

2.1 Families and the circumstances in which they live

In order to support every child to get the best start in life it is important to recognise the importance of the health and wellbeing of the parents and the circumstances into which the child is born.

The 2011 Census provides the most recent data on families living in the borough and demonstrates some of the shifts in the ten years since the previous census. Table 2.1.1 shows that the number and proportion of children in the borough rapidly increased between 2001 and 2011, particularly children under 5 years old. These trends have been continuing into the years succeeding the 2011 census. Children under 20 years old are expected to make up 32.3% (72,900 people) of the population by 2020¹.

Table 2.1.1: Trends in 2001 and 2011 Census Results

Indicator	2001 Count	2011 Count	% Change	LBBB %	England %
Age : 0-4yrs	12,542	18,676	+ 48.9%	10.05%	5.96%
Age: 5-15yrs	23,570	27,088	+ 14.9%	14.27%	12.92%
Households with dependent children	22,815	26,237	+ 15.8%	41.53%	29.12%
No adults in employment in a household with dependent children	6,555	7,279	+ 11.1%	24.8%	29.1%
Lone parent households with dependent children	6,982	9,965	+ 42.7%	14.30%	7.09%
- Lone parent in part-time employment	960	2,465	+ 156.8%	24.74%	24.56%
- Lone parent in full-time employment	1,424	2,097	+ 47.3%	21.04%	24.92%
- Lone parent not in employment	4,598	5,403	+ 17.5%	54.22%	50.53%

Source: LBBB Census Briefing

As a result of the increase in child population there has also been an increase in the number of households with dependent children, especially in the number of lone parent households, which increased by over 40% from 2001 to 2011. There was an increase in the proportion of lone parents in employment, although much of this is part-time employment and over 50% of lone parents are not in employment.

Section 4 of the JSNA includes data that demonstrate that Barking and Dagenham has a higher proportion of adults claiming job seekers allowance than the national average, and the increase in unemployment in the borough since 2008 has occurred at a faster rate than that seen across England.

¹ CHIMAT (2013). *Child Health Profile 2013*. London: CHIMAT. 1.

Poverty figures in children aged under 16 fell 3.7% percentage points to 30.2% in 2012, compared to the previous year. However this is still relatively high when compared with the London (23.5%) and England (18.6%) figures. This can have a huge impact on a child's start to life, and to future educational achievement and employment prospects¹. This is explained in further detail in section 5.

Parent and carer education is also an important aspect of supporting children to achieve the best start in life. The Census shows a significant decline in the proportion of adults over 16 years in the borough with no qualifications, from 42.3% in 2001 to 27.9%. More recent ONS estimates² still show a consistent pattern of relatively high rates of the working population (aged 16-64 years old) with no qualifications in the borough compared to 7.9% and 9.2% in London and England respectively. There is a strong correlation between parental education levels and early child outcomes. Positive parenting with an active home learning environment contributes significantly to a child's educational and vocational achievements³.

It is also important to recognise the role that grandparents play in children's early years, with anecdotal evidence in the borough suggesting that this is particularly significant in Barking and Dagenham. The needs of grandparents who are primary carers differ to those of younger parents and this should also be considered by care providers.

The context of children and families in Barking and Dagenham has changed substantially in the last ten years. Children in our borough now grow up in more culturally diverse communities, with changes in family cohesion, especially the increasing number of lone parent families, and increasing patterns of need, with increasing numbers of families living with disabilities in both parents and children. This evolution of the population reinforces the need for communities and public sector partners to work together to support and enable children and young people to reach their full potential.

² ONS Annual Population Survey 2013

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157260/report.aspx?c1=2013265927&c2=2092957699#tabquais>

³ Field.F (2010). *The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults*. London: Cabinet Office. 37-52.