



insight

The research bulletin for London West

Introduction

insight is the research bulletin from London West Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and is produced on a quarterly basis. Its aim is to give a snapshot of the London West area, in terms of education and labour market information, with regular updates on current research.

This issue features a strong focus on education, with briefings on the 2003 examination results and research

project – as yet unfinished – on e-learning. Also included is a map of the revised ward boundaries, together with comparative unemployment rates.

The current issue also contains a profile of Brent, one of the most culturally diverse boroughs in England, as part of our alternate series of briefings on boroughs and industrial sectors – a popular feature of *insight*.

Overview of the London West area

- Brent's current population stands at more than 253,000 living in approximately 104,000 households. The Black and Asian communities account for more than 51% of all residents.
- Ealing covers an area of 55km². The population currently stands at 311,000, which is the third highest in London. More than 40% of the residents are from minority ethnic groups.
- Heathrow airport is Hillingdon's largest business, with approximately 68,000 employees. The total number of full-time students and schoolchildren aged 16 and above is 13,952.
- Hounslow is one of London's most diverse multicultural areas, with 85,000 households and a population of around 212,000. More than a quarter of its population is from ethnic minorities.
- Hammersmith & Fulham is the fourth smallest London borough in terms of population, but the fourth most densely populated, with 159,000 people occupying an area of 16.4km².
- Harrow has a population of more than 210,000, living in 81,384 residential dwellings. The total number of full-time students and schoolchildren aged 16 and above is 13,441.



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Findings from research projects

Recent research

The findings of numerous evidence-based research projects play a vital role in informing London West LSC's planning and funding decisions. They help to ensure that the skills needed by employers are aligned with the requirements of local communities and the economic growth of the area.

Here we look at two recent research projects that investigate ways of getting people back into employment and learning, focusing in particular on the need to engage socially excluded groups. We also look at e-learning research on ways of reaching those groups who had previously found it difficult to access learning opportunities.

Women in construction

The *Building your Future* report, funded by London West LSC and published in September 2003, looked at the barriers preventing working age women from joining and pursuing a career in the construction industry.

Background

It's no secret that London West's construction industry is experiencing serious labour and skills shortages. This is not merely a short-term phenomenon. Major projects, including Wembley, Imperial Wharf, White City Centre, Heathrow Terminal 5 and Paddington Basin (which falls just outside the area covered by London West LSC), are all encountering difficulties – and the skills shortage looks set to worsen over the coming years as Terminal 5 increases its labour requirement.

The problem is not confined to London West; it is replicated across Greater London, where acute labour shortages will become critical if the bid for the 2012 Olympics is successful.

To maintain current and forecast levels of construction activity, the industry needs there to be enough skilled people available to work on projects as and when required. Construction firms also need to be able to recruit and retain a fully integrated workforce.

As part of the strategy to address the immediate skills and labour shortage, and to attract entrants to the construction industry in the longer term, it is important to look at ways of increasing participation of 'under-represented' groups. One such group is women: they account for at least 51% of the population of all London West boroughs; yet nationwide they represent only 10% of the total construction industry workforce, and only 1% of workers in manual trades.

Methodology

Building Your Future looked at different ways of meeting the labour and skills shortages in the short term and building a pipeline of labour for the future. It focused on: factors preventing working age women from joining the industry; and factors preventing women in full-time education from considering a career in the construction industry.

The research was carried out between February and July 2003. Information was obtained through a combination of desk research, face-to-face and telephone interviews and a number of group discussions. Respondents included women working or training within the industry, women who had rejected construction as a career option

and women who had never considered the idea of working in the industry. The research also included the views of construction companies, training providers and other organisations that have successfully integrated females into their workforce.

Key findings

The factors preventing working age women from joining the construction industry are varied. They include:

- **Image** – historically, the industry has been portrayed as a male preserve where the work is dirty and women may be physically unsuitable to undertake the required tasks. The trades within the industry (manual, craft and professional) are 'lumped together' as construction, leading to a lack of understanding
- **Culture** – some male workers can be condescending or sexist, while others can consider female workers to be a liability
- **Confidence** – joining such a male preserve prevents many women from considering a career in the industry. A lack of what to expect from working in the sector contributes to uncertainty and insecurity
- **The recruitment process** – many organisations in the construction industry do not follow established recruitment procedures, with a number of vacancies being filled by word of mouth. There is a lack of co-ordinated information about what jobs are available and where they can lead
- **Terms and conditions of employment** – appropriate terms and conditions of employment provide the key to attracting new entrants to the industry. Lack of adequate childcare provision is frequently quoted as a barrier
- **Lack of support** – new staff often lack support and effective feedback. Companies operating mentoring and buddying schemes report a much higher level of retention.

Taking a longer term view, the study also researched the factors preventing women from considering a future career in the industry. The findings reveal that the factors influencing an individual's choice of career come into play at an early age and are reinforced from pre-school onwards. These factors are a function of:

- **The image and culture of the industry.** Most of the imagery incorporated into early years play and learning reinforces the concept that construction is for men
- **The focus of the school curriculum on academic subjects.** Even where manual trades and vocational work are on the curriculum, the emphasis is on males rather than females
- **The lack of resources in schools** to provide appropriate vocational training. There is frequently a lack of skilled teachers in schools with sufficient knowledge to teach construction and allied subjects
- **The lack of awareness,** among careers advisers, of the potential offered by the industry, in terms of earnings, training, vocational qualifications available and career development.

The *Building Your Future* report proposes a wide range of possible solutions, including the following:

- Employers in the construction industry should provide appropriate levels of support through peer group buddying and developmental mentoring schemes

- A simple information sheet should be produced about career prospects in each of the different trades within the industry, including details about the skills required, potential salary levels and any other relevant points. These information sheets would then be used by Jobcentre Plus, other recruitment agencies and school careers advisers
- Television, film and media producers should be influenced to portray women's issues – to include a capable and valued woman construction worker in a sit com or soap would create a powerful role model.

Interviews with women currently employed within the construction sector confirmed that it is possible to succeed in the construction industry – but support is needed. One respondent said: 'You need confidence and the belief that you can do it; but you need the chance to prove that you can do it.'

Discrimination in the workplace in London West

A research project commissioned by London West LSC and financed by the European Social Fund has provided an invaluable insight into discrimination in the workplace within the local area. The report findings reveal that job-related discrimination has been reduced for most workers, although refugees, asylum seekers and people with disabilities continue to experience discrimination.

The aim of the research was to understand the extent and nature of people's experience of discrimination in relation to recruitment and employment, and when receiving education and training. It targeted people of working age who were living, working or studying in London West, and the sample ensured that socially excluded groups defined by the LSC were fully represented.

Running in parallel with the above research was a complementary study into the attitudes, experiences and needs of London West's employers in relation to employing people from these socially excluded groups.

Methodology

Between March and September 2003, a representative sample of 1,120 people of working age in London West was interviewed using a questionnaire. This was supplemented by further qualitative research; in-depth interviews were carried out with a number of individuals who had knowledge of local socially excluded groups.

In addition, more than 1,400 small to medium sized enterprises based in the London West area were contacted during a week-long telemarketing exercise, which resulted in interviews with a total of 623 local employers. This quantitative research was explored in detail through further qualitative research involving a focus group of local business people.

Findings

In general, most people of working age in London West do not experience discrimination in employment, education or training. This is a result of a combination of factors, including market forces in employment, the multicultural nature of business and life in the local area, and the impact of discrimination legislation.

The key findings of the report are:

- **Age** – Age was seen as a basis for discrimination by 13.2% of respondents overall and was felt to some degree across all age ranges. It was cited as a reason for discrimination by 22.9% of the over 50s; by 15.7% of 16 to 18-year-olds; and by 11.4% of 25 to 49-year-olds (a remarkably high result); yet for 19 to 24-year-olds, the figure was just 2.8%.

Generally, most London West employers said that their workforce includes older and younger staff members. Overall, they believed that nothing was required to improve the employability of the former, but many stated that further training in Basic Skills and Life Skills would be useful for the latter.

- **Gender and sexual orientation** – Discrimination in this area appears to be fairly low, although there is some evidence that women feel discriminated against.
 - **Ethnicity** – The results suggest that ethnicity is becoming less of a barrier to employment or training in London West, although it is still seen as a basis for discrimination by Black Africans, Black Caribbeans, Pakistanis and – surprisingly – White Europeans.
- Most companies (88%) stated that they did employ people from minority communities and most confirmed that they had no problem working with this group. Although training in English was requested by 111 employers of this group, 359 confirmed that nothing extra was needed to improve employability.
- **Refugees and asylum seekers** – This is one of the two groups most affected by discrimination. Most companies (494) participating in the research did not employ refugees or asylum seekers. Worryingly, within this number 113 either did not comment, or said that nothing could be done to improve the employability of this group – implying that they would not employ this group under any circumstances. In the focus group, businesses blamed much of the mistrust of asylum seekers on the press.
 - **People with disabilities** – Along with refugees and asylum seekers, this group appears to suffer the highest level of discrimination in employment and training (492 of the 624 organisations interviewed indicated that they did not employ disabled people).

Interestingly, 189 of the 492 organisations that do not employ disabled people cited accessibility as a problem. Many employers appear to have a 'catch all' approach to the concept of disability and assume wrongly that all disabled people have mobility and accessibility problems.

Employers gave a range of explanations as to why they could not employ this group, including a lack of knowledge about where to find prospective employees with disabilities and the high cost of adapting the workplace (few of them were aware that grants were available to assist them in this).

Most individuals who felt they had suffered some form of discrimination chose to suffer in silence. Only a small proportion of those who had taken action obtained a satisfactory outcome.

The research revealed a general lack of understanding of current legislation among individuals and businesses, particularly around ethnicity, nationality, gender and sexual orientation and disability. Employers stated that they needed more information and promotion around this subject, including the advantages of employing each of these groups and, importantly, how to access them.

E-learning

The Learning and Skills Council is committed to e-learning and is broadening its strategy to ensure that all post-16 learners have access to information and communications technology (ICT) and the opportunity to acquire the relevant skills.

Publication of the report of the LSC's Distributed and Electronic Learning Group signals the determination of the LSC to spread e-skills across post-16 education in England. This would mean more e-learning in colleges and school sixth forms and more access to e-learning for adults, for example, in community centres and in the workplace. The LSC will focus on the requirements of the e-learner in order to support, invest in and plan effective e-learning provision, to understand where distributed and electronic learning can make its greatest contribution, and to focus resources there.

In October 2003 London West LSC commissioned Host Policy Research (HOST) to carry out a review of e-learning in its operational area. The research centres around post-16 learning and training providers. The aim is to assess the roles e-learning can play in delivery of LSC targets and the fulfilment of their objectives, and to evaluate the benefits and risks of using e-learning.

Definitions of e-learning

It was felt to be important to achieve some mutual understanding of what is meant by the term 'e-learning', as definitions do seem to vary. For the purposes of the research, a more focused definition was needed – one that concentrated on post-16 learning of the structured variety, the sort that can respond to measurement and target setting. Here the LSC provides a useful compromise:

'An approach to learning delivery in which part of the learning resources used are made available to the learner via a computer, television or other electronic communication device, or a combination of these with printed materials. E-learning can be represented as a spectrum ranging from internet-supported distance learning, in which the learner has limited face-to-face contact with the tutor or other learners, to teacher-led, classroom-based activity which is interspersed with occasional computer-delivered or facilitated arrangements.'

This definition encompasses the different uses of e-learning, particularly recognising where it is used alongside other more traditional methods (such as classroom teaching) in a 'blended' format.

We wanted to include as many providers across the range as possible and our initial categorisation was as follows:

- Secondary schools
- Further education and sixth form colleges
- E-learning centres such as UK Online

- Voluntary and community organisations
- Information, Advice and Guidance providers, such as Connexions.

The ICT directory was supplemented from other sources to include, for example, all secondary schools in the area (64 questionnaires issued), work-based learning providers (29 questionnaires issued), UK Online centres (of 78 identified, 47 were already in the ICT directory), and learndirect centres (37). In all, some 367 e-questionnaires were distributed in early December (with questionnaires to learndirect centres distributed in January).

Provider case studies

An important part of the review is to seek face-to-face interviews with a selection of organisations that offer good or interesting practice in their approach to e-learning. The criteria for selection are flexible, depending largely on whether the provider is engaged in interesting approaches. The responses to the e-survey are being used to identify suitable cases (a section in the questionnaire asked for details of what respondents felt was good or interesting practice), supported by suggestions from members of the e-learning strategy group.

Results

The report of the research will be available at the end of March 2004. The results will be summarised in a future issue of *insight* and will be accessible at the research area of the London West website (www.londonwest.org/Research).

Current ward boundaries

The map below shows the distribution of unemployment across London West as reported by residents on their Census forms in April 2001. It is the first opportunity to present unemployment levels for the new London West wards that came into force from May 2002. Claimant counts continue to be published on 1991 ward boundaries, although it is expected that a change to the new wards will occur in 2004.

This measure differs from the unemployment count usually presented for local areas. It is based on people classifying themselves as 'unemployed'. Maps previously presented by London West LSC are based on the number of people unemployed and claiming benefits: the so-called 'claimant count'.

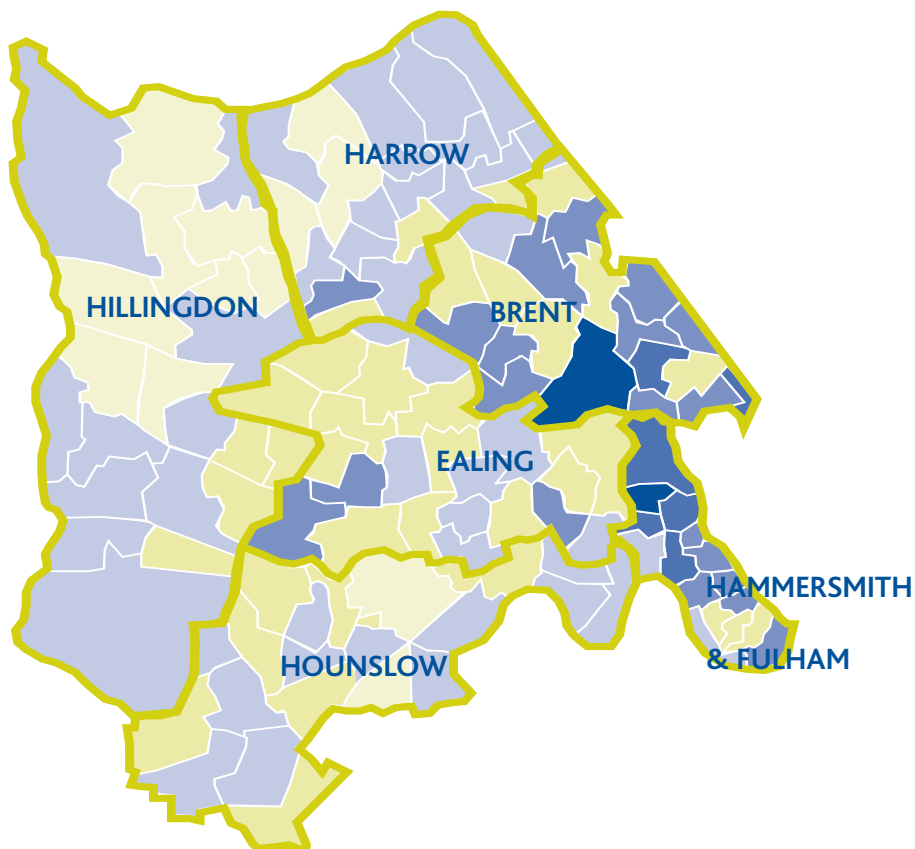
The claimant count is a narrow measure of unemployment – some people will be unemployed but not claiming benefits – so it is expected that unemployment reported by the Census will be higher. However, it has to be borne in mind that overall unemployment was very low at the beginning of 2001 and has risen significantly in the three years since then.

The highest unemployment rates on the map are for Stonebridge and Harlesden in Brent (both at more than 7%) and Wormholt and White City in Hammersmith & Fulham (at a little under 7%). The wards with the highest levels of unemployment are predominantly in these two boroughs, although there is another cluster of high unemployment in the west of Ealing.

Only two wards in London West had unemployment rates of less than 2%: Ickenham and Eastcote and East Ruislip, both in Hillingdon. Other areas of relatively low unemployment (less than 2.5 %) are located in North Harrow and Hounslow.

Unemployment at Census April 2001

6.5% to 8.0%	(3)
5.5% to 6.5%	(6)
4.5% to 5.5%	(21)
3.5% to 4.5%	(36)
2.5% to 3.5%	(44)
1.5% to 2.5%	(13)



Education and achievement

2003 GCSE and A-level results

With the draft report of the Tomlinson Committee recommending significant changes to the structure of 14-19 qualifications, the results of the latest GCSE and A-level examinations could well be among the last in the current format.

As far as London West is concerned, the picture is broadly similar to 2002. At A-level, our best performing borough, Ealing – as it was last year – is still below the national average, although the extent of the discrepancy has been substantially reduced from a 12% gap in 2002 down to one of less than 1%. This improvement in performance by Ealing at A-level is mirrored by its results at GCSE, where the figure for 15-year-olds achieving five good passes has risen to 54%.

Elsewhere, the story is one of variance. Hillingdon's performance at A-level has improved since 2002, while its GCSE pass rate, although up on last year, is still below 50%. In Hounslow the reverse situation prevails: healthier results at GCSE but A-levels unchanged. Overall, the performance of the London West boroughs at GCSE is on a par with the national average. However, that average is below expectations, while London West's A-level students are achieving below their peers in other parts of the country. These results would benefit from an analysis based on value added (to consider, for example, a 'London effect') and the LSC is currently looking at ways of undertaking this.

How the results are calculated

The average point score per student is now derived by adding together the points achieved by each student for each exam, according to a points tariff. The point scores for all students at an institution are then added together and the result is divided by the total number of students taking exams, to arrive at an average point score per student. It should be noted that in cases where a student achieved an AS-level pass and an A-level pass in the same subject, only the A-level pass is normally included. For borough average scores, all the further education colleges and state schools in the local education authority area are included.

At AS-level, the points are halved (for example, an A grade is worth 60 points). For a vocational double award, the points are doubled (an AA grade is worth 240 points). An A-level is equal to one entry; a VCE A-level Double Award is equal to two entries; and an AS qualification is equal to half an entry.

GCSE results 2003

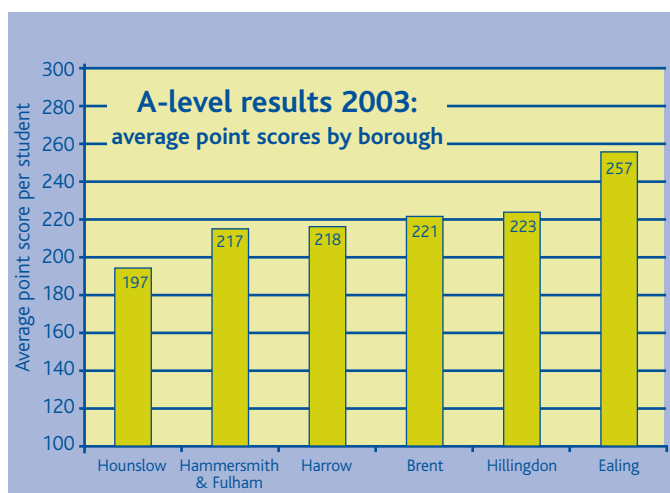
The table below shows the key indicators from the 2003 results for the London West area. The national target for 16-year-olds is that 50% should have five higher grade passes at this level. The table reveals that our area is broadly in line with this target – we have comfortably exceeded the minimum target of 95% of all this age group attaining at least one GCSE.

Results at GCSE have seen a consistent improvement since the LSC was established in 2001. The overall pass rate for the area at that time was 48% of pupils aged 15 with five passes at grades A* to C.

GCSE passes 2003

	Percentage of all pupils aged 15	
	5+ A* to C	5+A* to G
England	53	89
London West area	(52)¹	(90)¹
Ealing	54	93
Hillingdon	48	87
Hounslow	52	90
Brent	51	90
Harrow	58	91
Hammersmith & Fulham	52	89

¹ Provisional



Top-performing schools in London West

In addition to the overall results for the area, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) also publishes the average point score at A-level for individual schools. Reproduced below are the top-performing schools in each of London West's six boroughs (only one school is shown for each borough – there may be other schools within the boroughs that have higher totals than the highest for neighbouring boroughs, but these will not be shown).

Lady Margaret School, Hammersmith & Fulham, retains its pre-eminent position at the head of the table of comprehensive schools funded by London West LSC and is among the top 200 schools of its type in England. St Mark's, Hounslow, makes its first appearance for that borough in the table.

There is a contrast between the independent schools, which are selective, and the non-selective community schools in the London West area. Most of the independent schools have average point scores that are higher in the DfES Performance Tables than their community counterparts. London West has an unusually high number of independent schools: a total of 33, of which 25 have sixth forms. This represents nearly a third of London West's sixth form provision.

Comprehensive schools		
School	Borough	Average point score per student
Lady Margaret School	Hammersmith & Fulham	329
St. Dominic's 6th Form College	Harrow	311
Twyford Church of England High School	Ealing	302
JFS School	Brent	300
Bishop Ramsey C. of E. Secondary School	Hillingdon	287
St Mark's Catholic School	Hounslow	258

Source: DfES Performance Tables, 2003

Independent schools		
School	Borough	Average point score per student
St. Paul's Girls' School	Hammersmith & Fulham	446
North London Collegiate School	Harrow	435
Notting Hill & Ealing High School	Ealing	370
St. Helen's School	Hillingdon	369
Swaminarayan School	Brent	328
Arts Educational	Hounslow	304

Source: DfES Performance Tables, 2003

Job vacancies in London West

The number of notified vacancies has risen again following a fall in the quarter ending March 2003. There has been an increase of 10% on the previous figure although the total number of vacancies is still below the level at this time last year.

Breakdown by borough: notified vacancies (quarter ending September 2003)	
	Number of vacancies
London West LSC area	13,158
Hillingdon	3,677
Brent	2,537
Hounslow	2,312
Ealing	2,275
Hammersmith & Fulham	1,260
Harrow	1,097

Source: Quarterly Count of Job Centre Vacancies, ONS/NOMIS

As shown in the table, Hillingdon has by far the highest number of job centre vacancies. Notable changes from last time include the steep increase in the number of notified vacancies in Hounslow (up by 31%) and in Hammersmith & Fulham (an increase of 41%, albeit from a smaller base). Conversely, the figure in Ealing has declined by 23%. The top 30 notified vacancies in London West account for 70% of the total number – a similar proportion to London as a whole.

The following table shows the top 10 vacancies notified in job centres in the London West LSC area in the quarter ending September 2003.

Top 10 notified vacancies ¹	
Occupation	Number of vacancies
Sales and retail assistants	973
Cleaners, domestics	796
Kitchen and catering assistants	691
Security guards and related occupations	642
Van drivers	534
Chefs, cooks	453
Sales related occupations	448
Heavy goods vehicle drivers	423
General office assistants/clerks	413
Other goods handling and storage occupations	375

Source: Quarterly Count of Job Centre Vacancies, ONS/NOMIS

The top 10 remains largely unchanged, although the two categories of chefs and cooks and sales-related occupations make an appearance at the expense of sales representatives and customer care. The latter fell very sharply, a drop of more than 50% taking it out of the top 10. The incoming category of chefs and cooks, together with the existing high level of vacancies for kitchen assistants, show the importance of the catering sector to the London West economy.

¹ Please note, information suggests that only about a third of all vacancies are advertised in local job centres.

Borough profile: Brent

Located in North West London, just 20 minutes from the West End, Brent is a borough with very distinctive characteristics. It is one of the most culturally diverse areas in the UK, and more than 50% of its residents have ethnic backgrounds. Brent's diversity is evident in the vibrant Caribbean culture of Harlesden, the spectacular Hindu temple in Neasden and the pre-eminent Irish quarter of Kilburn. The borough is a mix of bustling inner city and more laid-back suburbia, where affluence and opportunities exist alongside high levels of deprivation.

Geographically, Brent borders seven other London boroughs and is bisected by the North Circular road. The north of the borough is generally more prosperous, and the south more disadvantaged. Brent is home to Park Royal, the largest business park in London, situated in the southwest corner of the borough, and Wembley, where the new national stadium is currently under construction.

Population

Results from the 2001 population Census show that there were 263,464 residents of Brent, in 99,991 households – an increase of 9.4% since the 1991 Census. It is notable that a relatively high proportion of the resident population is young, with 43% being under 30 years of age.

The Census also demonstrated that 45% of Brent's population was White, but that only 29% classified themselves as British – the lowest in Britain. The largest non-White ethnic group was Indian, which accounted for 18.5% of the population, followed by Black Caribbean (10.5%) and Black African (7.8%). Brent also has a large community of Irish origin that is currently estimated at 7 to 10% of the total, the highest proportion in any English local authority. It is anticipated that this remarkable diversity will continue to develop over the coming years.

Ethnic population forecasts for Brent 2006				
White	Black	Asian	Chinese & Other	Total
44.5%	20.5%	27.8%	7.2%	100%

Source: London Research Centre 'Ethnic Group Projections'

Employment

In 2001, 75% of the working age population was economically active, compared with 77% for the London West LSC area as a whole.

The table below shows the proportion of employees by sector in 2002. It also shows the importance of retail and wholesale distribution in the borough of Brent, which accounts for nearly a quarter of all employment. The next largest sector is real estate, renting and business activities, though this is of significantly less importance than it is to the London West LSC area as a whole.

Brent's hotels and catering sector has seen the greatest growth since 1999, with a 79% increase in the number of employees. Manufacturing, although still important, has seen a 14% decline since 1999.

Sector	Brent		London West LSC	
	Employees	%	Employees	%
Manufacturing	11,666	12	61,800	9
Construction	5,608	6	28,300	4
Retail and wholesale distribution	23,253	23	129,700	19
Hotels and catering	11,322	11	41,600	6
Transport and communication	7,957	8	90,300	13
Financial intermediaries	1,739	2	14,800	2
Real estate, renting and business activities	14,461	14	154,100	22
Public administration	4,836	5	30,300	4
Education	4,774	5	39,500	6
Health and social work	10,229	10	48,600	7
All other	4,993	4	48,700	7
	100,838	100	687,700	100

Source: ONS/NOMIS 2002

Unemployment

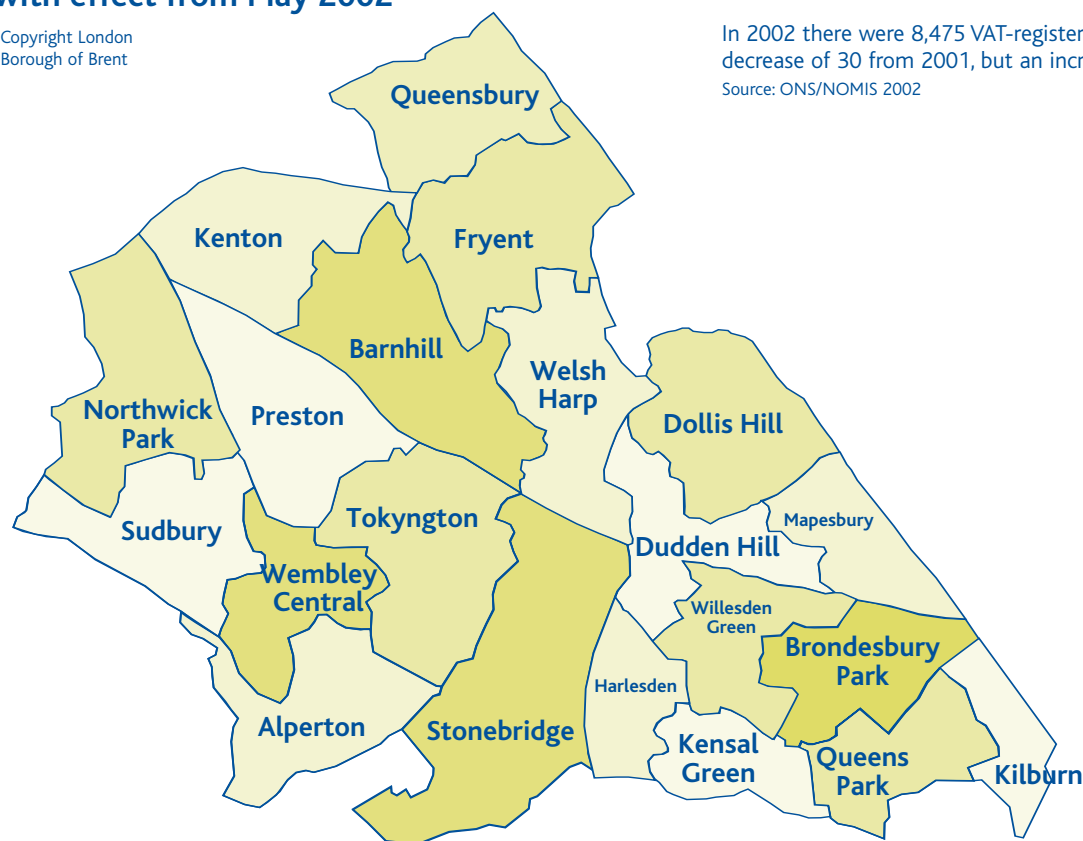
In January 2004 there were 8,241 claimants at job centres in Brent, representing 4.5% of the adult population (Source: ONS/NOMIS 2004). As in previous periods, this is the highest rate of all of the six boroughs in the London West LSC area, which had an average of 3.1% unemployment in January 2004. Compared with the previous year's figures, Brent effectively remains unchanged, but behind the overall borough average there is a variable picture, with some wards recording high and persistent levels of unemployment.

Figures from the 2001 Census show that Brent has four out of the five wards in London West with the highest proportion of adults who classify their economic status as unemployed: Stonebridge (7.9%), Harlesden (7.0%), Kilburn (6.4%) and Willesden Green (5.9%). Wards with relatively low unemployment levels are Kenton (3.1%), Northwick Park (3.6%) and Queensbury (3.9%).

Source: ONS/NOMIS 2002

London Borough of Brent wards with effect from May 2002

Copyright London
Borough of Brent



In January 2004, 11% of unemployed claimants in Brent had been unemployed for more than two years. This is double the rate for the London West LSC area, demonstrating just how much Brent is affected by unemployment in the sub region. On a more positive note, this figure does represent a reduction from the 2000 figure of 14%. Again, however, the reduction is not as great as for the London West LSC area as a whole, which has seen a reduction from 11.7% to 5.5%, highlighting the persistent nature of unemployment in particular areas of Brent.

Industrial structure

In 2002 there were 11,375 workplaces in Brent, according to the Annual Business Inquiry Unit.

The following table shows the importance of workplaces by their size and highlights the overwhelming prevalence of small workplaces.

Company size (Employees)	Brent		London West LSC	
	Workplaces	%	Workplaces	%
200 or more	65	1	500	1
50 to 199	239	2	1,700	3
11 to 49	1,034	9	5,900	9
1 to 10	10,037	88	55,000	87
Total	11,375	100	63,100	100

In 2002 there were 8,475 VAT-registered companies in Brent, a decrease of 30 from 2001, but an increase of 25 from 2000.

Source: ONS/NOMIS 2002

Education participation and skills

- The most recent figures show that there are 39,223 pupils in Brent (22,245 in primary schools and 16,282 in secondary schools)
- There are 60 primary schools, 14 secondary schools, five special schools and four independent schools
- English is an additional language for 55% of all pupils
- Approximately 130 languages are spoken in schools
- 73% of pupils are from an ethnic minority
- In 2000/01 there were 41 exclusions from secondary schools. This represents 0.28% of the school population and compares with an overall London West LSC figures of 0.31%
- There has been a noticeable improvement in the performance of pupils at GCSE level, with an increase in achievement of nearly 4% between 2001 and 2002.

GCSE passes

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Brent	43%	47%	47%	50%	50.5%
England average	48%	49%	50%	52%	52.9%

Source: DFES Secondary School Performance Tables 2003

Results from the 2001 Census show that 30% of residents aged 16 to 74 in Brent hold qualifications at degree level or higher, and that 25% have no qualification at all. In addition, 23% of Brent residents have poor numeracy and literacy skills, a figure on a par with the boroughs of Hounslow and Ealing.

However, behind the borough average, there are very varied ward levels. According to the Basic Skills Agency, on the 1991 ward boundaries St Raphael's has a 'total poor literacy rate' of 34.3%, Carlton 34.3% and Wembley Central 33.5%. On the other hand, figures for Barnhill are 17.6%, Queens Park 17.75% and Sudbury Court 17.95%. The reported poor numeracy levels are largely similar.

Source: Basic Skills Agency 2001

Deprivation in Brent

The 2000 Index of Multiple Deprivation compares each local authority area to the English averages of social conditions. Indicators cover topics such as employment, income, health, education and housing. Out of the 354 areas, Brent was ranked number 68 in terms of deprivation (one being the most deprived area), and was the borough with the highest deprivation rating in the London West LSC area.

In Brent, 26% of secondary school pupils are entitled to free school meals, compared to 22% for the London West LSC area. Of the Brent population, 11% is in receipt of income support, compared to 9% for the total London West LSC area.

Source: Income support Quarterly Statistical Enquiry, August 2003

The deprivation picture correlates closely with that of unemployment, which is confirmed in other research carried out by London West LSC. As with unemployment, behind the overall borough figure there are wide ranges for ward level deprivation and, on the 1991 boundaries, seven out of the 10 most deprived wards in London West LSC area were in Brent.

In terms of a comparison across England, the index of multiple deprivation shows that out of a total of 8,414 wards, the most deprived wards in Brent were Carlton (258), Stonebridge (259) and St Raphael's (356), where a ranking of one denotes the most deprived ward. And Brent's least deprived wards were: Barnhill (3,551), Sudbury Court (4,480) and Kenton (5,848).



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