Portrait of the West Midlands

By Angela Medland, Office for National Statistics

Key points

The West Midlands region:

• saw an 11 percentage points decline in manufacturing jobs from 22 per cent of the workforce in 1996 to 11 per cent in 2010, although this is still one of the highest regional percentages

• has the highest proportion of the working-age population having no qualifications among all the English regions

• has the largest non-White regional population outside of London. ‘Asian or Asian British’ is the ethnic group that makes up the biggest non-White proportion of the West Midlands population (estimated at 8.5 per cent in 2009)

• has the highest total fertility rate of all the English regions at 2.08 births per woman in 2008

• has the highest infant mortality rate of all the regions and countries in the UK – 6.0 per 1,000 live births in 2009 compared with 4.6 for the UK

• has the lowest risk of household residents being a victim of crime out of all English regions: 15.0 per cent of households were victimised at least once, compared with the national average of 16.4 per cent in 2009/10

• has a good record of waste disposal – with the lowest regional percentage of local authority collected waste going into landfill (28 per cent compared with 49 per cent for the UK in 2009/10), and the largest percentage incinerated as a method of energy recovery

Introduction

The West Midlands region shares its borders with the North West, East Midlands, South East and South West regions of England, and with Wales. It is the only landlocked region in England, with an area of 13,000 square km, making it the third smallest English region by area, after London and the North East.

The region is often described as an area of contrasts. It includes the densely populated conurbation of Birmingham, which is the largest urban area in England outside London, as well as beautiful areas of remote countryside within the counties of Herefordshire and Shropshire (see Map 1 and Map 2). It contains areas of high deprivation, particularly in Birmingham, Coventry and Stoke-on-Trent, but also contains very prosperous areas like Solihull, south Warwickshire and Evesham.
The West Midlands region contains many historic sites including the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Ironbridge Gorge, the birthplace of the industrial revolution, as well as Stratford-upon-Avon, which was the home of William Shakespeare.

Administratively, the region includes the former Metropolitan County\(^1\) also known as the ‘West Midlands’, which covers the seven metropolitan districts of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton; the four unitary authorities – County of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Stoke-on-Trent, and Telford and Wrekin; and the three counties of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Staffordshire. Within these three counties there are 19 local authorities (subsequently referred to in this article as lower tier authorities), which range in size from Tamworth (31 sq km) to Stratford-on-Avon (978 sq km).

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\(^1\) Metropolitan counties were abolished in 1986 but still continue to exist in law and as a geographic frame of reference.
northern corner of Staffordshire, which is home to Flash, the highest village in England, at 463 metres above sea level. The region also contains a stretch of the longest river in the UK – the Severn – and has the third largest area of land designated as green belt (270,000 hectares), accounting for 21 per cent of the total area of the region.

**Map 2 West Midlands: local or unitary authority, NUTS 2\(^1\) sub-regions and Rural/Urban Definition\(^2\)**

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1 Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics, level 2.
2 By Lower Layer Super Output Area.
3 After the April 2009 re-organisation.

Source: Office for National Statistics

Historically, employment in the West Midlands has been dominated by manufacturing, including major employers such as Rover, Jaguar, Wedgwood, JCB and Cadbury. In the fourth quarter of 1996 ‘manufacturing’ accounted for the biggest proportion of workforce jobs in the West Midlands, at 22 per cent of the workforce (575,500 jobs). However, by the fourth quarter of 2010 these figures had changed considerably, with ‘manufacturing’ only accounting for 11 per cent of workforce jobs (285,500 jobs) in the West Midlands, an 11 percentage point decline from 1996, although this is still among the highest proportions in the UK.
The main cities and towns in the West Midlands include Birmingham, Coventry, Hereford, Shrewsbury, Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford, Wolverhampton and Worcester. There are nine universities: Aston, Birmingham City, Coventry, Keele, Staffordshire, University of Birmingham, University of Warwick, University of Wolverhampton and University of Worcester, as well as three university colleges.

The West Midlands’ central location means that it is well linked to other parts of the country, making it one of the most accessible regions. The region is linked to the north and south, east and west by rail and road networks. It has several motorways serving the area including the M5, M6, M40, M42 and M54, and is the home to the UK’s first toll motorway, the M6 Toll north of Birmingham, which was designed to relieve congestion. The West Midlands is also home to Birmingham International Airport, the second largest airport in England outside of the London area, serving over 180 destinations in Europe, North America, Asia and the Middle East, and handling over 9.5 million passengers in 2008.

The National Exhibition Centre (NEC) in Solihull, adjacent to Birmingham International Airport and Birmingham International Railway station, is the largest exhibition centre in the UK, with 21 interconnected halls. In February 2006 it was estimated that over the previous 30 years the NEC had welcomed more than 90 million visitors, staged more than 2,500 events and generated more than £20 billion for the regional economy.

Population

Local Population
The West Midlands had a population of just over 5.4 million in mid-2009, an increase of 2.0 per cent since mid-2004. This compared with an increase of 3.3 per cent for the whole of the UK over the same time period. The former West Midlands Metropolitan County had a population of 2.6 million in mid-2009. This area covers the metropolitan districts of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

Figure 3 shows the mid-2009 population estimates for the counties, unitary authorities and metropolitan districts in the West Midlands. Of these, Birmingham, the second largest local authority in the UK by population, had an estimated population of over 1 million people, which was a larger population than that of the counties of Staffordshire (829,000), Worcestershire (557,000) and Warwickshire (535,000). Telford and Wrekin had the smallest population among the upper tier authorities, at 162,000, followed by the County of Herefordshire (179,000).
Of the 19 lower tier authorities (not shown in Figure 3), Warwick and Stafford had the largest populations, with 139,000 and 125,000 respectively. The districts of North Warwickshire and Malvern Hills (in Worcestershire) had the smallest populations, 62,000 and 75,000 respectively.

In 2009 the West Midlands’ population density was 418 people per sq km, the fourth highest of all the regions, and higher than the England average of 398 people per sq km. Of all the lower tier authorities and metropolitan districts within the West Midlands, Birmingham was the most densely populated, with 3,840 people per sq km, followed by Wolverhampton (3,440 people per sq km). This contrasts with Stratford-on-Avon which only had 122 people per sq km and Malvern Hills (130 people per sq km), reflecting the rural nature and sparse population of these areas.
According to the Rural/Urban Definition defined at Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) level, 84 per cent of the West Midlands population live in towns or cities with a population of over 10,000. Of the remaining population, about 6 per cent live in areas classified as ‘Town and Fringe’, and 9 per cent in ‘Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings’, see Map 2.

Figure 4 Proportion of urban and rural populations: by county, unitary authority, and metropolitan district, mid-2009

Figure 4 shows that there is variation among the West Midlands’ counties, unitary authorities, and metropolitan districts with respect to the urban/rural distribution of people. At one end of the scale, all of the population in Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton lived in urban areas with a population of more than 10,000 people. At the opposite end of the urban-rural spectrum, in Shropshire for example, around 27 per cent of people live in towns and fringe areas, and 33 per cent in villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings.

Age
In 2009 the West Midlands had the highest proportion of children aged under 16 of the nine English regions, 19.4 per cent compared with an England average of 18.7 per cent. Older people in
the West Midlands (those aged 65 and over) made up 16.9 per cent of the population, compared with 16.3 for England. The population aged 16 to 64 equated to 63.7 per cent, which was slightly lower than the England average (65.0 per cent).

Figure 5  **Mid-year population estimates: by 5-year age band and sex, mid-2009**

The more detailed population structure of the West Midlands by five-year age band in Figure 5 shows some substantial differences from the UK as a whole. Notably, a lower proportion of those living in the West Midlands were aged between 25 and 39 than for the UK.
Ethnic group

The West Midlands has the largest non-White population outside of London, according to experimental population estimates for mid-2009. Figure 6 shows the estimated population proportions for those in the non-White ethnic groups across the regions. According to the estimates, 14 per cent of the population of the West Midlands were classed as non-White, only second behind London at 30 per cent.

Figure 6  Proportion of non-White ethnic groups\(^1\) in total population: by region, mid-2009

England
Percentages

1 Experimental population estimates by ethnic group

Source: Office for National Statistics
Figure 7 shows the estimated composition of the non-White population in the West Midlands compared with England. People from the Asian or Asian British ethnic group made up the biggest non-White proportion of the West Midlands population at 8.5 per cent, higher than the national average for England at 6.1 per cent. The next largest non-White ethnic group in the West Midlands was Black or Black British with 2.7 per cent of the population in this group, which was lower than the national average at 2.9 per cent. People in the Mixed ethnic group represented 1.9 per cent of the population (1.8 per cent for England). The proportion in the Other ethnic group was smaller than that for England (at 1.3 and 1.6 per cent respectively). Sub-regionally the highest proportions of people from non-White ethnic groups were living in Birmingham, Sandwell and Wolverhampton.

A recent Regional Trends article, ‘Regional Characteristics of foreign-born people living in the United Kingdom’\(^2\), reported that in the West Midlands the foreign-born population made up 11 per cent of the total population in 2009 (compared with 4.6 per cent for the UK). This was one of the largest percentages by region and country within the UK and accounted for 8 per cent of the total foreign-born population of the UK in 2009. Asian was shown to be the largest ethnic group among the foreign-born population (40 per cent) in the West Midlands. People of White ethnic background made up the second largest group (32 per cent) among the foreign-born, and a notable percentage were of a Black ethnic background (15 per cent).

\(^2\) To see the full article please go to Regional Trends 43, 2010/2011 Edition or follow the web link: www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?ID=2601
**Population change**

Between mid-2008 and mid-2009 the population in the West Midlands increased by 0.4 per cent (about 23,000 people), which was lower than the increase for the UK at 0.6 per cent. Of the English regions, only the North West had a lower percentage increase in population at 0.3 per cent (also about 23,000 people). The majority of the increase (87 per cent) between mid-2008 and mid-2009 was due to natural change (the difference between births and deaths), and the remaining 13 per cent was due to net migration and other changes.

**Figure 8**  
**Total fertility rate (TFR): by region, 2008**

Interestingly the West Midlands had the highest total fertility rate (TFR) of all the English regions at 2.08 births per woman in 2008 (Figure 8) compared with 1.97 for England. This measure is the average number of live children that a group of women would bear if they experienced the age-specific fertility rates of the calendar year in question throughout their childbearing lifespan.
Figure 9 shows the components of population change for counties, unitary authorities and the metropolitan districts in the West Midlands for mid-2008 to mid-2009, as a percentage of the total population. The biggest population growth, of 0.9 per cent, was in Birmingham (around 9,500 people), mostly due to net natural change. While most of these areas saw an increase in their populations, Stoke-on-Trent saw an overall decrease of 0.2 per cent (about 2,500 people), due to net migration and other changes (an outflow) being greater than the (positive) natural change. Shropshire is a rural area that had a noticeable net increase due largely to positive net migration and other changes.

Of the lower tier authorities in the West Midlands (not shown in Figure 9), only Redditch and Wyre Forest (both in Worcestershire) saw an overall decrease in population (about 1,000 people each), again due to net outward migration and other changes being greater than the natural change. All other local authorities experienced a net increase in population, or their population was relatively unchanged.
Figure 10 Net migration\(^1\): by region, 2009

England
Thousands

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<td>South West</td>
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1 Net inter-regional migration of people moving from/to other regions of the UK and net international migration of people migrating from/to outside of the UK.

Source: National Health Service Central Register and International Passenger Survey, Office for National Statistics

Figure 10 showing regions ranked by net international migration, indicates that in 2009 the West Midlands had a net international migration gain of 11,000 people and a net inter-regional migration loss of 10,000 people. This change can be compared with Yorkshire and The Humber, which saw the largest net international migration gain of 37,000 people.

Trends in natural change and migration feed into population projections. The 2008-based population projections indicate that if recent trends continue the rate of population growth for the West Midlands may remain below the national average. The total population is projected to reach nearly 6 million people by 2028, which is an increase of just 10.7 per cent, compared with 14.7 per cent for England. The West Midlands is projected to have the third smallest population increase of all the English regions, with the East of England having the largest at 20 per cent.
Figure 11 shows projected population change by broad age group from 2008 to 2033. The projected change for the 65-and-over age group was lower in the West Midlands than England – at 58 per cent compared with 65 per cent. The projected change for the region for 0 to 15-year-olds was also slightly below average (10 per cent in the West Midlands compared with 13 per cent).

The most notable difference in projected population change between the region and country was for the 16 to 64 age group, which is only projected to increase by 2 per cent in the West Midlands between 2008 and 2033, compared with 8 per cent for England as a whole. This could be due to people of this age leaving the region. Inter-regional migration figures support this idea; figures show that in 2009 the West Midlands had a different migration pattern to most of the other regions, with large outflows (and small inflows) of the 16 to 64 population, in particular those aged 15 to 29.

These trends feed into the migration component of the population projections which indicate that the West Midlands may be one of the few regions to have a net loss of ‘working-age’ populations. Many age groups are projected to have some net inter-regional migration loss of people to other regions and UK countries, but those aged 15 to 29 see large net losses throughout the course of the projections.

Households and housing
In the West Midlands there were an estimated 2.2 million households at mid-2009, approximately 10 per cent of the total in England. Approximately 58 per cent of households contained a married or cohabiting couple, similar to the England average (57 per cent), while 27 per cent were one-
person households and 12 per cent were lone parent households. The West Midlands had the second largest proportion of multiple-family households of all the English regions, at 1.3 per cent.

The total number of households in the West Midlands is projected to rise to almost 2.7 million by 2033, according to projections based on mid-2008 data, an increase of around 500,000 households. This is equivalent to a 16 per cent change, which is one of the smallest changes of all the regions in percentage terms – only the North East and North West saw a smaller change (14 per cent) over this time period.

There were an estimated 2.3 million dwellings in the West Midlands in 2009, accounting for 10 per cent of England's total dwelling stock and an estimated increase of 6.4 per cent since 1999, compared with 7.8 per cent for England. Over 80 per cent of the dwellings were owner occupied or privately rented, 10 per cent were rented from registered social landlords (including housing associations), and 9 per cent were local authority owned.

In 2008/09, 11,100 new dwellings were completed in the West Midlands, the second lowest number out of all the English regions. This was a fall of 2,400 compared with the number completed in 2007/08 (at 13,500), and a decrease of 18 per cent, which is in line with a uniform trend seen throughout the regions. Of the dwellings completed in 2008/09 in the West Midlands, 9,100 dwellings were completed in the private enterprise sector, 1,600 for registered landlords and 300 for local authorities (Figure 12).

**Figure 12** Permanent dwellings completed: by tenure and region, 2008/2009

Source: Department for Communities and Local Government
The median price for homes sold in the West Midlands in 2009 was £142,000, the same as in 2008, compared with the England median of £170,000 (a decrease of 2.3 per cent). The median house price was ranked approximately in the middle of the figures for the English regions – with the highest median house price being in London at £250,000, and the lowest in the North East at £120,000.

Sub-regionally, 20 of the 30 lower tier authorities, unitary authorities and metropolitan districts in the West Midlands had a median house price lower than that for England (at £170,000). Stratford-on-Avon (in Warwickshire) had the highest median house price of £211,000 (down 8.3 per cent from 2008) followed by Malvern Hills (in Worcestershire) at £194,000 (down 7.9 per cent). The lowest median house price was for Stoke-on-Trent, at just £88,000 (down 4.9 per cent from the previous year). The next lowest was Sandwell, where the median price was £110,000 (down 6.1 per cent). A recent article on the Neighbourhood Statistics website examines regional and local variations in house prices in more detail.

**Box 1 Measuring housing affordability**

An important indicator of housing affordability is the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile incomes. The lower quartile value for a particular area is determined by ranking all prices or incomes in ascending order and identifying the value below which 25 per cent fall. The statistics used for lower quartile income are workplace-based annual full-time individual earnings from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). The ASHE is based on a 1 per cent sample of employee jobs in April of a given year. It does not cover the self-employed nor does it cover employees not paid during the reference period.

Lower quartile house prices are based on Land Registry data for the first two quarters of a given year. Each ratio is calculated by dividing the house price by income. Data for local authorities in England and Wales can be accessed on the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) website:

www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/housingmarket/livetables

A common indicator of housing affordability compares house prices towards the lower end of the range (lower quartile) with lower quartile earnings of workers in the area. On this measure, according to the latest available data for 2010, the ratio for the West Midlands was 6.1, which means that lower quartile flats and houses were more affordable to local workers than those in London (where the ratio was 9.0), the South East (8.5), the South West (8.2) and the East of England (7.7) regions. However, house prices in the West Midlands were less affordable than the

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3 The article ‘Regional and Local variations in the housing market, England and Wales, 2001-10’ can be accessed from the following link to the Neighbourhood Statistics website:
other regions – North East (4.9), North West (5.1), Yorkshire and The Humber (5.4) and East Midlands (5.8). Stratford-on-Avon (in Warwickshire) had the least affordable homes among the local authorities in the West Midlands, with a ratio of 9.8. The most affordable were in Stoke-on-Trent, which had a ratio of 3.7.

Map 13 illustrates the ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings for local, unitary and metropolitan districts in the West Midlands, showing the variation in affordability within the region.

Map 13  **Ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings: by local or unitary authority, 2010**

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Source: Annual Survey and Earnings (Office for National Statistics); Communities and Local Government; Land Registry.
Education and skills

The proportion of eligible pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent qualifications in 2007/08 was 64.1 per cent in the West Midlands, which ranked the fourth lowest of the English regions. However, the differences between the regions were relatively small and the national average (England) was 65.3 per cent. Among the West Midlands unitary authorities and metropolitan districts, the highest proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C or equivalent qualifications was in Solihull at 73.9 per cent, and the lowest was in Sandwell at 56.3 per cent. Figure 14 shows the variation by percentage point difference from the England average.

Figure 14  Pupils achieving 5+ grades A* to C at GCSE: by local education authority, 2007/08

West Midlands
Percentage point difference from England average

Source: Department for Education
In the second quarter of 2009 the West Midlands had the highest proportion of working-age population with no qualifications – 14.5 per cent – compared with the national figure for England of 11.2 per cent (Figure 15).

The region has nine universities: Aston, Birmingham City, Coventry, Keele, Staffordshire, University of Birmingham, University of Warwick, University of Wolverhampton and University of Worcester, as well as three university colleges. Between them they have over 180,000 enrolled students producing 35,000 graduate and 15,000 postgraduate qualifications annually.
Labour Market

The employment rate for the fourth quarter of 2010 was 67.9 per cent for those aged 16 to 64 in the West Midlands (compared with 70.5 per cent for the UK as a whole), which was the fourth lowest rate of employment for the 12 regions and countries in the UK. This was a 1.5 percentage point decrease from the previous quarter\(^4\), which was the second largest decrease across the regions (a 2.5 percentage point decrease was seen in the North East), and a 0.9 per cent decrease from the previous year.

Figure 16 shows the long-term trend, which has deviated considerably from the UK rate since 2005. In the 1990s employment levels in the West Midlands were generally on the rise, broadly in line with the UK trend. This was followed by a period of relative stability until 2006. From 2006 the rate became more variable – declining from 2008, which coincides with the economic downturn.

Figure 16  Employment rate\(^1\), 1992 Q2 to 2010 Q4

West Midlands and United Kingdom

Rate

1 Seasonally adjusted, three monthly data.

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

The unemployment rate in the fourth quarter of 2010 for the West Midlands was the second highest of all the regions and countries in the UK at 9.8 per cent of the economically active population aged 16 and over, compared with the UK average of 7.9 per cent. This follows one of the largest increases from the previous quarter out of all the regions, at 1.1 per cent.

\(^4\) Quarter on quarter changes at regional level are particularly subject to sampling variability and should be interpreted in the context of changes over several quarters rather than in isolation.
Sub-regionally, model-based estimates of unemployment\(^5\) for the period October 2009 to September 2010 indicate that Sandwell had the highest unemployment rate at 13.9 per cent, followed by Wolverhampton (13.0 per cent), and Birmingham (12.4 per cent). Stratford-on-Avon had the lowest unemployment rate in the West Midlands, at 4.0 per cent.

**Figure 17** Difference in median gross weekly pay for full-time employees: by region and country of workplace, April 2009

Median earnings in the West Midlands are lower than for the UK as a whole – in April 2009 median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees working in the West Midlands were £456, compared with £489 for the UK. **Figure 17** illustrates how this ranked among the other UK countries and English regions in terms of the difference from the UK average.

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\(^5\) A statistical model is used to improve the annual Annual Population Survey estimates of unemployment for small areas, by using supplementary information, mainly the numbers of claimants of Jobseeker’s Allowance (the claimant count).
Economy and Industry

In 2009 the West Midlands generated almost £91 billion gross value added (GVA), which was 7.4 per cent of the UK total. The total GVA was 2.7 per cent lower than in 2008, a smaller decrease than seen in the UK as a whole (3.1 per cent). Sub-regionally (NUTS 3rd level) in 2007, the area which produced the largest proportion of the region’s total GVA was Birmingham, where just over a fifth (21 per cent) was generated. Staffordshire produced the next highest proportion of GVA (13 per cent). See Box 2 for information on measuring economic performance.

Box 2 Measuring Regional Economic Performance

When measuring the economic performance of regions or sub-regions, the following should be considered:

Gross Value Added (GVA) is a good measure of the economic output of a region.

GVA per head, which divides output of those working in a region by everybody living in the region, should not be used as an indicator of either regional productivity or income of residents.

GVA per hour worked and GVA per filled job are the preferred measures of productivity of an area.

Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head is a good indicator of the welfare of residents living in a region. GDHI is the amount of money households have available for spending or saving.

Productivity, Income and Labour Market indicators should be used together to provide a more complete picture of regional and sub-regional economic performance.

For further information, see the National Statistician’s article ‘Measuring regional economic performance’, which can be found at www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?ID=2103 and the Regional Economic Indicators articles published in Economic and Labour Market Review, for example: www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?ID=2642

The West Midlands had lower productivity than the UK as a whole, and has been diverging from the UK average since 2001, in a similar way to the North West, North East and Yorkshire and The Humber regions. In 2009 labour productivity, as measured by GVA per hour worked, was the third lowest of the 12 UK regions and countries (Figure 18).

6 Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) levels.
Figure 18  **Gross value added per hour worked: by region and country, 2009**

United Kingdom

Percentage difference from UK

![Graph showing percentage differences in GVA per hour worked across regions.](image)

*Source: Office for National Statistics*

‘Manufacturing’ accounted for nearly £14 billion (or 15 per cent) of the total GVA in the West Midlands, which was higher than the proportion for the UK as a whole (at 12 per cent). ‘Wholesale and retail trade (including motor trade)’ accounted for 13 and 12 per cent respectively. However, in broad terms the industry groups that contributed most to total GVA in 2008 in the West Midlands were similar to those that contributed to the total UK GVA – in both cases ‘real estate activities’ accounted for the largest proportion (22 per cent and 25 per cent respectively).

The West Midlands has undergone major economic restructuring over the past two decades, with the relative shares of employment and wealth generation transferring from the manufacturing sector to service sectors. **Figure 19** shows that employment in manufacturing in the West Midlands has seen a notable decline since the late 1990s.

In the fourth quarter of 1996 manufacturing accounted for the biggest proportion of workforce jobs in the West Midlands, with 22.4 per cent of the workforce employed in ‘manufacturing’ (575,500 jobs). The next largest proportions were for the ‘wholesale and retail trade; repair of vehicles’ sector (17.3 per cent) and ‘human health and social work activities’ (9.6 per cent). This compared with the UK proportions of 15.1, 16.6, and 10.6 per cent respectively. However in the West Midlands, by the fourth quarter of 2010 these figures had changed considerably, with manufacturing only accounting for 11.2 per cent of workforce jobs (285,500 jobs), which was an 11 percentage point decline from 1996. ‘Wholesale and retail trade; repair of vehicles’ (15.9 per cent)
and ‘human health and social work activities’ (13.4 per cent) accounted for the largest proportions of workforce jobs within the West Midlands in 2010.

Figure 19  
Manufacturing jobs\(^1\) 1996 to 2010

West Midlands and Great Britain
Percentages

The decline in manufacturing workforce jobs was partly due to a decline in the manufacture of motor vehicles, although all manufacturing sectors have declined. The recent decline will be partly the result of the recent economic downturn, which led to an overall decrease in workforce jobs in the West Midlands of 164,000 jobs between the second quarter of 2008 and the fourth quarter of 2010. Almost 52,000 jobs were lost from the ‘manufacturing’ sector, 40,000 from the ‘wholesale and retail trade; repair of vehicles’ sector, and nearly 42,000 from ‘accommodation and food services’ sector. The decrease in the number of jobs in these and other areas was partly compensated by an increase in the number of workforce jobs in the ‘human health and social work’ and ‘professional, scientific and technical’ sectors, which increased by around 41,000 and 30,000 jobs respectively. More on how the economic downturn affected the West Midlands region can be found in the article ‘Impact of the recession’\(^7\). The report looks at the impact that the most recent recession (during 2008 and 2009) has had on people’s lives at a regional level. It brings together data from a wide range of subject areas to help understand how different aspects of life have been affected by the recession.

\(^7\) The article ‘Impact of the Recession’ can be found in Regional Trends: www.statistics.gov.uk/regionaltrends/editions/
The 2007 industry classification groups together ‘mining and quarrying’, ‘manufacturing’, and ‘electricity, gas and water supply’ in a broad industry group called ‘production industries’. Figure 20 shows which sectors had higher proportions of workforce jobs in the West Midlands than in the UK as a whole.

Figure 20  **Workforce jobs: by industry and region, 2010**

West Midlands and United Kingdom
Percentage point differences from UK

The West Midlands spent less on research and development than most other regions. In 2008 almost £1.2 billion was spent in total, with 73 per cent of expenditure coming from within businesses (£892 million), 0.3 per cent from government (£4 million) and 27 per cent from higher education institutions (£334 million).

The West Midlands has lower gross disposable household income (GDHI) per head than the UK as a whole. In 2008 GDHI per head was £13,300 in the West Midlands, which was £1,800 less than the UK figure of £15,100 per head.
Deprivation and income poverty

The West Midlands has some of the most and least deprived areas in England. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (see Box 3) can be used to explore patterns of deprivation at small area level across the region.

According to the 2010 indices, in terms of local or unitary authority areas, Sandwell was the most deprived – with 59 per cent of its Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) being in the most deprived quintile (see Box 3) and no LSOAs in the least deprived quintile (Figure 21). Birmingham had the next highest proportion of LSOAs in the most deprived quintile (56 per cent), with only 3 per cent of LSOAs in the least deprived quintile, followed by Wolverhampton (53 per cent).

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**Box 3 Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010**

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) provides a summary measure of relative deprivation at Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) level in England. The IMD aims to provide a nationally consistent measure of how deprived an area is by identifying the degree to which people are disadvantaged by factors such as low income, unemployment, lack of education, poor health, and crime. Particular points to note:

- Not all deprived people live in deprived areas and conversely, not everyone living in a deprived area is deprived; the indicators identify areas with characteristics associated with deprivation – not deprived people
- The indices should not be used as a measure of affluence: a lack of income deprivation does not necessarily equate to affluence
- The indices provide a relative measure of deprivation and therefore cannot be used to determine how much more deprived one LSOA is compared with another

This article uses the rankings of all LSOAs in England, which have been divided into five equal sized groups, or quintiles. In England 20 per cent of LSOAs are in the most deprived quintile and 20 per cent in the least deprived quintile and so on. If an area (region or local authority) had the average distribution of deprivation they would have 20 per cent of LSOAs in each quintile.

For more information on the IMD see the Neighbourhood Statistics website: www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk
Bromsgrove had the highest proportion of LSOAs in the least deprived quintile (47 per cent); South Staffordshire and Stratford-on-Avon were also among the least deprived, with no LSOAs in the most deprived quintile.

Figure 21  **Distribution of LSOA rankings on the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation: by unitary and lower tier authority**

Map 22 shows that although the most deprived areas appear to be concentrated in towns and cities, there are also pockets of deprivation in more sparsely-populated areas, such as within certain areas of the County of Herefordshire and Shropshire. It also shows where other disparity exists within particular local authorities, such as Solihull.
Income poverty is one aspect of deprivation. Model-based estimates of the proportion of households in poverty for England and Wales have been produced in response to user demand for specific poverty measures at a small area level. A recent *Regional Trends* article providing guidance on these estimates uses the West Midlands region as a case study. The estimates show the proportion of households with incomes below 60 per cent of the UK median.

*Map 23* shows that urban areas in Birmingham, Coventry, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton have clusters of Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) with the highest proportions of households in poverty. The areas with the lowest proportions of households in poverty tend to be in either smaller urban areas such as Worcester and Kenilworth, or in the surrounding rural areas. The distribution of poverty is similar to that of multiple deprivation shown on *Map 22*, although

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8 The full article ‘Understanding household income poverty at small area level’ can be downloaded from *Regional Trends* 43, 20/11 edition, or from the following web link: [www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id=2600](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id=2600).
there are differences, some of which may be due to the differences in the level of geographical detail shown on each map.

Map 23  **Percentage of households in poverty\(^1,2\): by MSOA, 2007/2008**

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\(^1\) Percentage of households below 60 per cent of the UK median net income (equivalised after housing costs).
\(^2\) Please note confidence intervals exist around these estimates.

**Source:** Office for National Statistics

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**Health**

Life expectancy at birth for females in the West Midlands over the three-year period 2007 to 2009 was 81.9 years, and 77.5 years for males. These estimates were quite similar to the UK figures (as shown in **Figure 24** below). The life expectancy for females was 1.4 years less than in the South East and the South West (at 83.3 years) where the life expectancy was estimated to be highest. The life expectancy for males was 1.9 years less than in the South East, which had the highest life expectancy (at 79.4 years).
Among the West Midlands counties, metropolitan districts and unitary authorities, life expectancy at birth in 2007 to 2009 ranged from a minimum of 74.9 years up to 80.3 years for males, and from 79.9 years to 83.9 years for females. For both genders the maximum life expectancy was in Wychavon (in Worcestershire), and the lowest for males was in Sandwell (at 74.9 years) and for females in Stoke-on-Trent (at 79.9 years).

Figure 24  
Life expectancy at birth: by region and country, 2007 to 2009

United Kingdom
Difference in years from UK average

Source: Office for National Statistics

In 2008 the West Midlands rate of 600 deaths per 100,000 people was only slightly higher than the UK equivalent of 592 deaths per 100,000 people. However, the West Midlands had the highest infant mortality rate of all the English regions and countries in the UK (Figure 25) – 6.0 per 1,000 live births in 2009, compared with 4.6 for the UK. Still births were also above average, at 5.8 per 1,000 births compared with the UK figure of 5.2.

The West Midlands also has the third highest conception rate for women under the age of 18. In 2007 there were 47.4 conceptions to women aged 15 to 17 per 1,000 women compared with 41.7 for England as a whole. This represents a decrease since 1999, when the rate was 49.3
conceptions per 1,000 women. Of those conceptions in 2007, 49 per cent led to abortion (compared with 41 per cent in 1999) and 51 per cent led to maternities (compared with the larger figure of 59 per cent in 1999).

**Figure 25**  
Infant mortality¹: by region and country, 2009

United Kingdom  
Rate per 1,000 live births

1 Deaths of infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births.  
Source: Office for National Statistics

A *Regional Trends* article ‘Regional health inequalities in England’⁹ brought together a range of health indicators for the regions, and made comparisons with the England figures. The article shows a mixed picture of health across the range of indicators for the West Midlands. Several indicators performed worse than the England average. Childhood obesity (shown for reception and Year 6 pupils), deaths by all causes, deaths by respiratory causes and infant mortality were all higher than the figures for England. Most of these indicators had moderate values compared with the northern regions but the rate of infant mortality was the highest across all regions and was significantly higher than four of the regions. By contrast, some indicators were better than the England average. The level of alcohol consumption by women (measured as the percentage of women drinking more than 6 units of alcohol at least once in the survey week) was lower than the England average (11 per cent versus 15 per cent). The incidence of lung cancer among women was also lower than the England average.

⁹ For the full article please go to Regional Trends 42, 2010 edition, or follow the web link:  
Transport

The West Midlands' central location means that it is well linked to other parts of the country, making it one of the most accessible regions. The region is linked to the north and south, east and west by rail and road networks. It has several motorways serving the area, including the M5, M6, M40, M42 and the M54, and is the home to the UK’s first toll motorway, the M6 Toll north of Birmingham which was designed to relieve congestion. The West Midlands is also home to Birmingham International Airport, which is the second largest airport in England outside of the London area, serving over 180 destinations in Europe, North America, Asia and the Middle East, and handling over 9.5 million passengers in 2008.

Figure 26  Usual method of travel to work: by region of residence, 2009 Q4

The West Midlands had the highest proportions of people travelling to work by car in the fourth quarter of 2009 (Figure 26). The Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimated that 79 per cent of journeys to work (excluding those working from home) were by car or van, compared with the England average of 70 per cent. Far fewer journeys were made on public transport, such as bus or...
rail (9 per cent); 8 per cent were made on foot; and 2 per cent were made by bicycle and other means; all of these figures were similar to the national figures.

According to the National Travel Survey, in 2008 and 2009 residents in the West Midlands region travelled on average 6,500 miles per year\(^\text{10}\), which was slightly below the average for England of 6,800 miles per year. About 3,600 of these miles (or 56 per cent) were made by car or van drivers, and 1,900 as car or van passengers (29 per cent). The average mileage covered using public transport was one of the lowest of all the English regions – with only 700 miles travelled by bus or rail per person (or 11 per cent), compared with the national average of 1,000 miles (15 per cent).

Walking was the main mode of travel for school pupils (aged 5 to 16) travelling\(^\text{11}\) to and from school in the West Midlands. The region had the second highest proportion of all the regions at 48 per cent, compared with England at 44 per cent. Around 33 per cent travelled by car, 15 per cent by bus and 3 per cent by other means. On average, pupils aged 5 to 10 years travelled 1.7 miles to school, which is similar to the national average (1.6 miles), and those aged 11 to 16 travelled 3.0 miles, slightly lower than the national average (3.4 miles).

**Environment**

The West Midlands has one of the smallest areas of national park of all the English regions, with only 2 per cent of the total land area being designated as national park, but it encompasses five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs): Shropshire Hills, Malvern Hills, Cannock Chase, and parts of The Cotswolds and Wye Valley. These AONBs cover 127,000 hectares, accounting for 10 per cent of the total area of the region. The West Midlands has the second largest area of green belt land of all the regions in percentage terms, with 21 per cent of the region being designated as green belt (269,000 hectares).

Carbon dioxide (CO\(_2\)) emissions in the West Midlands totalled nearly 42,700 kilotonnes (kt) in 2008, around 8 per cent of the UK total. Some 16,800 kt (39 per cent of the total for the region) were produced by industrial and commercial users, which was lower than the UK figure (45 per cent); 12,800 kt (30 per cent) came from domestic users (similar to the UK figure of 29 per cent); 12,700 kt (30 per cent) were from road transport use, which was higher than the UK (26 per cent); and 400 kt (1 per cent) were a result of land use, land use change and forestry.

\(^{10}\) Distances travelled within Great Britain only.

\(^{11}\) For trips of under 50 miles.
In total these figures equate to 7.9 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per resident, which is just below the UK average of 8.2 tonnes. Figure 27 shows this figure for all regions and countries in the UK. The West Midlands’ CO₂ emissions were ranked moderately when compared with the other regions and countries’ emissions. Sub-regionally, CO₂ emissions ranged from 5.4 tonnes per resident in Tamworth (in Staffordshire) to 24.1 tonnes per resident in Rugby (in Warwickshire).

Figure 27  **Carbon dioxide emissions: by region and country, 2008**

The West Midlands saw a 24 percentage point increase in the household recycling rate from 2003/04 to 2009/10. In 2009/10 some 40 per cent of household waste was recycled, compared with less than 16 per cent in 2003/04.

In 2009/10 the West Midlands had the lowest percentage of local authority collected waste going into landfill of all the regions and countries in the UK, at 28 per cent, compared with 49 per cent for the UK. The West Midlands also had the highest percentage of waste being disposed of by the method of incineration with energy recovery, at 33 per cent (compared with just 11 per cent for the UK), putting the West Midlands well ahead of all the other regions in this method of waste disposal (Figure 28).
Crime and Justice

The West Midlands had one of the lowest crime rates of the nine English regions, for crimes committed against households, according to figures estimated by the British Crime Survey (BCS) (Figure 29). In 2009/10 there were an estimated 2,400 household offences\(^{12}\) per 10,000 households in the West Midlands, compared with 2,500 per 10,000 households for England. In the region, about 1,000 crimes per 10,000 households were classed as vandalism, 270 as burglary and 560 as vehicle thefts.

\(^{12}\) Comprises the vandalism, burglary, and vehicle thefts plus thefts of bicycles and other household thefts.
According to the survey, of all the regions, households in the West Midlands had the lowest risk of being a victim of crime, with 15.0 per cent of households being victimised at least once, compared with the national average of 16.4 per cent.

The crime rate for all offences committed against the person\textsuperscript{13} (rather than against the household), was also comparatively low, with the region being ranked joint third lowest out of the nine regions. The personal crime rate was 750 crimes per 10,000 population in 2009/10, and the violent\textsuperscript{14} crime rate was 450 crimes per 10,000 population, according to figures estimated by the BCS.

The rate of recorded crime\textsuperscript{15} in comparison with other regions was ranked slightly higher than the BCS measure. These figures indicate that a total of 7,300 crimes per 100,000 population recorded in the region for 2009/10 (making the region rank fifth of the nine regions).

\textsuperscript{13} Including violent crimes, theft from a person and other personal theft.

\textsuperscript{14} Including wounding, assault with minor injury, assault with no injury and robbery.

\textsuperscript{15} Recorded crime statistics are those reported to, and recorded by the police and broadly cover the more serious offences.
The BCS does not provide results down to local authority level, but the recorded crime figures include a set of BCS comparator offences which cover about 60 per cent of all recorded crimes and allows for differences at the local level to be highlighted. This is called the ‘recorded crime BCS comparator’\(^\text{16}\). At a local level the highest recorded crime rate was for Stoke-on-Trent, which had a rate of 65.5 crimes per 1,000 population, followed by Coventry with 57.1 crimes per 1,000 population (both above the national crime rates). The lowest recorded crime rate was for South Shropshire with 18.2 recorded crimes per 1,000 population.

There were 14,300 police officers stationed in the West Midlands in March 2009, which equated to about one police officer to every 378 residents. Of this figure, 5.5 per cent of police officers were from minority ethnic groups, and 27 per cent were female – one of the highest female percentages of all the regions.

**Notes**

1. Every effort was made to ensure that the data used in this article was up to date at the time of writing.

2. The author would like to thank colleagues in the Regional and Local Division and the Mapping Unit at the Office for National Statistics for help in producing this article.

3. The Regional Trends **Glossary** and **Regional Trends Online Tables**, where much of the data used in this article may be downloaded, are available through the links at: [www.statistics.gov.uk/regionaltrends/editions](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/regionaltrends/editions)

\(^{16}\) The recorded crime BCS comparator is a subset of recorded crimes which can be aligned to categories in the British Crime Survey.