Royal Mail unveils Happiness Index for the UK, Winchester tops the list

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Winchester, East Renfrewshire, Monmouthshire and Lisburn and Castlereagh top the Royal Mail UK Happiness Index in each of the UKâ€™s four countries, according to a new study commissioned by Royal Mail. Winchester tops the list for the UK overall.

As the UK's pre-eminent delivery company posting mail to around 30 million addresses in the UK, six days a week, Royal Mail is well placed to identify the regional differences across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The findings are based on an index that is composed of eight measures which are relevant to one's happiness.

Winchester claims the top happiness spot for England

Winchester in South East England claims the top spot in the Royal Mail UK Happiness Index, largely driven by the local authority's high earnings, a high reported sense of well-being from residents and low levels of deprivation.

In England, the South East dominated the list, with five other local authorities from the region ranked in the top ten. Some of the highest earnings, reported sense of well-being, life expectancy and access to health services across the UK were recorded by local authorities in the region.

In second place was Babergh, a local government district in Suffolk, the East of England. Primarily a rural area, the local authority scored the highest ranking for low carbon emissions, while its access to health services also contributed to its high placement.

Ruschliffe in the East Midlands and Ribble Valley in the North West came in at number three and number five, respectively. Both areas boast low levels of deprivation and crime and enjoy high well-being scores.

Chiltern, fourth in the list had the highest score for life expectancy in the region, and the second highest score for access to health services.

Waverley (sixth), Surrey Heath (eighth), Elmbridge (ninth) and Epsom and Ewell (tenth) in the South East, as well as Forest

Heath (seventh) in the East, complete the top ten list.

East Renfrewshire is top for the Scots

East Renfrewshire tops the Royal Mail Happiness Index for Scotland. Its position is cemented with help from its high placing in the earnings index. It scores in the 90th percentile across all local authorities in the UK for earnings, and this pushes it up amongst local authorities in Scotland.

The next highest ranked local authority in Scotland for this measure, East Dunbartonshire, scores in the 60th percentile by comparison. East Dunbartonshire (second) boasts low levels of crime and also scores highly on the access to health services measure, a feat that is repeated across all of the local authorities in Scotland's top ten. Aberdeenshire completes the top three, scoring highly on the access to health services measure.

Stirling (fourth) has a comparatively good level of earnings relative to other local authorities in Scotland. Scottish Borders (fifth) secures its position with the second lowest level of crime in Scotland, followed closely by Midlothian (sixth) and East Lothian (seventh).

Highland (eighth) and the Shetland Islands (tenth) are the two northernmost local authorities on Scotland's top ten list. Highland has the joint highest score for reported well-being across the UK, while Shetland Islands' low crime rate and low deprivation levels edge it past other local authorities to round off the top ten list. South Ayrshire beats the latter into ninth position with its stronger performance in access to local services.

Monmouthshire wins for Wales

As with England and Scotland, most of the happiest local authorities in Wales are situated in the southernmost parts of the country. Taking first place, Monmouthshire has the highest life expectancy and earnings in Wales. It also scores third in Wales for low levels of crime and deprivation, which contributes to its leading position in the top ten.

Following closely behind is Vale of Glamorgan (second), the southernmost local authority in Wales. The highest score for access to health services in the country boosted its result.

Neighbouring local authorities, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, are third and fourth on the list as they make the top five Welsh local authorities for low levels of deprivation. Meanwhile, Pembrokeshire (fifth), Bridgend (sixth) and Neath Port Talbot (seventh) are buoyed by their scores for low crime and access to health services.

The capital of Wales and its largest city, Cardiff (eighth), also makes the top ten along

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with Torfaen (ninth) and Powys (tenth), boosted by its easy access to health services.

Lisburn and Castlereagh is number one for Northern Ireland

With just 11 local authorities in Northern Ireland, a ranking of the top five provides a better analysis for happiness in the country.

All top five local authorities have a very similar overall index. Making up the outer suburbs of Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh tops the list, thanks to its low level of carbon emissions and good access to health services.

Newry, Mourne and Down (second), as well as Causeway Coast and Glens (third), score particularly well on their reported sense of personal well-being.

Ards and North Down (fourth), along with Mid Ulster (fifth), boast notably low levels of crime compared not just to local authorities in Northern Ireland, but to the UK as a whole.

A spokesperson for Royal Mail said "This new study takes a look at the areas across the UK sparking the most joy. For people across the UK looking to live in or visit the happiest places, there are plenty to choose from. Royal Mail connects communities and businesses across the UK, delivering to nearly 30 million addresses."

Source: Royal Mail

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