NorthHFutures
Northern Health Futures Hub

UKRI Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

NorthHFutures Public Showcase

11 June 2026 | Opening Plenary

Keynote Speaker 1

Hannah Davies (she/her)



CEO, Northern Health Science Alliance

Executive Director, Health Equity North

Hannah Davies

CEO Northern Health Science Alliance and Executive Director – Health Equity North

Thursday, June 11, 2026

Our purpose



Our Mission

To unlock the combined potential of the North's health research and innovation assets for the benefit of the people and the economy



Our Vision

A healthy and prosperous North, powered by excellence in research and innovation across healthcare and academia with industry engagement and citizen involvement as key drivers



Our Role

High quality convening and advocacy

Our members

13 universities

Durham University

Edge Hill University

University of Lancashire

Lancaster University

University of Leeds

University of Liverpool

Manchester 1824 The University of Manchester

Northumbria University Newcastle

Newcastle University

University of Sheffield

University of Sunderland

University of York

Teesside University

10 NHS trusts

NHS Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust

NHS Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

NHS Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

NHS The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

NHS University Hospitals of Liverpool Group

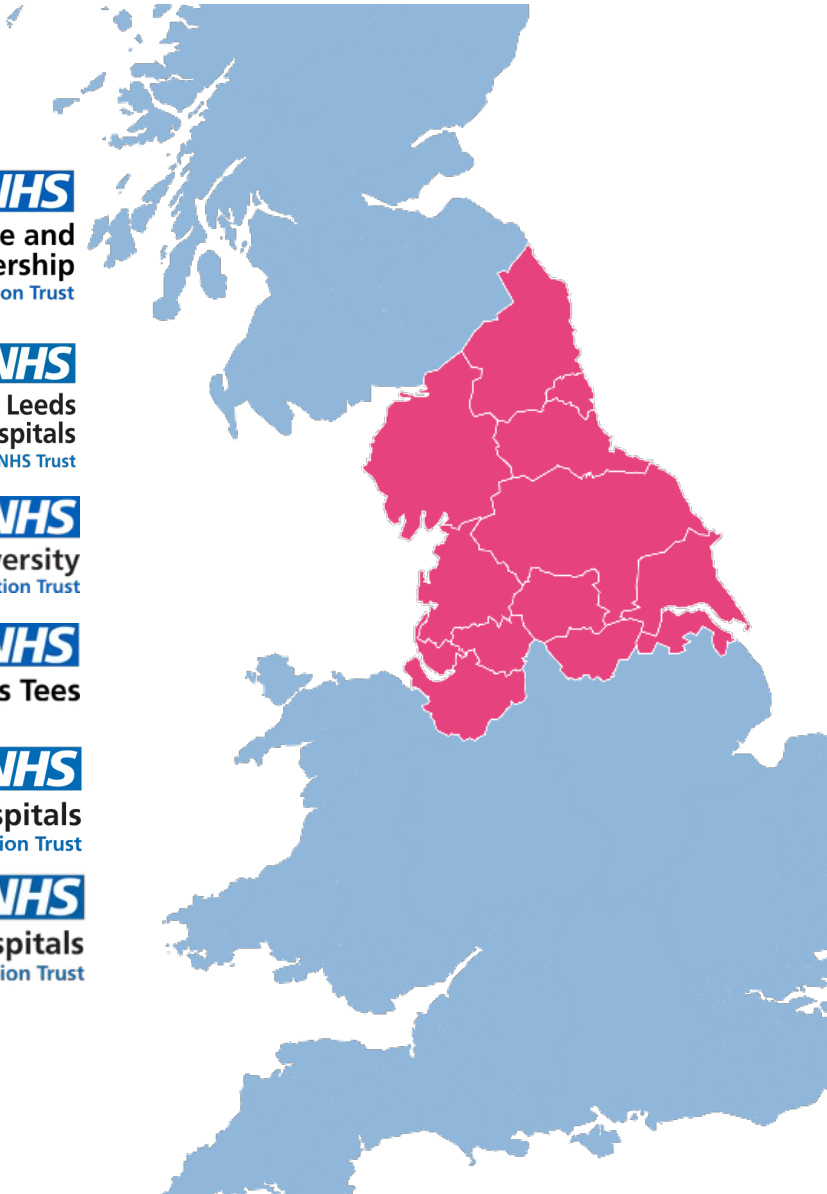
NHS Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

NHS Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

NHS University Hospitals Tees

NHS The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

NHS Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



4 Health Innovation Networks

Health Innovation North East and North Cumbria

Health Innovation Yorkshire & Humber

Health Innovation Manchester

Health Innovation North West Coast

The North

Population of
16 million

If the North was a separate country, its economy would be the 15th largest in Europe

A globaly connected region with a **deep talent pool**

Large diverse population that is representative of the UK

Secure intelligent data environment

Our universities train over
130,000
STEM graduates

£20 billion
Health and life science sector

Home to some of the best healthcare systems in the UK

Combination of urban and remote populations

7.4%
Productivity Growth, the fastest region in the UK

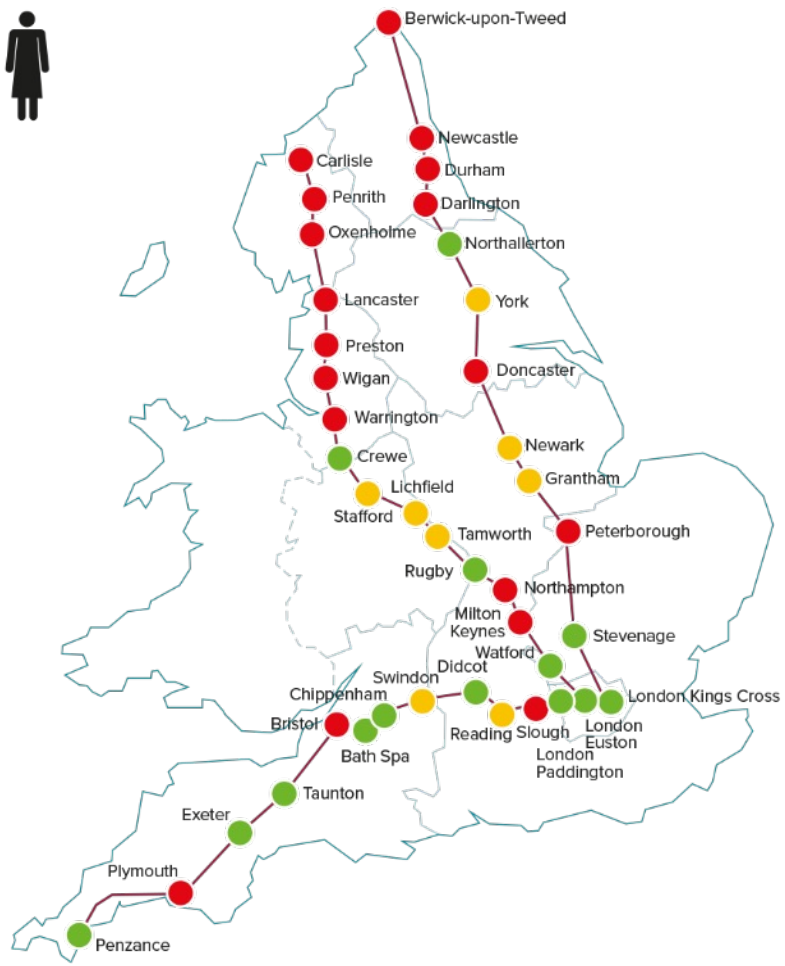
8 of the worlds top 200 universities within a couple of hours of travel

North/South health inequalities

Life expectancy for men along the East Coast, Great Western and West Coast Mainlines



Life expectancy for women along the East Coast, Great Western and West Coast Mainlines





Health Equity North

Health Equity North is committed to reducing health inequalities through research excellence and collaboration across the North's leading universities and hospitals.

Work themes

Health for Wealth – Good health is important for good economic health. Health for Wealth explores the economic impact of ill health and looks for policy solutions.

Health Resilience – Building resilience is key to future-proof the region's health and economic future and to closing the North/South divide

Child of the North – Children in the North of England should grow up with the same opportunities and life chances as those in the rest of the country

NHSA – HEN research, communications and policy support to NHSA members on aligned work

Child of the North

Poet, author and then Chancellor of the University of Manchester Lemn Sissay said:

“The Child of the North is not one child but many and each of their experiences is unique. They are brought up in different places. Educated in many different ways and go on to live very different lives.
“There is no one experience which speaks to every child across the region but there is an overall picture painted by this report of inequality between children in the North and the rest of the country
“Childhood is life defining and shaped by factors from before birth through to adulthood. A child’s mother’s health, the care they get, through family or the care system, what house they lie in, what food they eat, how often they get to run around, their education their opportunities.
“All of these things have a big impact and, as this report shows, the average Child of the North is disadvantaged from the start across all of these measures.”



Child of the North

Poverty

The Child of the North has a

27%

chance of living in poverty compared to **20%** in the rest of England.

They have a

58%

chance of living in a local authority with above average levels of low-income families, compared to **19%** in the rest of England.

Pregnancy early years

Prior to the pandemic, the North saw much larger cuts to spending on Sure Start children's centres.
On average, spending was cut by

£412

per eligible child in the North, compared to only **£283** in the rest of England.

Compared to children in England as a whole, they are more likely to die under the age of one.



In the first lockdown there was a massive drop-off in nursery and childcare services for eligible children, with only **7%** continuing to attend. Attendance has a range of benefits for children's health and development, particularly for deprived children. **Because the North is more deprived as a whole**, North-South inequalities in children's development are expected to increase.





Child mental wellbeing

During the pandemic, children in the North were lonelier than children in the rest of England. **23%** of parents in the North reported their child was 'often' lonely compared to **15%** of parents in the rest of the country.



Their parents and carers were also more likely to have often been lonely during the first lockdown: **23%** in the North compared to **13%** in the rest of England.

Schools and education

In primary maths, by the second half of the autumn 2020 term, pupils in the North East and Yorkshire and Humber experienced 4.0 and 5.3 months learning loss respectively, compared to less than a month in the South West and London.



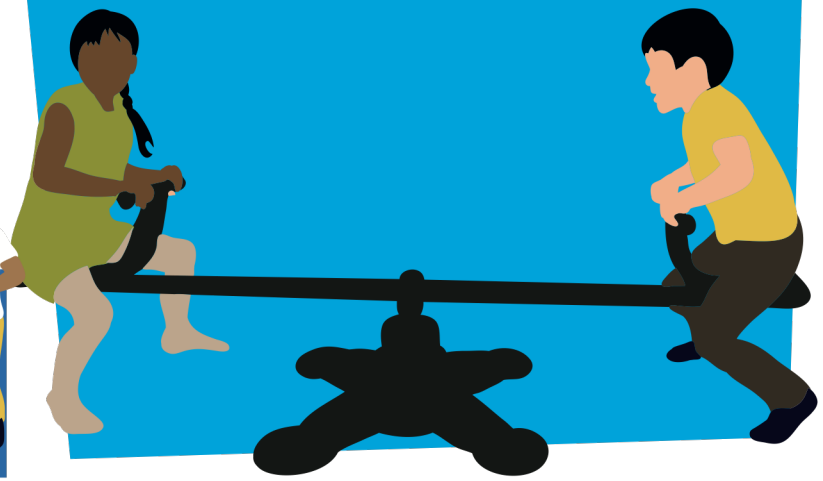
Children in care

Children in the North are significantly more likely to be in care than those in the rest of England. **Of the local authorities with more than 100 children per 10,000 in care, 21 of 26 are in the North.**



Ethnic minority children and young people: health and wellbeing

More than **one in five children in the North are from an ethnic minority**. These children are more likely to live in a deprived area than children from an ethnic minority in the rest of England.



Physical activity, obesity and food insecurity

The Child of the North is more likely to be living with obesity than a child elsewhere in England.



Woman of the North

One in five women aged 55-59 in the North of England provide care to a family member because of illness, disability, mental illness or substance use.

Women in the North are paid less for their work.

They lose out on

£132m

every week, around

£6.86bn

a year compared to what they'd get if they were paid the national average.



Women living in the North provide more unpaid care than average (10.3%) and those in London (8.4%). 12% of women in the North East, 11.2% of women in the North West, and 10.7% of women in Yorkshire and the Humber provide unpaid care.

Increases to retirement age would have greater adverse impacts on women in northern regions of England.



Long-term sickness and disability in working age women is higher in the North of England. The additional economic costs of this are

£400m

a year.

All of the 12 Local Authorities (LAs) in the North East have rates of absolute child poverty above the English average.

All of the 30 LAs in the South West have rates of absolute child poverty below the English average.

Woman of the North

Inequality, health and work

Women in the North contribute

£10bn

of unpaid care to the UK economy each year. This is £2bn a year more than if they provided the national average of unpaid care.

Of the recorded deaths per 100,000 from alcohol-specific causes in 2021, women in the North East (13.9), North West (13.8) and Yorkshire and Humber (11.7) had the highest rates of deaths in women in England.



A person living in the North East on Universal Credit is over 30 per cent more likely to be sanctioned than someone living in the South West.

There has been a demonstrable relationship between austerity, the implementation of the two-child limit, and increased rate of abortions.

Girls born in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber in 2018-2020 can only expect to live in good health to **59.7, 62.4 and 62.1 years**, respectively. This is up to four years less than the national average and up to six years less than girls born in the South East.



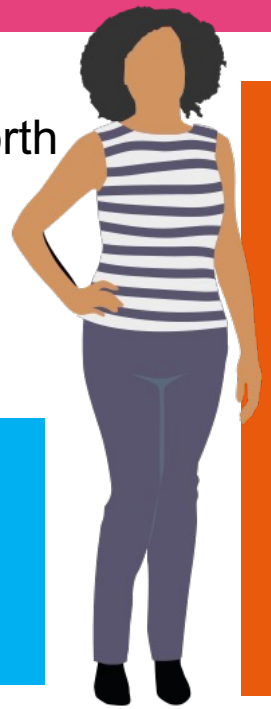
Lower levels of HRT prescribing in the North suggest some women may not be receiving adequate treatment for menopause symptoms, a concern as these affect employment, wellbeing and health.

Cuts to public health budgets have disproportionately affected the Midlands and North of England, with the **North enduring per-person cuts 15% higher than the average for England**, and the worst affected area in the country being the North East, with a cut of £23.24 per person.

Women in the North of England work more hours for less pay than women in the rest of the country.

Outside of London, the North consistently has a higher proportion of women who are Universal Credit claimants than the South.

The North showed the biggest increases in abortion rates between 2012 and 2021.



For severe mental illness, such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia the North West and North East have higher prevalence rates compared to the South and Yorkshire and Humber; eating disorders are the only low prevalence mental illness occurring in a higher proportion of women in the South.

If services are tailored to meet the needs of those women at greatest risk within the region they serve, Women's Health Hubs could play an important role in tackling inequalities within and between regions

Outside London, the three northern regions had the highest rates of new diagnoses of STIs and Gonorrhoea among people accessing sexual health services in 2022. The exception is Chlamydia in under 25s.



The proportion of women with a diagnosis of mental illness who were receiving a treatment for their mental illness was lower in the North West and North East than in the South and Yorkshire and the Humber, likely indicating a treatment gap between regions.

Spending on sexual health advice, prevention, and promotion has declined dramatically since 2013-14 in almost all English regions. Regions in the North have seen a 26-28% decrease, however the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber remain three of the top five highest spending regions, potentially reflecting higher STI burden in these regions.

Nationally, less than half of women (47%) will have settled accommodation on release from prison, and one in ten will be homeless or sleep rough. Although data are not collected regionally, it is likely that these figures are much higher in the North of England.

The North has disproportionate numbers of asylum seekers and resettled refugees highlighting the need for nuanced approaches to equitable resource allocation and support systems to ensure integration and welfare for vulnerable populations including asylum seekers.

The repeat abortion rate among pregnant young people has been increasing nationally, but was highest in the North West in 2021, with all three northern regions in the top five across England.

“This report must act as a wake-up call to all of us in positions of power, that to unleash the potential of women in the North is to unleash the potential of the UK.”



Tracy Brabin,
Metro Mayor of
West Yorkshire



Kim McGuinness,
Metro Mayor of
the North East.

Research for Impact



NHSA advocacy in action





Child of the North











Woman of the North Summit

Parliamentary launch and Westminster Hall debate

UK Parliament

Hansard

UK Parliament > Hansard > ••• > Westminster Hall > Regional Inequalities: Child Poverty

Regional Inequalities: Child Poverty

Volume 709: debated on Wednesday 2 March 2022

Download text

[Dr Rupa Huq *in the Chair*]

2.30pm

Liz Twist >
(Blaydon) (Lab)

Share

I beg to move,

That this House has considered regional inequalities and child poverty.

It is a pleasure, Dr Huq, to serve under you as Chair in this debate on regional



Impact

Our impact

Our work has been cited in more than

1,950

media stories/broadcasts between April 2025 and March 2026.
This has generated more than

£1.072m

million in PR value.

Since our inception, our work has been covered by/featured in:

Regional media coverage is also key to our ongoing influence and impact with stories regularly being covered (with many front-page stories under our belt) by: