Demography is the study of the population. The birth rate is the number of live births each year per 1000 of the population and the average fertility rate is the average number of children that women are choosing to have. These have both been decreasing over the last 100 years other than at the end of both the world wars (1919 and 1945) where there was a large ‘baby boom’. The reasons for the decline in the birth rate are as follows:

- Women now have legal equality with men and so are putting off having children in order to concentrate on their careers and gaining economic independence which was previously unavailable to them.
- The decline in the infant mortality rate (which is the number of children dying each year before their first birthday per 1000 of the population) caused by an increase in the knowledge of nutrition thus leading to better nutrition, better health services for mothers and babies and higher standards of living. This has meant that families do not have to have as many children as there is no need to replace those who previously were dying at a young age.
- Children are no longer in economic asset to their parents but instead economically dependent and thus so parents are unable to afford as many children whilst the changing position of childhood as created the western notion of childhood and child centeredness in which families are having less children but lavishing the ones they do have.

Many believe that this will have a variety of effects within society some of which being there will be less need for public health measures including schools, hospital and doctors surgery as there will be less people needing to use them, it will change the dependency ratio (which is the ratio between the working population and the non working population; the difference in the number of people working and those not working) and lead to overall small families size. However critics dispute this point due to mass immigration. Women from outside of Britain often have larger families due to the large importance that they put on having many children this as a result is causing a gradual increase in the average fertility rate and over time is thought to be able to increase the birth rate in Britain.

The death rate is the number of deaths per 1000 of the population per year and this has been gradually decreasing over the last 100 years (excluding during the periods of the two world wars in which many died fighting where the death rate peaked slightly) and some reasons causing this include:

- Better knowledge on nutrition has led to the decline in infectious diseases caused by poor knowledge on diet. This has strengthened the immune system and thus led to the resistance to common diseases which previously were fatal. However this approach fails to explain why women who receive a smaller proportion of food than men live longer nor does it give reason for why when the knowledge on nutrition initially improved so did the number of people dying from infections such as measles.
- The NHS which was introduced in 1948 has offered many people solutions to problems that would have previously had the potential to kill; it offers vaccinations preventing epidemics and medicine, treatment and surgery for free which has reduced the number of people dying from treatable illnesses. This has particularly aided the poor who previously did not have the money to pay for health care.
- The decline in dangerous jobs such as those including mining have led to the number of people dying accidentally in the workforce and this point is reinforced which shows that the life expectancy in industrial towns in the north are shorter than those who live in the south as they are exposed to less chemicals within their workforce.
- The improvement of public health such as better sewerage disposal and fresh water supply have decreased the number of people dying from water borne diseases such as cholera and also increased standard of hygiene.

However some people believe that the decline in death rate is having a negative impact within society and this is due to the ageing population which requires excessive amounts of