scotland average £647 per week UK- £674 per week)	Highest gross weekly Earnings: £900	East Renfrewshire
(Scotland average 35.1% UK – 35.2%)	% of adults (16+) with highest qualification gained: 49%. This includes graduate and post postgraduate degrees, NVQ level 4 and above, and professional qualifications.	City of Edinburgh
Housing (Scotland average 4.6 UK – 5.5)	Highest average number of rooms in house: 4.9	Western Isles East Renfrewshire
(Scotland average 95% UK – 97%)	Largest % of houses with central heating & bathrooms: 100%	East Ayrshire
(Scotland average 5.29 UK – 7.3)	Lowest House price to earnings ratio: 3.9	West Dunbartonshire
(Scotland average 91% UK – 94%)	% of households with more than 5Mbps: 99% of premises have broadband speed in excess of 5Mbps	West Dunbartonshire Dundee
Urban environment (Scotland average 70 per sq/km UK- 272 per sq/km)	Lowest Population density per sqkm: 9	Western Isles Highland
(Scotland average 6,305 cars/km UK- 9,584 cars/km)	Lowest traffic flows per square km: 75 cars /km	Western Isles
(Scotland average 36.5 per 10,000 people UK – 44.1 per 10,000 people)	Lowest burglary rate per 10,000 population: 1.5 per 10,000 people	Western Isles

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(Scotland average 1.72 tonnes CO ₂ emissions per household UK – 1.56 tonnes CO ₂ emissions per household)	Lowest Total Consumer CO₂ Emissions: 1.4 tonnes per household	Glasgow City
Physical environment (Scotland average 1,311.0 mm per year UK – 869.9 mm per year)	Lowest average annual rainfall: 804mm	Dundee City
(Scotland average 25.1 hours per week UK- 29.7 hours per week)	Highest average weekly sunshine hours: 27.9 hours	Aberdeen City
Health (Scotland average 94.7% UK – 94.6%)	Highest % of residents in good health: 96.8%	Aberdeenshire
(Scotland average 77.9 years UK -79.4 years)	Longest Male life expectancy at birth for males: 80.3 years	Orkney
(Scotland average 82.2 years UK -83.1 years)	Longest Female life expectancy at birth for males: 83.5 years	East Renfrewshire
Education (Scotland average 24.1 pupils per class UK - 27.1 pupils per class)	Lowest average number of pupils in primary school class: 17.0	Western Isles
Secondary Education Exams (Scotland average 67.5% UK- 65.1%)	Highest % of 15yr olds with 5 or more GCSEs A-C grade including English & Maths: 81.0% (in Scotland % of 15yr+ olds with 5 or more SCQFs at level 4 or better including English & Maths)	East Dunbartonshire
Per pupil spending (primary and secondary) – (Scotland average £5,721 per pupil UK - £4,633 per pupil)	Highest per pupil spend: £9,662	Orkney
Personal Well Being (Scotland average 7.8 from 10 UK- 7.7 from 10)	Highest Life Satisfaction rating out of 10: 8.3	Western Isles
(Scotland average 7.9 from 10 UK- 7.9 from 10)	Highest Worthwhile rating out of 10: 8.4	Western Isles
(Scotland average 7.6 from 10 UK- 7.6 from 10)	Highest Happiness rating out of 10: 8.1	Western Isles
(Scotland average 2.8 from 10 UK- 2.9 from 10)	Lowest levels of Anxiety rating out of 10: 2.1	Orkney
Leisure	Number of pubs per 10,000 population: 25 per 10,000 people	Argyll & Bute

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Kimberley Hamilton: 07557 257 298 kimberley.hamilton@lloydsbanking.com

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(Scotland average 9.5 per 10,000 people UK-10.1 per 10,000 people)		
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Source: Bank of Scotland January 2019

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 24 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 8 group scores are summed to create an overall quality of life score.

Note: ¹ 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.

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

Group	Variable	Period covered
Labour	Employment rate %	Jul 2017-Jun 2018
	Gross weekly Earnings £s	April 2018 (uprated by average weekly earnings to September 2018)
	% of adults(16+) with highest qualification gained	2011 Census data
Housing	Number of rooms in house	Scotland – Housing Conditions Survey 2009/11
	% of houses with central heating and sole use of bathroom	Scotland – housing Conditions Survey 2009/11
	House prices to Earnings ratio	12 months to November 2018
	Proportion of premises able to receive 5Mbit/s Broadband	OFCOM 2016
Urban environment	Population density per square km	2017 – ONS
	Traffic flows per square km	2017 - ONS
	Burglary rate per 10,000 population	Scottish Government 2016/2017
	CO ₂ Emissions per tonne per capita	Department of Energy and Climate Change (covers period 2005-2015)
Physical environment	Average annual rainfall mm	Met Office Average 2009/2013
	Annual sunshine hours	Met Office Average 2009/2013
Health	% in good or fairly good health	2011 Census
	Life expectancy at birth for males	Scotland 2014/16
	Life expectancy at birth for females	Scotland 2014/16
Education	Number of pupils in primary school class	Scotland Average class size of primary pupils, 2017

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Gregor Low: 07500 078 879 gregor.low@lloydsbanking.com

Kimberley Hamilton: 07557 257 298 kimberley.hamilton@lloydsbanking.com

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	% of 15yr+ olds with 5 or more GCSEs A-C grade or Scottish equivalent including English & Maths	Scotland 2016/17
	Average state school (primary and secondary) spending per pupil	Scotland 2016/17
Personal Well-Being	Life Satisfaction	April 2017-March 2018 ONS
	Worthwhile	April 2017-March 2018 ONS
	Happiness	April 2017-March 2018 ONS
	Anxiety	April 2017-March 2018 ONS
Leisure	Number of Pubs	2016 British Beer and Pub Association

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Bank of Scotland press team:

Gregor Low: 07500 078 879 gregor.low@lloydsbanking.com

Kimberley Hamilton: 07557 257 298 kimberley.hamilton@lloydsbanking.com