



An audit of public sector reform in the North East

A briefing paper for the Public Sector Commission

By Jane Midgley and Sue Stirling

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ippr north Public Sector Commission

ippr is establishing a Commission on Public Service Reform in the North East, based at ippr north in Newcastle. The Commission will look at the policy challenges faced in the reform and renewal of public services upon which successive Labour governments have embarked, within the context of the distinctive needs of the North East region. For more information please visit www.ippr.org/ipprnorth.

1. Background to the paper

This paper considers four key areas of the public sector – criminal justice, education, health and welfare-to-work – and the changes that have taken place within them over the last decade, from 1997 to March 2007. The specific focus of this audit is to consider the changes as they affected the North East of England. The situation of the North East – from where we started back in 1997 to where we are now – is considered in relation to the other eight English regions. Wherever possible we also consider change within the North East at a sub-regional level. However, different geographical areas or boundaries are used for different data, reflecting the sectors' different administration: for example, crime data refers to police force areas which differ from the local and unitary authorities often used in education and welfare-to-work data. The analysis uses publicly available data and all data sources are cited next to the relevant table or figure.

The paper observes change as it was officially measured, focusing on the key outcomes and targets of central government policies. However, the audit presented here can only show what has happened as recorded by a given number of measures; it cannot show how it happened (the detailed processes and possible inter-relationships), or how the change was experienced by users and providers.

This paper follows and is complemented by another briefing paper, *Reform in Action*, which explores policy changes and the key drivers of the public sector reform process from a national perspective.

2. Summary of key findings

Over the last decade the North East has received considerable increases in public funding. It has had the second highest expenditure on total public services per head among English regions (after London). In the four sectors (functional areas) that we explored, public expenditure in the North East had become the highest – for employment, social protection and health – and second highest – for public order and safety, education and training – in England by 2007.

Public sector employment also increased considerably between 1997 and 2006. The North East experienced the highest increases in terms of staff numbers relative to population numbers, for example, police numbers to resident population and pupil to teacher ratios. The Government invested considerable resources to support and implement the public sector reforms.

However, when we consider the key priorities of reform and their associated outcomes the results are more mixed, both nationally (for England) and for the North East in particular. This is true for the outcomes of each individual sector and the differences seen between the four sectors we analysed. In the main section of this audit the different inputs and outcomes are revealed in detail. The main headlines of the audit are summarised below.

Criminal justice

- The North East's residents are less likely to live in fear of crime (burglary and violent crime) than those elsewhere; crime rates have fallen considerably.
- The region's criminal justice agencies in 2006 had the highest rate of detection and sanctioned detection (reported crime leading to prosecution) of any English region.
- The region's police forces in 2006 enjoyed the highest levels of public confidence of any region but at the same time the criminal justice agencies experienced some of the lowest expressions of public confidence in their effectiveness in bringing people to justice.
- For those who committed a crime and were detected, the forms of sentencing varied considerably within the region; for example rates of custodial and community sentencing were far higher in the Durham area than elsewhere.
- The North East's record on youth offending is mixed. There are low levels of custodial and community sentencing for young offenders, and lengths of time between the arrest and sentencing are average (at target level). However, young offenders in the region are among the country's least well supported (in terms of ensuring they are in education and training, for example).

Education

- Despite a modest change to staff numbers in the maintained (state school) sector, the North East enjoys some of the lowest pupil to teacher ratios for primary and secondary education in the country.
- During the primary phase of education, results for school children in Key Stages 1 and 2 (undertaken at age seven and 11) are above the English average, with girls out-performing boys (which is consistent with national trends).
- Primary-level attainment leads to the expectation that secondary achievement should also be high. However, this is not the case: by Key Stage 3 (at age 14) attainment in the North East has declined to below the national average.
- GCSE results have improved over time but when English and maths are included in the five good GCSEs at grades A*-C, the region still performs relatively poorly compared with the rest of England. Within many North East local authorities great improvements have been made in GCSE pass rates, but if English and maths are included then the improvement is modest.
- The region has low rates of participation in post-16 education and training, as well as in adult learning.

Health

- Despite the fact that life expectancy for men and women in the North East has increased, the region still possesses the shortest life expectancies in England (average life expectancy being three years less in the North East than the average expectancies seen in other regions). The apparent positive regional trend for longer life also hides considerable variation in life expectancy within the North East (up to seven years difference between areas).
- High rates of low-birth-weight births are seen, with some areas having rates considerably above the English and the higher regional average; for example, in Middlesbrough 11.2 per cent of all births were below 2,500 grams in contrast to the national average of 7.9 per cent (2005 figures).
- Death rates from cancer (all types) and chronic heart disease in the North East have declined considerably, but still remain the

highest in England.

- Teenage conception rates at a regional level have declined, but within the North East remain very varied.
- Looked-after children (for example, children in care) in the region experience fewer movements between placements and there is less difference between looked-after children and their peers receiving a formal warning or conviction for illegal behaviour than elsewhere in England.

Welfare-to-work

- The North East has experienced significant increases in economic activity rates, with corresponding massive declines in unemployment rates and benefit claimant counts. But the region still has some of the lowest economic activity rates and highest unemployment and benefit claimant rates in England. The picture at sub-regional level is very mixed.
- Job gains through participation in the New Deal are among the lowest in the country for all target groups, except disabled participants and those who have long-term unemployed partners (but numbers are relatively small if compared to other New Deal target groups).
- The North East still possesses the second highest rate of children living in workless households in England.

Concluding comments

Over the last decade the North East has received some of the highest total spending on public services per head, and high growth in public sector staff. In relative terms the region by 2007 had in most instances improved its situation compared to the starting

position experienced ten years ago. However, situations in other English regions have not remained static. The North East still lags behind other English regions that have also improved their positions and is left to play 'catch up' with the average English position. Thus, the North East keeps its position at the lower end of achievement in three of the four public sector areas we analysed – education, health and welfare-to-work.

In some sectors the North East bears many similarities with other northern regions, such as the North West in education and health. In other sectors, particularly welfare-to-work, the region's situation is similar to London's.

Within the region there are dramatic differences, which often heighten when the region's average situation improves. For example, some parts of Northumberland if considered alone would not recognisably be placed within the region. We call this phenomenon the Hexham–Hartlepool divide.

But even in areas that are generally performing poorly, the dynamics are very diverse. For example, Hartlepool, while having low life expectancy and educational attainment, has seen some of the biggest improvements in economic activity over the last decade.

3. Inputs to the region

High levels of central spending in the region, which continues to increase

Table 3.1 shows central government spending per person (total identifiable expenditure per head) by main function in each English region during 2000/01 and 2006/07. Identifiable expenditure is

Table 3.1. Total identifiable expenditure by function and region per head, 2000/01 and 2006/07

	Total expenditure (accrual, £ per head)	General public services	Public order and safety	Employment policies	Health	Education and training	Social protection
2000/01							
North East	5,250	46	309	79	945	812	2,496
North West	5,196	57	290	70	964	797	2,392
Yorkshire & Humber	4,780	51	240	60	923	783	2,166
East Midlands	4,293	59	221	50	799	713	1,977
West Midlands	4,567	62	232	63	847	772	2,125
Eastern	4,056	55	200	42	793	668	1,843
London	5,347	93	427	52	1,042	869	2,137
South East	4,057	54	203	35	816	679	1,838
South West	4,535	64	229	48	863	682	2,096
England	4,660	62	264	53	891	752	2,094
2006/07							
North East	8,177	131	534	86	1,749	1,258	3,394
North West	7,798	117	517	64	1,704	1,197	3,154
Yorkshire & Humber	7,188	93	429	63	1,596	1,190	2,918
East Midlands	6,491	109	374	36	1,447	1,124	2,631
West Midlands	7,065	116	421	74	1,542	1,203	2,890
Eastern	6,144	112	342	34	1,368	1,060	2,533
London	8,404	148	750	54	1,678	1,385	2,964
South East	6,304	111	379	24	1,418	1,075	2,466
South West	6,677	108	387	31	1,479	1,044	2,732
England	7,121	117	467	49	1,547	1,172	2,819

Source: HM Treasury 2006. 2000/01 data National Statistics; 2007 2006/07 data HM Treasury

spending that can be shown to directly benefit the region rather than the nation. For example, defence would not be classified as identifiable regional expenditure as the benefit would flow to the nation as a whole. Table 3.1 reveals that public spending per head increased during this period in all regions, both with regards to total expenditure and to the selected public service areas (functions) considered in this audit. Employment policies are the exception though, spending having increased in some areas (Northern and Midlands regions and London) and declined elsewhere.

In both sets of years, looking at both total spending and spending by each function, the amount spent per head in the North East was above the English average amount spent per head. The region was second only to London in receiving the greatest total amount spent per head and in spending on public order and safety, and education and training in both sets of years. The North East received the highest spending per head on employment policies and social protection in both sets of years. The amount spent on employment policies increased over the time period considered and extended the disparity: the North East received double the amount per head as the East, East Midlands and South West and triple the amount received by the South East region. In health the North East in 2000/01 received the third highest regional amount spent per person, London and the North West being first and second respectively, but by 2006/07 the region had overtaken both those regions and was in first place in terms of health public spending.

4. Outcomes for the region

This section turns to how the region's performance has changed in relation to key public policy outcomes identified by central government policy, typified by the focus of public service agreements (PSAs) used since 1998. We now explore each public service sector separately.

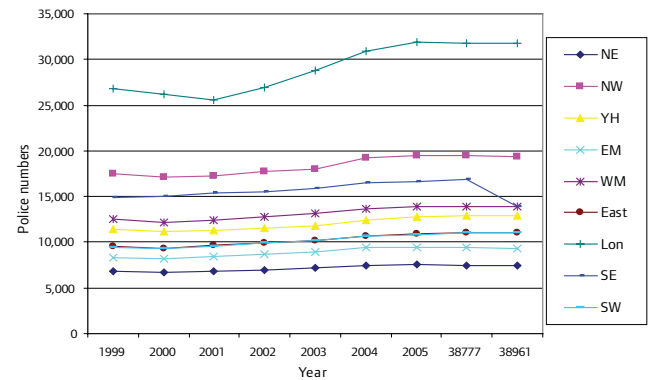
4.1 Criminal justice

Increasing police numbers and greater public confidence in policing

Increasing police force numbers has been a major government claim of the reform process in this area of criminal justice. Figure 4.1.1 shows that by 2006 in all regions, except the South East, police officer numbers were higher than in 1999. However, while police officer numbers in the North East were consistently the lowest seen in all English regions during 1999 to 2006 despite increasing by 606 officers during this time (from 6,824 to 7,430), Figure 4.1.2 shows that over time in most regions there has been a steady rise in police officers relative to the regional population. Based on this measure (officers per 100,000 resident population), the North East has the second highest police force size of all English regions. This position is less impressive, though, when it is recognised that the North East along with North West has been consistently losing population (through deaths and out-migration) in comparison to other English regions, which are gaining population.

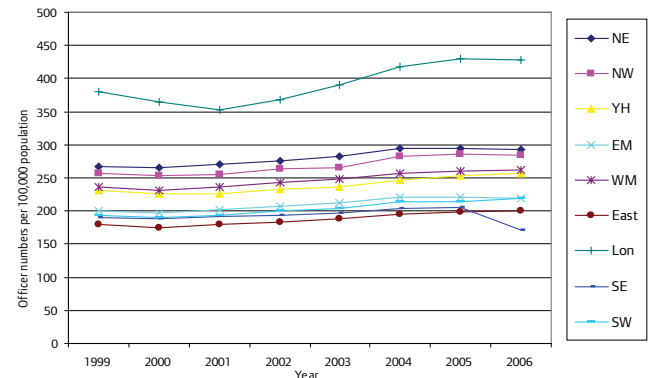
The most recent British Crime Survey (2006) revealed that residents in the North East had some of the highest public confidence in their police force in comparison to other English regions (53 per cent, joint second highest with the South West with only London ahead at 54 per cent). However, as Figure 4.1.3 shows, there is

Figure 4.1.1. Police force numbers by English region 1999-2006



Source: North East Regional Information Partnership (NERIP) online indicators of police numbers (population base) 1999-2005 and Home Office 2007a

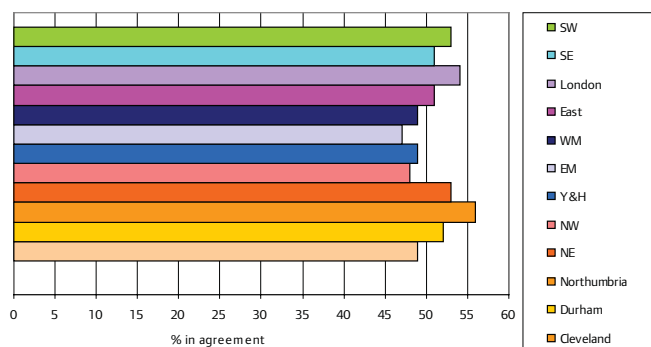
Figure 4.1.2. Regional police numbers by English region (officers per 100,000 population) 1999-2006



Source: North East Regional Information Partnership (NERIP) online indicators of police numbers (population base) 1999-2005 and Home Office 2007a

Note: police numbers divided by Office of National Statistics (ONS) mid-year population estimates (2004 used as base year for 2006)

Figure 4.1.3. Proportion of population in English regions who have confidence in their local police force 'doing a good job'



Source: Home Office 2006, data from Table 7.04

considerable variation in perceptions of the three regional police forces (Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria; the latter includes the Tyne and Wear metropolitan area). Fifty-six per cent of Northumbrian residents felt their force was doing a good job compared to 49 per cent of Cleveland residents.

North East residents are less likely to live in fear of crime and experience falls in reported levels of crime

In England the proportion of people fearing burglary has fallen overall since 2001/02, despite a slight increase in 2005/06. Within the North East fear of burglary during 2005/06 was relatively low given that in 2001/02 it was among the highest in the country.

Likewise, perceived fear of violent crime generally fell throughout all English regions between 2001/02 and 2005/06 and within the North East dropped by nine per cent. The reduction in fear of violent crime by North East residents was greater than that experienced by West Midlands and North West residents, who started from the same level in 2001/02.

Despite the perceived fear of burglary, the North East is one of only

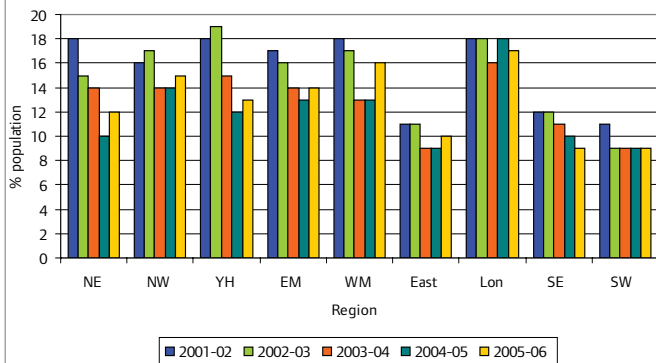
two regions in England where the number of recorded burglaries actually fell between 2001/02 and 2005/06 by approximately 100 incidents, shown by Figure 4.1.6. In the other region to experience a fall, Yorkshire and the Humber, the decline was ten times less over the same time period. However, such positive changes did not alter the fact that in 2005/06 the North East still had one of the highest rates of burglary.

As fear of violent crime decreased overall within England between 2001/02 and 2005/06 this was reflected by an actual fall in recorded violent crime in all English regions with the notable exception of the North East and West Midlands (Figure 4.1.7). Both in 2001/02 and 2005/06 the North East possessed the lowest rate of recorded violent crime, despite a rise of approximately 120 cases.

High rates of detection but varied sanctions

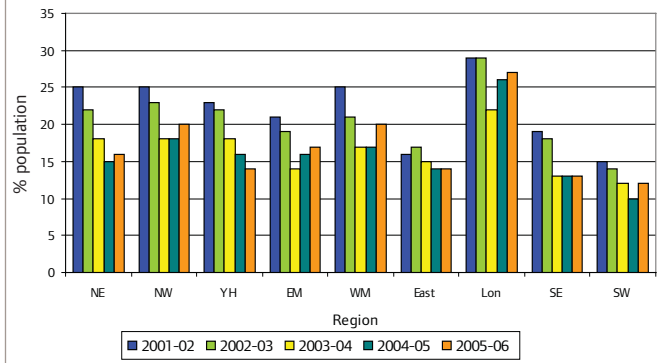
Figure 4.1.8 shows that in 2005/06 only 41 per cent of the North East's population felt confident that the criminal justice system (CJS) was effective in bringing people to justice. This was the lowest level of expressed confidence in the CJS out of all the English

Figure 4.1.4. Proportion of regional population fearing burglary 2001/02–2005/06



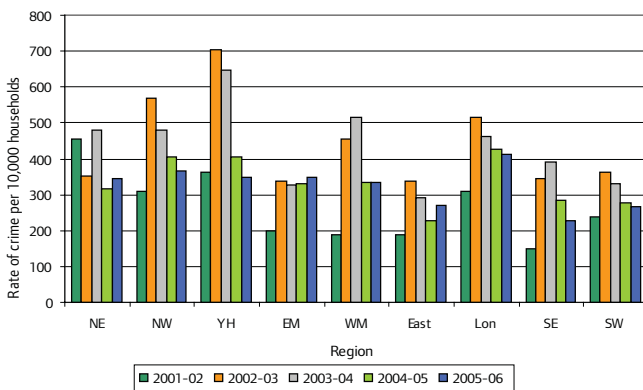
Source: Home Office 2002, table 7.05; 2003, table 6.06; 2004, table 6.01; 2005, table 6.07; 2006, table 7.02

Figure 4.1.5. Proportion of regional population fearing violent crime 2001/02–2005/06



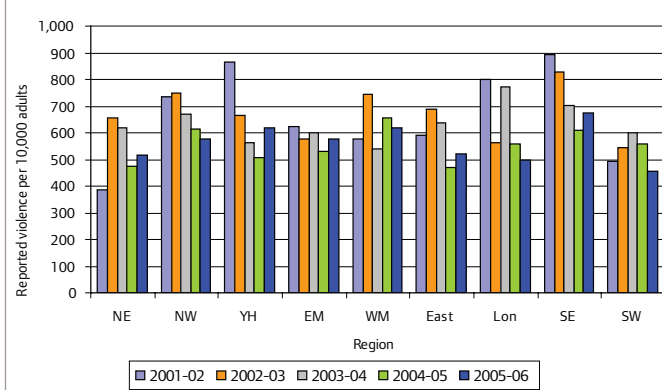
Source: Home Office 2002, table 4.04; 2003, table 4.05; 2004, table 4.09; 2005, table 6.04 2006 table 7.02

Figure 4.1.6. Incidence of reported burglaries in English regions 2001/02–2005/06



Source: Home Office 2002, table 4.05; 2003, table 4.09; 2004, table 6.04; 2005, table 6.07; 2006 table 7.06

Figure 4.1.7. Incidence of reported violent crime in English regions 2001/02–2005/06



Source: Home Office 2002, table 5.03; 2003, table 5.02; 2004, table 6.06; 2005, table 6.07; 2006 table 7.02

regions. However, given that the highest level of confidence was at 48 per cent, from London residents, this implies that nationally at least half of the population is far from confident that the CJS is effective.

If we look within the North East, there is little deviation from the regional norm; only two-fifths of people living within each of the three criminal justice areas in the region (equivalent to police force areas) thought that the CJS was effective.

While public perceptions are that the CJS is effective, the North East region experienced the highest rate (32 per cent) of recorded crime that was detected in England during 2005/06, illustrated by Figure 4.1.9. The sanctioned detection rate for the North East is actually higher or equal to a number of regions' overall detection rates. Sanctioned detections refer to an offence cleared up through judicial action or sanction, such as a charge, summons, caution or an offence taken into consideration. Non-sanctioned detections arise where an offender is identified but not charged, for example a witness may be unwilling to give evidence.

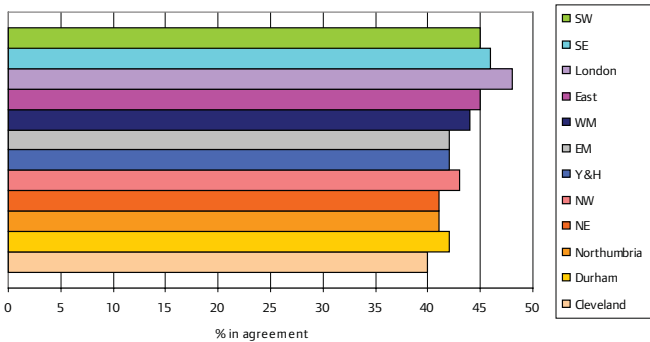
Figure 4.1.9 also suggests that in the North East two-thirds of recorded crime goes undetected, and by implication this rate would be among the lowest in England.

For those offenders who receive judicial sanction in the North East a number of trends are shown by Figure 4.1.10 occurring between 1997 and 2005. There was an increase in community sentencing and a decline (albeit marginal) in both immediate custodial sentencing and in fining offenders, accompanied by an increase in other forms of disposal.

It is interesting to see how different criminal justice areas in the North East proceed in sentencing individuals who have committed an offence that has been detected and sanctioned. Figure 4.1.11 shows that between 1997 and 2005 Durham courts sent approximately nine per cent of offenders into custody, yet custody rates in Cleveland and Northumbria fell, and substantially below the Durham rate. Obviously there is an issue in relation to the different offences that came before the court in each area and the 'usual' procedural response to each type of crime, which may differ by area. Yet Figure 4.1.11 does reveal a sub-regional difference in the custody rates for all offences coming before both magistrates and crown courts.

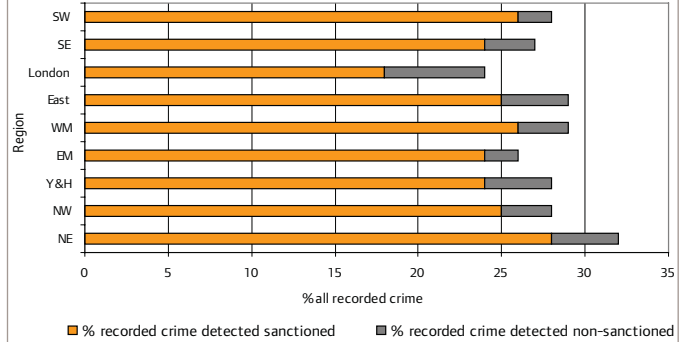
While custody rates have been falling at different rates within the North East, Figure 4.1.12 suggests that the length of custodial sentences is highly variable within the region. For example, in all areas sentence length declined during 1997/99 but since then has

Figure 4.1.8. Proportion of population very or fairly confident that the criminal justice system is 'effective in bringing people to justice', 2005/06



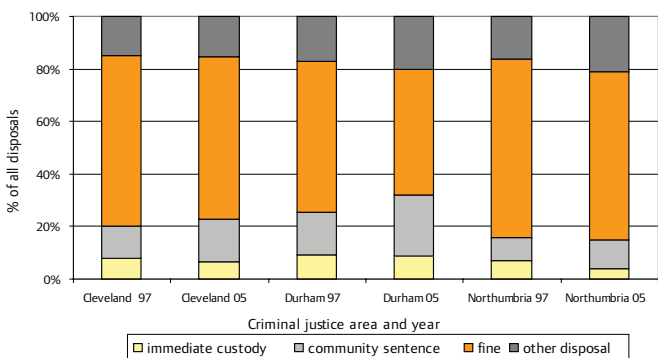
Source: Home Office 2006, table 7.04

Figure 4.1.9. Recorded crime detected (sanctioned and non-sanctioned) by English region, 2005/06



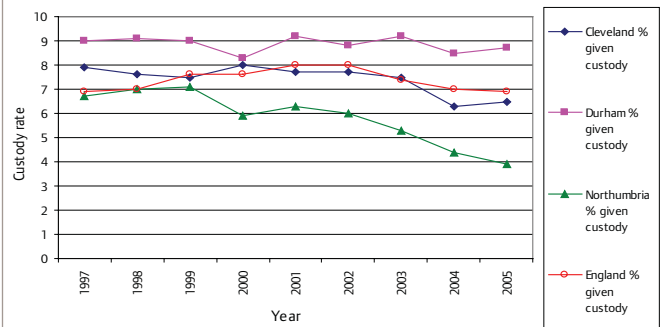
Source: Home Office 2006, data from table 8.01

Figure 4.1.10. Total sentencing (all courts) by sentence type for North East criminal justice areas, 1997 and 2005



Source: Home Office 2007b, data from tables 5.5 and 5.6

Figure 4.1.11. Custody rate (all courts and all offences) of persons sentenced by North East criminal justice areas and nationally (England), 1997-2005



Source: Home Office 2007b, data from table 5.1

steadily increased; albeit Northumbria in 2005 (the latest date for which information was available) was still below the 1997 rate, Durham was similar to the 1997 level, and in Cleveland the sentence length had increased considerably since 2000.

Youth offending sees low sentencing rates but low levels of support to young offenders

Youth offending, particularly efforts to reduce youth re-offending, is a key component of government policy and public service efforts in the criminal justice system.

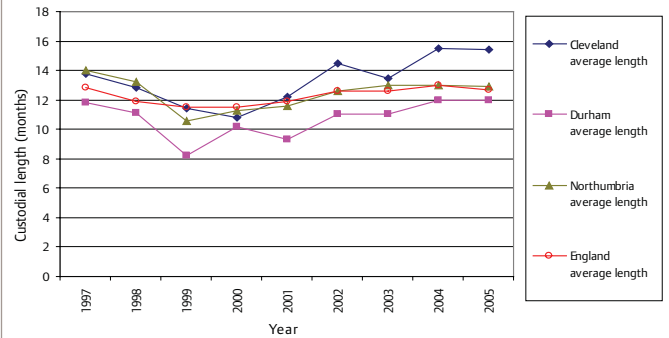
One key focus has been to reduce the length of time between arrest and sentence for persistent young offenders (those aged 10 to 17 years who have been charged with three or more offences or one or more offence during the preceding three years) to reduce the risk of further re-offending before sentencing. Figure 4.1.13 shows that between 1997 and 2006 the average number of days taken from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders fell. The target length applicable to each police force/criminal justice area is 71 days and this is generally being met, with the exception of the most recent months of 2006 (expressed as rolling three-monthly averages), which generally peak in the North East during summer and autumn and then decline again (if previous years' patterns are to be followed).

During the latest year that data is publicly available for sentencing young offenders, the North East experienced the lowest rates of custodial and community sentencing for young offenders (aged 10 to 17 years). The region experienced average rates of first-tier disposals (fines, deferred sentence or being bound over, for example) and rates among the highest for pre-court disposal (such as police reprimand or warning with or without intervention). These are illustrated by Figure 4.1.14.

The performance of Youth Offending Teams (Yots) is assessed by the Youth Justice Board (an executive non-departmental public body responsible for preventing re-offending by children and young people). The performance areas assessed include among others: recidivism (re-offending rates), use of restorative justice, parental satisfaction with parental intervention, time taken to submit a pre-sentence report, and ensuring that young offenders receive appropriate education, training or employment and that all young people subject to community interventions or on release have satisfactory accommodation to go to.

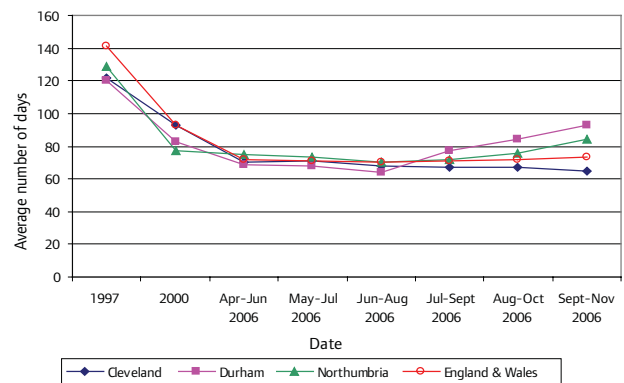
The final warning supported by intervention is a cornerstone of youth justice. The final warning programme attempts to promote consistency in delivery in terms of when the warning is triggered, through a range of targeted interventions, to address current offending and the risk of future crime. These may be structured meetings with educational, health and drug professionals or structured parental support. One aspect of the intervention procedure is that it is supposed to send a clear message to the young person about the consequences of offending. Figure 4.1.15 shows that there is an increase in the use of final warnings with interventions (given the 2004 target of 80 per cent of final warnings being supported by interventions) with all regions exceeding this target. However, recent research in northern England has suggested that there is still some local variation over when the final warning is provided, there is limited support from local youth

Figure 4.1.12. Average length of custodial sentence in North East criminal justice areas and nationally (England), 1997-2005



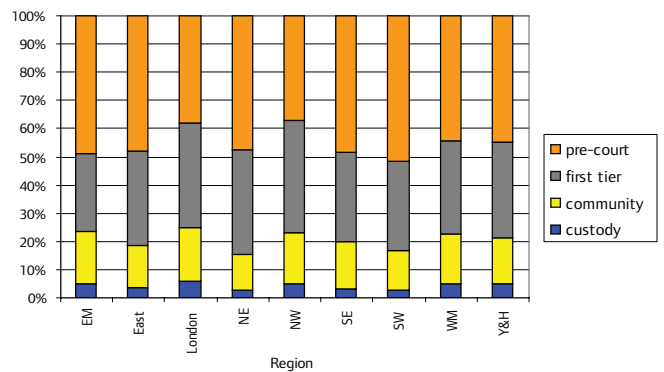
Source: Home Office 2007b, data from table 5.1

Figure 4.1.13. Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in North East criminal justice areas, 1997-2006



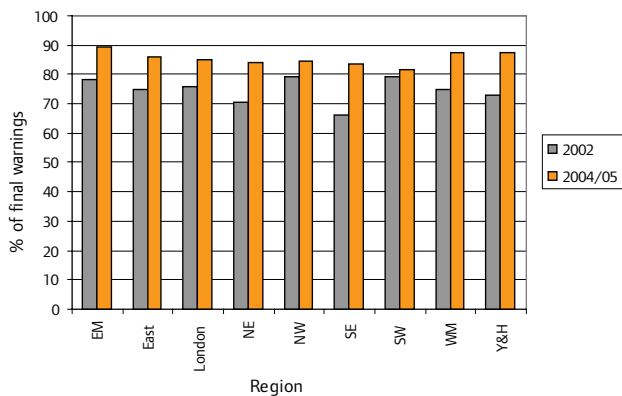
Source: Department for Constitutional Affairs 2000; 2007, data from table 2 and table 4 respectively

Figure 4.1.14. Young offenders disposal rates by English region, 2003-04



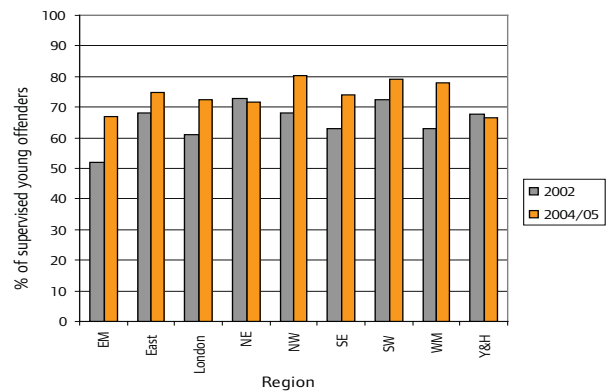
Source: Youth Justice Board 2004

Figure 4.1.15. Percentage of final warnings supported by interventions with young offenders by English region in 2002 and 2004/05



Source: Youth Justice Board 2003, 2005

Figure 4.1.16. Percentage of supervised young offenders in suitable education, training or employment in English regions in 2002 and 2004/05



Source: Youth Justice Board 2003, 2005

agencies to assist in rehabilitation, and young people fail to engage with the programme (Keightley-Smith and Francis 2007).

Figure 4.1.16 shows that all regions were falling below the target that 90 per cent of all young offenders supervised by Yots were in either full-time education or training or employment by 2003/04. Despite many regions having increased education, training and employment of young offenders, provision in the North East, as in the Yorkshire and Humber region, fell between 2002 and 2004/05 to around 72 per cent of young offenders receiving this support. Moreover, the North East fell from best performer to among the

worst.

4.2 Education

Modest staff increases lead to low pupil: teacher ratios

Table 4.2.1 shows that in every English region there was a steady increase in full-time equivalent teaching posts in the maintained (state) school sector between 1997 and 2006. The North East stands out: the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching posts, despite small movements, has remained relatively constant (the region hovers in the 22,000s and had only 600 more FTE teaching

Table 4.2.1. Full-time equivalent (FTE) regular teachers (excluding occasionals) in the local authority maintained sector by local authority in the North East and Government Office Regions of England: January 1997 to 2006

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Gateshead	1,680	1,630	1,580	1,630	1,670	1,660	1,650	1,620	1,630	1,660
Newcastle upon Tyne	2,120	2,130	2,140	2,130	2,180	2,230	2,170	2,160	2,170	2,160
North Tyneside	1,650	1,640	1,630	1,600	1,820	1,690	1,650	1,700	1,730	1,750
South Tyneside	1,370	1,350	1,380	1,310	1,440	1,460	1,410	1,430	1,410	1,410
Sunderland	2,660	2,620	2,650	2,620	2,670	2,670	2,640	2,670	2,690	2,690
Hartlepool	840	810	800	820	840	850	840	850	870	880
Middlesbrough	1,380	1,340	1,270	1,300	1,270	1,310	1,280	1,150	1,160	1,140
Redcar and Cleveland	1,300	1,280	1,300	1,300	1,280	1,410	1,370	1,390	1,380	1,340
Stockton on Tees	1,650	1,660	1,660	1,720	1,740	1,760	1,760	1,770	1,720	1,780
Former Durham	4,910	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Darlington	-	820	820	800	780	840	840	850	860	830
Durham post 1.4.97	-	4,120	4,190	4,190	4,240	4,270	4,310	4,300	4,300	4,300
Northumberland	2,630	2,560	2,600	2,590	2,620	2,760	1,760	2,810	2,790	2,830
North East	22,200	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,500	22,900	22,700	22,700	22,700	22,800
North West	59,300	59,200	60,100	60,200	60,400	61,600	61,700	62,000	62,200	62,500
Yorkshire & Humber	41,900	41,400	41,900	42,700	43,000	43,700	43,500	44,200	44,600	44,900
East Midlands	33,700	33,300	33,500	34,000	34,500	34,900	35,700	36,200	36,400	36,900
West Midlands	45,900	45,700	46,200	46,300	47,400	47,800	48,200	48,200	49,200	49,400
Eastern	43,300	43,200	43,800	43,800	44,300	46,200	46,700	47,100	47,200	48,000
London	56,800	56,700	57,100	57,300	58,300	60,100	60,900	61,600	62,700	63,500
South East	59,800	59,800	60,300	61,500	61,800	63,500	64,600	65,500	66,300	67,000
South West	36,300	36,400	36,300	37,000	38,000	38,900	39,700	40,200	40,600	43,600
England	399,200	397,700	401,200	404,600	410,200	419,600	423,600	427,700	431,900	435,600

Source: Department for Education and Skills 2007a, extract from table 18

Table 4.2.2. Pupil: teacher ratios (PTR) in the local authority maintained sector, by North East local authority and Government Office Regions of England: January 2006

	Nursery		Primary		Secondary		Overall	
	Pupils	PTR	Pupils	PTR	Pupils	PTR	Pupils	PTR
Gateshead	30	13.3	15,440	21.2	11,770	15.2	27,240	16.4
Newcastle upon Tyne	570	19.3	19,350	22.2	16,730	16.3	36,640	17.7
North Tyneside	60	19.0	15,140	22.2	13,650	15.5	28,850	17.3
South Tyneside	130	14.8	12,050	20.9	9,970	15.2	22,160	16.4
Sunderland	360	15.9	23,060	21.4	19,120	15.2	42,530	16.1
Hartlepool	20	8.9	8,570	21.9	6,460	16.1	15,050	17.3
Middlesbrough	0	..	12,910	21.0	5,580	15.2	18,490	17.1
Redcar and Cleveland	0	..	12,360	21.7	10,010	15.7	22,370	16.9
Stockton on Tees	0	..	16,090	21.3	12,590	16.4	28,680	16.8
Darlington	200	39.0	8,410	23.3	6,260	16.8	14,860	17.9
Durham	560	19.9	39,580	21.1	32,510	16.5	72,640	16.9
Northumberland	30	34.0	18,150	21.6	29,960	17.1	48,150	17.5
North East	1,950	19.1	201,110	21.5	174,600	16.1	377,660	17.0
North West	3,630	16.8	576,840	22.0	462,310	16.0	1,042,780	17.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,850	16.9	423,480	22.2	345,540	16.4	770,880	17.3
East Midlands	1,370	15.7	346,910	22.3	295,860	16.8	644,140	17.8
West Midlands	3,380	19.3	453,560	21.8	375,190	16.3	832,130	17.3
East of England	2,060	15.3	427,750	22.2	389,630	17.3	819,440	17.4
London	5,180	15.6	601,980	22.3	423,140	16.2	1,030,300	16.7
South East	2,260	14.0	613,400	21.8	514,190	17.1	1,129,850	17.2
South West	1,260	14.0	373,820	21.8	325,910	16.7	700,980	17.6
England	22,930	16.3	4,018,860	22.0	3,306,360	16.6	7,348,150	17.2

Source: Department for Education and Skills 2007a, extract from table 25

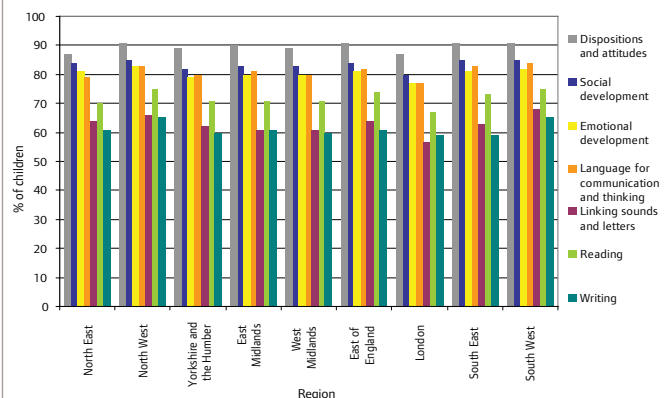
posts in 2006 than it possessed in 1997), whereas all other regions experienced larger staff increases, regardless of the size of the original workforce. Given the pattern seen in the North East it is unsurprising that the FTE numbers in the region’s local authority areas have remained relatively stable, experiencing a slight increase (taking into account the local government boundary change which affected County Durham in 1997).

When the pupil: teacher ratio (PTR) is explored (table 4.2.2) we begin to see some differences between areas. Lower PTRs in the primary stage of education (smaller primary class sizes) was an early electoral pledge that was transformed into one of the first education PSA targets. The lower the ratio, the fewer children there are to teaching staff. For nursery education within the North East there are wide variations, PTRs ranging from 8.9 to 39.0, but this is probably a reflection of the area’s choice of pre-school provision. For primary education the ratios range from 20.9 (South Tyneside) to 23.3 (Darlington), and in the secondary sector PTRs ranged from 15.2 (Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Middlesbrough) to 17.1 (Northumberland), all of which are relatively close to the national mean. Despite this regional variation for the primary and secondary PTRs, the North East has the lowest and second lowest regional average respectively (21.5 and 17.0), which puts the regional PTR well below the English rate.

Low foundation-stage achievement

Figures 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 show the variation in assessments of foundation stage profiles reflecting 3- to 5-year-olds’ attainment in English regions. (It should be noted that data before 2005 is available for England only, and as the assessments are performed by local authority officers, sub-regional direct comparison is not

Figure 4.2.1. Percentage of children who in local authority Foundation Stage Profiles are working securely within given assessment scales in English regions, 2005



Source: DfES 2006a, figures from table B – national results
 Note: ‘working securely in an area’ means obtaining an assessment of six points or more

reliable.) The figures for 2005 and 2006 show that children in the North East follow the same patterns of attainment on the assessment scales represented here (personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy scales) as children in other English regions. However, the rates of attainment of children from the North East are often among the lowest, if not the lowest, within England. This pattern is replicated for other assessment scales not reproduced here. These include mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and

physical development.

Strong performance in primary-level education (Key Stage 1 and 2 achievements)

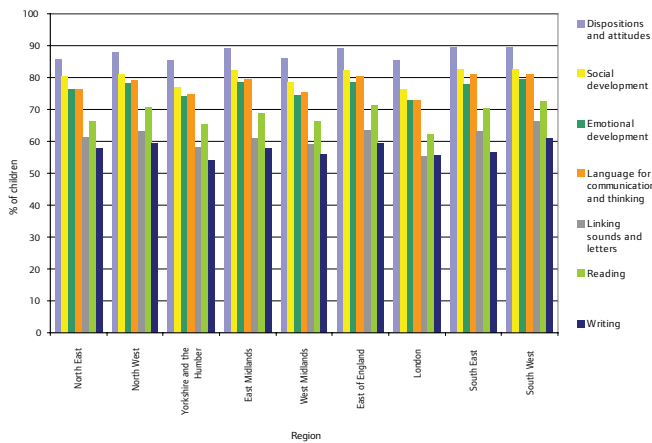
Figure 4.2.3 shows the achievement of children from the North East compared to their English peers in Key Stage 1 assessments in reading, writing and maths. A score of level 2 or above indicates that the nationally expected attainment for a child aged 7 is being successfully met. Figure 4.2.3 shows that the region's girls out-performed boys in both 2000 and 2006, reflecting a national pattern. However, a number of other changes between the North East and national performance are seen (remembering that data for the North East will be included within the English average). For example, attainment in maths within the region was above the English average for both girls and boys, yet writing attainment has fallen over time in the North East, producing a disparity that exceeds that observed nationally.

Key Stage 2 marks the transition from primary to secondary phase of compulsory education undertaken at age 11. It is clear from Figure 4.2.4 that at this point the achievement of pupils in the North East region at level 4 or above mirrors that of pupils throughout England, as rates are roughly similar, if not identical. Level 4 is the expected level an 11-year-old should achieve. The pattern of girls out-performing boys in both 2000 and 2006 is again evident.

Poor pupil achievement in secondary education

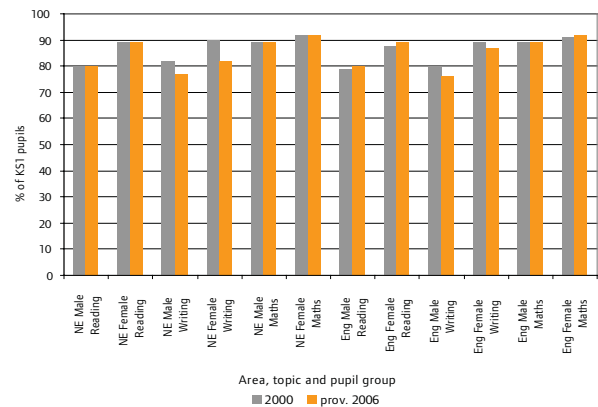
It is at Key Stage 3 that the disparities in academic achievement in the key topics begin to become evident between the North East's youth and the rest of their English peers. Figure 4.2.5 clearly shows two main features. First, over time, between 2000 and 2006, expected attainment had increased for all pupils. Second, the difference between the North East and English attainment at Key Stage 3 began to appear; in 2000 pupil attainment at level 5 or

Figure 4.2.2. Percentage of children who in local authority Foundation Stage Profiles are working securely within given assessment scales in English regions, 2006



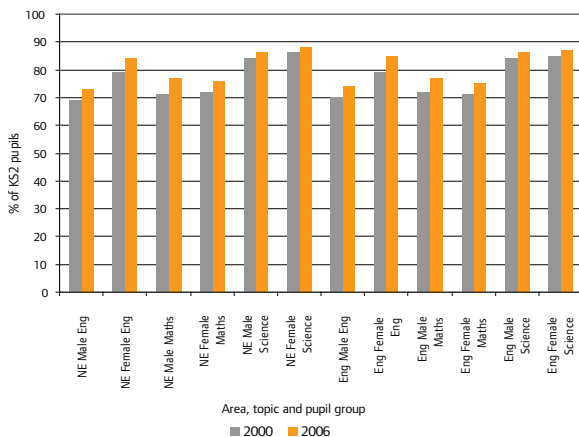
Source: DfES 2007b, from table B – national results.
 Note: 'working securely in an area' means obtaining an assessment of six points or more

Figure 4.2.3. Percentage of pupils by gender achieving level 2 or above in Key Stage 1, North East and England, 2000 and 2006



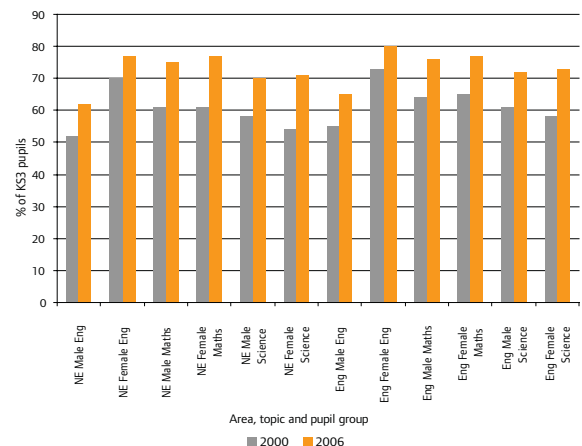
Source: DfES 2001, 2006b, table 4 both dates

Figure 4.2.4. Percentage of pupils by gender achieving level 4 or above in Key Stage 2, North East and England, 2000 and 2006



Source: DfES 2001, 2006c, table 9 both dates

Figure 4.2.5. Percentage of pupils by gender achieving level 5 or above in Key Stage 3, North East and England, 2000 and 2006



Source: DfES 2001, data from table 11; 2007c, data from table 10

above (level 5 being the expected level of achievement for 14-year-olds) in the region was roughly on a par with the English average. However, by 2006 attainment in the North East had dropped. One difference was between attainment in the North East and the English average in English. In 2006 62 per cent of boys and 77 per cent of girls achieved level 5 or above in the subject, compared with an average of 65 and 80 per cent of boys and girls respectively in England.

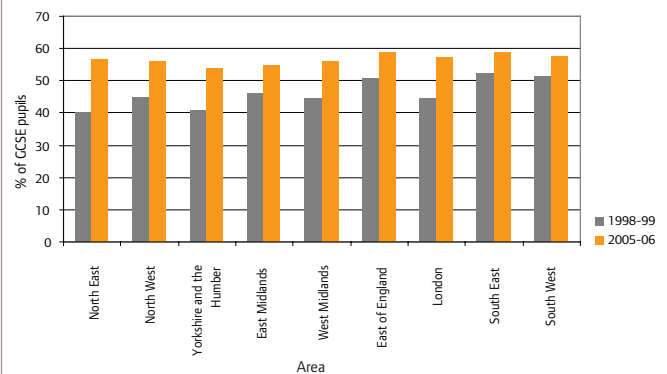
Figure 4.2.6 shows that from 1998/99 the proportions of pupils attaining the so-called 'gold standard' of five GCSEs or more at grades A*-C rose considerably throughout all English regions. For example, in the academic year 1998/99 the North East had the lowest rate of pupils leaving compulsory education with this standard of achievement (40 per cent), which by 2005/06 had risen to 57 per cent of pupils. This equates to a 42 percentage point improvement. Consequently, the region by 2006 was now among the stronger performing regions at GCSE level. In 1998/99 the South East had the highest rates of pupil achievement with 52.3 per cent of pupils achieving this level, which had only improved by 13 percentage points to 59.1 per cent of pupils achieving five good passes in 2005/06. One other important trend notable from Figure 4.2.6 is that the levels of disparity between regions in GCSE performance narrowed considerably over the eight year period discussed. For example in 1998/99 there was a gap of 12 percentage points between the highest regional pass rate (South East) and the lowest (North East) but by 2005/06 this had declined to 5.4 per cent (with the highest pass rates seen in the South East and the lowest in Yorkshire and the Humber).

At sub-regional level there was considerable improvement in pupil attainment in all the regions' local education authorities, evidenced in Figure 4.2.7.

But if we consider the latest academic year's GCSE performance in more detail we see that the picture is not quite as rosy as the foregoing figure might lead us to believe. In 2005/06 the proportion of pupils who achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C which included English and maths (the platinum standard compared to the five good passes which amount to the gold standard) was the lowest in the North East, alongside the Yorkshire and Humber region at just over 40 per cent of students achieving this combination of results (see Figure 4.2.8). The North East rate is nearly eight per cent lower than the South East whose pupils experienced the highest GCSE pass rates when English and maths are included.

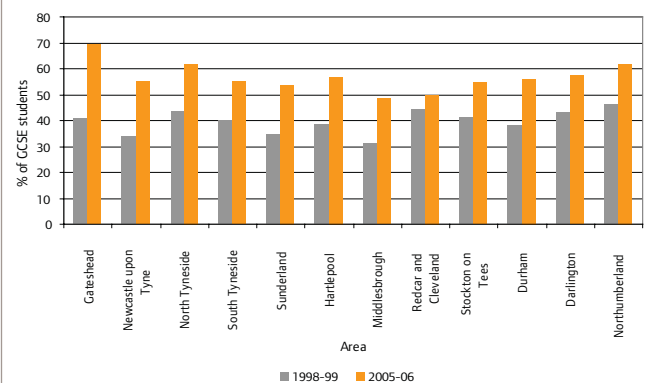
If this level of attainment is considered at sub-regional level for the last academic year (2005/06) we see that there is considerable difference according to local education authority (Figure 4.2.9). For example, at one extreme in Middlesbrough three-tenths of pupils achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and maths, in comparison with Northumberland and North Tyneside where nearly half of pupils did.

Figure 4.2.6. Percentage of GCSE pupils in maintained schools attaining five or more GCSE passes (grades A*-C) in English regions, 1998/99 and 2005/06



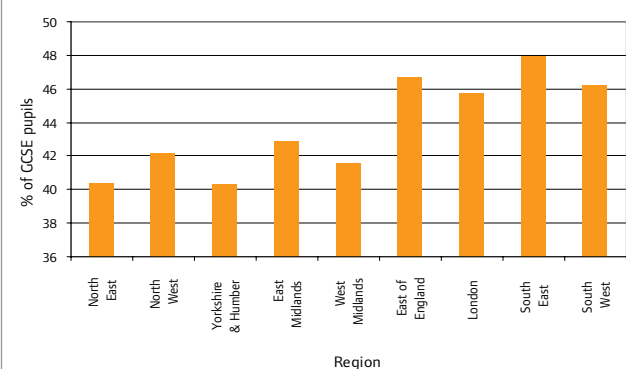
Source: Regional Co-ordination Unit (RCU) 2007, Regional Outcome Indicator 9

Figure 4.2.7. Percentage of GCSE pupils in maintained schools attaining five or more GCSE passes (grades A*-C) in North East local education authorities, 1998/99 and 2005/06



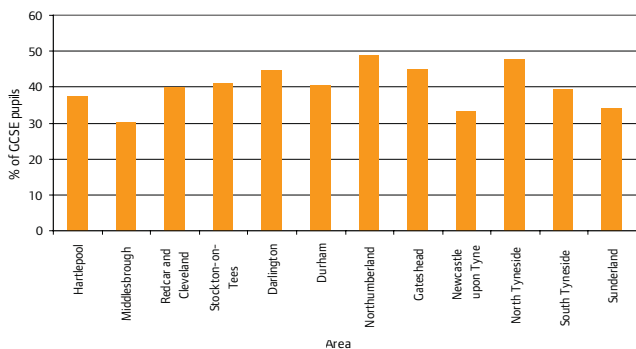
Source: Regional Co-ordination Unit (RCU) 2007, Regional Outcome Indicator 9

Figure 4.2.8. Percentage of pupils who achieved at least five GCSE passes, including English and maths, at grade A*-C in English regions, 2005-06



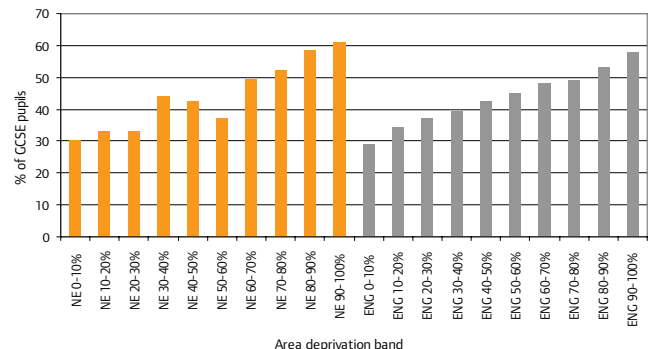
Source: DfES 2007d, data from table 18

Figure 4.2.9. Percentage of pupils who achieved at least five GCSE passes, including English and maths, at grade A*-C in North Eastern local authorities, 2005-06



Source: DfES 2007d, data from table 18

Figure 4.2.10. Percentage of pupils who achieved at least five GCSE passes, including English and maths, at grade A*-C, by deprivation band in the North East and England, 2005-06



Source: DfES 2007d, from table 21

Attainment at sub-regional level can also be explored by considering the attainment at GCSE of pupils by their area’s level of recorded deprivation, based on the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (see section 4.5 for further details on the index and regional levels of deprivation). Figure 4.2.10 reveals that for pupils in the North East and in England the higher the level of deprivation, the poorer the attainment at GCSE. Yet figure 4.2.10 is interesting as while this equation holds in England, within the North East it is not so clear cut. There is fluctuation at different levels of deprivation even though the overall trend remains true. Pupils in the most deprived 10 per cent of areas within the North East achieve a greater proportion of passes at this level of deprivation than seen for comparable areas in England. In addition, pupils living in the least deprived 40 per cent of areas in the North East also out-perform the national average for the ‘equivalent’ measure of deprivation. For those pupils in the worst 20 to 60 per cent of deprived areas in the region the picture is more mixed, pupils out-performing and under-performing in comparison to their peers.

Spending and educational outcomes

Despite some improvement in the region’s students’ attainment during compulsory schooling, the previous figures show that a considerable disparity between educational outcomes both within the region and between the North East and other regions remains. Table 4.2.3 shows that in the North East in many instances, the amount spent by Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools in the authority area when taken together was below the English average up to the period 2001/02, when more than half of the North East’s areas spent the national figure or more. However, a rough observation can be made of the table and the foregoing figures that there is no obvious positive correlation between spending and pupil attainment.

Low post-16 and adult participation in education and training
Participation in post-compulsory education (full or part time) and work-based learning (WBL) is a key area that the Government wishes to see increase, on the premise that this kind of participation can lead to greater social and economic mobility throughout

Table 4.2.3. Combined Local Education Authority and school based spending (£, real terms, at 2004/05 prices)

Area	Year						
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
England	3,180	3,260	3,140	3,300	3,560	3,600	3,980
Gateshead	3,230	3,220	3,110	3,420	3,750	4,010	4,240
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	3,450	3,380	3,290	3,410	3,580	3,880	4,190
North Tyneside	2,940	3,060	3,100	3,300	3,590	3,750	3,780
South Tyneside	2,860	2,990	3,020	3,280	3,720	3,770	4,000
Sunderland	2,820	2,960	2,990	3,230	3,600	3,460	3,990
Hartlepool	2,760	2,910	2,880	3,180	3,570	3,610	3,910
Middlesbrough	2,970	2,950	3,020	3,360	3,700	3,750	4,320
Redcar and Cleveland	2,890	3,000	3,020	3,240	3,380	3,700	4,290
Stockton-on-Tees	2,780	2,960	3,010	3,230	3,520	3,730	3,900
Durham	3,000	3,120	3,110	3,280	3,540	3,690	3,990
Darlington	2,810	2,930	2,920	3,080	3,360	3,490	3,770
Northumberland	2,910	3,040	3,020	3,190	3,440	3,580	3,890

Source: DfES 2005a

Note: highlighted figures indicate spending at or above the national figure.

adulthood. Figure 4.2.11 shows that between 1997 and 2004 overall rates of participation fluctuated considerably between regions, but all regions followed a national trend in which there was a fall in participation during 2000/02 followed by a rise. The rise could be explained by the gradual rolling out of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), which provides a small income to students who live with parents on a low income, or in a low-income household. However, most regional rates of post-16 participation education and training in 2004 were marginally (a few per cent) below those seen in 1997. For example, the North East in 1997 had 81 per cent of 16- and 17-year-olds participating in post-16 education and WBL, which despite rising to 83 per cent in 1999/2000, had dropped back to 80 per cent by 2004.

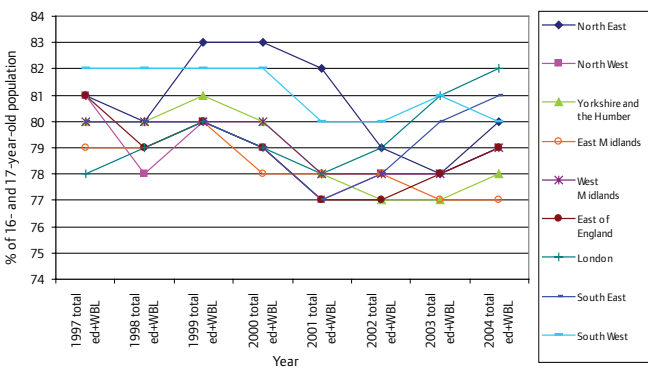
If the sub-regional picture is explored by Local Skills Council (LSC) areas, as shown in Figure 4.2.12 the same trend of participatory peaks and troughs is seen. Notably the Tees Valley area experienced the greatest variation in post-16 participation during the period. For both regional and sub-regional discussions it is worth noting that the North East has historically higher rates of part-time and WBL

than most regions and conversely lower rates of participation through full-time education. However, the different outcomes for young people following these different types of learning are from clear.

Looking at data for the participation of any adult (aged 16-69 years) in learning (taught or otherwise) between 2000/01 and 2004/05, Figure 4.2.13 shows that all regions experienced a decline in participation between the two sets of years, although the fall in the North East was smaller relatively than that in other regions. Similarly, on a sub-regional basis (LSC area, as LSCs are responsible for providing adult learning) a fall in participation was seen, which was visible in all LSC areas except Northumberland (Figure 4.2.14). However, in all areas the participation rate was well below the English average of 74.2 per cent and 69.5 per cent respectively for the years 2000/01 and 2004/05.

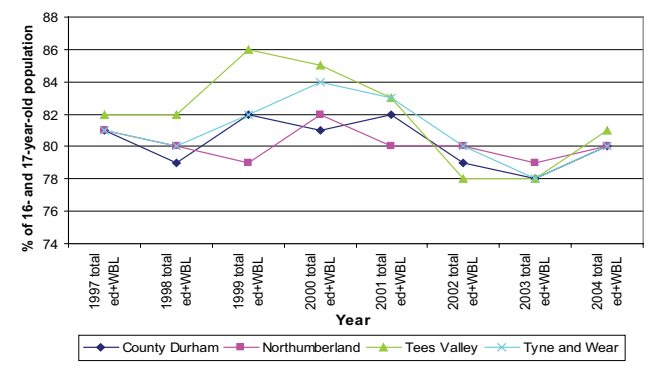
Taken together, the figures are somewhat worrying given that it is people with higher qualifications who usually participate in further learning, suggesting a qualifications 'deficit' in the region.

Figure 4.2.11. Percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds participating in education and work-based learning, by English region, 1997-2004



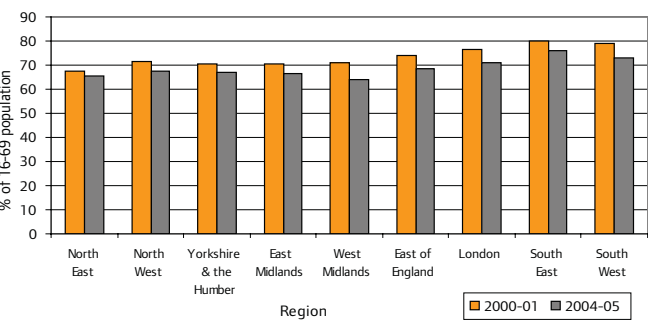
Source: DfES 2006d

Figure 4.2.12. Percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds participating in education and work-based learning, by North East Local Skills Council area, 1997-2004



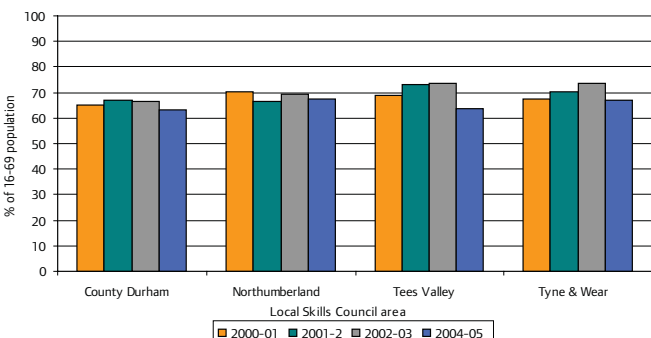
Source: DfES 2006d

Figure 4.2.13. All adults (16-69 years) participating in any learning, by English region, 2000/01 and 2004/05



Source: DfES 2002, 2006e

Figure 4.2.14. All adults (16-69 years) participating in any learning, by North East Local Skills Council areas, 2000/01 and 2004/05



Source: DfES 2002, 2003, 2005b, 2006e

4.3 Health

Increasing NHS staff numbers

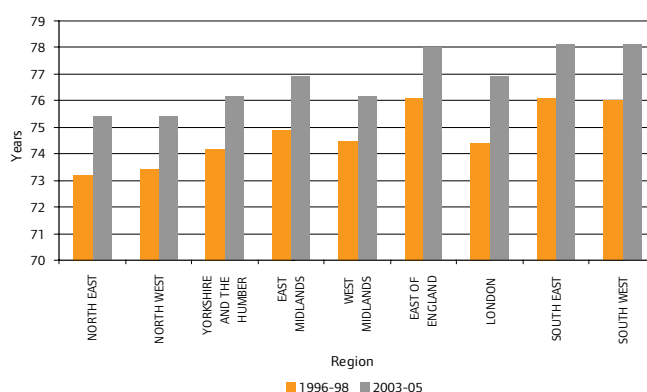
Within the NHS in England there was an increase of 129,774 professionally qualified clinical staff (doctors, consultants, registrars) from 436,646 to 566,420 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions between 1997 and 2005. This increase is the equivalent to an annual average change of 3.4 per cent. The numbers of FTE posts for qualified nurses (including for example practice nurses and midwifery nurses) increased from 256,093 to 321,537 over the same period, an annual increase of 2.9 per cent. However, much more startling is the increase in GP registrars (trainee doctors) from 582 in 1997 to 2,619 in 2005, equivalent to an annual increase of 20.7 per cent (Information Centre (for Health and Social Care) 2007, no regional breakdown available).

Table 4.3.1 shows full-time equivalent staff numbers for all general medical services (GMS) and personal medical services (PMS) staff at the end of September 2005 by Strategic Health Authority within the North East. GMS includes all GPs contracted and salaried with a Primary Care Trust (PCT) to provide services to patients. GMS 'other doctors' are salaried doctors but who work within partnerships providing a small number of service sessions each week (excluding locums and retainers). The table sheds some light on the composition of the region's primary health care provision through the numbers of GPs contracted and salaried by the PCT to provide services and the associated number of practices, the number of patients registered within each PCT area, and the average practice list size. There is considerable variation in the numbers of practices and patient numbers. However, in only four PCT areas was the average list size greater than the English average: these areas were North Tees, Easington, Hartlepool and Sunderland.

Rising but still poor life expectancy at birth

As Figures 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 show, there were overall increases in life expectancy at birth between 1996/98 and 2003/05 for males and females in all English regions. However, despite the rise, the North East consistently possessed the lowest life expectancy. More worrying still is that the difference between life expectancy rates equates to nearly three years less for North East males, and two years less for females than that which could be expected for regions with the longest life expectancy for both sexes (East, South East and South West regions).

Figure 4.3.1. Male life expectancy at birth, by English region, 1996-98 and 2003-05



Source: RCU 2007, Regional Outcome Indicator 11a

Table 4.3.1. General and personal medical services staff in the North East, September 2005

Strategic Health Authority	Primary Care Trust	Estimated FTE GMS & PMS contracted & GMS & PMS other	Practice staff FTE	Registered patients	PCT average list size	Number of practices
Northumberland, Tyne & Wear	Gateshead PCT	115	320	203,548	1,590	33
	Newcastle PCT	154	403	272,062	1,546	39
	North Tyneside PCT	115	311	210,180	1,557	30
	N'umberland Care Trust	217	163	312,843	1,287	49
	South Tyneside PCT	88	253	155,492	1,603	30
	Sunderland Teaching PCT	157	321	283,391	1,657	53
County Durham and Tees Valley	Darlington PCT	65	135	102,341	1,441	11
	Derwentside PCT	52	151	85,646	1,529	15
	Durham and Chester-le-Street PCT	94	239	150,400	1,446	18
	Durham Dales PCT	61	119	88,287	1,358	12
	Easington PCT	58	183	98,621	1,644	17
	Hartlepool PCT	54	126	93,818	1,618	16
	Langbaugh PCT	58	176	100,321	1,475	16
	Middlesbrough PCT	105	432	186,285	1,579	28
	North Tees PCT	108	292	187,851	1,619	26
	Sedgefield PCT	55	113	95,210	1,587	11
England total		29,248	72,990	52,817,500	1,613	8,451

Source: The Information Centre 2007, extract from GMP census tables, table 1

Within the North East there is considerable variation between the life expectancy between the region's males (Figure 4.3.3). While life expectancy at birth for all males has increased since 1996-98, by 2003-05 it was still possible that a male born in Berwick upon Tweed could have a life expectancy up to four years longer than a child born in Hartlepool or Middlesbrough.

Likewise for females all North Eastern local authority areas saw increased life expectancy at birth between the two sets of dates, with the exception of Wear Valley, which actually saw a fall (Figure 4.3.4). The sub-regional disparity appeared greater for females than for males, with a disparity of nearly five years. For example, in 2003-05 girls born in Berwick upon Tweed were expected to live to 83 years compared to 78.5 years for girls born in Hartlepool and Easington.

High rates of low-birth-weight births

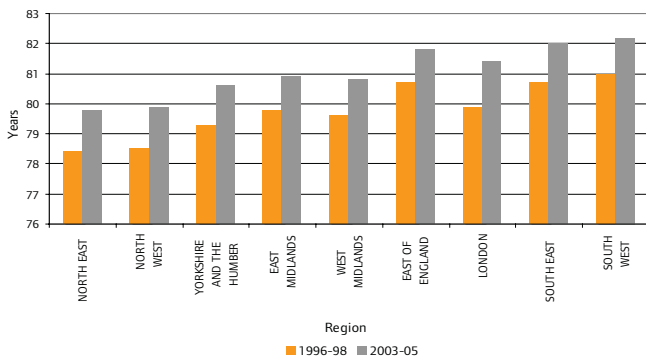
Low-birth-weight births are classed as those live or still births where a birth weight has been recorded that is below 2,500 grams, as a proportion of all births. Low-birth-weight births are recognised to be a major factor in infant mortality. Below 2,500 grams, weight-

specific infant mortality rises, with consequences for both childhood and longer term health. Low-birth-weight births are often associated with lower socio-economic status and as such have been included in government targets to reduce the inequality between infant mortality in manual occupation groups and the rest of the population.

In 1998 low-birth-weight births accounted for 7.48 per cent of births in England and Wales (Macfarlane et al 2000). By 2005 they accounted for 7.9 per cent of births (Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2006). Figure 4.3.5 shows the percentage of low-birth-weight births in 2005, the latest year for which data is available, in each English region. The North East did not possess the highest rates of low-birth-weight births, but did have a rate of 8.1 per cent, 0.2 per cent above the English average (also 7.9 per cent).

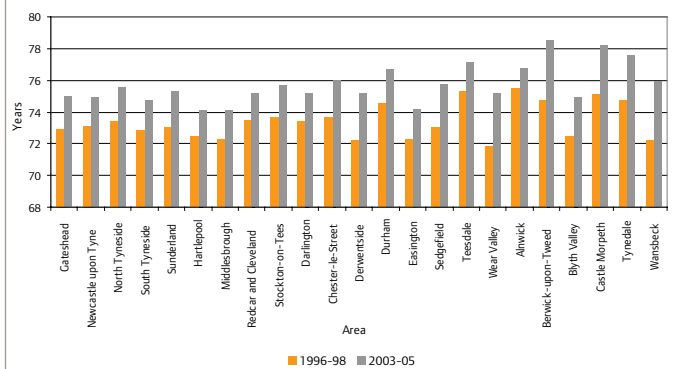
However, within the region the position is again one of stark contrasts. Figure 4.3.6 shows that within five primary care trusts, the number of infants born at a low birth weight exceeded the English average and even the higher regional rate in 2005. One statistic that immediately stands out is the high rates of low-birth-

Figure 4.3.2. Female life expectancy at birth, by English region, 1996-98 and 2003-05



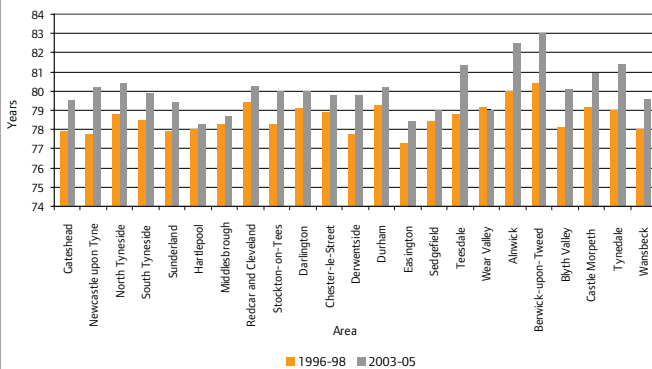
Source: RCU 2007, Regional Outcome Indicator 11b

Figure 4.3.3. Male life expectancy at birth for North East local authority areas, 1996-98 and 2003-05



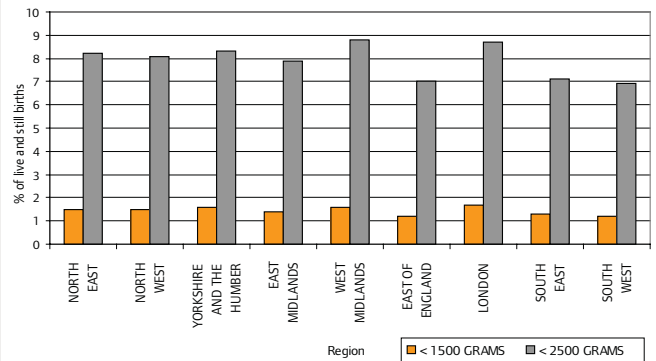
Source: RCU 2007, Regional Outcome Indicator 11a

Figure 4.3.4. Female life expectancy at birth for North East local authority areas, 1996-98 and 2003-05



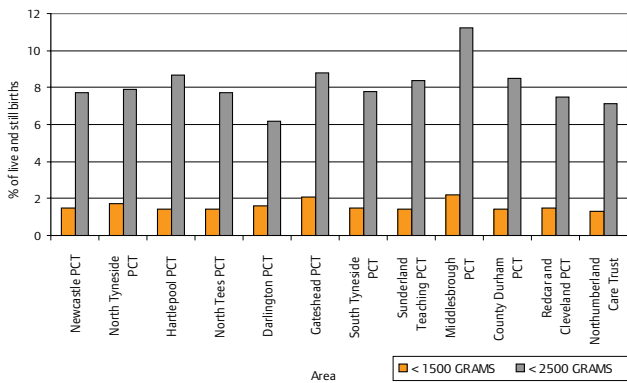
Source: RCU 2007, Regional Outcome Indicator 11b

Figure 4.3.5. Low-birth-weight births in English regions, 2005



Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2006

Figure 4.3.6. Low-birth-weight births in North Eastern Primary Care Trust and Care Trust areas, 2005



Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2006

weight births within Middlesbrough PCT, where 11.2 per cent of all births were below 2,500 grams in 2005, three per cent above the national and regional norms. This figure contrasts especially sharply with the 6.2 per cent of such births seen in Darlington PCT.

High mortality rates from coronary heart disease and all cancers, despite years of decline

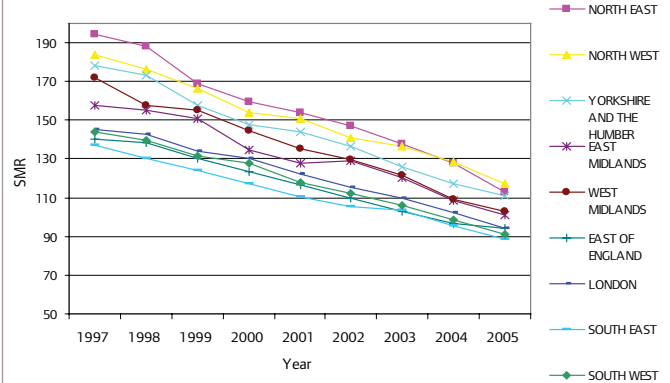
Figures 4.3.7 and 4.3.8 show that in each English region between 1997 and 2005 mortality rates from coronary heart disease (CHD) fell. Mortality rates are expressed using the Indirectly Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR). SMR reflects the ratio of age-specific observed deaths in the area's population, divided by the number of expected deaths given the area's population profile, multiplied by 100. Comparing death rates per 100,000 of the population is crude as it takes no account of the underlying age structure of the area; the SMR overcomes this problem by standardising mortality rates according to the area's age structure.

An SMR of 100 indicates an average mortality; consequently, anything above 100 reflects an excess rate. Despite the North East substantially reducing annual deaths from CHD over the period from 194 to 113 for males and from 191 to 121 for females respectively, the region still has the highest female and second highest male rates of mortality from CHD.

If we break down the deaths from CHD within the North East by PCT area, Figures 4.3.9 and 4.3.10 show that as expected there has been considerable decline in mortality from CHD for both sexes. However, the decline is far from smooth. For men the disparity within the region had not improved by 2005: in fact, it increased (shown by the distance between the top and bottom points in 1997 and 2005). But the mortality rates at which such disparity is seen were all well below the starting point for 1997. For women the disparity between areas narrowed over the period.

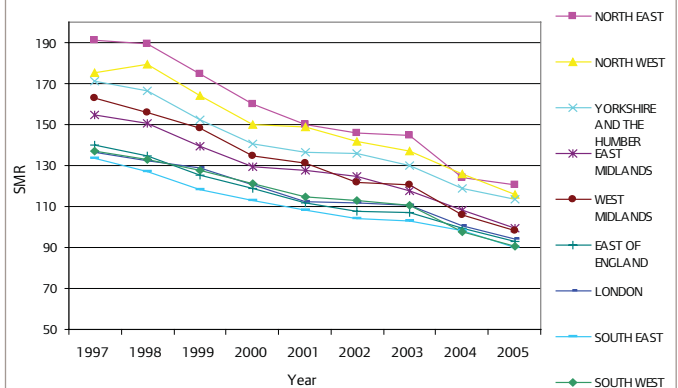
The picture for deaths from all cancers is similar to that for CHD. From 1997 to 2005 mortality rates for all cancers taken together for both men and women, shown in Figures 4.3.11 and 4.3.12, decreased in each English region. Again, the North East experienced a dramatic decline, although admittedly not from the problematic starting position that was seen for CHD. However, the North East

Figure 4.3.7. Male mortality (SMR) from coronary heart disease, by English region, 1997-2005



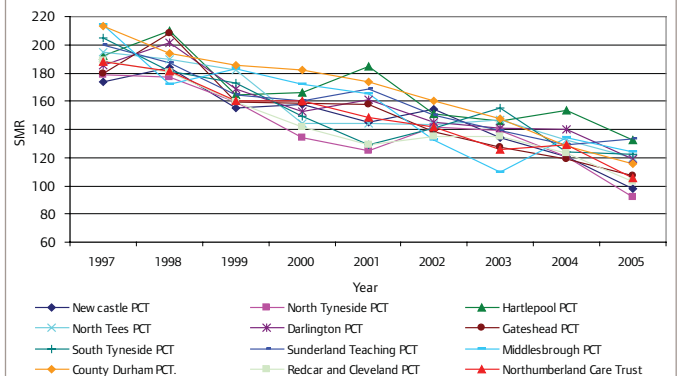
Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2007a

Figure 4.3.8. Female mortality (SMR) from coronary heart disease, by English region, 1997-2005



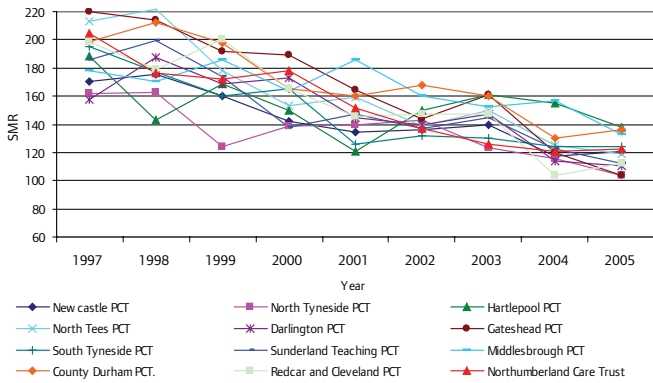
Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2007a

Figure 4.3.9. Male mortality (SMR) from coronary heart disease, by North East PCT, 1997-2005



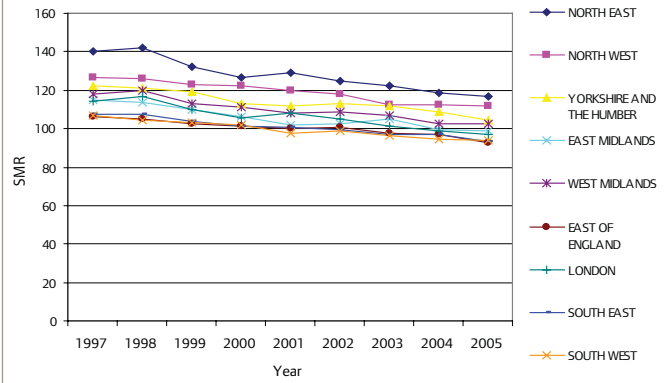
Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2007a

Figure 4.3.10. Female mortality (SMR) from coronary heart disease by North East PCT, 1997-2005



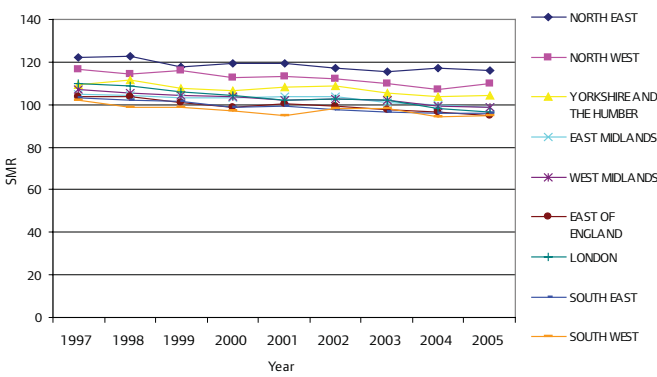
Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2007a

Figure 4.3.11. Male mortality (SMR) from all cancers, by English region, 1997-2005



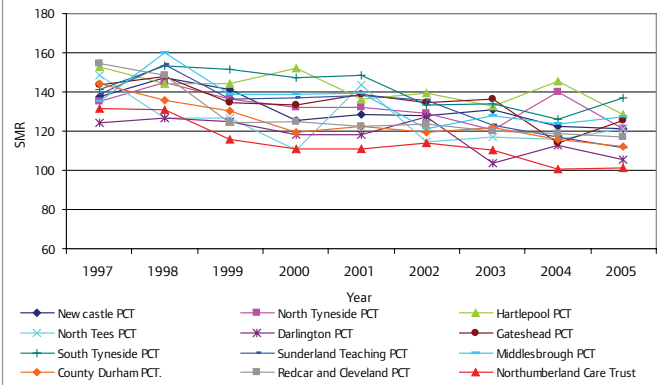
Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2007b

Figure 4.3.12. Female mortality (SMR) from all cancers, by English region, 1997-2005



Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2007b

Figure 4.3.13. Male mortality (SMR) from all cancers, by North East PCT, 1997-2005

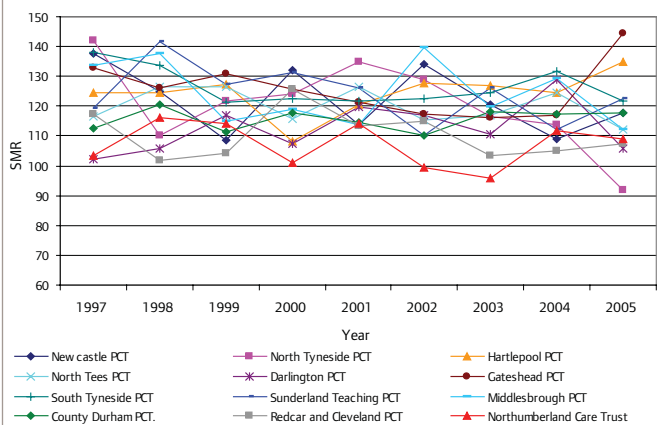


Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2007b

consistently possessed the highest excess rates of mortality from all cancers in each year. The regional differences are also illustrated by the fact that in 2005 the SMR for North East males and females was 117 and 116 respectively yet there were a number of regions that possessed SMRs below average (100) levels (these were East Midlands, East of England, London, South East and South West for both sexes, and in addition for females the West Midlands).

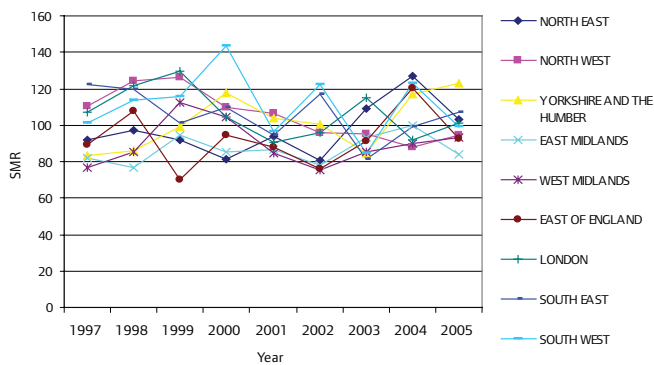
If deaths from all cancers are considered by sex for each PCT in the North East, a decline in male mortality in all PCT areas can be seen (Figure 4.3.13). However, Figure 4.3.14 reveals that female mortality rates from all cancers were in many instances higher in 2005 than they were in 1997. That said, some PCTs experienced considerable falls in mortality, such as North Tyneside, which in 2005 had below-average rates (the only PCT in the region to do so at the time) after starting in 1997 with the highest excess mortality rate.

Figure 4.3.14. Female mortality (SMR) from all cancers, by North East PCT, 1997-2005



Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2007b

Figure 4.3.15. Male mortality (SMR) from suicide by English region, 1997-2005



Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2007c

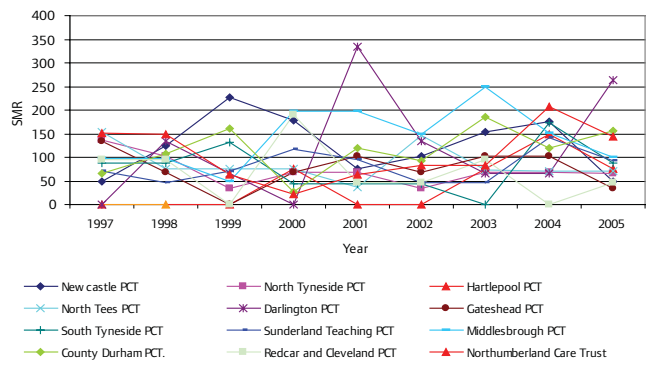
Fluctuating suicide rates

Mortality from suicides (excluding death from undetermined injury) is shown for each sex by region in Figures 4.3.15 and 4.3.16. Reducing deaths from suicide has been an important key policy area, accompanied by greater support for mental health services. However, as the Figures show, no overall trend is evident, and what can be seen are sporadic lurches upwards and downwards. So by 2005 the North East had above-average female deaths from suicide, after having below-average rates in 1997, while the situation was reversed for men. Figures showing suicide mortality rates for each PCT have not been reproduced due to the variation in underlying causes, making interpretation difficult.

Reduced waiting times

The Government has pursued ambitious targets for reducing waiting times. Table 4.3.2 shows the change in waiting times and numbers awaiting treatment within the North East between 1998/99 and 2005/06. The total numbers of patients waiting for treatment had declined by approximately 5,000 (280,835 in 1998/99 and 274,334 in 2005/06 were recorded as being on waiting lists). Moreover, both the median and mean waiting times for each Health Authority and its succeeding Strategic Health Authority area decreased between these dates. However, significant differences are apparent between the north and south of the region, taking into account the fact that those with the greatest numbers on waiting lists secure the shortest waiting list times.

Figure 4.3.16. Female mortality (SMR) from suicide by English region, 1997-2005

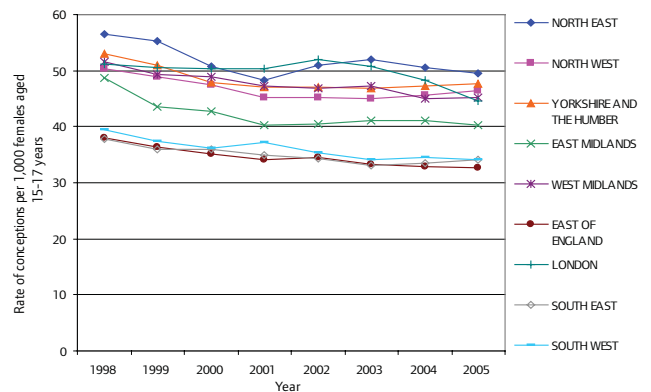


Source: Clinical and Health Outcomes Knowledge Base 2007c

Teenage conception rates vary highly

The conception rates of teenage girls (under 18 years) between 1998 and 2005 fell in each English region, resulting in a national decline of 11.8 per cent. However, as Figure 4.3.17 shows, a large variation in conception rates remains. The South East, South West and East of England were experiencing a rate of just over 30 conceptions per 1,000 by 2005. Yet, there are other regions,

Figure 4.3.17. Teenage conception rates in English regions, 1998-2005



Source: ONS and Teenage Pregnancy Unit 2007

Table 4.3.2. Waiting list numbers and waiting times to admission, 1998/99 and 2005/06, within North East Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and Health Authorities (HAs)

2005/2006	Waiting list numbers	Mean waiting time (days)	Median waiting time (days)
Northumberland, Tyne & Wear SHA	175,778	55	29
County Durham and Tees Valley SHA	98,556	70	46
1998-1999			
County Durham HA	58,789	85	41
Gateshead & South Tyneside HA	41,490	91	38
Newcastle & North Tyneside HA	55,998	59	26
Northumberland HA	32,730	69	34
Sunderland HA	32,164	84	40
Tees HA	59,664	85	46

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (2006) 1998/99 and 2005/06, available at www.hesonline.nhs.uk

particularly the North East, that despite declining rates were still experiencing conceptions rates of 50 per 1,000 teenage girls by 2005. So despite experiencing a considerable reduction in teenage conception rates – 2005 rates were 88 per cent of 1998 rates – the region still had the highest teenage conception rate of all English regions, as it did in 1998.

Within the North East there is considerable intra-regional variation in conception rates. In most areas despite earlier increases the overall trend is one of declining conception rates; however, as Figure 4.3.18 shows, the picture is messy. In some areas there has been a steady decline from relatively low conception rates; for example in Northumberland, rates fell by just four per 1,000 but in 1998 this area's rate was still lower than that of any other area in the region. In other areas there has been considerable decline. For example rates in South Tyneside and Darlington fell by 25.7 per cent and 24.5 per cent between 1998 and 2005 respectively. Yet in other areas the trend is far from clear-cut. For example, Hartlepool was the only sub-regional area that saw conception rates rise (by 2.4 per 1,000 females or 3.1 per cent) between 1998 and 2005, but this final position masks the rollercoaster movements in this area: in 1998 the conception rate was 75.6 per 1,000 females aged 15-17 years. This rose to 81.2 conceptions per 1,000, then fell dramatically to 55.9, but subsequently rose again to 78. Similar, but less extreme, swings have been seen elsewhere.

Regional support to looked-after children

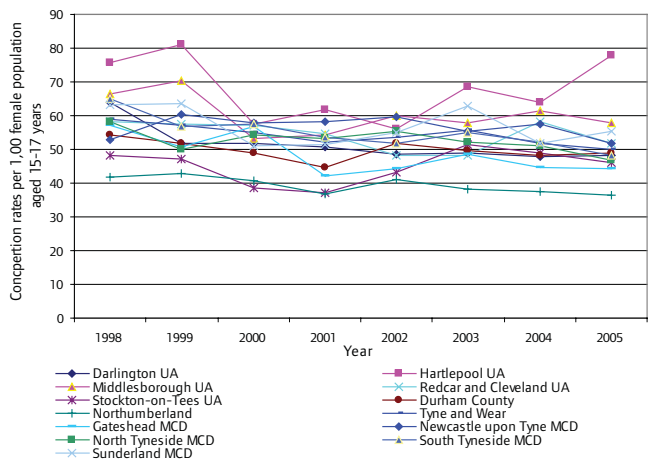
Looked-after children (for example, children living in care) have been a core feature of government attention for both health and education policy areas.

Figure 4.3.19 shows the proportion of looked-after children in each region who experienced at least three different placements in one year between 2004 and 2006. The North East region follows national trends in this respect, and the proportion of children experiencing large numbers of placements is declining. Moreover, the North East possesses the lowest regional rate of looked-after children experiencing an excessive number of different placements (three or more per year).

Sub-regional data available from 1999/2000, shows that substantial reductions in the number of placements for looked-after children have been achieved by many local authorities in the North East (Figure 4.3.20). Certainly these reductions come from a relatively high starting point of nearly one-fifth of looked-after children experiencing three or more moves in a year. However, there are two authorities (North Tyneside and Darlington) where the proportion of looked-after children experiencing three or more moves annually has increased, but as these two areas had the lowest rates in 1999/2000 this has brought them more in line with the regional norm, which the other areas achieved by reducing their numbers of moves.

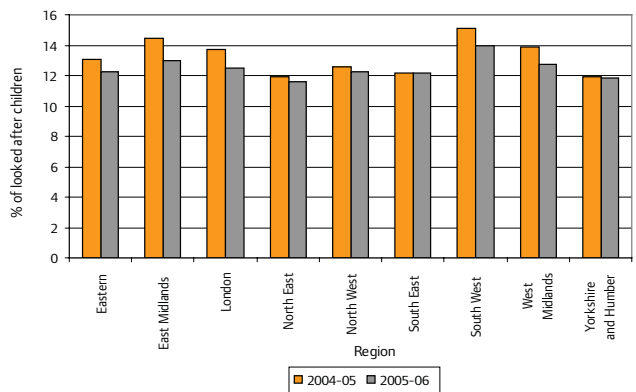
Reducing the inequalities between looked-after children and their peers has also been a key emphasis of policy and one recent focus was on the differences between children receiving a formal warning or reprimand or conviction for criminal behaviour. For the years for which data was available – 2004–06 in all regions with the exception of the West Midlands – the disparity between the number of looked-after children receiving warnings and the number of their

Figure 4.3.18. Teenage conception rates in North East local authority areas, 1998-2005



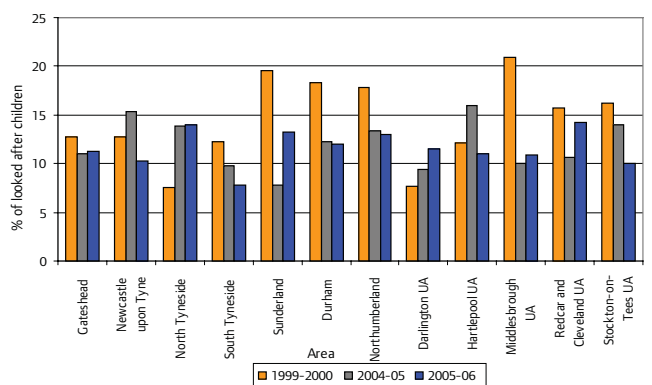
Source: ONS and Teenage Pregnancy Unit 2007

Figure 4.3.19. Percentage of looked-after children who experience three or more placement moves during a year, by English region, 2004/05 to 2005/06



Source: Commission for Social Care Inspection 2007

Figure 4.3.20. Percentage of looked-after children who experience three or more moves during a year, by English region, 1999/2000 to 2005/06



Source: Commission for Social Care Inspection 2007

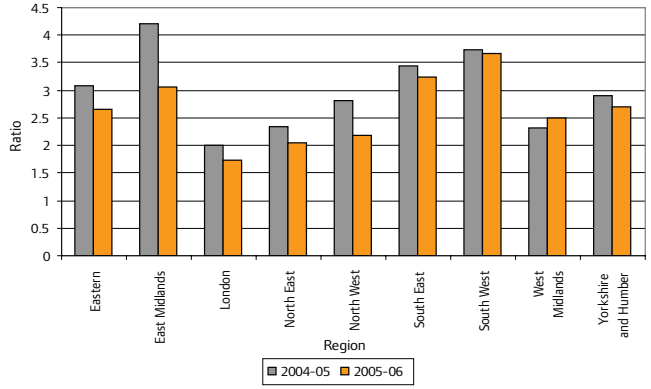
peers doing so decreased (Figure 4.3.21). Notably the North East possessed the second lowest disparity ratio between looked-after children and their peers of any region.

4.4 Welfare-to-work

Increased levels of economic activity, falling unemployment and claimant counts but still lagging behind other regions

Economic activity is measured by the ratio of the economically active population (both employed and unemployed and available for work) and the total population of this group, so the measure excludes those who do not have a job and do not want one. Figure 4.4.1 shows a mixed, essentially fluctuating, national picture for economic activity rates between regions from 1997 to 2006. It shows that the North East in 1997 possessed the lowest economic activity rate of any region (just over 74 per cent, approximately seven per cent below the highest performing region, the South East). By 2006 this had risen to 75 per cent following a number of dips and rises. Such a slight increase in economic activity is enough to take the region's economic activity rate above that of London, when coupled with London's overall declining rate. So by 2006 the

Figure 4.3.21. Ratio of looked-after children aged 10-17 given formal warning/reprimand or convicted during the calendar year as a proportion of all children in this age group given warnings or sentenced, by English region, 2004/05 to 2005/06



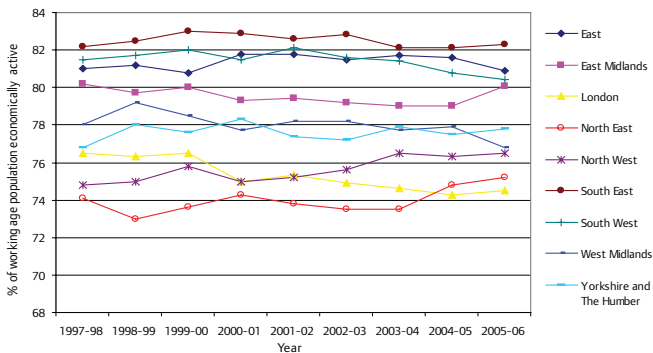
Source: Commission for Social Care Inspection 2007

North East no longer had the lowest regional economic activity rate.

Looking in more detail at local /unitary authority level in the North East over the same period shows that in all but six authority areas economic activity rates increased (Figure 4.4.2). Areas that did not experience an increase are generally found in the south of the region; for example Darlington, Durham, Hartlepool and Teesdale. But this does not exclude southern authority areas from increasing activity rates, as seen in Middlesbrough and Easington.

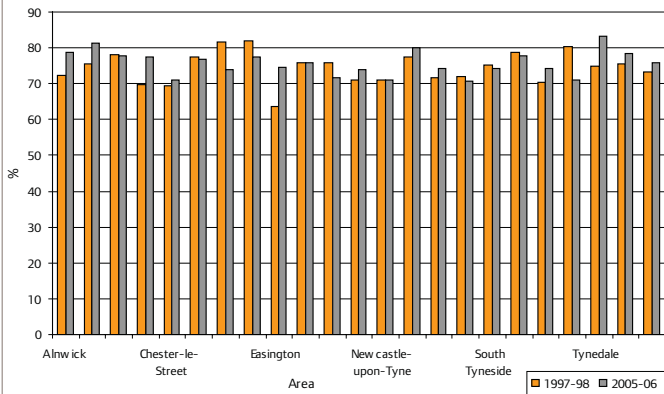
The number of unemployed people (those who are jobless, want to work and are actively seeking work) from 1997 to 2006 declined in all English regions, although from 2004 showed a slight increase (Figure 4.4.3). Notably the North East in 1997 had the highest unemployment rate (just over nine per cent), a position shared by London. From then to 2006 unemployment fell overall by approximately three per cent to just above six per cent. Yet, in 2006 the North East still retained the second highest working-age unemployment rate; only London had a higher rate.

Figure 4.4.1. Working-age economic activity rates in English regions, 1997-2006



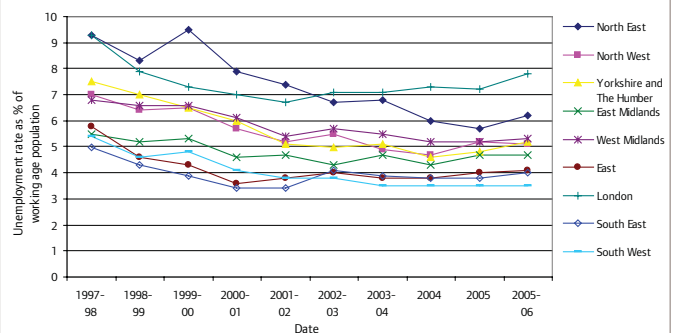
Source: ONS Labour Force Survey 2007 via NOMIS

Figure 4.4.2. Working-age economic activity rates in English regions, 1997-2006



Source: ONS Labour Force Survey 2007 via NOMIS

Figure 4.4.3. Working-age unemployment rates in English regions, 1997-2006



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (2005-06) and ONS Local Area Labour Force Survey (1997-2004)

When the working age unemployment rate is explored at local/unitary authority level within the region (Figure 4.4.4), it can be seen that, where data for 1997-98 is available, a considerable drop in unemployment had occurred by 2005/06. The most notable improvement was seen in Hartlepool, which had an eight per cent reduction.

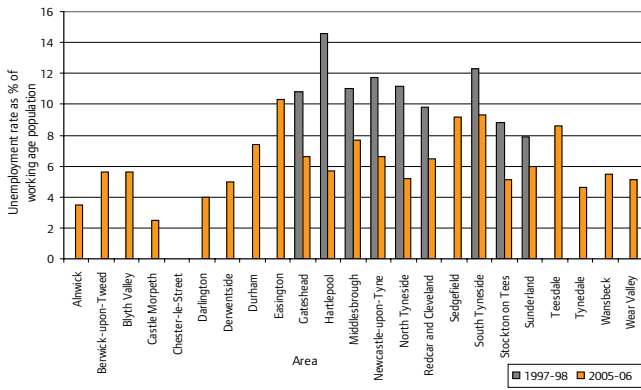
The claimant count (the number actually claiming unemployment-related benefits, such as Job Seeker's Allowance) declined very steadily in all regions (Figure 4.4.5). The claimant count measure moved in line with the decline seen in working-age unemployment, even down to the slight rise from 2004. The two measures tend to move in the same direction, although the claimant count tends to be slightly lower as not all unemployed individuals claim benefits. In 1997 the North East possessed the second highest claimant count rate in England and despite a two percentage point fall, by

December 2006 still possessed the joint second highest rate (with London). So while claimant counts may be declining, the situation in the North East relative to the rest of England is not improving, as other regions are doing just as well, or despite declining at a slower rate started from a lower rate.

When the claimant count rates are considered for local and unitary authority areas within the North East between 1997 and 2006 the overwhelming picture illustrated by Figure 4.4.6 is that all areas experienced a decline, some quite substantial. However, there was still a considerable level of disparity within the region; for example, Tynedale had a claimant count in December 2006 of just over one per cent whereas Middlesbrough's claimant count at the same date was five per cent.

The fall in individuals claiming unemployment-related benefits is reflected in Figures 4.4.7 and 4.4.8. The North East in 1998/99 had the highest rate of household units in any English region claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA), Income Support (IS) and Incapacity Benefit (IB), as well as the highest proportion of households receiving any income-related benefit. By 2004/05 the main changes

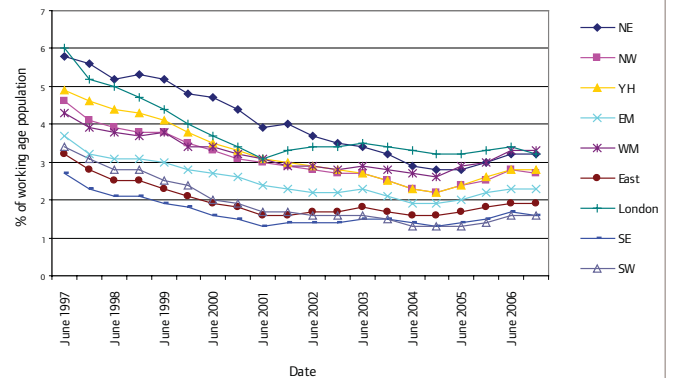
Figure 4.4.4. Working-age unemployment rates in North East local authority areas, 1997-98 and 2005-06



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (2005-06) and ONS Local Area Labour Force Survey (1997-2004)

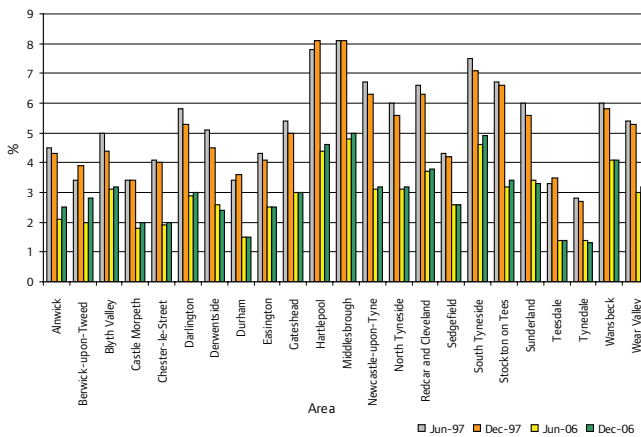
Note: data for 1997-98 incomplete due to small populations in some authority areas.

Figure 4.4.5. Claimant count rates in English regions, 1997-2006



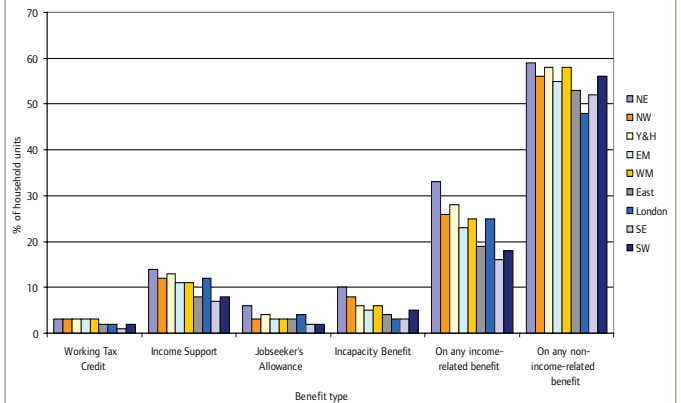
Source: ONS claimant counts with rates and proportions (1997-2006)

Figure 4.4.6. Claimant count rates in English regions, June and December 1997 and June and December 2006



Source: ONS claimant counts with rates and proportions (1997-2006)

Figure 4.4.7. Household units receiving income- and work-related benefits, by English region, 1998-99



Source: DWP 2000, 2006, data from tables 3.14

were that the percentage of households claiming JSA, IS and IB had fallen sharply. But for all these forms of benefits the North East remains the region with among the highest rates of households receiving them.

In more detail, rates of household units receiving JSA fell from seven to two per cent (here the West Midlands saw a rapid rise in claimants); IS and IB household claims fell from 13 to 7.5 per cent and from 10 to seven per cent respectively, with the North East joint highest with the North West for claimants of both benefit types. So there was an overall improvement but regional inequalities remained.

Figure 4.4.9 enables a more ready comparison between the two sets of dates and the changes in income-related benefit receipts for North East households. Between 1998/99 and 2004/05 there was a steady increase in the proportion of households receiving working tax credits and child tax credits in the region. The proportion of income-related benefits received by the region's households showed a decline from 33 to 24 per cent, although this figure includes other

income-related benefits such as pension credits that are not relevant to the working-age population.

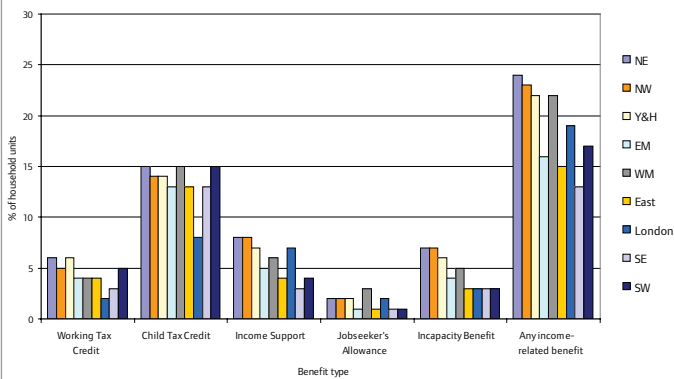
Decline in the duration of unemployment spells

Since 1997 unemployment has fallen in the region and as Figures 4.4.10 and 4.4.11 show, the length of unemployment spells has fallen considerably too. The North East in 1997 had the second highest level of individuals who had remained unemployed for periods of more than six and 12 months of any English region, behind London. Between 1997 and 2005 there was a drop in the North East in the proportion of individuals who remained unemployed for these lengths of time. The percentage of unemployed individuals who were out of work for six months or more fell from just over three to around one per cent and the proportion of those who were unemployed for over 12 months fell from two per cent in 1997 to 0.5 per cent in 2005.

Job gains for welfare-to-work participants relatively low for the region

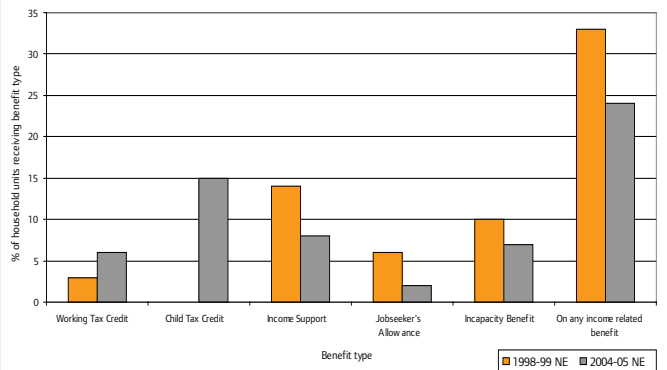
The New Deal is perhaps one of the most well known government

Figure 4.4.8. Household units receiving income and work related benefits, by English region, 2004-05



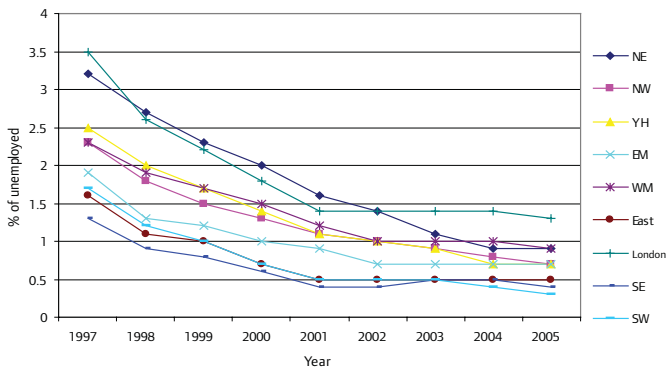
Source: DWP 2000, 2006, data from tables 3.14

Figure 4.4.9. Percentage of household units receiving income- and work-related benefits in the North East, 1998/99 and 2004/05



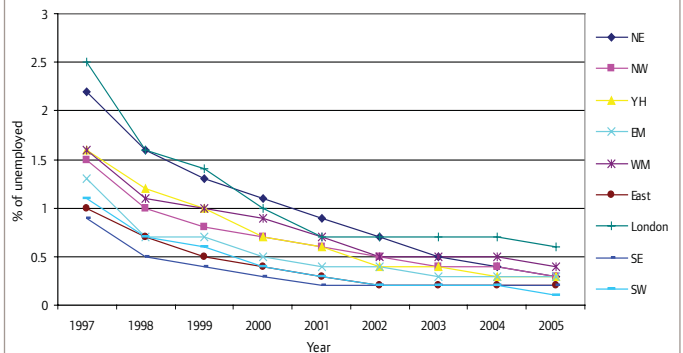
Source: DWP 2000, 2006, data from tables 3.14

Figure 4.4.10. Duration of unemployment lasting more than six months in English regions, 1997-2005



Source: North East Regional Information Partnership (NERIP) online indicators, using claimant count data (2007)

Figure 4.4.11. Duration of unemployment lasting more than 12 months in English regions, 1997-2005

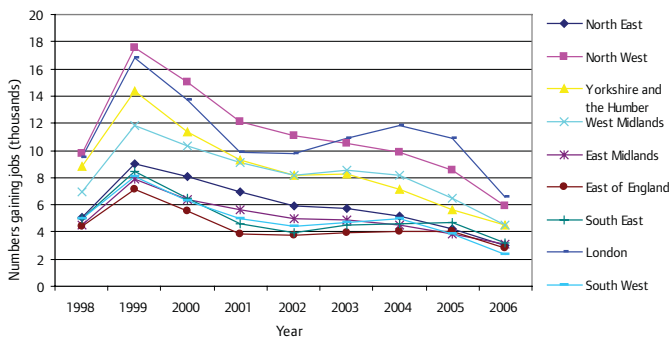


Source: NERIP online indicators, using claimant count data (2007)

welfare-to-work initiatives, focusing on specific population groups who are at risk of disengagement from the labour market due to their age, a disability or caring responsibilities. Figures 4.4.12 to 4.4.17 show the number of jobs gained by New Deal participants in each English region from the start date of each respective New Deal programme, up to 2006. Jobs gained are explored as opposed to participation rates as jobs gained reveal a successful change in status. There has been a considerable number (thousands) of jobs gained through the New Deal initiatives within each region. While

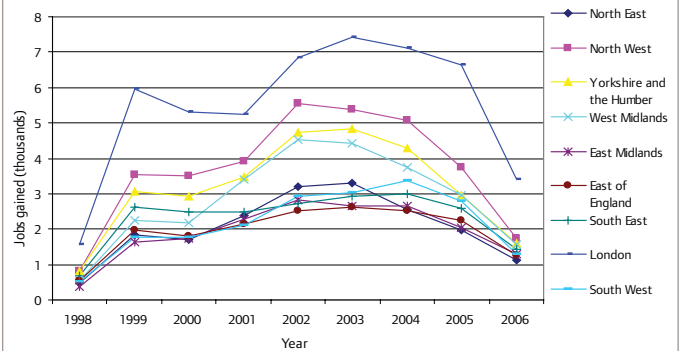
the following Figures show numbers and not proportions it is clear that small numbers of jobs were gained by young people aged 18-24 years, and people aged over 25 in certain groups including those aged 50 years and over eligible for a separate entitlement, and lone parents, in the North East compared to other regions. However, the North East experienced larger job gains for New Deal programmes focusing on disabled people and partners of individuals claiming unemployment benefits.

Figure 4.4.12. Jobs gained through New Deal for young people (18- to 24-year-olds), by English region, 1998-2006



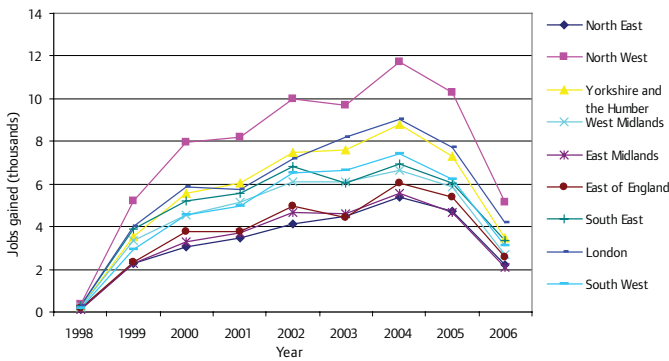
Source: DWP tabulation tool

Figure 4.4.13. Jobs gained through New Deal 25+, by English region, 1998-2006



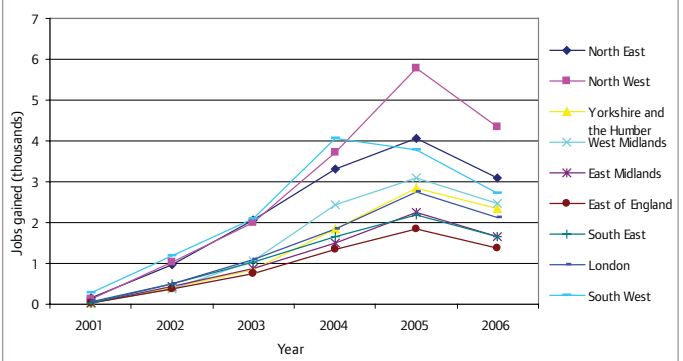
Source: DWP tabulation tool

Figure 4.4.14. Jobs gained through New Deal for lone parents, by English region, 1998-2006



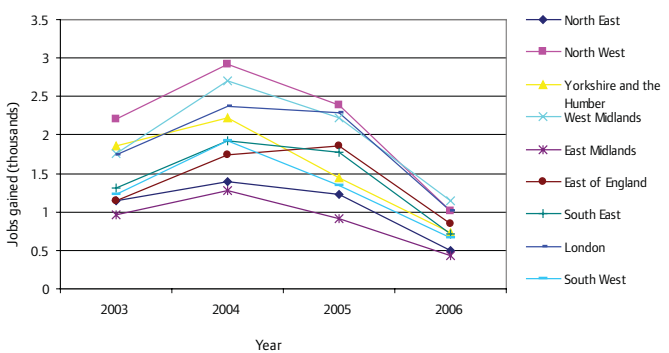
Source: DWP tabulation tool

Figure 4.4.15. Jobs gained through New Deal for disabled people, by English region, 2001-2006



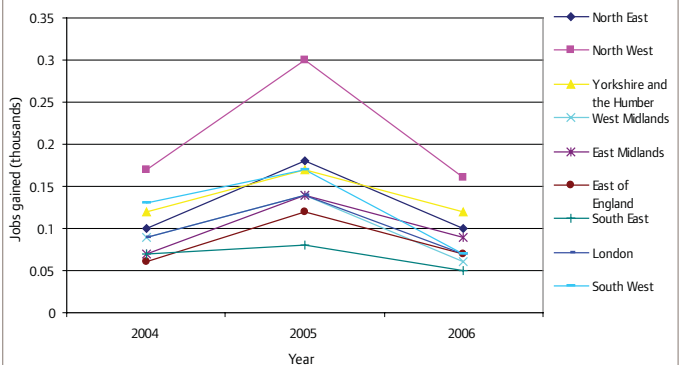
Source: DWP tabulation tool

Figure 4.4.16. Jobs gained through New Deal 50+ jobs, by English region, 2003-06



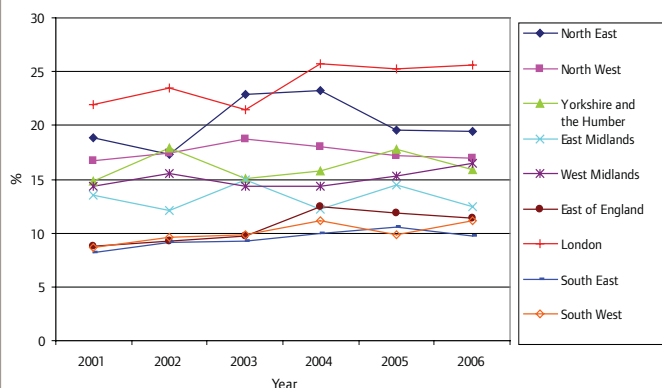
Source: DWP tabulation tool

Figure 4.4.17. Jobs gained through New Deal for partners, by English region, 2004-06



Source: DWP tabulation tool

Figure 4.4.18. Percentage of children in workless households in English regions, 2001-06



Source: Regional Coordination Unit 2007, Regional Outcome Indicator 5

High rates of children living in workless households

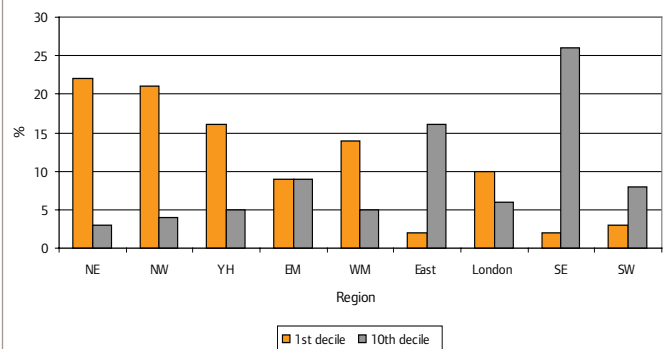
Reducing the proportion of children in workless households has been a key part of the Government’s efforts to tackle child poverty and provide a better start for all children, typified by the Sure Start initiative. Figure 4.4.18 shows that despite such efforts the proportion of children in workless households in all English regions actually increased from 2001 to 2006, except in the East Midlands. That said, the increase between 2001 and 2006 was slight in many areas, and there were considerable peaks and troughs between the dates, as in the North East. In other areas there were gentle incremental increases, as experienced by the South East. The North East started with 18 per cent of children in workless households in 2001, peaking to just below 25 per cent in 2003 and 2004, but was approximately 19 per cent by 2006 – the second highest regional rate.

4.5 Deprivation

Relatively high levels of deprivation

The English Indices of Deprivation (CLG 2004a) represents the most recent national estimate of deprivation, based on small area data

Figure 4.5.1. Indices of deprivation, showing proportion of each region’s areas that fell into England’s most and least deprived decile of population, 2004



Source: NERIP online indicators using CLG 2004a

(super output areas – SOAs – smaller or similar in size to wards, containing approximately 1,500 people). The indices provide information about the multiple aspects of deprivation: for example, low incomes, poor housing, poor health, low educational attainment, poor quality living environment, and high crime, which are then combined (with a weighting) to give an overall summary measure of deprivation. Figure 4.5.1 shows the proportion of each region’s population living in areas that were categorised as being in the most deprived 10 per cent in England (the 1st decile) and the least deprived (the 10th decile). The North East had the highest rate of residents living in the most deprived areas of England (22 per cent), compared to the East of England where the lowest rates were seen (around two per cent). Conversely, the North East region had the lowest proportion (around three per cent) in the least deprived areas.

Table 4.5.1 shows that the North East region had the greatest percentage (38 per cent) of SOAs that fell within England’s most deprived 20 per cent. Nearly two-fifths of the region’s population live within the most deprived fifth of places in England.

Table 4.5.1. Number of SOAs in the most deprived 20 per cent of SOAs in England on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, by English region

	Number of SOAs in most deprived 20% of SOAs in England	Number of SOAs in the region	% of SOAs in each region falling in the most deprived 20% of SOAs in England
East	220	3,550	6.2
East Midlands	482	2,732	17.6
London	1,260	4,765	26.4
North East	631	1,656	38.1
North West	1,461	4,459	32.8
South East	271	5,319	5.1
South West	278	3,226	8.6
West Midlands	917	3,482	26.3
Yorkshire & Humber	976	3,293	29.6

Source: CLG 2004b

5. Concluding comments

Over the last decade the North East has received some of the highest spending on public services per head, and experienced high growth in public service staff numbers. Looking back ten years from 2007, in relative terms the region has, in most instances, improved its situation compared to its starting position in 1997. However, if we compare the region's achievements with those of other English regions, the North East is still lagging behind. This is because other regions have not remained static and have also improved their positions. Thus, the North East keeps its position at the lower end of regional achievement in three of the four public services areas we analysed (education, health and welfare-to-work).

In some sectors the North East has many similarities with other northern regions, such as the North West in education and health. In others, particularly welfare-to-work, the region's situation is similar to London's.

Within the region there are dramatic differences, which often increase when the region's average situation improves. For example, the outcomes across the four public services areas in some parts of Northumberland if considered separately would not recognisably place it within the region. We call this phenomenon the Hexham–Hartlepool divide. This summarises the different legacies of heavy industry and fishing port decline in the region (as experienced by Hartlepool on the East coast, for example) when compared to more affluent, often rural, areas towards the far north and west of the region (such as Hexham, a market and cathedral town in Northumberland).

But even in areas that are generally performing poorly, the dynamics are very diverse. For example, Hartlepool, while having low life expectancy and educational attainment, has seen some of the biggest improvements in economic activity in the region over the last decade.

The evidence presented in this report uses only publicly available data, which has been chosen to measure progress, often in response to a key area of policy. This leaves us with many questions. For example, we may know mortality rates for those who suffer from cancer but the data cannot tell us about the quality of life experienced during treatment. We do not know if the improvements that have been seen have been affected by the individuals working within the public sector or by wider system change or a combination of the two. So while the audit is informative and provides a baseline of where the North East is now compared to where it was in 1997, it cannot tell us how this change came about or how people's lives have been affected more generally.

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