



Preston is a small city in the North West with a population of around 140,000. It is the city where the UK's first KFC was opened and is the home of Wallace and Gromit creator Nick Park. Preston has regional offices for both HMRC and DWP.

| Housing

Although a small city, Preston has a large student population thanks to the presence of the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). House shares in Preston are predominantly for students, and professional house shares (£300-400pcm) are limited, so you may wish to consider renting a place of your own. £400-550 pcm will get you a decent 1 bedroom flat with a 2 bed costing around £500-700 pcm. For those with families, a three bedroom house can cost between £550 and £800 pcm.



Eskdale

In terms of location, Fulwood (PR2) and the city centre (PR1) are ideal. Ashton-on-Ribble, Ingol and Lea are suitable alternatives, but are a bit further out from the Civil Service offices and would suit those who do not mind a longer commute.

The benefit of Preston being a small city is that you're never too far from something to do, and you are very likely to be able to find reasonably priced accommodation within short distance to work.

| Things to do

Preston has most major shops in the city centre, including Debenhams, M&S and Primark. It also has some good retail parks including Deepdale and Capitol Retail Park. Alternatively, Manchester (50 min by train) and Liverpool (1 hour by train) city centres

offer a wider range of shopping and entertainment, both make for a good day out. The Trafford Centre, a shopper's paradise just outside of Manchester, is under an hour's drive away. Blackpool is also very close and is only a 20 minute drive, where you can visit the famous Pleasure Beach Resort.

One of the best things about Preston is its proximity to the coast and the Lake District. You can be in the Lake District in under an hour – recommendations include Kendal, Keswick, Ambleside, Eskdale and Windermere.

In Preston itself there are plenty of gyms, a few cinemas, as well as the free-to-enter Harris Museum and Art Gallery, which features collections of national and international artwork and objects, including a gallery dedicated to Preston.

Preston is home to Preston North End football club, which plays out of Deepdale. There are several parks dotted about, and British Military Fitness boot camps are held in Moor Park (Mon, Wed, & Sat); these are tough but a great way to meet people.

If you're looking for picturesque parts of town, pop down to Winckley Square where you'll find Avenham Park and the Ribble River.

A lovely part of Preston is the Docklands which is still Europe's largest inland dock with plenty of facilities and things to do around the surrounding waterside areas including the Preston Marina, a retail park, housing, Odeon cinema, go karting, Ribble Steam Railway Museum, pubs and restaurants plus events throughout the year.



North Westers are very friendly and getting to know your new colleagues in your office is an excellent way to find out more about the area.

| Food and Drink

Preston has a range of chain bars and restaurants, including Yates's, Wetherspoon, Turtle Bay, Pizza



Civil Service HR Fast Stream

Express and Nando's. There are numerous independent pubs; one favourite is The Black Bull, a friendly pub in Fulwood – perfect for taking friends and family. For great food try Checco's Italian on Garstang Road, Coco's Soul Food on Friargate or The Olive Press at Winckley Square.

There is also a variety of nightclubs, including Baluga, Rift & Co. and Evoque, catering for a range of tastes

| Transport

Rail: Preston has excellent rail connections as it sits on the West Coast mainline, so you can be in London in 2:12, Glasgow in 2:08 or Edinburgh in 2:30. There are also regular trains to nearby destinations such as Blackpool, Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool.



Buses/taxis: Preston has a reliable bus service to get you around town ([Preston Bus](#)) but beware, exact change is required. Taxis are fairly cheap - recommended firms are Millers and AAA Taxis.

Driving: A car is very useful and allows you to explore the local area as well as the wider North West. There are DWP and HMRC offices in the city centre with some on the outskirts, where a car makes commuting much more convenient. Parking in the city centre is often limited, but where you do find parking, the rates aren't all that expensive.

Preston

| Civil Service Community

Preston has offices for two of the largest Civil Service departments: Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. As well as having one of the largest jobcentres, Preston also houses two small DWP corporate offices and one large HMRC office, as well as a smattering of small offices for various smaller departments. The main HR hub for DWP is in Holborn House, Caxton Road, PR2 9ZZ however there are some HR members based in Palatine House, Lancaster Road, PR1 1HB.

The local Fast Stream group for Preston is the North West Fast Streamers who regular host events in Manchester and Liverpool, only a short train journey away. The most up to date contact details for the group can be found on One HR.

| Useful Links

<http://www.preston.gov.uk/> - Contains lots of useful information.

<http://www.visitlancashire.com/explore/preston> - Use this to find suggestions on things to do during the weekend, days out etc.

<http://www.prestonguildcity.co.uk/> - Lots of useful information about the city.



Blackpool is a major seaside town in the North West of England. It is the fourth most populated settlement in the region after Manchester, Liverpool and Warrington. It is heavily dependent upon tourism and was voted the UK's most popular seaside resort in 2010. It is the home of the famous Blackpool Tower and Blackpool Illuminations. It also hosts Blackpool Football Club and Blackpool Cricket Club, who share their Stanley Park ground with Lancashire County Cricket Club.



The Promenade

| Housing

As a major tourism town Blackpool has a range of rental properties to suit individual needs and preferences. Professional house shares, however, are limited so you may wish to consider renting your own property. Studio flats are available for £300 pcm whilst £400-450 will get you a good 1 bedroom flat and a 2 bed will cost around £500-550 pcm. For those with families, a three bedroom house will cost around £650-700 pcm.

In terms of location, Poulton-le-Fylde (FY6) and Thornton-Cleveleys (FY5) are closer to the Ministry of Defence offices at Norcross and HMRC. Blackpool (FY2 – FY4) is better placed for DWP's Peel Park and Warbreck House offices.

| Things to do

Blackpool Tower, reaching 158 metres, is a dominant landmark of the Blackpool skyline. Built in 1894, it houses a complex of leisure facilities, and annually hosts Strictly Come Dancing! Blackpool's

beach front is itself a major draw, with its sandy beaches, three entertainment-filled piers and the 'Golden Mile' – the 1.6 mile promenade between the North and South piers. Noteworthy Blackpool attractions include Blackpool Pleasure Beach, home of the 'Big One' rollercoaster, Blackpool Zoo and Sandcastle Waterpark (the UK's largest indoor waterpark).

The Grand Theatre and the Winter Gardens, which houses the Opera House (one of the largest theatres in Europe), both hold regular musical and theatrical events. Additionally, Blackpool is home to an Odeon multiplex cinema, and further afield there is a Vue cinema in Cleveleys. The Grundy Art Gallery on Queen Street is highly recommended, featuring exhibitions by nationally acclaimed artists.



Blackpool Pleasure Beach

Squires Gate, just south of the South pier, is the main shopping area where both large and small retailers can be found. In addition, further north, there is the newly renovated Houndshell Shopping Centre, which is opposite Blackpool Tower and houses most major high street brands. Avid shoppers can reach major shopping centres in Preston, approximately 15 miles away, and the cities of Liverpool and Manchester which are both approximately 40 miles away. All are easily accessible via the motorway or train network.

Stanley Park is a Grade II listed historic park and gardens with a golf course, cricket club, sports arena, lake, art deco restaurant and model village. It is also the home of Blackpool Cricket Club who won the League Cup in 2013.



Stanley Park

| Food and Drink

Blackpool's nightlife includes clubs and pubs to suit everybody. There is a range of chain bars and restaurants near to both the shopping areas and the Winter Gardens; these include Walkabout, Yates's, Nando's and Pizza Express. There are also numerous independent pubs and a variety of fish and chip and kebab shops – fish and chips on the beach is a must!

There is a range of nightclubs to suit all tastes, notably Club Domain and Rumours & Hush. 'Funny Girls', which is a drag cabaret and burlesque showbar on Queen Street, is famous and attracts visitors from across the North West and beyond. Blackpool has a thriving LGBT community and hosts Blackpool Pride Festival each June. Head to Flamingo nightclub and the surrounding area for LGBT friendly bars and entertainment.

To explore further afield, visit Lytham St Annes, a family-oriented, picturesque town to the south of Blackpool. Explore Lytham's stylish cocktail bars and café quarter on Wood Street, or venture into the Fylde countryside for real country pubs.

| Transport

Rail: Blackpool has excellent rail connections as it sits on the West Coast mainline, so you can be in London in under 3 hours or Glasgow in just over 3 hours. There are also regular trains to destinations such as Preston, Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool.

Buses/taxis: Blackpool has a reliable bus service to get you around town ([Blackpool Transport](#)) and

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you can purchase a Blackpool1 ticket to travel all over the Fylde Coast. Taxis are fairly cheap - recommended firms are Premier and C Cabs.

Trams: Blackpool Tramway (metro) runs for 11 miles along the Fylde Coast with 16 new flexity trams running throughout the year alongside modified older 'heritage' trams which help with capacity in the summer months.



Tramway

Driving: A car is very useful and allows you to explore the local area. The M55 motorway links Blackpool to the national motorway network. Most Blackpool offices have free car parking although you may need to obtain a parking permit from the security office(s).

| The Civil Service Community

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| Useful Links

<http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/> - Contains lots of practical information.

<http://www.visitlancashire.com/explore/blackpool> - Use this to find suggestions on weekend and leisure activities.