RURAL
SERVICES
NETWORK

Rural as a region: the hidden challenge for Levelling Up

Assessing the scale of rural disadvantage using the White Paper's analytical framework

June 2022

pragmatix
advisory

Rural as a region: the hidden challenge for Levelling Up

A report for the Rural Services Network

Clare Leckie, Rebecca Munro, and Mark Pragnell

pragmatix
advisory

Contents

Executive summary

Average rating of all mission headline metrics for which local authority data is available*
Regions, England

Rural

East Midlands

South West

North East

Yorkshire and The Humber

East of England

West Midlands

North West

South East

London

-100 -80 -60 -40 -20 0

*Includes headline metric ratings for Missions 1, 3, 4, 6 and 8.

Weaker performing ← → Better performing
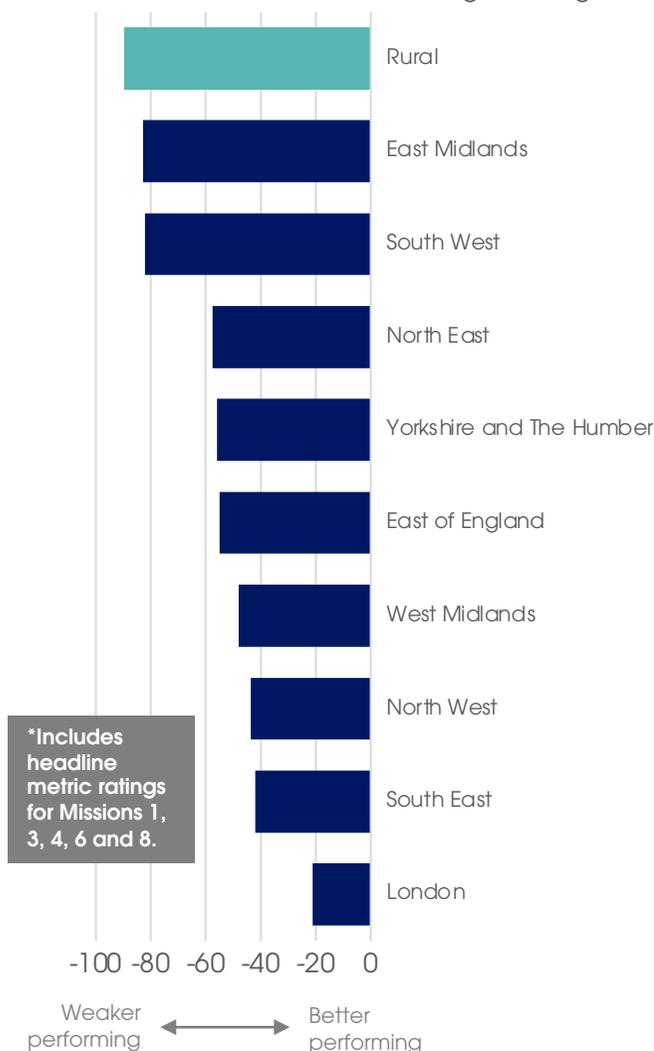
Rural is missing from the levelling up agenda.

If rural England was to be thought of as a region of England, it would be more populous than London or the South East. English rural local authorities are home to one fifth of the population, 4.8 million workers, and half a million businesses.

Based on the government's own white paper headline metrics, rural's need for levelling up would be greater than any other.

When all the headline metrics across which rural performance can be measured are considered and compared against other nine geographies, England's hidden region has on average further to level up than any other.

But, despite its scale and need, the needs of this 'region' are poorly reflected in the government's levelling up framework.

Targeting improvement at a regional level risks leaving communities behind.

Several of the government's missions are focussed on narrowing the gap between the regions. This causes problems, because in many cases, the differences within regions are greater than the differences between regions.

Using the most granular data available – either local authority district, middle or lower super output area, or at as low a geographical level as data are available - would be more beneficial in identifying disadvantaged communities.

Many of the underlying causes of need and disadvantage will be missed by the current metrics.

The white paper metrics appear predominantly urban-focussed, and do not capture disadvantage in rural economies. Metrics like gross disposable household income are partial, and disguise the true income levels of those working In rural areas. The inclusion of additional metrics would help to identify those areas most in need of levelling up at a local level, both for rural communities and the wider population.

Our research has identified a range of metrics which could be used to supplement those already outlined, and would help government achieve its four levelling up objectives. These include metrics such as:

- The proportion of households in fuel poverty, workplace based income, house price to local earnings ratio, and rates of seasonal employment

- The frequency of public transport services to access key services, distance to Further Education provider and the range of courses available

- Referral for treatment waiting times, rates of delayed discharge and levels of self harm amongst younger people

- Percentage of premises with super-fast broadband

The levelling up agenda is of course unable to include every metric, and the ones that have been outlined in the white paper are important benchmarks for current and ongoing progress in meeting government's objectives.

But without considering additional metrics, there is a risk that the needs of twelve million rural residents could be ignored by the levelling up agenda.

Boosting productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector.

Spreading opportunity and improving public services.

Restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging.

Empowering local leaders and communities
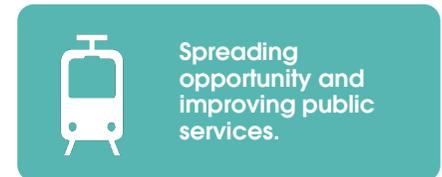
Levelling Up objectives

Rural as a region

- The Levelling Up White Paper appears to have forgotten about rural communities

- If England's rural communities were treated as a distinct region, their need for levelling up would be greater than any other

White Paper fails to consider rural disadvantage
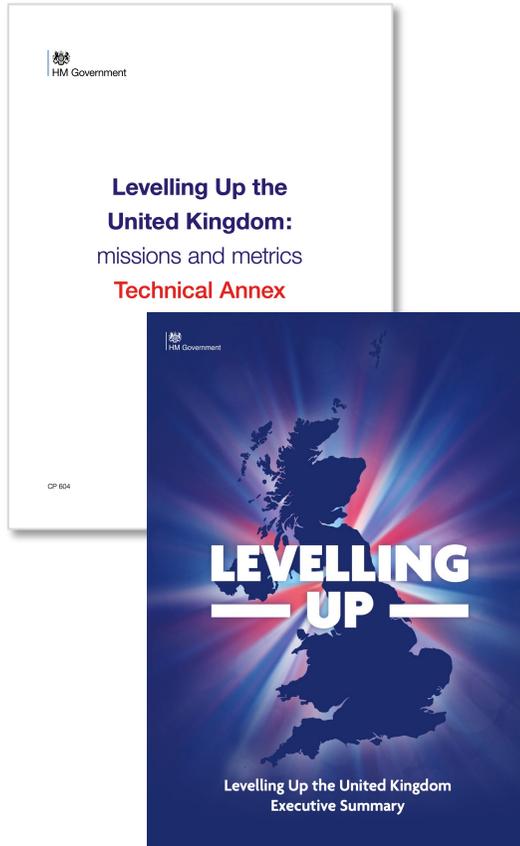
The government has now published its long-awaited Levelling Up White Paper but it is almost silent on rural disadvantage and how it will be addressed.

Central government has articulated four high-level objectives and twelve missions to level up communities by 2030.

It has identified a preliminary suite of metrics to evaluate need and monitor progress against the missions. The 'headline metrics' are the principal tools for describing the specific disparities that missions are aiming to address and for tracking developments; 'supporting metrics' capture broader related information.

The list is preliminary, with the government consulting on additional metrics that might improve measurement or outcomes. The White Paper focuses almost entirely on metrics and measures that illustrate the need for levelling up regions or city-regions. There's limited reference to or analysis of rural communities – or many other sub-regional geographies.

HM Government

**Levelling Up the
United Kingdom:**
missions and metrics
Technical Annex

CP 604

HM Government

**LEVELLING
UP**

**Levelling Up the United Kingdom
Executive Summary**

People in employment
Selected geographies, England, 2020, millions

Urban employment
Rural employment
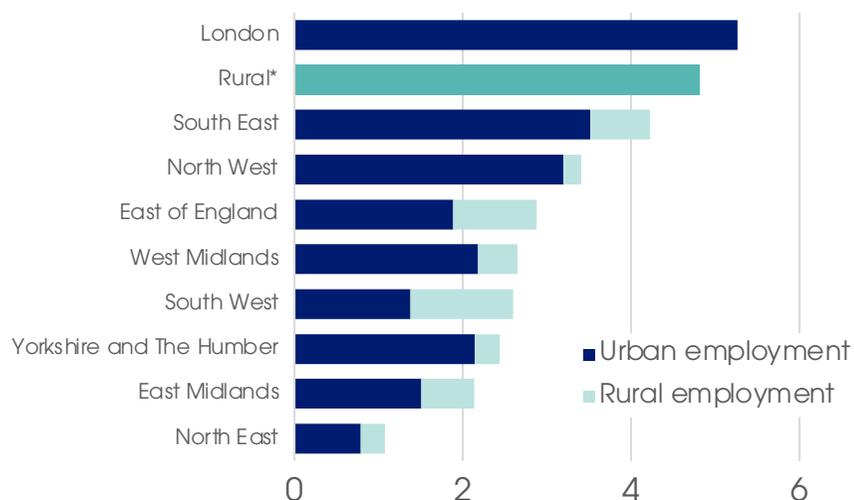
Thinking of rural as a 'region' highlights its importance to the United Kingdom economy, and its need for levelling up.

If rural local authorities in England were a region, they would have a larger population than London or the South East. The rural 'region' would have the second largest number of people in employment, and the second largest number of enterprises, just behind London.

With government aspirations to reduce the pay and productivity gap between London and the South East and other areas of England, rural areas have a central role to play – while ignoring rural communities in the levelling up agenda risks leaving behind almost 12 million people in England.

Business enterprises
Selected geographies, England, 2021, thousands

Urban enterprises
Rural enterprises
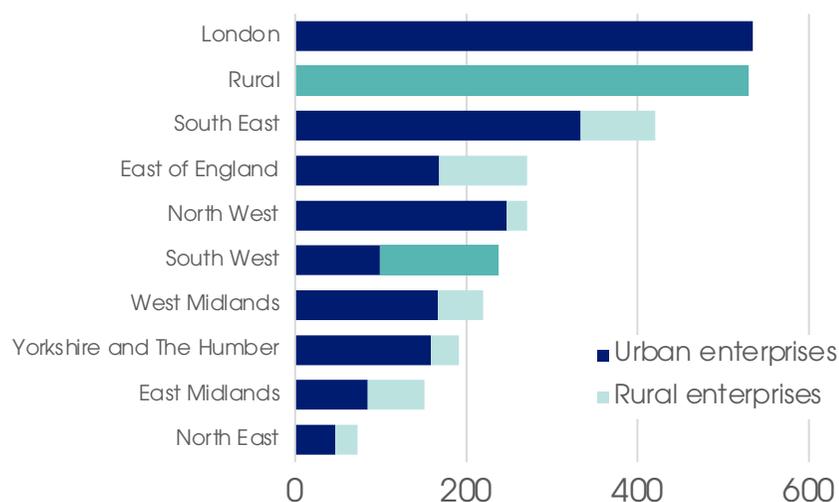
Mid-year population estimates
Selected geographies, England, 2020, millions

Urban population
Rural population

10
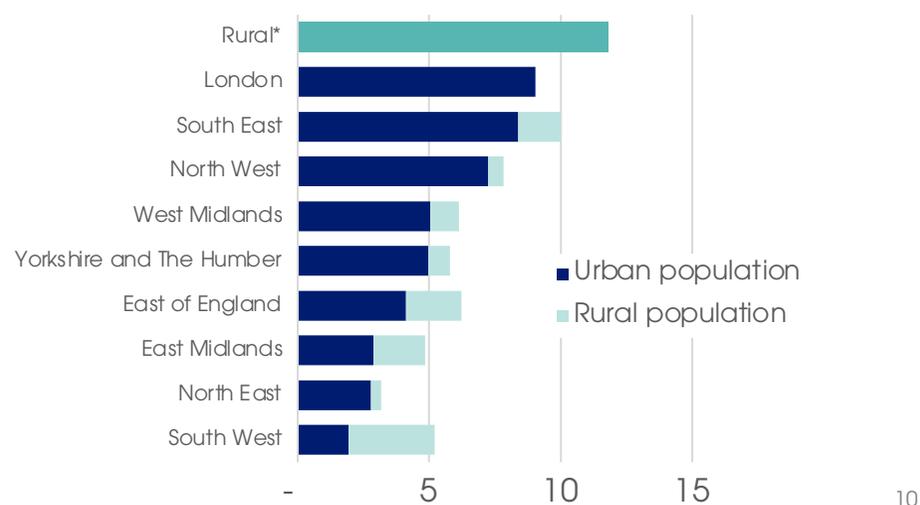
*We have categorised the rural population as those living in a local authority district classified as mainly or largely rural by DEFRA; Source: Office for National Statistics

Headline metrics show rural levelling up need

If England's rural communities were treated as a distinct region, their need for levelling up would be greater than any other – based on the government's own headline metrics.

We have systematically evaluated the scale of need in rural communities based on the analytical framework set out in the white paper and associated documents. We have calculated the performance of the 'rural region' against each of the government's metrics for which data are published at a local authority as well as regional level.

Considering all the headline metrics across which rural performance can be measured and compared against other nine geographies, England's hidden region has on average further to level up than any other.

Each of the nine English regions was given a score for each headline metric, with the best performing receiving 0, the weakest -100 and the remainder scaled proportionately between. The 'rural region' was allocated a score depending on its performance in comparison to the nine English regions. Averages scores were then combined for the headline metrics in each mission, determining how far away from the target '0' baseline they were.

Average rating of all mission headline metrics for which local authority data is available*
Regions, England

*Includes headline metric ratings for Missions 1, 3, 4, 6 and 8.

Rural
East Midlands
South West
North East
Yorkshire and The Humber
East of England
West Midlands
North West
South East
London

-100   -80   -60   -40   -20   0

Weaker performing ← → Better performing

11

Source: Pragmatix Advisory calculations using Office for National Statistics data
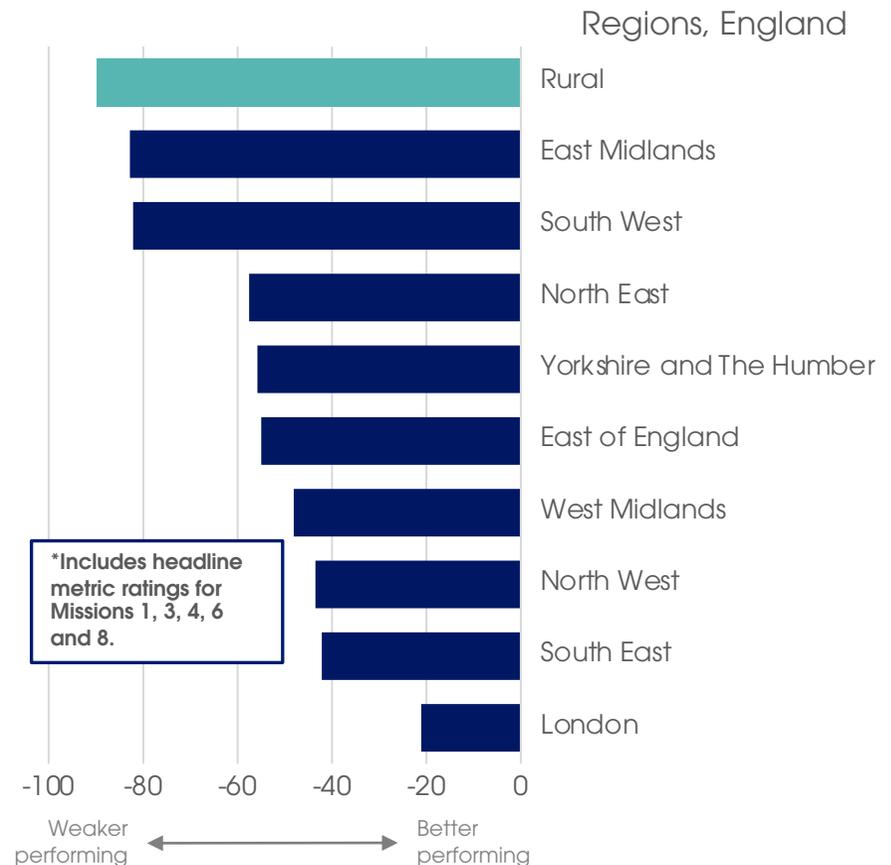
Rural the region most in need when it comes to digital and physical connectivity

Unsurprisingly, public transport connectivity is worse in rural than any of the regional averages. With Mission 3 aiming to improve standards in line with those accessible in London, rural communities are in need of significant public transport levelling up.

It is a similar story for mobile and broadband connectivity, with coverage in rural areas lagging behind the rest of England on Mission 4's headline metrics.

And on Mission 1, which covers pay, employment and productivity, our ratings show rural in the top three regions most in need of support.

Average rating of Mission 1 headline metrics
Regions, England

Mission 1: Pay, employment productivity and global competitiveness to increase across the UK, and gap to best performing to narrow.

North East
Yorkshire and The Humber
Rural
North West
East Midlands
West Midlands
South West
East of England
South East
London

-100 -80 -60 -40 -20 0

Weaker performing ←→ Better performing
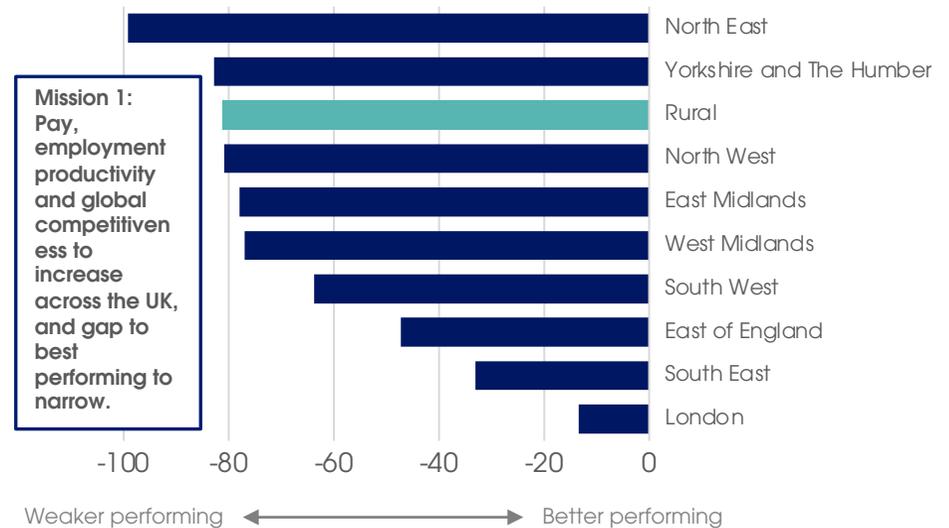
Average rating of Mission 3 headline metrics for which local authority data is available*
Regions, England

Mission 3: Local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.

Rural
South West
East of England
North East
East Midlands
Yorkshire and The Humber
West Midlands
South East
North West
London

-150 -125 -100 -75 -50 -25 0

Weaker performing ←→ Better performing
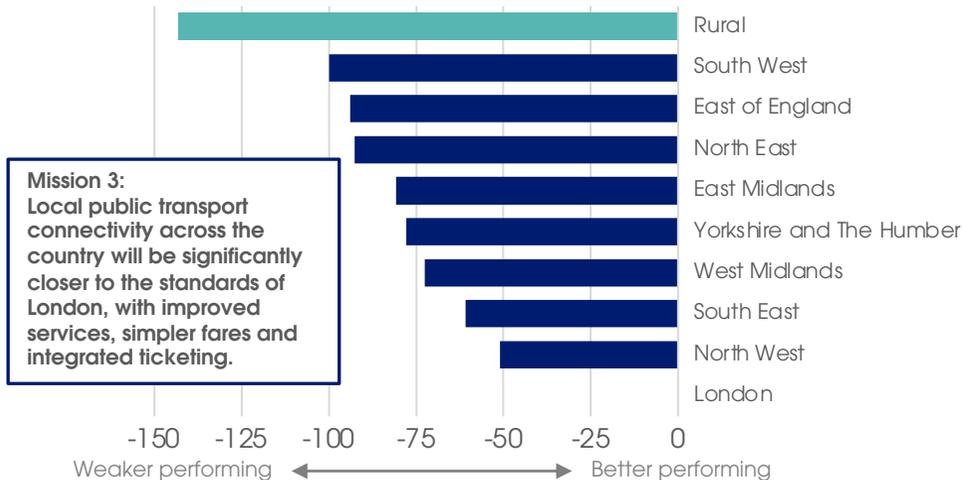
Average rating of Mission 4 headline metrics
Regions, England

Mission 4: The UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.

Rural
South West
East Midlands
East of England
Yorkshire and The Humber
North East
South East
North West
West Midlands
London

-125 -100 -75 -50 -25 0

Weaker performing ←→ Better performing

12
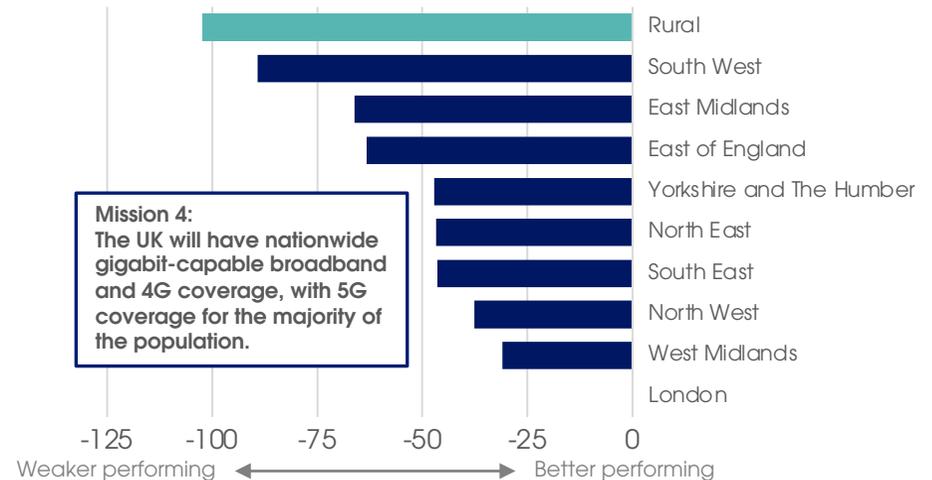
*data unavailable for travel to work method at local authority level; Source: Pragmatix Advisory calculations using Office for National Statistics data

Average rating of Mission 6 headline metrics
Regions, England

South East
Rural
East of England
Yorkshire and The Humber
East Midlands
West Midlands
North West
London
North East

-100 -80 -60 -40 -20 0

Mission 6:
The number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK.

Weaker performing ←——→ Better performing
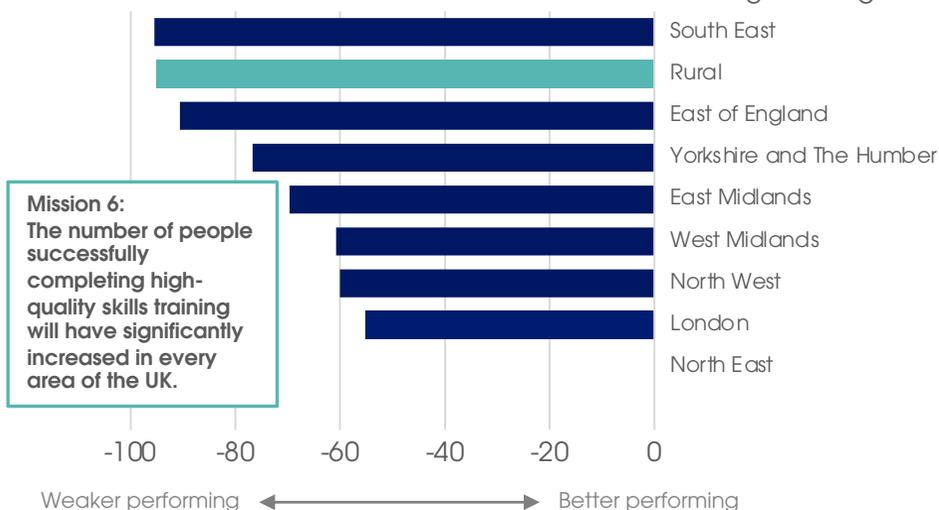
Support needed to improve high-quality skills and well-being in rural areas

The white paper's Mission 6, which targets a greater number of people completing high quality skills training, shows rural as the second weakest performing region, only slightly behind the South East.

Mission 8 aims to improve well-being, with its metrics drawn from the Office for National Statistics annual population survey on personal well-being. Here, we see the rural region firmly in the top four regions requiring levelling up support.

Not possible to assess all missions at local authority level

Average ratings have been compiled for those missions for which data are available at a sufficiently granular level. Where underlying data are unavailable at local authority level, it has not been possible to evaluate those metrics and produce a rural rating.

Some of the data are not gathered at lower level, and some data sets are yet to be confirmed, such as first time buyers and neighbourhood crime.

For this reason, we have only been able to produce headline metric ratings for five of the twelve missions.

Average rating of Mission 8 headline metrics
Regions, England

East Midlands
South West
London
Rural
South East
Yorkshire and The Humber
North East
East of England
West Midlands
North West

Mission 8:
Well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

-100 -80 -60 -40 -20 0

Weaker performing ←——→ Better performing

13

Source: Pragmatix Advisory calculations using Office for National Statistics data

Mission metrics

- Differences within regions are greater than the differences between regions, and targeting improvement at a regional level risks leaving communities behind

- Government should use the most granular data available to identify disadvantaged areas

- Levelling up should take place at a community level

Regional focus misses the target

Focussing on targets at a regional level fails to address the inequalities within regions.

For nine of the eleven Mission 1 metrics, data are available at local authority district level, but are only utilised at that level for one.

The remaining two metrics are available at ITL2 and ITL3 level, but again are only being considered at regional level.

Consistent use of data at a more granular level would better identify the communities with the greatest need, and target levelling up funds more accurately.

Reducing the gap between regions will not lead to true levelling up if it further increases the gap between areas within the region.

Gross value added per hour worked, and local authorities with the highest and lowest gross value added within each region
Selected geographies, England, 2019, £

Worst performing local authority in region

Best performing local authority in region

London
South East
East of England
South West
North West
West Midlands
Rural
East Midlands
North East
Yorkshire and The Humber

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

Although rural would be England's fourth worst performing region, its local authority with weakest productivity is the weakest nationally.

Source: Office for National Statistics

15

Gross median weekly pay, and local authorities with the highest and lowest pay within each region
Selected geographies, England, 2019, £

London
South East
East of England
West Midlands
East Midlands
North West
South West
Rural
Yorkshire and The Humber
North East

0   200   400   600   800
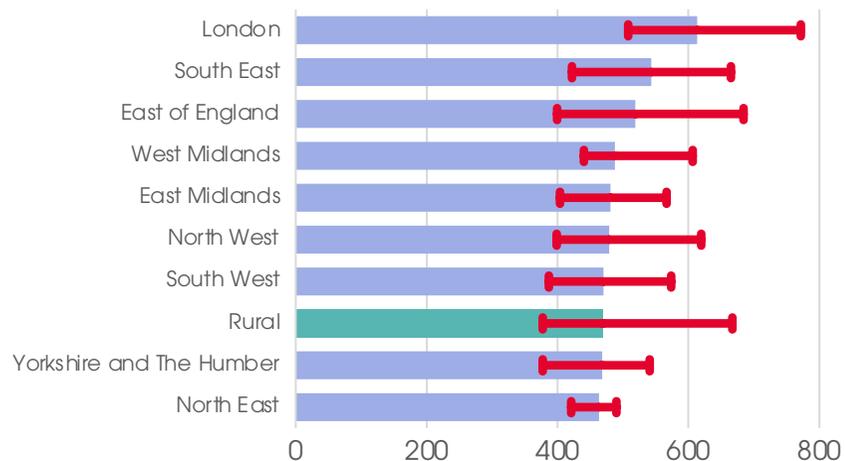
## Government's Mission 1 metrics show rural contains communities in some of the worst positions.

Official data shows the local authority with the lowest gross median weekly pay nationally is a rural authority. Overall, the rural region's performance is broadly in line with that of the North East and Yorkshire and The Humber.

When considering the proportion of jobs that are low paid, rural as a region is the sixth weakest performing region. But when taking into account local authority performance within the regions, we can see that the weakest performing rural authority has a higher proportion of low paid jobs than the weakest performing authorities in the five regions above it.

If real levelling up is to occur, it is important that the metrics assess the distribution and not just the mean.

Disability employment gap and local authorities with the highest and lowest gap within each region
Selected geographies, England, 2019, per cent

North East
North West
West Midlands
Yorkshire and The Humber
London
East of England
South West
Rural
East Midlands
South East

0   20   40   60
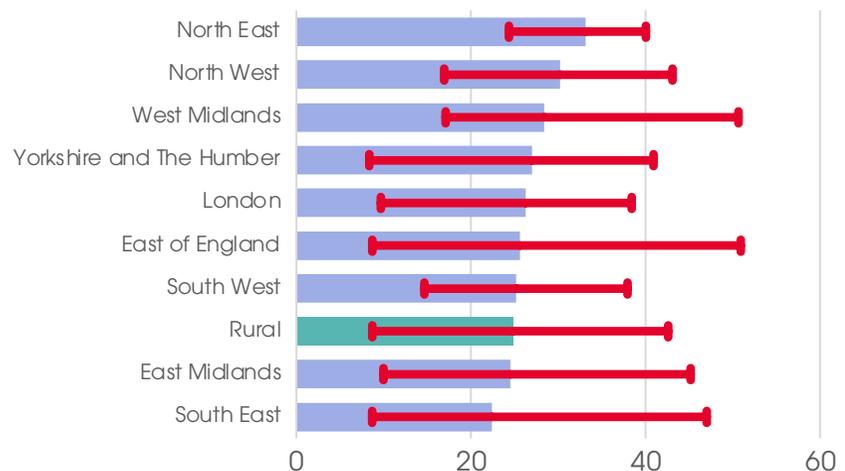
Proportion of jobs that are low paid* and local authorities with the highest and lowest rates of low paid jobs within each region
Selected geographies, England, 2018, per cent

East Midlands
Yorkshire and The Humber
North East
West Midlands
North West
Rural
South West
East of England
London
South East

0   20   40   60
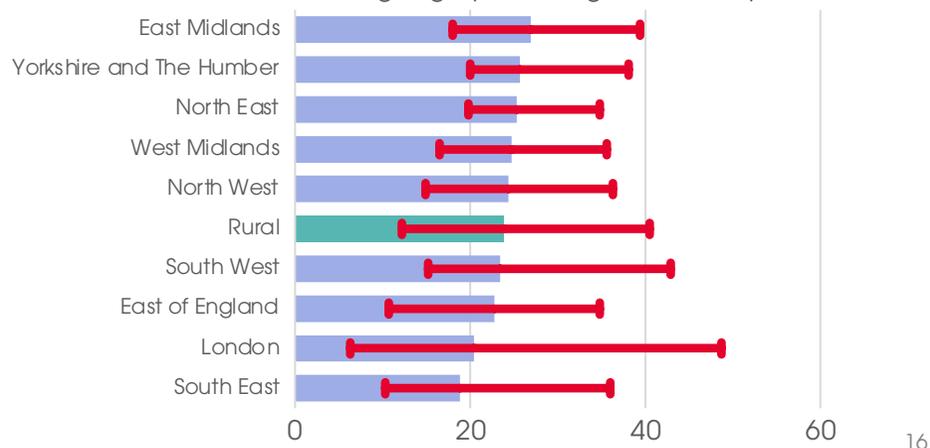
*proportion of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage, as defined by the living wage foundation; Source: Office for National Statistics

Employment rate for 16- to 64-year-olds
Regions, England, 2021, per cent, national scale

Lowest employment — Highest employment
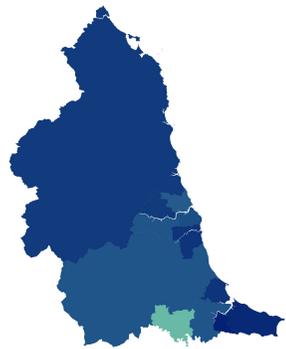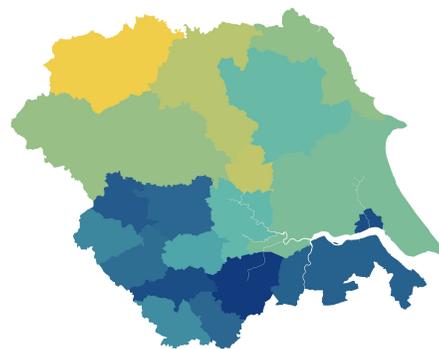
North East North West Yorkshire and the Humber East Midlands West Midlands
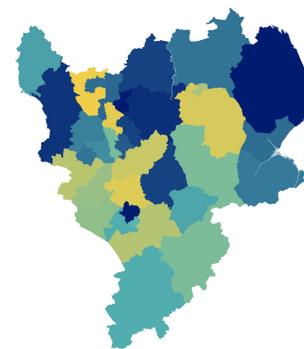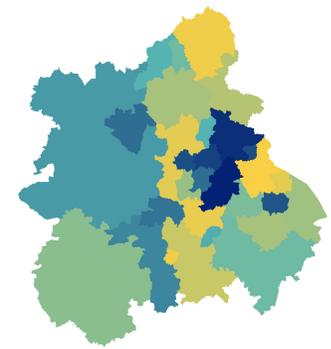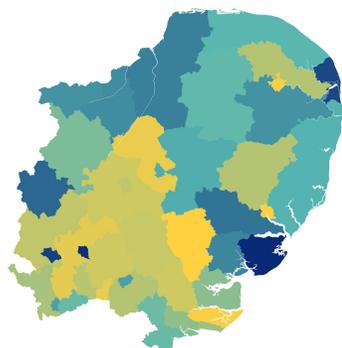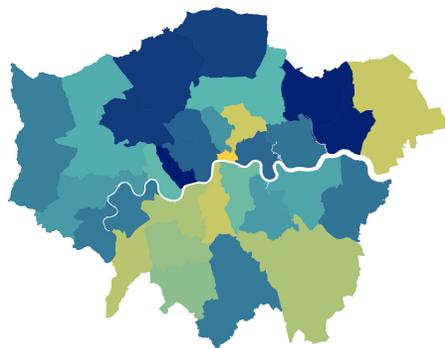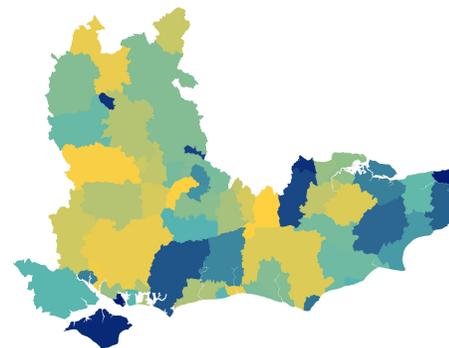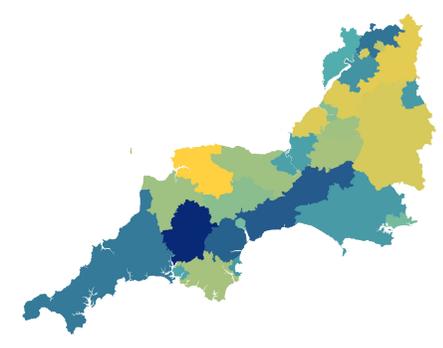
East of England London South East South West

These maps use colour to visualise employment rates within each region. They demonstrate how focusing on statistics at a regional level can fail to capture inequalities within the region.

17

Source: Office for National Statistics

Missing metrics

- The current white paper metrics are predominantly urban-focussed, and do not capture disadvantage in rural economies

- The inclusion of additional metrics would help to identify those areas most in need of levelling up at a local level

Metrics don't capture rural disadvantage

Difference in weekly expenditure on selected items by rural households in comparison to urban
Great Britain, three year average, 2018 to 2020, £

Transport

Health

Household goods & services

Net housing, fuel & power

Clothing & footwear

Alcohol, tobacco & narcotics

Food & soft drinks

-20 -10 0 10 20 30
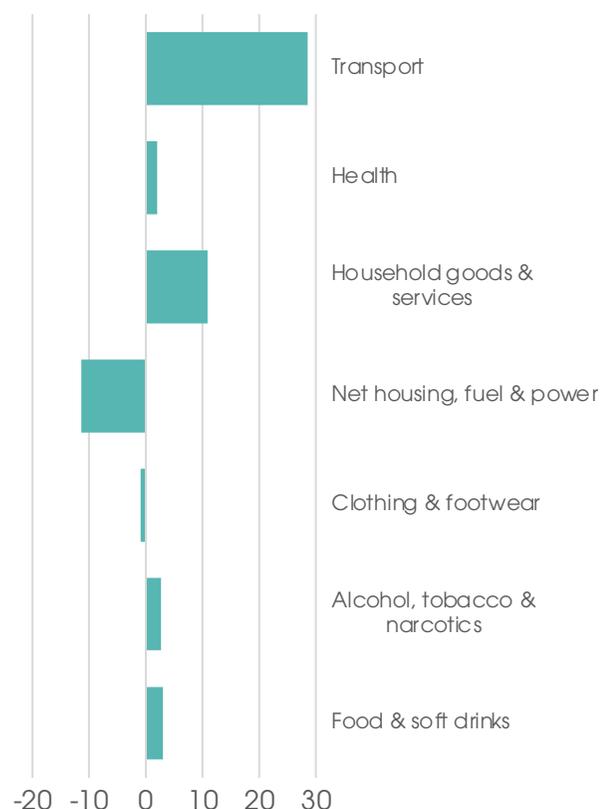
On some metrics, rural authorities appear to be performing well compared to their urban counterparts. But this is because the metrics chosen fail to capture the realities of rural disadvantage.

Employment rate, for example, tends to show higher levels of employment in rural areas, suggesting a healthier jobs market. But what this metric fails to account for is the quality of employment. Many rural labour markets are dependent on seasonal or part-time employment, and have many workers over- and under-employed. In addition, the employment rate doesn't help to understand the dependency of some workers in multiple jobs.

Just looking at gross disposable household income doesn't account for the differing costs of living in rural areas, including higher fuel costs, the need for car ownership to get around when no public transport is available, or the cost of housing compared to local earnings.

Gross median weekly pay, by definition, doesn't convey the distribution of incomes. It cannot show how much those in the lowest income decile earn, only the median value. Additionally, it is an average measure of one metric of job quality, and it doesn't consider the likes of job security.

Examples of other metrics which only tell part of the story are outlined in the appendix. Relying on them, without also understanding additional contributing factors, risks leaving rural England behind.

19

Additional metrics needed to truly 'level up'

The four objectives set out by government in its Levelling Up White paper would be better served by the inclusion of additional metrics.

While the metrics chosen by government will aid in assessing the needs of some communities, they tend to be more urban-focussed in their design.

Rural areas would be better represented as a part of the levelling up agenda by the inclusion of those metrics which demonstrate some of the underlying causes of disadvantage.

Spreading opportunity and improving public services

- Percentage of young people achieving GCSEs in English and maths who then go on to Further Education/ Level 3+ qualification
- **Average distance to nearest Further Education provider, and range of courses available**
- Apprenticeship achievements by SIC code

Skills and educational attainment

- **Referral to treatment wait times**
- Percentage of patients being treated for cancer within 62 days
- Average wait time for elective treatment
- Number of people on hospital wait lists
- Average distance to accident and emergency
- Average wait for an ambulance for Category 1 and 2 calls
- **Rates of delayed discharged from hospital**

Health service performance

- **Rates of self harm amongst younger people**
- Levels of drug and alcohol abuse
- Diagnosed depression in the adult population
- Suicide rates

Mental health and well-being

Empowering local leaders and communities

- Percentage of the population in favour of greater devolution

Boosting productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector

- Cost of living
- Average local earnings for those in the lowest income decile
- **Percentage of households in fuel poverty**
- **Workplace based incomes**
- **House price to local earnings ratio, and rent to local earning ratio**

Real pay and living standards

- **Percentage of working age population in seasonal employment**
- Percentage of economically active that have more than one job
- Percentage of people in employment that are working part-time
- Rates of under- and over-employment in the economically active
- Employment in R&D, and size and location of R&D enterprises

Local labour market

- **Percentage of households within walking distance of a public transport route, and frequency of public transport service to access key services**
- Car ownership by income decile

Physical connectivity

- Percentage of 4G (and 5G) coverage by at least two mobile network providers
- **Percentage of premises with super-fast broadband**

Digital connectivity

Restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging

- Net additions to the housing stock which are for social rent
- Rent in relation to public sector wages

Local housing

- As 'neighbourhood crime' is yet to be determined, it should include theft of machinery, fly tipping, theft of diesel/ fuel, wildlife crime and theft of livestock
- Town/ village/ city centre footfall

Community

Considering additional metrics will help those most in need of levelling up.

The added metrics we have outlined will enhance the missions set by government, and will help to form a more accurate evaluation of need in rural areas.

Without taking into account these supplementary metrics, levelling up support may end up widening the gap between rural communities and their town and city counterparts.

A more detailed reasoning for including these metrics is outlined in the appendix.

Appendix

Mission metrics – assessment notes

As part of this research, we have assessed each of the metrics which are to be used by government as benchmarks for levelling up.

The tables in this appendix outline:

- Government's chosen metrics which will be used to help meet its four levelling up objectives

- Government's proposed geography for monitoring the metrics

- The lowest level geographical area for which we were able to find data for each metric

- Issues interpreting the data that we have identified with the chosen metrics

Alongside evaluating the Levelling Up White Paper metrics, we have suggested additional metrics that would help meet the government's objectives and support the levelling up of rural areas.

We outline our reasoning for the inclusion of these additional metrics, and our proposed geography for assessment.

Key points

- The majority of missions propose assessing metrics at a local authority level (where data is available). Mission 1 proposes assessing the majority of metrics at a regional level, even where local authority data is accessible
- All metrics should be assessed at as granular a level as possible
- Metrics which use averages fail to capture the distribution across a geographical area - where pockets of need may exist or disadvantaged households may be scattered across an area
- For metrics where data is only available at a regional level, it will be difficult to assess the impact of levelling up support on smaller geographical areas, and risks widening the gap within regions
- Many of the metrics are urban-focussed, and fail to capture rural need and the underlying causes of disadvantage
- It is not possible to assess all metrics or missions, due some data sets being currently unavailable

The twelve missions are arranged into four objectives:

Boosting productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector.

Spreading opportunity and improving public services.

Restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging.

Empowering local leaders and communities

1. Pay, employment productivity and global competitiveness to increase across the UK, and gap to best performing to narrow.

2. Public investment in R&D outside the Greater South East to increase by 33-40 per cent.

3. Local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.

4. The UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.

5. The number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased.

6. The number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK.

7. The gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years.

8. Well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

9. Pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with gap to top performing closing.

10. Renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%.

11. Homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.

12. Every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement.

Twelve missions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper

pragmatix advisory

Mission 1:
By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
GVA per hour worked	Regions	Local authority district	GVA is dependent on how profits are allocated
Gross median weekly pay (£)	Regions	Local authority district	By definition, median doesn't account for distribution. How much are those in the lowest income decile earning? It is an average measure of one metric of job quality, it doesn't consider security etc.
Employment rate for 16–64-year olds	Regions	LSOA	Fails to account for seasonal, over- and under-employment. Doesn't help to understand dependency on multiple jobs.
Gross Disposable Household Income	Regions	Local authority district	Doesn't capture differing costs of living, i.e. higher fuel costs, need for car ownership in locations where no public transport is available
Proportion of jobs that are low paid	Regions	Local authority district	Doesn't account for quality of jobs available, or opportunity to progress/ secure higher paying employment. Living wage is a London number or a non-London number, and doesn't account for cost of living in rural areas
Participation rate	Regions	Local authority district	Metric needs to understand proportion of the population that are of working age and inactive retired, and working age inactive dependents
Disability employment rate gap	Regions	Local authority district	Doesn't account for quality, scale and value of work available to disabled workers
Proportion of children in workless households	Regions	Local authority district	Fails to capture households in which only one parent works. Doesn't capture those in poor quality, insecure, temporary or seasonal work.
Proportion of employed people in skilled employment (SOC 1-3, 5)	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Doesn't account for mix of jobs - some areas do not have skilled employment easily available.
Total value of UK exports	Regions	NUTS3/ ITL3	Exports are assigned to London, even when they are produced elsewhere. Data is available at ITL3 level, but is not being utilised.
Inward and outward FDI	Regions	NUTS2/ ITL2	Data is available at ITL2 level but is not being utilised.

For nine of the eleven Mission 1 metrics, data is available at local authority district level, but is only utilised at that level for one.

The remaining two metrics are available at ITL2 and ITL3 level, but again are only being considered at regional level. Focussing on regions fails to address the inequalities within regions. All metrics should be assessed at as granular a level as possible.

Suggested additional metrics	Proposed geography	Reasoning
Cost of living	Local authority district	Household face different cost pressures depending on location, for example higher fuel costs.
Workplace based incomes	Local authority district	Employment occupations in rural areas are more often lower pay than those in more metropolitan areas, and rural employers often pay lower wages. Average earnings data may be distorted by higher earners who travel outside their local area for work.
Average local earnings for those in the lowest income decile	Local authority district	Increasing the median weekly pay risks leaving behind the lowest earners. Aiming to increase earnings for the lowest paid is the only way to genuinely level up.
Percentage of households in fuel poverty	Local authority district	Rural households lack choice in terms of heating. Very few have access to cheaper mains gas, and many have no other option than to accept more expensive and volatile prices for kerosine, oil, liquid gas, and solid fuel
Rates of under- and over-employment in the economically active	Local authority district	Employment rates mask underlying issues with the local jobs market. An individual may be employed, but only working twelve hours a week when they would like to be working 40.
Percentage of the working age population in seasonal employment	Local authority district	Many rural and coastal communities have seasonal economies. Lack of year round employment means lower annual earnings.
Percentage of economically active that have more than one job	Local authority district	Many rural areas are reliant on seasonal and lower-skilled labour. Workers may need to take on multiple jobs to earn the equivalent of one full-time income.
Percentage of people in employment that are working part-time	Local authority district	Seasonal economies and lack of available jobs can mean workers only being able to secure part-time employment. Increasing the number of full-time jobs would help increase productivity.
House price to local earnings ratio, and rent to local earnings ratio	Local authority district	Households can have high earnings relative to other areas, but still be outpriced in the local housing market. Resident earnings and incomes should be used as a true measure of local pay, rather than commuter pay

Mission 2:
By 2030, domestic public investment in R&D outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40 per cent, and over the Spending Review period by at least one third. This additional government funding will seek to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
Business expenditure on R&D	Regions	Regions	Data only available at regional level, misses inequalities within regions.
Government funding for R&D	Regions	Regions	Data only available at regional level, misses inequalities within regions.
Percentage of businesses that are innovation active	Regions	NUTS2/ ITL2	Data is available at ITL2 level but is only being considered at regional level. The most granular data available should be used
Inward and outward Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)	Regions	NUTS2/ ITL2	Values for the East of England are missing from official Office for National Statistics data. Some data is available at ITL2 level but is not being utilised.
Suggested additional metrics	**Proposed geography**	**Reasoning**	
Employment in R&D, and size and location of R&D enterprises	Local authority	As business expenditure is only available at regional level, size and location of R&D enterprises and employment could be used as a proxy to track growth at a more granular level	

Mission 3:
By 2030 local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
Usual method of travel to work by region of workplace	Regions	Regions	Data currently only available at regional level. Focussing on connectivity at a regional level will leave behind rural and peripheral areas.
Average travel time in minutes to reach nearest large employment centre (500 + employees)	Local authority districts	LSOA	Doesn't capture type, frequency, availability or cost of public transport links to nearest large employment centre.
Percentage of non-frequent bus services running on time	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Data only available for 87 local authorities.
Average excess waiting time for frequent (bus) services	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Very poor reporting, only between twelve and 30 local authorities' data available for the last six years.
Public transport trips as a proportion of total trips per year	Regions	Regions	Focus at a region level fails to capture areas with little or no public transport usage.

Suggested additional metrics	Proposed geography	Reasoning	
Percentage of households within walking distance of a public transport route, and frequency of public transport service to access key services*	Local authority districts	Aid in identifying areas which do not have access to public transport routes.	
Car ownership by income decile*	Local authority districts	Aid in identifying areas which do not have access to public transport routes, and households that are forced into car ownerships as a way to get around	

*data that it would be beneficial for Office for National Statistics to be collecting

Mission 4:
By 2030, the UK will have nationwide* gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
Percentage of premises with gigabit-capable broadband	Local authority districts	LSOA	Data is available at LSOA. Using the most granular data available will be more beneficial in targeting those areas without gigabit-capable broadband
Percentage of 4G (and 5G) coverage by at least one mobile network operator	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Focussing on 'at least one' mobile provider limits choice for consumers in an area with only one provider as they have no options when purchasing a phone contract.
Suggested additional metrics	**Proposed geography**	**Reasoning**	
Percentage of 4G (and 5G) coverage by at least two mobile network providers	Local authority district	Aim should be for coverage from at least two mobile network operators, encouraging competition and a better deal for consumers	
Percentage of premises with super-fast broadband	Lower Super Output Area	The five per cent of areas that will not be covered by the 'nationwide' gigabit-capable broadband programme will mostly be in rural areas. To make up for this, the aim should be for 100 per cent of premises to have super-fast broadband access as soon as possible, insuring the rural areas businesses and residents are not penalised and further left behind due to inferior digital connectivity.	

*Nationwide is considered in the white paper as 95 per cent of the United Kingdom landmass for 4G, and 99 per cent of premises for gigabit-capable broadband

Mission 5:

By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths by end of primary school	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Data only available for 56 local authority districts, and no official data available for East of England
Percentage of young people achieving GCSEs (and equivalent qualifications) in English and maths by age 19	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Metric doesn't track other STEM subjects.
Percentage of schools rated good or outstanding by Ofsted	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Data only available for 125 local authority districts
Persistent absences for all pupils and disadvantaged and vulnerable cohorts of children	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Data only available for 125 local authority districts
Percentage of 5-year olds achieving 'expected level' on literacy, communication and maths early learning goals	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Data only available for 125 local authority districts

Suggested additional metrics	Proposed geography	Reasoning	
Percentage of young people achieving GCSEs in English and maths by age 19 who then go on to Further Education/ Level 3+ qualification	Local authority districts	Rural areas have higher levels of GSCE attainment in maths and English, but lower rates of FE participation and proportion of the population with Level 3+ qualifications.	

Mission 6:

By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest- skilled areas.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
19+ Further Education and Skills Achievements (qualifications) excluding community learning, Multiply and bootcamps	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Doesn't identify those learners who have relocated from another area to undertake FE or skills training which is unavailable to them at home.
Number of starts, and achievements, on apprenticeships per 1,000	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Doesn't account for type of apprenticeship, or whether apprenticeship leads to full-time work
Proportion of the population aged 16 – 64 with level 3+ qualifications	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Workers with higher level qualifications are grouped in areas where the skilled jobs are
19+ further education and skills participation	Local authority districts	Local authority district (LSOA for 2011)	Fails to capture participants that have move to an area to take undertake FE. Many students in rural authorities will have to leave their local area to attend college or university.

Suggested additional metrics	Proposed geography	Reasoning	
Average distance to nearest Further Education provider, and range of courses available	Local authority district	School leavers in rural areas are more likely to have to leave their local area to access further education, or may lack ability or means to easily access training providers	
Apprenticeship achievements by SIC code	Local authority district	Identify the proportion of apprenticeship achievements that are high-skilled and low-skilled	

Mission 7:
By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
Healthy Life Expectancy	Upper tier local authorities	Upper tier local authority	Misses pockets of deprivation and deprivation in scattered rural areas.
Smoking prevalence of adults	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Doesn't consider prevalence in under eighteens.
Obesity prevalence - children and adults	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Doesn't consider levels of exercise or sport participation, access to sports clubs, gyms or swimming pool
Cancer diagnosis at stage 1 and 2	Various	Clinical Commissioning group	Doesn't account for treatment wait times, or time between referral and diagnosis
Under-75 mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases considered preventable (per 100,000 population)	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Only considered cardiovascular diseases.

Mission 7:
By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years.

Suggested additional metrics	Proposed geography	Reasoning
Referral to treatment waiting times	CCG area, district if available	Fewer services in rural areas can mean longer wait times for treatment, and longer journeys to access treatment
Percentage of patients being treated for cancer within 62 days	CCG area, district if available	Fewer services in rural areas can mean longer wait times for treatment, and longer journeys to access treatment
Average wait time for elective treatment	CCG area, district if available	Fewer services in rural areas can mean longer wait times for treatment, and longer journeys to access treatment
Number of people on hospital wait lists	CCG area, district if available	Fewer services in rural areas can mean longer wait times for treatment, and longer journeys to access treatment
Average distance to accident and emergency	Local authority districts	Patients in rural areas will have to travel further to their nearest A&E, or many not have one at their local hospital
Average wait for an ambulance for Category 1 and 2 calls	CCG area, district if available	Patients in rural areas face longer wait times with ambulances serving a much wider geographical area
Rates of delayed discharged from hospital	CCG area, district if available	Delays in discharging patients can help identify issues
Rates of self harm amongst younger people	CCG area, district if available	Fewer support services in rural areas can mean longer wait times for treatment, and longer journeys to access treatment.
Levels of drug and alcohol abuse	Local authority district	Fewer support services in rural areas can mean longer wait times for treatment, and longer journeys to access treatment.

Mission 8:
By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
The average rating of those that feel satisfied about their lives.	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Responses are subjective
The average rating of those that feel the things they do in life are worthwhile.	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Responses are subjective
The average rating of those that felt happy yesterday.	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Responses are subjective
The average rating of those that felt anxious yesterday.	Local authority districts	Local authority district	Responses are subjective
Suggested additional metrics	**Proposed geography**	**Reasoning**	
Diagnosed depression in the adult population	CCG area, district if available	Data is reported by clinical professionals and is official data that is consistent for tracking changes	
Suicide rates	Local authority districts	Official data that is consistent for tracking changes. Gaps in mental health support provision may be identified by examining those areas with higher suicide rates and lower rates of diagnosed mental health disorders.	

Mission 9:
By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with gap to top performing closing.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
Percentage of adults who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live	Regions	Regions	Reponses are subjective. Focus on regions misses inequalities within region.
Percentage of individuals who have engaged in civic participation in the last 12 months	Regions	Regions	Focus on regions fails to capture inequalities within regions. Metric doesn't capture areas with higher rates of retired or part-time workers with greater opportunity to volunteer their time. Doesn't measure ability for people to be able to participate or barriers to participation
Suggested additional metrics		**Reasoning**	
Town/ village/ city centre footfall	Individual centres	Quantitative measure of town centre use. Although not data captured by Office for National Statistics, credit card spending data and mobile phone mast data can be used to accurately track trends, and has been used previously by local authorities to track footfall and spending habits.	

Mission 10:

By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50 per cent, with the biggest improvements in the lowest-performing areas.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
Proportion of non-decent rented homes	Regions	DfLUHC definitions of rural and urban	Focus at regional level fails to address inequalities within regions. Data available split by MHCLG definitions of rural/ urban classifications, but is not being utilised.
Number of first time buyers	Regions	England	Data currently unavailable
Recent first time buyers (last 3 years)	London and rest of England	England	Data currently unavailable
Net additions to the housing stock	Local authority districts	Local authority districts	Net of all housing tenures, doesn't differentiate between private, social, affordable etc.

Suggested additional metrics	Proposed geography	Reasoning	
Net additions to the housing stock which are for social rent	Local authority	Measure of housing availability by tenure type	
Rent to local earnings ratio by income decile	Local authority	Identifies affordability of renting for local people. Some rents may appear cheap on a regional or national scale, but be unaffordable on local wages	
House price to local earnings ratio by income decile	Local authority	Would help to determine likelihood of workers being able to get on the housing ladder. House prices may be cheaper on a national or regional scale, but out of reach when compared with local earnings.	
Rent in relation to public sector wages	Local authority	Identifies affordability of housing for key workers in an area, including nurses etc.	

Mission 11:
By 2030, homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
Neighbourhood crime	Police Force Areas	Unavailable	Data currently unavailable
Homicide	Police Force Areas	Police Force Area	Data is available at Police Force Area level and is not being utilised. Focus on regions fails to capture inequalities within regions
Hospital Admissions for Assault with a Sharp Object amongst under-25s	London and rest of England	Police Force Area	Data is available at Police Force Area level and is not being utilised. Focus on London and rest of England fails to capture inequalities across the rest of England

Suggested additional metrics	Proposed geography	Reasoning	
As the 'neighbourhood crime' data set is yet to be determined, it should include theft of machinery, fly tipping, theft of diesel/fuel, wildlife crime and theft of livestock	Police Force Areas, local authority districts where available	Although crime rates tend to be lower in rural areas, those crimes that do occur, e.g. theft of a tractor or livestock, can have a huge impact on individuals and businesses	

Mission 12:
By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement.

Metric	Proposed geography	Lowest level of data available	Issues to address when interpreting data
Percent of the population living in an area covered by the highest level of devolution	Various	Unavailable	Data currently unavailable

Suggested additional metrics	Proposed geography	Reasoning
Percentage of the population in favour of greater devolution	Local authority district	To assess demand for devolution at a sufficiently granular level – concern that devolution talks are only at a county or higher level without consideration of double devolution
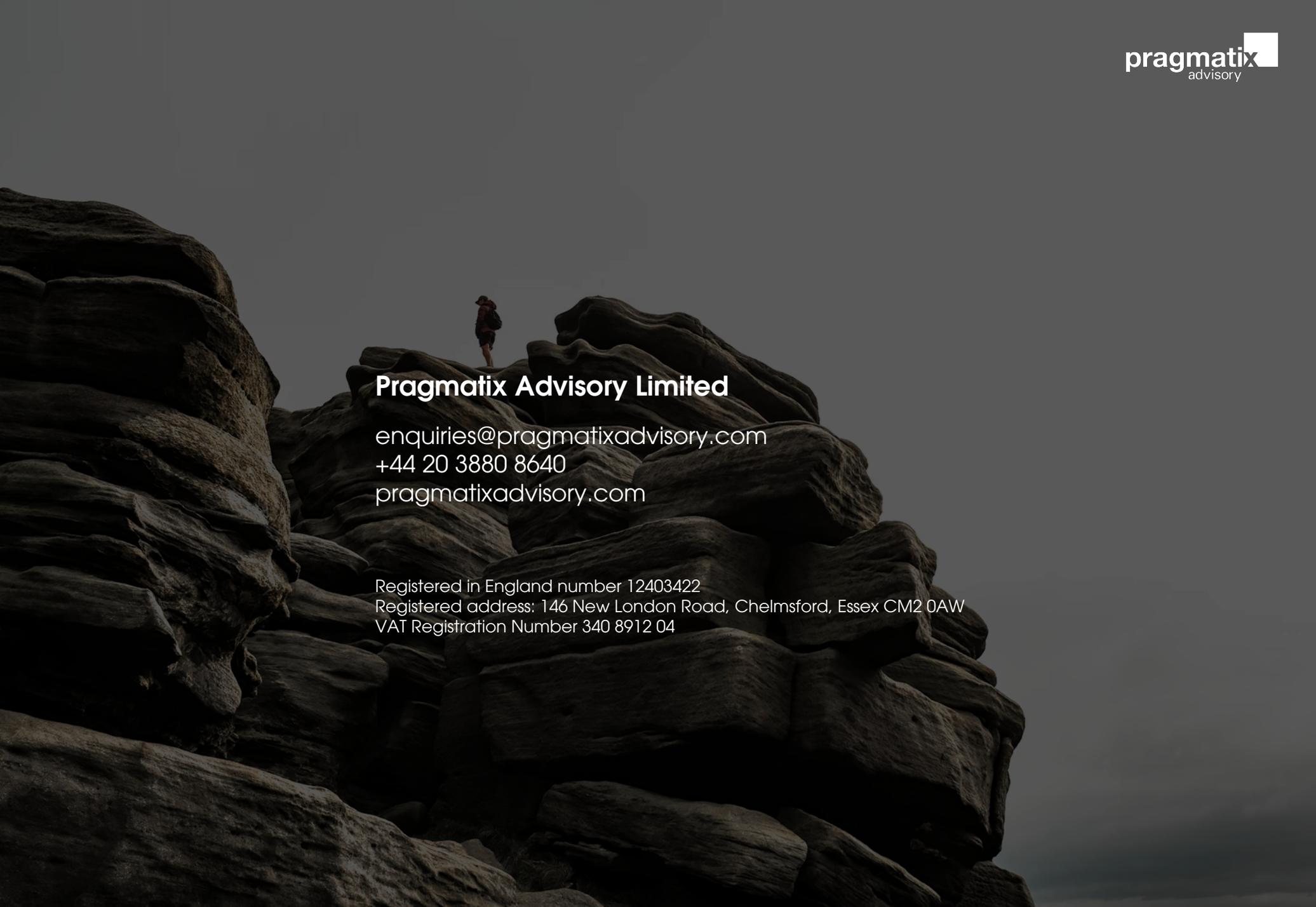
pragmatix
advisory

Pragmatix Advisory Limited

enquiries@pragmatixadvisory.com
+44 20 3880 8640
pragmatixadvisory.com