

Highgate by numbers

The first in a series of articles by Simon Briscoe that will look at publicly available statistical data about Highgate and its surrounds.

Background to the numbers

A few years ago barely any local area data existed but as every month goes by more seems to become available. I will not be able to present all of it here but more will be put on the Highgate Society website (www.highgatesociety.com) and I will give the sources for the data so that those who are interested can dig deeper.

Much of the new data comes from the government in one form or another. The 1990s saw a growing interest in trying to understand the differences between areas that are geographically close but socially and economically very different. The debate about the so-called north-south divide had become increasingly sterile as professionals realised that in reality serious poverty often exists in close proximity to wealth. The government realised that it would be difficult accurately to target public money without knowing where the areas of particular need were.

The desire to have local area numbers came at the same time as the technical ability to create the numbers. The wide availability of the computer processing power necessary to do the calculations coupled with the ability to match data from various computer records to geographic points was the main development. The numbers are still new and most people are not aware of their existence.

But there are many potential uses of the numbers. They offer a chance to hold local politicians to account. Citizens will be far better placed to engage public officials in debate about their areas. Such discussions normally happened in the past on the basis of hunch or at best fragile numbers.

Some of the country's largest companies have been modelling local area data to help decide where to locate supermarkets, for example, but now information is available to small businesses, which will be able to see where skilled workers live, how crime rates differ and where people of certain ages or income live.

I will present numbers here for fun and enlightenment – it can do no harm to be more knowledgeable about our habitat.

Forthcoming articles will be about census data (remember filling in those ten-yearly forms in April 2001?), the government's own 'neighbourhood statistics', and numbers compiled and released by commercial organisations. All sorts of different data are covered and relating to different 'geographies' – most are organised by local authority ward or by postcode. This time we start with deprivation and basic population numbers.

Deprivation

'Deprivation indicators' are published by The Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions based on work by a team at Oxford University. Figures relate to 2000 (using ward boundaries as they were in the late 1990s) and cover England. The website below shows all the reference documents.

The table shows some summary data. I have decided to show all the wards that have a boundary with the two wards called Highgate (one in Camden and one in Haringey). The 16 wards give a good idea of what might be called Highgate and surrounds. It covers N6 and large chunks of N2, N8, N10, N19 and NW3. Certainly I would expect most Highgate Society members to live in the area covered. Wards are ranked according to their deprivation score. The most deprived area – Benchill in Manchester – is ranked 1 and the least deprived – Aldenham East in Hertfordshire is ranked 8414.

What do the numbers show:

- The Highgate area turns out to be a perfect example of a considerable social and economic mix in a small area. One ward, Garden Suburb, is among the least deprived 10 percent in the country while three wards are in the most deprived 10 percent.
- Hampstead Town - as smart as it might seem - is not in the country's top 10 percent of areas.
- Muswell Hill – as I am sure everyone who lives there already knew – has no reason to feel inferior to Highgate – their scores are just about the same!
- Archway ward, straddling the Archway Road and always slightly 'unfashionable' compared to Highgate, is significantly less deprived than its 'up the hill' neighbour. That is despite Archway returning Labour councillors and Highgate returning Conservatives, up to the last local elections.
- Only five of the sixteen wards in our area are in the top half in the country.
- The scores, as opposed to the ranks, are interesting as they show four clear groupings – 16 to 14, 13 to 9, 8 to 4 and 3 to 1. Haringey and Barnet dominate the top two groups, and Camden and Islington dominating the inner city areas in the more deprived two.
- Although several wards in the Highgate area appear in low positions in the rankings, the scores in the table show that Benchill in Manchester, the most deprived ward, is considerably more deprived. All but three of our local wards have scores nearer the least deprived than the most deprived.

The overall index score is derived by adding the figures from six separate 'domains' – income, employment, health, education and skills, housing, and access to services. The first two – income and employment – count for half of the overall score.

The score in each domain is derived by the researchers by looking at a number of indicators. For example, income deprivation is measured by counting the number of people on various social benefits such as income support and family credit, and employment deprivation is measured by reference to, for example, the unemployment rate and the number of incapacity benefit claimants.

The 16 wards in our area tend to be ranked in pretty much the same order in each of the domains – moving up or down just one or places at the most. But collectively the wards in the area tend to be higher relative to others in the country in some domains and lower in others. The area in general scores well in education and health and worse in employment. Highgate in Haringey for example, ranks at 4419 overall, but higher in health (5269) and education (7692), but lower in employment (3689).

So while being just above average overall, Highgate comes in the top 10 percent in education. This is because children in the area tend to have low absenteeism, have English as a first language, perform well in primary school tests, stay on after 16 in school, and enter higher education – the variables in the education domain. This presumably reflects the fact that a good number of the children in the area attend private schools.

Population structure

Hampstead, Highgate (Haringey) and Garden Suburb all have 20 percent – one in five – of the residents over 60 years of age. The ratios of elderly in Crouch End, Highview and Archway wards are much lower due, in the first two cases to the number of flats, and in the latter due to the large proportion of good sized family homes which tend not to be lived in by the elderly once the family has left home. The café culture of Crouch End is easy to understand given its high proportion of working age residents.

Deaths outnumbered births in only three wards in 1998 – Highgate, Garden Suburb and Fortis Green – in good part due to the location of care homes for the elderly.

With nearly 2000 births each year in the area covered, it is no wonder there is pressure on places at good schools.

Source: <http://www.urban.dtlr.gov.uk/research/id2000/index.htm>

Wards in the Highgate area ranked by deprivation					
Ward	Borough	National rank	Score	Local rank	Population
Garden Suburb	Barnet	8073	4.8	16	6700
Hampstead Town	Camden	7279	7.5	15	5300
Archway	Haringey	5632	12.2	14	4400
Highgate	Haringey	4419	16.1	13	2800
Muswell Hill	Haringey	4406	16.1	12	6100
<i>England average</i>		4207			
Fortis Green	Haringey	3786	18.9	11	5000
East Finchley	Barnet	3608	19.8	10	8800
Crouch End	Haringey	3553	20.1	9	5700
South End	Camden	2337	27.1	8	6900
Highgate	Camden	2013	29.7	7	11000
St John's	Camden	1292	37.7	6	6800
St George's	Islington	1259	38.1	5	5400
Hillrise	Islington	1228	38.5	4	4900
Gospel Oak	Camden	547	50.5	3	6300
Highview	Islington	499	52.0	2	3000
Junction	Islington	495	52.1	1	4500
Note:					
Aldenham East	Hertsmere	8414	1.2	na	na
Benchill	Manchester	1	83.8	na	na

Population data for each ward								
Ward	Borough	Pop	under 16, %	16-59, %	Over 60, %	Children born in 1998	Girls, %	Deaths in 1998
Garden Suburb	Barnet	6700	18	61	20	173	52	175
Hampstead Town	Camden	5300	14	66	20	81	48	48
Archway	Haringey	4400	14	73	13	99	54	39
Highgate	Haringey	2800	16	65	20	78	47	90
Muswell Hill	Haringey	6100	19	67	14	139	46	116
Fortis Green	Haringey	5000	17	67	16	117	48	118
East Finchley	Barnet	8800	19	66	16	209	52	174
Crouch End	Haringey	5700	17	70	13	142	50	62
South End	Camden	6900	16	67	16	86	45	45
Highgate	Camden	11000	19	62	19	126	48	104
St John's	Camden	6800	18	68	14	97	37	67
St George's	Islington	5400	18	68	14	110	42	74
Hillrise	Islington	4900	20	67	13	154	51	77
Gospel Oak	Camden	6300	20	61	18	74	58	51
Highview	Islington	3000	23	66	11	101	65	48
Junction	Islington	4500	21	63	17	146	44	88