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**Coverage**

United Kingdom

**Theme**

Compendia and Reference

## Gender earnings gap in South East more than double Northern Ireland level

### *Regional Trends 39*

The earnings gap between the sexes is greater in the higher-earning South East of England than in lower earning areas of the United Kingdom such as Northern Ireland according to the new edition of *Regional Trends* published today by the Office for National Statistics.

Full-time gross weekly earnings were greatest in London at £575 for men and £483 for women but the gap between the sexes was most marked in the South East where the difference was £128 (men £521, women £393). In the lower earning regions the difference is less with gap in Northern Ireland amounting to £54 (men £410, women £356). Men in Northern Ireland were the lowest paid on average while women in the North East were the lowest paid at £328.

*Regional Trends* shows that diversity exists on many levels. While it is true that regional diversity exists, there is often evidence of greater differences within the regions.

For example, within the North West, house prices in Macclesfield were over £230,000, two and a half times the average in Blackburn with Darwen, at £85,000 in 2004. At the regional level, the average prices were only £9,000 different between the North West and North East at £126,000 and £115,000 respectively. Apart from London and the South East, average dwelling prices were less than £200,000 in all other regions.

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### *\*Regional Trends 39*

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Available free on the National Statistics website:



[www.statistics.gov.uk/regionaltrends39](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/regionaltrends39)

London had the highest levels of income of any region averaging £296 per person per week. However, London had the highest proportion of individuals in both the highest and lowest 20 per cent income group after taking account of housing costs in 2003/04 (over one-quarter in each group).

*Regional Trends* seeks to contribute to decision making at national, local and European level, and to inform debate about the current state of the nation. It brings together data from a wide range of sources, both from within government and outside, to give a comprehensive statistical picture of the countries and regions of the United Kingdom.

This year's edition also includes three feature articles, focusing on differences in regional economic performance, a regional perspective to deprivation and ethnicity in England and on profiling areas using the new National Statistics Area Classification.

### **New research**

The first article identifies the main factors that determine the variation between regions' economic performance, as measured by Gross Value Added (GVA) per resident. It shows that differences in commuting, employment and economic activity rates explain a large part of regional variation. Therefore, the difference in underlying productivity between the highest and lowest performing regions, as measured by GVA per hour worked, is actually less than half of the difference measured by GVA per resident. As a result, in terms of GVA per hour worked, the North East's productivity is close to the UK average, whereas the region appears to be among the lowest performing in terms of GVA per resident person.

The article on using the National Statistics Area Classification shows that around 30 per cent of people in the East Midlands live in relatively affluent areas. Typically, these areas have above average proportions of detached housing and households with two or more cars. The region has more households consisting of two adults with no, or non-dependent children than the UK average.

However, the proportions of people using public transport to work and households living in flats are far below the UK average. The East Midlands has the highest percentage of individuals living in these areas, categorised as Supergroup 4. The article describes the characteristics of different types of area and their distribution across the country.

### **Regional themes**

*Regional Trends* looks at a wide range of subjects, ranging from the environment and the economy to education.

### **Environment**

Households in the North West produced the most waste, at 26 kilos (kg) a week in 2003/04, and London the least with 20 kg each week. In England, the amount of waste reduced slightly by 0.6 kg per household per week between 2002/03 and 2003/04, although the amount produced in Wales increased across the four year period from 23 in 2000/01 to 24 kg per household in 2003/04.

The North East recycled the lowest proportion of household waste at only 12 per cent in 2003/04, although between 2002/03 and 2003/04 this region had the greatest increase, 5 percentage points, in the amount recycled.

### **Regional economy**

In terms of its contribution to the economy, London had the highest gross value added (GVA) per head of over £22,200 in 2004, but there was a slight narrowing of the range compared with the UK average. In 2004 London was 32 per cent above the average with the North East 20 per cent below on residence-based estimates. The East of England and South East were the only other regions with GVA per head above the national average by 9 and 16 per cent respectively.

### **Household expenditure**

Total household expenditure per person was highest in the South East at £204 per week, with London £10 below this. The largest



single item in most areas was transport, accounting for between 13 and 16 per cent of household expenditure, ranging from £47 to over £73 per week.

Wales, the North East and North West each spent a further 15 per cent of their expenditure on recreation and culture each week, more than £50 per week in each case. All regions, with the exception of London, spent more on recreation and culture than they did on housing. Housing costs in London are considerably higher than elsewhere, with households spending £20 per week above the national average.

### **Households**

Co-habiting was highest in the South East and South West, each with over 30 per cent of non-married people aged between 16 and 59 living together.

Between 1981 and 2003 the greatest growth in number of households was in the East and South West, each increased by 30 per cent to 2.3 and 2.1 million respectively. The South East was the region with the highest number of households, 3.4 million in 2003 and also had the highest projected growth of 20 per cent to just over 4 million by 2021.

### **Travel**

There was a slight decrease in the distance each person travelled per year by car in Great Britain between 2002/03 and 2003/04. The South East had the largest decrease of 242 miles between the two years (4 per cent reduction). Four regions showed slight increases in this period, ranging from the North West (21 miles) to Wales (243 miles).

Air travel has increased substantially over the last few years, the largest increase being at Stansted airport in the East where there has been a four-fold increase between 1998 and 2004 to over 17 million scheduled international passengers. Regional airports of Edinburgh, Bristol and East Midlands have more than doubled their international passenger numbers over the same time period.

### **Mortality**



Death rates continue to decline in all areas. In 2003, there were 10.3 deaths per 1,000 population for the UK overall. Rates were lowest in London (7.8) and Northern Ireland (8.5) compared with 11.6 and 11.5 per 1,000 population in Scotland and Wales respectively. Cancer remains a relatively common cause of death, accounting for over one-quarter of each region's mortality rate in 2003.

Heart disease is also a major cause of death, with more than 200 male deaths per 100,000 population in the North East, North West, Wales and Scotland during 2003. Female deaths from heart disease were somewhat lower, ranging from 134 in the South East to 193 in Scotland.

### **Crime**

The number of recorded criminal offences reduced by 7 per cent for England between 2003/04 and 2004/05. All regions except Scotland showed reductions in number of recorded offences, ranging from just over 1 per cent in the South East to nearly 14 per cent in Yorkshire and the Humber. Burglary was down by over 17 per cent overall, Yorkshire and the Humber showing the most improvement of 28 per cent between the two years. In the northern regions of England and the midlands rates reduced by about 20 per cent.

### **Education**

Educational qualification achieved at GCSE or Scottish equivalent levels continued to increase throughout the UK over the last few years, with 54 per cent of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A\*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) in 2003/04. Less than 5 per cent of pupils did not obtain a graded qualification. Northern Ireland with 60 per cent, Scotland with just over and the South East just under 58 per cent, had the largest proportion of pupils achieving these higher grades.

## **BACKGROUND NOTES**

1. This News Release contains a summary of some of the key points for each country and region. The data contained in Regional Trends 39 will be available electronically, free of charge, from the National Statistics website: [www.statistics.gov.uk/regionaltrends39](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/regionaltrends39)



2. A wider selection of regional and local authority information is also available via the Regional Snapshot web page which has been updated to coincide with Regional Trends:  
[www.statistics.gov.uk/regionalsnapshot](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/regionalsnapshot)
3. Also being released at the same time as Regional Trends is a new 'Strategic Framework for Regional Statistics' which covers the future goals and strategies to improve the availability and understanding of relevant regional statistics. This is available on the web site via the Regional Snapshot page.
4. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
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