



UPLIFT – Urban PoLicy Innovation to address  
inequality with and for Future generaTions

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## Summary

- In accordance with the Methodological Guidance and Work Plan for WP2 of the UPLIFT project, this report examines the scales and dimensions of inequality affecting the young population in the functional urban area (FUA) of Corby in England, United Kingdom. National and local dynamics are analysed to explore drivers of socio-economic inequality in this context, and to understand the role of policy interventions in aggravating or reducing the impacts of inequality on the urban youth.
- The analysis is based on desk research and interviews with seven key stakeholders at the local level, as well as relevant findings presented in previous deliverables of the UPLIFT project.
- After describing the FUA, we present the main trends and policies in four thematic areas (education, employment, housing, and health), distinguishing between national and local developments. The analysis focuses on the period since the 2008 economic and financial crisis, including the subsequent post-crisis years of recovery and then the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Our analysis shows that, in the aftermath of the 2007 financial crash, policies at the macro-level largely aggravated inequalities in post-industrial towns like Corby, as austerity cuts have been concentrated in these places. A neoliberal regime of punitive welfare reforms and cost-saving measures placed the burden of the economic crisis on those who were already worst-off. The 'social safety net' deteriorated and preventative measures eroded, driving inequality across the four dimensions discussed in this report.
- At the micro-level, austerity has severely impacted the capacity of local government to act on local issues and serve their communities. This is particularly prevalent in Corby, with a context of bankruptcy and financial turmoil within its two-tier council structure. Consequently, in expert interviews we repeatedly heard a perception that local policies were disjointed and largely absent in practice.
- Post-2016, macro-level policy shifted towards preparations for the post-Brexit context, and began to address the needs of post-industrial towns, like Corby, which had been 'left behind' or 'forgotten'. Macro-funds are also being channelled to post-industrial towns as part of the 'levelling up' agenda to address between-place spatial disparities. Nonetheless, analysis has shown that these types of interventions have consistently failed to address the most deprived local areas. Funds have not reached the right places, nor been invested to reflect the specificities of local contexts.
- The Big Local programme in Kingswood and Hazel Leys (KHL) ward in Corby provides a case study for an innovative post-crisis policy. It demonstrates an alternative approach to funding programmes, which prioritises sustained hyper-local community involvement.

## Introduction

This report examines the scales and dimensions of inequality affecting the young population in the functional urban area (FUA) of Corby in England, United Kingdom (UK). Our purpose is to understand how the drivers of socio-economic inequality operate in this local context, as well as the role of policy interventions in aggravating or reducing the impacts of inequality on the urban youth. This corresponds to the meso-level of analysis in the UPLIFT project, i.e. between the macro-level analysis of inequality drivers (the focus of WP1) and the micro-level analysis of individual behaviour and strategy (the focus of WP3).<sup>1</sup>

The UPLIFT project is analysing sixteen FUAs across Europe. The FUA concept reflects the inconsistency of national definitions of urban areas, usually based on administrative or legal boundaries, and aims to move beyond statistical definitions to consider the functional and economic extent of urban areas (Dijkstra et al., 2019). For Corby, the FUA reflects the former local authority district area: Corby Borough Council.

The report begins with a description of the FUA, highlighting key local characteristics and how they compare with the country as a whole. This is followed by a presentation of the main trends and policies at the national and local levels, and then a case study of an innovative policy example. Finally, we summarise and discuss the main findings, emphasising their contribution to understand the FUA of Corby and to fulfil the broader goals of the UPLIFT project.

Building on previous deliverables of the UPLIFT project, this report expands data collection and analysis by bringing in additional desk research and interviewees with seven local actors.

The desk research was carried out between September 2020 and August 2021, with the aim of collecting and organising the relevant literature referring to national, regional and local trends and policies for the four thematic areas of analysis: education, employment, housing and health. Special attention was given to studies that scrutinise the patterns and structures of inequality affecting young people in Corby, and policies influencing urban inequality since 2008. Sources included publications from official bodies, reports of independent studies, papers in academic journals, and other 'grey' literature.

The interviews were conducted between January and March 2021. The individuals interviewed were selected for their relevant knowledge of and experience in the FUA, ensuring a combination of views from local public officials, representatives from local non-governmental

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<sup>1</sup> The specific guidelines for the reports on the sixteen FUAs under study in the UPLIFT project can be found in the WP2 Methodological Guidance and Work Plan. As established in that document, this report draws on results from four tasks of the project: Task 1.3 - National policies and economic drivers for inequality, Task 2.1 - Statistical analysis of inequality at the local level, Task 2.2 - Analysis of the main socio-economic processes and local policies influencing inequality during and after the financial crisis and the subsequent recovery, and Task 2.3 - Innovative post-crisis policies.

organisations (NGOs,) and academic experts to enable a critical assessment of social developments and policy impacts<sup>2</sup>.

Scheduling the interviews took longer than expected due to the uncertainties of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting public health measures in England, which included repeated partial and full lockdowns during this research period. Moreover, Corby's transition to a unitary authority (explained further in Chapter 1) meant that many council staff were moving to new roles, or facing redundancy, which made it difficult to contact the relevant stakeholders and arrange interviews. This transition also means that, from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, the administrative area that represented the boundaries of the FUA (Corby Borough Council) ceased to exist. This will make obtaining data for the FUA more difficult going forward.

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<sup>2</sup> 4 interviewees worked for the local authority; 2 worked for Northamptonshire University; and 1 for a local community-based organisation. The local authority staff members worked across housing, social services and sports and leisure. The academic staff had expertise in education and employment, and delivered the university's outreach programmes with the local community in Corby.

# 1 General description of Corby Functional Urban Area

Corby is a town in the north of the county of Northamptonshire, located in the East Midlands of England, UK. Covering an area of around 80 square kilometres (Figure 2), as of mid-2019 the FUA had an estimated population size of 72,218, of which 16.8% (12,114 people) were young people aged 15-29 years old (ONS, 2021a). This compares to 18.5% of the UK national population, and 18.6% in the East Midlands region, although its population is slightly more youthful than the Northamptonshire average (16.3%) (ONS, 2021a). In terms of ethnicity, Corby's population is less diverse than its county, region and nation: the 2011 Census recorded 95.5% of Corby's population as White, compared to 91.5%, 89.3% and 85.5% respectively for Northamptonshire, the East Midlands and England (ONS, 2012).

Over the last century, the town has experienced multiple periods of substantial social and economic transition. The opening of its first steel works in 1934 initiated its urbanisation. Throughout the 1930s, the village settlement rapidly grew with an influx of miners and industrial workers, with the town becoming dubbed 'Little Scotland' as a significant proportion of these migrated from Scotland. In 1950, Corby was then designated for development under the 1946 New Towns Act. This was a post-war policy to help re-construct Britain's communities, with urban planning which aimed to reflect the successes of the 'garden city' movement.

Yet, in 1979 it was announced that Corby's British Steel plant would close, marking a change in the town's trajectory. Through the 1980s, deindustrialisation led to mass unemployment and economic hardship in the town. Nowadays, the town's economy revolves around manufacturing and distribution. In 2019, 23.5% of Corby's jobs were in wholesale and retail trade, 20.6% in the manufacturing industry and 14.7% in transportation and storage; this compares to 16.7%, 12.9% and 6.2% respectively in the East Midlands, and 15.0%, 8.0% and 14.9% respectively in Great Britain (Figure 3).

Over recent years, various packages of funding have been invested to support Corby's regeneration- as the impacts of deindustrialisation have been compounded by crises related to the 2007 financial crash and Covid-19 pandemic. In particular, investment in the town led to a new train station with rail links to London opening in 2009, as well as the £32m 'Corby Cube' (a civic centre boasting a 450-seat theatre, public library, and a new council chamber) and a £20m Olympic-sized swimming pool opening their doors in 2010. Nevertheless, with an average Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score of 25.7, Corby ranked among the most deprived quartile of English local authority district areas in 2019 (76 out of 317) (MHCLG, 2019a). Despite the struggles faced by the town, the local community shares a deep sense of resilience: "It's such as strong community. There is a high level of social capital and community bonds. This is because of the historical shared experience that still shapes the community resilience today" (Employment Expert, Northamptonshire). The town ranks comparatively highly on the Community Strength Index, among the strongest 30% of English local authorities (92 out of 315) (Tauschinski et al., 2019).

Until recently, local governance in Corby reflected a 'two-tier' council structure whereby local government functions were split between two councils: a larger 'county council' (Northamptonshire), mostly responsible for strategic services such as transport, and people-facing services such as public health, children's services and adult social care; and a smaller 'district council' within this (Corby Borough), often responsible for more place-related services such as housing, planning and licensing (Studdert, 2021a). However, in 2018, Northamptonshire County Council effectively declared itself bankrupt by issuing a Section 114 notice. Following recommendations in a subsequent 'Best Value Inspection' (Keller, 2018), on 1st April 2021 Corby Borough Council merged with three other local district councils – Kettering Borough Council, Wellingborough Borough Council and East Northamptonshire Council – to form a new 'unitary council': North Northamptonshire Council (Figure 4). This process of reform, known as 'unitarisation', means councils that were previously part of two-tier areas become 'single-tier' councils, where just one council carries out all local government functions of a former county council and several former district councils (Studdert, 2021a).

Overall, councils provide more than 800 services to their communities; some of which are statutory (obliged by law) whilst others are discretionary (Studdert, 2021b). Local decision-making thus follows a top-down structure in which the capacity of local councils in England to implement policies and strategies is largely shaped by decision-making of the UK central government in Westminster.

## Overarching Policy Context since 2008

In the decade since 2010, UK national policy was overwhelmingly characterised by austerity: measures to cut government expenditure. Austerity became a key driver of inequality, with the impacts concentrated at local scales among the most deprived places and marginalised communities:

- **Austerity disproportionately impacts those already worse off.** Poorer households are more reliant on a range of public services, thus they feel the cumulative impact of multiple cuts (Hastings et al., 2015).
- **Austerity had an uneven geography.** Analyses show that the most deprived English authorities experienced cuts almost six times higher than those in the least deprived authorities (Hastings et al., 2015). Poorer areas also rely more on central government grants (since authorities are less able to make as much independent income) meaning the effects of cuts were further exaggerated (Crewe, 2016). These geographical patterns contributed to widening gaps in prosperity between the best and worst local economies across the UK, with old industrial towns hit particularly hard (Beatty and Fothergill, 2013).
- **Austerity was concentrated at the scale of local government.** The Local Government Section of the Department of Local Government and Communities lost over half of its funding between 2011-2015, experiencing significantly higher cuts than



any other central government department (Gray and Barford, 2018). Meanwhile, an agenda of localism meant that increasing powers were devolved to local government (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013). Together, these factors meant that local councils were increasingly forced to forgo discretionary responsibilities as they dedicated limited funds towards statutory obligations (Crewe, 2016). Statutory services were even at risk in some local authorities due to reduced funding and the pressure of increasing social care demands (NAO, 2018).

- **The impacts of austerity are intersectional.** In 2018, following a visit to the UK, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights reported that “the costs of austerity have fallen disproportionately upon the poor, women, racial and ethnic minorities, children, single parents, and people with disabilities” (Alston, 2018: p. 18). Child poverty was highlighted as a particular concern, with analyses suggesting that the hardships faced by children and young people constitute a primary driver behind overall increases in poverty across the UK (Hood and Waters, 2017).

In this context, as austerity met with poor financial management, Northamptonshire County Council effectively declared itself bankrupt in 2018. This both reflected and implicated limits on local service provision for Corby’s population. The Section 114 notice meant that county council expenditure could no longer exceed the legal bare minimum (Robson and Manning, 2020). As a shadow council formed, a program of cuts was announced in attempt to ‘balance the books’ (Robson and Manning, 2020). Children and young people particularly suffered, with 2018 and 2019 inspections finding that Northamptonshire’s children’s services were inadequate and failed to keep children safe (Ofsted, 2019). Financial uncertainty was deemed to have contributed to significant shortfalls in social work capacity across the service (Ofsted, 2018).

The merger of Corby and surrounding district councils intends to offer a more viable future (Keller, 2018), though several stakeholders interviewed identified concerns that local issues in Corby would become diluted through its inclusion in a larger unitary council. This was related to political differences as Corby historically stood out as a left-leaning council in a largely Conservative area. Additionally, they noted that the town could lose out on funding opportunities, in favour of investment in neighbouring areas. Tauschinski et al. (2019) identify the town as an investment ‘cold spot’, among the bottom 10% of English local authorities in terms of public, philanthropic, and charitable funding (297/315). As well as being subject to high levels of local authority budget cuts, some communities have been ‘left behind’ or ‘forgotten’ by funders of all kinds, with Corby receiving just £1 per capita from trusts and foundations (Tauschinski et al., 2019).

Among other impacts, Britain’s Exit from the European Union (Brexit) will further reduce funding availability. As one stakeholder described, “around 2010, Corby was publicly seen as doing well because of EU funding in infrastructure and public spaces, like ‘The Cube’ ... All this redevelopment was possible through EU funding so it’s interesting that 5 years later, the town voted to leave the EU” (64% voted to leave). This reflects an overarching correlation whereby

‘funding deserts’, with low levels of public, philanthropic, and charitable funding, were more likely to vote for Brexit (Gulyurtlu, 2018).

In preparation for an array of post-Brexit changes, the UK government published The Industrial Strategy, which focusses on improving the five ‘foundations of productivity’ (Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment, Places), and included a commitment to agree Local Industrial Strategies (LIS) (HM Government, 2017). These were led by mayoral combined authorities or Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs): Corby is covered by the South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP), which has partnered with other LEPs to form the Cambridge-Oxford Arc (LEP Network, n.d.) (Figure 5). Its LIS positions the South East Midlands as the ‘Connected Core’ of this Arc (SEMLEP, 2019).

In tandem with these strategies, there have been several new packages of funding from central government to support local economic development. In more recent years, these have been framed in terms of ‘levelling up’, which is understood as a commitment to address the UK’s longstanding regional economic disparities (Harari et al., 2021). The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) describes that:

“A ‘left-behind’ area, in need of ‘levelling up’, is characterised by broad economic underperformance, which manifests itself in low pay and employment, leading to lower living standards in that area. Behind these factors lie other considerations such as poor productivity, which in turn may be associated with a low skill base. The health of the population may also be relatively poor: in some cases, this could be a legacy of deindustrialisation or long-term unemployment, as well as deep-rooted socio-economic issues” (Davenport and Zaranko, 2021: p. 325).

Interventions have tended to concentrate on ‘between-place’ spatial disparities in economic growth, at the expense of ‘within-place’ inequalities that exist inside local authority boundaries (Yang et al., 2021). Moreover, previous interventions have consistently failed to address the most deprived communities, contributing to a 0% average change in the relative spatial deprivation of the most deprived local authority areas (Yang et al., 2021). Ways of increasing the impact of such investment programmes will be considered in the case study of an innovative post-crisis policy (Chapter 3).

## 2 Findings

### 2.1 Education

#### 2.1.1 National trends and policies

In the UK, education policy is set by the four devolved nations (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). This Chapter therefore focuses on the policies relevant to England.

There have been concerted efforts in policy-making to reduce inequalities in educational outcomes and to improve overall levels of attainment. Some indicators show improvements on both issues, but the picture is complex.

One of the key policy changes was the decision **to raise the school-leaving age**. In 2008, the national legal minimum age to leave education was 16 years old; this has gradually been increased and since 2015 young people must remain in education until they are 18 years old. *Schooling* is compulsory until age 16 but after this education may take the form of academic or vocational qualifications, or work-based training such as apprenticeships, or a mix of education, work and volunteering (UK government, n.d.).

This shift constituted a concerted effort to increase the number of qualifications that young people leave education with across the country. There is evidence that this had a positive impact: a measure of Level 2 attainment by age 19 rose from 76.2% in 2008 to a peak of 87.5% by 2015, but has since slipped back slightly to 83.4% in 2019. Similarly, Level 3 attainment by age 19 rose from 49.6% in 2008 to a peak of 60.7% by 2017, but has since slipped back slightly to 59.7% in 2019 (DfE, 2020a).

Over the same period (2008 to 2019), the percentage of young people receiving 5 A\* to C grades at GCSE (the equivalent to national high school leaving exams) rose steadily (DfE, 2020b). However, this picture is complicated and contested with some commentators arguing it reflects or includes an element of grade inflation, and statistical trends disrupted by a **significant change to the GCSE system** between 2015 and 2018 (Lough, 2021). The pandemic has further exacerbated this trend, with teacher-led assessments replacing exams and record attainment levels in both 2020 and 2021.

Only 7% of the national population attend private fee-paying schools, making education affordable for the remainder of pupils who attend state-funded schools. However, with variations in quality, the best comprehensive schools take just half the rate of disadvantaged pupils as the average state school, with houses costing on average £45,700 more in the catchment areas for the best schools (Sutton Trust, n.d.).

Across the UK there have been long-standing gaps in attainment levels between young people from disadvantaged or minority backgrounds and their peers. There are inequalities relating to those young people: living in poverty; from Black backgrounds; who have special educational needs; and who are in the care system or under a child protection order. There are

also significant regional variations, attributable to differing levels of poverty and deprivation (Hutchinson et al., 2020).

Recognising the structural inequalities which affect how well children are likely to achieve at school, policies have been created and implemented to provide extra resources and support to help the most disadvantaged children succeed in education.

One of these schemes is the '**pupil premium**' which was launched in 2011 and gave public-funded schools extra funding to help increase the attainment levels of their disadvantaged pupils (DfE, 2021). For the year 2021/22, over 7.6 million children will be eligible for the pupil premium, with over £2.2 billion funding allocated. In the East Midlands, 22.1% of primary school pupils and 25.3% of secondary school pupils will be eligible for funding (ESFA, 2021).

There is some evidence to suggest that this policy has had a positive impact. In Corby, in 2008, the percentage of young people achieving 5 A\* to C GCSEs was 55.5% - almost 10% lower than the national average of 63.9% (UK government, 2020). This percentage had risen to 73.6% in 2019, only 1% below the 74.9% national average (UK government, 2020).

Similarly, the 'disadvantage gap' (a measure of how far young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are behind in terms of academic progress compared to their non-disadvantaged peers) reduced at both primary and secondary education levels over the period from 2011 to 2019, by 1.4 months (12.8%) at primary and 1.6 months (8%) at secondary (Hutchinson et al., 2020). However, in 2020, the closing of the gap stalled, and it is expected that the impact of Covid-19 will have led to the gap widening again (Lally and Birmingham, 2020). Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that the stalling of the gap occurred even before the Covid-19 pandemic, and policymakers failed in responding to earlier reports warning of a major loss of momentum in closing the gap (Hutchinson et al., 2020).

Similarly, by 2019, whilst 55% of school leaders surveyed felt that their pupil premium funding was helping to close the attainment gaps in their school, 15% disagreed. 27% of secondary school teachers reported that their pupil premium funding was being used to plug gaps elsewhere in their budget (Sutton Trust, 2019).

In 2014, a successful pilot programme to support the educational progress and attainment of young people in care/previously in care became a mandatory part of all local authority education provision. **Virtual schools** have a head teacher whose responsibility is to oversee the education of looked-after children; monitor attendance, attainment and achievement; and to ensure education is prioritised in care planning. These schools are not virtual in the sense of digital provision, but the head oversees all the looked-after children in schools within their geographic area (DfE, 2018).

Since the 2007 financial crash, and with the effects of Brexit uncertain, several government schemes have also been aimed at reducing the national skills gap by increasing young people's participation in further education. Most prominently, the **Post-16 Plan** aimed to provide a reformed technical education option with a framework of 15 'technical routes', in order to

support young people to secure a lifetime of sustained skilled employment (BIS and DfE, 2016). This included plans to extend the highest skill levels and standardise apprenticeships (BIS and DfE, 2016). In Corby, the local campus of Tresham College is key site for the delivery of further education, including these reformed options.

The same period has also seen multiple reforms and innovations in the English **Apprenticeships** scheme. This seen apprenticeships of different levels introduced and phased out, and the introduction of minimum standards for apprenticeships, including support for young people to achieve a minimum standard in English and maths, if not already achieved at school. There are financial incentives for small businesses to take on apprentices, and an Apprenticeship Levy on businesses with an annual salary bill of over £3 million; the 0.5% levy on their total wage bill effectively means the largest 2% of employers cross-fund the majority of apprenticeship support for smaller employers (UK government, no date).

Nonetheless, across the country, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the delivery and structure of education, with lockdowns resulting in many children having to complete their schooling independently. However, not all students will have equal access to this online provision, and “so many children have been left behind because they don’t have the technology” (Education Expert, Northamptonshire University). This digital divide has also amplified the educational inequalities faced by pupils living in digitally-excluded (typically low-income) households in Corby, as once again “those (disadvantaged children and) families have been penalised again because of their circumstance” (Education Expert, Northamptonshire).

## 2.1.2 Local Trends and Policies

As highlighted in 5.1, Corby’s educational attainment levels have demonstrated improvement but remain lower than the national average.

At the local level, there are also inequalities in the standard of education provision within Corby, and the ‘disadvantage gap’ evident at the national level is also present. There is concern around growing educational inequality in the town: “you have a lot of schools that achieve well but within those schools you have a lot of children who aren’t reaching their potential” (Education Expert, Northamptonshire).

From a government and educational monitoring board’s perspective, Corby’s educational inequalities are widespread and varied; with 48 out of 52 schools receiving ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ score in their latest Ofsted reports, but 2 schools deemed as ‘Inadequate’ and 7 which ‘Require Improvement’ (UK government, n.d.). Of the 11 colleges for students aged 16-18, 5 received ‘below average’ progress scores between GCSE and A-level grades (UK government, n.d.).

This range in both exceptional and poor schooling reflects the educational composition of many other urban towns in England. It also gives us an insight into some of the challenges in Corby’s educational system, as the variation in academic rating of schools in the local area highlight the hyper-localised levels of inequalities faced by community members in the town.

A local policy that is intended to tackle these issues is the **Championing Education Excellence School Improvement Strategy** (Northamptonshire County Council, 2016). This was launched in 2015 to try to raise attainment, aspirations and increase opportunities for young adults in Northamptonshire. Some of the key priorities outlined in this strategy are to increase the percentage of children and young children in Northamptonshire who are attending schools rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, the school inspectorate; to increase attainment levels; and to close the disadvantage gaps across the county whilst stretching more able pupils' achievements. The strategic plan focused on improvements in leadership; partnership and collaboration; improved commissioning; a new recruitment & retention plan for teachers; improved training; and intensive focus on key areas of concern. However, measuring the success of this strategy has been difficult as the Covid-19 pandemic has interrupted educational programmes and increased inequalities in some areas.

Northamptonshire County Council also offer several programmes that offer wrap around services that support young people's educational, health and future needs. These come under the umbrella of **Young Northants**, a programme that aims to decrease levels of youth inequality and educational issues in Northamptonshire (Northamptonshire County Council, n.d.). The programme offers a range of online support services and hotlines, and aims to ensure young people at the crucial stages of secondary education aged 14-18 feel supported in their educational journey (Northamptonshire County Council, n.d.). They provide support on next steps after education as well as information on working alongside remaining in education (Northamptonshire County Council, n.d.). The focus is on ensuring that vulnerable young people are informed of the support and help that exists at the local level to help them make positive life choices. An interviewee highlighted the power and impact that these extra projects have had on young people's lives: "When you do see a young person turning themselves around its great, but you do worry what happens when you are not there to support them." (Educational Expert, Northamptonshire).

From interviews, a clear perception emerged of an aspirations gap in Corby. As one interviewee highlighted "aspirational divides in the town (are) very clear; it's about motivations and expectations" (Charity Organisation, Corby). With historically low job opportunities and outcomes in working class communities, local stakeholders report concerns about a trend whereby children who grow up watching older generations work in low-skilled job sectors with few qualifications tend not to aspire to gaining qualifications and skills of their own. In 2020, only 32.5% of Corby's working-age population had a NVQ Level 4 qualification or higher, compared to 43.1% across Great Britain (nomis, n.d.). Meanwhile, 8.1% had no qualifications, compared to 6.4% nationally (nomis, n.d.).

This cross-cutting factor in between educational attainment, skills development and employment was summarised by one of interviewee: "In summary the barriers around education, skills develop and translate into low skills and then low wage, exasperating inequalities further and across generations" (Employment Expert, Northamptonshire).



In attempt to address the local skills gap, SEMLEP's **Growing People Skills Plan** (2017) is a cohesive strategic plan for lifelong skills development working with businesses, organisations, educators, agencies and local authority partners across the South East Midlands (SEMLEP, 2017). In particular, it aims to address discrepancies between the skills and attainment needed by employers and those held by young people, and sets out phases of activities, from the age of 9 to 19+, which should develop awareness, through to competencies and skill, and ultimately continuous development and engagement (SEMLEP, 2017).

Northamptonshire is also one of 14 areas in the UK to receive government funding to deliver the **Construction Skills Fund** (2018), which provides free industry-recognised and accredited training and qualifications for those looking to move into the sector to address the national skills gap. Over 2 years (2019-2021) almost 550 learners aged 18+ benefitted from the opportunity (Northamptonshire Council, 2021).

## 2.2 Employment

### 2.2.1 National trends and policies

At a national level, employment strategies and policies have focused on post-2008 economic recovery and, in more recent years, have also begun to account for post-Brexit changes and the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the wake of the 2007 financial crash, unemployment rates rocketed across the UK. The UK economy shrank by more than 6% between the first quarter of 2008 and the second quarter of 2009 (ONS, 2021b) meaning that, by the end of 2011, almost 2.7 million people were out of work (ONS, 2021c) with the unemployment rate reaching 8.4% for the first time since 1995 (ONS, 2021d). Youth unemployment rates (among those aged 18-24) increased to over 20% in 2011, up from 11% in 2008; and economic inactivity among this age group reached 32.3% in early 2011 (ONS, 2021e). Other factors, including ethnicity and gender, also intersected with unemployment trends (Devine et al., 2021) (Figure 6).

Under austerity measures, policy changes since 2010 largely focussed on incentivising work through a package of welfare reforms. As George Osbourn, Chancellor at the time, explained, these reforms aimed to "make work pay" as he believed "defending benefits that trap people in poverty and penalise work is defending the indefensible" (Osbourn, 2013). For instance, in 2013, the **Benefit Cap** was introduced: a limit on the benefits most 'work-less' households can receive. Intended to ensure households could not earn more from benefits than they would in work, this was initially set at a level similar to the national average wage (BBC, 2014). However, in 2015, the cap level was reduced and has remained unchanged despite inflation, effectively constituting a freeze on benefits (CPAG, 2020). Of the 170,000 households with their benefits capped (in August 2020), 85% of these include children (DWP, 2020). The cap therefore has significant impacts on the chances of young people, with analysis finding that the cost of raising two children becomes unaffordable when rent is deducted from the cap (Hirsch, 2020).

Another part of this package of welfare reforms included **The Work Programme**, which was introduced from June 2011 (until April 2017) to support those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed to find work (DWP, 2012). This was a welfare-to-work programme which provided contracted employment designed to help people come off unemployment benefits (House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 2015). Replacing previous welfare-to-work schemes, this programme was distinctive because of its 'payment-by-results' principle, which aimed to improve outcomes by paying service providers based on the delivery of results (DWP, 2012). A key motivation of this approach was also to provide better value for money by building accountability into the system (NAO, 2015). Although the programme, in general, produced results at least as good as previous programmes for a greatly reduced cost per participant, in 2015, nearly 70% of Work Programme participants were still not achieving the desired outcome of sustained employment two years on from the programme (House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 2015).

As well as youth unemployment, parental unemployment has an impact on young people's experiences. The **Child Poverty Strategy** (2014-17) recognised that unemployment and low earnings were among the root causes of child poverty (DfE, 2014). It stated that: "Children in workless families are three times as likely to be in relative poverty than families where at least one parent works. Of the 1.5 million children in poor working families in 2011/12 only 100,000 were in families where both parents were in full time work" (p. 13). Consequently, as part of the strategy, the government set employment targets to ensure that children were provided with the best start at life (DfE, 2014). It sought to achieve these through the continuation of support to help businesses to grow, by ensuring small and medium size companies were able to access credit and invest in infrastructure (DfE, 2014). It also aimed to tackle low pay and job mobility by raising the minimum wage and the personal tax allowance (DfE, 2014).

Shifting towards planning for a post-Brexit context, in the late 2010s, national employment policies focused on increasing productivity and economic growth across the country. A key component of this was **The Industrial Strategy**. The 2017 White Paper set out the central government's plans to build "a Britain fit for the future" by helping businesses to "create better, higher-paying jobs in every part of the United Kingdom with investment in the skills, industries and infrastructure of the future" (HM Government, 2017: p. 12). In particular, the South East Midland's Local Industrial Strategy (which includes the Corby FUA) focuses on increasing productivity and sustainability by investing in industries related to the UK 'Grand Challenge' of the *future of mobility*, such as precision engineering, robotics, AI and connected and autonomous vehicles; as well as in green energy and clean growth (SEMLEP, 2019).

In tandem, there have been several packages of funding from central government to support local economic development and boosts in productivity. In more recent years, these have been framed in terms of 'levelling up' to address the UK's longstanding regional economic disparities affecting 'left behind' areas (Harari et al., 2021). One such fund is the **Towns Fund**, which released £3.6 billion into the local economies to help 'level up' struggling towns across the country (MHCLG, 2019b). Corby received over £162,000 from this fund, which is being used



to drive growth and create jobs through urban regeneration; skills and enterprise infrastructure; and improved connectivity (MHCLG, 2019b). This extra funding has been described as a “catalyst for Corby employment” (Employment Expert, Northamptonshire).

The **Get Building Fund** also invested £900 million fund to support areas across the UK who have experienced the biggest economic challenges due to Covid-19 (MHCLG, 2020). Of this, a total of £1,195,000 was invested in the Rockingham Green Energy Hub in Corby (MHCLG, 2020). This is intended to contribute to both national and local efforts to promote a green recovery and provide new employment opportunities for those who have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic (MHCLG, 2020).

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on employment, despite support from the **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme** in which the UK government paid part of furloughed employees’ wages (HMRC, 2020). The Treasury also acknowledged that young people have particularly suffered from lack of employment opportunities, with over 600,000 16-24-year-olds not in employment on Universal Credit (a means-tested benefit) in August 2020 (HM Treasury, 2020). Research also found that those aged 16-25 were more than twice as likely as older workers to have lost their job, while six in 10 saw their earnings fall (BBC, 2020). In response, the **Kickstart Scheme** was launched in September 2020, through which the government is funding businesses to create new 6-month job placements for 16- 24-year-olds on Universal Credit, who are at risk of long-term unemployment (HM Treasury, 2020). As of January 2021, more than 120,000 job placements were created through the scheme (DWP, 2021).

### 2.2.2 Local trends and policies

Corby was formerly a thriving epicentre for the English steel industry, however, in the 1980s unemployment and poverty increased dramatically when British Steel closed its steel works in the town, making 6,000 people redundant at once (North Northamptonshire Council, 2019). An Employment Expert described how the “one-industry town” has “never recovered from losing its *raison d’être*”, due to issues of structural unemployment where local skills are not fit for the contemporary labour market. Today, Corby’s economy centres around manufacturing and distribution (see Figure 3). Many of these jobs perpetuate a “tradition [of] low skills and low pay in Corby” (Employment Expert, Northamptonshire); and these low-value job also hamper productivity. Reflecting national trends of a shift towards an increasingly precarious labour market, the Employment Expert added that much of the work currently available in Corby is via employment agencies with temporary contracts and/or very few, or no, guaranteed hours. These precarious paradigms of work particularly impact younger workers. For example, as the percentage of people in the UK employed on zero hours contracts increased from 0.5% at the end of 2008 to 3.1% at the end of 2020, 9.9% of 16-24-year-olds were employed on zero hours contracts by the end of this period (ONS, 2021f).

Although unemployment remains higher than the national average by 0.2% (Figure 7), Corby continues to have a close balance between jobs and workers (0.81 jobs: worker in 2019) (nomis, n.d.). This highlights how employment inequalities in Corby are characterised by a skills gap

and a lack of good-quality jobs, demonstrating the utility for policies which aim to boost productivity and skills locally. Several policies aimed at promoting skills development are discussed in Chapter 2.1, due to their overlap with Education policies. Alongside this, the creation of skilled job opportunities in the area is also important to avoid 'brain drain' problems, whereby skilled individuals must move or commute elsewhere to find employment. As suggested in interviews "an increase in new jobs in Corby would help reduce the skills gap and help bring graduates back into the Corby employment market" (Employment Expert, Northamptonshire).

The **North Northamptonshire Joint Strategy** (2011-2031) outlines that to maintain the existing balance between labour force and employment opportunities within North Northamptonshire, it will be necessary to create a minimum of 24,200 net jobs across all sectors of the economy between 2011 and 2031; as part of its planning strategy, it sets a target of 9,700 net job growth in Corby over this time period (North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit, 2016: p. 117). The **Corby Economic Development Strategy** (2015-2020) echoed these intentions in its vision to build upon the major developments in the town in recent years (Corby Borough Council, 2016). Yet, through talking to local experts, it appears that these strategies have had limited practical impact: "practically, I don't see any policies working on the ground in Corby" (Charity organisation representative, Corby).

The lack of skilled jobs also put limits on pay, and thus impacts living standards. One interviewee noted, "this educational skills gap translates into salaries" (Employment Expert, Northamptonshire). Total median weekly earnings (gross) in Corby (£466.1) are lower than national levels in England (£482.9) in 2020, reflecting the types of jobs available locally. Male averages are lower than national levels (£559.4 in Corby, compared to £574.9 in England); but, whilst female earnings lag behind due to a gendered differences (e.g. type of jobs, part-time work, pay gaps), the median female earnings in Corby (£401.4) are higher than the English national level (£397.3) (nomis, n.d.).

More recently, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted job prospects: "Locally the labour market doesn't have many opportunities" (Youth employment officer, Northamptonshire). One interviewee noted that the pandemic has hidden youth unemployment behind schemes such as the Furlough scheme and added a layer of complexity to youth graduate employment opportunities as many local companies and employers view graduates as just too expensive to hire (Youth employment officer, Northamptonshire).

## 2.3 Housing

### 2.3.1 National trends and policies

As Fitzpatrick et al. (2012) explain, "with respect to the main structural factors, housing market trends appear to have the most direct impact on levels of homelessness in many European countries, with the influence of labour market change more likely to be a lagged and diffuse effect, strongly mediated by welfare arrangements". House market prices continuously rise

faster than earnings. Moreover, as unemployment grew after the 2007 financial crash, and the 'housing safety net' weakened under austerity welfare reforms, both rough sleeping and statutory homelessness figures sharply increased; the national rough sleeper 'snapshot' count rose by 23% between Autumn 2010 and Autumn 2011, a more dramatic growth dynamic than anything seen since the 1990s (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012). Temporary accommodation (TA) placements also rose, with Bed and Breakfast hotel placements almost doubling between 2014-16, including an alarming rise in the numbers of households with children in TA, from 630 in March 2010 to 1,660 in March 2012 (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012).

By 2019, 'core homelessness' in England – a concept which captures the most severe and immediate forms of homelessness – is estimated to have totalled nearly 220,000, having risen from about 187,000 in 2012 (Fitzpatrick et al., 2021). During 2020 these numbers dropped somewhat to around 200,000, mainly due to the effects of the government's emergency measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (Fitzpatrick et al., 2021). Nonetheless, as more single adults were placed in TA during the pandemic, by the end of March 2021 there were 95,450 households in temporary accommodation- a rise of 3.5% on 31 March 2020-, of which 61.9% included dependent children (Wilson and Barton, 2021).

Beyond homelessness, housing inequalities are multifaceted. Research from Shelter (2021), describes a 'Housing Emergency' in which housing is:

- Unaffordable – with private rents growing at a faster rate than earnings, and insufficient housing benefit and social housing. 14% of people surveyed said that they regularly have to cut spending on household essentials like food or heating to pay their rent or mortgage;
- Unfit – with unsafe, overcrowded and poor-quality homes meaning that 23% are living in homes with significant damp, mould and condensation, and 7% don't have enough bedrooms for everyone in their home;
- Unstable – whereby the private-rented sector has doubled in size over the last 20 years, with more than 11 million private renters in the UK (including more than one million families with children). However, regulation hasn't substantially changed since 1988 so most private rental properties are let on tenancies of 6 to 12 months, and renters can be evicted for no reason because of Section 21;
- Unequal – whereby two million adults in Britain say they've faced discrimination when looking for a home, and those that identify as Black or Asian, gay or bisexual, disabled, or a single mum were found to be more likely to be impacted by the housing emergency.

Among recommendations of welfare reforms and legal changes, Shelter (2021) also advocates for a greater stock of social housing. Since 2008, central government housing strategies have responded by focussing on increasing national housing developments, building environmentally friendly housing and providing integrated social housing options in new housing developments.

A policy that has assisted with this aim of increasing affordable housing stocks nationally is the **Localism Act** (2011). This provides local areas with the power to control its housing and development strategy and includes policies and laws relating to allocations of tenancies and flexible tenancies (DCLG, 2011). As a result of this Act, local authorities are required to produce a 'Tenancy Strategy' that sits alongside their localised Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and Allocations Policy (DCLG, 2011). The act requires that this Tenancy Strategy covers the type of tenancies available locally, the type of tenancies in the local area (fixed, short-term, long-term) and the circumstances in which the landlord will grant and end each form of tenancy (DCLG, 2011). These changes have allowed local councils to manage and develop housing strategies that suits their community to solve housing inequality at more localised scales (DCLG, 2011).

In a further attempt to address housing inequalities, in 2020 the UK government published **The Charter for Social Housing Residents - Social Housing White Paper** (MHCLG, 2020). This built on a 2018 Green Paper which proposed a 'new deal' for social housing, aiming to address the unbalanced relationship between residents and landlords, by tackling tenancy stigma and ensuring that social housing can be both a stable base that supports people when they need it and support social mobility (MHCLG, 2018). The Charter sets out seven criteria that all social housing residents should be able to expect, which cover: the safety and quality of their home, their landlord's performance on key indicators; a complaints process; improved regulation; increased resident voice; and support to become a home owner (MHCLG, 2020). The paper goes on to set out the steps the government will take to ensure the Charter is implemented, including through a review of multiple policies, programmes, investments and regulation (MHCLG, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has further brought housing inequalities into sharp focus. 18% of homes in England are in a 'non-decent' condition and these homes are occupied disproportionately by older people, those with existing health conditions, people on lower incomes and those from ethnic minority groups (Thorstensen-Woll et al., 2020). Nearly a third of adults reported to have had mental or physical health problems during lockdown because of the condition of, or lack of space in, their home; and emerging evidence shows that overcrowded households had an increased risk of both the transmission and worst outcomes of Covid-19 (Thorstensen-Woll et al., 2020). Further challenges also arose related to the health implications of homelessness, as well as financial uncertainty leaving people unable to afford rent or mortgage payments. To address these, the government introduced the '**Everybody in' Scheme** which provided funding to help those who sleep on the streets self-isolate in lockdowns, as well as an **Evictions Ban** from March 2020 until May 2021, and an **Extended Notice Period** between June 2021 and October 2021. Nonetheless, as these temporary measures came to an end, evictions and homelessness were set to surge as rates of arrears across all tenures were at least twice the level of arrears observed going into the Covid-19 crisis by January 2021 (Judge, 2021).

### 2.3.2 Local trends and policies

As Corby is historically a 'New Town', much of its housing stock has been built over the last 80 years. As a result, the town housing structure is a mix of low-rise estates, with terraced or semi-detached houses, and purpose-built flats, including high-rise blocks. With the town's roots in working class manufacturing and steel works, many of the properties in Corby tend to be small and currently there is an issue with overcrowding (Northamptonshire Telegraph, 2019). In 2018, Corby Borough Council owned 4,717 residential dwellings of varying sizes and types for rent (Corby Borough Council, 2018a). There were also nine social Housing Association landlords with 1,141 homes for rent locally, in various forms, and 115 homes that come under the banner of 'Affordable Ownership', leaving 20,877 which are privately owned (Corby Borough Council, 2018a).

Until unitarisation in April 2021, Corby Borough Council managed its own housing stock. Unlike many other local authorities which have outsourced their housing stock, Corby Council had direct control over its housing. An interviewee from the Local Authority explained that this meant that the council could work with residents and local contractors to deliver suitable, affordable and appropriate housing for the local community.

Via the responsibilities afforded by the **Localism Act**, the council created several strategies to manage its housing stock. One of these was Corby Borough Council's **Housing Development Strategy** (2018) which aimed to establish criteria for the local council to consider when developing new homes to add to its housing stock (Corby Borough Council, 2018b). It sought to ensure the number of affordable homes meets housing need and improve the quality and energy efficiency of the town's housing stock (Corby Borough Council, 2018b). This approach by Corby Borough Council stands in contrast to the trend across England – the proportion of dwellings in England which were local authority-owned reduced by 1.6%, from 8.0% to 6.4% between 2009 and 2020 (MHCLG, 2021).

In recent years, policies affecting housing in Corby have largely echoed this focus on the development of new housing estates across the town, to accommodate the town's growing population. This growth can be attributed to the relatively low housing prices in the town, and the new train link that reaches London in approximately one hour, meaning Corby has become an affordable commuter town for London's workforce. Nonetheless, an interviewee from a charity organisation in Corby mentioned, "as Corby continues to push its various regeneration schemes in estates such as Kingswood estate, housing has been impacted by issues of affordability, as many local families feel they are being pushed out of their town by newcomers". According to another interviewee, this sense of gentrification is creating a visible community divide, between those living in new and old housing. They explain, "These new developments have brought people up from London" which in turn has compounded the "very clear divide between old housing estates vs. new affluent families and the very different communities in Corby" (Charity Organisation, Corby).

An interviewee from the Local Authority also highlighted how national imbalances between the price of housing and earnings are also an issue for the local context in Corby: “House prices are still increasing, even through the pandemic, and when this is compared relative to local wages, it’s a problem”. Affordable housing is therefore important to ensure that people can access suitable and stable housing, yet “despite local council efforts, social housing is not being built at a fast enough pace to support its growing need in the Corby community” (Local Authority, Corby).

In addition to affordability, interviews revealed that the property types within the housing stock do not suit the needs of the town’s population. As highlighted by one interviewee “the supply of rentals has collapsed, especially [properties with] one or 2 bedrooms” (Local Authority, Corby). Across the town, lettings more than halved and bids more than doubled in the last 5 years since 2013, adding to housing pressures (Corby Borough Council, 2018a).

Housing need is considered as part of the **North Northamptonshire Joint Strategy**, including a target to build an average of 9,000 new dwellings in Corby over the 20-year period between 2011 and 2031 (North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit, 2016: p. 132). This planning strategy recognises that new housing developments should reflect the needs of the local community, aiming to “deliver a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community.” (North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit, 2016, pg. 138).

As these issues come to a head, homelessness has also been a recurring issue which the council has sought to address. For example, an interviewee shared a perception that “Corby seems very proactive in their housing” and “very committed to those struggling” (Youth Charity, Northamptonshire). They explain, “when there was a lot of homelessness and fewer houses, they struck a deal with South Shields [a town in NE England with a lower cost of living and housing] to move people there if they wanted to” (Youth Charity, Northamptonshire).

In addition, Corby Borough Council’s **Housing and Homelessness Strategy** (2014-2019) aimed to reduce the town’s population who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (Corby Borough Council, 2015). It explores the housing backgrounds of households at risk of becoming homeless, using this understanding to prevent homelessness where possible through pro-active case work and partnership working with landlords and organisations which can provide support on debt, health and other personal issues (Corby Borough Council, 2015). It also sets out decisions required to make the best use of limited resources, for example giving reasonable preference for housing to those in the greatest housing need and those with a local connection to Corby (Corby Borough Council, 2015).

The town’s young population also face specific challenges in accessing housing. One interviewee pointed to discrimination, saying that, “landlords aren’t keen on taking young people” because welfare payments are higher for those aged over 25 (Youth Charity, Northamptonshire). This issue is aggravated by increased housing prices and a decrease in wages for young people and “now it is really hard to get private accommodation, and they



need follow formalised methods. And some kids don't do well in that." (Youth Charity, Northamptonshire).

Nonetheless, there seems to be an absence of policies targeted at addressing housing inequalities among young people in Corby. As one interviewee highlighted, "I don't think I can identify one policy that has addressed young people in housing. Probably referencing but nothing specific to address housing for young people" (Youth Charity, Corby).

## 2.4 Health

### 2.4.1 National trends and policies

Providing universal free and accessible healthcare has been a focus of the UK government for many decades. The National Health Service (NHS), which was founded in 1948, provides universal healthcare coverage which is free at the point of delivery. The UK healthcare system was ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in the world by the World Health Organisation in 2021 (Tandon et al., 2021). Austerity measures from 2008 onwards saw a slowing of the growth in NHS funding, which put pressure on services facing increased demand (Kings Fund, 2021).

The NHS is also a highly complicated system, with myriad levels of funding, governance and regulation, commissioning and delivery of services across primary and secondary care, mental health, and community services (King's Fund, 2020) (Figure 8).

Yet despite universal healthcare, in England, the range in life expectancy at birth between the least and most deprived area deciles was 9.3 years for males and 7.5 years for females in 2015 to 2017 (ONS, 2019). This highlights 'a social gradient in health' whereby health inequalities result from social inequalities (Marmot, 2010).

In response to the Marmot Review drawing attention to the wider social determinants of health, **The Healthy Lives, Healthy People** white paper set out a new approach to public health in England, with three overarching aims: protecting the UK population from serious health threats; helping people live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives; and, improving the health of the poorest, fastest (HM Government, 2010). It adopted a life course framework for tackling the wider social determinants of health, emphasising more personalised, preventive services (HM Government, 2010). Within this approach, several more specific strategies were published, including **The Alcohol Strategy** (HM Government, 2012a) and **The Tobacco Control Plan for England** (HM Government, 2011a). In 2011, the government also published a major mental health strategy; **No Health Without Mental Health: A Cross-government Mental Health Outcomes Strategy for People of All Ages** was the first public health strategy to give equal weight and priority to mental and physical health (HM Government, 2011b). This was followed up in 2012 with **Preventing Suicide in England**, a cross-government strategy (HM Government, 2012b).

More recently, the **NHS Long Term Plan** was published in 2019 (NHS, 2019). It is focused on "reshaping the NHS around the changing needs of patients today" (Theresa May, Prime

Minister, 2019). It is designed to respond to the increase demand for both health and social care which arise from an ageing population, providing more integrated care, and the need to modernise healthcare services. In particular, it aims to: remove the divisions between hospital and community care; reduce pressure on emergency services; provide more personalised care that gives people greater control; make greater use of digital technology; and have an increased focus on population health through local Integrated Care Systems (NHS, 2019).

Alongside these national plans and strategies, there are a wide range of policies and initiatives designed to address some of the most pressing public health issues in England, which include priority areas for young people. These include:

- A 2016 **Plan for Action on childhood obesity**, which introduced a levy on soft drinks (HM Government, 2016);
- **A Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Framework**, which aims to continue the significant and sustained reduction in the rate of teenage pregnancies in England over the last 20 years (PHE and LGA, 2018);
- The 2017-2022 **Tobacco Control Plan**, which aims to reduce smoking prevalence through a combination of services to support smokers to stop, and the use of legislation and policy to make smoking less attractive, e.g., through regulation of packaging, taxation, and sanctions on illicit tobacco (Department of Health, 2017);
- **The NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme**, which aims to reduce the prevalence of Type 2 diabetes through an innovative behavioural intervention for those considered at risk of developing the condition (PHE, 2018);
- The 2012 national **Preventing suicide in England: a cross-government outcomes strategy** was followed up by the 2016 **Five year forward view for mental health**. These place responsibility on local authorities to develop *local suicide prevention strategies and action plans* (PHE, 2020a).

While alcohol consumption and gambling are increasingly recognised as public health problems, including in the NHS Long Term Plan, there is, as of 2021, no national strategy to address the harms which arise from these. Currently, these issues are being tackled through a combination of improved service provision- for example, opening NHS gambling addiction clinics (NHS, 2020a), and investing in specialist Alcohol Care Teams in areas with a high level of need (NHS, 2019)- and regulation, such as capping the stake on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (Woodhouse, 2019), and a minimum price per unit on alcohol (Woodhouse, 2020).

NHS England and Public Health England have also been delivering **high profile campaigns**, supported by digital platforms and apps, and other resources for individuals, that focus on both physical and mental health:

- [Better Health](#) focuses on helping people to lose weight, become more active, stop smoking and reduce alcohol consumption. It includes a range of apps which offer dietary advice, exercise programmes fronted by sports stars and celebrities, and



progress tracking apps. Almost 1 million people downloaded the already popular 'Couch to 5k' app between March and June 2020 alone (NHS, 2020b).

- [Every Mind Matters](#) provides wellbeing and mental health tips, advice and signposting, including a simple quiz to generate tailored recommendations
- [Change4Life](#) is a programme targeting families with the aim of reducing childhood obesity. It provides healthy meal recipes, fun active game ideas, and offers incentives like free activity packs during school holidays. It also provides information about child weight, to support the **National Child Measurement Programme** which weighs children at the start and end of primary school, and informs parents whether their child is overweight, underweight or a healthy weight. Launched in 2009 as the first social marketing campaign of its kind in the UK, by 2019 its app has been downloaded more than five million times and been used for over 50 million barcode scans, along with a thriving Facebook community (PR Week, 2019).

Yet, in the ten years since the first Marmot Review, the 'social gradient' has become steeper, inequalities in life expectancy have increased and between-place inequalities have increased (Marmot et al., 2020). Since 2010, the amount of time people spend in poor health has increased across England, and there has been no sign of a decrease in mortality for people under 50 (Marmot et al., 2020). Large funding cuts have affected the social determinants of health across England, with austerity undermining the capacity for local governments to invest in prevention (Marmot et al., 2020).

Alongside the provision of traditional health services and public health campaigns, NHS England has been an active stakeholder in a shift seen across the UK (NHS, n.d.), which focus more squarely on the social determinants of health and frequently adopt a place-based approach to addressing these. It frequently connects health with other local issues such as tackling air pollution, increasing active travel, and creating physical environments which are more conducive to active and healthy lifestyles, including addressing 'food deserts'.

A significant example of this is the **NHS Healthy New Towns** programme (NHS England, 2019) explored how the development of new places could create healthier and connected communities with integrated and high-quality services. It identified 10 core principles, in three categories, which cover all aspects of place-making:

- Plan ahead collectively; Assess local health and care needs; Connect, involve and empower people and communities;
- Create compact neighbourhoods; Maximise active travel; Inspire and enable healthy eating; Foster health in homes and buildings; and
- Develop health services that will help people stay well; Create integrated health and wellbeing centres.

A range of actors are working in this space alongside the NHS and Public Health England, including:

- Sport England which is funding Local Delivery Pilots to explore how places can increase levels of physical activity (Sport England, n.d.);
- Impact on Urban Health, a place-based charity focusing on urban health, part of the Guy's & St Thomas' Hospital Foundation in South London.

Alongside these are a wide range of local authorities, charities, social enterprises, academics and others working on place-based programmes across the country.

Nonetheless, as the Covid-19 pandemic hit, it shone a light on persistent health inequalities. Suleman et al. (2021) highlight how “poor health and existing inequalities left parts of the UK vulnerable to the virus and defined the contours of its devastating impact” as the working age population (aged under 65) in the poorest 10% of areas in England were almost 4 times more likely to die from Covid-19 than those in the wealthiest decile. This is exemplified through the relationship between excess weight and Covid-19, which prompted the government to create a new strategy to tackle obesity in the wake of the pandemic (DHSC, 2020). Those with excess weight were at a higher risk of a positive test, hospitalisation, advanced levels of treatment and death, related to Covid-19; excess weight is more prevalent among people living in deprived areas and in some Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups, compared with the general population, and children in the most deprived parts of the country are more than twice as likely to be obese as their peers living in the richest areas (PHE, 2020b).

Beyond Covid-19 morbidity, the pandemic has also had implications for other health issues. Healthcare services for non-Covid-19 conditions were deprioritised to manage increased demand from Covid-19. This resulted in reduced or delayed treatment of existing conditions, leading to a backlog of unmet care need (Suleman et al., 2021). People living with long-term conditions, disabled people and those shielding also experienced reduced access to health services, and access to social care services declined despite an increasing need during the pandemic (Suleman et al. 2021). In addition, one-fifth of the population experienced a sustained increase in poor mental health (by September 2020), with rates of anxiety and depression rising particularly high during periods when the tightest social distancing restrictions were in place, and those facing financial hardship faring worse than others (Suleman et al., 2021).

In order to “to give ourselves the best chance of beating this virus – and of spotting and tackling other external health threats, now and in the future”, in August 2020, Matt Hancock, the Health and Social Care Secretary at the time, announced that the institution responsible for public health during the pandemic, Public Health England, would be disbanded and replaced by the National Institute for Health Protection (Hancock, 2020). With a focus on capacity and capability to respond to health threats, the restructuring will contribute to “levelling up health to support future resilience” (DHSC, 2020b): Matt Hancock (2020) described how, “it will be a national Institute that works very much locally, working with local directors of public health and their teams, who are the unsung heroes of health protection”. This decision was not without its critics who argued that restructuring public health in this way,

at this time, was merely the government making Public Health England a 'scapegoat' for its failings in handling the pandemic (BMA, 2020).

#### **2.4.2 Local trends and policies**

Northamptonshire is a region with significant social inequalities and levels of deprivation; these inequalities influence health and well-being (Patterson-Young et al., 2017). Local data for Corby highlights specific issues, including higher than average levels of: childhood obesity; child and adult alcohol-related hospitalisations; conceptions among under 18s; and smoking-related deaths (Patterson-Young et al., 2017) (Figures 9 and 10). Covid-19 has added a further dimension to these issues, as Corby "consistently had one of the highest Covid-19 case rates in England" (BBC, 2021).

As interviewees highlighted, "health has gotten worse over the course of the last year" (Youth Charity, Northamptonshire) with "mental health issues (being) exasperated by the pandemic" (Health Expert, Local Authority, Corby).

The life expectancy at birth for both males and females in Corby is one of the lowest in the county and in 2020 life expectancy figures in Corby stood at an average of 78 years for males and 81 years for females (Figure 11). These figures stand below the national average of 79.4 years for males and 83.1 years for females and are approximately 10 years below the averages in nearby Northampton which recorded averages of 83.6 years for males and 90.3 years for females (ONS, 2020a).

The combined effects of the financial crisis and shrinking job market are also affecting mental health. Corby was named the town with the highest level personal debt in 2017 (The Guardian, 2017). High levels of personal borrowing and debt contribute to high levels of poor mental health as many people's financial worries negatively impact their mental health. Mental health services in the town are considered stretched and insufficient for the high levels of demand. Over the period from 2014-2016, Corby had the highest rate of mortality from suicide in the country (17.5/10,000), and the rate remained above the national average for the period 2017-19 (11.7 compared to 10.1 in England) (ONS, 2020b). The town also experiences significantly higher rates of self-harm admissions in more deprived areas and "those living in the most deprived areas of the county are 3.9 times more likely to be admitted to hospital from self-harm than those in the least deprived areas", with the highest rate seen in the 20-24-year-old age group (Patterson-Young et al., 2017) (Figure 12).

With the town's lack of a community hospital and an expanding population, it is a concern that the healthcare infrastructure in Corby is not keeping up with population growth, while the pressure on services has been exacerbated by falling health budgets. The local council recognises its local efforts to address these issues have had mixed success: "There are lots of things we've done to combat this in worst areas. Even if we haven't done better in some areas, they haven't gotten worse." (Health Expert, Local Authority, Corby).

Through its '**In Everyone's Interest' Health and Wellbeing Strategy** (2013-2016), Northamptonshire aimed to be recognised as a "national centre of excellence in the quality of its health and social care and commitment to wellbeing for the benefit of all" (Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board, 2014, p: 3). The strategy set out several outcomes to ensure that every child has the safest and best start to life and people live healthier lifestyles and greater control over their health and wellbeing. This strategy was reviewed and republished in 2016 and outlined priorities in continuing to tackle health inequalities. These priorities focused on youth health inequalities, across physical and mental health, ensuring that all children were given the best start to life and that the healthcare environment allows everyone to succeed (Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board, 2016).

Statistics show that mental health is a significant and growing issue in Corby. This is reflected in the **Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy** (2016-2020) which recognises that local systems and services must reduce health inequalities by enabling people to help themselves (Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board, 2016). These efforts were highlighted in an interview where several services and activities were mentioned as having been designed to reflect local communities' needs with all additional Council run services "at a low cost to make the services accessible for the most deprived" (Health expert, Local Authority, Corby).

This policy has also had an impact on mental health and suicide prevention in Corby and wider Northamptonshire with the multi-agency **Suicide Prevention Partnership Forum** being set up as a result of the Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board, 2016). The Forum works locally to reduce stigma around mental health. Through encouraging people to seek mental health support and reducing stigma around emotional distress and suicidal thinking, the Forum ensures that services are responsive and offer localised, appropriate support. The success of services and outcomes like the Suicide Prevention Partnership Forum and the wider Northamptonshire Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy, both of which are "based in local context and outputs set on local issues" (Health expert, Local Authority, Corby) highlight how localised, relevant and reactive policy making that remains a collaborative effort can bring effective change and support to a local community and help reduce mental health inequality.

Another programme that reflects the policy outcomes of the Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy is **NGAGE: The Northamptonshire Young People's Service**. This provides an early intervention drug and alcohol service for young people aged 10-18 years old, to tackle the high levels of youth alcohol and substance abuse in the Northamptonshire area (Acquarius, n.d.). The service provides information, education, advice and support to young people in relation to drug and alcohol use. NGAGE is a free and confidential service that is committed to promoting the voice of young people in the design and delivery of the services (Acquarius, n.d.). The success of this programme can be measured in the support and

trust that young people find in the service, reflecting the positive outcomes that can come from localised policies that are grounded in the local context, needs and aspirations.

### 3 Innovative post-crisis policies

Kingswood and Hazel Leys (KHL) is a ward in Corby, just south of the town centre (Figure 2). As of mid-2019, it had a population of 7,795, of which 19% (1,477) were young people aged 15-29 (ONS, 2020c). The 2011 census showed that the neighbourhood performed poorly on several indicators of economic hardship, and consistently fell behind Corby and national (England and Wales) averages (nomis, n.d.):

- 13.9% of 16-64-year-olds were unemployed (compared to 7.6% both in Corby and nationally);
- The majority of those employed worked in low-skill and low-pay jobs: in elementary occupations (28.8%, compared to 21.1% in Corby and 11.2% nationally) or as process plant and machine operatives (21.5%, compared to 16.2% in Corby and 7.2% nationally);
- 29% had no qualifications (compared to 20.1% in Corby and 15% nationally) and only 9% had a Level 4 qualification or above (compared to 16.1% in Corby and 29.7% nationally).

In 2012, KHL became a 'Big Local area', and its community was set at the heart of leading an innovative post-crisis funding programme in the area. **Big Local** provides long-term, resident-led funding with almost no strings attached. Delivered by Local Trust, it is the largest single endowment ever made by the National Lottery Community Fund, a non-departmental public body which distributes National Lottery funding for the benefit of communities across the UK. Altogether, £217 million was invested in 150 neighbourhoods across England (including KHL), with each area awarded £1.1 million on the basis that it could be spent over 10-15 years at the communities' own chosen pace and according to their own plans and priorities (Local Trust, 2019).

The programme demonstrates an innovative approach to funding provision for local change. It is distinct from conventional funding programmes in five key ways: i) resident-led, rather than top-down, decision-making; ii) long-term, rather than time-limited, funding cycles; iii) non-prescriptive, rather than project-led, agendas; iv) patient, rather than judgemental, evaluation; and v) accompanied by flexible and responsive support (Local Trust, 2019). As its *Halfway Point* report explains, "In terms of scale, time horizon and ethos, nothing like Big Local has ever existed. Designed from the outset to be radically different from other funding programmes, Big Local has at its heart a vision of empowered, resilient, dynamic, asset-rich communities making their own decisions on what is best for their area" (Local Trust, 2019: p. 2).

As well as being among the changemakers involved in resident-led decision-making, young people are also key beneficiaries in KHL. Alongside several other activities, the community in KHL have decided to dedicate its Big Local funds towards various initiatives aimed at its young population. With grants ranging from £100 to £5,000, these have focussed on a range of areas,

from providing opportunities in the arts, to environmental projects and physical activity, health and wellbeing initiatives (Northamptonshire Community Foundation, n.d.). For example:

- In July 2016, £5,000 was granted to Corby Mind to provide young parents with support and a series of workshops including an 8-week psycho-educational group, a self-help group & relaxation therapy
- In April 2017, £5,000 was granted to HQ Can CIC to provide mentoring and studio services for aspiring Rappers, Singers and Producers for 11-19-year-olds in Hazel Leys and Kingswood
- In July 2017, £5,000 was granted to Jason Strachen Personal Fitness to enable the group to deliver two 12-week programmes to improve the health and well-being of young people in Corby
- In February 2018, £2,432 was granted to Mad2Perform to enable the group to deliver breakdance lessons to the children and young people of Kingswood and Hazelwood Estate

These funds are administered and accounted for by the KHL 'Big Local Partnership'. This is a group of at least 8 people, of which the majority must live in KHL, who are responsible for agreeing a shared vision, creating the Big Local plan, overseeing its delivery, collecting evidence to show how the plan is progressing, and reviewing the plan and partnership to make sure they are working in the best way possible (Local Trust, 2015). A locally trusted organisation(s) can also be chosen by the Big Local Partnership to administer and account for the distribution of its funding, and/or deliver projects, activities or services on behalf of the Big Local Partnership (Local Trust, 2015).

Antony Mason (2019) notes that, whilst all communities worry about their young, "there is a particular sense of crisis and urgency in deprived communities" (p. 10), exacerbated by the withdrawal of national and local funding, notably under austerity. Consequently, the wellbeing and the futures of young people ranked high in the priorities identified by almost all Big Local areas when formulating a vision of what they wanted to achieve with their £1 million (Mason, 2019). As the intergenerational social contract breaks down, Mason (2019) argues that the Big Local model demonstrates how grassroots action and neighbourhood-level localism can fill the gaps left by funding cuts and short-term localism; whilst youth provision must remain the responsibility of local and national government, it highlights how community-led approaches can increase the effectiveness of policies.

Although the programme is not yet complete, Matt Leach, Local Trust's Chief Executive, explains that, "as neighbourhoods overcome past and present inequalities ... there is now evidence to suggest the impacts of Big Local will be sustained over the long term. Since that initial leap in the dark ... we are coming to see that it really is possible for funders to give money and support in completely new and innovative ways, with residents in the lead" (Local Trust, 2019: p. 1). This includes emerging evidence about the impacts of Big Local on the four dimensions of inequality discussed in this report. There is particularly strong evidence of improvements in health inequalities. For instance, through conducting a survey of over 850



residents involved with the 150 Big Local areas across England, McGowan et al. (2021) found that a sense of 'collective control', and some measures of social cohesion, were positively associated with better mental well-being and self-rated health. These positive associations were often greater amongst women and participants with a lower education (McGowan et al., 2021). In addition, Halliday et al. (2021) use qualitative evidence from Big Local areas to describe the health impacts of living in stigmatised places, and Egan et al. (2021) use five examples from Big Local areas to demonstrate the relationship between health and community-led improvements to the built environment.

In this sense, Big Local is helping to address the 'evidence paradox', which undermines abilities to demonstrate the worth of 'community power' approaches because the current public services model is driven by a narrow framing of 'value' and a strong focus on quantitative metrics (Pollard et al., 2021) (Figure 13). This fails to capture the relational benefits of community-led approaches. For example, George Hill, chair of KHL Big Local, explains "this estate has massively improved because of the collaboration between the borough council, other organisations and Big Local ... The best way to get on with the council is to get to know the people in it. They're just human; they're just trying to do a job. With the council, I'm a bit of an advocate for how important they are, and it's not as if I'm high flying or a council officer. I'm one of the cleaners!" (Tickle, 2018).

Reframing the role of communities, particularly in shaping the central government funds granted to local areas, will be increasingly relevant given the recent focus on 'levelling up'. As the majority of 'macro funds' and economic interventions over the last two decades have not involved communities in a meaningful nor sustainable way, interventions have consistently failed to address the most deprived communities, contributing to a 0% average change in the relative spatial deprivation of the most deprived local authority areas (Yang et al., 2021). This "prompts the question of why this intervention has proved so ineffective" (p. 10)?

Plumb et al. (2021) argue that "what continues to be missing from the funds that are put in place to drive levelling up forward is a focus, not just on what is done, but on how it is done" (p. 4). They suggest that the current policy approach risks creating and reinforcing inequalities due to an inadequate focus on investment to build the capacity of communities to contribute to levelling up. Through learnings from Big Local, it is proposed that investment in social infrastructure would have economic as well as social value, with the potential to help 'level up' communities (Local Trust, 2021).

Two caveats of this potential are that investment must be "done in the right way" and "targeted at the right places" (Local Trust, 2021: p. 4). Corby has been identified as a funding 'cold spot'. Yet, despite being among the bottom 10% of English local authorities to receive the most public, philanthropic and charitable funding (297/315), the town ranks comparatively high in terms of its community strength (92/315) (Tauschinski et al., 2019). Yang et al. (2021) propose a 'locally engaged approach to levelling up' (Figure 14) which would tap into this 'community power' to enhance the impacts of funding programmes, such as the Towns Fund or Get Building Fund. This would mark a shift towards a 'community paradigm' for the allocation of



public resources, moving away from state and market paradigms (Pollard et al., 2021). As Mason (2019) questions, “if communities prioritise allocation of resources to intergenerational fairness, why can’t central and local government” (p. 63)?

## 4 Discussion and conclusions

Drawing together findings across the four dimensions of inequality discussed – employment, housing, education and social health – we now provide an overview of the three levels of analysis identified in the Deliverable 1.2 of the UPLIFT project: macro-level, meso-level and micro-level.

At the macro-level, trends in Corby are characterised by issues of globalisation and deindustrialisation. This has resulted in a prevalence of low-waged labour and high rates of unemployment. These employment inequalities are driven by educational inequalities, namely the skills gap and a generational aspirations gap, and have implications for housing security and health and wellbeing. Although there have been some areas of improvement (e.g. educational attainment), in the aftermath of the 2007 financial crash, policies at the macro-level largely aggravated inequalities in post-industrial towns like Corby, as austerity cuts have had disproportionate effects on these places. Rather than investing in addressing structural issues, like the skills gap, a neoliberal regime of punitive welfare reforms and cost-saving measures placed the burden of the economic crisis on those who were already worst-off. Under these reforms, the 'social safety net' deteriorated and preventative measures eroded, driving inequality across the four dimensions discussed in this report.

As Britain voted to leave the EU in 2016, macro-level policy shifted towards preparations for the post-Brexit context, and began to address the needs of post-industrial towns, like Corby, which had been 'left behind' or 'forgotten'. Policies such as the Post-16 Skills Plan and the Industrial Strategy largely focussed on the meso-level as they were implemented through LEPs (e.g. with SEMPLEP's Local Industrial Strategy and Growing People Skills Plan). Macro-funds, such as the Towns Fund or Get Building Fund, are also being channelled to post-industrial towns as part of the 'levelling up' agenda to address between-place spatial disparities. Nonetheless, analysis has shown that these types of interventions have consistently failed to address the most deprived local areas. Funds have not reached the right places, nor been invested to reflect the specificities of local contexts. The case of an innovative post-crisis approach, Big Local, demonstrates an alternative approach to funding programmes, which prioritises sustained hyper-local community involvement.

Micro-level interventions have greater potential to address local-level needs, particularly with the Localism agenda, which has devolved greater powers to local government since 2010. Nonetheless, time and time again, in expert interviews we heard a perception that local policies were disjointed and largely absent in practice. This must be viewed in the context of financial turmoil within Corby's two-tier council structure. Across the country, austerity measures have reduced the capacities of local government to serve their communities. As this was coupled with financial mismanagement, Northamptonshire County Council faced bankruptcy leading to even statutory services being under threat. Even in areas where there is evidence of local government action (e.g. Corby Borough Council's Housing and Homelessness strategy) cost-

saving measures and opportunity costs are embedded within official documentation, highlighting the limits of local service provision.

The cumulative effect of the financial crisis and the UK's decision to leave the EU and the Covid-19 pandemic has only served to deepen inequalities in Corby. Looking particularly at how gendered these inequalities are, young women are more likely to be unemployed and earn less due to the types and nature of jobs they have. Overall, policies implemented since 2008 have not effectively addressed the inequalities experienced by the urban youth in Corby for two key reasons. Firstly, austerity has undermined preventative measures implemented at national and local scales and can, in fact, be attributed to growing inequalities. Secondly, the lack of sustained community involvement in interventions (including the lack of involvement of young people as co-creators) has led to policy responses which are ill-suited to local needs. As the global economy shifts towards recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, we suggest avoiding mistakes of the past and learn from the KHL programme which had young people among the changemakers. We recommend that policymakers involve young people in decision-making so that the substantive content of policies address inequalities.

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## Annex

This table below contains data/indicators that are able to display social inequalities in a way that is the most comparable with other urban areas. Each urban report includes this data table, which is also intending to show not only the scale and dimensions of inequalities in the functional urban area of Corby, but indicate also the scale of missing data that makes any comparative research difficult to implement.

	National data (UK, unless otherwise specified)	Regional data (East Midlands, unless otherwise specified)	FUA data (Corby)	City level data (n/a)
<b>Population<sup>3</sup></b>				
Population in 2007	60,985,700		54,000	
Population in 2012	63,705,000		63,073	
Population in 2017	66,040,229		69,540	
Population aged 15-29 in 2007	12, 130,000		10,200	
Population aged 15-29 in 2012	12,576,700		12,485	
Population aged 15-29 in 2017	12,453,457		12,034	
<b>Income/poverty<sup>4</sup></b>				
Gini index 2007/08	38.6%			
Gini index 2011/12	33.8%			
Gini index 2017/18	34.4%			
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 1st quintile) 2018/2019				
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 2st quintile) 2018/2019				
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 3st quintile) 2018/2019				

<sup>3</sup> Mid- year population estimates data retrieved from:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

<sup>4</sup> Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income data retrieved from:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tessi190/default/table?lang=en> At risk of poverty rate  
 data derived from data retrieved from:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tessi012/default/table?lang=en>

	National data (UK, unless otherwise specified)	Regional data (East Midlands, unless otherwise specified)	FUA data (Corby)	City level data (n/a)
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 4st quintile) 2018/2019				
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 5st quintile) 2018/2019				
At risk of poverty rate 2007				
At risk of poverty rate 2012	16.8			
At risk of poverty rate 2017	17.0			
At risk of poverty aged 15-29 2007				
At risk of poverty aged 15-29 2012				
At risk of poverty aged 15-29 2017				
<b>Housing<sup>5</sup></b>				
Share of housing below market rates (social housing) 2008/2009				
Share of housing below market rates (social housing) 2011/2012				
Share of housing below market rates (social housing) 2018/2019				
Average housing price/average income 2007	7.14 (England)		6.20	
Average housing price/average income 2012	6.77 (England)		5.06	
Average housing price/average income 2017	7.92 (England)		6.78	
<b>Education<sup>6</sup></b>				

<sup>5</sup> Ratio of median house price to median gross annual residence-based earnings data retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoresidencebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

<sup>6</sup> % aged 16-18 not in any education or training (dates at end of year) data retrieved from: Additional Tables – Rates; Tables A1, A2 and A3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-employment-2019>; % aged 16-18 in full time education or training (dates at end of year) data retrieved from: Additional Tables – Rates; Tables A1, A2 and A3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-employment-2019>

	National data (UK, unless otherwise specified)	Regional data (East Midlands, unless otherwise specified)	FUA data (Corby)	City level data (n/a)
Early leavers from education and training 2007	9.9% (England)			
Early leavers from education and training 2012	6.9% (England)			
Early leavers from education and training 2017	4.2% (England)			
Share of inhabitants aged 15-64 with a maximum ISCED 1 (2) education 2007/2008				
Share of inhabitants aged 15-64 with a maximum ISCED 1 (2) education 2011/2012				
Share of inhabitants aged 15-64 with a maximum ISCED 1 (2) education 2018/2019				
Enrolment in upper secondary school 2007	78.4% (England)			
Enrolment in upper secondary school 2012	83.6% (England)			
Enrolment in upper secondary school 2018	87.0% (England)	82.6% (Northamptonshire)		
<b>Employment<sup>7</sup></b>				

Northamptonshire data retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neet-and-participation-local-authority-figures> (data in March, rather than end of year)

<sup>7</sup> % aged 16-18 not in any education, employment or training (at end of year) data retrieved from: Main Tables, Table 5a <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-employment-2019>; Northamptonshire data retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neet-and-participation-local-authority-figures> (this includes those not known and data is for March, rather than end of year); National un/employment rate, by age (not seasonally adjusted, based on Labour Force Survey) data retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/employmentunemploymentandeconomicinactivitybyagegroupnotseasonallyadjusted05nsa>; Regional un/employment rate, by age (based on Annual Population Survey) data retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/headlinelabourforcesurveyindicatorsfortheeastmidlandshi04>; FUA employment rate (Jan-Dec) data retrieved from: [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157155/subreports/ea\\_time\\_series/report.aspx?](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157155/subreports/ea_time_series/report.aspx?); FUA

	National data (UK, unless otherwise specified)	Regional data (East Midlands, unless otherwise specified)	FUA data (Corby)	City level data (n/a)
NEET youth aged 16-18 2007	6.1% (England)			
NEET youth aged 16-18 2011	5.8% (England)			
NEET youth aged 16-18 2018	3.5% (England)	5.8% (Northamptonshire)		
Employment rate 2007	72.3%	73.7%	77.7%	
Employment rate 2012	70.2%	71.4%	84.7%	
Employment rate 2017	74.6%	74.1%	83.2%	
Employment rate aged 18-24 2007	79.7%	68.3%		
Employment rate aged 18-24 2012	55.0%	56.2%		
Employment rate aged 18-24 2017	61.5%	59.7%		
Unemployment rate 2007/2008	5.6%	5.1%	6.4%	
Unemployment rate 2011/2012	8.3%	8.0%	7.7%	
Unemployment rate 2018/2019	4.7%	4.6%	4.5%	
Unemployment rate aged 18-24 2007	5.4%	12.1%		
Unemployment rate aged 18-24 2012	19.7%	19.8%		
Unemployment rate aged 18-24 2017	10.4%	11.2%		
Share of precarious employment 2007	0.6%			
Share of precarious employment 2012	0.8%			
Share of precarious employment 2017	2.8%			
Share of precarious employment aged 16-24 2007				

unemployment rate (Jan-Dec) data retrieved from:  
[https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157155/subreports/ea\\_time\\_series/report.aspx?](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157155/subreports/ea_time_series/report.aspx?); % in  
 employment on a zero hours contract (based on Labour Force Survey) data retrieved from:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/emp17peopleinemploymentonzerohourscontracts>

	National data (UK, unless otherwise specified)	Regional data (East Midlands, unless otherwise specified)	FUA data (Corby)	City level data (n/a)
Share of precarious employment aged 16-24 2012				
Share of precarious employment aged 16-24 2017	8.4%			
Health <sup>8</sup>				
Life expectancy 2006-08	Men: 77.38 Women: 81.61		Men: 74.3 Women: 80.2	
Life expectancy 2011-13	Men: 78.91 Women: 82.71		Men: 77.1 Women: 80.5	
Life expectancy 2016-18	Men: 79.25 Women: 82.51	(2015-17) Men: 80 Women: 83 (Northamptonshire)	(2013-17) Men: 77 Women: 81	
Teenage birth rate 2007				
Teenage birth rate 2012	27.7 (England)	30.7 (Northamptonshire)	47.2	
Teenage birth rate 2017	17.8 (England)	19.1 (Northamptonshire)		

<sup>8</sup> National life expectancy at birth data retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/datasets/nationallifetablesunitedkingdomreferencetables>; Northamptonshire (and FUA 2013-17) life expectancy at birth data retrieved from: <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/health/health-and-wellbeing-board/Documents/NCC%20Public%20Health%20Annual%20Report%202019.pdf>; FUA life expectancy at birth data retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/datasets/lifeexpectancyatbirthandage65bylocalareasinenglandandwalesreferencetable1>; Conceptions to women aged under 18 per thousand women aged 15-17 data retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/conceptionandfertilityrates/datasets/quarterlyconceptionstowomenagedunder18englandandwales> (note: used mean average of quarterly data for each year); FUA conceptions to women aged under 18 per thousand women aged 15-17 data retrieved from: <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/health/health-and-wellbeing-board/northamptonshire-jsna/Documents/CYP%20JSNA%20Corby.pdf>

Figure 2: Map of Corby FUA, with ward boundaries

Retrieved from: <https://www.corby.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Corby%20Wards%20Map.pdf>

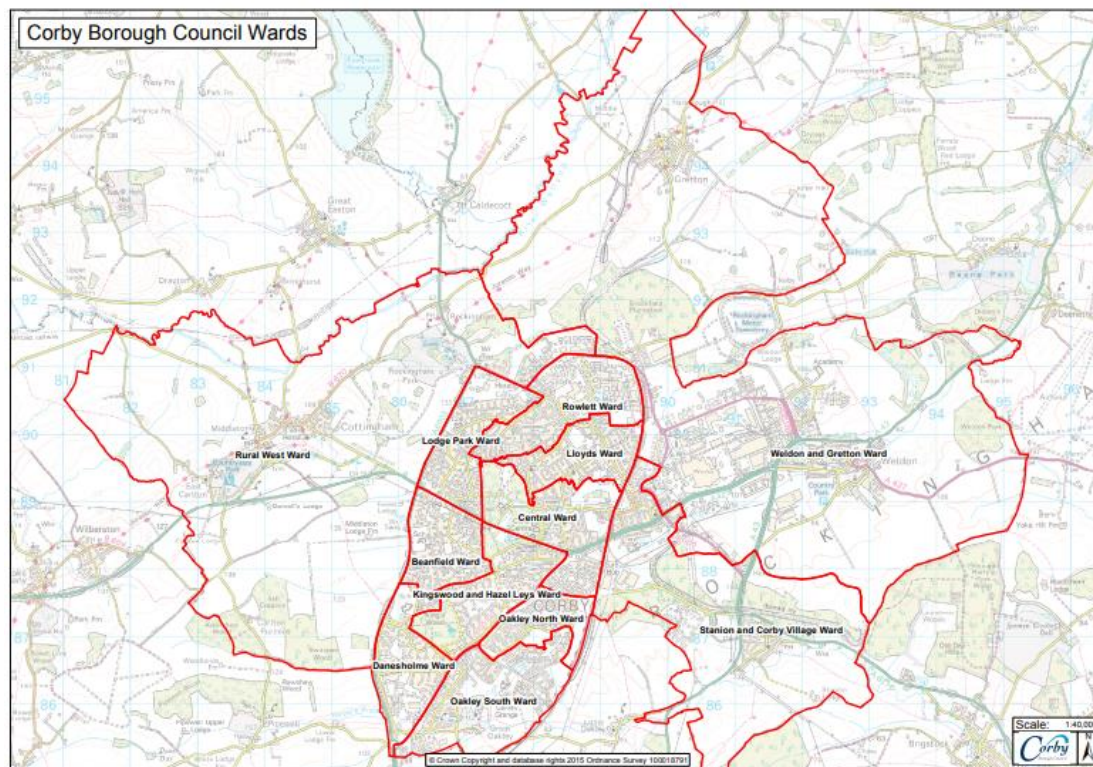


Figure 3: Employee jobs in Corby by industry, 2019

Retrieved from: ONS Population Survey 2020 -  
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157155/report.aspx>

	Corby (employee jobs)	Corby (%)	East Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
B: Mining and Quarrying	30	0.1	0.2	0.2
C: Manufacturing	7,000	20.6	12.9	8.0
D: Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply	10	0	0.7	0.4
E: Water Supply, Sewage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities	350	1.0	0.7	0.7
F: Construction	1,250	3.7	4.7	4.9
G: Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	8,000	23.5	16.7	15.0
H: Transportation and Storage	5,000	14.7	6.2	4.9
I: Accommodation and Food Service Activities	1,500	4.4	6.7	7.7
J: Information and Communication	350	1.0	2.4	4.3

	Corby (employee jobs)	Corby (%)	East Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
K: Financial and Insurance Activities	150	0.4	1.8	3.5
L: Real Estate Activities	300	0.9	1.3	1.7
M: Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	1,250	3.7	7.7	8.8
N: Administrative and Support Service Activities	3,000	8.8	8.5	8.9
O: Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Security Service	700	2.1	3.9	4.4
P: Education	2,500	7.4	9.2	8.7
Q: Human Health and Social Work Activities	1,750	5.1	12.0	13.1
R: Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	500	1.5	2.3	2.5
S: Other Service Activities	600	1.8	2.0	2.0
TOTAL	34,000	-	-	-

Figure 4: North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Unitary Councils

Retrieved from: <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/>

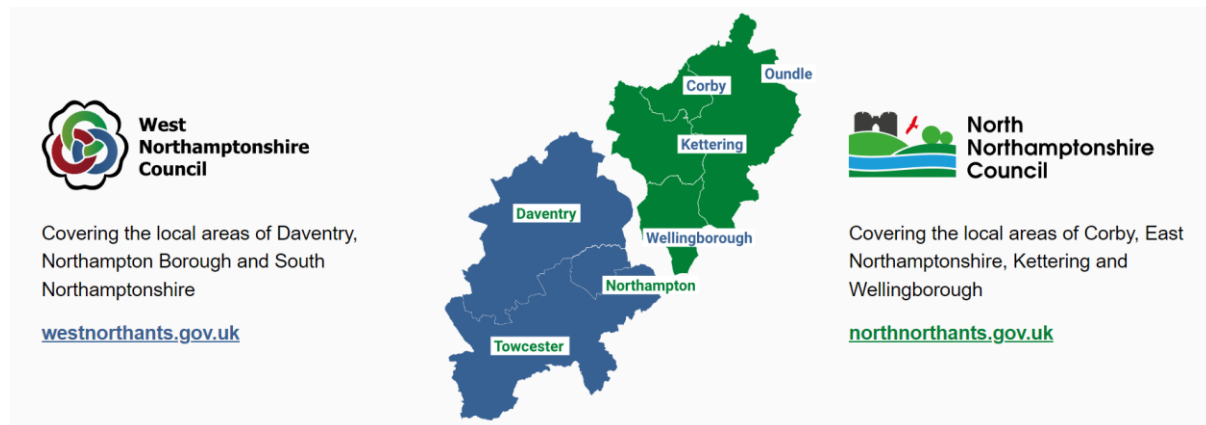




Figure 5: Map of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP)

Retrieved from: <https://www.semlep.com/south-east-midlands/>

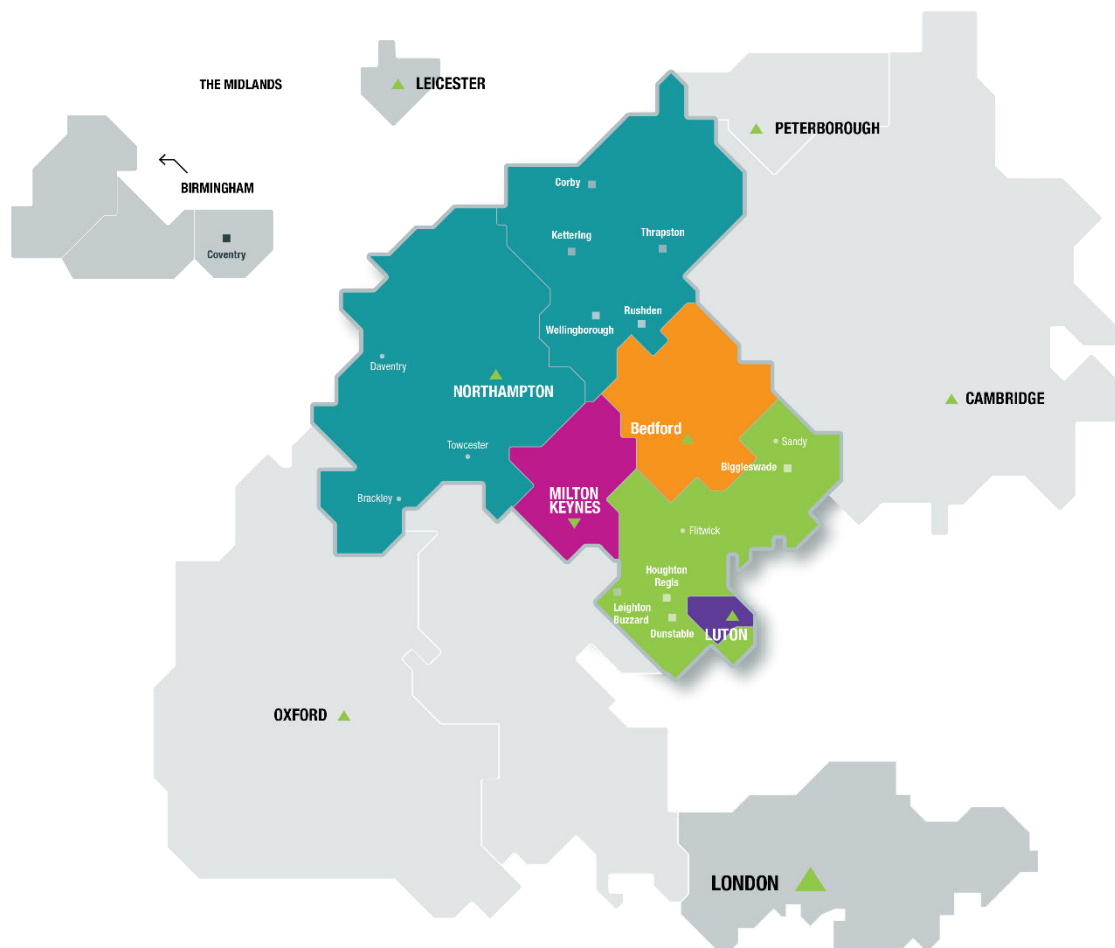


Figure 6: National unemployment rates by ethnic background and gender, 2007-2020

Retrieved from: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06838/SN06838.pdf>

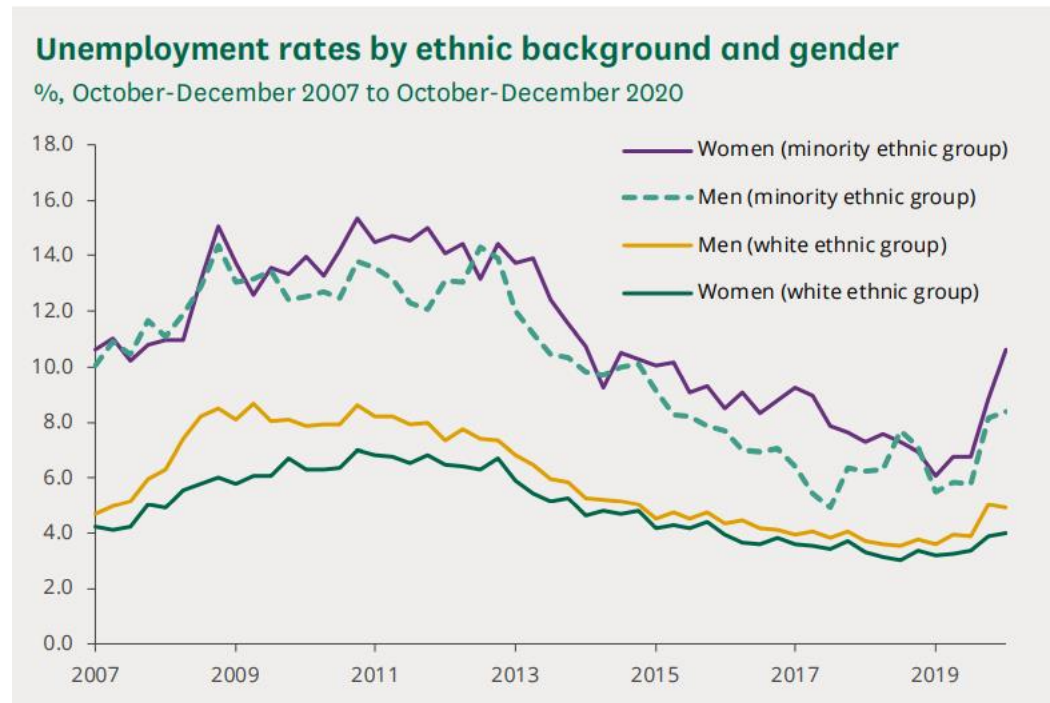


Figure 7: Economic activity, employment and unemployment in Corby, Oct 2019- Sep 2020

Retrieved from: ONS Population Survey 2020 -  
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157155/report.aspx>

	Corby (numbers)	Corby (%)	East Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
Economically Active	41,800	82.5	79.7	79.0
In Employment	40,900	80.6	76.2	75.7
Unemployed	1,800	4.4	4.3	4.2

Figure 8: How funding flows in the NHS

Retrieved from: [https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-04/NHS\\_Funding\\_Flow\\_April\\_2020.pdf](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-04/NHS_Funding_Flow_April_2020.pdf)

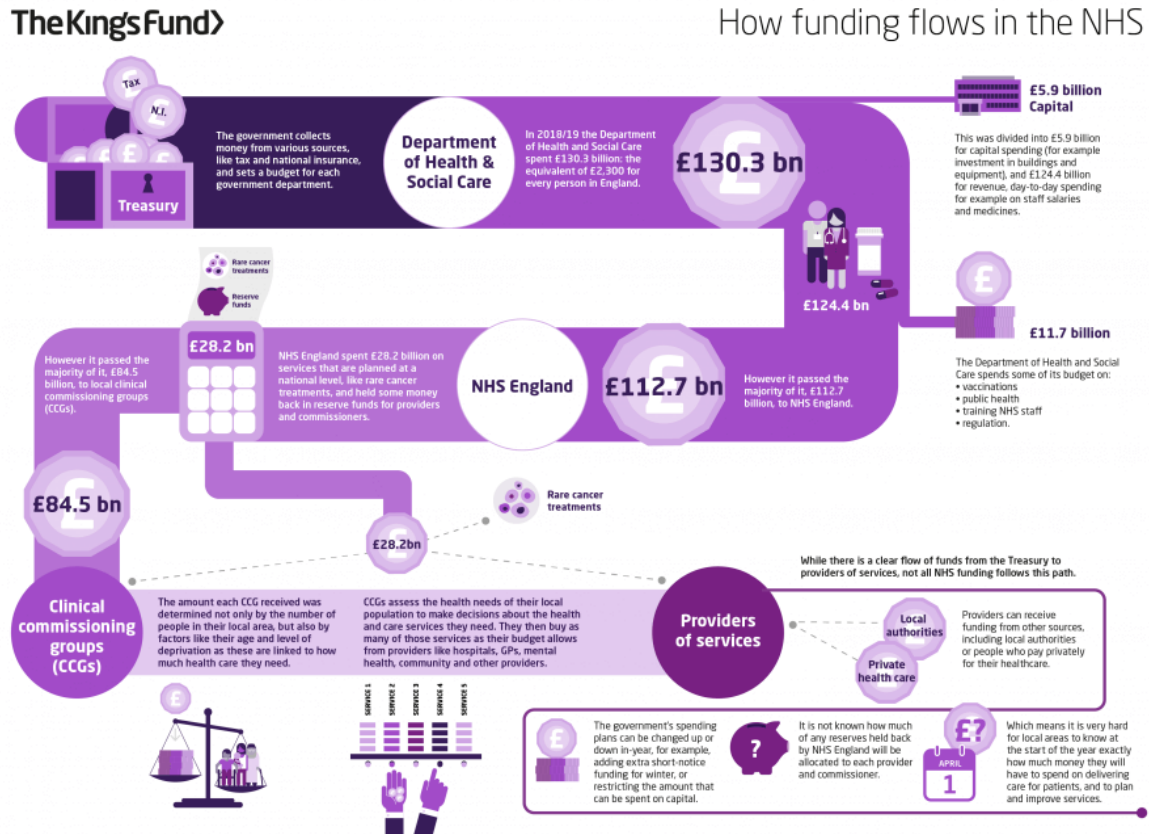


Figure 9: Smoking related deaths in Northamptonshire in comparison with the national average, 2014/15

Retrieved from:  
<http://www.ncf.uk.com/upload/managerFile/Hidden%20Needs/Hidden%20Needs%20Literature%20Review.pdf>

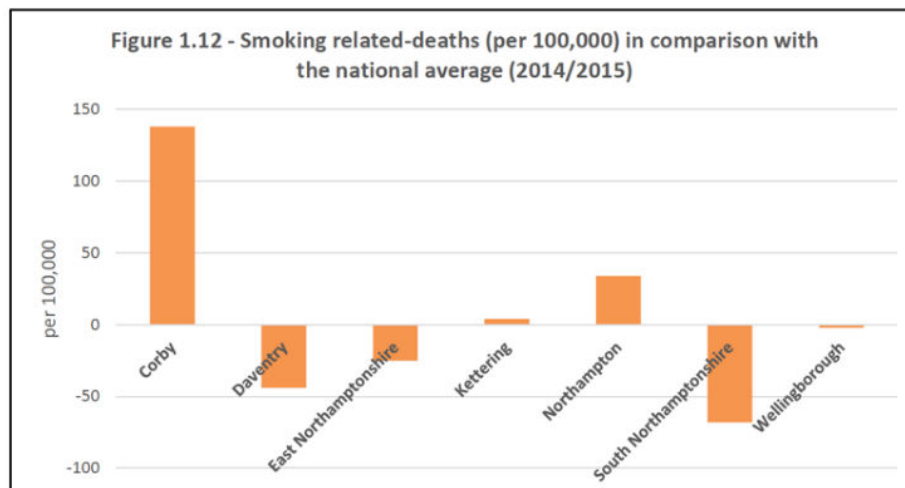


Figure 10: Conception rate for under 18-year-olds in Northamptonshire in comparison with the national average, 2014/15

Retrieved from:  
<http://www.ncf.uk.com/upload/managerFile/Hidden%20Needs/Hidden%20Needs%20Literature%20Review.pdf>

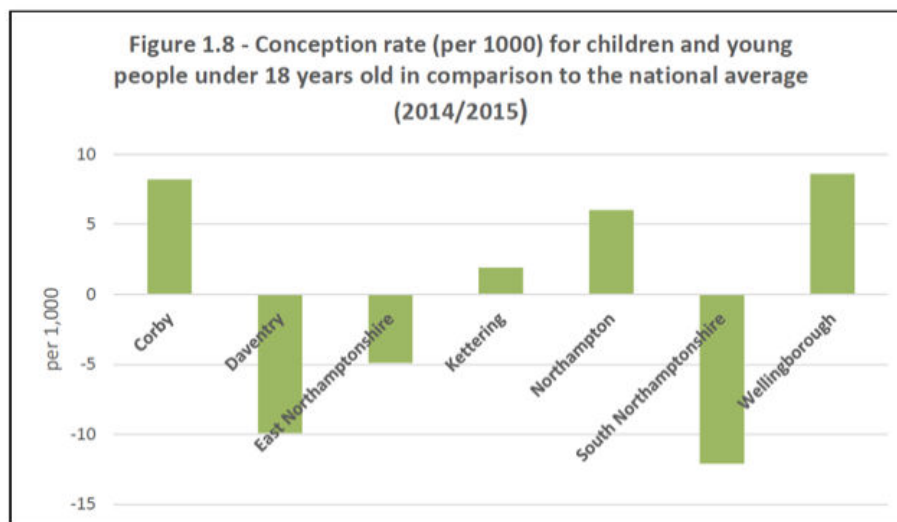


Figure 11: Maps showing male and female life expectancy by MSOA in Northamptonshire, 2013-17

Retrieved from: <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/health/health-and-wellbeing-board/northamptonshire-jsna/Documents/CYP%20JSNA%20Corby.pdf>

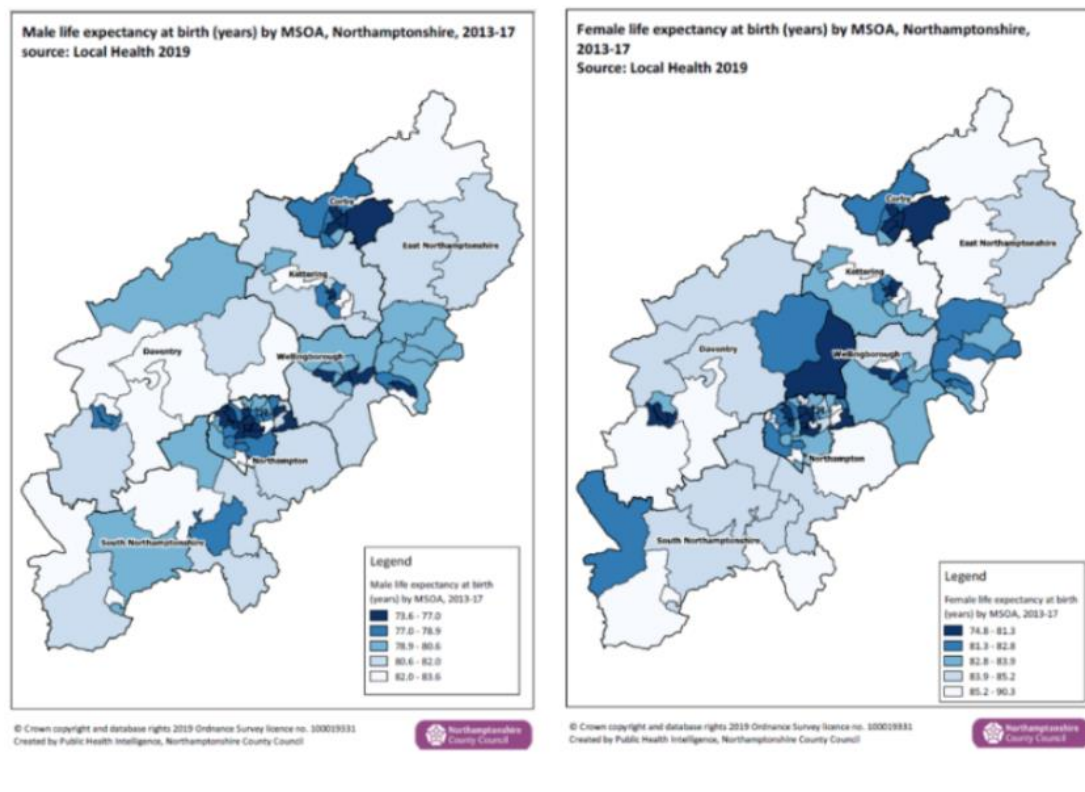


Figure 12: Self-harm admissions among 10-24-year-olds in Northamptonshire, 2014-16

Retrieved

from:

<http://www.ncf.uk.com/upload/managerFile/Hidden%20Needs/Hidden%20Needs%20Literature%20Review.pdf>

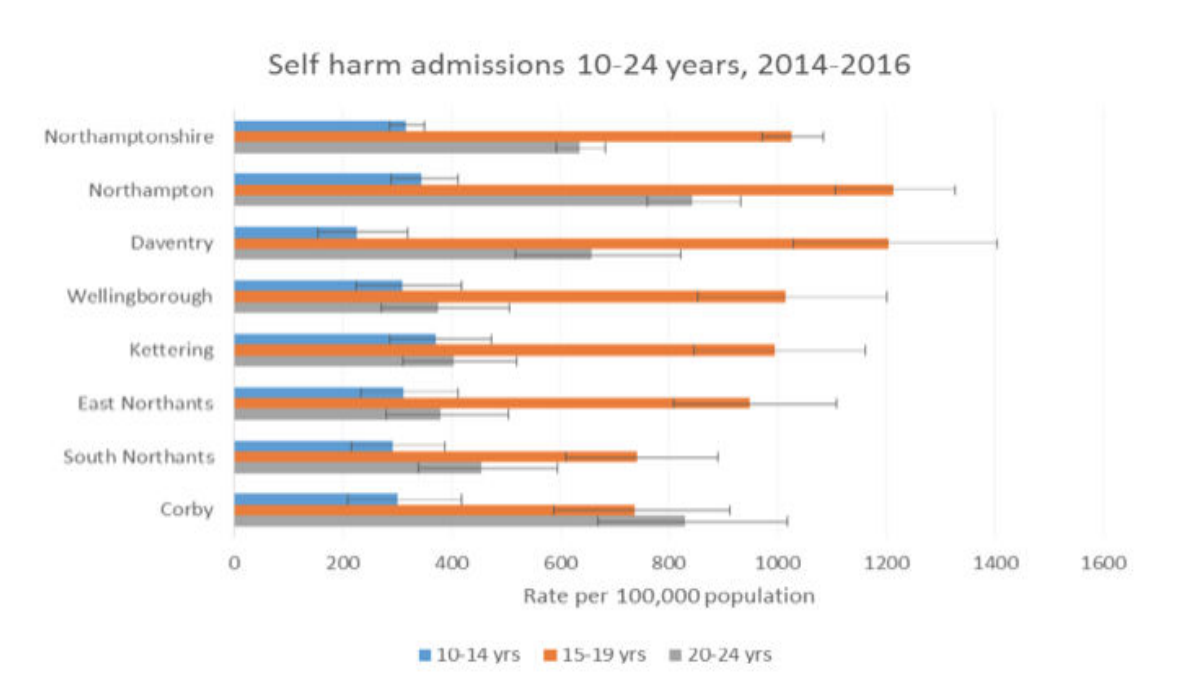


Figure 13: The community power 'evidence paradox'

Retrieved from: <https://www.newlocal.org.uk/publications/community-power-the-evidence/>

Evidence required by the state-market hybrid paradigm	Nature of community power
Guided by metrics	Guided by ethos
Quantitative	Qualitative
Immediate	Long-term
Large scale for efficiency	Small-scale for impact
Within a service silo	Embedded in the community
Related to a service output	Related to individual outcomes
Focused on proving	Focused on improving
Reporting data	Recalibrating relationships
Uniformity	Pluralism
Policy implementation	Human-centred design
Linear	Adaptive
Immediate cashable savings	Avoids costs occurring

Figure 14: A locally engaged approach to levelling up

Retrieved from: <https://icstudies.org.uk/insights/blog/why-dont-they-ask-us-role-communities-levelling>

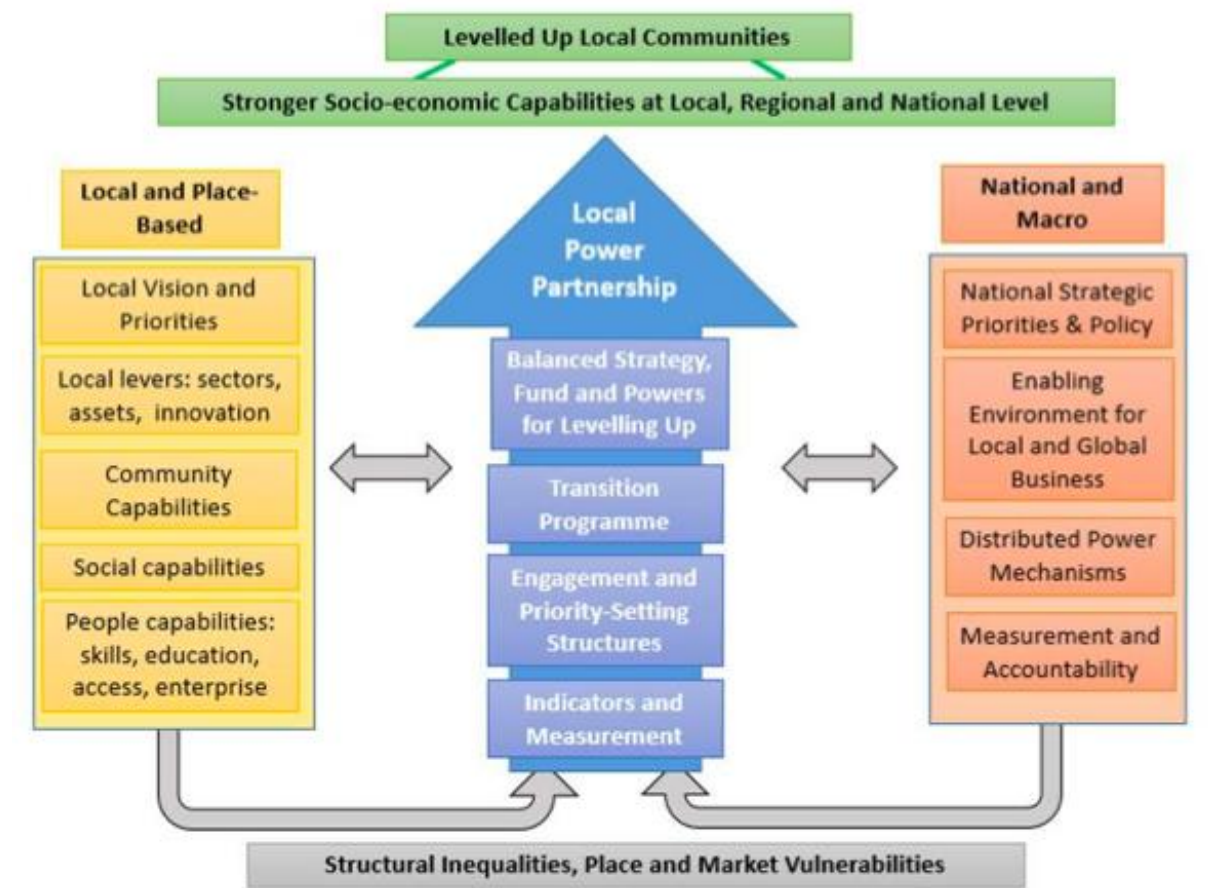


Figure 11: A locally engaged approach to levelling up. Source: Institute for Community Studies, 2021.