

# Registered Blind and Partially Sighted Persons, Scotland 2009



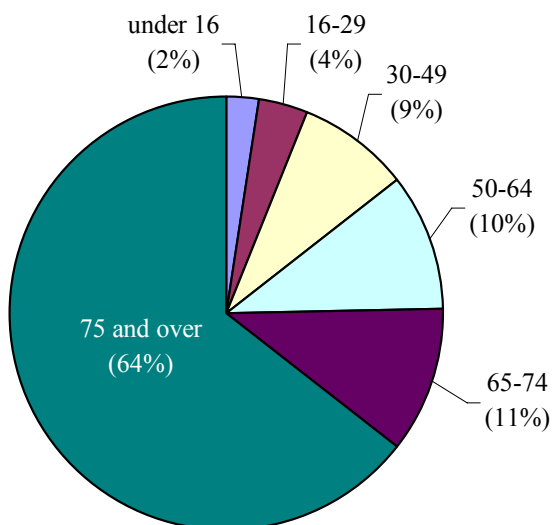
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## Introduction

The purpose of this Statistics Release is to present national figures on visually impaired persons registered with Local Authorities in Scotland. All figures relate to the 31st March 2009 and are provisional and, as such, may be subject to change. The final figures will be published in future publications.

Registration with Local Authorities for blind and partially sighted persons is not compulsory. Research studies suggest that between a quarter and a third of visually impaired people are in fact registered with Local Authorities (see background note for more details).

**Chart 1: Registered Visually Impaired Persons by Age Group, 2009**



## Main points

Information collected on visually impaired persons show that: -

- In 2009, the number of people registered as blind or partially sighted was estimated to be 35,588.
- There were 2,934 cases registered during the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009, a decrease of 5.8 per cent on 2008.
- The majority, 56 per cent, of those on the register were blind, 44 per cent were partially sighted.
- 38 per cent of those on the register were male and 62 per cent were female.

- Three-quarters (75 per cent) of those registered were over the age of 65.
- 11,798 persons (33 per cent) of those registered as visually impaired had additional disabilities. Of these, less than a quarter were deaf.

### Section 1: Blind Persons

There were 19,880 registered blind persons in 2009. The number registered blind has shown a slight drop of less than one per cent over the last year. This continues the trend of small, but steady falls since 2000. (See background note for more details).

The number of new cases registered during the year was 1,254. This is down nearly nine per cent on the previous year.

In 2009, there were 3.8 people registered blind for every 1,000 people in the population of Scotland (see table 1a).

**Table 1a: Number of Registered Blind Persons and New Registrations during the Year 2000-2009**

Year <sup>1</sup>	New Cases	Total	Registered per 1000 Pop'n
2009	1,254	19,880	3.8
2008	1,375	19,959	3.9
2007	1,418	20,457	4.0
2006	1,537	21,785	4.3
2005	1,682	23,248	4.6
2004	1,566	23,172	4.6
2003	1,743	23,557	4.7
2002	1,713	23,451	4.6
2001	1,766	24,748	4.9
2000	1,903	24,839	4.9

<sup>1</sup> Care should be taken when commenting on trends as the fall in numbers between 2000 and 2002 is explained in part by improvements in reporting procedures by some local authorities.

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

Just over three-quarters of registered blind persons are over the age of 65, with approximately two-thirds being over 75. There are significantly more women registered blind (61 per cent) than men (39 per cent).

Almost 45 per cent of all registered blind people are women aged 75 and over (see table 1b). This is also reflected in the new registrations where around 44 per cent of the new registered cases are women aged 75 and over.

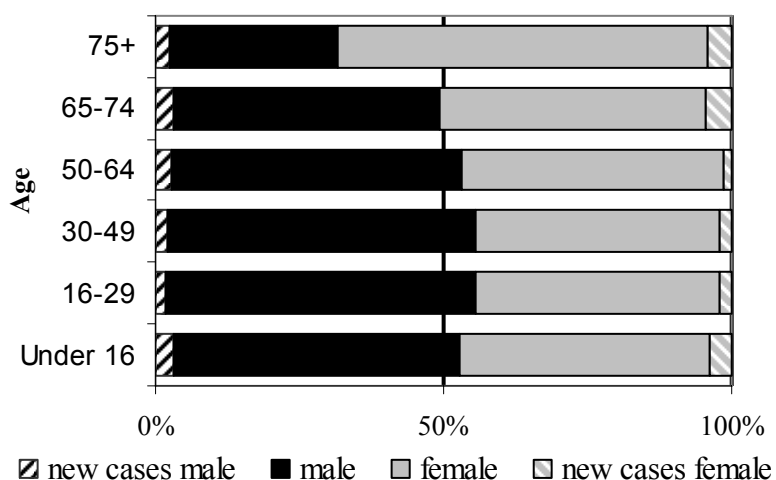
Excluding the '75 and over' age group there is a much more even split between the sexes. (See Table 1b & Chart 1b).

**Table 1b: Number of Registered Blind Persons and New Registrations by Age and Gender, 2009**

AGE	New Cases		Total Cases		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
Under 16	13	17	225	201	426
16-29	10	12	335	268	603
30-49	39	39	990	794	1,784
50-64	59	32	1,096	963	2,059
65-74	66	94	1,012	1,042	2,054
75 and over	327	546	4,079	8,875	12,954
<b>All ages-Total</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>7,737</b>	<b>12,143</b>	<b>19,880</b>

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

**Chart 1b: Number of Registered Blind Persons and New Registrations by Age and Gender, 2009**



An estimated 6,815 (34 per cent) of all registered blind persons have additional disabilities, nearly a quarter of which are deaf. Nearly 72 per cent of those with additional disabilities were over the age of 65 (see Table 1c).

**Table 1c: Number of Registered Blind Persons with Additional Disabilities by Age, 2009**

Additional Disability	AGE			Total
	Under 16	16-64	65 and over	
Deaf	6	269	1,261	1,536
Physically Disabled	63	662	2,586	3,311
Learning Difficulties	20	349	68	438
Mental Health Problems	5	214	515	734
Multiple Disabilities	76	265	455	796
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>1,758</b>	<b>4,886</b>	<b>6,815</b>

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

The number of registered blind people per 1,000 population is 3.8 for the whole of Scotland. This varies from 1.7 in Aberdeenshire and Shetland to 6.8 in the City of Glasgow. A more detailed breakdown showing the rate per 1,000 population by age and sex for each Local Authority is available in Annex A on page 9.

## Section 2: Partially Sighted Persons

There were an estimated 15,708 registered partially sighted persons in 2009. This is slightly down on last year (1.6 per cent). The number of people registered as partially sighted has been steadily rising over the last 9 years to 2006 with a slight dip in numbers in 2007, increasing again in 2008. The number of new cases registered during the year was 1,680. This is down three per cent on the previous year. The number of people registered partially sighted per 1,000 population is 3.0 for this year. This has remained at around the same level since 2003. (see Table 2a).

**Table 2a: Number of Registered Partially Sighted Persons and New Registrations during the years 2000-2009**

Year <sup>1</sup>	New Cases	Total	Registered per 1000 Pop'n
2009	1,680	15,708	3.0
2008	1,738	15,957	3.1
2007	1,845	15,181	3.0
2006	1,953	15,569	3.0
2005	1,759	15,339	3.0
2004	1,855	14,770	2.9
2003	1,748	14,443	2.9
2002	2,061	13,972	2.8
2001	1,856	13,676	2.7
2000	1,776	13,287	2.6

<sup>1</sup> Care should be taken when commenting on trends as the fall in numbers since 2000 is explained in part by improvements in reporting procedures by some local authorities.

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

Data on registered partially sighted individuals shows a similar picture to that of registered blind individuals. Approximately 75 per cent of registered partially sighted persons are over the age of 65, with approximately two-thirds (64 per cent) being aged 75 or over. There are significantly more women registered as partially sighted (63 per cent) than men (37 per cent). Again, just under half (44 per cent) of all registered partially sighted people are women aged 75 and over (see table 2b).

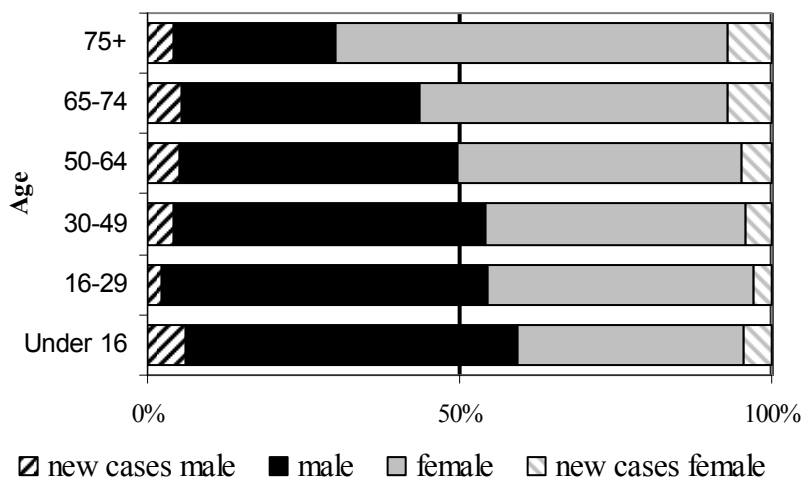
This large proportion of partially sighted women aged 75 or over is also mirrored in the new registrations where 42 per cent of the new registered cases are women aged 75 and over. Excluding the '75 and over' age group there is a much more even split between the sexes (see Table 2b & Chart 2b).

**Table 2b: Number of Registered Partially Sighted Persons and New Registrations by Age and Gender, 2009**

AGE	New Cases		Total Cases		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
Under 16	27	21	270	185	455
16-29	15	18	359	301	660
30-49	51	52	677	571	1,248
50-64	79	73	774	788	1,562
65-74	100	127	787	1,013	1,800
75 and over	412	705	3,011	6,972	9,983
<b>All ages-Total</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>5,878</b>	<b>9,830</b>	<b>15,708</b>

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

**Chart 2b: Percentage of Registered Partially Sighted Persons and New Registrations by Age and Gender, 2009**



An estimated 4,983 (32 per cent) of all registered partially sighted persons have additional disabilities, around three-quarters (74 per cent) of which are aged 65 and over. Physical disabilities account for over half (55 per cent) and nearly a quarter (22 per cent) are deaf (see Table 2c).

**Table 2c: Number of Registered Partially Sighted Persons with Additional Disabilities by Age, 2009**

Additional Disability	AGE			Total
	Under 16	16-64	65 and over	
Deaf	9	127	943	1,079
Physically Disabled	53	583	2,108	2,744
Learning Difficulties	23	183	41	247
Mental Health Problems	2	142	276	420
Multiple Disabilities	38	152	303	493
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>1,187</b>	<b>3,671</b>	<b>4,983</b>

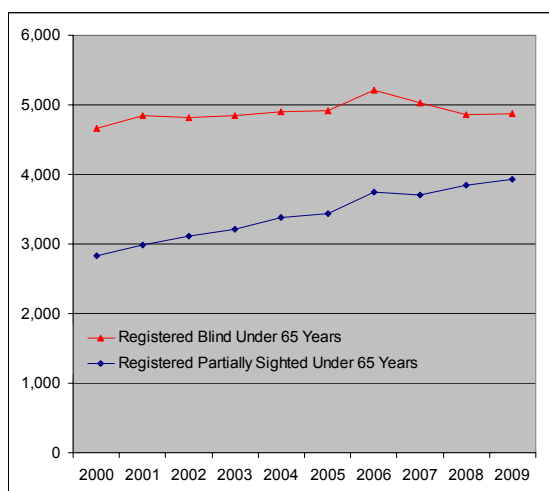
Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

The number of people registered partially sighted per 1,000 population is 3.0 for the whole of Scotland. This varies from 1.1 in Orkney to 4.8 in Argyll and Bute. A more detailed breakdown showing the rate per 1,000 population by age and sex for each Local Authority is available in Annex A on page 10.

### Section 3: Visually Impaired Under 65-year-olds

Time series data showing the number of visually impaired people under the age of 65 over the last 10 years is shown in the chart below. It shows a gradual rise in the number of registered blind persons up until 2001 before remaining relatively constant at around 4,900 until 2006 then falling in 2007 and 2008, before levelling in 2009. Registered partially sighted persons have increased year on year from 2000 to 2009

**Chart 3: Time Series of Registered Blind and Registered Partially Sighted Persons Aged 65 and Under, 1999-2009**



Overall the number of registered visually impaired under 65-year-olds has increased by around one per cent on last year. The ratio per 1,000 population is at around 2.0 Data on under 65's by local authority and sex is shown in Annex A.

**Table 3a: Number of Registered Visually Impaired Under 65-year-olds, 2000 - 2009**

Year	No. of Registered Visually Impaired under 65 year olds <sup>1</sup>	Registered under 65's per 1,000 Pop'n of under 65's
2009	8,797	2.0
2008	8,703	2.0
2007	8,724	2.0
2006	8,970	2.1
2005	8,354	2.0
2004	8,285	2.0
2003	8,068	1.9
2002	7,928	1.9
2001	7,836	1.8
2000	7,496	1.8

<sup>1</sup> Data for under 65-year-olds should be more reliable than older age groups due to lower mortality rates.

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

## Background Information:

Data was collected on persons registered with local authorities as at 31 March 2009.

The information is derived from returns made to the Scottish Government by Scottish local authorities. The return asks for the number of blind and partially sighted persons by age, sex and additional disabilities. It does not include persons who may meet the criteria for being blind or partially sighted but have not registered with their local authority.

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 gives local authorities the power to maintain a register of people who are blind or partially sighted. However registration is voluntary and while registration provides access to a number of benefits and concessions there remain a large number of people who meet the criteria but are not registered. Research in 1991<sup>1</sup>, undertaken at a UK level, indicated that the number of people on registers is some 23 per cent of those eligible. In 2001 they estimated it to be under a third.

'Think dual sensory' published in 1997 by the Department of Health suggested that some 2,000 people in Scotland could have some degree of deafblindness. Our latest figures show that there are 1,536 people registered as deafblind in Scotland and a further 1,079 people registered as partially sighted and deaf. This suggests that people are more likely to register if they have multiple disabilities.

Additionally, there are known problems with previous years' data where people have not been removed from the register of blind and partially sighted persons. Many local authorities have in recent years improved their registers by comparing with the register of deaths and this may in part explain the decrease in the number of registered blind persons since 2000.

Returns were received from all local authorities:

Glasgow have substantially revised their figures in recent years following a move to a new management information system. This has resulted in improvements to data quality for 2006 and 2007 but care should be taken when comparing 2005 and 2006 figures as many of the changes seen are largely due to changes in the Glasgow figures. In 2008, they moved from a stand alone system to care first and have been cleaning the data as they transfer it. This has resulted in further changes to Glasgow's data. This work is ongoing in 2009. A number of incomplete Glasgow records (592) were provided which the Scottish Government estimated for inclusion in the gender, age and additional disabilities analysis. This was based on 2008 proportions.

Fife were unable to provide complete information on additional disabilities. Care should therefore be taken when interpreting figures as a small amount of data has been estimated.

Edinburgh, Orkney, Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders have also undertaken data cleaning. Dumfries and Galloway had an Eye Care Review this year; and Scottish Borders have a new Sensory Perception Unit.

2008 based Mid-year population projections from GRO(S) have been used to calculate rates per 1000 population in this Statistics Release.

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<sup>1</sup> Blind and Partially Sighted Adults in Britain: The RNIB Survey, Volume 1, HMSO, 1991

## Further Information

Further details and analysis of the data presented in this Statistics Release are available on request from the address given below. The Statistics Release is available in large print and on the Internet by accessing the Scottish Government web site ([www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)).

Community Care Statistics

Basement Rear

St Andrew's House

Regent Road

Edinburgh

EH1 3DG

Contact: Steven Gillespie

Tel: 0131 244 3777

E-mail: [SWStat@scotland.gov.uk](mailto:SWStat@scotland.gov.uk)

This statistics release was published on

27 October 2009



Annex A:

Registered Blind by Local Authority, 2009

Local Authority	Under 65 years		Over 65 years		Total	Registered Blind per 1,000 Pop'n
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Aberdeen City	81	60	90	197	428	2.0
Aberdeenshire	59	51	98	199	407	1.7
Angus	38	44	75	148	305	2.8
Argyll & Bute	45	25	137	286	493	5.4
Clackmannanshire	16	16	43	72	147	2.9
Dumfries & Galloway	52	40	124	197	413	2.8
Dundee City	89	60	118	233	500	3.5
East Ayrshire	64	49	103	188	404	3.4
East Dunbartonshire	46	49	55	110	260	2.5
East Lothian	45	36	99	192	372	3.9
East Renfrewshire	30	23	122	233	408	4.6
Edinburgh City	239	211	486	962	1,898	4.0
Eilean Siar	15	12	18	51	96	3.7
Falkirk	75	65	127	204	471	3.1
Fife	168	138	216	474	996	2.8
Glasgow City	400	363	1,087	2,138	3,988	6.8
Highland	109	99	151	340	699	3.2
Inverclyde	40	37	52	124	253	3.1
Midlothian	58	31	75	152	316	3.9
Moray	37	23	72	136	268	3.1
North Ayrshire	90	63	195	363	711	5.2
North Lanarkshire	228	216	518	908	1,870	5.7
Orkney Islands	*	*	10	20	41	2.1
Perth & Kinross	30	34	92	220	376	2.6
Renfrewshire	100	70	110	218	498	2.9
Scottish Borders	43	29	80	182	334	3.0
Shetland Islands	*	*	5	22	37	1.7
South Ayrshire	51	43	151	320	565	5.1
South Lanarkshire	219	194	342	585	1,340	4.3
Stirling	42	39	73	139	293	3.3
West Dunbartonshire	62	41	64	140	307	3.4
West Lothian	62	57	103	164	386	2.3
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>2,646</b>	<b>2,226</b>	<b>5,091</b>	<b>9,917</b>	<b>19,880</b>	<b>3.8</b>

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

Note: Cells containing \* represent small numbers that are suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Annex A:

Registered Partially Sighted by Local Authority, 2009

Local Authority	Under 65 years		Over 65 years		Total	Registered per 1,000 Pop'n
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Aberdeen City	77	67	97	222	463	2.2
Aberdeenshire	65	47	125	266	503	2.1
Angus	33	28	52	153	266	2.4
Argyll & Bute	39	35	118	242	434	4.8
Clackmannanshire	16	17	28	86	147	2.9
Dumfries & Galloway	67	59	134	266	526	3.5
Dundee City	65	46	100	244	455	3.2
East Ayrshire	50	29	62	153	294	2.5
East Dunbartonshire	40	22	52	87	201	1.9
East Lothian	40	43	92	208	383	4.0
East Renfrewshire	16	21	51	135	223	2.5
Edinburgh City	203	171	385	915	1,674	3.5
Eilean Siar	*	*	9	26	45	1.7
Falkirk	43	51	90	219	403	2.7
Fife	140	124	188	396	848	2.3
Glasgow City	304	258	596	1,216	2,374	4.1
Highland	95	74	119	268	556	2.5
Inverclyde	49	33	73	131	286	3.5
Midlothian	39	41	86	160	326	4.0
Moray	21	23	38	60	142	1.6
North Ayrshire	62	63	130	239	494	3.6
North Lanarkshire	136	110	268	452	966	3.0
Orkney Islands	*	*	6	7	21	1.1
Perth & Kinross	45	48	119	217	429	3.0
Renfrewshire	76	82	141	309	608	3.6
Scottish Borders	35	32	116	234	417	3.7
Shetland Islands	*	*	12	17	38	1.7
South Ayrshire	36	38	115	227	416	3.7
South Lanarkshire	132	127	216	418	893	2.9
Stirling	18	31	60	144	253	2.9
West Dunbartonshire	53	38	51	120	262	2.9
West Lothian	74	71	69	148	362	2.1
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>2,080</b>	<b>1,845</b>	<b>3,798</b>	<b>7,985</b>	<b>15,708</b>	<b>3.0</b>

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

Note: Cells containing \* represent small numbers that are suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Annex A:

Registered Visually Impaired by Local Authority, 2009

Local Authority	Under 65 years		Over 65 years		Total	Registered per 1,000 Pop'n
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Aberdeen City	158	127	187	419	891	4.2
Aberdeenshire	124	98	223	465	910	3.8
Angus	71	72	127	301	571	5.2
Argyll & Bute	84	60	255	528	927	10.2
Clackmannanshire	32	33	71	158	294	5.8
Dumfries & Galloway	119	99	258	463	939	6.3
Dundee City	154	106	218	477	955	6.7
East Ayrshire	114	78	165	341	698	5.8
East Dunbartonshire	86	71	107	197	461	4.4
East Lothian	85	79	191	400	755	7.9
East Renfrewshire	46	44	173	368	631	7.1
Edinburgh City	442	382	871	1,877	3,572	7.6
Eilean Siar	18	19	27	77	141	5.4
Falkirk	118	116	217	423	874	5.8
Fife	308	262	404	870	1,844	5.1
Glasgow City	704	621	1,683	3,354	6,362	10.9
Highland	204	173	270	608	1,255	5.7
Inverclyde	89	70	125	255	539	6.7
Midlothian	97	72	161	312	642	8.0
Moray	58	46	110	196	410	4.7
North Ayrshire	152	126	325	602	1,205	8.9
North Lanarkshire	364	326	786	1,360	2,836	8.7
Orkney Islands	12	7	16	27	62	3.1
Perth & Kinross	75	82	211	437	805	5.6
Renfrewshire	176	152	251	527	1,106	6.5
Scottish Borders	78	61	196	416	751	6.7
Shetland Islands	9	10	17	39	75	3.4
South Ayrshire	87	81	266	547	981	8.8
South Lanarkshire	351	321	558	1,003	2,233	7.2
Stirling	60	70	133	283	546	6.2
West Dunbartonshire	115	79	115	260	569	6.3
West Lothian	136	128	172	312	748	4.4
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>4,726</b>	<b>4,071</b>	<b>8,889</b>	<b>17,902</b>	<b>35,588</b>	<b>6.9</b>

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

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Enquiries Community Care Statistics should be addressed to:

Steven Gillespie  
Analytical Services Division  
Health Directorate  
St Andrews House  
Edinburgh, EH1 3DG  
Telephone: 0131 244 3777; Fax: 0131 244 2371  
e-mail: Swstat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

General enquiries on Scottish Government statistics can be addressed to:

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LONDON SW1V 2QQ

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Current contact points, e-mail addresses and the publications listed below as well as a range of other statistical publications can be found on the Scottish Government Web site at [www.scotland.gov.uk/stats](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats)

Further information on the General Register Office for Scotland is available on the website [www.gro-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk)

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Additional copies of these publications may be purchased from Scottish Government Publication Sales, Blackwell's Bookshop, 53 South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1YS, Telephone: 0131 622 8283 or 0131 622 8258, Fax: 0131 557 8149. Cheques should be made payable to 'Blackwell's Bookshop'.

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If you are not satisfied with our service, please write to the Chief Statistician, Mr Rob Wishart, 3R.01, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail [rob.wishart@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:rob.wishart@scotland.gsi.gov.uk). We also welcome any comments or suggestions that would help us to improve our standards of service.

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