

Regions and Cities at a Glance 2020 provides a comprehensive assessment of how regions and cities across the OECD are progressing in a number of aspects connected to economic development, health, well-being and net zero-carbon transition. In the light of the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the report analyses outcomes and drivers of social, economic and environmental resilience. Consult the full publication [here](#).

OECD REGIONS AND CITIES AT A GLANCE - COUNTRY NOTE

UNITED KINGDOM

- A. Resilient regional societies
- B. Regional economic disparities and trends in productivity
- C. Well-being in regions
- D. Industrial transition in regions
- E. Transitioning to clean energy in regions
- F. Metropolitan trends in growth and sustainability

The data in this note reflect different subnational geographic levels in OECD countries:

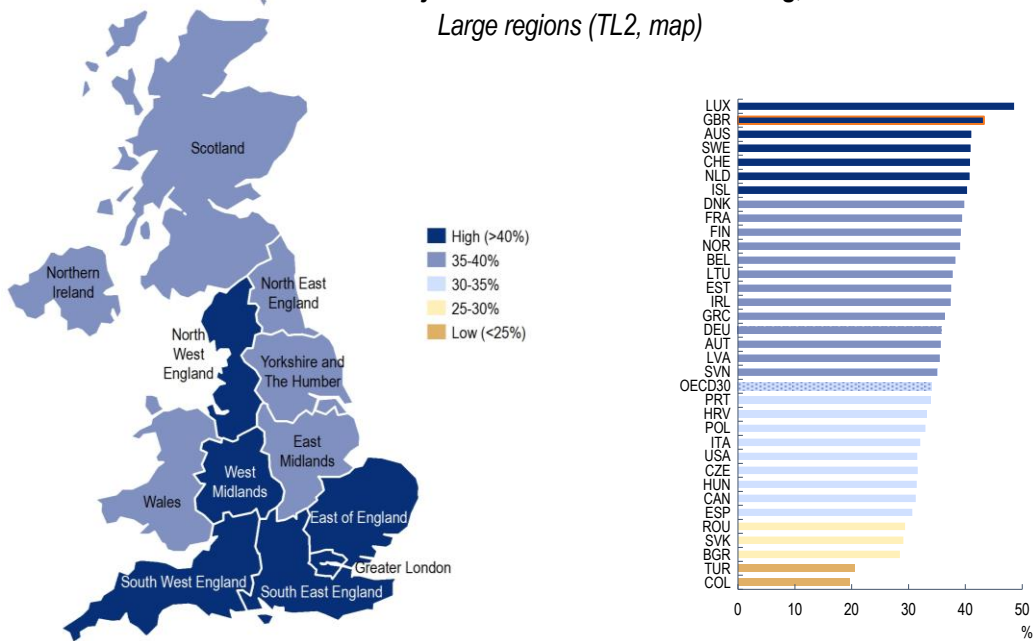
- **Regions** are classified on two territorial levels reflecting the administrative organisation of countries: large regions (TL2) and small regions (TL3). Small regions are classified according to their access to metropolitan areas (see <https://doi.org/10.1787/b902cc00-en>).
- **Functional urban areas** consists of cities – defined as densely populated local units with at least 50 000 inhabitants – and adjacent local units connected to the city (commuting zones) in terms of commuting flows (see <https://doi.org/10.1787/d58cb34d-en>). Metropolitan areas refer to functional urban areas above 250 000 inhabitants.

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Greater London and South East England have the highest potential for remote working

A1. Share of jobs amenable to remote working, 2018

Large regions (TL2, map)



The share of jobs amenable to remote working ranges from close to 54% in Greater London to less than 36% in North-East England (Figure A1). Such differences depend on the task content of the occupations in the regions, which can be amenable to remote working to different extents. As most OECD countries, the occupations available in cities, especially in capitals, tend to be more amenable to remote working than in other areas of the country.

Fast internet connections are crucial to ensure people seize the opportunity of digitalisation, including remote working. Northern Ireland has the highest fiber optic availability across large regions in the United Kingdom with 41% of the buildings connected to the network (Figure A2).

A2- Internet infrastructure

○ % of buildings connected to fiber, 2020

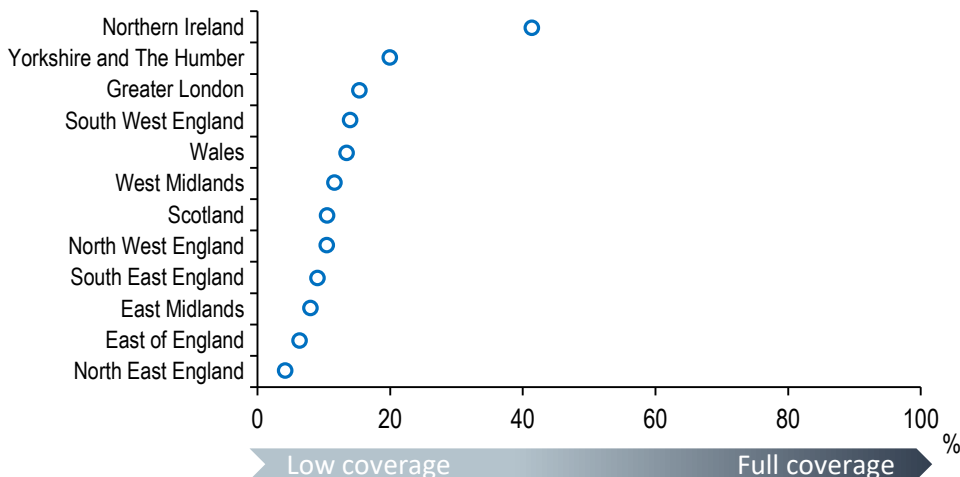
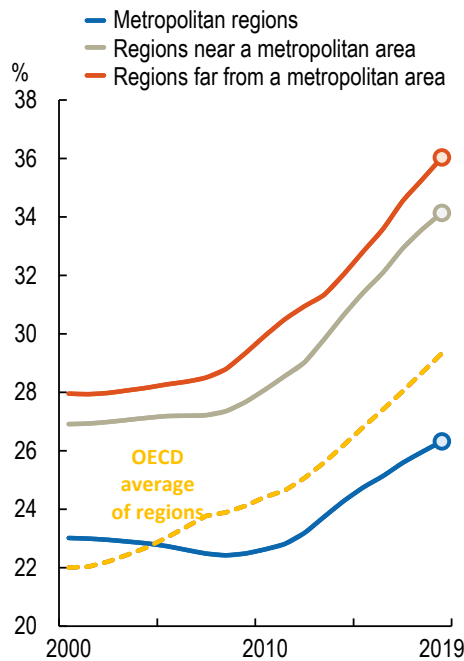


Figure [A1]: The lower percentage range (<25%) depicts the bottom quintile among 370 OECD and EU regions, the following ranges are based on increment of 5 percentage points. Further reading: OECD (2020), Capacity to remote working can affect lockdown costs differently across places, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/capacity-for-remote-working-can-affect-lockdown-costs-differently-across-places-0e85740e/>

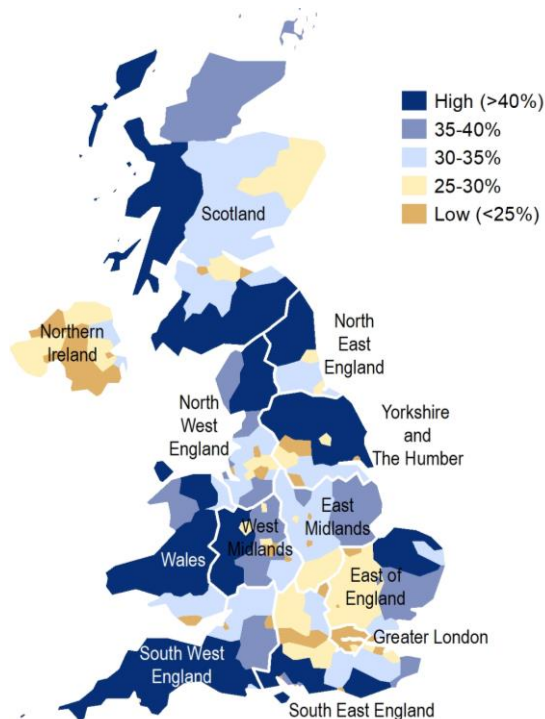
Ageing challenges regions far from metropolitan areas more strongly

The elderly dependency rate has increased in all types of regions in the United Kingdom since 2010. Regions far from metropolitan areas show the highest elderly dependency rate (36%) among different types of regions (Figure A3). In 15% of the small regions in the United Kingdom (26 over 179 regions), there are two elderly for every five persons in their working-age (Figure A4).

A3. Elderly dependency rate
By type of small regions in United Kingdom (TL3)



A4. Elderly dependency rate, 2019
Small regions (TL3)



All regions in the United Kingdom have fewer hospital beds per capita than OECD average

All regions in the United Kingdom have significantly fewer hospital beds per capita than the OECD average, with a declining trend since 2006 in most regions (Figure A5). Regional disparities in hospital beds are below OECD average, with South East England having 1.4 less hospital beds per 1000 inhabitants in average than Wales.

A5 - Hospital beds per 1000 inhabitants
Large regions (TL2)

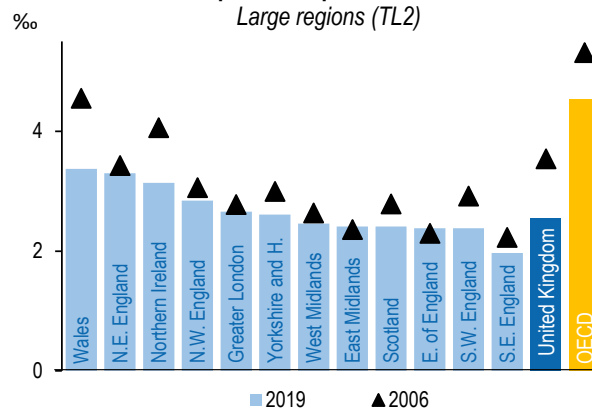


Figure notes. [A3]: OECD (2019), Classification of small (TL3) regions based on metropolitan population, low density and remoteness <https://doi.org/10.1787/b902cc00-en>. TL3 regions in United Kingdom are composed by 179 upper tier authorities or groups of lower tier authorities or groups of unitary authorities or LECs or groups of districts.



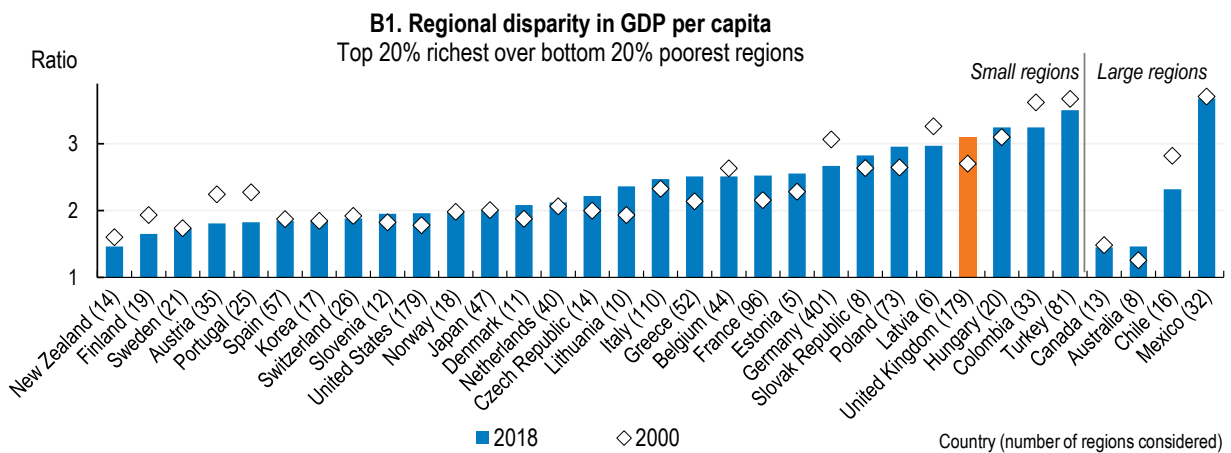
B. Regional economic disparities and trends in productivity

Regional economic gaps have increased since 2000, due to higher growth of the richest regions

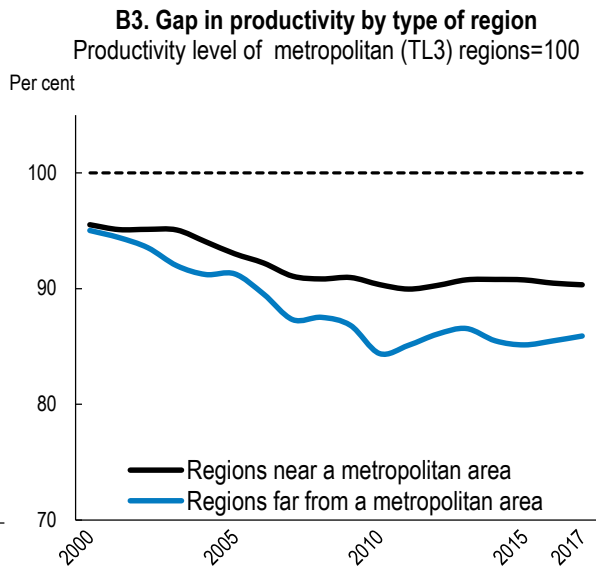
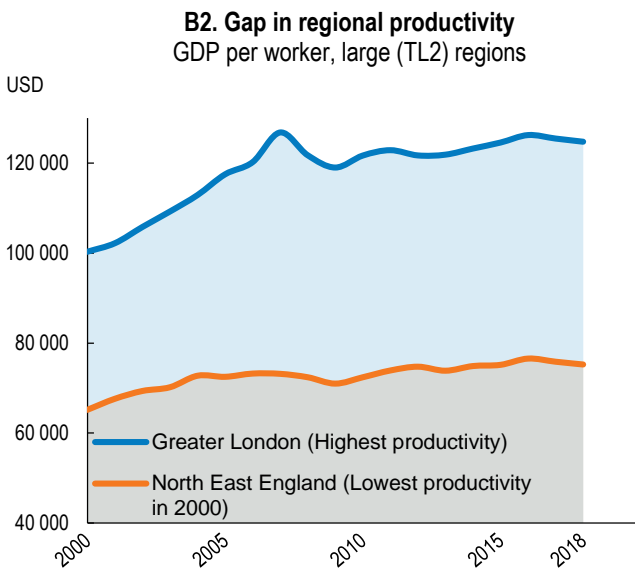
Regional disparities in terms of GDP per capita are high and have increased in the United Kingdom over the last eighteen years. In 2018, the GDP per capita in North East England was equivalent to 41% of the GDP per capita in Greater London. The United Kingdom has the 4th highest regional economic disparities among 29 OECD countries with comparable data and recorded the 4th largest increase in disparities between 2000 and 2018 (Figure B1).

Greater London has the highest productivity level (i.e. GVA per worker) among UK regions. With a productivity growth of 1.2% per year over the period 2000-18, Greater London has also the second largest productivity growth after Scotland (1.3% per year). In contrast, productivity in North East England grew by 0.8% per year, widening the gap to Greater London (Figure B2).

Regions far from a metropolitan area of at least 250 000 inhabitants have increased their gap to metropolitan regions since 2000, although the gap has remained stable after 2010 (Figure B3).

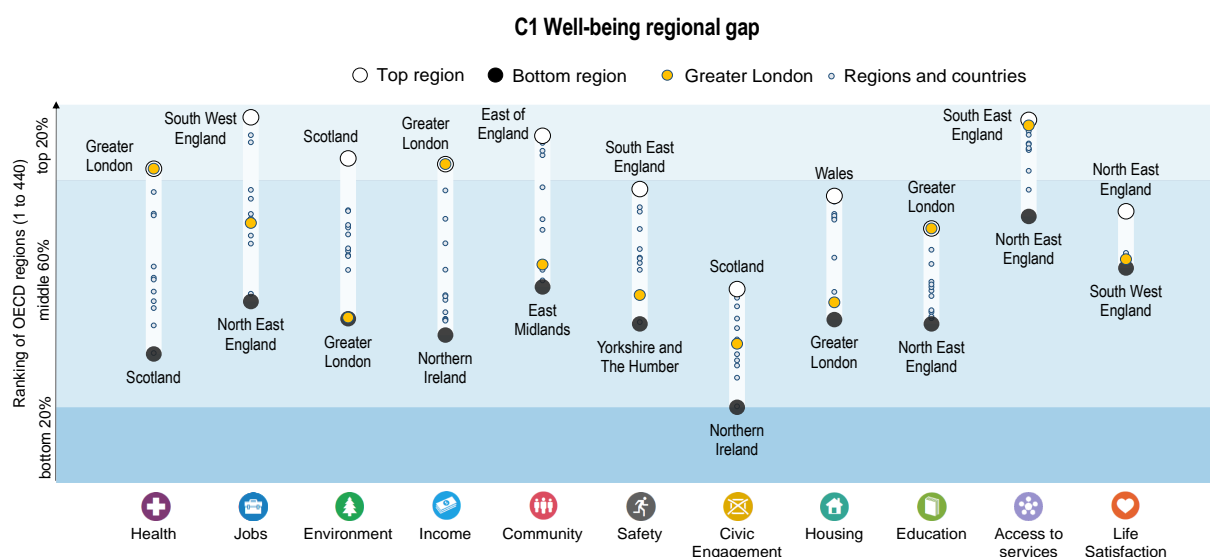


Note: A ratio with a value equal to 2 means that the GDP of the most developed regions accounting for 20% of the national population is twice as high as the GDP of the poorest regions accounting for 20% of the national population.



C. Well-being in regions

The United Kingdom suffers from large regional disparities in the majority of well-being dimensions, with the largest disparities in the dimensions of health and jobs



Note: Relative ranking of the regions with the best and worst outcomes in the 11 well-being dimensions, with respect to all 440 OECD regions. The eleven dimensions are ordered by decreasing regional disparities in the country. Each well-being dimension is measured by the indicators in the table below.

Five UK regions are leading in the top 20% of OECD regions in six out of eleven well-being dimensions. South West England and South East England rank particularly high in jobs and in access to broadband, respectively. While regional gaps in the jobs dimension are stark, other well-being dimensions, such as access to broadband, are more balanced across UK regions (Figure C1).

The average of the top performing UK regions is significantly above the average of the top 20% of OECD regions in 3 out of 13 indicators (Figure C2).

C2. How do the top and bottom regions fare on the well-being indicators?

| | Country Average | OECD Top 20% regions | British regions | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | | | Top 20% | Bottom 20% |
| Health | | | | |
| Life Expectancy at birth (years), 2018 | 81.4 | 82.6 | 82.8 | 79.8 |
| Age adjusted mortality rate (per 1 000 people), 2018 | 7.8 | 6.6 | 6.9 | 8.6 |
| Jobs | | | | |
| Employment rate 15 to 64 years old (%), 2019 | 75.2 | 76.0 | 78.8 | 72.2 |
| Unemployment rate 15 to 64 years old (%), 2019 | 3.9 | 3.3 | 2.9 | 4.9 |
| Environment | | | | |
| Level of air pollution in PM 2.5 (µg/m³), 2019 | 11.4 | 7.0 | 7.9 | 12.4 |
| Income | | | | |
| Disposable income per capita (in USD PPP), 2018 | 22 334 | 26 617 | 29 467 | 18 379 |
| Community | | | | |
| Perceived social network support (%), 2014-18 | 93.2 | 94.1 | 95.4 | 90.7 |
| Safety | | | | |
| Homicide Rate (per 100 000 people), 2016-18 | 1.1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 1.7 |
| Civic engagement | | | | |
| Voters in last national election (%), 2019 or latest year | 66.1 | 84.2 | 70.0 | 62.1 |
| Housing | | | | |
| Rooms per person, 2018 | 1.9 | 2.3 | 2.1 | 1.8 |
| Education | | | | |
| Population with at least upper secondary education, 25-64 year-olds (%), 2019 | 81.1 | 90.3 | 85.7 | 77.0 |
| Access to services | | | | |
| Households with broadband access (%), 2019 | 94.7 | 91.3 | 96.8 | 92.1 |
| Life Satisfaction | | | | |
| Life satisfaction (scale from 0 to 10), 2014-18 | 6.9 | 7.3 | 7.0 | 6.8 |

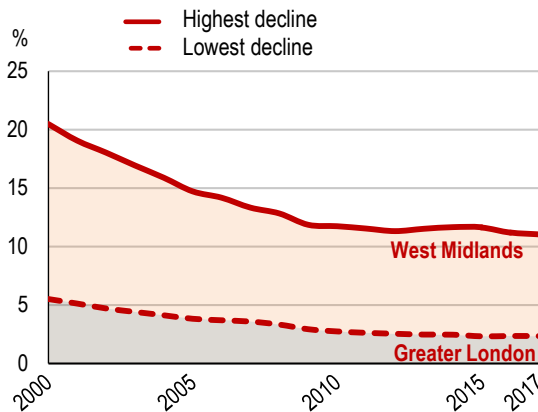
Note: OECD regions refer to the first administrative tier of subnational government (large regions, Territorial Level 2); the United Kingdom is composed of 12 large regions. Visualisation: <https://www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org>.



D. Industrial transition in regions

Manufacturing employment industry has declined in all UK regions since 2000, with the largest decline in the West midlands

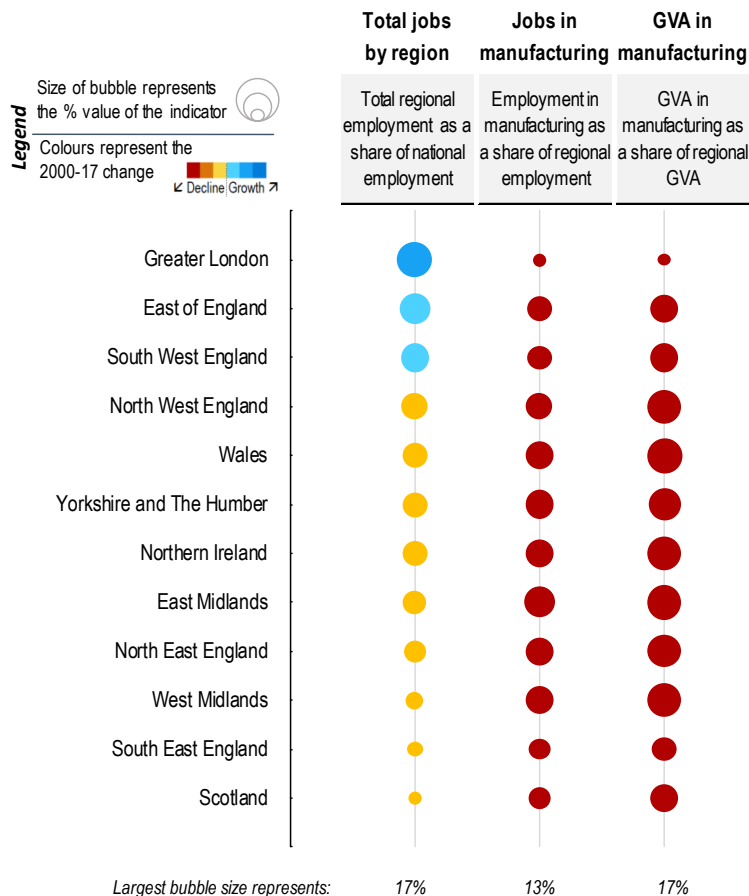
D1. Manufacturing employment share, regional gap



Between 2000 and 2017, all large regions in the United Kingdom experienced a decline in the share of manufacturing employment. With a reduction of almost 10 percentage points in the share of manufacturing employment, West Midlands, recorded the largest decline (Figure D1).

The decline in manufacturing employment since 2000 has coincided with a decline in manufacturing gross value-added in all regions of the United Kingdom (Figure D2). At the same time, Greater London, East and South West of England account for larger share of total employment in the UK compared to that in 2000.

D2. Manufacturing trends, 2000-17



Note figure D.2. : Regions are ordered by regional employment as a share of national employment. Colour of the bubbles represents the evolution of the share over the period 2000-17 in percentage points: red: below -2 pp; orange: between -2 pp and -1 pp; yellow: between -1 pp and 0; light blue: between 0 and +1 pp; medium blue: between +1 pp and +2 pp; dark blue: above +2 pp over the period.



E. Transitioning to clean energy in regions

East Midlands, Yorkshire-The Humber, and Wales, which account for half of the electricity produced in the United Kingdom, still highly rely on coal for electricity production

Among the top four producers of electricity in the United Kingdom – which together contribute to 52% of the country's electricity – East Midlands produces 26% of its electricity using coal and has a limited use of renewables. In 2017, only 16% of its electricity came from renewable sources. In contrast, Scotland – the largest producer of electricity in the country – produced 55% of its electricity using renewable sources (Figure E1).

E1. Transition to renewable energy, 2017

| | Total electricity generation (in GWh per year) | Regional share of renewables in electricity generation (%) | Regional share of coal in electricity generation (%) | Greenhouse gas emissions from electricity generated (in Ktons of CO ₂ eq.) | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Scotland | 50 376 | 55% | 0% | 4 069 | Scot. |
| East Midlands | 44 338 | 16% | 26% | 22 671 | Eas. |
| Wales | 43 658 | 32% | 8% | 16 566 | Wal. |
| South East England | 37 475 | 22% | 0% | 10 830 | Sou. |
| North West England | 36 629 | 26% | 0% | 5 098 | Nor. |
| East of England | 35 295 | 36% | 0% | 7 749 | Eas. |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 30 646 | 24% | 24% | 15 049 | Yor. |
| South West England | 24 118 | 25% | 0% | 5 840 | Sou. |
| Northern Ireland | 13 443 | 29% | 7% | 5 203 | Nor. |
| North East England | 13 137 | 29% | 0% | 500 | Nor. |
| Greater London | 4 081 | 38% | 0% | 1 419 | Gre. |
| West Midlands | 2 906 | 100% | 0% | 392 | Wes. |

Carbon efficiency in the production of electricity is very unequal across the United Kingdom. While East Midlands emits 510 tons of CO₂ per gigawatt hour of electricity produced, Scotland releases only 80 tons of CO₂ per gigawatt hour. Relative to total national levels, Scotland produces 15% of electricity in the country, but it emits only 4% of total CO₂ emissions related to electricity generation (E2).

E2. Contribution to total CO₂ emissions from electricity production, 2017

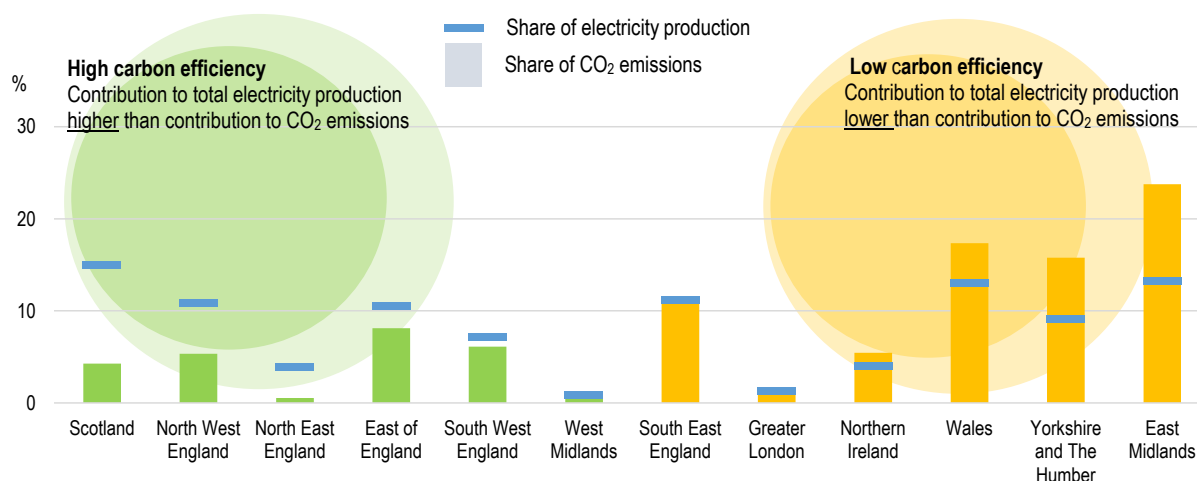


Figure notes: Regions are arranged in Figure E1 by total generation, and in Figure E2 according to gap between share of electricity generation and share of CO₂ emissions (most positive to most negative). These estimates refer to electricity production from the power plants connected to the national power grid, as registered in the Power Plants Database. As a result, small electricity generation facilities disconnected from the national power grid might not be captured. Renewable energy sources include hydropower, geothermal power, biomass, wind, solar, wave and tidal and waste. See [here](#) for more details.

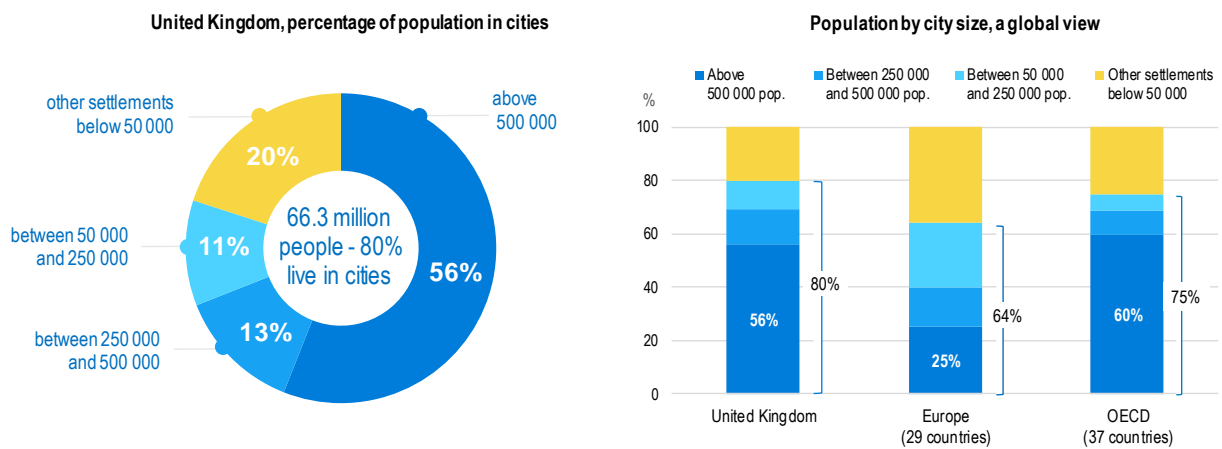


F. Metropolitan trends in growth and sustainability

Compared to OECD average, the United Kingdom has a higher concentration of people living in functional urban areas above 50 thousands inhabitants

In the United Kingdom, 80% of the population lives in cities of more than 50 000 inhabitants and their respective commuting areas (functional urban areas, FUAs), a higher share compared to the OECD average of 75%. At the same time, 55% of the UK population lives in metropolitan areas of over half a million inhabitants, compared to the OECD average of 60% (Figure F1).

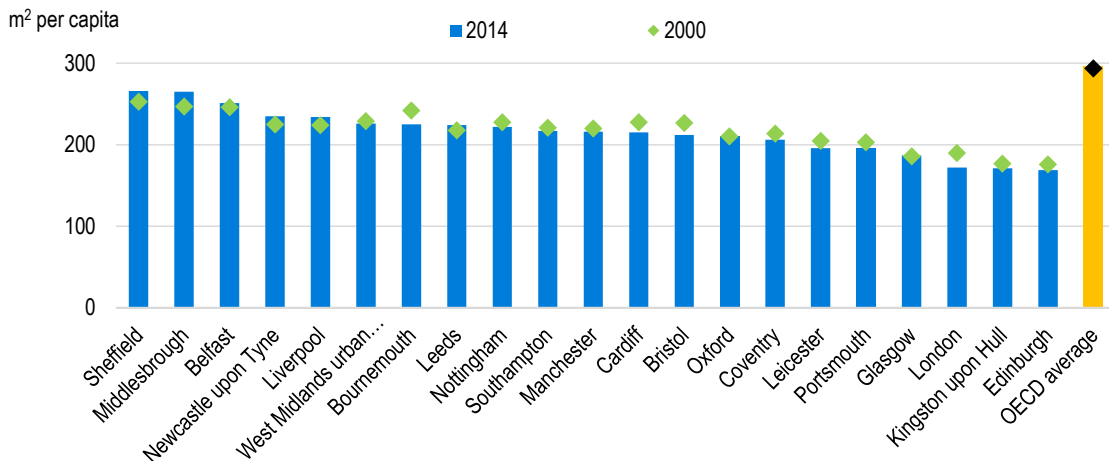
F1. Distribution of population in cities by city size
Functional urban areas, 2018



Built-up areas have increased faster than population in 7 out of 21 metropolitan areas in the United Kingdom

All metropolitan areas in the United Kingdom have lower built-up area per capita than the OECD average of OECD metropolitan areas. Since 2000, built-up area per capita has increased in seven metropolitan areas of at least half a million inhabitants, especially in Sheffield and Middlesbrough, where the difference between the growth of built up area and the growth in population is highest. Built-up area per capita has decreased in several metropolitan areas since 2000, especially in Bournemouth, Cardiff, Bristol and London (Figure F2).

F2. Built-up area per capita
Functional urban areas with more than 500 000 inhabitants



Source: OECD Metropolitan Database. Number of metropolitan areas with a population of over 500 000: 21 in the United Kingdom compared to 349 in the OECD.

London and Edinburgh are the top two metropolitan areas in the United Kingdom in terms of levels and growth of GDP per capita since 2000

While London ranks in the top 15% of OECD metropolitan areas in terms of GDP per capita levels, one quarter of UK metropolitan areas of more than 500 000 inhabitants are below the OECD median value. GDP per capita in the metropolitan area of London is twice that in Cardiff, Kingston upon Hull, Liverpool, Newcastle upon Tyne, Sheffield, and Middlesbrough. Both London and Edinburgh are within the top 30% of OECD metropolitan areas in terms of GDP per capita growth, while the majority of metropolitan areas in the United Kingdom are below the OECD median value.

