



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# **Levelling-up Missions Annual Report 2025-2026**

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 4 of the Levelling-up  
and Regeneration Act 2023

July 2026



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government  
Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
Tel: 030 3444 0000

## Delivering growth and raising living standards in every part of the United Kingdom

This report fulfils the legal duty under section 3 of Part 1 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 ("the Act") to report on delivery of the 12 levelling up missions established by the previous government. While this Government is legally required to produce this report for the period from 25 January 2024 to 24 January 2025, it has moved away from the levelling up programme, which failed to deliver meaningful change for our regions and undermined relations with the Devolved Governments. The Government intends to bring forward legislation to repeal Part 1 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 when parliamentary time allows, in line with its new direction.

The Government is committed to driving growth and raising living standards in every part of the United Kingdom. We have taken significant steps to tackle regional inequality in England, and we are continuing to work with the Devolved Governments to deliver a range of place-based initiatives, such as Investment Zones, Freeports, City and Growth Deals and the Local Growth Fund. However, there is further to go to ensure economic growth and its benefits are spread evenly across the country. This cannot be fixed by central government alone. In England, Mayors have shown how ambitious local leadership can drive growth. This relies on an effective local government system with resources in the right places, and with funding used to invest in and grow economies instead of servicing debt. That is not the system we inherited.

The last 15 years witnessed the managed decline of local government in England. Outdated local authority boundaries and over-centralisation held back growth. Inadequate funding and unfair formulas widened the gap between where funding went and where it was needed. Central government tied up funding for local government with bureaucratic micromanagement, via hundreds of competitive, short-term pots that made it nearly impossible to plan and invest. And failure to reform services such as SEND and social care left local authorities to pick up the bill, limiting the capacity of local leaders to invest in growth and their communities.

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act, which received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026, creates in law an enhanced framework of devolved powers. It establishes a new regional tier of government in England, the strategic authority, making it quicker and easier to devolve powers to our regions. Strategic authorities are responsible for unlocking investment, infrastructure and economic growth across larger geographies, while local authorities continue to be responsible for the critical daily services residents rely on, and improving local neighbourhoods. Our most established authorities in England are receiving £13 billion through the Integrated Settlement.

To build on this, we are backing local leaders with long-term investment and greater powers. The Pride in Place programme will deliver £5.8 billion over ten years to 284 neighbourhoods, with new neighbourhood governance structures giving people a say over the decisions impacting their local areas. In England, the Northern Growth Strategy combines national and local investment to increase the connections between our great northern towns and cities, laying the ground for economic growth. In addition the Government is drawing up plans to give local leaders a share of some national taxes to unlock local growth - an unprecedented transfer of power and resources from central to local government.

We are providing fairer funding, targeted where it is needed most. The first multi-year Settlement in a decade will provide a 24.3% increase in Core Spending Power by 2028-29, an increase of £11.4 billion compared to 2025-26 levels. These changes are essential to putting local government on a long-term sustainable footing and restoring the Exceptional Financial Support system to its original

purpose as a temporary safeguard, rather than a long-term crutch keeping councils afloat. The Spending Review provided the Devolved Governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with their largest settlements in real terms since devolution. Between 2026-27 and 2028-29, this includes an average £50.9 billion per year for the Scottish Government, £22.4 billion per year for the Welsh Government and £19.3 billion per year for the Northern Ireland Executive. The Spending Review also allocated funding to deliver projects such as the UK's most powerful Supercomputer in Scotland, rail investments across Wales, and City and Growth Deals in Northern Ireland, ensuring these nations remain at the heart of our industrial innovation.

We are clarifying expectations through the 16 local outcomes in the Local Outcomes Framework which was published in February 2026. It gives councils, government and residents a single view of local performance with a new digital tool, bringing together the outcome data, to be published later this year.

We are also providing local government with the systems and support it needs to deliver. The new Local Audit Office will streamline oversight and coordination to restore timeliness, confidence and stability in the local audit system. We are also strengthening our capacity and capability offer, so council staff have the skills to deliver for residents.

Finally, we are taking steps to defend and rebuild public services. As the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government set out in June, the government is prioritising place-based approaches that give local leaders the funding and flexibility they need to respond to local needs and user-centred, relational models of services, built around the communities and individuals they serve. We are investing billions of pounds in prevention over the next three years, including £4 billion for SEND reform, £3.6 billion for our homelessness strategy and £3 billion for the Families First Partnership to rewire how children's services function.

The UK Government has been clear since day one that rebuilding the country requires UK-wide delivery, working effectively with all levels of government. To this end, we have reset our relationships with the Devolved Governments and are working in partnership with them to deliver for people across the UK. This includes delivery of our manifesto commitments.

For Scotland, a raft of new legislation is being delivered by the UK Government as a result of co-operative working with the Scottish Government. That includes new protections for Scottish renters, new regulations on the sale of vapes and on tobacco, and ScotRail remaining in public hands. We have also worked constructively together on Grangemouth, Alexander Dennis and bringing the Commonwealth Games back to Glasgow. Furthermore, we continue to work closely with the Scottish Government to deliver UK Government place-based investments in economic growth in Scotland. These include the Glasgow City Region and North East Scotland Investment Zones, the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeports, and £451 million for the continuation of City and Growth Deals in Scotland over 2026-27 to 2029-30.

For Wales, this has seen the devolution of employment support funding, starting with the agreement to transfer up to £20 million for the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer Pilots, setting out our plans to agree an expanded and clearly defined role for the Welsh Government on youth justice, including the devolution of remand and early intervention funding, and committing to devolve powers to the Senedd to allow it to introduce a vacant land tax subject to consultation. At Autumn Budget 2025, the UK Government also announced changes to the Welsh Government fiscal framework from 2026-

27. This included increasing the Welsh Government's annual and cumulative capital borrowing limits, overall Wales reserve limit and annual RDEL and CDEL drawdown limits by 10%.

For Northern Ireland, this means working collaboratively with the Northern Ireland Executive to support institutional stability and continuing to work closely with Ministers and party leaders ahead of local and Assembly elections in May 2027. The government is investing in the transformation of Northern Ireland's public services by providing £235 million of ring-fenced funding alongside advice from the Public Sector Transformation Board. Working with the Executive, this funding has now been allocated across 12 transformation projects. Furthermore, we continue to work closely with the Northern Ireland Executive to deliver several key UK Government funding streams to promote long-term economic growth in Northern Ireland. These include the Northern Ireland City and Growth Deal programme, which the UK Government is investing £617 million into, as well as our ongoing work with the Northern Ireland Executive to co-design the new £43 million per annum Local Growth Fund, announced by the UK Government at Spending Review 2025.

As required by the Act, this report provides an assessment of progress in delivering each mission during the reporting period, describes what has been done in that period, and sets out planned action. In the course of preparing this report, Ministers have considered the needs of rural areas as required by section 3(2) of the Act, recognising the distinct challenges rural communities face, such as low productivity rates, poor service accessibility and digital connectivity gaps.

In addition to this focus on rural needs, and in accordance with section 3(7) of the Act, Ministers have consulted with the Devolved Governments (as defined in section 8) in the course of preparing this report, recognising the crucial role they play in addressing regional inequality through their own legislative frameworks and policy approaches. Going forward, while respecting devolved competencies, we remain committed to working constructively with the Devolved Governments to address our shared challenges and deliver better outcomes for all communities across the United Kingdom.

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## Summary of Levelling Up Missions progress (January 2025 – January 2026)

The following table provides an assessment of progress on each mission by reference to the methodology and metrics in the Statement of Levelling Up Missions published by the previous government, and outlines action taken and planned.

The following notation has been used throughout the report to indicate the geographic coverage of metrics:

\* Metric is reported UK-wide.

† Metric is reported for England and Wales only.

‡ Metric is reported for England only.

| Mission                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Progress assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Action being taken/planned                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| <b>1. Living Standards</b><br><br>By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GVA per hour* worked increased in 6 out of 12 regions and decreased in 6 out of 12 regions in 2023 compared to 2022<sup>i</sup></li> <li>Gross median weekly pay* has grown in every region over the year to April 2025<sup>ii</sup></li> <li>16-64 employment rate* increased in 6 out of 12 regions and decreased in 6 out of 12 regions year-on-year (November 2025-January 2026 compared to November 2024-January 2025)<sup>iii</sup></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched the Northern Growth Corridor and Northern Growth Strategy, a place-based policy workstream aimed at bringing the large Northern city-regions to and beyond the national productivity average, in order to rebalance the UK economy and drive better living standards across the North of England.</li> <li>Launched the fiscal devolution roadmap in England, with the intention of delivering a fiscally neutral transfer of powers that empower regional leaders and allow greater local control of investment and spending.</li> <li>Progressing with the Oxford-Cambridge and Northern Growth Corridors, with workstreams aiming to increase investment and density in these areas, driving higher productivity and living standards.</li> <li>Delivering investment via City Region and Growth Deals, Freeports, Investment Zones and the Local Growth Fund.</li> <li>Providing over £2.2bn for dozens of important local and regional projects across Scotland over 10 years, such as Growth Mission Fund investments in Kirkcaldy, Inchgreen and Rosyth.</li> <li>Investing £45.5m per year to provide targeted, long-term funding to support local growth across Northern Ireland over the following three years. To best meet Northern Ireland's needs, this also includes the Northern Ireland share of funding delivered from 2025-26 through Pride in Place (Phase 2 and Pride in Place Impact Fund) in England, Scotland and Wales.</li> <li>Supported the transition to Electric Arc steelmaking in Port Talbot and investing £2.6bn to bring new nuclear energy to Anglesey.</li> </ul> |
| <b>2. Research &amp; Development<sup>a</sup></b>                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>51% of all public-funded research and</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between 2026 and 2031, we will deliver the £500m Local Innovation Partnerships Fund (LIPF) to grow</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

<sup>a</sup> The metrics have not been updated as UK Research and Innovation and the Office for National Statistics have not published new data since last year's report.

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| <p>By 2030, domestic public investment in R&amp;D outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40%, and over the Spending Review period by at least one third. This additional government funding will seek to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.</p> | <p>development (R&amp;D)* in the 2021-2022 financial year was performed in the Greater South East<sup>iv</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funding* outside the Greater South East grew by 27% between 2021-22 and 2023-24<sup>v</sup></li> </ul> | <p>innovation clusters in 17 regions across the UK. The LIPF aims to generate at least £1bn of co-investment and an additional £700m of value to local economies, including through new jobs, products and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next iteration of the LIPF will hand control to Established Mayoral Strategic Authorities in England. This change is expected to come into force after the next Spending Review, subject to affordability. This reflects the government's commitment to empower local leaders to make the right funding decisions for their communities and unlock investment in their regions.</li> <li>• Invested in research and innovation infrastructure across the UK, including £51m for the National Cryogenics Facility at SciTech Daresbury, launching the Manchester Digital Campus, funding the next phase of the M-Sparc Science Park in Anglesey, confirming up to a further £750m to build the UK's new national supercomputer at the University of Edinburgh, and backing Barnsley as the UK's first Tech Town.</li> <li>• Established annual engagement with mayors of Established Mayoral Strategic Authorities, as part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's English Devolution Framework commitments.</li> <li>• Regular ministerial engagement with the Devolved Governments as part of a reset in inter-governmental relations.</li> <li>• UK Research and Innovation is extending its regional partnerships and network of embedded points of contact with Mayoral Strategic Authorities to work collaboratively on innovation. Where regions can evidence clusters with the potential to lead in Europe or globally, UK Research and Innovation will align its investments behind those clusters through its grant, talent and infrastructure levers.</li> <li>• UK Research and Innovation was set a new organisational objective in November 2025 to ensure that regional growth is considered in its investments, so that the benefits are felt by citizens and communities right across the UK, including by ensuring access for researchers and innovators from all backgrounds. Innovate UK and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council have managers working closely with industry and academia right across Wales and Scotland.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>3. Transport</b></p> <p>By 2030, local public transport connectivity across</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27% of trips by London residents were made by public transport in 2024†</li> <li>• Around 6% of trips made by residents in England</li> </ul>                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressed commitments set out in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026, strengthening mayoral roles in integrated transport and rail governance.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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| <p>the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.</p>                                                                                                | <p>(excluding London) were by public transport in 2024<sup>vi</sup></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From April 2026, all local transport authorities moved to long-term, more flexible transport funding settlements, replacing ad hoc bidding to provide greater certainty, reduce administrative burden, and enable them to manage investment as a portfolio.</li> <li>• Committed to a pipeline of rail projects worth up to £14bn across Wales and through our Railways Bill we are providing the Welsh Government with a statutory role in the management of the rail network.</li> <li>• We are providing over £21bn of consolidated local transport funding to authorities in England outside London. This can be used to fund new transport infrastructure, highways maintenance, bus services and active travel.</li> <li>• Invested over £1bn in 2025–26 to improve and maintain bus services in England outside London, including continued funding for the £3 national bus fare cap.</li> <li>• Secured Royal Assent for the Bus Services Act, which provides powers to local leaders to design bus services for their local areas. It also introduces changes to speed up and simplify the process for franchising, providing local authorities with the tools to choose the model that works best, reverses the ban on local authority-run bus companies and ends the risk of routes being scrapped at short notice by tightening the requirements for cancelling vital bus routes.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>4. Digital connectivity</b></p> <p>By 2030, the UK will have nationwide coverage of gigabit-capable broadband and 4G mobile networks, and our ambition is that higher quality, standalone 5G will extend to all populated areas.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4G coverage*: As of January 2026, where available from at least one operator, remains at 96% of the UK landmass (compared to January 2025)</li> <li>• 5G coverage* (which includes non-standalone and standalone 5G): As of January 2026, available from at least one operator across 73% of UK landmass (increase from 62% in January 2025), and outside 98% of premises in the UK (increase from 96% in January 2025)</li> <li>• As of January 2026, standalone 5G is available from at least one operator across 59% of the UK landmass, and</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This government has revised the target to deliver gigabit broadband nationwide and now expects to achieve this by 2032.</li> <li>• Launched the government’s Mobile Market Review call for evidence, which considers what more government can do to support the sector to invest in high-quality comprehensive connectivity to 2030 and over the long-term.</li> <li>• Continued delivery of new 4G coverage across harder to reach areas of Britain.</li> <li>• Upgraded over 80 Home Office masts during this reporting period for the SRN delivering new 4G coverage from all mobile network operators.</li> <li>• Continued commercial rollout of standalone 5G networks in locations across all four nations, with Ofcom reporting on standalone 5G in its own right for the first time (November 2025).</li> <li>• Extended the 5G Innovation Regions programme into 2026, with total investment rising to £46m.</li> <li>• Upgraded over 1.3m premises in rural and harder to reach communities to gigabit-capable broadband through government-funded programmes (as of the end of December 2025).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>outside 93% of premises in the UK.*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gigabit coverage*: As of January 2026, gigabit-capable coverage in the UK was 88%. This is an increase from 84% in January 2025 and exceeds the interim target of 85% by 2025<sup>b vii</sup></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued to monitor and support market developments for alternative technologies, to ensure those without gigabit broadband can access quality connections.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>5. Education</b></p> <p>By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National attainment†: 62% (increase from 61% in 2023-24, 60% in 2022-23 and 59% in 2021-22)<sup>viii</sup></li> <li>Education Investment Areas†: 60% (increase from 58% in 2023-24, 57% in 2022-23 and 56% in 2021-22)</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published the ‘Every Child Achieving and Thriving’ White Paper, building on the ‘Best Start in Life’ strategy and ‘Post-16 Education and Skills’ White Paper. It outlines the government’s plan to improve children’s outcomes and introduces generational SEND reforms.</li> <li>Recruited 3,008 more teachers in Secondary and Special Schools and 1,646 more teachers in Further Education – already over two-thirds (71.6%) of the way towards the 6.5k target.</li> <li>Published the Curriculum and Assessment Review, ahead of a new curriculum publication in spring 2027 for first teaching in 2028.</li> <li>New RISE teams are working with over 350 schools on bespoke packages of support with 200,000 pupils already benefitting.</li> <li>Ofsted launched a renewed education inspection framework and school report cards.</li> <li>Delivered 1,250 free breakfast clubs, with a further cohort due to join in September 2026. 10m meals have been served so far through these clubs. Updated the attendance toolkit for schools.</li> <li>Saw the biggest improvement in attendance in over a decade, with over 5m more days in school in 2024-25 compared to the previous year.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>6. Skills<sup>c</sup></b></p> <p>By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National†: in 2024-25 there were 582,480 learner achievements in regulated education and training and 198,330 Apprenticeship achievements<sup>ix</sup></li> </ul>                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper.</li> <li>Introduced a £725m package of reforms to the apprenticeship system and Growth and Skills Levy.</li> <li>Introduced a £600m construction skills package.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

<sup>b</sup> Since the last update, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology has moved away from ThinkBroadband (TBB) statistics to those updated by Ofcom Connected Nations (CN). During earlier stages of the programme, TBB provided a more timely picture of UK broadband coverage, as coverage was growing quickly and Ofcom’s CN reports were produced less frequently. As the pace of coverage growth has slowed, the reporting lag in CN data is now less significant.

<sup>c</sup> The original Levelling Up metric reported on further education and skills (including apprenticeships and excluding community learning and non-regulated multiply provision). Tailored learning has replaced community learning from 2024-25, and so data reported here for apprenticeships and regulated education and training (which excludes tailored learning and other non-regulated provision) is not comparable with data in previously published reports.

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| will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equivalent Local Authority data showing spatial disparity is available <a href="#">here</a><sup>x</sup></li> </ul>                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched 29 Technical Excellence Colleges in construction, digital, advanced manufacturing, clean energy and defence.</li> <li>• Set out our vision for 16–19-year olds' progression pathways to further education training and work, to support this group into their next phase.</li> <li>• Launched 7 Foundation Apprenticeships.</li> <li>• Delivered Youth Guarantee Y1 trailblazers.</li> <li>• Launched the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) 2025-26 bursaries programme.</li> <li>• Devolving ASF to Mayoral Strategic Authorities as part of an integrated settlement to bring interventions closer to the local labour market.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>7. Health</b><br><br>By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years.                                                                   | Between 2017-19 and 2022-24 <sup>d xi</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female HLE at birth‡: Decreased 2.4 years (from 63.7 to 61.3)</li> <li>• Male HLE at birth‡: Decreased 2.3 years (from 63.2 to 60.9)</li> <li>• Geographic gap widened.</li> </ul> | Published the 10-Year Health Plan for England (July 2025) setting out a vision for an NHS 'fit for the future', including aims to tackle the social determinants of health, halve the healthy life expectancy gap between the richest and poorest regions, and raise healthy life expectancy for all. As part of this, the Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed the NHS to being a 'service equipped to narrow health inequalities'. The NHS will drive the three shifts equitably.</li> <li>• Continued delivery of the Core20PLUS5<sup>e</sup> approach. Health inequalities metrics have been included within the NHS Oversight Framework.</li> <li>• Laid the foundations for neighbourhood health with the launch of the National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme, covering 43 areas.</li> </ul> In implementing and delivering the Plan, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reverse the healthy life expectancy decline seen since the 2010s.</li> <li>• Improve the healthy life expectancy for women in the poorest parts of the country to at least 61 years from 50.5 years.</li> <li>• Raise the healthiest ever generation of children.</li> <li>• Refresh Core20PLUS5 to support driving the NHS's contribution to halving the gap in healthy life expectancy.</li> <li>• Invest in the future of the neighbourhood estate by building and upgrading 250 new neighbourhood health centres up and down the country.</li> </ul> |
| <b>8. Wellbeing<sup>f</sup></b><br><br>By 2030, well-being will have improved in                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low life satisfaction*: 5.4% in 2021-23 (increase from 4.4% in 2017-19)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched the Youth Strategy after meaningful co-creation with young people and the sector. It ensures every young person across the country has somewhere to go, someone who cares for them and a</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

<sup>d</sup> The latest available accredited data. Note that this data is for England only. Data for the rest of the UK is available from the source.

<sup>e</sup> [Core20PLUS5](#) is a national NHS England approach to inform action to reduce healthcare inequalities at both national and system level by targeting the most deprived 20% of the national population.

<sup>f</sup> The metrics have not been updated as the Office for National Statistics has not published new data since last year's report.

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| every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low worthwhileness*: 4.3% in 2021-23 (increase from 3.7% in 2017-19)</li> <li>• Low happiness*: 8.7% in 2021-23 (increase from 8.1% in 2017-19)</li> <li>• High anxiety*: 22.9% in 2021-23 (increase from 20.0% in 2017-19)<sup>xii</sup></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>community they feel part of. Over the next few years, it will deliver up to 250 new or refurbished youth centres, 50 Young Futures Hubs, and new support for youth workers, backed by over £500m of investment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enacted landmark reforms of the Mental Health Act and recruited 8,500 additional mental health staff.</li> <li>• Continued to expand Mental Health Support Teams to reach every school and college by 2029.</li> <li>• Launched the Civil Society Covenant, a landmark framework designed to reset the partnership between the government and civil society organisations to tackle pressing social issues, rebuild communities, and deliver better outcomes for the UK.</li> <li>• Published the Creative Industries Sector Plan, with £380m announced in targeted funding to drive innovation, regional growth and investment.</li> <li>• In Wales, devolved employment support funding and established employment support trailblazers.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>9. Pride in Place</b></p> <p>By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local area pride†: 60% reported they are proud to live in their local area in 2024-25</li> <li>• Civic participation/engagement†: 33% said they had engaged in some form of civic participation over the last 12 months</li> <li>• Area attractiveness†: 58% reported as finding their local area attractive or very attractive<sup>xiii</sup></li> <li>• ASB perception†: 8.3% in 2025<sup>xiv</sup></li> <li>• Social Fabric Index: not implemented</li> <li>• Heritage engagement†: 67% reported engagement with physical or digital heritage in the last 12 months in 2024-25<sup>xv</sup></li> <li>• Arts engagement†: 91% in 2024-25<sup>xvi</sup></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published and launched the £5.8bn Pride in Place Programme, funding 284 deprived communities across the UK and the £150m Pride in Place Impact Fund.</li> <li>• Published the Protecting What Matters Command Paper, a cross-government action plan that sets out the steps government will take towards more confident, cohesive, and resilient communities.</li> <li>• Introduced a range of measures to support high streets (through the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act), including strengthening the power of licensing authorities to issue a cumulative impact assessment in relation to gambling, introducing a stronger community right to buy for valued local assets, and establishing the neighbourhood governance duty.</li> <li>• Progressed the early adopter programme on High Street Rental Auction powers with over 25 local authorities using the powers and over £1m of funding allocated.</li> <li>• The Common Ground Resilience Fund has supported local authorities to strengthen community connection and cohesion by providing funding to voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver projects in line with the fund's objectives of enabling locally led interventions that build community resilience against potential tensions, bringing people together in shared spaces, and improving local capability to resolve conflicts.</li> <li>• The Big Help Out 2026 will develop and test how an open data infrastructure can help people access volunteering and social action opportunities, and provide the chance to trial new open data approaches to enable digital volunteering platforms to join up,</li> </ul> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>making it easier for people to find and access volunteering opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £400m for new and upgraded grassroots sport facilities across the country, through close working with sporting bodies and local leaders to establish what each community needs.</li> <li>• Ensuring coal tips in Wales remain safe by committing £143m.</li> <li>• Investing £80m in Community Regeneration Partnerships for Dundee, Scottish Borders, Argyll and Bute, and the Western Isles.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>10. Housing</b></p> <p>By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First-time buyers ‡: the number of first-time buyers increased in all regions between 2023 and 2024<sup>xvii</sup></li> <li>• Non-decent homes ‡: 22% private rented, 10% social rented in 2024<sup>xviii</sup></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secured Royal Assent for the Renters' Rights Act in October 2025 and implemented Phase 1 of the reforms on 1 May 2026 to give renters greater security and stability, including through the abolition of 'no fault' evictions.</li> <li>• Committed to updating the Decent Homes Standard.</li> <li>• Consulted on reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework as part of work to overhaul the planning system and deliver more affordable housing, including in rural areas where there are particular affordability challenges.</li> <li>• Published the draft Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee, which includes measures to deliver the manifesto commitment to bring the feudal leasehold system to an end.</li> <li>• Progress is being made towards implementation of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act, including commencing provisions that remove the 2-year qualifying rule for enfranchisement and measures that expand access to Right to Manage measures.</li> <li>• Announced the biggest shake-up to home buying in England's history, aiming to cut transaction times and halve fall-through rates to create a fairer housing market that will support young people to move into stable homeownership sooner.</li> <li>• Consulting on a new first-time buyer product to replace the Lifetime ISA, which will include the government bonus being paid at the point individuals make a withdrawal for a house purchase, removing the need for a withdrawal charge.</li> <li>• Created a separate tax rate for property income and announced plans to increase the tax rate on property income by 2pp across all bands in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, to be effective from April 2027. We have also launched a consultation on the High Value Council Tax Surcharge, a new charge on owners of residential property in England worth over £2m.</li> </ul> |

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|                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarified (through the Financial Conduct Authority) the rules on affordability testing, meaning most lenders now allow borrowers to borrow around ten per cent more than they could at the start of 2025.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p><b>11. Crime</b></p> <p>By 2030, homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst affected areas.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homicides †: 6% decrease overall between December 2024 and December 2025. 7% decrease in worst-affected areas between December 2024 and December 2025.<sup>xix g</sup></li> <li>Serious violence (as measured by hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object amongst U25s) †: 15% decrease overall between March 2024 and March 2025. 16%-17% decrease in worst affected areas between March 2024 and March 2025.<sup>xx xxi h</sup></li> <li>Neighbourhood crime (vehicle crime, domestic burglary, theft from the person, personal robbery) †: for the year to December 2025, a statistically significant decrease in domestic burglary and vehicle theft compared to the previous year – by 22% and 14% respectively. Levels of theft from the person and personal robbery measured by the survey have remained stable year-on-year.<sup>xxii i</sup></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funded Five Safer Streets Challenges, backed by £50m from the £500m Research &amp; Development Missions Accelerator Programme, which will support delivery of Safer Streets outcomes, tackle local crime issues and reduce spatial inequality.</li> <li>Committed to halving knife crime over the next decade, as set out in Protecting Lives, Building Hope - A Plan to Halve Knife Crime.</li> <li>Implemented the ban on ninja swords on 1 August 2025, making it illegal to sell or own these weapons.</li> <li>Introducing a range of measures through the Crime and Policing Act which will include stricter rules for online sellers of knives, including strengthening age verification controls and checks through a two-stage age verification system at the point of purchase and on delivery. Increasing the penalties for illegal sales of knives, creating a new offence of possessing a knife with the intention to commit unlawful violence, a duty on sellers to report bulk sales, and giving the police a new power to seize knives when they believe they are likely to be used in connection with unlawful violence.</li> <li>Introduced measures to provide the police with the power to require social media, marketplace, and search services to take down illegal knife and offensive weapon content. Failure to remove this material could result in both the company and a designated senior executive facing significant penalties.</li> <li>Delivering the government's reforms to policing, the biggest in two centuries, which will bring the police closer to the communities they serve and make sure we have the right policing in the right places.</li> <li>Continuing to support forces to increase the number of neighbourhood policing personnel, achieving total expected growth of 4,750 neighbourhood officers by the end of March 2027.</li> </ul> |

<sup>g</sup> Worst affected for homicide is defined as the 20 forces in England and Wales with the highest volumes of hospital admissions for assault by a sharp object among U25s between 2015-16 and 2021-22.

<sup>h</sup> The worst affected forces for serious violence are the same as those for homicide, but they cover England only, as Wales do not publish their data due to low volumes (meaning 19 forces in total rather than 20).

<sup>i</sup> Prior to July 2024, the Home Office provided additional funding to the Office for National Statistics to expand the sample size of the Crime Survey for England & Wales (CSEW) in high-crime areas, to provide more reliable estimates in such areas to support monitoring of the previous administration's Levelling Up programme. The Home Office has re-purposed that funding to support the CSEW more generally, given it remains a key component for monitoring this government's priorities to halve violence against women and girls and deliver safer streets.

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing the neighbourhood policing guarantee to ensure appropriately trained neighbourhood officers' presence and visibility in the communities they serve. It means every community has named, contactable officers and increased patrols in town centres and other hotspots.</li> <li>Set out plans to agree an expanded, clearly defined role for the Welsh Government as part of reforms to the youth justice system in Wales. This new arrangement will start by devolving remand and early intervention funding to the Welsh Government from April 2027.</li> <li>Committed to working with the Welsh Government and Wales's four Police and Crime Commissioners to produce a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen flexibility in delivery of probation services in Wales by the end of 2026.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>12. Local leadership</b></p> <p>By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share of England's population covered by a devolution agreement ‡: increased from 41% (2021) to 61% (2026)<sup>xxiii j</sup></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secured Royal Assent for the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026, putting into legislation the policy measures in the English Devolution White Paper, including a new devolution architecture, expanded powers and functions in the devolution framework, and enhanced accountability for Mayors through Local Scrutiny Committees.</li> <li>Established Mayoral Strategic Authorities in Cumbria, Cheshire &amp; Warrington (meaning all of the North now has devolution) and Sussex &amp; Brighton, and announced plans to establish Mayoral Strategic Authorities in Hampshire &amp; the Solent, Norfolk &amp; Suffolk, and Greater Essex.</li> <li>Invited all places without devolution to establish a non-mayoral, Foundation Strategic Authority.</li> <li>Launched the Integrated Settlement for the first time for five Mayoral Strategic Authorities in April 2026, building on the Settlements provided to Greater Manchester and the West Midlands in 2025-26. The Integrated Settlement total is now over £13bn across the Spending Review Period.</li> </ul> |

<sup>j</sup> Based on the Office for National Statistics' mid-2024 population estimates. The 2021 figure is sourced from the Levelling-up Missions Annual Report 2024-2025. The Office for National Statistics' mid-2024 population estimates show that 43% of England's population was covered by a devolution agreement in 2021, but the earlier figure is used for consistency with the previous report.

## Annex - Data source

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- <sup>i</sup> ONS, 2025. [Regional and subregional labour productivity, UK: 2023](#)
- <sup>ii</sup> ONS, 2025. [Employee earnings in the UK: 2025](#)
- <sup>iii</sup> ONS, 2026. [Labour market in the regions of the UK: March 2026](#)
- <sup>iv</sup> ONS, 2024. [UK public-funded gross regional capital and non-capital expenditure on research and development: financial year ending 2022.](#)
- <sup>v</sup> ONS, 2024. [Geographical distribution of UKRI funding, financial years 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024.](#)
- <sup>vi</sup> ONS, 2024. [UK public-funded gross regional capital and non-capital expenditure on research and development: financial year ending 2022.](#)
- <sup>vii</sup> Ofcom, 2025. [Connected Nations 2025](#)
- <sup>viii</sup> Department for Education, 2026. [Release home - Key stage 2 attainment 2024/2025](#)
- <sup>ix</sup> Department for Education, 2025. Further education and skills: Academic year 2024/25.
- <sup>x</sup> Department for Education, 2026. ['Geography Region, LA, LAD, PCON - Participation, Achievement by provision type \(rates per 100,000 population\)' from 'Further education and skills', Permanent data table - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)
- <sup>xi</sup> ONS, 2026. [Healthy life expectancy, UK](#)
- <sup>xii</sup> ONS, 2023. [Personal well-being in the UK](#)
- <sup>xiii</sup> Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2025. [Community Life Survey 2024/25.](#)
- <sup>xiv</sup> ONS, 2025. [Crime Survey for England and Wales \(CSEW\) estimates of personal and household crime, anti-social behaviour, and public perceptions, by police force area, year ending March 2025](#)
- <sup>xv</sup> Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2025. [Participation Survey 2024-25](#)
- <sup>xvi</sup> Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2025. [Participation Survey 2024-25](#)
- <sup>xvii</sup> ONS, 2025. [First-time buyer mortgage sales, by local authority, UK](#)
- <sup>xviii</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2026. [English Housing Survey 2024 to 2025](#)
- <sup>xix</sup> Home Office, 2025. [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables](#)
- <sup>xx</sup> ONS, 2026. [Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables](#)
- <sup>xxi</sup> NHS England Digital, 2026. [Hospital admissions for assault by sharp objects February 2026](#)
- <sup>xxii</sup> ONS, 2026. [Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables](#)
- <sup>xxiii</sup> ONS, 2025. [Total population](#)