

Highgate by numbers

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

The first article, concerning deprivation rankings and population structure appeared in Buzz no 159 and is now on the web site at www.highgatesociety.com. All the numbers in this article refer to the 16 local authority wards that have boundaries with either of the wards called 'Highgate' – one in Haringey and the other in Camden – or the N6 postcode. The area covers N6 and good chunks of N2, N8, N10, N19 and NW3, where most Highgate Society members live.

Key to map of wards		
	Borough	Number on map
Garden Suburb	Barnet	16
Hampstead Town	Camden	15
Archway	Haringey	14
Highgate	Haringey	13
Muswell Hill	Haringey	12
Fortis Green	Haringey	11
East Finchley	Barnet	10
Crouch End	Haringey	9
South End	Camden	8
Highgate	Camden	7
St John's	Camden	6
St George's	Islington	5
Hillrise	Islington	4
Gospel Oak	Camden	3
Highview	Islington	2
Junction	Islington	1

Note: the most deprived ward is number 1, see Buzz number 159 or www.highgatesociety.com for the definition of 'deprived'

Off to university and back to school

This autumn around 600 under 20s from the Highgate area will be going to university for the first time. As there are about 1,700 young people of each age living in the area, this suggests a little over one third of the youngsters are off on this adventure.

But the likelihood of going to university is very different for people from different wards. There will be only around 10 teenagers - about 10% - going from Highview ward (the area covering the Crouch End end of Hornsey Lane, Hornsey Rise and Crouch Hill). In contrast, over 100 – about two-thirds of the youngsters – will be going from Garden Suburb. As there are typically about a quarter as many again mature – over 20 years old – students going to university, the total number for the area is somewhat higher. Across the country as a whole, there is one unsuccessful university applicant for every three that are successful.

Under 20s going to university			
Ward	Borough	Successful applicants	% of age group
Garden Suburb	Barnet	115	65
Highgate	Haringey	35	60
Muswell Hill	Haringey	70	55
Fortis Green	Haringey	50	50
Hampstead Town	Camden	20	45
Highgate	Camden	50	40
South End	Camden	25	35
Archway	Haringey	20	35
Crouch End	Haringey	35	35
East Finchley	Barnet	65	35
Hillrise	Islington	35	30
Junction	Islington	30	25
St George's	Islington	25	20
St John's	Camden	15	20
Gospel Oak	Camden	15	20
Highview	Islington	10	10
Note: Source ONS, neighbourhood statistics. Data relate to 1998 and are rounded. % figures are estimates.			

The differences between local areas becomes apparent at an early stage in a child's education. The national curriculum that was introduced as part of the Education Reform Act in 1998 sets out a series of core subjects and requires tests at key ages. The four ages for tests are 7, 11, 14 and 16. The figures published for local areas relate to the performance of children at the so-called Key Stage 2 when children are 11 years old. Even though the data from independent schools are not included, there are already differences between areas. Of course, if independent schools – where the test scores are generally higher – could be included, the differences would be greater as more of the families in the less deprived and more well-healed wards have the option to send their children to fee paying schools.

The ranking of wards in primary school performance is similar to that of university entrants. The seven wards with average KS2 scores above four occupy seven of the nine top spots when it comes to youngsters going to university. But there are some shifts - notably the relatively good performance of some Haringey wards in the primary school table relative to university entrance and vice versa for South End and Highgate (Camden).

This phenomenon, which points to youngsters in the two Camden wards doing better at University entrance than the ward's primary school figures would suggest, could be for many reasons. It might be that primary education is better in Haringey than in the other boroughs, or that the performance of secondary schools in the borough is poor. But it could reflect many other factors such as the process of gentrification in the last decade or more, which has 'imported' families with parents who are more ambitious for their children's education. One possible explanation would be the greater take-up of private prep schools in the west of our area (compared to the east). (Independent, or fee-paying, schools make up a significant minority of school places – 6% of pupils in England as a whole, rising to 10% in London and 13% in inner London.) The daily journey from the Camden wards to the prep schools in Hampstead and Swiss Cottage is far less unappealing than would be the journey from the eastern side of Muswell Hill or Crouch End. If this is happening, the western wards could be seeing more of the able children from higher income families taking the private option and not appearing in these figures.

Performance of children at age 11 in core subjects			
Ward	Borough	% of children scoring over level 4	KS2 average score
Hampstead Town	Camden	38	4.25
Garden Suburb	Barnet	33	4.15
Crouch End	Haringey	31	4.12
Highgate	Haringey	31	4.11
Muswell Hill	Haringey	34	4.11
Archway	Haringey	31	4.09
Fortis Green	Haringey	32	4.04
East Finchley	Barnet	23	3.99
Highgate	Camden	23	3.98
Highview	Islington	22	3.90
St John's	Camden	22	3.89
Hillrise	Islington	23	3.88
South End	Camden	20	3.87
Junction	Islington	17	3.80
Gospel Oak	Camden	17	3.79
St George's	Islington	16	3.77

Note: Source ONS. Data relate to summer 1998 and are rounded. % figures are estimates.

Benefit culture

There are an estimated 4900 claimants of unemployment benefit in the area, pointing to a rate of about 4% of the population aged 16-59. (As the local area figures relate to 1998, the rates now will be a fraction lower if national trends have been followed locally.) The rate in individual wards ranges from 2% in Garden Suburb to 10% in Junction.

The Government has also produced figures for Incapacity Benefit (IB) on a local basis which show a remarkably similar pattern to those on the claimant count, both in aggregate and distribution around the wards. (This is in contrast to the picture in some regions of the country which often shows sick and incapacity rates several times higher than unemployment.)

The lowest rate of IB is again in Garden Suburb (1%), with the highest rates in Gospel Oak, Highview and Junction (12% or 11%). Gospel Oak is somewhat of an oddity as it has a much higher rate of sickness than unemployment. Archway and Crouch End have the lowest sickness rates compared to unemployment, largely reflecting the social mix of the areas and the higher rates of private rental and home-ownership.

It is possible to add the figures of those on Job Seeker's Allowance (5600) and Incapacity Benefit (5500), to get an indication of how dependent the area is on state handouts. These are the main two benefits for people of working age, who might also receive Income Support, single parent allowances or Disability Allowance. The area's overall rate of dependency on these benefits is 11%. It is striking that several wards – Gospel Oak, Highview and Junction – have over 20%, or one in five, of the working age population off work and on these two benefits alone. The ranking of wards by deprivation (shown in the last edition of Buzz) and the proportion of residents who are benefit recipients is very similar.

Benefit recipients, % of working age adults			
	JSA	Incapacity	JSA & Incapacity
Archway	4	2	6
Crouch End	6	4	10
East Finchley	3	5	8
Fortis Green	5	4	9
Garden Suburb	2	1	3
Gospel Oak	8	12	20
Hampstead	3	3	6
Highgate - Camden	6	7	13
Highgate - Haringey	3	4	7
Highview	10	11	21
Hillrise	8	7	15
Junction	11	11	22
Muswell Hill	4	4	8
St George's	8	7	15
St John's	9	8	17
South End	5	6	11

Background to the numbers

A few years ago barely any local area data existed but as every month goes by more becomes available. 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 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 essential. The numbers are still new and as more people become aware of their existence, the many potential uses will become clearer. They will make it easier for citizens to engage public officials in debate about their areas and hold local politicians to account. Such discussions in the past were normally based on hunch or, at best, fragile numbers.

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Source: <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/home.asp>