



M O B I L I T Y   G U I D E

**G R E A T   B R I T A I N**





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## Part I: General country information

<b>Official name:</b>	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
<b>Capital:</b>	London – England Edinburgh (seat of government) – Scotland Cardiff – Wales Belfast – Northern Ireland
<b>Flag:</b>	
<b>Languages:</b>	The two official languages are English and Welsh. Scottish and Gaelic is also spoken in some parts of Scotland.
<b>Government:</b>	Head of State is Queen Elizabeth II. She assumed office on 06.02.1952 and was crowned on 02.06.1953. Head of government is Prime Minister Gordon Brown. He assumed office in June 2007.
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Around 60,2 million (2006); approximately 7,3 million people live in London
<b>Unemployment quota:</b>	5,5 % (January 2007)
<b>National holiday:</b>	Her Majesty Queen's Official Birthday, being celebrated on the second weekend in June 23rd April. St. George's Day – England. 30th November. St. Andrew's Day – Scotland. 1st March. St. David's Day – Wales. 17th March. St. Patrick's Day – Northern Ireland
<b>Currency:</b>	Pound Sterling = one hundred Pence Coins: £2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p, 2p, 1p Banknotes: £50, £20, £10, £5 (in Scotland additionally Scottish £1-notes, on the channel islands and on the Isle of Man partly coins and banknotes that differ from those in the rest of Great Britain. However, the monetary system is the same. A calculator is available at: <a href="http://www.marketprices.ft.com/markets/currencies/ab">http://www.marketprices.ft.com/markets/currencies/ab</a>
<b>Time:</b>	29 October – 26 March: Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) 26 March – 29 October: UTC + 1
<b>Prefix:</b>	++44
<b>Internet:</b>	.uk

## Part II: General information to prepare for mobility

In preparation for a working stay in Great Britain familiarise yourself with the country, its people and customs. This will

help you – especially in the beginning of your stay – to find your way in your new living and working environment.



## Labour market information

The UK has a strong, flexible and dynamic labour market with over 600,000 job vacancies and employment levels of over 74 %. All job vacancies are displayed on the European Job Mobility Portal, with an EU flag symbolising vacancies from employers interested in applications elsewhere in Europe. Around 75 % of British jobs lie in the service industries, and this sector is still the fastest growing business.

More detailed and updated information on the labour market situation can be found at <http://europa.eu.int/eures/home.jsp?lang=en> in the „Living and working“ section.

## Money earning and living costs

The average weekly pay in the UK in 2006 was 447 pounds. Among the highest paid are health professionals with 1,038 pounds and among the lowest paid are sales occupations with 259 pounds a week. Your net income, after tax deductions, would be about 226 pounds based on the latter.

England is considered a very expensive country to live in – especially if living in cities such as London. The Midlands and the North are considered cheaper than London and the South East. Average prices for products are (2007):

- ▶ Loaf of bread: £0.70
- ▶ Sandwich: £2.00
- ▶ Cup of Coffee: £1.50
- ▶ Pint of beer in pub: £2.70
- ▶ Chocolate bar: £0.60
- ▶ Fish and Chips: £5.00
- ▶ Cinema Ticket: £6.00
- ▶ Cigarettes: £5.00
- ▶ Short bus journey: £1.00
- ▶ Football match: £25–£40
- ▶ Petrol: 0.90 per litre
- ▶ Car Hire: £35 per day
- ▶ 2 course meal in an average restaurant: £15 per person

## Looking for a job: where to start?

Specialist posts or other jobs can be found searching the internet for particular organisations representing a certain industry or employment sector. Most advertising is done through the press, company website, private and public employment agencies and at careers and jobs fairs in the UK.

### Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus is part of the Department for Work and Pensions and helps with employment and benefits for people of working age in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland). <http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/>

### Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)

DEL is the equivalent to Jobcentre Plus in Northern Ireland and runs the network of Jobcentres providing help with employment and benefits for people of working age. <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>

### Recruitment Agencies

There are many thousands of recruitment agencies in the UK. The Recruitment and Employment Confederation is the main industry body that supports and represents private recruitment agencies and businesses in the UK.

### Newspapers

National newspapers are used widely to advertise professional jobs.

#### Selection of important newspapers:

##### *Daily Newspapers:*

Daily Telegraph (<http://jobs.telegraph.co.uk/>), Times ([http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life\\_and\\_style/career\\_and\\_jobs/](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/career_and_jobs/)) Guardian, Independent, Financial Times (<http://www.ft.com/jobsclassified>).



Yellow Press: Sun, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror

## Job Fairs

Jobs or Careers Fairs are a good way to meet lots of employers in one place. Prospects, the UK's official graduate careers website, provides event listings.

## Working conditions

In the United Kingdom there are statutory regulations with regard to the maximum number of working hours. According to these, employees may not work more than 48 hours per week on average. A 37.5-hour working week is normal for most employees as well as an entitlement to (paid) holidays of at least four weeks. Experience shows that there are more frequent and longer breaks that are strictly observed.

The working week in Britain is on average one of the longest of any country in Europe – usually, the working day starts at 9am and finishes by 5pm, for 5 days a week.

## The social security system

A national system takes care of social security. The contributions payable are dependent on the job (arranged into categories, with employees, as a rule, being assigned to category 1) and are deducted directly from wages or salaries. Payments are made in the event of illness and unemployment, as are widows' and old-age pensions etc. The social security payments made are recorded under your personal social security number (NI Number) which is issued by Jobcentre Plus.

The National Health Service (NHS) of the United Kingdom is financed through taxation and enjoys a questionable reputation. Making a claim is free (except in the case of prescriptions and dental treatment). You should be registered with the local Health Centre in order to be referred on to a doctor.

In the case of stays for business purposes, which are of a limited duration, it is worth having a talk with the health insurance company in your home country in order to find out about any necessary additional insurance.

## Looking for accommodation?

Rental prices in different regions of the United Kingdom vary widely. Properties in London and the South-East England command the highest rents. In general rents are lower in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the north of England, but there are exceptions in larger cities. As rents tend to decrease the further you are from a city centre, it is worth deciding to what extent you are willing to commute to work. Many people who work in the centre of London spend well over an hour travelling to and from work.

### 1. Rooms/apartments

You can obtain offers for rooms or housing from the local government, via the local press or from estate agents who (according to law) are not allowed to charge any commission for simply providing a list. The renting process is normal (read the contract carefully and thoroughly) and the Citizens Advice Bureau will help if there are any matters that you are not clear about. You may be entitled to apply for social housing which is offered by suitably registered landlords, known as registered social landlords.

Or ask your employer in advance if he has any tips. Perhaps he, or a colleague, has a room for the duration of your stay. Living in private accommodation has the advantage that you have a so-called "family connection", you settle in more quickly and are able to learn the language more quickly.

### 2. Youth Hostels

With an international youth hostel pass you have the chance of cheap accommodation (8–20 euros) for the initial period



or, of course, for your stay, if it is a short one. If in doubt, enquire as to what is the maximum period is that you can stay there. Often this is only 3–6 days. There is information and you can make online bookings at:

<http://www.hihostels.com/dba/continent-EU.de.htm>

### **To be checked before leaving and upon arriving**

Before moving to your new country of residence make sure you have:

- ▶ (Temporary) accommodation.
- ▶ Sufficient financial resources for the first month.
- ▶ The right documents:
  - A valid EU passport/ID card;
  - A European Health Insurance Card;
  - An E301 or 303 form.
- ▶ General knowledge of your new country of residence.

## **Part III: Golden rules for intercultural understanding**

A society's hidden rules form the basis for smooth everyday interaction – at home as well as abroad.

Any host will certainly be lenient towards a guest who – despite good manners – behaves differently from a fellow countryman. For instance, think of a guest smoking at table, something quite natural in that person's home country, but unthinkable in others, and this not only for legal reasons. Or think of the visitor from Paris, who barely knowing you, gives you a kiss on the cheek.

There is no written law on how to behave correctly in another country, and even within a country, rules will vary from one region to another. Any foreign visitor may therefore unconsciously drop a clanger.

Only living in a country for some time, being attentive and interested, will help you to learn the unwritten rules and see

As soon as you arrive in the United Kingdom:

- ▶ Register with the municipality in which you will be living.
- ▶ Apply to the tax authorities for a social security number (NI Number).
- ▶ If you are not a national of country belonging to the European Economic Area (except Bulgaria and Romania) and Switzerland, you need a work permit to take up work in the United Kingdom.

the clangers. However, if you as a guest stick to some basic rules, your stay will run smoothly.

- ▶ Don't be afraid of the unknown. Remember that in your home country you also meet strangers and usually you manage the situation without problems.
- ▶ Let situations sink in. Note the common ground as well as differences, and try to not immediately assess everything in terms of good and bad, better and worse. Things are just different!
- ▶ Confronted with new situations: wait and observe. You may be surrounded by cooperative people, however, be aware that they might never have thought about why things are done this or that way.
- ▶ Get into contact! Nobody expects you to be perfect in the foreign language. So make an effort. Even a few words can open doors.



► For conversation at your workplace, reflect on your job, your future plans and train the relevant vocabulary before you leave. Also: Read about your home as well as about

your target country and region. A country guide of your home region in the hosts' language might make a nice present.

## Part IV: Everyday-life

### Getting into contact

British people are quite reserved when greeting each other – a simple „Hi!“, „Hello“ or „Good morning/day/evening!“ will usually do, rather than a handshake or a kiss on the cheek. „How are you?“ is also a common form of greeting.

When introduced to somebody new, it is common to use a handshake. Formally, a handshake is custom, accompanied by the greeting „How do you do?“. Remember, this is a greeting and not a question, so you simply respond with the same words. Z.B. „Fine, thank you. And how are you?“

When meeting an old friend of the opposite sex after a long time, it is usual to kiss them on the cheek once.

It is quite normal to be called affectionate names – depending on your age, sex and the location you are in, you will be called „mate“, „son“, „love“ or even „treacle“. In Yorkshire, for example, a middle-aged lady working in a shop might well call you „duck“. Do not be offended. Formally, address men with „Mr.“ or „Sir“ and women with „Miss“, „Mrs.“ Or „Madam“.

In writing, use initials and the family name. If you are unsure whether the person you write to is married, write „Ms“.

### Language:

Britain is known for its diverse culture, with over 250 languages being spoken in London alone. Nevertheless, most British cannot or are not used to speak any other language other than English.

However, throughout the United Kingdom there are a number of different accents and ways of speaking. About a

quarter of the Welsh still speak a native Celtic tongue called welsh:

- Shwmae – How are you?
- Hoffet ti ddiod – What would you like to drink?

Particularly in the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland, the inhabitant's first language is Gaelic. In general, Scottish people have a stronger, harsher accent. However, this can still be understood quite well although some words vary.

In England itself, dialects vary throughout the country. Cockney is spoken in London (East End), Scouse in Liverpool, Manc in Manchester, Geordie in Newcastle, Mackem in Sunderland and Yorkshire in York. In general, it is for example common to use „cheers“ informally instead of thank you.

Some vocabulary to start with

Buongiorno ► Guten Morgen | Bonjour ► Good Morning!

Buongiorno ► Guten Tag | Bonjour ► How do you do?

This form of greeting if used at all times of the day.

In reply, don't start explaining how you feel, but answer

»Fine. Thank you.« and then go on asking »And yourself?.

Ciao ► Hallo | Allô ► hello

Rather refrain from using the American “hi”

Buonasera ► Guten Abend | Bonsoir ► Good Evening!

Buonanotte ► Gute Nacht | Bonne nuit ► Good Night!

Arrivederci ► Auf Wiedersehen | Au revoir ► (Good) bye!

Mi chiamo ► Mein Name ist | Je m'appelle ► My name is

Grazie ► Danke | Merci ► Thank you/Thanks



Per favore ▶ Bitte | S'il vous/te plaît ▶ Please  
Prego ▶ Bitte sehr | De rien ▶ You're welcome  
Scusa/scusi ▶ Entschuldigung | Pardon ▶ Sorry; Excuse me  
Si ▶ Ja | oui ▶ Yes  
No ▶ Nein | non ▶ No

## Working environment

The good economic situation and the shortage of skilled workers in the British Isles aid a situation in which foreign workers looking for work, especially those from the trades and crafts sector, have good prospects of success. You will, therefore, be warmly welcomed and you will be helped to settle into an unfamiliar area of work. Every company “ticks” differently. The following recommendations are, therefore, to be understood as giving food for thought in a general way.

Professional discussions are conducted in a very pragmatically orientated manner. Clear rejections or outspoken criticism are regarded as impolite, even rude. If the person you are talking to does not agree with something, he will not say it straight out. Rather, “There is something about this question that I do not get” is what will be heard. The British are often referred to as the masters of understatement. They do not like putting their own feats on show. Decisions, once they have been reached, must be adhered to.

Group consensus and teamwork are the top priority in the case of most Britons. They even joke about their love of committees. A “good” piece of work is not one that is regarded as being of value just in the case of one worker but also for others, and which makes a contribution towards a common goal. Therefore, meetings, at which joint decisions are taken, are widespread. Even in the trades and crafts sector the system in operation is based less on giving instructions. Instead, it is more often the case that a plan is discussed jointly. Thereby, every worker gives his opinion, even if he is not completely au fait with the subject or is still being

trained in it. Moreover, the word for the person in charge is not the “chef” (this is used for a “cook in charge of a kitchen”), but “head” or “boss”.

Safety at work is often writ very large. In companies there are safety induction courses for new employees and lots of signs which advise the employees as to the type of protective clothing to be worn. Authorities carry out unannounced inspections of businesses and building sites.

You may encounter a different type of customer behaviour. As a rule, functionality is given priority, and not so much how beautiful a piece of work that has been carried out is.

**Please note: Measurements are calculated in “inches” (1 inch = 2.54 cm).**

Your private life and your job are kept strictly apart, but it is very usual to meet your colleagues at the pub later on in the evening. Talking to colleagues about work during a meal and in the pub after work is, to a large extent, taboo.

## Manners/Etiquette

The enormous cultural diversity in Britain has bred a highly-tolerant population. Regardless of people's background or opinions, opposing views are accepted and it is left at that. Mutual consideration is a quality that is prized. Make frequent use of the words “sorry” or “excuse me”, even if you are not aware of being at fault. For example, always say thank you to the driver when leaving the bus and use please. Hats are not to be worn inside buildings (men).

Small or middling disasters are best not greatly commented on. Something that may form the topic of conversation for hours among German, French or Italian colleagues, for example – embellished with the words “disaster”, “unbearable”, “the day was already ruined as a result of this”, “incredible” – the British man will bear with what appears, on the





outside, to be a stoical calm. Every day is “a nice day” – regardless of whether the weather is “awful”, there is traffic chaos, a railway strike or something worse happens.

In this context people do not like it when criticism is made of how things are in Britain. Humour and seeing the funny side of things, as often as possible, are rewarded. However, jokes about traditions that might strike you as strange and British customs or the royal family are taboo.

“God save the Queen” is often to be heard not just as a toast or sung in the form of the national anthem but is also really meant in most cases. People are too proud of British television to want to hear jokes about it. Avoid talking about work or politics unless it comes up in conversation. The main topic for conversation is of course, the weather. In any case, people also already know every joke about the weather or mad-cow disease that a foreigner can come up with. Thus it is preferable to let the best jokes be told by the people who live there themselves.

“Please queue here” – you should observe queues which, for the most part, are neatly formed. Pushing your way forward is regarded as being extremely impolite. In the world of work people are generally punctual, but the custom of arriving between 10 and 20 minutes late is already widespread in the private sphere.

Humour in everyday life as well as among colleagues is important – something which is sometimes felt to be very bizarre by other Europeans. A good example are the Monty Python films or the USA “documentary” “Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan” by the British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen. They are jam-packed with over-the-top insinuations and have already caused outrage throughout the world.

The British man likes most of all to make fun of himself, but joking about others is not so well-received. Anyone who feels a joke to be too cutting or has not completely under-

stood the deeper significance can save the situation, for example, with a charming: “I had already heard a lot about British humour and couldn’t wait to hear some of it. Let me in on it -what was it actually about ?”

In Great Britain people drive on the left. First look right and then left if you have to cross the street. Of course you hear that, but it is so unfamiliar that you have to remind yourself of it again and again. There is a strict distinction between a BUS (which operates within towns) and a COACH (which operates cross country) Asking about the bus in small villages could cause a misunderstanding.

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## Invitations

“My home is my castle” reflects the love of the British for their own four walls (preferably a home of their own with a garden). Accordingly, the private sphere is also highly prized. It is quite common to be invited to dinner parties and other events – but spontaneous visits may be unwelcome.

If you receive private invitations, you only bring a present for your host if you are staying overnight. Although you are not expected to do so, it is a good idea and very polite to give your host a gift, however small it is. A good bottle of wine or even a travel guide to your home area are suitable as little presents, but flowers – especially lilies – rather not.

Punctuality is a must. You must arrive at the exact time specified for appointments and dinners. If you are unable to keep an appointment, you are expected to notify the person you are meeting with as soon as possible. You can arrive at any time during the hours specified for teas, receptions and cocktail parties, but you should arrive a few minutes early for public meetings, plays, sporting events and other public events. If an invitation specifies „7:30 or 8“, arrive no later than 7:50.

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## Topics for conversation



Unlike in other Southern European countries, for example, questions about someone's marriage partner, children or other private topics have a disconcerting effect before you get to know more about each other. Do respect British people's privacy. Intimate questions concerning topics such as salary, weight or marital status should not be asked. Topics such as sport, gardening or the outdoors or the tourist sites of an area offer a lot of material for conversations to start with until you get to know each other better and have found connections of "your own". Allow yourself to be guided by your host or the person opposite. He will address those topics that he finds agreeable.

If you are a guest, say thank you when being served something and always wait until the guest has started eating before you do.

There is also a big „card-culture“ in Britain, and you will find card-shops on every shopping street you go to. It is considered polite to send your hosts a thank-you note after the invitation.

Most British (men) are completely obsessed with sports, but there are several different branches. If you thought that football is the most popular, you have underestimated the influence of cricket, tennis or rugby.

Often Europeans tend to speak a mixture of American and British English: **But if you speak English in Great Britain, please speak English! Best pay attention when you buy a dictionary.**

Here some differences: The British »bonnet« [baanat] is called »hood« in American English. British will not say »windshield«, but »windscreen« [windskri:n]. Also British say »lorry« [laori:] or »van« [væn], not »truck«. »Gas« is really gas, and not »petrol« [petrowl]. And for tea ask for »biscuits« [biskats] not for »cookies«.

## England or Great Britain?

The United Kingdom is divided into England, Wales, Scotland and includes, in addition, Northern Ireland. This union is not regarded with great composure everywhere. The best thing to do is to use the relevant name for the country depending on where you are staying.

To speak generally of "the English" is wrong, the name is "British". Or, actually, "the English", "the Welsh", "the Scots" and "the people of Northern Ireland".

## Spare time

Weekends are usually spent at a public house (pub). Wherever you live in Britain, you will be assigned to a „local“ (the nearest pub). The evening is spent drinking „lager“ or „bitter“ (also known as ale, a darker and more bitter beer), and comfortably sitting and chatting with friends.

The pub is a favourite place with all Britons for meeting up with friends. Many people, however, also spend their leisure time at home and also in front of the television. The time that they spend doing this is, on a global scale, only surpassed by the Americans. The reason that the British give for this is, first and foremost, the good quality of their national television programmes.

Otherwise a lot of sports are played. Local pubs form „pub-teams“ which play each other in leagues. Joining these is a good way of getting to know people as well. Watching sports is also popular (cricket and tennis are played in the summer, whereas football and rugby are played in the winter), and is combined with social activities. A common practice is „going to the races“ (horse racing), where one gambles and ends up going for a couple of drinks. Scotland is commonly regarded as the home of golf, and polo is popular among the upper classes.

Sport is also a favourite topic of conversation. The national sports are football and rugby. Cricket is the traditional type of summer sport. Modern lawn tennis was first played in



**Here, by way of an example, is some information on Christmas in Great Britain:**

The “Christmas Tree”, the fir tree, belongs in every front room at Christmas. The husband of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, who came from Germany, brought this tradition to the island in the middle of the last century. A British tradition is a sprig of mistletoe attached to the door frame. If a young girl or a woman passes beneath this, she may be kissed without being asked. On the night of the 24th to the 25th of December “Santa Claus” drops his presents through the chimney into the stockings hung by the children on the fireplace. In general, this day is celebrated with a great deal of merriment. The British wear funny paper hats on their heads and pull crackers. This is accompanied by a substantial Christmas meal with stuffed turkey, plum pudding and eggnog. On the 26th of December, the day known as “Boxing Day”, there are presents once again. These are packed in brightly-coloured boxes in the same way that, in earlier times, the Christmas money was given to apprentices and domestic employees.

**Example: Bonfire Night**

A popular day to celebrate is November the 5th. Surprisingly, this day marks the anniversary of a plot to kill the King. In 1605, Guy Fawkes – a Catholic supporter from York – attempted to assassinate King James I. The infamous gunpowder plot also aimed at blowing up the Parliament which was being opened by the King that day, failed. Today, this day is celebrated with fireworks and bonfires every year. It also reminds us of the struggle between Protestants and Catholics which has been going on for decades. In the past, Abbeys have been destroyed and today we are still aware of the IRA (Irish Republican Army) in Northern Ireland.

England, and the rules of modern boxing were also invented on the island. The English, in particular, are keen ramblers and enthusiastic amateur gardeners who relax by working in the garden. Whole branches of industry profit from this passion (gardening books, for example, can become best-sellers in England).

## Public holidays

Difference in habits in European countries often exist where you wouldn't expect them. The way people celebrate holidays tells us a lot about the countries' culture. Therefore, to inform yourself about holiday traditions is a good way to get to know more about the country.

## Eating & drinking

Eating is very much seen as a central part of social life – there is a very distinct and specific eating-pattern the English follow, and it is a main part of holidays and celebrations.

In England, as a rule, there are three meals a day. The midday meal is mostly referred to as “lunch” and the evening meal as “dinner” or, if it is late in the evening, “supper”. It is rare for the midday meal to be called “dinner” and the sweet and substantial meal that is taken in the early evening to be called “tea”. The tradition of “teatime”, having tea at around 4 o'clock in the afternoon, which included tea, biscuits and cakes, is becoming less and less important. The same thing is happening with lunch which, for many people, now just consists of a light meal or a snack.



Scotland is known for its salmon and haggis, whereas it is popular to serve cockles (a kind of shellfish) for breakfast in Wales.

In English pubs drinks are often ordered at the bar or picked up and paid for at the bar, and taken to the table by the person himself. In a restaurant people wait until the waiter directs them to a table. Closing time, which has been painstakingly observed up until now, and which was intended to restrict the citizens' consumption of alcohol, has no longer officially existed since the 24th of November 2005.

As of the 1st of June 2007, smoking is prohibited from all pubs, clubs and restaurants in England. In Scotland, the law already existed. If you need to smoke, excuse yourself and smoke outside – you are usually allowed to take your drink with you. Otherwise smokers are in the minority, so ask if smoking is permitted if at somebody's house.

Traditional English Breakfast consists of eggs, bacon, baked beans, mushrooms and sausages with a slice or two of toast. However, most British will stick to some cereal and a glass of orange juice these days.

During the week, given the rushed and hectic atmosphere at work (especially in places like London) British will usually just have a sandwich, a packet of crisps and a drink. Every small kiosk offers a wide selection of sandwiches which can be bought as part of a „meal deal“ in combination with other items. However, over the weekend, things may be a bit different. „Sunday Roasts“ are very common and consist of slices of meat (pork, beef or chicken) served with a Yorkshire Pudding (savoury), potatoes, vegetables and gravy. These are usually eaten with the family. Pubs also offer „pub lunches“ during the day, which consist of burgers and various traditional English dishes. Fish & Chip stands are found everywhere too.

Tea is very popular in Britain, and it will be offered to you at all times. It is usually served with milk and upon request, sugar. However, plenty of people also drink coffee and this is usually offered along with tea. You can visit tearooms at which cakes and other treats can be eaten along with tea.

## Part V: Vocational education & training

People working abroad obviously often speak about their profession and everyday working life in their home country. It is therefore important to realise that school, vocational education and ways to learn a trade vary distinctively between States.

Find below a short overview of the British vocational education system:

The British state supervises education, but does not hold an „education monopoly“. Education is free for children from the age of 5 to 18 years. By law, children are required to have an education until they are 16, but this does not mean they have to attend public schools. Whereas around 94 % of pupils

receive education from public funds, 6 % attend independent fee paying schools or get tutored at home. State schools, or government-run, public schools, follow the same National Curriculum.

### First level of education

- ▶ Compulsory education from 5 to 16 years of age.
- ▶ In the very first stage of education, you can either attend primary schools (age 5–11), or infant schools (age 5–7) and junior schools (age 7–11).
- ▶ Secondary schools are attended from ages 11–16.



- ▶ At the age of 16, most children complete examinations known as GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the standard grade in Scotland.

### Continuing education

- ▶ After completion of the compulsory education, pupils can choose to continue at school, move to a sixth-form college or a further education (FE) college – enter employment with training such as an apprenticeship, or enter without one.
- ▶ Students continuing education at school or college may choose between general (academic) and vocational subjects, or take a mixture of the two.
- ▶ This phase normally lasts 2 years until the age of 18 or 19, where the dominant qualification obtained are the A-levels (equivalent to Matura, Bac. Or Abitur).
- ▶ Note that the education systems are under different governance: Scotland, especially, has a long tradition of an independent system from England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- ▶ A brief overview is given below: The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland differs from the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

### England, Wales & Northern Ireland national qualifications framework

#### Entry level:

- ▶ Qualification can be taken at any age to continue or return to education or training.
- ▶ Certificate: Entry Level Certification (NQF).
- ▶ Scotland: Access level 1, 2 and 3. Certificate: Foundation Standard Grade.

#### Level 1

- ▶ NVQ Level 1.
- ▶ Secondary education: initial entry into employment or further education.
- ▶ GCSEs at grade D-G.
- ▶ Certificate: Level 1 Certificate.
- ▶ Scotland: Level 4: Intermediate 1, General Standard Grade, SVQ 1.

#### Level 2

- ▶ NVQ Level 2.
- ▶ Continuation of secondary education.
- ▶ GCSEs at grade A-c.
- ▶ Certificate: Level 2 Certificate, Level 2 Diploma.
- ▶ Scotland: Level 5: Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, SVQ 2.

#### Level 3

- ▶ NVQ Level 3.
- ▶ Completion of secondary education.
- ▶ A-levels.
- ▶ Certificate: Level 3 Certificate, Level 3 Diploma.
- ▶ Scotland: Level 6: Higher, SVQ 3.

#### Level 4

- ▶ NVQs
- ▶ Entry to higher education.
- ▶ Certificate: Level 4 Certificate, Level 4 Diploma.
- ▶ Higher education qualifications: Certificates of Higher Education (Level C).
- ▶ Scotland: Level 7: Advanced Higher, Higher National Certificate, Certificate of Higher Education.



## Level 5

- ▶ NVQs.
- ▶ Specialised education and training.  
Qualified/Skilled worker.
- ▶ Certificate: Level 5 Certificate, Level 5 Diploma.
- ▶ Higher National Diploma.
- ▶ Higher education qualifications: Ordinary Bachelor's degree, Foundation degrees, Diplomas of higher education and other higher diplomas.
- ▶ Scotland: Level 8: Higher National Diploma, Diploma in Higher Education, SVQ 4. Level 9: Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma/Certificate.

## Level 6

- ▶ NVQs.
- ▶ Entry to professional graduate employment.
- ▶ Certificate: Level 6 Certificate, Level 6 Diploma.
- ▶ Higher education qualifications: Bachelor's degrees with honours, Graduate certificates and diplomas.
- ▶ Scotland: Level 10: Honours degree, Graduate Diploma/Certificate.

## Level 7

- ▶ NVGs.
- ▶ Intermediate/Higher education Advanced skills training.
- ▶ Certificates: Level 7 Diploma, Level 7 Fellowship, Level 7 Advanced Professional Certificate.
- ▶ Higher education qualifications: Master's degree, Post-graduate certificates and diplomas.
- ▶ Scotland: Level 7: Masters, SVQ 5.

## Level 8

- ▶ Professional or post-graduate education or employment.
- ▶ Certificate: highly specialist Diplomas from a professional body.

- ▶ Higher education qualifications: Doctoral Degree.
- ▶ Scotland: Level 12: Doctorates.

## Basics

Since 2004, schools are required to provide GCSEs in vocational subjects. Altogether there are eight subjects: applied science, applied IT, applied business, applied art and design, engineering, manufacturing, health and social care, leisure and tourism, and more subjects under development.

Young Apprenticeships were introduced in 2004 for 14–16 year-olds. This allows a flexible programme involving a college and a training provider or employer. Students are based at school, but for two days a week they work towards nationally recognised level 2 qualifications.

Colleges which students can attend after the age of 16 include specialist colleges (art, design and agriculture). Within this pathway, there are a range of vocational qualifications available.

## Vocational certificate of education (VCE)

VCE is an A-level award designed for those wanting to study a broad area of work. There are 10 applied subjects (2005) and progression leads on to higher education (including foundation degrees), an apprenticeship or training and/or professional qualifications.

## National vocational qualifications (NVQs)

NVQs are designed for people to gain recognised qualifications for specific occupations – they are offered at levels 1, 2 and 3. Progression leads to further education and training or to the labour market. These are often achieved through study at FE colleges.

## Key skills (KS)



KS qualifications are available to all students after the age of 16, and comprise communication, application of number and information technology (IT). Wider units – working with others, improving own learning and performance and problem solving – are also available.

### **BTEC introductory, first and national qualifications**

Business and technical education councils (BTECs) are designed for study in occupational areas – they offer a mixture of theoretical and practical work and lead on to the labour market or more advanced vocational courses.

### **OCR national awards, certificates and diplomas**

Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) nationals are qualifications available for 16 to 19 year olds.

### **City and Guilds, GVQs and IVQs**

City and Guilds offer more than 500 qualifications through thousands of centres across sectors. Different levels are particularly general vocational qualifications (GVQs) and international vocational qualifications (IVQs).

## **Part VI: Selected trades**

Trades and crafts is not a profession but are defined by the activity engaged in. Trade and craft activities exist if the following criteria are fulfilled:

- a) the predominance of the human factor in all phases of the manufacture of the product
- b) the use of natural materials (glass, natural fibres, wood, clay etc.)
- c) there is creativity (the aesthetic dimension of the product).

Training for a specific trade is not uniformly regulated in the United Kingdom. Everyone can have the skills that they have

### **Apprenticeships**

A total of 60 apprenticeships are available in over 80 different industries. Apprenticeships are a mixture of work-based training and education, which includes following elements:

- ▶ National vocational qualification (NVQ).
- ▶ Key skills and ICT at an appropriate level.
- ▶ A technical certificate associated with a job and delivered at a FE college.

Apprenticeships take a minimum of 12 months (at level 2) and a minimum of 24 months for advanced apprenticeships. There is no age restriction for them.

Similar arrangements exist in Scotland, but they do still differ slightly. Scottish apprenticeships include on- and off-the-job training, study for a SVQ level 3 or above, and core skills in numeracy, communications, IT, problem solving and working with others.

acquired tested by specific organisations (refer to the education system). A kind of performance level is determined according to a modular system.

### **The “Joinery” Trade**

<b>Title:</b>	Joiner
<b>Period of training:</b>	3-year apprenticeship or 2 years’ theory and practice at a college
<b>Leaving Certificates:</b>	NVQ Level 1 and Level 2



**Additional information:** Joinery work, building joinery work and carpentry work are taught together; specialisation in the window construction, building joinery, roof timbering and furniture-making areas takes place later. The joiner makes windows, doors and staircases, among other things. Installation is mainly a matter for the carpenter. Sash windows and windows which open outwards are typical of Great Britain. Less attention is paid to thermal insulation and sound insulation than in many other European countries.

### The “Carpentry” Trade

<b>Title:</b>	Carpenter
<b>Period of training:</b>	3-year apprenticeship or 2 years’ theory and practice at a college
<b>Leaving Certificates:</b>	NVQ Level 1 and Level 2

**Additional information:** Joinery work, building joinery work and carpentry work are taught together; specialisation in the window construction, building joinery, roof timbering and furniture-making areas takes place later. Roof timbers are frequently supplied as ready-made components and consist of a number of battens and 3x12 planks. The entire structure is supported in the middle and fully braced in such a way that the loft cannot be used as a living area.

In the case of roofing work, trap cushions measuring 80x80x150cm are laid out in place of arrester nets.

### The “Bricklaying” Trade

<b>Title:</b>	Bricklayer
<b>Period of training:</b>	on-the-job training and college courses or a 3-year apprenticeship
<b>Leaving Certificates:</b>	NVQ Level 1 and Level 2

**Additional information:** Walls are built using a large pointed trowel, with which the stones are also tapped. The mortar lies on a plank of wood, and the internal brickwork and facing brickwork are erected at the same time, with the hollow layer subsequently being blown out using small polystyrene balls. Lintels often consist of a sheet zinc with an insulating core. Facing joints are pointed on the same day using masonry mortar. Scaffolding is put on one side in the butt joints, and the groundworker creates the foundations and footings of the house.

### The “Wall and Floor Tiling” Trade

<b>Title:</b>	Wall and floor tiler
<b>Period of training:</b>	on-the-job training and college courses or 2–3 years at a college
<b>Leaving Certificates:</b>	NVQ Level 2 and Level 3

**Additional information:** Wall and floor tiling work are mainly part of a complete service package. Wall and floor tilers thus often take on other parts of the interior work.

### The “Stucco Plastering” Trade

<b>Title:</b>	Stucco plasterer
<b>Period of training:</b>	on-the-job training and college courses or 2 years’ basic training or 3 years incl. 1 year of further education
<b>Leaving Certificate:</b>	NVQ Level 2 and Level 3

**Additional information:** Plasterboard surfaces are almost always re-coated with a fine layer of stucco.

### The “Electronics” Trade

<b>Title:</b>	Electronic Technician
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**Period of training:** 3 or 4 years' apprenticeship with theory stages

**Leaving Certificates:** NVQ Level 2 and Level 3

**Additional information:** The basics of the trade are taught in 26 weeks of supra-trade training in training centres. The "electronic technician" trade has a high profile in England. Due to the construction boom in the last few years there is a great demand for skilled staff in this vocational area and the opportunities to earn money are, accordingly, very good.

What is unusual about the English system is fitting out houses, even today, with a ring structure. There are no 3-phase networks, but only 1-phase networks. The individual plugs for appliances, switches and sockets have their own fuses. A colour coding system for the individual wires for 3-wire cables is used, but this was not officially introduced until 2006. Concealed cables are rare. Most of them are laid on top of the plaster. Concealed cables are fitted with a metal cover.

### **The "Painting and Decorating" Trade**

**Title:** Painter and Decorator

**Period of training:** on-the-job training and college courses or a 3-year apprenticeship

**Leaving Certificates:** VQ Level 2 and Level 3

**Additional information:** In Great Britain, oil-based paints are generally used, in the main, not water-based paints as in Germany, for example. In addition, wallpapering is very important. Many borders and patterned wallpapers are pasted. Special techniques such as the production of wood or marble effects through paint are widespread.

### **The "Motor Mechanic/Vehicle Technician" Trade**

**Title:** Motor Mechanic/  
Vehicle Technician

**Period of training:** on-the-job training with day-release instruction or instruction arranged in blocks, or a 3-year apprenticeship

**Leaving Certificates:** NVQ Level 2 and Level 3

**Additional information:** A motor mechanic is similar, in his duties, to the German "Kfz-Mechatroniker". The tyre/exhaust fitter is placed at a level which is somewhat lower than that of a German service mechanic.

In Wales, it struck those taking part in periods of practical experience abroad that the "TÜV" (MOT) only checks the most essential items and many cars, from a German point of view, show shortcomings with regard to safety. In addition, more cars are repaired and fewer replaced than in Germany. Since not every workshop was equipped with the required equipment, they had to make do with those of a neighbouring workshop – for some of the young people this improvisation was a valuable addition to their skills.

### **The "Bakery" Trade**

**Title:** Baker

**Period of training:** on-the-job training and college courses or day courses at college or 2 years' full-time education

**Leaving Certificates:** NVQ 1 and 2



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## Part VII: Links

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### EURES

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- ▶ European Job Mobility Portal (EURES): <http://europa.eu.int/eures/main.jsp?countryId=UK&acro=living&lang=en&parentId=0>

### European guidance

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- ▶ Euroguidance centres in all EU-member and accession states and Switzerland inform on the advisory systems in your home country, if you intend to work or study in another EU-member state. <http://www.euroguidance.net>
- ▶ <http://www.fitforeurope.info>
- ▶ If you have difficulties regarding the recognition of diplomas you can turn to the EU directory service for citizens, which gives advice free of charge. <http://ec.europa.eu/citizensrights/>
- ▶ Further information on countries and their (business) etiquette is available on <http://www.executiveplanet.com>

### Free online-translation can be found at:

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- ▶ <http://babel.altavista.com/tr> (All languages)

### EUROPASS

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- ▶ [http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/preview.action?locale\\_id=1](http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/preview.action?locale_id=1)

### National employment agencies

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- ▶ Jobcentre Plus: <http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk>
- ▶ DEL (Department for Employment and Learning): <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>
- ▶ Recruitment and Employment Confederation: <http://www.rec.uk.com>
- ▶ European Job Mobility Portal: <http://europa.eu.int/eures/home.jsp?lang=en>
- ▶ Recruitment Agencies: <http://www.agencycentral.co.uk/>
- ▶ For graduates: <http://www.prospects.ac.uk>
- ▶ Information in German on <http://www.europa-mobil.de/eu-arbeitssuche-arbeitsaufnahme/Europa-Arbeitssuche/beratung-jobsuche/Europaservice/>

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### Representations of small and medium-sized enterprises

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- ▶ Landes-Gewerbeförderungsstelle des nordrhein-westfälischen Handwerks – Handwerk international: brochure „Länderleitfaden Großbritannien“, 2007, 5 Euro; <http://www.handwerk-international.net> -> Publikationen -> Publikationsliste

### Job databases

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- ▶ Information on job application and country information: <http://www.jobpilot.com/>



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- ▶ Links on job databases in the UK: [http://bak-information.ub.tu-berlin.de/verzeichnisse/jobseite/countrys/jobboersen/job\\_uk.htm](http://bak-information.ub.tu-berlin.de/verzeichnisse/jobseite/countrys/jobboersen/job_uk.htm)

## Newspapers online

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- ▶ [http://bak-information.ub.tu-berlin.de/verzeichnisse/jobseite/countrys/zeitungen/ztg\\_uk.htm](http://bak-information.ub.tu-berlin.de/verzeichnisse/jobseite/countrys/zeitungen/ztg_uk.htm)

## Guides:

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- ▶ “Living and Working in the UK”; Mathew Collins, Nicky Barclay; 2006
- ▶ “Gebrauchsanweisung für England”; Heinz Ohff; 2001
- ▶ “Gebrauchsanweisung für Schottland”; Heinz Ohff; 2002

## Further information on accommodation, media etc.:

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- ▶ <http://www.visitbritain.com/>
- ▶ <http://www.i-uk.com>

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