



Research Facts

March 2009

Fact Sheet 03

SANDWELL: KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

About Sandwell

Sandwell is a metropolitan borough which was formed in 1974, and is one of seven authorities that makes up the West Midlands conurbation. The Sandwell Borough comprises of 6 towns – Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich.

Population Trends

Sandwell has a population of 287,500¹. The population of the area fell considerably from the late 1960s until the early 2000s, however this trend has now been reversed and a small population growth is apparent. It is projected to rise by 1,424 per year to 2031². The age distribution of the population, over the last 5 years (2002 to 2007)³, has seen the largest increase amongst 20 to 24 year

olds, 40 to 44 year olds, 45 to 49 year olds and the over 85s. The biggest falls have been in the number of 5 to 9 year olds, 10 to 14 year olds, and the 30 to 34 age group.

Ethnicity

Sandwell is a diverse borough, with 20% (and growing) of the population from black and minority (BME) ethnic groups. The borough is becoming more ethnically diverse and the make-up of its population is changing. In ten years between 1991 and 2001, the BME population increased by 6% to 20%, with the rate of growth being most pronounced amongst the Asian communities. The most recent ethnicity estimates (June 2006) in Sandwell were as follows⁴:

Ethnicity	Population	Total as a % of Population
White: British	215,900	75.10%
White: Irish	2,500	0.90%
White: Other	4,100	1.40%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	4,000	1.40%
Mixed: White and Black African	300	0.10%
Mixed: White and Asian	1,700	0.60%
Mixed: Other	1,000	0.30%
Asian: Indian	27,200	9.50%
Asian: Pakistani	9,600	3.30%
Asian: Bangladeshi	4,100	1.40%
Asian: Other	2,300	0.80%
Black: Caribbean	9,600	3.30%
Black: African	1,800	0.60%
Black: Other	900	0.30%
Chinese	1,100	0.40%
Other	1,300	0.50%
All Groups	287,600	100.00%

Health

In absolute terms, health in Sandwell has been improving over time, though at a slower rate than the country as a whole. Life expectancy in Sandwell is 74.2 years for men and 80.0 for women, compared to the national figures of 77.65 and 81.81 years respectively⁵. The 2001 Census found that 22% of all Sandwell residents (more than 60,000⁶) had a long term illness, health problem or disability which limited their daily activities or work. The highest levels of long term illness are amongst White and Caribbean population profiles. Lower levels amongst other groups reflect younger population profiles.

Environment

Sandwell has an area of 8,600ha and is at the centre of both the motorway network and local conurbation, meaning there is heavy traffic crossing the borough. Sandwell has the highest proportion of its area given to parks and open spaces of any of the West Midlands Metropolitan Districts: 15.2% compared to an average of 10.6% in the West Midlands county area. Sandwell's open space is concentrated in the Sandwell Valley and Rowley Hills⁷.

Economy

The proportion of jobs in manufacturing fell to 21.3% in 2007. This compares with a national figure of 10.6%. In Sandwell there is now approximately the same proportion of jobs in the three largest sectors: Manufacturing; Distribution, hotels and restaurants and Public administration, education and health⁸. Sandwell has a slightly high proportion of people employed in large workplaces (200+ employees) compared to England as a whole, a higher proportion in medium sized

Key Employment Statistics (period)	Sandwell	West Midlands	Great Britain
JSA claimant rates (Jan 09)	6.20%	4.50%	3.40%
Unemployment rates (Jul 07- Jun 08)	8.80%	6.30%	5.20%
Economic Activity rates (Jul 07- Jun 08)	71.70%	77.40%	78.80%

workplaces (25 -199) and a smaller proportion in small workplaces (less than 25 employees).

In Sandwell 10,788 people claim Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), which accounts for 6.2% of the local working population⁹. The table below identifies that Sandwell has higher JSA claimant's rates by comparison to regional and national levels along with poorer unemployment and economic activity rates¹⁰:

Overall Sandwell is ranked 14th most deprived out of 354 Authorities with 53% of its population living in wards designated as 'very deprived'. Approximately 81% of households within the borough experience at least one of the following elements of deprivation: high unemployment, low educational attainment, poor and limiting health and disability or poor and overcrowded housing¹¹.

Housing

In March 2007, Sandwell had approximately 125,000 dwellings of which 25% are council housing, 4% registered social housing and 71% in the private sector. This compares to the local authority averages across England which are 9%, 9% and 82% respectively¹².

From 2001-2003 Sandwell went through an intense period of demolition. In recent years Sandwell has compensated for earlier demolition and provided 1190 net additional homes in 2006/07, this is an increase from 259 in 2002/03¹³. In addition, Sandwell has increased the number of affordable homes built or acquired per year from a five year low of 31 homes in 2003/4 to 137 in 2006/07¹⁴. In 2007, Sandwell had the most affordable housing in the private sector across Birmingham and the Black Country, with an average house costing £132,666¹⁵.

References

- ¹ ONS Neighbourhood Statistics - People and Society: Population and Migration; Resident Population Estimates by Broad Age Band 2001-2007 (June 2007).
- ² ONS 2006 mid-year Based Sub national Population Projections: Local Authorities and Higher Areas 2006-2031 by Sex and Quinary Age (2006).
- ³ ONS Neighbourhood Statistics - People and Society: Population and Migration; Resident Population Estimates by Broad Age Band 2001-2007 (June 2007).
- ⁴ ONS Neighbourhood Statistics - People and Society: Population and Migration; Resident Population Estimates, All Persons (June 2006).
- ⁵ National Centre for Health Outcomes Development: Compendium Ongoing Release (December 2008).
- ⁶ Census 2001 Profiles: Sandwell (2001)
- ⁷ ONS Annual Business Inquiry Employee Analysis: Employee Jobs (2007)
- ⁸ ONS Claimant Count with Rates and Proportions: Total JSA Claimants (January 2009)
- ⁹ ONS Annual Population Survey: Employment and Unemployment (July 2007-June 2008)
- ¹⁰ Communities and Neighbourhoods: Neighbourhood Renewal Indices of Deprivation (2007)
- ¹¹ Department of Communities and Local Government: Housing / Housing Research and Statistics / Overview of Stock, Vacants, Conversions and Demolitions (2007).
- ¹² Sandwell Plan: Annual Monitoring Report (2007).
- ¹³ Department of Communities and Local Government: Housing / Housing Research and Statistics / Affordable Housing Supply (2007).
- ¹⁴ Land Registry (2007).
- ¹⁵ Sandwell MBC / Sandwell Partnership: 'Better, Smarter, Healthier, Stronger, Safer, Brighter' (2005)