



local authority services 2009

Local authorities in England employ over 2.1 million staffⁱ and spend £113 billion a year, which accounts for around a quarter of public spending. Of this, only a quarter is funded by the council taxⁱⁱ. There are 17,500 elected councillorsⁱⁱⁱ serving on 353 local authorities in England.

Services provide by local authorities include:

Education

Education is a large service, both in terms of expenditure and the number of lives it touches daily. It accounts for just over £42 billion in net current expenditure in England^{iv}. More than eight million children are taught in just over 24,000 schools in England^v. The service employs over 380,000 full time and part time teachers^{vi}. Other services include adult education, the youth service and under-fives education.

Did you know? Local councils spend the highest proportion of their budgets on education services (37 per cent)^{vii}.

Social services

Social services departments are at the forefront of important policy developments in care, community care, child care changes and other social reforms. With over 200,000 care^{viii} staff, social services departments are often the first point of contact for those needing help. Social services departments co-ordinate work with other agencies to provide integrated care within the community. They administer children's home, arrange care for the elderly in their own homes, in residential care and nursing homes. Just over nine and a

half thousand homes in England receive home care^{ix}. They are also responsible for adoption and fostering services, sensory impairment and disability services, and a multitude of other services for vulnerable people. In total, social services account for nearly £20 billion of local government expenditure in England^x.

Did you know? Local councils provide almost 19 million days of care to looked after children^{xi}.

Planning

Councils have considerable powers to control development in their area through two important planning roles: strategic planning and development control (local planning). County, metropolitan, and unitary councils are responsible for the strategic plans which set out the authority-wide policies for the location of new development such as housing, industry, shopping and leisure facilities and the transport to serve all these. They also deal with planning applications for mineral and waste sites. Metropolitan, district and unitary councils deal with local planning in their area and all applications for development are made through these authorities. Other duties include protecting

listed buildings, advertisement control and some nature conservation issues.

did you know? There has been a 22 per cent decrease in the number of applications received by planning authorities between 07/08 and 08/09. In 2008/09 76 per cent of minor decisions were made in eight weeks^{xii}.

Libraries

The public libraries system is one of the most heavily used services and has been providing this much valued service since the 19th century. Every year millions of people borrow books, peruse historical collections and keep in touch with their communities through this vital information point. Modern and decentralised in approach; the library service utilises up-to-date technology to provide the best service nation-wide. There are more than 3,000 libraries in England and Wales. Expenditure on cultural and related services, including libraries staff in England is £1 billion^{xiii}.

did you know? 39.6 per cent of adults had used a public library service at least once in the past 12 months^{xiv}.

waste disposal and collection

County councils are responsible for the disposal of waste with district councils responsible for waste collection from households in their areas. Metropolitan DCs, unitary authorities and London boroughs act as collection and disposal authorities. All waste disposal is regulated by the Environment Agency. In all these matters they need to ensure that the wider interests of the community and the environment are met. 9.1 million tonnes of household waste is recycled in England equal to 38 per cent^{xv}.

did you know? Almost 89 per cent of municipal waste comes from households, equal to 24.3 million tonnes of household waste^{xvi}.

trading standards

Trading standards officers ensure compliance with trading standards legislation to protect the interests of both the consumer and the business sector. This can range from giving advice and information as well as the enforcement by prosecution of those who persistently flout the law.

did you know? 14 per cent of the population had been involved in local decision-making (for example, being a member of a committee or groups relating to local services, education or standing as a local councillor)^{xvii}.

fire and rescue

The fire service has a wide range of responsibilities apart from safeguarding people from the ravages of fire. It also deals with road traffic accidents, chemical spills, enforcement fire certificates for hotels, offices and factories and other fire safety inspections. The fire service employs just over 34,000 firefighters in 48 fire authorities in England and Wales^{xviii}.

did you know? Data from the Places survey shows 81 per cent of people very or fairly satisfied with their local fire and rescue services and 56 per cent of people satisfied with the local police service^{xix}.

Planning

Co-ordination is the key to combating disasters across a wide area. That is where the emergency planning service comes in. It plans for the continued efforts of the police, fire brigades and other emergency services to respond to disasters as diverse as flooding, chemical emissions and even terrorist attacks. Constant preparedness are their watchwords in protecting the public.

did you know? Local authorities are responsible for civil defence and other emergency planning.

roads, highways and transportation

Local authorities provide, manage and maintain more than 96 per cent of roads in England and Wales, as well as maintaining major parts of the motorway and trunk road network for the Department of Transport. However, there is much more to this than just constructing and maintaining this network, its bridges, lighting and drainage systems. Local authorities are responsible for many other functions associated with the use of our highways. Traffic regulation and management, road safety and on-street parking all come within their remit. In all these tasks, local authorities are striving to pursue ever more environmentally sustainable transport policies with the promotion of public transport a top priority.

did you know? 100 per cent of local authorities have concessionary fare schemes for older people^{xx}.

housing

The housing service in some areas now takes a strategic role in insuring local authority housing needs are met throughout their area with a mixture of housing association and private sector stock. Housing the homeless is a responsibility of the local authority. Although the housing service has undergone a great deal of change it still has a total expenditure in England of around £3 billion^{xxi} and provides around 1.9 million homes in England^{xxii}.

did you know? User satisfaction surveys show that 82 per cent of council tenants are satisfied with the services provided to them by their local authorities.^{xxiii}

environmental health

The environmental health service is one of the oldest services in local government and has many activities ranging from food safety, housing standards, pollution control, animal health, Agenda 21, noise control, pest control, dog wardens and so much more.

did you know? Latest data 80 per cent of the population were satisfied with their local area as a place to live^{xxiv}.

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- i Quarterly public sector employee survey Q1 2009, LGA, Analysis and Research
 - ii Local authority revenue expenditure and financing England: 2008-09 provisional outturn, CLG
 - iii LGA, National Census of Local Authority Councillors, 2008
 - iv Local Government finance key facts card, CLG
 - v Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2009, England, DCSF
 - vi School Workforce in England (including pupil: teacher ratios and pupil: adult ratios), January 2009 (Provisional), DCSF
 - vii Local authority revenue expenditure and financing England: 2008-09 provisional outturn, CLG
 - viii Personal Social Services staff of Social Services Departments at 30 September 2008 England, The Information Centre
 - ix Community Care Statistics 2008, Home Care services for Adults, England, The Information Centre
 - x Local authority revenue expenditure and financing England: 2008-09 provisional outturn, CLG
 - xi Detailed unit cost calculations, 2008, Personal Social Services Expenditure and Unit Costs: England 2007-08, The Information Centre
 - xii Planning applications March 2009, England, CLG
 - xiii Local authority revenue expenditure and financing England: 2008-09 provisional outturn, CLG
 - xiv 2008/09 Taking Part Survey, Department for Culture, Media and Sport
 - xv Quarterly municipal waste statistics quarter 4 2008/09, DEFRA
 - xvi Quarterly municipal waste statistics quarter 4 2008/09, DEFRA
 - xvii Places Survey 2008, CLG
 - xviii Fire Salaries and Numbers survey 2008, LGAAR
 - xix Places Survey 2008, CLG
 - xx Concessionary Bus Travel, Department for Transport
 - xxi Local authority revenue expenditure and financing England: 2008-09 provisional outturn, CLG
 - xxii Dwelling stock: local authority stock, by district : England 1994 – 2008, CLG
 - xxiii Tenants' services authority, Existing tenants survey 2008
 - xxiv CLG Place Survey 2008

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