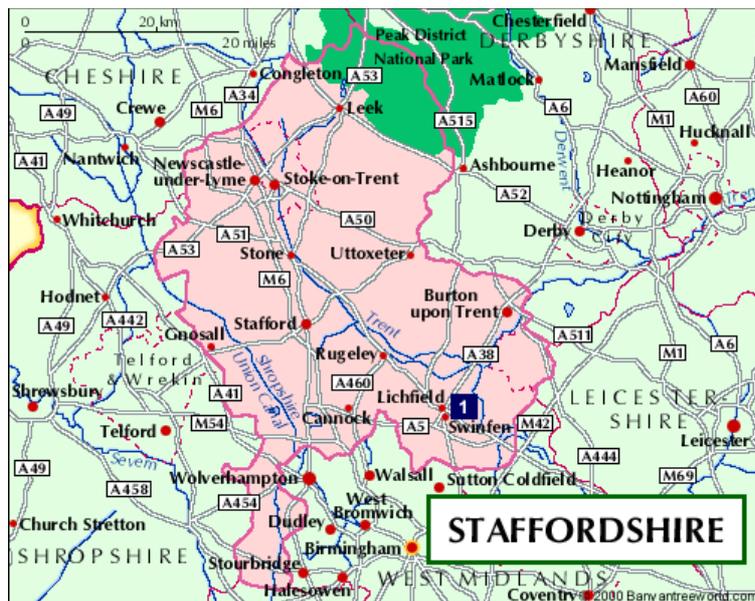


Localise

- showcase diagnosis -

Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire

- study trip 20-27.03.12 -

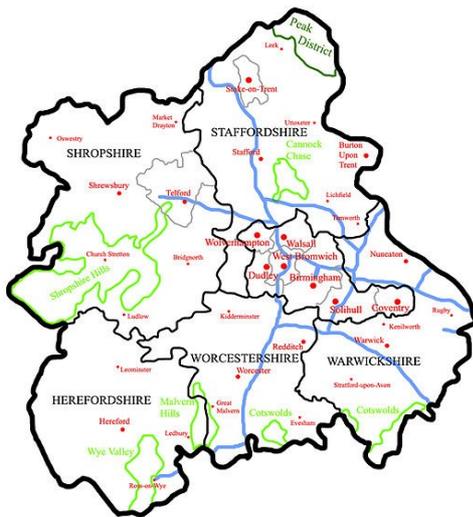


Staffordshire is a landlocked county in the West Midlands region of England (United Kingdom). Part of the National Forest lies within its borders. It adjoins Cheshire (to the north west), Derbyshire (to the east), Leicestershire (to the east), Warwickshire (to the south east), West Midlands (to the south), Worcestershire (to the south), and Shropshire (to the west).

The largest city in Staffordshire is Stoke-on-Trent (often abbreviated to Stoke), which is administered separately from the rest of the county as an independent unitary authority. Major towns include Stafford (the county town), Burton upon Trent, Cannock, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Leek and Tamworth.

Stoke-on-Trent

The city is situated about half-way between Manchester and Birmingham and adjoins the town and borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme, which is administered separately and is situated to the west. To the east is the Peak District, which includes part of the Staffordshire Moorlands District.



Stoke-on-Trent, forms a linear conurbation stretching for 12 miles (19 km), with an area of 36 square miles (93 km²). The city is formed formed by six separate towns. The settlement from which the city took its name was Stoke-upon-Trent, where the administration and chief mainline railway station were located. The neighbouring town of Hanley emerged as the primary commercial centre in the city, despite the efforts of its rival, Burslem. The three other component towns are Tunstall, Longton and Fenton.

Business and industry

- Coal mining -

North Staffordshire was a centre for coal mining. The first reports of coal mining in the area come from the 13th century. The Potteries Coalfield covers 100 square miles (300 km²). Striking coal miners in the Hanley and Longton area ignited the nationwide 1842 General Strike and its associated Pottery Riots. When coal mining was nationalised in 1947, about 20,000 men worked in the industry in Stoke-on-Trent. The Stoke mining industry set several national and international records. Wolstanton Colliery, when modernised, had the deepest mining shafts in Europe at 3,197 ft. In 1933, Chatterley Whitfield Colliery became the first Colliery in the country to mine one million tons of coal. In 1992 the combined Trentham Superpit (Hem Heath and Florence) was the first mine in Europe to produce 2.5 million saleable tonnes of coal. However, 1994 saw the last pit to close as the Trentham Superpit was shut.

The scars of mining still remain on the landscape. Slag heaps are still visible on the skyline, now covered with flora and fauna. The Chatterley Whitfield site reopened as a museum two years after its closure in 1976 but closed in 1991 and the site became a local nature reserve. It was declared a Scheduled Ancient Monument by English Heritage in 1993.

- The Potteries -

Since the 17th century, the area has been almost exclusively known for its industrial-scale pottery manufacturing. Companies such as Royal Doulton, Dudson Ltd, Spode, Wedgwood and Minton were established and based there. The local abundance of coal and clay suitable for earthenware production led to the early development of the local pottery industry. The construction of the Trent and Mersey Canal enabled the import of china clay from Cornwall together with other materials and facilitated the production of creamware and bone china.



For more than two centuries, the mentioned brands have dominated the world market in ceramics and chinaware and the explosion in its production fuelled the rapid industrialisation of the area leading to the development of the canal and railway network. The years after the second world war saw a decline in the area's ceramics industry and by the 1970s and 80s production was also dropping in iron and steel as well as in the once productive coalmines.

Today Stoke on Trent is fondly known as The Potteries boasts visitor centres, world class ceramic museums including the Wedgwood Museum, factory tours, pottery cafes and over 25 pottery factory shops.

- Business -

Today about 9,000 firms are based in the city. Amongst the more notable are bet365, and Phones4U, a large retailer of mobile phones. The Michelin tyre company has a complex in the city, Sainsbury's supermarket and The Co-operative Pharmacy have large warehouses in the city. Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the University Hospital of North Staffordshire, are the largest employers. KPMG's Competitive Alternatives_2004 report declared Stoke-on-Trent to be the most cost-effective place to set up a new UK business.

Socio-cultural characteristics

Stoke is an ethnically and culturally diverse city. The proportion of the city's Black and

Minority Ethnic (BME) population has doubled in two decades. Based on figures from 2009/10 approximately 21,200 people from ethnic minority groups live in Stoke on Trent (8.9% of the total population). The largest ethnic minority group is South Asians (12,000), with Pakistani people being the majority of those.¹

- Basic demographics -

- ^ the total population of the city and sub region is 240,636 people living in 103,196 households;
- ^ 94.8% of the population identified themselves as white, 2.6% as Asian British Pakistani, 0.5% Asian British Indian and 0.3% as Black Afro Caribbean;
- ^ Regarding religion, 74.7% described themselves as Christian, 3.2% Muslim and 13.4% had no religion;
- ^ 19.9% were identified as under 15; 21.0% were over 60. The average age of residents was 38½. A total of 24.2% of non-pensioner households were recorded as having no working adults,

The Stoke-on-Trent conurbation is now suffering many of the blights of post-industrial towns across the UK with high unemployment (currently standing at 19.5% with some black spots reaching 50%) and worse than average health statistics. This situation is exacerbated by relatively low levels of academic achievement and low workforce mobility. Stoke Town itself is now a struggling town with many empty shops and houses with very little to offer tourists or visitors.

Health profile

The health of people living in Stoke-on-Trent is generally worse than the national average. Levels of deprivation are higher than average and life expectancy for both

¹ Brown. Gill, Harris. Simon, Pugh. Nick, Trinder. Paul (2012) *Socially excluded communities and vulnerable people in Stoke-on-Trent: Full report Health inequalities report on vulnerable groups* Staffordshire CSS (NHS Commissioning Support Service) <http://www.stokepct.nhs.uk/pdfs/1033.pdf> [28-11-12].

men and women is lower than the average for England². The health history of the city has been significantly shaped by its industrial heritage. This has affected the types of work that people do, and the hazards and deprivation associated with such work.³ The Marmot Review into Health Inequalities in England was published in 2010, and drew attention to the ways in which the conditions that people live and work in throughout their lives lead to health inequalities⁴. These inequalities arise from a complex interaction of many factors such as housing, income, education, social isolation, and disability – all of which are strongly affected by a person’s economic and social status. People’s mental health as well as their physical health is affected by these factors, and concern about increasing levels of mental ill health can be seen in the World Health Organization’s prediction that “by 2020 mental ill health will be the second greatest cause of debilitating illness in developed nations (after heart disease)”⁵. Again, the impact of health inequalities is revealed in statistics about levels of mental illness in Stoke-on-Trent. For example, the percentage of people aged 18 and over with depression is significantly worse than the overall average for England.⁶ With the collapse of traditional industries e.g. pottery manufacturing, the iron and steel making industry, and coal mining, many older men in Stoke-on-Trent who worked in those industries have experienced redundancy and unemployment. Redundancy and job insecurity are widely recognised as contributing to stress, anxiety and depression for a number of reasons, including the impact of poverty and loss of self-esteem.

² *Stoke-on-Trent Health Profile*, Public Health Observatories 2012, <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=117139> [23.09.2012].

³ *The English Indices of Deprivation*, Communities and Local Government 2010, <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1871208.pdf> [23.09.2012].

⁴ *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*. „The Marmot Review” 2010, <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review> [23.09.2012].

⁵ Cited by Mike White, *Arts Development in Community Health: A Social Tonic*, Oxford: Radcliffe 2009, p. 51.

⁶ Public Health Observatories 2012, <http://www.nepho.org.uk/cmhp/index.php?pdf=E06000021> [23.09.2012].

Creative communities

- projects and organisations -

- AirSpace Gallery -

The gallery was opened by Turner Prize winner Martin Creed in May 2006 at the Falcon Works, a disused pottery factory, previously known as J. H. Weatherby & Sons. Since opening, AirSpace Gallery has been internationally recognised as a beacon for contemporary art in Stoke-on-Trent. "Our aim has been to maintain a high quality experience both in delivery and exhibition content, whilst also providing artists with studio space for the production of contemporary art". The gallery has worked with a number of artists working on an international level, and has also supported graduates and early career artists. AirSpace Gallery is now located in a Victorian building in Broad Street, Hanley (City Centre), which sits within the Cultural Quarter and is a minutes walk from the main shopping centre.

www.airspacegallery.org

- Anna Francis -

Anna Francis is an artist whose practice examines private histories, public space and civic languages; using forms of intervention, mapping, performance, consultation and photography to investigate the impact of art and culture on the regeneration of cities. One of her last projects is "Quality Streets", which involved a small team of local people who walked through the neighbourhood, taking photographs, identifying places and things they liked and didn't like. They used community research methods to encourage other people to do the same and analyse their results. This led to the development of an action plan for improvement of the area.

www.annafrancis.blogspot.com

- B Arts -

The group develops creative programmes and projects that sustain, develop and enrich

communities; while employing artists in work that is intelligent, thoughtful and contributes to a process of cultural democracy. "We're based in Newcastle under Lyme in the English Midlands, at the edge of the Potteries conurbation, and much of our work is in the varied and diverse communities of North Staffordshire. But we also work elsewhere in the West Midlands and with other UK and European partners. We make lantern processions, videos, theatre, music, books and banners. We drum, paint, sing, talk and design. We make memories and shared experiences as much as we create events. We welcome the challenge of working with people excluded from other opportunities, and enjoy mixing groups of people from different backgrounds. We do not, fundamentally, see much difference between elders, toddlers, young asylum seekers, parents, disadvantaged young people, artists or anybody else with whom we work. Why? We believe that working creatively can make a real difference to all our lives, that creativity is not confined to a talented few, that working together lifts our spirits and strengthens our souls, that there are voices that are silenced that deserve to be heard. Our work is a mixture of self-generated projects, commissions, and contract work. Partners include voluntary and informal groups and statutory bodies".

<http://www.barefootdoctors.blogspot.com/>
<http://growingheartsandminds.org.uk/>
<http://3minutenewcastle.wordpress.com/>
<http://www.lanternsallitup.blogspot.com/>
<http://www.b-arts.org.uk/>

- Burslem School of Art -

The school was originally built to house students from all around the 6 towns that make up Stoke-On-Trent. This was the case for several years but then had to conform to become part of the polytechnic education system and became part of a faculty of art. "The Burslem School of Art was once the powerhouse in developing world-renowned artist talent within the ceramics industry. For the last five years this 1905 historic Grade-II Listed Building has been run as an arts-based partnership - aimed at advancing education, training & employment and community development opportunities for local employment. The School's success has shown the way for new culture-led regeneration

projects in Burslem town – such as Ceramica, the Queen’s Theatre, the Indoor Ceramics & Crafts Market, Burslem Port, and the Burslem Festival. Training to create new opportunities for training in art & design, and to assist employment prospects for the local community.”

Burslem School of art houses many rooms that they rent out to artists, community groups and over the past 10 years has developed activities and programmes with community groups. It also houses exhibitions and is free for people to enter to look around.

<http://www.burslemschoolofart.com/>

- Clay chorus -

The Chorus was formed in August 2009 as the chorus for a B Arts site-specific performance called “Clay” at Burslem School of Art. Due to popular demand the chorus continues meeting and singing on Monday evenings at Burslem School of Art. It is a mixed: male and female accapella singing group. We learn songs by ear so you don` t need to be able to read music to take part. It is open access – there are no auditions. We sing songs from around the world, particularly traditional folk songs.

Clay Chorus is led by Kate Barfield (who also leads Loud Mouth Women, an open access women’s accapella choir), with support from Greg Stephens, both also members of the Boat Band.

- Creative Communities Unit -

The Unit at Staffordshire University is run by a team of specialists in community work, community arts, community development and regeneration. It offers interdisciplinary courses that bridge the gap between theory and practice in arts for health, community arts, creative consultation, regeneration, practical project management, volunteering and youth work. Its puts particular stress on learning through practice as well as on working with various communities and social groups. Its strong vocational focus is reflected in their offer of "short courses" - academic modules addressed to practitioners, governors, local council officers and others interested in developing better methods for

working with communities.

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/schools/humanities_and_soc_sciences/ccu/

- The Cultural Sisters -

The group uses creative processes to engage with people of all ages, abilities and cultural and social backgrounds. They work throughout the Midlands and UK to provide high quality enjoyable, creative experiences with visually interesting and beautiful results. Their creative specialities include textiles, printmaking, carnival arts, costume design and performance, sculpture, installation, site décor, photography, film and animation, graffiti art, lantern making, and mosaic.

“We are passionate about the work we do and believe that through creativity and participation we can all: Increase confidence and self-esteem, Raise awareness, Enable learning, Increase skills and knowledge, Have a positive impact on both mental and physical health, Improve our environment, Communicate effectively, Be inclusive and accessible”.

<http://www.theculturalsisters.org.uk>

- Mandays Photography Group -

It is a participatory photographic project, which was started by the Mental Health Social Work team of the local authority as one of a range of activities (under the Mandays banner) for men experiencing enduring mental distress. The activities of the group include a broad range of photographic activities in a context of informal learning and mentoring. Participants are encouraged to take photographs and to develop their interests. There have been trips to various places to take photographs, and also to visit places that are of interest to photographers, for example museums.

- New Vic Borderlines -

It is a initiative using theatre in social contexts. They use participatory activities and programmes to support the regeneration of our region by improving life expectations,

raising aspiration, and achievement, advancing social cohesion, reducing criminal and anti-social behaviour and improving the quality of life for disadvantaged people, whilst promoting diversity and challenging prejudice.

New Vic Borderlines delivers a range of dynamic and challenging theatre projects and programmes which changes lives in areas of significant disadvantage by addressing issues which cause individuals to be marginalised or at risk. The work has an impact on the life experiences of individuals and improves aspirations, ambitions and opportunities. It benefits the wider community by reducing criminal and antisocial behaviour; improving neighbourhood relationships; and making our region a better place to live, work and do business. We work with a range of partners to reduce barriers to inclusion, improve health and well-being, build thriving communities and improve chances for fruitful and meaningful lives.

During the period of the last 3 years New Vic Borderlines delivered 78 projects involving: 15,576 Participants; 12,785 Community Audiences 35,252 Individual.

<http://www.newvictheatre.org.uk/education-community/new-vic-borderlines>

- Place Space Identity -

This is one of the schemes financed in the frame of the RENEW North Staffordshire (HMR). The programme was established in 2003 as part of a Government initiative to turn around failing housing markets in the Midlands and North of England. The RENEW area covered parts of Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands councils and contained approximately 68,000 properties and had a population of some 154,000. RENEW was one of ten pathfinders working with partners to develop and deliver wide-ranging strategic plans for their housing markets, in what was originally envisaged to be a ten to 15 year regeneration process. The overall strategic objectives of the RENEW North Staffordshire area was to:

- Retain and attract population;
- Balance and supply demand for housing;
- Transform the urban form and local environment;
- Facilitate housing choice, and the provision of a quality housing stock;
- Promote social cohesion and social mobility, to help achieve sustainable

communities.

<http://www.placespaceidentity.org>

- Potteries Museum and art gallery -

The Museum is home to many exhibitions, art works, historical memorabilia and social activity, with free admission. It is located in Hanley and is run by the local authority along with 3 other museums (Gladstone Pottery Museum, Ford Green Hall and Etruria Industrial Museum) in the city.

“The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery was built on the site of the former large Ridgway Pottery Bell Works. The Ridgways were potters to Queen Victoria. Originally known as the City Museum and Art Gallery, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales performed the opening ceremony in 1981.”

One of the most recent collections to be added to the Potteries Museum has been the Staffordshire Hoard. This is the collection of new artefacts from the largest and most valuable collection of Anglo-Saxon treasure ever found was discovered last year in a field in Staffordshire and comprises in excess of 1,500 individual items, mostly gold, with some silver and decorated with semi-precious stones. Other exhibitions include: Arts, Ceramics, Local History, Natural History, Object of the month.

There is also a small theatre for community performances, cinema screenings and community meetings. A project was commissioned between 2008-2010 called “Museums aren’t for me” which was talked about during the study visit. This investigated people’s perceptions and ideas of what a museum is and how to make museums more inclusive.

<http://www.stokemuseums.org.uk/>

- RESTOKE -

The group combines dance, music and visual art to produce works that breathe new life into forgotten spaces. They are a multi-disciplinary collaboration between three artists: Choreographer – Clare Reynolds, Art Director – Sarah Nadin and Musical Dir-

ector – Paul Rogerson. All three directors are from Stoke-on-Trent and have worked over the past decade in community arts through their specialist art forms. In 2009 the trio first came together for *Place, Space and Identity*, a programme aiming to integrate arts into the regeneration process in Stoke and North Staffordshire. The project *Benches*⁷ was created for the programme from thoughts and images of the people of North Staffordshire and Stoke-On-Trent using public benches as a meeting point. Public response inspired a contemporary dance piece that was photographed and displayed on 15 buses traveling through the City of Stoke-on-Trent. A series of impromptu dance performances were held across the city bringing contemporary dance to the heart of everyday activity. This project also resulted in a strong connection between the three artists and fuelled a desire to create performance work outside the usual confines of theatre and gallery spaces. The group also produced and managed a performance project – Reclaim, held at the Spode Works site in Stoke Town in May 2011.

<http://www.restoke.org.uk>

- Junction 15 -

It is an Emmy award-winning corporate and broadcast production company based in North Staffordshire. Founded in 2005 by two successful filmmakers, graduates of Staffordshire University, Andrew Rowell and Darren Teale, Junction15 have provided television broadcast productions for BBC, UK independent TV channels, Sky channels and NBC. Junction15 have a reputation as producing films hard hitting content such as the Sky One commissioned and Bafta shortlisted *Ben: Diary of a Heroin Addict*. They have also been commissioned by many charity organisations to produce social conscience films on sensitive topics, such as Bi-Polar Depression and Alzheimer's. Recently they were commissioned by ARCH housing providers of a domestic violence refuge. The result was *Damage* – a brutal yet unapologetic fictionalised portrayal of true stories as told to the filmmakers during the scriptwriting process.

<http://www.junction15.com/>

⁷ <http://westmidlandsdance.com/2009/03/24/place-space-and-identity-benches> [12.10.2012].

Excerpts from reflective diaries, reports

- Sam Rushton -

Stoke-On-Trent is full of people who want to try and make a difference and enjoy coming together to socialize and to try and improve the area. There is evidence of identifying problems “Signs of apology” and then trying to do something about it.

There is also a feeling of celebration of heritage in Stoke-On-Trent and a sense of pride. The Burslem school of art celebrates sights of this city and people from it. The clay chorus choir also beam with joy and pride meeting together to socialize and sing songs about the heritage of their city.

At the moment public policy is centred on the government’s ideology of the “Big Society” boiling down, from what I can comprehend, to shared resources, time and everyone doing things for themselves and then offering their services to others for free. With this in mind more and more communities have to group together and build their own projects, groups and activities if they want to get anything done.

The Spode site in Stoke is currently involved in a large regeneration and renewal project. Community group RE:Stoke are involved in the project, however without their project meeting a target set by the council the chance of the same level of support, resources and money would be very slim.

- Marta Jalowska -

What Community Arts focuses on is the community, with its needs and possibilities. Since Community Artists often work in the field which in Poland could be perceived as artistic, the activities undertaken by Community Artists in Stoke-on-Trent would be also called ‘art’ in Poland, not so much culture animation. A post-industrial city in Staffordshire in the West Midlands, England, Stoke-on-Trent is a home to Staffordshire University, where the Faculty of Art, Media and Design runs a postgraduate course in Community and Participatory Arts. As for the learning and practical experience it offers, the Faculty resembles Polish academies (such as the Academy of Fine Arts and

the State Theatre Academy). And here comes an important difference between Polish culture animation and its British counterpart. Culture animation is part of faculties focused purely on theory, for instance Science of Culture/Cultural Studies in the Institute of Polish Culture at the University of Warsaw. Culture animation has its roots in ethnographic movements and an anthropological approach to the notion of community. Meanwhile, Community Arts was initiated by artists, not theorists of culture.

- Janine Goldsworthy -

6 Towns mean we have lots of different identities and specialism's relating to the potteries, each struggle for their own identity and the local governments idea of pulling them together may not be the best idea- celebrate their uniqueness!

We didn't get to see much dilapidated buildings or rough areas on the trip for balance - for example just along the canal is a lot of empty factories.

We are lucky to be able to get funding to initiate and develop small projects in the community for artists and have amazing spaces to show work. History of the area means we have special buildings with rich stories and legacy to build upon

- Katarzyna Malinowska -

An aspect of British Community Arts that remains unusual in the Polish context is the idea of well-being, namely the broadly defined health issue. I was profoundly impressed by the approach to this problem. It is important that many art projects related to this issue are financed (or co-financed) by health departments. [...] In the United Kingdom, the health issue is discussed not only in terms of a fit, illness-free body but the emphasis is put on mental health as well, which is related to the notion of creativity, a factor that enhances cognitive development. The main objective is to improve the quality of life in a large number of fields, which is followed by raising social awareness about illnesses by conducting information campaigns and providing medical services. [...] Formed at hospitals, care homes and theatres, art therapy groups are provided for people who are sick or coping with social problems

(alcoholism, social rejection). An example of such activities during the study trip was *Borderlines* at the New Vic Theatre in Newcastle. The project clearly focuses on those who live on the margin of the community or have been totally rejected, such as people turning to crime, exhibiting anti-social behaviour, excluded from social interaction or involved in social conflict. The therapy-through-theatre method aims to provide them with different, positive ways of understanding oneself and one's social groups. It is supposed to create affirmative attitudes, which will make it easier to analyse one's fears and overcome addictions.

Regional policies and general information

- Community Engagement Framework for Stoke (2009) -

http://www2002.stoke.gov.uk/framework_document/framework%20document%20b.pdf.pdf

- Stoke Regeneration Plans -

<http://www.urbed.coop/projects/stoke-town-and-spode-works-masterplan>

- Creative Stoke: creative work in and around Stoke including a directory -

<http://www.creativestoke.org.uk/commart.html>

- Stoke Cultural Development team -

<http://www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/content/rc/cultural-development/cultural-development-team.en>



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