

PREFACE

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CHAPTER 1

*The Training of Statisticians in the United Kingdom*

R.M. LOYNES UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

1.1 THE EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The United Kingdom consists of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. There are of course cultural differences between these countries, and indeed within them, and some legal and administrative separation between them – for example the Scottish school educational system has rather different features from that of England, and the tradition in Scottish universities is also somewhat different. Nevertheless, compared to many, it is rather homogenous. The population (1981 Census) is 56,300,000.

Education at Primary and Secondary levels has been free and compulsory for many years: at present it is compulsory between the ages of 5 and 16, promotion from one year to the next being automatic. The traditional pattern for state education has been for primary education to be organised on a general basis from ages 5 to 10, with a transfer to secondary school at age 11, where the programme is organised on a subject basis. These secondary schools might or might not take pupils beyond the compulsory stage, up to age 18. More recently considerable variety has arisen, with, in some cases, Middle schools catering for the age range of about 8 to 12, followed by senior schools. The great majority of schools are now 'comprehensive', admitting pupils of all abilities from the neighbourhood. The post-16 situation has changed too, with the setting up in some areas of sixth-form colleges (to cater for largely academic students) or in a few cases tertiary colleges (to deal with the whole range of academic, vocational and technical needs of the 16 to 18 year olds). Moreover growing numbers of students leave school at 16 and complete their education at Colleges of Further Education, which deal not only with their needs but also with continuing education and various types of leisure learning activities. The structure of the educational system is determined partly by the central government – which contributes the greater part of the financial support, controls the accreditation of teachers, determines pay-scales for teachers, and maintains standards via the activities of the Inspectorate of Schools – and partly by local government – which decides the location and age-range of schools in their area, and appoints the teachers. In the past curriculum has been in principle determined by the individual schools, though there has always been substantial pressure exerted on them at secondary level by the external examination system and of course some social and political