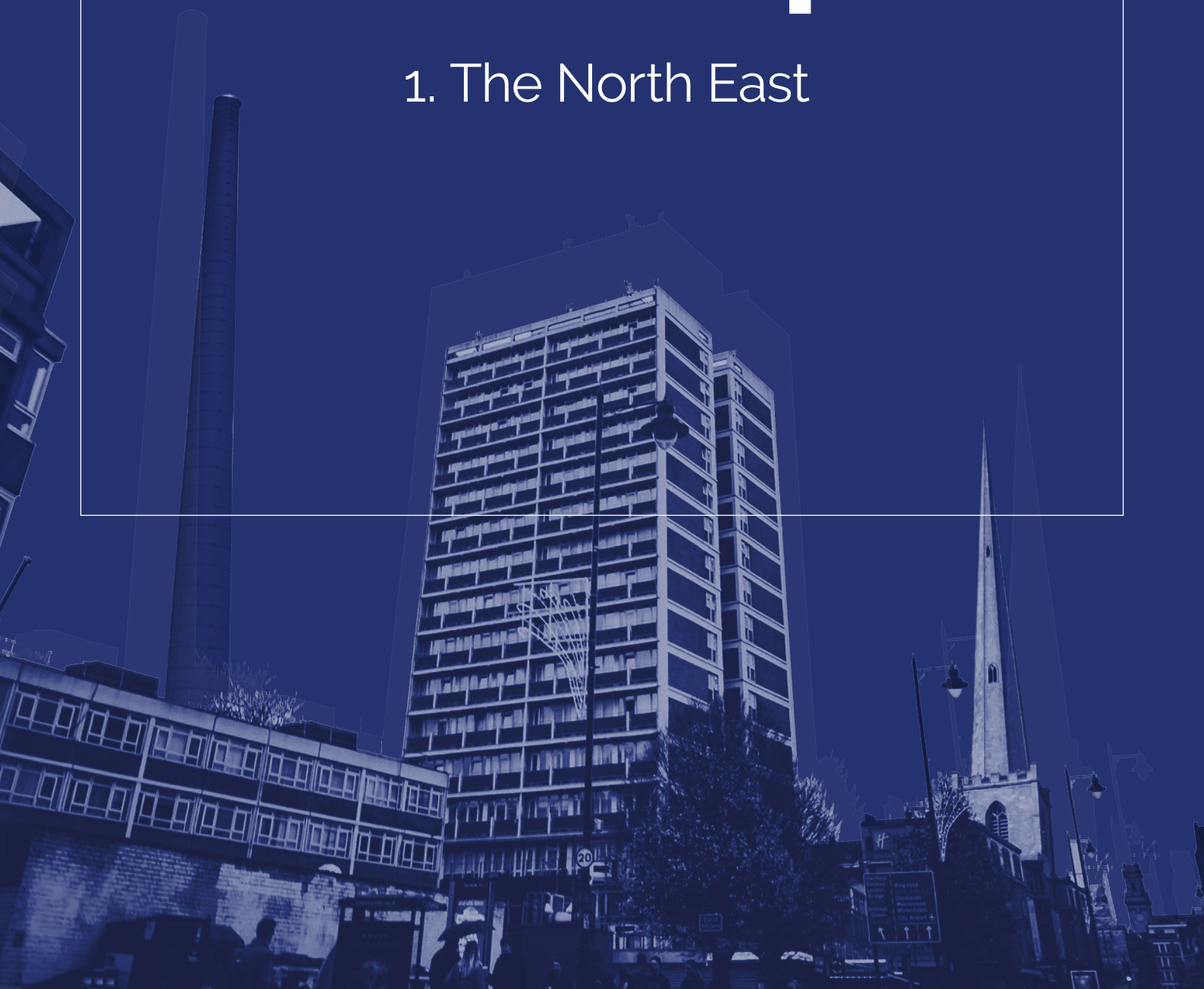


Policy Report Series

# Townscapes

## 1. The North East





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# Foreword by Michael Kenny

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**The declining economic fortunes of many towns, and the chasm that divides the experiences and outlooks of many of their inhabitants from the metropolitan centres where wealth and power have become concentrated, are issues of growing interest in political life and public policy.**

In the UK, the preponderance of support for Brexit among town-dwellers, and the countervailing values of many young urbanites, has sparked a deep debate about how and why towns are locked out of the circuits of growth in the modern economy, and how the inequalities associated with economic geography can be more effectively tackled.

The *Townscapes* project launched at the Bennett Institute brings together a variety of different data sources to offer a deeper analysis of how towns are faring across the regions and nations of Britain. It aims to step away from the generalisations and dogmas that infuse much of the contemporary policy debate and offer instead a more finely grained picture of how different towns relate to their wider regions and nations, as well as to their nearest cities. It showcases the merits of a more granular and regionally rooted perspective for our understanding of geographical inequalities and the kinds of policy needed to address them.

Analysts at the Bennett Institute have pulled together a variety of different data sources - from the ONS, Ordnance Survey and National Records of Scotland - and created new indicators to measure the relative economic performance of towns, and compile a picture of changes in levels of public service provision. Specifically we have compiled an **Improvement Index** for all towns which measures relative changes across a basket of economic and demographic indicators and separate **Public Services Indices** which supply a picture of changes to service provision in areas like health, education, transport and infrastructure.<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of these findings, we argue that policy makers need to consider multiple town categorisations, to get beneath the broad groupings that have become so dominant in this debate such as 'university', 'coastal', or 'post-industrial' towns. Instead we adopt a more useful data-driven typology developed by the ONS (2019) to contrast the fortunes of 'working', 'partially residential' and 'residential' towns in different parts of the country, and explore the crucial importance for many towns of their geographical distance from large urban centres.

These reports bust some of the prevalent myths about towns and their fortunes since the recession of 2007-08, and lead us towards a better appreciation of the very different circumstances and factors which affect the lives and opportunities of those who live in them. In addition to the insight and evidence which each supplies, we point policy-makers to ideas and proposals that are tailored to the regional and national circumstances which are pertinent to the townscapes of modern Britain.

*Professor Michael Kenny*  
*Director of the Bennett Institute, Cambridge University*

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1. These measures are developed drawing on the work of Pike et al (2016) and Jennings and Stoker (2019).

## The North East - Key Findings

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- The North East is one of the country's weakest and most deprived regional economies. Most of its towns have experienced faster economic and demographic decline than the average town in Britain.
- About two thirds of the region's towns have levels of household deprivation higher than the mean average for British towns.
- The urban cluster around Newcastle, Middlesbrough and Sunderland has not generated as much economic growth for surrounding towns as other regions, even though it is unusual in how close most of its towns are to the nearest city centre – the usual agglomeration effects are not operating.
- The North East towns with the fastest economic and population growth are those with the greatest access to health services.
- Compared to towns in other regions, the North East's towns have fewer nurseries and pre/after school clubs, and more Job Centres and police stations.

# Introduction

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The North East of England has many of the ingredients associated with economic decline. Declining industries such as manufacturing, mining, steel production and shipbuilding mean that this region houses a number of towns facing hard times. Its three major cities - Newcastle, Middlesbrough and Sunderland - are geographically clustered in a single urban centre in the region. Given the relatively poor economic performance of these cities, it is perhaps no surprise that surrounding towns in this region have not been faring well (Martin et al., 2019).

This briefing reports that many towns in the North East have experienced worse decline on several economic and demographic measures than most towns across Britain. Increases in the number of businesses and population levels are often low for towns in the North East. This report supports findings from the Centre for Towns (2018) showing that the North East's towns have had some of the worst population growth in Britain. In fact a 7% decline in population in its 'large towns' between 1981 and 2011.

Towns in the region also have more household deprivation than the British average. Almost two thirds are above average on this measure. The high level of deprivation, coupled with the population decline, highlights an important challenge facing the UK as a whole: **towns cannot be buoyed by nearby cities if their nearest city has not itself had significant economic growth**. The Centre for Cities (2018) recently reported findings that unemployment in a town is not related to how close it is to a city, but rather with the productivity levels of that city. Sunderland, Newcastle and Middlesbrough are not providing the kind of economic spill-overs to their nearby towns that other more economically vibrant cities offer towns elsewhere in Britain.

However, in their levels of public service provision, the North East's towns are much more typical. There are no significant differences from other regions in the transport links or health services. However, tellingly, towns in the North East have significantly more Job Centres and police stations yet fewer nursery schools and after school clubs than others. Many nurseries and childcare centres rely on income from parents beyond state funding. These lower levels of nursery provision thus both reflect and reinforce the economic disadvantages faced by people in the region. Meanwhile, higher provision of Job Centres reflects a relatively high rate of unemployment.

**Image, above:** Angel of the North, 2000



# Economic Performance of the North East's Towns

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The context in the North East is complicated by unsettled system of governance. The Tees Valley Combined Authority and the North of the Tyne Combined Authority now have elected mayors. However, the North of the Tyne authority is the product of a fracture in the larger North East Combined Authority – which is still without an elected mayor. This fracture means that the upcoming local industrial strategy – a great opportunity for governing bodies to include locally tailored strategies in their policy thinking – will be delivered along a different boundary to those of these Combined Authorities. The North East LEP will deliver a 'North East' local industrial strategy which should be beneficial to the Combined Authorities. But the challenge arising from different governing bodies having overlapping boundaries and legislative powers is a considerable one.

Politics in the North East reflect the town/city divide identified by Jennings and Stoker (2016). For example, the 2017 election saw Newcastle and Middlesbrough won by Labour with large majorities while the Conservative party won seats in the towns of Hexham and Berwick-upon-Tweed. The Conservatives also experienced a favourable swing in other town-based constituencies. Thus Labour's majority in Bishop Auckland was cut from 3,508 to 502 votes while the Conservative vote share in Blyth Valley and Hartlepool had more than doubled since 2005. The region remains dominated by support for the Labour party, however, and the newly elected Mayor for the North of the Tyne Combined Authority is a Labour party member.

These patterns are related to rates of economic decline across constituencies (Jennings & Stoker, 2019). We have created an *Improvement Index* (Figure 1) to help understand these declines for towns in the North East. Figure 1 shows that: **in the North East only nine out of its 23 towns score higher than the British average.**

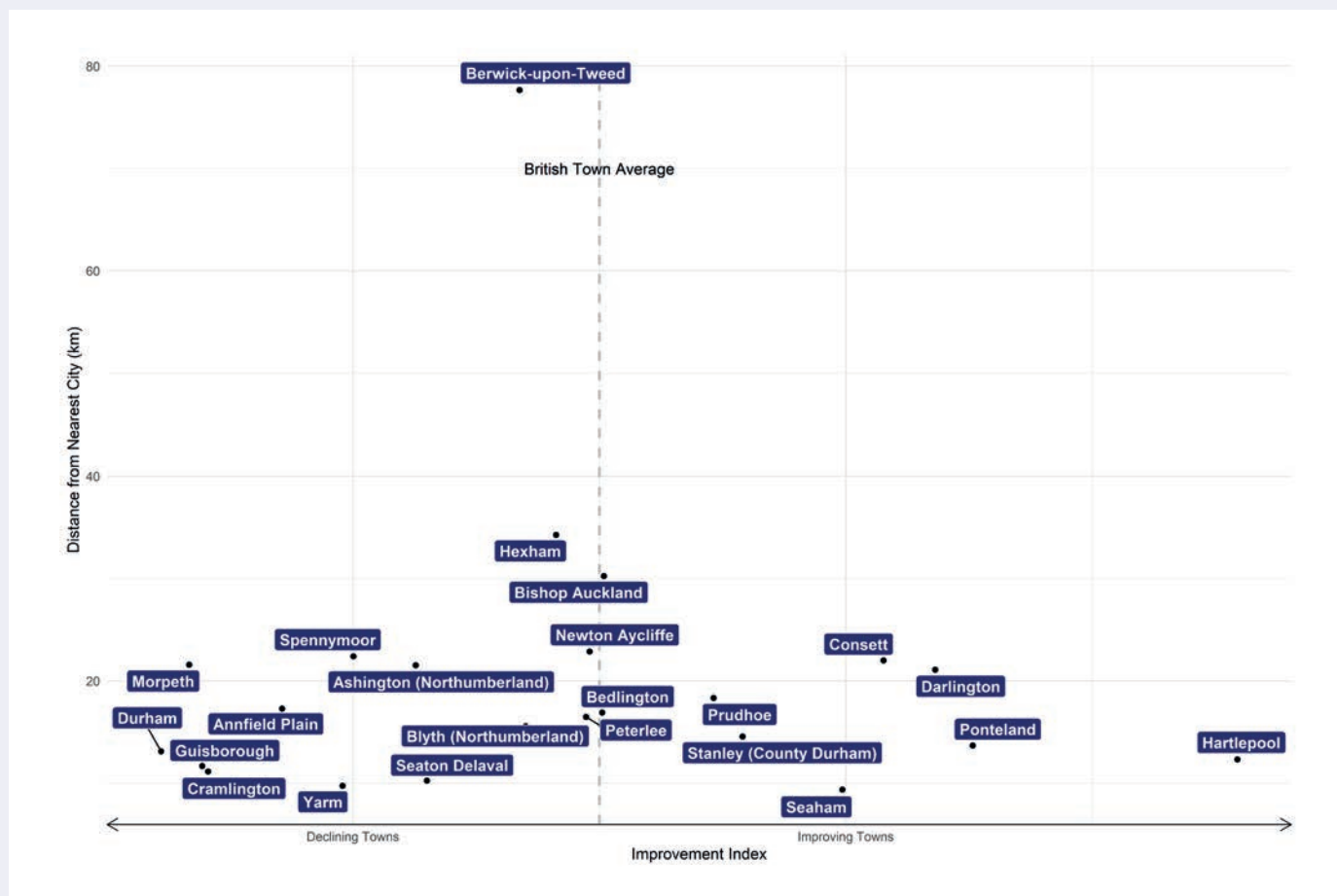
## The Improvement Index

- The Improvement Index is a measure of town improvement or decline, relative to the average for British towns.
- The index reports changes in five indicators: population levels, youth population (15-19 year old %), education (NVQ Level 3+ %), business counts and employment levels (%).
- Changes are between the two censuses of 2001 and 2011, although business counts changes are measured between 2010 and 2016.
- Changes for each of the five indicators are standardised and added to create the index.
- This is a revised version of an index developed by Pike et al. (2016) and Jennings & Stoker (2019) but is applied here at the Built-Up Area (BUA) geographic scale.

# Economic Performance of the North East's Towns

**Figure 1:**

Improvement or Decline in North East Towns and Distance from City



**Figure 1.**

Notes: Towns are any Built-Up Area with an estimated 2016 population of 10,000-175,000.

**Source:** Census 2011; Office for National Statistics – UK Business: Activity, Size and Location; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Scotland's Census 2011.





The region's largest town, Hartlepool, scores considerably better than the rest of the North East in the *improvement index* – although it is only 14<sup>th</sup> best in Britain. Hartlepool's score is due to relatively high increases in the number of businesses and population levels. Ponteland, one of the smallest towns, also scores very well. Ponteland's success reflects its large increase in its further education (level 3 qualification) rate compared to the other towns in the North East. Meanwhile, Durham, despite being cited as an example of an affluent 'University Town', is experiencing relative decline based on these measures. Adverse changes in education and employment rates in Durham between 2001 and 2011 mean that it does not score well on this index.

Figure 1 also shows that many of the towns in the North East are very close to their nearest city centre.<sup>2</sup> Only three towns are further than 30km from a city. Berwick-upon-Tweed clearly stands out as the only considerably isolated town. This simple measure of connectivity indicates that the North East, more than other regions, should provide most towns with access to a larger economic hub. However, poor performances for towns in the *Improvement Index* points to the impact of the relative weakness of the region's cities and the inadequate resilience of local economies in the North East.

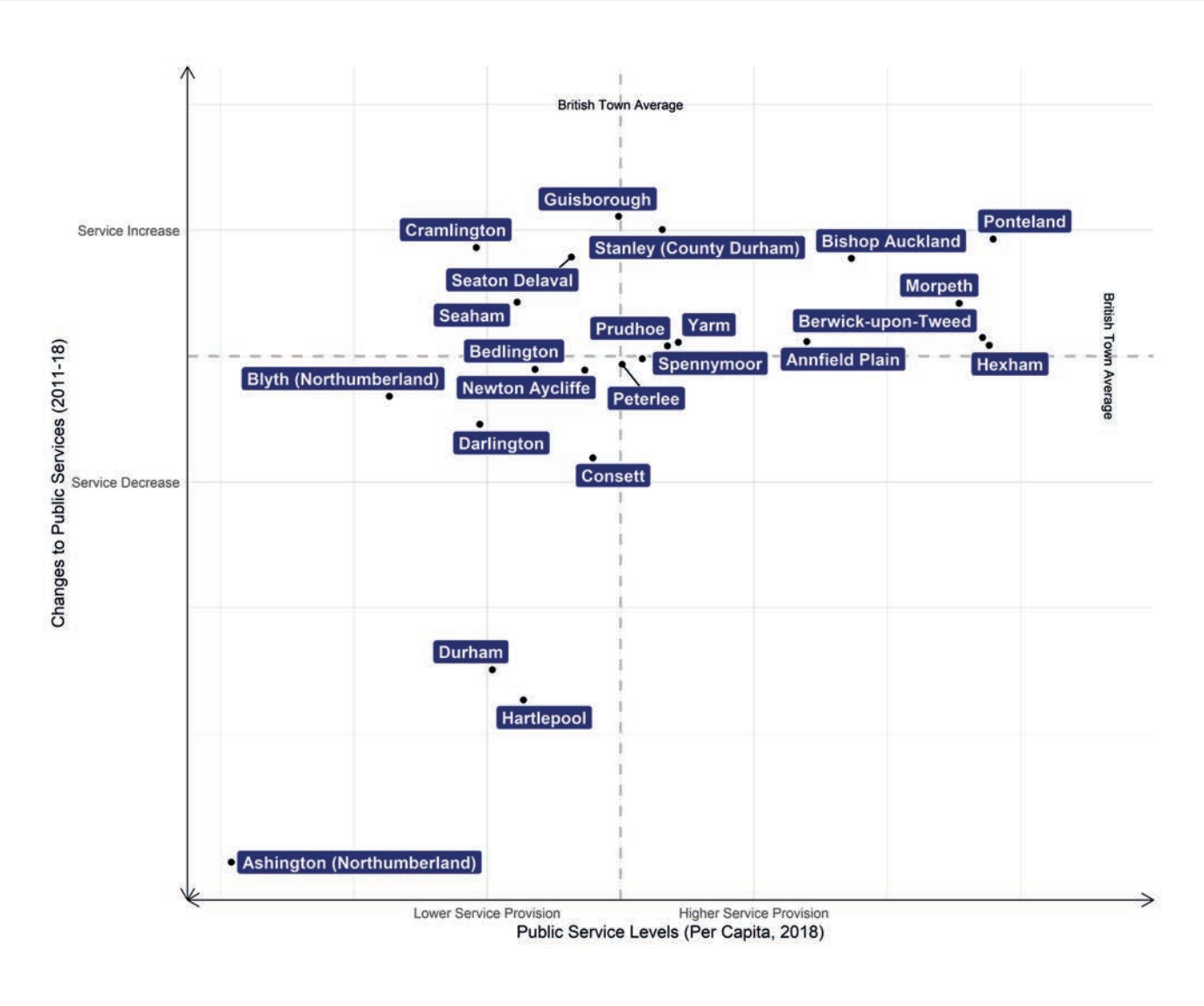
**Image, above:** Durham Cathedral, 2006

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2. 'Distance from Nearest City' measures the straight-line distance between geographic centres of a town and its nearest city.

# Economic Performance of the North East's Towns

**Figure 2:**  
Public Services in North East Towns: Changes and Per Capita Provision



**Figure 2.**  
**Source:** Office for National Statistics – Mid-Year Population Estimates; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Ordnance Survey – Points of Interest (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252)); National Records of Scotland – Mid-Year Population estimates.



We also construct two public service indices, shown in figure 2. In the North East, three towns stand out for suffering poor public service provision. Ashington, in particular, scores poorly across the board. Ashington's aggregate score in public service levels is the second lowest in Britain and it does not score above average in any public service. Equally, Ashington has experienced bigger losses in public services than the British average: there were fewer GPs, bus stops, health services and schools in 2018 than in 2011.

However, overall, it seems that the North East does not score particularly badly on the *public service indices*. Four of the smallest towns in the region stand out as having more access to public services per person than other towns. These all have different strengths. Ponteland has a large number of GPs per person; Hexham and Morpeth score well in terms of the number of health providers; and Berwick-upon-Tweed has the second most number of schools per person

of any town in Britain.<sup>3</sup> Ponteland also has relative increases in their provision since 2011. The town has gained eight more bus stops as well as six more health-related services.

### Public Service Indices

- The public service indices are measures intending to capture the relative density of, and changes to, public service provision in British towns.
- There are two separate measures:
  1. 'Public Service Levels' reports the per capita number of: GPs, schools, nursery schools, bus stops, community halls, post boxes and health services.
  2. 'Changes to Public Services' counts changes in the numbers of GPs, schools, nursery schools, bus stops, community halls, police stations and health services between 2011 and 2018.
- For both measures, each indicator is standardised and summed to create an index score.
- These measures cannot indicate the quality of public service provision, nor the accessibility, as such a high score is not necessarily better than a low score.

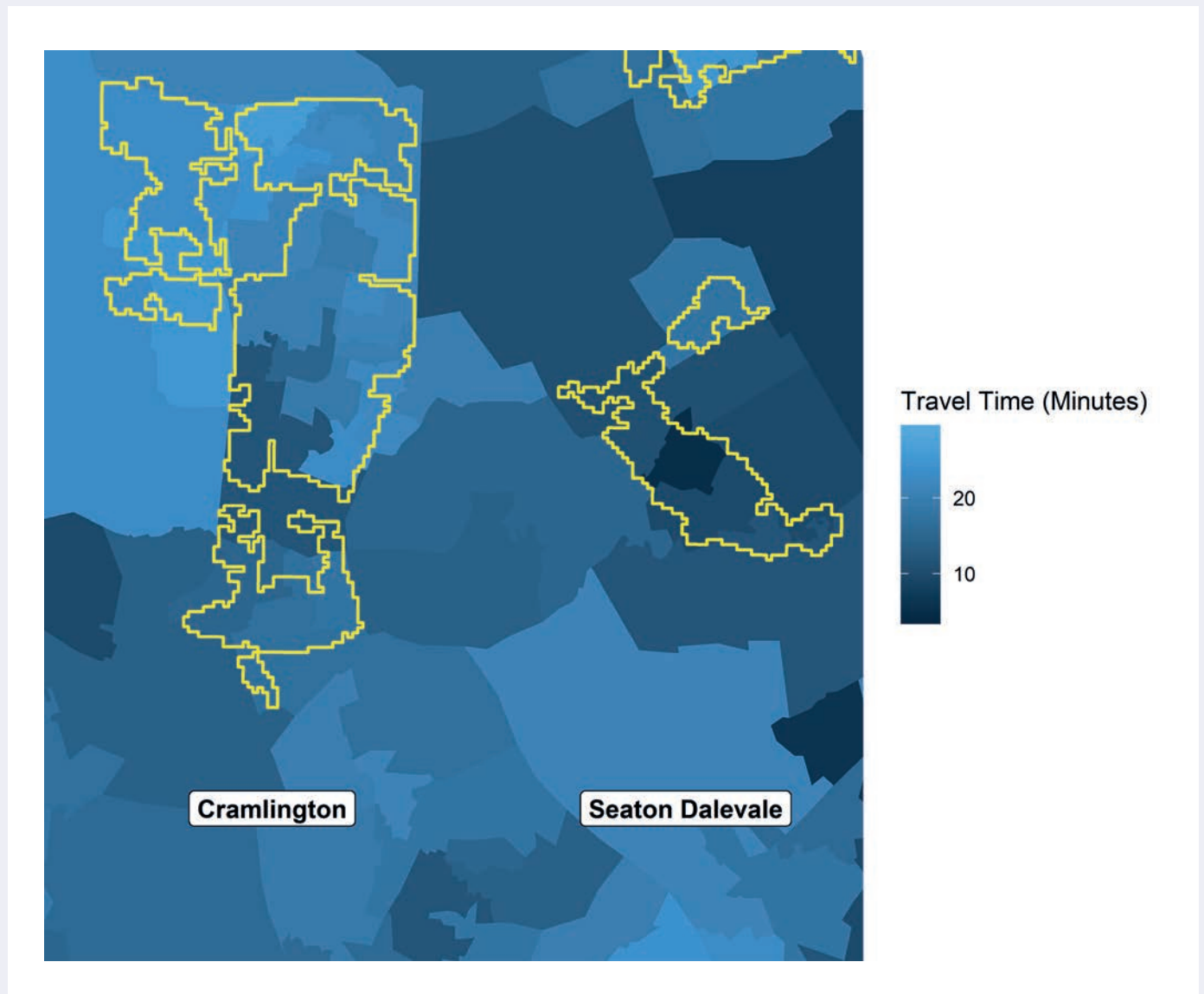
**Image, above:** Market stall in Berwick-upon-Tweed, 2006

3. It may be the case that the number of services in a town does not represent the amount of provision as we have no means for measuring the size, funding or demand for these services.

# Economic Performance of the North East's Towns

**Figure 3:**

Journey Time to Secondary Schools in Cramlington and Seaton Dalevale



**Figure 3.**

**Notes:** Travel time from each LSOA population centre to the nearest secondary school via public transport or walking.

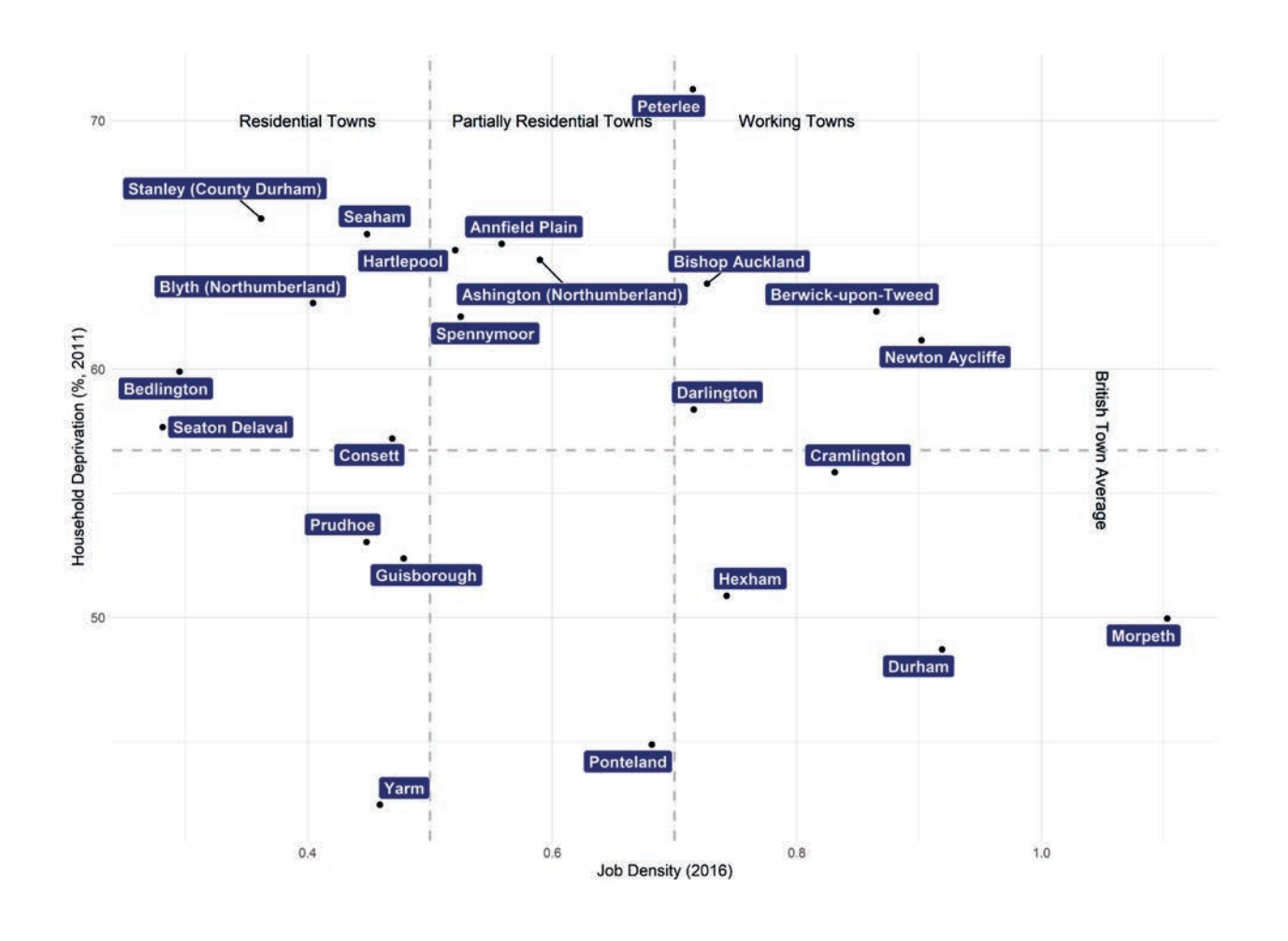
**Source:** Department for Transport - Journey Time Statistics, 2016. Office for National Statistics – Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2.

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The public service indices are based on the number of services, such as schools, in each town. We cannot make any firm conclusions on the basis of this data about the accessibility, quality or efficiency of these services. But we can draw some conclusions about the time it takes to reach them. As figure 3 shows, travel duration varies a lot - even for residents from the same town. Seaton Dalevale, a town with 0.5 schools per 1000 population has a population which mostly has a 10 minute journey to its nearest school. Whereas Cramlington, with 0.3 schools per 1000 residents, has many less geographically accessible schools. Some pupils living within the town's boundary may have a 30 minute journey to school.

# Economic Performance of the North East's Towns

**Figure 4:**  
Job Density and Deprivation Rate



**Figure 4.**  
**Source:** Census 2011, Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey; Mid-Year Population Estimates; Scotland's Census, 2011; National Records of Scotland – Mid-Year Population Estimates.



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Figure 4 builds on research undertaken by the ONS (2019) which reveals that many towns in England and Wales are largely 'residential' in nature – with different features and functions to 'working' towns.<sup>4</sup> The North East has both kinds. Morpeth is the only one with more jobs than residents, indicating that many people commute into the town to work. Meanwhile this is the only measure on which Durham does well. It has lots of jobs per resident and relatively low levels of deprivation despite the closing of all collieries in this former mining town.

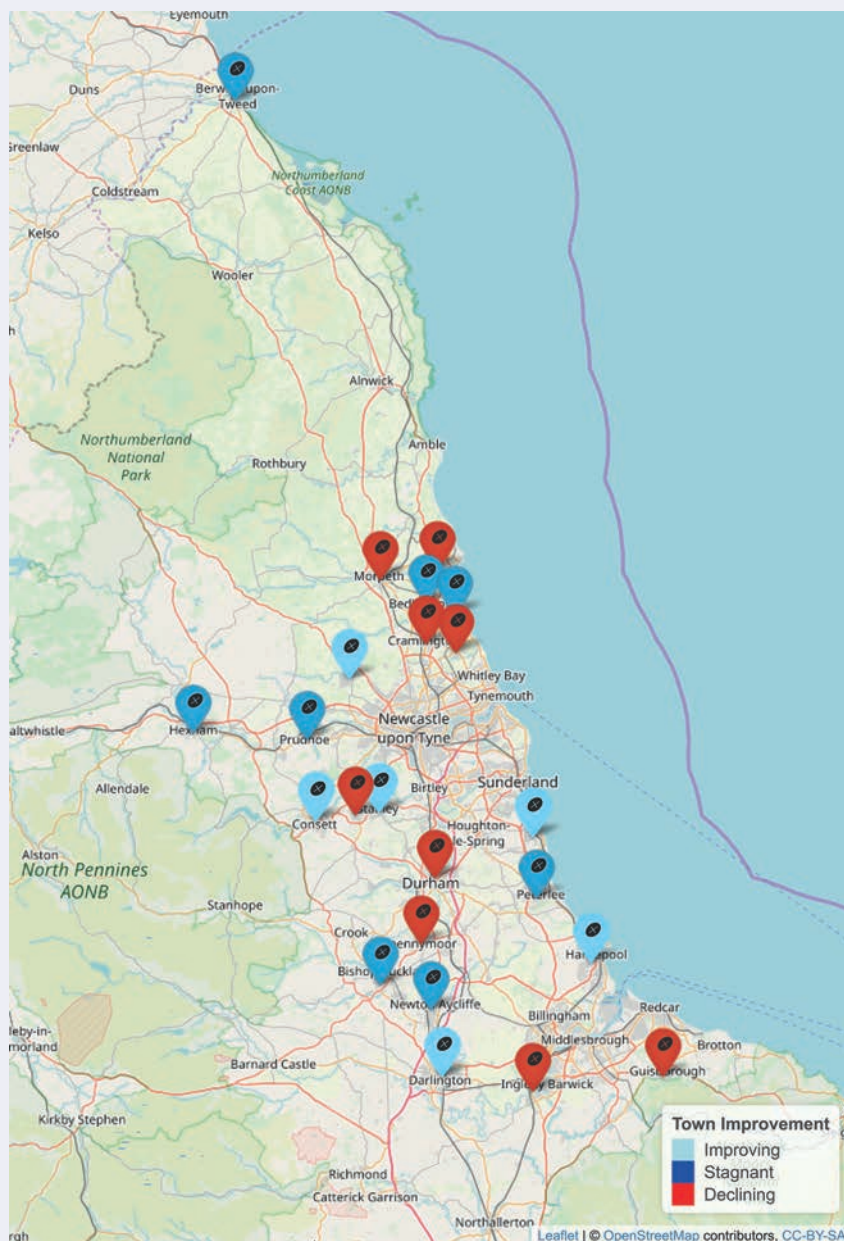
**Many towns in the North East have higher rates of deprivation than the British average.** The y-axis in Figure 4 indicates that only a handful have lower deprivation rates than the average British town.<sup>5</sup> In Peterlee, over 70% of households have at least one form of educational, employment, housing or health deprivation. Peterlee has a mediocre score on the *improvement index*. Meanwhile Ponteland appears again as one of the better performing towns – its high levels of relative improvement are matched by its relatively low levels of deprivation.

**The complexity and nuance of a town's situation are better understood by combining these measures.** Yarm is a town which highlights the different information reported by the *improvement index* and the household deprivation rate. Although it is largely residential and has low levels of deprivation, the town is declining relative to others. It has experienced a significant decline in its number of young residents. Yarm may well be experiencing a different kind of decline, however, to that of places like Spennymoor. Both towns have the same poor score in changes to their youth population but with very different deprivation rates it is unlikely that the decline in Yarm will have the same impact as that in Spennymoor. Consequently, in developing an understanding of how towns are doing and what their needs are, **it is important to use a combination of town performance measures including: improvement/decline; absolute levels of economic outcomes; demographic differences; and services/infrastructure.**

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4. Distinction between working, partially residential and residential towns is made based on the 'job density' in a town. Job density is total employment in a town divided by its estimated population. This typology was created by the ONS (2019) to express the different functions of towns.
5. Deprivation rate data is taken from the Census and is counted as any household that contains at least one of the following: an unemployed/ long-term sick member; no member with at least level 2 qualifications; a member with 'bad or very bad' health; no central heating or is overcrowded.

# Economic Performance of the North East's Towns

**Figure 5:**  
Index of Town Improvement

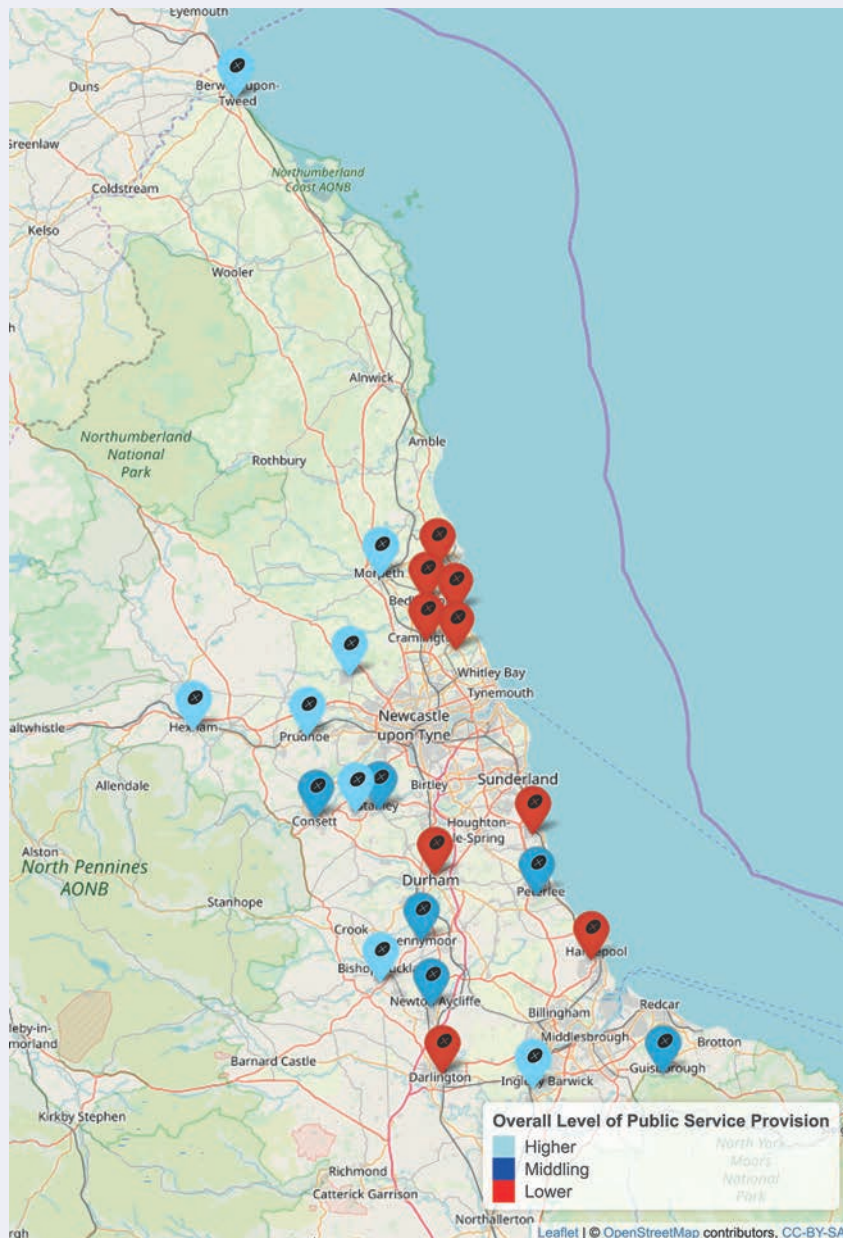


**Figure 5.**

**Notes:** These relative indices are aggregates of standardised measures. Light Blue markers have an Improvement Index score  $> 1\sigma$ , red markers have a total of  $< 1\sigma$ .

**Source:** Census 2011; Scotland's Census, 2011; Office for National Statistics – UK Business: Activity, Size and Location; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2.

**Figure 6:**  
Public Service Levels



**Figure 6.**

**Notes:** These relative indices are aggregates of standardised measures. Light blue markers have a total score > 1, red markers have a total of <1.

**Source:** Office for National Statistics – Mid Year Population Estimates; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Ordnance Survey – Points of Interest (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252)); National Records of Scotland – Mid-Year Population Estimates.

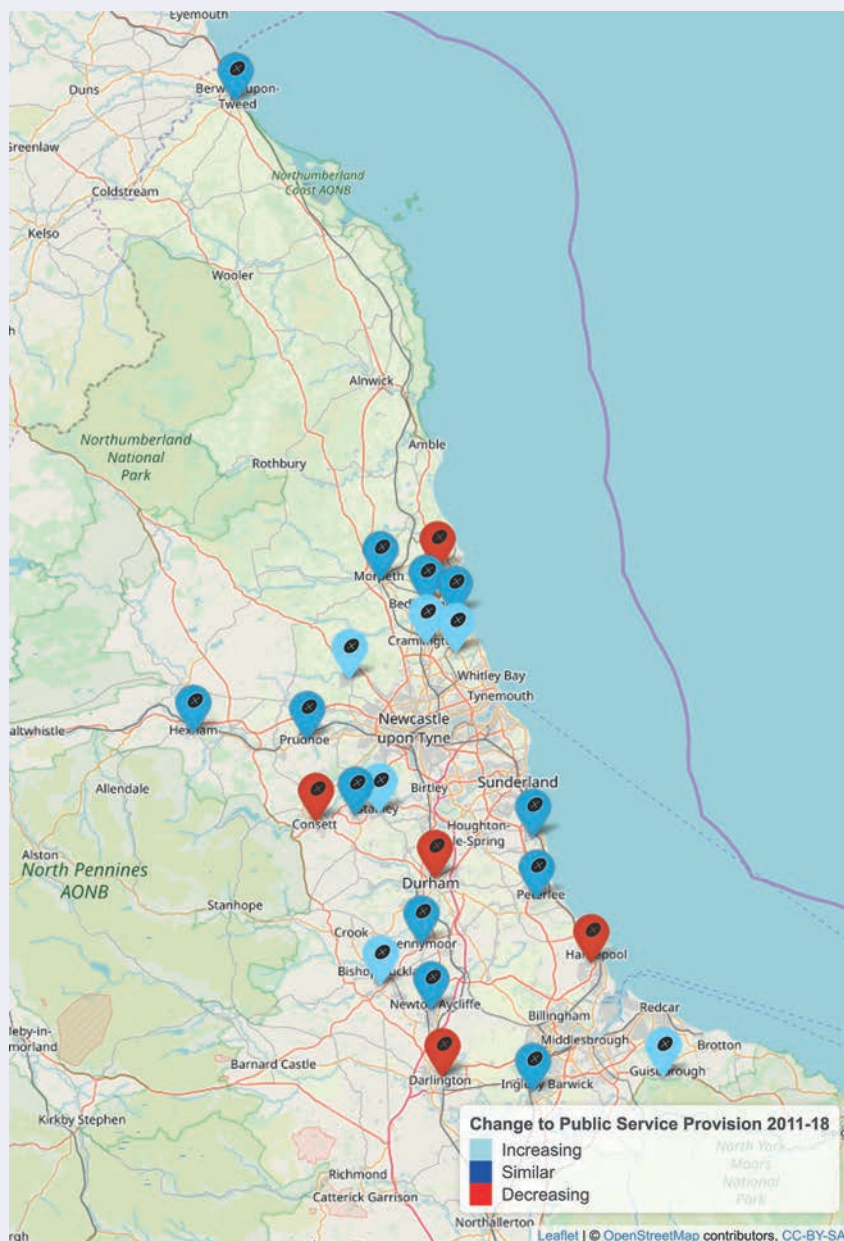
The clearest geographical concentration in the relative public service and town improvement indicators set out in Figures 5 and 6 concerns the four towns to the south of Northumberland - just north of Newcastle. Cramlington, Seaton Delaval, Ashington and Blyth all score lower than

average in terms of public services and the index of improvement. They stand in sharp contrast to Morpeth – only a few miles away – which scores above average for public service provision. Morpeth is also a 'working town' and has lower than average levels of deprivation.



# Economic Performance of the North East's Towns

**Figure 7:**  
Changes to Public Service Levels

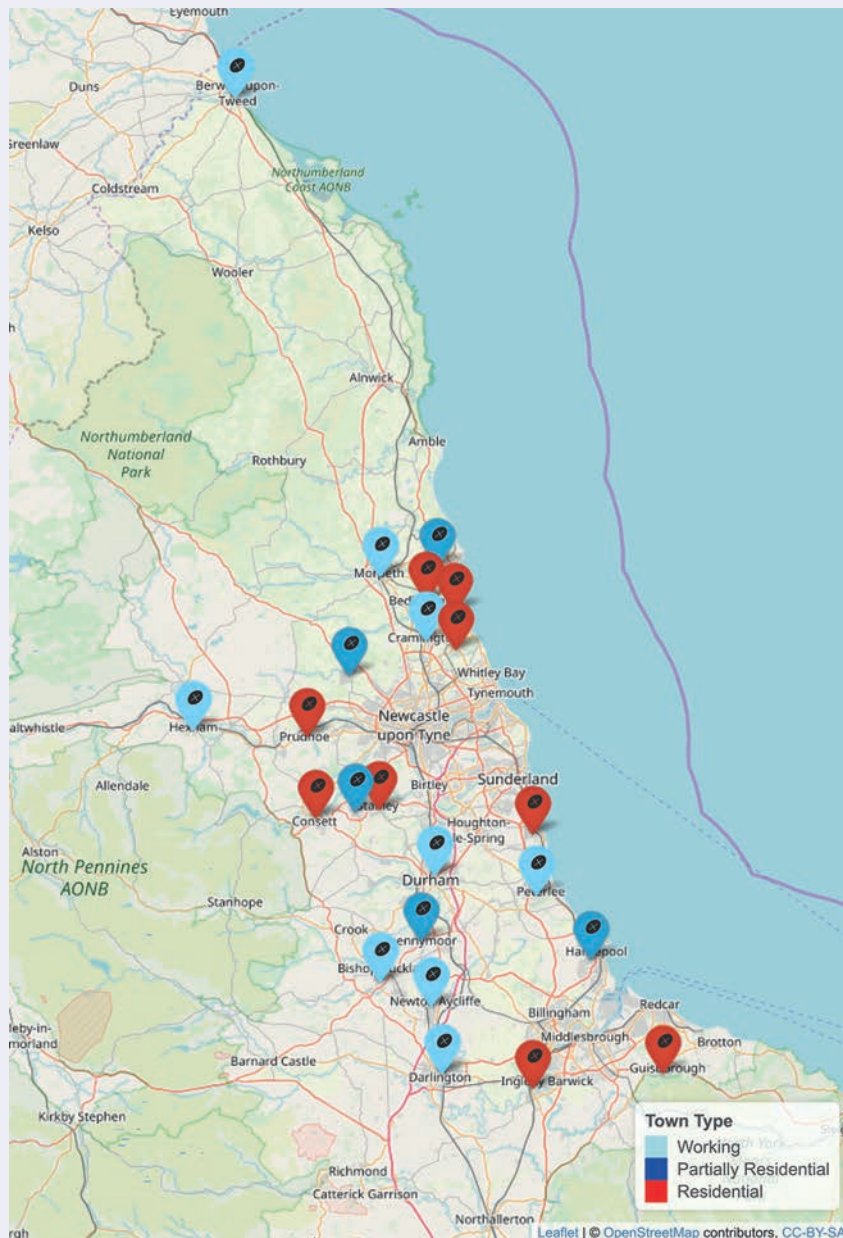


**Figure 7.**

**Notes:** These relative indices are aggregates of standardised measures. Light blue markers have a total score  $> 1$ , red markers have a total of  $< 1$ .

**Source:** Office for National Statistics – Mid Year Population Estimates; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Ordnance Survey – Points of Interest (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252)); National Records of Scotland – Mid-Year Population Estimates.

**Figure 8:**  
Residential-Working Town Typology



**Figure 8.**  
**Notes:** 'Residential towns' are all towns with fewer than 0.5 jobs per resident, 'working towns' have greater than 0.7 jobs per resident.  
**Source:** Census 2011; Scotland's Census, 2011; National Records of Scotland, Mid-Year Population Estimates; Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey; Mid-Year Population Estimates.

Figure 8 provides a visual representation of some of the effects of 'agglomeration' on surrounding towns. Most of the towns surrounding the large city areas of Newcastle and Middlesbrough are 'residential towns' with many residents commuting into work in

the cities. This data suggests that towns located near cities are less likely to have high levels of job-creating activity within their boundaries even though many residents are employed.

## Public Service Provision in the North East

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Overall, towns in the North East are fairly typical in terms of the density of their public services. However, each town has its nuances worth exploring. Spennymoor has one of the worst *improvement index* scores in the North East and above-average levels of deprivation. The town also has a sparse public service provision. The nearest train station, hospital and college are a 50-minute bus journey away in Bishop Auckland. Meanwhile, Cramlington is a town with over 30,000 people living in it. It has no dedicated mental health provider, further education college, hospital or train station – the latter two services fall just outside the boundary used in our analysis.

These examples can usefully be compared to one of the small towns also scoring poorly in the *improvement index* – Morpeth. It is a small town with 14,500 inhabitants but provides a library, a train station, a mental health service, eight schools, six children's nurseries and a total of 50 health providers. These cases represent the 'postcode lottery' in public services in different towns in the region.

There have also been important changes to public services in towns in this part of the country. Ashington, the town which scores worst in the public service index, has experienced closures and a decline in service provision. The closure of two middle schools in 2015 to reform the education system into a two-tier format was criticised by parents (Daniel, 2014). The 'old fire station site' was replaced by a community centre and MOT testing centre (Black, 2013). Plans to scrap some free school bus services in 2014 may explain the loss of a reported 15 bus stops in that year (Lognonne, 2014). However, the story of its recent public services experience is not only one of decline. Ashington is among the one in eight towns in Britain to have seen an increase in the number of nursery schools over the last 10 years – with the LittleLearners centre at Ashington Central First School opening in 2015 (ChronicleLive, 2015).

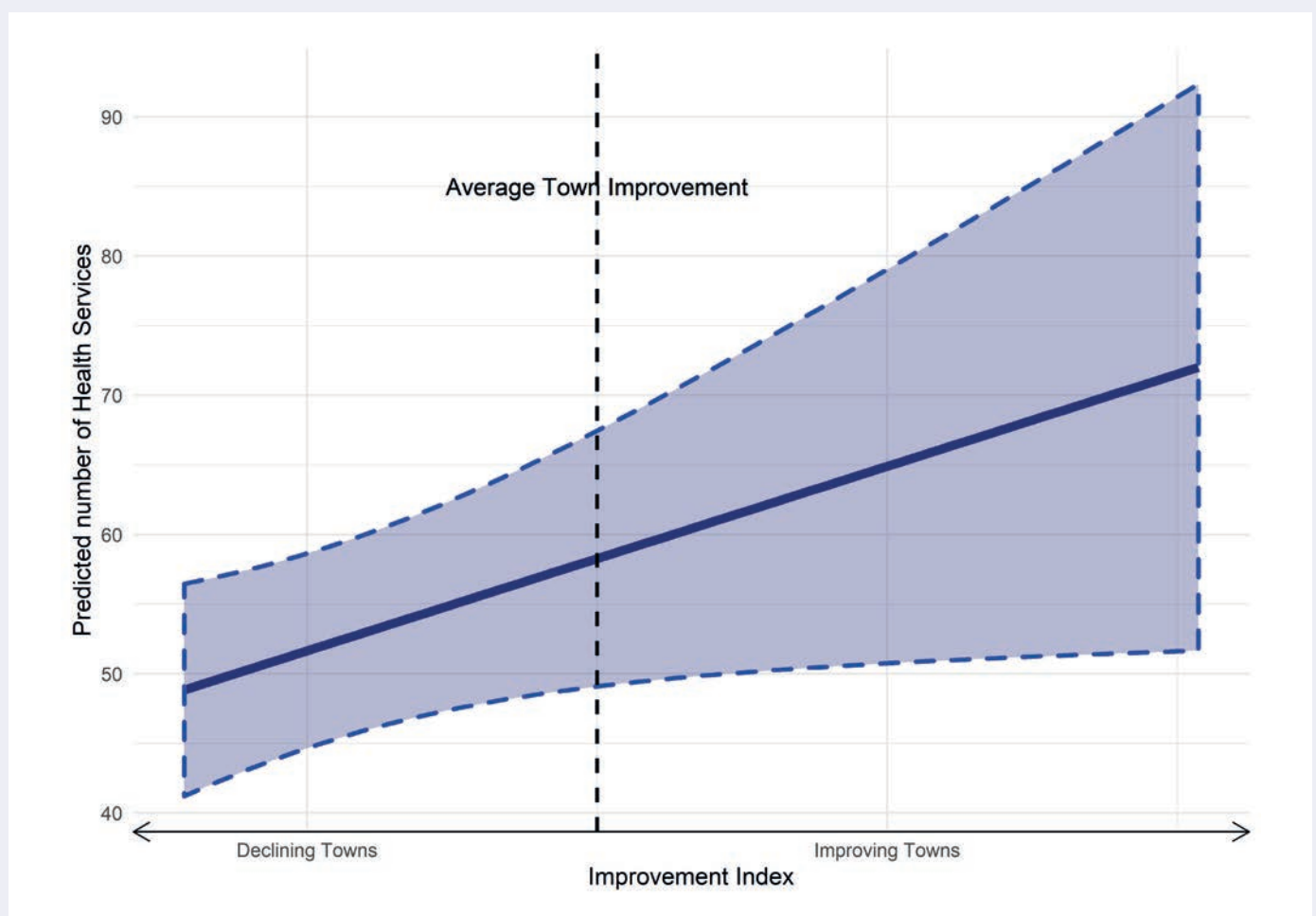
The decline in public services has been offset in some cases by various kinds of modernisation and the provision of new infrastructure. For example, changes in Durham represent a very different story. The opening of Co. Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service in 2015 increased the support of fire and other emergency services (County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority, 2016). The Lanchester Road hospital, opened in 2010 to provide dedicated mental health service for Durham (Tallentire, 2010). Finally, with a reported six more bus stops in the town than in 2011, Durham bucks the trend for the number of bus stops in this area to fall.



These patterns combine in distinctive ways for towns in the North East. But we find **a strong relationship between a town's likelihood of improvement and its provision of health services.**<sup>6</sup> Figure 9 illustrates this relationship.

**Image, left:** *Bus from Darlington to Spennymoor, 2005*

**Figure 9:**  
Estimated Number of all Health-related Services per Town



**Figure 9.**

**Notes:** OLS regression controlling for: population, area, distance to nearest city, job density and deprivation rate. Shaded area represents 95% confidence interval.

**Source:** Census 2011, Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey; UK Business: Activity, Size and Location; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Mid-Year Population Estimates; Scotland's Census, 2011; National Records of Scotland – Mid-Year Population Estimates; Ordnance survey – Points of Interest (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252)).

6. Health services includes all establishments that provide some health service. Such as: all types of hospitals, GPs, specialist care, pharmacies, opticians and physiotherapists etc.

# Comparing public services in North East Towns to the Rest of Britain

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Only just over half of towns in the North East have train stations within their boundaries. This compares unfavourably with almost two thirds of towns across the whole of Britain. However, two councils in the region are looking to address this deficit. Peterlee and Blyth both have plans to reintroduce railway stations for their residents. Peterlee will have access to Horden's new rail station (Durham County Council, 2019), while Northumberland Council is looking at how passenger services can be reopened on the Ashington, Tyne and Blythe line (Northumberland County Council, 2017).

Meanwhile the North East's towns are relatively well provided for in terms of some other key services: 83% have a police station compared to 68% of all British towns; 78% have a JobCentre compared to 52% of British towns. Finally, only one town, Ponteland, has no library (although Ponteland's library exists, it falls just outside the town's 'Built-Up Area' boundary).

The following section compares estimated average public service provision for towns in the North East and elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> **In most cases, the average in the North East does not differ significantly from the rest of Britain.**

Figure 10, however, does indicate that towns in the North East, on average, offer fewer Nursery Schools and pre/after school clubs than towns across Britain. **Controlling for size, deprivation rate, location relative to a city, job density, population and relative improvement, NE towns have on average around two fewer nursery schools and pre/after school clubs than the rest of the country's towns.** This raises the question of whether parents in this part of the country lack the resources to sustain childcare services given falling levels of per pupil funding in recent years.

Childcare funding from central government has seen real-terms declines over recent years (Preschool Learning alliance, 2019; Ferguson, 2019). This has coincided with significant staffing cuts, fee increases and organisation closures – around 9,000 of them in England between 2016 and 2018 (Department for Education, 2018). In 2018, 45% of group-based childcare providers and 24% of school-based nurseries increased their fees in the North East (Department for Education, 2018). Whilst these numbers are not exceptional, they highlight the increased reliance on fee increases to maintain staffing costs. The fact that towns in the North

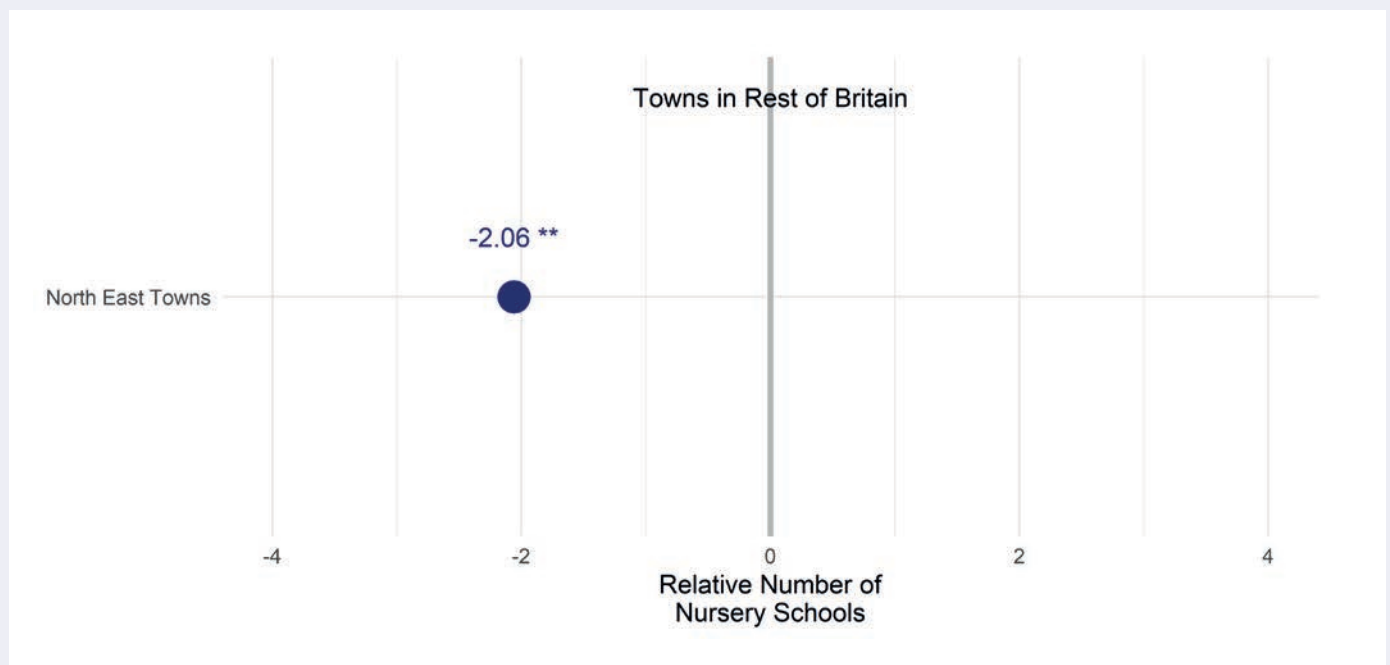
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7. Caution should be taken with these findings considering the small sample size of towns in the North East – the region with the fewest towns in Britain.

East have fewer childcare providers than elsewhere could indicate that they have suffered particularly badly from these trends as the combination of council funding and parental fees has not sustained childcare in the same way as towns in other regions.

**Image, left:** *Feetham's Football Ground – Darlington's old home and now a housing estate, Darlington, 2005*

**Figure 10:**  
Nursery Schools in North-East Towns compared to the rest of Britain



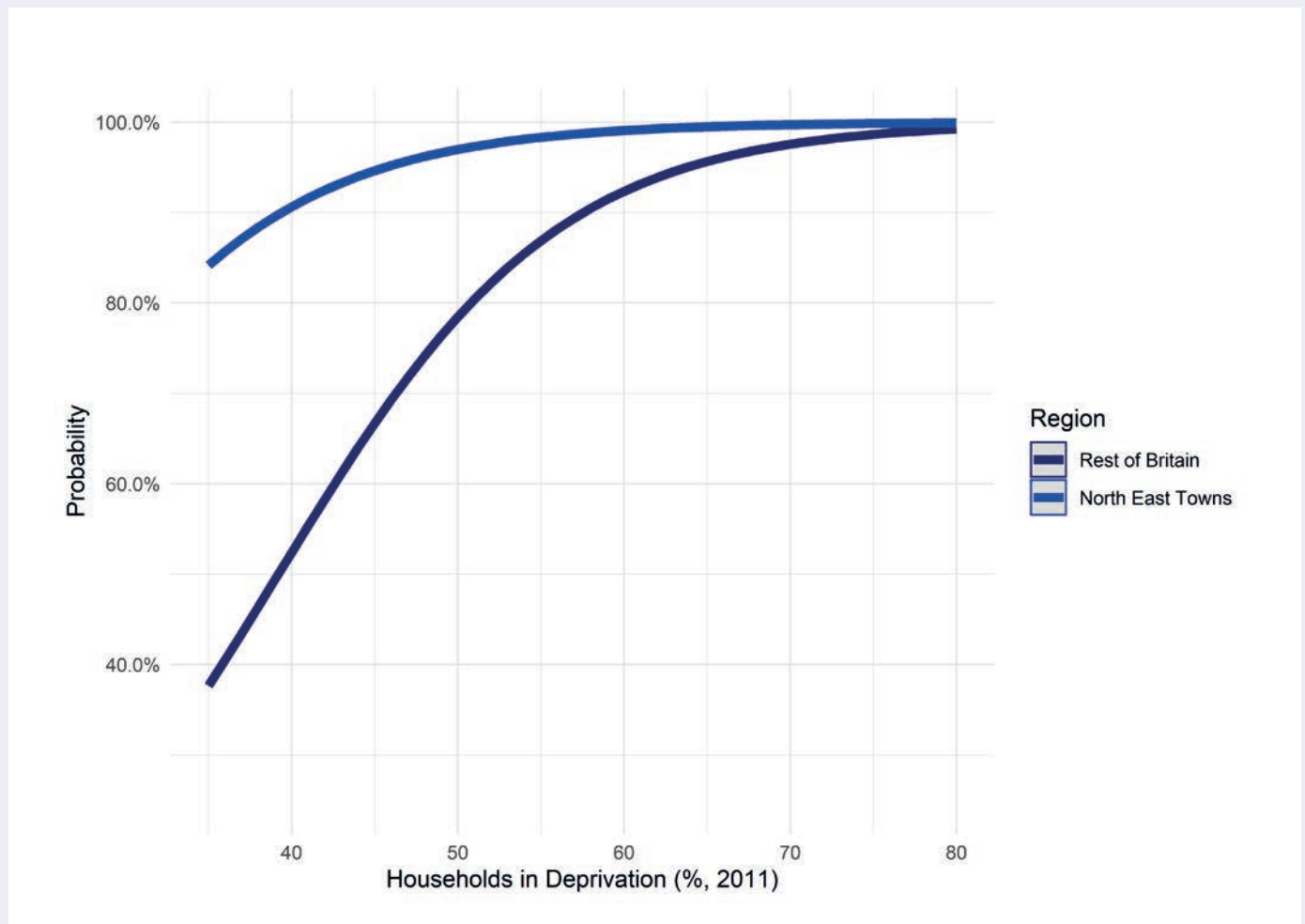
**Figure 10.**

**Notes:** OLS regression controlling for: area, population, deprivation rate, the improvement index, job density and distance from nearest city. \* $p < 0.1$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

**Source:** Census 2011, Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey; UK Business: Activity, Size and Location; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Mid-Year Population Estimates; Scotland's Census, 2011; National Records of Scotland – Mid-Year Population Estimates; Ordnance survey – Points of Interest (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252)).

# Comparing public services in North East Towns to the Rest of Britain

**Figure 11:**  
Predicted Probability of a Job Centre



**Figure 11.**

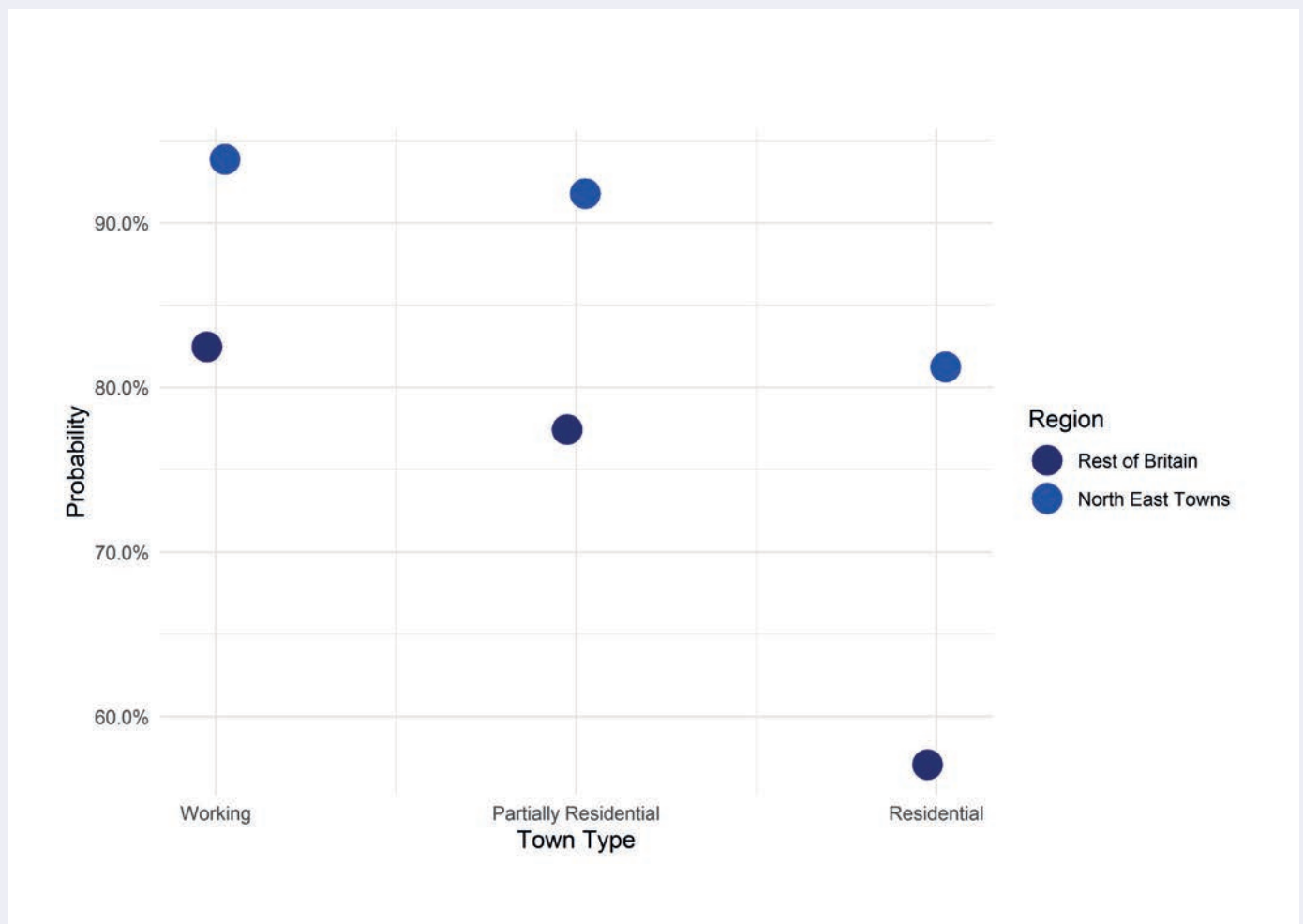
**Notes:** Logistic regression controlling for: area, population size, distance from nearest city, job density and Improvement Index.

**Source:** Census 2011, Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey; UK Business: Activity, Size and Location; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Mid-Year Population Estimates; Scotland's Census, 2011; National Records of Scotland – Mid-Year Population Estimates; Ordnance survey – Points of Interest (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252)).

**Towns in the North East are 25% more likely to have a Job Centre in them than elsewhere in Britain.** In total only five towns in the North East do not have a Job Centre. This is no surprise given the relatively high levels of deprivation and

hence unemployment there. Yet beneath this generalisation, the picture is more complicated. **Towns with low levels of deprivation are much more likely to have a Job Centre in them.**

**Figure 12:**  
Predicted Probability of a Town-based Police Station



**Figure 12.**

**Notes.** Logistic regression controlling for: area, population, distance from nearest city, deprivation rate and Improvement Index.

**Source:** Census 2011, Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey; UK Business: Activity, Size and Location; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Mid-Year Population Estimates; Scotland's Census, 2011; National Records of Scotland – Mid-Year Population Estimates; Ordnance survey – Points of Interest (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252)).

Figure 12 shows that 'residential towns' across Britain are less likely to have a police station within their boundary than 'working towns'. **However, even residential towns in the North East are quite likely to have a police station.** The differences between the North East and elsewhere in provision of

Job Centres and police stations cannot be explained by different town population sizes, deprivation rates or improvement scores. The North East is therefore relatively well provided-for in terms of these crime and unemployment-related services.



## Overview and Implications

Overall, the North East's towns have similar levels of public service provision to the rest of Britain, but much worse economic prospects. The main challenge facing the region's towns concerns how to deal with deprivation and decline.

If towns are to be given greater priority by policy-makers, the region will need innovative solutions that do not rely solely on connecting towns to the economic cluster associated with Middlesbrough, Newcastle and Sunderland. These cities have not given

the North East's towns a boost in their relative economic and demographic outcomes compared to towns elsewhere. This would suggest that towns in this area need their own more resilient economies, providing a better mix of jobs, services and cultural offerings.

The relationship between town improvement and the number of health services indicates that residents of prospering towns have an advantage over residents elsewhere when wanting to access health services in their





neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the region's higher provision of Job Centres and police stations compared to the rest of Britain reflect these places' deeply rooted social and economic problems.

The challenges involved in solving some of these issues are complicated further by the unsettled nature of the governance of the region. Three separate Combined Authorities, with different levels of powers and funding, share responsibility for many of the policy levers used in town regeneration with the 12 Local Authorities and two LEPs. The embryonic nature of Combined Authorities, each at a different stage of development, may provide considerable difficulties for policymakers looking to address the needs of the regions' towns.

### **Key Findings from our North East Townscapes Survey:**

- Most towns in the North East are declining faster than the British average.
- About two thirds of the region's towns have more deprived households than the British-town average.
- The region is distinctive in terms of the proximity of most of its towns to their nearest city centre, but the metropolitan cluster around Newcastle, Middlesbrough and Sunderland has not provided economic growth in surrounding towns compared to other regions.
- Within the region, there is a strong relationship between the number of health providers and town-improvement.
- Towns in the North East offer statistically fewer nurseries and pre/after school clubs but have more Job Centres and police stations than the rest of Britain.

# Descriptive Statistics and Regression Tables

**Table 1:**  
Descriptive Statistics

Town	Population	Distance from City (Km)	Land area (Km²)	Household Deprivation (%)	Job Density
Bedlington	16831	16.90	3.80	59.90	0.30
Ponteland	10406	13.68	5.50	44.88	0.68
Ashington	27664	21.53	6.06	64.39	0.59
Blyth	38388	15.57	8.43	62.66	0.40
Darlington	92934	21.09	22.55	58.37	0.72
Guisborough	17086	11.68	4.31	52.37	0.48
Newton Aycliffe	25833	22.87	8.90	61.16	0.90
Spennymoor	18745	22.40	5.38	62.11	0.53
Annfield Plain	10833	17.29	2.84	65.04	0.56
Yarm	19464	9.75	5.53	42.46	0.46
Seaham	22660	9.38	4.87	65.43	0.45
Hexham	11321	34.27	4.18	50.87	0.74
Berwick-upon-Tweed	13426	77.67	4.64	62.32	0.87
Morpeth	14526	21.57	4.82	49.95	1.10
Durham	51039	13.12	12.87	48.72	0.92
Consett	29758	22.01	7.35	57.20	0.47
Peterlee	36450	16.47	11.48	71.26	0.71
Seaton Delaval	10001	10.26	2.17	57.66	0.28
Hartlepool	89601	12.32	24.12	64.79	0.52
Bishop Auckland	26375	30.25	7.31	63.44	0.73
Cramlington	32751	11.16	8.77	55.85	0.83
Stanley	22473	14.57	5.38	66.05	0.36
Prudhoe	12191	18.34	3.46	53.03	0.45

**Table 1.**

**Source:** Census 2011, Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Mid-Year Population Estimates

**Table 2a:**  
Public Services

Town	Nurseries	Community Halls	Post Boxes	Schools	Health Services	Further Education Colleges	Bus Stops
Bedlington	4	4	18	8	29	0	57
Ponteland	3	3	25	5	25	0	67
Ashington	4	3	18	4	43	2	102
Blyth	4	13	36	9	62	0	132
Darlington	20	25	90	31	162	3	464
Guisborough	4	6	17	6	35	2	111
Newton Aycliffe	6	7	26	12	41	0	147
Spennymoor	6	6	19	8	20	0	122
Annfield Plain	1	4	15	5	15	0	71
Yarm	7	9	20	10	30	0	79
Seaham	3	6	22	7	40	0	97
Hexham	4	4	25	6	40	2	50
Berwick-upon-Tweed	3	5	24	9	41	2	98
Morpeth	6	4	26	8	50	0	61
Durham	12	12	54	19	74	10	229
Consett	5	13	39	10	45	2	188
Peterlee	4	10	33	18	50	1	209
Seaton Delaval	3	3	7	5	6	0	47
Hartlepool	13	29	78	32	128	2	519
Bishop Auckland	8	11	32	13	58	2	190
Cramlington	6	11	33	11	44	0	114
Stanley	5	8	22	10	38	1	133
Prudhoe	1	3	17	6	21	0	65

**Table 2a.**

**Source:** Ordnance survey – Points of Interest (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252))

# Descriptive Statistics and Regression Tables

**Table 2b:**  
Public Services

Town	Mental Health	Hospitals	Train Stations	GPs	Job Centres	Fire Stations	Police Stations	Libraries
Bedlington	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	2
Ponteland	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Ashington	1	1	0	3	1	0	1	1
Blyth	3	1	0	5	1	0	1	3
Darlington	3	5	2	8	1	1	1	2
Guisborough	2	1	0	2	1	1	1	1
Newton Aycliffe	2	0	1	3	1	1	1	2
Spennymoor	0	0	0	3	1	1	1	1
Annfield Plain	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1
Yarm	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	1
Seaham	0	0	1	5	2	1	1	2
Hexham	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2
Berwick-upon-Tweed	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Morpeth	2	1	1	3	1	0	1	2
Durham	1	1	1	6	1	2	1	6
Consett	1	1	0	3	1	1	1	1
Peterlee	0	1	0	9	2	1	1	4
Seaton Delaval	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
Hartlepool	6	1	1	14	2	2	1	6
Bishop Auckland	2	2	1	5	1	1	1	1
Cramlington	0	0	0	5	1	1	1	1
Stanley	0	0	0	4	1	0	1	1
Prudhoe	1	0	1	3	0	1	1	2

**Table 2b.**

**Source:** Ordnance survey – Points of Interest (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252))

**Table 3:**  
Improvement Index statistics

Town	Employment Rate Change (2001-2011)	Youth Population Change (2001-2011)	Business Count Change (2010-2016)	Population Change (2001-2011)	Further Education Qualification Rate Change (2001-2011)
Bedlington	2.55	0.34	40	581	6.44
Ponteland	2.85	0.41	90	293	21.01
Ashington	1.39	0.16	70	330	2.17
Blyth	3.35	-0.07	100	1521	1.90
Darlington	2.42	0.06	370	6658	5.82
Guisborough	-0.94	-0.72	60	-331	7.53
Newton Aycliffe	2.44	-0.08	135	220	8.30
Spennymoor	0.23	-0.65	70	198	9.72
Annfield Plain	3.61	-0.12	-5	187	-4.32
Yarm	-0.07	-0.73	125	407	9.07
Seaham	8.59	-0.15	95	1064	5.49
Hexham	1.78	-0.16	-5	467	12.03
Berwick-upon-Tweed	3.08	-0.62	35	541	10.52
Morpeth	2.39	-0.56	45	27	-2.54
Durham	-3.11	0.15	180	4849	-9.02
Consett	4.64	-0.05	100	3784	10.82
Peterlee	5.93	0.26	50	-1811	2.44
Seaton Delaval	3.01	0.34	15	319	-1.41
Hartlepool	3.75	0.09	760	9128	2.30
Bishop Auckland	2.62	-0.02	35	1606	8.10
Cramlington	-1.87	-0.21	155	-1052	4.17
Stanley	3.33	0.23	105	1699	8.49
Prudhoe	2.32	-0.28	60	519	17.35

**Table 3.**

**Source:** Census 2011, Census 2001, Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey; UK Business: Activity, Size and Location; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Mid-Year Population Estimates

## Regression Tables

### Table 4:

OLS Public Services																		
Predictors	Health Services			Bus Stops			Nurseries			Schools			GPs			Post Boxes		
	Estimates	CI	p	Estimates	CI	p	Estimates	CI	p	Estimates	CI	p	Estimates	CI	p	Estimates	CI	p
Intercept	19.91	6.45 – 33.36	<b>0.004</b>	-88.25	-127.81 – -48.70	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	7.67	5.32 – 10.02	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-1.41	-3.63 – 0.81	0.213	-3.14	-4.51 – -1.76	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	12.27	2.65 – 21.89	<b>0.013</b>
Improvement Index	-0.37	-1.16 – 0.42	0.354	-1.84	-4.16 – 0.49	0.122	0.04	-0.10 – 0.17	0.611	-0.10	-0.23 – 0.03	0.126	-0.08	-0.16 – 0.01	0.069	-0.16	-0.73 – 0.40	0.578
Distance from City	0.28	0.19 – 0.36	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.39	0.14 – 0.64	<b>0.002</b>	0.01	-0.00 – 0.03	0.092	-0.02	-0.03 – -0.00	<b>0.019</b>	-0.00	-0.01 – 0.01	0.740	0.17	0.11 – 0.23	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Population	0.00	0.00 – 0.00	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.00	0.00 – 0.00	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.00	0.00 – 0.00	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.00	0.00 – 0.00	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.00	0.00 – 0.00	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.00	0.00 – 0.00	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Land Area	-1.54	-2.18 – -0.89	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	10.16	8.26 – 12.06	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-0.05	-0.17 – 0.06	0.352	0.22	0.12 – 0.33	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.06	-0.00 – 0.13	0.059	0.15	-0.32 – 0.61	0.535
Household Deprivation	-0.59	-0.81 – -0.37	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	1.22	0.57 – 1.87	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-0.15	-0.19 – -0.12	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.03	-0.00 – 0.07	0.076	0.05	0.03 – 0.07	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-0.22	-0.38 – -0.06	<b>0.007</b>
North East Dummy	-0.00	-7.45 – 7.45	1.000	8.86	-13.04 – 30.76	0.428	-2.06	-3.36 – -0.76	<b>0.002</b>	0.85	-0.38 – 2.08	0.177	0.06	-0.70 – 0.82	0.882	-1.57	-6.89 – 3.76	0.565
Job Density	15.86	9.81 – 21.91	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-1.64	-19.43 – 16.16	0.857	1.30	0.24 – 2.36	<b>0.016</b>	1.14	0.14 – 2.14	<b>0.025</b>	-0.31	-0.93 – 0.31	0.330	1.29	-3.04 – 5.61	0.561
Observations	520			520			520			520			520			520		
R <sup>2</sup> / adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.908 / 0.907			0.909 / 0.907			0.904 / 0.903			0.928 / 0.927			0.889 / 0.887			0.868 / 0.866		

**Table 4.**

**Source:** Census 2011, Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey; UK Business: Activity, Size and Location; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Mid-Year Population Estimates; Ordnance survey – Points of Interest (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252)).

### Table 5:

Logistic Regression of Public Services availability																		
Predictors	Mental Health Practitioners			Hospital			Job Centre			Train Station			Further Education College			Police Station		
	Odds Ratios	CI	p	Odds Ratios	CI	p	Odds Ratios	CI	p	Odds Ratios	CI	p	Odds Ratios	CI	p	Odds Ratios	CI	p
Intercept	5.36	0.89 – 32.26	0.067	0.03	0.00 – 0.22	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.00	0.00 – 0.00	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.23	0.04 – 1.43	0.115	0.00	0.00 – 0.03	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.10	0.02 – 0.59	<b>0.011</b>
Improvement Index	0.96	0.85 – 1.08	0.522	0.97	0.85 – 1.10	0.614	0.98	0.86 – 1.13	0.795	1.23	1.09 – 1.40	<b>0.001</b>	0.97	0.86 – 1.09	0.607	1.03	0.92 – 1.15	0.636
Distance from City	1.02	1.00 – 1.03	<b>0.006</b>	1.05	1.04 – 1.07	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	1.02	1.00 – 1.03	<b>0.013</b>	1.01	1.00 – 1.02	0.066	1.02	1.01 – 1.03	<b>0.001</b>	1.00	0.99 – 1.01	0.787
Population	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	<b>0.001</b>	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	1.00	1.00 – 1.00	0.643
Land Area	0.95	0.84 – 1.08	0.433	0.92	0.81 – 1.06	0.244	1.02	0.85 – 1.22	0.852	1.01	0.87 – 1.17	0.907	0.93	0.84 – 1.04	0.217	1.19	1.02 – 1.38	<b>0.025</b>
Household Deprivation	0.93	0.91 – 0.96	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.98	0.95 – 1.01	0.131	1.13	1.09 – 1.17	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.99	0.96 – 1.02	0.576	1.03	1.00 – 1.07	<b>0.033</b>	1.02	0.99 – 1.05	0.266
North East Dummy	1.28	0.48 – 3.37	0.624	1.47	0.52 – 4.16	0.463	7.56	2.12 – 26.91	<b>0.002</b>	0.40	0.15 – 1.08	0.069	1.79	0.68 – 4.75	0.239	2.92	0.93 – 9.17	0.067
Job Density	3.06	1.33 – 7.05	<b>0.008</b>	18.96	7.17 – 50.16	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	15.28	5.69 – 41.01	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	2.76	1.20 – 6.32	<b>0.017</b>	4.48	1.99 – 10.10	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	5.32	2.22 – 12.73	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Observations	520			520			520			520			520			520		
Tjur's R <sup>2</sup>	0.175			0.205			0.528			0.093			0.223			0.122		

**Table 5.**

**Source:** Census 2011, Office for National Statistics – Business Register and Employment Survey; UK Business: Activity, Size and Location; Built-up Areas Boundaries, V2; Mid-Year Population Estimates; Ordnance survey – Points of Interest (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252)).



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