

Mapping Poverty in Cambridge City 2009

Executive Summary

The Mapping Poverty 2008 report was provided just before the national economic downturn and then recession took a grip on the country (July 2008). Mapping Poverty 2009 was commissioned because the City Council wanted to find out how the recession had impacted on groups of people and communities living in the City. Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit is used in the report as a proxy for low income. Not everyone is eligible for these benefits, such as students or people who don't claim, but the data used does provide a valuable insight into economic circumstances.

The data extract for Mapping Poverty 2009 was taken in November 2009, when the recession seemed to have "peaked" in the City, using the number of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants as a measure of unemployment and the strength of the local economy. This report has found an additional 409 households were in receipt of these benefits since 2008, an increase of 5%. Taking into account the severity of the recession at a national level this headline finding shows that Cambridge City as a place has been relatively resilient to its worst effects so far, given that each new claimant household may represent a personal tragedy for the individuals and families.

Economic inequalities between different areas matter because people living on a low income in a disadvantaged area are likely to have fewer opportunities to achieve their potential and enjoy similar outcomes, such as good health, compared to people living in different areas. Benefit households are unequally distributed across the City, with half of all people living in one fifth of the City's areas.

One of the strengths of this research is that it shows concentrations of people living in relatively small areas (Output Areas) of about 125 households, whilst preserving anonymity. The report finds that the disadvantaged areas (defined as the quintile with the highest number of claimants) previously found, broadly continue to be in the same places but that the small areas within them have seen a great deal of variation, with some seeing increases in the number of benefit claimants, the highest increase being 42 people, and other areas seeing a decrease, 31 people being the biggest decrease.

Overall one in nine people living in Cambridge continues to live in a household receiving Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. Among pensioners and dependent children, this rises to one in five people. The pensioner benefit population has been relatively stable over a number of years even with the growing number of elderly people in the population.

The characteristic of a benefit claimant in the City continues to be someone that is renting his or her home and is a single person either of working age or a pensioner. This report shows that the number of single people of a working age has risen and that many are new claimants, who are looking to return to work.

Cambridge City Council wants to share this research as widely as possible to help improve the delivery of services to disadvantaged communities and increase positive outcomes for local people.

Headline Findings

- **Benefit claimant units**

There are 8,181 claimant units receiving Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit in Cambridge. Of these, 5,400 units (66%) also receive Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based), Employment and Support Allowance (Income Based) or Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) and 2,781 (34%) receive no additional support. **The total number of claimants has risen 5% from 7,772 in 2008.** This marked increase follows a steady decline from 8,064 claimant units in 2000 to 7,432 in 2004, followed by a 6% rise from 7,432 to 7,844 in 2006, and a slight decrease from 7,844 to 7,772 in 2008.

24% of claimant units contain a 'family' composed of a single parent or couple parents with one or more dependent children. 38% of claimant units contain single or couple non-pensioners without dependent children. 38% of claimant units contain a single pensioner or a pensioner couple. These groups are broken down further in the sections that follow.

Abbey contains the most benefit claimant units with 1,090, followed by King's Hedges with 1,084. 30% of households in Abbey received HB/CTB, compared to a City average of 19%.

- **The benefit population**

The total benefit population of HB/CTB claimants, partners and dependants in Cambridge City is 13,122. This is an increase of 6% from 12,419 in 2008. Of these people, 8,472 (65%) live in households that are also in receipt of Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based), Employment and Support Allowance (Income Based) or Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit). 11% of Cambridge residents receive HB/CTB benefits; this proportion has not changed since 2008 as the 6% increase in the benefit population represents a relatively small number of people. 63% of the benefit population are the claimants themselves, 27% are dependent children and 10% are the partners of claimants.

Abbey has the largest benefit population, with 1,913. Over one in five people in this ward and King's Hedges live in a household receiving HB/CTB. The benefit population in Abbey has risen 3% from 1,861 in 2008. In contrast, Newnham ward has a benefit population of just 118.

- **Families**

Claimant units containing children

There are 1,955 claimant units containing at least one child in Cambridge. This has risen 5% from 1,856 in 2008.

Abbey has the highest number of claimant units containing children, with 333. Claimant units with children make up one third of all claimant units in Abbey and East Chesterton.

The child benefit population

In Cambridge 3,588 children live in HB/CTB claimant units. This is an increase of 5% from 3,401 in 2008. 19% of all dependent children in Cambridge live in HB/CTB claimant units.

Abbey has the most children living in HB/CTB claimant units, with 635. 34% of dependent children in this ward live in households receiving HB/CTB.

Lone parent and couple parent units

1,404 (72%) of the claimant units containing at least one child have a lone parent as the head of the family. This is an increase of 1% from 1,388 in 2008, but a reduction in the proportion from 75% in 2008. Just 551 claimant units comprise couple parents with dependent children, although this is an increase of 18% from 468 in 2008.

Abbey has the most lone parent claimant units, with 247, and the most couple parent units, with 86.

- **Non-pensioners with no children**

Non-pensioner claimant units with no dependent children

There are 2,865 claimant units composed of single people of working age with no dependent children. This is an increase of 14% from 2,512 in 2008. This group accounts for 35% of all claimant units; this proportion has increased from 32% since 2008, having previously risen from 31% in 2004 and 29% in 2002. There were 230 non-pensioner couple units with no children. This is an increase of 23% from 187 in 2008.

King's Hedges still has the highest number of single non-pensioner claimants, with 377; but East Chesterton now has the highest number of couple non-pensioner claimant units, with 40.

- **Pensioners**

Pensioner units

There are 3,131 claimant units where the claimant is a pensioner without dependent children, which is a fall of 3% from 3,217 in 2008. These account for 38% of all claimant units. This is a reduction from 41% in 2008, 42% in 2006 and 43% in 2004.

Pensioner population

There are 3,726 pensioners who live in claimant units that are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, which is a reduction of 3% from 3,829 in 2008. Single pensioners make up 69% of the pensioner benefit population. This is the same proportion as in 2008.

King's Hedges now has the largest pensioner benefit population, with 435 pensioners. King's Hedges also has the highest proportion of resident pensioners in receipt of HB/CTB benefits, at 34%.

There has been a consistent Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit total claimant population at just under 8,000 claimants recorded over the eight years from 2000 to 2008 – during a time of near full employment. Previous reports have indicated that the benefit claimant population has a large core of people attached to benefits with a smaller periphery of rapidly changing people.

Since 2008 there has been a 5% increase in the number of claimant units and a rise of 6% in the total benefit population. Although there is still a large core of people attached to benefits, this report has identified some subtle changes in the characteristics of the benefit population, such as an increase in the proportion of claims made by a single non-pensioner without dependent children, a decrease in the proportion of single pensioner claimant units, and an increase in the proportion of claims made on behalf of a partner.

Summary of benefit populations by ward 2009

Ward	Population (CCC mid-2008 estimate)	Total benefit population	Child benefit population	Single non pensioner without children	Pensioner benefit population
Abbey	9,300	1,913	635	362	432
Arbury	9,300	1,412	359	369	376
Castle	7,800	250	34	61	120
Cherry Hinton	8,700	1,186	358	152	383
Coleridge	8,500	1,006	213	212	410
East Chesterton	8,500	1,654	576	242	393
King's Hedges	8,100	1,823	544	377	435
Market	8,500	275	33	93	118
Newnham	8,400	118	34	18	39
Petersfield	7,800	655	132	228	182
Queen Edith's	8,600	612	174	52	250
Romsey	8,800	890	240	218	246
Trumpington	7,400	780	162	253	204
West Chesterton	8,400	548	94	228	138
TOTAL	118,100	13,122	3,588	2,865	3,726

Summary of benefit populations by ward 2008

Ward	Population (CCC mid-2007 estimate)	Total benefit population	Child benefit population	Single non pensioner without children	Pensioner benefit population
Abbey	8,920	1,861	634	323	442
Arbury	9,070	1,309	326	336	400
Castle	7,640	254	35	56	119
Cherry Hinton	8,500	1,206	373	124	401
Coleridge	8,170	930	185	188	412
East Chesterton	8,210	1,479	507	206	382
King's Hedges	7,860	1,699	511	347	432
Market	8,390	234	18	74	121
Newnham	8,390	114	38	10	37
Petersfield	7,640	624	136	194	179
Queen Edith's	8,490	558	146	51	250
Romsey	8,580	909	259	186	284
Trumpington	7,020	738	162	220	214
West Chesterton	8,310	504	71	197	156
TOTAL	115,190	12,419	3,401	2,512	3,829