

CASE STUDY

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL



Northumberland
County Council

Understanding inequalities
and informing five-year
planning with Paycheck
data

CACI

DO AMAZING
THINGS WITH DATA



Highlights

- Up-to-date, annually refreshed income data
- Comparing communities, not just towns
- Revealing inequalities in detail
- Supporting post-Covid recovery and growth
- Objective basis for strategy and resource allocation

About Northumberland County Council

Northumberland County Council looks after a population of over 320,000, in England's most northerly county. Northumberland is one of England's five largest counties, with widely distributed towns and communities of varying types and populations.

The Council's top priority is making Northumberland a stronger place, economically and socially. That means supporting economic recovery after the pandemic and tackling inequalities within its communities, so residents are healthier and happier.

The Challenge

Understanding the needs of different neighbourhoods

Senior Economic Analyst Julie Dowson provides data to departments across the council, from housing and planning to public health and regeneration. She says,

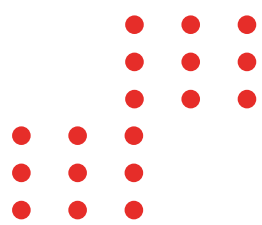
“

Our communities have such wide differences – it’s really important to look at them at a granular level and compare them. That’s where the Paycheck data comes in. We need current, household level information to understand exactly where people are experiencing challenges, so the council can target plans and funds to address them.

”

Like most Local Authorities, Northumberland County Council is focused on post-Covid recovery. Determining what’s changed and where the Council can help local economies and communities demands trusted, accurate income data.





The Solution



Household-level Paycheck data reveals areas of need and opportunity



Julie explains, “The cost of living is a very important topic for Northumberland’s council officials and politicians – reflecting the concerns of all who live and work in the county. One example of the way we use Paycheck data to compare incomes and cost of living across the council’s areas is in housing affordability assessments, to identify gaps and shortfalls that create inequality.”

Northumberland County Council also uses Paycheck insight to feed into its annual Economic Performance Assessment and five-year economic strategy. Julie says, “You can’t plan based on subjective assumptions – the Paycheck data provides objective evidence to support our policies, priorities and programmes. That means everyone in the Council as well as our partners and customers can see and understand why we’re focusing our resources in particular areas.”



The benefits

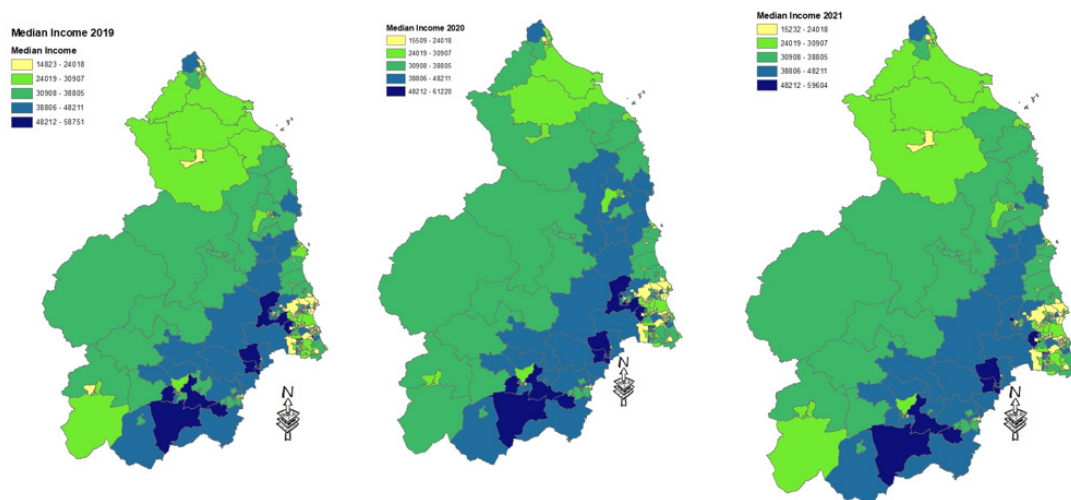
Targeted help and support for towns and communities

Northumberland's Public Health Department is conducting an Inequalities Assessment for the County which includes workshops with residents, businesses and partner organisations. Julie adds, "It's a very big county so we need to do work in smaller areas, comparing different communities to each other. We look at both health and economic aspects, including incomes from Paycheck. This ultimately informs healthcare commissioning and investment for different towns, plus an even more targeted focus on communities within towns and rural areas."

Northumberland County Council also shares the insight with its partners. Julie gives an example: "We recently worked with an organisation that helps get people more active – the data insight helped them to see where the greatest need is."

Median income levels in Northumberland LSOAs

(Source: © CACI Limited 1996 – 2022; The applicable copyright notices can be found at <http://www.caci.co.uk/copyrightnotices.pdf>)



Visualising the data in maps helps the widest audience to grasp the meaning and understand the impact on their particular area of focus.



Responding to post-Covid impacts and planning for recovery and growth

“

Julie says, Covid has changed our focus. In the last 2-3 years Paycheck has been a more important tool than ever before, helping us get data that's current and really reflects the situation. Economic data generally looks back, so it's invaluable to have data that relates to the current year.

”

“We mapped unemployment against income for different areas, which produced a really interesting set of maps. Paycheck confirmed what we suspected about the impact on unemployment. It showed where our wealthier residents live who tend to be more resilient, alongside others who need greater support.”

Northumberland County Council used Paycheck data to inform its Local Plan. The outputs influence Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Land Assessments, which identify potential locations for additional housing and indicate what land may be released for future housing development. This helps Northumberland County Council to plan enough affordable homes to meet residents' needs in different housing developments across the county.

The data also supports longer-term performance measures and strategy planning. Income data from Paycheck is a key economic indicator in Northumberland's annual Economic Performance Assessment. This supports a five-year economic strategy.





“

We have a long relationship with CACI and appreciate their regular contact. We've been very interested in the LARIA information our account manager shares and have joined several webinars. These add value to the data and disseminate best practice from other local authorities, so we can all make the most of the insight from Paycheck.

Julie Dowson
Senior Economic Analyst
Northumberland County Council

”



Contact us to discuss all the available data and solutions we can offer to support your organisation.

| Call: +44 (0)20 7602 6000

| Email: info@caci.co.uk



DO AMAZING
THINGS WITH DATA