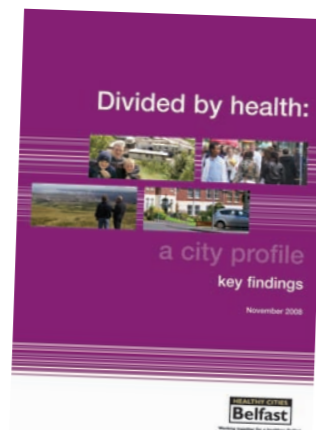


Key findings:

- There has been positive change in the health of the population in the Belfast Trust area. For example life expectancy has improved, unemployment fallen and educational attainment risen.
- Less change has been observed in smoking and other lifestyle factors, child health and economic inactivity in Belfast.
- Improvements in health tend to be larger in Castlereagh than Belfast, with notable exceptions including unemployment and educational achievement.
- Major inequalities remain within the Belfast Trust area; outcomes on most indicators are worse in Belfast North and West Parliamentary Constituency areas compared to Belfast South and East.
- There is a clear association between poor health outcomes and social disadvantage and deprivation. In many cases improvements are larger in less deprived areas, which results in a widening gap in health and wellbeing.
- The key challenge and priority is to tackle disadvantage and its root causes.



The challenges: the widening gap

- Despite the improvement in life expectancy, the gaps are increasing: a boy born in Belfast West Parliamentary Constituency can expect to live six years less than a boy born in Belfast South. Male life expectancy in Belfast is 11th lowest in the UK (422, based on 2004-06 data), while Castlereagh ranks among the top half of local authorities (place 172).
- Smoking prevalence in the Belfast Trust area remains at around 30%, and the gap in smoking rates between people in manual and non manual occupation groups has increased. This is in line with the trend across the UK.
- About 20% of people remain sedentary, and there has been an increase in the proportion drinking above sensible limits (over 21 units of alcohol per week for a man and 14 per week for a woman).
- Obesity is increasing among both adults and children, which reflects trends across the UK.
- Most importantly, the levels of economic inactivity have also remained high at about 30% in Belfast, which is one of the highest rates in the UK.
- There has also been limited change in the proportion of people who leave school with no GCSEs.
- In a UK wide perspective, Belfast continues to rank low on indicators such as life expectancy, long term limiting illness, child health and economic inactivity.
- Similarly, a European snapshot for 2004 indicates that Belfast has a comparatively high infant mortality rate, low employment rate and high proportion of young people who do not complete compulsory education.

Divided by health:



a city profile Summary

November 2008

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Working together for a healthier Belfast



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Introduction

Health is essential for personal quality of life. But as our health and wellbeing is shaped above all by the wider social living conditions, it is also a measure of how healthy a community, city or society is. Charting change is vital to ensure that policies contribute to improving health and wellbeing.

Divided by Health: A City Profile paints a picture of health and wellbeing in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area, which includes Belfast and Castlereagh Local Government Districts. It also provides an overview of change over the last decade, and highlights local differences and inequalities.

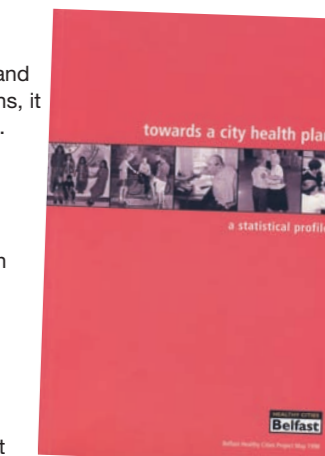
Analysis focuses on the Local Government District level. Local differences have been analysed primarily at Parliamentary Constituency level, and figures are presented for the four Belfast Parliamentary Constituencies (as at 2007-08).

For the first time in relation to health and wellbeing, this Profile also places Belfast and Castlereagh in a wider context of the UK, the Republic of Ireland and Europe. In particular, comparative data are presented for other WHO European Healthy Cities in the UK.

The Profile has been developed in collaboration with policy makers as well as statisticians in key public sector agencies and collates existing statistics and information into a single resource. The full version is published online at www.belfasthealthycities.com. A Key Findings report is also available in hard copy.

The good news: positive change

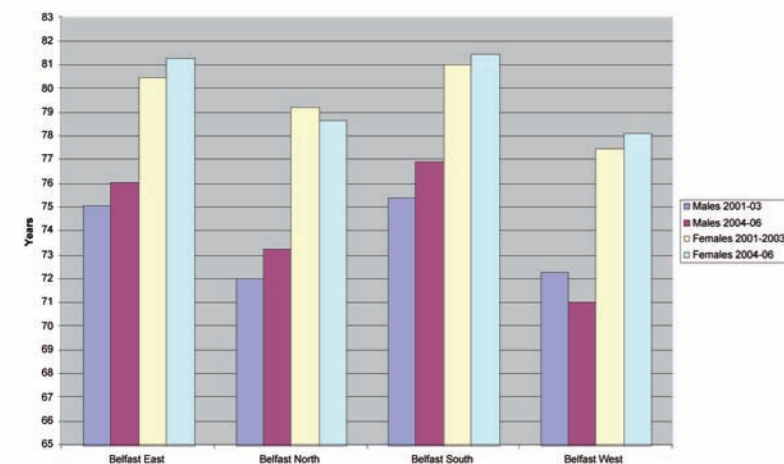
- Life expectancy has improved, in Belfast by about two years for both males and females, and in Castlereagh by three years for males and 2.5 years for females.
- Unemployment has fallen substantially across the Belfast Trust area, at a time when the number of employee jobs increased.
- The proportion of school leavers achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A*-C or a higher qualification has increased. Enrolments in further and higher education have also increased, most notably in Belfast West Parliamentary Constituency (enrolments in higher education up by 20% between 2001-02 and 2006-07), which generally has had low educational attainment.
- The living environment has also improved. Most notably, the proportion of dwellings that failed the Decent Homes standard across the Belfast Trust area fell from 35% in 2001 to 21% in 2006, which was similar to the improvement observed in England.
- Recorded crime fell by over 25% across the Belfast Trust area between 2001-02 and 2006-07, which was more than across Northern Ireland as a whole (-14%).
- Despite an increase in traffic volumes, air quality in the Belfast area has improved, and the number of people killed or injured in road traffic collisions fell by over 40% in all PSNI District Command Units (DCUs) in the Belfast Trust area. In West Belfast DCU, which in 1998 had the highest number of casualties, the total number of persons killed or injured more than halved (-54%) by 2006.



Divided by health: a city profile

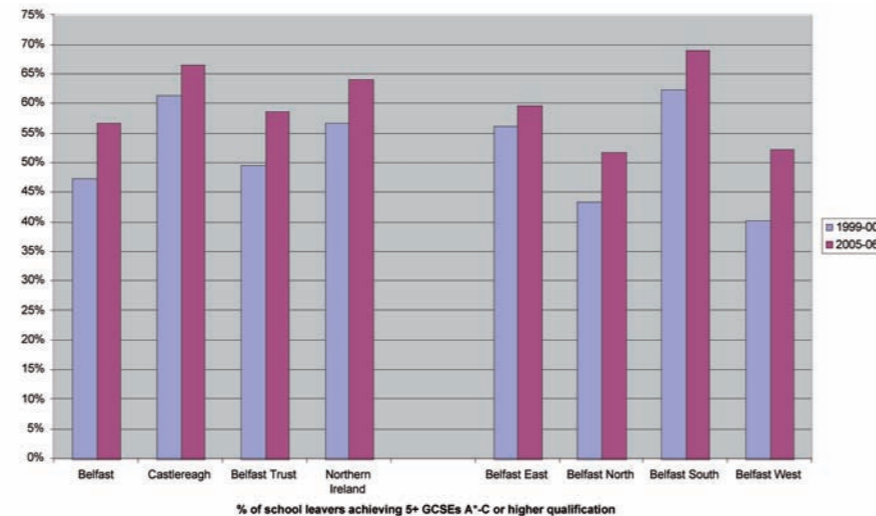


Life expectancy at birth by Parliamentary Constituency, 2001/03-2004/06 (years)



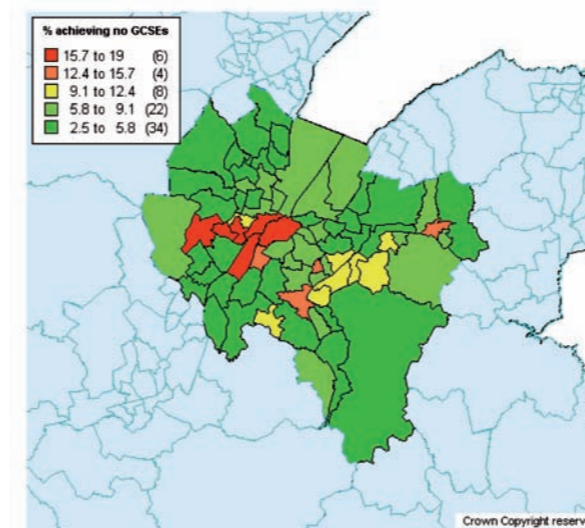
Source: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

% of school leavers achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C or higher qualification, 1999/00-2005/06



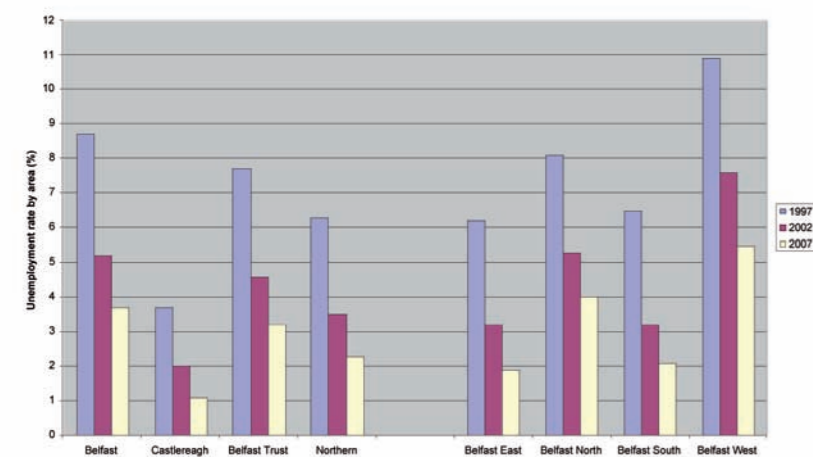
Source: School Leavers' Survey 1999/00-2005/06, Department of Education

Proportion of school leavers achieving no GCSEs, 2005-06



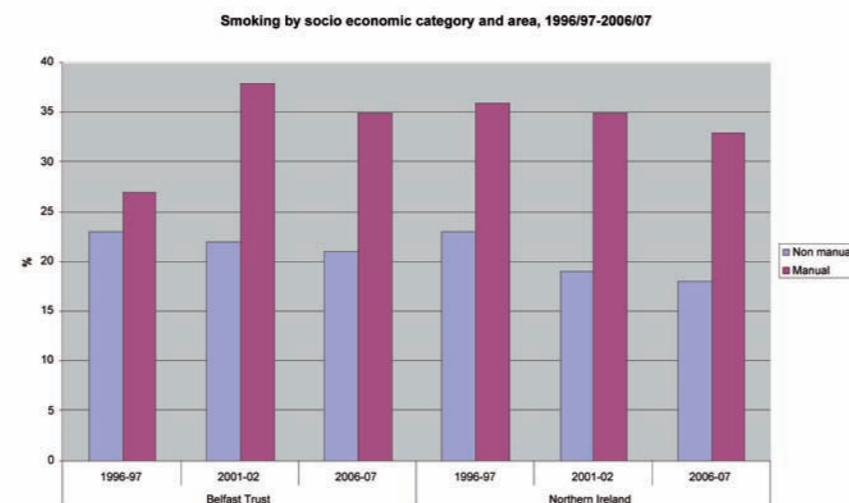
Source: School Leavers' Survey, Department of Education

Unemployment rate by area, 1997-2007 (%)



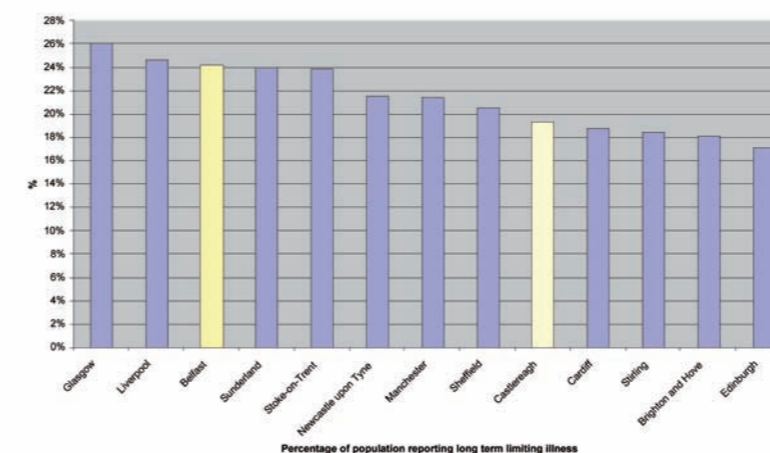
Source: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry Claimant Count

Smoking by occupation type and area, 1996/07-2006/07 (%)



Source: Continuous Household Survey, NISRA

Proportion of population reporting limiting long term illness, selected UK cities, Census 2001



Source: NISRA; Office for National Statistics; General Register Office for Scotland

The international context

Divided for Health: A City Profile is set in the broad context of the report by the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, *Closing the Gap in a Generation*.

The Commission's key recommendations are:

1. To improve daily living conditions
2. Tackle the inequitable distribution of power, money and resources, and
3. Measure and understand the problem as well as assess the impact of actions.



Belfast Healthy Cities will utilise the Profile to identify future priorities for action, which will build on the Commission's recommendations.

The WHO Commission's report is available at http://www.who.int/social_determinants/final_report/en/index.html.