Cities Outlook
2026

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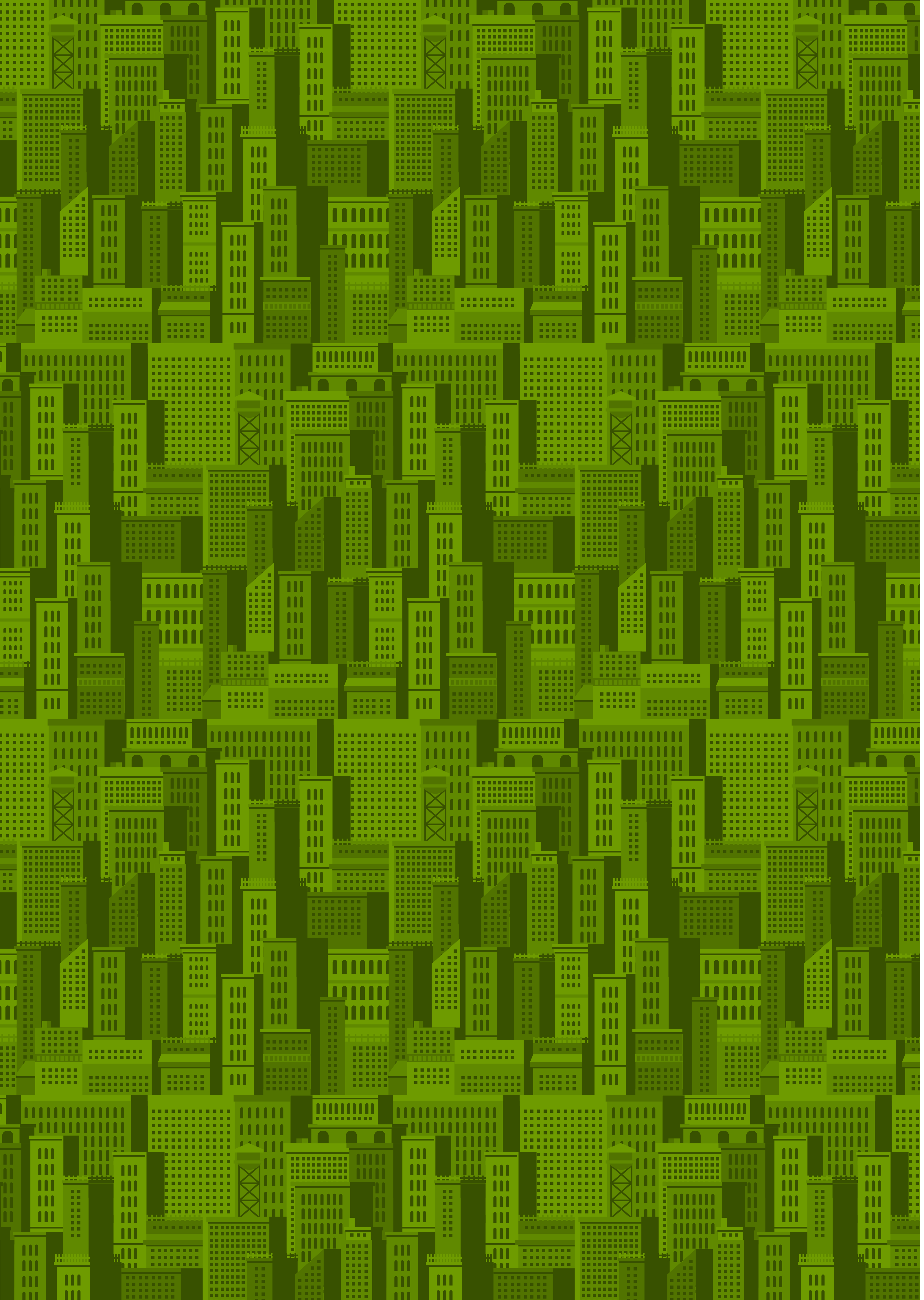

About Centre for Cities

The UK's economy is driven by the success of its largest cities and towns, which generate opportunities and prosperity for people in all parts of the country.

Our mission is to help the UK's largest cities and towns realise their economic potential.

We produce rigorous, data-driven research and policy ideas to help cities, large towns and Government address the challenges and opportunities they face – from boosting productivity and wages to preparing for the changing world of work.

We also work closely with urban leaders, Whitehall and business to ensure our work is relevant, accessible and of practical use to cities, large towns and policy makers.

For more information, please visit www.centreforcities.org/about

Partnerships

Centre for Cities is always keen to work in partnership with like-minded organisations who share our commitment to helping cities to thrive, and supporting policy makers to achieve that aim.

As a registered charity (no. 1119841) we rely on external support to deliver our programme of quality research and events.

To find out more please visit: www.centreforcities.org/about/partnerships

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Testimonials

Testimonials

I am determined we use the full force of devolved powers to speed up investment and job creation in our great cities, and to take the lead in harnessing new opportunities open to us such as the visitor levy.

The Great North recognises the fundamental role cities have in driving the economy, and as mayors we are working more closely together than ever to transform the North's economy at scale and pace.

Cities Outlook continues to be essential reading, by providing robust evidence and data about the challenges we need to address. It provides insight that can inform our essential work to unlock the potential of our cities and regions.

Mayor Kim McGuinness
Chair of The Great North and Mayor of the North East

Cities Outlook 2026 underlines Brighton & Hove's potential to lead the way in the UK economy. Thanks to the data from Centre for Cities, with growth running at twice the national rate and rising incomes, we have the foundations for long-term success and invaluable evidence to help shape our future plans. The report provides a clear and accessible evidence base for local decision-making. Our challenge now is to build on this momentum by investing in skills, housing and connectivity, so that Brighton & Hove's growth is inclusive and drives down the inequality that otherwise holds our city back.

Councillor Bella Sankey
Leader of Brighton and Hove Council

Cities Outlook will help shape the future of places like Bristol and Bath. Transport is rightly highlighted as key to growth, and better connecting residents and businesses is crucial to enhancing people's quality of life and further improving economic productivity. In the West, that will mean better buses, more trains and stations, and mass transit plans.

For the West of England, home to the strongest recent economic growth of any region and an ambitious ten-year Growth Strategy, this Centre for Cities report comes at an important time. With more decisions set to be made in the West Country rather than Westminster, our long-term economic development and investment must be guided by evidence like this to ensure that we can all see and feel the difference.

Mayor Helen Godwin
Mayor of the West of England

With its comprehensive data and consistent analysis, the annual *Cities Outlook* report really is a must-read for decision makers at all levels of government. Cities like Birmingham must be at the very heart of the drive for economic growth, if we are going to lift UK standards of living, tackle poverty and create jobs for our growing populations. Birmingham is one of the most investable cities, with some of the biggest opportunities in the country, and *Cities Outlook* is an invaluable go-to guide for identifying unique city strengths and driving informed decision-making.

Councillor John Cotton
Leader of Birmingham City Council

Centre for Cities

Cities Outlook 2026 once again provides invaluable insight into how our cities drive national growth. The report makes a vital contribution to a serious, evidence-led approach, grounded in a clear understanding of how different places contribute to the national economy. The ability to compare Milton Keynes with other UK cities across a broad range of economic indicators is hugely valuable and, I hope, can play an important role in informing better, more effective policy-making.

Unlocking the full potential of our cities means focusing on the fundamentals that make growth possible, strong transport links, skilled workforces, the homes people need, innovation and effective devolution. Analysis like this is essential if we are to boost productivity and ensure growth delivers higher living standards across the country.

Chris Curtis
MP for Milton Keynes North and Chair of the Labour Growth Group

Centre for Cities has long been a strong voice on the importance of city regions in driving growth and improving productivity and their 2026 report shows exactly why that matters.

The report's clear picture of how cities are performing, from the strength of local economies to the role of skills and transport, is the kind of independent analysis that's hugely valuable in helping city regions like Greater Manchester meet our trailblazing long-term growth ambitions.

Mayor Andy Burnham
Mayor of Greater Manchester

The economy of South Yorkshire has been too small for too long. There's not been enough jobs or opportunity, and people haven't had enough money in their pockets. But we have a plan and a healthy dose of ambition, and we're turning that around.

This Centre for Cities report shows exactly how that work is already paying off. Barnsley and Doncaster are now two of the fastest growing places in the country, with local economic growth outpacing the national average and disposable incomes rising almost twice as fast over the past decade.

My mission is simple: to make sure South Yorkshire has a bigger and better economy. I want everyone growing up here to believe, with confidence, that in South Yorkshire you can stay near and go far; that you can build a great life close to the people and places you love.

Each year *Cities Outlook* provides an invaluable snapshot of how places are changing, and how the long term, evidence led approach we're taking in South Yorkshire is paying off.

Mayor Oliver Coppard
Mayor of South Yorkshire

01

Cities Outlook 2026

A year for growth to be felt everywhere

A year for growth to be felt everywhere

The Government was elected with an economic mandate to kickstart economic growth and raise living standards in every part of the UK.

Politically, this is a demanding promise. Public confidence in economic policy has been weakened by more than a decade of feeble wage growth, rising living costs and repeated claims of recovery that have not been felt by many households and places. For growth to be 'felt by everyone, everywhere', improvements must be visible in people's daily lives through better jobs, higher pay and stronger local economies.

This creates a political as well as an economic challenge. Growth that is narrowly concentrated or slow to translate into local opportunities risks reinforcing perceptions that economic success is distant and uneven. At the same time, stagnant living standards means cost of living pressures continue to dominate public priorities, increasing pressure on the government to prioritise interventions on prices, bills, and household costs. The Autumn Budget 2025, and the Prime Minister's remarks in early January 2026, reflect this reality: an understandable shift in emphasis towards easing immediate pressures facing households.

But this shift also carries political risks. Without stronger economic growth, action on the cost of living can only ever be temporary and zero-sum – redistributing limited resources rather than expanding them. Over time, voters are unlikely to reward a government for managing decline more gently. If underlying productivity and earnings do not improve, cost-of-living relief risks being quickly eroded, leaving households no better off and political trust further diminished. In this sense, deprioritising growth in favour of short-term affordability risks becoming self-defeating.

Cities offer a way through this challenge. As the places where more than half the population live and work, and where economic change is most visible, cities are central to translating national growth ambitions into outcomes people can access and feel. When cities succeed, growth is not abstract: it shows up in job opportunities, rising wages and improved local services.

But city performance varies widely. Differences in skills, labour market density, connectivity and business mix are a key reason why the UK economy remains both weak and spatially uneven. Addressing these differences is essential if growth is to be broad-based, durable and politically credible.

Centre for Cities

Some cities already have strong economic fundamentals, including high skills levels and concentrations of high-value businesses, which support higher productivity and wages. Others face persistent constraints, with weaker skills bases, fewer high-productivity jobs and limited transport connectivity. These contrasts within urban Britain help explain why national growth has so often failed to translate into rising living standards.

Cities also illustrate the potential for policy to shift these trajectories. Where investment has been sustained in transport, housing, skills and regeneration, city economies have strengthened and access to opportunity has widened. This experience reinforces a core lesson: growth can be shaped by policy, but only when economic growth is matched by interventions that enable residents to benefit from it. Growth without inclusion risks political backlash and redistribution without growth is fiscally and politically fragile.

Metro mayors are central to achieving this balance. Through devolved powers, they are shaping local growth strategies that integrate transport investment, housing delivery, skills provision, and business support. Control over transport networks allows them to expand effective labour markets. Growing influence over adult skills funding enables closer alignment with employer demand. Strategic approaches to housing and regeneration help prevent growth being constrained by rising costs and limited supply.

Metro mayors are also increasingly active in supporting cutting-edge businesses and sectors. By aligning skills systems, planning decisions and innovation assets such as universities and research institutions, they are creating conditions for high-growth businesses to start and scale locally. These place-based approaches complement the national industrial strategy by anchoring investment in local economies and linking it more directly to employment and wage outcomes. Extending these benefits across the country will depend on learning from metro mayors, particularly the importance of matching political geography to economic geography in future devolution deals.

As the Prime Minister said in his New Year message, 2026 needs to be the year that 'politics shows it can help again'. With national and local policy frameworks now established, the focus must shift decisively from announcement to impact, and from managing pressures to generating growth that lasts.

The test at the end of 2026 will be whether these reforms are beginning to deliver more jobs, higher wages, and stronger local economies in more places across the country.

Chapter 2 examines the relationship between economic growth and living standards across UK cities over the last decade, highlighting the places where growth has translated into higher household incomes, and where it has not.

02

For prosperity

How to raise living standards across urban Britain

For prosperity: How to raise living standards across urban Britain

The Government wants to raise living standards 'everywhere'. Doing so requires understanding what drives differences across the country.

Urban Britain should be the starting point for any government looking to lift standards of living across the country. Cities contain the majority of the country's population (54 per cent) and its economy (63 per cent of all Gross Value Added (GVA) output). National economic goals cannot be achieved without thinking about them.

Standards of living will be assessed on the basis of **disposable income**, the Government's chosen measure.[1] This is the amount each person receives from all income sources and after taxes and transfers – the money they can directly spend (or save) to raise their material standard of living.

Different places offer different benefits to people and businesses. But the Government's commitment to raise living standards 'everywhere' is a response to wide gaps in disposable incomes across the country.

A stark North/South divide sees higher living standards concentrated mostly in cities in the Greater South East (**Figure 1**). On average London residents (£27,200 per person) have almost twice the disposable income (before housing costs) than residents of Blackburn (£15,200 per person).[2]

1 HM Government (2024), Plan for Change: Milestones for mission-led government, HMSO.

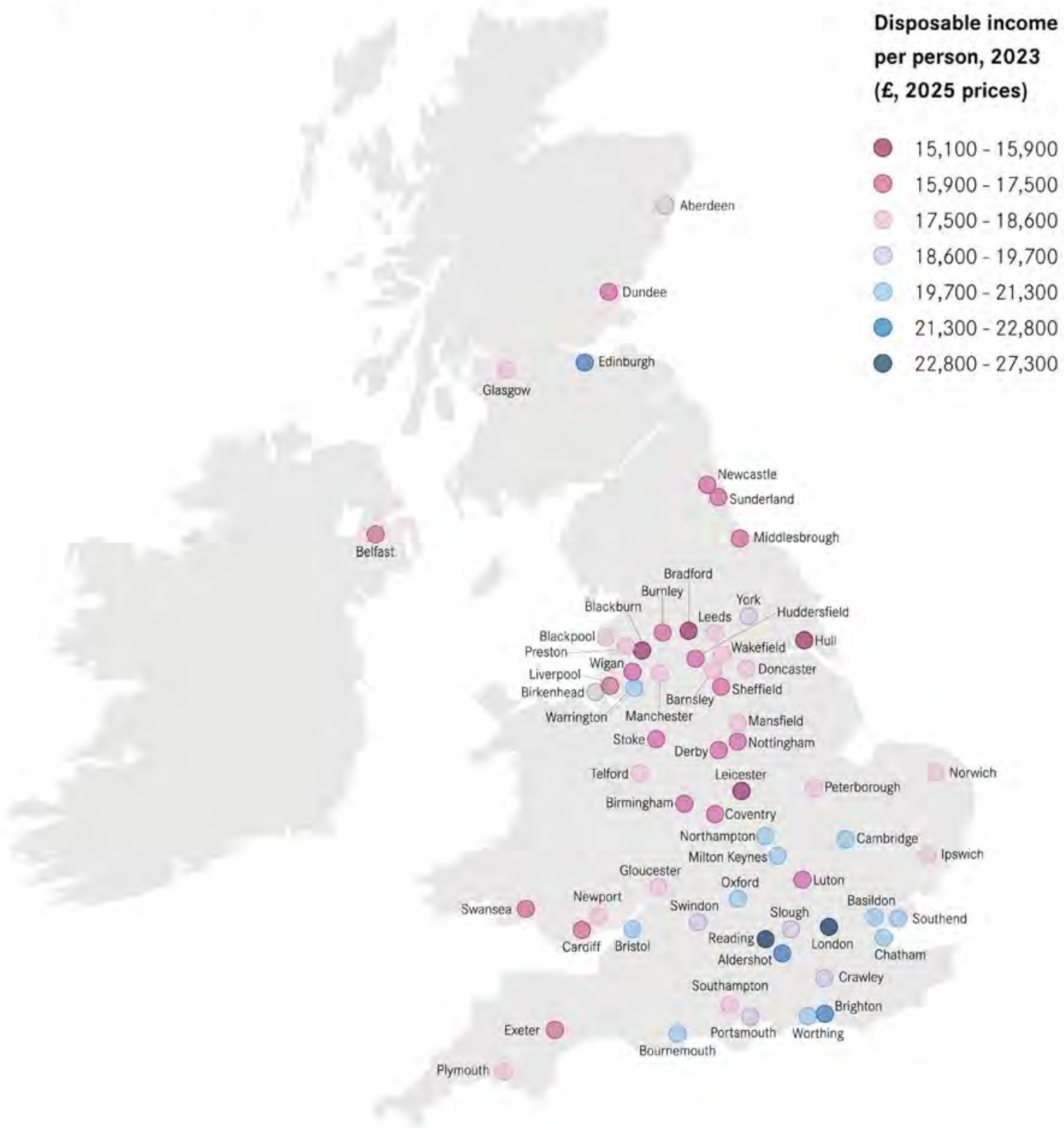
2 Disposable income is measured by Gross Domestic Household Income (GDHI) per person, adjusted to match income flows in cash terms as closely as possible to better capture living standards. This means GDHI values differ slightly from reported ONS values. Adjustment methodology set out in: Judge L & McCurdy C (2022), Income Outcomes: assessing income gaps between places across the UK, The Economy 2030 Inquiry.

Box 1: Defining cities

Centre for Cities research focuses on the UK's 63 largest cities and towns, defined as primary urban areas (PUAs). Unless otherwise stated, Centre for Cities uses data for PUAs in its analysis – a measure of the 'built-up' area of a large city or town, rather than individual local authority areas. You can find the full definitions and a methodological note at www.centreforcities.org/puas.

Figure 1: Disposable income is higher in cities in the Greater South East than in the rest of the UK

The geography of disposable income across UK cities



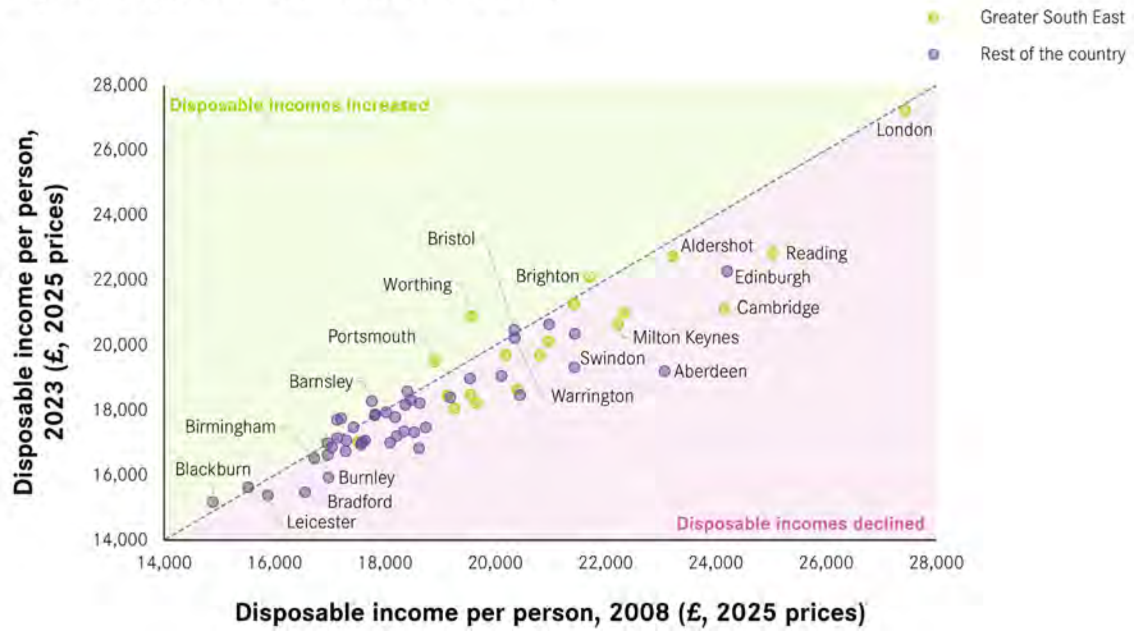
Source: ONS • Notes: Disposable income per person adjusts GDHI using methodology in Judge & McCurdy (2022)

This geography is much the same as it was on the eve of the global financial crisis. Greater South East cities today have disposable incomes about 40 per cent higher than cities in the rest of the UK – almost exactly the same gap as in 2008.[3]

It is no secret that most voters in Britain are dissatisfied with the state of the economy.[4] This is because in most places disposable incomes have barely changed in real terms since 2008, and in many places they have *declined* (**Figure 2**). These declines do *not* mirror the North/South divide, with cities in the Greater South East (e.g., Reading, Cambridge, Basildon) and the rest of the UK (e.g., Leicester, Aberdeen, Burnley) experiencing falling living standards.

Figure 2: Real disposable income has declined in most cities since the eve of the financial crisis

City real disposable income, 2008 and 2023



Source: ONS • Notes: Disposable income per person adjusts GDHI using methodology in Judge & McCurdy (2022).

Two further implications follow from **Figure 2**. First, some of the biggest squeezes have been in affluent cities, but these places continue to have higher living standards compared to the rest of urban Britain. Second, a few cities – such as Barnsley and Brighton – have bucked the trend and have seen disposable incomes increase.

Understanding both **what more affluent cities have** and **what improving cities are doing** is important if the Government is to raise living standards everywhere.

3 The gap was 39 per cent in 2008 versus 41 per cent in 2023. The gap narrowed to around 35 per cent at the beginning of the 2010s, because Greater South East cities saw larger falls in disposable income than those in the rest of the country.

4 Smith M (2026), Britons and the cost of living, January 2026, YouGov [Accessed January 2026]

Only rising incomes can tackle persistent deprivation

The commitment to increase living standards is not just about 'everywhere' (between places). The Government has also pledged that these increases must be 'felt by everyone' (within places).

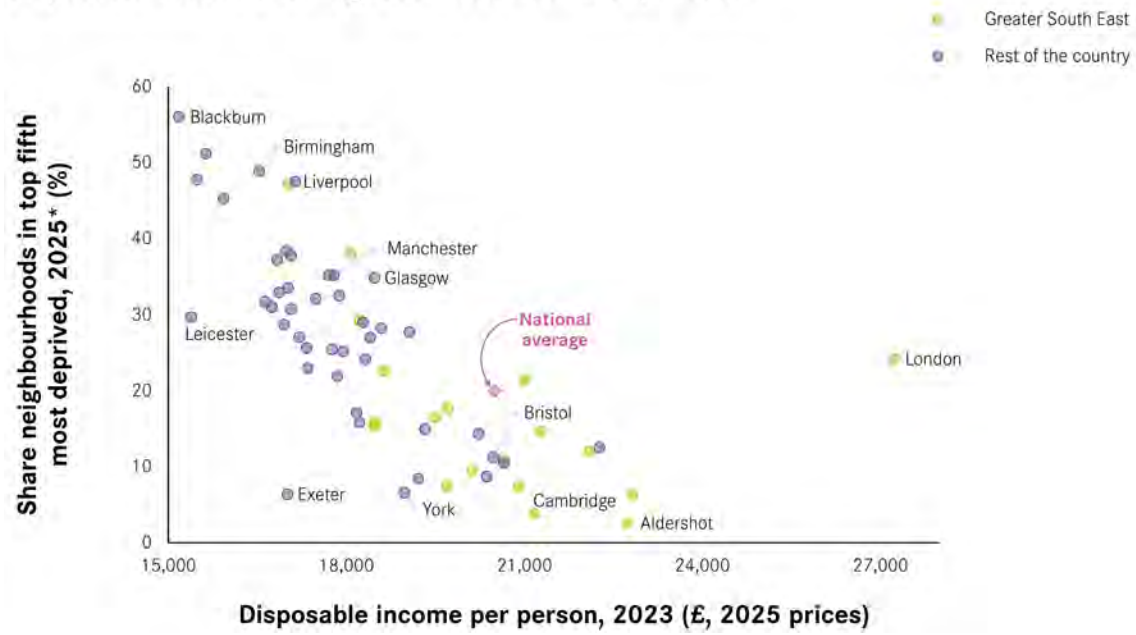
In most parts of urban Britain these goals are one and the same. As **Figure 3** shows, the average disposable income of a place is a good predictor of the share of local neighbourhoods facing the strongest pressures on their material standard of living, as set out in the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).[5]

In Blackburn, the city with the lowest disposable income per head, the majority of neighbourhoods – 56 per cent – are among the most income deprived in the country. In affluent Aldershot, the figure is less than 3 per cent.

The challenge faced by cities with high levels of income deprivation is not local inequality but the fact that there are low levels of income across the urban area. If the local economic pie is small, then even equal slices will be small too.

Figure 3: Lower living standards mean higher local deprivation

Disposable income and neighbourhood income deprivation



Source: IMD 2025, WIMD 2025, SIMD 2020. • Notes: Disposable income per person adjusts GDHI using methodology in Judge & McCurdy (2022). Deprivation measure shows proportion of LSOAs within each PUA which are in the top 20 per cent of most income deprived neighbourhoods in each constituent country by ranking. Belfast not included. *Data for Scotland from 2020 (latest IMD available).

5 These are the 2025 releases for England and Wales, and the 2020 release for Scotland. All reference to deprivation in this report is based on the income deprivation domain in the IMD, rather than the headline composite index. References to most (least) income deprived means a neighbourhood is more (less) deprived than at least 80 per cent of all other neighbourhoods in the country.

This means the 'everywhere' and 'everyone' parts of the living standards mission are equivalent for most places. With a few exceptions – most notably London – lifting the poorest residents out of income deprivation (moving down in **Figure 3**) in each place requires raising incomes in aggregate (moving to the right).

What makes tackling income deprivation such a challenging problem is its persistence. Across the UK, 80 per cent of the most income deprived postcodes in 2010 were still in this position in 2025.

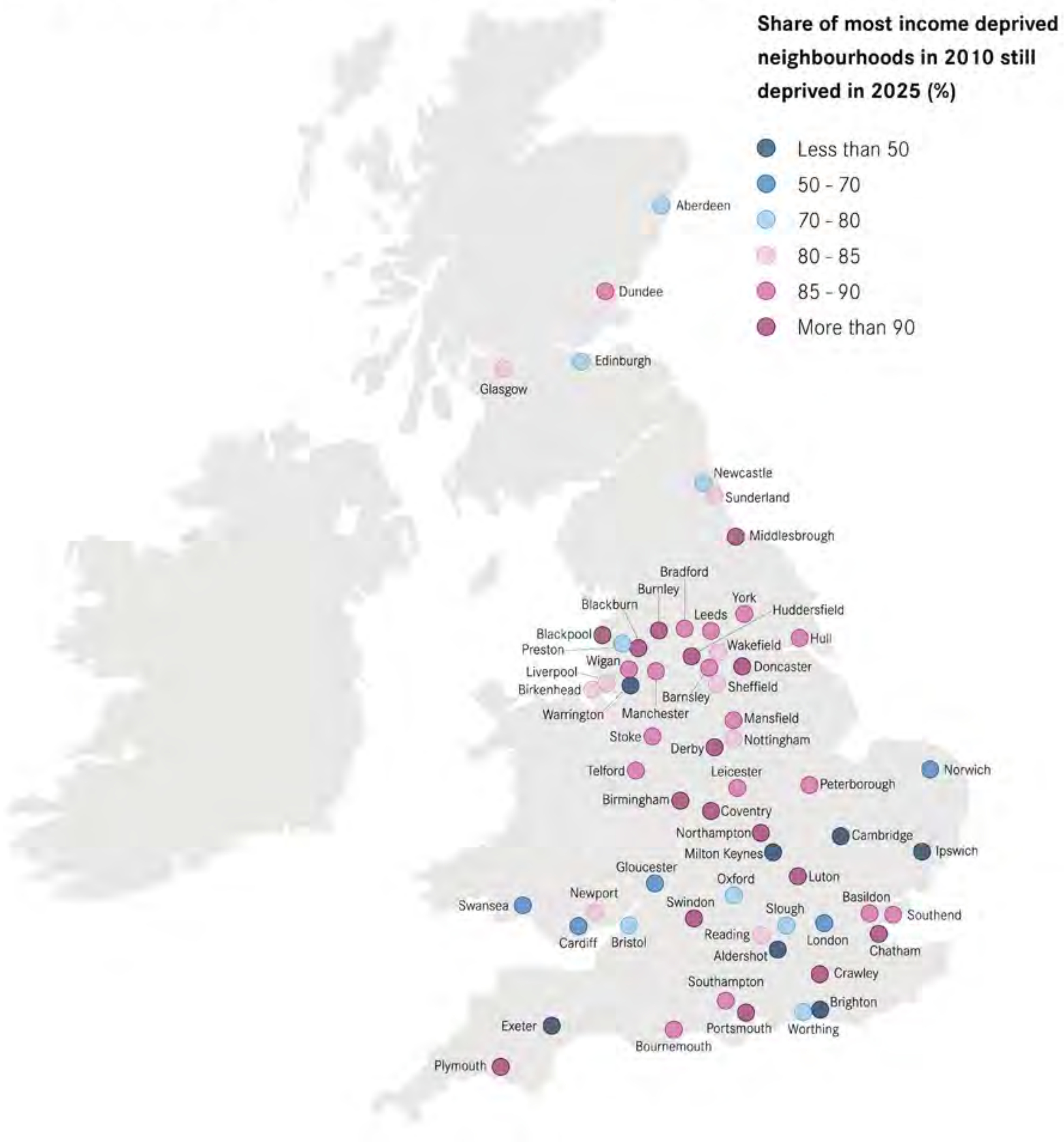
In some places persistence is even greater. In 16 British cities, that figure rises to more than 90 per cent (**Figure 4**). In Burnley and Blackburn, not a single income deprived neighbourhood in 2010 had escaped that status by 2025. Despite a decade of political turmoil, the major issue facing much of the country is too little economic change rather than too much.

There are cities that buck the trend. In places like Warrington, Brighton, and Milton Keynes more than half of their most income deprived postcodes in 2010 are no longer in the bottom fifth of neighbourhoods nationally in 2025.

What these cities show is that reducing deprivation is a difficult but not an impossible challenge. Urban Britain can address concentrated pockets of deprivation, but doing so at scale across the country requires overall living standards to rise.

Figure 4: In two thirds of cities, more than 80 per cent of neighbourhoods that were income deprived in 2010 were still income deprived in 2025

The geography of income deprivation persistence in UK cities



Source: IMD 2010 & 2025, WIMD 2011 & 2025, SIMD 2009 & 2020, ONSPD. • Notes: Shows proportion of LSOAs within each PUA which are in the top 20 per cent of most income deprived neighbourhoods in each constituent country by ranking. Persistence is measured by taking all current postcodes and matching them to neighbourhood income deprivation levels from 2010* and 2025** IMDs, then calculating the share of most deprived postcodes in 2010 (bottom fifth by ranking) that are still most deprived today. Northern Ireland not included. *Data for Scotland from 2009, data for Wales from 2011. **Data for Scotland from 2020 (latest IMD available).

Growth needs to be reconnected to living standards

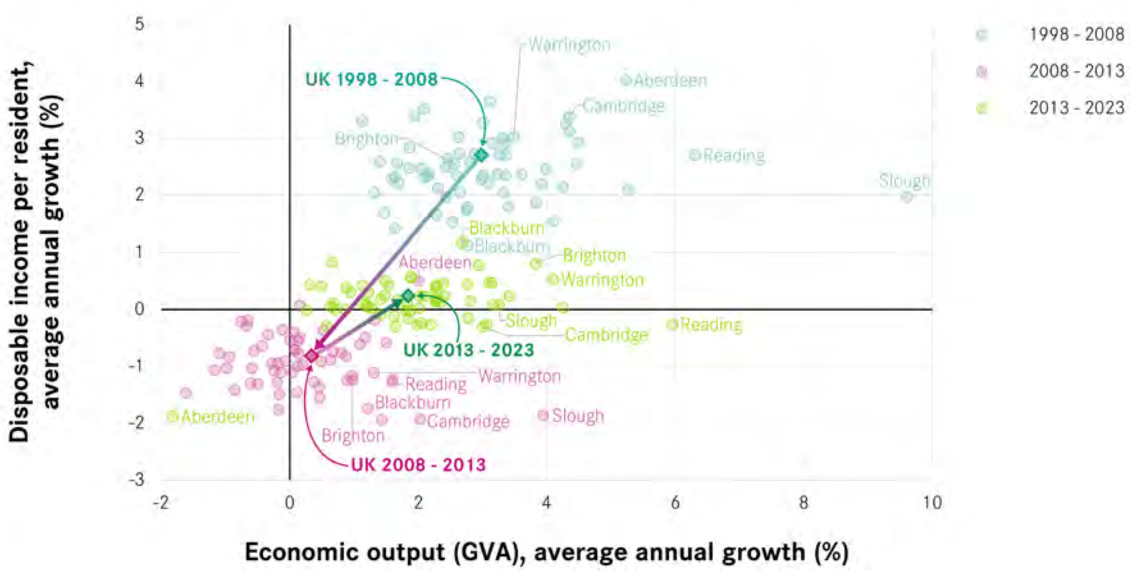
Raising living standards ‘everywhere’ on a scale that it is ‘felt by everyone’ means every person getting a larger slice of the economic pie. This is not possible without economic growth – the pie must get bigger.

But a sluggish recovery from the financial crisis has meant the relationship between economic growth and living standards has broken down in many places over the past decade. **Figure 5** shows how disposable income growth in urban Britain has tracked economic growth over three distinct periods in the past 25 years.

The period 1998-2008 saw increasing prosperity across urban Britain: every city saw average economic growth and disposable income growth of at least 1 per cent per year (the blue dots in **Figure 5**). For example, Cambridge experienced healthy average annual economic growth of 4.4 per cent, and 3.4 per cent average annual disposable income growth over this decade.

Figure 5: Economic growth is necessary, but not sufficient, for raising living standards in UK cities

Output and living standards growth over a quarter of a century



Source: ONS • Notes: Disposable income per person adjusts GDHI using methodology in Judge & McCurdy (2022). Real growth for both indicators presented.

The global financial crisis and its aftermath brought this to a halt. Between 2008 and 2013 (the pink dots), economic growth was low (or even negative) and disposable incomes declined in almost every city. Cambridge’s economic growth rate in this period was no faster than its population growth, and average disposable incomes fell by -1.9 per cent per year on average.

Since 2013 (the green dots), two things stand out. First, there has been some economic growth in almost all places, though mostly below the 1998-2008 trend.[6] But only 13 cities have seen stronger economic performance in the more recent period.

Second, living standards growth in urban Britain has not recovered. Annual increases in disposable incomes for most places have hovered around zero. Cambridge is a case in point: its annual economic growth rate recovered to 3.4 per cent, but average disposable incomes continued to shrink by -0.3 per cent a year.

Figure 5 shows that economic growth is necessary for sustained rises in living standards across the country, but it is not sufficient. The average urban resident saw their disposable income after inflation rise just 2.4 per cent over 2013-2023 in a period of slower economic growth, compared to 27 per cent over 1998-2008 when growth was faster.

Economic growth and rising living standards have been disconnected. As the ‘cost of living crisis’ continues to dominate the public’s understanding of the British economy, reconnecting higher economic growth to living standards must be at the heart of economic policy if voters are to feel and see change in their communities.

Cities that have achieved greater prosperity are the model for the country

In all this there are lessons to be learned from the cities that have ‘bounced back’ from the financial crisis.

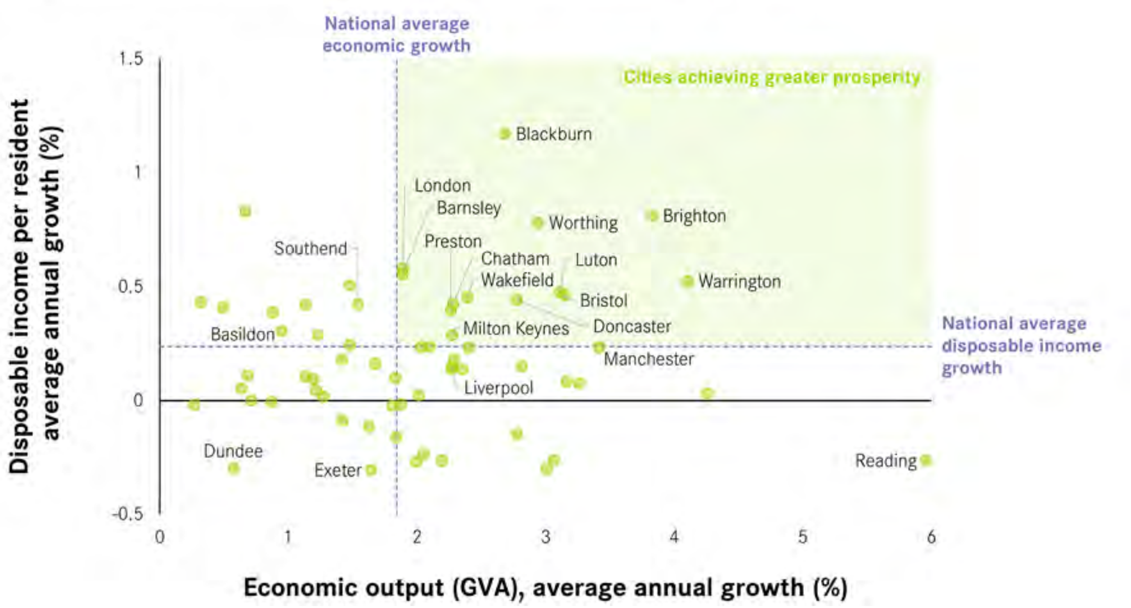
These cities in the top right of **Figure 6** have seen **above-average disposable income growth and economic growth** since 2013 – real growth in living standards based on a stronger local economy, defined as **greater prosperity.**[7] If the ‘good growth’ that these cities have achieved can be replicated and scaled across the country, then greater prosperity should be felt by more places and people than is the case today.

6 Excluding Aberdeen, which has faced a serious negative oil shock. Selby, O. (2024), Aberdeen’s lost decade: What went wrong? Centre for Cities.

7 This definition captures ‘sustainable’ increases in living standards. For instance, Southend and Basildon have seen above-average disposable income growth but below-average GVA growth. These cities are not considered to have increased their prosperity over the period as their income growth has been in spite of the performance of their local economy – this growth in living standards has been far more to do with the fortunes of London.

Figure 6: Cities in the top right quadrant have achieved greater prosperity in their recovery from the financial crisis

City growth 2013-2023: output and living standards (per person)



Source: ONS • Notes: Aberdeen removed from chart as an extreme outlier (see **Figure 5**).

What these places show is that prosperity today does not necessarily decide prosperity tomorrow. Cities as varied as Barnsley, Brighton, and Warrington have led the country in improving local prosperity. Even taking into account that some cities started from a very low base in 2013 (such as Blackburn and Luton),[8] the success stories of the past decade have not been an exclusive group of mostly affluent cities in the Greater South East.

Emulating these cities requires a **focus on the ingredients that lead to greater local prosperity.**

Prosperity starts with a strong local economy

A productive business base is key for raising local living standards

The recipe for local prosperity starts with a strong business base. This means having a significant number of productive firms in 'tradeable' industries that sell to markets outside the local area (e.g., software, marketing, manufacturing) and bring in income from elsewhere, putting money in residents' pockets to spend on local services (e.g., retail, hospitality, entertainment).[9]

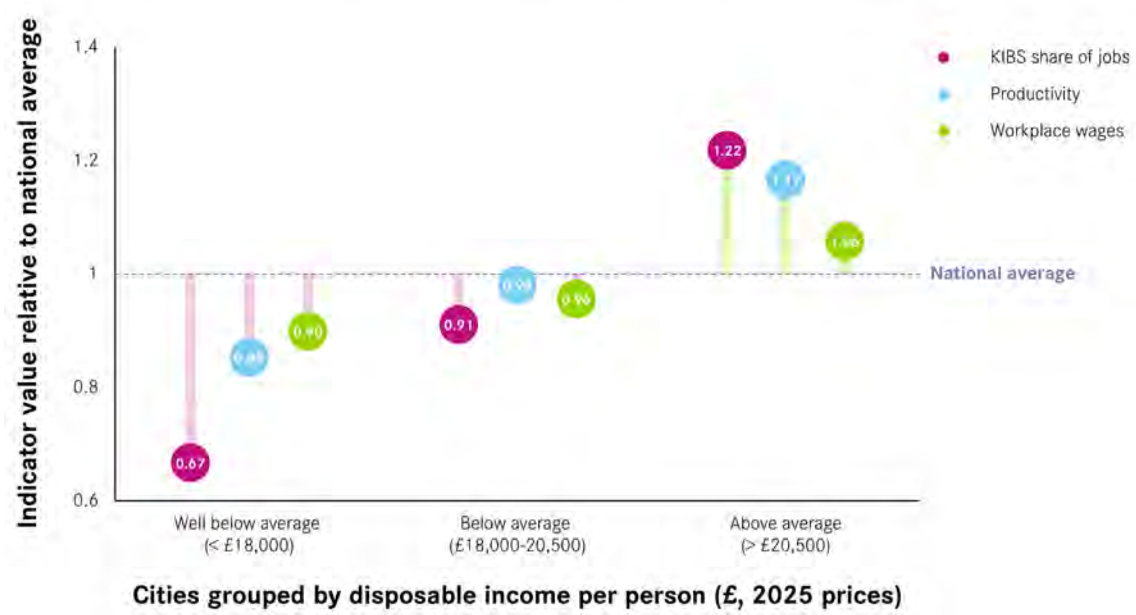
8 In 2013, Luton and Blackburn were the cities with (by far) the lowest incomes in the Greater South East and the Rest of the UK respectively.

9 Centre for Cities (2025), Cities Outlook 2025, Centre for Cities, Chapter 2.

Figure 7 shows that cities with above-average levels of disposable income outperform the national average on three indicators of local economic strength – share of jobs in Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS), productivity (GVA per hour), and average workplace wages.

Figure 7: Cities with stronger economies have higher living standards

Economic performance indicators and disposable income relative to UK average



Source: ONS • Notes: Indicators are simple averages across cities in each group relative to the national figure. All data from latest year available: 2023 (disposable income, productivity) and 2024 (KIBS, wages).

These indicators capture the translation of economic performance into higher living standards:

- **Knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS)** are high-skilled jobs in industries such as software, marketing, and finance, where worker knowledge and capability (rather than materials or machinery) are the main 'input'.
- **More KIBS means more productive local economies.** 'Productivity' is the economic value (GVA) an hour of work adds to the economy. KIBS jobs often involve more complex activities and specialised knowledge, meaning they produce more economic value in a given hour of work than more routine roles.
- **Higher productivity means higher workplace wages.** KIBS workers in higher productivity cities produce more value, which means they earn more. This results in more money spent locally, increasing the entire city's material standard of living.

As an illustration, compare two similarly sized cities: Bradford (£15,500 disposable income per resident, well below the UK average) and Edinburgh (£22,300, comfortably above). While the Scottish capital has almost one in four of its jobs in KIBS (including strengths in financial services), in Bradford it is fewer than one in ten. This is reflected in productivity too – workers in Edinburgh produce 75 per cent more in terms of economic value than the average worker in Bradford. This means average Edinburgh wages are almost £12,000 higher than in Bradford.

KIBS are a small part of the national economy, at around 15 per cent of all jobs. But they play an outsized role in shaping national and local productivity performance and are at the heart of the 'IS-8' sectors identified in the Government's industrial strategy – the high-wage, high-skilled sectors in which the UK has a global competitive advantage.[10]

For all cities, a strong local economy is the necessary first ingredient for residents to experience higher living standards. This means focusing on expanding the tradeable business base, particularly KIBS sectors.[11]

Barnsley is a good example of a place that has focused on improving its economic fundamentals over the past decade as a means to lift local incomes.

Case Study 1: Barnsley's economic strategy is helping everyone with a focus on higher-value tradeable jobs

Barnsley's almost 2 per cent annual economic growth has outpaced the UK average since 2013. Local disposable incomes have also risen at more than twice the national rate – the average Barnsley resident has £1,000 more in their pocket than a decade ago in real terms.

This strong performance has been helped by a proactive local authority. Focusing on the local economic base – Barnsley's M1 corridor location has seen it rise as a logistics hub – the council has opened up industrial land around motorway junctions ensuring this activity has space to grow.[12, 13] This has helped Barnsley successfully adapt its economy away from manufacturing and towards higher-value service sectors.[14] Since 2015 the city has added 6,000 more private service jobs, of which a third are in KIBS – far more than cities with similar starting points such as Huddersfield, Blackburn, Hull, and Sunderland.

Building on this performance, the council's latest economic strategy identifies future plans to keep Barnsley's economy growing.[15] The strategy demonstrates knowledge of current economic strengths but also the courage to use these strengths to diversify into other growing areas, rather than doubling down. It is a template for other cities looking to strengthen their local economy because:

- **It focuses on the tradeable base –** the strategy sets an explicit target to increase the share of jobs in tradeable sectors to more in line with the national average, with a focus on professional business services.
- **It commits to increase economic 'complexity'**, meaning building up specialist capabilities and knowledge to increase productivity and better allow adaptation to future innovative activities.[16] This includes recognition that while its current manufacturing base is 'tradeable', it is less specialised and so less productive than other industries. The strategy aims to use its supply chain to build more specialised industries around large cutting-edge employers in the region, such as Boeing and Rolls-Royce.
- **It identifies what Barnsley does not have.** Instead of going all in on existing strengths – some of which are vulnerable to automation – the council aims to diversify the local economy. The planned city centre SEAM Digital Campus aims to build new capabilities in tech, while a key priority is to use the city's logistics base to attract a wider set of ancillary professional services.
- **It focuses on the city centre.** A strategic objective is to use the city centre's designation as a 'growth area' in the South Yorkshire Combined Authority's Plan for Good Growth to attract office-based KIBS firms. This alongside the SEAM development will help the ongoing regeneration of the city centre.[17]

Increasing access to economic opportunities means focusing on employment and skills

For higher living standards to be widely shared across urban areas, people must be able to access the local economy. The most direct way to access this is through a job – participating in the local labour market.

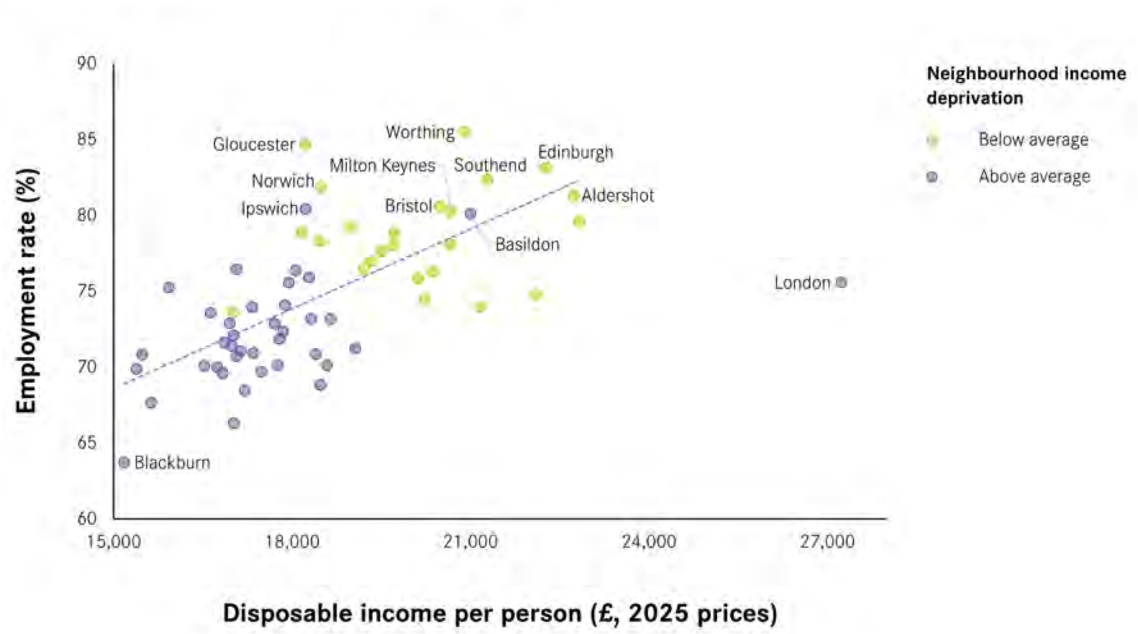
Cities with higher employment rates have higher disposable incomes (**Figure 8**). Worthing is the city with the highest employment rate (86 per cent) and disposable incomes above the national average (£20,900 per person). This compares to Blackburn which has the lowest employment rate (64 per cent) and the lowest disposable incomes (£15,200 per person on average) of all British cities.

Labour market participation impacts local income deprivation too. In Worthing, just 8 per cent of neighbourhoods are among the most income deprived in the country, compared to 56 per cent in Blackburn.

10 DBT (2024), Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy, HMSO.
11 Centre for Cities (2025), Cities Outlook 2025, Centre for Cities, Chapter 2.
12 For example: Parcel firm's expansion to create up to 300 jobs, BBC News, 29 September 2025
13 This has allowed commercial projects such as Nexus Park (completed in 2019), as well future commercial developments of Kestrel Park and Barnsley West.
14 Resolution Foundation, Centre for Economic Performance & LSE (2023), Ending Stagnation: A New Economic Strategy for Britain, Resolution Foundation.
15 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (2024), Barnsley Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy 2025-30.
16 Rodrigues G & Breach A (2021), What levelling up really means: changing the geography of knowledge, Centre for Cities.
17 How a Tuscan vision saved a mining town from 'the brink of disaster', BBC News, 28 December 2025.

Figure 8: More people in work means higher disposable incomes and less deprivation

Disposable income and employment rate



Source: ONS, IMD, SIMD, WIMD. • Notes: Disposable income per person adjusts GDHI using methodology in Judge & McCurdy (2022). No employment rate data for Belfast. London excluded from linear trendline. Above national average deprivation means more than 20 per cent of city neighbourhoods are in the top 20 per cent most income deprived nationally.

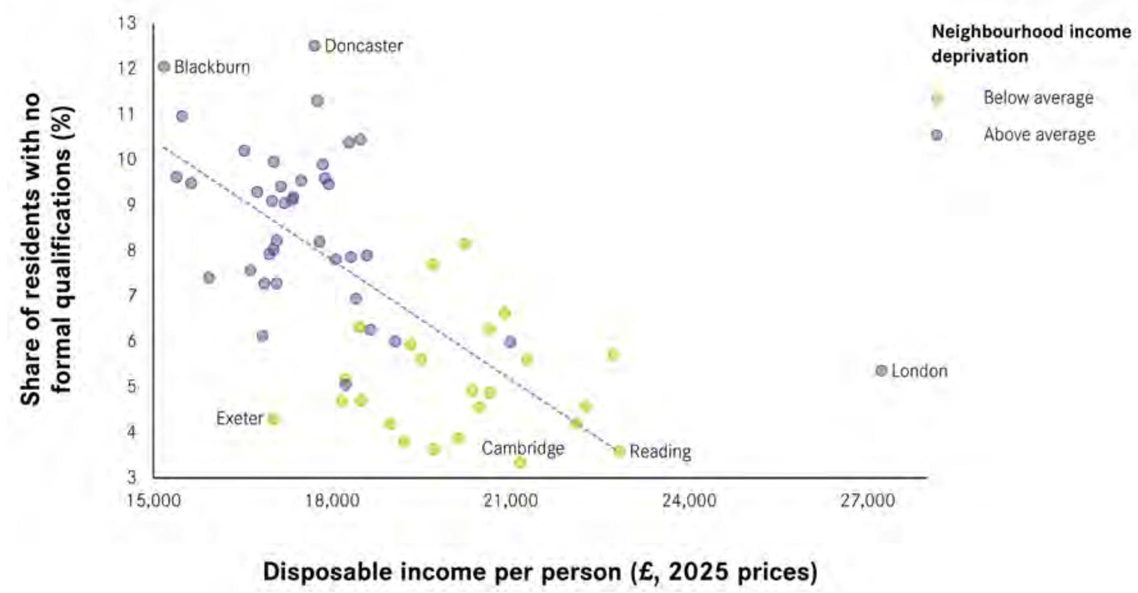
To participate, people need the skills to access local jobs. Places with fewer residents with no formal qualifications have higher incomes and less deprivation (**Figure 9**).

All but 4 per cent of Reading's residents have GCSE-level qualifications or above, while the city's average disposable income of £22,800 (£2,300 above the national average) is second only to London. Just 6 per cent of its neighbourhoods are among Britain's most income deprived.

In Doncaster, where average disposable incomes are £5,000 lower than in Reading and a third of neighbourhoods are highly income deprived, one in eight residents (13 per cent) lack GCSE-level qualifications.

Figure 9: Cities with fewer low-skilled residents have higher living standards

Disposable income and no formal qualifications



Source: ONS, IMD, SIMD, WIMD. • Notes: Disposable income per person adjusts GDHI using methodology in Judge & McCurdy (2022). Share of population with no formal qualifications is the average of 2022-2024 estimates to account for fluctuations in data. London excluded from linear trendline. Above national average deprivation means more than 20 per cent of city neighbourhoods are in the top 20 per cent most income deprived nationally. No deprivation data for Belfast.

Supporting people into work and in-work progression is a key ingredient for cities that want to share the proceeds of their local economy more widely among residents.

Liverpool City Region serves as an example of how devolved funds and targeted local initiatives can come together to improve participation and skills development in the local economy.

Case Study 2: Liverpool City Region has taken a targeted approach to increase economic participation

In 2013, Liverpool had the lowest employment rate (61 per cent) of any UK city. Today – at 71 per cent – it is far closer to the UK average. This rise has been twice the urban average. At the same time, the share of its residents with no formal qualifications has halved from 15 per cent in 2013 to below 8 per cent in 2024 (only outperformed by Coventry). Over this period, it has seen the greatest reduction in neighbourhood income deprivation of any city, with the share of neighbourhoods in the most income deprived in the country falling nine percentage points between 2010 and 2025 (from 57 to 48 per cent).

Targeted interventions on skills and employment have been enabled by central government funding, such as the City Region receiving £50 million annually from the

Adult Skills Fund (devolved to Combined Authorities in 2019 to strengthen the link between local skills provision and employment opportunities).[18] Liverpool was able to use funds to progress recommendations from an earlier review of post-16 education skills provision in the City Region, highlighting the importance of policy continuity in this area.[19]

By 2025 these initiatives – supplemented by £16 million for Skills Bootcamps and free job courses – were helping 37,000 people annually (mainly from disadvantaged areas) to access adult education courses.[20]

Liverpool also has a focus on young people. The City Region is part of the national Youth Guarantee Trailblazers scheme. This supports the metro mayor's manifesto pledge of a Young Person's Guarantee – committing a job, training or apprenticeship place for every young person inactive for more than half a year – alongside targeted links between schools and employers through the City Region Careers Hub collaboration.[21]

In some places – particularly big cities – *physical* access to economic opportunities is an important missing ingredient. The inclusion benefits from improving transport, particularly public transport, is illustrated by the example of **Greater Manchester.**

Case Study 3: Greater Manchester is improving access to its city centre economy through transport

Transport is the wiring of local economies, connecting people to opportunities. But in big cities outside London, poor transport is a limiting factor to growing the local economy and higher living standards for more residents.[22]

Greater Manchester has been taking steps to address this since the 1990s by creating and expanding the Metrolink tram network. Over the last 15 years improving the local transport network has been a core component of the devolution programme. Since the formation of Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) in 2011 as part of the Combined Authority, investments have trebled Metrolink's network size and more than doubled passenger numbers (19.2 million in 2010 to 46 million in 2024).[23]

18 Originally devolved as Adult Education Budget, which was replaced by the Adult Skills Fund in 2024 with a greater employment focus.

19 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, (2018), Skills Strategy: 2018 - 2023.

20 'Thousands to benefit as Liverpool City Region invests £68m in skills and training', Liverpool City Region Press Release, 4 March 2025.

21 Liverpool City Region Careers Hub, (2026), The Careers & Enterprise Company: About Us [Accessed January 2026].

22 Stansbury A, Turner D and Balls E (2023), Tackling the UK's regional economic inequality: binding constraints and avenues for policy intervention, Contemporary Social Science, 18, 318 - 356.

23 DfT (2025), Light rail and tram statistics, England: year ending March 2025, HMSO. Figures for 2010 are April 2010 to March 2011; for 2024 are April 2024 to March 2025.

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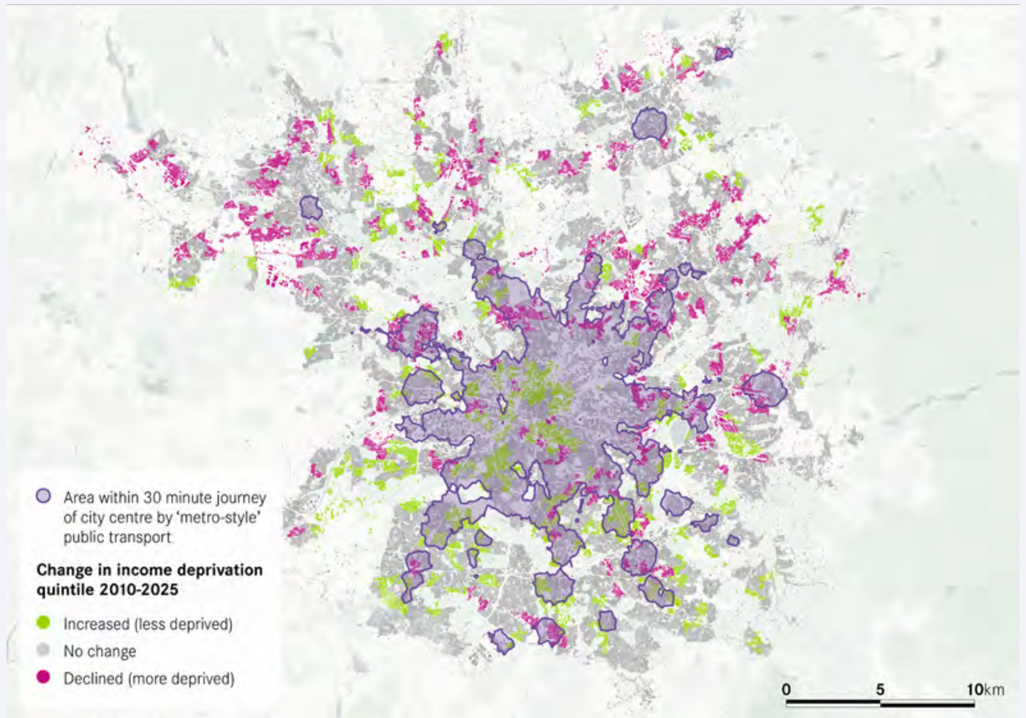
These urban transport upgrades have allowed Manchester's city centre economy to expand. In 2015, less than a third of city centre jobs were KIBS. Today Manchester city centre (with 40 per cent more jobs than a decade ago), has 42 per cent of jobs in KIBS, a share comparable to London.

The combined expansion of the transport network and the city centre economy has helped reduce neighbourhood-level deprivation. **Figure 10** shows the catchment area that can now easily reach the city centre in 30 minutes by public transport, and the neighbourhoods that have become more or less income deprived since 2010.[24] **Residents in this catchment are twice as likely to have seen material improvements in income deprivation** over this period.[25]

Figure 10: The better-connected south Manchester has seen more income deprivation improvements over the last 15 years

Manchester transport connectivity and changes in neighbourhood income deprivation



Source: IMD 2025; Centre for Cities' calculations. • Notes: For calculation of transport catchment area, see Johnson & Rollison (2025). Highlighted neighbourhoods are those that appeared in different income deprivation quintiles in the 2010 and 2025 IMDs.

24 Specifically, the area within a 30 minute journey by 'metro-style' public transport at peak times. For details, see: Johnson R & Rollison C (2025), Integrated transport: the size of the prize for mayors, Centre for Cities. Deprivation changes measured by whether area changed quintiles of income deprivation between the 2010 and 2025 IMDs. Changes are relative, based on national income deprivation rankings.

25 The share of current Manchester population in neighbourhoods that have experienced these improvements is twice as large for those in the well-connected area (21 per cent) than those outside (11 per cent). Residents inside the catchment are also less likely to have seen worsening neighbourhood deprivation (13 per cent) than outside (15 per cent).

> More improvements are planned. Bus franchising was completed in 2025 – the first place outside of London to do so – allowing integration of bus and tram into the Bee Network. Commuter rail services are next, with the first Bee Network services expected by the end of 2026.[26]
>
> This is a devolution success story. TfGM and the metro mayor have taken active steps to capitalise on Manchester's city centre resurgence by improving access to the heart of the city region's economy for its residents.

Successful places must remove growth constraints to reduce costs

For cities with high disposable incomes and strong economies, the additional ingredient for broad-based prosperity is to reduce the costs that often accompany economic success. Removing constraints around housing, commercial space, and 'underbounded' administrative boundaries is important to ensure the benefits these local economies offer are not consumed by high costs of living and doing business.

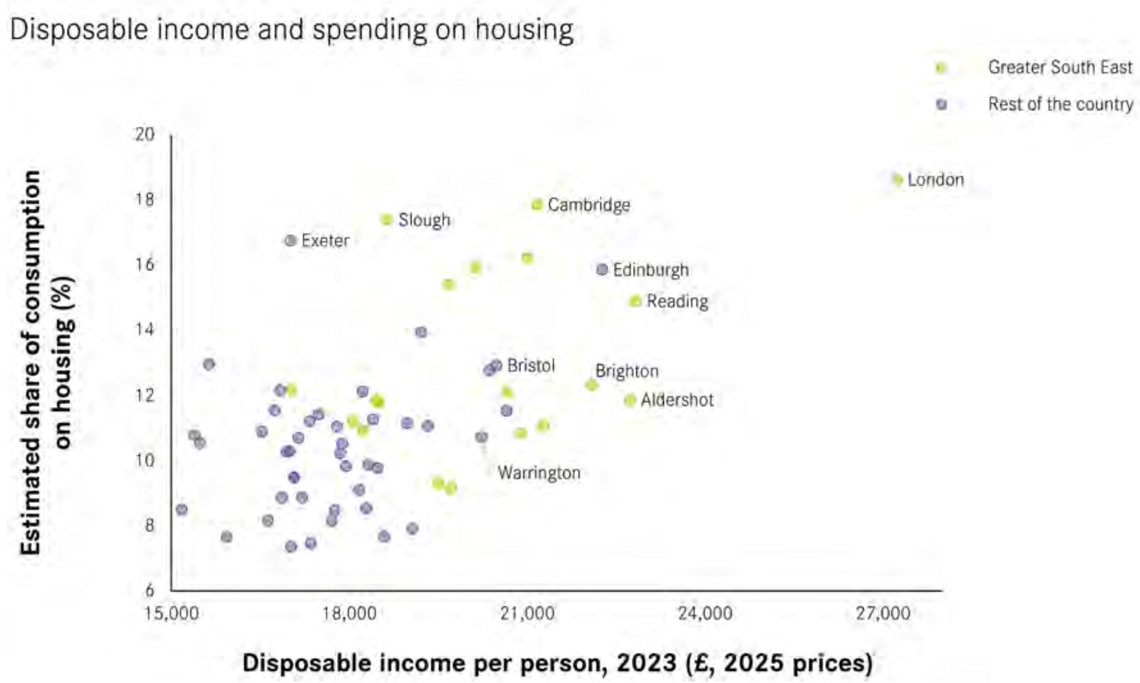
Housing is the prime example. Cities with strong economic performance and high disposable incomes will always have higher housing costs, reflecting greater demand.

But these costs can and do rise to an excessive level that harms living standards if not managed. Residents of high-income cities such as London and Cambridge spend more than 17 per cent of their outgoings on housing on average (**Figure 11**).[27] Many renting and young homeowning residents likely face significantly higher proportional costs.

26 TfGM (2025), On the Right Track for Growth: A 2050 vision for the future of rail in Greater Manchester. Transport for Greater Manchester.

27 Shares of consumption on housing estimates are based on estimates at local authority level (for 2018-2019) from: Levell P & Vyas G (2025): Which places have the highest standard of living? Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Figure 11: High housing costs impact living standards in high-income cities



Source: ONS, Centre for Cities' calculations based on Levell P & Vyas G (2025). • Notes: Estimated spending shares based on household consumption by local authority before and after housing, aggregated up to Centre for Cities' PUA geography (taking household-weighted averages across local authorities where necessary).

As housing is the biggest component of household budgets and an essential spend, variation in housing costs has a big effect on local living standards. An identical salary is likely to be felt differently in Cambridge (where an average of 18 per cent of spending goes to housing) than in Warrington (11 per cent), even if residents of Cambridge enjoy opportunities that are unavailable in Warrington.

More supply is the solution to high housing costs, but urban development is constrained by the UK's restrictive discretionary planning system. The uncertainty and case-by-case nature of the process disconnects local housing supply from demand. This also limits cities' economic potential, as fewer people can live and work locally, reducing the size of the urban labour market.

There is also the constraint of local government boundaries. Cities 'underbounded' by their current administrative borders (e.g., Oxford, Exeter, Norwich) are restricted in how they can grow because of the misalignment between local political and economic geography. This means land for new homes and commercial space on the outer fringe of the city is outside the control of the city's local government.

These constraints are evident in **Brighton** – a successful economy with further growth potential if local leaders are supported by national government.

Case study 4: Brighton's successful economy must be given an opportunity to grow

Since 2013 Brighton's economy has grown twice as fast as the national average. As a result, Brighton's residents have £1,700 more disposable income per year in real terms compared to a decade ago – 3.4 times more than the average British resident. Since 2010 the seaside city has reduced its share of neighbourhoods among the most income deprived (from 15 to 12 per cent) and doubled the share in the least income deprived (from 7 to 14 per cent).

Brighton had below-average productivity a decade ago but now finds itself in the top ten cities in the UK. This reflects its ability to attract productive businesses. It has the third largest concentration of 'new economy' firms of all British cities, only behind London and Cambridge, with a specialisation in the creative industries that has long been recognised by the local council.[28, 29]

But further progress is at risk due to high local housing costs. The average house price is 11 times the average annual salary in the city – making it less affordable than London and second only to Oxford – as average house prices have increased almost 50 per cent since 2013. This is because housing supply does not match demand, increasing just 6.4 per cent over the decade, below the national average (8.4 per cent).

As a result, despite the strength of its economy, only five other cities have had slower population growth than Brighton over the past decade. Brighton is emblematic of the constraining effect of the English planning system – restricting the growth of an otherwise successful economy limits the city's ability to further improve the living standards of its population.[30]

Brighton is also an example of how the misalignment of local government boundaries with economic geography restricts the ability to respond to demand. The city council is 'underbounded', meaning that much of the greenfield land in the immediate vicinity of the city is under the control of different authorities. This further severs the link between supply and demand in the local housing market, as the discretionary planning system is so restrictive on brownfield land that urban expansion onto greenfield is at present the only way to build homes at scale.[31]

Brighton and Sussex's status as a Devolution Priority Programme area is a real opportunity to correct this, but the new map will require a close match between political and economic geography.[32]

28 New economy firms are companies in emerging knowledge-intensive sectors at the forefront of new technologies and innovations, identified using The Data City's Real Time Industrial Classifications (RTICs). See: Rodrigues G, Vera O & Swinney P (2022), At the frontier: the geography of the UK's new economy, Centre for Cities.

29 Greater Brighton Economic Board (2025), Unleashing potential: a creative industries vision for Greater Brighton and Coastal West Sussex, GBEB.

30 See Bristol as a similar example of a successful local economy constrained by local planning restrictions: Selby, O (2024), Ship shape? How the planning system is holding back Bristol's economy. Centre for Cities.

31 Breach, A (2024), Restarting housebuilding I: Planning reform and the private sector, Centre for Cities; Lange M, Breach A, and Kovacevic, L (2025), Flat Britain: The urban density gap and how to close it, Centre for Cities.

Achieving greater prosperity in more cities would raise national living standards

The cities identified in the top right quadrant of **Figure 6** – those that achieved greater prosperity by outperforming the national average in both economic and disposable income growth in the recovery after the global financial crisis – are set out in **Table 1**.

These strong performers had different starting points in 2013, from first-ranked London to Barnsley and Doncaster in the bottom third of cities for disposable incomes. This is important: a city's starting position does not preclude it from getting the ingredients right and increasing prosperity for its residents.

Table 1: Cities that have achieved greater prosperity since the financial crisis

City	Real disposable income per person growth 2013-2023 (%)	Real economic output growth 2013-2023 (%)	Disposable income per person: Rank of all 63 cities in 2013 (rank in 2023)
Brighton	8.1	38.3	8th (5th)
Worthing	7.8	29.4	17th (9th)
London	5.8	18.9	1st (1st)
Barnsley	5.6	18.9	41st (30th)
Warrington	5.3	41.0	19th (14th)
Bristol	4.6	31.4	15th (12th)
Wakefield	4.6	23.9	36th (29th)
Doncaster	4.4	27.8	48th (40th)
Chatham	4.3	22.8	22nd (16th)
Preston	4.0	22.6	37th (33rd)
Milton Keynes	2.9	22.7	11th (10th)
National average	2.4	18.4	

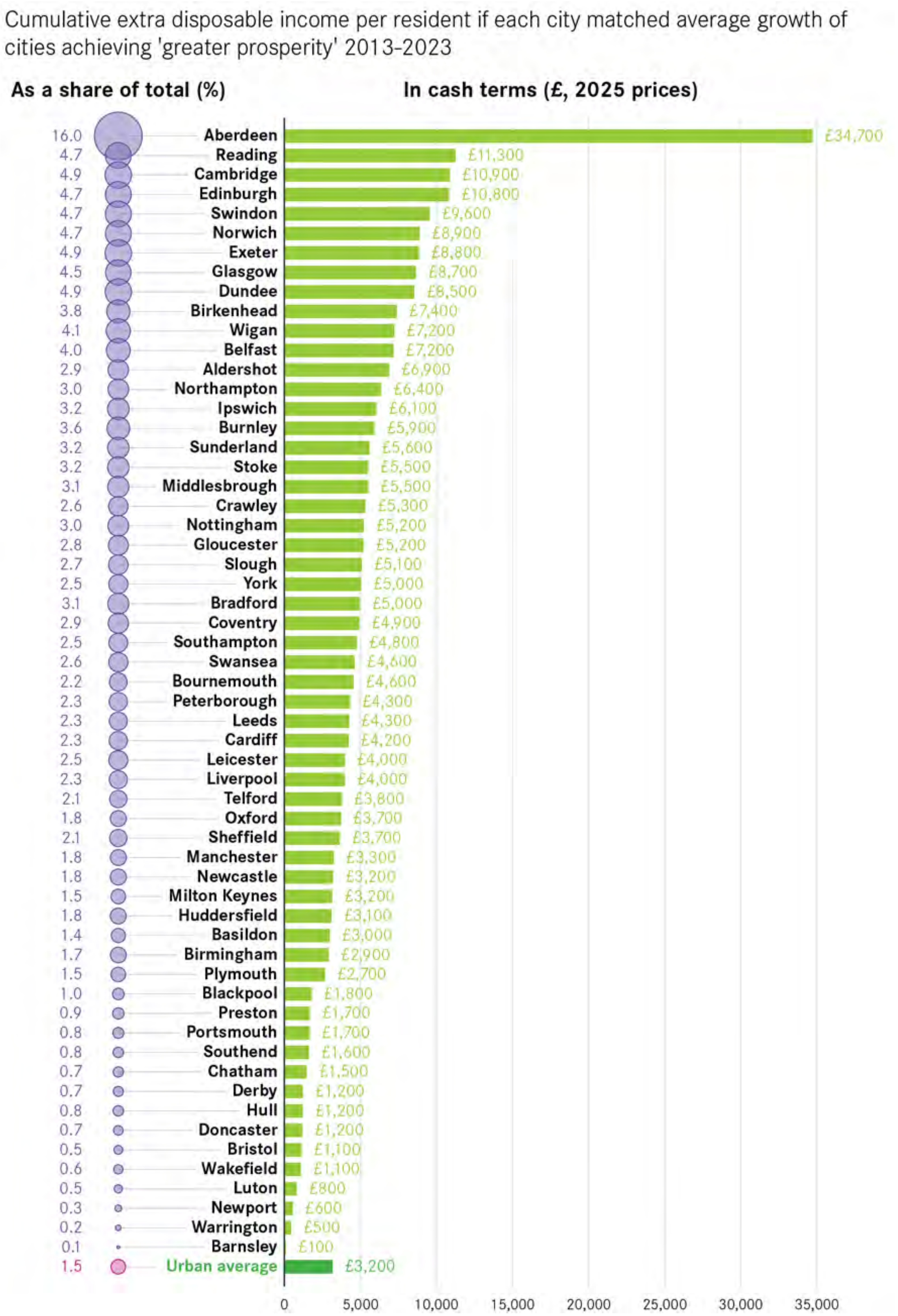
Source: ONS • Notes: Blackburn and Luton also outpaced the national average in economic and income growth over the period but are not included due to starting from unusually low bases in 2013 (see Footnote 8).

If the average performance of these 11 cities had been achieved everywhere over this period, in output terms the UK economy would be 4 per cent larger today. And if all cities had matched the average disposable income growth of these places that had increased prosperity from 2013 to 2023, the typical urban resident would cumulatively have £3,200 more in their pockets.

Figure 12 sets out the variation in potential impact across the country.

32 See Centre for Cities' proposal for reorganisation in Sussex: Breach A (2025), Priority Growth: How to reorganise local government in 2026, Centre for Cities.

Figure 12: Each urban resident would have seen £3,200 more in disposable income over a decade if they had matched the performance of the most prosperous cities



Source: ONS, Centre for Cities' calculations. • Notes: Blackburn, Brighton, London, Mansfield, and Worthing not included as cities saw disposable income growth higher than the average of cities achieving 'greater prosperity'.

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For Reading, Cambridge, and Edinburgh – where strong economic growth did not translate into increases in disposable income – achieving greater prosperity over this decade would be equivalent to all residents getting an extra £11,000, an amount only beaten by Aberdeen (an extreme outlier driven by exposure to oil and gas).[33]

There would also be large relative impacts for places with lower incomes, such as Dundee (a 4.9 per cent boost in disposable income over the period), Wigan (4.1 per cent), and Birkenhead (3.8 per cent).

What this means for the Government's living standards mission in 2026 and beyond

Raising living standards across the country is the Government's number one economic mission. 2026 has seen a renewed focus on tackling the cost of living, with pledges to alleviate the greatest pressures by the end of the year.

By focusing on tinkering with the symptoms, the Government runs the risk of losing sight of the cause. **The problem underpinning cost of living pressures, stagnant incomes, and persistent deprivation is the lack of economic growth.** Redistributing slices of the existing pie will not achieve increases in standards of living 'felt by everyone, everywhere'. Growing the pie is the only way forward.

But what does 'good growth' look like in concrete terms? Alongside the other case studies, **Warrington** serves as a sketch of what places could do to achieve greater prosperity in the future. Focusing on its economic fundamentals has meant Warrington has been better placed than most to raise living standards across its urban area.

Case study 5: Warrington means business – what other places and national government could learn from the North West new town

Since 2013, both economic and disposable income growth in Warrington have been 2.2 times the national average. It is the city in the north of England with the highest disposable income, and the only city in this part of the country to have workplace wages above the UK average. In 2025, 42 per cent of Warrington's neighbourhoods are among the 20 per cent least income deprived in the country, up from 31 per cent in 2010.

Warrington, in part because of local policies, has got the ingredients right for greater prosperity over the past decade.

- **Expanding the productive business base:** Warrington doubled its KIBS jobs between 2015 and 2024 – the strongest growth of any UK city – and has the seventh highest concentration of 'new economy' firms of all UK cities, on par with Oxford. Much of its expansion in economic activity has happened in

33 Disposable income in the Scottish city saw a 20 per cent real-terms decline over the period, so matching the performance of 'good growth' cities would result in each resident cumulatively being almost £35,000 better off.

Birchwood Park on Warrington's northeastern edge, which is home to a nuclear cluster (present since the headquarters of the Atomic Energy Authority opened there in the 1950s) that has rapidly expanded over the past 25 years with the council's backing. This strength in one domain has attracted in other cutting-edge industries in areas such as cyber and cloud computing.[34] The local plan recognises and supports these strengths but explicitly aims to diversify the economy with city centre initiatives such as 'The Base' aimed at digital and technology sectors.[35]

- **Increasing access:** the city has taken advantage of being well-connected by motorways and its proximity to two big cities. The council has made more than £170 million worth of highways improvements over the last decade. Investment has been targeted to support the economy, focusing on motorway junctions and roads connecting to its industrial parks (where the majority of funding has been raised through borrowing and private investment). The council is also active around improving regional connections. Central government funding and matched levels of private investment were used to open Warrington West railway station in 2019 to improve connections to Liverpool and Manchester, giving Warrington residents better access to large neighbouring labour markets.[36]
- **Removing constraints:** the council has been responsive to housing demand (reflected in Warrington's low housing costs in **Figure 11**), and particularly active in enabling commercial space expansion. Most significant in the last decade has been the development of the Omega business park in the north west of the city.[37] More recently the council has made further moves to enable its city-edge industries to grow: its latest 380-hectare release of green belt land (3.4 per cent of the total area) puts it as one of only 13 local authorities to shrink its green belt by more than 1 per cent between 2023 and 2025.[38]

Pockets of deprivation remain (though, as shown in **Figure 4**, Warrington has far less persistent deprivation than most of its neighbouring cities). And more 'peripheral' workplaces mean a greater potential disconnect between residents and the local economy, as workers have less need to live and spend within the urban area.

In response, the council is taking steps to 'centralise' its economy, having undertaken city centre regeneration schemes (such as the 2019 Times Square development) alongside future plans to leverage the Northern Powerhouse Rail improvements at Warrington Bank Quay station to develop high quality office space in the city centre.

34 Johnson R (2025), Cutting edge? Post-war New Towns, suburban innovation and lessons for the future. Centre for Cities.

35 Breach A & McDonald R (2018), Building Blocks: The role of commercial space in Local Industrial Strategies, Centre for Cities; Warrington Borough Council (2024), Warrington means business: Warrington's growth ambition, Warrington & Co.

36 Warrington Borough Council (2024), Transport Improvements & Highways Maintenance Projects 2015/16 – 2024/25, Warrington Borough Council.

37 Warrington Borough Council (2024), Warrington means business: Warrington's growth ambition, Warrington & Co.

38 MHCLG Local authority green belt statistical releases 2023-24 and 2024-25.

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The Government needs more urban areas across the country with stronger economic performance to accomplish its national economic mission. There are lessons from looking at the ingredients that lead to higher living standards in successful cities, particularly in those that have bounced back from the financial crisis and achieved greater prosperity:

- **Building a strong economy.** This underpins any move to raise living standards and should be the starting point for any local economic interventions. It means focusing on the base of productive businesses and making sure to diversify rather than double down. It is imperative that all cities look to attract the cutting-edge, knowledge-based businesses that are the drivers of local incomes and future productivity growth.
- **Increasing labour market access through skills support will help raise living standards more widely.** The Government's 80 per cent employment target recognises that economic participation is important to achieving this. Raising the skills base in some places requires national action as well as increased scope for locally-led targeted interventions. To be fully effective, participation and skills interventions need local economies that are creating enough jobs to absorb these new workers.
- **Improving urban transport in big cities.** Improving the access to city centres in the UK's big cities is a key step to improving their economic performance. This means increasing devolved powers, such as following through on rail devolution to give big cities London-style powers over integrated transport networks.[39]
- **Tackling constraints and costs that result from success.** The Government must quicken the pace of planning reform to ensure the places with high growth potential are not constrained, and residents are not squeezed by high housing costs. This also means ensuring the boundaries of new unitary and combined authorities match local economic geography.

39 Johnson R & Rollison C (2025), Integrated transport: the size of the prize for mayors, Centre for Cities.

03

City Monitor

The latest data

City monitor: The latest data

There is considerable variation in the economic performance of cities and large towns across the UK. This chapter shows the scale and nature of this variation by highlighting the performance of the 63 largest urban areas on 17 indicators covering:

- Population
- Employment
- Productivity
- Skills
- Business
- Living standards
- Innovation
- Housing
- Wages
- Environment

For all indicators, the 10 strongest and 10 weakest performing places are presented.

Scan for all city data

www.centreforcities.org/data/data-tool/

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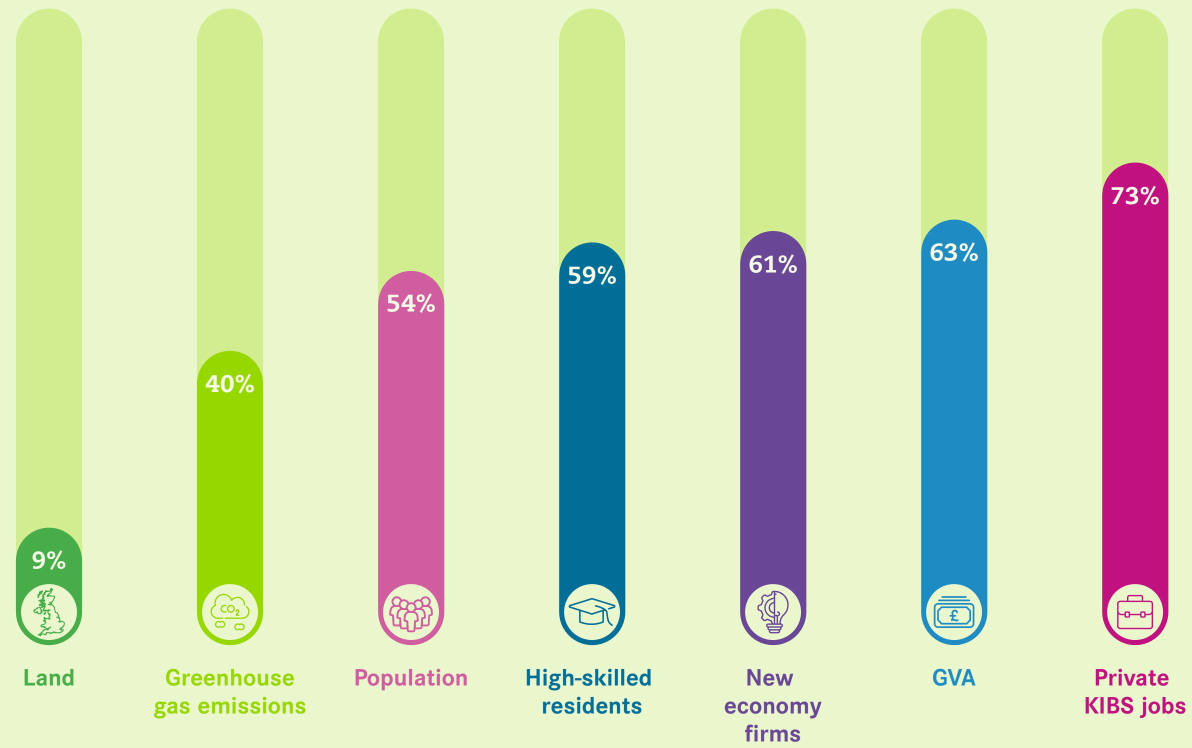
The national picture

The national economy clusters in cities and large towns.

Cities account for 9 per cent of land but 63 per cent of output and 73 per cent of knowledge-based jobs in the private sector – the sorts of jobs that the UK will need more of if it is going to see productivity growth throughout the rest of this decade.

Cities as a share of the national total



Sources:
Land area: ONS 2025, Open Geography Portal.
Greenhouse gas emissions: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero 2025, greenhouse gas emissions per capita, 2023 data.
Population: ONS 2025, Population estimates, 2024 data.
New Economy Firms: The Data City, accessed December 2025
High-skilled residents: ONS 2025, Annual Population Survey, 2024 data. NISRA 2025, Labour Force Survey, 2024 data.
GVA: ONS 2025, Regional Gross Domestic Product: local authorities, 2023 data.
Private KIBS jobs: ONS 2025, Business Register and Employment Survey, 2024 data.

Population

Table 1: Population growth

Rank	City	Population percentage change, 2014-2024 (%)	Population, 2014	Population, 2024	Population absolute change, 2014-2024
10 fastest-growing cities by population					
1	Exeter	15.5	119,789	138,399	18,610
2	Milton Keynes	15.5	264,948	305,884	40,936
3	Telford	14.9	170,610	195,952	25,342
4	Cambridge	14.5	130,432	149,352	18,920
5	Peterborough	14.2	195,766	223,655	27,889
6	Slough	13.6	147,313	167,359	20,046
7	Reading	13.6	325,876	370,107	44,231
8	Coventry	13.5	325,066	369,026	43,960
9	Leicester	12.6	495,664	558,208	62,544
10	Northampton	12.5	391,024	439,811	48,787
10 slowest-growing cities by population					
54	Southend	4.1	351,375	365,652	14,277
55	Plymouth	3.9	261,980	272,067	10,087
56	Warrington	3.5	208,056	215,391	7,335
57	York	3.5	202,206	209,301	7,095
58	Brighton	2.7	339,524	348,759	9,235
59	Portsmouth	2.7	525,439	539,655	14,216
60	Aberdeen	2.5	226,170	231,780	5,610
61	Birkenhead	2.5	320,917	328,873	7,956
62	Dundee	1.7	147,360	149,880	2,520
63	Ipswich	1.6	138,108	140,274	2,166
	United Kingdom	7.2	64,618,693	69,281,437	4,662,744

Source: ONS 2025, Population estimates, 2014 and 2024 data.

Productivity

- There is a clear geographic divide in productivity. With the exception of Edinburgh, Leeds and York, all 15 cities with productivity higher than the national average are in the South.
- Besides Bristol and Leeds, all other large cities lag behind the UK productivity average. Their size means they should be the most productive parts of the national economy, like large secondary cities in other G7 countries.[40] It is this underperformance that is the main cause of the wider underperformance of the economy outside of the Greater South East.

Table 2: GVA per hour

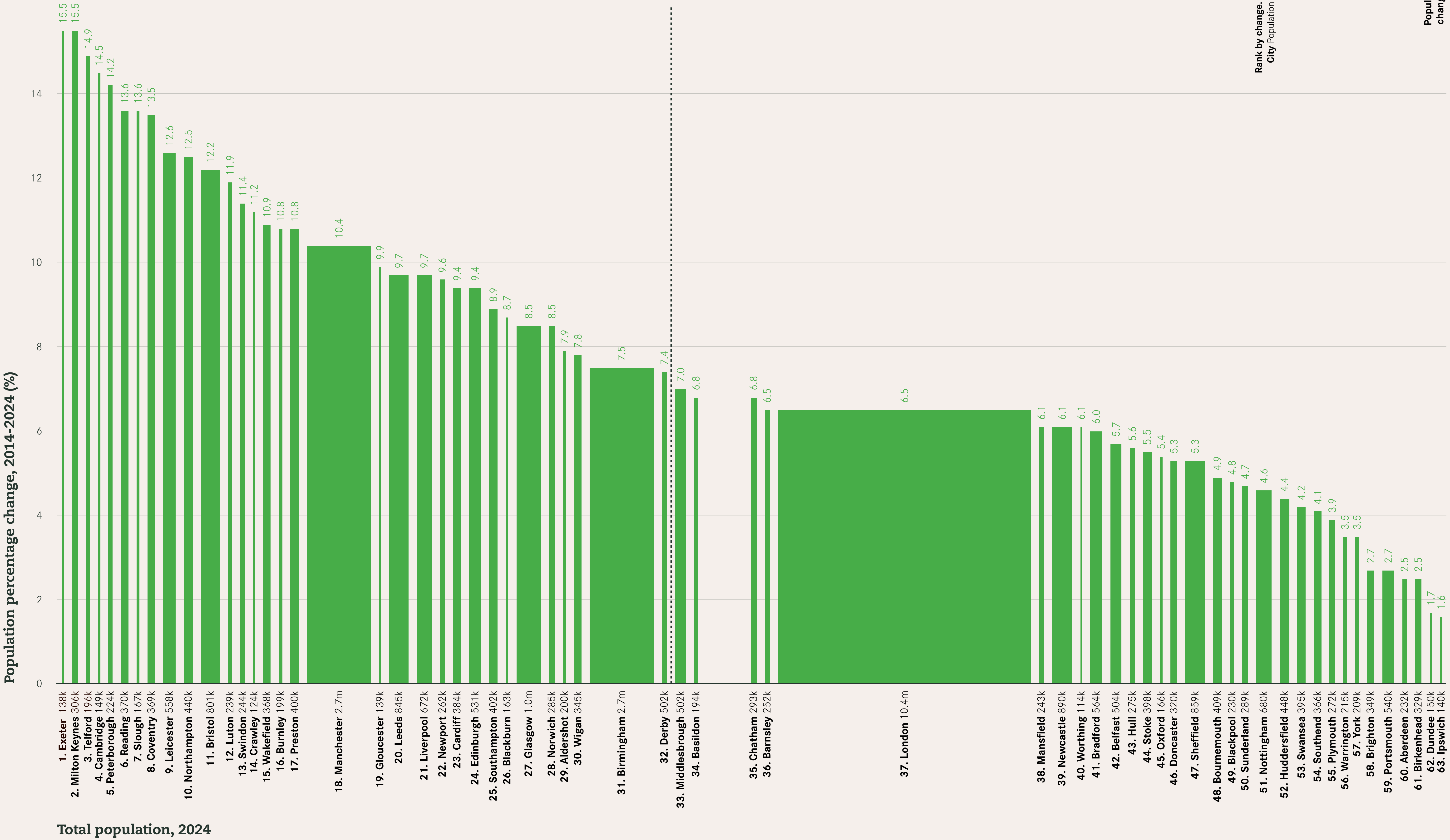
Rank	City	GVA per hour, 2023 (£)	Rank	City	GVA per hour, 2023 (£)
10 cities with the highest GVA per hour			10 cities with the lowest GVA per hour		
1	Slough	65.7	54	Plymouth	33.4
2	Aldershot	63.3	55	Blackburn	33.1
3	Swindon	60.8	56	Stoke	33.0
4	Edinburgh	56.7	57	Blackpool	32.9
5	London	52.5	58	Gloucester	32.5
6	Worthing	51.8	59	Huddersfield	32.4
7	Reading	51.6	60	Bradford	32.2
8	Brighton	48.8	61	Telford	30.5
9	Milton Keynes	48.6	62	Mansfield	29.9
10	Southampton	47.3	63	Doncaster	29.9
	United Kingdom				41.3

Source: ONS 2025, Regional gross domestic product: local authorities; ONS 2025, Subregional productivity: labour productivity indices by local authority district, 2023 data. • Note: Reported in 2022 prices using regional GVA deflators. GVA measures the contribution of each individual producer, industry or sector to the economy of the United Kingdom excluding Value Added Tax (VAT); other taxes on products and subsidies on products.

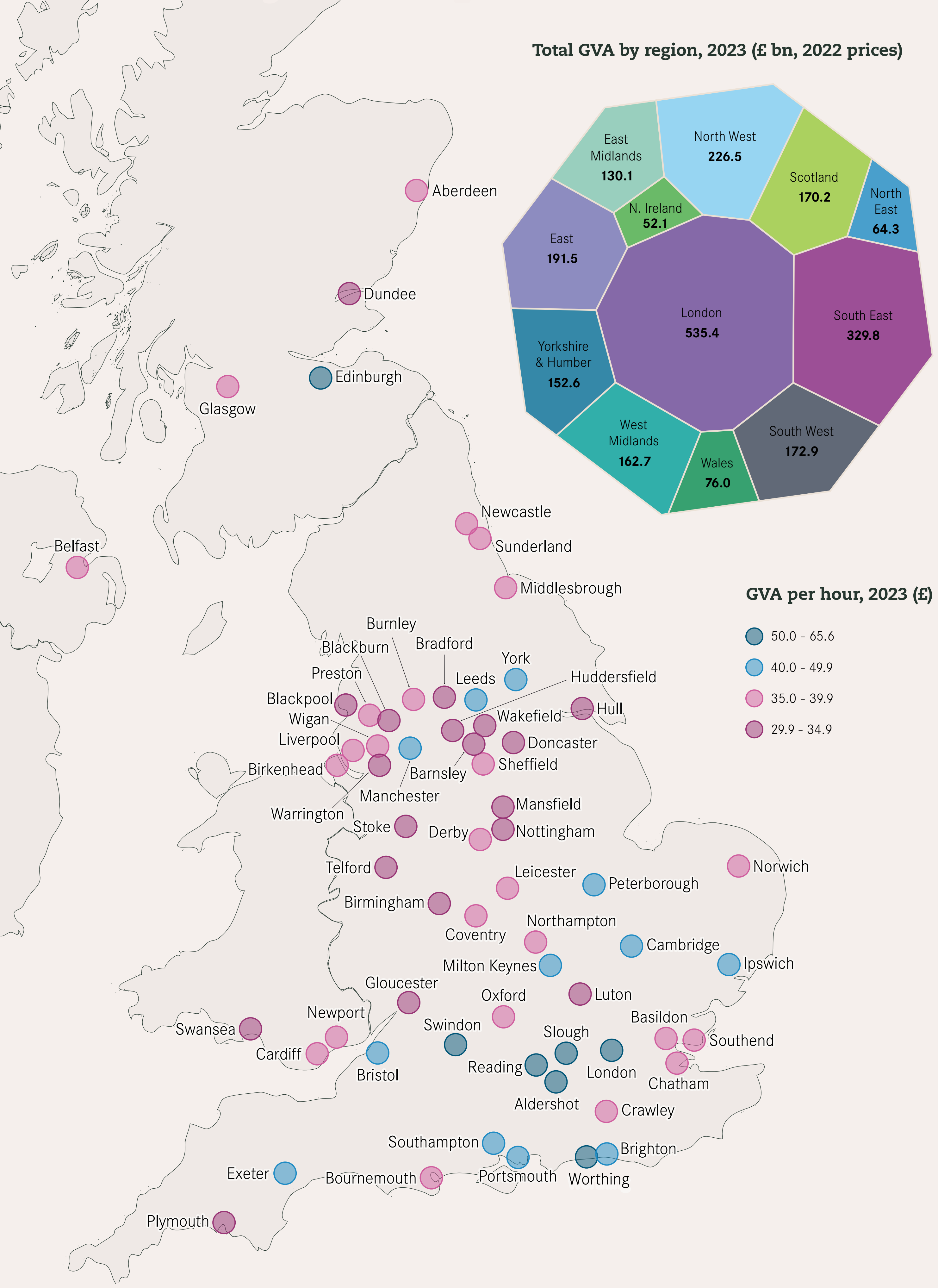
40 Breach A and Swinney P (2024): Climbing the Summit: Big Cities in the UK and the G7, London: Centre for Cities.

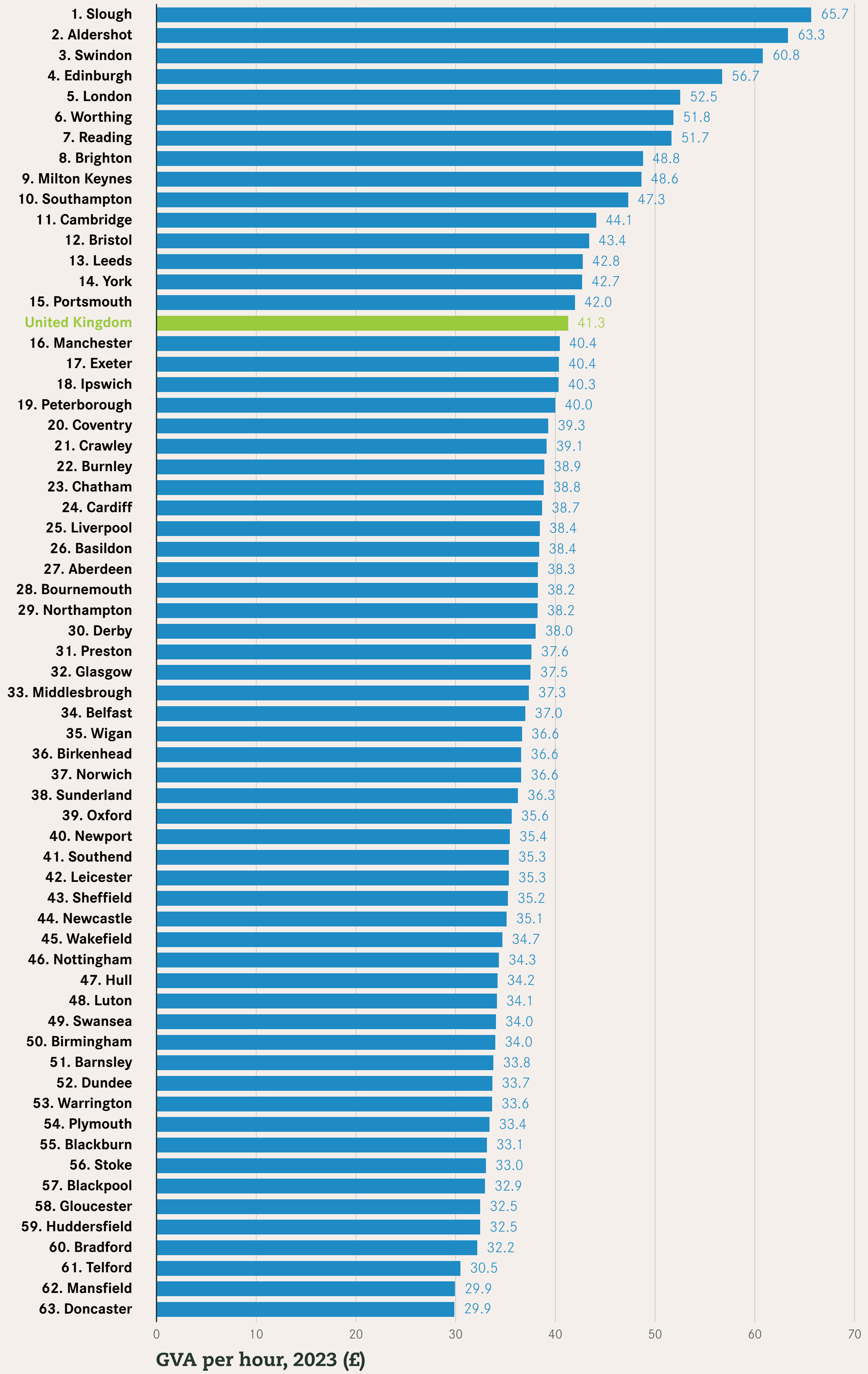
Population

How to read



Productivity and output





Business

Business stock

Table 3: Business stock per 10,000 population

Rank	City	Business stock per 10,000 population, 2024	Business stock per 10,000 population, 2023	Change, 2023-2024 (%)
10 cities with the highest number of businesses				
1	London	575.8	574.3	0.3
2	Brighton	461.6	472.8	-2.4
3	Northampton	405.3	406.8	-0.4
4	Reading	403.1	403.8	-0.2
5	Milton Keynes	402.8	405.9	-0.8
6	Basildon	393.3	397.1	-1.0
7	Slough	392.0	391.9	0.0
8	Warrington	385.3	387.2	-0.5
9	Aldershot	385.3	386.1	-0.2
10	Bournemouth	377.9	377.4	0.1
10 cities with the lowest number of businesses				
54	Barnsley	257.8	259.7	-0.7
55	Stoke	251.0	249.8	0.5
56	Mansfield	247.8	258.6	-4.2
57	Newport	245.4	249.4	-1.6
58	Swansea	239.0	240.2	-0.5
59	Middlesbrough	236.6	235.7	0.4
60	Hull	234.9	234.4	0.2
61	Dundee	234.2	228.3	2.6
62	Plymouth	225.5	229.5	-1.7
63	Sunderland	203.0	207.2	-2.0
	United Kingdom	372.3	373.7	-0.4

Source: ONS 2025, Business Demography, 2024 data; ONS 2025, Population estimates, 2023 and 2024 data.

Public and private sector jobs

Table 4: Ratio of private sector to publicly-funded jobs*

Rank	City	Private to public ratio, 2024	Private sector jobs, 2024	Publicly funded jobs, 2024
10 cities with the highest proportion of private sector				
1	Crawley	6.6	79,500	12,000
2	Warrington	4.6	127,500	28,000
3	Slough	3.8	63,500	16,500
4	Milton Keynes	3.6	151,000	41,500
5	Aldershot	3.6	82,000	23,000
6	Swindon	3.6	89,000	25,000
7	London	3.6	5,077,500	1,426,500
8	Reading	3.5	165,500	47,500
9	Northampton	3.4	172,000	51,000
10	Luton	3.2	83,500	26,500
10 cities with the lowest proportion of private sector				
53	Liverpool	1.7	227,000	130,500
54	Gloucester	1.7	44,000	26,000
55	Cardiff	1.7	143,500	85,500
56	Swansea	1.6	98,500	61,500
57	Birkenhead	1.5	64,000	41,500
58	Worthing	1.5	29,000	19,500
59	Exeter	1.4	59,000	41,000
60	Cambridge	1.4	70,000	50,500
61	Dundee	1.3	45,500	34,000
62	Oxford	0.8	57,000	68,500
	Great Britain	2.7	23,672,750	8,733,000

Source: ONS 2025, Business Register and Employment Survey, 2024 data. • Note: Northern Ireland data not available, so the figure for Great Britain is shown.

*Publicly-funded jobs are defined as those jobs that are in the sectors of public administration and defence, education, and health. This means that this definition captures private sector jobs in these sectors but also captures jobs such as GPs and those in universities that the standard ONS definition does not.

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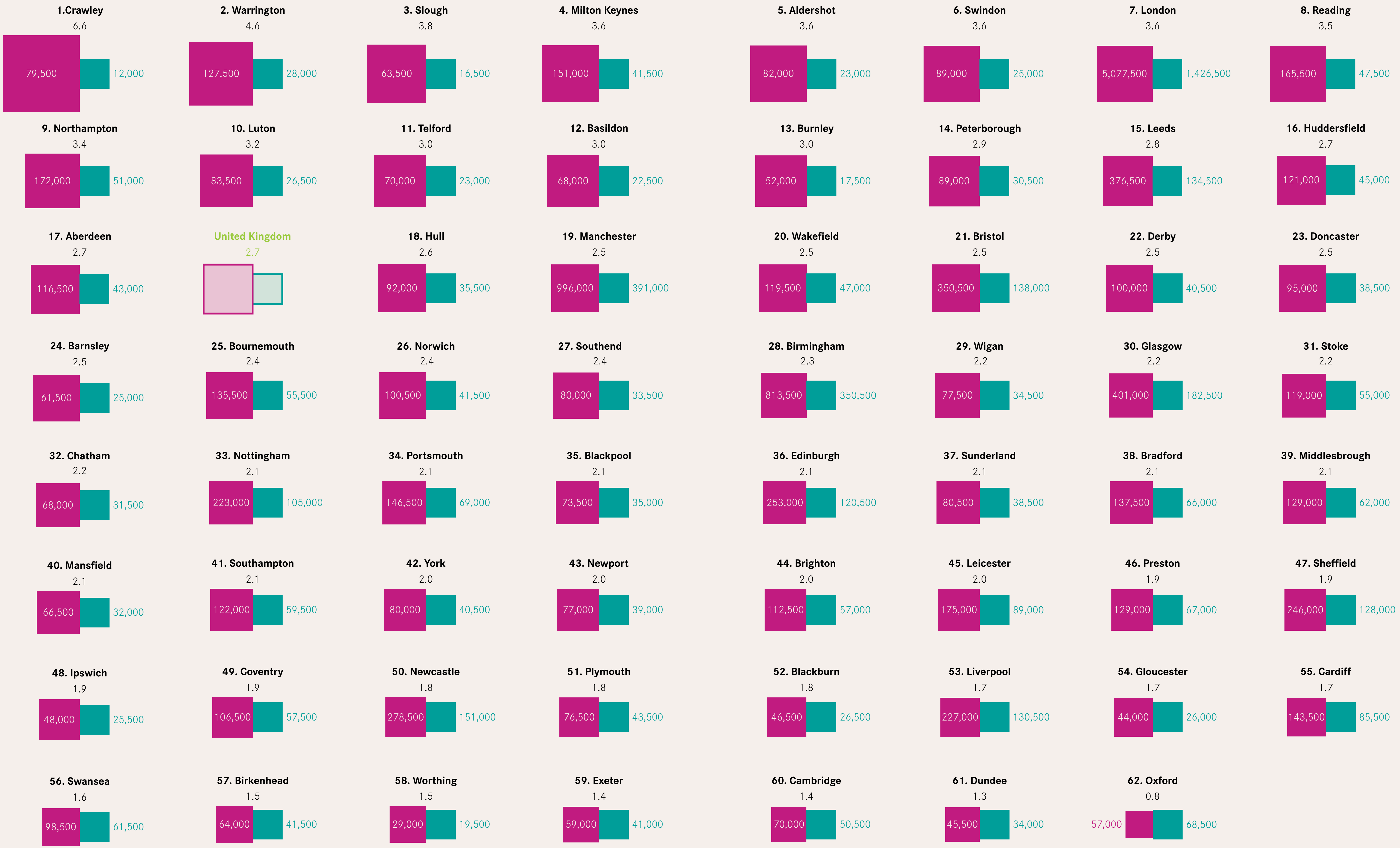
Public and private sector jobs



Innovation

Table 5: New economy firms per 10,000 working age population

Rank	City	NEFs per 10k working age population, 2025	Rank	City	NEFs per 10k working age population, 2025
10 cities with the highest NEFs per 10k working age population			10 cities with the lowest NEFs per 10k working age population		
1	Cambridge	44.6	54	Swansea	13.7
2	London	42.5	55	Dundee	13.4
3	Brighton	36.9	56	Bradford	12.7
4	Milton Keynes	36.1	57	Barnsley	12.6
5	Reading	35.1	58	Mansfield	12.5
6	Oxford	32.3	59	Middlesbrough	12.5
7	Warrington	32.1	60	Wigan	12.4
8	Aldershot	31.6	61	Newport	11.9
9	Edinburgh	30.1	62	Luton	11.3
10	Worthing	29.5	63	Sunderland	11.2
	United Kingdom				24.7

Source: The Data City, accessed December 2025; ONS 2025, Population estimates, 2024 data. • Note: New Economy Firms (NEFs) are companies in emerging knowledge-intensive sectors at the forefront of new technologies and innovations. These firms are identified based on the Data City's Real Time Industrial Classifications (RTICs). Businesses solely with RTICs 'Business Support Services', 'B2B Services' and 'Sports and physical activities' were excluded. For more information see: Rodrigues G, Vera O, and Swinney P (2022), At the frontier: The geography of the UK's new economy, London: Centre for Cities.

Wages

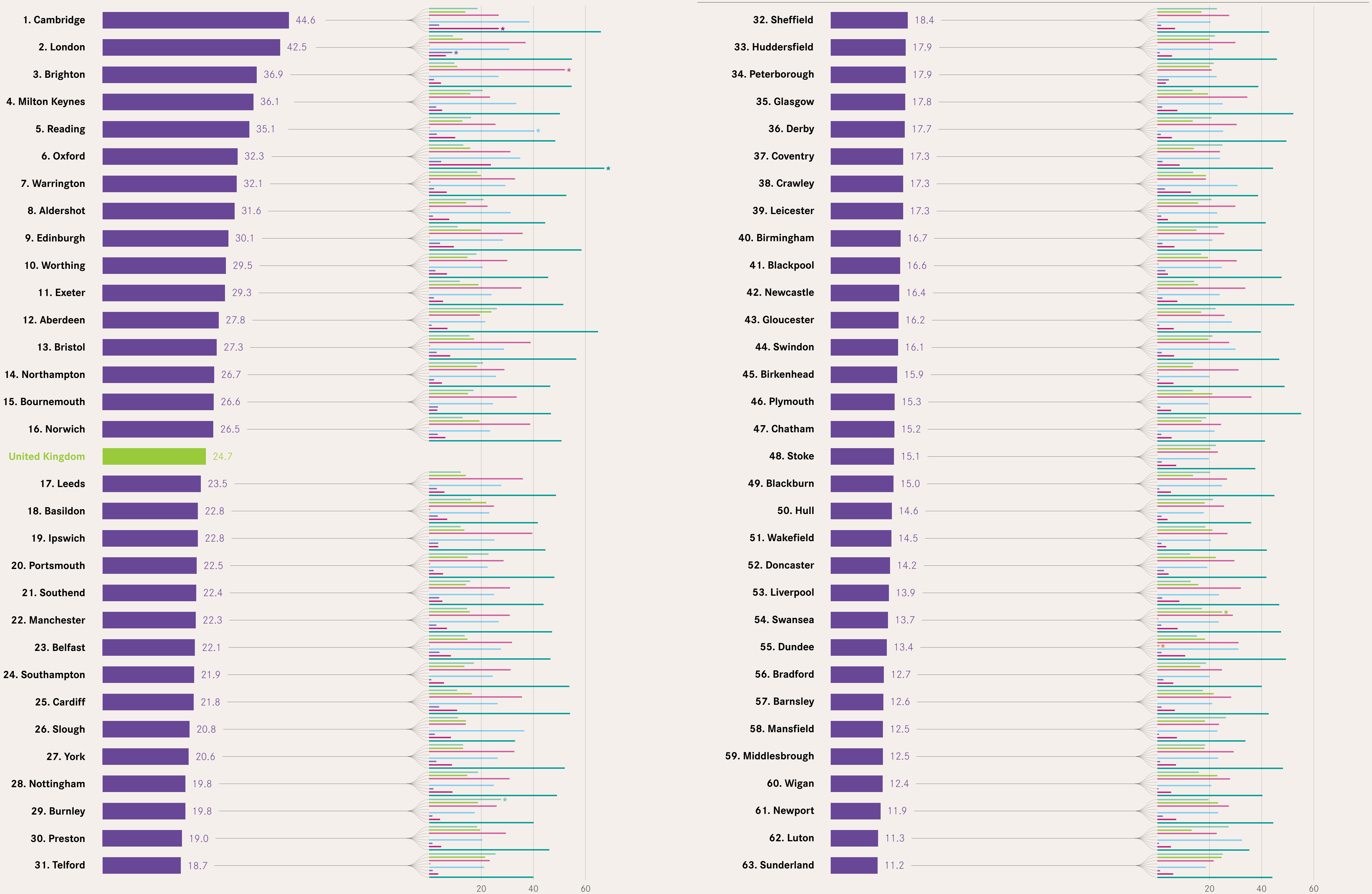
- Average weekly workplace wages in cities in 2025 were £813, £55 higher than the UK average of £758. This was driven by a few high-performing cities – 16 cities had wages higher than the UK average. London leads the pack, and 9 of the top 16 are in the Greater South East.
- While seven of the ten largest cities have wages below the national average some still stand out as leaders within their regions. Leeds, Manchester, and Liverpool are examples. This underscores the importance of large cities in their regional context, even if they underperform nationally.

Table 6: Average weekly workplace earnings

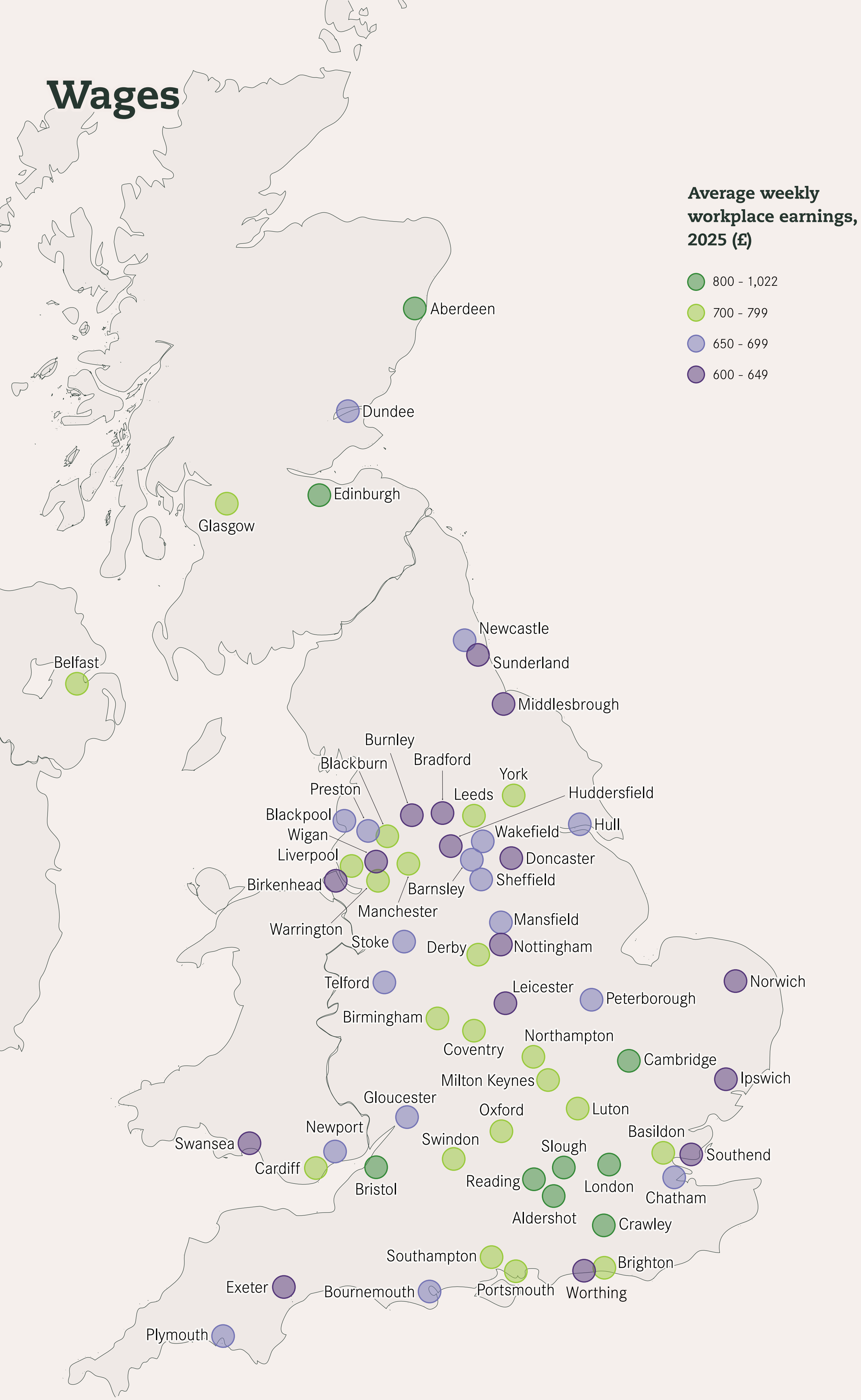
Rank	City	Average weekly workplace earnings, 2025 (£)	Rank	City	Average weekly workplace earnings, 2025 (£)
10 cities with the highest average weekly workplace earnings			10 cities with the lowest average weekly workplace earnings		
1	London	1,022.1	54	Middlesbrough	641.8
2	Cambridge	924.5	55	Bradford	640.6
3	Reading	917.1	56	Doncaster	635.8
4	Slough	873.0	57	Birkenhead	633.5
5	Edinburgh	865.4	58	Wigan	628.8
6	Aldershot	834.1	59	Exeter	628.1
7	Crawley	820.0	60	Huddersfield	627.6
8	Bristol	808.6	61	Sunderland	619.9
9	Aberdeen	806.5	62	Burnley	616.6
10	Oxford	796.6	63	Southend	606.1
	United Kingdom				757.5

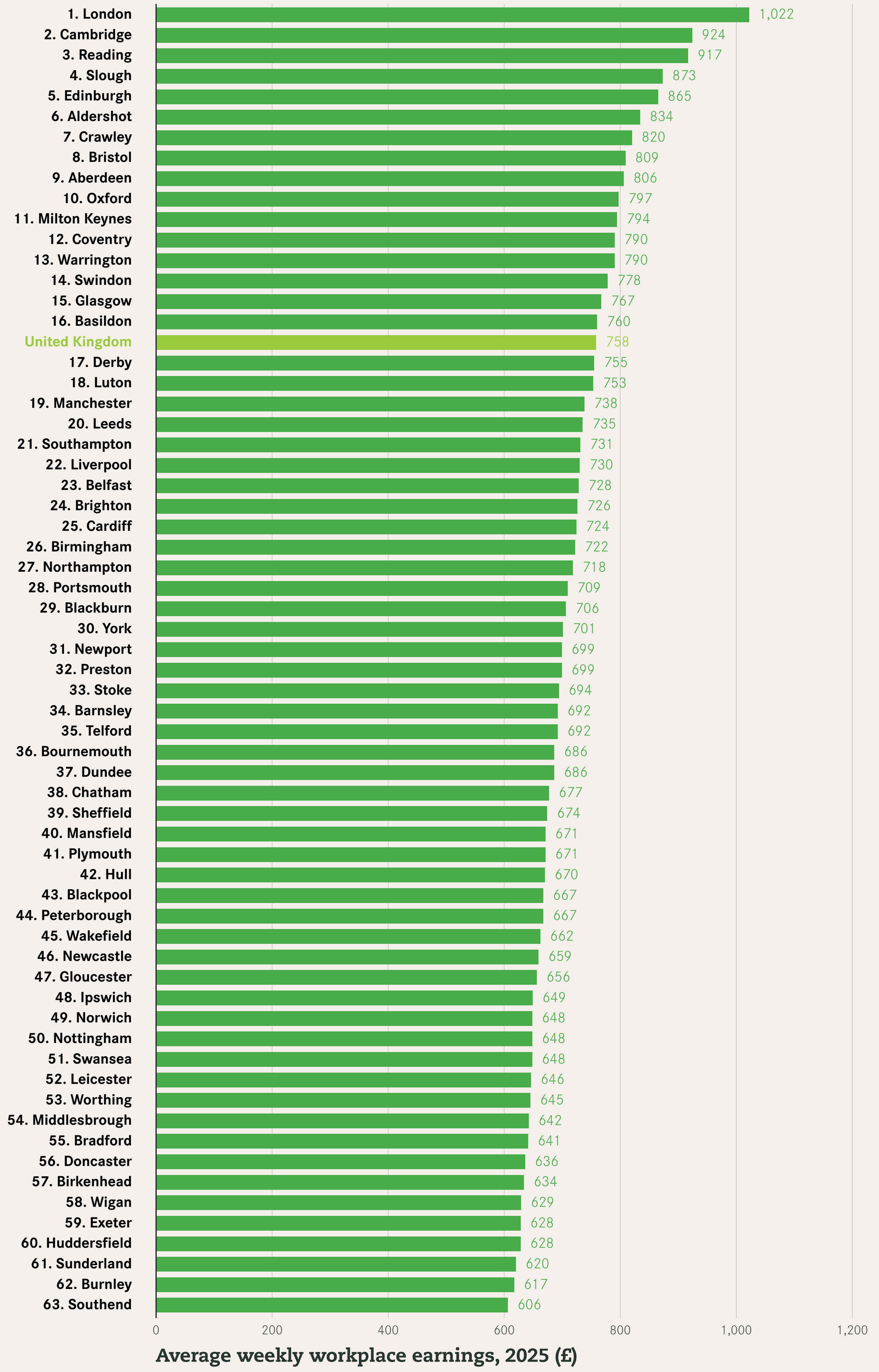
Source: ONS 2025, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), average weekly workplace-based earnings, 2025 data. • Note: Earnings data is gross pay for all employees (full-time and part-time).

New economy firms



Wages


Average weekly workplace earnings, 2025 (£)
800 - 1,022
700 - 799
650 - 699
600 - 649
Aberdeen
Dundee
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Belfast
Newcastle
Sunderland
Middlesbrough
Burnley
Blackburn
Bradford
York
Preston
Leeds
Huddersfield
Blackpool
Wigan
Wakefield
Hull
Liverpool
Doncaster
Birkenhead
Barnsley
Sheffield
Manchester
Mansfield
Warrington
Stoke
Derby
Nottingham
Telford
Leicester
Peterborough
Norwich
Birmingham
Coventry
Northampton
Cambridge
Milton Keynes
Ipswich
Gloucester
Oxford
Luton
Newport
Swansea
Swindon
Slough
Basildon
Southend
Cardiff
Bristol
Reading
London
Chatham
Aldershot
Crawley
Southampton
Brighton
Exeter
Bournemouth
Portsmouth
Worthing
Plymouth


1. London 1,022
2. Cambridge 924
3. Reading 917
4. Slough 873
5. Edinburgh 865
6. Aldershot 834
7. Crawley 820
8. Bristol 809
9. Aberdeen 806
10. Oxford 797
11. Milton Keynes 794
12. Coventry 790
13. Warrington 790
14. Swindon 778
15. Glasgow 767
16. Basildon 760
United Kingdom 758
17. Derby 755
18. Luton 753
19. Manchester 738
20. Leeds 735
21. Southampton 731
22. Liverpool 730
23. Belfast 728
24. Brighton 726
25. Cardiff 724
26. Birmingham 722
27. Northampton 718
28. Portsmouth 709
29. Blackburn 706
30. York 701
31. Newport 699
32. Preston 699
33. Stoke 694
34. Barnsley 692
35. Telford 692
36. Bournemouth 686
37. Dundee 686
38. Chatham 677
39. Sheffield 674
40. Mansfield 671
41. Plymouth 671
42. Hull 670
43. Blackpool 667
44. Peterborough 667
45. Wakefield 662
46. Newcastle 659
47. Gloucester 656
48. Ipswich 649
49. Norwich 648
50. Nottingham 648
51. Swansea 648
52. Leicester 646
53. Worthing 645
54. Middlesbrough 642
55. Bradford 641
56. Doncaster 636
57. Birkenhead 634
58. Wigan 629
59. Exeter 628
60. Huddersfield 628
61. Sunderland 620
62. Burnley 617
63. Southend 606
0
200
400
600
800
1,000
1,200
Average weekly workplace earnings, 2025 (£)

Employment

Employment rate

Table 7: Employment rate

Rank	City	Employment rate 2024-2025 (%)	Rank	City	Employment rate 2024-2025 (%)
10 cities with the highest employment rate			10 cities with the lowest employment rate		
1	Worthing	85.5	53	Birmingham	70.1
2	Gloucester	84.7	54	Coventry	70.0
3	Edinburgh	83.2	55	Leicester	69.9
4	Southend	82.4	56	Newcastle	69.7
5	Norwich	81.9	57	Dundee	69.6
6	Aldershot	81.3	58	Glasgow	68.8
7	Bristol	80.6	59	Swansea	68.5
8	Ipswich	80.4	60	Hull	67.7
9	Milton Keynes	80.3	61	Luton	66.3
10	Basildon	80.1	62	Blackburn	63.7
	United Kingdom				75.4

Source: ONS 2025, Annual Population Survey, resident analysis mid-year estimates, July 2023 - June 2025 data. • Note: Belfast excluded as Northern Ireland data unavailable at a Local Government District level.

Unemployment rate

Table 8: Unemployment rate

Rank	City	Unemployment rate, 2025 (%)	Rank	City	Unemployment rate, 2025 (%)
10 cities with the highest unemployment rate			10 cities with the lowest unemployment rate		
1	Coventry	6.4	54	Southend	3.3
2	Birmingham	6.4	55	Reading	3.3
3	Leicester	6.1	56	Northampton	3.1
4	Hull	6.0	57	Worthing	3.0
5	Blackburn	5.7	58	Aldershot	3.0
6	Derby	5.7	59	Barnsley	2.8
7	Brighton	5.6	60	Warrington	2.8
8	Luton	5.6	61	Edinburgh	2.5
9	Bradford	5.5	62	York	2.3
10	Slough	5.5	63	Belfast	1.5
	United Kingdom				4.0

Source: ONS 2025, model-based estimates of unemployment, 2025 data; NISRA 2025, Labour Force Survey Tables for Local Government Districts, 2024 data. • Note: Northern Ireland data is one year behind, so for Belfast we use the latest available year (2024) to fill the 2025 value.

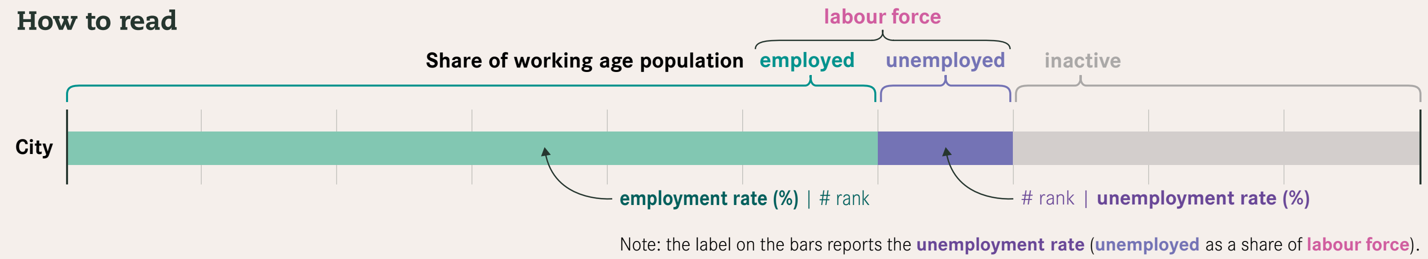
Job growth

Table 9: 10-year job growth rate

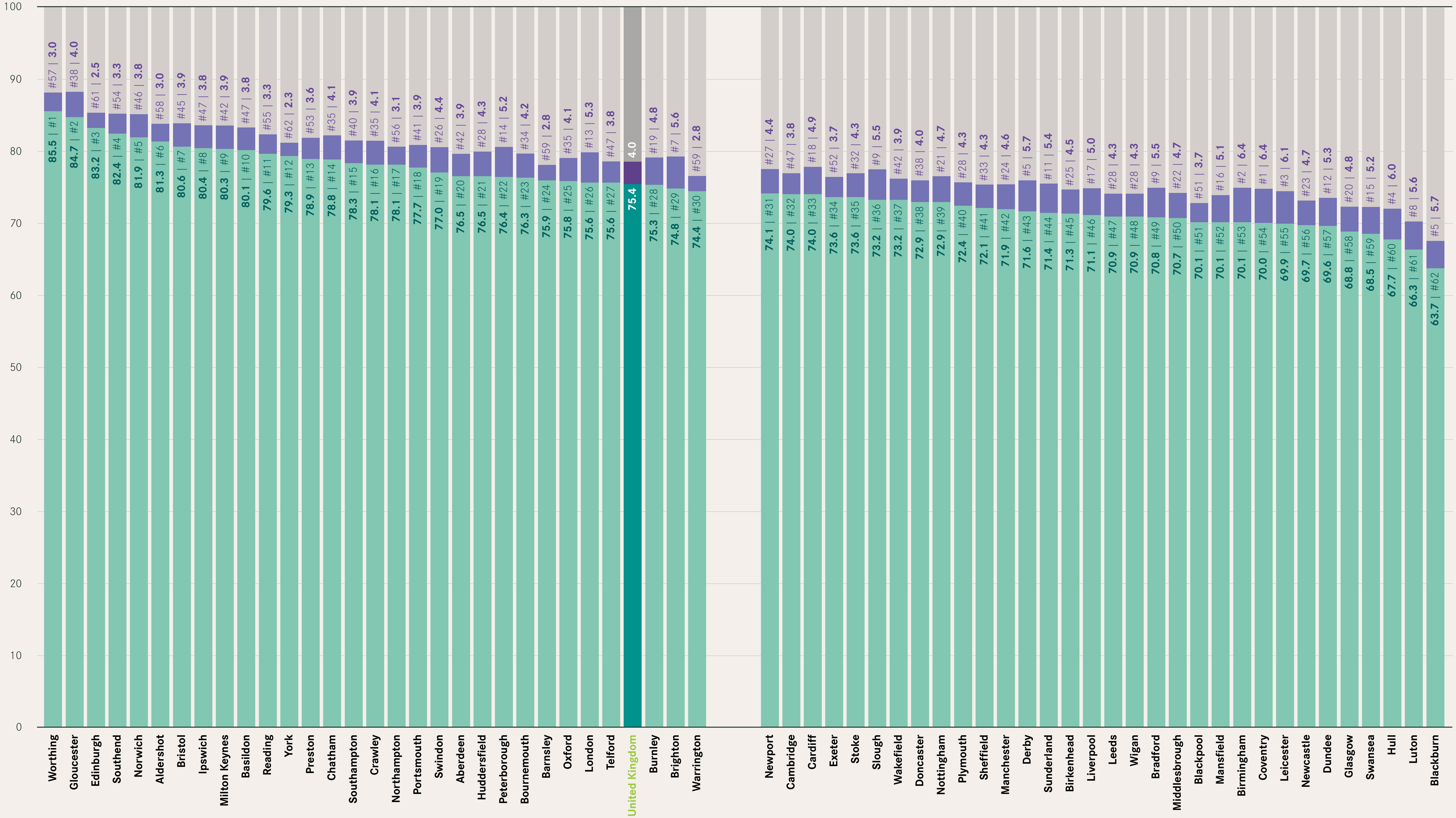
Rank	City	10-year job growth rate, 2013-2023 (%)	Rank	City	10-year job growth rate, 2013-2023 (%)
10 cities with the highest 10-year job growth rate			10 cities with the lowest 10-year job growth rate		
1	Luton	31.2	54	Southampton	3.6
2	Mansfield	24.4	55	Preston	3.5
3	Peterborough	23.9	56	Slough	3.4
4	Reading	23.8	57	Burnley	2.8
5	Warrington	23.1	58	Swindon	2.5
6	Bristol	23.0	59	Bradford	2.3
7	Basildon	22.1	60	Crawley	2.2
8	London	21.8	61	Southend	-1.6
9	Glasgow	20.5	62	Portsmouth	-2.3
10	Leeds	20.0	63	Aberdeen	-11.3
	United Kingdom				13.9

Source: ONS 2025, jobs density, 2023 data.

Employment



Share of working age population unemployed and inactive, 2025



Share of working age population employed, 2024-2025

Skills

- Half of the working age population in UK cities have high-level qualifications (above A Level or equivalent), compared to 44 per cent outside of cities. This rises to 56 per cent in cities within the Greater South East, with Oxford, Cambridge and Reading leading the way.
- Cities with more highly-skilled residents also tend to have fewer residents with no formal qualifications (below GCSE or equivalent). For every resident with no qualifications, Brighton has 30 residents who are highly qualified. For Reading the ratio is 1 to 23, and Edinburgh 1 to 17. There are some exceptions to this rule – Glasgow has a high proportion of highly qualified residents (57 per cent) and a high proportion with no qualifications (12 per cent).
- Cities with more low-skilled residents have lower labour market participation rates. Three large cities–Birmingham, Newcastle and Glasgow–are in the top ten for the share of residents with no formal qualifications and are in the bottom ten cities with the lowest employment rates.

High-level qualifications

Table 10: Residents with high-level qualifications

Rank	City	Working age population with high skills (RQF4 or above) qualifications, 2024 (%)	Rank	City	Working age population with high skills (RQF4 or above) qualifications, 2024 (%)
10 cities with the highest percentage of people with high-level qualifications			10 cities with the lowest percentage of people with high-level qualifications		
1	Oxford	72.9	54	Southend	34.1
2	Edinburgh	68	55	Blackburn	33.3
3	Cambridge	65.9	56	Burnley	32.2
4	Reading	62.7	57	Mansfield	31.5
5	Aberdeen	62.4	58	Wigan	31.3
6	London	60.3	59	Peterborough	30.8
7	Bristol	59.7	60	Basildon	30.5
8	York	59.6	61	Hull	29.7
9	Brighton	57.3	62	Crawley	27.6
10	Glasgow	56.9	63	Doncaster	25.5
	United Kingdom				47.1

No formal qualifications

Table 11: Residents with no formal qualifications

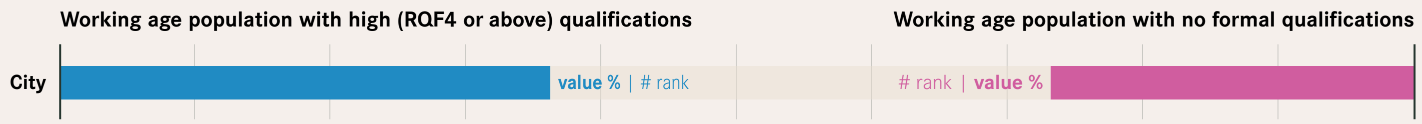
Rank	City	Working age population with no formal qualifications, 2024 (%)	Rank	City	Working age population with no formal qualifications, 2024 (%)
10 cities with the highest percentage of people with no formal qualifications			10 cities with the lowest percentage of people with no formal qualifications		
1	Warrington	13.6	54	Slough	4.1
2	Blackburn	12.9	55	Swindon	4.0
3	Glasgow	12.4	56	Edinburgh	4.0
4	Belfast	12.2	57	Exeter	4.0
5	Newcastle	11.4	58	Chatham	3.8
6	Barnsley	11.4	59	Bristol	3.8
7	Birmingham	10.9	60	Cambridge	2.7
8	Luton	10.6	61	Reading	2.7
9	Burnley	10.3	62	Oxford	2.5
10	Stoke	10.1	63	Brighton	1.9
	United Kingdom				6.9

Source (Table 10): ONS 2025, Annual Population Survey, resident analysis, 2024 data; NISRA 2025, Labour Force Survey Annual Tables, 2024 data. • Note: Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) is the classification given to different qualifications and replaces the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) measure historically reported by ONS. RQF level 4 plus captures qualifications from Higher National Certificates through to doctorates.

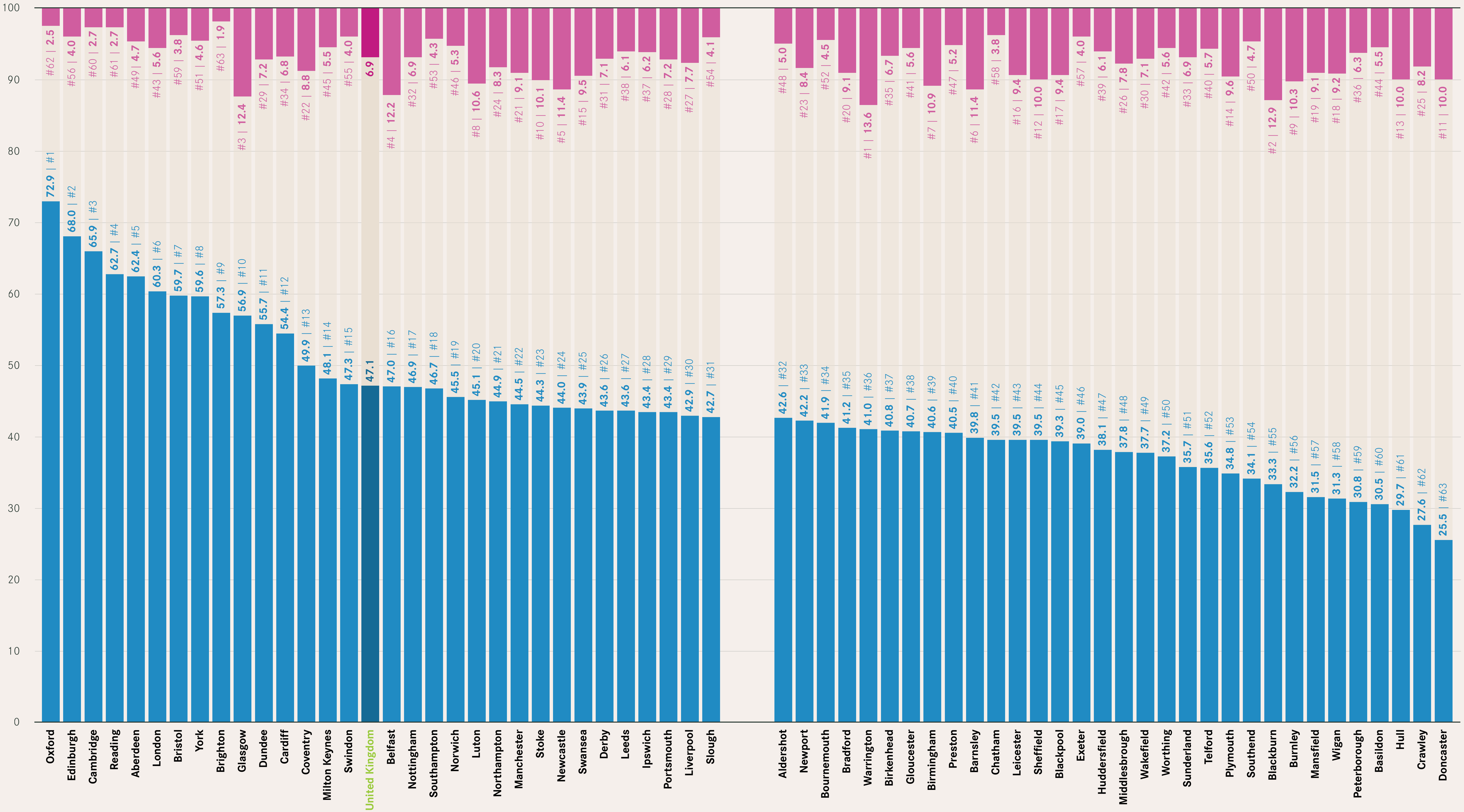
Source (Table 11): ONS 2025, Annual Population Survey, resident analysis, 2024 data; NISRA 2025, Labour Force Survey Annual Tables, 2024 data. • Note: Some data supressed at the local authority level. These local authorities are ignored when calculating the average for affected cities. Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) is the classification given to different qualifications and replaces the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) measure historically reported by ONS. RQF level 0 indicates no qualifications equivalent to GCSE or higher.

Skills

How to read



Working age population with no formal qualifications, 2024



Working age population with high (RQF4 or above) qualifications, 2024

Living standards

Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI)

Table 12: Gross disposable household income per capita

Rank	City	GDHI per capita, 2023 (£)	Rank	City	GDHI per capita, 2023 (£)
10 cities with the highest GDHI per capita			10 cities with the lowest GDHI per capita		
1	London	25,739	54	Derby	15,938
2	Reading	21,578	55	Dundee	15,909
3	Aldershot	21,483	56	Coventry	15,824
4	Edinburgh	21,044	57	Stoke	15,716
5	Brighton	20,887	58	Birmingham	15,620
6	Southend	20,111	59	Burnley	15,057
7	Cambridge	20,004	60	Hull	14,774
8	Basildon	19,848	61	Bradford	14,631
9	Worthing	19,756	62	Leicester	14,540
10	Milton Keynes	19,521	63	Blackburn	14,345
	United Kingdom				19,372

Source: ONS 2025, Gross Disposable Household Income per capita, 2023 data.

Income deprivation

Table 13: Share of neighbourhoods in the top 20 per cent most income deprived nationally

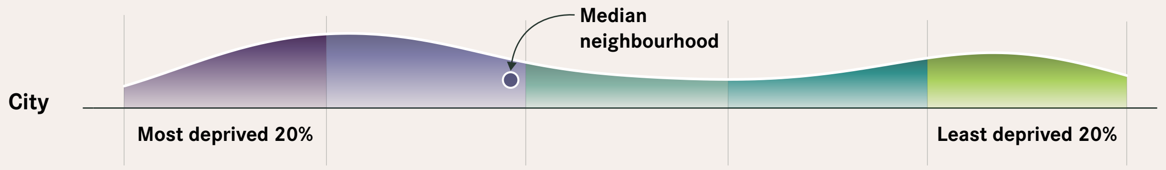
Rank	City	Share of the most income-deprived neighbourhoods, 2025 (%)	Rank	City	Share of the most income-deprived neighbourhoods, 2025 (%)
10 cities with the highest share of neighbourhoods in the top 20 per cent most income deprived nationally			10 cities with the lowest share of neighbourhoods in the top 20 per cent most income deprived nationally		
1	Blackburn	56.0	53	Oxford	9.5
2	Hull	51.2	54	Bournemouth	8.8
3	Birmingham	48.9	55	Aberdeen	8.5
4	Bradford	47.8	56	Crawley	7.5
5	Liverpool	47.5	57	Worthing	7.4
6	Luton	47.2	58	York	6.6
7	Burnley	45.3	59	Exeter	6.4
8	Sunderland	38.4	60	Reading	6.4
9	Peterborough	38.0	61	Cambridge	3.8
10	Middlesbrough	37.7	62	Aldershot	2.6
	Great Britain				20.0

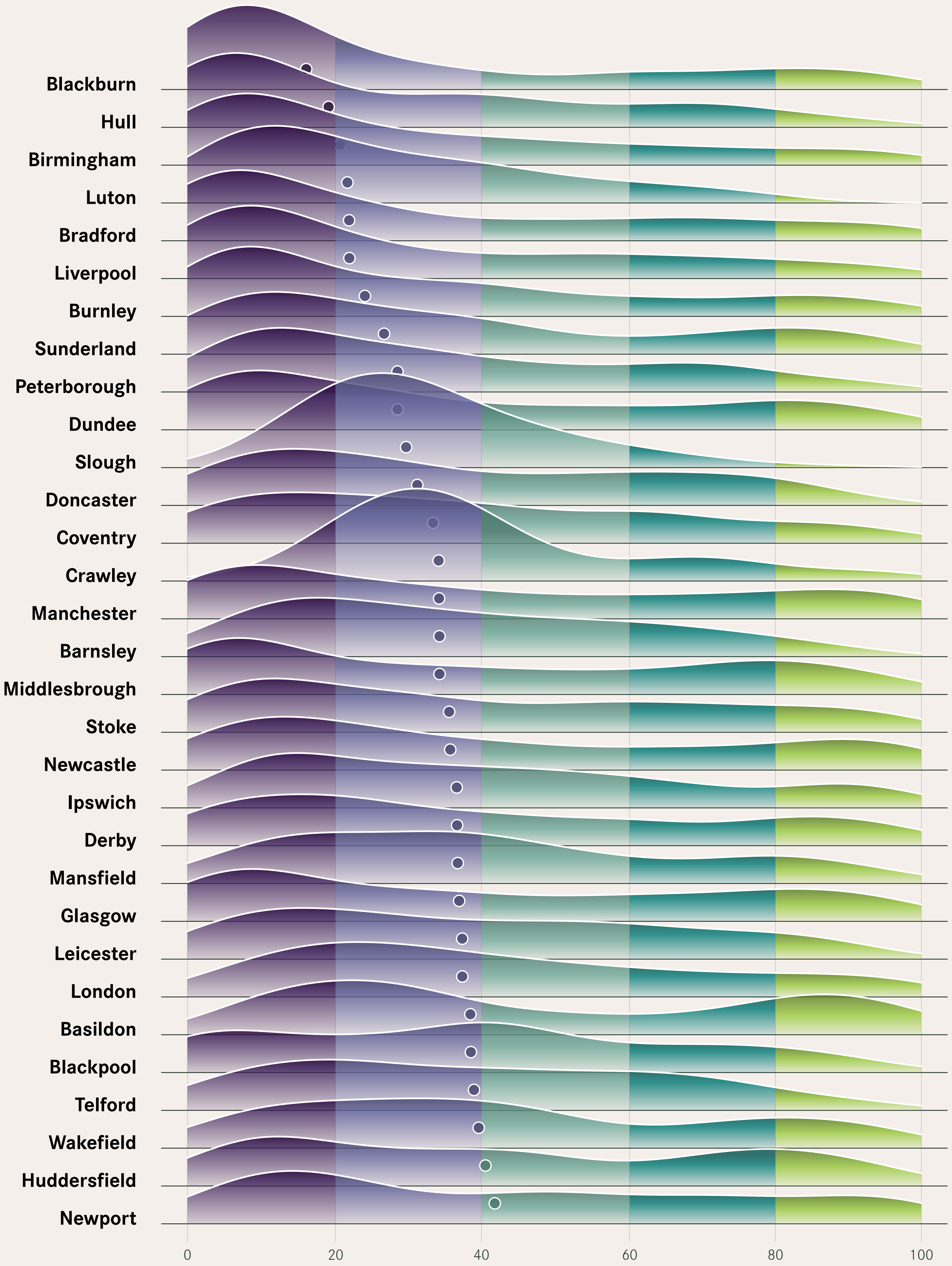
Source: IMD 2025, WIMD 2025, SIMD 2020. • Notes: Shows proportion of LSOAs within each PUA which area in the top 20% of most income deprived neighbourhoods in each constituent country by ranking. Scotland data from 2020. Belfast not included.

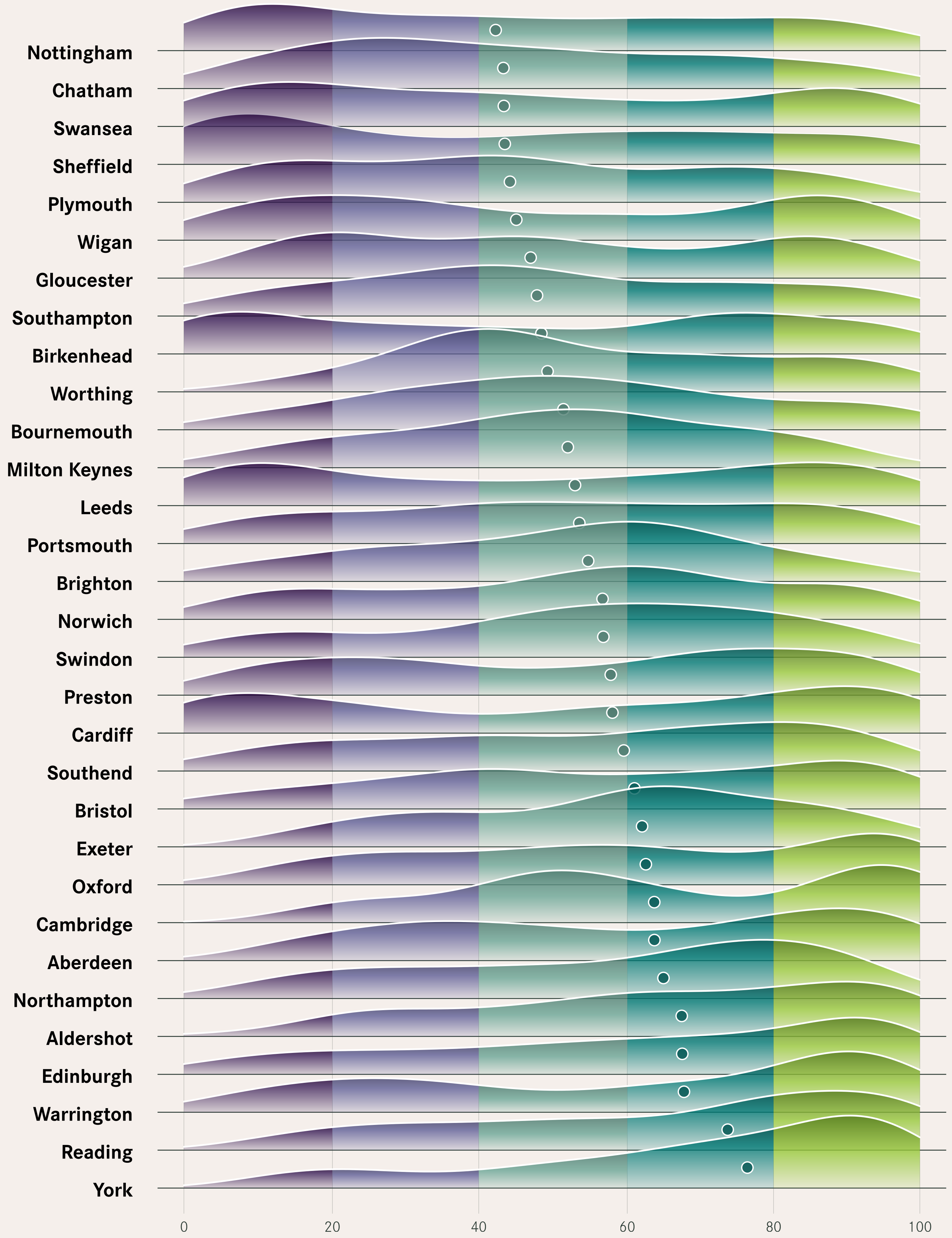
Living standards

How to read

Distribution of neighbourhoods by national income deprivation percentile, 2025







Housing

- Average house prices declined across the UK between 2024 and 2025. 38 UK cities that saw price rises over this period, compared to 47 between 2023 and 2024. Expensive cities were more likely to see house prices fall over the past year. Of the 17 cities with prices above the national average, 10 have lower average prices in 2025 than 2024.
- This has eased housing affordability. In 2025, the average house price was 8.2 times the average annual wage, down from 8.8 in 2024. The affordability ratio also reduced in every UK city between 2024 and 2025, except Doncaster, Liverpool, Glasgow, Belfast and Derby where it increased slightly.
- Milton Keynes again saw the highest growth in housing stock between 2023 and 2024, with an increase of 1.8 per cent. 25 cities - including Preston, Slough, Leeds and Exeter - saw housing stock growth above the national growth rate. However, overall housing stock growth has slowed this year compared with last year.
- In theory, higher house prices should signal stronger demand and lead to more housing supply, but in practice this doesn't happen (see figure on page 67-68). In many places - especially successful cities like London, Oxford and Cambridge - high house prices are not matched by high levels of housing supply, with the planning system acting as a key constraint on building both upwards and outwards.

House prices

Table 14: House price growth

Rank	City	Annual growth, 2024-2025 (%)	Average price, 2025 (£)	Average price, 2024 (£)	Difference in average prices, 2024-2025 (£)
10 cities with the highest increases in housing price					
1	Doncaster	7.9	195,400	181,100	14,200
2	Liverpool	6.4	200,300	188,300	12,000
3	Belfast	5.5	188,900	179,000	9,900
4	Glasgow	4.6	234,800	224,600	10,300
5	Swansea	4.2	210,700	202,300	8,500
6	Derby	4.1	230,200	221,100	9,100
7	Newport	3.7	239,500	230,800	8,600
8	Hull	3.6	142,900	137,900	5,000
9	Sunderland	3.6	157,900	152,500	5,400
10	Wakefield	3.4	217,400	210,200	7,200
10 cities with the greatest reduction in housing price					
54	Gloucester	-2.9	254,900	262,500	-7,600
55	Aberdeen	-2.9	175,500	180,800	-5,300
56	Peterborough	-3.1	254,100	262,300	-8,200
57	Southampton	-3.3	295,500	305,400	-9,900
58	York	-3.6	333,100	345,400	-12,300
59	Oxford	-3.7	549,600	571,000	-21,400
60	Blackburn	-3.8	174,300	181,200	-6,900
61	Cambridge	-5.4	555,500	587,300	-31,800
62	Worthing	-5.6	354,600	375,500	-20,900
63	London	-7.6	629,000	680,500	-51,500
	United Kingdom	-2.7	329,600	338,600	-9,000

Source: Land Registry 2025, Market Trend Data, Price Paid, 2024 and January to October 2025 data; Scottish House Price Statistics 2025, Mean House Prices, 2024 and Q1-Q3 2025 data; Northern Ireland Finance 2025, Land and Property Services, 2024 and Q1-Q3 2025 data. • Note: Outliers and commercial properties removed from Land Registry data.

Housing affordability

Table 15: Housing affordability ratio

Rank	City	Affordability ratio	Average house price, 2025 (£)	Annual wages, 2025 (£)
10 cities with the highest affordability ratio				
1	Oxford	12.5	549,600	44,000
2	Brighton	11.4	465,200	40,600
3	London	11.2	629,000	56,200
4	Bournemouth	10.6	386,700	36,500
5	Slough	10.3	387,000	37,600
6	Cambridge	10.2	555,500	54,500
7	Exeter	10.1	339,000	33,500
8	Bristol	10.1	380,600	37,800
9	Worthing	9.8	354,600	36,100
10	Aldershot	9.6	432,500	44,800
10 cities with the lowest affordability ratio				
54	Barnsley	5.8	187,000	32,100
55	Blackburn	5.7	174,300	30,300
56	Stoke	5.5	173,600	31,400
57	Belfast	5.3	188,900	35,300
58	Dundee	5.2	169,400	32,700
59	Middlesbrough	5.1	172,200	33,500
60	Sunderland	4.9	157,900	32,300
61	Hull	4.8	142,900	29,700
62	Burnley	4.8	144,900	30,300
63	Aberdeen	4.2	175,500	42,200
	United Kingdom	8.2	329,600	40,200

Source: Land Registry 2025, Market Trend Data, Price Paid, 2024 and January to October 2025 data; Scottish House Price Statistics 2025, Mean House Prices, 2024 and Q1-Q3 2025 data; Northern Ireland Finance 2025, Land and Property Services, 2024 and Q1-Q3 2025 data; ONS 2025, Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK: December 2025. • Note: Earnings data is residence-based gross annual pay for all employees (full-time and part-time).

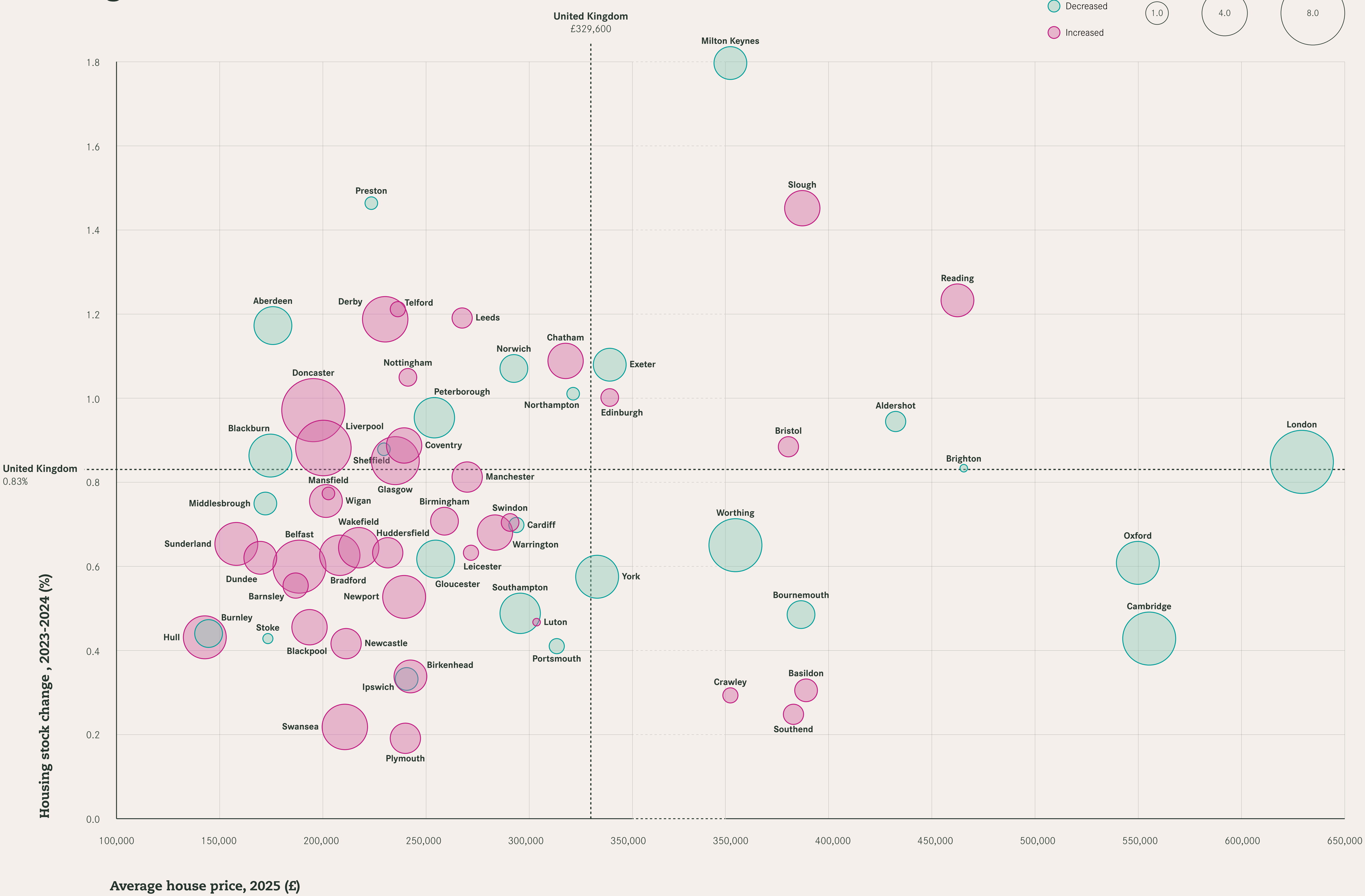
Housing stock growth

Table 16: Housing stock growth

Rank	City	Annual growth, 2023-2024 (%)	Housing stock, 2024	Housing stock, 2023	Absolute change, 2023-2024
10 cities with the highest housing stock growth					
1	Milton Keynes	1.8	124,610	122,410	2,200
2	Preston	1.5	173,240	170,740	2,500
3	Slough	1.5	57,820	56,990	830
4	Reading	1.2	149,510	147,690	1,820
5	Telford	1.2	83,520	82,520	1,000
6	Leeds	1.2	367,720	363,400	4,320
7	Derby	1.2	114,600	113,260	1,340
8	Aberdeen	1.2	125,830	124,370	1,460
9	Chatham	1.1	120,810	119,510	1,300
10	Exeter	1.1	57,420	56,810	610
10 cities with the lowest housing stock growth				-	
54	Stoke	0.4	176,310	175,560	750
55	Newcastle	0.4	402,490	400,820	1,670
56	Portsmouth	0.4	237,540	236,560	980
57	Birkenhead	0.3	152,770	152,260	510
58	Ipswich	0.3	62,040	61,840	200
59	Basildon	0.3	80,250	80,000	250
60	Crawley	0.3	47,400	47,260	140
61	Southend	0.2	160,550	160,150	400
62	Swansea	0.2	181,900	181,500	400
63	Plymouth	0.2	122,500	122,260	240
	United Kingdom	0.8	30,677,170	30,424,200	252,970

Source: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities 2025, Dwelling stock estimates in England: Table 125, 2023 and 2024 data; National Records of Scotland 2025, Housing and Dwellings in Scotland: Table 2, 2023 and 2024 data; Welsh Government dwelling stock estimates by local authority and tenure 2025, 2023 and 2024 data; Northern Ireland Department of Finance 2025, Annual housing stock statistics: Table 1.18, 2023 and 2024 data.

Housing



How to read
House price change, 2024-2025 (%)
Decreased
Increased
1.0
4.0
8.0
United Kingdom
£329,600
United Kingdom
0.83%
Milton Keynes
Slough
Reading
Preston
Aberdeen
Derby
Telford
Leeds
Chatham
Norwich
Exeter
Nottingham
Doncaster
Peterborough
Northampton
Edinburgh
Aldershot
London
Bristol
Blackburn
Liverpool
Coventry
Sheffield
Brighton
Manchester
Mansfield
Glasgow
Middlesbrough
Wigan
Birmingham
Swindon
Cardiff
Worthing
Wakefield
Huddersfield
Oxford
Sunderland
Belfast
Warrington
Leicester
Dundee
Bradford
Gloucester
York
Barnsley
Newport
Southampton
Bournemouth
Cambridge
Burnley
Luton
Hull
Stoke
Newcastle
Blackpool
Portsmouth
Birkenhead
Crawley
Basildon
Ipswich
Southend
Swansea
Plymouth
1.8
1.6
1.4
1.2
1.0
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0.0
Housing stock change , 2023-2024 (%)
100,000
150,000
200,000
250,000
300,000
350,000
350,000
400,000
450,000
500,000
550,000
600,000
650,000
Average house price, 2025 (£)

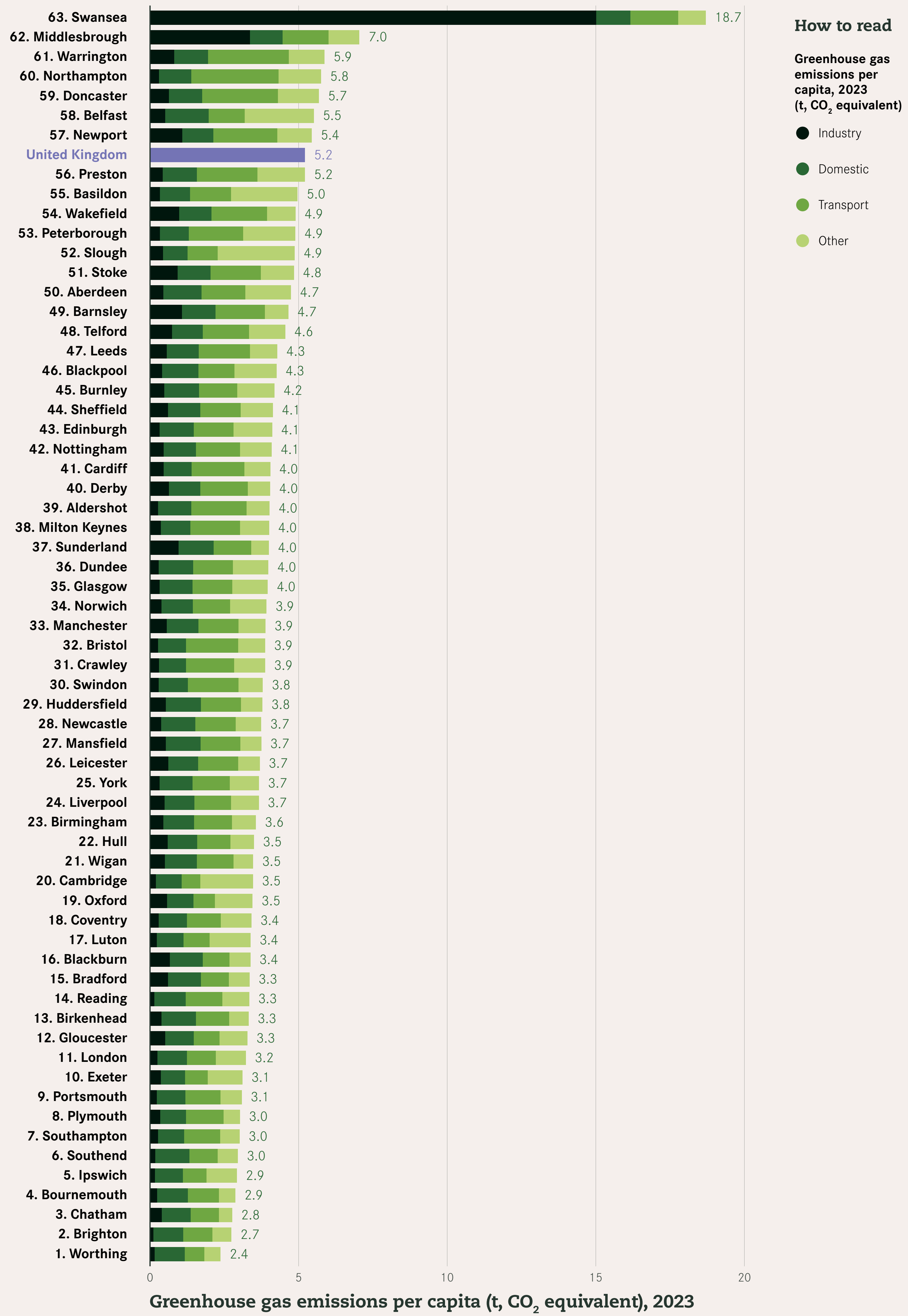
Environment

- Cities are greener than the rest of the country. They accounted for 54 per cent of the total population but only 40 per cent of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions in 2023.
- Cities' per capita emissions from industry and transport were just over half those of non-urban areas in the UK. Domestic emissions per capita were 43 per cent less in cities compared to non-urban areas.
- Domestic emissions make up a quarter of UK city emissions. These are related to the heating needs as well as the energy efficiency of the housing stock. All ten of the cities with the highest domestic emissions per capita are in the North. Meanwhile, all ten of the cities with the lowest domestic emissions are in the South.

Table 17: Total greenhouse gas emissions per capita

Rank	City	Greenhouse gas emissions per capita, 2023 (t)	Greenhouse gas emissions per capita, 2022 (t)	Rank	City	Greenhouse gas emissions per capita, 2023 (t)	Greenhouse gas emissions per capita, 2022 (t)
10 cities with the lowest emissions per capita				10 cities with the highest emissions per capita			
1	Worthing	2.4	2.5	54	Wakefield	4.9	5.3
2	Brighton	2.7	2.9	55	Basildon	5	5.2
3	Chatham	2.8	3.1	56	Preston	5.2	5.4
4	Bournemouth	2.9	3.1	57	Newport	5.4	5.7
5	Ipswich	2.9	3.1	58	Belfast	5.5	5.6
6	Southend	3	3.1	59	Doncaster	5.7	6.4
7	Southampton	3	3.2	60	Northampton	5.8	6.2
8	Plymouth	3	3.2	61	Warrington	5.9	6.3
9	Portsmouth	3.1	3.3	62	Middlesbrough	7	7.6
10	Exeter	3.1	3.5	63	Swansea	18.7	19.2
	United Kingdom					5.2	5.5

Source: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero 2025, Greenhouse gas emissions: local authority and regional, 2022 and 2023 data. • Note: Unit is tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions per capita. Emissions assigned to where production takes place, except energy emissions which are attributed to the place of consumption. Greenhouse gases covered are carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide.



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