

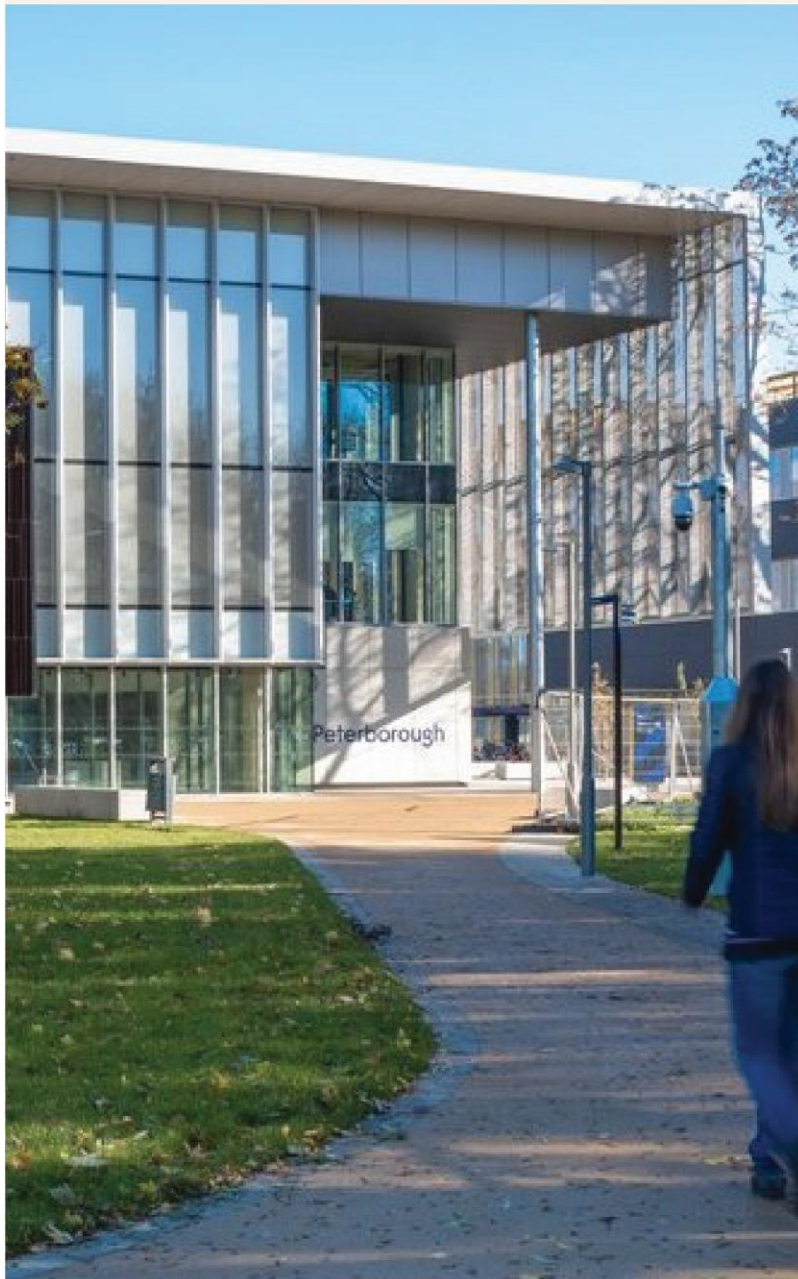


**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

PAUL BRISTOW
MAYOR OF
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH

Workforce, Jobs & Skills

State of the Region 2025





State of the Region Overview

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough State of the Region 2025 provides a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's current economic, social, and environmental landscape. By analysing the most up-to-date data and insights from across the region, this report serves as a resource and evidence base for stakeholders, policymakers, and community leaders to understand the area's opportunities, priorities, and pathways for growth and prosperity.

The comprehensive analysis was structured with more than 140 distinct indicators across eight key themes. The resulting holistic approach reflects stakeholders' commitment to capturing a detailed and nuanced picture of the C&P region's current status and prospects. The themes and data were selected and refined through a process of continuous engagement with core stakeholders, ensuring they resonate with local priorities that leveraged relevant data sources.

An interactive publicly accessible data portal containing all the raw data, with interactive charts and maps can be opened from this website link [State of The Region Data Portal](#).

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Prepared by: James Clayton | Senior Analyst

Reviewed by: Dan Buckridge | Performance and Evaluation Manager

Approved by: Jules Ient | Head of Policy, Insight & Performance



Workforce, Jobs & Skills

This chapter explores workforce, jobs and skills, through the sub-themes of employment, earnings, job opportunities, job quality, education and apprenticeships. It presents insights across the employment landscape, considering jobs, the quality of work, and inequalities between local districts.

While the employment rate¹ of 77.7% in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (C&P) exceeded the England rate of 75.7% in 2023-24. Total employee growth locally, since 2017, was on par with England's 6.5% growth rate. Cambridge was the primary driver of the growth, accounting for most of the C&P region's employment increase. Sectoral employment² in C&P is diverse, Manufacturing was the most prominent at 39,800 employees when including High-tech Manufacturing, followed by Other Business Services at 27,500, in 2023-24. The Life Science and Healthcare sector had extraordinary growth, increasing by 67.6% between 2017-18 and 2023-24.

Access to work³ varied considerably across the region. Travel-to-work patterns revealed that 79% of Cambridge residents were able to work within 5km of home or at home, compared to just 44% of residents in Fenland. However, the Census 2021 data used here were impacted by the concurrent COVID-19 pandemic.

Both income⁴ and disposable income⁵ also differed considerably across the C&P region. Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire had median earnings 15-18% higher than the England level, while in Fenland median earnings were 17% below, in 2024. Disposable income in South Cambridgeshire at £29,000 was 24.5% above the national average (England), whereas Peterborough and Fenland were 20.3% and 18.1% below the national average, respectively, in 2022. The proportion of employees receiving in-work Universal Credit⁶ in C&P at 8.4% was slightly below the England rate of 8.7%, though Peterborough's rate was nearly double at 15%, in 2025.

Education and skills presented additional contrasts. In 2023-24, attainment levels by age 19⁷ differed across the local authority areas in relation to the national average (England). Peterborough and Fenland lagged in both Level 2 (7.5% to 7.8% lower) and Level 3 attainment (8.8% to 11.2% lower), whereas Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire lead England in both Level 2 (5.9% to 6.6% higher) and Level 3 (8.5% to 11.1%). Post-18 education participation in education and training⁸ within C&P at 2,305 people per 100,000 was below the England rate of 2,898 per 100,000, in 2023-24. Peterborough had the highest rate amongst C&P's local authority areas, with a rate of 4,348 per 100,000. Elsewhere, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire had high percentages of residents educated to RQF3+⁹, while East Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Huntingdonshire, and Fenland sat below the national average (England), in 2024.

¹ ONS, 2025. Annual Population Survey. [\[Link to source\]](#)

² The University of Cambridge's CBR, 2025. Cambridge Cluster Insights. [\[Link to source\]](#)

³ ONS, 2021. Distance travelled to work. [\[Link to source\]](#)

⁴ ONS, 2024. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. [\[Link to source\]](#)

⁵ ONS, 2024. Regional gross disposable household income: local authorities by ITL1 region. [\[Link to source\]](#)

⁶ DWP, 2025. People on Universal Credit. [\[Link to source\]](#)

⁷ DfE, 2025. Attainment by local authority district data - ages 16 to 19. [\[Link to source\]](#)

⁸ DfE, 2025. Geography Region, LA, LAD, PCON - participation, achievement and apprenticeship starts (volumes and indicative rates per 100,000 population) by level, age, provision type. [\[Link to source\]](#)

⁹ ONS, 2025. Annual Population Survey. [\[Link to source\]](#)



Moreover, the C&P region had a higher rate of young people not in education, employment, or training¹⁰ (NEETs), with rates higher than England in 2024. Peterborough had a NEET rate of 4.3%, with Cambridgeshire (3.3%) also above the England NEET rate of 3.2%. Moreover, apprenticeship participation rates were the lowest among the combined authority peer group, with a declining trend since 2019-20, and lower than England across all age groups.

¹⁰ DfE, 2025. Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority. [\[Link to source\]](#)



Summary of key findings

Metric	Section	Findings
Total Employees	1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total number of employees increased by 6.5% in C&P since 2017, which was on par with the growth rate for England. Employment growth in C&P can be largely attributed to the 12.6% growth of employees observed in Cambridge.
Employment Rate	1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The C&P employment rate in 2023-24 was 77.7% compared to 75.7% in England. The employment rate in C&P remained relatively stable in the post-global financial crisis period and since 2009-10 was consistently higher than England's employment rate. In most years, the employment rate in Fenland was the region's lowest, with a five-year average rate of 71.3%, to 2023-24. In contrast, East Cambridgeshire had the highest five-year average employment rate at 84.1%.
Sectoral Employment	1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total C&P employment, of locally based companies, across all sectors was 256,000 in 2023-24. The largest employment sector was Manufacturing, which included High-tech Manufacturing with 39,800 employees. Other Business Services, including management consultancy, professional business services, employment agencies and marketing activities, were the second largest corporate sector, employing 27,500 people.
Employment Growth by Sector	1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total employment of locally based companies within C&P grew by 21.5% between 2017-18 to 2023-24. The strongest growth was in the Life Science and Healthcare sector at 67.6%, increasing from 13,500 employees in 2017-18 to 22,500 in 2023-24.
Residents Aged 16-64 in Employment and Working Within 5km of Home or at Home	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 79% of working age residents, in employment, in Cambridge were able to work within 5km of home or at home; however, in East Cambridgeshire this figure was 47%, and 44% in Fenland.
Median Worker Pay (full-time)	2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earnings growth across the C&P region marginally exceeded the England rate of 29.4%. Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire had median pay that was 15-18% higher than England, respectively, in 2024, while Fenland's median pay of just £31,300 was 17% below the average for England.
Median Worker Pay (part-time)	2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In every year between 2017 and 2024, Cambridge had the highest absolute median worker pay for part-time employees. Huntingdonshire had the highest growth in part-time worker earnings of 74.5%, followed by Peterborough (43.5%) and South Cambridgeshire (42%), which both had similar growth to England (41.5%). Cambridge (26%), Fenland (21.9%) and East Cambridgeshire (20.5%) had growth in part-time earnings lower than England.
Disposable Household Income per Head	2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Cambridgeshire had the highest disposable income of £29,000, which was 24.5% greater than England's £23,300. Despite residents in Cambridge having similar median earnings to those in South Cambridgeshire, residents in Cambridge had a lower disposable income of £23,900, 17.9% below South Cambridgeshire.



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Peterborough and Fenland, disposable incomes were 20.3% and 18.1% lower than in England respectively.
Employees in Low Pay	2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the C&P region, on average, 14.2% of employees earned below living wage rates, based on the mean of the local authority area values, lower than the rate for England (15.9%).
Online Job Adverts	3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024, C&P had a 1.8% increase on the previous year of 2023, reaching a total of 330,000 online job adverts. Cambridge was the local area covering 45.8% of all C&P's online job adverts in 2024. Furthermore, Peterborough and Cambridge combined, had 68.5% of all C&P's online job adverts in 2024. The year-on-year growth rate peaked in 2021 for all areas, followed by two consecutive annual declines before an uplift for most areas in 2024.
Quality of Work	4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A slightly higher proportion of females in C&P were paid overtime and had a desired contract to males in C&P. However, males in C&P appeared to have experienced better opportunities for career progression (58%) compared females in C&P (53.6%).
Workforce Receiving In-Work Universal Credit	4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total number of in-work Universal Credit claimants within C&P was 34,000 in 2025. The proportion of all employees claiming the in-work Universal Credit in C&P at 8.4% was slightly below the proportion for England (8.7%). The local authority area with the highest proportion was Peterborough (15%), whilst South Cambridgeshire had the lowest proportion (4.9%).
Workforce Working Long Working (>45) Hours	4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of the workforce working long hours was slightly higher in C&P (19.9%) compared to England (19.5%), in 2024. Fenland had the highest percentage of workforce working long hours (at 26.3%). This was significantly higher than the average across England.
Attainment and Attainment Gaps by Age 19	5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the academic year 2023-24, the average across local authority areas in C&P had age 19 participation rates of 83% at Level 2 and 56.3% at Level 3, compared to England's at 83.4% for Level 2 and 57.6% for Level 3. South Cambridgeshire consistently had the highest rate of Level 2 and Level 3 attainment across the time period, whilst Fenland remained at the lowest level of attainment for Level 3 over the entire time period, despite increasing from 41% in 2016-17 to 46.4% in 2023-24.
Participation Rates Post-18	5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-18 education participation in education and training within C&P was 2,305 people per 100,000 compared to England's 2,898 per 100,000, in 2023-24. Peterborough had the highest rate amongst C&P's local authority areas with a rate of 4,348 per 100,000.
Residents educated to RQF3+	5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of residents educated to RQF3+ in C&P was marginally below England (65.1% vs 67.6%) in 2024. As of 2024, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire stood out with high percentages of residents educated to RQF3+ compared to England (79.6% and 78.3% respectively, compared to England's 67.6%).





		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 2015 and 2024, the percentage of residents that were educated to NVQ3+/RQF3+ increased for each local authority in the C&P region.
Higher Education Rate	5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across the C&P region, the average enrolment rate was 2,134 per 100,000 population in 2023-24. Peterborough, at 40.4%, experienced the greatest increase in the rate of enrolments between 2017-18 and 2023-24. South Cambridgeshire had the highest rate of enrolments in higher education with a rate of 2,741 per 100,000 population in 2023-24, whilst Fenland had the lowest rate of enrolments, at 1,405 per 100,000 population.
Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	5.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024, the NEET rate in Cambridgeshire of 3.3% and in Peterborough of 4.3% were higher than the England rate of 3.2%. In all three, the NEET rate for males was higher than for females in 2024. From 2019 to 2024, the NEET rate for Peterborough endured between 4% and 4.4% in each year, whereas Cambridgeshire's rate reached a historic high of 3.3% in 2024, having previously sustained between 2.4% and 2.7%.
Apprenticeships	5.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rate of apprenticeship starts in C&P averaged 764 per 100,000 population per year across 2019-20 to 2023-24, below the average for England of 935. The participation rate for C&P was 1,671 per 100,000 population, lower than England's rate of 2,031 per 100,000 population, in 2023-24. C&P had the lowest start rate and participation rate within the combined authority peer group.



1 Employment

1.1 Total Employees

ONS data defines total employees as those aged 16 years or over, receiving a wage in return for carrying out full- or part-time work. It excludes voluntary workers, self-employed workers or working owners who are not paid via pay as you earn (PAYE). Note, Appendix A Selection of Data Sources presents a comparison between the different possible sources of employment data. This indicator reports total employment as reported by ONS¹¹, which are figures derived from workplace-based data. Since 2017, the total number of employees in the C&P region has grown by 6.5%, matching the growth rate of England.

Figure 1-1 plots the total employees by local authority over time to 2023. Growth in C&P can be largely attributed to the 12.6% growth in total employees observed in Cambridge. Peterborough had a sizeable decline in the number of employees in 2019 from 2017, but bounced back in 2023, nevertheless reaching only a 1.7% growth rate, the lowest of all the local authorities in the C&P region. Elsewhere, locally, the number of all employees grew by between 5.6% to 7.1% since 2017.

The ONS data suggest that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the total number of employees were small, with policies such as the furlough scheme supporting employment broadly through national lockdowns, and employment growth overall in C&P mirroring the average in England.

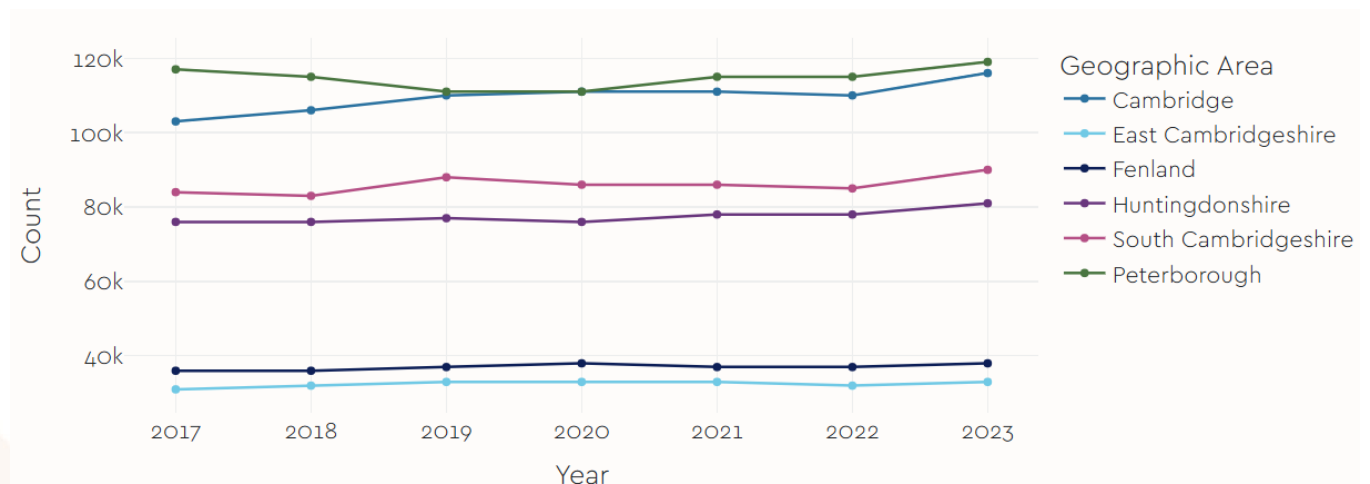


Figure 1-1: Total Employees (count) by Local Authority Area and by Year

1.2 Employment Rate

Whilst the indicator *Total Employees* only counted those employed by a company, wider measures of employment also include the self-employed and unpaid family workers. The employment rate¹² is a wider measure of employment as a percentage of the working age population (aged 16-64). The C&P employment rate in 2023-24 was 77.7% compared to 75.7% in England.

The overall employment rate across the C&P region remained relatively stable and was consistently greater than the national average beginning in 2009-10. Figure 1-2 plots the employment rate by local authority area over time between 2009-10 and 2023-24. There was some annual variance in the employment rate; however, certain observations were made.

¹¹ ONS, 2024. Business Register and Employment Survey: open access. [\[Link to source\]](#)

¹² ONS, 2025. Annual Population Survey. [\[Link to source\]](#)



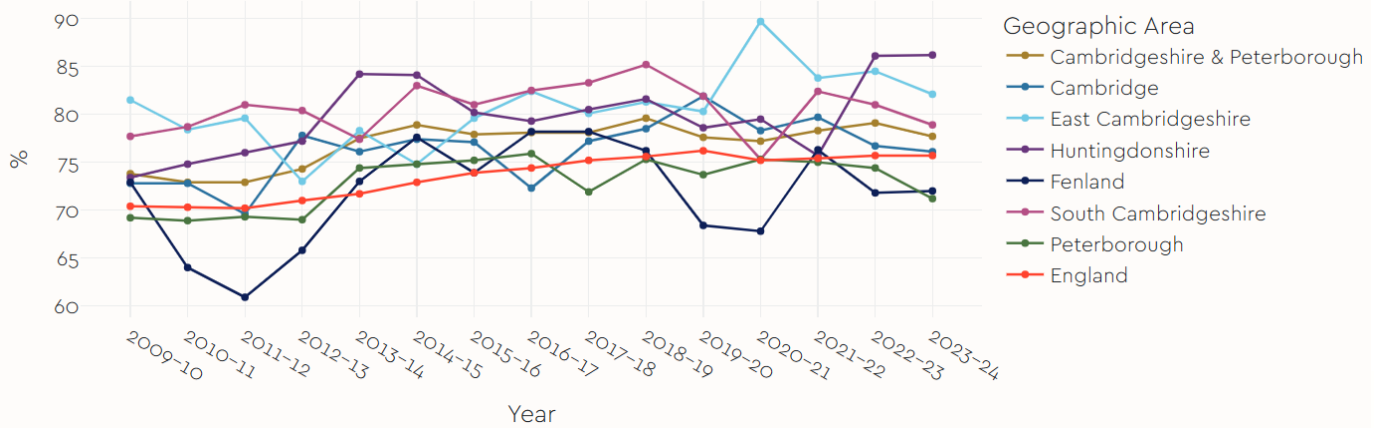


Figure 1-2: Employment Rate (%) by Local Authority Area & England and by Year

Accordingly, Table 1-1 contains the average employment rate by local authority area over the past five years of data (2019-20 to 2023-24). The employment rate in Fenland was, on average, the lowest within the C&P region, with a rate of 71.3%. In contrast, East Cambridgeshire had the highest five-year average employment rate at 84.1%.

Area	Five-Year Average Employment Rate
Cambridge	78.5%
East Cambridgeshire	84.1%
Fenland	71.3%
Huntingdonshire	81.2%
South Cambridgeshire	79.9%
Peterborough	73.9%
C&P	78.0%
England	75.6%

Table 1-1: Five-year Average Employment Rate (%) by Local Authority Area & England

1.3 Sectoral Employment

The *Sectoral Employment*¹³ indicator reports the breakdown of total employment by each industry sector. Data on the number of employees within each industry sector was provided by the University of Cambridge’s Centre for Business Research (CBR). Note that the aggregate of these values does not match the *Total Employees* metric, owing to the differing data sources and methods. This section uses the CBR data as it is the primary source selected for this report, covering locally based companies, whereas the *Total Employees* metric used ONS data. Appendix A Selection of Data Sources discusses the difference in these data sources in more detail.

Figure 1-3 charts the number of employees within each sector during the financial year 2023-24. The size of each bar displays the employment within that sector across the C&P region, with segments of the bar showing the employment within each local authority area.

¹³ The University of Cambridge’s CBR, 2025. Cambridge Cluster Insights. [\[Link to source\]](#)



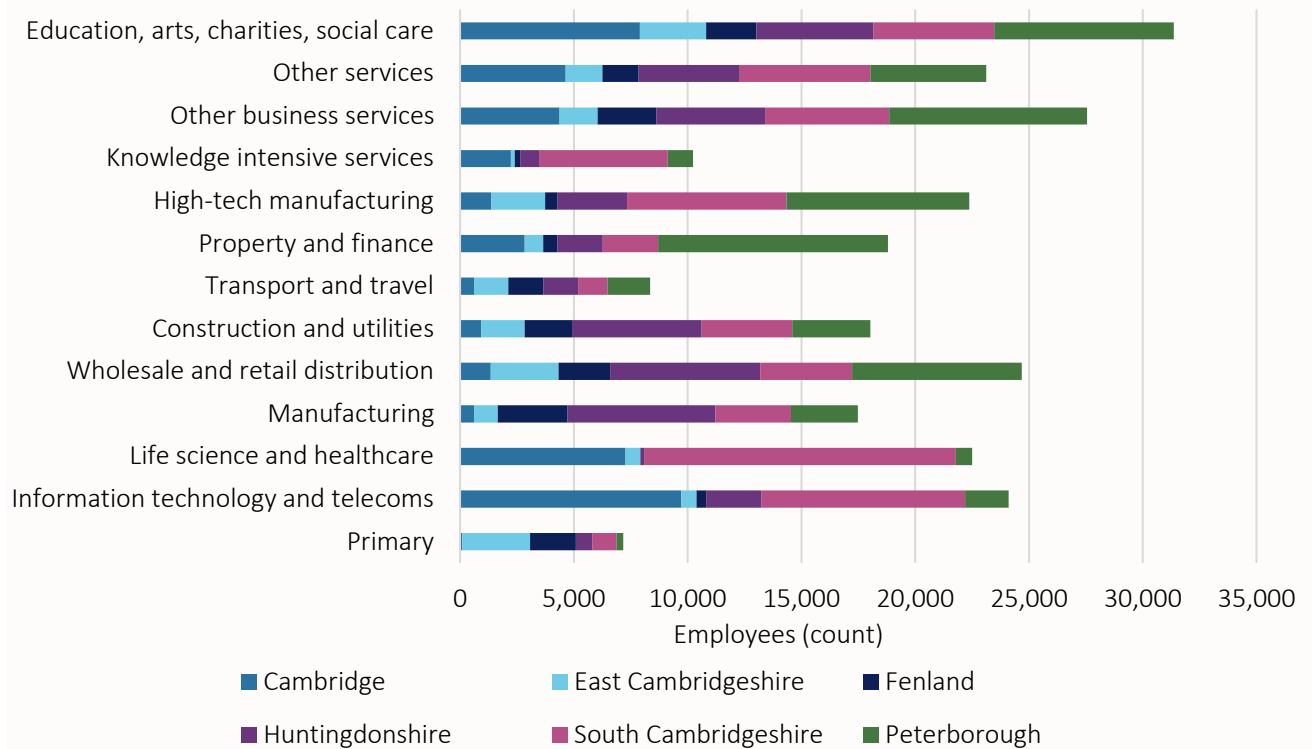


Figure 1-3: Total Employees (count) by Sector and by Local Authority Area in 2023-24

Across the C&P region, the total employment over all sectors was 256,000. The Manufacturing and High-tech Manufacturing sectors together had the greatest number of employees at 39,800. Within these sectors combined, Peterborough had the highest number of workers, followed closely by South Cambridgeshire, contributing 27.5% and 25.9% correspondingly, of the region's total manufacturing workforce. Cambridge had the smallest proportion of employees working in manufacturing at only 5%.

Other Business Services was the second largest corporate sector in the C&P region, employing 27,500 people. This sector includes services such as management consultancy, professional business services, employment agencies and marketing. Most of the sector's employees were located in Peterborough (31.5%) and South Cambridgeshire (19.8%), whilst East Cambridgeshire had the smallest share of employees at 6.1%.

The Education, Arts, Charities and Social Care sector employed more people than the Other Business Services sector, with 31,400 employees. Employment in this sector was largest in Cambridge and Peterborough, which together accounted for half of the total workforce in this sector.

The remaining sectors, including Construction and Utilities, Information Technology and Telecoms, Property and Finance, Other Services and Wholesale & Retail Distribution, each employed between 7-10% of the total workforce. The Life Science & Healthcare sector was also in this range, employing 22,500 people, though with the vast majority of the workforce located in either South Cambridgeshire or Cambridge (93.1%, combined).

Noticeably smaller sectors within the region included the Knowledge Intensive Services sector, which employed approximately 10,200 people, equating to 4% of the total workforce. Over half (55.3%) of the employees were located within South Cambridgeshire. Similarly, the Primary sector (raw material extraction and production, including agriculture, fishing, forestry and mining) employed approximately 7,200 employees in the C&P region, making it the smallest employment sector in the C&P region, with only 2.8% of the total workforce.



Table 1-2 contains the largest sectors by employment within each local authority area. For all areas apart from Cambridge, about one-fifth of employees worked in the Manufacturing sector, including High-tech Manufacturing, which was the sector with the greatest number of employees across the C&P region in 2023-24. However, the proportion was lower for Cambridge, signifying a more varied workforce in this local authority area. Manufacturing that included High-tech Manufacturing was the largest sector by employees in East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough, whilst for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire the largest sectors by total employees were Information Technology and Telecoms, and Life Sciences and Healthcare, respectively.

Area	Sector	Proportion of total employees
Cambridge	Information Technology & Telecoms	22.1%
East Cambridgeshire	Manufacturing	15.9%
Fenland	Manufacturing	18.9%
Huntingdonshire	Manufacturing	21.8%
Peterborough	Manufacturing	18.4%
South Cambridgeshire	Life Sciences and Healthcare	20.1%
C&P	Manufacturing	15.6%

Table 1-2: Key Sector as Highest Proportion of Total Employees (%) within each Local Authority Area in 2023-24

1.4 Employment Growth by Sector

Following on from section 1.3, which discussed *Sectoral Employment* during 2023-24 only, the Employment Growth by Sector¹⁴ indicator reports by how much employment in the sector has grown over time since 2017-18, according to the data produced by the CBR. Figure 1-4 plots the yearly employment by each sector in C&P as percentage growth compared to 2017-18.

¹⁴ The University of Cambridge's CBR, 2025. Cambridge Cluster Insights. [\[Link to source\]](#)

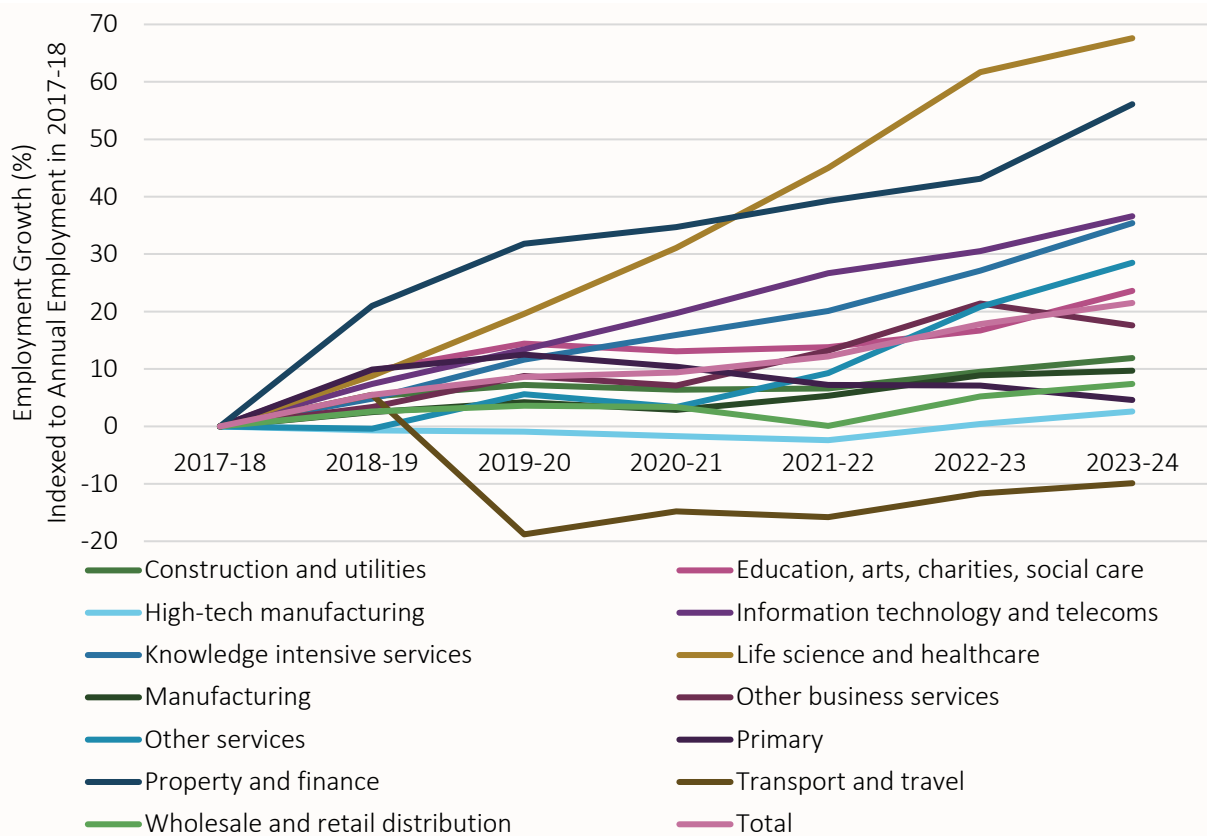


Figure 1-4: C&P Sectoral Employment Growth (%) by Sector and by Year on 2017-18

Total employment within C&P grew by 21.5% from 2017-18 to its 2023-24 value of 256,000. The strongest growth was in the Life Science and Healthcare sector at 67.6%, increasing from 13,500 employees in 2017-18 to 22,500 in 2023-24. The growth in this sector was significantly higher compared to all the other sectors. For instance, the sector with the second highest growth was Property and Finance, reaching 18,800 employees due to a 56.1% growth rate in 2017-18. Other major sectors in the C&P region that experienced significant growth were Information Technology and Telecoms (36.6%) and Knowledge Intensive Services (35.4%).

It is notable that the Manufacturing sector, including High-tech Manufacturing, with the highest count of employees at 39,800, experienced relatively lower growth (5.6%) since 2017-18. The High-tech Manufacturing subset of the Manufacturing sector grew by 2.6%, adding around 500 employees, whilst the remaining (non-High tech) Manufacturing base grew by 9.7%, gaining 1,500 employees since 2017-18. All sectors experienced growth apart from Transport and Travel. In this sector, employment declined by 9.9% from 9,300 to 8,400. The decline was influenced by the collapse of Thomas Cook in September 2019, which employed over one thousand people in the Transport and Travel sector across C&P.

Table 1-3 contains a breakdown of the manufacturing sector employment into the constituent sub-sectors of low-tech manufacturing and med-low tech manufacturing and is shown alongside high-tech manufacturing as the total manufacturing base. Across C&P’s local authority areas, Peterborough had the greatest proportion of its entire manufacturing workforce employed in high-tech manufacturing, with 8,000 employees representing 73.2% of the manufacturing workforce. East Cambridgeshire had the second largest proportion of its manufacturing workforce employed in the high-tech manufacturing subsector with nearly 2,500 workers, making up 69.5% of its total manufacturing workforce. Within the local authority areas, Fenland had the lowest proportion of high-tech manufacturing employees at 15.2%.



Area	High-tech	%	Low-tech	%	Med-low	%	Total
Cambridge	1,376	69	536	26.9	83	4.2	1,995
East Cambridgeshire	2,360	69.5	625	18.4	410	12.1	3,395
Fenland	547	15.2	1,954	54.1	1,109	30.7	3,610
Huntingdonshire	3,058	32	4,729	49.4	1,781	18.6	9,568
Peterborough	8,025	73.2	2,143	19.5	797	7.3	10,965
South Cambridgeshire	7,004	67.9	2,248	21.8	1,061	10.3	10,313
C&P	22,370	56.1	12,235	30.7	5,241	13.2	39,846

Table 1-3: Number of employees per manufacturing subsector by local authority area in 2023-24, with percentage of total manufacturing sector

1.5 Residents Aged 16 to 64 in Employment & Working Within 5km of Home or at Home

The 2021 Census recorded the distance travelled to work by gathering home and work addresses of the population in employment within the UK. The data captured the percentage of usual residents aged 16 to 64 years old in employment who worked at or within 5 km of their usual home address, expressed as a proportion of all working residents¹⁵. The data is presented in Figure 1-5. It is important to be aware that the data was collected in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted the distance travelled to work patterns due to national lockdowns, related guidance and furlough measures.

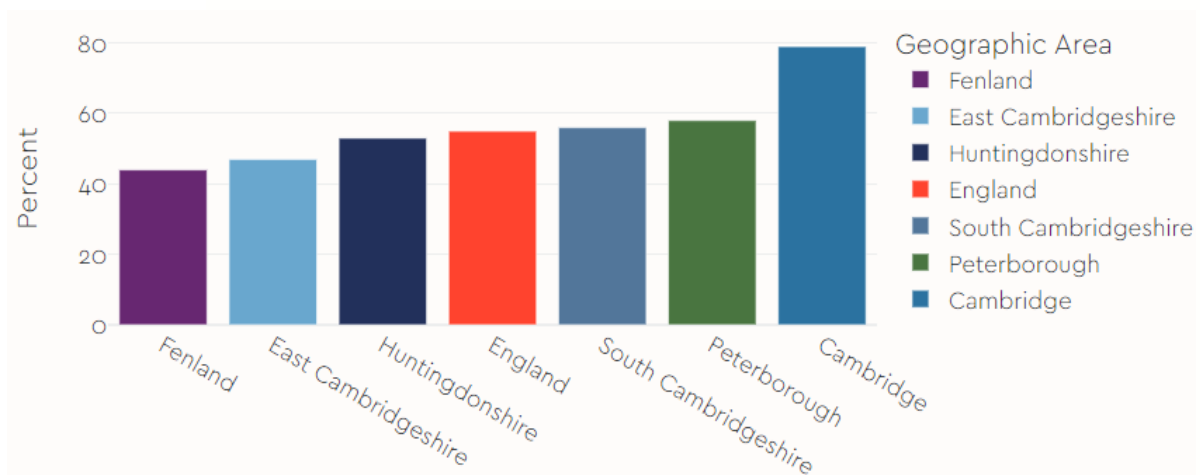


Figure 1-5: Percentage of Residents Aged 16-64 in Employment and Working within 5km of Home or at Home by Local Authority Area in 2021

According to the data, 79% of working age residents in employment in Cambridge worked within 5km of home or at home. In Fenland, the percentage of working age residents in employment able to work within 5km of home or at home was 44%. In East Cambridgeshire this figure was 47%, suggesting that many residents within Fenland and East Cambridgeshire had to travel further for work, proportionally commuting out of the district. As more urban and sub-urban areas, Peterborough and South Cambridgeshire also had relatively high proportions of working residents working within 5 km of home (or at home) at 58% and 56% respectively. Huntingdonshire had a rate slightly lower at 53% and similar to England's rate of 55%.

¹⁵ ONS, 2021. Distance travelled to work. [\[Link to source\]](#)



2 Earnings

2.1 Median Worker Pay (Full-Time)

The Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings (ASHE) collects information from PAYE tax information submitted by employers and provides information on employee pay. The earnings of self-employed people were not included, whilst the figures were derived from workplace-based data.

This indicator relates to the annual gross earnings (earnings before tax and other deductions but including overtime) of employees within the ASHE. The value reported is the median of all full-time employees¹⁶ within the area under consideration. A full-time employee was defined as an employee who works more than 30 paid hours per week or those in teaching professions working 25 paid hours or more per week.

Figure 2-1 plots the median annual earnings of full-time workers during the period 2017 to 2024. Values are shown for each of the C&P region's constituent local authority areas; however, ONS published ASHE outputs at the C&P regional level separately for the two years of 2023 and 2024¹⁷. For some years, values for East Cambridgeshire were not present in the source data, having been suppressed at source as they were statistically unreliable.

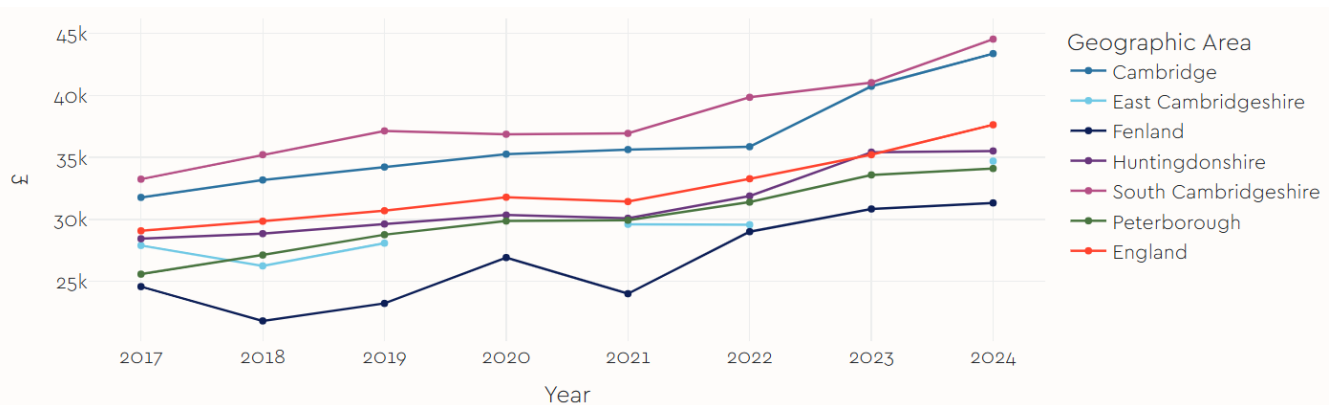


Figure 2-1: Full Time Median Worker Annual Earnings (£) by Local Authority Area & England by Year. Note: A data point is not shown where data has been suppressed due to its large confidence interval.

Median earnings varied significantly throughout the C&P region. Cambridge, at £43,400, and South Cambridgeshire, at £44,500, had median earnings that were 15-18% higher than England, respectively in 2024, while the median earnings in Fenland of £31,300 were 17% below the average for England. South Cambridgeshire's consistently high median earnings are associated with the area's high share of jobs in sectors such as Life Science and Healthcare, High-Tech Manufacturing, and Information Technology and Telecoms, uncovered by the CBR data (sections 1.3 and 1.4). Median earnings in C&P overall of £38,300 was marginally higher than England's £37,600.

Median full-time earnings increased in all C&P regions between 2017 and 2024. However, notably only three of the six constituent local authority areas outpaced the UK's inflation rate of 29.5% calculated by the Bank of England's inflation calculator¹⁸ for the same period. Cambridge, with a growth rate of 36.5%, South Cambridgeshire with 33.9% and Peterborough with 33.3% were above the inflation figure of 29.5%, whilst Fenland with 27.4%, Huntingdonshire with 24.9% and East Cambridgeshire with a growth rate of 24.4% were all

¹⁶ ONS, 2024. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. [\[Link to source\]](#)

¹⁷ ONS, 2024. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings - Estimates of annual, weekly and hourly earnings of employees, by Combined Authorities. [\[Link to source\]](#)

¹⁸ Available here <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>.



below 29.5%. England's growth rate of 29.4% almost exactly matched the inflation rate of 29.5%. Also notable is the comparatively sizeable 8.5% increase in median earnings in South Cambridgeshire between 2023 and 2024.

2.2 Median Worker Pay (Part-Time)

Section 2.1 reported the earnings of full-time workers, obtained from the ASHE data. Using the same data, this indicator discusses the earnings of part-time workers¹⁹, defined as working 30 paid hours or less per week or those in teaching professions working fewer than 25 paid hours per week. The indicator reports workers' median gross annual earnings. Due to small sample sizes, data pertaining to part-time worker earnings suffer from large confidence intervals and, consequently, ONS intentionally omitted certain data points for publication across some local authority areas and year pairs. The suppressed values are omitted from the analysis and the plots herein.

Figure 2-2 shows that the median part-time earnings varied between years. Markedly, the figure shows a drop in value between 2020 to 2021 for Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire, possibly indicating an effect of COVID-19 on this period's data. Data is unknown for Fenland and East Cambridgeshire for at least one of these years, so it was not possible to determine whether a similar drop in wages was also observed for these two areas. However, Peterborough did have growth over this period, and moreover, within a wider year-on-year trend between 2019 and 2022, whereas Huntingdonshire had four consecutive year-on-year rises between 2021 and 2024.

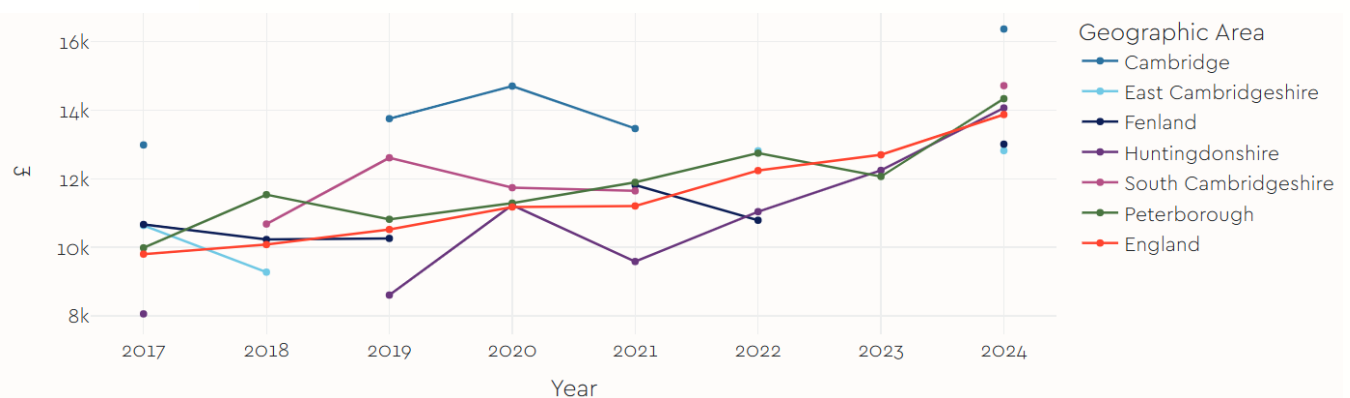


Figure 2-2: Part Time Median Worker Annual Earnings (£) by Local Authority Area & England by Year. Note: A data point is not shown where data has been suppressed due to its large confidence interval.

To fill the data gaps, linear interpolation was used to estimate values between available data points as plotted in Figure 2-3. The positive gradients of the time series in Figure 2-3 indicates a growth in gross part-time earnings across all the local authority areas within C&P. In every year between 2017 and 2024, Cambridge had the highest median worker pay for part-time employees. However, Huntingdonshire had the highest growth in part-time worker earnings of 74.5%, followed by Peterborough (43.5%) and South Cambridgeshire (42%), which both had similar growth to England (41.5%). Cambridge (26%), Fenland (21.9%) and East Cambridgeshire (20.5%) had growth in part-time earnings lower than England.

¹⁹ ONS, 2024. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. [\[Link to source\]](#)

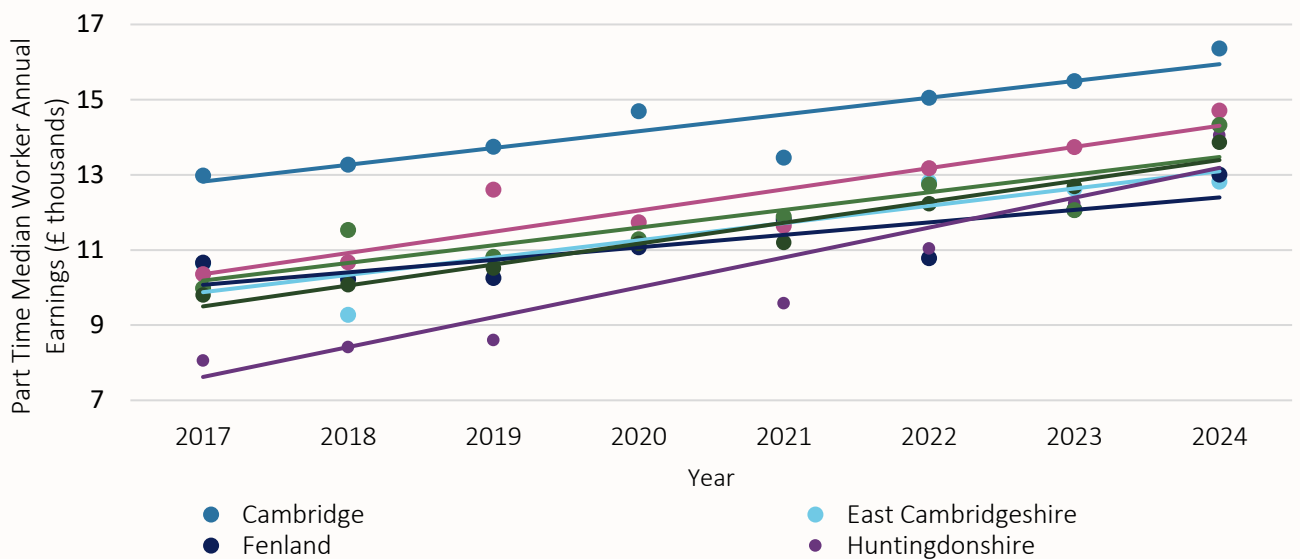


Figure 2-3: Part Time Median Worker Annual Earnings (£) by Local Authority Area & England by Year. Note: Linear interpolation was used to fill the data gaps in figure 2-2.

2.3 Disposable Household Income per Head

An area’s disposable income is defined as the amount of money that all the individual residents in that area have available for spending or saving after they have paid any taxes and received any direct benefits. This differs from the other sections that use earnings as the primary measure. This metric accounts for all taxes, benefits and non-PAYE sources of income to account for how much money an individual has to spend. It includes the business income of self-employed people in that area. *Disposable Household Income Per Head*²⁰ is computed by dividing this number by the number of usual residents in that area, which accounts for the entire population of the area, including children and retired people.

Figure 2-4 plots the disposable income per head in the C&P region from 2004 to 2022. The time series data shows that disposable income per resident increased across the C&P region since 2004, most notably in Huntingdonshire (79.5%) and East Cambridgeshire (74.3%), compared to the average of 68.8% across all of England.

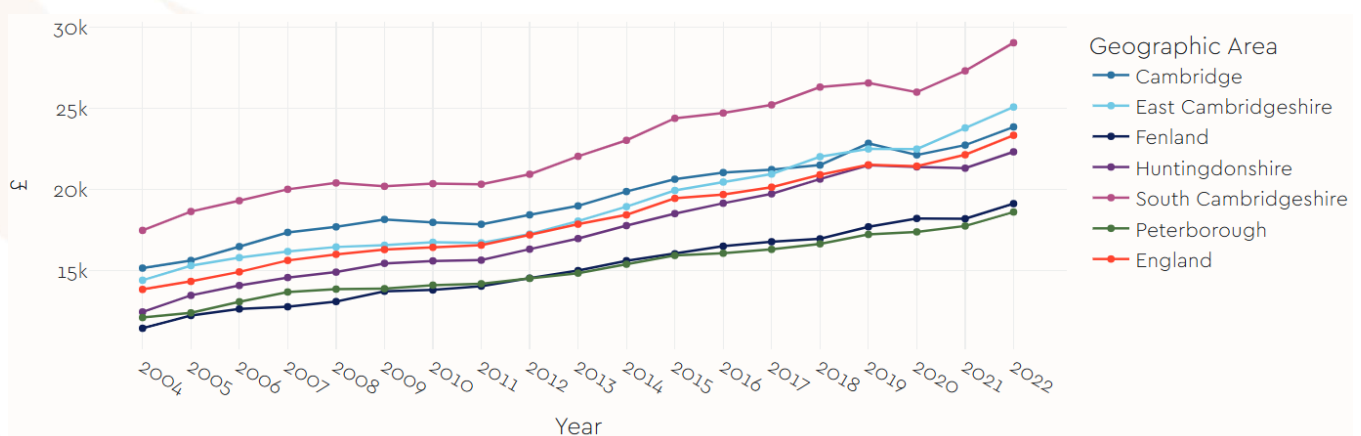


Figure 2-4: Gross Disposable Income per Head (£) by Local Authority Area & England and by Year

While all areas had growth, there were differences in disposable income across the C&P region. As with median income, South Cambridgeshire had the highest disposable income per head

²⁰ ONS, 2024. Regional gross disposable household income: local authorities by ITL1 region. [\[Link to source\]](#)



annually in 2022 (at £29,000), which was 24.5% greater than England's £23,300. Cambridge, however, had lower disposable income per head than England (£23,900, 17.9% below that of South Cambridgeshire), whereas East Cambridgeshire had a higher than England (£25,100).

In the other three local authority areas, disposable income per resident was below the average for England. Peterborough and Fenland had disposable incomes 20.3% and 18.1% below England, respectively. In the same year of 2022, Fenland's median income was 12.8% lower than England's, whilst Peterborough's median income was 5.7% lower, implying that lower wages were not offset by lower living costs in comparison to England, overall.

2.4 Employees in Low Pay

An employee is in low pay if their hourly wage is below the Living Wage Foundation's real living wage. In 2024-25, this was deemed to be £12.60 per hour outside London. This is the rate set by the Living Wage Foundation, which is higher than the legal minimum wage and is calculated based on the cost of living. The legal living wage, known as the National Living Wage, is set by the government and is the minimum wage employers are legally required to pay workers. This ONS²¹ dataset covers earnings from both full- and part-time workers, and a percentage is provided setting out what share each group represents within the total employees counted. The figures are derived from workplace-based data. Figure 2-5 charts this data by local authority area with a comparison to England.

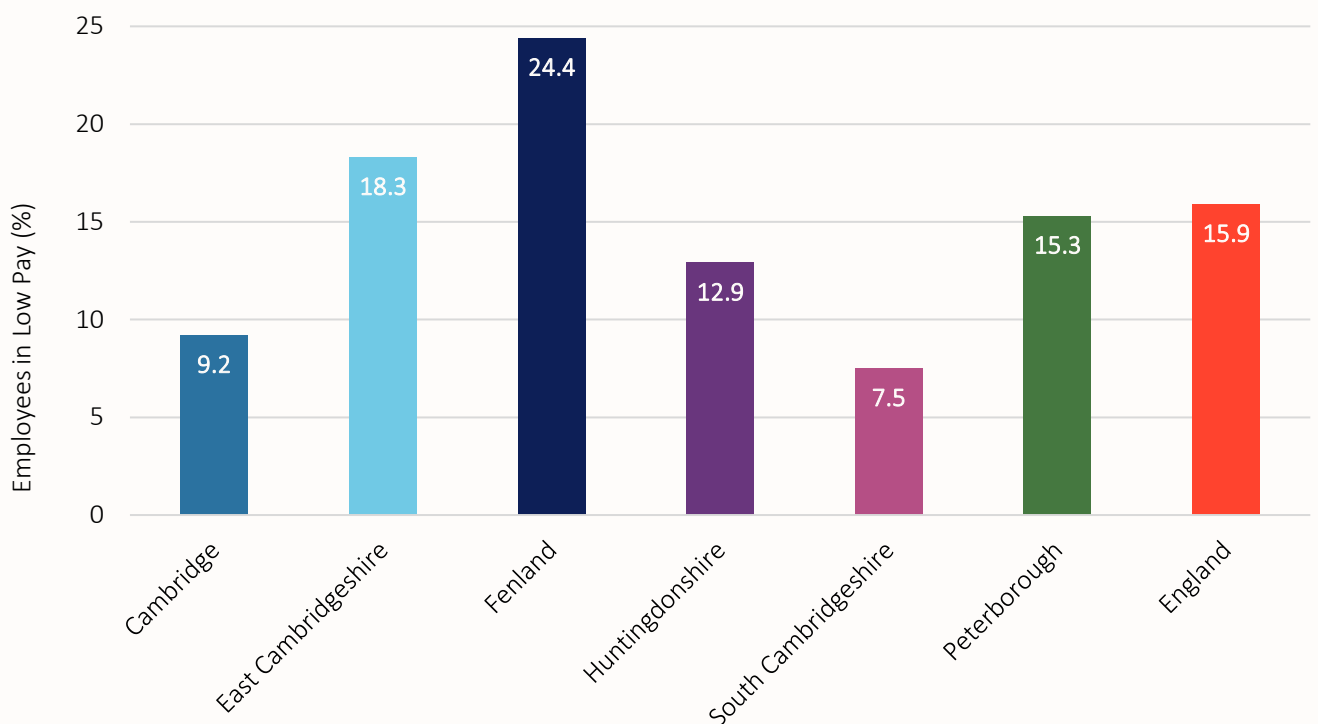


Figure 2-5: Employees in Low-Pay (%) by Local Authority Area & England in 2024

In the C&P region, on average, 14.2% of employees earned below living wage rates in 2024, based on the mean of the local authority area values. This was lower than England, where 15.9% of employees earned below the living wage. The share of employees earning below the living wage was below the rate for England in Cambridge, Huntingdonshire, Peterborough and South Cambridgeshire. Only Fenland and East Cambridgeshire had a higher proportion of employees earning below the living wage than the average. Fenland stood out as having a significantly higher percentage of employees in low pay at 24.4%. This correlates with Fenland

²¹ ONS, 2024. Number and proportion of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage. [\[Link to source\]](#)



having the lowest GVA per head and the lowest median worker pay out of the C&P constituent local authority areas.

South Cambridgeshire has a particularly low percentage of employees earning below living wage rates at 7.5%, in line with the findings of South Cambridgeshire having the highest median worker pay out of the C&P region's authorities. However, all areas had an increase in the proportion of low-pay employees in 2024 from the previous year (excluding East Cambridgeshire due to no 2023 value available).





3 Job Opportunities

3.1 Online Job Adverts

Hiring activity can be measured by the number of online job adverts, which can indicate the near-and- future economic landscape since a higher number of job vacancies signals expanding businesses and economic growth. The Online Job Adverts indicator data was obtained from the ONS dataset that uses *Textkernel*, a web-scraping software used to download job advert information from approximately 90,000 job boards and recruitment pages²². The data included weekly same-day, snapshot counts representing the average point in time of the number of all live adverts²³, averaged across calendar months; and, separately, the number of adverts that appeared for the first time across the calendar month across geographies.

Figure 3-1 plots the year-on-year growth rate of all the online job advert counts by area. In 2024 within C&P overall, there was a 1.8% increase on the previous year of 2023, reaching a total of 330,000 online job adverts. England recorded a 3.4% decline in 2024 on 2023. At the local authority area level, Cambridge was the only area that also had a decline, by 6.5%, in the number of online job adverts in 2024. Notwithstanding the year-on-year reduction, Cambridge was the local area covering 45.8% of all C&P's online job adverts in 2024. Furthermore, Peterborough and Cambridge combined had 68.5% of all C&P's online job adverts in 2024.

Over the longer-term, the year-on-year growth rate peaked in 2021 for all areas, followed by two consecutive annual declines before an uplift for most areas in 2024. The growth rates were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, within the time period covered, and moreover, the data is classed as official statistics in development²⁴ by the ONS. However, Table 3-1 shows the absolute and relative change of online job adverts by local authority area and England in 2019 and 2024. The data highlights that the relative change varied across local authority areas. Notably, Cambridge had a 1% increase, whilst South Cambridgeshire had a 134% expansion. Cambridge was the only local authority area that was below C&P's relative change of 25.1%.

²² ONS, 2025. Labour demand volumes by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC 2020), UK. [\[Link to source\]](#)

²³ If the count day fell between a job advert's posting date and expiration date, it was counted as a live advert.

²⁴ The data is currently being tested and refined to meet the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value (Code of Practice for Statistics).



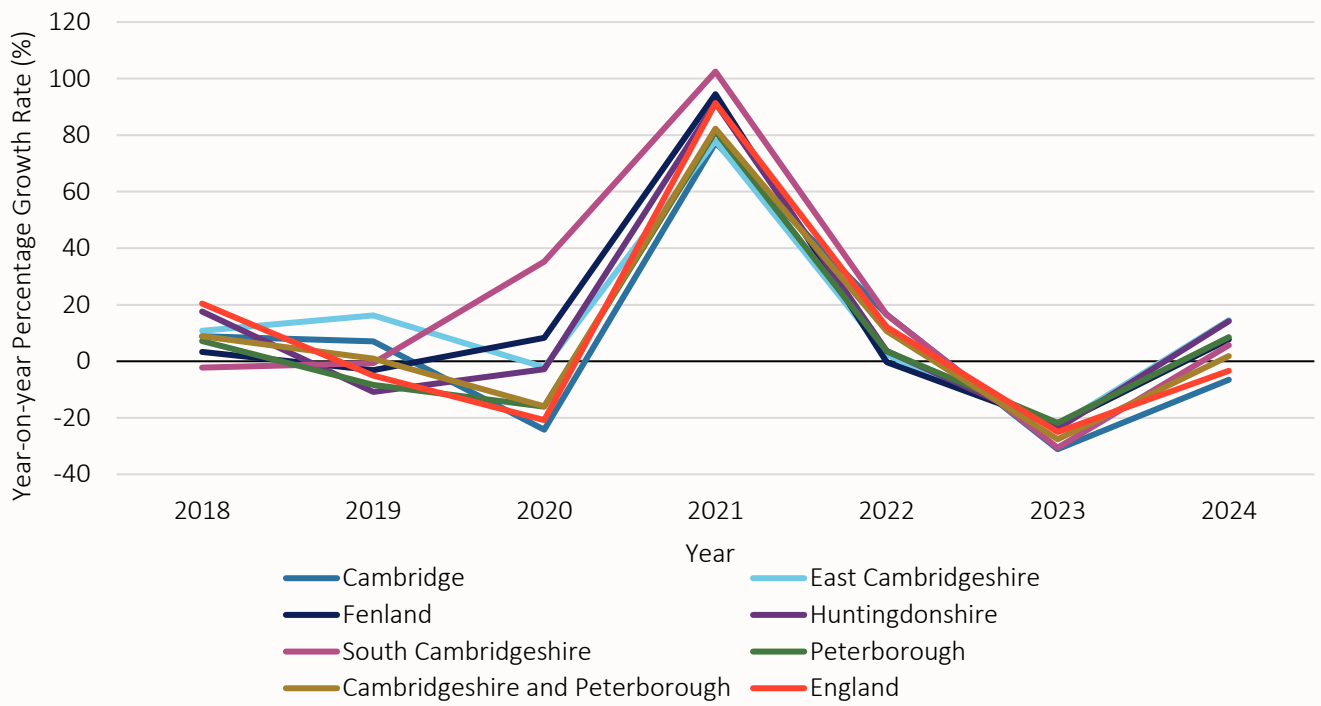


Figure 3-1: Year-on-year Percentage Growth Rate (%) of All Online Job Adverts by Local Authority Area & England

Area	Online job adverts in 2019	Online job adverts in 2024	Percentage change 2019 to 2024
Cambridge	149,900	151,300	1.0%
East Cambridgeshire	10,200	16,100	57.7%
Fenland	8,800	15,400	75.3%
Huntingdonshire	28,700	48,100	67.8%
South Cambridgeshire	10,500	24,500	134.0%
Peterborough	56,000	74,800	33.5%
C&P	264,000	330,200	25.1%
England	11,868,100	14,598,800	23.0%

Table 3-1: Online Jobs Adverts by Local Authority Area & England in Year and Relative Change. Notes: absolute values are rounded to the nearest hundred; percentage change was calculated on the unrounded data.

The data also shows that the C&P region had a larger increase in the number of online job adverts in 2024 on 2019, at 25.1% compared to England’s 23.0%. Figure 3-2 plots the year-on-year growth rate of only the new online job advert counts by area.

Like the features of the plot of all online job adverts in Figure 3-1, the year-on-year growth rate of only new online job adverts peaked for all areas in 2021, apart from South Cambridgeshire, which peaked a year earlier, in 2020. Notably, all areas declined for two consecutive years across 2023 and 2024, suggesting a widespread cooling down of new jobs. Although for all areas, the reduction in 2024 slowed compared to the rate of decline observed in 2023. The growth rate deterioration in 2024 on 2023 of 18% for C&P was marginally larger than England’s rate of 17.1%.

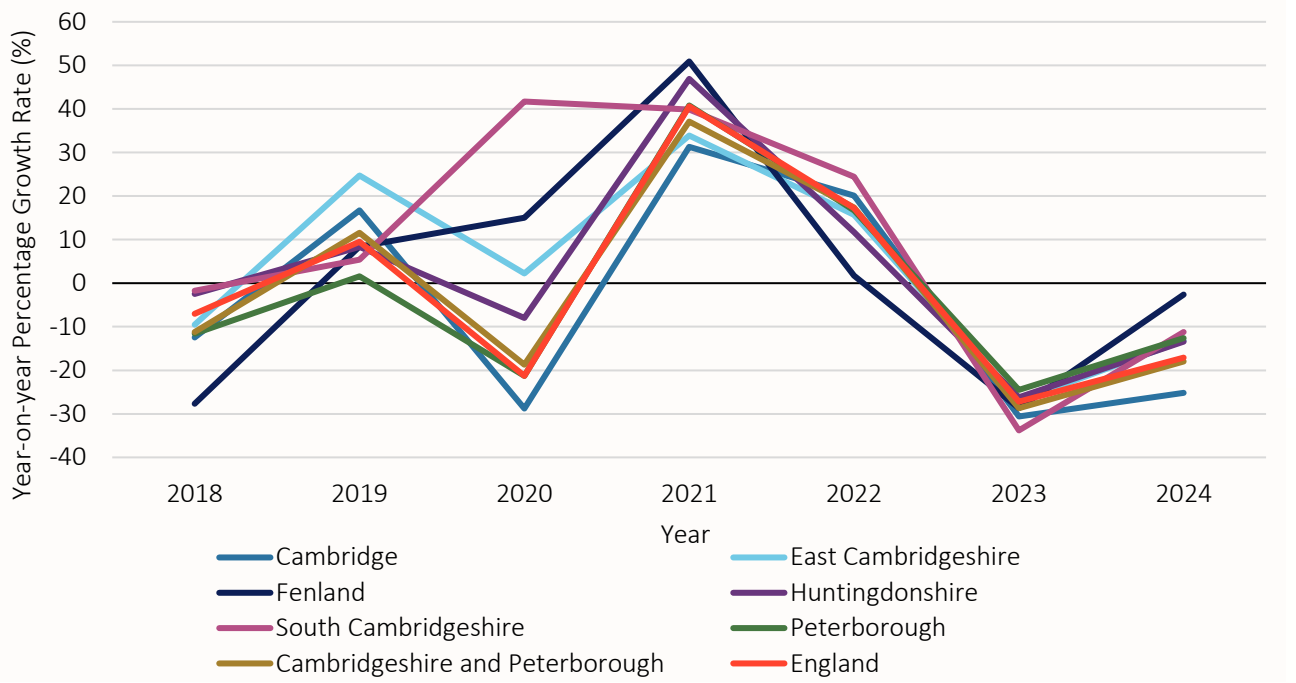


Figure 3-2: Year-on-year Percentage Growth Rate of New Online Job Adverts by Local Authority Area & England



4 Job Quality

4.1 Quality Of Work

ONS²⁵ publish data on work quality, which offers insight into the prevalence of high-quality work in the C&P region whilst not repeating aspects of work quality covered by other indicators, such as pay. The selected data values for the percentage of work covered the following:

Opportunities for progression: Employee has good career progression opportunities. This is measured as the percentage of surveyed employees who *agree* or *strongly agree* with the statement: *My job offers good opportunities for career progression*.

Desired contract: Employees either have a permanent contract or a non-permanent contract for a reason other than *could not find a permanent job*.

Paid overtime: Employees do not work unpaid overtime.

The estimates were based on samples of the population. The 95% confidence interval on these estimates was also provided; subsequently, comparisons between groups and time periods must be done with caution as the estimates were constructed from a sample survey. Also, data was only available down to the **International Territorial Level 2 (ITL2)** subdivision. Comparison is therefore made to England. The data included a breakdown by sex within each area, though.

Figure 4-1 charts the mean estimated value of the high-quality work indicators during 2023. Comparing between places on an indicator and by the basis of sex, there were differences between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and England. However, it should be noted that the 95% confidence intervals of these values overlapped, meaning there are no statistically distinguishable differences between the places at 95% confidence.

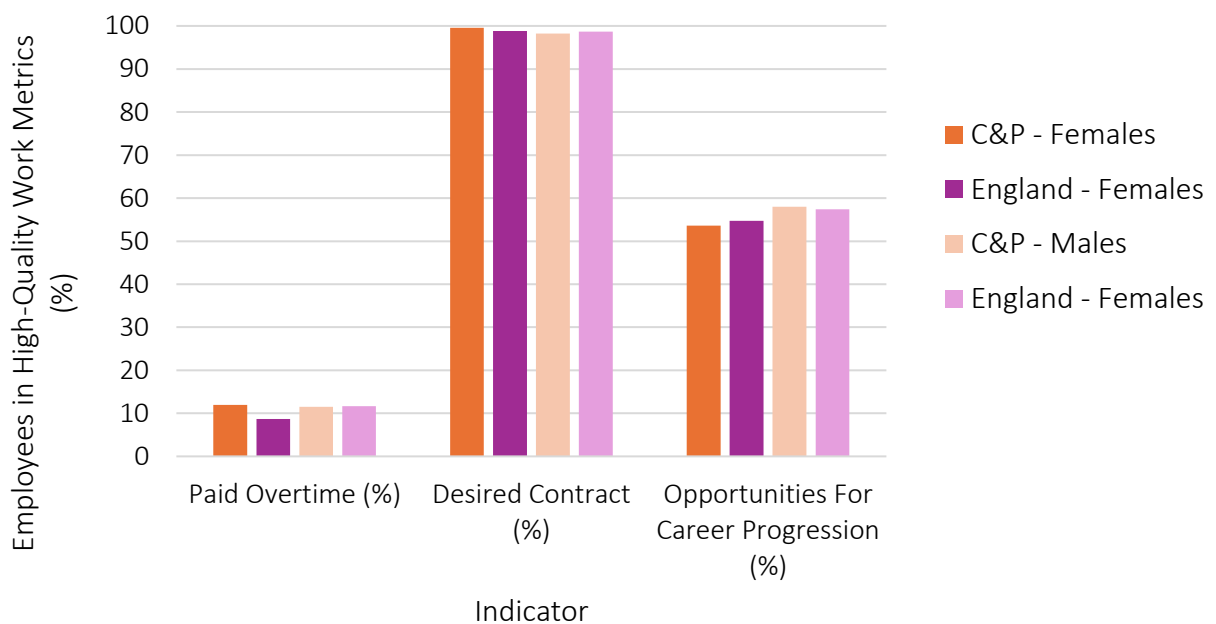


Figure 4-1: Employees in High-Quality Work Metrics (%) in 2023 by Area and Sex

The data shows that on average; England had a similar proportion of workers employed on their desired contract to C&P for both males and females. Females in C&P had the highest percentage across both areas and between males and females, with 99.6% of C&P females indicating they had a desired contract. This compared to 98.2% of males, in C&P.

²⁵ ONS, 2025. Job quality indicator tables, UK. [\[Link to source\]](#)





Considering career progression, males in C&P appeared to have experienced better opportunities for career progression than females in C&P since 58% of males in C&P indicated they had opportunities for career progression, notably higher than females in C&P who had a lower percentage at 53.6%. The career progression opportunities gap between males and females was also present at the national level (of England).

Whilst for males in C&P, the paid overtime percentage of workers resembled that of England (11.5% and 11.7%, respectively), the proportion of females paid overtimes in C&P was higher than for females in England, overall. 12% of females in C&P reported being paid overtime, compared to 8.7% of females in England.

4.2 Workforce Receiving In-Work Universal Credit

Universal Credit replaced and combined six benefits for low-income households when it was introduced in 2013, before being rolled out nationally in 2016-17. The data reports the count of the number of people receiving Universal Credit whilst at the same time being an employee²⁶.

Figure 4-2 charts the data on in-work Universal Credit claims since 2016, which demonstrates that Peterborough had the highest absolute number of claimants, in-region, at 13,379 in 2025. East Cambridgeshire had the fewest absolute number of claimants at 2,659 in 2025. Given that Universal Credit is a scheme that has only been rolled out in recent years, and at different points between areas, it is intractable to make robust conclusions regarding the large increases from 2018 to 2021. However, it is conceivable that the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the increase from 2021, following which claimant numbers appear to have remained at a new higher plateau.

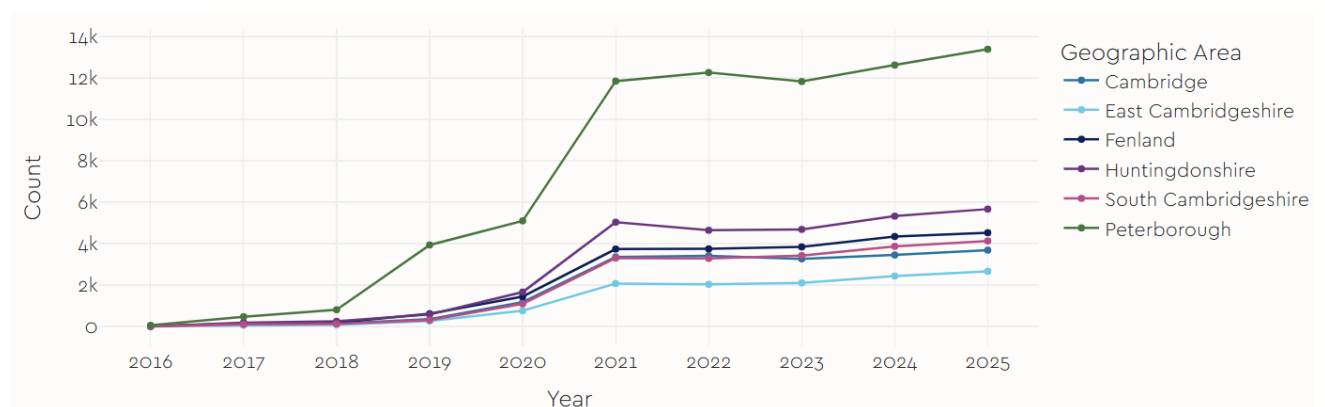


Figure 4-2: Employees Receiving In-Work Universal Credit (count) by Local Authority Area and by Year

²⁶ DWP, 2025. People on Universal Credit. Accessed via Stat-Xplore. [\[Link to source\]](#)



Table 4-1 contains the number of employees who received in-work Universal Credit and as a percentage of total employees, by local authority area, in 2025. The number of people in employment aged 16 to 64, as reported by the ONS' Annual Population Survey, was used as the denominator since the data relate to the people living in an area (and where they can claim Universal Credit) who were in employment rather than the jobs in that area, whilst capturing the main age group able to claim Universal Credit. The total number of employees receiving in-work Universal Credit in C&P was 34,000. Overall, the proportion of all employees receiving in-work Universal Credit in C&P, at 8.4%, was slightly below the proportion for England (8.7%). Peterborough had the highest proportion of employees receiving in work Universal Credit at 15%, approaching double the proportion across the whole of England. Fenland, at 11.3%, also had a higher proportion of workers claiming Universal Credit than the average for England. The percentage of claimants in the remaining four authorities was below the average for England. For example, South Cambridgeshire had only 4.9%.

It is interesting to note that the results for the proportion of employees receiving Universal Credit was largely in line with the trends of median worker pay (sections 2.1 and 2.2). Peterborough and Fenland both had a relatively low median worker pay in comparison to the other authorities in the C&P region. South Cambridgeshire had the highest median worker pay, which was likely associated to having the lowest proportion of employees receiving Universal Credit.

Area	Universal Credit Claimants in Employment	People in Employment ²⁷	Percentage Receiving in-Work Universal Credit
Peterborough	13,379	88,900	15.0%
Cambridge	3,681	57,700	6.4%
East Cambridgeshire	2,659	46,400	5.7%
Fenland	4,522	39,900	11.3%
Huntingdonshire	5,661	89,000	6.4%
South Cambridgeshire	4,123	84,200	4.9%
C&P	34,025	406,100	8.4%
England	2,336,690	26,720,000	8.7%

Table 4-1: Employees Receiving in-Work Universal Credit (%) by Local Authority Area & England in 2025

4.3 Workforce Working Long (>45) Hours

A worker is considered to work long hours if they work more than 45 hours per week. The Annual Population Survey measures the number of paid hours a person works, and the dataset provides this value as a percentage of the total number of workers²⁸. Figure 4-3 and Figure 4-4 plot the data from 2010. Overall, the percentage of the workforce working long hours was marginally higher in C&P (19.9%) compared to England (19.5%) in 2024. Additionally, the percentage rate change over time illustrates the proportion of those working long hours experienced slightly more of a post-COVID-19 rebound within C&P than in the rest of the country, as demonstrated by the gap between C&P and both the UK and England in between 2021 and 2022.

²⁷ ONS, 2025. Annual Population Survey. People aged 16-64 in employment, Jan-Dec 2024. [\[Link to source\]](#)

²⁸ ONS, 2025. Annual Population Survey. [\[Link to source\]](#)

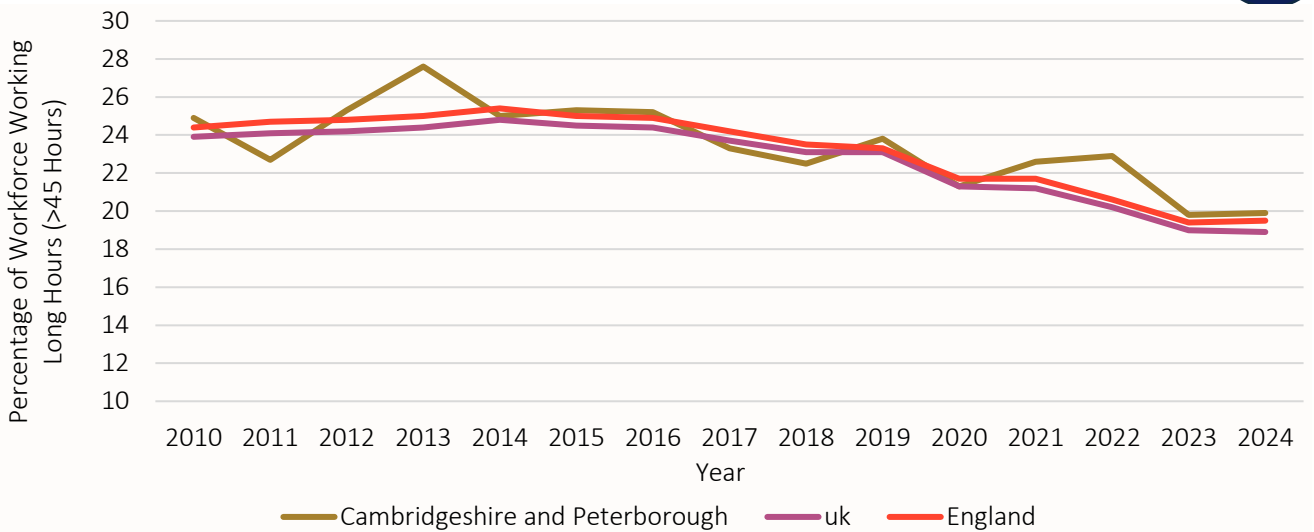


Figure 4-3: Percentage of Workforce Working Long Hours (>45 Hours) C&P Region, England & UK by Year

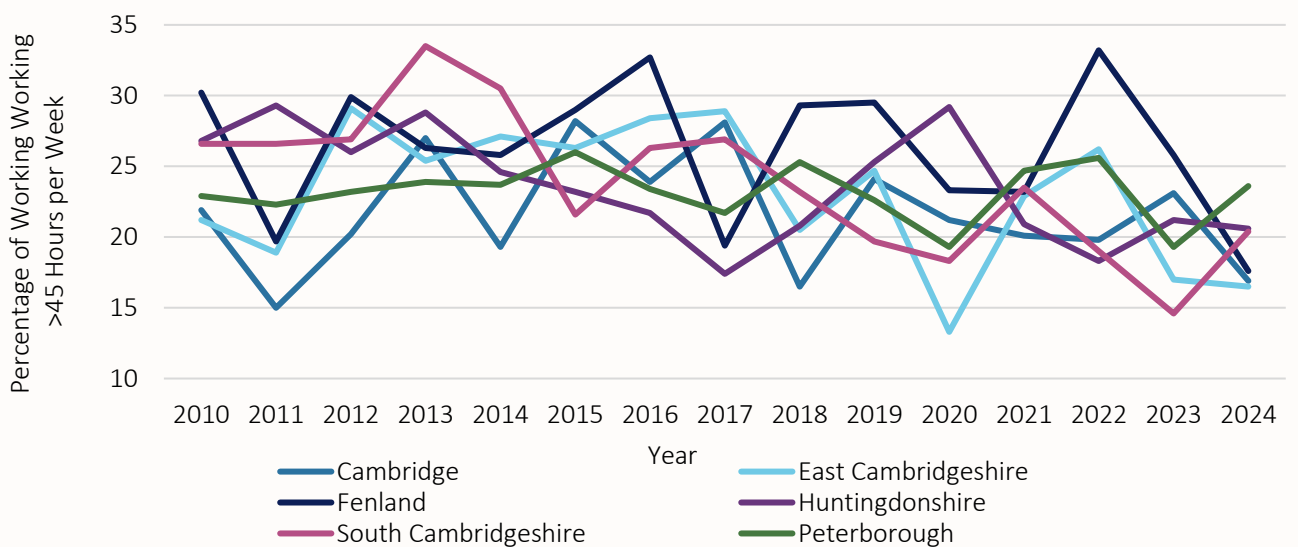


Figure 4-4: Percentage of Workforce Working Long Hours (>45 Hours) by Local Authority Area and by Year

As the data was quite volatile at the local authority level with higher statistical noise, Table 4-2 contains the average percentage for each local authority area between 2010 and 2024. Three additional columns contain the average percentage by five-year buckets for comparison over time. The data show that Fenland had the highest average percentage of workforce working long hours for the entire 15-year period, at 26.3%, whilst South Cambridgeshire was the only local authority area that had a consecutive decline between the year buckets. Fenland’s average percentage rate for the entire period was significantly higher than England’s, which was 23.2%. Across the rest of the C&P region, the remaining authorities had a similar average to England between 21.7% and 23.8%. Cambridge (21.7%), East Cambridgeshire (23.1%) and Peterborough (23.2%) had the lowest proportion of the workforce working long hours overall and were either equal to or below England.



Area	Entire period 2010 to 2024	Bucket 1: 2010 to 2014	Bucket 2: 2015 to 2019	Bucket 3: 2020 to 2024
Cambridge	21.7%	20.7%	24.2%	20.2%
East Cambridgeshire	23.1%	24.3%	25.8%	19.2%
Fenland	26.3%	26.4%	28.0%	24.6%
Huntingdonshire	23.6%	27.1%	21.7%	22.0%
Peterborough	23.2%	23.2%	23.8%	22.5%
South Cambridgeshire	23.8%	28.8%	23.5%	19.2%
C&P	23.5%	25.1%	24.0%	21.3%
England	23.2%	24.9%	24.2%	20.6%

Table 4-2: Average Percentage of Workforce Working Long Hours (>45 Hours) by Local Authority Area and Year Groupings





5 Skills & Training

5.1 Attainment Gaps by Age 19

In the UK, most qualifications taken at school, college or university fall into one of nine levels, with higher levels indicating more challenging qualifications. Level 2 qualifications include GCSEs graded 4-9 (previously A*-C), intermediate apprenticeships, National Vocational Qualifications, and O Levels graded A-C. Level 3 qualifications are a step above Level 2 and include AS and A levels, International Baccalaureate, BTEC diplomas, certificates and awards, advanced apprenticeships, and Access to Higher Education diplomas. The *Attainment Gaps by Age 19*²⁹ indicator reports the number of young people in the state sector who achieved Level 2 or 3 qualifications by age 19. The time period refers to the academic year in which the young person turned 19.

The proportion of 19-year-olds with attainment at Level 2 from 2016-17 to 2023-24 is plotted in Figure 5-1 whilst at Level 3 is charted in Figure 5-2. In the academic year 2023-24, the average local authority area within C&P (based on the mean) had age 19 participation rates of 83% at Level 2 and 56.3% at Level 3. The C&P rates were marginally lower than England’s rates of 83.4% for Level 2 and 57.6% for Level 3. In 2016-17, the attainment rate for C&P at Level 2 was 81.7%, whilst England’s rate was 83.7%, therefore C&P’s rate increased in 2023-24 compared to 2016-17 as England’s rate decreased, however the Level 3 attainment rate between the two academic years of 2016-17 and 2023-24 for both C&P and England sustained.

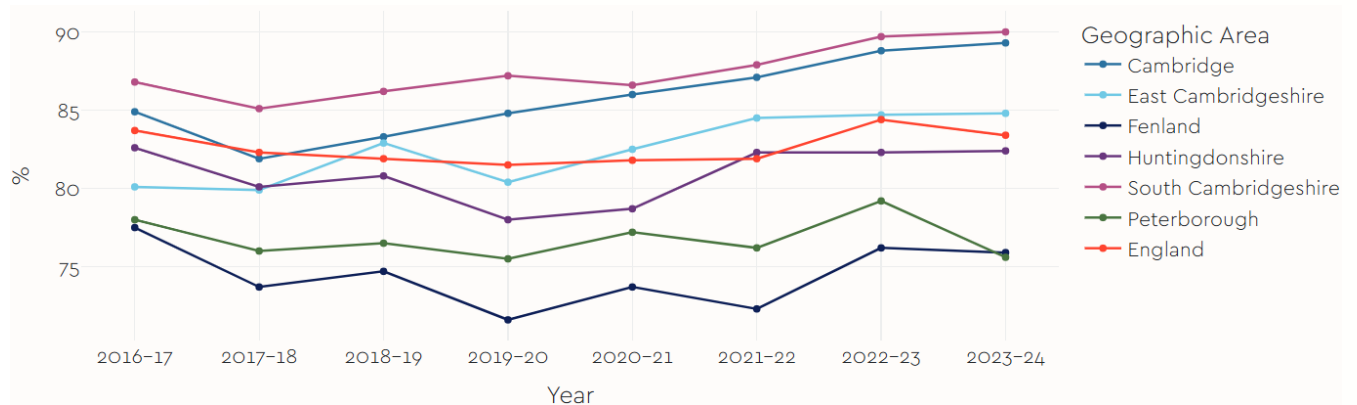


Figure 5-1: Percentage of Attainment and Attainment Gaps at Age 19 (Level 2) by Local Authority Area & England and by Year

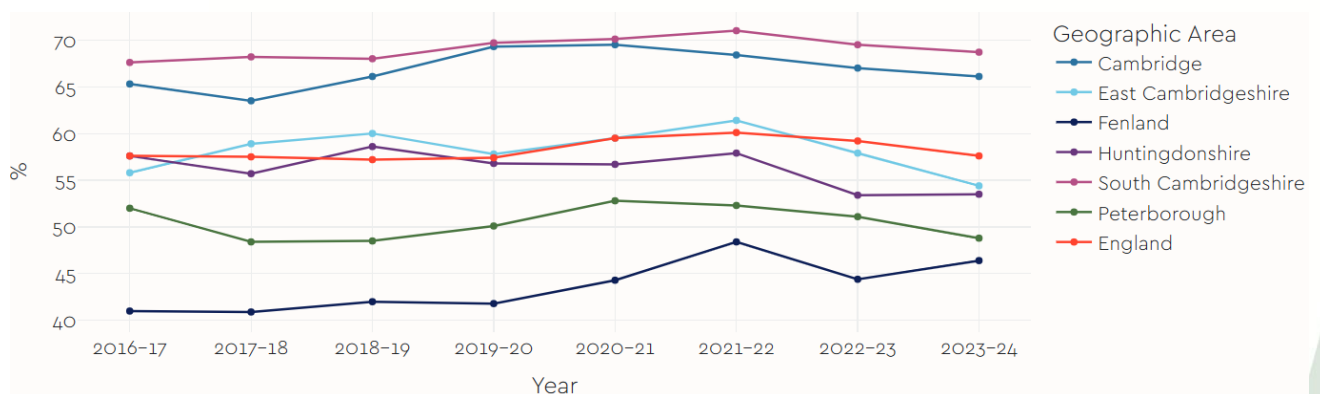


Figure 5-2: Percentage of Attainment and Attainment Gaps at Age 19 (Level 3) by Local Authority Area & England and by Year

²⁹ DfE, 2025. Attainment by local authority district data - ages 16 to 19. [\[Link to source\]](#)





The local authority area which consistently had the highest rate of Level 2 and Level 3 attainment across the time-period was South Cambridgeshire, with a proportion of 90% and 68.7% respectively in 2023-24, an increase from 86.8% at Level 2 and from 67.6% at Level 3 in 2016-17.

Peterborough was the local authority area with the lowest proportion of Level 2 attainment (75.6%) with Fenland the lowest proportion of Level 3 attainment (46.4%), in 2023-24. These outcomes were notably lower than England's 83.4% and 57.6%, respectively. Fenland remained at the lowest level of attainment for Level 3 over the entire time-period; however, the attainment rate increased from 41% in 2016-17 to 46.4% in 2023-24. Despite Level 3 attainment growth over time, Level 2 attainment in Fenland decreased from 77.5% to 75.9%. Figure 5-3 and Figure 5-4 display the attainment and attainment gaps at age 19 by academic year and local authority area at Level 2 and separately at Level 3, as a percentage. The colour grading enables year on year comparison.

Year	East				South	
	Cambridge	Cambridgeshire	Fenland	Huntingdonshire	Cambridgeshire	Peterborough
2016-17	84.9	80.1	77.5	82.6	86.8	78
2017-18	81.9	79.9	73.7	80.1	85.1	76
2018-19	83.3	82.9	74.7	80.8	86.2	76.5
2019-20	84.8	80.4	71.6	78	87.2	75.5
2020-21	86	82.5	73.7	78.7	86.6	77.2
2021-22	87.1	84.5	72.3	82.3	87.9	76.2
2022-23	88.8	84.7	76.2	82.3	89.7	79.2
2023-24	89.3	84.8	75.9	82.4	90	75.6

Figure 5-3: Attainment and Attainment Gaps at Age 19, Level 2 (%), by Local Authority Area and Year

Year	East				South	
	Cambridge	Cambridgeshire	Fenland	Huntingdonshire	Cambridgeshire	Peterborough
2016-17	65.3	55.8	41	57.6	67.6	52
2017-18	63.5	58.9	40.9	55.7	68.2	48.4
2018-19	66.1	60	42	58.6	68	48.5
2019-20	69.3	57.8	41.8	56.8	69.7	50.1
2020-21	69.5	59.5	44.3	56.7	70.1	52.8
2021-22	68.4	61.4	48.4	57.9	71	52.3
2022-23	67	57.9	44.4	53.4	69.5	51.1
2023-24	66.1	54.4	46.4	53.5	68.7	48.8

Figure 5-4: Attainment and Attainment Gaps at Age 19, Level 3 (%), by Local Authority Area and Year

5.2 Participation Rates Post-18

*Participation Rates Post-18*³⁰ data provides the volumes and indicative rates per 100,000 population for participation, achievement and apprenticeship starts. The data include adult (19+) further education and skills, 19+ education and training, community learning, and all age apprenticeships. Further education, not being higher education, is typically practical and skills-based and delivered via colleges.

³⁰ DfE, 2025. Geography Region, LA, LAD, PCON - participation, achievement and apprenticeship starts (volumes and indicative rates per 100,000 population) by level, age, provision type. [\[Link to source\]](#)





Participation rates for education and training between 2019-20 and 2023-24 is plotted in Figure 5-5. The chart shows that, of the six local authority areas in the C&P region, Peterborough had the highest post-18 participation rate for education and training in every year, most recently reaching 4,348 per 100,000 population in 2023-24. Peterborough’s rate was significantly higher than the other local authority areas, with Fenland having the second highest rate at 2,464 per 100,000 population. Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire both had a rate below 1,500 per 100,000, significantly lower than the rate across England, which was 2,898.

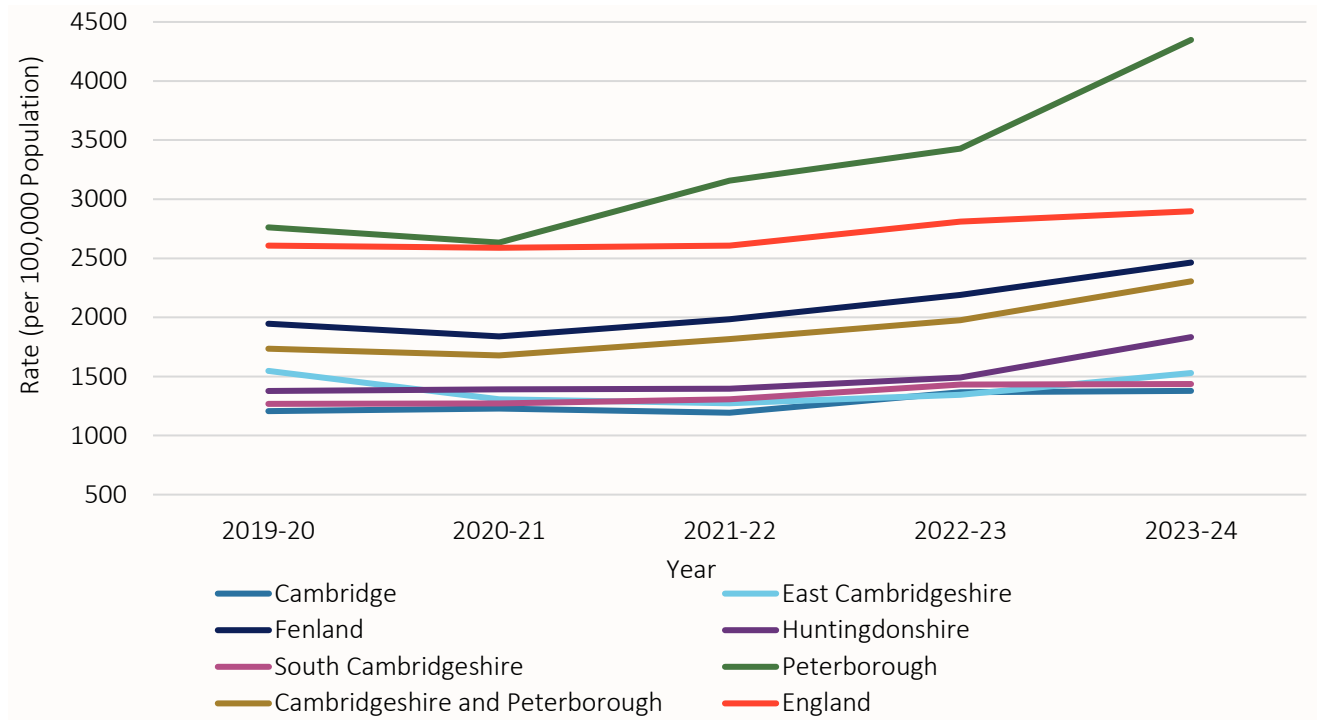


Figure 5-5: Participation Rates Post-18 for Education and Training by Local Authority Area & England and by Year

Of note, whilst all C&P’s local authority areas apart from East Cambridgeshire had an increase in participation rates between 2019-20 and 2023-24, Peterborough’s growth was sizeably the highest at 57.5% compared to both England’s 11.2% and Huntingdonshire’s 33.1% rates. Huntingdonshire had the second highest growth rate in the C&P region.

Figure 5-6 plots the participation data for further education and skills. Similarly to the education and training category, as of 2023-2024, Peterborough had the greatest participation rate for further education and skills, at 6,392 per 100,000. Fenland had the second highest rate at 4,669 but below the average for England, which was 5,347 per 100,000 population.

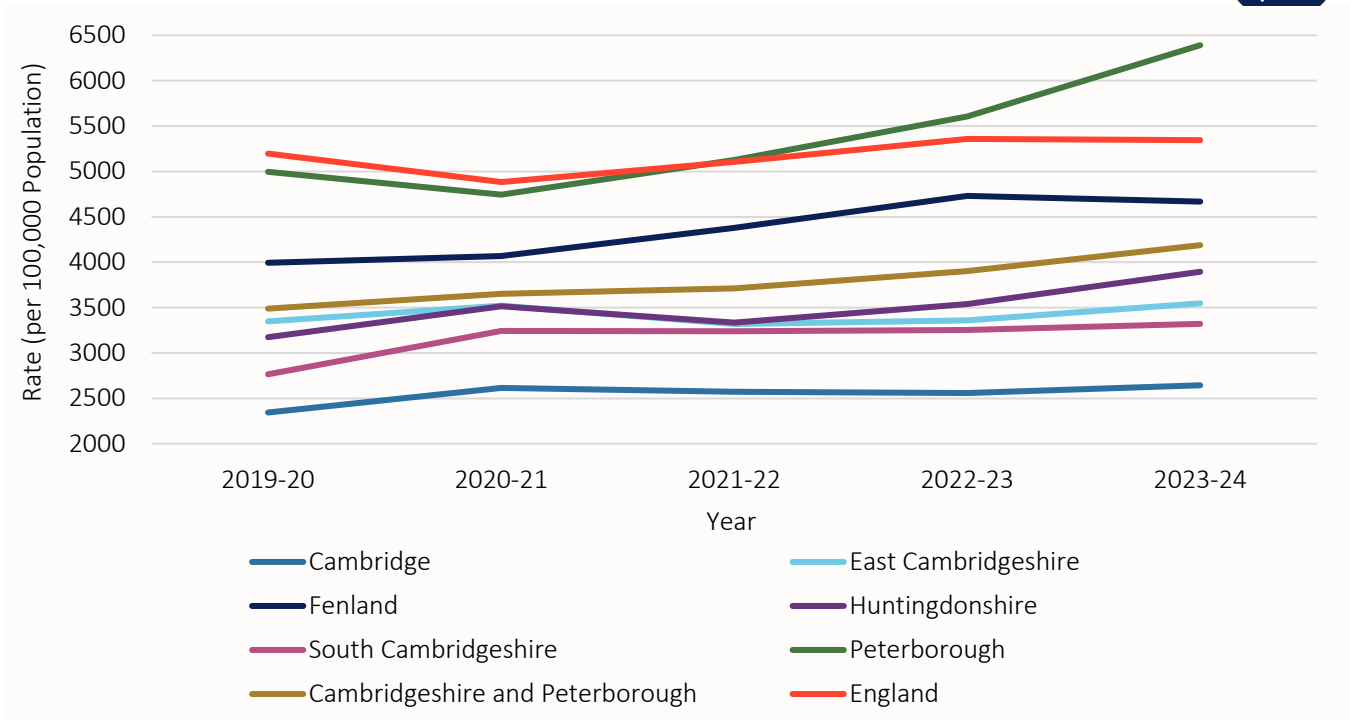


Figure 5-6: Participation Rates Post-18 for Further Education and Skills by Local Authority Area & England and by Year

5.3 Residents Educated to RQF3+

The Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) groups nationally regulated qualifications to allow others to understand how they relate to each other. For example, an A-level and a Level 3 BTEC are both Level 3 qualifications according to the RQF and so are seen as equivalent qualifications. This indicator identifies the proportion of the population aged 16-64 with a Level 3 qualification³¹, or higher. A Level 3 qualification is normally taken at the age of 17-18. RQF estimates replaced National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) estimates for the 2022 Annual Population Survey, so figures prior to 2022 remain on the analogous NVQ basis.

Combined Authority Comparators

The percentage of residents educated to RQF3+ in C&P was marginally below England (65.1% vs 67.6%) in 2024. As shown in Figure 5-7, across the combined authority peer group, C&P had the second highest percentage of residents educated to RQF3+. Below only the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) area, which had a notably higher proportion at 76.3%. In contrast, both the South Yorkshire Combined Authority (SYCA) area and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) areas had lower proportions at 60.5% and 63.3%.

³¹ ONS, 2025. Annual Population Survey. [\[Link to source\]](#)

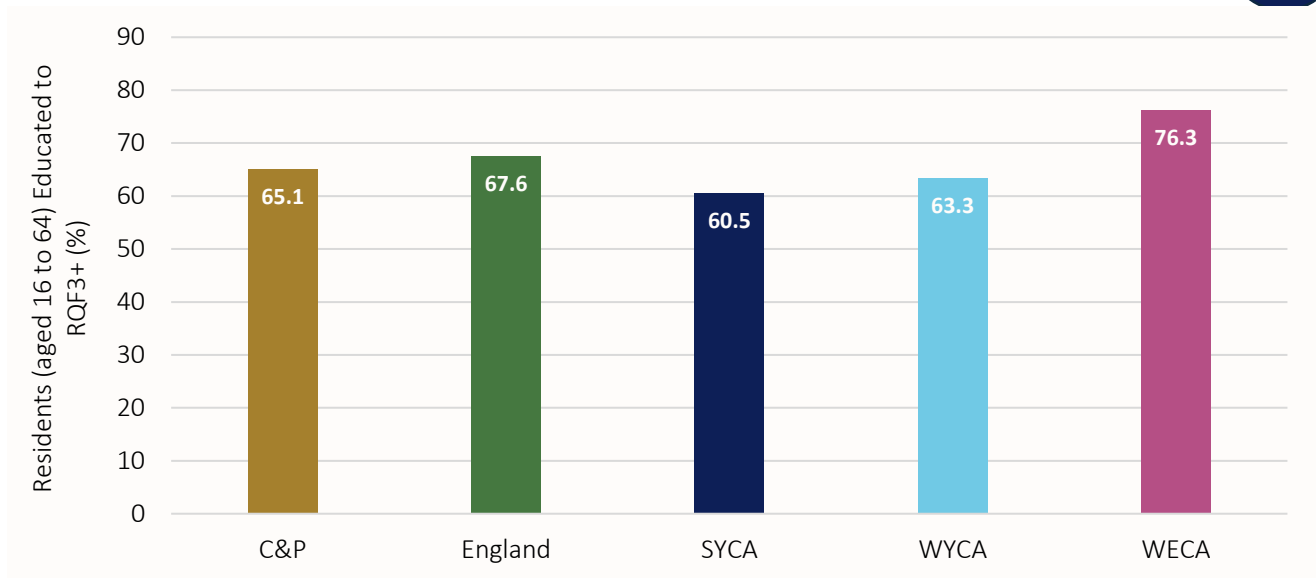


Figure 5-7: Residents (aged 16 to 64) Educated to RQF3+ in 2024 (%) by Combined Authority and England

Local Authority Comparison

Figure 5-8 charts the percentage of residents (aged 16 to 64) educated to RQF3+ from 2015 to 2024 by local authority area. As of 2024, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire stood out with high percentages of residents educated to RQF3+ compared to England (79.6% and 78.3% respectively, compared to England’s 67.6%). Peterborough (53.6%), East Cambridgeshire (60.2%), Huntingdonshire (60.2%), Huntingdonshire (67%) and Fenland (48.9%) had lower percentages of residents educated to RQF3+ than England. Between 2015 and 2024, the percentage of residents who were educated to NVQ3+/RQF3+ increased for each local authority in the C&P region.

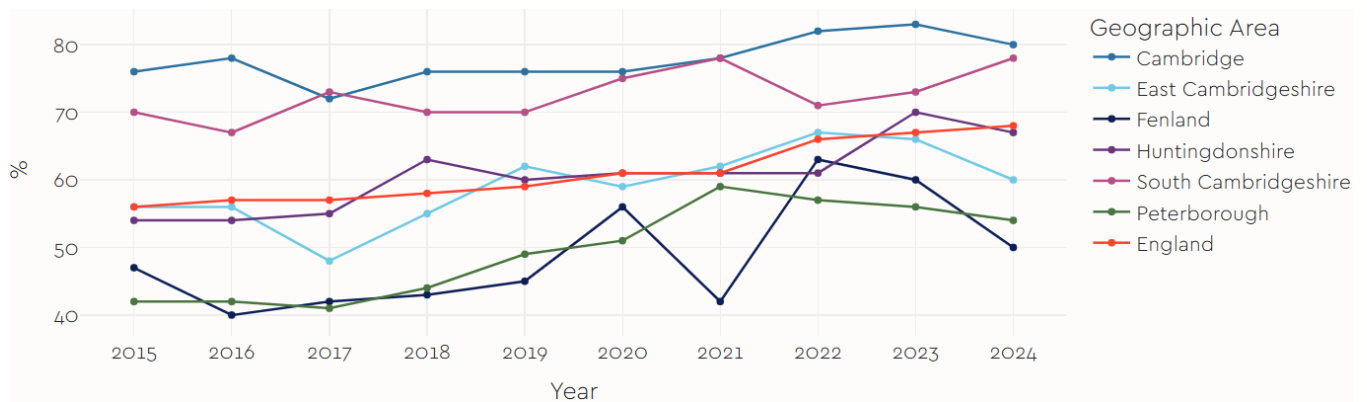


Figure 5-8: Percentage of Residents (aged 16 to 64) Educated to RQF3+ by Local Authority Area & England and by Year

5.4 Higher Education Rate

The *Higher Education Rate*³² can be measured using the rate of enrolment into first degrees (both full- and part-time). The dataset tracks higher education student enrolments by domicile and by region of higher education provider, which is based on the postcodes of students living within each local authority and not the enrolments at higher education institutions within the local authority. Using this data, a rate per 100,000 population was calculated using the ONS population counts with resulting in the rates being plotted in Figure 5-9.

³² HESA, 2025. Table 61 - HE student enrolments by domicile and region of HE provider 2017/18 to 2023/24. [\[Link to source\]](#)



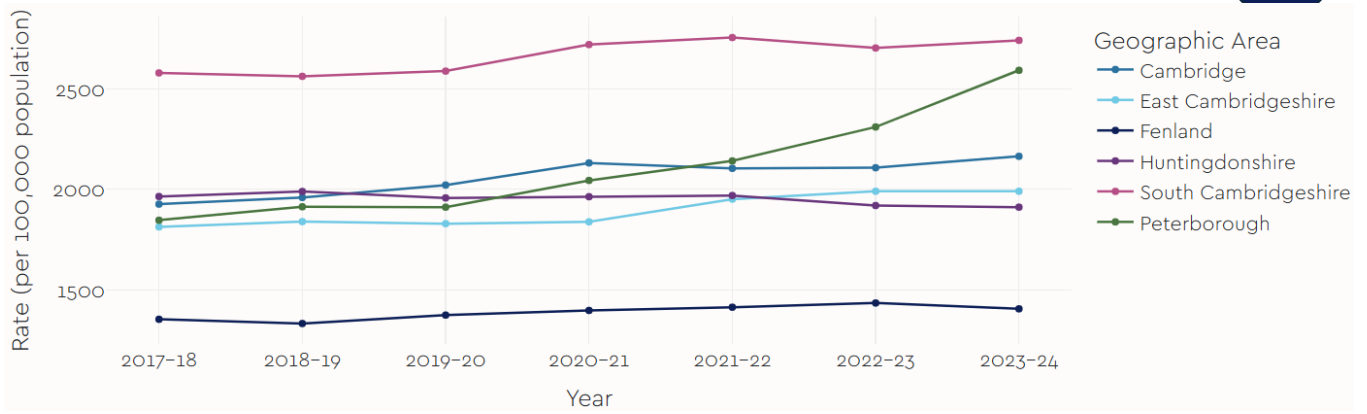


Figure 5-9: Rate per 100,000 Population of Enrolments into First Degrees, Full and Part Time by Local Authority Area and Year

Across the C&P region, the average enrolment rate was 2,134 per 100,000 population in 2023-24. The rate increased from 1,914 per 100,000 population in 2017-18. The local authority area that experienced the greatest increase in the rate of enrolments between 2017-18 and 2023-24 was Peterborough (40.4%). Peterborough reached a rate of 2,592 per 100,000 population in 2023-24. However, the local authority area with the highest rate of enrolments in higher education was South Cambridgeshire with a rate of 2,741 per 100,000 population, having increased by 6.3% over the entire seven-year time period. Fenland had the lowest rate of enrolments in 2023-24, at 1,405 per 100,000 population, which was considerably lower than the other local authority areas.

5.5 Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

The Department for Education³³ records the annual count of individuals aged 16-17 who were not in education, employment, or training (NEETs). The count is aggregated for each higher-tier local authority. The percentage of young people classified as NEET was calculated by dividing the count by the total number of 16-17-year-olds within the corresponding area.

The data in Figure 5-10 provides a breakdown by sex. Note that the data were only available at the level of higher-tier authorities and are therefore reported for both Cambridgeshire and, separately, Peterborough, but not the individual local authority areas.

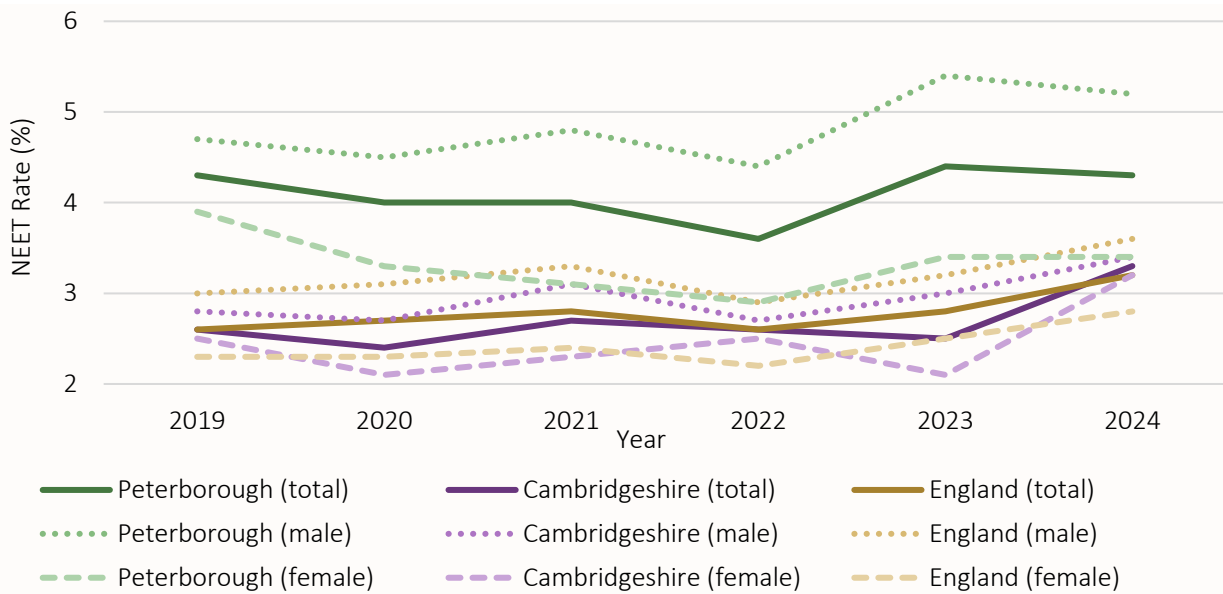


Figure 5-10: NEET rate (%) for 16-17-year-olds in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire & England and by Year

³³ DfE, 2025. Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority. [\[Link to source\]](#)



In 2024, the NEET rate in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough was correspondingly 3.3% and 4.3%, both higher than the England rate of 3.2%, albeit Cambridgeshire marginally by 0.1%. The NEET rate of Peterborough was around 1% higher than Cambridgeshire and England. Cambridgeshire's NEET rate in 2023 was 2.5%, whilst Peterborough's was 4.4%, compared to England's rate of 2.8% in the same year. In all places, the NEET rate for males was higher than for females in 2024. The difference on the basis of sex was greater in Peterborough (5.2% males vs 3.4% females) than it was in Cambridgeshire (3.4% males vs 3.2% females).

From 2019 to 2024, the NEET rate for Peterborough endured between 4% and 4.4% in each year, aside from 2022, when the rate dropped to 3.6%. However, Cambridgeshire's rate reached a historic high of 3.3% in 2024, having previously been between 2.4% and 2.7% in each year.

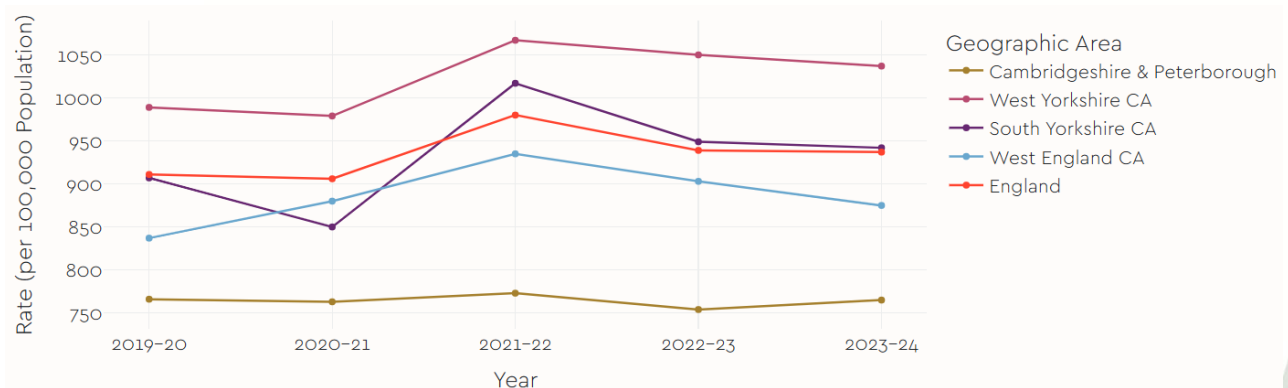
5.6 Apprenticeships

Annual figures for the number of people undertaking apprenticeships in England³⁴ captured the rate of apprenticeship starts and participation per 100,000 population. Starts were defined as the count of apprenticeship programmes that began in each academic year, whereas participation in an apprenticeship programme was counted as the number of people who attended one day or more on a learning aim, in the given academic year. Apprenticeships are practical training which provide students with a wage, whilst also developing skilled workers for industry needs. Higher apprenticeship numbers suggest stronger workforce development, employer engagement, and potential economic opportunities in a region.

Apprenticeship Starts

As noted above, an apprenticeship start was defined as the number of people signed up to an apprenticeship programme at the point at which it started. An apprenticeship course may start at any point throughout the year, so the count reflected starts during the academic year shown.

Figure 5-11 charts the apprenticeship starts per 100,000 population from 2019-20 to 2023-24 for each combined authority area within the peer group and for England. The start rate of apprenticeships peaked for all combined authority areas and for England in 2021-22, midpoint between 2019-20 and 2023-24. The rate of apprenticeship starts in the C&P region, overall averaged 764 per 100,000 population per year across the five academic years (below the average for England of 935). Overall, C&P had the lowest start rate within the combined authority peer group. WECA was the only other combined authority that was consistently below the England rate.



³⁴ DfE, 2024. Geography Region, LA, LAD, PCON - participation, achievement and apprenticeship starts (volumes and indicative rates per 100,000 population) by level, age, provision type. [Link to source](#)



Figure 5-11: Apprenticeship Start Rate for All Ages (per 100,000 Population) by Combined Authority Area & England and by Year

Figure 5-12 plots the apprenticeship starts per 100,000 population, between 2019-20 and 2023-24 by local authority area within the C&P region. The apprenticeship start rate in Fenland most closely resembled the England rate and trend over the entire period. The start rates in Peterborough, Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire were also comparable to the England rate. However, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire had consistently lower start rates than England and the other four local authority areas within C&P. The number of apprenticeship starts did not appear to have been significantly affected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

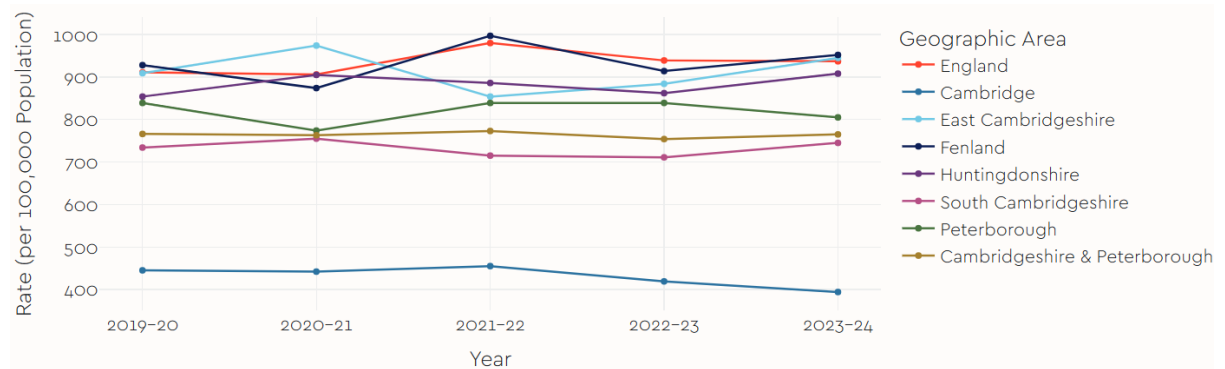


Figure 5-12: Apprenticeship Start Rate for All Ages (per 100,000 Population) by Local Authority Area & England and by Year

Table 5-1 contains the rate of apprenticeship starts in 2023-24 by age groups, which shows the categories with the highest apprenticeship start rate was under 19, followed by aged 19 to 24, which is to be expected since these two age groups are the demographics entering the workforce for the first time.

Area	Aged under 19	Aged 19 to 24	Aged 25+	All ages
Cambridge	914	494	326	394
East Cambridgeshire	4,572	3,137	513	945
Fenland	4,361	2,600	570	952
Huntingdonshire	3,731	2,902	550	908
Peterborough	2,505	2,087	534	805
South Cambridgeshire	2,762	2,971	411	745
C&P	2,908	1,763	483	765
England	3,905	2,325	547	937

Table 5-1: Apprenticeship Start Rate (per 100,000 Population) in 2023-24 by Local Authority Area & England and by Age Group

Apprenticeship Participation

Participation rates provide a measure of attendance on apprenticeship courses during the academic year. Ordinarily, the comparison of participation rates with start rates can indicate the rate of withdrawal from apprenticeship programmes. However, it was not possible to do so with these datasets as the Department for Education-reported data did not break down participation by year (i.e. on a two-year apprenticeship course, a start will be counted once, but participation is counted in every year that was attended on the programme).

Figure 5-13 plots the participation rate per 100,000 population between 2019-20 and 2023-24 per combined authority area in the peer group. In 2023-24, the participation rate for C&P overall was 1,671 per 100,000 population, lower than England’s rate of 2,031 per 100,000



population. Like the apprenticeship start rate, the West of England was the only other combined authority within the peer group below England throughout 2019-20 to 2023-24. The trend for the C&P region was downward across the five academic years, not matched by the other comparator areas in which rates oscillated between years. The overall participation rates per combined authority in 2023-24 largely echoed the stylised features observed with the apprenticeship start rates data since C&P had the lowest overall participation rate (1,671 per 100,000) whilst both SYCA (2,079 per 100,000 population) and WECA (1,963 per 100,000 population) most closely aligned to the England rate of 2,031 per 100,000 population whereas WYCA had the highest rate of 2,217 per 100,000.

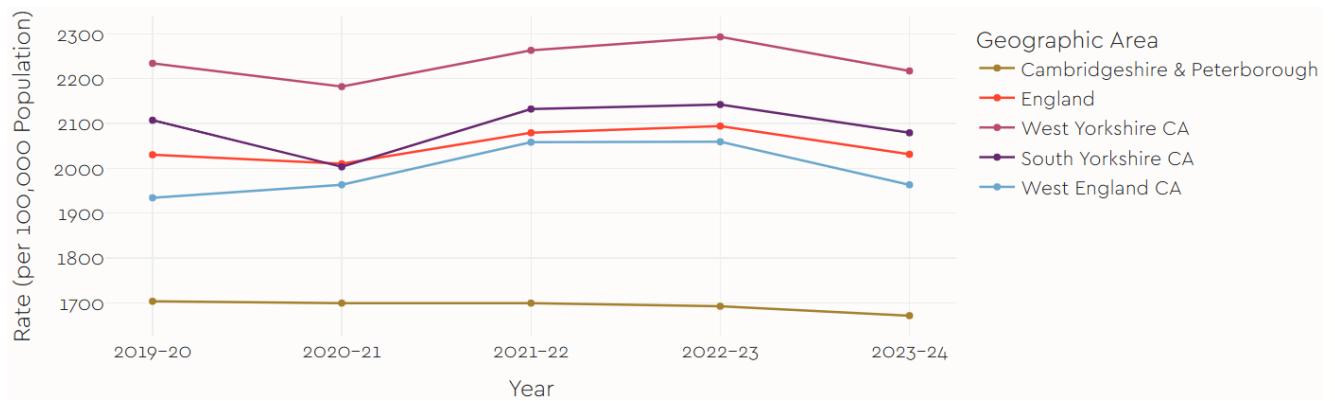


Figure 5-13: Apprenticeship Participation Rate for All Ages (per 100,000 Population) by Combined Authority Area & England and by Year

Figure 5-14 plots the participation rate per 100,000 population from 2019-20 to 2023-24 per local authority area within the C&P region. Fenland had the highest participation rate of 2,068 per 100,000 population in 2023-24, while Cambridge had the lowest rate of 899 per 100,000 population. All the local authority areas, apart from Fenland, had a participation rate below England.

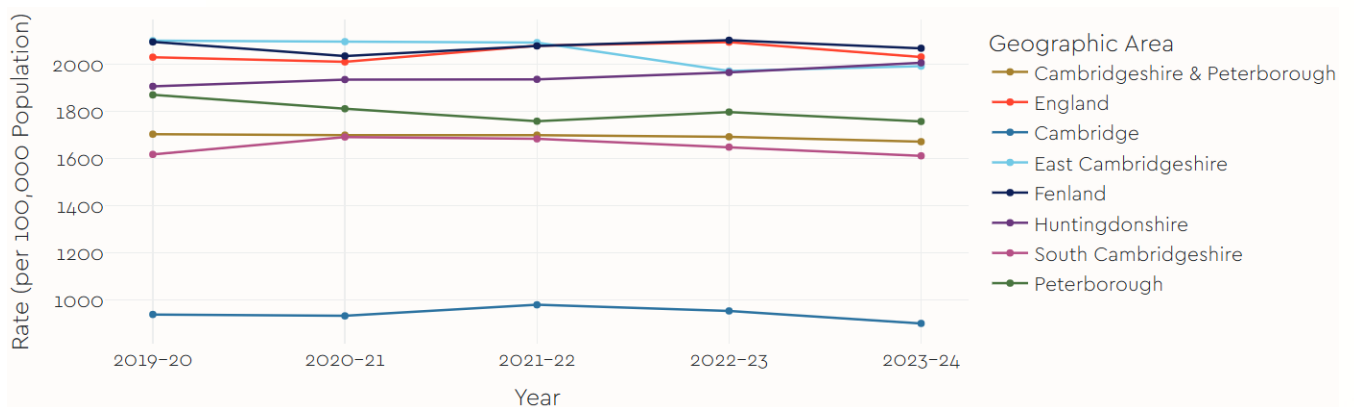


Figure 5-14: Apprenticeship Participation Rate for All Ages (per 100,000 Population) by Local Authority Area & England and by Year

Table 5-2 contains the rate of apprenticeship participation in 2023-24 by age groups, which shows that the categories with the highest apprenticeship participation rate was either under 19 or those aged 19 to 24, which is to be expected since these two age groups are the demographics entering the workforce for the first time.



Area	Under 19	Aged 19 to 24	Aged 25+	All ages
Cambridge	1,692	1,126	768	899
East Cambridgeshire	8,371	8,388	1,004	1,992
Fenland	6,947	7,691	1,179	2,068
Huntingdonshire	6,315	7,869	1,191	2,006
Peterborough	4,295	5,279	1,173	1,757
South Cambridgeshire	4,135	7,657	911	1,611
C&P	4,875	4,620	1,046	1,671
England	6,561	6,008	1,181	2,031

Table 5-2: Apprenticeship Participation Rate (per 100,000 Population) in 2023-24 by Local Authority Area & England and by Age Group





Appendix A Selection of Data Sources

Within the State of The Region 2025, a number of different datasets with unique methodologies within the same domain were incorporated. The differences between the data covering the same subject can create ambiguity and somewhat complicate the provision of a single version of the truth, which is a key aspiration of the State of the Region. Below, the rationale for the selection of the core data sources used is delineated. Each data source had its own applicability in drawing out the important insights across the C&P region.

Business and Employment Data

Table A-1 compares the values provided by the distinct data sources concerning the number of businesses and employees within Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, and the C&P area. The ONS employee counts pertain to the data described in the section 1.1, *Total Employees*³⁵. The total business counts, sourced from the ONS³⁶ were not used as an indicator but are included here for comparison. CBR³⁷ data for business and employee counts were used in sections 1.3 and 1.4.

Source	ONS (2024)	CBR (2023-24)
Businesses (Cambridge)	5,000	4,000
Businesses (Cambridgeshire)	29,000	21,000
Businesses (C&P)	36,000	27,000
Total Employees (Cambridge)	116,000	44,000
Total Employees (C&P)	477,000	256,000

Table A-3: Business and Employment Data Comparison. Notes: values are rounded to nearest thousand.

For business employment data, the CBR dataset was selected as the primary source for the purposes of the State of the Region. CBR data is derived from a detailed annual census of locally based firms to obtain a precise figure of the number of staff employed within the C&P region. In contrast, alternative sources such as the ONS' BRES data deploy sampling of businesses from a wider business register that includes weightings and adjustments to account for sampling effects. In certain cases, company-supplied figures may be 95% lower than employees reported within company accounts, and so the process of making the adjustment from surveys must be undertaken carefully to maximise the accuracy of the results.

As a locally collected dataset, CBR data also allow for highly granular mapping of business clusters, for example, to understand trends down to the level of individual businesses, sectors or business parks. However, it is important to note that CBR is a survey of business employment, whereas ONS *Total Employees* also includes employees within the public sector.

³⁵ ONS, 2024. Business Register and Employment Survey: open access. [\[Link to source\]](#)

³⁶ ONS, 2024. UK Business Counts. [\[Link to source\]](#)

³⁷ The University of Cambridge's CBR, 2025. Cambridge Cluster Insights. [\[Link to source\]](#)