

Place Survey 2008, England

About your local area

- 80 per cent of the population were satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- 59 per cent felt they belong to their immediate neighbourhood

Your local public services

- 33 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that their local council provided value for money
- 45 per cent were, taking everything into account, satisfied with the way their local council runs things

Awareness of civil protection arrangements in local area

- 15 per cent of the population said that they were very well or fairly well informed about what to do in the event of a large-scale emergency e.g. flooding or human pandemic flu.

Local decision-making

- 29 per cent felt they could influence decisions in their local area

Helping out

- 23 per cent had participated in formal volunteering at least once a month in the last twelve months

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Getting involved

- In the last 12 months, 14 per cent of the population had been involved in local decision-making (for example, being a member of a committee or groups relating to local services, education or standing as a local councillor)

Respect and consideration

- 31 per cent of the population felt that there were problems with people in their local area not treating one another with respect and consideration
- 72 per cent felt that they were treated with respect and consideration by local services
- 76 per cent felt that people from different backgrounds got on well together in their local area

Community Safety

- 29 per cent felt that drunk or rowdy behaviour was a problem in their area; for drug use or drug dealing the figure is 31%.
- 25 per cent felt that police and other local public services sought local people's views on community safety issues; and 26% felt that these bodies were successfully dealing with these problems.

Introduction

The 2008 Place Survey provides information on people's perceptions of their local area and the local services they receive. This release summarises the headline findings for England and Government Office regions with results for individual local authorities shown in the accompanying tables.

The survey collects information on 18 national indicators (NIs) for local government, used to measure local government performance for 152 county councils, metropolitan district councils, London boroughs and unitary authorities (see table 3).

The Place Survey was designed primarily for use at the local level. National and regional figures are provided here for benchmarking purposes. The NI questions are indicated by footnotes throughout the release and listed in full in the background notes.

About your local area

Overall, 80 per cent of the population in England were either satisfied or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live.¹

There was some variation by Government Office Region, with satisfaction lower in London (75%) and the North East and North West (both 77%) and higher in the South West (85%), East of England (83%) and South East (83%).

% either very or fairly satisfied with local area as a place to live, by Government Office region and England			
North East	77%	East of England	83%
North West	77%	London	75%
Yorkshire & the Humber	79%	South East	83%
East Midlands	80%	South West	85%
West Midlands	78%	England	80%

59 per cent felt very or fairly strongly that they belonged to their immediate neighbourhood², with this sense of belonging higher in the South West and North East (both 62%) but lower in London (52%).

¹ National Indicator (NI) 5

² NI 2

% Very or fairly strongly feel they belong to the immediate neighbourhood, Government Office region and England			
North East	62%	East of England	59%
North West	60%	London	52%
Yorkshire & the Humber	61%	South East	58%
East Midlands	60%	South West	62%
West Midlands	59%	England	59%

Your local public services

The Place Survey asked a very broad question about satisfaction with local council (“*And now taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you the way [name of council(s)] runs things?*”). Overall, 45 per cent were either satisfied or fairly satisfied. Satisfaction levels were higher in London (49%), East of England (47%) and the South East (47%) and lower in the North West (43%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (41%).

% Very satisfied and fairly satisfied, taking everything into account, with the way your council runs things? Government Office Region and England			
North East	46%	East of England	47%
North West	43%	London	49%
Yorkshire & the Humber	41%	South East	47%
East Midlands	44%	South West	44%
West Midlands	44%	England	45%

The answers to this question may reflect experiences of specific local services and/or concerns regarding value for money, both of which were asked by the survey.

Overall, a third of the population (33%) strongly agreed, or tended to agree, that their council provided value for money.

% Strongly or tend to agree that the local council provides value for money? By Government Office Region and England			
North East	35%	East of England	35%
North West	32%	London	35%
Yorkshire & the Humber	30%	South East	34%
East Midlands	34%	South West	31%
West Midlands	32%	England	33%

Levels of satisfaction varied between services. For most services relating to the environment (refuse collection, doorstep recycling and local tips and waste recycling centres) satisfaction levels were 70 per cent or more. With the exception of libraries (69%), satisfaction levels were below 50 per cent for sports, leisure and cultural services that local councils provide (sports and leisure facilities, museums and galleries and theatres and concert halls).

% Very or fairly satisfied with the following services, England	
Keeping public land clear of litter and refuse	57%
Refuse collection	78%
Doorstep recycling	70%
Local tips/household waste recycling centres	71%
Local transport information	48%
Local bus services	55%
Sport/leisure facilities	46%
Libraries	69%
Museums/galleries	41%
Theatres/concert halls	43%
Park and open spaces	69%

Information

15 per cent of the population said they were very well or fairly well-informed about what to do in the event of a large-scale emergency e.g. flooding or human pandemic flu³.

% Very well or fairly well informed about what to do in the event of a large-scale emergency e.g. flooding, human pandemic flu, by Government Office Region and England			
North East	16%	East of England	15%
North West	14%	London	14%
Yorkshire & the Humber	17%	South East	16%
East Midlands	16%	South West	17%
West Midlands	16%	England	15%

Local decision-making

29 per cent of the population felt that they could influence decisions affecting their local area⁴. The proportion was noticeably higher in London, where just over a third of people (35%) felt that they could influence decisions. A smaller proportion – 27% in England - felt that they would like to be more involved in local decision-making.

³ NI 37

⁴ NI 4

Government Office Region, England	% definitely or tend to agree that they can influence decisions in their local area	% generally speaking, would like to be involved
North East	28%	25%
North West	27%	27%
Yorkshire & the Humber	27%	25%
East Midlands	28%	24%
West Midlands	28%	25%
East of England	29%	25%
London	35%	33%
South East	28%	27%
South West	27%	25%
England	29%	27%

Helping out

The Place Survey asked about unpaid help that people gave, such as helping at a youth or day centre, helping to run an event or campaigning⁵. This was outside of anything that was a requirement of a job, and also excluded donating money. Overall, 23% of the population said that they had helped out at least once a month in the previous 12 months.

⁵ NI 6

% given unpaid help to any groups, clubs or organisations, at least once per month In the previous 12 months, by Government Office Region and England			
North East	19%	East of England	25%
North West	22%	London	21%
Yorkshire & the Humber	22%	South East	25%
East Midlands	23%	South West	28%
West Midlands	22%	England	23%

Getting involved

The survey asked about participation in decisions that affect the local community, for example by serving as a local councillor or being part of some decision-making body relating to local services⁶. Overall, 14% were engaged in some sort of civic participation.

% In the last twelve months of people who have belonged to group(s) that make decisions affecting the local area, by Government Office Region and England			
North East	12%	East of England	13%
North West	13%	London	17%
Yorkshire & the Humber	13%	South East	14%
East Midlands	13%	South West	16%
West Midlands	13%	England	14%

Respect and consideration

The Place Survey provided information that shed light on community cohesion. Just over three-quarters of the population felt that in their local area people from different backgrounds got on well together⁷ and just under a third (31 per cent) felt that there was a problem with people not treating

⁶ NI 3

⁷ NI 1

one another with respect and consideration⁸. 30% felt that parents in their local area took responsibility for the behaviour of their children⁹.

Government Office Region, England	% definitely or tend to agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together in local area	% thinking people not treating one another respect and consideration is a very big or fairly big problem	% definitely or tend to agree that parents in local area take responsibility for the behaviour of their children
North East	74%	35%	27%
North West	74%	34%	27%
Yorkshire & the Humber	72%	33%	28%
East Midlands	77%	31%	29%
West Midlands	75%	32%	28%
East of England	78%	27%	31%
London	76%	38%	30%
South East	79%	28%	31%
South West	80%	25%	33%
England	76%	31%	30%

Two further questions explored respect and consideration within the context of service provision – one exploring whether older people received the support they need to live independently at home, and one regarding fair treatment by local services. Just under a third of the population (30%) felt that older people received the support that they needed to live independently at home¹⁰. 72% of people felt that they received fair treatment by local services¹¹.

Government Office Region, England	% think that older people receive the support they need to live independently at home	% agree or tend to agree that they were treated with respect and consideration by local services
North East	36%	73%

⁸ NI 23

⁹ NI 22

¹⁰ NI 139

¹¹ NI 140

North West	32%	70%
Yorkshire & the Humber	33%	71%
East Midlands	31%	73%
West Midlands	31%	70%
East of England	29%	76%
London	23%	67%
South East	28%	76%
South West	33%	76%
England	30%	72%

Community safety

The Place Survey collected detailed information on peoples' perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area and the extent to which they felt that the police and other local services were dealing with these problems.

20 per cent felt that anti-social behaviour was a problem in their local area¹², with a higher proportion in London (26%) and lower levels in the South East (16%) and the South West (15%).

Around a quarter of the population felt that two specific forms of anti-social behaviour – drunk or rowdy behaviour¹³ (29%), and drug use or drug dealing¹⁴ (31%) – were problems in their local areas.

Government Office Region, England	% agreed that anti-social behaviour was a very big or fairly big problem ¹⁵	% think perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a very big or fairly big problem	% seeing drug use or drug dealing as very big or fairly big problem
North East	21%	32%	32%

¹² NI 17

¹³ NI 41

¹⁴ NI 42

¹⁵ NI 17 is a composite indicator based on perceptions of different anti-social behaviours (noisy neighbours or loud parties; teenagers hanging around the streets; rubbish or litter lying around; vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles; people using or dealing drugs; people being drunk or rowdy in public places; abandoned or burnt out cars).

North West	23%	32%	35%
Yorkshire & the Humber	22%	28%	34%
East Midlands	18%	27%	30%
West Midlands	21%	28%	33%
East of England	16%	26%	26%
London	26%	35%	37%
South East	16%	27%	24%
South West	15%	26%	26%
England	20%	29%	31%

The survey asked whether police and other local services sought peoples' views about community safety issues in the local area¹⁶ and about how successful they were in dealing with these problems¹⁷. The proportions for both questions were the same, around a quarter. Looking at the regional breakdown, the police and other local services were perceived to be most successful in seeking views and in dealing with these problems in the North East (29%) and London (29%).

Government Office Region, England	% strongly agreeing or tending to agree that police and other local services sought people's views about crime and anti-social behaviour in their area	% feeling that police and other local services dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour
North East	28%	29%
North West	26%	26%
Yorkshire & the Humber	22%	24%
East Midlands	23%	24%
West Midlands	24%	25%
East of England	24%	26%
London	28%	29%
South East	24%	26%

¹⁶ NI 27

¹⁷ NI 21

South West	25%	28%
England	25%	26%

About Yourself

The final section of the survey asked a number of questions regarding the characteristics of the respondents (e.g. age, sex, and ethnicity) and the household (e.g. number of adults and children). This information was used to help ensure that survey respondents were representative of the local population. This section also asked about general health¹⁸. 76% of the population described their health as, in general, being good or very good. Self-reported health was higher in London and the South East and lower in the North East.

% Describing health in general as very good or good by Government Office region and England			
North East	70%	East of England	77%
North West	73%	London	79%
Yorkshire & the Humber	73%	South East	79%
East Midlands	74%	South West	77%
West Midlands	73%	England	76%

Further analysis will be carried out to explore whether and to what extent the findings reported in this release vary for different sections of the community. For example, the information on age breakdown can be combined with the results from the 'About Your Local Area' section to show that 84% of those aged 65 and over were satisfied with both their home and neighbourhood¹⁹.

Use of survey data for local and national performance measurement

The results of the Place Survey inform the measurement of the performance of local government.

¹⁸ NI 119

¹⁹ NI 138

The survey collected information on 18 national indicators for local government, used to monitor performance in 152 local authorities (county councils, metropolitan district councils, London boroughs and unitary authorities). 2008 was the first year that the Place Survey was run, and therefore its primary purpose was to supply baseline figures. A further survey is due to be run in Autumn 2010.

The Place Survey is designed primarily for use at the local level. Other government surveys, such as the Citizenship and British Crime Surveys, should be used at the national and regional level where identical questions are asked.

The results of the Place Survey can also be used to measure some indicators in Public Service Agreements (PSAs) 15, 17, 21, 23 and 25 and the Department Strategic Objectives (DSOs) for Communities and Local Government, Cabinet Office, Home Office and the Department of Health.

Figures aggregated across certain deprived local authority areas are to be used to measure Communities and Local Government's Department Strategic Objectives (DSO) indicators 3.4 (overall satisfaction) and 3.9 iv (perceptions of anti-social behaviour). Their precise definitions are set out in the DSO 3 measurement annexes at

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/928748.pdf>.

Data source

The Place Survey was run between September and December 2008 but designed to reflect the structure of local government from 1st April 2009, when five new county and four new unitary authorities were established. For example, in the North West, the survey was designed to cover the new Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester unitary authorities, rather than the former district councils that existed until 1st April 2009.

In total, 329 local authorities ran the survey. Twenty four county councils did not run the survey – results for these councils are derived from the constituent districts.

Each individual council was responsible for running the survey in their local area, using a core questionnaire supplied by Communities and Local Government. A copy of the questionnaire and a copy of manual supplied to local authorities can be found on the Department's website:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/placesurveymanual0809>

Local authorities had the option of adding additional questions (from the "question bank" in the above link). These were not collected centrally so are not included in this statistical release or the accompanying tables.

543,713 questionnaires were completed. Unweighted data were supplied by councils to the Audit Commission. The data were then weighted and provisional results for national indicators were sent

to 152 councils in February 2009. Following a review of the survey conducted by Communities and Local Government, adjustments were made to the provisional data results and confidence intervals. The review and the changes to the data are discussed in the following section.

Each questionnaire should have been completed by any resident aged 18 or over living at an address.

Data quality

Unlike other surveys (e.g. the Citizenship Survey), the Place Survey was not run by a single contractor under a single contract – each local authority was responsible for running its own survey. Ensuring data quality was complicated, given the large number of separate surveys. Quality was assured in a number of ways.

The Place Survey manual detailed eight common standards that needed to be followed when conducting the survey: following the timetable, using the questionnaire template, using the appropriate sampling method, using a correct sampling frame, using a common method of data collection (postal), maximising response rates, achieving a sufficient sample to enable statistically reliable data, and submitting results using templates and tools provided on a dedicated Place Survey website.

The provisional data sent to the Audit Commission were then subjected to initial checks, and weighted, and provisional national indicators results (scores and confidence intervals) were sent to 152 county councils, metropolitan district councils, unitary authorities and London Boroughs.

Communities and Local Government conducted a quality review of the survey, involving an independent academic statistician as well as members of the Government Statistical Service (GSS). The review was based around the principles in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics: <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf>

On the advice of the review, the provisional data were revised. The revised results reported in this release and the accompanying tables are based on the same underlying data submitted by councils and used to calculate the provisional results. The differences between the provisional results and the revised results arise from (1) capping of the scaled (final) weights to reduce the impact of individual responses to the overall estimates and (2) the application of an inflation factor to the confidence intervals which enabled them to more accurately capture the impact of the survey design and non-response. This inflation factor is based on the weighting and therefore it varies between local authorities.

These changes mean that the results and confidence intervals shown in table 3 should be used in place of the provisional results and confidence intervals supplied to 152 councils in February 2009.

The review considered the impact of low response rates in some areas. There is no evidence that

either specific sections of the population or any particular localities have been systematically underrepresented. Furthermore, as noted above, the inflation factor applied to the confidence intervals following the review has improved the robustness of the results. Nonetheless, where response rates are low (less than 30%) and confidence intervals are wide (outside +/- 3 percentage points) some caution may be necessary when using the results to set performance targets (for example as part of local area agreements), particularly when the target is linked to a financial reward.

A technical report detailing the reviews' findings and recommendations will be published by the Communities and Local Government in due course.

Notes on analysis and data presentation

The tables in this statistics release summarise the findings at Government Office and England level, in order to draw out the general headline figures. The primary purpose of the Place Survey is to collect information at local authority level, to inform performance monitoring. The data in the accompanying tables will therefore be of use for local and central government as well as citizens interested in their local area and the services they receive.

Some of the questions asked in the Place Survey are also asked in the Citizenship Survey and the British Crime Survey. Because of methodological differences²⁰ between the surveys, results at national and government office level may differ for some questions. The Citizenship and British Crime Surveys are National Statistics and should be used for national level results.

All reported differences between regions in this release are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level. The level of change required to observe a statistically significant difference varies depending on the number of respondents the percentage is based on; and the observed percentage itself.

The Department for Communities and Local Government will be conducting further analysis of the data, which will be published in due course.

Accompanying tables

Table 1 Results for England and Government Office Regions

Table 2 Survey results for 353 local authorities

Table 3 National Indicator results for 152 local authorities

²⁰ The main difference is that the Citizenship Survey and British Crime Surveys use face-to-face interviews whereas the Place Survey is a postal survey.

Background notes

Definition of Terms

“*Your local area*” – when completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to consider “local area” as the area within 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home.

“*Civic participation*” – the ‘Getting involved’ section defines civic participation as being involved in any of the following in the preceding 12 months:

Being a local councillor (for the local authority, town or parish)

Being a member of a group making local decisions relating to any of the following: local health or education services; regeneration of the local area; to tackle local crime problems; a tenants group; services for young people; and other group making decisions on services in the local community

List of national indicators

The following 18 national indicators for local government have been collected using the Place Survey.

NI 1: % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area

NI 2: % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood

NI 3: Civic participation in the local area

NI 4: % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality

NI 5: Overall/general satisfaction with local area

NI 6: Participation in regular volunteering

NI 17: Perceptions of anti-social behaviour

NI 21: Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by police and other local services

NI 22: Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area

NI 23: Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration.

NI 27: Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues

NI 37: Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area

NI 41: Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem

NI 42: Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem

NI 119: Self-reported measure of people's overall health and well-being

NI 138: Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood

NI 139: The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home

NI 140: Fair treatment by local services.

The Place Survey Manual contains further information on each national indicator, including full definition, rationale, formula and a worked example:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/placesurveymanual0809>

Other

Details of officials who received pre-release access to the Communities and Local Government Place Survey up to 24 hours before release can be found at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/researchandstatistics/statistics/subject/cohesionstatistics>

Enquiries

This Statistical Release can be accessed and all text, tables and charts downloaded electronically, from the Communities and Local Government website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/researchandstatistics/statistics/>

Further details on this Statistical Release are available from Dan Howard, Communities and Local Government, Zone 5/A6, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU. Telephone 020 7944 5305. E-mail: dan.howard@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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Information on Official Statistics is available via the UK Statistics Authority website:
www.statistics.gov.uk.

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