

QUARTERLY ECONOMIC BULLETIN

An Economic Summary for Herefordshire

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Key Points for Herefordshire:

- Unemployment rose sharply in January 2009 (page 3-4).
- The volume of house sales was down 55% in mid-2008 compared with 2007 (page 5).
- Median weekly earnings for people who work full time in Herefordshire was £389.40 in 2008, 19% lower than earnings across England as a whole (page 6).
- Of Herefordshire's 76,100 workers, 19% of them were employed in the wholesale, retail and repair trade sector in 2006 (page 8).
- Access to services 2008 - Across all key services, Herefordshire had lower proportions of households within set distances compared to both the West Midlands region as a whole and England (page 10).

NEWS SOURCED FROM LOCAL PRESS

Job Creation

The takeover of the Mortimer street site by Hereford Truck Care Ltd has the potential to save some of the jobs lost due to closure of the sites previous occupant, LSUK. The takeover of the site is to accommodate the companies expansion, in particular the increased demand for tachograph testing in the area.

Central Group, which owns the company Central Roofing based on the Holmer road in Hereford has bought Rent a Scaffold based in Shrewsbury. As well as the purchase of new offices in Shrewsbury the takeover will result in 12 new jobs. This includes new staff and vehicles being taken on at their site in Hereford. Head of corporate development Graham Neal commented that "the roofing business continues to defy the odds" despite a steep decline in construction generally.

The Robert Owen Society, a learning cooperative and training provider based in Leominster, is expanding (up to six new jobs) due to a restructure aimed at improving the quality of services delivered to students and customers.

Job Losses

One of Herefordshire's oldest building firms Beavon & Hodges Ltd has confirmed its closure and the subsequent loss of 12 jobs at their Portland Street site.

A year ago the manufacturing company, Wrayram Engineering, who make hydraulic cylinders for agriculture and manufacturing, were on course for record levels of turnover, but has now been forced to make most of its 50 employees at its Rotherwas site redundant and sell off the remainder of the company.

Development and Investment

A Herefordshire firm, IA Technology, is performing well despite the current economic climate. In 2008 IA technology saw its sales increase by 60% and is expecting more in 2009. The company designs

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NEWS (CONT.)

specialist technologies for a wide range of clients, from the Royal Navy to bio-tech giant Genetix.

Developers have completed the purchase of the old Chadds site on Commercial Street. The owners Hawkstone Development want to split the four floors of the property between three new retailers and are expecting to have tenants in by April.

Edgar Street Grid

Contrary to recent media reports suggesting ESG is on hold (as stated in the last edition of the QER), it is definitely progressing, albeit at a slightly slower pace and concentrating on being infrastructure led. ESG and their partners, Herefordshire Council and Advantage West Midlands, believe this development to have a vital role in the economic survival of the city. This belief is supported by the Government Regional Minister, Ian Austin MP, who visited Herefordshire on 13 February and devoted a large part of his busy schedule to discussing ESG plans.

ESG continues to consult with people and interested groups to ensure that it regenerates this area of the city in a way that suits the best interests of the community as a whole. ESG is establishing new channels of communication to keep people informed and up to date, and are working closely with Herefordshire Council, Hereford City Council and Hereford City Partnership to develop the bigger 'One City' regeneration strategy.

Health and Social Care

Herefordshire PCT is due to receive nearly £40 million as a reward for good performance particularly with respect to its financial management. Some of the money will be set aside to fund a new radiotherapy unit at the County Hospital and a GP-led, 7-day, walk in health centre to open early 2009.

Education and training

Businesses in Herefordshire could be set to gain from a new £800,000 training fund for bosses. The Director Development Program will be funded by the Learning and Skills Council and delivered by Advantage West Midlands. The training will focus on business performance but personal development opportunities could include professional qualifications, supporting innovation, creativity and project management. The scheme will be available to any business with between 5

to 249 employees and turning over more than £27 million.

Housing

Newly built homes in Herefordshire that developers are struggling to sell could soon be occupied by some of the 5,000 households on Herefordshire Councils waiting list. The Council, which to date is in negotiation on 135 properties, is looking to relieve some of the demand for affordable housing and help developers at the same time.

Agriculture and Environment

A proposed biomass co-operative has the potential to boost Herefordshire's rural economy and contribute to a more sustainable future. The project could involve the provision of 100,000 tonnes of stock annually from any local land or woodland owners who produce the right materials. The potential fuels, which would be supplied to energy development firm LandEnergy, are: woodland thinnings, orchard prunings and micanthus grass.

The government has released detailed proposals for Upland Entry Levels Stewardships (UELS), which will replace the Hill Farm Allowance (HFA) from 2010. The scheme supports farmers that play a vital role in maintaining our upland landscapes.

A new project manager, Perminder Balu, has been appointed to Connect2 Hereford City's planned walking and cycling route between the Cathedral and Rotherwas Industrial estate.

Community and Voluntary Groups

A new film *Show and Tell* produced by the Rural Media Company about rural poverty aims to dispel the myth about living the good life in the country. The film features a selection of participants reflecting on their lives and the struggles they face.

NATIONAL NEWS

Passengers on some of the country's busiest rail routes will benefit from the single biggest investment in Intercity trains for a generation. Agility Trains has been selected as the preferred bidder for a £7.5bn contract to build and maintain a fleet of new Super Express trains for the Great Western and East Coast main lines. These will replace existing high speed trains which are 20-30 years old.

Information for this news article has been sourced from the press and online resources

EDITORIAL: JOBCENTRE PLUS RAPID RESPONSE SERVICE PHIL VALLELY, JOBCENTRE PLUS MARCHES DISTRICT

The economic downturn has already affected many companies across Herefordshire. Since the start of November, Jobcentre Plus has been notified of 43 redundancy exercises in the county affecting 720 members of staff.

Five of these notifications have been received from the HR1 forms sent by the employer to the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). This process is initiated whenever a company wishes to make at least 20 staff redundant but there are also situations where the forms cannot be completed. Jobcentre Plus also acts upon reports of redundancies, Short Time Working or Temporary Stops coming from clients wishing to make claims as well as any other information source such as newspapers, websites etc.

Jobcentre Plus' reaction to these events has been to set up a Rapid Response Service. This service collates details of every notification received and makes contact with each and every employer to see what level of support would be of use.

The Service has recently given several redundancy talks to those being laid-off as well as leaving supplies of relevant leaflets, dealing with queries about benefit entitlement, referring companies to other partners and providing lists of vacancies currently available in the locality.

Jobcentre Plus is keen to make sure that every employer, who may be going through issues such as these, has access to our services and we welcome approaches to discuss the assistance we can provide. Further details of services offered by Jobcentre Plus can be found at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/employers and <http://www.supportwm.co.uk>.

Impact so far

Of the 43 exercises since November that we were made aware of, 33 have been in Hereford City (affecting 593 staff), seven in Leominster (106 staff) and one each in Bromyard (1 staff), Ledbury (5) and Ross-on-Wye (15 staff). We have not received any formal notifications from more rural areas.

We are aware that 308 staff were made redundant in November but only 35 in December.

Unfortunately, January saw the figures again rise after the Christmas break and there were 122 job losses in the month. February has seen this trend continue and 145 have already been laid-off this month with another 34 expected in the final week. We are already aware of 76 further losses before the end of the financial year.

Since the start of January, the three largest scale redundancies to have been announced occurred at Wrayram, Bulmer's and Triplex – all in Hereford and laying off a total of 156.

Table 1 Redundancies by Jobcentre Plus office

Local JCP Office	Employers	Redundancies
Bromyard	1	1
Hereford	33	593
Ledbury	1	5
Leominster	7	106
Ross on Wye	1	15
Grand Total	43	720

Industrial Sector

38% of the people affected by the redundancies were in Manufacturing at 14 companies and another 23% were in Engineering. The only other sectors to experience more than 50 job losses were Retail (where the impact of national chains closing has been evident in all of the major towns in the county) and Construction.

Table 2 Redundancies by Industrial Sector

Industry Sector	Employers	Redundancies
Construction	9	77
Engineering	4	168
Food	3	68
Leisure / Travel	1	2
Manufacturing	14	271
Other	4	30
Retail	7	99
Transport	1	5
Grand Total	43	720

Jobcentre Plus welcome **contact** from any employers who are considering a Temporary Stop, Short Time Working or making redundancies. To discuss these matters, please ring **Phil Vallely** on **01562-623683**.

UNEMPLOYMENT

This article shows levels and trends of unemployment in Herefordshire. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) supplies data on numbers and rates of unemployment (% of the working age population claiming unemployment benefits), the age of those who are unemployed and duration of their unemployment. The following is a summary of the key information from **January 2009**. All figures are un-adjusted for seasonal variation unless otherwise stated.

In January 2009:

The claimant count for Herefordshire continues to increase at a fast rate, with the count in January 2009 being 2,550 a large increase (16%) on December. This was a result of both a large on-flow (new claimants) and a small off-flow (claimants leaving benefit) (chart 1). This is the highest since August 1998 and is much higher than in January 2008 (1,517).

In January 2009 the rate was 2.5%, high compared to January 2008 (1.5%). This was still low compared to the West Midlands region (4.5%) and England as a whole (3.4%).

Age and duration

When looking at the duration of claims, unsurprisingly it was those claiming for less than six months that accounted for most (94%) of the increase since July, as this incorporates new claimants. In January 2009 those claiming for less than 6 months accounted for 86% (2,170 claimants) of all claimants. Claims of 6-12 months (220 claimants) and claims over 12 months (130 claimants) both increased over the same period but at a much slower rate.

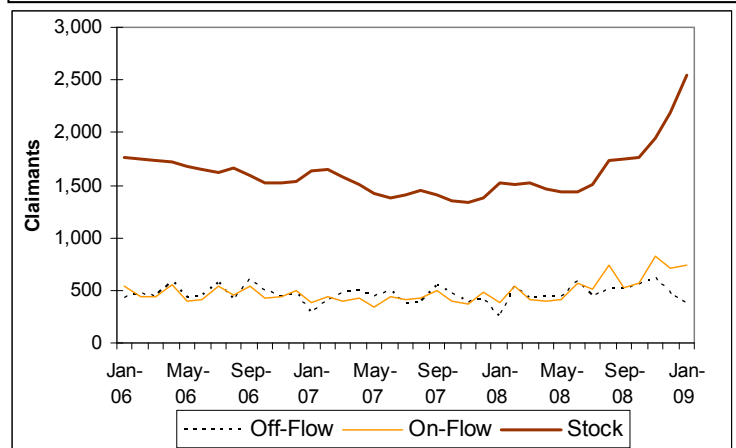
The greatest proportion of claimants by age were those between 25 and 49 years, 53% (1,325 claimants). Those under 25 accounted for 29% and the over 50s 19%. It is the over 50s (470 claimants) that have seen the largest increase in percentage terms since July 2008 (81%).

Sub county

Between July 2008 and January 2009 the wards that saw the greatest increases in terms of claimant number were Belmont and St. Martins and Hinton, both increasing by over 100 claimants. The following wards all saw an increase of more than 30 claimants over this period:

Belmont	(109)	St Nicholas	(52)
St. Martins and Hinton	(101)	Tupsley	(41)
Ross-on-Wye West	(72)	Leominster North	(39)
Three Elms	(62)	Kerne Bridge	(34)
Leominster South	(57)	Ross-on-Wye East	(33)
Ledbury	(56)	Aylestone	(31)

Chart 1. Claimant on-flow, off-flow and claimant Stock



Source: ONS - Crown copyright

Occupation

When looking at the usual occupation of claimants, the greatest proportion are in the **'elementary trades, plant and storage related occupations'**¹ accounting for 20% of all claimants (520 claimants). It was also this group that saw the largest increase in the number of claimants since July 2008 (increase of 215).

The **'sales occupations'** also accounted for a large proportion of total claimants (14%, 365 claimants) and had increased by 145 claimants since July.

Other groups that saw large increases in the number of claimants were 'transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives' (105), 'process, plant and machine operatives' (90), 'skilled construction and building trades' (80), 'elementary administration and service occupations' (65) and 'skilled metal and electronic trades' (65).

¹ 'Elementary trades, plant and storage related occupations' include; elementary trades within agriculture and construction e.g. woodworking and building labourers; elementary process plant occupations e.g. foundry workers and packers; and elementary goods storage occupations e.g. stevedores, dockers and slingers.

'Click here for the full article' - please note this opens a new window (36 KB)

Any queries please contact the Herefordshire Council Research Team: 01432 260464 or researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

HOUSE PRICES

HM Land Registry collects data on house prices from all house sales in England and Wales which forms the basis of the data below. The most recent data for house prices is **Quarter 2 in 2008** and for the House Price Index, **December 2008**.

This data is published as a series of 'Live Tables', including various measures of property price – the mean, the median and the lower quartile. The median and lower quartile figures are shown in the table below for Herefordshire, the West Midlands and England & Wales.

In the 2nd quarter of 2008, the *provisional* median price of a property in Herefordshire was **£194,500**. In comparison, the median property prices for England & Wales and the West Midlands were £175,000 and £144,000 respectively.

Volume of Sales

The Land Registry figure for the number of house sales in Herefordshire during October 2008 was 148. In the 6 months prior to November 2008 (May 2008 to October 2008) the volume of sales

averaged 156 per month, which is a decrease of 55% from the same period last year (350 sales per month). For comparison, England & Wales also experienced a fall of 55% and the West Midlands region saw a similar fall of 53% between the 6 months prior to November 2008 and the same period of the previous year.

Affordability

The preferred measure for house price affordability is the ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings. For 2008, the ratio for Herefordshire was 9.2, that is, for those on lower quartile earnings a house at the bottom end of the market would cost them 9.2 times their annual earnings. In 2008 Herefordshire had the worst affordability ratio out of the West Midlands Authorities (unitaries, counties and metropolitan boroughs) and neighbouring counties.

Year of 2nd Quarter	Median property prices			Lower quartile property prices		
	England & Wales	West Midlands	Herefordshire	England & Wales	West Midlands	Herefordshire
2006	£165,000	£140,000	£179,000	£120,000	£110,000	£135,000
2007	£175,000	£147,000	£182,500	£125,000	£114,000	£145,000
2008^a	£175,000	£144,000	£194,500	£125,000	£111,500	£148,000

Source: HM Land Registry

^aFigures for 2008 are provisional.

House Price Index

The Land Registry releases a House Price Index (HPI), calculated by selecting properties that have changed hands more than once since January 1995, so the index is based on genuine price increases for particular properties.

The table gives the index values in December 2008 and the current annual rate of increase in

house prices for Herefordshire, the West Midlands and England & Wales.

	HPI			Annual change (%)		
	Eng & Wales	West Mids	Hfds	Eng & Wales	West Mids	Hfds
Dec-07	293.7	259.3	283.1	6.7%	3.5%	6.4%
Dec-08	254.2	224.1	262.3	-13.5%	-13.6%	-7.3%

Source: HM Land Registry

Private Rental Levels

The Rent Service (TRS) publishes Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates monthly - these represent the amount payable in Housing Benefit to cover rental of different dwelling sizes. The LHA rates are based on on-going surveys of the rental market by TRS, who then use median values as the basis for their figures.

There has been a marked decrease in the private rental level for 5 bedroom dwellings in

Herefordshire since April 2008. Rental levels for smaller dwellings have changed little, if at all.

	<i>(Calculated from the weekly LHA rental levels published by TRS)</i>					
	1 Bed-room Shared	1 Bed-room	2 Bed-room	3 Bed-room	4 Bed-room	5 Bed-room
Apr-08	£287	£411	£526	£652	£797	£1,153
Nov-08	£296	£421	£531	£652	£797	£953
Dec-08	£287	£421	£531	£652	£797	£977
Jan-09	£296	£421	£531	£652	£785	£977
Feb-09	£289	£421	£536	£652	£777	£940

Source: The Rent Service

EARNINGS & HOURS WORKED 2008

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) provides information about the levels and range of earnings and hours worked, for employees in all industries and occupations. The latest data was released in **November 2008** and relates to employees who were employed on the 18th April 2008. This excludes employees not paid during the pay period including 18th April 2008 and those who are self-employed. The survey is based on a random 1% sample of employees (using their national insurance number), via a postal questionnaire to their employer. Methodological changes were introduced in 2007 with retrospective changes made to the 2006 figures, therefore data before 2006 is not directly comparable.

The ASHE survey provides data on earnings for employees: gross annual, weekly and hourly pay and hours worked (including and excluding overtime). It also provides a breakdown by gender and full/part-time workers. There are two sets of figures of earnings data for Herefordshire:

- **Work based** – all people who work in Herefordshire regardless of which county they live in, and
- **Residence based** – people who live in Herefordshire i.e. includes those working outside the county.

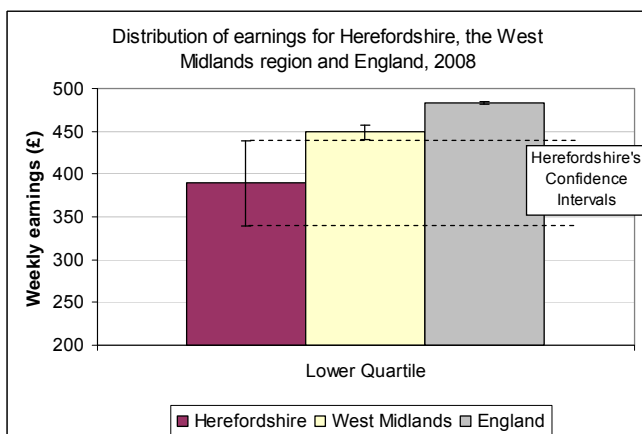
This article focuses on ‘work based median’ earnings - this figure provides a mid-point for earnings such that half the workers earn more than this and half earn less. Unless otherwise stated figures are gross weekly earnings for full-time adults.

It is important to use **confidence intervals** when making comparisons using results drawn from sample surveys, as differences seen between the published figures may not be statistically significant. For example, if the ranges of the confidence interval for each of the estimates overlap with each other then it is possible that the ‘true values’ are actually the same. When confidence intervals are referred to they will be shown as \pm £0.00, i.e. plus or minus however many pounds from the published figure.

Average WORK BASED earnings for full-time employees

In 2008, the **median weekly earnings** for people who work in Herefordshire were **£389.40** (\pm £49.61).

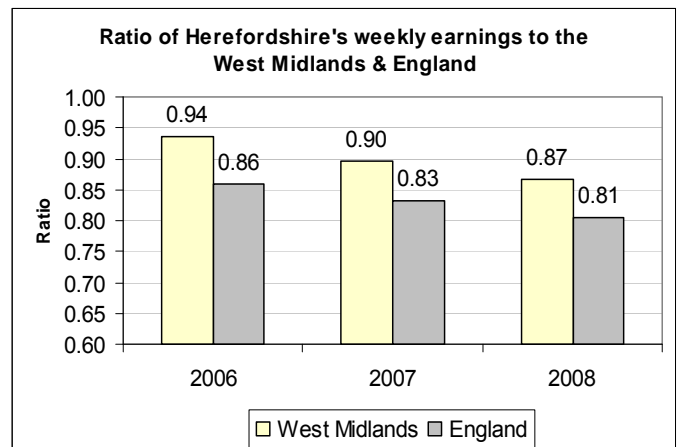
Comparatively, median weekly gross earnings were £448.90 (\pm £7.90) and £483.10 (\pm £1.90) in England.



Herefordshire’s published earnings were statistically lower than those in both the West Midlands region and across England as a whole.

In 2008, Herefordshire’s work based gross **median annualised¹ earnings** were **£20,304** (\pm £2,587) which is statistically lower than both the West Midlands, £23,407 (\pm £413) and England £25,190 (\pm £99).

The **median hourly earnings** (incl. overtime) for people working in Herefordshire were **£9.49** (\pm £0.97), statistically lower than those in the West Midlands region £11.09 (\pm £0.24) and in England £12.11 (\pm £0.07).



Ratios of earnings

Monitoring the ratio of Herefordshire’s earnings compared to regionally and nationally shows whether the gap between earnings in Herefordshire and elsewhere has got larger or smaller.

In 2006, Herefordshire's earnings were 6% lower than the West Midlands, whereas in **2008** this **gap** had **widened** to 13% lower. The gap between Herefordshire and England’s earnings is wider but has not increased as much, 14% lower in 2006 increasing to 19% lower in 2008.

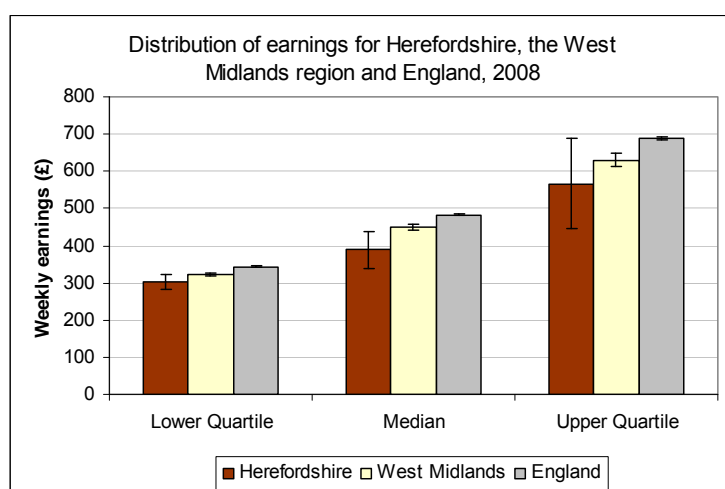
¹ Annualised earnings are derived from weekly earnings

EARNINGS & HOURS WORKED (CONT)

High and low earnings

Higher and lower levels of earnings are measured through quartile information i.e. the figures where 25% of workers earned less and 25% earned more.

In Herefordshire during 2008, 25% of adult full time workers earned less than **£301.00** (per week) and 25% earned more than **£566.60**. For comparison, the median is £389.40.



The only statistically significant differences are:

- Herefordshire's **lower quartile earnings are lower** than England's lower quartile earnings
- and as already mentioned, Herefordshire's **median earnings are lower** than West Midlands and England's median earnings.

Differences in male & female earnings

Across the whole of the West Midlands region and England in 2008, median earnings for full-time female workers are lower than those of their male counterparts (ratio of 0.79 in England and 0.78 in the West Midlands). If female and male earnings were the same the ratio would be 1.0, if females earned less the ratio is less than 1 and if females were paid more the ratio would be higher than 1. The further the ratio is from 1 the larger the gender pay gap.

Out of all authorities in the West Midlands region, Herefordshire had the **smallest gender pay gap**. Female earnings were 0.88 of male earnings, 12% lower, although, this difference is not statistically significant. However, this comparatively high ratio is due to Herefordshire's male workers having relatively low earnings compared to other authorities.

Earnings by Industry

This information is only available at a national level, but it gives some insight into the level of earnings in Herefordshire when shown alongside the proportion of Herefordshire residents working in each industry.

In 2008, the UK industry with the highest median weekly earnings was mining & quarrying at £647.80 per week, 0.2% of Herefordshire's residents were employed in this sector.

The largest proportion of Herefordshire's residents were employed in wholesale & retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, at only £380.00 per week nationwide, this is one of the sectors with lowest median earnings.

17.4% of Herefordshire's residents were employed in manufacturing at the time of the 2001 Census (the second largest proportion of workers), median earnings for this industry nationally were £487.20 in 2008.

If earnings by industry in Herefordshire follow national patterns, the local economy is made up of small proportions of residents working in industries where earnings are high and large proportions of the workforce in sectors with lower earnings.

Hours Worked

ASHE publishes information about the number of hours worked by people working in the county, providing the median figures for the **basic** hours worked and **total** hours worked (i.e. including overtime) for full-time adult workers.

When looking at **basic** hours only, the median number of hours worked by people in Herefordshire in 2008 was 38 hours per week. This is similar to the number of basic hours worked by those in the West Midlands, England as a whole and neighbouring counties (both 37.5 hours).

The median of **total** hours worked (including overtime) by those working in Herefordshire was 39 hours per week. Despite this looking higher than Herefordshire's basic hours worked, the difference is not statistically significant. Herefordshire's median of total hours worked is **higher** than those in the West Midlands and England as a whole.

ANNUAL BUSINESS INQUIRY 2007

Employment figures are sourced from the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI), the latest date for which was **2007** (released in December 2008). The ABI survey samples approximately 66,000 workplace units in the UK providing the best available estimates of employment at a detailed regional and industry level. There was a change in methodology in 2006, which caused some discontinuity with previous data. Self-employed workers are not covered by the ABI which may have a larger impact on Herefordshire's figures, as 2001 Census information indicated Herefordshire had a higher proportion of self-employed than regionally and nationally (20% of Herefordshire's working population compared to 11% in the West Midlands and 12% in England). In particular people employed in the 'agricultural, forestry and fishing' industry may be under represented.

Current employment by Industry Sector

In 2007, there were an estimated **76,100 employees** in Herefordshire a 1.4% increase on the number in 2006. The sectors which employ the most people within the county are:

- **Wholesale, retail and repair trades sector** (14,300 employees, 19% of total)
- **Manufacturing** (11,200 employees, 15% of total)
- **Health and social work** (9,300 employees, 12% of total)
- **Real estate, renting and business activities** (8,800 employees, 12% of total)

Compared to the West Midlands and England Herefordshire has:

- A much higher proportion of people employed in the **agricultural sector** (9%) (West Midlands and England both 1%). Although, this sector is likely to have been particularly effected by the exclusion of the self-employed.
- Slightly higher levels of people (19%) employed in **wholesale, retail and repair sector** (West Midlands and England both 17%).
- A considerably lower proportion in the **real estate, renting and business activities** (12%) (West Midlands ,16%, England, 18%)
- A higher proportion of people employed in the **manufacturing sector** than England as a whole (15% compared to 11%), but similar to the West Midlands (14%).

Table 1. Employment by sector ABI 2007 (full and part time employees)	Herefordshire		West Midlands	England
	No.	%	%	%
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	6,900	9%	1%	1%
Fishing	0	0%	0%	0%
Mining and quarrying	100	*%	*%	*%
Manufacturing	11,200	15%	14%	11%
Electricity, gas and water supply	0	0%	0%	*%
Construction	4,000	5%	5%	5%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods	14,300	19%	17%	17%
Hotels and restaurants	5,300	7%	6%	7%
Transport, storage and communication	2,600	3%	6%	6%
Financial intermediation	900	1%	3%	4%
Real estate, renting and business activities	8,800	12%	16%	18%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	2,600	3%	5%	5%
Education	6,600	9%	10%	9%
Health and social work	9,300	12%	11%	12%
Other community, social and personal service activities	3,400	4%	5%	5%
Total employees	76,100	100%	100%	100%

ANNUAL BUSINESS INQUIRY 2007 (CONT.)

Employment Patterns

The highest proportion of workers are **full time males** (43%), which is similar to both the West Midlands and England (44% and 43% respectively). Herefordshire has a slightly higher proportion of **part-time workers** (33% of the total workforce), compared to 31% for the West Midlands and England. For all areas, around 8% of all workers are part-time male workers, whereas over 23% of are part-time female workers.

Work place units (see Chart 1 below)

The largest proportion of Herefordshire's business units (site or workplace) were in **real estate, renting and business activities** (26%), followed by **wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles** (22%). 12% of Herefordshire's business units are in construction and 8% in both manufacturing and other community, social and personal service activities.

The only marked differences between Herefordshire and regionally/nationally were in the real estate, renting and business activities sector, where Herefordshire had a lower proportion of units (26%) compared to across England as a whole (32%) and in manufacturing

where Herefordshire has a slightly higher proportion (12%) than both England and the West Midlands (both 10%).

Size of companies

Herefordshire has a **similar proportion** of **smaller businesses** (1-10 employees) to regionally and nationally (86% compared to 84% regionally and 85% nationally).

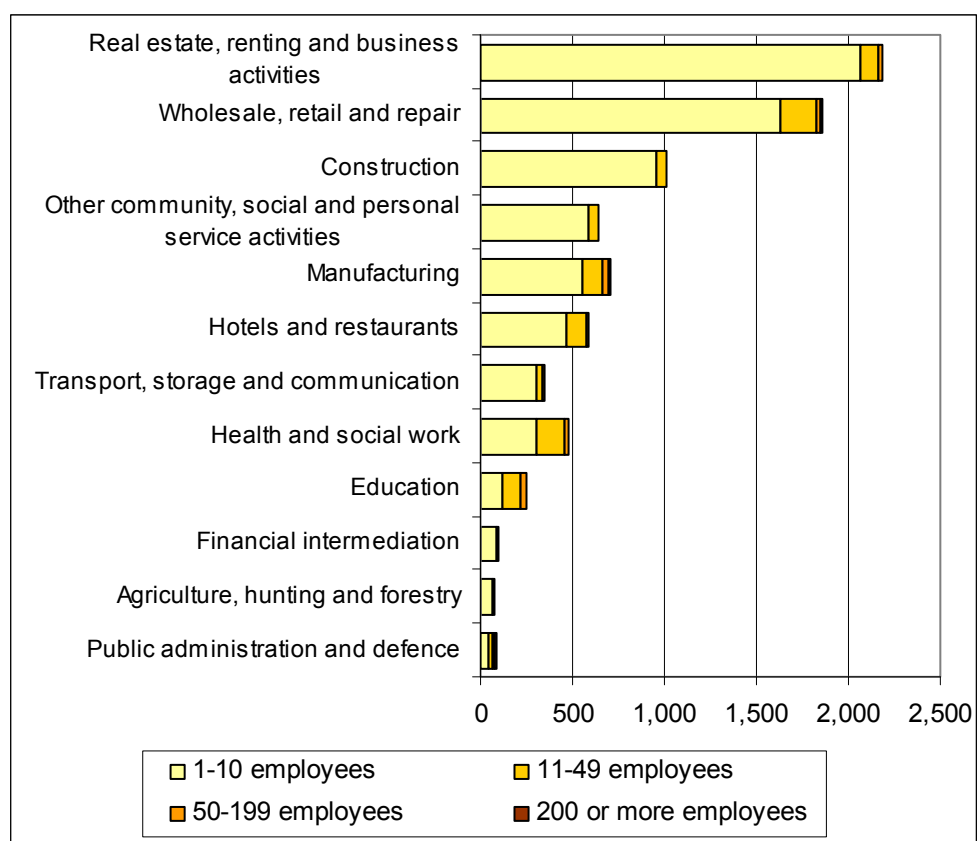
Size of companies by sector

The main differences between the sectors in Herefordshire are:

- **Public administration** has the largest number of businesses (17%) with 50 or more employees.
- **Real estate, construction and other community, social and personal service activities** are the three sectors that have the highest proportion of businesses with between 1 and 10 employees - all above 90%.
- **Education and health and social work** both have more than 30% of units with 11-49 employees, followed closely by **public administration and defence** (29%).

Chart 1. Number of business units by employee size band

Note: These figures will not reflect any of the recent changes resulting from the economic downturn e.g. decreases in number of workplaces or employees, as this data relates to 2007; before any impacts of the economic downturn started to filter through the economy.



'Click here for the full article' - please note this opens a new window (44 KB)
 Any queries please contact the Herefordshire Council Research Team: 01432 260464 or researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

ACCESS TO SERVICES 2008

Physical distance from services and facilities can be a problem, particularly for those living in rural areas. Data for the number of households living within various distance bandings of key services is made available by the Commission for Rural Communities. The Countryside Agency use this data in their State of the Countryside reports where national and regional figures are presented for set distances. These distance bandings have been used to compare the situation locally with elsewhere. Due to changes in the methodology, data is only comparable from 2007 onwards.

Access to services is measured by 'how the crow flies' rather than distances by road.

Changes from 2007

The only changes since 2007 were seen in the proportion of households within set distance for: **GP surgeries (all sites)** - increased from 76% in 2007 to 83% in 2008. The West Midlands region has also seen a slight increase from 96% to 97% in 2008.

Primary schools - down 1 percentage-point from 83% to 82% whereas this has increased by 1 percentage-point from 96% to 97% in the West Midlands and from 97% to 98% across England as a whole.

Public houses - increased from 86% to 88% in 2008. There have been no changes in the West Midlands region and England.

Differences between Herefordshire and the West Midlands region and England (2008)

Across **all** key services, Herefordshire had lower proportions of households within set distances compared to both the West Midlands region as a whole and England, with much lower proportions for particular services:

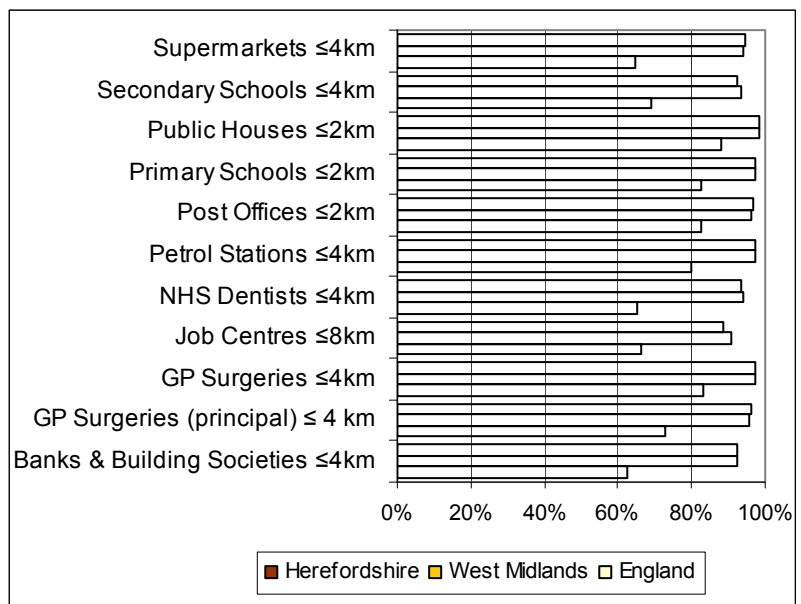
Banks and building societies - 62% of Herefordshire households were within 4km of a bank or building society (92% in the West Midlands region and 93% in England).

NHS Dentists - 65% of Herefordshire households are within 4km of an NHS dentist (94% in both the West Midlands region and England). However there are likely to be wider issues than just distance from a NHS dentist as there are limitations on how many **people** can register for this service and how far people actually travel to visit a NHS dentist.

Job Centres - 66% of Herefordshire households are within 8km of a Job Centre (91% in the West Midlands region and 89% in England). Note: this may not take into account some of the Job Centre Plus stations that are available in some of the Market Towns.

GP Surgeries (principal sites) - 73% of Herefordshire households are within 4km of a GP surgery that is a principal site (96% in both the West Midlands region and England). Access to any GP surgery is better (83%), albeit still lower than regionally and nationally (97% and 98% respectively).

Chart 1. Proportion of all households within set distances of key services for Herefordshire, the West Midlands region and England.



Source: Commission for Rural Communities. ≤ means less than or equal to the set distance

88% of households in Herefordshire are within 2km of a public house. This is still 10 percentage-points lower than the West Midlands and England (both 98%), but is the smallest gap between Herefordshire and regionally and nationally.

Other services with better geographical access, are Post Offices, any GP surgeries and primary schools. All of these services have a **lower** proportion of households within the set distances than the West Midlands and England with Herefordshire only lower by 14 or 15 percentage-points. The largest gap was 31 percentage-points for banks and building societies.

ACCESS TO SERVICES (CONT.)

Access to services for rural-urban settlement areas within Herefordshire

This section looks at the differences between rural and urban areas within Herefordshire. There are 4 main types of area defined by Defra's 2004 rural-urban settlement classifications (urban, rural towns, rural villages and rural dispersed areas – hamlets) and we are therefore able to group access to services data against these categories. This may highlight any particular issues for Herefordshire as it is possible to compare like with like, i.e. comparing rural areas of Herefordshire with rural areas of the West Midlands.

Nearly all households in urban areas are within the set distance for each of the key services for Herefordshire, as is the case for the West Midlands region and England as a whole.

Noticeable points suggesting **poor geographical access** for certain services are:

- only 12% of households within **village** locations are within 4km of a bank or building society.
- only 13% of households in **town & fringe** locations are within 8km of a Job Centre.

Access to services in rural towns and households on the fringe of towns - See Table 1.

The majority of key services, **rural towns** in Herefordshire either have better access or similar to that of the rural towns within the West Midlands region and England.

Herefordshire has a noticeably **higher** proportion of households within rural towns within the set distances, compared to those in the West Midlands region and England for:

- Banks and building societies
- GP surgeries
- NHS Dentists
- Secondary schools

Access to Job Centres, however, is the exception; Herefordshire has a much **lower** percentage of households (only 13%) in rural towns within 8km of a Job Centre than the West Midlands and England (54% and 56% respectively).

Table 1. Percentage of rural town and fringe households within set distances of key services grouped by rural-urban settlement definition (2008)	<i>Herefordshire's relative position</i>	Herefordshire	West Midlands	England
Banks & Building Societies ≤4km	Better	87%	74%	79%
GP Surgeries ≤4km	Better	100%	97%	98%
NHS Dentists ≤4km	Better	89%	84%	83%
Secondary Schools ≤4km	Better	93%	74%	77%
Petrol Stations ≤4km	<i>Similar</i>	98%	97%	94%
Post Offices ≤2km	<i>Similar</i>	99%	99%	99%
Primary Schools ≤2km	<i>Similar</i>	99%	100%	99%
Public Houses ≤2km	<i>Similar</i>	99%	99%	98%
Supermarkets ≤4km	<i>Similar</i>	87%	86%	88%
Job Centres ≤8km	Worse	13%	54%	56%

Source: Commission for Rural Communities; Defra; 2001 Census; OA Boundaries, ONS. Crown Copyright. ≤ means less than or equal to the set distance

There are only 3 areas in Herefordshire with less than 25% of households within the set distances for **all** of the key services, which are within:

- **Edvin Loach & Saltmarshe / Tedstone Wafer parish** (Bringsty ward near Bromyard)
- **Newton parish** (Golden Valley South ward)
- **Stapleton parish** (Mortimer ward, north west of Herefordshire)

'[Click here for the full article](#)' - please note this opens a new window (232 KB)

Any queries please contact the Herefordshire Council Research Team: 01432 260464 or researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

RECENTLY PUBLISHED RESEARCH

National Research

The Credit Crunch and Regeneration: Impact and Implications

Independent report to the Department for Communities & Local Government (Jan. 2009)

This report look at the implications of the credit crunch, which it defined as a sudden cut in the availability of credit or loans, including mortgages, credit cards and interbank lending as banks worry about a lack of liquidity. If the supply of loans reduces significantly, the economic outlook quickly becomes depressed.

The West Midlands region has already been affected by the credit crunch. Housing is badly affected. Mixed use schemes in particular have suffered from the collapse in the housing market, because developers can no longer get the profits in the residential parts which makes the scheme unviable without extra funding. Commercial development schemes have been affected by the economic downturn and speculative developments have been put on hold.

Sectors which are heavily dependent on steel and energy – for example manufacturing and transport – are vulnerable. Places in the region that depend heavily upon them are hit hardest. In these places market confidence weakens quickest and there will be more slowing down of regeneration activities. Overall the region had seen a 50% drop in activity in housing and offices, a 25% reduction in mixed use and a 10% drop in retail and leisure.

Smaller towns and rural areas have also been affected by the credit crunch. The credit crunch and higher costs of products and services were exacerbating challenges of running businesses, securing and maintaining jobs and living in rural areas. Those reported include the disparity of wages for employees in rural workplaces and commuting residents; need for multi-jobbing to create a living wage has become more difficult and more necessary, costs of travel and fuel to premises not on mains; late payments from large to small firms.

Despite falling house prices, which were creating some challenges for existing homeowners, the lack of affordable housing was still a major concern for many communities. In many rural areas it was still difficult to attract staff because of the lack of affordable housing, made worse by difficulties faced by staff failing to obtain mortgages.

The full report , The Credit Crunch and Regeneration: Impact and Implications, is available at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/citiesandregions/creditcrunchregeneration>

Local Research

Area Profiles - We have produced a profile for every ward in the county that includes information on population, deprivation, educational attainment, employment and more. To download a profile visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/research under the 'About your area' section

Housing Needs Studies continue across the county. After a survey and the analysis is completed, a report is issued to the parish or town council and circulated to other interested parties both within and outside Herefordshire Council. The most recent report is for **Pembridge area**. All housing needs survey reports can be accessed from www.herefordshire.gov.uk/research or can be obtained by telephoning the Research Team on 01432 383069.

Forthcoming HIRN seminars:

- **Economic downturn** 11th March 2-4pm
- **Department of Public Health Report & Joint Strategic Needs Analysis** 28th April
- **State of Herefordshire Report** TBC

For more information about HIRN visit www.herefordshirepartnership.com/hirn or ring 01432 260893

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