



BARNSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

Barnsley Poverty Needs Assessment 2014

Key Findings

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Key Findings

Chapter 2: Households Affected by Poverty

This section provides indicators of poverty that affect households, i.e. they are common to adults, children and pensioners.

EMPLOYMENT: [SECTION 2.2]

- The overall picture that emerges is that: unemployment in the borough continues to be higher than average; Barnsley's job density rate is low indicating that there are not adequate jobs in the local area to support all the people available for work; and that there is a mismatch between the skills of local people and the jobs that are on offer. The implications of this are that a considerable number of Barnsley residents have to commute to find employment.
- Historically, Barnsley's employment rate has been low, lagging behind both the regional and national employment rates, for the first time since records began in 1981 Barnsley has a higher employment rate than national rate for England. The gap between Barnsley and the national and regional averages for unemployment is narrowing.
- **Benefits claimant data shows that health problems are affecting people's ability to work.**
- The number of working age people claiming carer's allowance is increasing locally and nationally this also includes those **claiming this benefit for five years or more.**

QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING AND SKILLS: [SECTION 2.3]

- There is a strong link between education, skill levels and employment, those who have no or low skill levels are less likely to be employment. Barnsley continues to have higher than average levels of low and no skilled people, however, more people are undertaking study so the gap between the national and regional averages is starting to narrow.

HOUSING AND HOMELESS PREVENTION: [SECTIONS 2.4 AND 2.5]

- People on low incomes, young adults and those aged over 75 years are the most likely to live in non-decent housing [section 2.4].
- The impact of welfare reform, such as changes to the Local Welfare Scheme, Under Occupancy Charges and a tougher sanctioning regime, appear to have contributed to a spike in rent arrears amongst Berneslai Homes tenants in 2013 [section 2.4].
- In the last few years there has been an increase in households seeking help from the council's Housing Options, Advice and Homelessness Prevention (HOAHP) service, these are people facing eviction by landlords or repossession by mortgage companies [section 2.5].
- Repossession rates within Barnsley are particularly high, during 2013/14 1 in every 98 household were affected **but the rate for possession claims have decreased in the last year** [section 2.5].

HEALTH & LIFE STYLE: [SECTION 2.6]

- Barnsley has lower life expectancy generally residents of Barnsley die younger than those in Yorkshire & Humber and England. The Healthy Life Expectancy is of particular concern as many residents suffer years of ill health before they reach retirement age, which has significant impacts on their ability to work.
- **Life expectancy is increasing but at a slower rate than the rest of the Country.** The findings show that there is a significant inequality in life expectancy across the borough, with those living in the wards with the highest levels of deprivation dying on average 6 years sooner than those in the least deprived wards.
- The main, preventable reason for these inequalities in Life and Healthy Life Expectancy are smoking related disease and deaths.
- Yorkshire & Humber as a region has a higher rate of drug use than the national average, and Barnsley is in line with regional averages. The treatment rates for Barnsley are higher than average.

MONEY AND DEBT: [SECTION 2.7]

- The findings do not show that people on low incomes use credit more often than affluent people, the rates are pretty similar across all income bands. What they do show is that people on low incomes borrow to cover the costs of essentials - *'to make ends meet'* - and limited financial options available resulting in them paying a much higher fee for their credit than those with higher incomes.
- In general people are making use of services such as the Credit Union, especially in areas with high levels of deprivation.
- There is also evidence that the earnings in Barnsley are failing to keep up with the regional and national levels.
- Evidence suggests that 1 in 3 households found it difficult to manage their household incomes.

FUEL AND FOOD POVERTY: [SECTION 2.8 AND 2.9]

- **The number of households affected by fuel poverty has fallen in the recent year this could be due to efforts to make homes more energy efficient [section 2.8].**
- Food poverty does appear to be rising, both nationally and in Barnsley. Food prices are rising faster than incomes. The evidence does not provide us with the information on the full extent of how many people are affected in Barnsley, but where we do have data it shows there is a high demand for services working in this area [section 2.9].
- There has been a 39% increase in Foodstuff related shoplifting between 2012 and 2014 in Barnsley, which supports the national trend [section 2.9].

TRANSPORT: [SECTION 2.11]

- People on low incomes, in chronic ill-health or with limited mobility are significantly less able to access and pay for the transport they need to access work, education and services.
- More households in Barnsley have access to a car or van compared to the national average.
- Access to cars and vans is up to 5 times higher on the less deprived wards than in the most deprived.

Chapter 3: Children Affected by Poverty

Child poverty occurs throughout the borough, but there are huge differences between communities.

- The likelihood of children living in a family where someone is out of work are up to 8 times higher in some parts of the borough than in others.
- The likelihood of child poverty is up to 6 times higher in some parts of the borough than in others.

Looking at all the indicators of child poverty several themes emerge:

EDUCATION [SECTIONS 3.4, 3.10 AND 3.11]

- Poverty in children has a profound effect on their future prospects, as a significant number of children who receive free school meals do worse at school [Sections 3.10 and 3.11]. Based on national research these children are more likely to leave school without the skills they need for the modern workplace, so any employment they do get is likely to be low paid and insecure which in turn increases the risk of repeating the cycle with their own children [Section 3.4].
- In Barnsley the general performance of children at both Key Stage 2 (end of Primary School) and GCSE level is catching up with the regional and national averages [Section 3.11].

WORKLESSNESS AND LOW INCOME [SECTIONS 2.2 & 3.3]

- Younger children are more likely to live in families where no one works, than older ones [Section 3.3].
- Children from working families can also experience poverty, just over half the families who receive Child Tax Credits are working families [Section 2.2].
- One of the key barriers to people entering the labour market is childcare costs as in 2014 national research found that part-time childcare costs outstrip the average mortgage. In Barnsley the average cost for 25 hours childcare, is £85 a week per child or almost

£4,500 a year **however rates in Barnsley are cheaper than regional and national averages.** [Section 3.3].

FAMILY SIZE & STABILITY [SECTIONS 3.7 AND 3.8]

- Lone parents are one of the highest risk groups for persistent poverty, and have some of the highest entry rates into poverty, and lowest exit rates. This is partly due to the difficulties in achieving a good income level compared with dual headed households [section 3.7].
- The number of lone parent families in Barnsley is in line with regional and national rates. However, lone parents are twice as likely to live in the more deprived wards than in the less deprived [section 3.7].
- Barnsley has a lower rate of large families (3+ children) than the regional and national average. Approx 1,100 of the Barnsley children who live in poverty come from large families [section 3.8].

HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE [SECTION 3.9]

- **Rates of teenage pregnancy are higher than the regional and national averages but are improving.**
- **Rates of smoking in pregnancy and low birth weights are higher in Barnsley than they are regionally. These lead to poorer health outcomes for children.**
- **Only 0.5% of Barnsley children in reception are underweight, this is better than both the Regional and National averages.**
- Barnsley has higher number of young people aged under 16 years claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) than the both the regional and national averages.

Chapter 4: Older People Affected by Poverty

There is very little evidence concerning older people affected by poverty in Barnsley, but the data that is available does suggest that levels of poverty are not increasing in this age group. Age UK says that many people do not realise when they're entitled to benefits, but also says some feel too proud or embarrassed to claim, while others find the process of claiming too intrusive.¹

HOUSING [SECTION 4.2]

- The condition of the homes that older Barnsley residents live in is an issue, particularly for those aged over 60 and living alone. 56% of them lived in housing in need of repairs to brick/ stone work, roofs and windows. The main reasons why these repairs had not been made were: they could not afford to them (owner occupiers); or the repairs were not their responsibility (private renters).

¹ <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-news/more-should-be-done-to-help-older-people-claim-benefits/>

- In Barnsley 14.8% of the non-decent housing is occupied by those aged over 65.

CARER'S [SECTION 4.4]

- In Barnsley, 8,454 (19%) residents aged 65 and over provide unpaid care for other members of their family, such as grandchildren and partners.

BENEFITS [SECTION 4.5]

- Almost 1 in 4 people aged 60 to 64 are claiming some type of means tested state benefit.

PENSIONS [SECTION 4.6]

- 15% of those in the Yorkshire and Humber region that retiring this year have no private pension and will rely on the State Pension or Pension Credit alone.
- 1 in 5 of all people aged over 60 years living within Barnsley were claiming Pension Credit and of these 75% were single.
- The claimant rates for Pension Credit in Barnsley are lower than the regional and national averages, however given the levels a deprivation, low literacy skills, and cultural issues across the borough suggests there could be hidden pockets of poverty.

TRANSPORT [SECTION 4.7]

- Older people rely most on public transport, and those who are in poverty are least likely to have access to alternatives. They also have the highest rates of mobility issues, which make shopping, banking and medical journeys even more difficult.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE [SECTION 4.8]

- National estimates suggest that problematic alcohol use in this age group is a growing issue, however the evidence locally is not available.

EXCESS WINTER DEATHS [SECTION 4.9]

- In Barnsley the Excess Winter Death Index are higher in the more deprived ward areas.