

West Berkshire Council: local authority assessment

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About West Berkshire Council

Demographics

West Berkshire Council (WBC) is a unitary authority in the southeast of England. The population of 162,000 is largely rural, with centres of population in Newbury, Hungerford and Thatcham. The population is relatively affluent and healthy. West Berkshire has an index of multiple deprivation in the lowest category of 1. However, there are pockets of deprivation and large rural areas suffer from poor infrastructure.

The population is largely people aged between 18 and 64. However, the latest census data indicates the older adult population is growing rapidly. Since the previous census, the number of people aged 65 to 74 rose by 31.7%, the number of people aged 35 to 49 fell by around 11.2% and the number of people over 90 increased 23%. 92% of the population is white and the largest nonwhite ethnic group is Asian representing 4% of the population.

West Berkshire is located within the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care Board (ICS) which is a large system. As a small authority it works closely with neighbouring authorities in Reading and Wokingham as part of the Berkshire West 'place'.

West Berkshire is a council in transition. In May 2023 the makeup of the council changed from a Conservative majority to a strong Liberal Democrat majority. The council was still in the process of updating and realigning strategies to the new administration. In addition, the role of Director of Adult Social Care was relatively new, having recently been separated from the previous dual director role for both adults and children's services.

Financial facts

- The Local Authority estimated that in 2022/23, its total budget would be **£263,597,000**. Its actual spend for that year was **£287,839,000**, which was **£24,252,000 more** than estimated.
- The Local Authority estimated that it would spend **£60,073,000** of its total budget on adult social care in 2022/23. Its actual spend was **£64,542,000**, which is **£4,469,000 more** than estimated.
- In 2022/2023, **22%** of the budget was spent on adult social care.
- The Local Authority has raised the full Adult Social Care precept for 2023/24, with a value of **2%**. Please note that the amount raised through Adult Social Care precept varies from Local Authority to Local Authority.
- Approximately **2,335** people were accessing long-term Adult Social Care support, and approximately **775** people were accessing short-term Adult Social Care support in 2022/23. Local authorities spend money on a range of adult social care services, including supporting individuals. No two care packages are the same and vary significantly in their intensity, duration, and cost.

This data is reproduced at the request of the Department of Health and Social Care. It has not been factored into our assessment and is presented for information purposes only.

