



UK RELOCATION, CRIME STATISTICS AND HOUSE PRICES

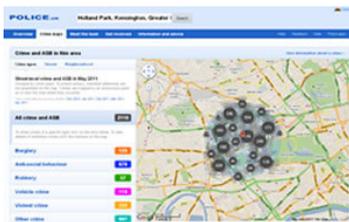
Nick Draycott, Miidas Relocation

“Burglaries rise fast as economy goes slow” was the headline on the front page of the Times newspaper on 29th June 2011.

This much anticipated **‘recession crime wave’** is set to have a significant impact on both **domestic** and **inbound relocation services**.

According to the Metropolitan Police there were big increases in robbery, burglary and motor vehicle crime in the past 12 months, with other Forces’ Chief Constables claiming clear signs that burglary and robbery are “on the turn” with commentators anticipating that crime rates can only worsen as unemployment increases.

A couple of days after the Times article appeared, the figures covering May 2011 for the whole of England and Wales were published on the Police UK website. Type in your postcode and you will be shown a map detailing the month’s crimes broken down into various categories.



Not for the faint hearted, particularly for urban dwellers.

The stark data can make genteel Hampstead or, as shown below, Holland Park look like Beirut on a bad night, and pointing out that a certain level of crime is inevitable, particularly in built up areas, does little to reassure those of a nervous disposition.

Neighbourhood Crime Data from Police UK

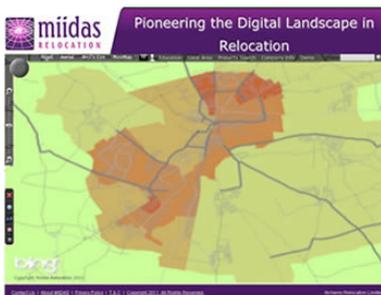
Or indeed anyone relocating and researching destination areas.

Publication of these crime statistics started in December 2010, so we now have a full six months worth to analyse.

So what can it tell us?

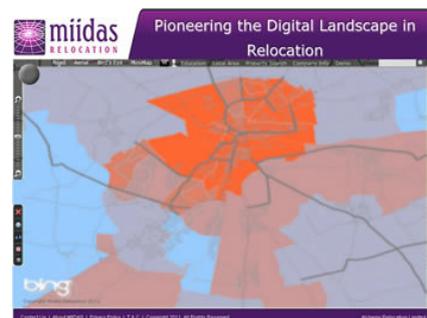
On the face of it, not much because most of the information seems to be very obvious.

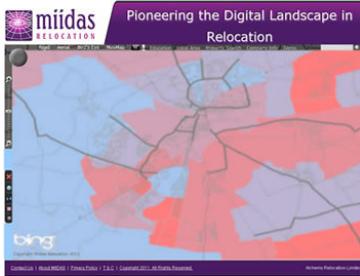
Unsurprisingly, we learn that built up urban areas tend to have more crime than rural ones.



This map shows a typical (disguised) town colour coded according to population density (the darker the colour, the more densely populated the area).

And this is a heat map of the same town showing the concentration of crime is greater (red) in more densely populated areas. As stated, no big surprise there.

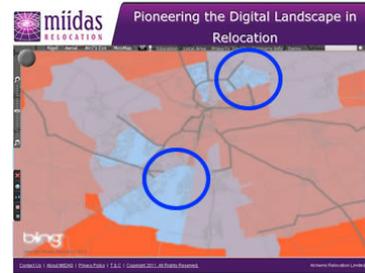




However, if one analyses the increase in crime rates nationally between December 2010 and May 2011 and then compares the target town against this benchmark, a different picture emerges.

In this case, and somewhat counter to what is generally perceived, the greater increases (red) occur in the rural areas.

Again, if one establishes national benchmarks for crime rates in areas of similar population density i.e., comparing like with like, thereby putting the 'Beirut effect' into context, more light is shed on our destination area.



Clearly, there are urban areas (circled) here with crime levels not only well below what we could expect to find in similarly densely populated areas, but also with increases well below the national average.

Which is precisely the sort of qualitative information our relocating family, whether moving domestically or internationally, would want to know.

Not only is it highly relevant to the issue of lifestyle choice, but also, given the coming recession crime wave, property values. Areas where crime rates are increasing faster than elsewhere, or are greater than neighbourhoods with similar characteristics, could experience a negative impact on property values.

Would you want to know whether you are going to make your biggest investment in an area where property values are likely to be affected more than elsewhere?

And, if Additional Housing Cost Allowance (AHCA)/Mortgage Disparity Assistance/Housing Cost Disparity payment is part of the relocation package, it is now surely essential that this is becomes factored into the calculation.

Traditionally the concept of 'neighbourhood desirability' (as defined by the Differential Suppliers) has been based on the relatively static assessment of the residents' demographic profiles. Potentially, the much more volatile crime data turns this assessment on its head.

The data is out there for anyone to access and, given the current economic climate, it is bound to increase in significance.

Fortunately, with regular and meaningful analysis, it should develop into a valuable tool not only for the relocating family, but also the relocation professional.