

CHAPTER 14 THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

To help progress towards achieving a more sustainable environment, it is necessary to consider the Reading's social environment. For example, we need to consider forecasts in the level and structure of the population and the implications of these on the natural, built and social environment. Furthermore, the council considers 'quality of life' to be of paramount importance and central to this is the health and well-being of its inhabitants. Therefore, this chapter considers a number of social indicators, including health issues, in order to establish whether or not certain characteristics are more prevalent than others. Such information forms an important base on which to formulate future initiatives.

The quality of life enjoyed by the people who live in Reading is to a certain extent dependent on the prosperity of the economy. Reading's residents and its surrounding areas are perceived to have prospered as a result of growth in technology-based and other high-growth industries. The council wishes to ensure that the area continues to benefit from a buoyant economy and increased prosperity and wealth. This should result in further improvements to the health and well-being of Reading's residents. However, it is important that improvements to health and living standards are enjoyed equally by all sections of the community and that the more vulnerable groups of society are not excluded or disadvantaged by such growth. The council will work in partnership with the community, other public services and local businesses, to monitor changes in the social environment in order to prevent this happening.

The main social concerns that are considered in this chapter are inequality, exclusion, deprivation, quality of housing, quality of education, healthcare and the fear of crime. Therefore, the data used to indicate the extent of these concerns includes:

- The changing level and structure of the population.
- Ethnic group, economic status and prosperity.
- Deprivation indicators such as Jarman UPA scores and the 1991 & 1998 Indices of Deprivation.
- Crime statistics including the level of certain crimes and detection rates.
- Data on the number of people who are suffering from or have suffered from certain illnesses and teenage conception rates.
- The provision of social services and 'child support scores'.

Contents

- Legislation and Guidance
- Population of Reading
- Ethnic Groups
- Deprivation
- Community Safety and Fear of Crime
- Health
- Social Services Provision
- Main Issues
- Key Contact(s)
- Reference Documents

Legislation and Guidance

There is a variety of existing legislation and guidance that covers the social environment. However, the most important legislation is summarised below:

European Legislation

- **Treaty of the European Union**

Article 129 of the Treaty of the European Union requires member states to contribute towards the achievement of a high level of human health protection including direct action towards the prevention of disease.

National Legislation

- **National Health Service and Community Act 1990**

This places a legal requirement on local authorities to produce a Community Care Plan which should be regularly updated. The plan should also outline how future services are to be provided.

- **Government White Paper “The Health of the Nation” 1992**

National priorities for health are contained in this paper, and these include the reduction and prevention of coronary heart disease, cancers, mental illness and accidents. The White Paper also urges health authorities to seek partnerships with local communities to reduce and prevent illness and accidents.

- **Crime and Disorder Bill 1998**

This Bill seeks to promote partnerships between business, local authorities and local communities to reduce crime. It also requires local authorities to produce a crime audit and crime strategy.

- **Government White Paper “Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation”, 1999**

This sets a number of targets for reducing mortality rates for certain diseases by 2021. However, these targets do not relate to the main causes of death such as coronary heart disease, cancer and strokes.

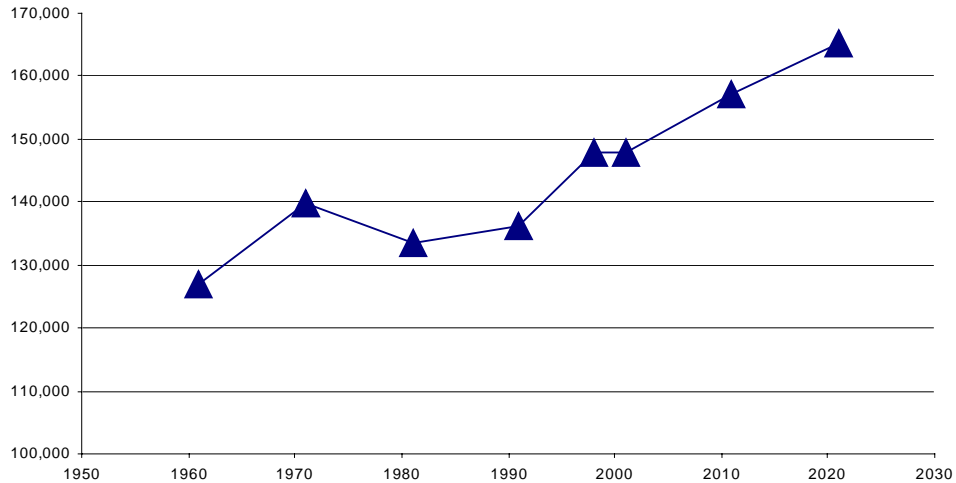
Population Change

Figure 14.1 shows the past and projected population of Reading. The population of the Reading has grown since the 1960s, from an estimated population of 126,797 in 1961 to 147,840 by mid 1998, representing a growth of some 17%¹. This growth is despite a fall in the population of the town between 1971 and 1991.

Population projections produced on behalf of the government suggest that the population of Reading is set to continue to grow and could increase to 165,000 by 2021, a growth of 12% from 1998 levels². This compares to projected national population growth over the same period of approximately 7%. It must be recognised that these projections are based on the continuation of past trends and do not take account of changes in circumstances. However, if these increases are realised they could lead to significant additional pressures on infrastructure, increased demand for services, and environmental and social problems such as increased traffic congestion, the loss of ‘green’ land especially for housing development, town cramming and health problems related to higher levels of pollution. Some of these potential problems are discussed in more detail in other chapters of this report.

¹ Source: 1961 Census and ONS 1998 Mid Year Estimate

² Source: ONS 1996 Based Population Projections



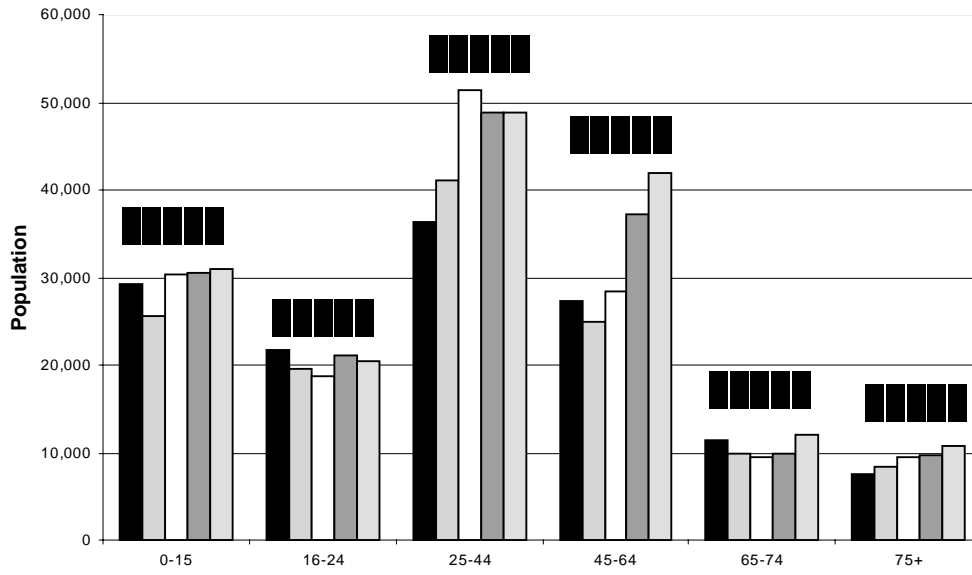
Source: 1961,1971,1981 and 1991 Census, 1998 ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates and ONS-1996 based Government Population Projections
Figure 14.1: Reading Borough: Past and Forecast Population Levels 1961-2021

Age Profile

The age profile of the population of Reading is also changing as shown in Figure 14.2. The number of people under 24 years of age is projected to increase but this only represents a relatively minor change compared with the projected increase in total population. Larger changes are expected in the 25-44 age group, but the greatest increase is projected to occur in the 45-64 age group from 24,882 in 1991 to 41,900 by 2021, a growth of some 68%³. There is also projected to be a 15% increase in the population aged over 65.

The projected change in age profiles, if realised, could have a significant impact on the demand for certain services and would probably require a change in the way that services are planned for and provided. For example, these changes could affect the demand for schools, and, social and medical services.

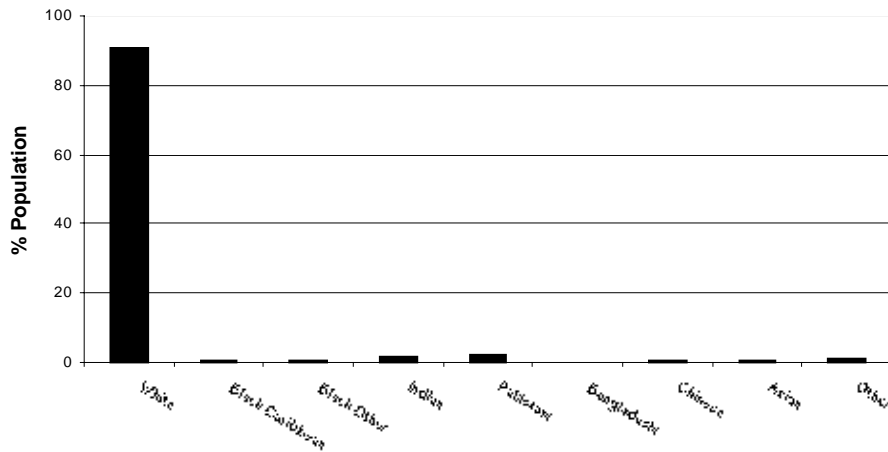
³ Source: 1991 Census and ONS 1996 Based Population Projections



Source: 1981 and 1991 Census and 1996 based Sub-National Population Projections
 Figure 14.2: Forecast Change in the Population Profile of Reading Borough

Employment Status of Ethnic Groups

The last Census, conducted in 1991, includes data on ethnic groups. Figure 14.3 provides a breakdown by ethnic group Reading's population. It can be seen that approximately 10% of the Reading population are from ethnic groups. This compares with the national average of 6%⁴.



Source: 1991 Census
 Figure 14.3: Ethnic Groups in the Borough's Population

Prosperity of Ethnic Groups

⁴ Source: 1991 Census

Table 14.1 indicates that people who are from ethnic groups are less likely to be employed. This applies particularly to males. However, it should be noted that this data was gathered at a time of relatively high unemployment, as in 1991 unemployment in Reading stood at approximately 9% compared to 2.1% in September 1999⁵. No breakdown of the latest unemployment statistics by ethnic group is available.

It would appear that in 1991 ethnic groups were more likely to be unemployed. However, the labour market has changed considerably since then with the creation of many new jobs. Therefore, it is uncertain whether the same would be true in 1999. However, it will be possible to monitor any change in the above trend when data from the 2001 Census becomes available. It should be noted that the 1991 Census was the first to include a question on ethnic group. Therefore, it is not possible to compare 1991 Census data with previous Census data for this indicator.

		White Households	Non-White Households
Total households		48,753	3419
Unemployed*	Males	8.7%	18%
	Females	4.7%	11%

Source: 1991 Census * % of total economically active population
Table 14.1: Employment Status of White and Ethnic Group Households

Deprivation

Although Reading is currently experiencing low unemployment levels and is perceived to be a prosperous place to live, this perception may shroud underlying problems. Therefore, it is important to monitor levels of deprivation as there is a need to prevent social exclusion and to ensure that everyone shares and contributes equally to the prosperity of Reading.

Deprivation Indicators

Indicators of deprivation include household income levels, the economic status of people living in a house, the composition of households (e.g. number of children or elderly persons), and the quality of housing. Recognised methods for measuring deprivation are explained below.

The Department of Environment Index of Deprivation, 1991

The Department of the Environment (now the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions) devised a methodology to measure deprivation based on a number of different indicators taken from the Census as well as from other nationally available sources⁶. These indicators measure the extent to which figures for an area differ from those which would be expected if that area reflected the pattern for the UK as a whole.

Figures were published at district level. The results showed that, when compared with the national statistics, Reading was relatively deprived. It was ranked 92nd out of a total of 366 authorities, with 1 (Newham, London) being most deprived and 366 (Mid Sussex) being least deprived.

⁵ Source: Labour Market Trends September 1999

⁶ Nationally the Index is based on the following data available from the 1991 Census and other data sources at 1991: unemployment, overcrowding, lacking amenities, children in unsuitable accommodation, children in low-earner households, households without a car, the number of 17 year olds not in full time education, standard mortality rates, long term unemployment, income support, home insurance ratings, low educational attainment and derelict land at 1988.

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, Index of Deprivation, 1998

A revised index of local deprivation was produced by DETR in 1998 at both ward and district level. Although this still used some data from the 1991 Census, statistics for unemployment, income, education, health and crime were more recent⁷. However, although the 1998 Index of Deprivation uses different indicators from the 1991 Index, a similar mathematical formula was used to measure deprivation. Therefore, it is possible to compare the results of the 1998 and 1991 Indices.

Unlike the 1991 Index of Deprivation, the 1998 Index also includes a rank and score for individual wards. A total of 8,620 wards and 354 local authorities were surveyed. Figure 14.4 shows individual rankings for each ward in Reading; the lower the ranking, the higher the level of deprivation. It should, however, be noted that if wards have the same deprivation score then they are given the same rank.

The results show that:

- the level of deprivation experienced in Reading as a whole appears to have fallen slightly since 1991, with Reading achieving a rank of 112th out of 354 local authorities compared to a rank of 92nd out of 366 authorities in 1991;
- three wards have very low levels of deprivation, with Thames, Tilehurst and Kentwood Wards faring very well;
- conversely, there appear to be severe pockets of deprivation in the wards of Abbey, Katesgrove and Whitley.

Jarman UPA scores

An alternative measure of deprivation is that derived by Jarman which is known as Jarman UPA Scores. It combines several data indicators included in the 1991 Census and gives an overall score of deprivation⁸.

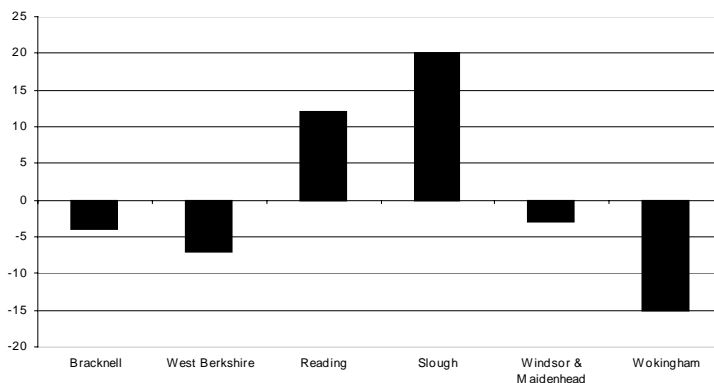
The average score for the nation is zero. A positive score indicates relative deprivation, a negative score relative affluence. Figure 14.5 shows that according to this measure, within Berkshire only Slough has a higher level of deprivation than Reading. All other districts experience below average levels of deprivation.

⁷

The 1998 Index is based on the following data: unemployment (ONS 1997), houses lacking amenities (1991 Census), overcrowded housing (1991 Census), children receiving school meals (DfEE 1996), households receiving housing assistance combined with households receiving council tax benefit (DSS 1996) low educational participation aged 17 (1991 Census), low educational attainment (DfEE 1996), standard mortality rates (ONS 1995), home insurance weightings, male long term unemployment (ONS 1997) and income support (DSS 1995).

⁸

Jarman UPA scores are based on 1991 Census indicators of: elderly people living alone; households with children under 5; one parent families; households headed by unskilled people; the unemployed; households with no amenities; overcrowding in households; people who have recently moved to the area and ethnic origin.



Source: Berkshire Health Authority Statistics 1996
Figure 14.5: Jarman UPA scores for Berkshire Area Local Authorities

Jarman UPA scores for each ward in Reading support the general picture that emerged from the 1998 DETR survey. In more detail, the Jarman UPA scores show that only 4 of the 15 wards in Reading (Kentwood, Peppard, Thames and Tilehurst) are considered to be affluent in terms of Jarman UPA scores, while all other wards are considered to be deprived in relation to the national average, with Abbey, Katesgrove and Whitley Wards having the highest scores.

As stated previously, the 1991 Census (on which the Jarman UPA test is based on) was undertaken at a time of recession and relatively high unemployment. The economy of the Reading has changed significantly in the intervening years.

Other Indicators of Deprivation

The indices of deprivation discussed so far combine a number of indicators to give an overall score or rank. It is also possible to examine individual factors which contribute to deprivation, such as the quality of housing. The table contained in Appendix 1 of this section shows a number of indicators by ward. The best and worst performing wards are summarised in Table 14.2 and the results of this table are discussed in more detail in the conclusion to this section.

Car Ownership	Worst Performing Wards	47% of households in Abbey Ward, 41% in Whitley and Katesgrove Wards and 39% in Battle Ward do not own a car
	Best Performing Wards	15% of households in Thames Ward, 17% in Peppard Ward and 22% in Kentwood Ward do not own a car
Social class by head of Household	Worst Performing Wards	11% of heads of households in Whitley and Church Wards are unskilled
	Best Performing Wards	1% of heads of households are unskilled in Thames Ward and 3% in Caversham and Peppard Wards
Overcrowding	Worst Performing Wards	2.5% of households in Abbey and Katesgrove Wards suffer overcrowding of over 1.5 people per habitable room
	Best Performing Wards	

Lacking or Sharing of WC/Bathroom	Worst Performing Wards	7.1% of households in Abbey Ward, 6.3% in Redlands Ward and 5.5% in Katesgrove Ward lack or share a WC/Bathroom
	Best Performing Wards	0.2% of households in Tilehurst Ward, 0.3% in Peppard Ward and 0.4% in Whitley Ward lack or share a WC/Bathroom
Income Support Claimants	Worst Performing Wards	19.6% of residents in Abbey Ward and 13.6% in Whitley Ward claimed income support in 1998
	Best Performing Wards	2.1% of residents in Thames and 4% of residents in Peppard claimed income support in 1998
Housing Benefit Claimants	Worst Performing Wards	15.4% of households in Abbey, 13.4% in Whitley Ward and 10% in Church Ward claimed housing benefit in 1998
	Best Performing Wards	1% of households in Thames Ward and 2.5% in Peppard Ward claimed housing benefit in 1998

Source: 1991 Census and Reading Children Services Plan 1999/2000 * Income support and housing benefit figures represent the percentage of the total population who claimed benefit in 1998

Table 14.2: Other Indicators of Deprivation in the Borough - a Summary of the Best and Worst Performing Wards

Unemployment by ward is discussed in Chapter 10 – Local Economic Development.

Future Monitoring of Deprivation

An Index of Deprivation for 1999 is currently being produced by the DETR. It will therefore be possible to continue monitoring the levels of deprivation experienced in Reading.

The council is, however, concerned that national deprivation measures are based on data that may be out of date and which is published at a national level. It may not reflect more local factors that contribute to deprivation. Although the council recognises the importance of national deprivation indicators, it is currently considering compiling its own Index of Local Deprivation. This may involve the incorporation of additional data, such as access to services, and recent local education and crime statistics.

Conclusions on Deprivation

This section of the report has considered a number of deprivation indicators. From these, it is possible to draw some general conclusions. These are:

- whilst Reading is perceived to be prosperous, there are areas of deprivation;
- there is a sharp contrast in the levels of deprivation experienced in the various wards with there being some pockets of affluence and some pockets of severe deprivation;
- Abbey, Katesgrove and Whitley Wards perform badly in the Index of Deprivation. Closer analysis of individual deprivation indicators also reveals that these wards have low car ownership, a high proportion of benefit claimants and high unemployment rates. These wards suffer from high levels of deprivation;
- Redlands, Church, Battle and Minster Wards also perform poorly across all indicators and appear to experience high levels of deprivation;

- Thames, Tilehurst and Caversham Wards all perform well and are considered to be affluent with very low levels of deprivation. In particular, they have high rates of car ownership, a low proportion of benefit claimants, good quality housing and low unemployment rates. Peppard ward also appears to be reasonably affluent;
- Kentwood Ward appears to have experienced a significant improvement (i.e. reduction) in its level of deprivation since 1991;
- the problem of deprivation in Reading as a whole appears to be improving with a rise in its national ranking between 1991 and 1998. However, Reading is in the nations top 35% in terms of the level of deprivation experienced by its inhabitants.

Community Safety and Fear of Crime

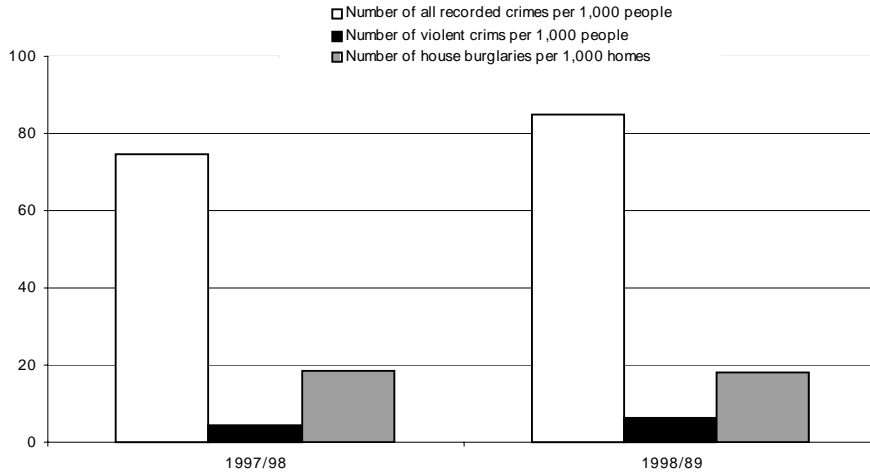
Crime and anti-social behaviour results in significant economic and social costs and causes fear and concerns about personal safety, particularly among the more vulnerable groups of society, such as the elderly. Partnerships between public service providers, the business community and local amenity groups can help to reduce the number of crimes committed and thus reduce fear and improve safety. This principle is encompassed in the Crime and Disorder Bill which encourages local authorities to work in partnership with the police and local communities. The Crime and Disorder Bill also places a statutory duty on local authorities to undertake a crime audit and adopt a crime reduction strategy.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of crime reduction initiatives and to understand the extent of the current problem, it is important to highlight some key crime statistics.

Figure 14.6 illustrates crime rates for the Thames Valley Police (TVP) area. It should be noted that as well as Berkshire, TVP also cover the counties of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. These statistics provide a useful benchmark against which to compare crime statistics for Reading.

Trends in the number of crimes committed in the TVP area are summarised below:

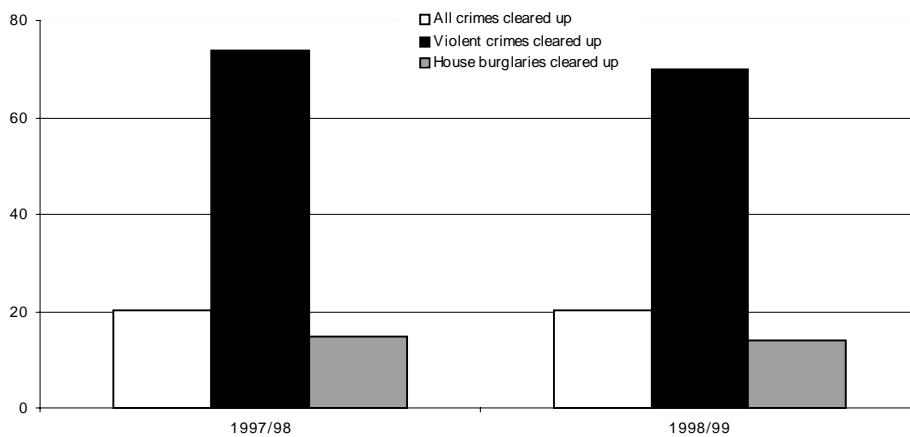
- the number of reported crimes committed per 1,000 people increased from 74.6 in 1997/1998 to 85.0 in 1998/99;
- the number of reported violent crimes per 1000 people increased from 4.2 in 1997/98 to 6.3 in 1998/99; and
- the number of reported burglaries per 1000 people declined from 18.6 in 1998/99 to 18.0 in 1997/98.



Source: Thames Valley Police, 1999
Figure 14.6: Number of Crimes Committed per 1000 People in the TVP Area

Trends in crime detection rates (Figure 14.7) can be summarised as follows:

- there was a slight fall in the number of crimes detected from 25.4% in 1997/98 to 24.6% in 1998/99;
- the detection rate for violent crimes fell from 74.2% in 1997/98 to 70.1% in 1998/99; and
- there was also a fall in the detection rate for house burglaries from 17.5% in 1997/98 to 16% in 1998/99.



Source: Thames Valley Police 1999
Figure 14.7: Crime Detection Rates for the TVP Area

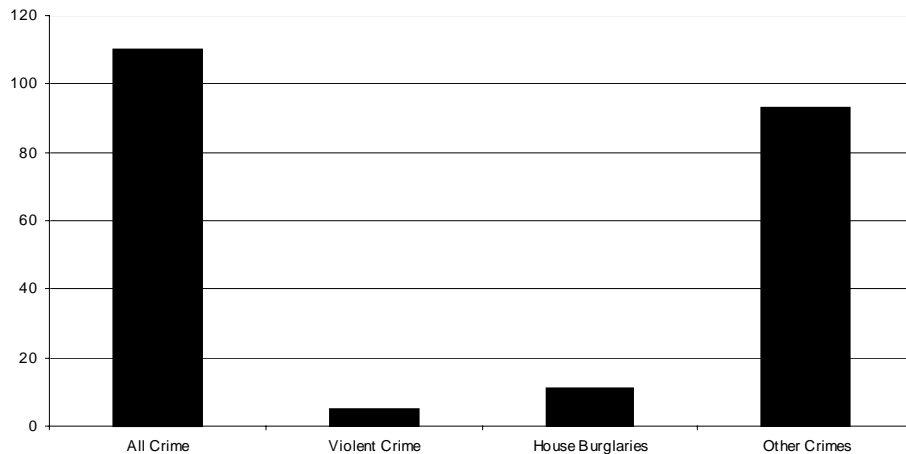
Number of Recorded Crimes Committed in the Borough in 1997/98

Figure 14.8 shows the number of reported crimes per 1000 people in Reading. However, as data on the number of reported crimes is gathered at 'police beat' area level it is difficult to compile accurate statistics for Reading. Therefore, these statistics should be treated with some caution as they represent the 'best estimate' of crime in Reading.

Whilst TVP area statistics are available for 1998/99, crime statistics for Reading are only available for 1997/98. Therefore, it is only possible to draw comparisons for 1997/98. Trends in the number of crimes committed in Reading can be summarised as follows:

- the total number of recorded crimes committed in 1997/98 was 110 per 1000 people, higher than the TVP area average of 74.6;
- the number of recorded violent crimes was 5 per 1000 people in 1997/98 compared to 4.2 per 1000 people in the TVP area;
- the number of recorded house burglaries was 11 per 1000 people, much lower than the TVP area average of 18 per 1000 people;
- other crimes, such as robbery, car crime and shoplifting, accounted for 93 crimes per 1000 people (there is no corresponding figure for the Thames Valley Police area).

Therefore, the level of reported crime in Reading would appear to be generally higher than the average for the TVP area as a whole.



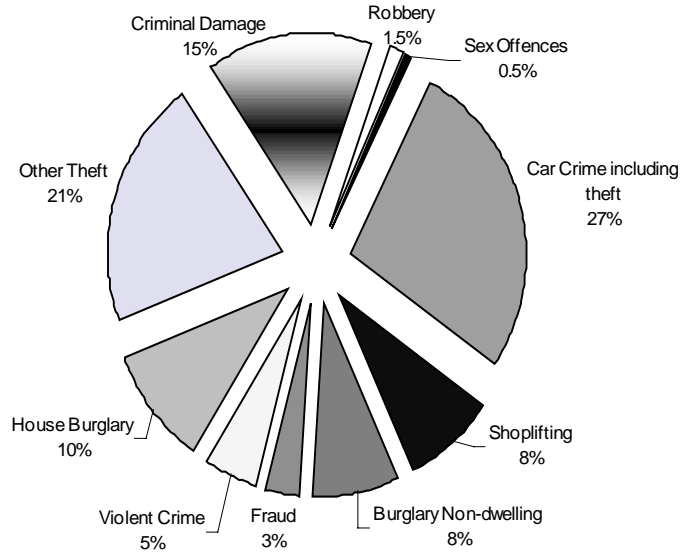
Source: Reading Borough Council
Figure 14.8: Number of Crimes Committed per 1000 People in Reading in 1997/98

Type of Crime Committed in Reading in 1997/98

Figure 14.9 shows the type of crime committed in Reading as a percentage of all reported crime in 1997/98.

The main features that emerge are:

- the most common crime reported is theft of or from motor vehicles, accounting for 27% of all crimes;
- other theft accounts for 21.4% of all crime and criminal damage 15%;
- house burglaries account for approximately 10% of all crime;
- sex offences (0.5%) and robbery (1.5%) account for only a small percentage of all crimes committed.



Source: Reading Borough Council
Figure 14.9: Selected Crimes Committed (% of Total Crime) in Reading

Health Provision

As stated previously, it is important that any improvements to the general level of health and living standards are enjoyed by all sections of the community. Key indicators need to be identified in order to monitor changes in the well-being of the residents of Reading.

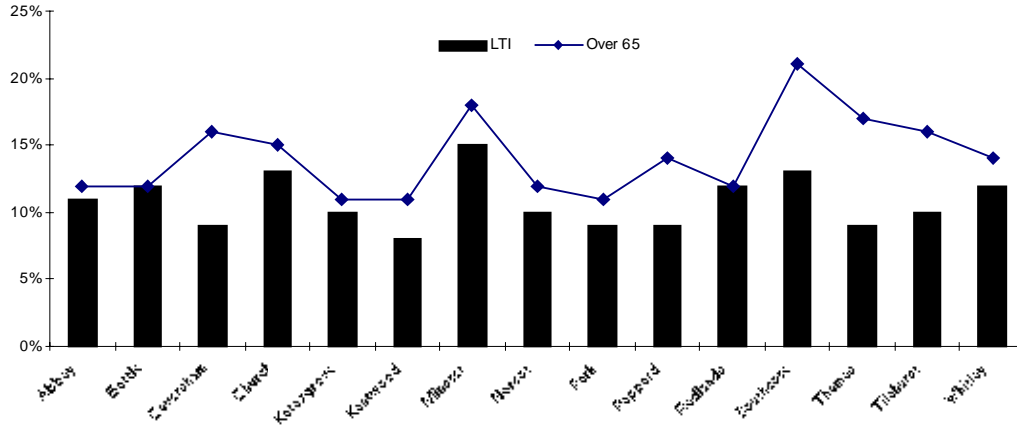
Whilst some information on health is available from the 1991 Census, more detailed statistics are collated by the Berkshire Health Authority and used to assist in the provision of health services. It should be noted that some statistics provided by Berkshire Health Authority are only available at 1996 whilst others are available at 1997.

Long Term Illness

Figure 14.10 illustrates the percentage of residents in each ward containing a person suffering from a long-term illness. It also relates this to the percentage of the population in each ward aged 65 or over at 1991.

Conclusions on long term illness may be summarised as follows:

- Minster Ward has the highest proportion of households (15%) containing a person who is suffering from a long term illness, followed by Southcote and Church Wards (13%);
- Wards with the lowest percentage of residents suffering from long term illness are Kentwood (8%) followed by Caversham, Peppard, Park and Thames (9%);
- Southcote (21%) and Minster Wards (18%) have the highest proportion of residents aged 65 or over. This may explain the higher levels of long term illness;
- However, other wards that have a high proportion of residents aged 65 or over, do not have high levels of long-term illness. For example, 16% of the population in Caversham are aged 65 or over but only 9% of residents suffer from a long term illness. In Thames Ward, 17% of the population are aged 65 or over but only 9% of residents suffer from a long-term illness.



Source: 1991 Census
Figure 14.10: Households Containing a Resident Suffering from a Long Term Illness and the Proportion of Residents in Each Ward Aged 65 or Over Standardised Mortality Ratios

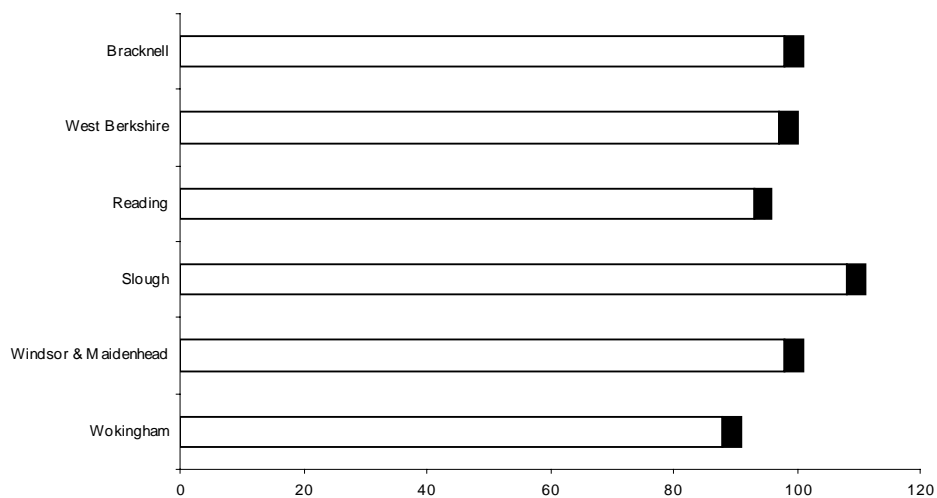
Standardised mortality ratios (SMRs) are the accepted indicator for expressing death rates. Local mortality rates are death rates relative to a national average set at 100. As the number of deaths can vary randomly from year to year, SMRs are quoted with confidence intervals which are a range of values with which it is 95% certain where the true SMR lies.

Deaths from all causes

Figure 14.11 illustrates SMRs for deaths from all causes for districts in the Berkshire area. It should be noted that SMRs remove the variation caused by differences between areas in terms of population structure. Consequently, the differences presented are not simply due to younger or older populations in different areas.

Figure 14.11 shows that:

- the SMR for Reading is 93-96. Of the Berkshire authorities, only Wokingham has a lower SMR. Slough has the highest SMR of 108-111.
- the SMR for Reading is below the national average of 100. In crude terms, this means that the death rate of people who live in Reading is lower than the national average.

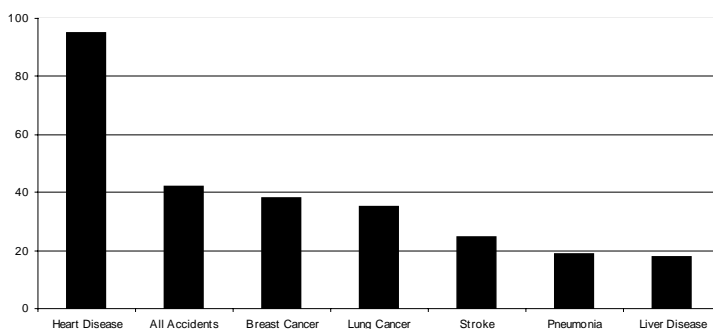


Source: Berkshire Health Authority 1996
 Figure 14.11: SMRs for the Berkshire Area

Premature Deaths

One indicator of the health of Reading residents is to measure the number of lives lost for selected causes of death before people reach the age of 75. Figure 14.12 shows the number of lives lost annually per 10,000 residents due to the principal causes of premature deaths. It shows that:

- one of the main causes of premature death is coronary heart disease with on average 95 deaths annually per 10,000 of the population;
- other common causes of premature death are accidents, breast cancer and lung cancer with approximately 35-40 deaths annually per 10,000 of the population;
- less likely causes of premature death are liver disease, colon cancer and pneumonia.



Source: Berkshire Health Authority, 1997
 Figure 14.12: Age Standardised Average Annual Years of Life Lost up to Age 75 per 10,000 Residents by Selected Causes of Death (deaths registered 1994-96)

SMR of other Selected Causes of Death

The SMR for some other selected causes of death are:

- the SMR from CHD for Reading is 79-81, below the national average of 100;
- for all cancers, Reading has an SMR of 81-90, also below the national average of 100;
- the SMR from strokes of 78-94 is also below the national average of 100.

Teenage Conception Rates

The national average of conception rates is 9 per 1000 girls aged 11-15 compared to 11 in the Reading.

Although, this is not strictly an indicator of health this information is useful for both health and social service providers.

Conclusions on Health

This section has looked at a variety of data and it is possible to draw some general conclusions. These are:

- coronary heart disease is the most common cause of death in Reading;
- the health of residents appears to be relatively good with a below average death rate, especially from some of the main causes of death such as coronary heart disease, cancer and strokes. However, it should be borne in mind that information on other key indicators, such as life expectancy, is unavailable.

Social Service Provision

The council provides a range of social services to the community. However, the delivery of services is concentrated upon those most in need. In order to ensure that resources are managed efficiently, the council has produced a Community Care Plan which sets out the way in which services are planned, developed, monitored and evaluated. The Plan is a three year strategic plan, which enables the council to plan and maintain the long term provision of services. The plan is produced in partnership with the public and other statutory and independent bodies. Some of the main challenges outlined by the Community Care Plan are:

- to ensure that the benefits of living in a thriving town are enjoyed by all sections of the community and lead to social inclusion rather than social exclusion;
- to provide services for a changing population particularly one that is generally ageing;
- to deliver community care to vulnerable adults (e.g. those suffering from long term illness), older people, people with mental health problems and people with learning disabilities;
- to develop services in partnership with other organisations;
- to continue planning high quality services.

Children's Services Plan

As previously stated, the council is committed to ensuring that the benefits of living in Reading are enjoyed by all sections of the community which includes children and young people. Therefore, whilst the Community Care Plan is primarily focused on the provision of services for adults, a separate plan has been produced for children. Like the Community Care Plan, the Children's Services Plan has been produced in partnership with representatives from the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors.

Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Whilst many children are raised in a healthy family environment with good access to education, not all children are as fortunate. Moreover the number of divorces, and the numbers of single parents and teenage conceptions have increased over recent years, thus putting extra pressure on both children and parents. Other children, such as disabled children, require special needs. Therefore, the key objective of the Children's Services Plan is to plan and monitor services available to children whose parents can no longer look after them, are at risk or require special services. Particular services that are planned by the council and are outlined in the Children's Services Plan include:

- adoption;
- the care of children including providing accommodation;
- providing services for disabled children and those who have mental health or learning disabilities;
- dealing with disruptive children.

Likelihood of children being admitted into Local Authority care

A 'children's support score' has been developed by Bebbington and Miles to forecast the likelihood of dependent children being admitted into the care of local authorities. Although this indicator has some weaknesses (such as the lack of recent data), it does provide Social Services with some indication as to where resources and services are most likely to be needed.

Bebbington and Miles scores are based on a number of key factors⁹ about a child's circumstances which are weighted according to their importance. The higher the 'support score' the more likely it is that the child will be admitted into care.

Reading has a Bebbington and Miles score of 604 which is the highest of all Berkshire districts (i.e. the highest likelihood of a child being admitted into care). Wokingham has the lowest score of 279.

Bebbington and Miles scores for each ward in Reading (for simplicity these are presented as a percentage of total children who are likely to be taken into care). show that:

- approximately 11-13% of dependent children in Whitley Ward are likely to be admitted to local authority care, the highest level in Reading. This is followed by Church Ward, where the level is 9-11%. Norcot and Minster Wards also score highly.
- on the other hand, only 2-4% of dependent children in Peppard, Thames and Tilehurst Wards are likely to be taken into care, the lowest levels in Reading.

Main Issues

- The population of Reading is forecast to continue to rise, and changes in the population structure of Reading will result in the ageing of the population. This will lead to increased pressure on existing infrastructure and services and may require a change in the way that certain services are resourced, delivered and planned. The way in which new development is planned should take account of environmental and social concerns but this will become increasingly difficult as the population increases.
- Reading is perceived to be a prosperous place to live, with low employment and a high standard of living. However, although certain areas of Reading are relatively well off, many areas have above average levels of deprivation and there appears to be a wide disparity between the most and least deprived areas. Nationally, Reading is in the top third of the most deprived areas in England. There is a need to close the 'gap' between the best and worst-off areas.

⁹ Bebbington & Miles scores are based on 1991 Census indicators of: dependent children in households with only one adult; dependent children in households with four or more dependent children; dependent children aged under 18 in households in Black Caribbean, Black African and Black Other ethnic groups; dependent children aged under 18 in households in Council rented accommodation (excluding housing association); dependent children under 18 in households living at an average of more than one person per room; children aged 10-17 resident in households and dependent children in households with at least one person economically active but not in employment.

- The number of crimes committed in Reading appears to be higher than the rest of the Thames Valley Police area. Although the reasons for this may be complex, there is a need to reduce crime, particularly common crimes such as car theft, burglaries and other thefts.
- Although the residents of Reading appear to enjoy above average health, the health of the Reading residents could still be improved. For example, the number of deaths from diseases such as coronary heart disease, needs to be reduced.

Key Contacts

For further information, please contact

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DEPRIVATION INDICATORS BY WARD

Table to show deprivation indicators by ward

Ward	Deprivation Indicator (% of total households)					
	No car	Over-crowding	Lacking or sharing bathroom & WC	Unskilled	Income support claimants	Housing benefits claimants
Abbey	47.1	4.5	7.1	5.7	19.6	15.4
Battle	38.8	3.7	3.7	7.1	11.1	7.3
Caversham	29.1	1.9	1.4	3.4	8.4	7.3
Church	36.4	4.2	0.5	10.6	10.6	10.0
Katesgrove	41.0	5.5	5.5	8.0	10.7	8.5
Kentwood	21.9	2.02	0.6	6.3	6.8	4.5
Minster	35.6	2.6	2.6	7.1	10.5	9.1
Norcot	36.8	3.1	1.1	8.4	10.6	9.5
Park	33.1	5.2	5.3	3.6	7.6	3.7
Peppard	16.9	1.6	0.3	3.0	4.0	2.5
Redlands	38.0	4.2	6.3	.5	7.3	5.4
Southcote	37.5	2.5	1.0	5.3	8.6	9.3
Thames	15.3	0.5	0.6	1.0	2.1	1.0
Tilehurst	24.4	4.8	0.2	4.1	6.0	5.5
Whitley	40.6	4.8	0.4	10.5	13.6	13.4
Reading	33.2	3.3	2.5	5.8	9.2	7.5