



# Research Methodology

May 2011

User Guide 1

## SANDWELL TRENDS: Overview

**Sandwell Trends Local Intelligence System (LIS) is the first port of call for data, intelligence and analysis about the people and places in Sandwell.**

The system is web-based, which hopefully means that most users will be familiar with how to navigate the site – however this series of user guides has been produced to help answer the more complex questions a user may have. The first in the series aims to provide the user (or non-user) with an overview of the type of information a user can expect to find on the system, general information about logging in and access rights, and how to use the various options on the home page.

### Getting Started

Sandwell Trends can be accessed from [www.sandwelltrends.info](http://www.sandwelltrends.info), via Sandwell Council's intranet homepage, or via the Research Sandwell website ([www.researchsandwell.org.uk](http://www.researchsandwell.org.uk)). The Sandwell trends home page offers the user the chance to log in to the system – for the majority of users, this is unnecessary, as all pages on the system can be viewed by any level of user. However, there are two main cases when logging in would be beneficial:

- if the user wants to be able to save queries (which could then be emailed to other interested parties)
- or if the user wants to create or contribute to “Topic Pages.”

If you think you would need a log in, then contact [Research Sandwell](#) who will provide you with the appropriate access level (this is currently restricted to Sandwell Council users).

### Technical Bit

Sandwell Trends should warn you of the following when you access the system, but as a reminder:

- Before you start, you'll need to have JavaScript enabled – if you're unsure whether it is, check at <http://kb.iu.edu/data/ahqx.html>



- You'll also need to have the latest version of Adobe Flash installed to use the maps, charts or Benchmarking tools. If you don't have this, you can download it from <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>

### **So what's on Sandwell Trends?**

There are eight main areas which are accessible from the homepage (just by clicking on the appropriate link). This section provides an overview of the type of information or intelligence you can find in each one.

#### **1. Sandwell Trends Publications.**

This section gives the user access to the wide range of reports that are produced by Research Sandwell. These include briefing notes, fact sheets, technical advice and summaries of reports produced by external agencies. These briefing notes and fact sheets provide the deeper "intelligence" element of the system – where data has been analysed to highlight issues of interest or where data has been pulled together into a concise format. The technical advice helps to explain what users may be seeing in the data they extract from the system, confidence they can have in data, and the background to the geographical areas used, for example.

#### **2. Interactive Tools.**

This section provides access to the wealth of data hosted on Sandwell Trends. Users can access:

- A list of current datasets. Clicking on the link provides the user with a full A-Z list of available datasets. Clicking on the 🌐 icon next to a dataset name provides a full description of the dataset, together with headline findings and example queries.
- Postcode finder tool. Clicking on the link allows the user to enter a postcode to find out where in the borough it's located. Boundaries within which a postcode falls are listed, a map showing the location is displayed, and tables of key facts and figures are provided.
- 2001 Census data. This provides Key Statistics<sup>1</sup> data for the West Midlands. Users can view data for local areas within Sandwell (such as Towns, wards and neighbourhoods), and can make comparisons with Sandwell as a whole, other West Midlands boroughs, the Government Office Region, the West Midlands Conurbation, the Black Country or England & Wales.
- The National Indicator (NI) benchmarking tool. This provides National Indicator<sup>2</sup> data for Sandwell, and comparisons can be made with the Black Country, statistical neighbours, England and various other areas. Indicators are presented in tables, charts (showing quartiles or comparison data) and maps (which show regional comparisons and disaggregated data [at a sub-borough level] where available). The tool also provides access to background information about each indicator.
- The finance benchmarking tool. This follows the template for the NI benchmarking tool, but provides CIPFA<sup>3</sup> financial data on local authority spending on various services. Data is available from 2007/08 to 2010/11.

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<sup>1</sup> Key Statistics are a sub-set of the 2001 Census data.

<sup>2</sup> From 2008, public services were required to collect data on a number of indicators known as "The National Indicator set." This requirement has now ended.

<sup>3</sup> Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.



- Charts, maps or tables to query numerous datasets, including operational and survey data. Data is divided into a number of “areas of interest” – these include topics such as children & young people; civic participation; crime & community safety; customer insight; deprivation & income; economy & skills; environment; health; national indicators; older people; perception surveys; population; and quality of life. Datasets can appear under more than one area of interest. Charts can provide data broken down by population groups (such as age, gender, ethnicity) and over time, whilst maps and tables can also provide data by geographical area (the boundaries available will depend on the dataset). As well as viewing query results in the system, users can also choose to export the data to use within another package.
3. Topic Pages.

These form another “intelligence” element of the system. The homepage shows the latest available topic pages. Other topic pages can be accessed via the *search topic pages* box, or by clicking *topic pages* on the quick links at the top of the home page. Topic pages aim to provide a snapshot of current topics of interest. By accessing a topic page, the user can be signposted to data sources, view charts or maps that may be of interest, and take part in discussion forums (users need to be logged in to post their views on an issue).

    - Sandwell in brief topic page will always be accessible from the icons within the topic pages section, but there is also a Sandwell in Brief section on the homepage – this provides summary statistics about Sandwell, and also gives a link to the more detailed topic page.
  4. Ward Profiles.

This section provides key facts on the 24 wards in Sandwell. You can view a ward map of the area, key statistics, and details of local Councillors, as well as being able to link to ward level data queries.
  5. News.

This area highlights any current Research Sandwell or Sandwell Trends news. This is where users can easily see where datasets have been updated, or new datasets added.
  6. Tutorials.

This is the area of the system where users can access User Guides such as this. If there is a particular area where you think a user guide would be useful, please contact [Research Sandwell](#).
  7. Tips and Guidance.

This area provides direct access to the User Guides, details of the datasets available on the system, FAQs, and example data queries.
  8. Links.

This final area of the homepage provides links to other websites which may be of interest.



## How do I find out further information?

Further User Guides are available from the homepage of Sandwell Trends. These include:

- [Interactive Tools - charts, maps and tables](#)
- [How do I find 2001 Census data?](#)
- [How do I use the Benchmarking tools?](#)
- [Publications and Topic Pages](#)
- [Getting the most from Maps](#)

Christine Wright, Principal Research Officer  
**Research Sandwell**  
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