

A summary of demography and deprivation in Southwark, Tower Hamlets and the City of London

Age and ethnicity

Tower Hamlets and Southwark have relatively young, ethnically diverse populations for the UK, typical of Inner London.

- Of the entire population in Tower Hamlets, 39% was aged between 20 and 34 at the last Census in 2011, compared to a third in Southwark and one in five across the UK.
- Tower Hamlets is one of three London boroughs where over half the adult population is Black or minority ethnic (BME). A third of Southwark's adult population is BME. This is slightly less than the average for Inner London, but significantly more than the average for the UK.

Housing

Both boroughs still have historically large social housing stocks, with some ethnic groups particularly concentrated in these homes.

- 37% of households in Southwark and 42% in Tower Hamlets were social renters at the last Census in 2011, higher than both the Inner London (32%) and UK (18%) averages.
- 70% of Black households were living in social rented accommodation, compared to 46% of Asian households and 32% of White households.¹

Meanwhile, private renting is currently the fastest growing tenure, and problems associated with private renting are also growing.

- There were 10,000 more private rented households in each borough between 2009 and 2014.
- Across the two boroughs, the number of accelerated landlord repossession orders, which allow mostly private landlords to process evictions faster, rose from 173 in 2003 to 837 in 2015.

Census data also shows particularly high rates of large households in Tower Hamlets, indicative of high levels of overcrowding in the borough.

- 19% of people in Tower Hamlets, with up to one in four in some wards, lived in households of 6 or more people, compared to one in ten across London and 6% across England. Southwark was close to the average for London.
- 8% of Tower Hamlets residents lived in households of 8 or more people.

¹ Households where the Household Reference Person was Black, Asian or White respectively.

Education and employment

Historically, Inner London had high unemployment and poor school attainment. In recent years there have been considerable shifts in both, particularly education.

- Tower Hamlets and Southwark have a high proportion of free school meal pupils meeting the target standard of 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths (ranking third and fifth in London in 2013/14).
- Less than half of 19 year olds eligible for free school meals in Southwark and Tower Hamlets were lacking two or more A-levels or equivalent vocational qualifications, significantly lower than the 64% average across England.

However, while unemployment has been falling, low pay among working residents remains a significant challenge.

- 22% of employees living in Southwark were paid below the London Living Wage in 2014, a high rate for Inner London. In Tower Hamlets it was 19%.
- In 2015 40% of working-age social renting claimants in Tower Hamlets were in work compared to 30% in Southwark and 25% on average across England.

Poverty and deprivation

Child poverty is a major problem in certain areas, especially in Tower Hamlets.

- Child poverty varied significantly across local areas, at just 4% in Cripple Gate, City of London, and 12% in Village, Southwark, to 54% in Bethnal Green South and Bromley-by-Bow². There are nine wards in Tower Hamlets where more than half of children were in poverty.
- 45% of secondary school pupils in Tower Hamlets are eligible for free school meals, far above the Inner London average and the level for Southwark which are both 30%.

Despite a reduction in pensioner poverty across the country and London, Inner London boroughs still have relatively high pensioner poverty rates.

- Over half of all residents 75+ receive pension credit in Tower Hamlets, double the London average.
- In Southwark, 40% of 85+ receive pension credit, compared to the London and Great Britain average of 30%.

Both boroughs, especially Tower Hamlets, have a high concentration of deprived local areas.

- Over half (59%) of Tower Hamlets' neighbourhoods³ are in the bottom fifth for levels of deprivation nationally. Southwark also has high levels of deprivation relative to the rest of the country, as more than one in three (39%) of neighbourhoods are in the bottom fifth nationally.

² Based on child poverty rates after housing costs, published by End Child Poverty in 2013.

³ Called Lower Super Output Areas, or LSOAs