# UK regional income gap widens as London’s wealth outpaces Midlands and North



Newly released data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reveals stark regional disparities in disposable household incomes across the UK in 2023. Residents of Westminster and the City of London enjoyed the highest gross disposable household income (GDHI) per head at £79,555 — a figure more than three times the UK average of £24,836 and nearly five times the £16,067 disposable income recorded for residents in Leicester. This metric, which measures the money households have available to spend or save after taxes and benefits, highlights profound economic divides between regions.

The ONS data underscores a clear geographic pattern: the top 10 areas with the highest GDHI per head were concentrated in London and the South East, while the lowest 10 were all in the Midlands and Northern England. Within London itself, GDHI ranged significantly, with Westminster and the City of London vastly outstripping other boroughs such as Barking & Dagenham and Havering, where disposable income was around £24,410—less than one-third that of the capital’s wealthiest districts. By contrast, Wales showed relatively little variation, with Monmouthshire and Newport at the higher end (£21,733) and Neath Port Talbot at the lower (£18,827).

Total GDHI across the UK in 2023 approached £1.7 trillion, with England accounting for 86.5 percent of this sum. When adjusted for population, only England had a GDHI per head above the national average. Among UK countries, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland contributed smaller shares and displayed lower average incomes. Regionally, London posted the highest GDHI per head at £35,361, while the North East ranked lowest at £19,977 per head.

The rise in disposable incomes was notable, with a 9.5 percent increase in total GDHI between 2022 and 2023, driven mainly by England’s growth of 9.6 percent. London boroughs like Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham saw the most significant rises in absolute GDHI, reporting increases of 12.9 percent between 2022 and 2023. Meanwhile, some areas experienced more modest growth; for example, the Isle of Anglesey and Tower Hamlets posted rises of 6.1 and 6.6 percent, respectively.

These latest figures continue a longer-term trend of widening regional income inequality. Historical ONS data shows that London's dominance in GDHI per head has been consistent over recent years, with Westminster regularly topping national charts by more than triple the UK average, while cities such as Leicester have remained at the lower end. Between 2021 and 2022, London's GDHI was recorded at £32,330 per head compared with just £18,388 in the North East, reflecting enduring economic imbalances. The growth rate of GDHI in England has consistently outpaced other UK countries in recent years, contributing further to the economic divergence seen across the country.

These disparities have significant implications for regional economic policies and social equity debates. The concentration of wealth in London and parts of the South East contrasts starkly with persistent lower income levels in many northern and midlands regions. Efforts to address these imbalances are complicated by the complex factors underpinning regional economies, including differences in employment sectors, housing costs, and public investment.

The development of improved regional household expenditure measures by the ONS, incorporating new data sources like card payments, aims to provide even deeper insights into how disposable income translates into spending and saving patterns across the UK. This enhanced understanding will be crucial for policymakers seeking to tailor economic interventions that can foster more balanced growth and reduce entrenched disparities.

Overall, while the UK’s aggregate gross disposable household income continues to rise, benefiting many, the geographical unevenness in economic prosperity remains one of the country’s most pressing challenges. The gap between areas like Westminster and Leicester illustrates a continuing divide that shapes everyday lives and opportunities for millions of people.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15084857/Heat-map-UK-highest-lowest-disposable-incomes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/bulletins/regionalgrossdisposablehouseholdincomegdhi/latest), [[5]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/indicators/gross-disposable-household-income-per-head)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15084857/Heat-map-UK-highest-lowest-disposable-incomes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/bulletins/regionalgrossdisposablehouseholdincomegdhi/latest), [[5]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/indicators/gross-disposable-household-income-per-head)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15084857/Heat-map-UK-highest-lowest-disposable-incomes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/indicators/gross-disposable-household-income-per-head)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15084857/Heat-map-UK-highest-lowest-disposable-incomes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/bulletins/regionalgrossdisposablehouseholdincomegdhi/latest), [[5]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/indicators/gross-disposable-household-income-per-head)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15084857/Heat-map-UK-highest-lowest-disposable-incomes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/bulletins/regionalgrossdisposablehouseholdincomegdhi/latest), [[3]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/bulletins/regionalgrossdisposablehouseholdincomegdhi/1997to2021), [[4]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/bulletins/regionalgrossdisposablehouseholdincomegdhi/1997to2020)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15084857/Heat-map-UK-highest-lowest-disposable-incomes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/bulletins/regionalgrossdisposablehouseholdincomegdhi/1997to2021), [[6]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/articles/developmentofregionalhouseholdexpendituremeasures/2025-03-12)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15084857/Heat-map-UK-highest-lowest-disposable-incomes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/articles/developmentofregionalhouseholdexpendituremeasures/2025-03-12)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15084857/Heat-map-UK-highest-lowest-disposable-incomes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/bulletins/regionalgrossdisposablehouseholdincomegdhi/latest> - This Office for National Statistics (ONS) bulletin provides the latest data on regional gross disposable household income (GDHI) in the UK. It reveals that in 2022, London had the highest GDHI per head at £32,330, while the North East had the lowest at £18,388, with the UK average being £22,789. The bulletin also highlights that Westminster had the highest GDHI per head at £69,058, over three times the UK average, and Leicester had the lowest at £15,075. Additionally, it notes that total GDHI in the UK increased by 6.3% between 2021 and 2022, with England exceeding this growth rate at 6.5%.
3. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/bulletins/regionalgrossdisposablehouseholdincomegdhi/1997to2021> - This ONS bulletin presents data on regional gross disposable household income (GDHI) in the UK from 1997 to 2021. It indicates that in 2021, London had the highest GDHI per head at £31,094, while Northern Ireland had the lowest at £17,636, with the UK average being £21,679. The bulletin also highlights that Westminster had the highest GDHI per head at £67,389, over three times the UK average, and Leicester had the lowest at £14,605. Additionally, it notes that total GDHI in the UK increased by 6.3% between 2020 and 2021, with England exceeding this growth rate at 6.5%.
4. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/bulletins/regionalgrossdisposablehouseholdincomegdhi/1997to2020> - This ONS bulletin provides data on regional gross disposable household income (GDHI) in the UK from 1997 to 2020. It reveals that in 2020, London had the highest GDHI per head at £29,890, while Northern Ireland had the lowest at £17,301, with the UK average being £21,440. The bulletin also highlights that Kensington and Chelsea, and Hammersmith and Fulham had the highest GDHI per head at £60,277, nearly three times the UK average, and Nottingham had the lowest at £13,952. Additionally, it notes that total GDHI in the UK increased by 0.3% between 2019 and 2020, with England exceeding this growth rate at 0.2%.
5. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/indicators/gross-disposable-household-income-per-head> - This ONS page provides an indicator of the amount of money each individual within a household has available for spending or saving after they have paid taxes and received any direct benefits, in pounds, in the UK, for 1997 to 2022. It offers data on gross disposable household income per head across different regions and local areas in the UK, allowing users to explore and compare income levels across various geographical areas.
6. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/articles/developmentofregionalhouseholdexpendituremeasures/2025-03-12> - This ONS article discusses the development of regional household expenditure measures. It provides insights into the latest developments in estimating household spending and saving in the countries, regions, and subregions of the UK. The article outlines recent changes to methods, explores card payment data, and discusses future developments in regional household expenditure measures, offering a comprehensive overview of the ongoing improvements in understanding regional economic disparities.
7. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/timeseries/crxt/ukea> - This ONS time series dataset provides data on households' gross disposable income per head, including year-on-year growth percentages, in current prices and seasonally adjusted. It offers historical data from 1956 to 2024, allowing users to analyse trends and changes in disposable income over time. The dataset is part of the UK Economic Accounts and is updated quarterly, providing valuable insights into the economic well-being of households across the UK.