



REGIONAL LIFESTYLE SURVEY 2005
HEREFORDSHIRE REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Herefordshire Council Research Team

Contact: researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: (01432) 260 442

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Executive Summary

In Spring 2005 the West Midlands Regional Observatory (WMRO), in partnership with the West Midlands Public Health Observatory (WMPHO), undertook a region-wide survey to explore the attitudes of adult residents towards lifestyle, environmental and wider quality of life issues. The survey has been funded and supported by a broad range of partners across the region, including Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT).

The overall response rate for the County of Herefordshire was **34.3%**, in line with the response rates for other local authorities and similar to those achieved by other postal surveys locally. **1,910** of these responses for Herefordshire could be weighted and used in subsequent analysis. Results are presented for different areas depending on the subject of the question.

West Midlands Regional Observatory has compared regional results with figures from the Health Survey for England 2003 and found some marked differences for prevalence of smoking and obesity. The difference may be partly due to differences in survey method.

Quality of Life

Although cited by fewer residents in Herefordshire than across the West Midlands (**42%** compared with **49%**) *“a safe area with low crime”* remains the major influencing factor when deciding where to live, the second most common factor in Herefordshire is *“close to family or friends”*.

Residents in Herefordshire consider *“a quiet area”* and *“accessibility to the countryside”* to be amongst the most important aspects when deciding where to live. Responses from the West Midlands indicate that regionally these factors are less important. A much higher proportion of residents from Herefordshire prefer to live in the countryside, away from towns (**20%** versus **9%**) than in the West Midlands overall.

People in Herefordshire were more likely to feel strongly that they belong to their *“village or part of town / city”* than those from the region overall. People in Herefordshire felt more strongly that they belonged to their county than people from across the region. A smaller proportion of people in Herefordshire felt strongly that they belong to the West Midlands.

The greatest proportion of Herefordshire residents who work travel more than 1 mile but less than 5 miles to their place of work, accounting for **20%** of all residents, similar to the regional value of **21%**. A smaller proportion of the residents in Herefordshire (**9%**) travel 5 to 10 miles to work compared to regionally (**12%**).

A higher proportion of people experience difficulties accessing services in Herefordshire than in the region generally. **20%** of Herefordshire residents had problems accessing health services (compared to **12%** regionally). A similar proportion **20%** encountered difficulties when trying to use public transport compared to **9%** in the West Midlands. Accessing learning or training and leisure facilities is also more difficult in Herefordshire.

Larger proportions of people in Herefordshire live further away from facilities than those in the region, particularly adult learning centres, food stores and banks/cashpoints. Residents were invited to give further details of any of the problems that prevent or make it difficult to access any of the services. Distance was identified as a difficulty when accessing all of the services, along with lack of transport links in the area. Coupled with these problems the *“lack of facilities available in the area”* was a commonly cited problem for all services, most particularly for health services.

Grocery stores or cornershops are the services most commonly accessed *“most days”*, however the **21%** doing so in Herefordshire is significantly lower than the **28%** reported across the region. The frequency of use of public transport varies greatly between the two areas, a far smaller

proportion of residents in Herefordshire using the bus daily. The proportion of those in Herefordshire who never use the bus (**50%**) is considerably greater than the **38%** regionally.

Frequency of use is similar in Herefordshire to that of the region as a whole for libraries and leisure/sports centres with **27%** and **34%** respectively visiting these facilities at least once a month. A larger proportion of people in Herefordshire visit the countryside at least monthly. A lower percentage of Herefordshire residents visit parks at least once every 6 months and a slightly higher proportion visit art and cultural venues in the same period.

Recycling Services

The proportion of residents actively recycling is almost identical in both geographies. Differences between methods of recycling in Herefordshire and the region are likely to be in part due to differences in the provision of doorstep recycling services.

Crime and Community Safety

In Herefordshire, across the West Mercia Police Force area and West Midlands region, the greatest proportion of residents feel that litter is one of the 3 main problems in their neighbourhoods. Herefordshire residents are less likely to be troubled by speeding, joyriding or dangerous driving, troublesome teenagers, vandalism and graffiti and theft from vehicles, than residents from over the West Midlands region overall.

People in Herefordshire expressed greater levels of concern over the presence of drug users and the presence of drug dealers than those from the West Midlands. A greater proportion of the residents from Herefordshire felt that there were no problems in their neighbourhoods compared to both the West Mercia Police Force area and the region.

Results suggest that people in Herefordshire are more satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live, **68%** of residents strongly agreeing with the statement compared to **51%** over the West Midlands. **70%** of residents from Herefordshire indicated that they had not been the victim of any of the crimes listed, this is higher than the figure for the West Mercia Police Force area (**66%**) and for the West Midlands region (**61%**).

General Health

Herefordshire residents are more likely to describe their health as good than people across the region as a whole.

Physical Activity

A higher percentage of people in Herefordshire (**47%**) undertake moderate physical activity for 5 or more days per week, than in the West Midlands overall (where the proportion is **41%**). The percentage undertaking no moderate physical activity is lower in Herefordshire compared to the region (**11%** versus **15%**) and the proportion of residents in Herefordshire exercising every day is higher than that of the West Midlands as a whole (**21%** compared to **16%**).

Diet

People within Herefordshire are more likely to eat the recommended 5 or more portions of fruit or vegetables each day than those in the West Midlands as a whole (**34%** compared to **27%**). Notably the proportions consuming the recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables tends to increase with age both in Herefordshire and regionally.

Alcohol Consumption

The proportion of people who drank more than the recommended maximum amount of alcohol in the week before they complete the survey was lower in Herefordshire than for the region as a whole (**17%** compared with **20%**). Males are more likely to drink more than the recommended maximum than females.

In Herefordshire **23%** of residents were identified as binge drinkers compared to **28%** regionally. Rates of binge drinking are considerably higher in males, in both areas, with the highest rates being observed in the 18-34 year old age band.

Prevalence of Smoking

The Prevalence of smoking in Herefordshire is similar to the region (**22%** and **21%** respectively). Both in Herefordshire and regionally smoking rates are higher for males. The highest cigarette-smoking rate in Herefordshire occurs amongst the 35-44 year olds (**29%**) and this is substantially higher than the regional average for this age band. It should be noted however that Regional Lifestyles Survey results may underestimate the prevalence of smoking.

Employment

Levels of volunteering are greater in Herefordshire than those across Herefordshire and Worcestershire (the local learning and skills council (LSC) area) and the West Midlands. Rates of volunteering are highest for the 55 to 64 year old age group

Within Herefordshire and the local LSC area results suggest that **19%** of residents are managers or senior officials compared with **16%** over the region. A greater proportion of people in Herefordshire work in skilled trade occupations than regionally.

In Herefordshire, the local LSC area and the West Midlands region people are most likely to take less than 20 minutes to get to work (**49%**, **48%** and **47%** respectively), with the vast majority of people driving to work. A greater proportion of people in Herefordshire walk to work than across the region and there is a lower frequency of bus use by commuters in Herefordshire.

When asked to identify which factors prevented them from changing jobs or finding employment, in both Herefordshire and the West Midlands the 2 most common responses to this question were *“Don’t want to look for a new job”* and *“I have retired”*.

People from Herefordshire (and the local LSC area) are more likely to feel that *“no suitable jobs”* are available to them compared to the West Midlands as a whole. A greater proportion of people in Herefordshire identifying that *“potential employers are too far away”*. Fewer residents in Herefordshire cited a *“lack of qualifications”* as a barrier to further employment than those from the West Midlands.

Qualifications and Learning

People in Herefordshire are more likely to have a qualification than in the region as a whole. Herefordshire residents who have participated in training more recently being more likely to begin training again in the next 12 months. Moreover, those who have not undertaken any training or learning since leaving school are the group most unlikely to start, **57%** of whom will definitely not begin training within the next 12 months.