



Impetus

Research Briefing 4:

The Employment Gap in the North West

June 2019

CENTRE FOR
VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION
RESEARCH



National
Institute of
Economic and
Social Research



Impetus transforms the lives of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring they get the right support to succeed in school, in work and in life. We find, fund and build the most promising charities working with these young people, providing core funding and working shoulder-to-shoulder with their leaders to help them become stronger organisations. In partnership with other funders we help our charities expand and we work to influence policy and decision makers so that young people get the support they need.

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Disclaimer: The statistics shown in this report are based on data outputs prepared by CVER researchers, with financial support by Impetus. By publishing this work, CVER and Impetus aim to improve our understanding of the situations affecting disadvantaged young people, their education choices and labour market outcomes and to elicit comments and further debate. The views expressed are solely those of the author(s) and therefore, do not represent the position of CVER or NIESR or other organisations involved.

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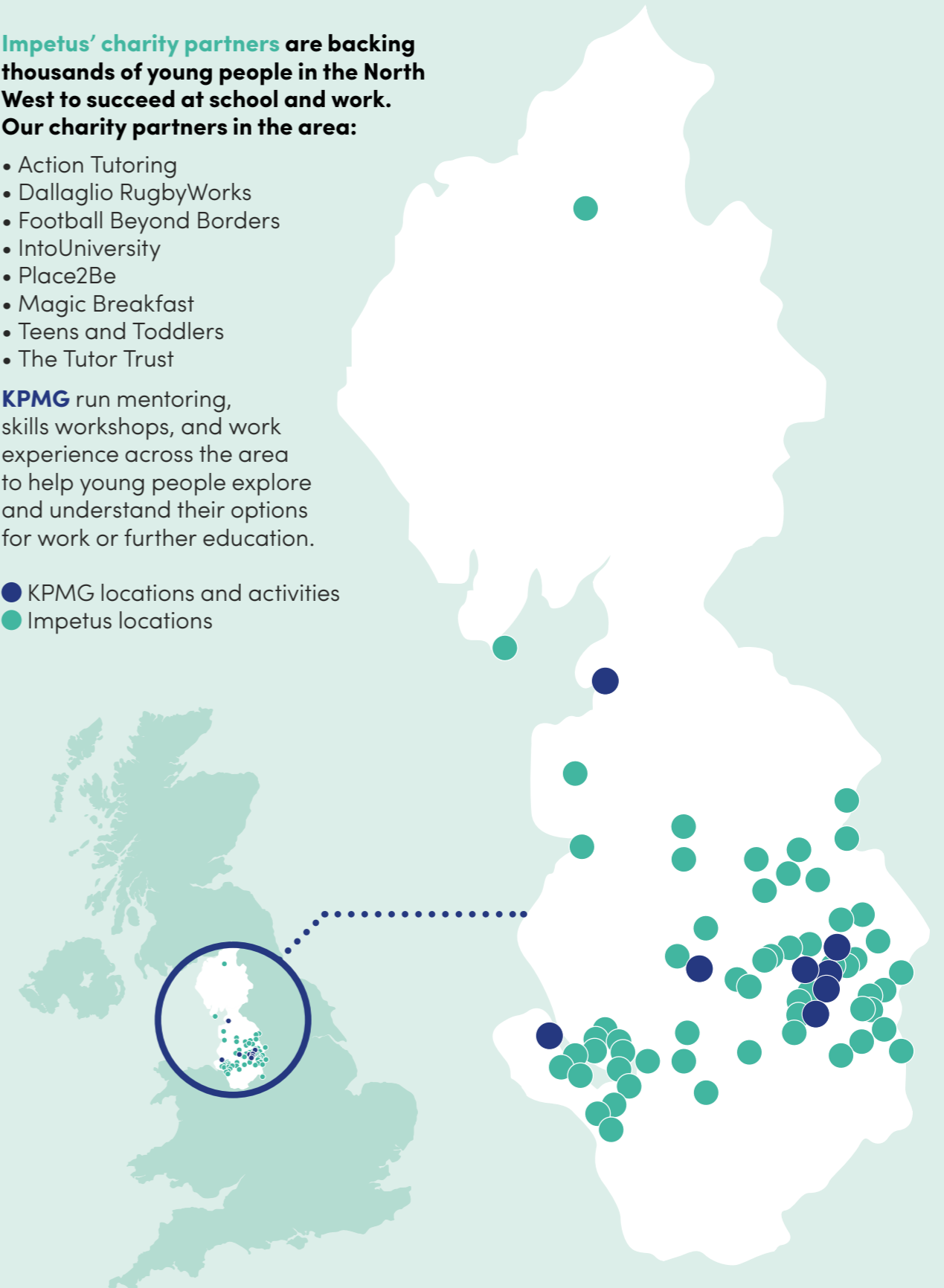
Where we work

Impetus' charity partners are backing thousands of young people in the North West to succeed at school and work. Our charity partners in the area:

- Action Tutoring
- Dallaglio RugbyWorks
- Football Beyond Borders
- IntoUniversity
- Place2Be
- Magic Breakfast
- Teens and Toddlers
- The Tutor Trust

KPMG run mentoring, skills workshops, and work experience across the area to help young people explore and understand their options for work or further education.

- KPMG locations and activities
- Impetus locations



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Foreword



Andy Ratcliffe
CEO, Impetus

When we published our first Youth Jobs Gap report this spring, I said I was concerned that youth employment has disappeared from the front pages and politicians' lists of priorities. This is as true at local level as national level.

So I'm pleased we can give local policymakers the information they need to have an impact on this issue. This report provides the first accurate statistics on the numbers of young people not in employment, education or training in each local authority in the North West.

This data shows that if we miss the local we miss a lot. Differences *within* a region matter as much as differences *between* regions.

Take Trafford and Manchester for example – the homes of two big football teams and just 20 minutes apart by tram. Manchester City's home, Manchester local authority, has the highest NEET rate of any local authority in the North West. Manchester United's home, Trafford, has the lowest.

This is just an illustration of a complex picture of local differences. Only by fully understanding these differences can all of us involved in tackling youth unemployment, whether charities, businesses or policy makers, hope to solve these problems.



Nicola Quayle
KPMG, Manchester Office
Senior Partner

The North West region has both a rich and challenging education and employment landscape. As this report shows, there is a stark postcode lottery of education and employment outcomes for young people; with evidence of good practice in some areas, but also a regional landscape facing the joint third highest employment gap between disadvantaged young people and their peers in the country.

As a local employer, we are not alone in prioritising skills and education. If we are to make the most of UK talent, drive productivity, and ensure businesses and individuals can prosper, we must put skills at the heart of our Industrial Strategy.

Working towards a fairer future is both the right thing to do and a business imperative. A fundamental part of this has to be ensuring *all* young people have access to education, employment and training which enables them to realise their potential.

KPMG works closely with cross-sector stakeholders in the North West to do just this. But wholesale structural change cannot be achieved in isolation.

Businesses need to agree on the skills we need – be it improvements in digital learning, or creating a culture of lifelong learning – and work with schools and policy-makers to develop a system which leaves no person behind.



“Only by fully understanding the complex picture of local differences can all of us involved in tackling youth unemployment hope to solve these problems”

Executive summary

The Youth Jobs Gap research series uses new Longitudinal Education Outcomes data to present new insights into disadvantaged young people's transition from compulsory education into employment. The first three national reports have looked at NEET rates, higher education, and apprenticeships respectively. These national reports have also looked at differences between regions – but differences *within* the regions are often greater than the differences *between* regions.



70%

of disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs from Bolton access university



This report looks at the North West region, including the combined authority areas of Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region. It presents findings at local authority area level, for the measures developed in the first three national reports.

We find twice as many young people are NEET in Manchester as in Trafford – both parts of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Young people from Cumbria are nearly three times as likely to do an apprenticeship as young people from Salford.

Some of the most interesting findings come when looking at people with similar qualifications. We find that, in terms of NEET rates, it is better to be better-off than have better qualifications in places like Salford, Wigan, Knowsley and Liverpool. Similarly, the gap

between disadvantaged young people and their better-off peers in NEET rate is twice as big in Wigan as Oldham. And while 70% of disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs from Bolton access university, only 53% of equally well qualified young people from Knowsley do so.

We can also factor in the underlying rates of qualification and disadvantage, to consider which groups are most under or over represented. So disadvantaged young people from Cheshire & Chester are more

underrepresented among those who go on to university than any other local authority area. And around a quarter of young people who start apprenticeships are from disadvantaged backgrounds, but in some local authority areas disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among apprenticeship starters by almost 50%, whereas in others they are underrepresented by more than 10%.

Finally, we bring together the main findings on a local authority area by local authority area basis. We hope it will be useful for those working in or with specific local authority areas in the North West region to have a summary of how the specific area is doing on different measures, relative to others.

It would be easy to assume that this area by area analysis would show that some local authority areas are performing better (or worse) than others. This is an oversimplification. Instead, what we find is that every local authority area has its own story – areas of strength, where it is among the best ranked local authority areas in the North West; but also areas of weakness, where it isn't. This is true within combined authority areas.

And this is the most important point for policymakers: the findings really show the need to consider the issues on a granular, local level. The question of whether the North West is "good" or "bad" at something isn't really meaningful – the answer differs in

different places. And the same is true for combined authorities – even where Greater Manchester does well on a particular measure, there are local authority areas within it where the opposite is true.

No doubt people with frontline experience will also say there are differences within local authority areas; and no doubt this is true (although not something our data can shed light on). If we are to tackle the challenges faced by young people, particularly disadvantaged young people, in transitioning from school to work, we need to understand how the picture varies in a granular, local way.

In some local authority areas disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among apprenticeship starters by almost 50%, whereas in others they are underrepresented by more than 10%

Introduction

In April 2019, Impetus launched the first Youth Jobs Gap report, *Establishing the Employment Gap*.¹

It found that, nationally:

- Disadvantaged young people are twice as likely to be out of education, employment and training (NEET) as their better-off peers.
- Half this gap can be explained by qualification, and half cannot.
- The group who are both low qualified and from disadvantaged backgrounds are doubly disadvantaged, and most likely to be locked out of the labour market when aged 18-24.

This report explores those variations at local authority area and combined authority area level in the North West of England and provides the most thorough picture to date of disadvantaged young people's progress from education into adult life in the region. Details about the areas included in this study can be found at the end of this chapter.

In Chapter 1, we build directly on *Establishing the Employment Gap* to explore NEET rates in the North West. We are able to provide the clearest and most comprehensive picture to date of NEET rates at local authority area level, including breakdowns by qualification and disadvantage, and also an analysis of the composition of the group of young people who are NEET.

In Chapter 2, we focus on higher education, fleshing out data analysed in the second *Youth Jobs Gap* report *Research Briefing 2: Higher Education*², investigating issues around access to university for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In Chapter 3, we focus on apprenticeships in the North West detailing the data initially analysed in the third *Youth Jobs Gap* report *Research Briefing 3: Apprenticeships*.³ Again, we are able to explore issues around access to apprenticeships for disadvantaged young people.

Finally, Chapter 4 provides a breakdown of the available data by authority rather than by theme. This will enable decision makers in local and combined authority areas to have the most complete picture of the disparities in each area.

This report covers two combined authority areas, 21 local authority areas, and one joint area:

- The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), consisting of Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan local authority areas.
- The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA), consisting of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral local authority areas.
- The local authority areas of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Cumbria, Lancashire, and Warrington.
- A single joint area referred to as "Cheshire & Chester" covering the area of two current local authority areas, Cheshire East, and Cheshire West and Chester.ⁱ For simplicity this is treated like, and often referred to as, a local authority area.

The following table lists these areas, along with the number of young people from each area included in our study (Table 1):

Table 1: Population of young people in this Youth Jobs Gap study (nearest 100) for each local and combined authority areaⁱⁱ

Authority	Population
GMCA	189,100
LCRCA	109,700
Lancashire	81,800
Cheshire & Chester	48,200
Cumbria	36,300
Liverpool (LCRCA)	32,000
Manchester (GMCA)	28,000
Wirral (LCRCA)	24,200
Wigan (GMCA)	23,700
Bolton (GMCA)	21,500
Sefton (LCRCA)	21,400
Stockport (GMCA)	18,800
Oldham (GMCA)	18,500
Tameside (GMCA)	17,900
Trafford (GMCA)	17,500
Rochdale (GMCA)	15,500
Warrington	15,300
Salford (GMCA)	14,000
Bury (GMCA)	13,700
St. Helens (LCRCA)	12,700
Blackburn with Darwen	11,100
Knowsley (LCRCA)	10,100
Blackpool	10,000
Halton (LCRCA)	9,100
North West total	501,300

ⁱ These two local authorities were created in 2009 from Cheshire County Council. As our study runs from 2007-2017, for simplicity and consistency, we have treated it as a single area, as it was in 2007.

ⁱⁱ Across the six cohorts who left school from 2007 to 2012.

This briefing takes advantage of the new Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data. LEO is the most complete data available, and offers better insights than we've had from any previous datasets. From it, we can see how things differ for young people based on whether they are from a disadvantaged background, their qualifications, and where they went to school. The approach taken is summarised on the inside back cover, and full details of the methodology used can be found in the accompanying document *Methodology for the Youth Jobs Gap*. This includes a discussion of caveats associated with the new LEO dataset.

As with government reports based on LEO, these are experimental statistics and feedback on methodology is welcome. Contributions, engagement and comments are encouraged, via info@impetus.org.uk

We're also keen to see how the findings laid out in this report are taken forward by local and combined authority areas. Please let us know how and where we've helped inform your work.

For reference, the figures provided in Table 1 are also provided broken down by disadvantage, qualification, and both.



Disadvantaged young people are twice as likely to be out of education, employment and training (NEET) as their better-off peers

Table 2: Population of disadvantaged young people in Youth Jobs Gap study (nearest 100) for each local and combined authority area

Local authority area	Total young people	Total disadvantaged young people	Disadvantage (%)
LCRCA	109,700	26,900	25%
GMCA	189,100	38,600	20%
Manchester (GMCA)	28,000	10,900	39%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	10,100	3,200	32%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	32,000	9,800	31%
Rochdale (GMCA)	15,500	3,900	25%
Halton (LCRCA)	9,100	2,300	25%
Wirral (LCRCA)	24,200	6,000	25%
Blackburn with Darwen	11,100	2,600	24%
Salford (GMCA)	14,000	3,200	23%
Blackpool	10,000	2,100	22%
Oldham (GMCA)	18,500	4,000	21%
Bolton (GMCA)	21,500	4,200	19%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	12,700	2,300	18%
Tameside (GMCA)	17,900	3,000	17%
Sefton (LCRCA)	21,400	3,200	15%
Wigan (GMCA)	23,700	3,400	15%
Bury (GMCA)	13,700	1,800	13%
Stockport (GMCA)	18,800	2,200	12%
Trafford (GMCA)	17,500	2,000	12%
Lancashire	81,800	9,500	12%
Cumbria	36,300	3,600	10%
Cheshire & Chester	48,200	4,700	10%
Warrington	15,300	1,400	9%

Table 3: Population of low qualified young people in Youth Jobs Gap study (nearest 100) for each local and combined authority area

Local authority area	Total low qualified young people	Total mid qualified young people	Total high qualified young people	Low qualified (%)
LCRCA	31,900	27,900	49,900	29%
GMCA	48,500	48,900	91,700	26%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	4,200	2,800	3,100	42%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	10,700	8,000	13,400	33%
Manchester (GMCA)	9,300	7,000	11,600	33%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	3,900	3,100	5,700	31%
Blackpool	3,000	2,400	4,600	30%
Salford (GMCA)	4,100	3,900	6,100	29%
Halton (LCRCA)	2,600	2,800	3,700	29%
Rochdale (GMCA)	4,200	4,400	6,900	27%
Oldham (GMCA)	5,000	4,400	9,100	27%
Tameside (GMCA)	4,800	4,800	8,300	27%
Blackburn with Darwen	3,000	3,200	5,000	27%
Bolton (GMCA)	5,700	5,300	10,400	27%
Cumbria	9,100	10,000	17,200	25%
Wirral (LCRCA)	5,900	5,400	12,900	24%
Wigan (GMCA)	5,500	6,700	11,500	23%
Lancashire	18,600	20,100	43,100	23%
Stockport (GMCA)	4,200	4,800	9,800	22%
Cheshire & Chester	10,700	11,600	25,900	22%
Sefton (LCRCA)	4,700	5,700	11,000	22%
Warrington	3,000	3,700	8,600	20%
Trafford (GMCA)	3,200	3,800	10,500	18%
Bury (GMCA)	2,500	3,800	7,400	18%

Table 4: Population of disadvantaged and low qualified young people in Youth Jobs Gap study (nearest 100) for each local and combined authority area

Local authority area	Low qualified		Middle qualified		High qualified	
	Non-disadvantaged	Disadvantaged	Non-disadvantaged	Disadvantaged	Non-disadvantaged	Disadvantaged
LCRCA	12%	17%	7%	19%	6%	40%
GMCA	9%	17%	6%	20%	6%	43%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	18%	24%	8%	20%	6%	25%
Manchester (GMCA)	17%	16%	10%	15%	11%	30%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	16%	18%	8%	17%	7%	35%
Halton (LCRCA)	11%	17%	8%	23%	6%	35%
Wirral (LCRCA)	11%	13%	7%	16%	7%	47%
Rochdale (GMCA)	11%	16%	7%	21%	7%	38%
Salford (GMCA)	10%	19%	7%	21%	6%	38%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	10%	20%	5%	20%	4%	42%
Blackpool	10%	19%	5%	19%	6%	40%
Blackburn with Darwen	10%	17%	7%	21%	7%	38%
Oldham (GMCA)	9%	18%	5%	19%	7%	42%
Bolton (GMCA)	9%	18%	5%	20%	6%	43%
Tameside (GMCA)	8%	19%	5%	22%	5%	42%
Wigan (GMCA)	7%	17%	4%	24%	3%	45%
Sefton (LCRCA)	6%	16%	5%	22%	4%	47%
Stockport (GMCA)	5%	17%	4%	22%	3%	49%
Lancashire	5%	17%	3%	22%	3%	49%
Cumbria	5%	20%	3%	25%	2%	45%
Cheshire & Chester	5%	17%	3%	21%	2%	52%
Trafford (GMCA)	5%	14%	3%	18%	4%	56%
Bury (GMCA)	4%	14%	4%	23%	4%	50%
Warrington	4%	16%	3%	21%	2%	54%

The Employment Gap

Local authority areas: The headlines

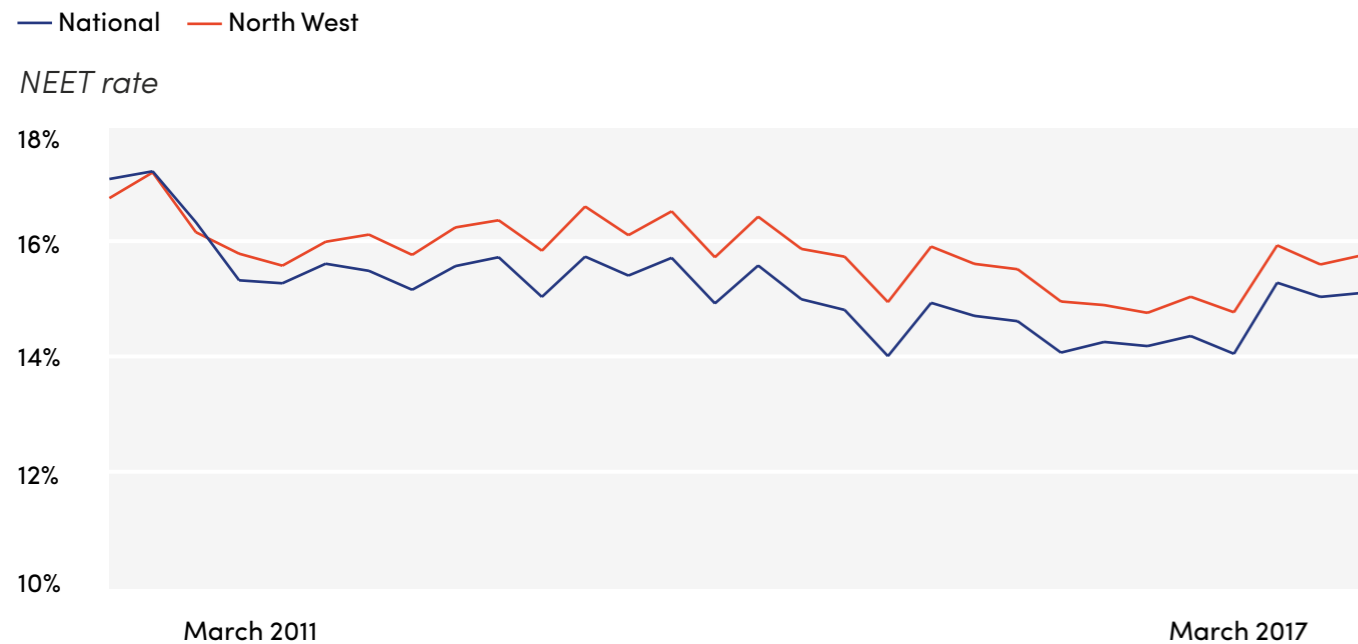
Local and combined authorities can have a sizeable impact on the outcomes for young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

But there is a lack of helpful, quality statistics on 18-24 NEET figures at a local level, to help inform where they should focus their efforts. National statistical data provides only headline regional figures. And while data such as the claimant count can provide an insight into unemployment, the broader NEET data covers those who aren't claiming benefits and are economically inactive.



As noted in *Establishing the Employment Gap*, the North West has a slightly higher NEET rate than England as a whole, by roughly 0.5–1 percentage points. This NEET rate is the fourth highest of the nine English regions (Chart 5):

Chart 5: The NEET rate in the North West is consistently higher than the national NEET rate
NEET rate vs time



Young people from Manchester around twice as likely to be NEET as those in Trafford



For the first time, we can provide a picture of how NEET rate varies by local authority area (Table 6):

In *Establishing the Employment Gap*, we found that the NEET rate in different regions of the country varied by a few percentage points. But here we see for the first time the stark differences within the region, with young people from Manchester around twice as likely to be NEET as those in Trafford. This sizable variation is not just within the North West, but within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority itself, and this is a theme that emerges throughout our analysis.

Table 6ⁱⁱⁱ: Twice the proportion of young people are NEET in Manchester as in Trafford

Local authority area	NEET rate
LCRCA	17% (3)
GMCA	16%
Manchester (GMCA)	21%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	19%
Salford (GMCA)	19%
Blackpool	18%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	18%
Rochdale (GMCA)	18%
Bolton (GMCA)	17%
Blackburn with Darwen	17%
Halton (LCRCA)	17%
Tameside (GMCA)	17%
Oldham (GMCA)	16%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	15% (1)
Wirral (LCRCA)	15%
Sefton (LCRCA)	15%
Lancashire	14%
Bury (GMCA)	14%
Stockport (GMCA)	13%
Wigan (GMCA)	13%
Warrington	12% (2)
Cheshire & Chester	12%
Cumbria	12%
Trafford (GMCA)	11%



There are substantial differences between different parts of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority

ⁱⁱⁱ Data in this chapter is based on figures for March 2017, and is restricted to 21 year olds (i.e. the 2011 cohort). Figures for St. Helens (and thus LCRCA) and Warrington come with additional caveats, which are explained in the methodology reference section at the back of the report.

The Employment Gap

Our previous report, *Establishing the Employment Gap* measured the noticeable difference in NEET rates between young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and their better-off peers. In March 2017, nationally there is an “Employment Gap” of around 13 percentage points, with 26% of disadvantaged young people NEET, compared to 13% of their better-off peers.

In the North West, the Employment Gap is consistently around 2 percentage points higher than the national figure (Chart 7). This is because the NEET rate for disadvantaged young people is higher in the North West than nationally (Chart 8). The NEET rate for non-disadvantaged young people is almost identical to the equivalent national NEET rate (Chart 9).

The Employment Gap is bigger in the North West than in England, because of a higher NEET rate for disadvantaged young people



Chart 7: The Employment Gap in the North West is consistently larger than the gap across England
Employment gap vs time

— National — North West

Employment Gap

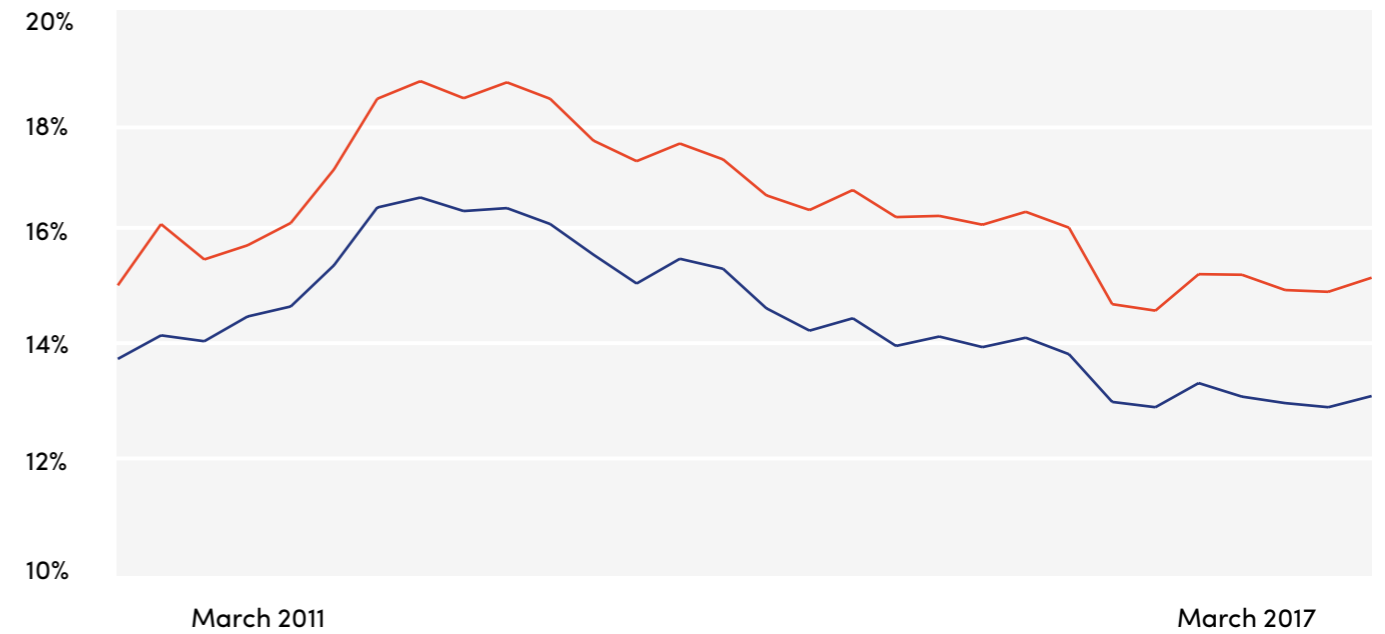


Chart 8: NEET rates for disadvantaged young people in the North West are higher than in England
NEET rate (disadvantaged young people) vs time

— National — North West

NEET rate (disadvantaged young people)

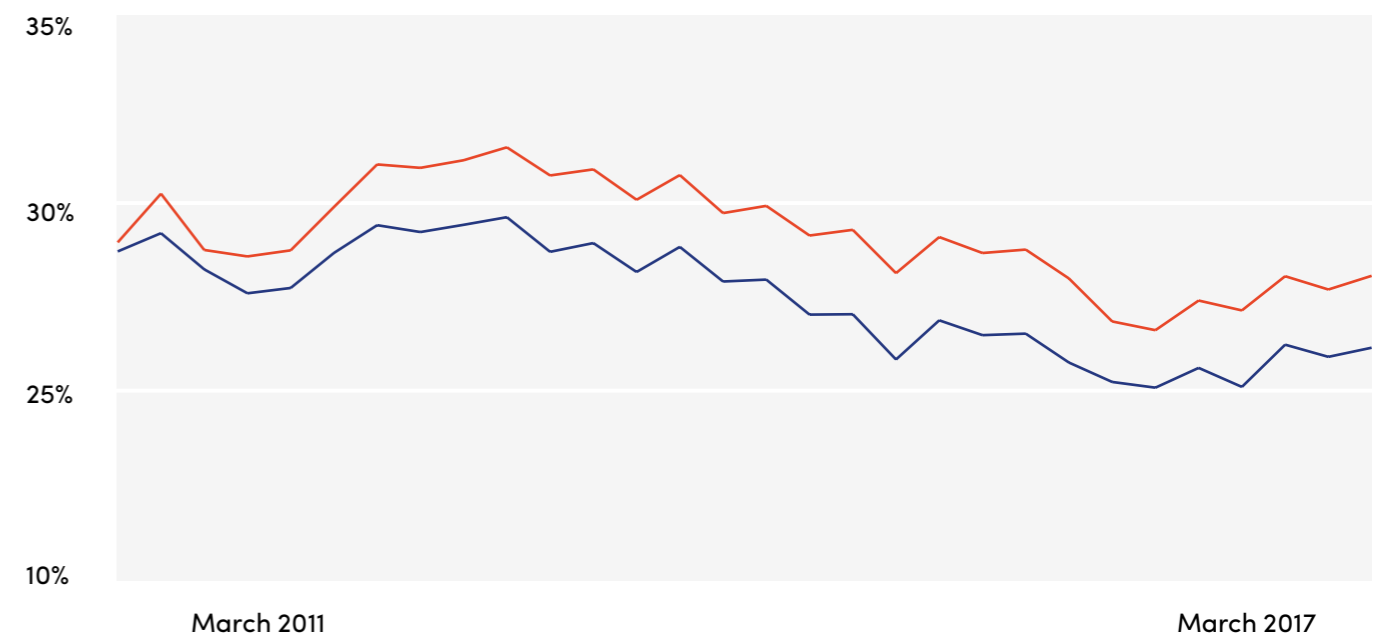
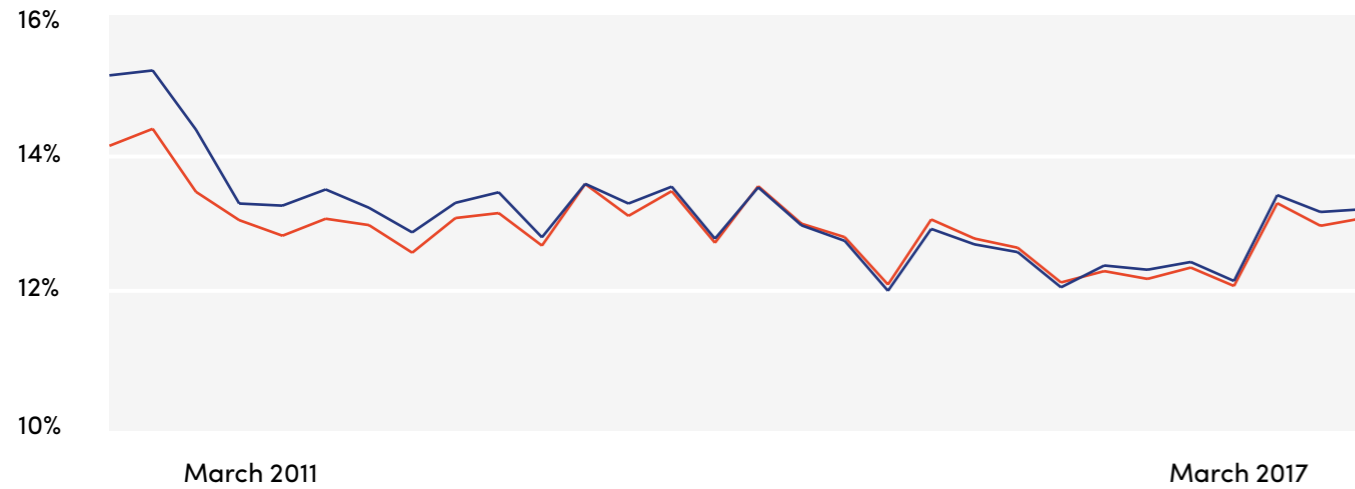


Chart 9: NEET rates for non-disadvantaged young people in the North West are very similar to those across England

NEET rate (disadvantaged young people) vs time

— National — North West

NEET rate (disadvantaged young people)



Looking at the Employment Gap by local authority area highlights which local authority areas see the most markedly different outcomes for young people based on their background (Table 10):

The Employment Gap is twice as high in Wigan and Tameside as it is in Manchester and Oldham, which again underscores the levels of variation within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

But there is also a deeper finding: authority areas that might superficially appear similar may have important differences that are easy to overlook from afar. In Table 6, Tameside and Oldham sat next to each other in mid-table, with NEET rates of 17% and 16% respectively. Now they've diverged to opposite extremes of performance for disadvantaged young people. They're next to each other on a map and next to each other on the headline measure, but worlds apart in outcomes for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Indeed, more generally, the local authority area NEET rate for disadvantaged young people is not well correlated with the equivalent NEET rate for their better-off peers (Chart 11). While most local authority areas are either above or below the average on both measures, some are above for one and below for the other. Even among those that are the same side of average on both measures it is often truer on one measure than the other.



The Employment Gap is twice as high in Wigan and Tameside as it is in Manchester and Oldham

Table 10: The Employment Gap is twice as wide in Wigan as in Manchester

Local authority area	Disadvantage NEET rate	Non-disadvantage NEET rate	Gap (%pts)
LCRCA	28% (3)	13%	16
GMCA	27%	13%	14
Wigan (GMCA)	30%	10%	20
Tameside (GMCA)	32%	13%	19
St. Helens (LCRCA)	31% (1)	12%	19
Blackpool	32%	14%	18
Bolton (GMCA)	32%	14%	18
Cumbria	27%	10%	17
Wirral (LCRCA)	28%	11%	17
Blackburn with Darwen	30%	13%	17
Warrington	27% (2)	11%	16
Liverpool (LCRCA)	29%	13%	16
Rochdale (GMCA)	29%	14%	15
Cheshire & Chester	25%	10%	15
Salford (GMCA)	30%	15%	15
Lancashire	27%	12%	15
Knowsley (LCRCA)	29%	14%	15
Stockport (GMCA)	25%	12%	14
Halton (LCRCA)	26%	13%	13
Sefton (LCRCA)	26%	13%	13
Trafford (GMCA)	21%	10%	11
Bury (GMCA)	23%	12%	11
Oldham (GMCA)	23%	14%	9
Manchester (GMCA)	26%	17%	9

Chart 11: NEET rates for disadvantaged young people and non-disadvantaged young people are not especially closely related

Difference between disadvantaged NEET rate in local authority area and the average disadvantaged NEET rate for local authorities in the North West

vs

Difference between non-disadvantaged NEET rate in local authority area and the average non-disadvantaged NEET rate for local authorities in the North West



There is a bigger variation in outcomes for disadvantaged young people than their better-off peers

To be more explicit: a low Employment Gap does not automatically mean a low NEET rate, and a low NEET rate does not necessarily mean a low Employment Gap. Policymakers will care about both, and will often be able to make decisions that help reduce both measures. But the evidence suggests you cannot assume that focussing on one will be enough to improve the other. After all, Manchester and Trafford both have very low employment gaps, but NEET rates are far higher in the former than the latter.

Finally, when looking at the NEET rates for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged young people, another theme emerges: the variation is bigger for disadvantaged young people than for non-disadvantaged young people. This is another recurrent theme in our analysis.

Understanding the NEET population in the North West

So far, we have looked at outcomes for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and analysed the levels of young people who are NEET. We can also look at young people who are NEET and determine the proportion that are disadvantaged. In *Establishing the Employment Gap*, we found that 26% of NEETs in England were from disadvantaged backgrounds (compared to 15% of young people), as were 32% of NEETs in the North West (compared to 18% of young people). We can now extend this analysis to look at the different local authority areas (Table 12).

Once again, the differences are stark, with twice as many young people who are NEET in Manchester coming from disadvantaged backgrounds compared to Bury, Trafford, and Stockport. On this measure, we see a noticeable difference between the Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester for the first time, with the former having a substantially more disadvantaged NEET population.

This analysis does nothing to factor in the differing levels of disadvantage different local authority areas have in their underlying population of young people. We know from Table 2 that fewer than one in ten young people in Warrington is from a disadvantaged background, compared to four in ten in Manchester. By comparing the proportion of NEETs who are from a disadvantaged background to the proportion of the underlying population, we can see to what extent disadvantaged young people are overrepresented in the NEET group (Table 13).

Table 12: Nearly half of NEETs in some parts of Greater Manchester are from disadvantaged backgrounds, but in others it's under a quarter

Local authority area	Proportion of NEETs who are disadvantaged
LCRCA	43% (3)
GMCA	36%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	49%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	49%
Manchester (GMCA)	48%
Wirral (LCRCA)	47%
Halton (LCRCA)	44%
Rochdale (GMCA)	42%
Blackpool	41%
Blackburn with Darwen	41%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	39% (1)
Salford (GMCA)	38%
Bolton (GMCA)	37%
Wigan (GMCA)	34%
Tameside (GMCA)	33%
Oldham (GMCA)	32%
Sefton (LCRCA)	26%
Cumbria	24%
Stockport (GMCA)	24%
Lancashire	24%
Trafford (GMCA)	24%
Cheshire & Chester	23%
Bury (GMCA)	22%
Warrington	21% (2)

Table 13: NEET young people are disproportionately disadvantaged everywhere, but six times more so in Cumbria compared to Manchester

Local authority area	Disadvantage (Population)	Disadvantage (NEETs)	Overrepresentation of disadvantaged young people
GMCA	20%	36%	1.74
LCRCA	25%	43% (3)	1.74
Cumbria	10%	24%	2.46
Cheshire & Chester	10%	23%	2.39
Wigan (GMCA)	15%	34%	2.36
Warrington	9%	21% (2)	2.27
St. Helens (LCRCA)	18%	39% (1)	2.10
Lancashire	12%	24%	2.03
Stockport (GMCA)	12%	24%	2.02
Trafford (GMCA)	12%	24%	2.01
Tameside (GMCA)	17%	33%	1.98
Bolton (GMCA)	19%	37%	1.91
Blackpool	22%	41%	1.91
Wirral (LCRCA)	25%	47%	1.87
Halton (LCRCA)	25%	44%	1.75
Blackburn with Darwen	24%	41%	1.72
Bury (GMCA)	13%	22%	1.70
Sefton (LCRCA)	15%	26%	1.70
Rochdale (GMCA)	25%	42%	1.68
Salford (GMCA)	23%	38%	1.66
Liverpool (LCRCA)	31%	49%	1.60
Knowsley (LCRCA)	32%	49%	1.52
Oldham (GMCA)	21%	32%	1.47
Manchester (GMCA)	39%	48%	1.24

In this table (and indeed throughout this report), overrepresentation reflects the extent to which disadvantaged young people are more prevalent among a particular group – in this case, the NEET population – than they are among young people overall.

The NEET population is disproportionately disadvantaged everywhere. But while disadvantaged young people are overrepresented in the NEET population of Cumbria by a factor of 2.46, in Manchester they are only overrepresented by a factor of 1.24. This still partly reflects levels of disadvantage – for Manchester to match Cumbria's figure of 2.46, disadvantaged young people would need to make up 96% of NEETs.

Nonetheless, there is more than a clear difference between the two in the extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented – it is vast.

One difference that has disappeared here is between the Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester. We saw previously that a higher proportion of NEET young people in the former were from disadvantaged backgrounds; we see here that this is entirely due to the Liverpool City Region having a higher level of disadvantage to start with.

NEET young people are disproportionately disadvantaged everywhere, but doubly so in Cumbria, compared to Manchester

Manchester
1.24

Cumbria
2.46

The role of qualifications

In *Establishing the Employment Gap*, we found that the low qualified group (who do not have five GCSEs at A*-C, or equivalent by age 18) are around twice as likely to be NEET as middle qualified young people who do have five GCSEs at A*-C (but who do not have A-levels or equivalent).

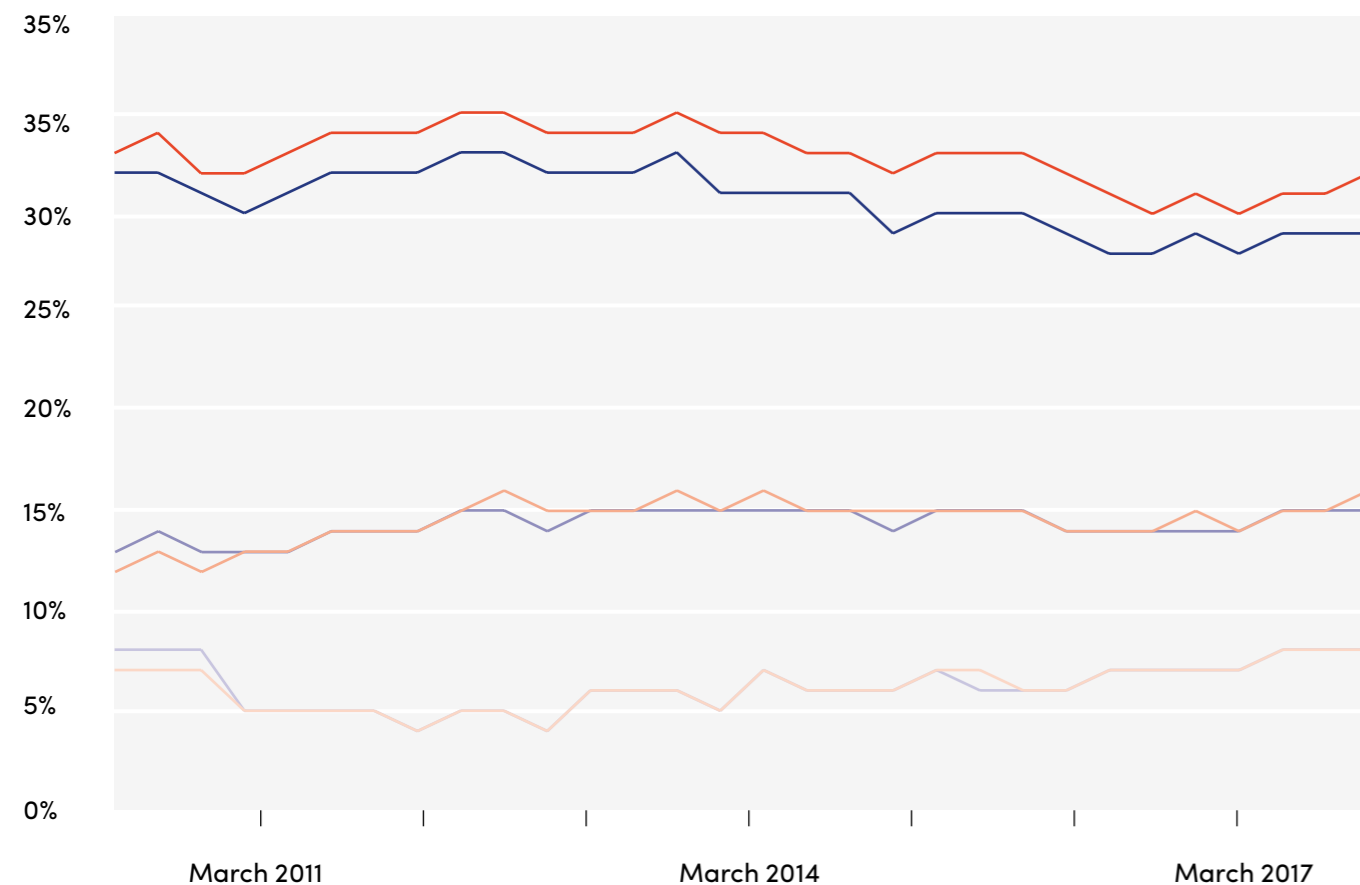
By comparing the national NEET rate for each of our three qualification groups to the NEET rate in the North West for each, we can see that the higher overall NEET rate (Chart 5) is driven by a higher NEET rate for low qualified young people (Chart 14). For some reason, a low qualified young person is more likely to be NEET if they are from the North West.

Chart 14: Low qualified young people in the North West are more likely to be NEET than in England as a whole, but this is not true for middle or high qualified young people

NEET rate for each qualification group vs time

— Low qualified, National — Low qualified, North West — Mid qualified, National
— Mid qualified, North West — High qualified, National — High qualified, North West

Employment Gap



As before, we are able to see for the first time how this NEET rate varies across different parts of the North West (Table 15).

Table 15: Low qualified young people are 50% more likely to be NEET in Manchester compared to low qualified young people in Cumbria

Local authority area	NEET rate Low qualified	NEET rate Mid qualified	NEET rate High qualified
LCRCA	33%	17%	8% (3)
GMCA	33%	17%	8%
Manchester (GMCA)	37%	22%	10%
Blackburn with Darwen	37%	15%	8%
Tameside (GMCA)	36%	17%	7%
Blackpool	36%	21%	9%
Wirral (LCRCA)	36%	16%	7%
Rochdale (GMCA)	35%	18%	9%
Sefton (LCRCA)	35%	14%	8%
Salford (GMCA)	34%	20%	9%
Oldham (GMCA)	33%	15%	10%
Bolton (GMCA)	33%	18%	10%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	32%	19%	9%
Bury (GMCA)	32%	14%	8%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	31%	15%	6% (1)
Wigan (GMCA)	30%	14%	6%
Stockport (GMCA)	29%	14%	7%
Lancashire	29%	16%	8%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	29%	17%	9%
Halton (LCRCA)	28%	18%	9%
Trafford (GMCA)	28%	12%	7% (2)
Warrington	28%	16%	7%
Cheshire & Chester	26%	13%	7%
Cumbria	24%	11%	6%

In many respects, what we see here is what we might have predicted. The jump from low to middle qualification level has a bigger impact than the jump from middle to high qualified. There is more variability in the NEET rate for low qualified young people than the high qualified groups. And the order of the local authority areas is comparable to the order they appear when looking at the overall NEET rates.

Nonetheless, it is still revealing that young people in Manchester are over 50% more likely to be NEET than their similarly qualified counterparts in Cumbria. Coming from a disadvantaged background affects people wherever they live, but it affects young people differently depending on where they live. The same is true of qualification.



Understanding the NEET population in the North West

Table 16: While 60% of NEETs in Knowsley are low qualified, it's fewer than 40% in Bury

Local authority area	Proportion of NEET young people who are low qualified
LCRCA	53%
GMCA	48%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	61%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	58%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	54%
Tameside (GMCA)	54%
Manchester (GMCA)	53%
Blackpool	52%
Wirral (LCRCA)	52%
Salford (GMCA)	51%
Blackburn with Darwen	50%
Cumbria	50%
Wigan (GMCA)	48%
Oldham (GMCA)	47%
Sefton (LCRCA)	47%
Rochdale (GMCA)	47%
Halton (LCRCA)	46%
Stockport (GMCA)	46%
Bolton (GMCA)	45%
Cheshire & Chester	45%
Trafford (GMCA)	44%
Lancashire	43%
Warrington	38%
Bury (GMCA)	37%

The pattern of variation continues, with six in 10 young people in Knowsley who are NEET being low qualified, compared to fewer than four in 10 in Bury and Warrington. As with the similar exercise based on disadvantage, the Liverpool City Region has a higher proportion of NEETs being low qualified than Greater Manchester. This is partly a reflection of differing levels of qualification outcomes in different local authority areas. We saw in Table 3 that Knowsley and Bury are at opposite extremes for this, and this doubtlessly causes them to be at the opposite extremes here. But we can control for this, by looking at how overrepresented low qualified young people are in the NEET population, compared to the population of young people at large (Table 17).

Table 17: Low qualified young people make up a disproportionate share of NEET young people, especially in Trafford

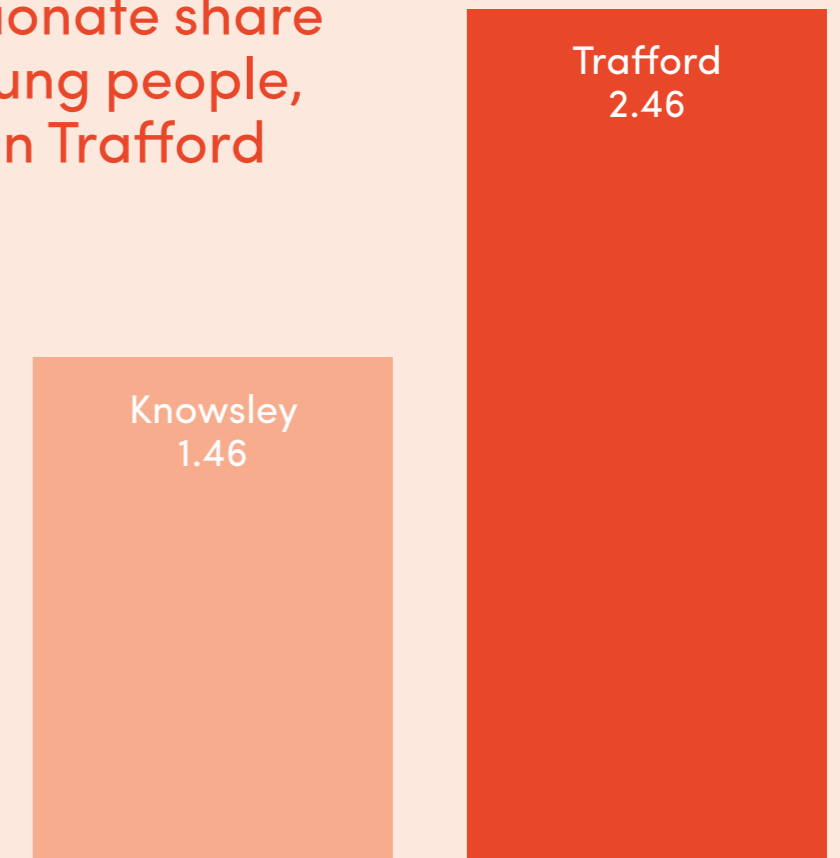
Local authority area	Low qualified (Population)	Low qualified (NEET young people)	Overrepresentation of low qualified young people
GMCA	26%	46%	1.76
LCRCA	29%	50%	1.73
Trafford (GMCA)	18%	44%	2.46
Wirral (LCRCA)	24%	52%	2.15
Sefton (LCRCA)	22%	47%	2.13
Wigan (GMCA)	23%	48%	2.10
Stockport (GMCA)	22%	46%	2.09
Bury (GMCA)	18%	37%	2.06
Cheshire & Chester	22%	45%	2.06
Tameside (GMCA)	27%	54%	2.00
Cumbria	25%	50%	2.00
Warrington	20%	38%	1.91
St. Helens (LCRCA)	31%	58%	1.87
Lancashire	23%	43%	1.85
Blackburn with Darwen	27%	50%	1.85
Salford (GMCA)	29%	51%	1.76
Oldham (GMCA)	27%	47%	1.74
Rochdale (GMCA)	27%	47%	1.72
Blackpool	30%	52%	1.72
Bolton (GMCA)	27%	45%	1.68
Liverpool (LCRCA)	33%	54%	1.65
Manchester (GMCA)	33%	53%	1.61
Halton (LCRCA)	29%	46%	1.59
Knowsley (LCRCA)	42%	61%	1.46

Greater Manchester is performing slightly worse than the Liverpool City Region in this measure, which is the opposite of what the raw figures imply. It's an important illustration of how context, in this case the underlying levels of low qualification, can challenge the message conveyed by headline figures.

We see that while young people who are NEET are disproportionately low qualified everywhere, they are overrepresented by a factor of 2.46 in Trafford, compared to only 1.46 in Knowsley.

And while some local authority areas have moved from one extreme to the other – Knowsley from top to bottom – it is not the case that the story changes for every local authority area when you factor in context. Cumbria and Blackburn with Darwen, for example, both sit mid-table in both Tables 16 and 17.

Low qualified young people make up a disproportionate share of NEET young people, especially in Trafford



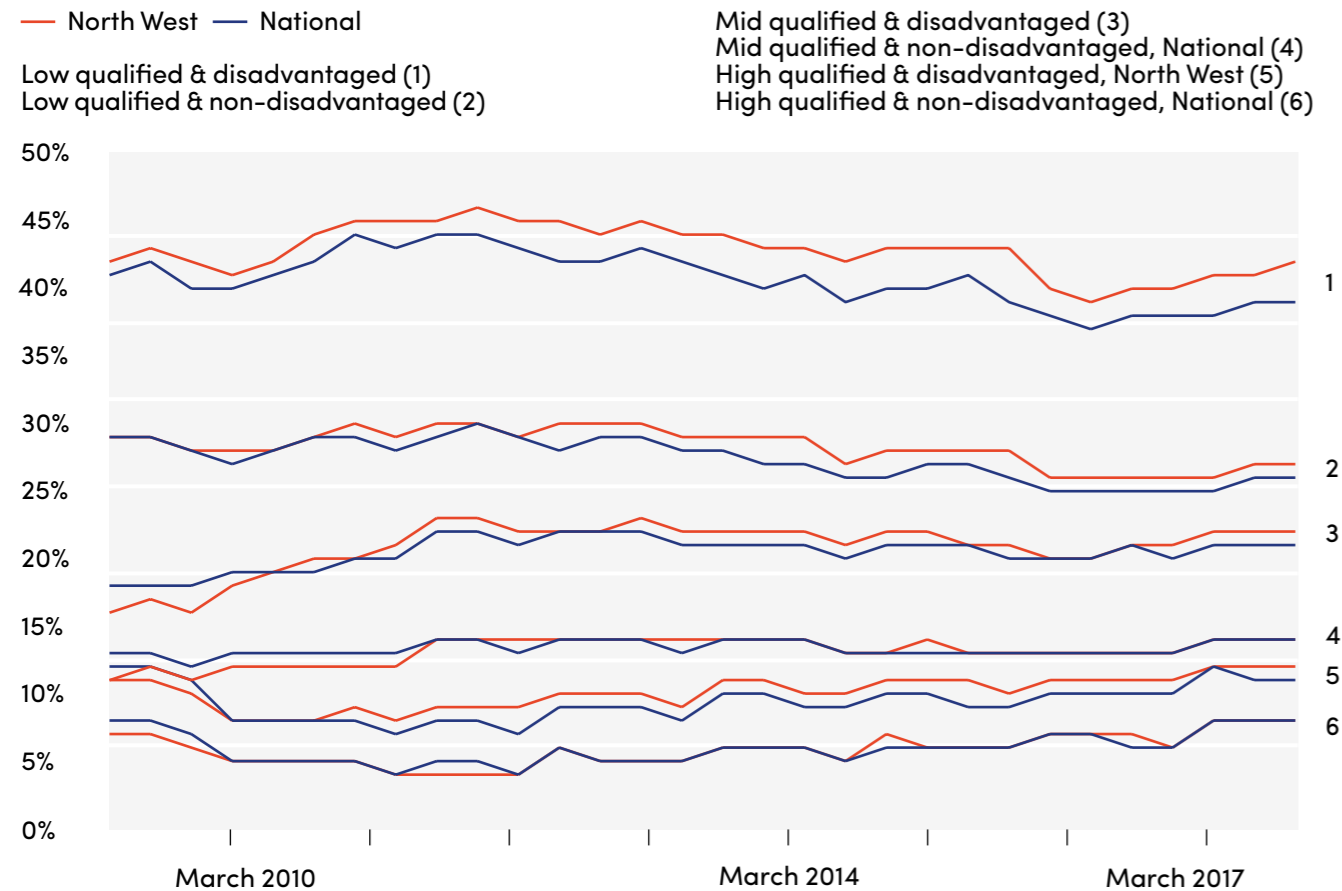
Bringing together disadvantage and qualification

The “doubly disadvantaged” group – young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who also have low qualifications – were found in our previous research to be of particular interest and importance.

The data divides into six distinct groups based on qualification and disadvantage combined. We can compare the national NEET rate for each of these qualification/disadvantage groups to the NEET rate in the North West for each group.

We find that the higher overall NEET rate (Chart 5), which in the previous sections was driven by a higher NEET rate for disadvantaged young people (Chart 8) and a higher NEET rate for low qualified young people (Chart 14), is driven mostly by a higher NEET rate for disadvantaged, low qualified young people. The non-disadvantaged but low qualified group also contributes, as does the disadvantaged but high qualified group.

Chart 18: The doubly disadvantaged group of low qualified young people from disadvantaged backgrounds is the main driver of the higher NEET rate in the North West compared to nationally NEET rate for each qualification and disadvantage group vs time



The NEET rates for the other groups are almost identical to national figures (Chart 18).

We continue to see substantial variation between better and worse performing local authority areas by this measure.

Table 19: Doubly disadvantaged young people, those from disadvantaged backgrounds with low qualifications, are most likely to become NEET

Local authority area	Low qualified		Middle qualified		High qualified	
	Non-disadvantaged	Disadvantaged	Non-disadvantaged	Disadvantaged	Non-disadvantaged	Disadvantaged
GMCA	28%	42%	14%	24%	8%	12%
LCRCA	27%	40%	14%	24%	7%	13% (3)
Tameside (GMCA)	30%	52%	15%	24%	7%	13%
Blackpool	28%	50%	20%	24%	7%	17%
Rochdale (GMCA)	26%	49%	17%	22%	9%	13%
Blackburn with Darwen	30%	48%	13%	23%	7%	15%
Wirral (LCRCA)	27%	45%	13%	21%	7%	11%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	24%	45%	14%	16%	6%	15% (1)
Bolton (GMCA)	26%	45%	16%	26%	9%	20%
Warrington	23%	44%	15%	20%	7%	14% (2)
Bury (GMCA)	29%	43%	13%	18%	8%	10%
Wigan (GMCA)	24%	43%	11%	29%	6%	8%
Manchester (GMCA)	32%	42%	20%	25%	10%	10%
Salford (GMCA)	30%	41%	16%	31%	9%	13%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	25%	40%	16%	26%	8%	13%
Sefton (LCRCA)	33%	40%	12%	25%	8%	13%
Cumbria	20%	40%	10%	18%	6%	12%
Lancashire	26%	39%	14%	23%	8%	14%
Oldham (GMCA)	30%	38%	15%	16%	9%	12%
Cheshire & Chester	22%	37%	11%	21%	7%	9%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	23%	37%	13%	25%	8%	14%
Stockport (GMCA)	27%	36%	12%	24%	7%	10%
Trafford (GMCA)	25%	34%	11%	16%	6%	10%
Halton (LCRCA)	25%	33%	15%	25%	7%	17%

Over half of doubly disadvantaged young people (those from disadvantaged backgrounds and with low qualifications) become NEET in Tameside and Blackpool, compared to only a third in Halton and Trafford.

Even in top performing Halton or Trafford, a higher proportion become NEET from this group than from any other group in any other authority.

Disadvantage is such a crucial factor in outcomes that in some local authority areas, such as Sefton, disadvantaged young people with five GCSEs are still more likely to be NEET than their better-off but worse qualified peers from places like nearby St Helens.

And in Salford, Wigan, Knowsley, and Liverpool, this is true even in the same local authority area – it is better to be better-off than to have qualifications. GCSEs are not as protective against chances of being NEET as might be expected.

The doubly disadvantaged group is a sizeable proportion of all young people who are NEET in most of the North West (Table 20).

In Salford, Wigan, Knowsley, and Liverpool it is better to be better-off than have qualifications



Table 20: One third of NEET young people in Knowsley and Liverpool are doubly disadvantaged, compared to one in eight in Warrington and Bury

Local authority area	Proportion of NEET young people who are low qualified and disadvantaged
LCRCA	28%
GMCA	23%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	34%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	33%
Wirral (LCRCA)	32%
Manchester (GMCA)	30%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	29%
Rochdale (GMCA)	27%
Blackpool	26%
Blackburn with Darwen	24%
Halton (LCRCA)	24%
Salford (GMCA)	23%
Wigan (GMCA)	23%
Bolton (GMCA)	23%
Tameside (GMCA)	23%
Oldham (GMCA)	21%
Cumbria	18%
Cheshire & Chester	16%
Trafford (GMCA)	15%
Stockport (GMCA)	15%
Lancashire	15%
Sefton (LCRCA)	14%
Warrington	13%
Bury (GMCA)	13%

Table 21: Doubly disadvantaged young people are more than three times as prevalent in Cumbria's NEET population as the overall population

Local authority area	Low qualified disadvantaged (Population)	Low qualified disadvantaged (NEET young people)	Overrepresentation of low qualified and disadvantaged young people
GMCA	9%	23%	2.52
LCRCA	12%	28%	2.32
Cumbria	5%	18%	3.53
Wigan (GMCA)	7%	23%	3.41
Cheshire & Chester	5%	16%	3.35
Warrington	4%	13%	3.32
Trafford (GMCA)	5%	15%	3.11
Bury (GMCA)	4%	13%	2.96
Tameside (GMCA)	8%	23%	2.92
St. Helens (LCRCA)	10%	29%	2.83
Wirral (LCRCA)	11%	32%	2.81
Lancashire	5%	15%	2.78
Stockport (GMCA)	5%	15%	2.77
Bolton (GMCA)	9%	23%	2.58
Blackpool	10%	26%	2.51
Blackburn with Darwen	10%	24%	2.45
Rochdale (GMCA)	11%	27%	2.43
Sefton (LCRCA)	6%	14%	2.28
Oldham (GMCA)	9%	21%	2.24
Salford (GMCA)	10%	23%	2.23
Halton (LCRCA)	11%	24%	2.11
Liverpool (LCRCA)	16%	33%	2.08
Knowsley (LCRCA)	18%	34%	1.85
Manchester (GMCA)	17%	30%	1.77

One third of young people who are NEET in Knowsley and Liverpool are doubly disadvantaged, compared to barely one in eight in Warrington and Bury. They make up a larger share of NEETs in the

Liverpool City Region than Greater Manchester, though as with earlier findings, this is largely a reflection of the different makeup of the population in the regions (Table 21).

Higher Education

In principle, measures of disadvantage should be based on individual circumstances, and not an area measure. While area measures have their advantages if you are looking to provide solutions that can only be provided at an area level, in general the risk is better-off people living in a disadvantaged area benefit – while disadvantaged people in better-off areas miss out.



This is a concern that applies to the go-to metric for measuring access to higher education for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds – the Participation of Local Areas measure (POLAR).

This has a number of consequences:

- Areas where lots of young people go to university are not considered a priority – even if it's better-off young people going, with disadvantaged young people left behind.
- Areas where lots of young people go to university are not considered a priority, no matter how many disadvantaged young people they have in the area. For example, London is "classified as an almost universal 'high participation' area, thus the participation, or not, of white students who by other measures could be classified as coming from a lower socio-economic background cannot be examined using this data."⁴
- It is possible to improve outcomes as measured by POLAR without improving outcomes for disadvantaged young people – as all local people in the POLAR area are treated the same.

In general, there are too few higher education statistics published based on Free School Meals (FSM). In part, this reflects the fact that this is, by its nature, a very school-centric measure. But it does make it hard to compare pre-16 education data, where FSM is invariably provided, with higher education data.

The Office for Students has rightly included FSM in its broader list of measures that higher education providers should consider collecting data on, but continues to set targets based on POLAR.⁵ This report looks at what LEO can tell us about access to higher education in the North West, building on our national findings in *Research Briefing 2: Higher Education*, and using FSM as a measure of disadvantage.

The Access Gap in higher education

In line with the national figure, 42% of young people across the 2007–2012 cohorts in the North West are recorded as having started a higher education course.^{iv} But only 24% of disadvantaged young people have started a higher education course, compared to 45% of their better-off peers – an access gap of 21 percentage points.

The main entry requirement for higher education is qualifications. 69% of those with top GCSEs (five A*–C including English and maths) in the North West started a higher education course, only 12% of those without good GCSEs (fewer than five A*–C grades at GCSE, including missing at least one of English and maths) did so. These two qualification groups account for over 90% of higher education starters in the North West, and it is these two groups (top GCSEs/without good GCSEs) that provide enough data for a local authority area level analysis to be meaningful.

We know that disadvantaged young people are less likely to get top GCSEs, and we know from *Research Briefing 2: Higher Education* that this explains a

big part of the access gap. 61% of disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs start a higher education course, compared to 69% of their better-off peers: an access gap of 8 percentage points. This is double the gap found nationally for this qualification group, which was four percentage points. For the group without good GCSEs, the equivalent figures are 11% and 13%, a small access gap that does not exist at a national level.

These gaps may not be unexpected, but they are now measurable. Even in a field like higher education, where qualification is such a crucial prerequisite, it is not enough to explain why disadvantaged young people are less likely to go to university.

^{iv} By the 2016–2017 academic year, which applies throughout the chapter.

Disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs are still much less likely to go to university than their better-off peers



Local differences in access to higher education

Table 22: Young people from Trafford are more than twice as likely to go to university as young people from Knowsley

Local authority area	University Access rate (both groups)	University Access rate (without good GCSEs)	University Access rate (top GCSEs)
GMCA	43%	14% (4)	68%
LCRCA	43%	12% (4)	70%
Trafford (GMCA)	57%	12%	77%
Bury (GMCA)	48%	15%	67%
Wirral (LCRCA)	48%	9%	72%
Warrington	47%	(4)	68%
Cheshire & Chester	46%	10%	69%
Sefton (LCRCA)	46%	14%	71%
Lancashire	46%	13%	70%
Bolton (GMCA)	45%	17%	70%
Stockport (GMCA)	44%	10% (4)	66%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	44%	15%	74%
Manchester (GMCA)	42%	18%	74%
Oldham (GMCA)	42%	14%	71%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	41%	10% (4)	70%
Blackburn with Darwen	40%	14%	66%
Wigan (GMCA)	40%	9% (4)	64%
Rochdale (GMCA)	40%	15%	64%
Cumbria	39%	8%	64%
Tameside (GMCA)	37%	12%	63%
Halton (LCRCA)	37%	12%	61%
Salford (GMCA)	36%	14%	62%
Blackpool	31%	10%	62%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	27%	11%	61%

Different local authority areas see a substantially different proportion of young people going to university (Table 22).

Trafford is a noticeable top performer, sending twice the proportion of young people educated there to university as Knowsley. It is worth noting that this is based on young people who went to school in Trafford, rather than young people from Trafford. This distinction is generally a minor one. However, in the Trafford case specifically, it's grammar schools mean that the population of young people educated in Trafford might be particularly different to the population of young people living in Trafford.

While Trafford still has a higher proportion of its top GCSE performers going on to university than any other local authority area, it leads this category by much less than when looking at young people overall. And since disadvantaged young people are underrepresented at grammar schools, we might expect that advantage to disappear in the figures for disadvantaged young people.

There is still substantial variation in similarly qualified young people's likelihood of enrolling at university in different places. Those without good GCSEs in Manchester are about twice as likely to start a higher education course as those from Wirral or Cumbria. Among top performers at GCSE, you are still 10 percentage points more likely to go to university if you are from Liverpool than Wigan or Rochdale.

And we see once again the substantial variation within the combined authority areas, with both having one local authority area in the top three and another in the bottom three. Neither Greater Manchester nor the Liverpool City Region have a particular problem with university access – but both have areas that do.

Those without good GCSEs in Manchester are about twice as likely to start a higher education course as those from Wirral or Cumbria



We can also look at the proportion of university starters by qualification (Table 23). We know that young people with top GCSEs are much more likely to go to university, and unsurprisingly they outnumber students without top GCSEs dramatically (when comparing the two groups).

Nonetheless, the extent to which this story is true is also highly variable.

While just 7% of university starters from Trafford left school without good GCSEs, the figure for Knowsley is 28% – a quarter of Knowsley’s subsequent university starters had this level of qualification

Table 23: Four times the share of university starters from Knowsley as Trafford didn’t have good GCSEs at 16

Local authority area	Proportion of university starters without good GCSEs	Proportion of university starters with top GCSEs	Ratio
LCRCA	14%	86%	6.15
GMCA	15%	85%	5.68
Trafford (GMCA)	7%	93%	14.11
Wirral (LCRCA)	8%	92%	12.15
Cheshire & Chester	8%	92%	10.83
Stockport (GMCA)	9%	91%	10.66
Cumbria	9%	91%	10.47
Wigan (GMCA)	10%	90%	9.42
Warrington	10%	90%	9.21
Bury (GMCA)	12%	88%	7.62
Lancashire	12%	88%	7.48
St. Helens (LCRCA)	12%	88%	7.27
Sefton (LCRCA)	13%	87%	6.45
Halton (LCRCA)	16%	84%	5.40
Tameside (GMCA)	16%	84%	5.38
Oldham (GMCA)	17%	83%	5.02
Blackburn with Darwen	17%	83%	4.75
Liverpool (LCRCA)	17%	83%	4.72
Bolton (GMCA)	18%	82%	4.65
Rochdale (GMCA)	19%	81%	4.35
Blackpool	19%	81%	4.34
Salford (GMCA)	22%	78%	3.60
Manchester (GMCA)	25%	75%	2.98
Knowsley (LCRCA)	28%	72%	2.54

at 16. Both Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region have areas where very few university starters left school without good GCSEs, and areas where a sizable minority do.

As we saw in Table 3, young people without good GCSEs are much more

common in Knowsley than in Trafford. How does the share of university students with such qualifications compare to the share of the underlying population? We know that those with top GCSEs will be overrepresented, but we can now see to what extent this is true (Table 24).

Table 24: Young people with top GCSEs are more likely to go to university than those without good GCSEs – but especially in Knowsley, and least in Trafford

Local authority area	Proportion of university starters with top GCSEs	Proportion of young people with top GCSEs	Ratio
LCRCA	86%	52%	1.65
GMCA	85%	53%	1.59
Knowsley (LCRCA)	72%	32%	2.24
Blackpool	81%	41%	1.99
Manchester (GMCA)	75%	42%	1.78
Salford (GMCA)	78%	45%	1.75
St. Helens (LCRCA)	88%	51%	1.72
Tameside (GMCA)	84%	50%	1.70
Liverpool (LCRCA)	83%	49%	1.70
Oldham (GMCA)	83%	49%	1.69
Halton (LCRCA)	84%	51%	1.66
Blackburn with Darwen	83%	50%	1.64
Rochdale (GMCA)	81%	50%	1.63
Cumbria	91%	56%	1.62
Wigan (GMCA)	90%	57%	1.59
Bolton (GMCA)	82%	52%	1.57
Sefton (LCRCA)	87%	57%	1.53
Lancashire	88%	58%	1.52
Wirral (LCRCA)	92%	61%	1.51
Cheshire & Chester	92%	61%	1.50
Stockport (GMCA)	91%	62%	1.48
Warrington	90%	61%	1.47
Bury (GMCA)	88%	63%	1.40
Trafford (GMCA)	93%	69%	1.35

Table 25: Disadvantaged young people from Manchester are twice as likely to go to university as disadvantaged young people from Knowsley

Local authority area	University Access rate (disadvantaged, both groups)	University Access rate (disadvantaged, without good GCSEs)	University Access rate (disadvantaged, top GCSEs)
GMCA	27%	13%	64%
LCRCA	22%	10%	60%
Manchester (GMCA)	32%	17%	73%
Bolton (GMCA)	31%	16%	70%
Bury (GMCA)	31%	13%	59%
Trafford (GMCA)	29%	11%	64%
Oldham (GMCA)	28%	14%	70%
Rochdale (GMCA)	27%	13%	62%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	26%	13%	67%
Blackburn with Darwen	25%	11%	60%
Sefton (LCRCA)	24%	11%	61%
Lancashire	24%	11%	59%
Wirral (LCRCA)	22%	7%	56%
Tameside (GMCA)	22%	10%	58%
Salford (GMCA)	21%	12%	56%
Stockport (GMCA)	21%	7%	55%
Halton (LCRCA)	21%	9%	52%
Warrington	19%	9%	50%
Wigan (GMCA)	18%	6%	50%
Cumbria	16%	5%	52%
Blackpool	16%	7%	55%
Cheshire & Chester	16%	6%	51%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	16%	6%	55%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	16%	9%	53%

As we are looking at just the two groups (those with top GCSEs and those without good GCSEs), the converse is also true: young people without good GCSEs are obviously underrepresented among university starters, but they are most underrepresented in Knowsley and least in Trafford.

As well as looking at the overall access rate and the breakdown for the two qualification groups, we can also look at the impact of disadvantage (Table 25).

These figures are much lower than those in Table 22, reflecting the fact that disadvantaged young people are much less likely to go to university than their better-off peers. But we also see a subtly different picture for disadvantaged young people compared to young people as a whole in terms of geography.

Firstly, while Trafford is still above average, it is no longer a clear front runner – disadvantaged young people in Trafford do have a good chance to access university, but they aren't benefitting as much as we'd expect from the schools that drive Trafford's top performance overall.

Secondly, the variation in similarly qualified young people's likelihood of enrolling at university in different places is much wider. Disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs in Manchester are about three times as likely to start a higher education course as those from Cumbria. And disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs are over 20 percentage points more likely to go to university if they are from Bolton or Oldham than Wigan or Warrington.

Finally, the Combined Authority areas look rather different, with disadvantaged young people in the Liverpool City Region less likely to access higher education than their peers in Greater Manchester, at all levels of qualification.

Even in the sphere of access to higher education, where qualifications are well known to be a significant barrier to entry, disadvantage still seems to be a critical factor.

Disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs in Manchester are about three times as likely to start a higher education course as those from Cumbria



Cumbria

Manchester

Understanding the student population

Across the North West, as across England, only around 10% of young people who start a higher education course are from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is unsurprising, given that 79% of young people at university have top GCSEs – which we know disadvantaged young people are much less likely to secure⁶ – and only 12% did not have good GCSEs at 16. These figures are also in line with the national figures.

As Table 26 demonstrates, these headline figures disguise wide variation across the North West.

In all cases, we see that disadvantaged young people are a much larger share of the university starters without good GCSEs than with top GCSEs, reflecting their greater likelihood of having the lower qualifications.

Manchester is a standout performer, with large minorities of its university starters coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, closely followed by Knowsley, Liverpool and Rochdale. Much of this variation is related to differences in the numbers of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to start with. Controlling for this, a different picture emerges (Table 27).

Table 26: Nearly a third of students from Manchester are from disadvantaged backgrounds, compared to only 3% of those from Cheshire & Chester

Local authority area	Proportion of university starters from disadvantaged backgrounds (both groups)	Proportion of university starters from disadvantaged backgrounds (without good GCSEs)	Proportion of university starters from disadvantaged backgrounds (top GCSEs)
GMCA	12%	29%	9%
LCRCA	12%	29%	9%
Manchester (GMCA)	29%	44%	24%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	18%	32%	12%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	17%	36%	13%
Rochdale (GMCA)	17%	32%	13%
Blackburn with Darwen	14%	25%	12%
Oldham (GMCA)	14%	32%	10%
Halton (LCRCA)	14%	28%	11%
Salford (GMCA)	13%	27%	9%
Bolton (GMCA)	13%	28%	10%
Wirral (LCRCA)	11%	32%	9%
Blackpool	11%	20%	9%
Tameside (GMCA)	10%	20%	8%
Bury (GMCA)	8%	19%	7%
Sefton (LCRCA)	8%	20%	6%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	7%	18%	5%
Wigan (GMCA)	6%	15%	5%
Trafford (GMCA)	6%	21%	5%
Lancashire	6%	16%	4%
Stockport (GMCA)	5%	16%	4%
Cumbria	4%	11%	3%
Warrington	4%	13%	3%
Cheshire & Chester	3%	11%	3%

Table 27: In Greater Manchester, disadvantaged young people are better represented among university starters, compared to other parts of the North West

Local authority area	Underrepresentation of disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs)	Underrepresentation of disadvantaged young people (top GCSEs)
GMCA	0.95	0.94
LCRCA	0.80	0.85
Oldham (GMCA)	1.03	0.99
Bolton (GMCA)	0.98	0.99
Manchester (GMCA)	0.94	0.98
Trafford (GMCA)	0.92	0.83
Rochdale (GMCA)	0.90	0.96
Bury (GMCA)	0.88	0.89
Liverpool (LCRCA)	0.85	0.90
Salford (GMCA)	0.84	0.91
Tameside (GMCA)	0.83	0.91
Knowsley (LCRCA)	0.82	0.88
Lancashire	0.81	0.85
Sefton (LCRCA)	0.79	0.86
Halton (LCRCA)	0.79	0.86
Warrington	0.77	0.73
Blackburn with Darwen	0.76	0.90
Stockport (GMCA)	0.75	0.83
Wirral (LCRCA)	0.75	0.78
Cumbria	0.69	0.81
Blackpool	0.68	0.89
Wigan (GMCA)	0.65	0.79
St. Helens (LCRCA)	0.61	0.78
Cheshire & Chester	0.58	0.74

In Greater Manchester, disadvantaged young people make up roughly the same share of university starters as do better-off young people with similar qualifications overall. Indeed, in Oldham, disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs are overrepresented.

But this is less true in the Liverpool City Region, where disadvantaged young people only make up 80–85% of the expected proportion of university starters, based on their share of similarly qualified young people as a whole.

In general, disadvantaged young people are most underrepresented among university starters without good GCSEs. Given most disadvantaged young people fall into this group, this is the crucial factor for explaining why disadvantaged young people are underrepresented overall.

Final observations

Access to university is only part of the story. As we saw in *Research Briefing 2: Higher Education*, places at top third universities that are particularly prestigious are even more disproportionately taken up by young people achieving top GCSEs at 16, and therefore, take up by disadvantaged young people is lower. Similarly, the main benefit of university is graduating with a degree, something that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are much less likely to do, even when they do access university.

On both of these measures, there are too few young people with these characteristics in some local authority areas to be able to measure variances within the North West in a meaningful way. Nonetheless, this issue should not be overlooked, nor should it be assumed that simply closing the university access gap will be enough to address the gaps access to a top third university and overall pass rates.

Access to apprenticeships

Apprenticeships policy has changed dramatically over the last decade. From the introduction of standards to replace frameworks, to the Apprenticeship Levy, the system in 2017 is very different to that in 2007.

As we saw in *Research Briefing 3: Apprenticeships*, this has led to noticeable differences in experience for the 2012 cohort, compared to the 2007 cohort. While overall 7% of young people in England start an apprenticeship, there has been a growth in the share of disadvantaged young people starting an apprenticeship, from 4% of the 2007 cohort to 10% of the 2012 cohort.^v

^v We cannot be sure this truly represents growth in take up of apprenticeships over time, though published data on starts for this period finds this. Strictly, what we have here is a growth in take up of apprenticeships in later cohorts.



Apprenticeships in the North West

There are more apprenticeships in the North West than any other region – indeed, 18% of all apprenticeships taken by young people nationally were taken by young people from the North West. Overall, 9% of all young people undertook an apprenticeship, including 13% of disadvantaged young people in the 2012 cohort, which is a sizeable minority.^{vi}

We know the growth in apprenticeships has disproportionately been from disadvantaged young people, but what does it look like in terms of qualification? In the North West, the bulk of the growth

in apprenticeships has been among the 39% of young people without good GCSEs: 9% of the 2007 cohort without good GCSEs started an apprenticeship, compared to 19% of the 2012 cohort.

By contrast, there is no increase in apprenticeship starts among the 48% of young people with top GCSEs. Indeed, young people without good GCSEs make up 68% of apprenticeship starters, and it is this group that provides enough data for a local authority area level analysis to be meaningful.^{vii} 13% of this group start an apprenticeship, a figure that varies by local authority area.

^{vi} By the 2016/17 academic year, which applies throughout the chapter.

^{vii} We are also only analysing the 2008 to 2012 cohorts. 2007 is excluded due to the lower take-up of apprenticeships.



There are more apprenticeships in the North West than any other region

Table 28: Young people from Cumbria without good GCSEs are nearly three times as likely to do an apprenticeship as those from Salford

Local authority area	Proportion of young people without good GCSEs starting an apprenticeship
LCRCA	14%
GMCA	13%
Cumbria	19%
Wirral (LCRCA)	16%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	16%
Rochdale (GMCA)	16%
Wigan (GMCA)	16%
Tameside (GMCA)	16%
Trafford (GMCA)	15%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	15%
Bolton (GMCA)	13%
Lancashire	13%
Manchester (GMCA)	13%
Oldham (GMCA)	12%
Warrington	12%
Bury (GMCA)	12%
Cheshire & Chester	12%
Stockport (GMCA)	12%
Sefton (LCRCA)	11%
Blackburn with Darwen	11%
Blackpool	10%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	10%
Halton (LCRCA)	9%
Salford (GMCA)	7%

We see substantial variation by local authority area, with Cumbrians without good GCSEs almost three times as likely to go on to an apprenticeship as those from Salford with the same qualifications. Aside from these two outliers, there's substantial variation within the Liverpool City Region, with Wirral and Halton second from top and second from bottom respectively.

These figures can also be broken down by disadvantage. While 17% of disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs go on to an apprenticeship in the North West, some local authority areas saw a far higher proportion of disadvantaged young people go on to an apprenticeship (Table 29).

Similarly to the headline findings, we see enormous variation from top to bottom. Just 8% of disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs from Salford go down an apprenticeship route. Among Cumbrians, with the same qualifications, it's 23%. Local authority areas within the Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region are represented among the top three and bottom three local authority areas, reinforcing the point that different areas face different challenges.

Table 29: Disadvantaged young people from Cumbria without good GCSEs are three times as likely to do an apprenticeship as those from Salford

Local authority area	Proportion of disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs starting an apprenticeship
LCRCA	17%
GMCA	17%
Cumbria	23%
Trafford (GMCA)	22%
Wirral (LCRCA)	20%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	20%
Rochdale (GMCA)	20%
Tameside (GMCA)	20%
Wigan (GMCA)	20%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	19%
Warrington	18%
Bolton (GMCA)	18%
Manchester (GMCA)	17%
Cheshire & Chester	16%
Lancashire	15%
Oldham (GMCA)	14%
Stockport (GMCA)	14%
Sefton (LCRCA)	13%
Blackpool	13%
Bury (GMCA)	13%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	12%
Blackburn with Darwen	12%
Halton (LCRCA)	10%
Salford (GMCA)	8%

Looking at apprentices in the North West

As we saw in *Research Briefing 3: Apprenticeships*, when looking at the 2007 cohort, disadvantaged young people are underrepresented among apprentices, whereas by 2012 they are overrepresented. This trend continues in the North West, with disadvantaged young people growing from a 16% share of apprentices (of the 2007 cohort) to a 26% share of apprentices from the 2012 cohort, and indeed 29% of apprentices without good GCSEs.

We can also look at the qualifications of apprentices, without considering the disadvantage angle. Overall, 68% of apprenticeship starters are those without good GCSEs. This group represents 39% of all young people, so these young people are disproportionately undertaking apprenticeships. By contrast, 19% of apprenticeship starters are young people with five A*-C including English and maths, far less than the 48% of all young people with this level of qualification. This last group is too small to meaningfully analyse at local authority area level, so we look at the group without good GCSEs (Table 30).

Table 30: Disadvantaged young people make up half of apprentices from Manchester without good GCSEs, but fewer than a fifth of those from Bury

Local authority area	Proportion of apprenticeships started by disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs
LCRCA	37%
GMCA	32%
Manchester (GMCA)	51%
Liverpool (LCRCA)	41%
Wirral (LCRCA)	41%
Knowsley (LCRCA)	38%
Rochdale (GMCA)	37%
Halton (LCRCA)	35%
Bolton (GMCA)	33%
Oldham (GMCA)	30%
Blackpool	30%
Trafford (GMCA)	29%
Blackburn with Darwen	29%
Salford (GMCA)	29%
St. Helens (LCRCA)	28%
Tameside (GMCA)	25%
Wigan (GMCA)	25%
Sefton (LCRCA)	22%
Warrington	22%
Cheshire & Chester	21%
Stockport (GMCA)	21%
Lancashire	19%
Bury (GMCA)	19%
Cumbria	16%

Table 31: In some places, disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among apprentices. In others, the opposite.

Local Authority area	Proportion of young people who are disadvantaged	Proportion of apprenticeship starters who are disadvantaged	Over/under representation of disadvantaged young people
GMCA	30%	32%	1.05
LCRCA	37%	37%	1.00
Warrington	15%	22%	1.49
Trafford (GMCA)	21%	29%	1.44
Bolton (GMCA)	29%	33%	1.15
Cheshire & Chester	19%	21%	1.14
Manchester (GMCA)	47%	51%	1.08
Halton (LCRCA)	33%	35%	1.07
Rochdale (GMCA)	35%	37%	1.05
Wigan (GMCA)	24%	25%	1.04
Blackpool	29%	30%	1.03
Tameside (GMCA)	24%	25%	1.02
Stockport (GMCA)	21%	21%	1.01
Cumbria	16%	16%	0.99
Lancashire	20%	19%	0.99
Knowsley (LCRCA)	39%	38%	0.98
Wirral (LCRCA)	42%	41%	0.97
Oldham (GMCA)	31%	30%	0.97
St. Helens (LCRCA)	29%	28%	0.97
Liverpool (LCRCA)	43%	41%	0.96
Sefton (LCRCA)	25%	22%	0.91
Salford (GMCA)	32%	29%	0.90
Blackburn with Darwen	32%	29%	0.90
Bury (GMCA)	22%	19%	0.87

Part of the reason Manchester tops this list and Cumbria is at the bottom, is because there are many more disadvantaged young people in the former than the latter. Controlling for this, we can see the extent to which disadvantaged young people are over (or under) represented among apprentices.

While in some places, noticeably Trafford and Warrington, disadvantaged young people are disproportionately likely to be apprentices. In others, such as Bury and Blackburn, they are disproportionately unlikely. There are exactly 11 areas in each camp, though with the exception of Warrington and Trafford, all are within +/- 15 percentage points of parity.

Final observations

Access to apprenticeships is only part of the story. As we saw in *Research Briefing 3: Apprenticeships*, historically, progression to Level 3 apprenticeships has also varied based on disadvantage and prior qualification. There has been much change in the landscape between 2007 and 2017, but this must not be at the expense of disadvantaged young people. Pathways for young people to reach intermediate or higher level skills are vital, and policymakers across national and devolved government must ensure that there is both access and appropriate progression routes in the North West when considering future apprenticeship reforms.

Findings by local authority area

This chapter presents 25 of the key findings for each of the 22 local authority areas in the North West.

It also provides the rank for each finding within the North West region. Positions 1-7 are the top third of local authority areas, 8-14 are the middle third of local authority areas, and 15-22 are the bottom third of local authority areas.

For local authority areas that are also part of combined authority areas, the rank within the combined authority area is also listed. This is out of six for the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, and out of 10 for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.



Blackburn with Darwen

Blackburn with Darwen is a small local authority area and comes in the middle third of local authority areas in the North West on most measures. It does, however, have noticeably high NEET rates for low qualified young people, and for young people who are both low qualified and

disadvantaged, coming in the top five for both measures. It also has a very low rate of apprenticeship starts, and disadvantaged young people are particularly underrepresented among apprenticeship starters.

Table 32: Summary of findings for Blackburn with Darwen

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Population	11,100	19
Level of disadvantage	24%	7
Level of low qualification	27%	11
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	10%	10
NEETs		
NEET rate	17%	8
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	30%	6
Employment Gap	17%	8
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	41%	8
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.72	14
NEET rate (low qualified)	37%	2
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	50%	9
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.85	13
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	48%	4
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	24%	8
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.45	14

Table 32: Summary of findings for Blackburn with Darwen *continued*

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Higher education		
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	66%	13
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	14%	7
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	60%	8
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	11%	10
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.90	8
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.76	15
Apprenticeships		
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	11%	18
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	12%	20
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	29%	11
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	0.90	21

Blackpool

Blackpool is a small local authority area with a relatively high level of low qualification. As a result, Blackpool performs poorly on a number of measures where low qualification impairs rankings, for example having high NEET rates and a large employment gap. When you control for this high level of low qualification (and above average disadvantage), Blackpool is in the middle of the pack.

Blackpool is in the bottom third of local authority areas both for higher education starts, which may well be driven by the weaker education performance; but also for apprenticeship starts among those without good GCSEs. This suggests that post-education opportunities are a challenge across all three routes.

In 2016, Blackpool was designated as one of the Government's Opportunity Areas and these issues (educational attainment and support for young people to move from school to work) have already been identified as priorities in the Opportunity Area plan.

Table 33: Summary of findings for Blackpool

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Population	10,000	21
Level of disadvantage	22%	9
Level of low qualification	30%	5
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	10%	9
NEETs		
NEET rate	18%	4
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	32%	2
Employment Gap	18%	4
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	41%	7
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.91	11
NEET rate (low qualified)	36%	4
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	52%	6
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.72	17
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	50%	2
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	26%	7
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.51	13

Table 33: Summary of findings for Blackpool continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Higher education		
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	62%	20
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	10%	19
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	55%	14
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	7%	18
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.89	10
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.68	19
Apprenticeships		
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	10%	19
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	13%	17
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	30%	9
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	1.03	9

Bolton

Bolton is the third largest local authority area in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and in the middle third of local authority areas on most measures. It does however stand out for having a relatively high NEET rate for disadvantaged young people, and a high employment gap.

More positively, low qualified young people are not especially overrepresented among its NEET young people.

Where Bolton excels is sending young people to higher education, and is in the top three local authority areas in the North West for young people starting higher education (both those with top GCSEs and those without good GCSEs), for both young people as a whole and disadvantaged young people. Indeed, disadvantaged young people are scarcely underrepresented at all, once controlling for qualification.

Table 34: Summary of findings for Bolton

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Population	21,500	8	3
Level of disadvantage	19%	11	5
Level of low qualification	27%	12	6
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	9%	12	5
NEETs			
NEET rate	17%	7	4
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	32%	3	2
Employment Gap	18%	5	3
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	37%	11	4
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.91	10	5
NEET rate (low qualified)	33%	10	6
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	45%	17	8
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.68	18	9
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	45%	7	3
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	23%	12	5
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.58	12	6

Table 34: Summary of findings for Bolton continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	70%	7	4
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	17%	2	2
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	70%	3	3
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	16%	2	2
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.99	1	1
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.98	2	2
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	13%	9	5
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	18%	10	5
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	33%	7	3
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	1.15	3	2

Bury

Bury is the smallest local authority area in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Across the whole of the North West it has the lowest level of low qualification, and also a low level of disadvantage. This feeds through into low NEET rates, although those young people who are low qualified are about as likely to be NEET as anywhere else, a measure on which Bury comes 12th. Consequently, low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs, compared to other local authority areas.

Higher education start rates are among the highest in the region for those without good GCSEs, including disadvantaged young people. However, this is an area where many Greater Manchester local authority areas rank highly, so while Bury is always in the top half overall and mostly in the top third in the region, it sits consistently in the middle of Greater Manchester local authority areas.

Uptake of apprenticeships is low among disadvantaged young people, and Bury is one of the lowest ranked local authority areas on these measures.

Table 35: Summary of findings for Bury

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Population	13,700	17	10
Level of disadvantage	13%	16	8
Level of low qualification	18%	22	10
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	4%	21	10
NEETs			
NEET rate	14%	16	7
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	23%	21	9
Employment Gap	11%	20	8
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	22%	21	10
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.70	15	6
NEET rate (low qualified)	32%	12	7
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	37%	22	10
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.06	6	4
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	43%	9	4

Table 35: Summary of findings for Bury continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	13%	22	10
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.96	6	3
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	67%	12	5
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	15%	3	3
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	59%	10	6
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	13%	5	5
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.89	9	7
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.88	6	6
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	12%	14	8
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	13%	18	9
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	19%	21	10
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	0.87	22	10

Cheshire & Chester

Cheshire & Chester, covering the local authority areas of Cheshire East, and Cheshire West & Chester, is the second largest area in the North West. It has the second lowest level of disadvantage, and very low levels of low qualified young people. Consequently, it has

very low NEET rates – but this masks the fact that those young people who are from disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately overrepresented among NEETs, more so than any other part of the North West (bar one).

Cheshire & Chester sends fewer disadvantaged young people, and those without good GCSEs, to university, and is in the bottom three local authority areas on several measures. By contrast, disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs are overrepresented among apprenticeship starters, more so than most other places.

Table 36: Summary of findings for Cheshire & Chester

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Population	48,200	2
Level of disadvantage	10%	21
Level of low qualification	22%	18
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	5%	19
NEETs		
NEET rate	12%	20
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	25%	18
Employment Gap	15%	12
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	23%	20
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.39	2
NEET rate (low qualified)	26%	21
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	45%	18
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.06	7
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	37%	18
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	16%	16
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	3.35	3

Table 36: Summary of findings for Cheshire & Chester continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Higher education		
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	69%	10
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	10%	17
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	51%	20
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	6%	20
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.74	21
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.58	22
Apprenticeships		
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	12%	15
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	16%	12
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	21%	18
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	1.14	4

Cumbria

Cumbria is the third largest authority in the North West. It has very low levels of disadvantage, but is in the middle third of authority areas for levels of low qualification. While it has a very low overall NEET rate, and for low qualified young people in particular, it has a large employment gap between disadvantaged young people and their better-off peers. Indeed, disadvantaged young people are more overrepresented among NEETs in

Cumbria than in any other local authority area, as are the doubly disadvantaged group (those with low qualifications and from disadvantaged backgrounds).

Cumbria also has the lowest levels of access to higher education for those without good GCSEs, and the highest apprenticeship start rate. This group is disproportionately disadvantaged, and thus outcomes for disadvantaged young people echo this. Despite the high apprenticeship start rate for disadvantaged young people, they make up only 16% of apprentices, lower than anywhere else.

Table 37: Summary of findings for Cumbria

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Population	36,300	3
Level of disadvantage	10%	20
Level of low qualification	25%	13
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	5%	18
NEETs		
NEET rate	12%	21
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	27%	12
Employment Gap	17%	6
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	24%	16
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.46	1
NEET rate (low qualified)	24%	22
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	50%	10
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.00	9
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	40%	15
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	18%	15
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	3.53	1

Table 37: Summary of findings for Cumbria continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Higher education		
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	64%	16
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	8%	22
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	52%	19
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	5%	22
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.81	17
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.69	18
Apprenticeships		
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	19%	1
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	23%	1
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	16%	22
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	0.99	12

Halton

Halton, in the Liverpool City Region, is the smallest of all the local authority areas in the North West. By the standards of the North West, it has high levels of both disadvantage and low qualification, but this is a feature of many LCRCA local authority areas, and it does not stand out among the six of them.

Given these underlying features, it is a good sign that Halton is among the middle third of local authority areas on most NEET measures, and is one of the higher ranked authority areas in LCRCA.

Particularly noteworthy, low qualified young people are less overrepresented among NEETs than almost anywhere else, and the NEET rate for the doubly disadvantaged group (those with low qualifications and from disadvantaged backgrounds) is lower than anywhere else in the North West.

Halton is ranked in the bottom two authority areas on university access for those with top GCSEs, and access to apprenticeships for those without good GCSEs.

Table 38: Summary of findings for Halton

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Population	9,100	22	6
Level of disadvantage	25%	5	3
Level of low qualification	28%	7	4
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	11%	4	3
NEETs			
NEET rate	17%	9	3
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	26%	15	5
Employment Gap	13%	17	5
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	44%	5	4
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.75	13	3
NEET rate (low qualified)	28%	18	6
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	46%	15	6
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.59	21	5
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	33%	22	6

Table 38: Summary of findings for Halton continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	24%	9	5
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.11	19	4
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	61%	21	5
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	12%	13	3
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	52%	18	6
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	9%	14	4
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.86	13	4
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.79	13	4
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	9%	21	6
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	10%	21	6
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	35%	6	4
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	1.07	6	1

Knowsley

Knowsley is the third smallest local authority area in the North West and part of the Liverpool City Region. It has some of the weakest education outcomes in England. It has the highest rate of low qualification and the second highest rate of disadvantage, of any of the 22 local authority areas in the North West.

Consequently, it has a very high NEET rate, though the NEET rate for those with low qualifications and those from

disadvantaged backgrounds are both in the middle third of local authority areas overall. While very large shares of its NEETs have one of these two characteristics, more than almost anywhere else, these groups are less overrepresented than almost anywhere else too.

Access to higher education is lower among those with top GCSEs than anywhere else. Access to apprenticeships, including for disadvantaged young people, is high.

Overall, Knowsley faces particularly large challenges, especially around academic attainment. Once accounted for, outcomes for young people are in line with other local authorities in the North West.

Table 39: Summary of findings for Knowsley

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Population	10,100	20	5
Level of disadvantage	32%	2	1
Level of low qualification	42%	1	1
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	18%	1	1
NEETs			
NEET rate	19%	2	1
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	29%	10	3
Employment Gap	15%	15	4
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	49%	2	2
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.52	20	6
NEET rate (low qualified)	29%	17	5
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	61%	1	1
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.46	22	6
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	37%	19	5

Table 39: Summary of findings for Knowsley continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	34%	1	1
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.85	21	6
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	61%	22	6
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	11%	15	4
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	53%	17	5
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	9%	13	3
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.88	11	2
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.82	10	2
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	16%	3	2
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	20%	4	2
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	38%	4	3
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	0.98	14	2

Lancashire

Lancashire is the largest of the local authority areas in the North West. Overall levels of disadvantage are low, as are levels of low qualification. This translates into being in or close to the middle third on most measures.

Similarly, on higher education and apprenticeships, every measure is within the middle third, except for the proportion of apprenticeship starts which are by disadvantaged young people, which is low.

Table 40: Summary of findings for Lancashire

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Population	81,800	1
Level of disadvantage	12%	19
Level of low qualification	23%	16
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	5%	17
NEETs		
NEET rate	14%	15
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	27%	14
Employment Gap	15%	14
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	24%	18
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.03	6
NEET rate (low qualified)	29%	16
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	43%	20
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.85	12
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	39%	16
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	15%	19
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.78	10

Table 40: Summary of findings for Lancashire continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Higher education		
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	70%	9
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	13%	10
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	59%	9
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	11%	11
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.85	14
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.81	11
Apprenticeships		
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	13%	10
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	15%	13
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	19%	20
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	0.99	13

Liverpool

Liverpool is a very large local authority area with very high levels of disadvantage and low qualification. As a result, more NEETs have these characteristics than in most other regions, but this is just a feature of their prevalence – these groups are less overrepresented among NEETs in Liverpool than most other local authority areas.

Liverpool is the top ranked of every LCRCA local authority area on every higher education measure, and is in the top third overall for all measures. Rankings on apprenticeship starts sit in the middle third, although a higher proportion of apprentices are from disadvantaged backgrounds than almost anywhere else, reflecting the high levels of disadvantage among young people.

Table 41: Summary of findings for Liverpool

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Population	32,000	4	1
Level of disadvantage	31%	3	2
Level of low qualification	33%	2	2
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	16%	3	2
NEETs			
NEET rate	18%	5	2
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	29%	8	2
Employment Gap	16%	10	3
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	49%	1	1
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.60	19	5
NEET rate (low qualified)	32%	11	3
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	54%	3	3
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.65	19	4
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	40%	13	3
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	33%	2	2
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.08	20	5

Table 41: Summary of findings for Liverpool continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	74%	3	1
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	15%	4	1
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	67%	4	1
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	13%	6	1
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.90	7	1
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.85	7	1
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	15%	8	3
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	19%	8	3
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	41%	2	1
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	0.96	18	5

Manchester

disadvantaged or low qualified (or both) than almost anywhere in the region, these groups are less overrepresented than almost anywhere else too.

Manchester is a large local authority area with higher levels of disadvantage than anywhere else, and very high levels of low qualification. As such, it has the highest overall NEET rate. But the NEET rate for disadvantaged young people is low, and the employment gap is smaller than anywhere else in the region. While more NEETs are either

Manchester is in the top three local authority areas overall on all higher education measures. On apprenticeships, Manchester generally sits in the middle third of local authority areas, though given the numbers of disadvantaged young people, more apprentices are disadvantaged than anywhere else.

Table 42: Summary of findings for Manchester

Local authority area facts

		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Population	28,000	5	1
Level of disadvantage	39%	1	1
Level of low qualification	33%	3	1
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	17%	2	1
NEETs			
NEET rate	21%	1	1
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	26%	16	6
Employment Gap	9%	22	10
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	48%	3	1
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.24	22	10
NEET rate (low qualified)	37%	1	1
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	53%	5	2
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.61	20	10
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	42%	11	6
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	30%	4	1
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.77	22	10

Table 42: Summary of findings for Manchester continued

Local authority area facts

		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	74%	2	2
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	18%	1	1
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	73%	1	1
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	17%	1	1
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.98	3	3
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.94	3	3
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	13%	11	6
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	17%	11	6
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	51%	1	1
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	1.08	5	3

Oldham

Oldham is a mid-sized local authority area, with middling levels of disadvantage and low qualification. It has a low NEET rate for disadvantaged young people, a small employment gap, and these young people are less overrepresented among NEETs than almost anywhere else. Oldham is also solidly in the middle third on measures relating to apprenticeships.

In higher education, Oldham is higher ranked, with disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs more likely to access higher education than their better-off peers. Access rates for disadvantaged young people are in the top three overall.

Table 43: Summary of findings for Oldham

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Population	18,500	11	5
Level of disadvantage	21%	10	4
Level of low qualification	27%	10	5
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	9%	11	4
NEETs			
NEET rate	16%	11	6
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	23%	20	8
Employment Gap	9%	21	9
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	32%	14	7
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.47	21	9
NEET rate (low qualified)	33%	9	5
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	47%	12	5
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.74	15	7
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	38%	17	8
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	21%	14	7
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.24	17	8

Table 43: Summary of findings for Oldham continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	71%	6	3
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	14%	9	6
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	70%	2	2
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	14%	3	3
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.99	2	2
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	1.03	1	1
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	12%	12	7
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	14%	14	7
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	30%	8	4
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	0.97	16	8

Rochdale

Rochdale is a midsized local authority area with higher levels of disadvantage, more than anywhere else in Greater Manchester apart from Manchester itself. Most figures around NEETs are among the middle third of local authority areas, although the NEET rate is among the top third, as is the NEET rate for low qualified young people and the proportion of NEETs who are doubly disadvantaged (those with low

qualifications and from disadvantaged backgrounds). The NEET rate for this doubly disadvantaged group is the third highest of any of the 22 local authority areas in the North West.

Rochdale is among the top third on most higher education and apprenticeship start related measures. On apprenticeships, though, it is noticeably highly ranked among Greater Manchester local authority areas, with a higher start rate than any of the other nine local authority areas, and it's second on the list for apprenticeship starts for disadvantaged young people.

Table 44: Summary of findings for Rochdale

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Population	15,500	14	8
Level of disadvantage	25%	4	2
Level of low qualification	27%	8	3
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	11%	6	2
NEETs	NEETs		
NEET rate	18%	6	3
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	29%	9	5
Employment Gap	15%	11	4
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	42%	6	2
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.68	17	7
NEET rate (low qualified)	35%	6	3
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	47%	14	6
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.72	16	8
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	49%	3	2
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	27%	6	2
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.43	15	7

Table 44: Summary of findings for Rochdale continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	64%	15	7
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	15%	5	4
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	62%	6	5
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	13%	4	4
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.96	4	4
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.90	5	5
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	16%	4	1
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	20%	5	2
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	37%	5	2
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	1.05	7	4

Salford

Salford is a relatively small local authority area, with slightly higher rates of disadvantage and low qualification than most places, especially most places in Greater Manchester. NEET rates are high, including for disadvantaged young people, although this largely reflects the higher levels of disadvantage as disadvantaged young people are less overrepresented in Salford than most other places. The proportion of NEETs who are doubly disadvantaged (those with low qualifications and from disadvantaged backgrounds) is fairly high by Greater Manchester standards.

Apprenticeship take up is lower than anywhere else in the region, both overall and for disadvantaged young people, and higher education starts by those with top GCSEs are also low. Most other measures in higher education are in the top half but not the top third for the region, but given the top spaces are dominated by Greater Manchester authority areas these same figures are in the bottom half (but not the bottom third) of Greater Manchester authority areas.

Table 45: Summary of findings for Salford

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Population	14,000	16	9
Level of disadvantage	23%	8	3
Level of low qualification	29%	6	2
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	10%	7	3
NEETs			
NEET rate	19%	3	2
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	30%	5	3
Employment Gap	15%	13	5
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	38%	10	3
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.66	18	8
NEET rate (low qualified)	34%	8	4
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	51%	8	3
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.76	14	6
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	41%	12	7

Table 45: Summary of findings for Salford continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	23%	10	3
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.23	18	9
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	62%	19	10
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	14%	8	5
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	56%	12	8
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	12%	7	6
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.91	6	6
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.84	8	7
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	7%	22	10
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	8%	22	10
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	29%	12	6
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	0.90	20	9

Sefton

Sefton is a mid-sized local authority area in both a North West and Liverpool City Region context. It is the least disadvantaged, and has the fewest low qualified young people, of any LCRCA local authority area.

On most measures related to NEETs, Sefton is ranked in the bottom half without being near the bottom of the list overall – but is the lowest ranked LCRCA local authority.

On apprenticeship measures, Sefton is in the bottom third of local authority areas, although in higher education it is generally in the top third. The most noteworthy of these measures is probably the extent to which disadvantaged young people are underrepresented among apprentices, where Sefton is the fourth lowest ranked local authority area in the North West.

Table 46: Summary of findings for Sefton

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Population	21,400	9	3
Level of disadvantage	15%	14	6
Level of low qualification	22%	19	6
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	6%	15	6
NEETs			
NEET rate	15%	14	6
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	26%	17	6
Employment Gap	13%	18	6
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	26%	15	6
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.70	16	4
NEET rate (low qualified)	35%	7	2
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	47%	13	5
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.13	3	2
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	40%	14	4

Table 46: Summary of findings for Sefton continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	14%	20	6
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.28	16	3
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	71%	5	3
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	14%	6	2
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	61%	7	2
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	11%	8	2
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.86	12	3
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.79	12	3
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	11%	17	4
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	13%	16	4
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	22%	16	6
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	0.91	19	6

St. Helens

St. Helens is a small local authority area, with higher levels of low qualification than many other parts of the North West – though in the context of the Liverpool City Region, it's in the middle of the pack. It is low ranked on a number of NEET indicators, with a high NEET rate for disadvantaged young people, a large employment gap, and the proportion of NEETs who are low qualified all being in the top four.

St. Helens has very low apprenticeship take up for both disadvantaged young people and young people overall, and fares little better on higher education measures. While overall access to higher education among young people with top GCSEs is only just outside the top third, every other measure is in the bottom third, with young people without good GCSEs particularly underrepresented in higher education.

All St. Helens' figures are calculated slightly differently to others, see Note 1 in the methodology section on the inside back cover. There is therefore more uncertainty about these rankings than for other local authority areas.

Table 47: Summary of findings for St. Helens

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Population	12,700	18	4
Level of disadvantage	18%	12	5
Level of low qualification	30%	4	3
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	10%	8	5
NEETs			
NEET rate	15%	12	4
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	31%	4	1
Employment Gap	19%	3	1
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	39%	9	5
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.10	5	1
NEET rate (low qualified)	31%	13	4
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	58%	2	2
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.87	11	3
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	45%	6	2

Table 47: Summary of findings for St. Helens continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	29%	5	4
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.83	8	1
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	70%	8	4
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	10%	16	5
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	55%	16	4
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	6%	19	6
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.78	19	5
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.61	21	6
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	10%	20	5
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	12%	19	5
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	28%	13	5
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	0.97	17	4

Stockport

Stockport is a mid-sized authority, with disadvantage and low qualification levels among the bottom third of local authority areas. NEET rates are lower than in most places, especially for young people who are doubly disadvantaged (those with low qualifications and from disadvantaged backgrounds).

Across higher education and apprenticeship measures, Stockport ranks in the bottom third of local authority areas, often the second lowest in Greater Manchester, without ever being in the bottom three.

Table 48: Summary of findings for Stockport

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Population	18800	10	4
Level of disadvantage	12%	17	9
Level of low qualification	22%	17	8
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	5%	16	8
NEETs			
NEET rate	13%	17	8
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	25%	19	7
Employment Gap	14%	16	6
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	24%	17	8
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.02	7	2
NEET rate (low qualified)	29%	15	9
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	46%	16	7
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.09	5	3
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	36%	20	9
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	15%	18	9
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.77	11	5

Table 48: Summary of findings for Stockport continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	66%	14	6
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	10%	18	9
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	55%	15	9
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	7%	16	9
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.83	16	9
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.75	16	9
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	12%	16	9
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	14%	15	8
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	21%	19	9
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	1.01	11	7

Tameside

Tameside is a mid-sized local authority area, with mid-ranking levels of disadvantage and low qualification. But it has the highest NEET rate for disadvantaged young people of any local authority area, and the second highest employment gap. NEET rates for doubly disadvantaged young people (those with low qualifications and from

disadvantaged backgrounds) are also higher than anywhere else.

Access to higher education for young people with top GCSEs is low, though disadvantaged young people are not especially underrepresented among university starters with top GCSEs compared to other local authority areas (although this is a measure on which GMCA local authority areas generally do well). Tameside is in the top third of local authority areas for access to apprenticeships.

Table 49: Summary of findings for Tameside

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Population	17,900	12	6
Level of disadvantage	17%	13	6
Level of low qualification	27%	9	4
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	8%	13	6
NEETs			
NEET rate	17%	10	5
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	32%	1	1
Employment Gap	19%	2	2
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	33%	13	6
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.98	9	4
NEET rate (low qualified)	36%	3	2
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	54%	4	1
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.00	8	5
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	52%	1	1
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	23%	13	6
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.92	7	4

Table 49: Summary of findings for Tameside continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	63%	18	9
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	12%	14	8
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	58%	11	7
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	10%	12	8
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.91	5	5
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.83	9	8
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	16%	6	3
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	20%	6	3
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	25%	14	7
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	1.02	10	6

Trafford

Trafford is a midsized local authority area. It has a lot of grammar schools, which attracts a lot of young people who do not live in Trafford. This distinction matters, as this data is based on young people educated in Trafford, not those who necessarily live there. This group of young people has a low level of disadvantage, and a very low level of low qualification.

Trafford has a lower NEET rate than anywhere else in the North West, including for disadvantaged young people. The NEET rate for low qualified young people and doubly disadvantaged young people (those with low qualifications and from disadvantaged

backgrounds) are also very low. That said, low qualified young people are more overrepresented in the NEET population than in any other region, making up almost 2.5 times the share expected based on the low level of low qualification.

Trafford sends a greater share of young people with top GCSEs to university than any other local authority area, and ranks well for disadvantaged young people with these qualifications. Its ranking for young people without good GCSEs is not noteworthy.

Disadvantaged young people from Trafford without good GCSEs are more likely to start an apprenticeship than almost anywhere else, and disadvantaged young people are disproportionately likely to take this option, more so than in any other local authority area (bar one).

Table 50: Summary of findings for Trafford

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Population	17,500	13	7
Level of disadvantage	12%	18	10
Level of low qualification	18%	21	9
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	5%	20	9
NEETs			
NEET rate	11%	22	10
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	21%	22	10
Employment Gap	11%	19	7
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	24%	19	9
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.01	8	3
NEET rate (low qualified)	28%	19	10
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	44%	19	9

Table 50: Summary of findings for Trafford continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.46	1	1
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	34%	21	10
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	15%	17	8
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	3.11	5	2
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	77%	1	1
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	12%	11	7
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	64%	5	4
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	11%	9	7
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.83	15	8
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.92	4	4
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	15%	7	4
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	22%	2	1
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	29%	10	5
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	1.44	2	1

Warrington

Warrington is a midsized local authority area with the lowest rate of disadvantage in the North West, and the third lowest rate of low qualification. This leads to good outcomes in terms of low NEET rates, and very low proportions of NEETs having one of these characteristics. That said, young people with these characteristics are overrepresented, given their low underlying prevalence.

Warrington is in the middle third for most higher education measures, though it does have an issue with the lowest start rate for disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs (and, relatedly, the greatest underrepresentation of this group of any North West local authority area).

Most apprenticeship measures are also in the middle third, though Warrington comes top in the North West for the extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among apprentices.

All Warrington figures are calculated slightly differently to others, see Note 2 in the methodology section on the inside back cover.

Table 51: Summary of findings for Warrington

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Population	15,300	15
Level of disadvantage	9%	22
Level of low qualification	20%	20
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	4%	22
NEETs	NEETs	
NEET rate	12%	19
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	27%	13
Employment Gap	16%	9
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	21%	22
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.27	4
NEET rate (low qualified)	28%	20
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	38%	21
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.91	10
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	44%	8
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	13%	21
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	3.32	4

Table 51: Summary of findings for Warrington continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)
Higher education		
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	68%	11
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	12%	12
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	50%	22
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	9%	15
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.73	22
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.77	14
Apprenticeships		
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	12%	13
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	18%	9
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	22%	17
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	1.49	1

Wigan

Wigan is larger than many local authority areas in the North West. It is, however, the second largest part of the Greater Manchester area. Disadvantage and low qualification here are both less prevalent than in other areas, but not remarkably so.

Wigan has a larger employment gap than any other local authority area in the North West, and disadvantaged young people are particularly overrepresented among NEETs, more so than anywhere else in Greater Manchester.

The same extreme overrepresentation is true for doubly disadvantaged young people (those with low qualifications and from disadvantaged backgrounds).

Wigan has very low rates of access to university, and is the lowest ranked local authority area in Greater Manchester on almost all measures, with access for disadvantaged young people a particular concern, as the figures rank lower than all but one local authority area in the North West. Access to apprenticeship is quite high, but otherwise unremarkable.

Table 52: Summary of findings for Wigan

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Population	23,700	7	2
Level of disadvantage	15%	15	7
Level of low qualification	23%	15	7
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	7%	14	7
NEETs			
NEET rate	13%	18	9
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	30%	7	4
Employment Gap	20%	1	1
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	34%	12	5
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.36	3	1
NEET rate (low qualified)	30%	14	8
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	48%	11	4
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.10	4	2
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	43%	10	5

Table 52: Summary of findings for Wigan continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within GMCA (out of 10)
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	23%	11	4
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	3.41	2	1
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	64%	17	8
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	9%	21	10
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	50%	21	10
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	6%	21	10
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.79	18	10
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.65	20	10
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	16%	5	2
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	20%	7	4
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	25%	15	8
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	1.04	8	5

Wirral

Wirral is a reasonably large local authority area and the second largest part of the Liverpool City Region. Levels of disadvantage, and double disadvantage (low qualifications and disadvantaged background) are high by North West standards but low by LCRCA standards.

NEET measures in Wirral are generally unremarkable, and either in the middle third or the bottom end of the top third. However, NEET rates for low qualified and doubly disadvantaged young people are both higher than anywhere else in LCRCA, as is the extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented.

In North West terms, the proportion of NEETs who are from disadvantaged backgrounds or doubly disadvantaged is high, but the figures are generally high for LCRCA local authority areas and are less remarkable in that context.

Access to university for young people with top GCSEs is high overall, but middle of the road for disadvantaged young people. Access to university for young people without good GCSEs is very low, and disadvantaged young people are particularly underrepresented among university starters.

Access to apprenticeships, including for disadvantaged young people, is high; more measures on which Wirral is ranked higher than all other local authority areas within LCRCA.

Table 53: Summary of findings for Wirral

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Population	24,200	6	2
Level of disadvantage	25%	6	4
Level of low qualification	24%	14	5
Level of low qualification and disadvantage	11%	5	4
NEETs	NEETs		
NEET rate	15%	13	5
NEET rate (disadvantaged)	28%	11	4
Employment Gap	17%	7	2
Proportion of NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds	47%	4	3
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	1.87	12	2
NEET rate (low qualified)	36%	5	1
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified	52%	7	4

Table 53: Summary of findings for Wirral continued

Local authority area facts		Rank within North West (out of 22)	Rank within LCRCA (out of 6)
Extent to which low qualified young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.15	2	1
NEET rate (low qualified and disadvantaged)	45%	5	1
Proportion of NEETs who are low qualified and disadvantaged	32%	3	3
Extent to which low qualified and disadvantaged young people are overrepresented among NEETs	2.81	9	2
Higher education			
University start rate (young people with top GCSEs)	72%	4	2
University start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	9%	20	6
University start rate (disadvantaged young people with top GCSEs)	56%	13	3
University start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	7%	17	5
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (with top GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.78	20	6
Extent to which disadvantaged young people (without good GCSEs) are underrepresented	0.75	17	5
Apprenticeships			
Apprenticeship start rate (young people without good GCSEs)	16%	2	1
Apprenticeship start rate (disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs)	20%	3	1
Proportion of apprenticeship starts by disadvantaged young people	41%	3	2
Extent to which disadvantaged young people are over/underrepresented as apprentices	0.97	15	3

Methodology reference notes

The following is a summary of the terminology used in this briefing for reference. We have also published a full methodology document, *Methodology for the Youth Jobs Gap*.

Cohort – a group of students who all sat their GCSEs in the same year, from 2007 to 2012 (six cohorts), included in our analysis.

Disadvantage – eligible for free school meals (FSM) in year 11.

Local authority and region – where young people went to school. This briefing only covers young people who were in mainstream English schools in year 11, and about whom disadvantage status is known.

Qualification – high (A-level or equivalent), middle (five GCSEs A*-C or equivalent), low (fewer than five GCSEs). Based on highest qualifications at age 18.

EET – young people recorded as being in education, employment or training (EET) at a point in time. Due to limitations with LEO at the time of developing this project, self-employment is not included as a form of EET.

NEET – not EET for at least three consecutive months up to and including the NEET reference points we use, namely December, March, June and September of any given year, from December 2009 to March 2017.

Age – approximate age, based on the year young people left school and the point in time NEET or EET is being measured at. This is based on academic age and therefore academic years. See below. Every young person in the same cohort is the same age; age acts as an intuitive measure of ‘how long since the cohort left school’.

Cohort Year EET / NEET observed

	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
2007	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
2008		18	19	20	21	22	23	24
2009			18	19	20	21	22	23
2010				18	19	20	21	22
2011					18	19	20	21
2012						18	19	20

Caveats noted in data tables

(1) St. Helens data is suppressed in March 2017 for 21 year olds, so the figure used here is an adjusted one based on 23 year olds, which is available. Generally, the NEET rate for a group of 23 year olds is higher than similar 21 year olds, so each figure is reduced by the average difference. A fuller explanation of this adjustment is included in the methodology document. In practice, it means true figures for St. Helens may be a few percentage points higher or lower.

(2) Warrington data is suppressed in March 2017 for 21 year olds, so the figure used here is from June 2017, which is available. Generally, the NEET rate for June 2017 is the same as for March 2017, so no adjustment is applied. A full explanation of why June 2017 data hasn't been used more generally is included in the methodology document. In practice, it means true figures for Warrington may differ slightly.

(3) Calculations for LCRCA include the estimated St. Helens values. As St. Helens is a small part of LCRCA, there is less uncertainty about the LCRCA figures.

(4) In higher education access specifically, there are a small number of cases where the number of disadvantaged young people without good GCSEs accessing university is 10 or fewer, meaning it is suppressed in the data. We have estimated each of these missing pieces of data to be 10. This means the analysis is a best-case scenario. While these figures may as a result be a few percentage points out, the impact is likely to be negligible, especially where these estimates form just one-sixth of the overall calculation for their local authority area (St. Helens and Wigan) or one-third of the overall calculation for their local authority area (Stockport). Data for Warrington is excluded, as two-thirds of the data would be estimated.

Due to the local authority areas involved, this caveat also applies to both LCRCA and GMCA, though with very little uncertainty due to such a small part of the overall combined authority area being impacted.

1. Impetus, *Establishing the Employment Gap*, April 2019
2. Impetus, *Research Briefing 2: Higher Education*, May 2019
3. Impetus, *Research Briefing 3: Apprenticeships*, June 2019
4. NEON, *Working Class Heroes*, February 2019
5. Office for Students, *Low higher education participation, household income and socio-economic status*, accessed May 2019
6. Department for Education, *Key stage 4 and multi-academy trust performance 2018 (revised)*, January 2019



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