



Menu

Subscribe

AS

Graphic detail | Daily chart

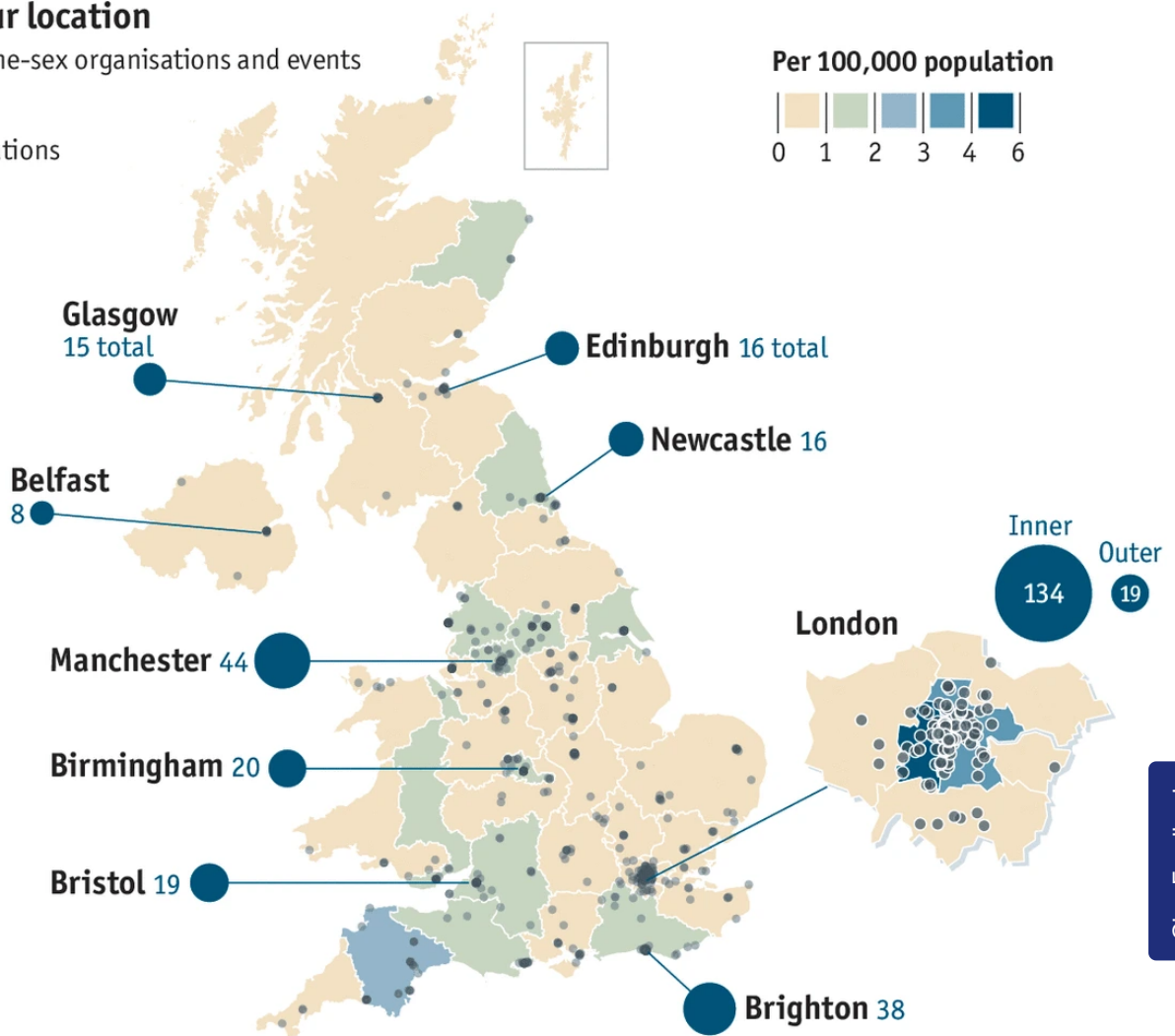
What porn and listings sites can tell us about Britain's gay population

Queer communities are now visible all over the country

Send your location

Britain, same-sex organisations and events
2017

● Organisations



Sources: Eurostat; pinkuk.com; upnorthdownsouth.co.uk; queersaunas.co.uk; pridesports.org.uk; wikishire.co.uk; lgbtconsortium.org.uk; *The Economist*

Economist.com

Nov 9th 2017

Give Feedback

Discover insightful, in-depth analysis with a 30-day trial. Cancel at a

By THE DATA TEAM

HALF a century after Britain's Parliament passed the Sexual Offences Act of 1967, which partially decriminalised homosexual acts, gay life is flourishing more

than ever. The country boasts [the world's gayest legislature](#), according to Andrew Reynolds, a professor of political science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: some 45 of the 650 members of Parliament elected in June are openly gay or bisexual. Britain is also tied with Sweden as the least homophobic country on the Gay Travel Index, an annual ranking produced by Spartacus World, a gay holiday guide.

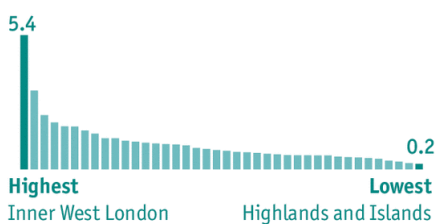
Even though Britons see gay and lesbian politicians and fictional characters more and more often on television, there is still a surprising lack of data about where gay life is most concentrated. Polls typically find that about a quarter of people say they feel some attraction to the same sex, but just 2% of respondents to the Annual Population Survey identify themselves as something other than straight—a group too small to give an accurate regional picture. To get a clearer illustration, we used two datasets.

Scene and unseen

Britain, 2017

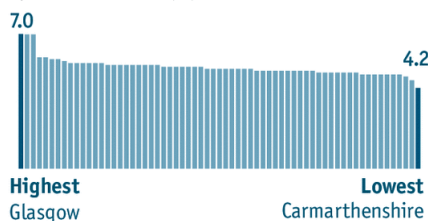
Same-sex organisations per 100,000 population

By NUTS 2 region



Gay (male) pornography as % of all pornographic consumption

By counties >100,000 population



Sources: Eurostat; pinkuk.com; upnorthdownsouth.co.uk; queersaunas.co.uk; pridesports.org.uk; wikishire.co.uk; lgbtconsortium.org.uk; Pornhub.com; *The Economist*

Economist.com

Give Feedback

The first attempted to measure where gay people live, and was provided by the insights team at Pornhub.com, a widely viewed pornography website. The video-streaming service attracts 5m visitors from Britain each day, 5.6% of whom watch gay content (excluding lesbian porn, whose main audience is straight men). When broken down by county, the data show very little geographic variance: 97% of the population lives in a region that is within one percentage point of the national average. Since some groups of people watch more porn than others, the numbers cannot reveal how many gay Britons there are.

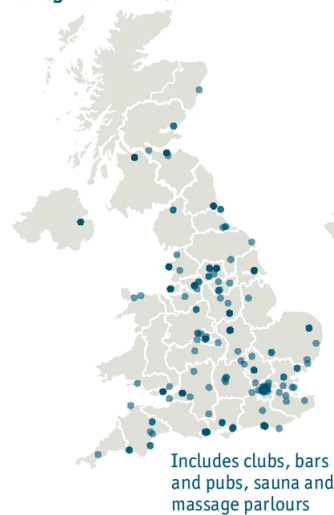
However, they do imply that gay people are very evenly distributed around the country.

Our second dataset aimed to depict gay visibility. To do so, we scraped records of venues and events from a handful of listings websites, selecting only those that catered specifically to gay or bisexual people. Our records are likely to be incomplete, since these lists are mostly user-generated, and gay bars are shutting down at a startling rate. We found 675 organisations in total, ranging from club nights to cycling teams to church groups. There were many varieties, but their locations were heavily clustered. For example, inner west London had 25 times as many events per person as did Scotland's highlands and islands. Other busy, liberal cities also tended to have high densities.

Town and country

Britain, same-sex organisations and events, 2017

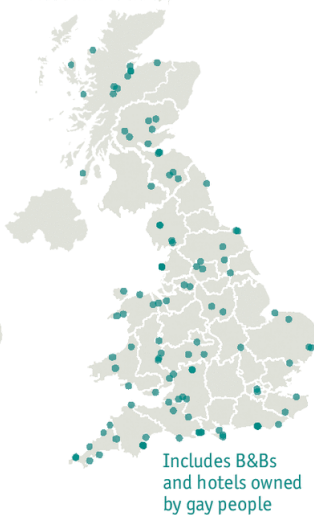
Going out



Community



Accommodation



Sources: Eurostat; pinkuk.com; upnorthdownsouth.co.uk; queersaunas.co.uk; pridesports.org.uk; wikishire.co.uk; lgbtconsortium.org.uk; *The Economist*

Economist.com

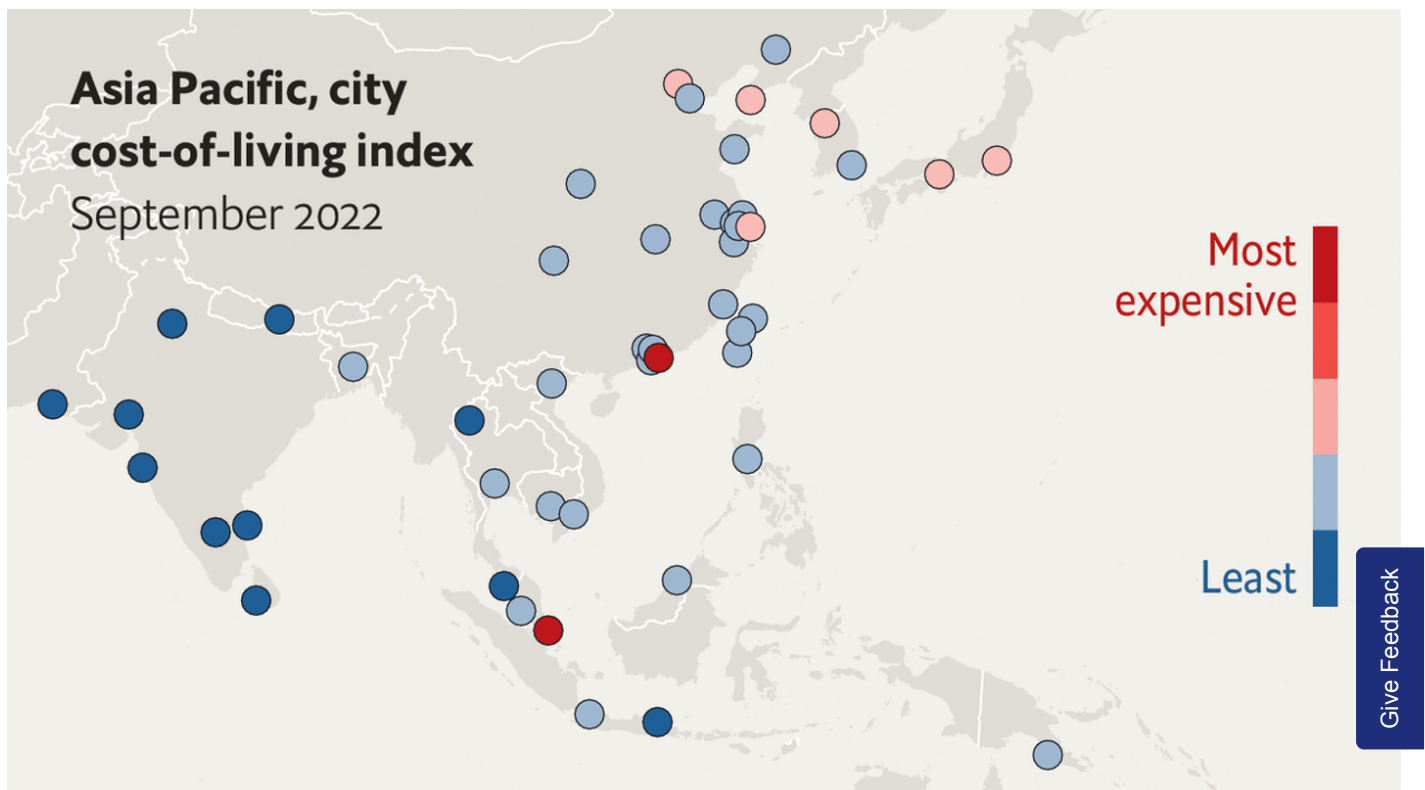
Give Feedback

Put together, these datasets suggest that lots of gay people live in rural areas without much sign of their presence. But that now seems to be changing ([see article from this week's print edition](#)). Specialist dating apps have made it much easier to meet partners nearby. Thanks to a gradual decline in bigoted attitudes, older gay people are more willing to move to the countryside, where there is also a fair smattering of gay-run hotels and B&Bs (which we excluded from our visibility measurements, since they are mostly not presented as "gay" establishments or intended primarily for gay clients). After London, the next

most publicly gay region in our data was rustic Devon, home to five annual Pride events and, as of September, a queer arts festival at Dartington Hall. Ceri Goddard, who helped organise the event, says it “reminded locals that amongst them there are thousands of gay and lesbian people”. As Britain becomes more comfortable with people displaying their sexuality openly, expect to see more of these events in the sticks.

[Share](#) [Reuse this content](#)

More from Graphic detail

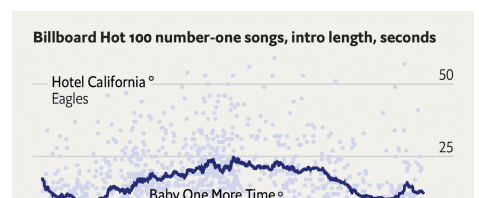


The world's most, and least, affordable cities are in Asia

An EIU survey highlights a region of cost-of-living extremes

Max Martin knows how to create a number-one hit

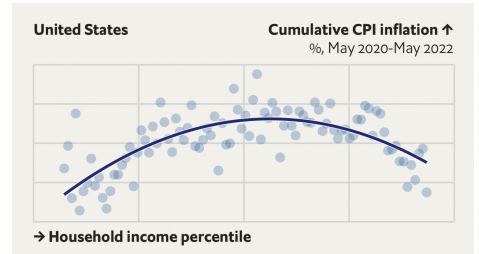
One rule for success: get to the catchy vocals as fast as possible





Inflation usually hits America's poor hardest. Not this time

The middle class is faring worst in the current bout



Subscribe

Group subscriptions

Reuse our content

The Trust Project

Help and contact us

Keep updated



Published since September 1843 to take part in *“a severe contest between intelligence, which presses forward, and an unworthy, timid ignorance obstructing our progress.”*

The Economist

- About
- Advertise
- Press centre

The Economist Group

- The Economist Group
- Economist Intelligence
- Economist Impact
- Economist Events
- Working Here
- Economist Education Courses
- Which MBA?
- Executive Jobs
- Executive Education Navigator

Give Feedback

Do Not Sell My Personal Information

Copyright © The Economist Newspaper Limited 2023. All rights reserved.

Give Feedback