

3.1 SOCIAL AND PLACE

Introduction

Many factors affect the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities in Somerset. These include environmental and social factors such as learning and skills, the economy, housing, the environment, crime and disorder and other issues.

This section examines these determinants in more detail, giving a better understanding of the wider health and wellbeing issues individuals and communities face in Somerset.

Summary

Economy and employment

There has been an increase in numbers of people claiming out of work benefits in Somerset since August 2008 (around the start of the economic downturn) which can be attributed to an increase in the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA).

In April 2011,¹ 2.2% of Somerset's working age population were claiming JSA, compared to 2.6% regionally and 3.7% nationally. The percentage of the working age population claiming JSA varies across the county, from 8.9% in Bridgwater Fairfax to 0.3% in Ruishton and Creech.

Both regionally and nationally, youth unemployment is of particular concern. In Somerset, 5.8% of 18 to 24 year olds claim JSA compared to 2.3% of 25 to 49 year olds and 1.1% of 50 to 64 year olds. Sedgemoor has the highest level of youth unemployment in the county at 7.4%, and West Somerset has the lowest at 4.5%.

In December 2010,² the majority of Somerset's residents were employed within the service industry. However, a smaller percentage of people work in the service sector compared to the regional and national average. This is particularly true within banking, finance and insurance.

¹ NOMIS <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1967128607/report.aspx?town=somerset>

² NOMIS <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1967128607/report.aspx?town=somerset>

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In March 2010,³ there were 25,925 VAT registered employers in Somerset. Somerset has a higher percentage of businesses employing 0 to 4 employees than observed regionally or nationally. This is particularly evident in West Somerset where 76.2% of businesses employ between 0 and 4 people.

Half of all businesses in Somerset have been in existence for 10 or more years. This is greater than the regional (47%) and national (42%) averages. We therefore have a larger number of micro and small businesses with less churn than would be usual.

Deprivation in Somerset

The Index of Multiple Deprivation indicates that approximately 21,200 people in Somerset live in one of the 20% most deprived LSOAs nationally. These

LSOAs can be found in Taunton, Bridgwater, Highbridge, Williton, Shepton Mallet and Yeovil.

Comparing the deprivation in 2010 with deprivation in 2007 shows that in some of the 'most' deprived areas of Somerset, deprivation has increased. This is particularly evident in areas of Bridgwater Sydenham and Taunton Halcon.

Barriers to housing and services form the most prevalent form of deprivation in Somerset; 130,500 people live in LSOAs within the 20% most deprived nationally.

Looking at this domain in more detail it is clear that people living in these areas are more likely to suffer from geographic barriers (distance to services) due to the rurality of the county, rather than wider barriers such as household overcrowding, homelessness and access to affordable homes.

The child wellbeing index indicates that 14 LSOAs in Somerset rank amongst the worst 20% in England for child wellbeing, accounting for 4,500 children.⁴ These areas are located within Bridgwater, Taunton, Yeovil and Highbridge.

Two LSOAs perform particularly poorly for child wellbeing in Somerset:

- E01029106 (Bridgwater Sydenham Central), which ranks amongst the lowest 5% in England, and

³ Office for National Statistics <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=933>

⁴ Assuming each LSOA contains 350 people age 0 to 18

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- E01029297 (Taunton Lyngford Central), which ranks amongst the lowest 10% nationally

Fuel poverty

Within Somerset higher levels of fuel poverty are seen outside of the main urban areas. People in these areas (with the exception of Exmoor) are generally not on lower incomes than people living in urban areas and therefore the costs to heat their homes must be greater, for example, less fuel efficient.

Community safety

The 2008 Place Survey found that 92% of people in Somerset felt very safe or safe outside in their local area during the day. This figure fell to 62% after dark.

Women, under 25s, people with a limiting disability and those in social housing were the most likely to feel unsafe.⁵

The 2010 Community Safety Strategic Assessment identified four key community safety priorities for Somerset in 2011:

- reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB), crime and re-offending
- road safety
- protection of vulnerable groups
- substance misuse

Travel and transport

Outside of Somerset's main towns, the county is characterised by a dispersed pattern of settlement and a relatively low population density. Transport and the relative ease of movement within the region are therefore major issues which influence the social, environmental and economic life of the county.

The Department for Transport 2010 Accessibility statistics⁶ provide a local-level measure of the availability of transport to key services, including food stores, education, health care, town centres and employment centres.

⁵ 2008 Place Survey <http://www.sine.org.uk/publications/place-survey/>

⁶ <http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accessibility/index.html>

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On average the minimum travel time to the nearest key service in Somerset is 16 minutes by public transport/walking, 11 minutes by walking and six minutes by car.

Natural environment

The natural environment offers many benefits to health and wellbeing. It can reduce stress and improve mental health, encourage people to be more active and it has also been shown to reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities.

Within Somerset, 68% of people are satisfied with parks and open spaces in their local area. This is in line with the national average of 69%. At district level West Somerset residents are the most satisfied (76%) and Sedgemoor residents are the least satisfied (59%) with parks and open spaces in their local area.⁷

Climate change

Climate change is a cross-cutting issue, and is likely to impact on people lives both negatively and positively in many different ways now and in the future.

Somerset County Council's 2008 report, "*Responding to Climate Change in Somerset*," identifies flooding as the single biggest threat to Somerset posed by climate change.

Climate change is likely to have both positive and negative effects on the local economy. One of the biggest is likely to be impacts on agriculture. In 2010,⁸ 4.9% of Somerset working age population (11,400 people) were employed in agriculture and fishing, this is higher than the regional (2.1%) and national (1.2%) averages.

However, climate change will impact many different areas of the local economy. It will lead to changes and instabilities in weather; heat waves could mean people are unable to work and flooding events could disrupt local transport link and cause physical damage to businesses.

High transport costs are likely to increase the demand for locally produced food and amenities. There will also be opportunities for new business in low-carbon technologies to develop. This has been seen in Somerset over the

⁷ Place Survey 2008 <http://www.sine.org.uk/publications/place-survey/>

⁸ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/submit.asp?menuopt=201&subcomp=>

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last year with an increase in solar energy projects; the largest commercial project in Somerset during 2010/11 was at Worthy Farm in Pilton (home of the Glastonbury festival) where 1,116 solar panels have been installed.

Energy

Currently one of the biggest energy projects in Somerset is the proposed construction of the new nuclear reactor at Hinkley Point Power Station in West

Somerset. The project is expected to create up to 5,000 new jobs during the construction phase and 900 permanent jobs during the 60-year operation of the plant.

Although it is likely that some of the new workers will be from outside the local area, EDF Energy (which owns Hinkley Point) has committed to help prepare local people for the new jobs by developing a construction skills centre in Sedgemoor and an apprenticeship skills hub in West Somerset.

A report by the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development estimates that the project could input on average £100 million per year into the local economy during construction and £40 million per year during operation. This would come mainly from salaries spent in the area by workers and from local contracts let for the project.⁹

Waste

Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) manages recycling and waste services on behalf of Somerset's district councils and Somerset County Council.

In April 2009 the total cost to SWP for land filling waste in Somerset was just under £60 per tonne. This figure is expected to rise to £100 per tonne by April 2013 and could reach £200 a tonne if Somerset exceeds its Landfill Allowance.

In 2010/11, 249,643 tonnes of household waste was created in Somerset, 50.9% of which was recycled. This is an improvement on 2009/10 when more waste was created (256,063 tonnes) and less recycled (48.7%).

Since April 2011 there has been a reduction in opening times at some recycling centres and sites. A new charge for disposing of soil, hardcore,

⁹ <http://hinkleypoint.edfenergyconsultation.info/key-benefits/>

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tyres and glass bottles has been introduced and an entry charge applied to four community recycling sites. This may discourage people from using the recycling sites and centres, leading to more recyclable waste being sent to landfill and potential increases in fly-tipping across the county.

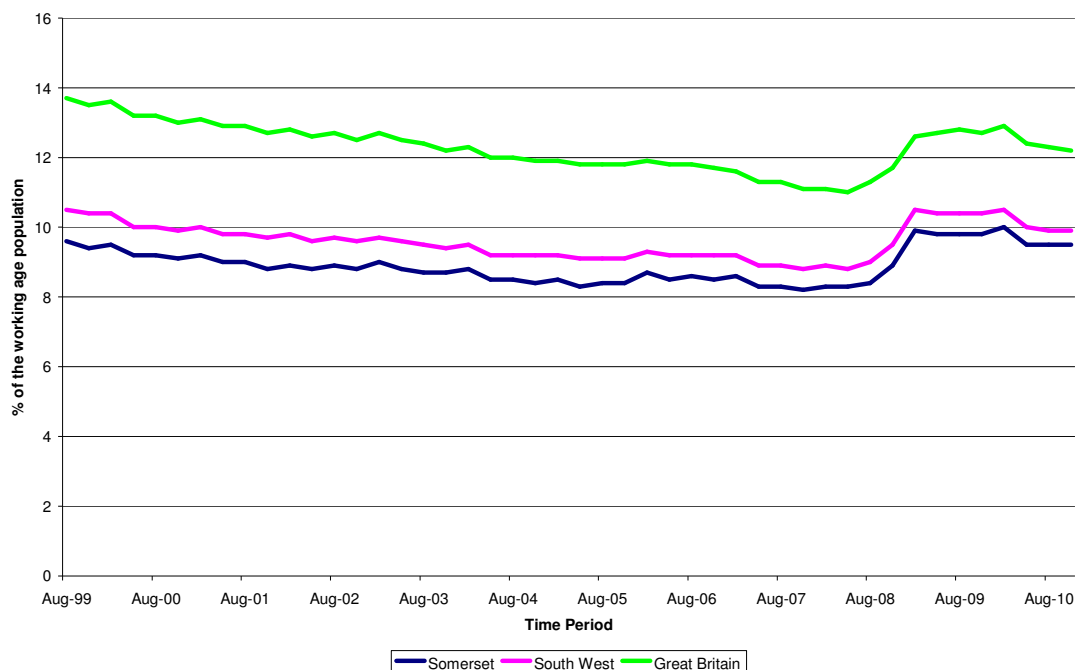
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Economy and employment

In November 2010,¹⁰ 9.5% of Somerset's working age population¹¹ were claiming key 'out of work benefits' compared to 9.9% regionally and 12.2% nationally. This claimant group includes job seekers, disabled people claiming employment support allowance and incapacity benefits, lone parents and others on income related benefits.

Figure 3.1 shows that following a decline between 1999 and 2008 the number of key 'out of work' claimants has risen in Somerset from 27,090 (8.4% of the working age population) in August 2008 to 30,090 (9.5% of the working age population) in November 2010, peaking in February 2010 at 31,860 (10.0% of the working age population).

Figure 3.1: Trend in key 'out of work' benefit claimants between August 1999 and November 2010



Source: Nomis

¹⁰ NOMIS <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1967128607/report.aspx?town=somerset>

¹¹ Working age population males and females aged 16 to 64

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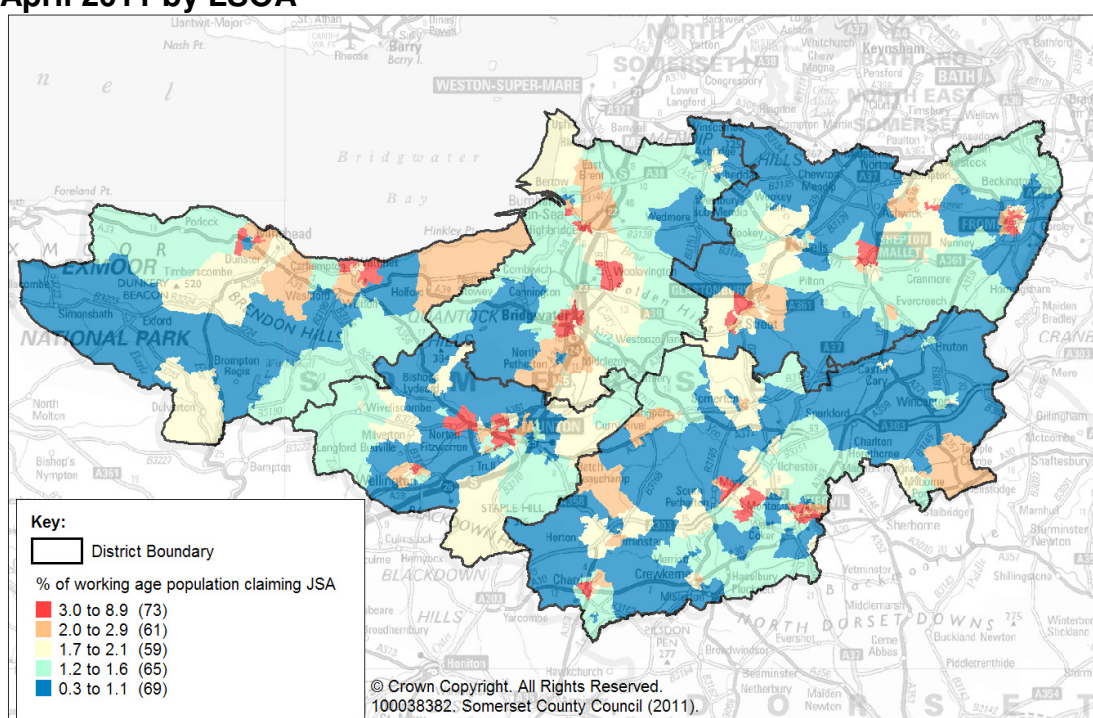
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The majority of the increase since August 2008 (around the start of the economic downturn) can be attributed to an increase in the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA).

In April 2011,¹² 2.2% of Somerset's working age population were claiming JSA, compared to 2.6% regionally and 3.7% nationally. Figure 3.2 shows that the percentage of the working age population claiming JSA varies across the county, from 8.9% in Bridgwater Fairfax to 0.3% in Ruishton and Creech.

Figure 3.2: Percentage of the working age population claiming JSA in April 2011 by LSOA¹³



Source: Nomis

As is the case both regionally and nationally, youth unemployment is of particular concern, with 5.8% of 18 to 24 year olds claiming JSA in Somerset, compared to 2.3% of 25 to 49 year olds and 1.1% of 50 to 64 year olds.

Table 3.1 following shows that Sedgemoor has the highest level of youth unemployment in the county at 7.4% and West Somerset the lowest at 4.5%.

¹² NOMIS <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1967128607/report.aspx?town=somerset>

¹³ An LSOA (Lower level Super Output Area) is a statistical boundary containing approximately 1500 people in 2001

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Table 3.1: Percentage of JSA claimants by age band (April 2011)

	18 to 24 (%)	25 to 49 (%)	50 to 64 (%)
Mendip	6.4	2.3	1.2
Sedgemoor	7.4	3.0	1.4
South Somerset	4.8	1.8	1.0
Taunton Deane	5.6	2.3	1.1
West Somerset	4.5	2.4	1.1
Somerset	5.8	2.3	1.1

Source: Nomis

Further JSA claimant data can be found on the INFORM Somerset website:

www.sine.org.uk/jsnabenefits

In 2010,¹⁴ there were 1,009 16 to 19 year olds in Somerset Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). In Somerset, Taunton Deane has the highest percentage of NEETs 16-19 year olds (4.1%). Mendip has the lowest (3.1%).

At LSOA¹⁵ level, LSOA E01029286 in Taunton Eastgate Ward has the highest percentage of NEETs in the county with 16% of 16 to 19 year olds not in employment, education or training. This is followed by LSOA E01029293 in Taunton Halcon (15%).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) annual population survey indicates that in 2010,¹⁶ about half (51%) of Somerset's working age population held a qualification at NVQ level 3 or higher, slightly less than the regional average of 53% but in line with the national average.

Table 3.2 following shows that 8.7% of Somerset's working age population had no qualifications, in line with the regional average of 8.4% and lower than the national average of 11.3%.

¹⁴ Children and Young People's Directorate, Somerset County Council

¹⁵ An LSOA is a statistical boundary containing on average 1500 people in 2001

¹⁶ NOMIS <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1967128607/report.aspx?town=somerset>

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Table 3.2: Number of people aged 16 to 64 by qualification level¹⁷

	Somerset (number)	Somerset (%)	South West (%)	Great Britain (%)
NVQ4 and above	93,800	29.8	31.5	31.3
NVQ3 and above	160,700	51.1	53.3	51.0
NVQ2 and above	221,900	70.5	71.0	67.3
NVQ1 and above	261,800	83.2	84.5	80.2
Other qualifications	25,600	8.1	7.2	8.5
No qualifications	27,400	8.7	8.4	11.3

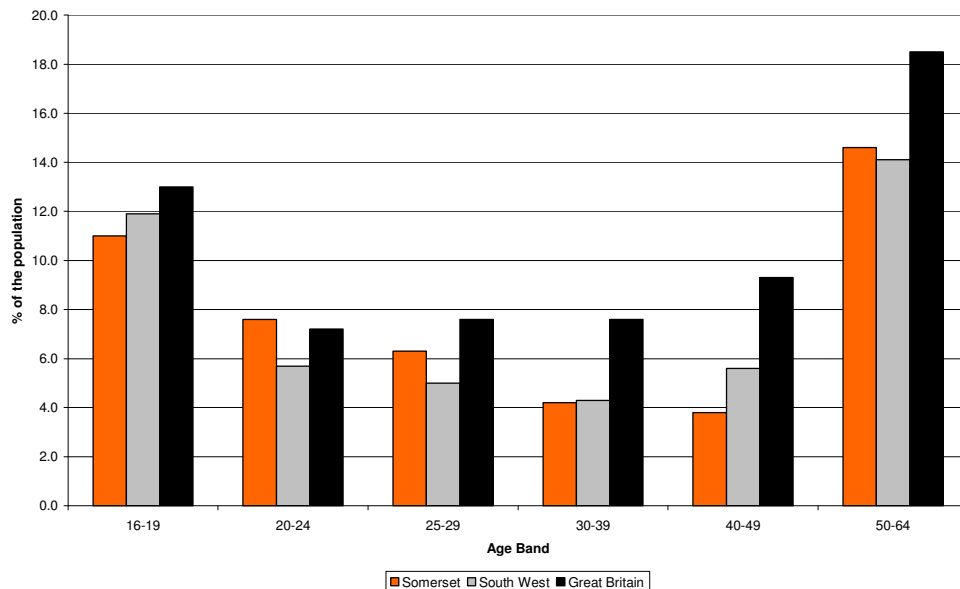
Source: NOMIS

Figure 3.3 following shows that within Somerset the 50 to 64 year old age group is the most likely to hold no qualifications; in Somerset 14.6% of 50 to 64 years hold no qualifications which is below the national average of 18.5%.

Interestingly, Figure 3.3 also shows that although the percentage of 16 to 19 year olds with no qualifications is the second largest group in Somerset, the percentage is lower than the regional and national average. However, in the 20-24 year old age group the percentage with no qualifications is above the regional and national average. This could be a reflection of people with qualifications moving out of Somerset for further education or better employment opportunities (see also Section 2 of the JSNA – Demography).

¹⁷ The trade apprenticeships are split 50/50 between NVQ level 2 and 3. **No qualifications:** No formal qualifications held, **Other qualifications:** includes foreign qualifications and some professional qualifications, **NVQ 1 equivalent:** e.g. fewer than 5 GCSEs at grades A-C, foundation GNVQ, NVQ 1, intermediate 1 national qualification (Scotland) or equivalent, **NVQ 2 equivalent:** e.g. 5 or more GCSEs at grades A-C, intermediate GNVQ, NVQ 2, intermediate 2 national qualification (Scotland) or equivalent, **NVQ 3 equivalent:** e.g. 2 or more A levels, advanced GNVQ, NVQ 3, 2 or more higher or advanced higher national qualifications (Scotland) or equivalent, **NVQ 4 equivalent and above:** e.g. HND, Degree and Higher Degree level qualifications or equivalent

Figure 3.3: Percentage of the population holding no qualification by age, December 2010



Source: NOMIS

The ONS annual business inquiry employee analysis indicates that in December 2010,¹⁸ the majority of Somerset’s residents were employed within the service industry. However, Table 3.3 shows that a smaller percentage of people work in the service sector compared to the regional and national average. This is particularly true within banking, finance and insurance.

Within Somerset a higher percentage of people are working in agriculture and fishing and manufacturing than the regional and national average.

¹⁸ NOMIS <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1967128607/report.aspx?town=somerset>

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Table 3.3: Percentage of 16 to 64 year olds in Somerset by sector of employment (December 2010)

Sector	Somerset (number)	Somerset (%)	South West (%)	Great Britain (%)
Agriculture and fishing	11,400	4.9	1.8	1.0
Energy and water	4,300	1.8	1.5	1.6
Manufacturing	31,800	13.8	11.1	9.9
Construction	15,100	6.5	7.6	7.6
Service	166,800	72.3	77.4	79.3
<i>Distribution, hotels and restaurants</i>	<i>51,100</i>	<i>22.2</i>	<i>18.8</i>	<i>18.5</i>
<i>Transport and communications</i>	<i>12,500</i>	<i>5.4</i>	<i>7.3</i>	<i>8.5</i>
<i>Banking, finance and insurance</i>	<i>25,000</i>	<i>10.8</i>	<i>14.4</i>	<i>16.1</i>
<i>Public admin. education and health</i>	<i>65,100</i>	<i>28.2</i>	<i>31.2</i>	<i>30.7</i>
<i>Other services</i>	<i>13,200</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>5.5</i>

Source: Nomis

In March 2010,¹⁹ there were 25,925 VAT-registered employers in Somerset. Somerset has a higher percentage of businesses employing 0 to 4 employees than observed regionally or nationally. This is particularly evident in West Somerset where 76.2% of businesses are of this size.

Half of all businesses in Somerset have been in existence for 10 or more years. This is greater than the regional (47%) and national (42%) averages. We therefore have a larger number of micro and small businesses with less churn than would be usual.

In 2009,²⁰ it is estimated that the mean gross household income in the county was £32,961, which is lower than the national²¹ average of £35,299.

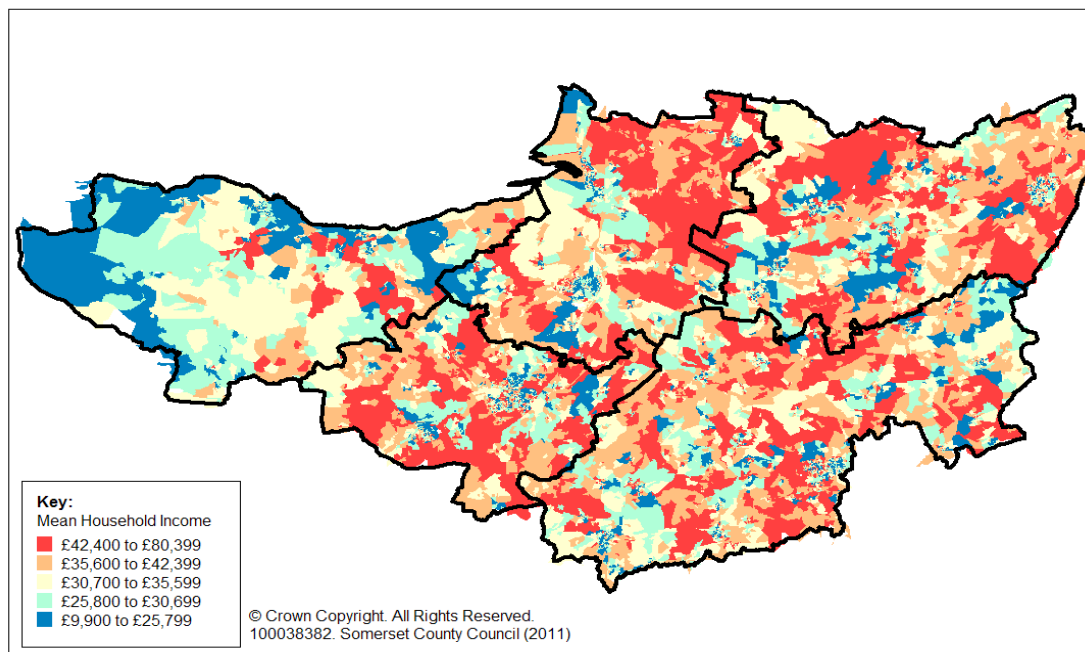
At ward level, Nedge Ward in Mendip has the highest mean gross household income at £49,574, and Dunster Ward in West Somerset has the lowest at £21,445.

¹⁹ Office for National Statistics <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=933>

²⁰ Caci 2009

²¹ Great Britain

Figure 3.4: Mean Gross Household Income by postcode in 2009.



Source: Caci 2009

Somerset's 2011 Economic Assessment provides a detailed summary of business, employment, income and skills factors affecting Somerset. The document can be accessed through Somerset County Council's website: www.somerset.gov.uk

3.3 DEPRIVATION IN SOMERSET

As part of the JSNA process, a local index of deprivation has been developed specifically for Somerset. The local index is called the 'priority area score' and complements the national Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) from the national Indices of Deprivation (ID) 2010. However, the indices follow different methodologies and contain different variables.

The Priority Area Report and information on the differences between the two indices can be found on the SIne website: <http://www.sine.org.uk/jsna/>

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Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)²² is used to measure deprivation at local levels. The IMD ranks each LSOA²³ in England using 38 indicators split into seven domains:

- income
- employment
- health deprivation and disability
- education, skills and training
- barriers to housing and services
- crime
- living environment.

There are 327 LSOAs within Somerset, 14 of which fall within the 20% most deprived nationally. These 14 LSOAs contain approximately 21,200 people and can be found in Taunton, Bridgwater, Highbridge, Williton, Shepton Mallet and Yeovil.

Comparing the IMD 2010 with the 2007 version shows that in some of the 'most' deprived areas of Somerset deprivation has increased:

- five of the 14 most deprived LSOAs also fall into the 10% most deprived nationally, three more than in 2007²⁴. Together, these five LSOAs represent around 7,700 people
- two of the 14 most deprived LSOAs also fall within the 5% most deprived nationally; there were no LSOAs in this category in 2007. These LSOAs are in Bridgwater Sydenham (1,600 people) and in Taunton Halcon (1,700 people)

Barriers to housing and services are the most prevalent form of deprivation within Somerset. Eighty-seven out of 327 LSOAs in Somerset fall into the 20% most deprived nationally, affecting 147,900 people (see Table 3.4).

Looking at this domain in more detail it is clear that people living in these areas are more likely to suffer from geographic barriers (distance to services)

²² <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/indices2010>

²³ An LSOA (Lower level Super Output Area) is a statistical boundary comprising roughly 1500 people.

²⁴ Highbridge (South West), Taunton Halcon (West), Taunton Lyngford (North)

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due to the rurality of the county, rather than wider barriers such as household overcrowding, homelessness and access to affordable homes.

Table 3.4: Number of LSOAs in Somerset that fall into the 20% most deprived nationally, by domain (ID 2010)

Domain	Number of LSOAs	Population ²⁵
Income	16	27,200
Employment	29	49,300
Health, Deprivation and Disability	16	27,200
Education, Skills and Training	42	71,400
Barriers to Housing and Services	87	147,900
Crime	22	37,400
Living Environment	26	44,200

In the other six domains, the most significant pockets of deprivation relate to Education, Skills & Training, with 71,400 people living in one of the 20% most deprived LSOAs nationally – Table 3.4.

For more details, please go to <http://www.sine.org.uk/publications/deprivation>

Child Wellbeing Index 2009

The Child Wellbeing Index (CWI),²⁶ measures the wellbeing of children aged 0 to 16 (or 18 if in full-time education) at local levels. Similarly to the Index of Multiple Deprivation, each LSOA in England is ranked against a number of indicators split into seven domains:

- material well-being
- health
- education
- crime
- housing
- environment
- children in need

²⁵ Assuming each LSOA contains 1,700 people

²⁶ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/childwellbeing2009>

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Fourteen LSOAs in Somerset rank amongst the 20% worst in England for child wellbeing, accounting for approximately 4,500 children.²⁷ These areas are located within Bridgwater, Taunton, Yeovil and Highbridge.

Two LSOAs in particular perform particularly poorly for child wellbeing in Somerset:

- E01029106 (Bridgwater Sydenham Central), which ranks amongst the lowest 5% in England, and
- E01029297 (Taunton Lyngford Central), which ranks amongst the lowest 10%.

At district level, none of the districts fall within the 20% worst nationally overall. However, within the seven domains, West Somerset is ranked in the worst 20% nationally for housing (see Table 3.5). The indicators that make up this domain are:

- access to housing:
 - overcrowding
 - shared accommodation
 - homelessness
- quality of housing
 - lack of central heating

Mendip has the best level of child wellbeing in the county, appearing in the best 40% nationally overall. At the domain level, it appears in the top 20% nationally for health and disability. At domain level West Somerset appears in the best 20% nationally for crime.

²⁷ Assuming each LSOA contains 350 people age 0 to 18

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Table 3.5: Child Wellbeing Index 2009 ranking for Somerset, by district and domain²⁸

	Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Taunton Deane	West Somerset
Material Wellbeing	131	175	112	142	235
Health and Disability	32	163	151	253	147
Education	121	218	188	162	192
Crime	155	142	149	101	42
Housing	201	254	210	179	316
Environment	94	185	127	226	227
Children in Need	121	179	125	142	240
Overall	95	182	146	158	220

3.4 COMMUNITY COHESION

Results from the 2008 Place Survey show that 77% of Somerset's residents believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area. This is slightly lower than the national average of 79%.

Looking at responses in more detail shows that there are significant differences evident by age. Among those aged 65+, 86% perceive that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, as do 80% of those aged 55-64. However, this figure falls to 67% in the 25 to 34 age group.

Owner occupiers (78%) are significantly more likely to agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together than those in social housing (73%).

There are also variations by ethnic groups, with 78% of non-BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) respondents agreeing that people from different backgrounds get on well together, compared to 66% of BME respondents.

Belonging

Results from the 2008 Place Survey show that 63% of Somerset's residents feel very strongly or fairly strongly that they belong to their immediate neighbourhood. This is greater than the national average of 59%.

²⁸ Rank out of 354 local authorities (1 is the best)

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The level of belonging varied within Somerset across different communities. Residents aged 65 and over were the most likely to feel they belonged to their local area very or fairly strongly (76%). In comparison, only 41% of 18-24 year olds felt strongly that they belonged to their local area.

Residents in private rented accommodation were significantly less likely to feel that they belonged (46%) compared with all other tenure types (owner occupiers 65%, social housing 61%).

Residents from BME groups were less likely to feel they belonged to their neighbourhood (51%), compared to residents from non-BME groups (64%).

The results of the 2008 Place Survey can be found on the SINE website:
<http://www.sine.org.uk/publications/place-survey/>

Somerset Community Cohesion Strategy

The Somerset Community Cohesion Strategy 2004-2014 outlines the challenges to community cohesion in Somerset, and the plans for how these will be overcome between 2004 and 2014.

The document can be downloaded from the Somerset County Council website.

[http://www1.somerset.gov.uk/static/equalities_documents/Community Cohesion Strategy for Web.pdf](http://www1.somerset.gov.uk/static/equalities_documents/Community_Cohesion_Strategy_for_Web.pdf)

3.5 COMMUNITY SAFETY

The 2008 Place Survey found that 92% of people in Somerset felt very safe or safe outside in their local area during the day. This figure fell to 62% after dark. Women, under 25s, people with a limiting disability and those in social housing were the most likely to feel unsafe.²⁹

The 2010 Community Safety Strategic Assessment identified four key community safety priorities for Somerset in 2011:

²⁹ 2008 Place Survey <http://www.sine.org.uk/publications/place-survey/>

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- reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB), crime and re-offending
- road safety
- protection of vulnerable groups
- substance misuse

Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)

ASB affects more people in Somerset than any other community safety issue. The high impact on quality of life and the necessity to safeguard vulnerable victims means that ASB is a local and national priority.

In 2010/11:

- there were over 25,000 reports of ASB in Somerset in 2010/11 which is lower than previous years and levels are showing a downward trend (since 2007/8)
- the majority (68%) of incidents are in relation to rowdy/nuisance behaviour
- hotspots tend to be in town centres, with 50% of incidents occurring on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings between 6pm and midnight, suggesting strong links to the night-time economy
- ASB levels are affected by seasonal trends with higher levels during the summer months

Further information on ASB in Somerset can be found on the Avon and Somerset Constabulary website:

http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/community_safety/anti-social-behaviour/

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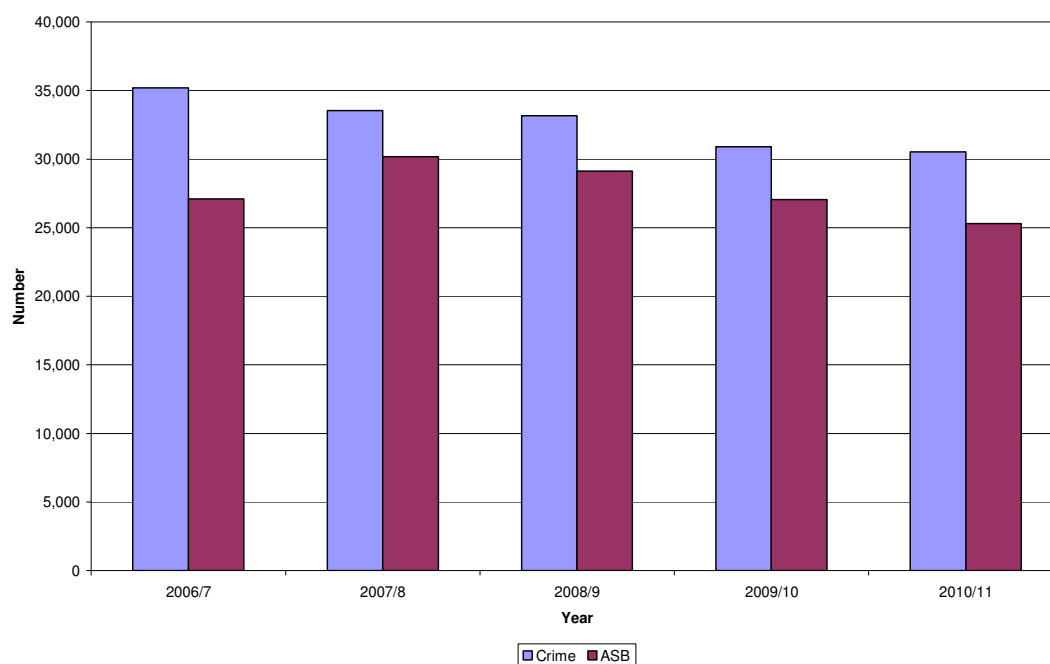
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Crime in Somerset

Levels of overall crime have been falling year-on-year in Somerset, from 35,000 in 2006/7 to 30,500 in 2010/11. However, Figure 3.5 following shows that the overall decline in crime has slowed down over the last year. This is due to the economic downturn resulting in more opportunistic crime such as:

- shoplifting
- theft from a motor vehicle
- theft of metal
- shed/garage breaks
- bilking³⁰

Figure 3.5: Trend in numbers of reported crime and ASB in Somerset between 2006/7 and 2010/11.



Re-offending

The Offender Assessment System (OASys) is used by the probation service to assess an offender's likelihood of reconviction. The assessment looks at the criminogenic factors associated with offending (e.g. employment status, drug/alcohol use) and the risk of harm the offender presents to the community.

³⁰ Making off without payment

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Data from Avon and Somerset Probation Trust shows that between April 2009 and March 2010, 1,046 offenders³¹ in Somerset completed an OASys assessment.

Table 3.6 following shows that offenders in Somerset have lower levels of criminogenic need than the national average, with the exception of alcohol misuse and relationships.

Table 3.6: Criminogenic needs of offenders in Somerset in comparison to the regional and national average

Criminogenic needs	Somerset	SW Region	England and Wales
Accommodation	35%	40%	37%
Education, Training and Employability	53%	61%	61%
Relationships	68%	69%	60%
Lifestyles and Associates	52%	57%	59%
Drug Misuse	31%	38%	37%
Alcohol Misuse	41%	36%	32%
Thinking and Behaviour	45%	57%	56%
Attitudes	42%	56%	52%

In 2008/9 there were 603 first time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10 to 17 years old in Somerset, a rate of 1,130 per 100,000. The provisional figure for 2009/10 is 474 first time entrants (846 per 100,000). This represents a decrease of 4% on the previous year.

Protection of vulnerable groups

It is important to protect vulnerable people in society to stop them from becoming victims of crime or from becoming involved in crime themselves.

The reoffending section above has looked at the reasons that drives offenders in Somerset to re-offend, for example, substance misuse or unemployment.

The following section looks at vulnerable people, levels of hate crime, sexual offences and domestic violence in Somerset. This information comes from

³¹ The assessments are normally carried out before or during sentencing, however, not all offenders are required to complete the assessments.

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sanitised information contained within the restricted Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Internal Strategic Assessment (F&G Somerset³²), June 2011.

Hate crime: in 2010/11 the majority of hate crimes in Somerset reported to Avon and Somerset Constabulary were racially motivated (approximately 80% in Somerset East and approximately 85% in Somerset West). However, hate crimes due to age, gender, disability, sexual orientation and religion were also reported, albeit at lower levels.

The majority (73%) of reported hate crime relates to verbal insults and harassment. Twenty-five percent of hate crimes relate to assault or Actual Bodily Harm (ABH) and 2% relate to Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH).

In Somerset hate crime represents nearly 4% of all Violence Against the Person, 11% are directly related to the night-time economy³³ (NTE), and the remainder mainly occur in the evening (15:00 hours to 22:00 hours) with higher levels towards the end of week.

Offences tend to concentrate in town centres, specifically in Yeovil,³⁴ Glastonbury and Bridgwater. However, there are also hotspots in more rural locations such as Chard, South Petherton, Wincanton and Shepton Mallet.

There are particular issues in Bridgwater town centre (police beat GB006) and Sydenham estate (Police Beat GB005). With the forthcoming Hinkley Point Site C build from this year onwards, hate crime in this area could increase due to the future rise in migrant workers³⁵ to the Bridgwater area with specific accommodation blocks planned in or close to the Sydenham area.³⁶

Domestic abuse: recorded incidents of domestic related crimes are reducing in Somerset as is the occurrence of domestic sexual offences (6% in 2010/11 compared to 12% in 2009/10).

³² F is the police district which includes Mendip and South Somerset District Council

G is the police district which includes Sedgemoor, West Somerset and Taunton Deane

³³ Offences occurring on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights between 23:00hrs and 04:00hrs.

³⁴ There seem to be some community tension with the polish community in Yeovil (see Op. Falcon -May 2011) and should be monitored at a tactical level.

³⁵ Non-home based workers predicted to rise from 2011 to peak in 2016. No information with regards to the origin of the workers has been provided by EDF.

³⁶ A&SC Somerset, *Hinkley Point C Site: Baseline Assessment and Crime trends predictions*, Problem Profile, Feb 2011.

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There are also fewer repeat victims in Somerset than five years ago (50% in 2005³⁷ compared to 33% in 2010/11) and usually victims experience lower levels of violence. However, over the last year, Somerset has seen a slight increase in repeat victimisation especially amongst male victims (although it is more pronounced in East Somerset, i.e. Mendip and South Somerset).

Further information on domestic abuse in Somerset can be found on the Somerset Survivors website:

<http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk/>

Sexual offences: levels of sexual offences in Somerset have continued to decrease since 2004³⁸ and remain in low numbers. Stranger attacks remain rare as do repeat offenders (other than in cases of child abuse – see below).

In Somerset, a third of sexual offences were committed against children (mostly girls aged 14-15 years old), with high representation of repeat victims in vulnerable teenagers such as those in care homes. Offenders are mostly males (98%).

Historical cases, i.e. those over a year old, made up 30% of overall reported sexual offences in 2010/11. The majority (74%) of historic reports relate to child abuse cases. The proportion of historic cases has steadily increased in the last few years from 20% in 2007/08, which is likely to be a reflection of increasing confidence in the police and criminal justice system.

Substance misuse: information from Avon and Somerset Constabulary shows that crimes occurring within the Night Time Economy (NTE) timeframe³⁹ represent about 20% of overall crimes in Somerset with about half of these offences relating to violence and disorder⁴⁰ linked to high alcohol consumption.

Crimes linked to the NTE tend to occur in Somerset's largest urban areas (Taunton, Bridgwater, Yeovil, Frome and Chard) and tend to be concentrated in the vicinity of licensed premises and fast food outlets, as well as on the arterial routes from the town centres towards the main residential areas.

³⁷ O. Burtchaell, *Understanding Violence in Somerset*, Presentation, Somerset Crime and Disorder partnership, 2005.

³⁸ SFN (2011): 2004 calendar year was a peak in levels of sexual offences with 265 offences compared to 145 offences in 2010 calendar year.

³⁹ NTE = Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights between 23:00hrs and 04:00hrs.

⁴⁰ 26% = criminal damage; 25% = VAP (SFN 2010/11) ; this does not take into account ASB incidents occurring within that timeframe.

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NTE-related criminal damage levels have been consistently reducing since 2007 and are currently at record low levels. However, NTE related Violence Against the Person (VAP), representing 13.6%⁴¹ of overall VAP in Somerset, shows increasing levels in Mendip and South Somerset.

Although levels of NTE related VAP are rising in Mendip and South Somerset, levels of serious VAP offences are higher in Somerset West.⁴²

3.6 THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment offers many benefits to health and wellbeing. It can reduce stress and improve mental health, encourage people to be more active and it has also been shown to reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities.

Within Somerset, 68% of people are satisfied with parks and open spaces in their local area. This is in line with the national average of 69%. At district level, West Somerset residents are the most satisfied (76%) and Sedgemoor residents are the least (59%) satisfied with parks and open spaces in their local area.⁴³

Further information on benefits the natural environment has on health and wellbeing can be found on the Natural England website.

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/health/ournaturalhealthservice/default.aspx>

Biodiversity

The Somerset landscape contains a great variety of habitats which not only make the county an attractive place to live and visit but also make it one of the most biologically diverse and valuable areas for conservation in the UK.

The county is home to seven species threatened on a global scale, including the UK's strongest site for the large blue butterfly, which was the result of an innovative re-introduction project. It also hosts over 200 species on the UK

⁴¹ Accurate proportion derived from the VAP Daily monitoring spreadsheet (since 01/12/2011) after reading MOs, and discounting non- NTE related crimes even if in the same timeframe.

⁴² Taunton Deane, Sedgemoor and West Somerset

⁴³ Place Survey 2008 <http://www.sine.org.uk/publications/place-survey/>

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Biodiversity Action Plan list of priority species, including the otter, water vole and hairy click beetle.⁴⁴

Within Somerset there are many European, national and locally designated wildlife sites, including:

- eight Special Areas of Conservation
- two Ramsar Convention/Special Protection Areas
- 12 national nature reserves
- 124 Sites of Special Scientific Interest,
- 2,080 local wildlife sites

In Somerset the threats to biodiversity include unavoidable climate change, habitat loss and fragmentation, intensification of farming systems (increasingly driven by rising global food demand), changes in agricultural support grants, changes in land ownership patterns, unsympathetic development, issues of water quantity and quality and aerial nitrogen pollution.

Further information on biodiversity in Somerset can be found on the Somerset Environmental Records Centre's (SERC) website: www.somerc.com.

Energy

In 2010/11, there were 295 renewable electricity projects set up in Somerset; 97% (287) of these were solar projects, three were hydro and five were wind.

95% of new projects were domestic, for example, solar panels on residential properties. The largest commercial project in Somerset during 2010/11 was at Worthy Farm in Pilton (home of the Glastonbury festival) where 1,116 solar panels have been installed.

This picture is dramatically different to that of 2009/10 when the biggest contributor to renewable energy in Somerset was from Landfill Gas. The large increase in solar energy is a direct result of the government Feed-in Tariff scheme which started in April 2010 and guarantees a 25 year fixed price for solar generated electricity.

Further information on renewable energy projects in Somerset can be found on the Regen SW's website: <http://www.regensw.co.uk/projects/support-for-decision-makers/annual-survey>

⁴⁴ 2008-2018 'Wild Somerset' Somerset Biodiversity Strategy produced by the Somerset Biodiversity Partnership http://www.somerset.gov.uk/iri/go/km/docs/CouncilDocuments/SCC/Documents/Environment/Countryside%20and%20Coast/Somerset_biodiversity_strategy_final%20version.pdf

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Energy and the economy

Currently one of the biggest energy projects in Somerset is the proposed construction of the new nuclear reactor at Hinkley Point Power Station in West Somerset. The project is expected to create up to 5,000 new jobs during the

construction phase and 900 permanent jobs during the 60-year operation of the plant.

Although it is likely that some of the new workers will be from outside the local area, EDF Energy (which owns Hinkley Point) has committed to help prepare local people for the new jobs by developing a construction skills centre in Sedgemoor and an apprenticeship skills hub in West Somerset.

A report by the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development estimates that the project could input on average £100 million per year into the local economy during construction and £40 million per year during operation. This would come mainly from salaries spent in the area by workers and from local contracts let for the project.⁴⁵

Fuel poverty

A household is said to be in fuel poverty if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime (usually 21°C for the main living area, and 18°C for other occupied rooms).

In 2008 (the latest information available at sub-regional level), 17% of households in Somerset were in fuel poverty. This figure varies hugely across the county from 15% in Taunton Deane to 28% in West Somerset.

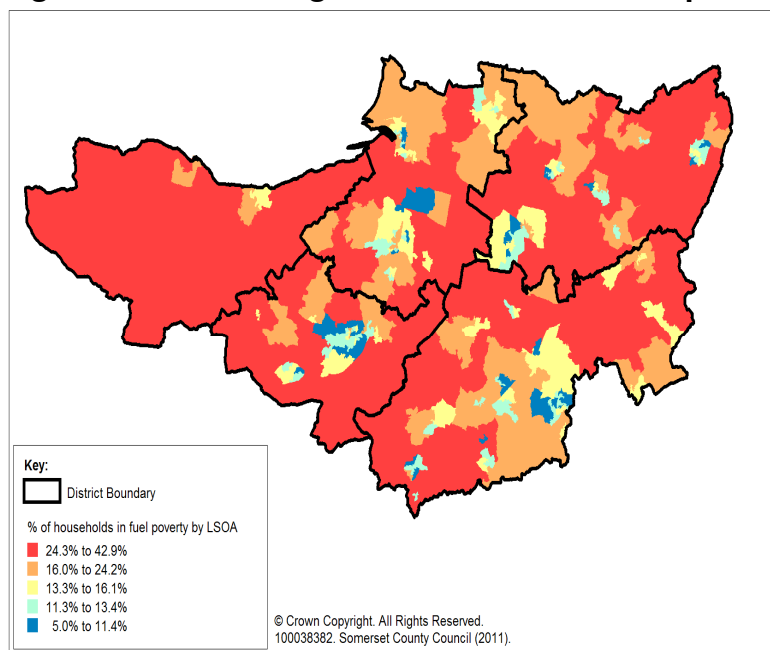
Figure 3.6 below shows that within Somerset higher levels of fuel poverty are seen outside of the main urban areas. People in these areas (with the exception of Exmoor) are generally not on lower incomes than people living in urban areas and therefore the costs to heat their homes must be greater, i.e. less fuel efficient.

Data on fuel poverty is available on the INFORM Somerset website, at District and LSOA level:

<http://inform.sine.org.uk/dataviews/view?viewId=40>

⁴⁵ <http://hinkleypoint.edfenergyconsultation.info/key-benefits/>

Figure 3.6: Percentage of households in fuel poverty during 2008.



Further information on fuel poverty can be found on the Department of Energy and Climate Change's website:

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/fuelpov_stats/fuelpov_stats.aspx

Waste

Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) manages recycling and waste services on behalf of Somerset's district councils and Somerset County Council.

In April 2009, the total cost to SWP for land filling waste in Somerset was just under £60 per tonne. This figure is expected to rise to £100 per tonne by April 2013 and could reach £200 a tonne if Somerset exceeds its Landfill Allowance.

In 2010/11, 249,643 tonnes of household waste was created in Somerset, 50.9% of which was recycled. This is an improvement on 2009/10 when more waste was created (256,063 tonnes) and less recycled (48.7%).

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There are 18 recycling centres and community recycling sites in Somerset:

- 75.6% of the waste entering these centres in 2010/11 was recycled compared to 72.2% during 2009/10
- the highest performing centre in 2010/11 was Williton, which on average recycled 82.9%

Since April 2011 there has been a reduction in opening times at some recycling centres and sites. A new charge has been introduced for disposing of soil, hardcore, tyres and glass bottles and an entry charge applied to four community recycling sites. This may discourage people from using the recycling sites and centres, leading to more recyclable waste being sent to landfill and potential increases in fly-tipping across the county.

Further information on the Somerset Waste Partnership can be found on their website: <http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk>

3.7 CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a cross-cutting issue and is likely to impact on people's lives both negatively and positively in many different ways now and in the future.

Flooding

Somerset County Council's 2008 report, "*Responding to Climate Change in Somerset*," identifies flooding as the single biggest threat to Somerset posed by climate change.

Climate change will increase the risk of flooding through a numbers of factors:

- sea level rise
- increase in intensity, severity and frequency of coastal storms;
- increase in winter precipitation
- increase in the frequency of severe rainfall events
- impact on river catchments and urban surface water systems

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Climate change will mean both the frequency and intensity of all types of flooding will increase in Somerset. For example the Environment Agency has predicted that climate change will increase the probability of coastal flooding in Somerset from 0.5% in 2002 to 6% by 2060, with inundation expected once in every 17 years.⁴⁶

Flooding events place a huge demand on public services, not only on emergency services during the flood but also before and afterwards, for example, providing temporary housing to people. Flooding can have an impact on the local economy through property damage and disruption to transport networks. It can disrupt water and sewage supplies, increasing the risk of water-borne diseases and for those directly affected, it can cause increased stress, affecting mental health and wellbeing.

Economy

Climate change is likely to have both positive and negative effects on the local economy. In 2010,⁴⁷ 4.9% of Somerset's working age population (11,400 people) were employed in agriculture and fishing. This is higher than the regional (2.1%) and national (1.2%) averages.

Climate change will bring some benefits to agriculture:

- longer growing seasons and reduced frost damage in the winter
- new geographical ranges for crops
- the opportunity to introduce new crops/livestock species

However, climate change is likely to pose more threats than opportunities for agriculture. These include:

- increased pressure on water availability
- increased risk of pests and diseases
- increased incidence of extreme weather events like flooding and drought

Further information on Agriculture and Climate Change can be found on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) website:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/foodfarm/enviro/climate/>

⁴⁶ Responding to Climate Change in Somerset 2008

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/irj/go/km/docs/CouncilDocuments/SCC/Documents/Environment/Sustainable%20Development/20080220RespondingToClimateChangeInSomerset.pdf>

⁴⁷ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/submit.asp?menuopt=201&subcomp=>

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Climate change will also have an impact of other sectors of the local economy. As discussed earlier in this section, it will lead to changes and instabilities in weather. Heat waves could mean people are unable to work and flooding events could disrupt local transport links and cause physical damage to businesses.

However, climate change is also likely to have a positive influence on a local economy. High transport costs are likely to increase the demand for locally produced food and amenities. There will also be opportunities for new business in low-carbon technologies to develop.

3.8 TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

Outside of Somerset's main towns, the county is characterised by a dispersed pattern of settlement and a relatively low population density. Transport and the relative ease of movement within the region are therefore major issues which influence the social, environmental and economic life of the county.

Personal travel

In 2010 there were 297,800 cars and motor cycles registered with the DVLA in Somerset. This would equate to 0.7 cars/motor cycles per person in Somerset.⁴⁸ However, vehicle ownership is not distributed evenly throughout Somerset's population.

Census data shows that in 2001-

- 18% of households in Somerset did not have access to a car or van, this is lower than the regional and national average
- 46% of households have access to one car or van
- 25% of households have access to four or more cars or van

⁴⁸ There are approximately 421,500 people in Somerset aged 17 or older (NHS 2010 population estimates).

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In 2009/10 there were 9,111,000 passenger journeys by public buses within Somerset:

- 53% of residents in Somerset are satisfied with local buses, which is below the locally set target of 58%⁴⁹
- 80% of buses are on time at intermediate turning points, which is again below the locally set target of 87%

Further information on travel and transport in Somerset can be found within Somerset County Council's Future Transport Plan:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/irj/public/services/directory/service?rid=/guid/10a792ea-dddd-2d10-0c92-f8a877a39b80>

School travel

Table 3.7 shows that in January 2010, half of school pupils in Somerset walked to school, 25% travelled in a car/van and 18% car shared or travelled on a dedicated school bus.⁵⁰

Table 3.7: Children's main mode of transport to and from school in 2010

Mode of transport	Number	%
Walk (including roller skates, scooter and skateboard)	33,470	50
Car/Van	16,968	25
Dedicated school bus	9,095	14
Car Share (with a child/children from a different household)	2,939	4
Cycle	1,969	3
Boarder – not applicable	388	1
Bus (type not known)	395	1
Not Recorded	557	1
Public service bus	829	1
Taxi	454	1
Other	67	0
Train	3	0
Total	67,134	100

Source: 2010 School Census

⁴⁹ BVPI107, LTP2: Year 4 Annual Progress Report

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/irj/public/services/directory/service?rid=/guid/b0e4abfb-6739-2c10-229e-ad4dfff902f0>

⁵⁰ 2010 School Census http://www.six.somerset.gov.uk/sixv3/content_view.asp?did=19119

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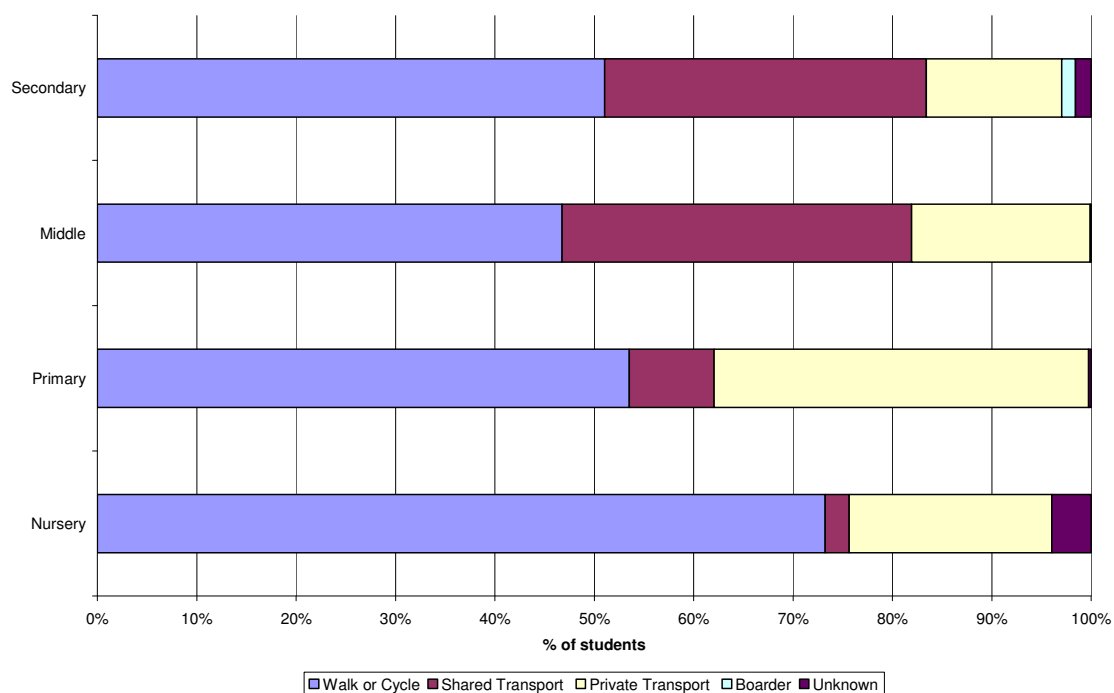
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Within Somerset, the percentage of children travelling to school by each mode of transport varies between schools. For example, 95% of primary school children walk to Taunton Halcon Community Primary School, whereas by comparison, 4% of children walk to Upton Noble CE Primary School.

The mode of transport also varies with age. Figure 3.7 following shows that nursery aged children are the most likely to walk to school compared to the other age groups. Middle and secondary school aged children are more likely to travel by private transport (car/van (not car share) or taxi) compared to the younger age groups.

Figure 3.7: Percentage of student travelling to school by main mode of transport, 2010.



Source: 2010 School Census

Accessibility

The Department for Transport 2010 accessibility statistics⁵¹ provide a local-level measure of the availability of transport to key services including food stores, education, health care, town centres and employment centres.

On average the minimum travel time to the nearest key service in Somerset is 16 minutes by Public Transport/Walking, 11 minutes by walking and six minutes by car.

⁵¹ <http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accessibility/index.html>

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Access to employment centres

Within Somerset, 83% of residents can reach a medium sized employment centre⁵² (500 jobs) within a reasonable travel time by car. However, this figure drops to 58% if residents have to walk or travel by public transport.

Larger employment centres (5,000 jobs) are less accessible with only 45% of residents being able to access one by car within a reasonable travel time. This figure drops to 15% if residents have to use public transport or walk.

The accessibility of employment centres varies across the county; for example only 10% of residents in West Somerset are able to travel to a large employment centre in a reasonable travel time by public transport, compared to 25% of residents in Taunton Deane.

Access to hospitals

Sixty-six per cent of residents in Somerset can access a hospital within a reasonable travel time by car. This figure drops to 36% if residents have to use public transport or walk.

It would be expected that people living in the most rural areas of Somerset would find it the most difficult to travel to hospital by public transport. However, this does not seem to be the case. In Taunton Deane, only 28% of residents are able to travel to hospital in a reasonable time by public transport. In comparison, 41% of residents living in towns West Somerset are able to travel to hospital by public transport in a reasonable time. This could be explained by West Somerset residents having better demand transport links, or because a greater proportion live in the town and large villages along the coast.

⁵² Employment centre refers to an LSOA with a defined number of jobs

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Somerset LINK 2011 Patient Transport Survey

The Somerset LINK carried out an evaluation of patients' experiences of using patient transport in Somerset. Various data sources were

analysed as well as direct feedback from patients between December and May 2011.

The main findings of the evaluation were:

- the most common way patients surveyed travelled to hospital was via Transporting Somerset (which includes demand responsive transport)
- 83% of respondents found it easy to get in touch with the right person to book their transport
- when asked what would help to improve patient transport in Somerset, the most commonly cited suggestion was better information. This was followed by extended operating hours and lower costs
- 70% of respondents felt that where they lived affected their travel into hospital or to health appointments. The main reason given was rural isolation and the distance to hospital

The evaluation can be accessed through the Somerset LINK website:

<http://www.makesachange.org.uk/cms/site/news/somerset/patient-transport-report.aspx>

Traffic flow and road condition

In May 2011, the average travel time on Somerset's 'A' roads was 1.9 minutes per mile (31.6 miles per hour) during rush hour.⁵³ This is faster than the regional (2.06 minutes per mile) and national (2.35 minutes per mile) averages, suggesting Somerset's 'A' roads are less congested relative to the regional and national average.

⁵³ Rush hour defined as 7am to 10am Monday to Fridays. Weekdays falling within school holiday periods are excluded

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>>Link to DfT <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/congestion-on-local-authority-managed-a-roads-april-to-june-2011>

The condition of Somerset's roads is measured by the Highway Condition Index. Between 2006/7 and 2009/10, the number of Somerset's 'A' roads classified in good condition has fallen but is still above the national average. However the number of 'all classified roads' classified as in 'good' condition has fallen below the national average since 2006/7.

For more details, please go to: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-conditions-statistics-2010>

Road transport accidents and road safety

The *Somerset Road Safety Casualty Review 2008-2010* indicates that in 2010 there were 1,272 injury collisions on Somerset roads, resulting in 1,792 casualties. Of these, 32 were fatal, 206 serious and 1,554 were slight injuries. From 2008 to 2009 the number of KSI (killed or seriously injured) casualties rose by 11% but then fell by 22% from 2009 to 2010. Since the inception of the Somerset Road Safety Partnership in 2006, the overall number of people killed or seriously injured on roads in Somerset has decreased by 21%.

Between 2008 and 2010 there was a decrease in the number of KSI casualties from cars/taxis, goods vehicles and powered 2-wheelers (e.g., motorcycles) but a slight increase in the number of pedal cycle casualties. The number of pedestrian KSI casualties was broadly static over this period. Most age groups saw a decline in KSI casualties between 2008 and 2010, the exceptions being in the younger (0-15 years) and older (60+) groups. The largest year-on-year fall in KSI casualties came amongst the 16-24 age group.

However, in terms of total casualties, including those categorised as 'slight', there has been a steady downward trend in the past few years amongst all age groups apart from the 60+ group. The 'Route Sixty+' initiative has since been introduced to educate older drivers who wish to drive safely and for longer.

The *Somerset Road Safety Casualty Review 2008-2010* can be downloaded from: <http://roadsafetysomerset.org.uk/downloads.html>