



Community Foundation

Vital Signs North East

How philanthropy can make the most difference to our region's people and places

July 2024



www.communityfoundation.org.uk/vitalsigns



About Vital Signs

Vital Signs is a programme from the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland which gathers and presents information about issues affecting our region. It draws on statistics, research, local expertise and knowledge gathered through funding to 'take the pulse' of communities and inform a better philanthropic response to their needs.

Vital Signs 2024 explores ten themes for donors and funders:

Economy – How can we help build a strong regional economy where everyone benefits from increased prosperity?

Education – What opportunities can we create for people to learn, develop skills and achieve their potential?

Health – How can we improve the overall health of our region, and reduce differences in health outcomes between richer and poorer people?

Environment – What support can we provide to help communities look after the environment and ensure the region rises to the challenge of climate change?

Culture – How can we foster our unique culture, from iconic theatres, museums and concert halls to diverse community arts, heritage and sports?

Homes – Can we help ensure that there are decent, secure homes for everyone who needs them?

Community – What can we contribute to ensuring communities are strong, welcoming and able to cope with the challenges of uncertain times?

Justice – How can we support work to protect people from crime, prevent discrimination and give opportunities for offender rehabilitation?

Living standards – How should we support those faced with a decline in living standards due to economic pressures and rising costs?

Access – How can we help people overcome the barriers they face in getting access to opportunities and services?

This report sets out our key messages for those involved in giving and philanthropy, as well as for businesses and public bodies. We also summarise the findings from each theme.

Full theme reports with links to all our evidence sources are on our website. www.communityfoundation.org.uk/vitalsigns

Our Key Messages

Many challenges for the North East are national – and some global – in scope. They require action by government and private investors. Donors and funders rightly have causes they care about, so we have set out to make the most difference through the ten themes identified. But cutting across all of them, we think philanthropy can have a bigger impact through a stronger focus on:

1. Reducing our region's unacceptable **poverty** and **inequality**
2. Widening **access** and **inclusion** so more people benefit from **opportunities**
3. Supporting people to live **healthier** and **safer** lives
4. Strengthening **culture**, **community life** and the **resilience** of our places
5. Taking and resourcing action to address **climate change**

In highlighting these, we also call on the public and private sectors, alongside individuals, families and wider civil society in the North East, to:

Recognise the value of the region's 7,000 charities and community organisations and invest in them accordingly.

The sector employs more than 37,000 people alongside 152,000 volunteers and has a financial value of £1.7bn. But its total social and economic contribution is closer to £6bn. It needs long-term, core financing, strong data and infrastructure, and to be resourced for activism, advocacy and campaigning alongside services.

Join in a renewed effort to grow giving and philanthropy.

There's not enough giving of money, time and expertise to go round. Philanthropy can do more, and better, if individuals, businesses and employers work to grow the giving cake. But that will only help if philanthropy is adding value and getting ahead of problems, not being expected to pick up things that government and businesses can and should do – including meeting essential needs.

Build on the opportunities of devolution.

A decline in civic participation risks greater disconnection. Civil society plays an essential role in bringing people together and creating a dynamic regional culture. It also provides spaces where people can connect with local democracy and help shape the decisions that affect them. The Mayor and North East Combined Authority have the chance to harness efforts across sectors to create an environment where civil society and philanthropy can flourish and play their part in ensuring everyone benefits from growing prosperity in our region.



Economy

The UK is not doing too well, and the North East is lagging behind on key measures of economic prosperity. But as a country and a region, we have huge economic potential. A renewed commitment to close the performance gap between English regional economies, in combination with progress on devolution, opens up opportunities to create a more prosperous future. The heavy lifting will be done by government and the private sector, but needs active involvement of civil society organisations if rhetoric on engagement, socially responsible development, inclusion and outreach is to translate into reality.

- **National challenges:** low productivity, high regional disparities, ageing workforce, long-term health issues.
- **North East England challenges:** long-term economic weaknesses; particularly affected by impact of Brexit and the pandemic; limited progress on 'levelling up'.

Economic indicator	North East	England	South East
Unemployment rate for those aged 16-64	5.2%	4.3%	3.9%
Economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64	21.9%	20.7%	17.1%
Median weekly earnings	£608.40	£683.50	£704.30
% of people in employment who are self-employed	12.7	15.2	16.8
Number of businesses for every 10,000 adults	704	1009	1134
Productivity (output per hour worked; UK = 100)	82.6	101.5	109.9
Research and development spend per person	£278	£606	£820

- **North East England opportunities:**
 - Research focused universities
 - Advanced manufacturing, life sciences, digital, renewables and business services
 - Thriving tourism and night-time economy
 - Significant cultural, natural and civil society assets
 - Widespread commitment to inclusive growth agenda among councils, devolved authorities, economic development agencies and business groups

The Community Foundation believes philanthropy can have the most impact on the economy in three areas.

1

Helping ensure everyone can contribute to, and benefit from, a prosperous regional economy:

- nurture greater interest in entrepreneurialism and self-employment
- support individuals with talent and ability from all backgrounds to become world-class innovators
- foster arts, heritage and environment initiatives that underpin our tourism offer
- help those yet to realise potential as a result of disadvantage, focusing on vocational education and skills
- support social entrepreneurs from marginalised communities to provide wider opportunities for economic inclusion
- address individual and institutional prejudice and discrimination

2

Fostering local economies:

- ensure local people can access opportunities for well-paid local jobs and training
- tackle low participation through action on health inequalities
- support provision of vocational opportunities within civil society

3

Increasing civil society organisations' capacity to be strong economic partners:

- provide core funding to underpin their work
- help so they can and negotiate fair contracts and financing
- support them to ensure economically marginalised people's voices are heard



Education

Philanthropy cannot plug funding gaps that statutory education services face. But it can enable civil society organisations to complement or enhance the system from pre-school to higher education and beyond. Charitable support can also help those with academic ability from all backgrounds, and fund less formal education provision that supports learning as an end in itself, or a way for people to understand and even change the world.

- **National challenges:** early education provision, school budgets and teacher shortages, effect of pandemic on disadvantaged children and those with higher support needs; lower participation in higher education for those from disadvantaged backgrounds; squeeze on adult education.
- **North East England challenges:** educational attainment gap significant and growing at GCSE and A levels; lowest proportion of voluntary sector early years providers in England; additional pressure on schools here including high levels of persistent absence; less progression to higher education.

Education indicator	North East	England	South East
% in reception year achieving early learning expected levels	64.6	65.6	68.5
% GCSE grades 7/A and above	17.6	20.75	24.4
Progression rate into higher education	42.5%	46.8%	46.3%
Overall educational attainment in population (index higher = better)	2.767	2.831	2.881
% population with no qualifications	8	7	4.9
% young people not in education, training or employment	4.7	2.8	2.5

- **North East England opportunities:**
 - Schools do well on 'distance travelled' i.e. how pupils progress taking account of population, needs, free-school-meal eligibility etc.
 - Progress on improving vocational skills and qualification levels in the workforce.
 - Combined authorities and economic development bodies committed to working with public, private and voluntary sector to improve skills

The Community Foundation believes philanthropy can have most impact in three areas.

1

Supporting civil society organisations to add value to, or fill gaps in, mainstream education and training:

- early years provision for disadvantaged families and communities
- support for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- alternative education and vocational training for those at risk of being not in education, training or employment (NEET) after school
- activities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access vocational and further and higher educational opportunities
- capacity building to provide services under contract to benefit those excluded

2

Contributing to raising levels of attainment and skills, closing the gap and supporting individuals at risk of exclusion:

- partnerships between state schools, civil society organisations and educational charities (including independent schools)
- additional support for disadvantaged high-attaining pupils to realise potential e.g. mentoring, equipment, tuition or homework clubs
- support for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education experiencing financial and other hardship
- routes for people at risk of exclusion or who lack qualifications to re-engage with education and training

3

Promoting greater equity, diversity and inclusion in education and training, and supporting learning as a force for positive change in communities:

- access to academic and vocational skills progression
- campaigns to ensure pupils with SEND secure appropriate access to mainstream educational and vocational training provision
- lifelong learning so people can be active members of their communities



Health

In the North East, health problems are compounded by poverty, resulting in health inequity. And there is a stark difference in life expectancy and quality in the North East when compared to the England average. Philanthropy cannot fill gaps in public sector funding and provision of health and care services. But it can focus on issues most able to be addressed through early interventions and which present the biggest health risks. We need to improve people's awareness of how the choices we all make impact on our health and build confidence required to adopt healthier behaviours. We also need to invest in communities to tackle the wider circumstances that contribute to ill health. Of particular importance is the support charitable funding can offer to improve mental health.

- **National challenges:** significant pressure of people being overweight or obese; pandemic exposure of weaknesses in public health and social care; long-term sickness including from mental health issues.
- **North East England challenges:** people are more likely to have a shorter lifespan and to spend a larger proportion of their lives in poor health. They are also more likely to die prematurely from preventable diseases. Significant gaps in life expectancy between the region's least and most disadvantaged areas.

Health indicator		North East	England	South East
Life expectancy	female	81.2	82.8	83.8
	male	77.2	78.9	80.1
Expected years of good health	female	59.0	63.5	65.8
	male	59.4	63.2	65.5
% adults overweight or obese		69.7	63.5	62.4
% adults who smoke cigarettes		13.1	12.7	11.5
% adults drinking more than 14 alcohol units a week		24	21	22
% adults doing 150 mins or more a week of physical activity		60.9	64.2	66.5
Child obesity at year 6	female	20.3%	18.4%	15.7%
	male	26.1%	23.6%	19.8%
Deaths by suicide for every 100,000 people		12.8	10.5	10.4

• North East England opportunities:

- Integrated plan by the Integrated Care Partnership for North East England and North Cumbria to improve health and care involving the NHS, councils and voluntary sector
- Generally good uptake of vaccinations compared to England average
- Significant skill and reach among civil society organisations that are addressing health issues and diverting people from 'risky' behaviour

The Community Foundation believes that philanthropy can play a positive role in building lifelong better health in three key ways.

1

Addressing root causes of ill-health and health inequality:

- services for women supporting informed choices about pregnancy and good maternal health
- early years' provision, particularly in poorer communities
- healthy living and physical activities for young people
- food banks, community transport, advice, counselling and other services which help to address the effects of poverty on physical and mental health

2

Funding and supporting community organisations that address gaps or add value to other services:

- activities for adults which address isolation, poor diet, drinking and smoking and promote healthier lifestyles
- access to dental products and 'last-resort' services for people most in need
- targeted crisis, information, advice, advocacy and recovery services for those at greatest risk of poor mental and physical health

3

Tackling health issues for people who are at most risk of social exclusion:

- community hubs that can provide accessible health resources and services
- services for older people, disabled people, people from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic backgrounds and those from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities
- advocacy and lobbying which gives people a voice and removes barriers



Environment

We are edging ever nearer to a tipping-point of rapid and irreversible climate change. We are also facing a decline in biodiversity. But there are also everyday environmental issues affecting health and quality of life, like pollution, waste and access to green spaces. Much can be done locally to address the root causes of climate change or protect local ecosystems – and every little bit of philanthropic support for this does something to chip away at the larger problems. And action on local issues – from clearing undergrowth from paths around a green space to educating people on the benefits of recycling – helps to build community resilience and a commitment to environmental issues.

- **National challenges:** delivery of net zero commitments in current context; extreme weather and climate events; air pollution and contamination of waters; UK one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.
- **North East England challenges:** key contributor to historic carbon production during industrial era; last 10 years have seen hottest day and wettest winter since records began; vulnerability of our places to storms, flooding and rising sea levels; vulnerability of our people because of age, health and levels of disadvantage; relatively complacent about climate change and lower commitment to e.g. recycling.

Environment indicator	North East	England	South East
% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per person 2005-21	64	45	49
Days on which air quality index showed moderate, high or very high pollution levels 2021-24	39	103	133
Average population for every park, public garden or playing field	6867	8557	7028
Household waste recycling rates	31.2%	41.7%	45.4%
% who agree 'there is so much conflicting information about climate change it is difficult to know what to believe'	57	51	51
% who agree 'if everyone does their bit, we can reduce the effects of climate change'	81	84	85

• North East England opportunities:

- Rapid fall in the region's greenhouse gas emissions since de-industrialisation
- Hub potential in 'green industrial revolution': development and production of renewables, hydrogen, decarbonised heating, materials and transport
- Population well served with green spaces

The Community Foundation believes there are three areas where philanthropists and charitable funders can make a real difference.

1

Providing support to address local environmental issues:

- activities that increase awareness and action on climate change, loss of biodiversity and other environmental problems
- projects run by environmental charities and other civil society organisations that tackle local issues within communities
- work on social and economic issues and community cohesion that addresses the lack of resilience within disadvantaged communities to climate change
- capacity building for civil society organisations wishing to contract to run environmental and related services

2

Providing help to enable people in the North East to benefit from the "Green Industrial Revolution":

- vocational programmes that encourage young people to develop an interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), and support to realise potential, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- vocational support for young people not in education, training or employment, adults furthest from the labour market and those at risk of social exclusion

3

Ensuring communities have a voice on environmental issues

by enabling charity sector infrastructure organisations, and civil society organisations working in the environmental space, to work with others to enable an independent voice for communities in relation to them, especially at a time of devolution

Culture means everything that brings people together – as audiences or participants – via arts, heritage and non-elite sport. Despite the challenges of Covid and cost of living, the cultural sector retains the potential to make a positive contribution to the lives of everyone who lives or works in the region. Philanthropy has a major part to play. There are many more people that would benefit from engaging in cultural activities, but less money from the state or people's disposable incomes, and civil society organisations need extra funding to close the gap. It should be a basic right to have access to a range of different activities that nourish, fulfil and inspire. The benefits are personal and societal.

- **National challenges:** reduced or stand-still budgets for funders of arts, heritage and sports; reduced extra-curricular school provision; local authority budgets squeezed; reduced disposable incomes for leisure activities; impacts of pandemic on tourism.
- **North East England challenges:** London disproportionately favoured for investments; regional household incomes under particular pressure; access in rural areas.

Culture indicator	North East	England	South East
% of people who took part in the arts e.g. reading, going to the theatre, playing games 2022-23	89	89	91
% of people who visited historic buildings or places 2022-23	66	67	71
% of people who visited a museum or gallery 2022-23	30	33	34
Investment per person by Arts Council England 2022-23	£13.43	£14	£11.24 (London = £32.52)
Investment per person by Sport England 2022-23	£8.44	£15.07	£9.05 (London = £34.72)
Investment per person by National Lottery Heritage Fund 2022-23	£2.73	£3.95	£1.49 (London = £4.02)

• **North East England opportunities:**

- Active organisations offering many routes to participation and enjoyment
- Growth in number of Arts Council national portfolio organisations
- Strong support for culture and tourism among regional and sub-regional bodies
- Burgeoning creative industries including TV and film production

The Community Foundation believes that philanthropic support is essential in three areas.

1

Ensuring everyone has opportunities to engage in culture – for fun and fulfilment and to develop skills, so benefitting individuals and society:

- support for grassroots activity with a range of lifelong entry points and progression routes
- nurture talent and invest in opportunities that allow exceptional people to flourish in the North East and stay here in creative jobs
- prioritise places where there are fewer opportunities, and communities facing additional barriers, including girls and women, disabled people and people from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic backgrounds

2

Funding arts, heritage and sport activities which act as an effective way to address the region's social and economic challenges and opportunities:

- activity to reduce health inequalities
- support for participation and attainment in education
- creation of routes into employment
- enhance prosperity through tourism and inward investment

3

Increasing the capacity of civil society organisations in this area:

- more core funding, and whenever possible, multi-year awards
- support for volunteering
- enable them to engage effectively with local and regional partners



Homes

In general, the housing and homelessness situation in the North East is more in line with the national picture, and we may even be doing a little better in areas such as housing affordability and numbers of rough sleepers. But there is no doubt that being in line with England is not enough when as a nation we face a situation that is dire enough to be characterised by some campaigning charities as a 'housing emergency' or 'housing crisis.' And we must recognise that many people in our region do not yet enjoy their right to a decent and secure home.

- **National challenges:** lack of affordable, adequate and good quality housing; inadequate regulation of the private rented sector and issues with housing quality and security of tenure; unacceptable levels of homelessness and rough sleeping.
- **North East England challenges:** supply of affordable and social housing in e.g. coastal and rural areas; expanding private rented sector with potential quality and security of tenure issues; serious shortage of accessible housing and possible discrimination in the rental market; higher numbers of indebted households at risk of repossession.

Housing indicator	North East	England	South East
Housing tenure %			
- Home owners (owns outright)	32	33	34
- Home owners (mortgage/loan/shared ownership)	28	30	33
- Social housing tenants	22	17	14
- Private rented tenants	17	21	19
Multiples of median annual earnings needed to cover median house price	x5	x8	x10
% median income needed to meet median private rent	24	26	29
Proportion of non-decent homes	13%	15%	9%
% of households with problem debt	5	4.5	4
Number of households per 1000 with initial assessment of homeless	7	7	5
And those 'threatened with homelessness'	9	6	5
Youth homelessness rate	2%	2%	2%
% of England's rough sleepers	2	100	17

- **North East England opportunities:**

- Housing affordability, quality and overcrowding less problematic than in other English regions
- Effective charities working directly on housing issues and homelessness; many other community organisations doing work which addresses their root causes
- Civil society organisations have capability to work effectively with statutory bodies on policy and practice

The Community Foundation believes philanthropy can have the most impact on housing and homelessness in three areas.

1

Addressing root causes of homelessness:

- support for organisations tackling poverty, social exclusion and health inequalities
- help for young people so they're better placed to avoid homelessness

2

Supporting people who are inadequately housed, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless:

- advice, information and advocacy
- provision of housing
- preventing or addressing the worst impacts of homelessness
- filling gaps in existing services.

3

Research and campaigning with a particular focus on influencing housing and homelessness policy and practice so that it better meets the needs of individuals and communities of place, interest and identity in the North East.



Living standards

In October 2022 inflation was over 11%. The good news is that it's now down to 2%. But prices haven't stopped rising – it's just happening more slowly. Which means the North East remains vulnerable, lacking the financial resilience that enables more prosperous areas to ride out hard times. More people here that are 'just about managing' could fall into financial difficulty, particularly while mortgage and credit payments remain high. Households on low incomes from work and/or benefits – who have endured huge increases since 2021 in the price of essential items like food (up 31%) and energy (up 66%) – will remain in or at the margins of poverty. That means demands on charities working in benefit and debt advice, mental health, family support and community cohesion will keep rising. And that will be at the same time as those charities themselves are likely to be struggling to meet the increased cost of delivering their work.

- **National challenges:** structural economic issues with unequal prosperity across the UK; international tensions and environmental challenges with the potential to reignite inflation; rising poverty, falling disposable income and potential for more households to get into financial difficulties.
- **North East England challenges:** low productivity and pay and high rates of economic inactivity and benefit dependence; high rates of poverty, especially child poverty; higher than average numbers of households in serious debt and at risk of financial difficulties; civil society organisations facing increased demand and rising costs.

Living standards indicator	North East	England	South East
Weekly median full-time pay	£614	£675	£724
% of households with income from employment	69	75	76
Median total household wealth	£169,000	£308,000	£503,000
% change in median household wealth April 2016-March 2020	- 6.6	- 2.6	+ 8.2
% of people in households with less than 60% median UK income after housing costs (% children in brackets)	21 (30)	22% (30)	19% (25)
% of constituencies with a child poverty rate of at least 25%	89	70	44
% households with problem debt	5	4.5	4
% people reporting using support from charities/foodbanks due to increased cost-of-living	5	3	2

- **North East England opportunities:**

- Commitment from devolved bodies and regional partners to address poverty
- Potential to increase prosperity and financial resilience through reinvigorated foundational economies and the 'Green Industrial Revolution.'
- Track record of charities helping people in poverty and financial hardship.

The Community Foundation believes philanthropy can have the most impact on living standards in three areas.

1

Helping people, families and communities by ensuring basic needs are met, that families and carers under pressure get help and that communities are encouraged to stick together through the problems they face.

2

Supporting charities and community organisations as they face rising demand and pressure on their core budgets, so they continue to have the capacity and resources to help while staying financially sustainable and able to advocate and campaign for those they serve.

3

Building long-term resilience by ensuring people, families and communities are better able to benefit from regional economic development and cope with challenges like the cost of living crisis.



Community

There are many different types of community – those of a place, but also those where people share a common interest or identify. Civil society – people coming together to do things out of care for others, creativity or to pursue a passion – is key to community strength. And local charities and community organisations are civil society’s lifeblood. But experience of community isn’t always positive. Some people are deliberately or unconsciously excluded. Others struggle to get their voices heard by those in power. In some places, institutions have declined while poverty and poor health have risen, creating ‘double disadvantage’ and vulnerability when disasters happen. Philanthropy – giving of money, time and expertise – can strengthen what’s great about community. But there’s less giving to go around at a time when pressures on civil society are greater than ever.

- **National challenges:** mistrust in big institutions; decline in local news media; disappearance of funds for local regeneration; weak public sector policy around community transfer of buildings and land; drop in volunteering, stagnation in charitable giving and reliance on fewer people donating; donors’ continued reluctance to fund long-term running costs.
- **North East England challenges:** lower levels of civic participation; weaker ties between people from different backgrounds; double disadvantage in many ‘left behind’ neighbourhoods; charitable giving skewed to London; double whammy of rising costs and rising demands for local civil society organisations leading to burnout and potential for closures.

Community indicator	North East	England	South East
% adults who say they belong to their neighbourhood	65	63	62
% adults who say people from different backgrounds get along in their area	81	84	86
% adults engaging in civic participation in last year	26	34	36
2019 General Election turnout %	64	68	70
% adults formally volunteering at least once in last month	14	16	18
% adults giving to charitable causes in last month	66	66	67
Added value of charities and community organisations per 1000 people	£2.3m	£3.2m*	£3.3m

*England and Wales

• North East England opportunities:

- Strong ties within communities
- Examples of grassroots organising, new forms of participation and of revitalised community anchors
- Strong tradition and impact of home-grown philanthropy including through two leading community foundations
- Excellent data and evidence of significant social and economic added value through civil society organisations.

The Community Foundation believes charitable giving and funding can have a significant impact on community life in three key areas.

1

Supporting resilience and strong bonds in and between communities, and with those in power:

- activities which encourage and increase civic participation, such as voter registration, citizens assemblies, grassroots organising and democracy reporting
- long-term, core support for community anchor organisations especially in areas facing disadvantage and disappearance of social infrastructure
- co-ordinated responses to natural disasters and emergencies through trusted intermediaries which can address immediate need and longer-term recovery

2

Enabling more and better giving, philanthropy and volunteering:

- sharing experience and acting collectively, including by providing match incentives to inspire and engage others
- gift and grant amounts which take account of inflation
- businesses committing to donate 1% of pre-tax profits and employers to offering work-based volunteering as standard
- investment in organisations’ capacity to recruit, train and support volunteers

3

Strengthening civil society organisations:

- longer-term, less restricted support, enabling organisations to recruit and retain staff and volunteers and meet their core running costs
- pro bono help especially around governance, strategy and finance
- investment in civil society networks, infrastructure, digital and data use

Crime and anti-social behaviour are falling across the UK. But public confidence in policing has been dented and there are staffing challenges across the criminal justice system. Levels of offences like knife crime and shoplifting are rising. A backlog of criminal cases is causing undue suffering to both victims and defendants. Overcrowded prisons can't offer sufficient rehabilitation, and re-offending rates are too high. There are disparities in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour between regions like the South East and North East, and between more affluent and disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Problems like these are mainly for government to solve. But on crime and anti-social behaviour, prevention is better than cure – and that's where philanthropy can make a significant contribution.

- **National challenges:** improving performance of and confidence in the criminal justice system; maintaining long-term downward trend in levels of crime and anti-social behaviour; reducing disparities between regions; supporting victims.
- **North East England challenges:** reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in areas where rates are relatively high and/or rising, including violent and knife crime, hate crime, sexual offences, domestic violence and shoplifting; reducing disparities between affluent and poorer areas; high re-offending rates.

Justice indicator	North East	England	South East
Recorded crime per 1000 people (change on prev. year in brackets)			
- All (exc. fraud)	109 (+3%)	90.2 (-1%)	77.2 (-1%)
- Violence against the person	34 (+2%)	33.7 (-3%)	30.3 (-3%)
- Sexual offences	3.8 (+3%)	3.1 (-2%)	3 (-2%)
- Robbery and theft	33.4 (+26%)	31 (+19%)	24.1(+11%)
% serious crimes involving a knife	6 (+ 8%)	7 (+7%)	5 (-3%)
Domestic abuse per 1000 people	39.1	31	25.6
Hate crimes per 1000 people	2.2	1.9	2.2
Proportion offenders re-offending (young offenders in brackets)	28.4% (35.2%)	25.4% (32.3%)	23% (32.2%)
% people experiencing or witnessing anti-social behaviour	44.3	34.5	36.3
% people who agree police and local council are dealing with anti-social and crime issues that matter locally	42.5	49	46.8

- **North East England opportunities:**

- Devolved institutions and partners can look to address social problems in a 'joined-up' way and address root causes of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Track-record within public and charitable sectors in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, supporting victims and helping those in the criminal justice system to address their offending.

The Community Foundation believes philanthropy can have the most impact on Justice in three areas.

1

Getting ahead of the problem:

- providing positive alternatives to young people at risk of becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour
- supporting vulnerable individuals
- funding areas like family mediation, conflict resolution, online safety and community-building

2

Supporting victims of crime:

- specialist civil society organisations working with people affected by hate crime or sexual and domestic violence
- community organisations providing informal support and which can help resolve local issues.

3

Helping offenders make a fresh start: activities to enable those leaving the criminal justice system move on to a more positive future, which also prevents more people becoming victims of repeat offences.

The UK's overall income and wealth inequality is high compared to most developed countries. Half of the country's households know what it is to be excluded in relation to education, employment, health and disability or housing. In the North East, the situation in many ways is worse. There is a strong case for philanthropy to address the challenges that disabled people face due to the poor design of spaces and services. And for it to focus on communities at the greatest risk of social and economic exclusion. But it can also make a difference to the challenges faced by people from all backgrounds who are rural dwellers or who lack local banking facilities or connections to high-speed broadband.

- **National challenges:** widening access to opportunities and services to reduce the impact of inequality and disparities between communities of place, interest and identity; ensuring convenient access to essential services particularly in rural areas; tackling digital and financial exclusion.
- **North East England challenges:** widening access to opportunities and services to reduce the impact of above national average levels of inequality, deprivation and disparities between communities of place, interest and identity; ensuring convenient access to essential services particularly in rural areas; tackling high levels of digital and financial exclusion.

Access indicator	North East	England	South East
Wealth disparity ('GINI coefficient' 1 = most unequal and 0 = most equal)	.64	.61	.57
% of households experiencing deprivation in at least one of education, employment, health and disability or housing	55	52	48
Share of consumers with high-cost loans recorded in Q4 2021	15.5%	11.2%	9.7%
Reduction in number of bank and building society branches 2012-2022	-33%	-40%	-39%
% of broadband connections that are Superfast	16.6	17	20

- **North East England opportunities:**
 - New devolved institutions and their partners have the potential to address the region's problems in a 'joined-up' way that can contribute to increasing access.
 - There are established and emerging civil society organisations with the capacity to have an impact in this area across each of the Vital Signs themes.
 - Even modest support can open up access for people who would otherwise miss out. Whether it is by providing the opportunity to study at a top regional university; find work on leaving the criminal justice system or express oneself through sports or creative arts activity philanthropy really can make a difference.

The Community Foundation believes philanthropy can have the most impact on improving access in three areas.

1

Widening access to opportunities and services by addressing underlying issues of exclusion:

- support for accessibility audits and improvements
- financial help for students who might otherwise be excluded from higher education or vocational training;
- advocacy for people at risk of exclusion from services.

2

Funding activities that directly increase access to opportunities and services:

- outreach projects and community transport (particularly in rural areas)
- alternative financial or digital services

3

Supporting research, policy and campaigning to raise awareness and promote action for example, research into how communities at risk of exclusion can sometimes be 'designed-out' of mainstream services; policy work to increase the accessibility of civil society organisations; campaigning on issues like the availability of accessible housing in the region.

Acknowledgements

Vital Signs is researched and written by Mark Pierce, the Community Foundation's Associate Director of Knowledge and Research. Further research is by Nils Stronach (health) and Jo Cundall (culture) at the Community Foundation. The Foundation's CEO, Rob Williamson, is Vital Signs' editor-in-chief. Additional publication support has come from Adam Lopardo, Dawn Porter and Alastair Walker. Design is by Lisa Kirkbride.

Our Vital Signs work is generously supported by Newcastle Building Society.

The Community Foundation is grateful for the time and expertise given by our Vital Signs North East editorial group. The group comprises: Matt Bratton – CBI, Professor Tony Chapman – St Chad's College, Durham University, Ngozi Lyn Cole – freelance consultant, Jo Curry MBE – Sir James Knott Trust, Dr Christopher Hartworth – Barefoot Research/Difference NE, Claire Malcom MBE – New Writing North and trustee of the Community Foundation. Further specialist advice was provided by Nick Perks (environment) and Becky Elton (housing).

While the group advises on data sources, analysis and findings, the Community Foundation has overall editorial responsibility. The content and findings of our Vital Signs reports reflect the Community Foundation's conclusions not the individual views of editorial group members or of Newcastle Building Society.

Let's talk

We hope that Vital Signs will inspire more of you to get involved with and give to causes that address our region's challenges and opportunities.

If you would like to discuss the findings further, or find out how you can get involved in our continuing conversations, please contact us:

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Registered Charity No. 700510 Limited Company No. 227308

Cover photos: Gateshead Older People's Assembly, Tyne Rivers Trust, Northumberland National Park Foundation, Moving Part Arts CIO, Children North East, Gilbert Johnston Photography.

