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The second **Halifax Seaside Town Quality of Life review** tracks where living standards are highest by ranking performance across key indicators of the labour market, the housing market, the environment, education and health. 125 coastal towns in England, Wales and Scotland have been included in this survey.

North Coast for quality of life and affordability

- **Yorkshire's Bridlington, Withernsea and Hornsea and Scotland's Peterhead and Fraserburgh offer a good quality of life and the best value amongst Britain's coastal towns**
 - **Bexhill-on-Sea offers the best quality of life of Britain's seaside towns**
 - **Sandbanks retains top spot as the most expensive seaside town**

Nitesh Patel, housing economist at Halifax, commented:

"A breath of fresh sea air coupled with great scenery has strong appeal for homeowners and often property in coastal areas has a hefty price tag attached to it. Our research demonstrates that for homebuyers who dream of 'being beside the seaside' there are good value hotspots where you don't compromise on the standard of living. Towns in Yorkshire and Scotland have rated highly on our 'quality of life' index and have reasonable prices that are affordable on local incomes.

"Many seaside towns, particularly in the South West, offer an excellent quality of life but with house prices to match. Despite house price falls between 2007 and 2009 in all but four seaside towns across the UK, the South West remains the most unaffordable region. Millionaire's playground Sandbanks is the most unaffordable seaside town but is balanced by residents having a high quality of life.

"Occupying the top spot for quality of life is Bexhill-on-Sea in East Sussex, which not only provides residents with four more hours sunshine a week to enjoy the beach life, but also higher than average employment and earnings, and good health and life expectancy."

KEY FINDINGS

Quality of life in seaside towns (Table 1)

Residents of Bexhill-on-Sea in East Sussex have the highest quality of life among Britain's seaside towns followed by Burnham-on-Crouch in Essex and Christchurch in Dorset. All three towns have higher than average weekly earnings compared to other seaside towns and an above average employment rate. Over nine out of ten adults report themselves as having good health and residents have an average life expectancy of around 80. They also have four more hours of sunshine per week than the average for seaside towns.

Twenty-nine of the 35 seaside towns offering the best quality of life are in southern England. Seventeen are in the South East, 11 in the South West and one in East Anglia.

The three highest ranked seaside towns outside southern England are all in the East Riding of Yorkshire: Bridlington, Withernsea and Hornsea. In the North East, Alnwick and Whitley Bay have the best quality of life.

Stonehaven, Peterhead and Fraserburgh are the highest ranked Scottish coastal towns.

Quality of Life and House Prices

Many of the highest ranked seaside towns also have the most expensive houses. Nine of the ten most expensive seaside towns feature among the 35 seaside towns with the highest quality of life. Sandbanks in Dorset is the most expensive seaside town with an average house price of £544,951 followed by Milford-on-Sea in Hampshire (£334,717) and Lyme Regis in Dorset (£308,063). *(Table 2)*

A good quality of life does not always come with high property prices. The five best value seaside towns – towns offering the combination of relatively low house prices (in the ten least expensive towns) and a high ranking for quality of life (in the top 35) - are the three east Yorkshire coast towns of Withernsea, Hornsea and Bridlington along with the Scottish seaside towns of Peterhead and Fraserburgh. *(Table 3)*

Five seaside towns in southern England also provide good value for money with relatively low property prices (in the twenty least expensive towns) and a ranking in the top 35 for quality of life. Three are in the South East - Dover, Newhaven and Folkstone - together with the South West towns of Burnham on Sea and Weston Super Mare. *(Table 3)*

Table 1: Seaside Towns with Best Quality of Life in Great Britain

Seaside Town	Region	Quality of Life Rank
Bexhill On Sea	South East	1
Burnham On Crouch	South East	2
Christchurch	South West	3
Peacehaven	South East	4
Newhaven	South East	5
Swanage	South West	6
Lymington/ Milford On Sea	South East	7
Leigh On Sea	South East	8
Whitstable	South East	9
Herne Bay	South East	10
Shoreham By Sea	South East	11
Hythe	South East	12
Sandbanks	South West	13
Poole	South West	14
Southend On Sea	South East	15
Weston Super Mare	South West	16
Folkestone	South East	17
Dover	South East	18
Bridlington	Yorkshire and Humber	19
Hornsea	Yorkshire and Humber	20
Withernsea	Yorkshire and Humber	21
Worthing	South East	22
Littlehampton	South East	23
Felixstowe	East Anglia	24
Eastbourne	South East	25
Lyme Regis	South West	26
Burnham On Sea	South West	27
Weymouth	South West	28
Brighton	South East	29
Stonehaven	Scotland	30
Fraserburgh	Scotland	31
Peterhead	Scotland	32
Bournemouth	South West	33
Sidmouth	South West	34
Budleigh Salterton	South West	35

Sources: Halifax

Table 2: 10 Most Expensive Seaside Towns in Great Britain

Town	Region	Average House Price 2009* (£)	Quality of Life Rank
Sandbanks	South West	544,951	13
Milford On Sea	South East	334,717	7
Lyme Regis	South West	308,063	26
Sidmouth	South West	292,291	34
Budleigh Salterton	South West	276,975	35
Poole	South West	268,186	14
Christchurch	South West	257,505	3
Swanage	South West	253,310	6
Hythe	South East	237,277	12
Brighton	South East	232,261	29

Sources: Land Registry and Halifax

* 12 months to December 2009

Table 3: 10 Best Value Seaside Towns in Great Britain

Town	Region	Average House Price 2009* (£)	Quality of Life Rank
Withernsea	Yorkshire and Humber	91,360	21
Peterhead	Scotland	112,031	32
Fraserburgh	Scotland	113,362	31
Hornsea	Yorkshire and Humber	126,498	20
Bridlington	Yorkshire and Humber	131,766	19
Dover	South East	152,400	18
Burnham on Sea	South West	159,091	27
Weston Super Mare	South West	162,899	16
Newhaven	South East	172,414	5
Folkstone	South East	173,228	17

Sources: Land Registry, Registers of Scotland and Halifax

* 12 months to December 2009

EDITORS' NOTES:

DATA SOURCES:

House Prices

The prices used are simple arithmetic ('crude') averages. These prices are not standardised and therefore can be affected by changes in the sample from period to period. Data is from the Land Registry and Registrar for Scotland with average house price based on the rolling 12 months to December 2009.

Prices stated in Table 3 are among the 20 lowest houses prices in Britain's seaside town for the rolling 12 months to December 2009.

Quality of Life

The Quality of Life index aims to quantify where living standards are highest in Great Britain by ranking local performance across a range of indicators, including the labour market, the housing market, the environment, education and health. The index has been produced at a local authority level for all 408 local authorities in Great Britain. Seaside towns have been matched to their relevant local authority to derive quality of life scores by town.

The quality of life reading for each area has been created by summing scores across 15 variables within 6 broad groups. All towns referred to in this research are seaside towns.

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