



BRIEFING PAPER

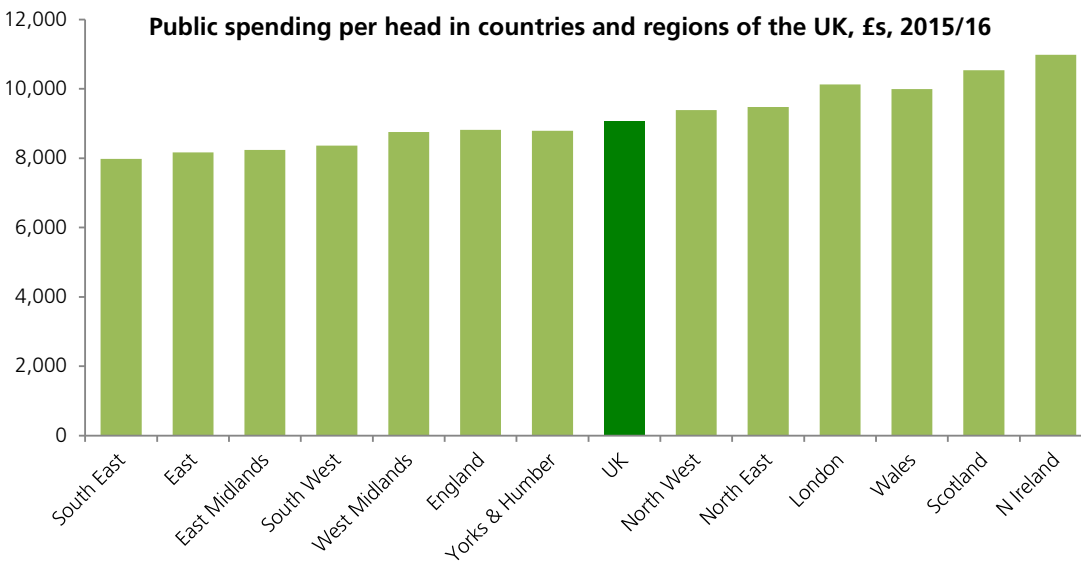
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Public expenditure by country and region

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Summary

This note gives figures on the level of public expenditure in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It also gives figures for the English regions.

In 2015/16, public spending per head in the UK as a whole was £9,076. In England, it was £8,816 (3% below the UK average). This compares with:

- Scotland: £10,536 (16% above the UK average)
- Wales: £9,996 (10% above the UK average)
- Northern Ireland £10,983 (21% above the UK average).

Among the English regions, public spending per head was lowest in the South East at £7,977 (12% below the UK average) and highest in London at £10,129 (12% higher than the UK average).

The data shown are for public expenditure per head and are taken from HM Treasury's [Country and regional analysis: 2016](#), which contains more detailed information including spending by function (health, education etc).

1. Introduction: The data

For many types of spending, we have a good idea of how much goes to each region or nation within the UK. This “identifiable expenditure”, covers around 88% of total public spending¹ and is the focus of this briefing.² The remaining 12% is regarded as benefiting the UK as a whole and therefore is not attributed to a particular region or nation – a classic example is spending on defence.

For Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the data include expenditure by the devolved administrations but also spending in these countries by UK Government departments. For example, the Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for social security expenditure throughout Great Britain. So, for example, DWP expenditure on social security in Scotland is included under Scotland in the tables below.

2. Spending per head, 2015/16

Table 1 and the chart below show public expenditure per head for each country and region. The table shows considerable variation between the different parts of the UK. For example, public spending per head is £8,816 in England compared with £10,983 in Northern Ireland – a difference of around £2,200. Public expenditure per head in Northern Ireland is 21% higher than the UK average, in Scotland it is 16% higher and in Wales 10% higher. There are also differences in spending levels between the English regions where spending per head ranges from £7,977 in the South East to £10,129 in London.

In interpreting the data, it is necessary to bear two points in mind. First, the scope of the public sector varies between countries. For example, water supply is in the public sector in Scotland and Northern Ireland but in the private sector in England and Wales. Second, the figures are intended to give a broad overview and cannot be regarded as a precise measure. This is because it is not always easy to decide who benefits from particular expenditure and simplifying assumptions are made in compiling the data. Small differences in expenditure between regions should not, therefore, be regarded as significant.

¹ Public spending includes spending by central government, local government and public corporations

² For further information on the classification see [paras 15-19](#) of HM Treasury’s Country and Regional Analysis – November 2016

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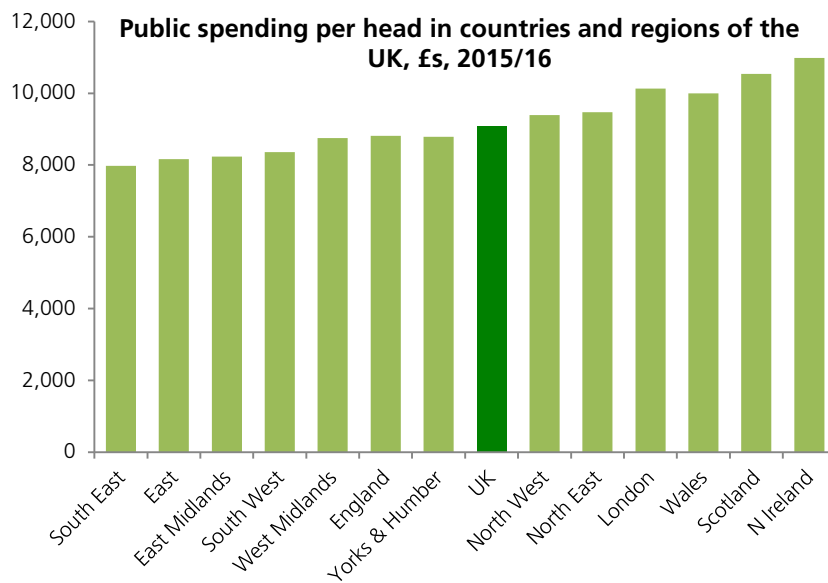


Table 1
Public spending per head by country and region, 2015/16 (a)

	£ per head	Index: UK identifiable expenditure = 100
North East	9,472	104
North West	9,387	103
Yorkshire and the Humber	8,791	97
East Midlands	8,237	91
West Midlands	8,750	96
East	8,163	90
London	10,129	112
South East	7,977	88
South West	8,361	92
England	8,816	97
Scotland	10,536	116
Wales	9,996	110
Northern Ireland	10,983	121
UK identifiable expenditure	9,076	100

Source: HM Treasury, Country and Regional Analysis Table A.2

Note: (a) identifiable public spending on services

3. Spending per head, 2011/12 to 2015/16

Tables 2 and 3 show public spending per head for each country and region of the UK since 2011/12.

Table 2
Public spending per head by country and region, 2011/12 to 2015/16
£ per head in real terms (2015/16 prices)

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
North East	9,781	9,613	9,549	9,447	9,472
North West	9,516	9,409	9,281	9,302	9,387
Yorkshire and the Humber	8,950	8,780	8,683	8,729	8,791
East Midlands	8,291	8,238	8,164	8,229	8,237
West Midlands	8,908	8,774	8,665	8,787	8,750
East	8,062	7,946	7,943	8,065	8,163
London	10,584	10,263	10,099	10,002	10,129
South East	7,881	7,825	7,872	7,854	7,977
South West	8,385	8,298	8,319	8,408	8,361
England	8,929	8,791	8,729	8,754	8,816
Scotland	10,601	10,556	10,394	10,373	10,536
Wales	10,326	9,971	9,954	9,931	9,996
Northern Ireland	11,303	11,163	11,139	11,090	10,983
UK identifiable expenditure	9,204	9,063	8,995	9,011	9,076

Sources: HC Library based on HM Treasury, Country & Regional Analysis, Nov 2016, Table A.2
Real terms figures calculated using ONS GDP deflators (released 25 November 2016).

Note: (a) identifiable public spending on services

Table 3
Public spending per head by country and region, 2011/12 to 2015/16
Index UK = 100

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
North East	106	106	106	105	104
North West	103	104	103	103	103
Yorkshire and the Humber	97	97	97	97	97
East Midlands	90	91	91	91	91
West Midlands	97	97	96	98	96
East	88	88	88	90	90
London	115	113	112	111	112
South East	86	86	88	87	88
South West	91	92	92	93	92
England	97	97	97	97	97
Scotland	115	116	116	115	116
Wales	112	110	111	110	110
Northern Ireland	123	123	124	123	121
UK identifiable expenditure	100	100	100	100	100

Sources: HC Library based on HM Treasury, Country & Regional Analysis, Nov 2016, Table A.2
Real terms figures calculated using ONS GDP deflators (released 25 November 2016).

Note: (a) identifiable public spending on services

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