



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

**NHS**

**Bedfordshire**

Bedford Borough  
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2010

# Demography, Social, Economic and Environmental Context



# Contents

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- Demography ..... 3**
  - Population ..... 4
  - Ethnicity ..... 6
  - Fertility / Mortality ..... 9
  - Life Expectancy ..... 12
  - Migration ..... 13
  - Vulnerable Groups and Disabilities ..... 16
  
- Social, Economic and Environmental Context ..... 19**
  - Economy ..... 20
  - Deprivation ..... 24
  - Benefits ..... 29
  - Housing ..... 31
  - Education ..... 34
  - Transport ..... 38
  - Crime and Anti-social Behaviour ..... 41
  - Best Practice ..... 44
  
- References ..... 45**

# Demography

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Key features of Bedford Borough's current and projected demography include:

- Bedford Borough's population grew by 5.1% between 2001 and 2008 to 155,700, with growth concentrated in older age groups including a 23% rise in the numbers aged 85+.
- A large part of Bedford Borough is situated in one of the growth areas of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) Strategy. Consequently, the Borough's population is expected to grow significantly to 172,000 by 2021.
- The number of older people is forecast to grow at a much higher rate than the 10.4% increase forecast for the total population between 2008 and 2021, with 75-84 year olds increasing by 31% and those aged 85+ increasing by 61%.
- There are major differences between the profiles of the Borough's urban and rural areas. The urban population is younger on average and more ethnically diverse. Areas of highest deprivation are concentrated within the urban area, although parts of the rural area do suffer from poor accessibility to essential services, including health and social care.
- Bedford Borough has an ethnically diverse population. In 2001, 19.2% of the population was from minority ethnic groups (BME), compared to 13% nationally, and this has increased since 2001 due to significant international in-migration. The BME population is concentrated in the urban area of Bedford and Kempston with particularly large BME communities in Queens Park (57.8%) and Cauldwell (43.8%) wards.
- There was a significant increase in the number of births in the Borough in 2008-2009 compared to earlier years, with much of the increase attributable to mothers born outside the UK. If this trend continues it will result in an early rise in the preschool and younger school age populations, and in a need to raise population forecasts.
- Although Bedford Borough has a higher average life expectancy than England, both at birth and at the age of 65, the more deprived areas of the Borough experience significantly lower life expectancy. There is a difference of 9 years between the most deprived wards and the most affluent. Rates of limiting long term illness and disability are also significantly higher in deprived areas.
- The Borough has become home to a large number of new migrants in recent years, particularly from the EU Accession countries, primarily Poland and Lithuania. However, data availability on these new residents is limited and intelligence on their numbers, characteristics, and health and social care needs is poor and needs to be improved.

## Population

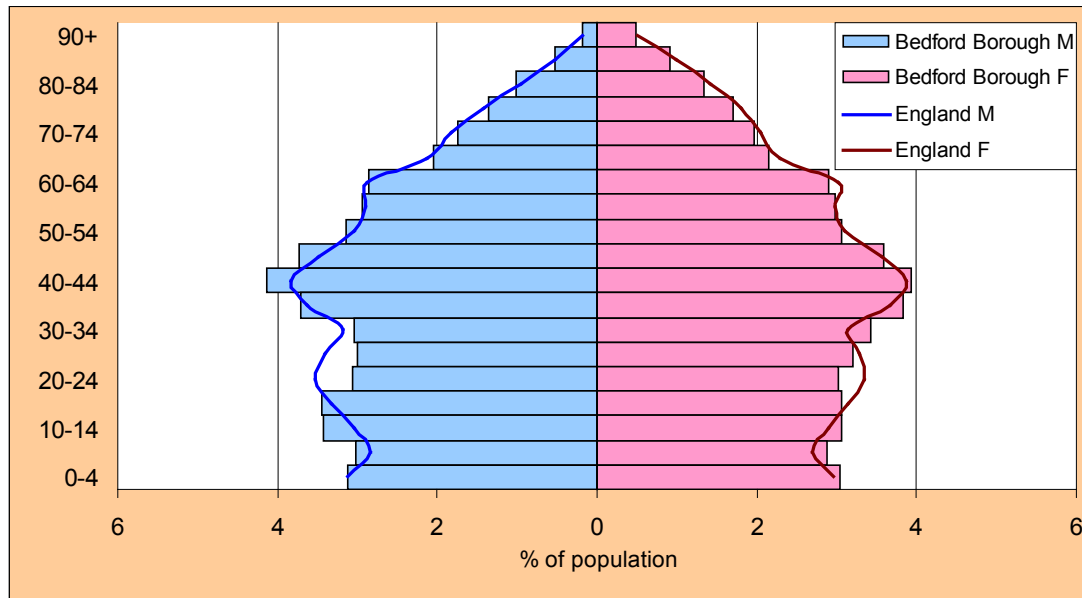
Bedford Borough covers an area of 476 sq. km and is home to 155,700 people (2008).

Almost two-thirds of the population (64.5%) live in the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston, and 35.5% in the surrounding rural areas.

## Age Structure

Bedford Borough has a slightly younger age profile than either the East of England or England with 15.4% of its population aged 65+ in 2008, compared to 16.0% in the region and 16.9% in England (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Bedford Borough Age Profile



Source: ONS, 2008 Mid Year Estimates

Within the Borough, there are distinct differences between the age structures of the urban area of Bedford and Kempston and the rural area. The population of Bedford and Kempston has a younger profile, with 32.8% of its population being 24 and under compared to 28.2% of the rural population, and only 19.3% over 60 compared to 24.8%.

While the total population of Bedford Borough increased by 5.1% between 2001 and 2008, older age groups increased at a significantly higher rate, with those aged 50-64 and 75-84 both rising by over 9%.

Significantly, the population aged 85+ increased by 22.9% from 2001-2008, more than four times the rate of overall population growth.

## Forecasts of Population

The population is set to grow to around 172,000<sup>a</sup> by 2021 with 17,500 new homes planned between 2001 and 2021. Most of this growth will occur in areas on the fringe of Bedford and Kempston, including Biddenham, Eastcotts, Wootton and in the major new community of Wixams. Growth within Bedford town will be largely concentrated in Castle and Cauldwell wards.

Older age groups are forecast to grow at a much higher rate than the total population between 2008 and 2021, with those aged 85+ expected to grow by nearly 6 times the rate of the total population, whilst younger age groups are expected to remain constant, resulting in a significant ageing of the population: Table 1

Table 1: Population Age Forecast

	2008	2021	2008-21	% Change
0-19	39,000	39,300	300	0.9
20-39	40,900	40,800	-100	-0.2
40-59	42,800	48,200	5,400	12.6
60-74	21,300	27,300	6,000	28.1
75-84	8,400	11,000	2,600	31.0
85+	3,300	5,300	2,000	61.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>155,700</b>	<b>172,000</b>	<b>16,300</b>	<b>10.4</b>

Source: Bedford Borough Population Forecasting Model, 2009

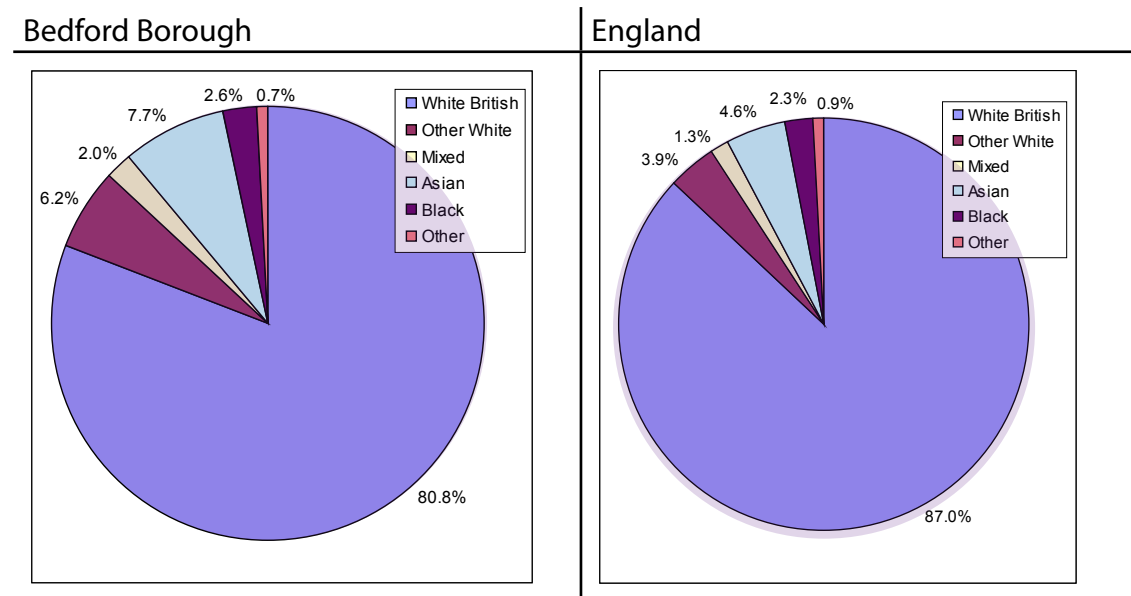
<sup>a</sup> Bedford Borough Population Forecasting Model, 2009. ONS has indicated that it may raise its estimate of the Borough's 2008 population which may result in a higher 2021 forecast.

## Ethnicity

Bedford Borough is one of the most ethnically diverse authorities in the East of England, with over 60 different ethnic groups living within its boundaries.

A higher proportion of Bedford Borough's population (19.2%) is from minority ethnic groups (BME)<sup>b</sup> than is the case across England (13%) and the East of England region (8.6%), particularly in the numbers from 'Asian' and 'White Other' groups: (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Ethnic Groups



Source: ONS, 2001 Census, Table S101

The main ethnic groups in Bedford Borough are White Other and Indian, with substantial populations of Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and White Irish. In all these groups the Borough has higher proportions than both England and the East of England:

<sup>b</sup> Minority ethnic groups (BME) are defined as all ethnic groups other than 'White British'

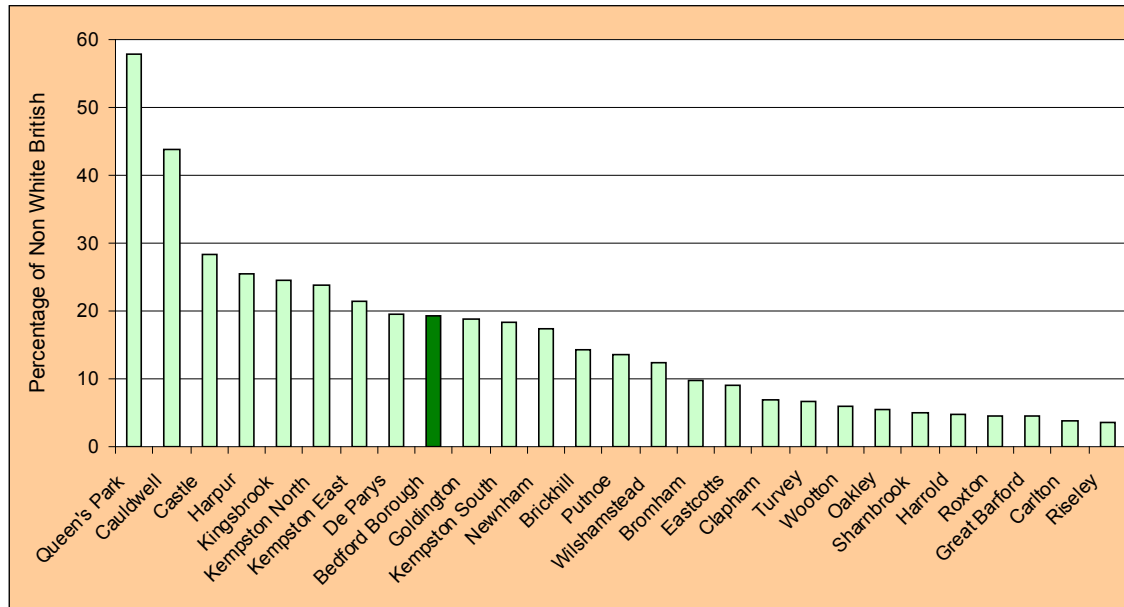
Table 2: Ethnicity Groups

Ethnic Group	Bedford Borough		England	East
	Number	%	%	%
White British	119,467	80.8	87.0	91.4
White Irish	2,084	1.4	1.3	1.1
White Other	7,107	4.8	2.7	2.5
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	1,448	1.0	0.5	0.4
Mixed White and Black African	191	0.1	0.2	0.1
Mixed White and Asian	747	0.5	0.4	0.3
Mixed Other Mixed	525	0.4	0.3	0.3
Asian or Asian British Indian	6,335	4.3	2.1	0.9
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	2,350	1.6	1.4	0.7
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	2,023	1.4	0.6	0.3
Asian or Asian British Other Asian	737	0.5	0.5	0.2
Black or Black British Black Caribbean	2,773	1.9	1.1	0.5
Black or Black British Black African	735	0.5	1.0	0.3
Black or Black British Other Black	338	0.2	0.2	0.1
Chinese or other ethnic group Chinese	614	0.4	0.4	0.4
Chinese or other ethnic group Other Ethnic Group	427	0.3	0.4	0.3
All people	147,901	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ONS, 2001 Census, Table S101

Within the Borough, the BME population tends to be concentrated in the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston, where 25.1% of the population is from BME groups compared to only 6.9% in the surrounding rural areas. The BME population is even more concentrated in certain wards in Bedford such as Queen's Park (57.8%) and Cauldwell (43.8%), whilst most rural wards, for example Carlton (3.8%) and Riseley (3.6%), have a relatively low proportion:

Figure 3: Ethnicity by Ward



Source: ONS, 2001 Census, Table S101

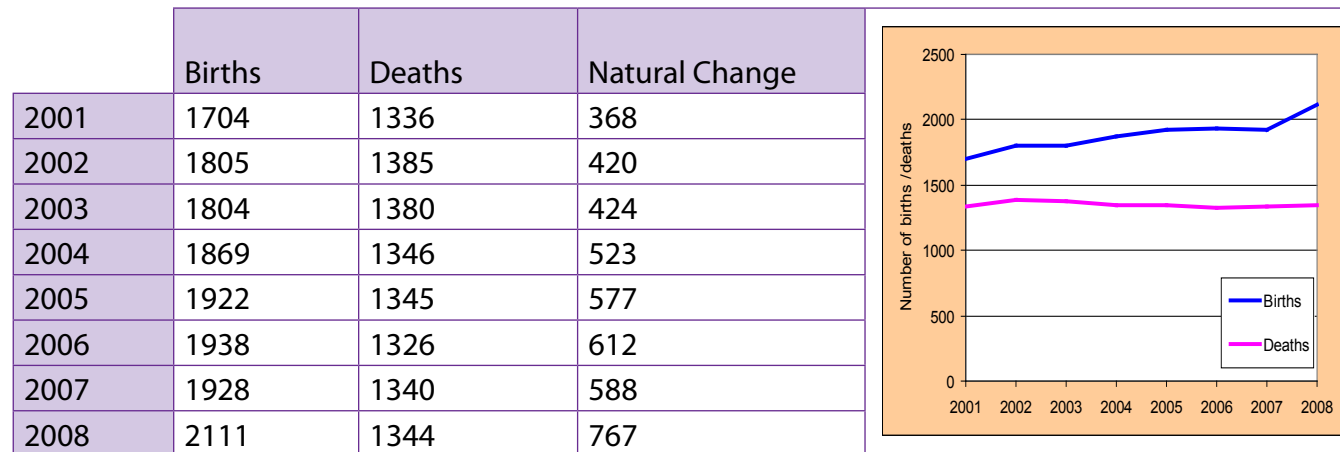
It is likely that the Borough's BME population has increased significantly since the 2001 Census. ONS estimates that it rose from 19.2% in 2001 to 21.6% in 2007, an increase of approximately 5,000 people. Much of the increase has resulted from significant in-migration from the EU Accession countries, particularly Poland and Lithuania. More recent migrant communities include significant numbers from Afghanistan and Zimbabwe.

## Fertility / Mortality

### Births / Deaths

Natural Change is the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths each year which, together with migration, are the main components of population change. While the number of births was stable between 2005 and 2007, they rose significantly in 2008 and indications are that this higher level was maintained in 2009. The number of deaths, however, has remained largely constant. Consequently, Natural Change has also increased: (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Births and Deaths



Source: ONS, Vital Statistics Table 1, 2008

The increase in births since 2001 can be attributed predominantly to mothers born outside the UK, who accounted for 74% of the total increase between 2001 and 2008.

### Fertility

Bedford Borough's General Fertility Rate<sup>c</sup> (GFR) was 66.3 in 2008, much higher than that of England (63.7) and the East of England (63.7). It is also much higher than it has been in recent years, ranging from 59.5 to 61.1 over the previous 4 years. This reflects the large increase in the number of births during 2008, due in part to the recent increase in migrants from the European Union Accession countries.

<sup>c</sup> General Fertility Rate (GFR) is defined as the number of live births per 1,000 women aged 15-44

## Mortality

Mortality rates in Bedford Borough are lower than those in the East of England and in England and Wales: Table 3)

Table 3: Mortality Rates

Mortality Rate	Bedford Borough	East of England	England & Wales
Crude <sup>d</sup>	8.6	9.2	9.4
Age standardised ratio <sup>e</sup>	95	94	100

Source: ONS, Vital Statistics Table 1, 2008

The crude rate has declined slightly over recent years in line with the national and regional rates, and the age standardised ratio has declined slightly from 2007 after being at the same level for four years.

## Infant Mortality

High rates of infant mortality can be seen as a product of disadvantaged communities. Although Bedford Borough had a higher rate of deaths under 1 year than the East of England and England and Wales in 2008, the actual number of deaths was small (12) and the higher rate cannot, therefore, be interpreted as significant. Table 4. Deaths under 4 weeks and the perinatal mortality rate were both less than the regional and national figures, but again actual numbers were low:

Table 4: Infant Mortality

Age	Bedford Borough	East of England	England & Wales
Under 1 year <sup>f</sup>	5.7*	4.4	4.8
Under 4 weeks <sup>g</sup>	2.8*	3.0	3.2
Perinatal mortality rate <sup>h</sup>	5.7*	6.5	7.6

Source: ONS, Vital Statistics Table 1, 2008 | Denotes a rate calculated from less than 20 events.

<sup>d</sup> Crude Mortality Rate is the number of deaths per 1,000 population

<sup>e</sup> Standard Mortality Rate is the number of observed deaths as a % of the expected deaths if the population of an area experienced the same age specific deaths as England and Wales.

<sup>f</sup> Deaths under 1 year per 1,000 live births

<sup>g</sup> Deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 live births

<sup>h</sup> Stillbirths and deaths under 1 week combined per 1,000 live births

## Causes of Death

The total number of deaths in the Borough has remained fairly constant in recent years. Approximately one third of all deaths each year are caused by neoplasms (cancer), with an additional quarter due to diseases of the circulatory system which includes heart disease and strokes.

Other main causes of death include diseases of the respiratory system (10.3%), digestive system (5.1%), and mental and behavioural disorders (4.6%)<sup>1</sup>.

## Life Expectancy

Life Expectancy and Healthy Life Expectancy are higher in Bedford Borough than England as a whole, both at Birth and at Age 65, but life expectancy in 2006-2008 was slightly lower in the Borough than in the East of England among both males and females.

Females have a higher life expectancy than males in Bedford Borough, the East of England, and in England.

Life expectancy at birth in the Borough has increased from 76.5 years (2000-02) to 78.6 years (2006-08) for men, and from 81.2 to 82.1 for females. Life expectancy at age 65 has risen from 16.8 to 18.4 years for men, and from 19.8 to 20.3 years for females over the same period. Table 5 There are no more current local estimates of healthy life expectancy than 2001; however, nationally, this has increased in line with life expectancy.

**Table 5:** Life Expectancy and Healthy Life Expectancy (years)

	2006-2008 Life Expectancy		2001 Healthy Life Expectancy	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>At Birth</b>				
Bedford Borough	78.6	82.1	70.7	73.9
East of England	78.9	82.8	71.2	74.2
England	77.9	82.0	69.1	72.3
<b>At Age 65</b>				
Bedford Borough	18.4	20.3	13.6	15.7
East of England	18.2	20.7	13.4	15.4
England	17.7	20.3	12.5	14.5

Source: ONS, Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at birth by Government Office Region, country and sex, England & Wales, 2001, 2007; ONS, Life expectancy at age 65 (years) by local authority in England & Wales, 2000-2002 to 2006-2008, 2009

Life expectancy is highly correlated with deprivation and there are major differences in life expectancy between the most and least deprived wards in the Borough. The difference between Oakley (84.2 years) and Harpur (75.3 years) wards reflects the presence within Harpur of areas which fall within the 10% most deprived in England<sup>2</sup>.

## Migration

Migration into and out of the Borough is very difficult to measure since the population is becoming increasingly mobile.

Total migration is made up of two main components: Internal and International Migration. ONS primarily uses National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR) records of when people change doctors to estimate Internal Migration.(Table 6). This is not an absolute record as many people do not register with a GP until they need one, so their records can remain with their old GP for some time after they have moved.

International Migration is estimated from the International Passenger Survey, which is a sample survey of people arriving at ports and airports across the country, together with records of Asylum Seekers and Visitor Switchers.

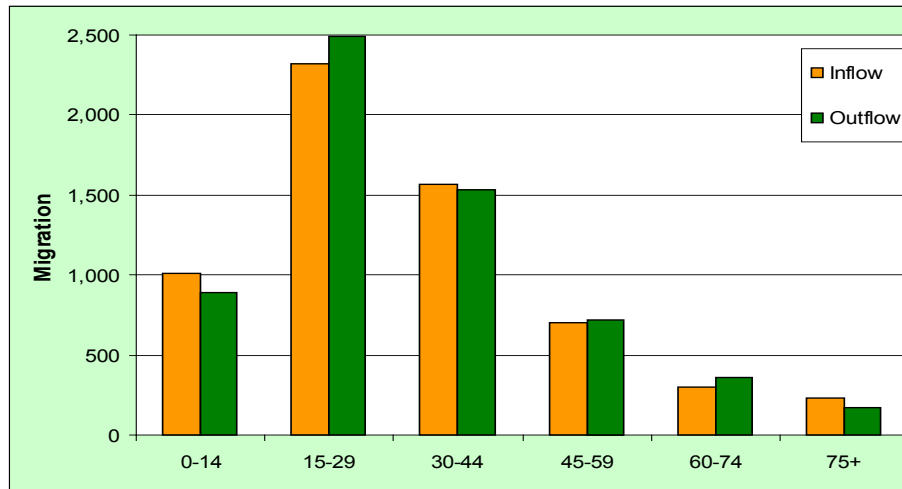
Table 6: Migration

	Internal Migration	International Migration
2001-02	10	1430
2002-03	-20	1120
2003-04	190	610
2004-05	240	270
2005-06	90	260
2006-07	-110	-190
2007-08	-40	50

Source: ONS, Mid Year Estimates, Components of Change

Net Internal Migration numbers are low in the Borough, but this masks large numbers (6,000+) who move in and out of the Borough each year. The age structure of internal migrants indicates that the Borough is losing young adults and younger pensioners, whilst gaining children and over 75s (Figure 5):

Figure 5: Migration by Age



Source: ONS, Internal Migration Data, 2008/09

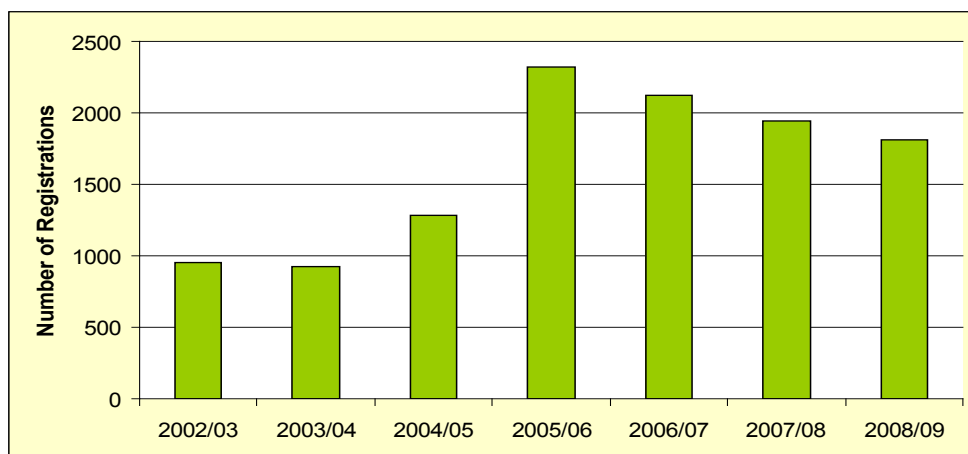
## Migrant Workers

Since 2001 there has been a large in-migration of people from the Accession States which joined the European Union in 2004. Numbers are difficult to estimate with any degree of confidence, the main source being National Insurance registrations (NINo). This data records migrants in the area they first registered but does not record those who moved on to another area or returned to their home country. Nor does the data provide any details of dependants.

Nationally, the number of NINo applications from adult overseas nationals entering the UK doubled from 2002/03 to 2006/07, primarily due to the increase from the Accession States, particularly from Poland. Numbers from Poland increased from less than 9,000 a year to over 220,000 a year during this period. 80% of all NINo registrations are to people aged 18 to 34.

In Bedford Borough there have been over 11,300 applications since 2002. Annual numbers reached a peak of 2,320 in 2005/06 and have declined slightly each year since (Figure 6):

Figure 6: NI Applications



Source: DWP, NINo Registrations

This decline continued in 2009/10 with only 630 registrants in the period April 2009 – September 2009.

## Vulnerable Groups and Disabilities

### Vulnerable Groups

There are a number of groups which either have special health and social care needs and/or experience difficulty in accessing suitable care and support. Many of these groups have poor health outcomes. The needs of these groups of concern and their health inequalities are addressed at length in this Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Among the groups of concern are (alphabetical):

- Alcohol and drugs misusers
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities
- Carers
- Homeless and rough sleepers
- Gypsies and travellers
- Lone Parents
- Looked after children and young people
- New migrants
- Older people
- People with disabilities (see below)
- People with long term conditions, particularly diabetes, HIV, Ischaemic Heart Disease and stroke
- People with mental ill-health including dementia
- Pregnant teenagers
- Prisoners
- Residents of the most deprived areas in the Borough
- Workless
- Young offenders
- Young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

As an example of the health inequalities experienced by groups of concern, the Bedfordshire PCT Public Health Annual report Issue 2 (July 2007) highlighted some of the inequalities experienced by rough sleepers:

- The average life expectancy of a rough sleeper who has been living on the streets since age 16 is 42 years.
- People who sleep rough are 35 times more likely to commit suicide than the general population.
- Tuberculosis is 25 times more prevalent among rough sleepers than the national average.
- Infectious diseases such as hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections are two to three times higher than in the general population.

## Disabilities

The disabilities addressed in the JSNA include:

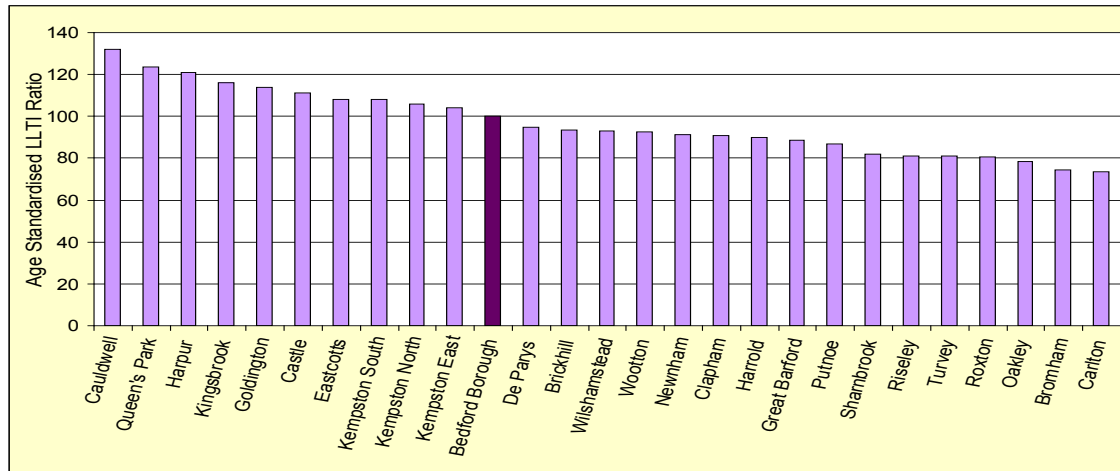
- Learning
- Mental Health
- Physical
- Sensory Impairment

In the 2001 Census, 14.9% of household residents (i.e. excluding residents of communal establishments such as residential care and nursing homes) indicated that they had a limiting long term illness or disability (LLTI) which affected their day-to-day activities.

The level of LLTI varies greatly by age. Among people aged 55-64, 24.1% report a LLTI rising to 36.5% for those 65-74. Rates then rise dramatically for people aged 75-84 (52.6%) and 85+ (68.8%). As the population ages in future years, it is highly likely to be accompanied by a significant increase in the proportion of the overall population reporting a LLTI.

The level of LLTI also varies greatly by ward. Figure 7 shows the ratio of LLTI when the age composition of each ward is standardised to the LLTI age ratios for the Borough which is set at 100 (this removes the impact of different ward age profiles). The most deprived wards in Bedford and Kempston have far higher ratios than more affluent rural areas:

Figure 7: Age Standardised Limiting Long Term Illness Ratios by Ward, 2001



Source: Based on ONS, 2001 Census, Table S016. Age standardisation by Community Intelligence Team, Bedford Borough Council. Household residents only.

# Social, Economic and Environmental Context

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The social, economic and environmental circumstances in which people live directly and indirectly impacts on their health and well-being. Key issues in Bedford Borough include:

- Though economic activity rates exceed national averages, Bedford Borough has been impacted by the recession with Claimant Count unemployment increasing by 34% in 2009, including a large rise in 18-24 unemployment
- Unemployment is far higher in Bedford and Kempston towns (5.3%) than in the rural area (2.4%). The rate exceeds 7% in the more deprived wards
- A broader measure of unemployment, people claiming all forms of out-of-work benefits, affects 12% of the working age population but some areas in the most deprived wards have worklessness rates approaching 30%
- Three areas in Bedford town are among the 10% most deprived areas in England and a further 6 areas in Bedford and Kempston are among the 20% most deprived. These areas also have poor health outcomes and poor performance on a range of well-being indicators
- More than 20% of children in the Borough are being raised in income deprived households, rising to two-thirds in the most deprived areas
- More than 15% of pensioners in the Borough are income deprived with twice that level in the most deprived wards in Bedford
- GCSE performance in the Borough's maintained schools lags both the national and statistical neighbour averages. A reorganisation from a 3-tier to a 2-tier structure has been approved by the Borough Council in an effort to raise attainment levels
- Significant housing development is planned in the Borough with completion of 1,000 units each year from 2010-2021. Average house prices are 7.6 times average earnings
- Poor quality housing and overcrowding are concentrated in the more deprived wards and among owned and private rented accommodation
- Some rural areas of the Borough suffer from lack of access to adequate public transport which impacts particularly on those pensioner households without access to a car and children raised in households with no car
- Crime has been declining in the Borough but residential burglary levels are a continuing concern and reducing crime is regarded as the major priority by the Borough's residents. Anti-social behaviour levels are also impacting on quality of life and perception of safety

## Economy

### Economic Activity

The working age population<sup>i</sup> of the Borough is 96,300, of whom 50,500 are male and 45,800 female (2008).

The economic activity rate among the working age population is 82%, compared to 79% across England. The rate rises to 87% for males compared to 83.7% nationally, but is only 76.5% for females, though this also exceeds the national average (74%).

### Unemployment

As nationally, Bedford Borough has been affected by the recession and unemployment levels have risen sharply. Claimant count unemployment, which measures those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, rose from 3,114 (3.2% of the working age population) in January 2009 to 4,183 (4.3%) in January 2010. The rate is higher in Bedford and Kempston (5.3%) than in the rural area (2.4%), with the highest rates in Castle (7.2%), Cauldwell (7.0%), and Kingsbrook (6.5%) wards.

Claimant count unemployment, however, does not measure the full level and impact of worklessness. A more representative measure is the number of people of working age who are claiming out-of-work benefits. In the first quarter of 2009/10 this was 11,500 or 12% of the Borough's working age population. However, six wards (Castle, Cauldwell, Goldington, Harpur, Kingsbrook and Queens Park) had rates between 15% and 20%, and the average rate in the five most deprived Lower Super Output Areas was 28% (NI 153).

Claimant count unemployment among younger people has also risen sharply with 7.6% of those aged 18-24 claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in January 2010 compared to 6.0% in January 2009 and 3.9% in January 2008. Of the 1,020 claimants, 700 were male and 320 female, and claimants were concentrated in those Bedford town wards with the highest deprivation levels.

Out-of-work benefits claimants among people aged 18-24, which is also a more representative measure of worklessness among younger people than the claimant count, rose from 10.4% in the first quarter of 2008/09 to 14.9% in the second quarter of 2009/10.

<sup>i</sup>This is defined as 16-59 Female/16-64 Male

## Employment

There were an estimated 70,800 employee jobs in Bedford Borough in 2008, an increase of 6,200 (9.6%) since 2001. This does not include the self-employed, of whom there were 8,600 in 2001 and probably higher numbers in 2008.

Of the 70,800 employee jobs within the Borough, the overwhelming majority (85%) are in the service sector, with the distribution, hotel, transport and restaurant sector providing 17,400 jobs (24.6%), and the public sector some 22,300 (31.5%)<sup>3</sup>. The numbers employed in manufacturing have fallen since 2001 by 2,600 to just 7.8% in 2008. The proportion employed in manufacturing is less than the East of England (9.7%) and England (9.4%).<sup>4</sup>

Employment by occupation is broadly in line with national averages. Around 46.5% of those in employment are engaged in managerial and professional occupations compared to 44.2% in England; 17.4% in administrative and skilled trades (21.7%); 18.3% in sales and customer services (15.7%); and 17.4% in unskilled jobs (18%)<sup>5</sup>.

## Qualifications

Qualifications tend to be lower than the national average, with only 59.5% of working age people in the Borough having Level 2 or higher qualifications Table 7 compared to 62.8% in the region and 64.6% in England, and 25.9% with Level 4 compared to 26.1% in the region and 28.7% in England (Table 7).

Table 7: Qualifications

NVQ level <sup>j</sup>	Bedford Borough	East of England	England
% with NVQ4+	25.9	26.1	28.7
% with NVQ3+	42.0	43.4	46.5
% with NVQ2+	59.5	62.8	64.6
% with NVQ1+	74.2	78.8	78.8
% with other qualifications	14.9	9.3	8.9
% with no qualifications	10.9	11.8	12.3

Source: Annual Population Survey Jan08 – Dec08. Includes self employment.

<sup>j</sup> Level 2 qualifications are 5 GCSE grades A\*-C or equivalent; Level 4 qualifications are a higher education diploma and above

However, it should be noted that Bedford Borough has significantly more people with qualifications which are outside the NVQ rating system ('other qualifications'). It is quite common to find this in areas, such as Bedford Borough, which have relatively high proportions of BME ethnic groups and have experienced a high level of recent international in-migration, so the data may underestimate the qualifications levels in the Borough.

The Skills for Life Survey, which was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 2003, indicated that the Borough has relatively low proportions of its working age population lacking functional skills when compared nationally and regionally. Nevertheless, the data still suggested that there is a substantial cohort within the Borough lacking the basic skills necessary to function at work and in society in general. For example, 8 per cent of the working age population in Bedford (7,200 people) lacked Level 1 literacy skills and 16 per cent (16,200 people) lacked Entry Level 3 numeracy skills.

## Earnings

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings indicates that the residents of Bedford Borough earn more than the people who work in the Borough. This is a reflection of the large number of residents who commute to areas such as London where higher salaries are available.

As both nationally and regionally, male workers in the Borough earn more than females (Table 8):

**Table 8:** Gross Weekly Pay of Full Time Workers (£), 2009

	Resident			Workplace		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Bedford Borough	484.7	535.6	450.1	450.6	464.6	417.8
East of England	496.0	538.5	431.4	495.2	538.2	431.2
England	509.4	565.8	432.6	479.1	524.3	409.4

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS, 2009

Within the Borough there are huge disparities between wards in both income and employment levels. Average gross weekly household income in Bromham ward (£1,110) is more than twice the level in Harpur (£530), Kingsbrook (£540) and Queens Park (£540) wards<sup>6</sup>, and well above the regional level of £700.

## Local Economic Assessment

In 2008 the Borough commissioned a Strategic Economic Assessment<sup>7</sup> which concluded that Bedford should achieve a relatively high rate of output and employment growth in the medium to long term as a result of its relatively low salary and wage levels, excellent transportation links, significant population and labour force growth, and its geographical proximity to surrounding major centres of growth, especially in the knowledge economy.

To realise this potential, the report highlighted the challenge of raising educational attainment at all levels and raising participation in post-16 education, particularly among males. Improving basic skills, workforce qualifications and lifelong learning were also emphasised along with the need to tackle crime and deprivation, and measures to address the Borough's poor share of the tourism market.

This Strategic Economic Assessment is to be updated in 2010 when the Borough will undertake a Local Economic Assessment, now a statutory requirement.

## Deprivation

### Indices of Deprivation 2007

While Bedford Borough is in the mid range of local authorities on the overall level of deprivation, ranking 183 out of 354 local authorities in England (where 1 is the most deprived) on the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), there are pockets of significant deprivation in Bedford and Kempston towns.

High deprivation levels are correlated with low life expectancy, unhealthy lifestyles, high levels of limiting long term illness and disability, poor educational attainment, high rates of worklessness, poor housing quality and overcrowding, and high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. Areas of high deprivation in Bedford and Kempston generally have a significantly higher proportion of BME groups than the Borough as a whole, though the residents of areas which are among the 20% most deprived nationally are still primarily White British (66.9%<sup>8</sup>).

The 2007 Indices of Deprivation use the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)(Table 9) geography which allows us to identify deprivation and needs at a neighbourhood level and to target resources more effectively than at the ward level. Of the 102 LSOAs in Bedford Borough, 3 are among the Top 10% most deprived areas in England (in parts of Castle, Cauldwell and Harpur wards) and a further 6 are among the 20% most deprived nationally. All 9 of these LSOAs are in Bedford or Kempston:

Table 9: LSOA IMD

LSOA	WARD	IMD Ranking in Bedford Borough	National Ranking
E01017471	Castle	1	Top 10%
E01017502	Harpur	2	
E01017477	Cauldwell	3	
E01017523	Kingsbrook	4	Top 10% - 20%
E01017466	Castle	5	
E01017472	Cauldwell	6	
E01017519	Kingsbrook	7	
E01017490	Goldington	8	
E01017509	Kempston North	9	

Source: DCLG, Indices of Deprivation 2007

## Domains of the Indices of Deprivation

Underlying the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) are 7 domains, each of which is composed of several indicators. Some domains also have sub-domains. These domains have been combined to produce the IMD but they can also be examined individually. The following table (Table 10) lists the 7 domains, and some sub domains, and the number of LSOAs in the Borough which fall into the top 10%, 20% and 30% nationally.

Table 10: IMD Domains

	Top 10%	10%-20%	20%-30%
MD	3	6	10
<b>Domain</b>			
Income	8	10	5
Employment	3	9	11
Health Deprivation & Disability	3	4	12
Education, Skills & Training	5	12	12
Barriers to Housing & Services	9	6	12
Crime and Disorder	6	7	12
Living environment	0	0	5
<b>Sub Domain</b>			
IDACI <sup>k</sup>	9	9	7
IDAOP <sup>l</sup>	7	6	14
Geographic Barriers	14	16	8

Source:DCLG, Indices of Deprivation, 2007

<sup>k</sup>The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) is a sub-domain of the Indices of Deprivation 2007, DCLG

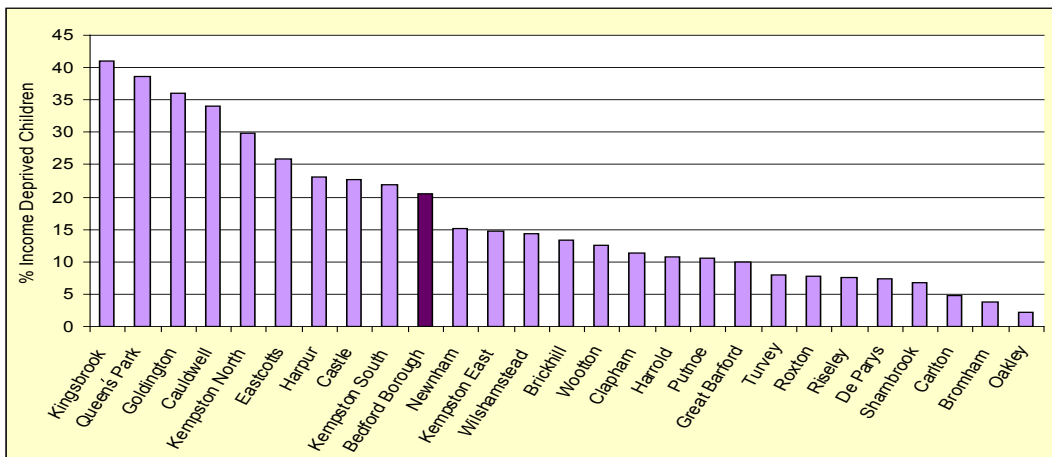
<sup>l</sup>The Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOP) is a sub-domain of the Indices of Deprivation 2007, DCLG

### Child Deprivation

Children and older people are particularly impacted by deprivation. Overall, almost 20% of children in the Borough live in income deprived households, but rates in some wards are much higher. The highest rates of child poverty are in Kingsbrook (41%) and Queen’s Park (38.7%) wards: Bedford Borough has 9 areas among the 10% most deprived in England and a further 9 among the 20% most deprived on the child deprivation measure. All 18 are located in either Bedford or Kempston towns.

In the most deprived areas within Castle and Harpur wards, two-thirds of children live in income deprived households, and a further four areas in Kingsbrook (2), Goldington and Queen’s Park have rates exceeding 50%.

Figure 8: Children in Income Deprived Households (IDACI) by Ward, 2007

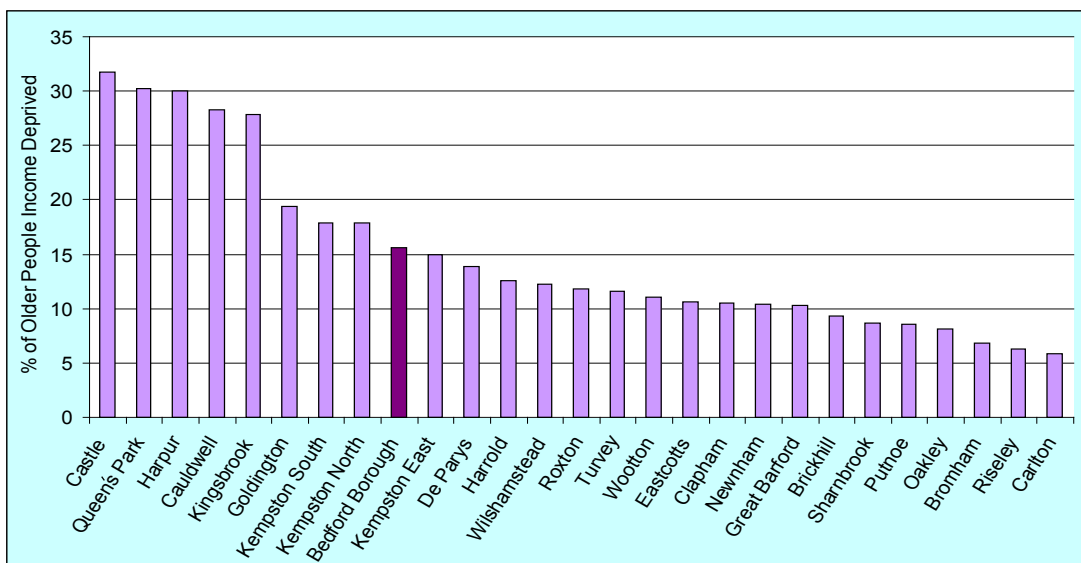


Source: DCLG, Indices of Deprivation, 2007

## Older People Deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation also provide a measure of income deprivation affecting older people (IDAOP)<sup>m</sup>. Across the Borough, 15.7% of those aged 60+ are considered to be income deprived, but the proportion by ward varies greatly, from a high of 31.7% to a low of 5.9%:

Figure 9: Older People (60+) who are Income Deprived by Ward, 2007



Source: DCLG, Indices of Deprivation, 2007

Wards with the highest proportion of income-deprived older people are all in the urban area of Bedford and Kempston, with levels exceeding 30% in Castle, Queen's Park and Harpur wards.

There are 13 LSOAs in the Borough among the 20% most deprived areas nationally on the measure of older people deprivation, with 7 of these among the 10% most deprived. All 13 are in the urban area of Bedford/Kempston. In the LSOA with the highest level of deprivation, part of Castle ward, 57% of older people are income deprived and the rate exceeds 40% in 6 other LSOAs.

Significant numbers of income deprived older people are likely to be in fuel poverty and their health may be vulnerable to cutting back on energy expenditures.

<sup>m</sup> This is defined as the percentage of an LSOA's population aged 60 and over who are Income Support/JobSeeker's Allowance (income based) claimants and their partners (if also aged 60 or over)

## Deprivation in Rural Areas

In general, the rural areas of the Borough do not suffer from significant deprivation on such measures as income, education and health. While a third of the 102 LSOAs in the Borough can be classified as rural, when all 102 are ranked on the IMD, only 1 rural LSOA appears in the 35 most deprived areas, and the remaining 34 are all in Bedford or Kempston. However, there are small pockets of rural deprivation which are not necessarily indicated at the LSOA level since these areas may be overwhelmed in the deprivation calculations by the more affluent areas which are also part of their LSOAs.

Furthermore, many of the Borough's rural areas do suffer greatly from inaccessibility to such essential services as a GP, primary school, post office and supermarket. On the Geographical Barriers sub-domain of the Indices of Deprivation 2007, 14 LSOAs in the Borough are among the 10% most deprived areas in England on access to services, and a further 17 are among the Top 20%. Of these 31 areas, 25 are rural. Indeed, over 70% of the Borough's 55,000 rural residents live in areas which are among the 20% most deprived in England in access to services, including health care services.

Access to services can be a considerable problem for older people in rural areas, particularly those living in households without a car or wishing to travel at times when public transport is unavailable. Rural areas also have to contend with the growing cost pressures on the provision of public transport, and the reduction in services which some rural parts of the Borough have experienced in recent years.

Wards with the highest proportions of pensioners without access to a car are in the urban area of Bedford and Kempston, but many of these will have reasonable access to public transport. However, in a majority of rural wards more than 20% of pensioner households also lack access to a car, and in both Eastcotts and Wootton wards the rate exceeds 40%, though parts of both wards have good bus service. Since rural pensioners generally do not have access to the same level of public transport as those living in urban areas, the availability of private transport or demand responsive transport assumes greater significance.

## Benefits

### Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit

Housing benefit claimant levels in the Borough exceed the regional average but are significantly below the level in Great Britain:

Table 11: Households receiving Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, August 2009

Benefit	Bedford Borough		Great Britain	East of England
	Number	% Households	% Households	% Households
Housing	9,830	15.4	17.9	14.7
Council Tax	11,910	18.6	22.0	18.5

Source: DWP, August 2009

Of the 9,830 households receiving Housing Benefit in the Borough, 71.7% were Social Rented and 28.3% were Private Rented households.

### Pension Credit

There were 27,430 pensioners in Bedford Borough in May 2009. Of these 17,030 (62%) were female, and 5,600 (20.4%) were in receipt of Pension Credit, slightly above the regional average of 20.0%, but below the national average of 23.9%<sup>9</sup>

### Income Support

In May 2009 there were 4,430 people claiming Income Support benefit in Bedford Borough. This represented 4.8% of the population aged 16-59 which is higher than the region (4.2%) but lower than England (5.9%). Claimant levels in Bedford and Kempston (6.4%) were considerably higher than in the rural area (2.2%)<sup>9</sup>

The more deprived wards in Bedford have much higher rates of Income Support claimants:

- Goldington – 8.9%
- Kingsbrook – 8.9%
- Cauldwell – 8.5%
- Queen's Park – 7.9%

## Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance

There were 4,815 people claiming either Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance in May 2009 (Table 12), representing 5.0% of the working age population compared to 6.3% in England and 4.9% in the region.

Again, there are wide differences within the Borough with a rate of 5.9% in the urban area compared to 3.2% in the rural area, with Harpur (7.5%), Cauldwell (7.3%), Kingsbrook (6.7%), De Parys (6.7%) and Goldington (6.5%) wards being particularly high.

**Table 12:** Incapacity Benefit<sup>n</sup> and Severe Disablement Allowance Claimants, May 2009

Benefit	Bedford Borough		England	East of England
	Number	%*	%*	%*
Incapacity Benefit	4,185	4.3	5.7	4.4
Severe Disablement Allowance	630	0.7	0.7	0.6
All Claimants	4,815	5.0	6.3	4.9

Source: ONS, via NOMIS, May 2009. \* % of working age population.

<sup>n</sup> Includes claimants receiving IB Credits only i.e. they do not receive IB payments, but their National Insurance account is credited for the period of their claim

## Housing

### Existing Housing Stock

In 2001, there were 61,270 dwellings in the Borough and 59,600 households. Between 2001/02 and 2008/09 4,550 net dwellings were completed and the number of households in 2009 is estimated at 64,000.

**Table 13:** The distribution of housing by type in 2001<sup>o</sup> was:

Housing Type	Proportion of Housing Stock
Detached	28.0%
Semi-Detached	33.1%
Terraced	22.6%
Flat	15.4%
Caravan or Mobile Home	0.9%

Source: ONS, 2001 Census, Table S049

The urban area had a lower proportion of detached units (19.0%), but 21.4% of the housing stock were flats.

Across the Borough, 72.4% of dwellings were owned, with 15.8% rented from social landlords and 11.8% rented privately. In the urban area 67.4% of households were owned and 32.6% rented.

In March 2008, 742 dwellings were classed as long term vacant. The Borough has had an Empty Homes Strategy since November 2003, and 529 properties were brought back into use between 2004/05 and 2008/09 as a direct result of action by the Council.<sup>10</sup> Many of these homes have been rented to homeless households or those threatened with homelessness.

<sup>o</sup> There is no more recent source of data on many characteristics of the housing stock (e.g. type, tenure and overcrowding) than the 2001 Census

## Future Housing Development

Parts of Bedford Borough lie within the Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) sub regional growth area and substantial residential development is planned in the Borough to 2021 and beyond. The total number of dwellings scheduled for completion between 2001 and 2021 is 17,500 with major growth in the Marston Vale MKSM growth area, including the new community of Wixams, and significant new development planned for areas on the fringes of Bedford and Kempston such as Biddenham, Eastcotts and Wootton. In Bedford, significant growth is planned for Cauldwell and Castle wards, including the redevelopment of Bedford town centre.

Achievement of these housing targets will require acceleration in the number of completions compared to recent years. In the 5 year period from 2004/05-2008/09 annual completions in the Borough averaged 520. Subject to market conditions, this is expected to rise to 1,000 completions each year to 2021.

## Amenities and Overcrowding

In 2001 2,810 households (4.7%) in the Borough did not have central heating and 277 (0.5%) lacked exclusive use of a bath/shower and toilet. Households in private rented accommodation and owner occupiers are more likely to live in homes without central heating than those in social rented housing.<sup>11</sup>

While few children (77) were raised in households without access to a private bathroom, 717 (2.1%) lived in households without central heating and the rate was highest in Queen's Park (4.7%).<sup>12</sup> A higher proportion of pensioner households did not have central heating (6.3%) and this rate exceeded 11% in Castle, Cauldwell and Queen's Park wards. Significant lack of central heating among pensioner households was also present in some rural wards with both Riseley and Roxton at 7.8%.<sup>13</sup>

The 2001 Census determines that a household is moderately overcrowded if it has one less room than is considered necessary given the household's number, age and gender of residents and the relationship between them, and severely overcrowded if it has two less rooms.

Using this measure, 5.2% of the Borough's households were considered moderately overcrowded in 2001, with overcrowding concentrated in the urban area (6.8%). The highest rates were in Harpur (10.9%) and Queen's Park (9.8%) wards. Severe overcrowding impacted 2.4% of all households but 3.3% of the urban area, with the highest rates also in Queen's Park (6.5%) and Harpur (6.1%) wards.

The proportion of children raised in moderately or severely overcrowded households averaged 12.3% across the Borough in 2001, but was 32.2% in Queen's Park and 22.9% in Cauldwell wards, both wards with high BME populations.

## Housing Costs

The average house price in Bedford Borough during the period April-June 2009 was £181,433, a decline of 11.2% over the same period in 2008:

Table 14: Average House Prices

Housing Type	Average Price (April-June 2009)
Detached	£257,490
Semi-Detached	£173,429
Terraced	£140,944
Flat	£109,740

Source: Land Registry Office via [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

This represents 7.2 times the median average annual earnings of Borough residents and compares to 5.6 times earnings in April-June 2002.

## Education

### Early Years Education

Free Early Years (nursery school) places are available to all 3 and 4 year olds. Research indicates that Early Years education is a crucial predictive factor in educational achievement at school and beyond, with important implications for the life chances of young people.

Pre-school is particularly beneficial to children from disadvantaged backgrounds and for those whose first language is not English but, nationally, children from Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black Caribbean groups are less likely to attend, as are poor White British.<sup>14</sup>

Analysis of take up of Early Years places in the Borough during 2006/07 indicates that there is wide variation in the proportion of children attending nursery school and in the proportion completing at least 2 terms, with children from the most disadvantaged wards being least likely to attend or to complete 2 terms.<sup>15</sup>

### Educational Attainment

Pupil performance in Bedford Borough maintained schools is well below the average of its statistical neighbours at Key Stage 4 (GCSE).

At Key Stage 1 (7 years of age) performance in 2007/08 was above both the national average and that of statistical neighbours in reading, writing and mathematics.

By Key Stage 2 (11 years of age), however, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in both English and mathematics was below both the national and statistical neighbour averages.

Provisional figures<sup>p</sup> indicate that Key Stage 3 (14 years of age) performance in English was also below both national and statistical neighbour averages while performance in mathematics was in line with the national figure.

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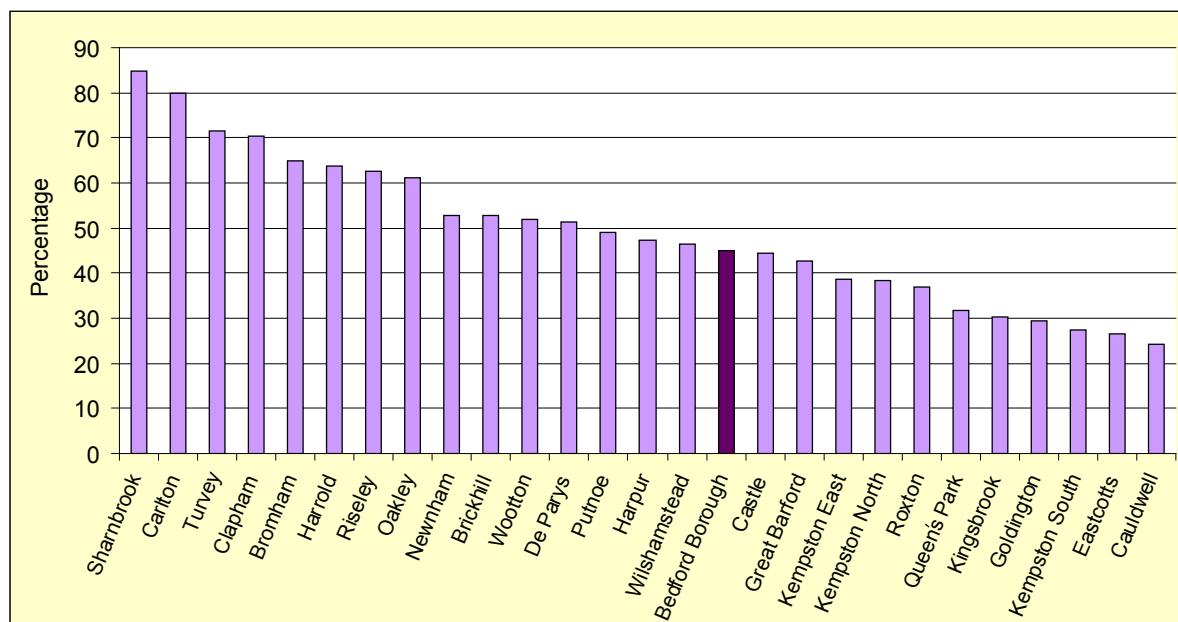
<sup>p</sup> These figures will remain provisional as the Government has decided to cease external marking and reporting of Key Stage 3 tests and will not be publishing Key Stage 3 achievement and attainment tables

At the end of Key Stage 4 (16 years of age) when pupils sit their GCSE examinations, the gap between Bedford Borough and the national and statistical neighbour averages widens. The percentage of students achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades in the Borough (60.3%) in 2007/08 compared poorly to the national (64.6%) and statistical neighbour (66.8%) averages. Similarly, the percentage of students achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades including English and mathematics was 46.7% compared to 47.6% nationally and 53% among statistical neighbours<sup>16</sup>.

The Council has taken the decision to move to a 2-tier school structure in an effort to raise educational standards in the Borough’s maintained schools.

GCSE results for pupils *resident* in Bedford Borough are even lower than the results of those attending schools in the Borough<sup>a</sup> with only 45.0% achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades including English and mathematics (2007/08) (Figure 10) Only 37.8% of pupils resident in Bedford and Kempston achieved this level and there was considerable disparity between the most and least deprived wards, and between urban and rural wards:

Figure 10: Proportion of pupils achieving 5 A\*-C grades including English and mathematics by ward, Bedford Borough 2007/08



Source: Analysis by Community Intelligence Team, Bedford Borough Council based on 2007/08 Key Stage 4 pupil level results.

<sup>a</sup>This is due to children living outside the Borough who attend Borough schools having higher results than Bedford residents

## Attainment by Pupil Characteristics

Children eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieve below average performance at all key stages and the gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils widens as they get older.

Across the Borough, 14.3% of pupils are eligible for FSM but the proportion varies greatly, being 18.3% in the urban area, and exceeding 20% in the more disadvantaged wards of Queen's Park (28.0%), Kingsbrook (27.5%), Cauldwell (23.3%) and Goldington (22.6%).

Pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) achieve results which are far below average at all key stages. Combining all forms of SEN, 20.2% of pupils resident in the Borough have SEN with the rate again being highest in the most disadvantaged wards – Queen's Park (28.0%), Harpur (26.4%), Eastcotts (26.0%), Goldington (25.8%) and Kingsbrook (24.8%).

Looked after children achieve extremely poor results nationally. In Bedford Borough only 31% of looked after children achieved 5 GCSE passes at any grade in 2008/09 compared to 93% of the general pupil population, though this is based on an extremely small cohort and the figures are volatile from year to year (56% in 2007/08).

Levels of achievement also vary greatly across ethnic groups, with Chinese, Mixed White and Asian, and Indian pupils tending to perform better than average at Key Stage 4. Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black Caribbean, Traveller and Romany and some mixed-heritage groups tend to attain the poorest average results. White British males from the more deprived areas of Bedford and Kempston also have very poor attainment levels.

## School Reorganisation

As part of its commitment to raising educational standards across the authority, Bedford Borough Council has decided to change from its current 3-tier education structure to 2-tier, providing Primary Schools for children aged 4-11 and Secondary Schools for pupils aged 11-18.

The Borough is also now part of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. Through BSF, every secondary school in the country will be rebuilt or upgraded over the next 15 to 20 years.

In February 2010, the Council also approved a reorganisation of the Borough's special schools.

## Young People in Further and Higher Education

In October 2009, 79% of Bedford Borough 16-18 year olds who had completed compulsory education were still in education (40% in School Sixth Form, 33.6% in further education, 4.4% in higher education, 1% other). Of 19 year olds, 18.4% were in further education, and 24.5% in higher education.<sup>17</sup>

Participation in post-16 education is strongly associated with prior attainment. Nationally, those with 5 or more GCSEs A\*-C in 2004 were significantly more likely to remain in full-time education after age 16 than those achieving 1-4 GCSEs grades D-G (89% compared to 32%).<sup>18</sup>

Young People from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to continue in post-16 education, as are looked after children, those with SEN, and those from several BME groups, including Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black Caribbean, and Mixed White and Black Caribbean. Among several ethnic groups there is also considerable variation by gender, for example participation by Black Caribbean females is higher than among males.

## Transport

Accessible, efficient and reliable transport:

- Allows people to access services they require such as health care, leisure and the countryside
- Increases social inclusion, and enables people to reach family and friends
- Supports economic regeneration
- Facilitates the transition from welfare to work
- Improves participation and attendance in education<sup>19</sup>

Groups which tend to be disadvantaged in their access to transport include older people, disabled people, the unemployed, people on lower incomes, and rural residents<sup>20</sup>.

Deprivation in access to such essential services as a GP, primary school, post office and supermarket, is a major issue in the rural parts of Bedford Borough. The rural areas do not generally suffer from high deprivation levels; however, on the Geographical Barriers sub-domain of the Indices of Deprivation 2007<sup>21</sup>, 13 rural Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are among the 10% most deprived areas in England in access to services, and a further 12 are among the Top 20%. These areas include almost 70% of the Borough's 55,000 rural population.

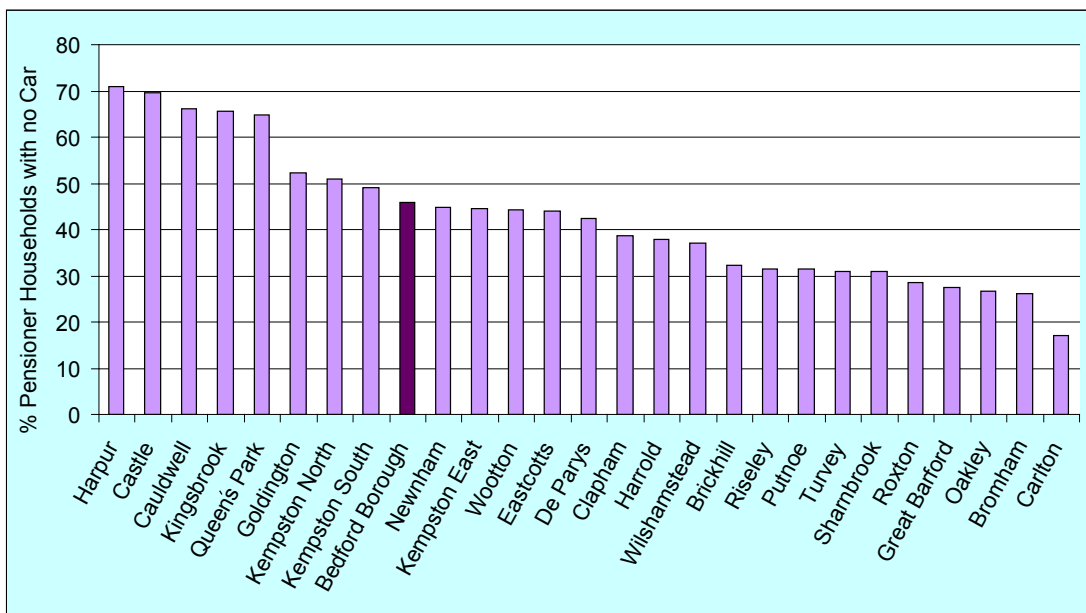
### Access to a Car

Almost 22% of Borough households lack access to a car (2001 Census). The rate is higher in the urban (27.3 %) than rural (11.1%) area. Rates are highest in the more deprived wards of Harpur (39.6%), Castle (37.9%) and Kingsbrook (34.9%). The highest rates by type of household are among pensioners (45.8%) and lone parents (35.0%).

### Older People

Access to services can be a particular problem for older people living in rural areas that do not have access to a car and are reliant upon public transport. While the highest proportions of pensioner households without a car are, as expected, in the urban areas,(Figure 11), more than 30% of pensioners in a majority of rural wards also lack access, and in both Eastcotts and Wootton wards the rate is 44%:

Figure 11: Number of Pensioners Without a Car by Ward



Source: ONS, 2001 Census, Table S062

Help the Aged observes that many older people face barriers that prevent them from using bus services, including difficulty in getting to/from bus stops and the infrequency of service, and notes that driving is often the easiest way for older people to get around<sup>22</sup>.

Help the Aged also refutes the accepted notion of a progression from driving to public transport to special transport, pointing out that, in physical terms, driving is often the easiest way for older people to get around since they may become unable to board a bus or walk to a bus stop *before* they lose the ability to drive safely<sup>23</sup>.

The Strategic Promotion of Ageing Research (SPARC) network has identified the main factors influencing older people's mobility and the specific barriers they face, including bus driver behaviour, insufficient time at road crossings, personal safety concerns, and mistrust of taxi drivers<sup>24</sup>.

Many rural areas in the Borough are not only inaccessible to services but they also have significant populations of older people. In the rural area 24.8% of the population is aged 60+ compared to 19.3% in the urban area. Access to services and convenient transport for older people is, therefore, clearly a major issue, particularly given the rapidly increasing numbers of older people in the Borough.

## Children and Young People

Transport can also be a key concern for young people living in rural areas and small towns, and result in difficulties in accessing education, training and healthcare as well as limiting their leisure and social opportunities. They may also be less able to access confidential personal advice on such issues as contraception and drugs.

Young people in households without cars may have even fewer opportunities since where public transport is available it may still not be at the times when they wish to travel, such as evenings. They then become dependent upon family members or friends to provide a lift<sup>25</sup>.

Across the Borough, 13.3% of dependent children live in households without a car<sup>26</sup>. The rate is far higher in the more deprived wards of Bedford and Kempston such as Queen's Park (27.4%), Cauldwell (26.9%) and Kingsbrook (26.5%). Rates in most rural wards are well below the Borough average, though young people in Eastcotts ward (21.5%) may experience transport difficulties outside daytime.

## Commuting

While Bedford Borough has *net* out-commuting of only 2,150 or 3% of the resident labour force<sup>r</sup> almost 24,000 people commute to jobs outside the Borough, with Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and London being the favoured destinations.

Given the proximity to large neighbouring employment centres and the frequency of rail services to London, it is inevitable that the Borough will experience large commuter flows.

There are, however, many social and environmental costs associated with commuting. Large scale purchases of homes in villages by commuters can affect the social fabric of communities, making it difficult for younger people to afford to live in their communities, and reducing the community networks available to support older people. They may also undermine the viability of local services such as village schools and shops<sup>27</sup>.

Lengthy commutes may also have detrimental impacts upon health, and family and personal relationships. Long hours of commuting, especially if driving, can lead to high blood pressure and musculoskeletal disorders. Long journey times can also mean less time for personal care such as visits to doctors, sleeping, eating healthily, and leisure and social activities<sup>28</sup>.

In the longer term, the level of out-commuting from the Borough can only be addressed by growth in the number and range of local employment opportunities, especially in management and professional positions and in the knowledge economy.

<sup>r</sup> Commuting patterns may have changed significantly since the census in 2001 and there is anecdotal evidence that the level of out-commuting may have increased

## Crime and Anti-social Behaviour

The level of crime is a major influence on quality of life, and ranked as the most important concern reported by the Borough's residents in the 2008 Place Survey<sup>29</sup>.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) can have a significant impact on people's quality of life, fear of crime, and satisfaction with their neighbourhood and wider community.

Total crime has fallen significantly in the Borough over the past five years, from more than 16,000 in 2003/04 to under 12,000 in 2008/09. Between 2007/08 and 2008/09 Comparator Crime<sup>s</sup> in the Borough declined by 14%, including a 17% reduction in residential burglary and a 6% reduction in violence against the person. Comparator Crime offences in 2008/09 at 45 per 1,000 residents were below the average of 50 per 1,000 for England and Wales.

However, sexual violence rose from 94 reports in 2007/08 to 128 in 2008/09 and the level of residential burglary rose by 29% between the first quarter of 2008/09 and the first quarter of 2009/10. Residential burglary is a high impact crime that can raise the victim's ongoing future fear of crime and affect their long-term wellbeing, particularly in the case of older people.

ASB incidents in the Borough declined by 2.7% from 11,656 in 2007/08 to 11,336 in 2008/09. Rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour accounted for 64% of ASB incidents in 2008/09 followed by ASB involving vehicles (11%) and neighbours (8%). However, preliminary figures indicate that ASB incidents rose in the first half of 2009/10.

While the highest concentration of ASB incidents is found in Bedford and Kempston towns, there are some 'warm spots' in rural areas and ASB is not exclusively an urban issue. For example, in the summers of both 2007 and 2008, the villages of Bromham, Sharnbrook and Stewartby all experienced concentrations of ASB.

Drug dependency and, in particular, alcohol abuse are major contributors to crime and anti-social behaviour. Nearly three-quarters of those convicted of disorder offences were identified as hazardous drinkers and over half identified alcohol as a factor in their arrest<sup>30</sup>.

Domestic violence accounts for 25% of all violent crime. Domestic violence will affect one in four women and one in six men in their lifetime. On average, a person will be assaulted 35 times before reporting it to the police.

<sup>s</sup> British Crime Survey Comparator Crime consists of 10 offences: theft of a vehicle; theft from a vehicle; interference with a vehicle; domestic burglary; bicycle theft; theft from a person; criminal damage; common assault; wounding; personal robbery

## Perceptions of Crime and Anti-social Behaviour

The 2008 Place Survey, which was conducted by postal questionnaire to 6,000 households in the Borough (1,868 respondents), contained a section on community safety to gauge public perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Almost half (48.4%) of respondents said they felt safe when outside in their local area after dark, slightly below the national average (50.9%), while the 88.9% who said they felt safe during the day exceeded the national average (87.9%).

**Table 15:** The major issues identified by respondents as very big or fairly big problems were (% of respondents):

Issue	Bedford Borough	England
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	14.7	13.7
Teenagers hanging around the streets	41.1	43.0
Rubbish or litter lying around	31.6	36.7
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	30.3	32.7
People using or dealing drugs	30.1	30.5
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	25.4	29.0
Abandoned or burnt out cars	7.7	7.2

Source: Bedford Borough, Place Survey 2008

Respondents aged 65 and over generally felt less safe when walking after dark (46%) than those under 65 (52%). However, older residents were less likely to indicate that the above issues were a very big or fairly big problem. For example, only 27% of those aged 65+ regarded teenagers hanging around the streets as a problem compared to 40% of those under 65, and only 21% referred to people using or dealing drugs compared to 25%.

Between November 2009 and January 2010, Bedford Borough conducted a Place Tracker Survey based on a smaller sample of 4,000 households (955 respondents) to monitor progress on a number of National Indicators, including perceptions of community safety. Respondents reported a rise in perception of anti-social behaviour (NI 17) to 24.8% compared to the 2008 Place Survey (19.0%), but improvement from 25.7% to 31.8% in dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the Council and Police (NI 21).

Bedford Borough Council has conducted several consultations with children and young people to gauge their perceptions of crime and personal safety<sup>1</sup>. Young people express a number of concerns, including: safety on public transport, particularly when waiting for buses in unlit rural areas and when taking buses from Bedford in the dark; lack of adequate activities for them in their local area; the safety of their belongings at school; bullying; and fear of being a victim of violence, theft or assault.

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<sup>1</sup> For example: Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Scheme, Supporting the Health of Young People in Bedford: A summary report of the Health Related Behaviour Survey 2008 (the 'Balding Survey')

## Best Practice

The Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership uses a multi-agency problem solving methodology (SARA – Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) to tackle problems by working with local stakeholders at a local level.

Two successful examples of this approach are:

- A partnership to tackle ASB at Offa Road playground in Cauldwell ward
- A partnership to tackle domestic burglary and ASB in the Prime Ministers area of Harpur ward.

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