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ORKNEY IS THE BEST PLACE TO LIVE IN SCOTLAND FOR THE THIRD YEAR

Orkney tops the 2015 Bank of Scotland Quality of Life Survey for the best places to live for the third consecutive year.

Orkney remains at the top of the Quality of Life Survey by again scoring consistently highly across a range of categories covering residents' health and life expectancy, personal well-being, employment, a low crime rate and good weather. (See table 1)

The Shetland Islands too keeps its number two spot for the third year running, while the Western Isles moves up to third from seventh place in 2014.

Orkney

Orkney has the highest employment rate in Scotland, with 86.3% of its adult residents being in employment. This is much higher than the Scotland average of 73.8% and the UK average of 72.9%. Orkney is also fortunate enough to have the lowest burglary rate in the whole of the UK.

The other factors keeping it ahead of the chasing pack are: low amount of traffic on the roads, with just 139 cars per square kilometre, compared to the Scottish average of 3,236; a low population density with 22 residents per square kilometre compared to the Scottish average of 480.5; and even the weather is fairly agreeable, with an annual rainfall of 1,064 (1,311mm for Scotland).

Nitesh Patel, housing economist at Bank of Scotland, comments:

"It tends to be the northern parts of Scotland that come out best for quality of life each year, due to the lower population, higher employment rate and low crime rates. Orkney rates very positively in many categories, which has helped it secure the number one spot for the third year, although it ranks the best in only two categories - highest employment and lowest burglary rate.

"The Western Isles in particular have seen a marked change in comparison to last year, and have moved up four places to now sit in third. It's not so good news for Edinburgh though, as we have seen it drop to 21st place this year, from 15th in 2014."

Shetland Islands second most desirable place to live

The Shetland Islands has also retained their title as the second best place to live in Scotland for the third year running. They score particularly well for education, having one of the lowest average numbers of school pupils in primary schools across the UK - 18.4 compared to the Scottish average of 22.7 pupils and UK average of 26.7 pupils.

The Shetland Islands also has the lowest secondary school pupil to teacher ratio in the UK - 8.6 pupils to teacher, compared to the Scottish average of 11.8 and UK average of 15.5. The area also has the highest spend per pupil in the UK, with an average of £10,821. That's almost twice the Scotland average of £5,834 and double the UK spend of £4,564 per pupil.

The Western Isles has seen a marked improvement in the last year, moving up from seventh in 2014 to third in 2015. The area comes top in a number of categories, especially for well-being where residents are the happiest in Scotland and have the highest life satisfaction rate.

Key.../

Key facts

Labour Market

- **Employment** is highest in Orkney at 86.3%, ahead of Aberdeenshire (81.7%) and the Shetland Islands (80.9%). The Scotland average is 73.8%.
- **The highest weekly average earnings** are in East Renfrewshire at £795 per week, followed by Stirling (£726 p/w) and East Dunbartonshire (£710 p/w). The Scottish average is £608 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) is the highest in Edinburgh (49%), followed by East Renfrewshire (45.2%), and East Dunbartonshire (44.6%) – all significantly above the Scottish average of 35.1%.

Housing

- **The biggest homes** are in the Western Isles and East Renfrewshire, which both have an average of 4.9 habitable rooms. The smallest homes are in West Dunbartonshire (4.2 habitable rooms). The average number of habitable rooms in Scotland is 4.6.
- 100% of homes in East Ayrshire have **central heating**; the Scottish average is 95.0%.
- Only two areas in Scotland have an **average house price to earnings ratio** which is below the UK historical long-term average of 4.0; West Dunbartonshire (3.8) and East Ayrshire (3.9). The highest ratios are East Lothian (6.4), Edinburgh (6.2). Aberdeenshire (6.1) and the Orkney Islands (6.0). The Scottish average is 5.0.

Urban Environment

- The four most sparsely populated areas in the UK are in all in Scotland: the Western Isles and Highlands take the top spot for lowest **population density**, with just nine people per square kilometre (pp/ km). Followed by Argyll & Bute (13 pp/Sq. 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 in Scotland are Glasgow (3,427 pp/ km), Dundee (2,471 pp/ km), Edinburgh (1,873 pp/ km) and Aberdeen (1,231 pp/ km). The Scottish average is 480.5 pp/ km.
- It's no surprise that the UK's emptiest roads are mostly in Scotland. The lowest **traffic levels** are found in the Western Isles with just 69 vehicles per square kilometre, Highland (102 vehicles/km), Argyll & Bute (130 vehicles/km) and Orkney Islands (139 vehicles/km). The Scottish average is 3,236 vehicles/km.
- Orkney Islands has **the lowest burglary rate per 10,000 people (5.1)** followed by the Western Isles (7.0) and the Shetland Islands (10.8). The Scottish average is 31.9 per/10,000.
- Glasgow has **the lowest CO2 emissions** in Scotland with 1.9 tonnes of CO2 per household. The Scottish average is 2.4 tonnes of CO2 per capita.

Physical Environment

- **Dundee has lowest average annual rainfall** (804 mm) in Scotland. The Scottish average annual rainfall is 1,311 mm.
- **The sunniest place in Scotland** is Aberdeen where residents enjoy an average of 27.9 hours of sunshine a week. The Scottish average is 25.1 hours.

Health

- **The healthiest districts** are all in the North of Scotland with Aberdeenshire having 96.8% of households rating themselves in good or fairly good health, closely followed by the Orkney Islands (96.6%).
- **Life expectancy for males at birth** is highest in East Dunbartonshire (80.7 years). The Scottish average is 77.5 years.
- **Life expectancy for females at birth** is also highest in East Dunbartonshire (83.9 years). The Scottish average is 81.4 years.

Education

- **Primary school class sizes** are smallest in The Western Isles with 17.4 children compared to a Scottish average of 22.7.
- **All ten of the UK's lowest secondary school pupil teacher ratio areas are in Scotland.** The Shetland Islands has the lowest secondary school pupil teacher ratio of 8.6 compared to 15.5 across the UK.
- **The best SCQF results** in the Shetland Islands (94.3) and East Dunbartonshire (94.0%). Both are above the Scottish average of 83%.
- **The highest average school (both secondary and primary) spend per pupil** is in the Shetlands (£10,821) – almost twice Scottish average of £5,834.

Personal Well-Being

- **Personal well-being is based on four categories – life satisfaction, worthwhile, happiness and anxiety:**
 - Adults (16 and over) in the Western Isles have the highest average rating for **life satisfaction** in Scotland. Based on a score out of ten, the adults there had an average rating of 8.4. This is also the highest rating in the UK. Both the Scottish and UK averages are 7.7.
 - With a rating of 8.5 (out of ten) adults in the Western Isles believe what they do in life is **worthwhile**, the highest average rating in Scotland. The Scottish average is 7.9.
 - The **happiest** adults are also in the Western Isles, having an average rating of 8.2 – significantly higher than the Scottish average of 7.5.
 - Adults in the Western Isles are also the least **anxious** with an average rating of just 2.1. The Scottish for is 2.8.

Table 1: 2015 Bank of Scotland Quality of Life Rankings – the top 50 Local Authority Districts in the UK

Local Authority	2015 Rank	2014 Rank
Orkney Islands	1	1
Shetland Islands	2	2
Western Isles	3	7
Aberdeenshire	4	3
East Renfrewshire	5	5
Scottish Borders	6	6
East Dunbartonshire	7	4

Moray	8	11
Perth & Kinross	9	8
Aberdeen City	10	9
Angus	11	12
East Lothian	12	10
Fife	13	14
Dumfries & Galloway	14	16
Midlothian	15	17
West Lothian	16	13
Highland	17	22
Argyll & Bute	18	23
Stirling	19	18
Falkirk	20	21
Edinburgh, City of	21	15
South Ayrshire	22	20
Clackmannanshire	23	19
South Lanarkshire	24	24
Renfrewshire	25	25
East Ayrshire	26	26
North Lanarkshire	27	27
Dundee City	28	28
North Ayrshire	29	30
Inverclyde	30	29
West Dunbartonshire	31	31
Glasgow City	32	32

Source: Bank of Scotland December 2015

Table 2: Local Authority District with the Best Quality of Life in each category in 2015

Group	Variable	Local Authority District
Labour (Scotland average - 73.8% UK average - 72.9%)	Highest employment rate: 86.3%	Orkney
(Scotland average - £608 UK- £630 per week)	Highest gross weekly Earnings: £795	East Renfrewshire
(Scotland - 35.1% UK - 34.8%)	% of adults (16+) with highest qualification gained: 49%. This includes graduate and post graduate degrees, NVQ level 4 and above, and professional qualifications.	City of Edinburgh
Housing (Scotland - 4.6 UK - 5.5)	Highest average number of rooms in house: 4.9	Western Isles East Renfrewshire
(Scotland 95.0% UK - 96.0%)	Largest % of houses with central heating: 100%	East Ayrshire
(Scotland - 5.0 UK - 6.8)	Lowest House price to earnings ratio: 3.8	West Dunbartonshire
(Scotland - 69.5% UK - 87.0%)	% of households with more than 2Mbps - and where more than half of household have chance of having superfast broadband: 89%	Midlothian
Urban environment (Scotland - 480.5 per sq/km UK- 266 per sq/km)	Lowest Population density per sq km: 9	Western Isles Highland
(Scotland - 3,236 cars/km UK- 9,268 cars/km)	Lowest traffic flows per square km: 69cars /km	Western Isles
(Scotland - 31.9 per 10,000 people)	Lowest burglary rate per 10,000 population: 5.1 per 10,000 people	Orkney Isles

UK-29.6 per 10,000 people)		
(Scotland - 2.4 tonnes CO ₂ emissions per household UK – 2.1 tonnes)	Lowest Total Consumer CO₂ Emissions: 1.9 tonnes per household	Glasgow City
Physical environment (Scotland - 1,311.0mm per year UK – 878.8 mm per year)	Lowest average annual rainfall: 804mm	Dundee City
(Scotland - 25.1 hours per week UK- 29.5 hours per week)	Highest average weekly sunshine hours: 27.9 hours	Aberdeen City
Health (Scotland - 94.7% UK – 94.6%)	Highest % of residents in good health: 96.8%	Aberdeenshire
(Scotland - 77.5 years UK - 79.5 years)	Longest Male life expectancy at birth for males: 80.7 years	East Dunbartonshire
(Scotland - 81.4 years UK - 83.2 years)	Longest Female life expectancy at birth for males: 83.89years	East Dunbartonshire
Education (Scotland - 22.6 pupils per class UK - 26.7 pupils per class)	Lowest average number of pupils in primary school class: 17.4	Western Isles
Secondary Education (Scotland - 11.8 pupil to teacher UK – 15.5 pupil to teacher)	Lowest secondary school pupil – teacher ratio: 8.6	Shetland Islands
Secondary Education Exams (Scotland - 83% UK - 68.6%)	Highest % of 15yr olds with 5 or more SCQF A-C grade: 94.3	Shetland Islands
(primary and secondary) (Scotland - £5,833 per pupil UK – £4,564 per pupil)	Highest per pupil spend: £10,821	Shetland Islands
Personal Well Being (Scotland - 7.7 from 10 UK - 7.7 from 10)	Highest Life Satisfaction rating out of 10: 8.4	Western Isles
(Scotland - 7.9 from 10 UK- 7.9 from 10)	Highest Worthwhile rating out of 10: 8.5	Western Isles
(Scotland - 7.5 from 10 UK - 7.5 from 10)	Highest Happiness rating out of 10: 8.2	Western Isles
(Scotland - 2.8 from 10 UK - 2.8 from 10)	Lowest levels of Anxiety rating out of 10: 2.1	Western Isles

Source: Bank of Scotland December 2015

Ends

Notes to editors:

The Quality of Life index aims to quantify where living standards are highest in Scotland by ranking local performance across a range of indicators covering the labour market, the housing market, the environment, education, health and personal well-being. The index has been produced at a local authority district level for all 32 Local Authority Districts in Scotland.

The quality of life reading for each local authority has been created by summing scores across 24 variables within 7 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.

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

Group	Variable	Period covered
Labour	Employment rate %	Jul 2014-Jun 2015
	Gross weekly Earnings £s	April 2015
	% 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 2015
	Households with a good level of broadband access (i.e. a download speed of at least 2Mbps):	Point Topic June 2014
	Population density per square km	2014 – ONS
Urban environment	Traffic flows per square km	2014
	Burglary rate per 10,000 population	British Crime Survey 2014/15
	CO ₂ Emissions per tonne per capita	2013 Department of Energy and Climate Change (covers period 2005-2013)
	Average annual rainfall mm	Met Office Average 2009/2013
Physical environment	Annual sunshine hours	Met Office Average 2009/2013
	% in good or fairly good health	2011 Census
Health	Life expectancy at birth for males	2013/14
	Life expectancy at birth for females	2013/14
	Number of pupils in primary school class	2014
Education	% of 15yr+ olds with 5 or more SCQFs A-C grade or Scottish equivalent	2013
	Average state school (primary and secondary) spending per pupil	2013
	Secondary school pupil teacher ratio	2014
	Personal Well-Being	Life Satisfaction
Worthwhile		April 2014-March 2015 ONS
Happiness		April 2014-March 2015 ONS
Anxiety		April 2014-March 2015 ONS

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This report is prepared from information that we believe is collated with care, however, it is only intended to highlight issues and it is not intended to be comprehensive. We reserve the right to vary our methodology and to edit or discontinue/withdraw this, or any other report. Any use of this report for an individual's own or third party commercial purposes is done entirely at the risk of the person making such use and solely the responsibility of the person or persons making such reliance.

For further information, contact:

Zoe Redhead, Bank of Scotland Press Office

Tel: 0131 655 5405

Email: zoeredhead@bankofscotland.co.uk

Web: www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/media.asp