



We consider a wide range of datasets when conducting research and analysis into quality of life in Warwickshire. Many of these datasets are from Government departments but we also include local data from partner agencies such as the Police, District and Borough Councils and the NHS.

Quality of life and well-being are clearly subjective themes, and it is impossible to cover all aspects within a single report. We recognise that the report is only ever a snapshot of some of the current issues and we try to tailor the indicators we use to reflect key themes being discussed at a local and national level. There are also occasions where we would like to explore an issue but there is not sufficient data for us to use. We thought it might be useful to articulate some of those areas where we recognise there are information gaps. We would welcome any suggestions on how these gaps might be filled in future editions of the report!

- In some instances, datasets have a considerable **time lag** and do not necessarily present an up-to-date picture of what is happening. The data is very often out of date by the time it is released. This is a particular problem for some datasets relating to the economy, child poverty and the Census.
- Added to this, there are various consultations taking place on the viability of **providing some of this data in the future** as Government departments face pressures on their budgets. For example, the Office for National Statistics are consulting on the Census and the future provision of other large scale surveys which could directly impact on resources available to Local Government, potentially limiting our access to rich sources of data.
- **Data quality, accuracy and robustness** are often issues faced when considering indicators affecting the Quality of Life of Warwickshire residents. This is often due to inconsistencies in recording or the data may not be the main focus of data collection, for example, data recorded on victims of crime and smoking in pregnancy data.
- There can be a lack of data at a **local level** for small geographical areas, such as wards or Lower Super Output Areas. Where there are figures at a local level, it can be of limited value due to the small numbers involved, causing significant fluctuations in rates over time.
- In the absence of the Place Survey, local data on **lifestyles and perceptions** is an identified intelligence gap as we know little on the priorities, concerns and lifestyles of local residents. Figures are often based on synthetic estimates that are taken from national lifestyle surveys which can be unrepresentative of the local population. However, a 'Living in Warwickshire' survey is being carried out during Autumn 2013 by the County Council which will consult with Warwickshire residents on themes such as economic confidence, well-being, exercise and diet and more generally on the identification of neighbourhood priorities and residents satisfaction with their local area. The results will be available for next year's Quality of Life report.

- Linked to the well-being agenda, a better understanding of resident's aspirations and expectations would be useful. Our analysis is largely statistical and offers a data driven view of quality of life. It would be good to get some '**real life**' views and **community intelligence** around how quality of life in Warwickshire is changing over time. The Living in Warwickshire survey should provide some useful intelligence around residents' well-being particularly linked to their mental health as well as gauging if there is a sense of community resilience by considering cohesion, belonging and residents' participation in their local area.
- Measuring the rapidly increasing influence of the **internet and technology** on everyday lives, including the way people connect and communicate with each other and its scope for improving people's quality of life in the future, is an intelligence gap for the team.
- There are difficulties associated with identifying communities based on **boundaries** which are often artificial and, it could be argued, increasingly less relevant to how most people live their lives.
- As in previous years, there are considerable data gaps around the extent and impact of the **voluntary and community sector** in Warwickshire and there is little data on volunteering. However, this question will be asked in the 2013 'Living in Warwickshire' survey which will be comparable with previous Place Surveys.
- Although we have included an indicator on **welfare reform** in this year's report, we recognise it is still relatively early to assess the impact of the reforms for Warwickshire residents as many of the reforms are still being implemented. The Observatory will monitor a broad range of indicators (including well-being, poverty, crime and benefit claimants) to assess the impact of welfare reforms as the changes begin to be implemented across the county.
- The method of collecting data on **job vacancies** changed at the end of 2012 with the final release of Jobcentre Plus data in November 2012. Universal Jobmatch was introduced in December 2012 which gives information on all vacancies and occupations sought, i.e. not just those engaging with Jobcentre Plus. It is open to all jobseekers, regardless of whether or not they are claiming a benefit. We have not included an indicator on job vacancies in this year's report as the data cannot be compared to previous datasets and at the time of writing there was not sufficient data to draw conclusions.

Finally, we always welcome suggestions for new areas we can consider for the report. The indicators we use are not cast in stone and we adapt the report to reflect emerging themes and changing datasets over time. If you are aware of, or hold, some data that can help inform our understanding of quality of life in Warwickshire then we would like to hear from you!