

The North East of England – A Snapshot

Economic growth in the North East currently exceeds that of London, the South East and is higher than the national average.

The proportion of new business survivals is higher than it has been for many years and our business failure rate is similar to the national average. In fact, during 2003 the North East was the most active region outside of London for 'hi-tech' business start-ups.

North East England has seen year on year reductions in unemployment levels since the turn of the century. Since 2000, unemployment has fallen from 108,000 to 64,000 (April 2005). Unemployment as a percentage of the economically active population has dropped from 7.1% in 2001 to 5.9% in 2004 and unemployment rates in the region are now falling faster than the national level.

The region is now recognised by Europe as the leading UK region putting science and technology at the heart of its economic strategy. In this respect it has become the model for all UK regions to copy, offering a variety of trade and investment opportunities.

Science Parks such as Knowledge Campus and Netpark are supporting this high-tech industry growth, as is major investment into the region's key sector strengths of health sciences, new and renewable energy and process industries.

Creative industries such as content-based businesses, which include computer games and video production, are now growing faster in North East England than in any other region of England. There are over 2,800 creative businesses operating in North East England, employing around 26,000 people.

According to Rebecca Harding of the London Business School, of those firms that have started life in the region in the past three years, 20% are using or selling technology, which was not available a year ago. In Britain as a whole, the figure is 11%. Only London has a higher rate of tech start-ups than North East England.