

Quality of Life

in Warwickshire 2011/12

Key Messages



*Working for
Warwickshire*



A growing and ageing population...

Population growth has been a message communicated in previous Quality of Life reports, but it is worth highlighting again this year. Population growth has been rapid in recent years, increasing by nearly 60,000 people in the last 30 years, to over 530,000 in 2010. Furthermore, the county's population is projected to grow to 634,900 by 2033 – an increase of just over 100,000 from 2008. External migration is seen as the key reason for the increases witnessed in the past, but there is evidence that this is slowing.

Alongside this general population growth will be a particularly high rate of increase in those aged 65 and over, a trend reflected across all boroughs and districts. A report released by the Department of Work & Pensions has examined life expectancies for different generations, and highlighted some striking findings. For example, 20-year-olds are three times more likely to reach 100 than their grandparents, and twice as likely as their parents. Furthermore, a girl born in 2011 has a one in three chance of living to 100; for a boy the chance is one in four.

To put these findings into a Warwickshire context, we currently have fewer than 50 residents turning 100 each year. In the year 2030, more than 250 local residents will become centenarians each year and by the year 2060 Warwickshire will have around 5,000 residents aged 100 or more, equivalent to the entire population of Shipston-on-Stour.

Whilst living longer is a cause for celebration, from a public sector point of view, the two key impacts of this trend are the additional pressures that will be placed upon our services (particularly health and social care) and the quality of life experienced by our residents as their life expectancy increases.



Inequality is worsening...

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2010) shows that around half of the areas (Super Output Areas) in the county have shown a relative improvement in national rankings since the last Index in 2007. However, all of the top 13 most deprived SOAs from the IMD 2007 have shown considerable deterioration in rankings in the IMD 2010, suggesting that the gap between the most and least deprived areas of the county is widening. There are nine SOAs in Warwickshire ranked within the top 10% most deprived nationally on the overall IMD 2010; all are located in Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough. This compares with six SOAs in the IMD 2007.

Although Warwickshire has low overall levels of child poverty, localised pockets with relatively high levels do exist, particularly in Nuneaton, and to a lesser extent in Rugby and Bedworth. There are also dispersed rural pockets both in the rural south and north. Fuel poverty levels have risen across Warwickshire with the highest pockets of need located in rural areas within Stratford-on-Avon District and North Warwickshire Borough. Rising fuel prices and continued pressures on incomes are seen as the main reasons why levels of fuel poverty have increased.

With all the deprivation datasets, there is a considerable time lag with the data, so it is unlikely that the full effects of the economic downturn since 2008 have been reflected. It will be even more important to monitor these indicators as we move forward.



Key Messages



Levels of recorded crime and anti-social behaviour continue to fall...

Levels of crime and disorder are consistently found to be the single most important factor influencing the quality of life for Warwickshire residents. It is therefore encouraging that the number of crimes recorded in Warwickshire has fallen for the fourth consecutive year, from 124 crimes per day to 90 crimes per day during this four year period. In 2010/11 a total of 32,789 crimes were recorded in Warwickshire, representing a reduction of 3.1% on the previous 12 months. Reductions have been witnessed in three of the four key crime categories (criminal damage, domestic burglary and vehicle crime) with a small increase being seen in violent crime.

Alongside these reductions in recorded crime are lower levels of reported Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). Despite small increases being witnessed in the south of the county, reductions have been observed in the rest of the county, particularly in Rugby Borough. However, Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough still has the highest rate of ASB in Warwickshire, with 22 incidents reported to the police every day in this borough alone.

Although these decreases are positive news for residents of Warwickshire, the impacts of the public sector spending cuts may affect crime and anti-social behaviour rates. Warwickshire Police, one of the smallest forces in the country, have to cut their budget by one-fifth, and it is unknown if these reductions will impact upon the falling crime rate.



The economic outlook remains uncertain...

As the UK growth forecast for 2011 is cut, the economy remains a strong focus both nationally and locally as uncertainty into the economic recovery continues. Recent months have seen reductions in the numbers claiming unemployment benefits in Warwickshire, although numbers remain much higher than before the recession began. At its peak, in August 2009, there were 12,267 job seekers allowance claimants in Warwickshire; in June 2011, this had dropped to 8,736.

Despite this relative improvement, recovery is likely to be slow, reflected in falls in earnings and income, higher inflation levels and restrained customer demand. In the coming months it will be important to monitor the global economic performance and more importantly the impacts on the UK economy.

This is emphasised to a greater extent when we look at the knowledge economy, which in the past has been driven by the expansion of the public sector. Key growth areas for the economy include advanced manufacturing and engineering, low carbon technologies and digital media, all of which the Warwickshire economy can take advantage of and should provide a platform for strong future economic growth. Local partners operating through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) will need to help create the conditions for growth and effectively address the weaknesses, risks and inequalities across Warwickshire and the sub-region.



Key Messages



Housing supply must adapt to meet changing needs...

The number of housing repossession claims in Warwickshire has changed significantly over the last decade, from a low of 460 in 2002, to a high of 1,335 in 2007, to 750 at the last count in 2010. The rate of possessions varies across the county, from 5.20 per 1,000 households in Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough, to 1.83 per 1,000 households in Warwick District. Overall, the rate in Warwickshire is very similar to the England and Wales figure.

Between 2000 and 2010 the number of households on local authority housing registers in Warwickshire more than doubled, from 5,750 to 13,370. Some of this increase can be explained by a general increase in the number of households in the county, but even allowing for this, the proportion of all households in the county on a register has risen from 2.8% to 5.9% over the last decade.

These combined pressures on housing in Warwickshire will need careful monitoring, to ensure that the right housing is being provided in the right areas, whilst meeting the changing demographics of the county.



Health concerns...

An ageing population in Warwickshire clearly has significant impacts on the provision of health and social care services in the county. Currently, two out of every three deaths in Warwickshire do not occur until people are at least 75 years old, and it is likely that incidents of conditions such as mental health illness and cancer are likely to increase as residents start to live longer.

Some of the healthy lifestyle indicators are also of particular concern. Obesity currently affects approximately one in four adults in Warwickshire; nearly 110,000 people. Furthermore, by 2050 obesity is predicted to affect 60% of adult men, 50% of adult women and 25% of children in England.

Alcohol related harm is a priority for both health and community safety partners in Warwickshire. In some areas, one in four Accident & Emergency admissions is related to alcohol misuse, and countywide the rate has doubled over the last seven years. The rate of increase witnessed in Warwickshire is greater than the equivalent figures for the region and nationally.

These issues are major challenges for public health in Warwickshire, placing significant strain on budgets and resources.



Key Messages



Early research into charities and social enterprises...

The Coalition Government have an ambition to put more power and opportunity into people's hands. In line with the Government's Big Society agenda and its proposals for 'Localism' and 'Open Public Services', local public sector partners are looking to encourage an increase in volunteering and community activism. This will include a greater involvement of voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises in identifying and meeting local needs, and taking over services or facilities previously run by public agencies.

A survey of 487 registered charities and social enterprises in Warwickshire has found that 91% feel they have successfully met their objectives over the last 12 months, and 89% feel confident they will do so over the next 12 months. However, one-third of groups feel they have insufficient income, whilst a similar proportion state they have insufficient volunteers. Research into this field is at its early stages, but it is recognised that much more needs to be done to evaluate the success of the Big Society.

As we increasingly look to the voluntary sector to support and deliver services, we will need to develop a better understanding of the capacity of the sector to meet these demands.



Continued strengths...

Over the last decade, significant improvements have been witnessed in many of the other indicators discussed in the Quality of Life Report. For example, the number of people reported killed or seriously injured (KSI) on Warwickshire roads has fallen from 638 in 2000 to 301 in 2010. Although Warwickshire has a significant motorway and trunk road network, when casualty rates are compared in terms of KSI per billion vehicle miles, Warwickshire's casualty rate is better than average.

The percentage of waste that is recycled or composted has more than doubled in the last seven years, from 22% in 2003/04 to 49% in 2010/11. This has resulted in just 33% of waste going to landfill, compared to 76% seven years ago.

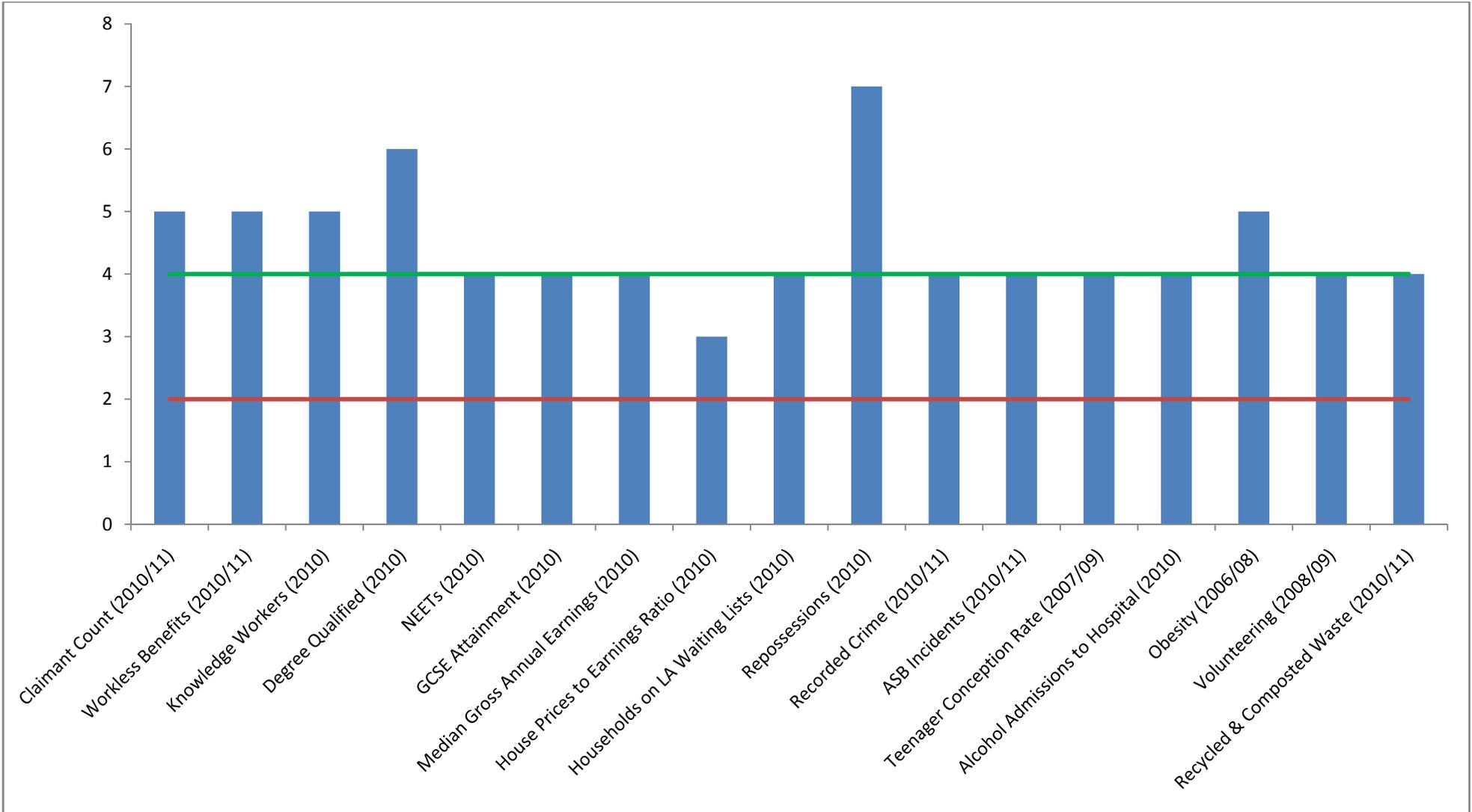
GCSE attainment has continued to improve, with 76% of pupils now achieving five or more A* to C grades, compared to 57% five years ago. There have also been improvements in the percentage of pupils achieving 5 A* to C grades including Maths and English, with 59% of pupils attaining this standard in 2010.



QUALITY OF LIFE DISTRICT TRENDS

Summary of key Quality of Life indicators, comparing each Warwick district with Warwickshire's performance

Key: A score of 7, 6 or 5 = Better or slightly better than Warwickshire's performance (above the green line)
 A score of 4 or 3 = no significant difference in performance (between the red and green lines)
 A Score of 2 or 1 = slightly worse or worse performance (below the red line)



Quality of Life Headline Trends

Summary of key Quality of Life indicators, looking at Warwickshire's performance compared to the national average

The results cover the years 2002 to 2011

Key: A score of 6,5 or 4 = Significantly better, better or slightly better than the national average

A score of 3,2 or 1 = No difference, no significant difference or a slight difference from the national average

