



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE NORTH EAST

The North East

The North East is one of the smallest of the English regions in both area (8,573 square km) and population (2.5 million).

It is a region of great contrasts. The hills, moorlands and forests of the North Pennines and Border Hills form its western part. Its eastern side is a 186-kilometre North Sea coastline, on which long-established industrial conurbations are grouped around the main river estuaries of the Tees, Wear and Tyne. Between the two lie agricultural lowlands, the eastern parts of which have been marked by the rise and subsequent decline in the coalmining industry.

Whilst two-thirds of the region is rural, a third is designated as a National Park (Northumberland and part of the North York Moors) or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (North Pennines and the Northumberland Coast)

In addition the region has two World Heritage Sites in Durham Cathedral and Hadrian's Wall.

North–South arterial Trunk Road links through the region are provided by the A1(M), A1 and A19. The A69(T) and A66(T) provide the region's main East–West connections. The region is well served with frequent rail links to London (3 hours) and Edinburgh (80 minutes). The region's public transport system includes the Metro System within Tyne & Wear. There are two international airports in the region, Newcastle and Durham Tees Valley both experiencing significant growth.

The region has seen enormous change over the past 30 years. Between 1981 and 1997, for example, the North East lost over 110,000 jobs in primary and manufacturing industries. Although less than 15% of the workforce is still employed in manufacturing the sector remains an important element in the economy.

The regional economic base has diversified into new areas such as microelectronics, the offshore industry, biotechnology and automotives. There has also been significant growth in the service sectors, public administration, education and health. Retail is also an important sector accounting for some 10% of all businesses whilst tourism is estimated to support over 55,000 jobs in the region.

Despite this diversification the region is still dealing with the economic, social and structural consequences of its past dependence on traditional industries, which is reflected, in it's poor performance across a range of indicators. As a result there are wide regional variations in relative terms of deprivation. Over 30% of Super Output Areas (SOAs) in the region fall within the 20% most deprived in England under the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004, 22% fall within the most deprived 10%. Significant clusters of deprivation exist within Easington, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Sunderland. 17 of the 23 local authorities have 25% or more SOAs within the 20% most deprived in England.

ECONOMIC

- Regional **Gross Value Added (GVA)** at current basic prices in 2002 was £12,078 per head (£15,614 for the UK)
- **Gross Value Added** in manufacturing was £37,300 per person employed in 2001, compared to £38,200 for the UK
- **VAT registration figures** for 2003 averaged 22.6 start-ups per 10,000 population for the North East, against a UK figure of 48.1. There were 45,405 **businesses registered for VAT** in the North East at the start of 2003, representing 2.5% of VAT registered businesses in the UK
- The seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey for August–October 2004 estimates 69.5% of people of working age are **in employment**
- North East has an overall **unemployment** as a % of those aged 16 and over of 6.0% for the August–October 2004 period (UK 4.7%)
- The LFS estimate of **economically active** people in the August–October 2004 period was 74.1% of those of working age

EDUCATION

- In 2004, 48.3% of pupils aged 15 achieved **5 GCSE's at A*–C** in maintained schools (England 51.5%) *provisional*
- Results for pupils achieving **level 4 in Key Stage 2** in 2004 were 75% for Maths and 77% in English (England 73% and 77%)
- In 2004, 69.2% of **economically active adults** of working age are qualified to **NVQ level 2 or above** (England 70.2%)
- The region has 5 Universities, one Open University regional centre, a supporting resource centre and 25 **Further Education establishments**

HEALTH

- Average **life expectancy at birth** for the 2001-2003 period is 74.7 years for males (England 76.2) and 79.5 years for females (England 80.7)

CRIME

- **Burglary offences per 1,000 households** for 2003/04 was 18.2 (18.6 for England)
- In the North East **robbery rates are 1.1 per 1,000 population** at 2004, England average 2.0

TRANSPORT

- **Road casualties for people killed or seriously injured** is the lowest in the North East of all the English regions at 47.6 per 100,000 population at 2002, England average 68

HOUSING

- **The percentage of non-decent social housing** is 28% for the North East compared to an England average of 38% at 2001
- During 2002, the North East had 57% of **new homes built on previously developed land** (England 64%)

POPULATION

- The mid-2003 population estimate for the region was **2,539,400** with 1,233,500 males (48.6%) and 1,305,800 females (51.4%)
- Within the age structure of the population, 17.8% are aged 0-14 years, 65.4% aged 15-64 and 16.8% aged over 65
- Approximately 2.4% of the region's total population belong to ethnic minorities. Of these 33,582 (55.9%) are of Asian or British Asian origin

GENERAL

- The region has 23 local authorities, of which there are 13 district/borough councils and 10 unitary/metropolitan councils. There are two county councils, one in Northumberland and one in Durham. In addition, there are two local planning authorities, Northumberland National Park and North Yorkshire National Park. There are four Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) and four Business Links.
- The region has 30 MPs (28 Lab, 1 Con, 1 Lib Dem).