

Regional Trends

No 40
2008 Edition

Editor: Frances Sly
Office for National Statistics

ISBN 978-1-4039-9386-1
ISSN 0261-1783

A National Statistics publication

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This publication first published 2008 by Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08

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Printing

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Hobbs the Printer Ltd, Totton, Southampton

Typeset by Curran Publishing Services Ltd, Norwich, Norfolk

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Introduction

Regional Trends exists to paint a statistical picture of areas within the UK to assist in understanding the complex relationships between locations and the people who live there. The information aids decision making at local, national and European level. This volume brings together data from a wide range of sources, both from within government and outside, to provide an insight into the countries and regions of the UK.

Interest in local information and regional diversity continues to grow, as does the wealth of data available at various geographic levels. Similarly the range of customers for this type of information widens and *Regional Trends* must evolve to meet these requirements. We continue to develop our products – *Regional Trends* and associated datasets – to reflect these changing priorities, new policies and data improvements.

Regional Trends is designed to help address general questions posed by users of regional statistics. Users of regional information require statistics that can examine for example:

- i. the latest figures for a particular topic for a defined area
- ii. the relationship between areas (for example neighbouring or similar areas) in terms of these statistics and changes over time
- iii. deeper spatial relationships between statistics and the underlying geography of areas
- iv. multiple relationships between statistics on different topics across the social/economic spectrum including environmental information

The intention of *Regional Trends* as a ‘flagship’ publication is to enable readers to see the big picture emerging from such perspectives. The publication will not necessarily contain all the information and analysis but, together with Regional Snapshot (see below), will help point users to relevant sources.

This edition contains three articles that focus on the access to and the use of sub-regional data. This first describes the latest developments and future challenges facing Neighbourhood Statistics websites across the UK and how they have been used to influence local policy making. Others cover the power of using several classifications together to increase our understanding of place, and how indices of deprivation and unemployment benefit statistics can be used to direct resources to areas of need.

The Regional Snapshot webpage has become an established gateway to a wide range of information – data, maps and articles – including key local authority data, which will complement the tables in this publication. It can be found at: www.statistics.gov.uk/regionalsnapshot

This continues to be enlarged and updated to include information previously available through our Region in Figures series. Regional Snapshot allows greater flexibility in updating the information and provides access to a wider selection of contextual material for the reader.

Restructuring Regional Trends

Since the last edition we have investigated the most appropriate ways of responding to customer needs and changing situations by conducting a further review of *Regional Trends*. Both reviews have highlighted the need to expand the online data provision and functionality. As a result, we will continue to work towards a more

integrated set of products which will provide an authoritative reference source while allowing more flexibility in terms of format and frequency of updating. *Regional Trends* will remain one of the central pillars for delivering information, but will be linked more closely to the information on Regional Snapshot to provide access to the wider range of data on the web.

In future, *Regional Trends* will give more focus to analysis and interpretation, including research into new data sources and statistical tools to aid understanding of what makes one area different from, or similar to, another. Its aim will be to provide evidence for discussion or to raise questions, such as how the characteristics of an area can be used to inform policies, and how these policies can be implemented to benefit the population as a whole.

Data underpinning the analysis will be provided online at www.statistics.gov.uk. *Regional Trends* will contain a data catalogue to signpost users to datasets online so that the most recent data can be accessed. The emphasis on providing datasets in the publication will be further reduced and consideration is being given to ceasing this aspect of the publication entirely.

As a reader of *Regional Trends* we would welcome your feedback on the following proposals:

1. All regional data to be made available online only
2. A new publication with a regional perspective to be published possibly twice yearly in the first instance. This would contain articles, summaries and a data catalogue to highlight the wealth of regional information and analysis and to provide signposting to datasets online

Please send your comments and feedback to: regional.trends@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Summary

Regional Trends provides a unique description of the regions and countries of the UK. It covers a wide range of demographic, social, industrial and economic statistics, taking a look at most aspects of life. The book falls broadly into three sections: articles outlining research and development of new datasets (Chapter 1), regional profiles (Chapter 2), and the main topic areas (Chapters 3 to 13). In support of these chapters there are comprehensive sections on Geography and Notes and Definitions. To make comparison between regions easy, information is given in clear tables, footnotes highlighting differences in coverage where appropriate.

Regional statistics are essential for a wide range of people including policymakers and planners in both the public and private sectors; marketing professionals; researchers; students and teachers; journalists; and anyone with a general interest in regional information. *Regional Trends* brings together data from diverse sources and, for some topics, is the only publication where data for the whole of the UK are available in one place. Wherever data for the component parts of the UK are sufficiently comparable, figures have been aggregated to give a national average or total.

Given the wide subject content, it is not possible to provide a simple summary of what the statistics show. The following paragraphs set out some of the highlights of this volume.

Neighbourhood Statistics in England & Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

One of the major technological developments this decade to meet the demand for statistics for small geographic areas – neighbourhoods – has been the birth of several government websites which provide this information. These ‘Neighbourhood Statistics’ websites and the statistics on them are used to inform policy and decision making. There are three recognised government ‘Neighbourhood Statistics’ websites: one covering England and Wales, one Scotland and one Northern Ireland. Together, they paint a picture of society at a small geographical level. This has the benefit of

enabling policy and decision making to be better targeted at the areas that need it most.

Although all three websites focus on their respective countries, they do have many similarities. The sites provide statistics and indicators on neighbourhoods – populations of a few hundred people. Users can compare one area with another and see the differences between areas. Another key feature of the sites is the ability for users to view the data through thematic maps and charts and to download information to use on their own systems.

The sites provide local decision makers and the general user with an understanding of the characteristics and needs of local populations to inform decisions, set local priorities, attract funding to monitor and evaluate local initiatives and to make comparisons over time and with other local areas.

The article '*Neighbourhood Statistics in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland*' provides more information on the early history of the websites and how they are being used, including case studies, their functionality and the future challenges and direction of the sites. There are addresses for all three websites to enable you to view the content and find out about your neighbourhood.

Investigating change over time for deprived areas

It is widely recognised that small area statistics have a central role in neighbourhood renewal. Local data are needed to identify areas that require funding and resources and are used to form policies aimed at improving conditions in deprived places. In addition, consistent information is needed over time to identify changes in local conditions, and to measure the impact of interventions at local level.

Initiatives such as Neighbourhood Statistics have been put into place to meet these needs, and more data sources are becoming available to meet the requirements of local practitioners. Two such sources are the Indices of Deprivation and benefit claimant statistics produced by the Department for Work and Pensions:

- Indices of Deprivation measure how deprived an area is, namely the degree to which people are disadvantaged by factors such as low income, lack of education, poor health, crime, and other factors
- Benefits data are an important source of information on unemployment, worklessness, and low income. These are key issues in many deprived places, and tackling them is an important aspect of neighbourhood renewal

The article '*Investigating change over time for deprived areas using benefits data*' shows how these sources can be analysed in conjunction to add value and improve evidence-based decision making. More specifically, it examines data for the East Midlands to identify local areas that are most deprived and provides examples to show whether employment conditions are improving in these places compared with less deprived areas.

The analysis focuses on the overall trends, and those within specific Government Office Regions. In each case the trends are analysed for deprived and non-deprived areas to establish where most improvement is taking place. In summary, the analysis shows that the percentage of benefit claimants is reducing more consistently in deprived areas than non-deprived areas. Although the reductions are generally small, this is encouraging from a neighbourhood renewal perspective. The article also illustrates methods that can be applied using different data or different areas (for example the updated Indices of Deprivation 2007).

Using classifications

Classifications are widely used to group together small areas with similar characteristics. Doing so permits analysis of these groups of areas in situations where information is not available or sufficiently robust for each of the small areas in isolation.

Many classifications have been produced using data from the England and Wales Neighbourhood Statistics website. Two of these – the 2004 Rural and Urban definition of England and Wales (which is based on the physical characteristics of an area) and the 2001 UK Classification of Super Output Areas and Data Zones (which is based on the socio-economic aspects of the population resident in the area) – have been used together to reveal more information about small areas than could have been obtained by using each classification in isolation.

The '*Comparing classifications: Rural and Urban with Area*' article shows how combining these classifications could provide additional insights in south Hampshire and the remote rural area of the Isle of Anglesey. It identifies areas that are in the countryside but have resident populations with characteristics similar to urban areas. Likewise, there are areas on the fringes of towns and cities that have resident populations with characteristics similar to those in rural areas.

Diversity within and between regions

While it is true that regional diversity exists, there is often evidence of greater differences within the regions. For example in the South East, the proportion of people of pensionable age ranged from 12.7 per cent in Milton Keynes to 31.9 per cent in Rother in East Sussex. (Table 2.31)

Over the past 25 years (between 1981 and 2006) the population in the UK has increased by 7.5 per cent. However, this masks regional variations. The North East saw its population fall by 3.1 per cent while the South West saw a 16.9 per cent increase. (Tables 2.3 and 2.35)

In 2005 the West Midlands Strategic Health Authority had the highest infant mortality rate (deaths of infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births) in the UK at 6.4 per 1,000 live births. This did vary within the region: Redditch had the highest rate of 10.4 while Bridgnorth had the lowest rate which was below 0.1. The South East Coast region had the lowest infant mortality rate of 3.9. (Tables 2.19 and 2.31)

Death rates continue to decline in all areas and in 2005 there were 9.7 deaths per 1,000 population for the UK overall. The rates were lowest in London (7.1) and Northern Ireland (8.2) compared with 10.9 per 1,000 population in both Scotland and Wales and 10.8 in the North East. Cancer remains a relatively common cause of death, accounting for over one-quarter of each region's mortality rate in 2005. (Tables 3.7 and 7.3)

In 2006/07, 11.2 per cent of primary school classes in Great Britain had 31 or more pupils. This ranged from 5.9 per cent in Wales to 14.9 per cent in the East Midlands. (Table 4.2)

In 2005/06, 59 per cent of pupils in the UK achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-C. Across the English regions this varied from 54.5 per cent in Yorkshire and The Humber to 59.7 per cent in the South East. Northern Ireland had a rate of 63.0 per cent while Wales had a rate of 53.8 per cent. (Table 4.4)

Median gross weekly earnings for males in London reached £596 in April 2007, but their female counterparts earned £90 per week less at £506. In other areas of the UK earnings for both males and females were lower, with £425 per week in Northern Ireland being the lowest for males and £345 in the North East the lowest for females. Within the North East there was considerable variation. For all people median gross weekly earnings ranged from £350 in Berwick-upon-Tweed to £510 in Tynedale. (Tables 5.12 and 2.4)

London continued to have the highest gross value added (GVA) per head of nearly £29,000 in 2006, 52 per cent above the UK average. The South East was the only other region with GVA per head above the national average (7 per cent above at £20,300). (Table 12.1)

House prices in England and Wales increased by 8.1 per cent between 2005 and 2006. This ranged from an increase of 5.3 per cent in the East Midlands to 10.6 per cent in London. Within the East Midlands there were variations. House prices fell by 3.1 per cent in Bolsover while they increased by 16.6 per cent in South Northamptonshire. (Tables 6.5 and 2.16)

The proportion of households with the regular use of two or more cars increased from 28 per cent in 2000 to 31 per cent in 2005 in Great Britain. London had the lowest proportion of households (21 per cent) with the regular use of two or more cars in 2005 while the South East had the highest (39 per cent). (Table 10.2)

There were falls in all English regions in the number of offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used between 2004/05 and 2005/06 – the largest fall was seen in the North West. There was an increase in the number of operations in which firearms were issued to the police over the same period although this was not seen in all regions – the North East, North West and West Midlands saw falls. The largest increase was seen in London. (Table 9.4)

The number of anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued by all courts increased between 2001 and 2005 in England and Wales. However, 2005 was the first year where some regions saw a fall compared with the previous year. The South East and the South West both saw falls in the number of ASBOs issued in 2005 compared with 2004. (Table 9.8)

Are we getting greener?

The debate on climate change continues and there are regional variations in our impact on the environment. Data describing this variation can be found in chapters 10 (Transport) and 11 (Environment).

The number of licensed cars in Great Britain grew steadily across the ten year period 1996 to 2006, an increase of 22 per cent to just under 28 million. During this time, London had only a 9 per cent increase, the smallest among all the regions, while Northern Ireland had the largest increase with 48 per cent. New car registrations in 2006 were, on average, 10 per cent less than in 2001 with London and Northern Ireland showing the most marked decrease with a 25 per cent reduction. (Table 10.1)

During the period 2003-2004 to 2005-2006 the average distance travelled per person by car increased by nearly 4 per cent to nearly 5,900 miles per year. People in the South West travel the furthest, an average of 7,100 miles per year in 2005-2006, which represents an increase of 1 per cent over the time period. Yorkshire and The Humber, however, had the largest percentage increase with nearly 11 per cent. People in London travelled just over 3,100 miles per year in 2005-2006 by car, the lowest by far across the regions and this represents a decrease of 2 per cent since 2003-2004. (Table 10.3)

The distance travelled by car far exceeds the distance travelled by any other means of transport. However, there have been notable increases in rail travel across Great Britain during the period 2003-2004 to 2005-2006. During this time, the average distance travelled by rail increased by just under 28 per cent with Yorkshire and The Humber having the largest percentage increase of nearly 93 per cent followed by the East Midlands with a 73 per cent increase. The West Midlands deviated from the norm as being the only region with a reduction in distance travelled by rail of nearly 37 per cent. (Table 10.3)

People in London walked the furthest and cycled the furthest in 2005-2006 with an average distance travelled of 230 miles and 50 miles respectively. Cycling distance has increased by 43 per cent in London since 2003-2004 whereas it has decreased by 21 per cent in the West Midlands. (Table 10.3)

Air travel has increased substantially over the past few years, the largest increase in passengers being at Stansted Airport in the East up from 13.7 million passengers in

2001 to 23.7 million in 2006. The regional airports of Liverpool, Bristol and Southampton have all seen a doubling of passenger numbers in this time.

(Table 10.16)

Overall, the amount of household waste has remained broadly the same over the four years from 2002/03 to 2005/06. London produces the least waste per household per week at 20.5 kg in 2005/06. By contrast, Northern Ireland households generate the most with 26.2 kg. The largest reduction has been in the North East which has reduced its waste per household every year from 2002/03, a total reduction of 6 per cent. (Table 11.13)

Recycling has increased strongly across all regions in the four years from 2002/03 to 2005/06. Households in the East recycled 34 per cent of their waste in 2005/06, the highest of any region and almost double the rate of recycling in 2002/03. The North East has recycled the lowest proportion of household waste in each year from 2002/03. Nevertheless, the North East is also the region that has seen the greatest improvement in this time with a trebling of the proportion of waste recycled.

(Table 11.13)

Guidance

Coverage and definitions

A section of Notes and Definitions provides details of coverage to assist in analysing and interpreting the information; additional data are also included in some instances. There is also a section on maps showing the geographic boundaries applicable to various datasets. Maps have also been included which support information available via the website. Due to variations in coverage and definitions, some care may be needed when comparing data from more than one source. Readers are encouraged to consult the Notes and Definitions, footnotes to the tables and other references provided.

Many of the comparisons made in the chapters in this volume refer to data available on the Regional Snapshot website or previous editions of *Regional Trends*. Details of how to access these are given below.

As part of our moves to focus *Regional Trends* more on interpretation and analysis and less on data, this edition does not include data about the regions of the other European Union countries. Data at the regional level for most EU countries can be downloaded from the Eurostat website, at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>. Datasets on Regions may be found under the Data menu. A reference guide entitled 'European Regional and Urban Statistics' is also available (see below for web address).

This publication contains a mixture of 'National Statistics' and 'Other Official Statistics'. Statistics accredited as 'National Statistics' are fully compliant with the National Statistics Code of Practice, and carry the National Statistics Kitemark. Statistics labelled as 'Other Official Statistics' follow many of the best practice principles set out in the Code but have not been accredited as fully compliant.

Availability of electronic data

The contents of *Regional Trends 40* are available free of charge via the National Statistics website, both in PDF format and as downloadable Excel files. In addition the Excel spreadsheets can be accessed and downloaded by clicking on the relevant chart or table in the PDF files. An online publication based on the individual topic areas is available (www.statistics.gov.uk/regionaltrends40) which, together with the Regional Snapshot webpage (www.statistics.gov.uk/regionalsnapshot), provides access to a wide range of data. Previous editions of *Regional Trends* are also available from the Virtual Bookshelf area of this site (www.statistics.gov.uk).

Further information

Regional and sub-regional statistics can be found in a range of other GSS publications, statistical bulletins and regular press releases, and on other government

departments' websites. Much of the information relating to population, households and the labour market presented in *Regional Trends* can be found on Nomis®, an online publication run by Durham University under contract to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). It contains government statistics down to the smallest available geographic area, which may be unpublished elsewhere.

Sub-regional data can be accessed from the Neighbourhood Statistics web pages for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (see below). In addition, data for Wales are published on the National Assembly for Wales website (www.wales.gov.uk), and on Local Government Data Unit Wales website (www.dataunitwales.gov.uk); data for Scotland are published on the Scottish Government website (www.scotland.gov.uk); and data for Northern Ireland are published on the Northern Ireland Office website (www.northernireland.gov.uk). Details of these sources, and others, are available on the National Statistics website (www.statistics.gov.uk)

Useful web addresses

www.statistics.gov.uk

Sub-regional data can be accessed at:
www.statistics.gov.uk/regionaltrends40
www.statistics.gov.uk/regionalsnapshot

If you would like to know more about the UK Neighbourhood Statistics websites, please visit the respective websites at:

England and Wales – www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

Scotland – www.sns.gov.uk

Northern Ireland – www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk

Nomis® can be accessed at: www.Nomisweb.co.uk

Statistics for the devolved administrations can be accessed at:

Wales – www.wales.gov.uk/statistics

Scotland – www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/statistics

Northern Ireland – www.nisra.gov.uk

European Regional and Urban statistics (a reference guide) can be accessed at:

<http://europa.eu/eurostat>

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1073,46587259&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&p_product_code=KS-RA-07-005

Acknowledgements

The editor would like to thank the following people for their help in producing this book:

Production Manager: Cecilia St John

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| | | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Production Team: | Robert Adams | Cris Coxon | Susan Williams |
| | Linda Alderslade | John Fraser | Iain Wilson |
| | Paul Allen | Stephanie Green | Annette Wright |
| | Dave Blythe | Cathryn McBurney | Mark Yeomans |
| | Janette Conquest | Richard Seymour | |

Maps: Alistair Dent Deborah Rhodes

Data collection: Core Table Unit

Contributors

The editors, authors and production team wish to thank all their colleagues in ONS, contributing government departments and other organisations for their generous support and helpful comments, without whose help this publication would not be possible.

Data providers

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| AEA Energy and Environment | Health Protection Agency's Centre for infections |
| British Trust for Ornithology | Health Protection Scotland |
| Central Services Agency, Northern Ireland | HM Revenue and Customs |
| Centre for Ecology and Hydrology | Home Office |
| Centre for Infections | Institute of Child Health |
| Civil Aviation Authority | Information Centre for Health and Social Care |
| Communities and Local Government | Irish Central Statistical Office |
| Countryside Council for Wales | Joint Nature Conservation Committee |
| Court Service | Land Registry |
| Department for: | Local Government Data Unit, Wales |
| Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform | Loughborough University |
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| the Environment, Northern Ireland | Scottish National Heritage |
| Environment Agency | Scottish Natural Heritage |
| Environment and Heritage Service, Northern Ireland | Welsh Assembly Government |
| Forest Service, Northern Ireland | |
| Forestry Commission | |
| General Register Office for Scotland | |