



Newcastle is the largest city in the North East of England. It's known for Newcastle Brown Ale (the Dog to locals), Newcastle United and also hosts the Great North Run, the largest half marathon in the world. It has a history steeped in ship building and coal mining, and today is known as a vibrant, exciting city with a great nightlife.

| Housing

The most popular areas to live in Newcastle are Jesmond, Heaton and Gosforth. The city centre and Quayside are popular alternatives if you want to live more centrally. These areas come highly recommended, with good transport links and local amenities and have a good buzz about them.

Newcastle is an affordable place to live in comparison to other large cities in the UK. There are lots of professional house shares in Newcastle offering rooms from around £380 pcm. Alternatively, a 1 bedroom flat close to the city centre/Quayside for £600 pcm while 2 bedroom flats in these locations are available for roughly £700 pcm.

If you are looking for something cheaper, moving away from the city centre could save you money. South of the river in Gateshead can add around 30 minutes to your commute but a two bedroom flat can cost less than £500 pcm.

A few local estate agents are Walton Robinson, Pat Robson and Reeds Rains. It's also worth checking out spareroom.com as going directly through a landlord can avoid costly agency fees. The speed of the rental market is normal with a strong influx of students in September.

| Things to do

Newcastle is famous for its love of sports, both football and rugby. Go to St. James' Park for a football match (even if you don't like football) to sample the atmosphere and unique Geordie passion for 'The Toon Army' or to Kingston Park for a Newcastle Falcons rugby match. Alternatively, Newcastle and Hexham Racecourses are a short distance away and can provide a great day out for all.

There are plenty of theatres around including the Theatre Royal, Northern Stage and Tyne Theatre and Opera House. Further afield the Sunderland Empire

(linked on the metro) has played host to a number of London Shows on tour such as Lion King, Evita, Billy Elliot and Wicked. There are also some great art galleries such as the Laing Art Gallery, the Baltic, which displays contemporary artwork in an old flour mill with breath taking views of the Tyne, and the Biscuit Factory which exhibits the works of a range of talented local artists.

On the opposite bank of the river in Gateshead, the iconic Sage hosts concerts from a wide range of internationally famous artists and acts as a musical education centre. For more mainstream concerts and events, the Metro Radio Arena hosts a variety of international artists as well. There are also lots of smaller venues that host live music and the Get into Newcastle website is a good place to find out more about them.

Newcastle provides excellent shopping opportunities for even the most dedicated shopaholic. Eldon Square mall hosts a range of shops and eateries including department stores such as John Lewis, Fenwicks. Neighbouring Northumberland Street, The Monument and Grainger Town provide a range of high street brands along with local independents and food markets. The Metro Centre Gateshead, is one of the largest shopping centres in Europe and with its cinema and substantial restaurants is a great place to spend a rainy day. This is a 10 minute bus journey out of Newcastle and across the river.



Make sure you have time to visit Grainger Market, located in the heart of the city centre. This is home to a number of butchers, fishmongers, grocers and independent food stores that offer great quality and prices.

Newcastle is spoiled by a great number of bars and restaurants. The Fat Hippo (Jesmond), Red Mezze, Chilli Padi, COOP Chicken House and Pani's are just a few great restaurants with great prices. For something more upmarket try the popular Blackfriars or Babucho. The Bridge Tavern is a good bet if you're



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looking for great pub food and a equally good selection of beers. For a real treat, try Peace and Loaf (Jesmond) or House of Tides (the city's only Michelin starred restaurant). Get into Newcastle run their 'Restaurant Week' twice a year (January and August) and it's worth taking advantage of their £10 and £15 offers.

To escape the hustle and bustle of the city, visit Jesmond Dene. Minutes from the city centre, the Dene provides much needed peaceful space. The Town Moor also provides a nice walk and there is also a weekly ParkRun on a Saturday morning if that's your type of thing.

If you want to get even further out of the city, Newcastle is very close to the Northumberland coast and there are many wonderful beaches and castles to visit. Alnwick Castle, which was featured in the Harry Potter movies provides a great day out, as does Bamburgh with its dramatic castle overlooking the beach.



Alnwick Castle

Closer to home, use the metro rail system to visit Tynemouth beach where you can walk along the sand, visit local boutique shops, bars and restaurants or sample freshly caught fish and chips. Try Riley's Fish Shack for a real treat right on the beach.

If you prefer the countryside, try Weardale, the Tyne Valley or head to inland to Northumberland, which offers visitors some fantastic scenery and lots more to see and do, such as Hadrian's Wall near Hexham or try Corbridge for nice walks and a good variety of cafes and restaurants .

| Transport

Rail/Metro: Newcastle has excellent rail links and the train station is located in the heart of the city centre.

Newcastle

Trains frequently run north and south, meaning you can be in London in about 3 hours, or Edinburgh in 1h 30min. The Metro underground system is used to travel around Newcastle and the local area, these services are frequent and reliable and offer annual, monthly or day passes.

Bus/taxi: The city centre and surrounding areas have excellent bus services which run regularly all week. Taxis are always easy to find however like any big city, booking in advance through a local firm could save you money.

Driving: Having a car will give you the freedom to live further afield if you don't want to live in the city and make travelling around the region a little easier.

Walking/Cycling: As Newcastle is not a big city, walking is a viable option. All of the main attractions in the city centre are within about 15 minutes walking distance. From the city centre (Grey's Monument) it will take about 25mins to reach Jesmond, 30 mins to Heaton and 40 mins to Gosforth.

Airport: Newcastle Airport is situated about 30minutes away. There are domestic flights to a number of different airports, including Bristol, London Heathrow, Birmingham and Cardiff . The airport also serves most popular European destinations as well as a few a bit further afield, including Dubai and New York. The metro provides a reliable, cheap alternative to parking your car at the airport.

| Civil Service Community

Benton Park View is where the majority of Civil Servants are based given its capacity of 10,000. HMRC, DWP and CS Resourcing are all based here. DWP are also based across the region in job centres and DCLG also have an office in the city centre.

The North East Fast Stream Network often arrange to meet for lunch and plan events for after work. There are a reasonable number of Fast Streamers in Newcastle so it's easy to get involved.

| Useful Links

Information about what to do in Newcastle:

<http://www.newcastlegateshead.com/>

<http://www.getintonewcastle.co.uk/>

Local Public Transport Information:

www.nexus.org.uk



Sunderland and Washington

Sunderland and Washington are both situated in the North East. The city of Sunderland is famous for its sandy beaches and rich history of ship building and mining, and Washington is steeped in history of a different kind, as Washington Old Hall was home to the ancestors of US President George Washington. Both locations have a lot to explore, and are situated just a short distance from Newcastle, meaning you can take full advantage of everything the North East has to offer.

| Housing

Renting housing within these areas tends to cost around £400 per month for a good quality room in a house share in a large city and £400-500 per month for a one / two bedroom flat depending on size and location.

Washington is a popular area for families to live. Areas such as Lambton, Harraton and Fatfield are popular areas for flats. Within Washington there are a variety of estate agents in the Galleries shopping centre covering the local areas.

As Sunderland has a university, there are many students and so more house shares. If you're looking to share with young professionals, there may be more opportunities in Newcastle. Renting a flat on your own may also be an option as it is possible to get more for your money in the North East.

| Things to do



Sandy beaches in Sunderland

There are plenty of things to do right on your doorstep, including the North East Aircraft Museum at the former RAF Usworth base or the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Nature Reserve. If you're after a culture fix you could head to Washington Arts Centre

which hosts local artists and theatre productions. In addition, Washington's new £11million leisure centre is open and available to access from the Galleries shopping centre.

Sunderland is a coastal city, and has numerous sandy beaches as well as a wide range of marine activities. If you like football, the atmosphere at both the Stadium of Light for Sunderland and the St James' Park for Newcastle both provide a great experience.

The Galleries shopping centre in Washington has all your usual high street shops. You can also do your food shop here with the centre holding Aldi, ASDA and Sainsbury's. There are also a number of local shopping estates throughout Washington. Plus, nearby you will find a selection of shopping options, with Newcastle city centre and the Metrocentre in Gateshead just a short journey away.

There are plenty of entertainment venues in Sunderland such as a bowling alley and cinema, as well as the Empire Theatre, which shows touring shows, such as The Lion King. Sunderland's Stadium of Light also hosts concerts by lots of big music acts.



Durham Cathedral

The county of Durham is close by with picturesque views, national heritage sites and coastal landscapes. The city of Durham has lots of sights to see including its impressive cathedral. Every other year, Durham hosts Lumiere, the UK's largest light festival. There are also many things to do in nearby Newcastle. Further information can be found in the Newcastle Location Guide.

| Food and Drink

Washington has several bars and plenty of pubs to eat in along the River Wear. For a bigger night out, Sunderland has bars and clubs in the city centre,



such as Cooper Rose as well as some well known chains like Vodka Revolution. If you want to head further afield, Durham has a large student population and the nightlife that typically comes with this. Newcastle has a more extensive nightlife, with many different bars and clubs.

There also a vast range of restaurants including chains such as Strada, Nando's and Frankie and Benny's, and independent restaurants such as Italian Kitchen and The Ivy House across Washington, Sunderland, Newcastle and Gateshead.

| Transport

Rail/Metro: While Washington does not have any rail links, it is only a 40 minute bus journey into central Newcastle for national and regional trains. London is approximately three hours from Newcastle on Virgin East Coast trains.

Sunderland has it's own train station which has regional and national trains and the Metro which runs between Sunderland and Newcastle. The Metro line also runs through Newcastle Airport where you can fly both international and domestic.



The Metro

Bus/Taxi: Stage Coach and Go North East are the main bus services in this area. From the central hub in the Washington Galleries bus station you can get buses to the local Waterview Park (HMRC office), Gateshead, Newcastle and the Sunderland Interchange. Washington to Newcastle by bus takes approximately 40 minutes from the central bus station and runs frequently. You can use Nexus journey planner to plan your local journeys. Taxis are also reasonably priced and many offer set fares to the main train stations.

Car: A car would definitely be useful to get around this area, but it is not essential due to the bus networks. With easy access to the A19 and A1, it takes just 10 minutes to drive between Sunderland and Washington, and 20 minutes to drive to Newcastle.

Cycling: There are numerous cycle paths in Sunderland and Washington, so you can easily cycle to work if you chose. For those who enjoy cycling their spare time, the Sunderland City Council website contains information of all the cycle ways the area has to offer, including the end of the Coast to Coast where those who complete it traditionally dip their front wheel in the sea at Roker beach.

| Civil Service Community

Both HMRC and DWP have offices in Washington. There are also several Civil Service Offices in Newcastle, including a large HMRC / DWP office in Long Benton, and throughout the North East where Fast Streamers are based.

The local Fast Stream group for this area is the North East Fast Streamer group, they meet on a 4/6 week basis with activities including; bowling, karaoke, drinks and pub lunches.

The most recent contact details for the North East Fast Streamer group can be found on One HR, to get more idea of the sort of social events they organise.

| Useful Links

Useful to help plan your local journeys:
<http://www.nexus.org.uk/>

Things to do in the local area:
<http://www.seeitdoitsunderland.co.uk/>

Practical help to living in Sunderland:
www.sunderland.gov.uk