Portrait of the South West

by Eddie Smith, Office for National Statistics

Key points

The South West region:

- is the largest English region in terms of area
- has more people living in villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings than in any other English region – almost one in five of the region's total population
- includes more than a quarter of the land within National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England
- has the highest proportion of people of state pension age and above
- includes more second homes than any other English region
- has a smaller proportion of working-age people without qualifications than any other region
- has among the highest proportions of self-employed workers, part-time workers and people with more than one job
- has the largest hotels and restaurants sector in the UK, in terms of percentage of both employment and GVA and receives more domestic tourists than any other UK region or country
- has highest regional life expectancy at birth for females and second highest for males
- receives the highest average annual rainfall in England and the largest proportion of rain falling in winter months

Eddie Smith is Regional Analyst for the South West
Tel: 01392 229186
Email: eddie.smith@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Introduction

The South West region is the largest in England, with 18 per cent of the total area (Online table 1.2), and is also bigger in area than both Wales and Northern Ireland. It includes the most southerly and westerly points in England and is bordered by Wales, the West Midlands and the South East. It has the longest coastline of any English region, 638 km of which is defined as heritage coast (Online table 5.8).

The largest conurbations in the region are Bristol, Bournemouth/Poole and Plymouth which have estimated populations, respectively, of over 600,000, 350,000 and 250,000.¹ Administratively, the region includes four counties (Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Somerset) that contain 25 districts, most of which are rural. Two new unitary authorities (UAs – Cornwall and Wiltshire) were created in 2009 from former counties. There are 10 further UAs that centre on many of the region's largest towns and cities but also include the smallest local authority in the UK – the Isles of Scilly.

Over five million people live in the region (Online table 1.2). Although not the largest region on this basis, it has a population slightly above that of Scotland, more than that of Wales and Northern Ireland combined, and just over a tenth of the total for England. About a third of the region's population (1.7 million) live in settlements of less than 10,000 people, the largest proportion in England. Almost a million of these live in villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings, more than in any other English region. The region's population grew faster than that of the whole UK between 2003 and 2008, with nearly all of the growth due to in-migration rather than natural change.

More than 22 per cent of the South West population (almost 1.2 million people) is of state pension age and above (as defined in 2008), the largest proportion of any UK region (Online table 10.3). Between 2003 and 2008 the number of people in this age group in the South West grew at more than twice the rate of overall population growth. The region has the lowest percentage of working-age people in England but this disguises a relatively large population of those aged 50 to state pension age, only the North East has a higher proportion.

Note:

Unless otherwise stated the data used in this article were those available at the time of writing. In particular, mid-year population estimates were those released in August 2009.

¹ Urban Area population data from mid-2008 Lower Layer Super Output Area population estimates aggregated to best fit 2001 Census Urban Area boundaries

Map 3.1 South West: physical features **Map 3.2 South West: local or unitary authority, NUTS 2¹ sub-regions and Rural/Urban Definition²**

1 Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics, level 2.

2 By Lower Layer Super Output Area.

3 Prior to April 2009.

The South West contains two national parks, Dartmoor and Exmoor. It also includes 35 per cent of the land that lies within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and 60 per cent of the Heritage Coast. There are almost a thousand Sites of Special Scientific Interest and four World Heritage Sites. According to the latest long-term climate data, the region had the highest average annual rainfall in England between 1971 and 2000 and the largest proportion of rainfall in winter months (Online tables 5.1 and 5.2). The Environment Agency estimates that more than 86,000 South West properties are at significant risk of flooding from rivers or the sea, 18 per cent of the total in England.

Service industries are responsible for about four out of every five employee jobs in the South West and three-quarters of gross value added. The hotels and restaurants sector makes a relatively larger contribution to the region's economy than in any other region or country of the UK.

The South West receives more domestic tourists than any other UK region or country, with more than a fifth of the UK total number of tourist nights being spent there. The region also has the fourth highest number of nights spent by overseas tourists. Tourists spent £4,600 million in the South West in 2007 and nearly one in ten of the region's jobs were tourism related. In 2008 the most popular paid attractions in the region were the Eden Project in Cornwall, Stonehenge in Wiltshire and the Roman Baths in Bath. Among UK towns and cities, Bristol had the seventh highest number of visits from overseas residents while Bath, Bournemouth and Plymouth were ranked 14th, 25th and 28th respectively.

Among UK regions, the South West has higher than average rates of employment and economic activity and one of the lowest unemployment rates. The patterns of working also differ from elsewhere. No other region has a higher proportion of part-time workers or of workers with a second job and only London has a higher percentage of self-employed workers.

The north and east of the region is intersected by two major motorways, the M4 and M5, which meet to the north of Bristol, with the latter ending at Exeter. However, large parts of the South West are not served by motorways, including two of the three most populous urban areas (Bournemouth/Poole and Plymouth) and the largest unitary authority (Cornwall). Despite being in the south of England, the region includes places that are as distant from London and the South East as many in the north of England: The third largest settlement, Plymouth, is further from London by road than York, while Penzance in Cornwall is the same distance away as Carlisle.

Population

In 2008 the estimated population of the South West was 5.2 million, about 8.5 per cent of the population of the UK. This was the seventh largest among the 12 UK regions, with marginally more than Scotland and almost half a million more than Wales and Northern Ireland combined (Online table 1.2).

Figure 3.3 shows the mid-2008 population of all 16 South West counties and unitary authorities as defined from April 2009. Among these, the counties of Devon (755,000) and Gloucestershire (583,000) had the largest populations. The Isles of Scilly (2,100) had the smallest population of any local authority in the UK. The two new UAs created in the region in 2009 (Cornwall and Wiltshire) were among the 10 most populous UAs in England, together with Bristol.

The mid-2008 populations of the region's districts ranged from 36,000 in West Somerset to 159,000 in South Somerset. West Somerset, Christchurch (45,800) and Purbeck (46,000) have the lowest populations of the 201 post-April 2009 English lower tier authorities. South Somerset, on the other hand, has the 12th largest population, with more people than Poole and Torbay UAs.

The South West's population density in 2008 was 219 people per sq km, compared with the UK and England densities of 253 and 395, respectively. The figure is the lowest among English regions, but above that of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Among South West counties and unitary authorities, the population density ranges from 115 per sq km in Devon to 3,830 in Bristol. The former has the seventh lowest population density in England but there are 34 English unitary authorities that are more densely populated than Bristol.

In mid-2008, 33 per cent of the South West population (1.7 million) lived in rural settlements according to the Rural/Urban Definition defined at LSOA level, the largest proportion among the nine English regions. This includes almost 20 per cent who lived in villages, hamlets or isolated dwellings, again the highest percentage in England.

Five of the 45 pre-2009 districts and UAs in the South West are classified according to the LA Classification, as Large Urban

Figure 3.3

Population: by county and unitary authority, South West, mid-2008

Mid-2008 population (thousands)

Source: Office for National Statistics

(Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch). In 2008 these contained about 20 per cent of the region's population while a further 19 per cent lived within the seven authorities classified as Other Urban (Cheltenham, Exeter, Gloucester, Plymouth, Swindon, Torbay, and Weymouth and Portland). The remaining 61 per cent of people in the South West lived in Rural or Significant Rural authorities; the largest proportion of any English region.

ONS used 2001 Census data to classify each LSOA by its characteristics into one of seven 'supergroups'.² In mid-2008, 28 per cent of the South West population lived in an area classified as 'countryside', the highest percentage among the English regions. A further 24 per cent and 23 per cent respectively lived in 'White Collar Urban' and 'Miscellaneous Built Up' areas. The 20 subdivisions of these classifications ('groups') suggest that, in 2008, the South West had the highest proportions among English regions of people living in areas defined as 'Rural Economies', 'Small Town Communities' and 'Resorts and Retirement' and the second highest percentage in 'Educational Centres'.

2 Information about the National Statistics 2001 Area Classification is available via: www.statistics.gov.uk/about/methodology_by_theme/area_classification/default.asp

In the five years to mid-2008, the region's population grew by 4.1 per cent, the fourth largest growth rate of the 12 UK regions (Online table 1.2). Among the 45 pre-2009 South West districts and UAs, percentage growth was highest in Exeter (9.8 per cent), Mid Devon (7.4 per cent), North Somerset (7.2 per cent) and Bristol (7.1 per cent). The Isles of Scilly was the only one of the 45 where population did not grow in this period (it remained unchanged). In the other South West districts and UAs, percentage growth was lowest in West Somerset, Salisbury (both 0.3 per cent) and Bournemouth (0.9 per cent).

Map 3.4 classifies South West districts and UAs relative to all such areas in England. (See also Map 7.1 on page 113).

Between mid-2007 and mid-2008 the South West population grew by 31,300 or 0.6 per cent (Online table 10.8). This was a similar percentage change to the UK average. Most of this population growth (24,900 or 0.5 per cent) was due to net migration and other changes. This was the third highest percentage change among UK regions. The population change of 0.1 per cent due to natural change (births minus deaths) was one of the lowest.

Figure 3.5 shows the components of population change (in percentage terms) in the year to mid-2008 for South West county and unitary authorities. Swindon, Bath & North East

Map 3.4 Percentage change in population by local or unitary authority,¹ 2003 to 2008

1 Unitary authorities in 2008.

Source: Office for National Statistics

Figure 3.5**Components of population change: by county and unitary authority, South West, mid-2007 to mid-2008**

Percentages

Source: Office for National Statistics

Somerset and North Somerset were 3 of the 10 English upper tier authorities with the highest increases in population due to migration and other changes, while Torbay, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall were 4 of the 10 with the biggest decreases due to natural population change.

Recent population increase in the South West due to migration has largely been a result of internal migration (from elsewhere in the UK) rather than international migration. In fact, in the year to mid-2008, estimates suggest slightly more international migration out of the South West than into it. Figure 3.6 shows net migration into the South West by UK region between mid-2007 and mid-2008 and illustrates the impact of people moving from the South East.

The 2006-based population projections provide an estimation of future population growth if recent trends continue. These

Figure 3.6**Net internal migration into the South West: by region of origin, mid-2007 to mid-2008**

Thousands

Source: National Health Service Central Register; General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

project that by 2026 the South West will have over 6.1 million residents, an increase of 20 per cent on the 2006 population, the third highest percentage change among the English regions. Within the region, the Isles of Scilly, Exeter, Torridge and North Somerset are projected to have the largest percentage changes in population, over 32 per cent.

The population of the South West has an older age structure than that of the UK average, as the mid-2008 population pyramid in Figure 3.7 indicates. The differences are most noticeable in the 25 to 34-year-old age groups where the national proportions are almost one percentage point higher than those of the South West and among 60 to 69-year-olds where the reverse is true.

The South West had the highest proportion (over 22 per cent) of people of state pension age and above (as defined in 2008 – see Glossary) among the nine English regions. Almost 1.2 million people were in this age group in 2008, the third highest regional total. The proportions of children and working-age people (18 and 60 per cent respectively) were the lowest of any English region, but the latter figure hides the fact that the South West had the second highest proportion of people aged 50 to retirement age (after the North East) in 2008.

Figure 3.7**Mid-year population estimates: by five-year age band and sex, South West, 2008**

Percentages

Source: Office for National Statistics

Within the region, the South West includes 7 of the 11 English counties and UAs with the highest proportions of people of retirement age and above in 2008. Dorset and the Isles of Scilly (almost 29 and over 27 per cent) had the highest proportions in England. Torbay (27 per cent) had the largest percentage of any urban UA. At district level, Christchurch and West Somerset were the only authorities in England where more than a third of the population were in this age group. Among South West counties and UAs, Bristol and Plymouth had the largest proportion of their population of working-age, while Swindon and Wiltshire had the largest percentage of children.

Population projections suggest that, based on trends and incorporating planned changes to the state pension age, the working-age population in the region in 2026 will have grown by almost 610,000 or 20 per cent. The number of children will be 130,000 or 14 per cent higher and there will be 280,000 more people of pension age and above, a rise of 25 per cent.

According to mid-2007 experimental estimates by ethnicity, people from non-White ethnic groups made up 5 per cent of the region's population. This was the second lowest of all the English regions; only the North East had a similar proportion. Asian or Asian British people were the largest non-White ethnic group in the region with almost 2 per cent of the total population but this is a smaller proportion than the 3 per cent of South West people describing themselves as 'White – other' (that is, White, non-British and non-Irish). More than one-fifth of the non-White population of the South West lived in the City of Bristol UA, despite the fact that it had only 8 per cent of the region's total population. Bristol contained a quarter of the people in the region who considered themselves Black or Black British and almost a quarter of those who were Asian or Asian British. However, almost half of England's other UAs have higher percentages of people of a non-White ethnicity than Bristol.

According to the Annual Population Survey, in the year to June 2009, around 94 per cent of the population of the South West were born in the UK, the second highest proportion among the English regions behind the North East. The survey suggests that more South West residents were born in Germany and Poland than in any other foreign country, the former mainly due to the large number of families of armed forces personnel in the region.

Households and housing

There were an estimated 2.2 million households in the South West in 2006 (Online table 10.15), approximately 10 per cent of the total in England. The average household size was 2.26 people, the joint lowest (with the North East) among the nine English regions.

Approximately 46 per cent of South West households contained a married couple, while 31 per cent were one-person households. Both of these proportions were the fourth highest among the nine English regions and close to the England average (44 per cent and 32 per cent).

About 10 per cent of South West households consisted of a cohabiting couple and 6 per cent were lone parent households.

The total number of households in the South West is expected to reach almost 2.9 million in 2026, according to projections based on mid-2006 data. This is equivalent to a 29 per cent increase over the preceding 20 years, the second largest change among English regions in percentage terms. The increase reflects the projected 20 per cent growth in the region's population during this period combined with the expected fall in the average South West household size to 2.10.

Figure 3.8 illustrates actual and projected changes in the number of households in the region between 2001 and 2026

broken down by type. It particularly highlights the fact that the number of one-person households is projected to overtake the number of married couple households towards the end of this period.

In 2007 there were 2.3 million dwellings in the South West (Online table 7.1). This stock of dwellings grew by 5.2 per cent between 2002 and 2007, the highest rise of any English region. Almost three-quarters of this stock was owner-occupied; one of the highest proportions of any region, while 14 per cent were privately rented or with a job or business, the highest percentage outside London. The remaining 13 per cent were rented from registered social landlords or local authorities, the smallest proportion in England (Online table 7.3).

Although the proportion of houses or bungalows was fairly typical, the South West had a larger proportion of detached houses and bungalows (29 per cent of total housing stock) than the England average (22 per cent). The region had the second lowest percentage of purpose-built flats or maisonettes (8 per cent) but the second largest proportion of flats created by conversions (5 per cent).

In 2008/09, 16,800 dwellings were completed in the South West, the lowest number since 2003/04 and 11 per cent less than in 2007/08, although all but one of the other English regions had even larger percentage decreases. The number of completions for the private sector in the region (13,700) was at its lowest level since 2000/01 but completions for registered social landlords (3,100) had increased in each of the most recent five years, with the largest increases coming in the latest two.

The median house price in the South West in 2008 was £185,000, compared with the England average of £174,000. The regional median in 2008 was 3 per cent less than in 2007 (Online table 7.4) and more up-to-date data indicate that in the third quarter of 2009, it was £180,000, 4 per cent below that of the same period a year earlier. In 2008, 38 of the 45 pre-2009

Figure 3.8

Household estimates¹ and projections: by household type, South West, 2001–2026

¹ Estimates from 2001 to 2006 are based on ONS mid-year population estimates and projected rates of household formation from trends in Census and Labour Force Survey data. Projections are 2006-based.

Source: Communities and Local Government

districts and UAs in the region had a median house price above the English equivalent. None were within the lowest quarter of English local authorities for median house prices.

A common indicator of housing affordability compares house prices towards the lower end of the range (lower quartile) with lower quartile earnings of workers in the area (Box 1). On this measure, in 2009 lower quartile houses and flats in the South West, like those in the South East, were slightly more affordable to local workers than London houses and flats were to workers in London on lower quartile earnings. Lower quartile house prices in the South West and the South East were 7.6 and 7.7 times the lower quartile for earnings, respectively, compared with a ratio of 8.0 in London. This contrasted with ratios of 5.8 or below in the five northern and midland regions of England.

As Map 3.9 illustrates, the South West has more than its share of local authority districts with high house prices relative to earnings. In 15 of the South West's 37 post-2009 districts and UAs the lower quartile house price ratio was among the highest 25 per cent of ratios found in English local authorities. Two of these, East Dorset (11.2) and Cotswold (10.9), were among the 10 authorities in England with the highest ratios.

Box 1: Measuring housing affordability

An important indicator of housing affordability is the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile incomes.

The lower quartile value for a particular area is determined by ranking all prices or incomes in ascending order and identifying the value below which 25 per cent fall.

The statistics used for lower quartile income are workplace-based annual full-time individual earnings from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). The ASHE is based on a 1 per cent sample of employee jobs in April of a given year. It does not cover the self-employed, nor does it cover employees not paid during the reference period.

Lower quartile house prices are based on Land Registry data for the first two quarters of a given year. Each ratio is calculated by dividing the house price by income. Data for local authorities in England and Wales can be accessed on the Communities and Local Government (CLG) website:

www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/housingmarket/livetables/

Map 3.9 Ratio¹ of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings by local or unitary authority,² 2009

1 See box 1. A higher ratio means less affordable house prices.

2 Unitary authorities in 2009. No data available for Isles of Scilly.

3 There were no local authorities in the South West in 2009 with a lower quartile house price ratio in the lowest 20 per cent of these ratios across England.

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (Office for National Statistics); Communities and Local Government; HM Land Registry

Figure 3.10**Second homes: by region,¹ average 2005/06 to 2007/08**

Thousands

1 Not all regions can be shown separately due to small sample sizes.

Source: Survey of English Housing, Communities and Local Government

Figure 3.10 shows the number of second homes in England in 2005/06 to 2007/08 by location. This is based on data from the Survey of English Housing and includes information for seven areas, with some regions combined. The South West, with an estimated 57,000 second homes, had the highest of any of the seven areas. In total, some 21 per cent of all second homes in England were in the region, despite the fact that it had only 11 per cent of the total number of dwellings.

Information produced from local authority (LA) council tax systems gives an indication of the proportion of dwellings in an area that are second homes, although totals are not available for all councils. These statistics suggest that 2 per cent of

dwellings in the South West were second homes in 2008, the highest proportion of any English region. Within the region, of the 36 district and UAs for which data are available, South Hams (10 per cent) and North Cornwall (9 per cent) had the highest proportions of second homes.

Education and Skills

The proportion of Key Stage 4 pupils who achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent in 2008/09 was lower in the South West maintained schools sector than in any other English region, 67.9 per cent compared with the England average of 70.0 per cent. However, the differences between English regions were small. The region also had the joint lowest percentage of pupils not getting any GCSE passes (1.1 per cent). Within the South West, excluding the Isles of Scilly (with only 15 pupils), the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C ranged from 76 per cent in Bath and North East Somerset to 62 per cent in Swindon and Bristol.

The proportions of 16 and 17-year-olds participating in post-compulsory full-time education and government-supported training in the South West (83 per cent and 71 per cent respectively in 2006/07) were similar to the England average of 84 and 72 per cent (Online table 4.10).

In 2009 the proportion of the South West's working-age population that had no qualifications was lower than in any other English region; just over 8 per cent compared with the England average of 11 per cent (Figure 3.11 and Online table 4.14). The region had the third highest proportion of working-age people with qualifications at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 3 (see Glossary) and above, 51 per cent

Figure 3.11**Population of working age:¹ by level of highest qualification,² 2009 Q2**

Percentages

1 Males aged 16 to 64 and females aged 16 to 59.

2 For information on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) equivalent level qualifications see Glossary.

Source: Department for Business Innovation and Skills, from the Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

compared with 49 per cent in the England average and a similar proportion educated to NQF Level 4, (30 per cent). Among the English regions, only London and the South East had higher proportions educated to this level.

Labour market

The South West has rates of employment that are among the highest in the UK. In the fourth quarter of 2009, the employment rate for residents of working-age was 75.5 per cent compared with 72.4 for the UK average (Online table 1.1b). This was the third highest rate among UK regions but was 2.5 percentage points lower than in the same quarter of 2008, the second highest percentage point decrease. [Figure 3.12](#) illustrates that the long-term trend has been broadly in line with the UK average.

The South West labour force contains high proportions of self-employed workers, part-time workers and people with more than one job. In 2008, 14.5 per cent of employees and self-employed workers in the region were self-employed in their main job, compared with 12.6 per cent in the UK as a whole – only London had a greater proportion. Almost half of women in employment in the South West were part-time workers and the same was true of one in eight men. Both proportions were the highest among UK regions. The South West also had the highest percentage of people in employment with second jobs, 5.1 per cent compared with 3.9 per cent for the UK average (Online tables 9.3 and 9.8).

In the fourth quarter of 2009 the South West unemployment rate was the third lowest among the 12 UK regions at 6.4 per cent of the economically active population, compared with the national rate of 7.8 per cent (Online table 1.1b). The South West rate was 1.6 percentage points higher than a year earlier, the UK rate had risen by 1.4 percentage points in the same period.

At a local level, unemployment rates are modelled (see Glossary). The latest available are for the year to June 2009, with equivalent regional and UK rates of 5.4 and 6.8 per cent, respectively. Within the South West, the highest UA/district unemployment rates were in Torbay (7.4 per cent), Gloucester (7.3) and Swindon (7.0) and the lowest were in Purbeck (3.3 per cent) and West Devon (3.5).

The Jobseeker's Allowance claimant count rate, a timelier but more narrowly defined indicator of unemployment, also tends to be lower in the South West than across the UK average. In January 2010, 3.1 per cent of the region's working-age population were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, compared with 4.3 per cent nationally. At a local level, this rate was highest in Torbay (4.9 per cent), and Gloucester and Swindon (both 4.6). It was lowest in the Isles of Scilly (0.6), North Dorset (1.8), West Devon and West Dorset (both 1.9).

In 2009, 18 per cent of working-age people in the region were economically inactive, compared with 21 per cent for the UK average (Online table 1.1b). Only the East and South East had lower rates. About 15 per cent of South West working-age men and 21 per cent of women were economically inactive; the latter was the lowest proportion of any region. The breakdown of reasons for inactivity in the region in 2008 differed slightly from nationally, with a smaller proportion looking after family and home in the South West (26 per cent compared with 28 per cent). The South West had a relatively high proportion of working-age people who were economically inactive because of retirement (10 per cent compared with less than 8 per cent for the UK average). [Figure 3.13](#) illustrates reasons for inactivity in English regions (Online table 9.16).

In April 2009 median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees working in the South West were £454, compared with £489 for the UK average (Online table 9.20). The figure

Figure 3.12

Employment rate,¹ South West, 1992 Q4 to 2009 Q4²

¹ Working age.

² Seasonally adjusted, three monthly data.

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

Figure 3.13**Economic inactivity by reason: by region, 2008**

Percentage of working age economically inactive

Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

was the third lowest of the nine English regions but very similar to that in regions in the north and midlands, as Figure 3.14 illustrates. It was 1.6 per cent higher than in 2008, the lowest percentage change of any region. Median hourly earnings of full-time employees on adult rates of pay in the region were lower than national equivalents (£11.33 compared with £12.34) but among part-time employees they were higher (£7.96 compared with £7.83).

In the fourth quarter of 2009, 19.1 per cent of working-age people in the region were economically inactive, compared with the UK average of 21.3 per cent. Only the East and South

East had lower rates. 17.1 per cent of South West males of working-age and 21.2 per cent of females were economically inactive, the latter was the lowest proportion of any region. The breakdown of reasons for inactivity in the region in 2008

Box 2: Measuring regional economic performance

When measuring the economic performance of regions or sub-regions, the following should be considered:

Gross Value Added (GVA) is a good measure of the economic output of a region.

GVA per head which divides output of those working in a region by everybody living in the region, should not be used as an indicator of either regional productivity or income of residents.

GVA per hour worked and **GVA per filled job** are the preferred measures of productivity of an area.

Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head is a good indicator of the welfare of residents living in a region.

Productivity, Income and Labour Market indicators should be used together to provide a more complete picture of regional and sub-regional economic performance.

For further information, see the National Statistician's article 'Measuring regional economic performance' which can be found at

www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?ID=2103

Figure 3.14**Median gross weekly pay for full-time employee jobs, workplace based: by region, April 2009**

£ per week

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics

Figure 3.15**Labour productivity: gross value added per hour worked: by region, 2008**

UK = 100

Source: Office for National Statistics

Figure 3.16**Employee jobs: by industry,¹ South West, September 2009**

Percentages

1 Standard Industrial Classification 2003

Source: Short-Term Employment Surveys, Office for National Statistics

Figure 3.17**Expenditure on research and development: by sector and region, 2007**

£ million

Source: Office for National Statistics

differed slightly from nationally, with a smaller proportion looking after family and home in the South West (26 per cent compared with 28 per cent in the UK). The South West had a relatively high proportion of working-age people who were economically inactive because of retirement (10 per cent compared with less than 8 per cent for the UK as a whole).

Figure 3.13 illustrates reasons for inactivity in English regions.

Economy and industry

In 2008 the South West generated £98 billion of gross value added (GVA), almost 8 per cent of the UK total (Online table 3.1). The total GVA was 3.6 per cent higher than in 2007, a similar increase to that of the UK average (3.5 per cent). In 2007 more than half (53 per cent) of the region's total GVA was produced in the Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and North Somerset sub-region, which includes Bristol and Swindon (Online table 3.5).

Productivity, as measured by GVA per hour worked, was 94 per cent of the UK rate in 2008, the fifth highest of the 12 UK regions, as shown in Figure 3.15. GVA per filled job in the South West in 2008 was 91 per cent of the UK rate, the sixth highest of the UK regions

The industry groups that most contributed to total GVA in 2007 were broadly similar in the South West to the UK average (Online table 3.7). In both cases, three industry groups were responsible for almost half: real estate, renting and business activities (23 per cent of South West GVA, 24 per cent of the UK's), manufacturing (13 per cent in both cases) and the wholesale and retail trade (12 per cent in both cases). The South West had higher proportions of its GVA produced by hotels and restaurants and by electricity, gas and water supply than any other region (3.3 and 2.7 per cent compared with 2.9 and 1.7 per cent across the UK), the only industry groups for which this was the case.

Industry groups where the South West was a particularly important contributor to UK GVA in 2007 include mineral mining and quarrying (19 per cent of the UK's GVA from this industry); agriculture (13 per cent); fishing; electricity, gas and water supply (both 12 per cent); and public administration and defence (10 per cent). Specific types of manufacturing where this was the case include transport equipment (13 per cent of UK GVA from this industry); electrical and optical equipment; and leather and leather products (both 11 per cent).

In terms of employment, service industries (see Glossary) provide the majority of jobs, although a slightly smaller proportion than across the UK average. Short-term Employment Survey data show that in September 2009, 83 per cent of employee jobs were in service industries (compared with 84 per cent nationally) while just over 10 per cent were in manufacturing (just under 10 per cent in the UK average). As Figure 3.16 illustrates, the three largest service industry groups were the same in the South West as nationally. However, of these, the region had higher than average proportions of employee jobs in wholesale, retail trade and repairs, and in health and social work. It had a below average percentage of employee jobs in real estate, renting and business activities. Hotels and restaurants was the only industry group where the South West had a higher proportion of jobs (8 per cent) than in any other region, although it was only 1 percentage point above the UK average.

Among the region's 16 counties and UAs, Bournemouth (93 per cent), Torbay and Bristol (both 90 per cent) had the highest proportions of employee jobs in service industries,

according to the 2008 Annual Business Inquiry. Poole (16 per cent) and Gloucestershire (15 per cent) had the highest proportions in manufacturing.

In 2008 UK residents visiting the South West spent 72 million nights and £3,600 million in the region, the largest numbers of any UK country or region, representing 19 per cent and 17 per cent of the UK totals respectively (Online table 3.17). Overseas visitors spent 20 million nights and £980 million, the third highest among UK regions. According to the Annual Business Inquiry, an estimated 200,000 jobs in the South West were tourism-related in 2008; this was 9 per cent of total jobs, the highest proportion of any UK country or region. In the Isles of Scilly (31 per cent), Torbay (17 per cent) and Cornwall (14 per cent) more than one in eight jobs were tourism-related.

In 2007 almost £1.9 billion was spent on research and development in the South West, the fifth highest figure among UK regions (Figure 3.17). Some 68 per cent of this was spent by businesses, a higher proportion than nationally (63 per cent), and 16 per cent each from government and higher education institutions (compared with 9 per cent and 26 per cent, nationally).

In the South West, gross disposable household income (GDHI) per head was £14,200 in 2007, the fourth highest among UK regions (Online table 3.4). This was just below the UK equivalent (£14,300 per head). Within the region, GDHI per head ranged from 16 per cent below the UK figure in Plymouth to 8 per cent above in Wiltshire (Online table 3.6).³

Box 3: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) provides a summary measure of relative deprivation at Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) level in England. The IMD aims to provide a nationally consistent measure of how deprived an area is by identifying the degree to which people are disadvantaged by factors such as low income, unemployment, lack of education, poor health and crime.

The IMD brings together 37 different indicators which cover specific 'domains' of deprivation. These are weighted as follows and combined to create the overall IMD 2007:

- Income; employment (both with a weight of 22.5 per cent)
- Health and disability; education, skills and training (both 13.5 per cent)
- Barriers to housing and services; living environment; and crime (with a combined weight of 28 per cent)

Particular points to note about the IMD are:

- Not all deprived people live in deprived areas and conversely, not everyone living in a deprived area is

deprived; the indicators identify areas with characteristics associated with deprivation – not deprived people

- The indices should not be used as a measure of affluence. A lack of income deprivation does not necessarily equate to affluence
- The indices provide a relative measure of deprivation and therefore cannot be used to determine how much more deprived one LSOA is than another

This article uses the rankings of all LSOAs in England, which have been divided into five equal sized groups, or quintiles.

In England, 20 per cent of LSOAs are in the most deprived quintile and 20 per cent in the least deprived quintile and so on. If an area (region or local authority) had the average distribution of deprivation they would have 20 per cent of LSOAs in each quintile.

For more information on the IMD see the article in *Regional Trends 41*, pages 93 to 114, and the Communities and Local Government website: www.communities.gov.uk/indices

3 These were the latest data available at the time of writing. Data for 2008 are available in Online tables 3.4 and 3.6.

Figure 3.18**Distribution of LSOA¹ rankings in the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation: by South West county and unitary authority²**

1 Lower Layer Super Output Areas.

2 Unitary authorities are pre-April 2009.

Source: Communities and Local Government

Disadvantage

According to the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, 2007), just over 9 per cent of South West Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) were within the most deprived quintile (20 per cent – Box 3) in England. This was the third lowest proportion among the nine English regions, behind the South East and East of England. As Figure 3.18 indicates, Plymouth and Bristol had by far the largest proportions of LSOAs in the most deprived quintile and, in fact, included almost 40 per cent

Figure 3.19**Indices of deprivation 2007: South West population living in LSOAs in the 10 per cent most deprived in England, by domain of deprivation**

1 The domains are weighted so that some contribute more to the overall IMD and some less (See Box 3).

Source: Communities and Local Government

Figure 3.20**Workless households: by county and unitary authority, South West, 2008**

Percentage of working age households with no adult working

Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

of all such LSOAs in the South West. However, both cities also had a greater percentage of their population within the least deprived quintile than either Cornwall or Torbay.

An indication of the number of people in the region that lived in the areas most affected by deprivation can be estimated by aggregating LSOA population estimates and focusing on the most deprived decile (10 per cent) of LSOAs. Using the domains of IMD (Box 3) can also highlight the most prevalent types of deprivation in the region. As Figure 3.19 illustrates, more people in the South West lived in areas affected by deprivation relating to barriers to housing and services than in those affected by other types. The Indices also suggested that

deprivation relating to the three topics of the living environment – crime and education, skills and training were more common in the region than income, health and employment deprivation.

In the second quarter of 2009 there were 217,000 working-age households in the South West where no adult worked (Online table 8.6). This number of workless households was 15 per cent of the total number of households in the South West, more than 1 percentage point higher than a year earlier but still the joint third lowest proportion among UK regions. About 14 per cent of children in the region lived in a workless household, also more than 1 percentage point higher than in 2008 but the third lowest regional proportion. The latest data for local areas in 2008 indicated that, within the South West, the proportion of workless households ranged from more than 19 per cent in Plymouth and Bristol to less than 9 per cent in South Gloucestershire (Figure 3.20).

Health

Life expectancy at birth for females in the South West in 2006–08 was the highest of any UK region (83.1 years). For males it was the second highest (79.0 years). In both cases, South West life expectancy was approximately 1.5 years above the UK equivalent and was almost a year higher than in 2003–05 (Online table 6.8).

Among South West counties and UAs, life expectancy at birth in 2006 to 2008 ranged from 76.9 years to 80.2 years for males and from 81.7 years to 84.1 years for females. For both genders the highest values were for Dorset and the lowest for

Figure 3.21

Difference in life expectancy at birth between counties and unitary authorities¹ and the UK average, South West, 2006 to 2008

UK average: males = 77.5 years; females = 81.7 years.

¹ No data for the Isles of Scilly.

² Female life expectancy in Bristol is the same as for the UK as a whole.

Source: Office for National Statistics

Bristol. As Figure 3.21 shows, none of these South West areas had a female life expectancy at birth below the UK equivalent and, for males, only two had a life expectancy below the national level (Online table 6.8).

Figure 3.22

Age-standardised mortality rates:¹ by cause and region, 2008

Rate per 100,000 population

¹ Based on deaths registered in 2008. Rates standardised to the European population.

Source: Office for National Statistics; General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

In 2008 the South West had the second lowest age-standardised mortality rate for all causes among UK regions, behind the South East (Figure 3.22 and Online table 6.4). The rate of 526 per 100,000 people was 11 per cent below the UK equivalent (592). Mortality rates in the South West for all main groups of causes were below the UK equivalent and the region had the lowest mortality rate for respiratory diseases and the second lowest for both cancer and circulatory diseases.

The South West consistently has an infant mortality rate below the UK equivalent. In 2008 the rate was 4.0 per 1,000 live births compared with 4.7 nationally. In the same year, 4.5 per 1,000 births were stillbirths, also below the UK rate of 5.1 (Online table 6.3).

In 2008 the proportion of adults who smoked in the South West was the same as the Great Britain average (21 per cent). About 30 per cent of adults in the region were non-smokers who were former regular smokers, with no other region having a higher proportion. Alcohol consumption among adults in the South West was slightly above that of the Great Britain average in 2008, with 66 per cent drinking at least once in the previous week compared with 62 per cent nationally and 18 per cent drinking on five or more days in the previous week, compared with the Great Britain average of 15 per cent. The average weekly alcohol consumption in the South West in 2008 was 12.5 units compared with 12.2 nationally.

According to the 2008/09 British Crime Survey, about 10 per cent of 16 to 59-year-olds in the South West reported that they had used drugs in the previous year, similar to the equivalent for England and Wales. The region had the second highest proportion of people who stated that they had used a Class A drug (4.4 per cent compared with 3.7 per cent across England and Wales) and a higher proportion of people using a stimulant drug than nationally (4.8 per cent compared with 4.4) (Online table 6.16).

Conception rates for women aged under 18 were lower in the South West than across England in 2008 (35 per 1,000 women aged 15 to 17 compared with 40 nationally). The region had the second lowest overall conception rate in England, 73 per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 compared with 80 nationally.

Transport

According to the National Travel Survey, in the two years of 2007 and 2008 the average South West resident made about 1,100 journeys within Great Britain each year. Apart from in London, where the number of journeys was smaller, totals for all regions were similar. About 33 per cent of the South West journeys were for leisure purposes, just under 20 per cent were for shopping and 15 per cent were commuting journeys, all similar proportions to the national equivalents (Online table 11.5).

In distance terms, these journeys totalled 7,700 miles, one of the highest regional mileages, along with the South East and East of England (Online table 11.4). About 6,700 or 87 per cent of these miles were undertaken as a car driver or passenger or by other private road vehicle, compared with the Great Britain average of 81 per cent. The proportion by public transport (10 per cent) was lower than nationally (15 per cent).

In the last quarter of 2008, 76 per cent of journeys to work (excluding those working at home) were by car or van, a larger percentage than the England average (69 per cent) (Figure 3.23). The proportion of such journeys made on foot or bicycle (17 per cent) was similar to the average – 14 per cent – (Online table 11.7) but a much lower proportion was made by public transport (6 per cent rather than 15 per cent). Data from 2007 indicate that 65 per cent of journeys to work in the South West were of 20 minutes or less, higher than the average percentage for England (56 per cent) (Online table 11.6).

Figure 3.23

Usual method of travel to work: by region of residence, 2008 Q4

Percentages

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

In the ten years to 2008 the overall volume of traffic on the region's major roads increased by 14 per cent, the highest percentage change among the English regions and well above the 9 per cent increase in the average for England (Online table 11.12). The average weekly household expenditure on transport in the South West in 2006–08 was £66, the third highest regional average and above the UK equivalent (£62). Over half of the South West expenditure (£34) was spent on operation of personal transport, compared with the UK average of £30. Around £24 was spent on purchase of vehicles and £8 on transport services, compared with £22 and £10 nationally.

Environment

A key feature of the South West is the high proportion of land in the region that falls within national and international statutory designations protecting the natural environment. Almost 900 hectares (36 per cent of the region) are within a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This is more than a quarter of the total land in such areas in England (Online table 5.8). The South West also includes 60 per cent of England's Heritage Coast, 24 per cent of its Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and 22 per cent of its National Nature Reserves. The only natural World Heritage Site in England is also in the region, the Dorset and East Devon Coast.

The South West had a high proportion of good quality rivers in 2008. Almost 88 per cent were of good biological quality while over 89 per cent were of good chemical quality. Both proportions were the second highest in England (Online table 5.5). The region has almost half of the identified coastal bathing waters in England and, in the 2008 bathing season, 95 per cent of these complied with European bathing water standards. This proportion was slightly below the national equivalent of 96 per cent and 3 percentage points less than in 2007 (Online table 5.6).

The latest long-term climate averages indicate that the South West region as originally designated by the National Rivers Authority, which covers most of the region, had the third highest rainfall in the UK in the 30 years to 2000 (behind Scotland and Wales) (Online table 5.1). The region also had the joint biggest seasonal variation with 62 per cent of rain in winter (October to March) (Online table 5.2). The latest available annual rainfall for the South West (2008) was 9 per cent higher than this 30-year average but single year totals for the region vary considerably; from 22 per cent below, to 21 per cent above the 30-year average in the years since 2000.

In 2008 the Environment Agency estimated that more than 86,000 South West properties were at significant risk of flooding from rivers or the sea, 18 per cent of the total in England and the second highest regional total. Almost a quarter of these properties (20,400) are in the North Somerset unitary authority area, with a further 9 per cent (8,100) in the Somerset district of Sedgemoor.

Carbon dioxide emissions in the South West totalled 40,800 kilotonnes in 2007, around 7.9 per cent of the UK total. This

Figure 3.24

Household recycling rates: by region, 2003/04 and 2008/09

Percentage of household waste recycled

Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

was 600 kilotonnes less than in 2006, a 1.4 per cent fall that was slightly below the 1.7 per cent decrease for the UK average. Industrial and commercial users were responsible for 38 per cent of these emissions, a smaller proportion than nationally (45 per cent). The South West total equates to 7.9 tonnes per person of CO₂ in 2007, below the UK equivalent of 8.4 tonnes (Online table 5.15).

South West residents had the third lowest levels of residual household waste (see Glossary) among the nine English regions in 2008/09, 626 kg per household. In the previous five years this figure had fallen by 31 per cent. Over the same period, the household recycling rate for the South West rose from 21 per cent to 42 per cent with the 2008/09 rate being the third highest in England (Figure 3.24).

Crime

The South West has a comparatively low number of crimes committed against households, as estimated by the British Crime Survey (BCS). In 2008/09 there were 2,500 household offences per 10,000 households. As Figure 3.25 illustrates, this was the lowest rate among the nine English regions (the estimated rate for the England average was 2,900). According to the survey, households within the South West had a lower risk of being victims of crime than those in all other regions, with 16 per cent being a victim at least once compared with 18 per cent nationally. The rate of vehicle related theft was below the England average; 500 offences per 10,000 households compared with 640 nationally.

The BCS also suggests that the rate of crimes against the person in the region is similar to the England equivalent, around 890 per 10,000 adults in 2008/09 compared with 910 per 10,000 adults in England. The risk of being a victim of this type of crime at least once in the South West was 6 per cent, the same as nationally.

According to responses to the BCS, anti-social behaviour, drugs and drunk or rowdy behaviour in the local area are all perceived

Figure 3.25

Crimes committed against households: by type and region, 2008/09

Crimes per 10,000 households

Source: British Crime Survey, Home Office

by the public in the region as less of a problem than the average perception nationally. In the South West in 2008/09, 13 per cent of respondents perceived a high level of anti-social behaviour in

their area (compared with 16 per cent in the England average), 23 per cent thought that there was a problem with drug use or dealing (27 per cent) and 23 per cent identified a problem with drunk or rowdy behaviour (26 per cent).

The rate of recorded crime in the South West is also among the lowest of the English regions. In 2008/09 there were 73 recorded crimes per 1,000 people, compared with 86 across England. Only the East of England had a lower rate. The number of recorded crimes was 5 per cent lower than in 2007/08, the same percentage decrease as for the England average (Online table 2.3).

The BCS does not provide results at local authority level but the recorded crime figures include a set of BCS comparator offences⁴ which covers about 60 per cent of all recorded crimes and allows differences at a local level to be highlighted. Within the South West, Bristol had a BCS comparator offence rate of 83 per 1,000 people, 25 per cent higher than that of the local authority with the second highest rate (Bournemouth, 66 per 1,000 people) (Online table 2.4). The combined rate in the region's 12 unitary authorities and districts classified by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as 'Large Urban' and 'Other Urban' was almost twice the rate of more rural authorities (59 and 31 per 1,000 people respectively).

Annex: Rural and urban totals

The Rural/Urban Definition and Local Authority (LA) Classification were developed to produce a rural/urban view from government statistics. Depending on the geographic level for which data are available, the Definition or Classification must be used to produce rural and urban totals.

The Rural/Urban Definition for small geographies was introduced in 2004 and is based on the settlement type that an area is within. Each Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) is defined as one of three settlement types:

- Urban (population over 10,000)
- Rural – Town and Fringe
- Rural – Village, Hamlet and Isolated Dwellings

These three types are assigned to either a 'sparse' or 'less sparse' regional setting to give six classes of LSOAs. The Definition also applies to Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs), wards and output areas, but with four settlement types in the latter.

The LA Classification was introduced in 2005 in order to differentiate between rural and urban for those statistics

which are only available at LA level. It provides six classifications:

- **Major Urban:** LAs with either 100,000 people or 50 per cent of their population in urban areas with a population of more than 750,000
- **Large Urban:** LAs with either 50,000 people or 50 per cent of their population in one of 17 urban areas with a population between 250,000 and 750,000
- **Other Urban:** LAs with fewer than 37,000 people or less than 26 per cent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns
- **Significant Rural:** LAs with more than 37,000 people or more than 26 per cent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns
- **Rural-50:** LAs with at least 50 per cent but less than 80 per cent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns
- **Rural-80:** LAs with at least 80 per cent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns

⁴ The crimes included in the recorded crime BCS comparator measure are theft of and from a vehicle, vehicle interference and tampering, domestic burglary, theft of a pedal cycle, theft from a person, criminal damage, common assault, wounding and robbery (of personal, not business property).