

A Summary Picture of Wider Determinants of Health and Wellbeing in Birmingham

This document provides a summary of the key facts and figures on wider determinants of health and wellbeing in Birmingham. For detailed information and a wider range of data (including sources), please see the [Wider Determinants Dashboard](#).

Wider determinants are a diverse range of social, economic, and environmental factors which impact on people's health. They're also known as social determinants. These factors are influenced by the local, national and international distribution of power and resources, which shape the conditions of daily life. They determine the extent to which different individuals have the physical, social, and personal resources to identify and achieve goals, meet their needs and deal with changes to their circumstances.

Wider determinants are the drivers of health and are an important aspect of public health in terms of informing preventative action and reducing inequality. These conditions have an impact on life expectancy, as is evident in the inequality in life expectancy geographically across our city.

Population

Population Overview

The population of Birmingham is estimated to be 1,166,049. There has been an increase of around 7% (73,000) over a decade, which is similar to population growth in England. Birmingham is a predominantly young city, with just over half (51%) of the population aged under 35 years. The 2021 Census revealed that Birmingham is one of the first 'super-diverse' cities in the UK, where citizens from ethnic minorities make up more than half the population (around 51%). Across all age groups, most Birmingham residents are born in the UK.

Young people (aged 16-24 years) make up around 15% of Birmingham's population and one quarter (25%) are children (aged 0-17 years). Birmingham's younger population is highly diverse, with ethnic minorities representing around two thirds (67%) of under 16s and just over one third (35%) of 16-24-year-olds are of Asian ethnicity. Across all age groups, English is the most commonly used language, with Asian languages coming second. European languages are increasingly used, particularly in 25-49-year-old residents. The majority religion for residents aged 65 and over is Christianity, while for those under 65, it is Islam.

Life Expectancy

Life expectancy at birth in Birmingham is 81.1 years for females and 76.4 years for males, both lower than the England averages. Citizens living in more deprived areas have shorter life expectancies on average than those living in the least deprived areas. The difference in life expectancy between the least and most deprived areas is 7 years for females (range: 78-85 years) and 9 years for males (range: 72-81 years). These disparities underscore the impact of socioeconomic factors on health outcomes.

Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score in Birmingham is 38.1, higher than the England average of 21.7. Of the 69 Birmingham wards, 59 have a higher IMD score than the England average. There is also large variation within our city. The most deprived ward overall is Sparkbrook and Balsall Health East (57.1) and the least deprived, Sutton Roughley (7.8).

Income deprivation is significantly higher in Birmingham than England, affecting around 246,700 citizens overall (almost a quarter of Birmingham's population), around 70,100 children (28% of children in the city), and around 49,400 older people (26% of Birmingham's older people).

Domains of Deprivation

Birmingham experiences higher levels of deprivation across multiple domains compared to national averages. These include income, barriers to housing and services, crime, education skills and training, health and disability, quality of living environment and employment.

Household Level Deprivation

Household deprivation is measured differently to IMD and uses household characteristics around education, health, employment and housing. In England around half of all households are not deprived in any domain. For Birmingham this is around 40%. Around 40% of households in Birmingham are deprived in all four ways.

Employment and Income

Employment

Birmingham has significantly higher proportion (6.0%) of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to the England average of 5.2%. In the population aged 16-64 years, Birmingham also has lower economic activity (70.8%) and employment (66.1%) rates than the England averages (78.7% and 75.7% respectively). The employment gap between those with long-term health conditions and the rest of the working population is around 9.5%, similar to the gap in England (10.4%). However, just 1.0% of individuals receiving long-term support for learning disability were in paid employment. The rate of long-term claimants of Jobseekers Allowance is 6 times higher in Birmingham than England.

Socioeconomic Landscape

Birmingham has lower median earnings and higher poverty levels than England, with a larger gender pay gap and a significant proportion of residents who are economically inactive. Birmingham's median gross weekly earnings were £518.30 in 2023, significantly lower than England's median of £518.00. A third of children live in absolute low-income families, more than double the England average and almost one quarter of Birmingham residents are in fuel poverty.

Economic Inactivity

Around 40% of the Birmingham population (16 and over) is economically inactive. This includes those who are retired, disabled, students or those looking after the family and home. Birmingham has a high student population, accounting for 22.6% of economically inactive individuals.

Education

Attainment 8

In Birmingham, the average Attainment 8 score for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is 44.8, lower than the England average of 46.2. However, in pupils eligible for free school meals in Birmingham scored 42.6, higher than the England average of 39.1. In 'looked after' children, the average score is 21.9, higher than the England average of 19.4. Asian or Asian British pupils in Birmingham have the highest average Attainment 8 scores and pupils of unknown ethnicity score lowest. Of the 69 Birmingham wards, 51 have lower average Attainment 8 scores than the national average.

Absenteeism

In Birmingham schools, persistent absenteeism is a concern in more than one fifth (22%) of primary school pupils and more than one quarter (27%) of secondary school pupils. In addition, around 8% of half days are missed in Birmingham schools, higher than the England average of 7.37%.

Ofsted School Inspection

In 2023, Ofsted graded fewer schools in Birmingham as good (66.1%) compared to England (72.8%), but more as outstanding (20.5%, compared to 16.1% in England). Schools requiring improvement (9.3%) and those graded as inadequate (4.1%) were both higher in Birmingham than the England averages of 8.6% and 2.6% respectively. Alternative provision and nursery schools in Birmingham mostly received good and outstanding grades, respectively. Most special schools in Birmingham were graded good (50.0%) or outstanding (30.8%), both lower than the England averages of 54.4% and 35.1% respectively.

For more data on children of school age please refer to the School Years dashboard and chapter summary on the City Observatory

<https://cityobservatory.birmingham.gov.uk/pages/jsna/>

Highest Level of Education

We see geographical variation across our city in the highest level of education obtained and these appear to be similar to the patterns of deprivation we see. Around a third of the population are educated to at least degree level (level 4). This is highest in Harborne (51.8%) and lowest in Castle Vale (16.5%). Conversely almost a quarter of people in Birmingham have no qualification. This is highest in Alum Rock (37.2%) and lowest in Bournbrook and Selly Park.

Our Surroundings

Air & Noise Pollution

The annual concentration of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in Birmingham is higher than the England average and deaths attributable to PM2.5 are also higher than in England. Around 6% of deaths in those 30 and over are considered attributable to particulate air pollution. Around 10% are exposed to road, rail and transport noise of 55 dB or more during the night and 5.5% during the day.

Road Traffic Accidents

There were 448 road traffic accidents in Birmingham in 2022 with casualties who were killed or seriously injured (KSI) and the rate of accidents with KSI per billion vehicle miles is higher in than the England average. In the period 2020-2022, there was an increase of 16% in KSIs involving children (0-15 years) in Birmingham, while all-age KSIs increased by almost 1%.

Green Travel for Work

Around 10% Birmingham residents who work travel by Bus to work, 7% on foot, 2% by train, 1.3% by bicycle and 0.2% by tram/metro. Around 50% use private vehicles as a driver or passenger. Data was gathered during the pandemic however and around a quarter were working from home. This is likely to have changed normal travel.

Access to Healthy Assets & Hazards

Around 12% of Birmingham's population live in areas which score among the poorest performing 20% on the Access to Healthy Assets and Hazards Index (AHAH) which is better than the England average of 20.9% This index measures the health of neighbourhoods in Great Britain, considering factors such as retail environment, health services, physical environment and air quality.

- The average driving time to blue spaces (visible water such as lakes, rivers and canals in Birmingham is 2.7 minutes. (range 0.2 - 6.4 minutes) and leisure centres 2.8 minutes (0.5 to 7.6 minutes)
- The areas with the poorest access to green spaces (measure using the Normalised Vegetation Index NDVI) Aston, Bordesley & Highgate and Soho & Jewellery Quarter. The areas with the highest access are Sutton Four Oaks, Longbridge & West Heath and Edgbaston.
- The average driving time a dentist is 2.6 minutes (range 0.4-4.7 minutes), GP 1.7 minutes (range 0.4-4 minutes, and pharmacy 1.5 minutes (range 0.0 to 3.9 minutes)
- The average drive time to the nearest A&E hospital is 11 minutes (range 2-19 minutes)
- The average driving time to a fast-food outlet is 1.5 minutes, gambling outlets 2.0, bars pubs and nightclubs 2.1 minutes, and tobacconist and vape stores 2.6 minutes.

Crime

Crime Rates

Birmingham scores higher than England for several crime-related indicators and has the highest crime rate of major cities in the West Midlands. The crime deprivation score in Birmingham is 0.3, higher than the England score of 0.01 and the rate of police-recorded violence against the person offences is around 59 per 1,000 population, whilst the England average is 34 per 1,000, with trends indicating an increase. The rate of emergency hospital admissions for violence is around 52 per 100,000 population in Birmingham, significantly higher than the England rate of 34 per 100,000. Birmingham's rate of domestic abuse-related incidents is also higher than the national average.

Crime Types

Violence and sexual offences are the most prevalent crime type in Birmingham, with 63,386 incidents, equivalent to a rate of around 55 per 1,000 population. Other frequently recorded crime types include vehicle crime (around 14,079 incidents), other thefts (11,037), public order offences (10,891), and criminal damage and arson (10,844). Bicycle theft is the least commonly recorded offence (866 incidents).

Youth Crime

In 2022-23, violence against the person was the most frequently recorded youth offence (252 incidents), followed by robbery and sexual offences (both 107 incidents, motoring offences (61 incidents), and drug offences (39 incidents).

Housing

Affordability & Housing Conditions

Housing in Birmingham is more affordable than England overall, with a lower median house price-to-earnings ratio of 7.1, compared to 8.3 in England. However, there are significant housing quality issues with around 60% of local authority housing in Birmingham deemed non-decent, significantly higher than the national average of 9%. The City Council however, is currently completing new stock condition surveys for all its properties to ensure it has a thorough, up to date understanding of all its stock. This increase in stock condition surveys has brought some further issues to light and reported decency levels have worsened.

Tenure

More than half of all households in Birmingham (53%) are owned outright or with a mortgage or loan. Around 14% of households are rented from the council, 10% from other social landlords, and 20% are rented from a private landlord or letting agency. Density of privately owned properties is lowest in central Birmingham.

Environmental Impact

In Birmingham, environmental impact and energy efficiency scores are generally worse than the average scores in England. This indicates higher environmental impact and lower energy

efficiency in Birmingham housing. Of all housing tenures, socially rented properties have the highest energy efficiency and environmental impact scores (indicating lower environmental impact and higher energy efficiency) and the lowest estimated CO2 emissions (indicating lower environmental impact). Owner-occupied properties show the highest emissions and the lowest energy efficiency.

Homelessness

Whilst the estimated rate of people sleeping rough in Birmingham (3.1 per 100,000 population) is lower than the England average (6.8 per 100,000), the estimated rate of homeless deaths is higher in Birmingham (23.8 per million population) than in England (16.8 per million). In the city, an estimated 20 homeless people died in 2021. Birmingham has a higher rate of families and households living in temporary accommodation than the England average, and the rate of households owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act is also higher.

Food

Food & Alcohol Landscape

More than half of Birmingham's population (55%) live in areas ranked in the top 20% nationally for food insecurity risk. Birmingham has a lower density of fast-food outlets (around 78 per 100,000 population) compared to the England average (96 per 100,000). Birmingham has a higher density of premises selling alcohol than England, with around 11 premises per square kilometre in Birmingham, compared to an average of just 1 per kilometre in England. There are around 113 growing and allotment sites in Birmingham, with almost 7,000 plots.

Families, Friends and Communities

Household Size

The majority of Birmingham households consist of 2 or more people, with most of the youngest age groups (aged 19 years and under) living in households consisting of 4 or more people. Around one fifth (20.3%) of households in Birmingham are one-person households, a higher proportion than the national average of 17.3%. Of the 69 Birmingham wards, 43 have higher proportions of one-person households than the national average. Around 11% of people of state pension age (66 years and over) live alone. For those younger, this is around 20%. A third of Birmingham wards have higher proportions of one-person households than the England average (12.8%).

Loneliness & Social Isolation

More than one quarter (28.5%) of adults in Birmingham often feel lonely, a significantly larger proportion than the England average (22.3%). Almost one third (31.3%) of Birmingham pensioners live alone, whilst the average in England is 28.9%. Just under a quarter (23.3%) of adult carers in Birmingham have as much social contact as they would like, a significantly smaller proportion than in England (28.0%).