

# PROFILE OF READING

## READING TODAY

Reading is the principal regional and commercial centre of the Thames Valley, a major retail and leisure destination, with a thriving night-time economy.

There has been a huge shift in the town's economy, from its origins in 'beer, biscuits and bulbs' to a compact service economy which specialises in business and insurance services, and has some of the finest high-tech business parks in the South East, with many international companies such as Microsoft and Oracle choosing Reading as their home.

The town is a major transport interchange, continuing to benefit from its strategic location on the M4 corridor and proximity to Heathrow Airport and London. Reading is also home to the University of Reading and Reading College, with a large percentage of the local working population highly skilled.

However, prosperity has brought its own problems, with pressure on infrastructure, communities and the environment. The high cost of living and, in particular, the high cost of housing, have had a significant impact on local communities. Although Reading can undoubtedly demonstrate success and wealth, the town also contains wards amongst some of the most deprived in the country.

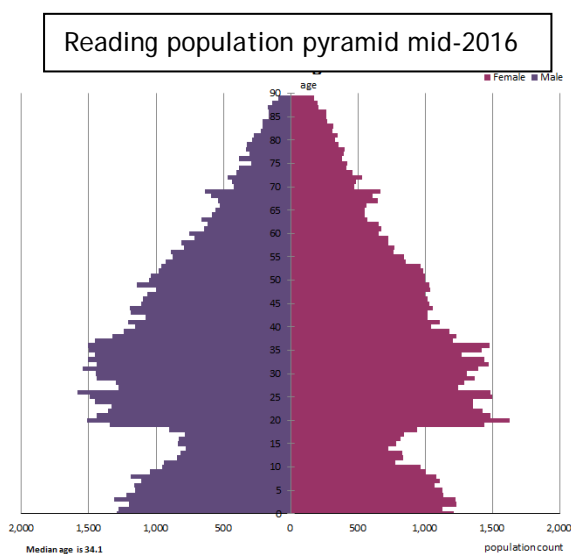


## POPULATION & HOUSEHOLDS

Currently 162,666 residents<sup>1</sup> and 66,000 households<sup>2</sup> live within the Reading borough boundary, while around 233,000 people live in Reading's greater urban area. The population is estimated to increase by 12.5% by 2039.

The proportion of older people is predicted to increase, with the proportion aged 60+ predicted to rise from 10.9% in 2016 to 22.3% by 2039.

The number of households is predicted to rise to 77,000 by 2039.



Source: ONS mid-year estimates 2016

| Age          | 2016           | % of total | 2020           | 2039           |
|--------------|----------------|------------|----------------|----------------|
| 0-4          | 12,239         | 7.5%       | 11,900         | 11,600         |
| 5-9          | 11,044         | 6.8%       | 11,400         | 10,500         |
| 10-19        | 17,985         | 11.1%      | 19,900         | 21,700         |
| 20-39        | 28,313         | 17.4%      | 55,300         | 56,800         |
| 40-59        | 27,815         | 17.1%      | 41,000         | 40,800         |
| 60-79        | 21,588         | 13.3%      | 21,900         | 29,700         |
| 60+          | 17,668         | 10.9%      | 28,000         | 40,500         |
| 80+          | 12,240         | 7.5%       | 6,100          | 10,800         |
| 90+          | 1,089          | 0.7%       | 1,200          | 3,000          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>162,666</b> |            | <b>167,700</b> | <b>181,900</b> |

Sources: ONS mid-year estimates 2016, ONS population projections 2014-based

| No households    |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 2015 (estimated) | 2020 (projected) | 2039 (projected) |
| 66,000           | 68,000           | 77,000           |

Source: DCLG household projections 2014-based

|                                    | Reading | England |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| One person                         | 30.6%   | 30.2%   |
| With pensioner/s                   | 14.9%   | 20.8%   |
| Couple with no children            | 17.3%   | 17.6%   |
| Couple with dependent children     | 19.3%   | 19.3%   |
| Couple with non-dependent children | 4.6%    | 6.1%    |
| Lone parent                        | 10.8    | 10.6    |
| Full-time students                 | 1.5     | 0.6     |

Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

<sup>1</sup> ONS mid-year estimates 2016

<sup>2</sup> DCLG Household projections 2014-based

## ETHNICITY

Reading has a very diverse population, with 35% now belonging to a Black and Minority Ethnic community, the third highest proportion in the South East after Slough and Oxford.

| Ethnicity          |                |                |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                    | <i>Reading</i> | <i>England</i> |
| White British      | 66.9%          | 80.9%          |
| Other White        | 7.9%           | 4.6%           |
| Mixed              | 3.9%           | 2.2%           |
| Indian             | 4.2%           | 2.6%           |
| Pakistani          | 4.5%           | 2.1%           |
| Other Asian        | 3.9%           | 2.3%           |
| Black Caribbean    | 2.1%           | 1.1%           |
| Black African      | 4.9%           | 1.8%           |
| Black other        | 0.7%           | 0.5%           |
| Chinese            | 1%             | 0.7%           |
| Other ethnic group | 0.9%           | 1.1%           |

Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

## HOUSING

Reading's continued success has further increased demand for housing, resulting in higher than national average prices, with the median house price over 4 times higher in 2015 than 1995<sup>3</sup>. Because of this, the property market has become increasingly inaccessible to those on low incomes, due to the shortage of affordable housing.

| Housing tenure   |                |                |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                  | <i>Reading</i> | <i>England</i> |
| Owner occupied   | 54.8%          | 63.3%          |
| Shared ownership | 1.8%           | 0.8%           |
| Social rented    | 16.3%          | 17.7%          |
| Private rented   | 26.1%          | 16.8%          |
| Rent free        | 1.0%           | 1.3%           |

Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

| House prices   |                                 |                        |                             |                        |                          |
|----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
|                | <i>Median house price of...</i> |                        |                             |                        |                          |
|                | <i>Median house price</i>       | <i>detached houses</i> | <i>semi-detached houses</i> | <i>terraced houses</i> | <i>flats/maisonettes</i> |
| <i>Reading</i> | 290,000                         | 545,000                | 360,000                     | 295,000                | 229,950                  |
| <i>England</i> | 225,000                         | 319,950                | 195,000                     | 180,000                | 210,000                  |

Source: LG Inform Plus, 2017 Q1 (rolling)

<sup>3</sup> ONS house price statistics for small areas, 1995 - 2005

## ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS

Over the last 20 years, Reading has developed from an economy based on trading and manufacturing into a centre for leading edge information communication technology (ICT) companies and is now one of the largest insurance and business service centres in the country. Reading is now a major retail centre, with a significant evening economy.

Unemployment is currently low and Reading had a highly skilled workforce, however there is a disparity between the workforce and with the skills and earnings of Reading residents, with in-work poverty increasing in certain areas

Reading's occupation profile has changed since 2001 Census, with professional occupation types showing the most significant increase. Service occupations have increased and administrative occupations decreased.

- In terms of **unemployment**, the **claimant count rate**<sup>4</sup> (is currently 1.5% (Nov 2016), compared with 1.1% for the South East and 1.8% nationally.
- The **average gross annual salary** for workers in Reading is around £31,171 for residents and £33,333 for workers, higher than the average for both the South East and England.

| Occupation profile                                  |         |         |
|---|---------|---------|
| Occupation type                                     | Reading | England |
|   | 2011    | 2011    |
| 1. Managers, directors and senior officials         | 9%      | 11%     |
| 2. Professional occupations                         | 25%     | 18%     |
| 3. Associate professional and technical occupations | 14%     | 13%     |
| 4. Administrative and secretarial occupations       | 10%     | 12%     |
| 5. Skilled trades occupations                       | 9%      | 11%     |
| 6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations    | 9%      | 9%      |
| 7. Sales and customer service occupations           | 9%      | 8%      |
| 8. Process, plant and machine operatives            | 5%      | 7%      |
| 9. Elementary occupations                           | 11%     | 11%     |

Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

| Qualifications   |                  |         |
|--|------------------|---------|
| Highest level of qualification                                   | Reading          | England |
|  | 2011             | 2011    |
| No qualifications  | 17% <sup>5</sup> | 23%     |
| Highest level of qualification: Level 1 qualifications           | 12%              | 13%     |
| Highest level of qualification: Level 2 qualifications           | 12%              | 15%     |
| Highest level of qualification: Apprenticeship                   | 3%               | 4%      |
| Highest level of qualification: Level 3 qualifications           | 13%              | 12%     |
| Highest level of qualification: Level 4 qualifications and above | 35%              | 27%     |
| Highest level of qualification: Other qualifications             | 7%               | 6%      |

Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

<sup>4</sup> proportion of working age population claiming JSA or Universal Credit

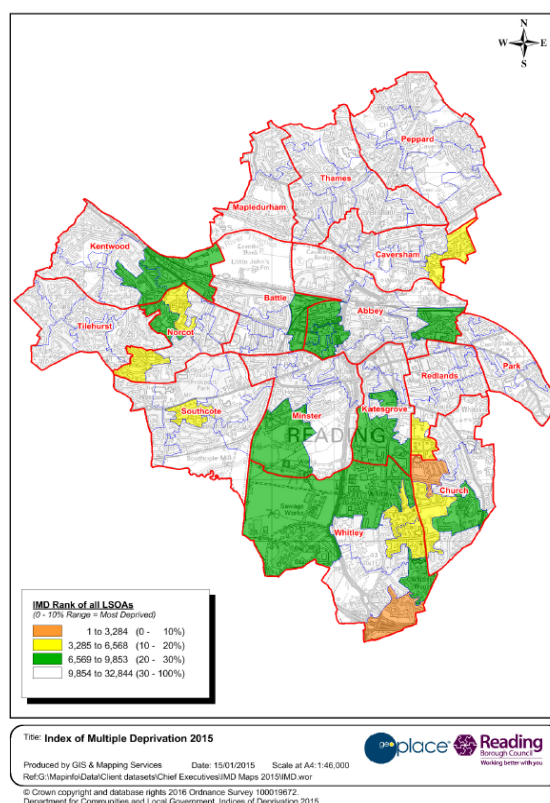
<sup>5</sup> %age of residents aged 16-74

## DEPRIVATION

Although the pace of change in Reading has been rapid, there is a clear mismatch between outstanding economic success and the level of benefits to local people, leaving a significant gap between Reading's most and least prosperous neighbourhoods. Reading has, within a small geographic area, some of the most affluent and the most deprived neighbourhoods in the whole of the Thames Valley.

- According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015, Reading as a whole is ranked the **146<sup>th</sup>** most deprived out of **326 local authorities** in the country, down from 129<sup>th</sup> most deprived in 2010. However, there are 10 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)<sup>7</sup> in Reading within the worst 20% nationally, with 2 LSOAs within the most deprived 10%.
- Reading broadly reflects the national picture in terms of **child poverty**, with just under 1 in 5 children or **18.7% in poverty**<sup>8</sup>, up from 17.8% in 2013.

### Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015



<sup>6</sup> Rank of average score

<sup>7</sup> Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a set of geographical areas developed following the 2001 census. Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) typically contain 4 to 6 OAs with a population of around 1500.

<sup>8</sup> children in low income families measure, HM Revenues & Customs 2014

## HEALTH

In general terms, Reading tends to score better than the national average for most health measures, although this hides problems amongst particular communities.

- One of the most significant health-related statistics is that **life expectancy** is 7.8 years lower for men and 6.5 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Reading than in the least deprived areas<sup>9</sup>.
- For further information see Reading's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Reading (<http://www.reading.gov.uk/jsna>).

| Proportion of population reporting good or very good health |                                      |                            |
|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
|   | % reporting good or very good health | Limiting long-term illness |
| Reading   | 86%                                  | 13%                        |
| England   | 81%                                  | 18%                        |

Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

## CRIME

Crime and the fear of crime have become more significant issues as Reading's evening economy has grown over recent years. However, Reading has a fairly average crime rate, when compared our most similar group of Community Safety Partnerships, ranking 10<sup>th</sup> out of the 15 CSPs.

- 8,378 crimes were reported in 2016/17, an 11% increase on the previous year
- **Violent crime** has decreased by 6% in 16/17 compared to the previous year
- Reading is currently above average for arson, theft from person and cycle theft; below average for burglary, theft from vehicle, vehicle interference and wounding.
- The current priorities for Reading's Community Safety Partnership are:
  - *Domestic violence*
  - *Other violence*
  - *Adult exploitation*
  - *Vulnerable communities (hate crime, preventing violent extremism and counter terrorism)*

<sup>9</sup> Source: Public Health England Health Profile 2017

## TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL TO WORK

Reading is a major population and employment centre within the South East, benefiting from close proximity to London and Heathrow, and with excellent links to national road and rail networks as well as to Heathrow Airport. Such connectivity is represented by Reading's status as a regional transport hub, international gateway and a major transport interchange.

As with most other towns and cities in the UK, Reading experiences congestion on many of its main routes during the week, with the commercial success of the town adding to weekend congestion.

- Reading has one of the UK's **busiest railway stations**, with 14 million rail passengers passing through each year<sup>10</sup>.
- Reading attracts a large number of **trips from surrounding communities**. In the AM peak period (07:00-10:00), 30,000 people arrive and 24,000 people leave the Reading area<sup>11</sup>.

| Travel to work and car ownership    |                |                   |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
|                                     | <i>Reading</i> | <i>South East</i> | <i>England</i> |
| Travel to work by car               | <b>49.5%</b>   | 65.1%             | 60.2%          |
| Travel to work on foot/<br>by cycle | <b>22.3%</b>   | 14.8%             | 14.4%          |
| Number of households<br>with no car | <b>28.3%</b>   | 18.6%             | 25.8%          |

*Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics*

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<sup>10</sup> *Local Transport Plan 2011-2026*

<sup>11</sup> *Local Transport Plan 2011-2026*