



# BRITAIN'S

# 'Boomerang Kids'

**You got good grades. You finished school and went to uni. You moved out. You were independent. Three years later, you're in debt\*, jobless and back with your parents. Meet Britain's 'Boomerang Generation'.**

It's 1.30am, Sunday morning. Nessa is coming back from a night out. She quietly opens the door and tiptoes\* past her parents' room, hoping not to wake them up. Sound familiar? But Nessa isn't sixteen anymore, she's twenty-two years old...

"I hate it," says Nessa. "After three years of doing my own thing, it's not easy living under your parents' rules. I feel like I'm a child

again." Nessa is not alone. With 58% of male and 39% of female 20-24-year olds living with their parents<sup>1</sup>, Britain has twice as many young adults living at home as the rest of Europe. Many of them, like Nessa, have returned to the 'nest' after finishing university.

While more and more young people in Britain are getting degrees, more and more of them are also getting into debt. British students leave university with an average debt of £17,500<sup>2</sup>. A few years ago, these graduates walked into well-paid jobs to pay off that debt. That was before the recession\*. As a result of the current economic conditions, the number of unemployed in the UK has increased to 2.2 million - a 12-year high<sup>3</sup>. And it is the under 25s who are the worst hit. Graduates fight over the few jobs on offer. One BBC journalism apprenticeship received 2,500 applicants. With high debt and no

work, more and more adult-aged children have to move in with their parents.

The media talks a lot about 'boomerang kids' or 'in-betweeners'. Most are critical about the new social situation, including Professor Leo Hendry from the University of Glamorgan. Professor Hendry is writing a book on adulthood. He says:

"I have a negative view. It puts a strain on\* parents and postpones\* entry into work. Once the aspiration was to become an adult as quickly as possible. That's no longer the case."

The charity 'Parentline' is also concerned. Not about the kids, but about the parents. Their website tells stories of stressed mums doing the washing, cooking and cleaning for their 20-year-old sons. But what about the 'kids'? Is it all bad? Are the boomerang generation just spongers\*?



The **CLUB** interview

**THE DAUGHTER:**  
“I feel like I’m a child again”

CLUB talks to Nessa, a graduate and a ‘boomerang kid’, about her return home.



**CLUB:** You’ve had to move back home after finishing your degree. How does that feel?

**Nessa:** Personally, I don’t like it. I really hate feeling dependent on my parents’ money.

**CLUB:** What are the advantages of living back home?

**Nessa:** I pay less rent than I would living out, although I do make a contribution. And I do like spending time with my parents when we’re getting on well.

**CLUB:** What are the disadvantages?

**Nessa:** I think that it’s made my relationship with my parents difficult. Especially with my mum. I feel like I’m a child again.

**CLUB:** Can you explain?

**Nessa:** Yes, if I go out late on the weekends, I have to sneak\* back into the house as quietly as possible so that I don’t wake up my parents. If I want to smoke, I have to do it at the bottom of the garden. Worst of all, there’s no privacy.

**CLUB:** How have you lost your privacy?

**Nessa:** While I was at university, my mum moved some of her stuff into my room. Now she just comes up the stairs (there’s no door) at any time of day or night to get her things. Sometimes I wake up at 6 o’clock in the morning to find my mum in my room looking for some of her clothes!

**CLUB:** What do you feel about being called a ‘boomerang kid’?

**Nessa:** I don’t like it! It makes our generation sound like lazy kids who sponge off\* our parents! Of course that’s probably true in some cases, but for a lot of people at the moment, it’s a result of the high cost of university fees, and how hard it is to get a steady\* job due to the recession.

**CLUB:** What is your advice to all those teens still in education?

**Nessa:** Be realistic. Find out exactly what a job you want to do involves, and get as much experience as possible. Not many people land their dream job instantly, so be prepared to work for it. If you want to move out ... start saving!

**SPEAKING: ROLE PLAY**

Think about your home life with your parents.

Do you argue with your parents about any of these things?

- Being tidy and cleaning
- The time you come home in the evening
- Having friends to stay over
- Washing your clothes

Describe the arguments with a partner. Then, prepare a dialogue between your parents and a teenager and act it out in front of the class.

