



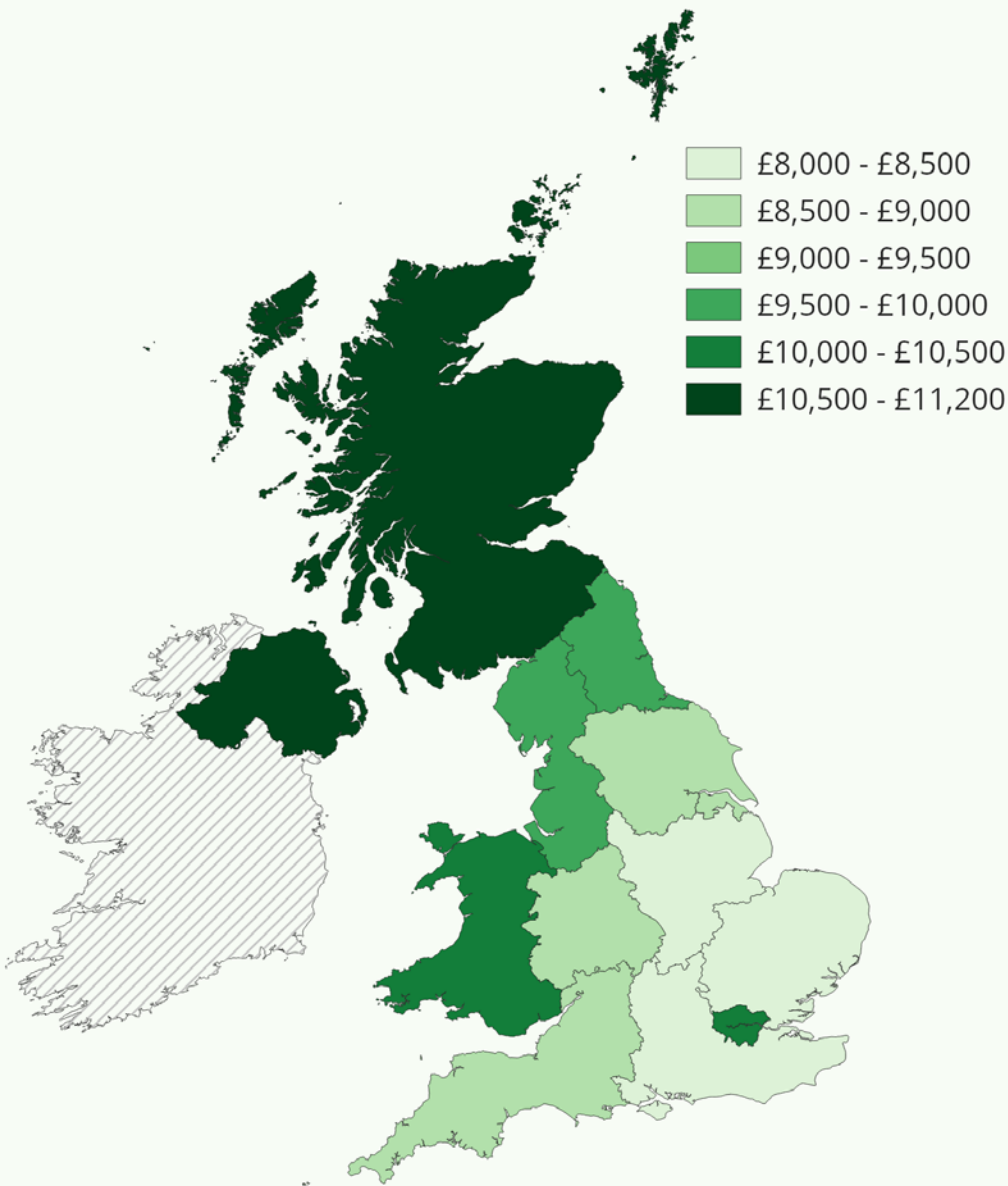
BRIEFING PAPER

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Public spending by country and region

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Spending per person, by country and region, 2017/18



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Summary

This note gives figures on the level of public expenditure in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It also gives figures for the English regions.

In 2017/18, public spending per person in the UK as a whole was £9,350. In England, it was £9,080 (3% below the UK average). This compares with:

- Scotland: £10,881 (16% above the UK average)
- Wales: £10,397 (11% above the UK average)
- Northern Ireland £11,190 (20% above the UK average).

Among the English regions, public spending per person was lowest in the South East at £8,297 (11% below the UK average) and highest in London at £10,323 (10% higher than the UK average).

The data shown are for public expenditure per person and are taken from HM Treasury's [Country and regional analysis: 2018](#), which contains more detailed information including spending by function (health, education etc).

1. Introduction: The data

For many types of spending, we have a good idea of how much goes to each region or nation within the UK. This “identifiable expenditure” covers around 88% of total public spending¹ and is the focus of this briefing.² The remaining 12% is regarded as benefiting the UK as a whole and therefore is not attributed to a particular region or nation – a classic example is spending on defence.

For Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the data include expenditure by the devolved administrations but also spending in these countries by UK Government departments. For example, the Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for social security expenditure throughout Great Britain. So, for example, DWP expenditure on social security in Scotland is included under Scotland in the tables below.

2. Spending per person, 2017/18

Table 1 and the chart below show public expenditure per person for each country and region. The table shows considerable variation between the different parts of the UK. For example, public spending per person is £9,080 in England compared with £11,190 in Northern Ireland – a difference of around £2,100. Public expenditure per person in Northern Ireland is 20% higher than the UK average, in Scotland it is 16% higher and in Wales 11% higher. There are also differences in spending levels between the English regions where spending per person ranges from £8,297 in the South East to £10,323 in London.

In interpreting the data, it is necessary to bear two points in mind. First, the scope of the public sector varies between countries. For example, water supply is in the public sector in Scotland and Northern Ireland but in the private sector in England and Wales. Second, the figures are intended to give a broad overview and cannot be regarded as a precise measure. This is because it is not always easy to decide who benefits from particular expenditure and simplifying assumptions are made in compiling the data. Small differences in expenditure between regions should not, therefore, be regarded as significant.

¹ Public spending includes spending by central government, local government and public corporations.

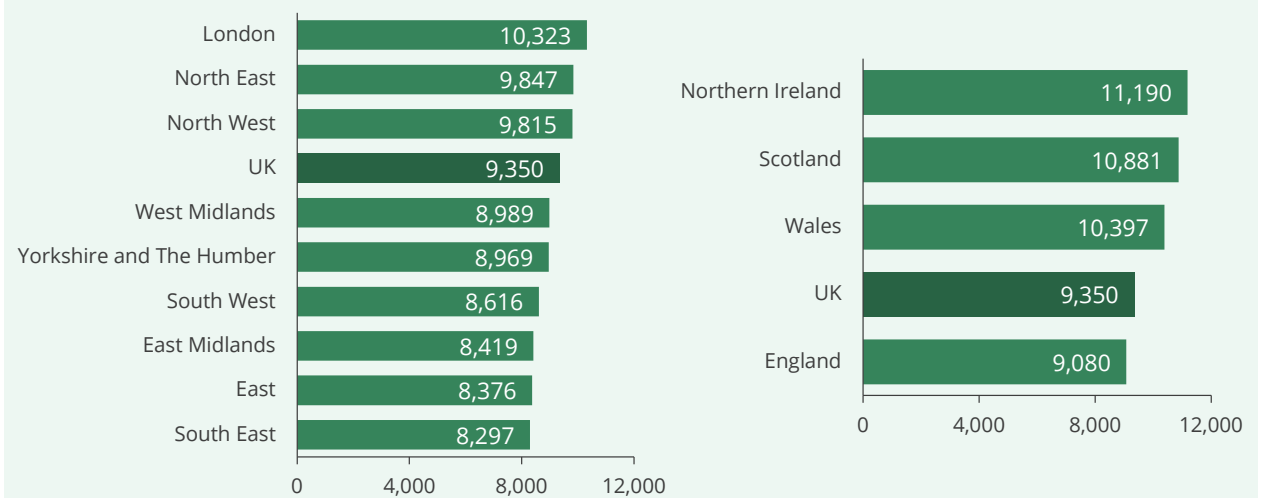
² For further information on the classification see [paras 18-20](#) of HM Treasury’s Country and Regional Analysis – November 2017.

5 Public spending by country and region

Table 1: Public spending per person, by country and region 2017/18

	£ per person	Index: UK identifiable spending = 100
North East	9,847	105
North West	9,815	105
Yorkshire and The Humber	8,969	96
East Midlands	8,419	90
West Midlands	8,989	96
East	8,376	90
London	10,323	110
South East	8,297	89
South West	8,616	92
England	9,080	97
Scotland	10,881	116
Wales	10,397	111
Northern Ireland	11,190	120
UK identifiable spending	9,350	100

Public spending per person, by country and region of the UK
£ per person, 2017/18



Source: HM Treasury, [Country and regional analysis: 2018](#), Table A.2, 20 November 2018

3. Spending per person, 2013/14 to 2017/18

Tables 2 and 3 show public spending per person for each country and region of the UK since 2013/14.

Table 2: Public spending per person, by country and region					
£ per person, adjusted for inflation					
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
North East	9,995	9,983	10,096	9,887	9,847
North West	9,715	9,731	9,827	9,638	9,815
Yorkshire and The Humber	9,078	9,159	9,205	9,018	8,969
East Midlands	8,554	8,646	8,608	8,462	8,419
West Midlands	9,052	9,234	9,077	9,037	8,989
East	8,299	8,449	8,507	8,307	8,376
London	10,528	10,395	10,490	10,234	10,323
South East	8,190	8,188	8,273	8,290	8,297
South West	8,675	8,778	8,735	8,656	8,616
England	9,114	9,157	9,192	9,054	9,080
Scotland	10,791	10,788	10,889	10,808	10,881
Wales	10,380	10,398	10,410	10,281	10,397
Northern Ireland	11,575	11,601	11,371	11,220	11,190
UK identifiable spending	9,385	9,421	9,452	9,318	9,350

Table 3: Public spending per person, by country and region					
Index: UK = 100					
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
North East	106	106	107	106	105
North West	104	103	104	103	105
Yorkshire and The Humber	97	97	97	97	96
East Midlands	91	92	91	91	90
West Midlands	96	98	96	97	96
East	88	90	90	89	90
London	112	110	111	110	110
South East	87	87	88	89	89
South West	92	93	92	93	92
England	97	97	97	97	97
Scotland	115	115	115	116	116
Wales	111	110	110	110	111
Northern Ireland	123	123	120	120	120
UK identifiable spending	100	100	100	100	100

Source: HM Treasury, [Country and regional analysis: 2018](#), Table A.4, 20 November 2018

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