

Spen Valley

Overall health and wellbeing in Spen Valley was similar to that of Kirklees across the majority of health and wellbeing indicators. As in the rest of Kirklees, obesity, insufficient physical activity and smoking/drinking continued to present problems. These behaviours were reflected in adults with long-term conditions and avoidable death rates being close to the Kirklees average. Cancer and heart disease remained the major causes of premature mortality under age 75.

Headlines

- There were fewer south Asian young people than in other areas of Kirklees.
- 1 in 3 adults had a limiting long-term condition.
- 1 in 4 adults with dependent children felt their house was inadequate for their needs.
- Breastfeeding initiation rates are higher than in Kirklees but continuation at 6-8 weeks is lower.
- There were lower levels of social capital and community cohesion than other areas in Kirklees.
- Smoking at age 14 was amongst the lowest in Kirklees but smoking in adults and young people remained a concern because of its association with a series of life threatening conditions.
- 1 in 4 women of childbearing age smoked, and 1 in 4 non-south Asian women smoked whilst pregnant.
- 1 in 3 (32%) women of childbearing age binge; 88% were not concerned about their drinking.
- Alcohol bingeing in men was highest in Spen and had increased since 2009, though it had reduced in women. However, 86% were not concerned about their levels of drinking.
- There were higher levels of takeaway consumption locally (23%), coupled with lower adult physical activity. Spen had the lowest number of adults meeting recommended levels of physical activity (35%) compared to 2005 when it had the highest.

- There were high numbers of overweight and obese people across all ages, similar to Kirklees.
- The proportion of older people needing help with daily activities was higher than in other areas.

Population

Spen Valley locality includes the three wards of Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike & Liversedge, and Gomersal. There were 54,330 people living in Spen – of these 22% (11,930) were under 18 and 1 in 6 (16%) were over 65 years. Spen Valley had significantly fewer young people of south Asian origin (18%) compared with Kirklees (29%). Even so, nearly 1 in 6 were of south Asian origin, compared with less than 1 in 20 in neighbouring Mirfield and Birstall & Birkenshaw.

There are around 22,486 **households** in Spen. 1 in 6 (16%) felt that their house was inadequate for their needs, the same as Kirklees overall. Of all families in Spen Valley with dependent children 1 in 4 (23%) felt their homes were inadequate for their needs versus 1 in 5 (20%) in Kirklees overall. Spen had the lowest level of overcrowding affecting only 3.1% of households, compared to 6% in Kirklees overall and 13% in Batley.

There were 683 births locally, 1 in 5 of these were of south Asian origin compared to 1 in 3 for Kirklees. Life expectancy at birth (76.6 for men and 81.0 for women) and at age 65 (82.1 and 84.8) in the locality was just below Kirklees and national figures.

Deaths from all causes in those aged under 75 reflected the Kirklees average (3.02 per 1,000 compared to 2.93) though Spen had higher death rates for coronary heart disease (0.45 per 1,000) compared to Kirklees (0.37). Caution is advised in interpreting mortality rates as numbers are small.

Conditions

Almost 1 in 3 (30%) adults had a limiting long-term condition, the same as Kirklees. 4 out of 5 people (79%) were confident in their ability to manage these conditions, similar to Kirklees (78%).

Emotional wellbeing was an issue for 14-year olds. Spen has seen the biggest increase in sleep problems due to worry from 12% in 2005 to 17% in 2009. 1 in 5 (22%) felt miserable weekly or more in the last year and 1 in 5 (19%) did not have someone to talk to about their problems, the same as Kirklees overall.

Rates of **obesity** in children in 2011/12 were the same as Kirklees overall, with nearly 1 in 9 (11%) children aged 4-5 years and 1 in 5 (20%) children aged 10-11 years being obese. Parental obesity influences childhood obesity. More than 1 in 5 (19%) of all adults were obese, similar to Kirklees overall (20%) with 55% being at least overweight (Kirklees, 54%). Nearly 1 in 7 (14%) women of childbearing age were obese, lower than Kirklees overall (17%).

In adults, levels of self reported stroke (1.3%), cardiovascular disease (24%), asthma (11%) and diabetes (7%) were close to Kirklees overall. Levels of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (2.2%) were slightly lower. Spen had the lowest levels of asthma in 14-year olds affecting 1 in 5 (17%) compared to 19% in Kirklees overall.

Cancer deaths have not changed from 2005-2011, unlike the rest of Kirklees and nationally. 1 in 4 of all cancer deaths were due to lung cancer, making smoking a significant issue.

Behaviours

Breastfeeding initiation rates (85%) had improved since 2010 and were better than the Kirklees average (81.5%) but by 6-8 weeks only 31% were breastfeeding, lower than the Kirklees average of 43%.

The **teenage conception** rate (51.7 per 1,000 girls aged 15-17) had remained stable since 2008, and was higher than Kirklees overall (44 per 1,000).

In 2009, 1 in 9 14-year olds were **sexually active** (11%), the same as Kirklees overall. Of all those 14-year olds having sex 1 in 5 (20%) reported not using a condom or other protection, no change from 2005.

In 2009, only 1 in 14 (7%) 14-year olds **smoked** weekly or more, a significant drop from 2005 and lower than nationally (8%). The largest drop was in girls smoking. However, those who did smoke were amongst the most likely to be happy to continue (1 in 3, 33%) confirming that smoking is highly addictive and it is difficult to stop. The focus needs to be on stopping young people from starting in the first place.

Smoking rates in adults had not changed since 2009 as 1 in 5 (19%) adults still smoked and 1 in 3 smokers were happy to continue smoking. 1 in 4 cancer deaths are due to lung cancer.

1 in 4 (23%) women of childbearing age still **smoked**, the same as Kirklees. 1 in 5 (22%) non-south Asian mothers still smoked in pregnancy, one of the highest rates in Kirklees

(17%). Maternal smoking is linked to infant risk of asthma and 1 in 3 of low birth weight babies.

In 2009, Spen Valley had higher levels than average of 14-year olds ever having drunk **alcohol** (72%) compared to 66% in Kirklees. Regular alcohol use in those 14-year olds who did drink was the same as Kirklees overall (21%). The number of 14-year olds having their first drink at age 9 or less dropped markedly in Kirklees from 1 in 5 (22%) in Kirklees in 2005 to 1 in 8 in 2009, especially in Spen, 1 in 10.

Women bingeing reduced from 36% to 28% from 2008 to 2012, lower than the Kirklees average of 31%. The numbers of women of childbearing age bingeing (32%) reduced to below the average for Kirklees (35%). However, 88% were not concerned about their levels of drinking.

The numbers of **adult males engaging in unsafe drinking** remains a concern. Binge drinking in males in Spen was the highest in Kirklees and had increased to nearly half of men (47%) compared to 43% in Kirklees overall and 42% in 2008. Rowdiness because of drinking was highest in Spen and Batley (34%).

Spen clearly has a problem with alcohol consumption in terms of high levels of binge drinking in men and a high percentage of women of childbearing age being unconcerned about their drinking. Lack of concern about levels of drinking shows a lack of awareness of the risks and makes them a hard to reach group.

Levels of **drug misuse** by 14-year olds in the locality (under 3%) had improved to below the Kirklees average (under 4%).

Spen (equal with Dewsbury) reported the highest consumption of **fast food takeaways** with 1 in 4 (23%) adults eating them at least once a week compared to 1 in 8 (13%) in Mirfield and 1 in 5 (19%) in Kirklees. The number of people eating five items of fruit and vegetables a day was 63%, similar to the Kirklees average of 64%.

Levels of **physical activity** were similar to across Kirklees. More than 2 in 3 (68%) 14-year olds were doing the recommended levels of physical activity compared to 67% in Kirklees overall. Spen had one of the lowest numbers of adults reporting doing recommended levels of physical activity, 1 in 3 (35%), despite having the highest numbers in 2005. Levels were similar to the Kirklees average (37%) and the same as nationally (35%).

Wider factors affecting health

There are around 22,486 **households** in Spen. 1 in 6 (16%) felt that their house was inadequate for their needs, the same as Kirklees overall. Of all families in Spen Valley with dependent children 1 in 4 (23%) felt their homes were inadequate for their needs compared to 1 in 5 (20%) in Kirklees overall. Spen had the lowest level of overcrowding affecting only 3.1% of households, compared to 6% in Kirklees overall and 13% in Batley. 1 in 5 (18%) of all children in Spen lived in income deprived households, similar to the Kirklees average (20%) and this equated to over 2,200 children. 1 in 7 (15%) working-age adults lived in **poverty** in Spen similar to Kirklees overall (16%). 1 in 3 (30%) pensioners lived in poverty, the same as Kirklees overall.

The locality had the second lowest participation in regular **volunteering** with 1 in 5 (18%) adults participating, compared to 21% in Kirklees overall.

Less than half (45%) of 14-year olds in Spen Valley felt that people from different backgrounds **got on well together** in the local area – the lowest in Kirklees (51%).

Residents of Spen Valley felt there was a poor level of **community cohesion** in their area. A third of adults (34%) believed that people from different backgrounds got on well together in the local area, one of the lowest rates in Kirklees (43%). Just over half (54%) of adults felt that they belonged to their neighbourhood.

Levels of recorded **crime** are better than average although fear of crime is higher particularly after dark. Parts of the area have above average levels of environmental anti-social behaviour and fire incidents.

Educational attainment at Foundation Stage (66%) had increased and was similar to Kirklees overall (68%) and above the national average (59%). **Attainment at GCSE** level (5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths, 65%) had improved since 2005 when attainment was only 42% in Spen.

Young people who were not in education, employment or training (**NEET**) was slightly higher than the Kirklees average, 9% in Spen compared to 8%.

Date this section was last reviewed

09/07/2013 (PL)