

Why cities matter / key city stats

GVA

- UK cities contribute 61% to the UK's Gross Value Added (GVA). England's 56 cities accounted for 65% of GVA in 2009.¹
- The GVA per head of the UK's top performing cities – Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Cambridge, London and Oxford – was at least 150% higher than the UK average in 2009.²
- **However**, UK cities account for just 9% of the UK's land mass.³

Jobs & Businesses

- Great Britain's cities account for 58% of employment and 53% of businesses.⁴
- England's cities contain:
 - 61% of employment;
 - 55% of firms; and,
 - 64% of the headquarters of high growth firms.⁵
- When England's 56 cities include their hinterlands (as measured by TTWAs), they contain 74% of the country's private sector employment.⁶

Skills & Innovation

- In 2010, England's cities contained 57% of England's high-skilled workers – although the concentration of high-skilled workers within cities varies widely between places like Oxford (54%) and Wakefield (18%).⁷
- The UK's cities also account for the lion's share of innovative activity. In 2010, they were responsible for 54% of patent applications. Cambridge, Aldershot, Oxford, Bournemouth and Aberdeen were amongst the most innovative cities. In 2010 Cambridge had 113 applications per 100,000 residents.⁸
- Employment in innovative industries is also highly concentrated in and around cities: in Great Britain, 72% of employment in knowledge-based industries was in cities in 2010.⁹
- 77% of UK universities are located in cities.¹⁰

Wages

- A high demand for labour and high skills levels in cities like London, Cambridge and Edinburgh mean that they offer some of the highest wages in the country.¹¹
- In 2011, 13 out of the UK's 64 cities had workplace-based wages higher than the UK average. The average weekly wage was highest in London at £686 per week – 140% higher than the UK average of £491.¹²

Population

- 54% of UK's population lived in cities in 2010.¹³
- Between 2000 and 2010 some cities grew by approximately double the average for Great Britain of 0.56%: Milton Keynes (1.42%); Cambridge (1.35%); York (1.23%); Oxford (1.19%); Swindon (1.17%); and Leeds (1.14%).
- On the other hand, some cities have steadily lost residents over the last decade including places like: Birkenhead (-0.22%); Burnley (-0.20%); Dundee (-0.16%); and Sunderland (-0.08%).¹⁴

Environment

- Cities tend to be greener than rural areas because they reduce the main source of personal emissions – petrol consumption. The CO₂ emissions per capita of the UK's ten largest cities were all lower than the national average in 2009.¹⁵

Defining a city

There are several ways to define a city. Details on the two most common approaches are below. Unless otherwise stated the statistics here refer to Primary Urban Areas.

Primary Urban Areas (PUAs)

PUAs are defined as areas of continuous built-up land containing urban structures that are within 50 metres of each other which have a population in excess of 125,000. On this basis England had 56 Primary Urban Areas in 2007. For more details see www.centreforcities.org/puas

Travel-to-work-areas (TTWAs)

A city's TTWA is defined as the area within which at least 75% of its resident population also work. The geography of TTWAs is identified by exploring the patterns of commuting.

Sources

1. ONS, Regional Economic Activity, NOMIS, BRES, employment data, 2009 data in current prices. GVA data at city level should be treated as an approximation, especially for cities in Scotland. To calculate city level GVA data, GVA in NUTS3 areas was weighted by the number of workers to assign it to local authorities then scaled up to city level.
2. *ibid*
3. 2001 Census and NISRA data.
4. ONS, Business Demography, and NOMIS, BRES, 2010 data.
5. Swinney P, Larkin K & Webber C (2010) Firm Intentions: Cities, Private Sector Jobs and the Coalition. London: Centre for Cities (2008 data)
6. NOMIS, BRES, 2010 data.
7. NOMIS, Annual Population Survey, 2010 data. Highly skilled refers to those qualified to level NVQ4+.
8. Intellectual Property Office 2011, FOI release: Patents granted and trademarks registered by postcode, 2009 and 2010 data. NOMIS 2011, Mid year-population estimates, 2010 data.
9. NOMIS, BRES, 2010 data. Uses State of the English Cities "wide" definition of KIBs.
10. Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)
11. ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, average gross weekly workplace based earnings, 2011 data in 2011 prices. Own calculations for PUA-level weighted by number of jobs. Note: ASHE statistics are based on a sample survey, so the statistical significance of the results should be treated with caution.
12. *ibid*
13. NOMIS, Mid-year population estimates, 2010 data.
14. *ibid*
15. DECC, CO₂ emissions per capita, 2009 data.