

The New Statistical Regions

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In April 1997 the Government Statistical Service adopted the Government Office Regions (GORs) for the standard presentation of regional data for England. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland continue to be standard areas for statistical output. This paper describes the new areas and provides some statistical comparisons between them.

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I Introduction

In 1994 ten Government Offices for the Regions were established to integrate the regional operations of four departments: Environment, Trade and Industry, Employment (now Education and Employment) and Transport. From April 1997 the Government Statistical Service has adopted these Government Office Regions (GORs) for the standard presentation of regional statistics for England. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland continue to be standard areas for statistical output. The GORs replace the standard statistical regions (SSRs) which have been in use since local government reorganisation in the 1970s and, with small changes, since the 1960s. This change was prompted by a number of factors:

- some change was necessary due to the re-organisation of local government in England, Wales and Scotland;
- the standard statistical regions are of very different sizes. The South East SSR (including London) has a population of nearly 31 million compared with East Anglia's population of less than 4 million;
- the change provides better alignment between the regional areas used for administrative and statistical purposes.

The main differences between the SSRs and the GORs are as follows:

- Cumbria moves from the North SSR to the North West GOR;
- London becomes a separate GOR;
- Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire are merged with the East Anglia SSR to form the new Eastern GOR;
- the new South East GOR excludes London, Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

Although Merseyside has a separate Government Regional Office, it will often be shown as part of a North West & Merseyside region for statistical purposes.

II The new regions

The following table describes each of the GORs in terms of counties and the unitary authorities that will exist after local government reorganisation. The authorities marked with an asterisk will be the result of reorganisation taking effect in April 1998. The maps on pages 9 and 10 illustrate the GORs in terms of administrative areas in existence as at 1 April 1997.¹ Appendix A provides a summary in terms of the counties that existed prior to 31 March 1997.

Government Office Region	Areas
North East	Hartlepool UA Middlesbrough UA Redcar & Cleveland UA Stockton-on-Tees UA Darlington UA Durham County Northumberland County Tyne & Wear Metropolitan County
North West & Merseyside	
North West	Halton UA* Warrington UA* Cheshire County* Cumbria County Greater Manchester Metropolitan County Blackburn UA* Blackpool UA* Lancashire County*
Merseyside	Merseyside Metropolitan County
Yorkshire & the Humber	East Riding of Yorkshire UA Kingston upon Hull UA North East Lincolnshire UA North Lincolnshire UA York UA North Yorkshire South Yorkshire Metropolitan County West Yorkshire Metropolitan County

¹ The maps were kindly supplied by the Office for National Statistics

Government Office Region Areas

East Midlands	Derby UA Derbyshire County Leicester UA Rutland UA Leicestershire County Lincolnshire County Northamptonshire County Nottingham UA* Nottinghamshire County*
West Midlands	Herefordshire UA* Worcestershire County* The Wrekin UA* Shropshire County* Stoke-on-Trent UA Staffordshire County Warwickshire County West Midlands Metropolitan County
Eastern	Luton UA Bedfordshire County Peterborough UA* Cambridgeshire County* Southend-on-Sea UA* Thurrock UA* Essex County* Hertfordshire County Norfolk County Suffolk County
London	Greater London

Government Office Region	Areas
South East	Bracknell Forest UA* Newbury UA* Reading UA* Slough UA* Windsor & Maidenhead UA* Wokingham UA* Milton Keynes UA Buckinghamshire County Brighton & Hove UA East Sussex County Portsmouth UA Southampton UA Hampshire County Isle of Wight UA Medway Towns UA* Kent County* Oxfordshire County Surrey County West Sussex County
South West	Bath & North East Somerset UA City of Bristol UA North Somerset UA South Gloucestershire UA Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Plymouth UA* Torbay UA* Devon County* Bournemouth UA Poole UA Dorset County Gloucester County Somerset County Thamesdown UA Wiltshire County

III Some basic statistics

This Section sets out some basic statistics for the GORs. The 1997 edition of the Office for National Statistics' publication *Regional Trends* (to be published on 10 July) will include regional profiles and a range of other statistics.

A. Population & Vital Statistics

Table 1 (page 12) sets out some data on population and vital statistics for the each region.

The largest region by population is the South East GOR with a mid-1995 population estimate of around 7.8 million. Northern Ireland had the highest proportion of residents aged under 15 while the South West GOR had the highest proportion of pensionable age.

In 1995, the region with the highest infant mortality rate was Northern Ireland with 7.1 deaths of infants aged under one year per 1,000 live births. Northern Ireland also had the highest general fertility rate, with 66.8 live births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44. The region with the highest crude² mortality rate was Wales.

² Not adjusted for the age and sex structure of the population

Table 1

Population and vital statistics

Country	Region	Mid-1995 population estimate			Percentage aged			Infant mortality rate 1995 (b)	General fertility rate 1995 (c)	Crude mortality rate per 1,000 population		
		Males (000s)	Females (000s)	Persons (000s)	under 15	pensionable age and over (a)	over 75			Males	Females	Persons
United Kingdom		28,728	29,878	58,606	19.4%	18.2%	7.0%	6.2	60.1	10.8	11.1	10.9
England		24,008	24,896	48,903	19.3%	18.2%	7.1%	6.1	60.4	10.6	11.0	10.8
	North East	1,272	1,333	2,605	19.5%	18.5%	6.5%	6.7	57.0	11.5	11.7	11.6
	North West and Merseyside	3,376	3,524	6,900	20.0%	18.2%	6.9%	6.6	59.8	11.4	11.8	11.6
	<i>North West</i>	2,687	2,786	5,473	19.9%	18.1%	6.8%	6.6	60.2	11.2	11.7	11.5
	<i>Merseyside</i>	690	737	1,427	20.0%	18.7%	7.0%	6.4	58.1	12.2	12.1	12.2
	Yorkshire and the Humber	2,474	2,556	5,029	19.5%	18.3%	7.0%	6.9	60.9	10.8	11.3	11.1
	East Midlands	2,038	2,086	4,124	19.2%	18.3%	6.9%	5.8	58.5	10.6	10.7	10.6
	West Midlands	2,621	2,686	5,306	19.8%	18.0%	6.6%	7.0	62.2	10.8	10.8	10.8
	Eastern	2,591	2,667	5,257	19.1%	18.4%	7.1%	5.1	60.3	10.0	10.5	10.3
	London	3,432	3,575	7,007	19.3%	15.5%	6.2%	6.3	63.8	9.5	9.6	9.5
	South East	3,847	4,000	7,847	18.9%	18.7%	7.6%	5.2	59.6	10.2	11.2	10.7
	South West	2,357	2,470	4,827	18.2%	21.2%	8.7%	5.2	57.7	11.5	12.0	11.8
Wales		1,426	1,491	2,917	19.4%	19.9%	7.6%	5.9	60.4	12.0	12.2	12.1
Scotland		2,489	2,647	5,137	18.9%	17.8%	6.4%	6.2	54.5	11.6	12.0	11.8
Northern Ireland		805	844	1,649	23.7%	15.0%	5.3%	7.1	66.8	9.3	9.3	9.3

Notes: (a) Aged 60 and over for women and 65 and over for men

(b) Deaths of infants aged under one year resident in an area per 1,000 live births to mothers resident in the area

(c) Live births to mothers resident in an area per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 resident in the area

Sources: ONS Mid-year population estimates on disk

Public Health Common Data Set 1996, Department of Health

Annual Abstract of Statistics 1997

Digest of Welsh Statistics 1997, Welsh Office

The Scottish Abstract of Statistics 1996, Scottish Office

Northern Ireland Annual Abstract of Statistics 1997, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

B. Labour market

Table 2 (page 14) sets out some basic labour market data derived from the Autumn 1996 Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS is a sample survey of 60,000 households (about 150,000 individuals) undertaken each quarter. The survey includes a very wide range of questions that cover individuals' demographic characteristics, their educational qualifications, and their labour market position. The results are then grossed up and weighted to be representative of the country as a whole. In the LFS individuals are normally allocated to a geographical area on the basis of their place of usual residence rather than where they work.

The columns show the following information:

- The population aged 16 and over resident in private households, student halls of residence and NHS accommodation.
- The number of economically active persons. To be economically active, a person must be either in employment or unemployed on ILO definitions.
- The number of people in employment, i.e. undertaking at least one hour's paid work in the week prior to interview.
- The number of people unemployed on ILO definitions. The ILO definition of unemployment refers to those people *without a job who were available to start work in the two weeks following their LFS interview and had either looked for work in the four weeks prior to the interview or were waiting to start a job already obtained.*
- The number of economically inactive persons. To be economically inactive, a person must be neither in employment nor unemployed on ILO definitions.
- The economic activity rate: the number of economically active people divided by the population aged 16 and over.
- The ILO unemployment rate: the number of people unemployed on the ILO definition divided by the number that economically active.

Table 2

Labour Market Indicators
Autumn 1996; Not seasonally adjusted

Country	GOR	Population aged 16 & over (000s)	Economically active (000s)	In employment (000s)	ILO Unemployed (000s)	Economically inactive (000s)	Economic activity rate	Unemployment rate
United Kingdom		45,816	28,866	26,568	2,298	16,950	63.0%	8.0%
England		38,285	24,333	22,434	1,899	13,953	63.6%	7.8%
	North East	2,045	1,199	1,083	115	847	58.6%	9.6%
	North West & Merseyside	5,347	3,254	3,007	247	2,093	60.9%	7.6%
	<i>North West</i>	4,264	2,636	2,456	181	1,628	61.8%	6.9%
	<i>Merseyside</i>	1,082	617	551	66	465	57.1%	10.7%
	Yorkshire & the Humber	3,937	2,437	2,224	213	1,500	61.9%	8.7%
	East Midlands	3,250	2,111	1,967	144	1,139	65.0%	6.8%
	West Midlands	4,131	2,601	2,398	202	1,530	63.0%	7.8%
	Eastern	4,152	2,724	2,543	181	1,428	65.6%	6.6%
	London	5,471	3,535	3,133	402	1,937	64.6%	11.4%
	South East	6,123	4,061	3,825	235	2,063	66.3%	5.8%
	South West	3,829	2,412	2,253	159	1,416	63.0%	6.6%
Wales		2,288	1,325	1,216	109	962	57.9%	8.2%
Scotland		4,026	2,480	2,262	218	1,546	61.6%	8.8%
Northern Ireland		1,217	728	656	72	490	59.8%	9.9%

Source: ONS Labour Force Survey via Quantime database

Nationally the economic activity rate was 63%. This varied from less than 58% in Wales and Merseyside to over 66% in the South East GOR. The national unemployment rate on ILO definitions was 8.0%. The lowest regional rate was 5.8% in the South East GOR and the highest was 11.4% in London. Compared to the monthly count of unemployed claimants (see table 3), the LFS shows the unemployment rate in London to be relatively high compared to other regions. This is because, in the LFS - which is based on usual residence - the number of employed in London (which forms part of the denominator in the rate calculation) does not include those commuting into the capital.

C. Unemployed Claimants

Table 3 (page 16) summarises the latest information from the monthly count of unemployed claimants. The number unemployed is based on those claiming unemployment-related benefits (Jobseekers Allowance and national insurance credits). The data are adjusted for seasonal factors and, as part of this process, the relatively small number of claimants aged under 18 are excluded. The unemployment rates express the number of unemployed as a proportion of the workforce.

On this basis, there were some 1.7 million unemployed in April 1997 representing 5.9% of the workforce. In the regions, unemployment rates varied from 3.9% in the South East GOR and 8.5% in the North East. Within the North West & Merseyside, the unemployment rate in Merseyside was 11.0%.

D. Regional accounts

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces regional estimates for a number of national accounts variables such as gross domestic product (GDP), consumers' expenditure and personal sector income. Table 4 (page 17) summarises data for household disposable income, which were among the first regional accounts data to be published for GORs. Household disposable income includes the income of households from all sources less taxes on income, social security contributions and contributions to life assurance and occupational pension schemes. The data in the table are consistent with national estimates contained in the 1995 edition of the national accounts 'blue book'.³

Nationally, household disposable income per capita was estimated to be £7,755 in 1993. Income per capita was highest in London at £9,033 (17% above the national average) and lowest in Northern Ireland at £6,828 (12% below the national average).

³ ONS, *United Kingdom National Accounts*, 1995

Table 3

Unemployed Claimants
April 1997; Seasonally adjusted

Country	GOR	Unemployed claimants			Unemployed rate (a)		
		Males (000s)	Females (000s)	Total (000s)	Males	Females	Total
United Kingdom		1,267	384	1,651	8.1%	3.1%	5.9%
England		1,025	317	1,342	7.8%	3.0%	5.7%
	North East	76	19	95	12.4%	3.7%	8.5%
	North West & Merseyside	157	43	200	9.0%	3.1%	6.4%
	<i>North West</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>7.5%</i>	<i>2.6%</i>	<i>5.3%</i>
	<i>Merseyside</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>16.0%</i>	<i>5.1%</i>	<i>11.0%</i>
	Yorkshire & the Humber	120	34	154	8.9%	3.3%	6.4%
	East Midlands	77	24	101	7.2%	2.8%	5.2%
	West Midlands	112	35	146	7.8%	3.2%	5.8%
	Eastern	82	27	109	6.0%	2.5%	4.5%
	London	209	74	283	9.2%	4.2%	7.0%
	South East	109	34	143	5.3%	2.1%	3.9%
	South West	84	28	111	6.4%	2.6%	4.7%
Wales		65	18	82	9.3%	3.2%	6.6%
Scotland		126	36	162	9.6%	3.2%	6.6%
Northern Ireland		51	14	65	11.6%	4.2%	8.4%

Note: (a) As percent of the workforce.

Source: ONS - NOMIS database

Table 4

Household disposable income 1993

Country	GOR	Total (£ million)	Regional share	Per capita (£)	Per capita (UK=100)
United Kingdom		451,262	100%	7,755	100.0
England		379,294	84.1%	7,815	100.8
	North East	18,542	4.1%	7,098	91.5
	North West & Merseyside	50,196	11.1%	7,272	93.8
	<i>North West</i>	40,058	8.9%	7,334	94.6
	<i>Merseyside</i>	10,137	2.2%	7,035	90.7
	Yorkshire & the Humber	36,226	8.0%	7,225	93.2
	East Midlands	30,027	6.7%	7,354	94.8
	West Midlands	38,503	8.5%	7,279	93.9
	Eastern	42,234	9.4%	8,132	104.9
	London	62,628	13.9%	9,033	116.5
	South East	63,877	14.2%	8,256	106.5
	South West	37,061	8.2%	7,773	100.2
Wales		20,278	4.5%	6,977	90.0
Scotland		40,546	9.0%	7,919	102.1
Northern Ireland		11,143	2.5%	6,828	88.1

Source: ONS, "Economic Trends", March 1996 pp14-37

SSRs and GROs in terms of Pre-1997 Counties

Standard Statistical Region	County	Government Office Region
North	Cleveland Durham Northumberland Tyne & Wear	North East
	Cumbria	
North West	Cheshire Greater Manchester Lancashire	North West
	Merseyside	
Yorkshire & Humberside	Humberside North Yorkshire South Yorkshire West Yorkshire	Yorkshire & the Humber
East Midlands	Derbyshire Leicestershire Lincolnshire Northamptonshire Nottinghamshire	East Midlands
West Midlands	Hereford & Worcester Shropshire Staffordshire Warwickshire West Midlands	West Midlands
South West	Avon Cornwall Devon Dorset Gloucestershire Somerset Wiltshire	South West
East Anglia	Cambridgeshire Norfolk Suffolk	Eastern
South East	Bedfordshire Essex Hertfordshire	London
	Greater London	
South East	Berkshire Buckinghamshire East Sussex Hampshire Isle of Wight Kent Oxfordshire Surrey West Sussex	South East

Recent papers on related subjects have been:

95/113	Investment	20.11.95
95/114	The economic background to the November 1995 budget	21.11.95
95/120	Personal tax allowances & reliefs 1996/97	29.11.95
96/18	The Value of the Pound since 1750	01.02.96
96/32	Economic Indicators: March 1996	01.03.96
96/33	Economic & Monetary Union	01.03.96
96/38	Unemployment by Constituency: February 1996	13.03.96