



Homecare Association



The Homecare Deficit 2023

A report on the funding of older
people's homecare across the UK

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About the Homecare Association

The Homecare Association is the UK's membership body for homecare providers, with over 2,180 members nationally.

Our mission is to work together to ensure homecare is valued, so all of us can live well at home and flourish within our communities.

We lead the way in shaping homecare and provide practical support for our members.

For more information, please visit www.homecareassociation.org.uk.

Disclaimer

Public organisations provided information for this report, under Freedom of Information laws. These included local authorities; Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) in England; Local Health Boards in Wales; Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland; and regional NHS Boards in Scotland.

The Homecare Association sense checked replies where possible. We asked public organisations for more information if needed and corrected obvious mistakes. We excluded data that appeared questionable.

When an organisation gave an unsatisfactory answer, we relied on other information they provided to make accurate calculations, where possible.

We asked for an internal review when a public organisation refused to share information or did not answer our questions.

With an enquiry of this size, it was not possible to get satisfactory answers to every question. This report presents the most comprehensive dataset we could gain. We note limitations to the data of specific organisations in this report. Some organisations provided data on planned or estimated care instead of actual care, which was acceptable.

Care providers must thus not use the data as an alternative to the accurate pricing of individual tender bids. Likewise, purchasers must not use the data to set maximum prices in contracts.

NB. We rounded the data labels on graphs and figures in this report. We used exact figures when adding or subtracting numbers in the text, which may cause occasional differences because of rounding.

Where comparison is made with the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for Homecare, this refers to figures from the 2023-24 edition of the document.

Moreover, this report refers to analysis of questions (a)-(h) **only** of our Freedom of Information request (see Appendix 1). We are, however, grateful to those organisations that provided information to questions (i) and (j).

If an organisation did not hold any of the information requested, we assume that they do not purchase services from the independent and voluntary sector.

Executive summary

Homecare plays a vital role in enabling us all to live well at home and flourish in our communities. Investing in homecare helps to enhance wellbeing; increase healthy life expectancy; reduce pressure on the NHS; and save money for the health and care system.

Research by the Homecare Association shows that public organisations purchase an estimated 3.7 million hours of homecare each week in the United Kingdom. As a result, with private-pay funded homecare, the Homecare Association estimates that over 800,000 adults are currently supported at home and can live independently within their communities. In contrast, less than 150,000 people (of any age) are in UK hospitals at any one time.¹

Freedom of information enquiry

The Homecare Association asked 276 public organisations in the UK about fees paid for homecare services. These included local authorities; Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) in England; Local Health Boards in Wales; Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland; and regional NHS Boards in Scotland. We used the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to gather this information.

The enquiry examined homecare given to individuals aged 65 and above during a one-week sample period that included April 17, 2023.

We also asked for data on, *inter alia*, the total number of hours purchased in the sample week and the equivalent week in 2022, and total spend on homecare, as well as the

number of care packages handed back by providers in both 2022-23 and 2021-22.

We used the figures provided to calculate the deficit in funding for homecare hours currently purchased. This is based on paying careworkers the same as NHS Band 3 healthcare assistants with 2+ years' experience (£12.45 per hour).

We did not include unmet need in our calculations. The homecare deficit would be much higher if we costed unmet demand.

Key findings

Homecare deficit

Providers in many areas say they need to pay careworkers a wage of at least £12.45 per hour, to attract and keep them. This is the same as NHS Band 3 healthcare assistants (with 2+ years' experience).

Based on the [Homecare Association costing model](#), to pay careworkers this wage, we need an extra **£2.08 billion** per year across the UK.

- ➔ **£1.62** billion per year for England
- ➔ **£105.5** million per year for Wales
- ➔ **£244.2** million per year for Scotland
- ➔ **£117.7** million per year for Northern Ireland.

¹ Based on the following data sources:

- [Bed Availability and Occupancy Data – Overnight for NHS organisations in England \(NHS England\)](#)
- [NHS beds by organisation and year, 2009-10 onwards in Wales \(StatsWales\)](#)
- [Acute hospital activity and NHS beds information \(quarterly\) in Scotland \(Public Health Scotland\)](#)
- [Hospital statistics: inpatient and day case activity 2009/10 to 2021/22 in Northern Ireland \(Department of Health\)](#)

Of those that supplied information for both 2022-23 and 2021-22, an average of 81 care packages per council/HSC Trust in the UK were handed back by homecare providers in 2022-23, a fall of 6% from the previous year. This affected about 17,000 older people.

Of respondents who purchase homecare externally, only 56% of UK councils/HSC Trusts could provide data on package hand-backs for both 2022-23 and 2021-22. We are concerned about the lack of data on this important metric, which indicates financial strain on the homecare sector.

Fee rates for homecare

Average hourly fee rates for homecare, weighted for the volume of hours purchased by state commissioners, were:

- **£21.59** in England (with a split of £21.60 for councils and £21.56 for health bodies);
- **£23.98** in Wales (with a split of £24.20 for councils and £21.27 for health bodies);
- **£21.43** in Scotland; and
- **£18.63** in Northern Ireland.

In England and Wales, fee rates for homecare purchased by the NHS do not reflect the complexity of care they are commissioning. The respective weighted averages of NHS rates for homecare are lower than those for local government. Those who qualify for NHS-funded care have greater healthcare needs than those funded by local authorities.

Only 5% of UK public organisations paid the Minimum Price for Homecare calculated by the Homecare Association. This minimum is based on a careworker receiving the National Living Wage in England, and real Living Wage in the devolved administrations. None of the Local Health Boards in Wales, councils in Scotland, or HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland met the Homecare Association's Minimum Price.

Only 5% of councils/HSC Trusts were paying an hourly average of at least their nation's Minimum Price – the lowest proportion from any of our five Homecare Deficit projects (with percentages based on the specific Minimum Price **at that time**), stretching back to the first sample week in September 2014.

18 public organisations paid average hourly rates lower than the amount required to cover careworker direct costs alone. These vary by nation, but comprise the wage specified above, plus other employment on-costs. A third of these were based in the Greater London government region. This leaves nothing extra to cover other operating costs. This risks non-compliance with employment and care regulations; poor experience for those receiving and giving care; and provider insolvency.

Greater London stands out as a concern. It has the lowest weighted average among England's government regions and the smallest increase since 2021 among the UK's regions. The weighted average in NHS London was also the lowest in the NHS regions/administration of England and Wales.

Number of homecare hours purchased

In the UK, there was an 8% increase in the hours of homecare purchased since 2022. England and Northern Ireland also saw an increase of 8% (to the nearest whole number). However, in Wales, there was a very minor drop, because of 6% fewer hours purchased by the NHS.

59 councils/HSC Trusts reported a decrease in hours between 2022 and 2023. This represents 30% of such organisations in the United Kingdom, rising to 43% of local authorities in Wales and 46% in Scotland.

In 2021, the Homecare Association asked for information on the hours of homecare purchased for sample weeks in 2021 and 2020. The percentage change in hours between 2022 and 2023 is smaller in every government region and administration, except the South East, compared to the change between 2020 and 2021.

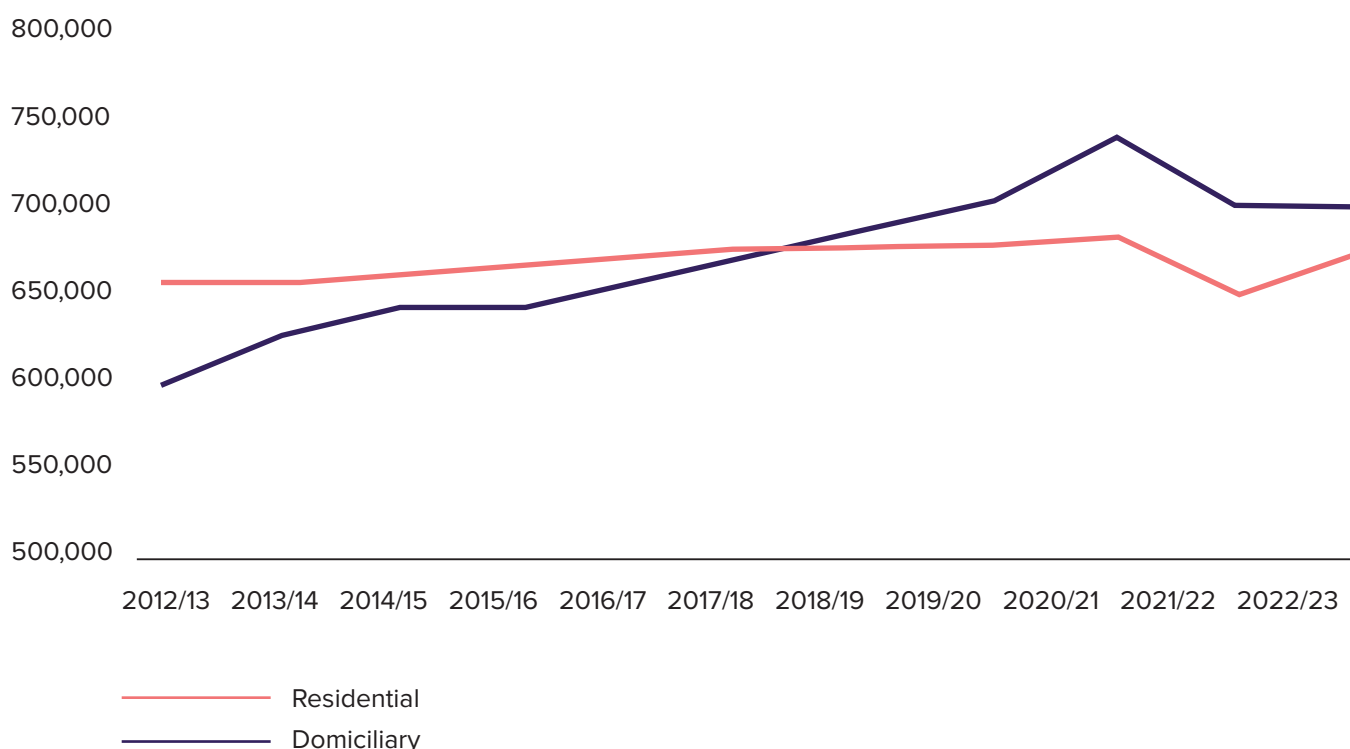
In all UK administrations, 75% of the government regions reported a larger proportion of councils/HSC Trusts with a drop in hours between 2022 and 2023, compared with between the two years prior. Indeed, half (50%) of North East of England councils bought fewer hours between 2022 and 2023, while the respective proportion for between

2020 and 2021 was just 17%. The differential was similarly substantial elsewhere – for example, 29 percentage points in Scotland and 27 percentage points in Wales.

Discussion

Jobs in homecare have been steadily increasing over the last decade. Despite a drop in filled posts after 2020-21, the number in England is now estimated to be [27% higher than in 2012-13 in the independent sector](#). The following chart compares workforce estimates in domiciliary and residential care across all sectors (including, for example, local authority) in England.

Figure 1. Comparison of jobs in domiciliary and residential care since 2012-13 (source: Skills for Care, 2023)



Workforce shortages in homecare hit a peak in October 2022, when Skills for Care estimated a record-high vacancy rate of 14.1% in England. This figure has now fallen, but at [12.4% in September 2023](#), it is still more than [four times the vacancy rate](#) of the wider UK economy.

Ability of councils to assess need, commission and pay for homecare is not keeping pace with demand. Unmet need is acute. Age UK estimates that, in England, [2.6 million people aged 50 and over](#) have some unmet care need. Over [430,000 people](#) are waiting for assessment, review or start of a care package or direct payment. This is down from a peak of 542,000 people in April 2022.

Mismatch of supply and demand for home-based and community support and care is contributing to greater burdens on the NHS. Neglecting people in the community risks deterioration in their health, crisis, and greater need for acute care. This adds to demand for ambulances and hospital beds. This can lead to longer waits for ambulances; cancelled clinics; cancelled operations; delayed discharges; and difficulty in reducing waiting lists, which are now at a record of [more than 7.7 million people](#). Almost a [quarter of delayed discharges from hospital](#) are due to people waiting for homecare, as there is a shortage of homecare workers.

According to Laing and Buisson², the State funds about 70% of total homecare hours purchased. The decisions made by local authority and NHS commissioners shape the quality, delivery and financial viability of the market.

Central government provides councils with inadequate money to purchase homecare. This results in poor practices in the

commissioning and purchase of homecare. Some local authority tenders for homecare now place more weight on price than quality. This leads to poor pay and terms and conditions of employment for care workers.

Unregistered service providers

Due to pressure on budgets, some councils and NHS bodies are encouraging the use of unregistered care providers. Under current law, sole traders can deliver paid care to citizens, without a need for regulatory oversight. The introductory agencies that connect them are also exempt from regulation. Reducing costs is a key driver for public sector commissioners. Unregistered providers can provide homecare at a lower cost without the burden of regulation. There is, however, no oversight of quality and safety, or requirement for mandatory training or supervision of careworkers.

Unregistered careworkers lack support or protection while caring for people with complex needs. Many consumers do not appreciate the differences between registered and unregistered homecare services. This includes not understanding that there is no oversight of quality or safety, or that they may assume employer liabilities.

The Homecare Association fully supports choice and control in accessing care and support services. We believe that people receiving state funding should have the same ability to self-direct care and support as those paying for their own care.

People's safety should be the primary consideration when deciding which professions to regulate. Regulation should be based on the type of service and its risk, not on employment status.

² Homecare and Supported Living UK Market Report: Third Edition, 2020

The costs of delivering complex care

People need more complex care because of long-term illness, disability, or hospitalisation. Our research found that [over half \(56%\) of homecare providers](#) agreed that more complex tasks were being commissioned by the NHS now than before the pandemic.

Careworkers can provide complex care, but they need to be proficient in specialist care techniques. These could include enteral/percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) feeding; nasopharyngeal suctioning; tracheostomy care; and complex catheter care. Individuals trained in specialist care techniques deserve extra compensation.

Providers must spend more money on training and supervising careworkers to perform healthcare tasks. The cost of delivering complex care is thus higher and fee rates must reflect this.

Zero-hour commissioning of homecare at low fee rates leads to zero-hour employment of careworkers at low wage rates

Public organisations often buy homecare by the minute, for contact time only, at rates below the cost of providing good quality care. This results in many homecare workers being

paid by the minute at the legal minimum wage. If councils do not factor in the cost of travel time properly, careworkers may receive less than the minimum wage. Alternatively, people drawing on services may receive shorter visits than commissioned. Neither outcome is acceptable.

Society undervalues care work. Similar roles in the NHS are given greater recognition and reward than those in the care sector. Pay and terms and conditions of employment in care are also lower than those requiring less training and skill in retail and hospitality. Care roles are far more than minimum wage jobs. We need to go further to attract, keep, and develop a talent pool for the future.

Risks associated with under-funded care

Low prices paid for homecare create risks. These include poor pay and terms and conditions of employment for the workforce; poor quality care; and lack of financial sustainability of services.

The Government must fund care adequately to solve recruitment and retention problems. Without this, more providers may have to hand back contracts or cease trading, leading to higher levels of unmet need.

Recommendations

The Homecare Association urges the Government to invest in homecare to improve quality of life; extend life expectancy; reduce inequalities; alleviate the burden on the NHS; and decrease healthcare costs.

Central government funding of public organisations has a direct impact on the fee rates they can pay for homecare. If commissioners purchase homecare at low fee rates, careworkers receive poor pay and terms and conditions of employment.

Shorter-term recommendations

In the short-term, we recommend that:

- The Government invests an additional **£2.08 billion per year** in homecare across the UK. This would enable careworkers to receive wages equivalent to Band 3 healthcare assistants in the NHS with 2+ years' experience (equivalent to £12.45 per hour). The split by each administration is as follows:
 - ➔ **£1.62 billion** per year for England
 - ➔ **£105.5 million** per year for Wales
 - ➔ **£244.2 million** per year for Scotland
 - ➔ **£117.7 million** per year for Northern Ireland.
- The Government supports an expert-led workforce strategy for social care and a ten-year workforce plan, aligned with the NHS People Plan.
- Commissioners stop purchasing homecare by the minute in arrears and instead pay in advance on planned homecare. This will help to stabilise and develop homecare provision by: a) providing greater security of income; b) encouraging investment in workforce and technology; and c) reducing the risk of provider insolvency.
- All public commissioners adopt an evidence-based approach to calculating

the cost of delivery of homecare. Fee rates must reflect dependency of need and enable wage rates on a par with equivalent NHS roles.

Longer-term recommendations

In the longer-term, we recommend that:

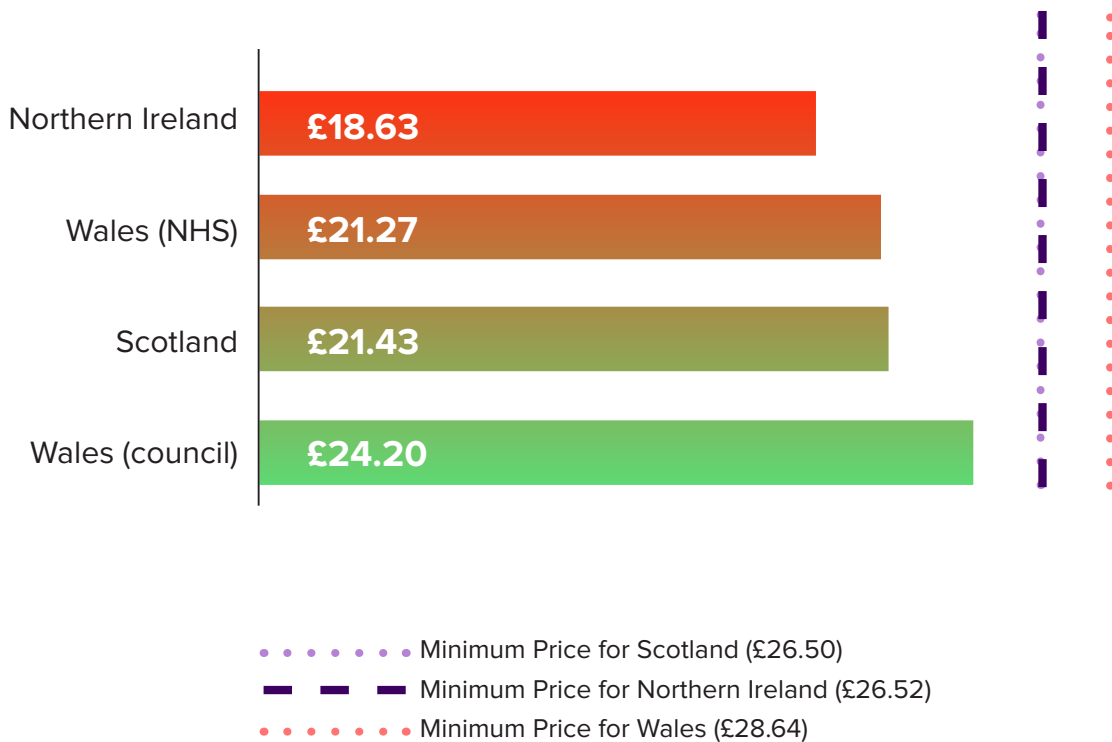
- The Government focuses on social factors that affect health instead of just urgent hospital care. This requires more investment in support and care at home and in the community to decrease the need for costly healthcare services.
- Public organisations reform commissioning of care services. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - ➔ More accurate assessment of people's needs, such as dependency and type of need in places and neighbourhoods;
 - ➔ Improving management of supply and demand of care services to ensure we meet needs, avoiding under- or over-supply;
 - ➔ Joint commissioning for better outcomes, rather than commissioning for minutes in isolation from other services;
 - ➔ Commissioning to expand the use of technology solutions, with or without in-person care, to promote health and well-being of people in communities.
- The Government creates a national professional register for careworkers in England, learning the lessons from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This must be adequately funded and carefully implemented.

Headline figures

Figure 2. Weighted average hourly prices paid for homecare in England for each government region and the NHS during the 2023 sample week, compared with relevant Minimum Price statistics



Figure 3. Weighted average hourly prices paid for homecare in the devolved administrations during the 2023 sample week, compared with relevant Minimum Price statistics



England

£21.60

The weighted average price paid by councils in England for an hour of homecare for people aged 65 years and over in a sample week during April 2023.

£21.56

The weighted average price paid by health bodies in England for an hour of homecare for people aged 65 years and over in a sample week during April 2023.

£21.59

The weighted average price paid overall in England (councils and health bodies combined) for an hour of homecare for people aged 65 years and over in a sample week during April 2023.

£1.62 billion

The additional money needed overall per year to ensure that homecare workers in England can be paid the same as [NHS healthcare assistants at Band 3 with 2+ years' experience](#), and that homecare services are financially sustainable.

£893.4 million

The additional money needed overall just to guarantee that homecare workers in England receive the Government's statutory National Living Wage of £10.42 per hour (2023-2024), while also enabling homecare services to meet their statutory obligations.

5%

The proportion of public organisations in England overall that were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for Homecare in England of £25.95 per hour.

8%

The change in the overall total number of hours of homecare purchased by public organisations in England between the sample weeks in 2022 and 2023.

26%

The proportion of councils in England whose number of hours of homecare purchased fell between the sample weeks in 2022 and 2023.

86

The average number of care packages per council in England handed back by homecare providers in 2022-23.

Wales

£24.20

The weighted average price paid by councils in Wales for an hour of homecare for people aged 65 years and over in a sample week during April 2023.

£21.27

The weighted average price paid by Local Health Boards in Wales for an hour of homecare for people aged 65 years and over in a sample week during April 2023.

£23.98

The weighted average price paid overall in Wales (councils and Local Health Boards combined) for an hour of homecare for people aged 65 years and over in a sample week during April 2023.

£105.5 million

The additional money needed overall per year to ensure that homecare workers in Wales can be paid the same as [NHS healthcare assistants at Band 3 with 2+ years' experience](#) and that homecare services are financially sustainable.

7%

The proportion of public organisations in Wales overall that were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for Homecare in Wales of £28.64 per hour.

-0.1%

The change in the overall total number of hours of homecare purchased by public organisations in Wales between the sample weeks in 2022 and 2023.

43%

The proportion of councils in Wales whose number of hours of homecare purchased fell between the sample weeks in 2022 and 2023.

52

The average number of care packages per council in Wales handed back by homecare providers in 2022-23.

Scotland

£21.43

The weighted average price paid by councils in Scotland for an hour of homecare for people aged 65 years and over in a sample week during April 2023.

£244.2 million

The additional money needed per year to ensure that homecare workers in Scotland can be paid the same as [NHS healthcare assistants at Band 3 with 2+ years' experience](#) and that homecare services are financially sustainable.

0%

The proportion of councils in Scotland that were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for Homecare in Scotland of £26.50 per hour.

5%

The change in the total number of hours of homecare purchased by councils in Scotland between the sample weeks in 2022 and 2023.

46%

The proportion of councils in Scotland whose number of hours of homecare purchased fell between the sample weeks in 2022 and 2023.

47

The average number of care packages per council in Scotland handed back by homecare providers in 2022-23.

Northern Ireland

£18.63

The weighted average price paid by Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland for an hour of homecare for people aged 65 years and over in a sample week during April 2023.

£117.7 million

The additional money needed per year to ensure that homecare workers in Northern Ireland can be paid the same as [NHS healthcare assistants at Band 3 with 2+ years' experience](#), and that homecare services are financially sustainable.

0%

The proportion of Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland that were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for Homecare in Northern Ireland of £26.52 per hour.

8%

The change in the total number of hours of homecare purchased by Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland between the sample weeks in 2022 and 2023.

20%

The proportion of Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland whose number of hours of homecare purchased fell between the sample weeks in 2022 and 2023.

130

The average number of care packages per Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland handed back by homecare providers in 2022-23.

United Kingdom

£21.56

The weighted average price paid by councils in Great Britain and Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland for an hour of homecare for people aged 65 years and over in a sample week during April 2023.

£21.54

The weighted average price paid by NHS bodies in England and Wales for an hour of homecare for people aged 65 years and over in a sample week during April 2023.

£21.56

The weighted average price paid overall in the United Kingdom (all organisations combined) for an hour of homecare for people aged 65 years and over in a sample week during April 2023.

£2.08 billion

The additional money needed overall per year to ensure that homecare workers in the United Kingdom can be paid the same as [NHS healthcare assistants at Band 3 with 2+ years' experience](#), and that homecare services are financially sustainable.

5%

The proportion of public organisations in the United Kingdom overall that were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's respective Minimum Price for Homecare in each administration.

8%

The change in the overall total number of hours of homecare purchased by public organisations in the United Kingdom between the sample weeks in 2022 and 2023.

30%

The proportion of councils in Great Britain and Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland whose number of hours of homecare purchased fell between the sample weeks in 2022 and 2023.

81

The average number of care packages per council/Health and Social Care Trust in the United Kingdom handed back by homecare providers in 2022-23.

Introduction

The Homecare Association wanted to determine the current homecare deficit. This is the gap between the budget allocated and the amount needed to ensure high-quality, sustainable services.

We therefore asked 276 public organisations in the UK about fees paid for homecare services. These included local authorities; Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) in England; Local Health Boards in Wales; Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland; and regional NHS Boards in Scotland. We used the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to gather this information.

We asked each public organisation to provide the prices (lowest, highest and average) that it pays to independent and voluntary sector homecare providers for the provision of regulated homecare services delivered to people aged 65 years and over in their own home, during a seven-day 'reference period' (otherwise referred to as the 'sample week') which included Monday, 17 April 2023.

We also asked for data on, *inter alia*, the total number of hours purchased in the sample week and the equivalent week in 2022, and total spend on homecare, as well as the number of care packages handed back by providers in both 2022-23 and 2021-22.

We used the figures provided to calculate the deficit in funding for homecare hours currently purchased. This is based on paying careworkers the same as NHS Band 3 healthcare assistants with 2+ years' experience (£12.45 per hour).

We confined the initial enquiry to the care of older people. This was partly because services for this group make up the bulk of many independent and voluntary sector providers' work. In addition, services for younger adults often cost more, which risks hiding underfunding of care for older people. That said, a small quantity of organisations could not provide this age breakdown in at least part of their response. We included these figures in this report, but treated them with caution.

Several ICBs split their responses – for example, by the areas of former Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) – resulting in 307 responses. Of the public organisations contacted, 280 confirmed that they purchase homecare services from the independent and voluntary sector.

This report is the product of the fifth such Freedom of Information exercise undertaken. It analyses the data from the responses to the request and updates our findings from previous editions, most recently in 2021.

To see the full request and for more information on the methodology used, please see Appendix 1.

Detailed findings

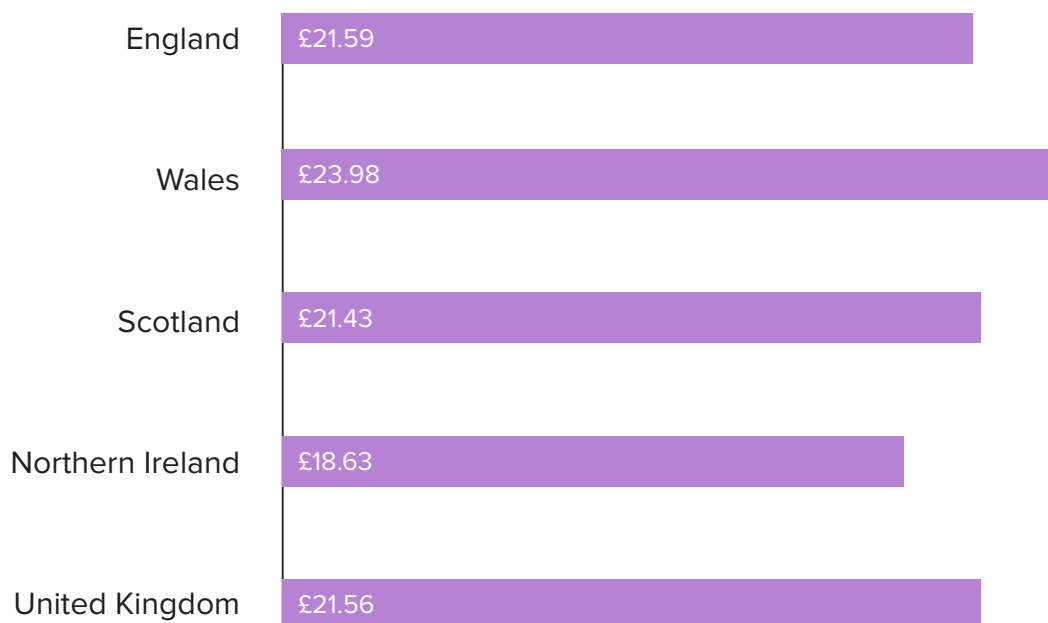
Weighted average prices paid for homecare

For the 2023 sample week, the overall weighted average price (i.e. using figures for both councils/HSC Trusts and NHS bodies) for an hour of homecare for older people paid by public organisations in the United Kingdom was £21.56.

(Details of how weighted averages in this report are calculated can be found on page 165.)

The administration with the highest overall weighted average is Wales, with a rate that is £2.38 above that of any other UK nation. Meanwhile, the weighted average in Northern Ireland remains far too low.

Figure 4. Overall weighted average hourly prices paid for homecare in each administration and the United Kingdom for the 2023 sample week

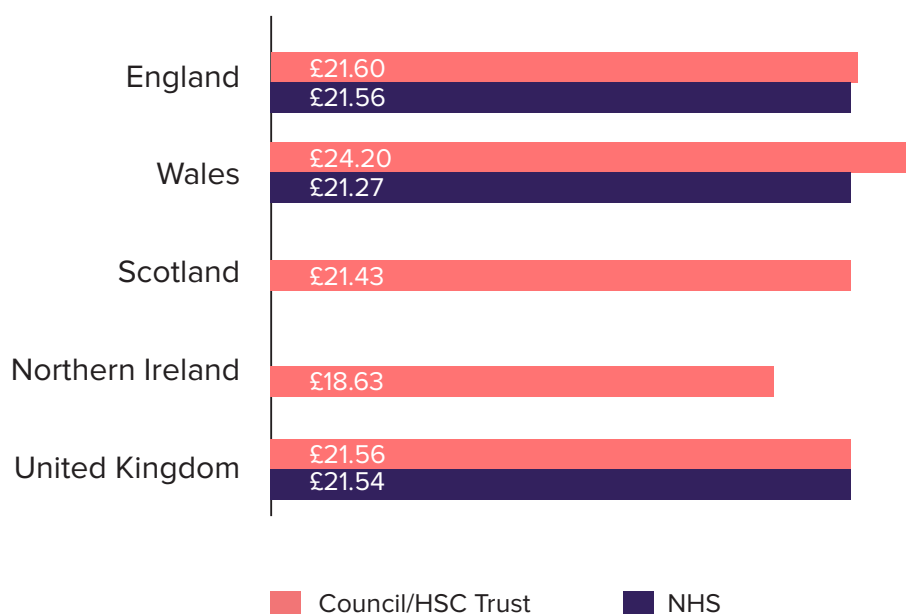


We now split the data between councils/HSC Trusts and NHS bodies, where relevant. As depicted in Figure 5, the weighted average for NHS bodies in England and Wales (and consequently the United Kingdom) is lower than the respective price in local government. Indeed, in Wales, the NHS mark is a sizeable £2.92 adrift of that for councils. This is surprising and perhaps somewhat alarming,

as NHS funding for homecare is restricted to those with the highest healthcare needs, including end of life care. Greater complexity of need requires higher levels of training and skill and should thus incur higher cost.

(No figure is provided for the NHS in Scotland – this is explained on page 115).

Figure 5. Weighted average hourly prices paid by councils/HSC Trusts and the NHS (where relevant) for homecare in each administration and the United Kingdom for the 2023 sample week



The regional picture

The following two maps illustrate the weighted average rates for the government and NHS regions (where appropriate) of the United Kingdom.



Figure 6. Map showing weighted average hourly prices paid for homecare in England's government regions and the devolved administrations for the 2023 sample week

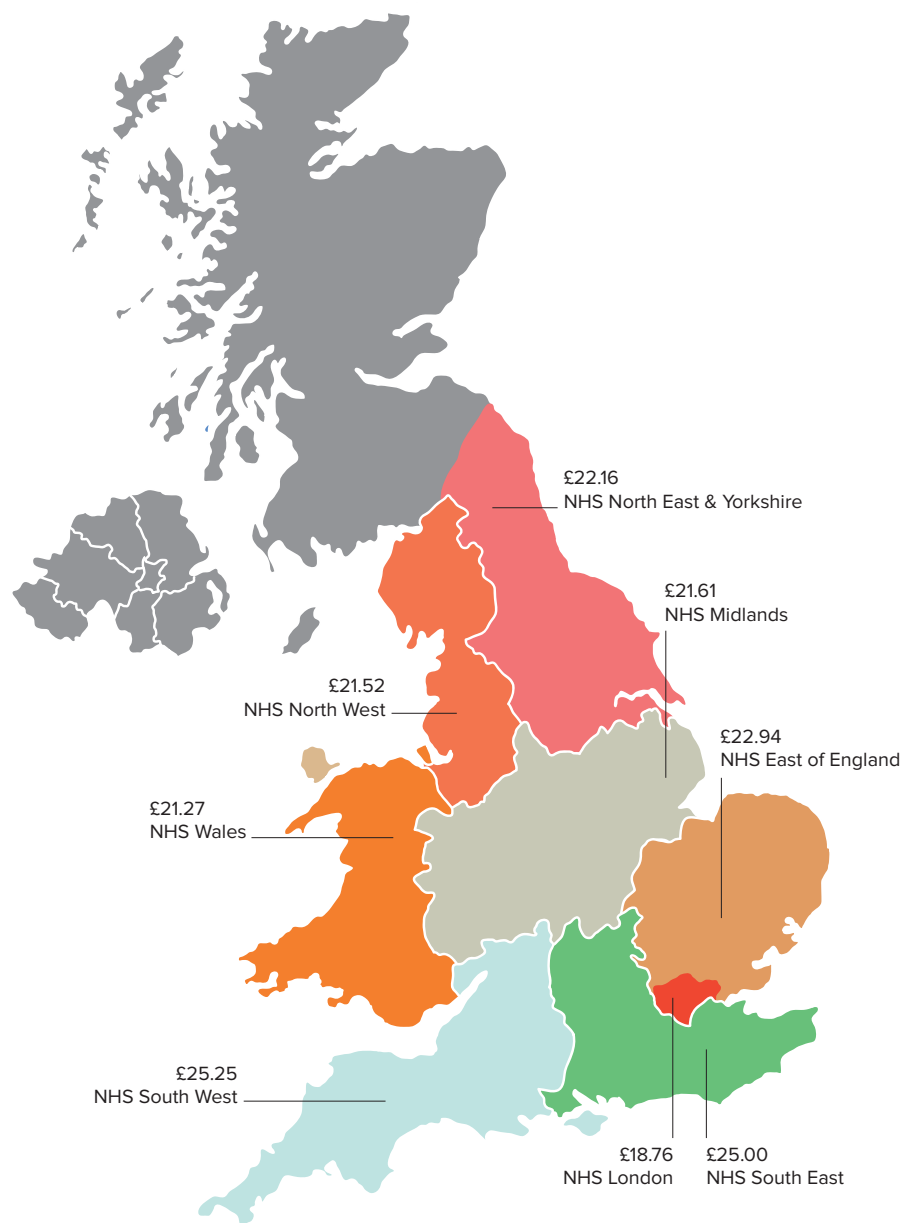


Figure 7. Map showing weighted average hourly prices paid for homecare in England's NHS regions and by the NHS in Wales for the 2023 sample week

Consequently, we can compare these rates between respective NHS and government regions within England and Wales.

To do this, a weighted average for the 'Midlands' government region was calculated using council responses from the East Midlands and West Midlands. Similarly, a 'North' government region weighted rate incorporates information from councils in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and The Humber, while the 'North' NHS region average is based upon health body figures in NHS North East and Yorkshire, and NHS North West.

The following chart contrasts NHS and government region differentials with the 2021 sample week. A positive figure indicates a higher NHS region weighted average. In the 'Midlands' and South East, the difference is smaller than before, despite the NHS figures still exceeding those for the government regions. Meanwhile, in a reversal, the government region figure in the East of England is now larger than that for the NHS. For Wales, the differential in favour of the government region has increased markedly since our 2021 Freedom of Information request.

Figure 8. Difference between the weighted average hourly prices paid for homecare in the NHS and government regions of England and Wales for the 2023 and 2021 sample weeks



Minimum Price for Homecare

The Homecare Association’s Minimum Price for Homecare is calculated to cover the cost of an hour of homecare commissioned by councils/HSC Trusts or NHS bodies, while enabling providers to meet both employment and care regulations, as well as to ensure financial sustainability.

For the first time in 2022, we produced separate reports and Minimum Prices for each UK nation. The England minimum value was based upon a careworker receiving the National Living Wage, while calculations for the devolved administrations were each

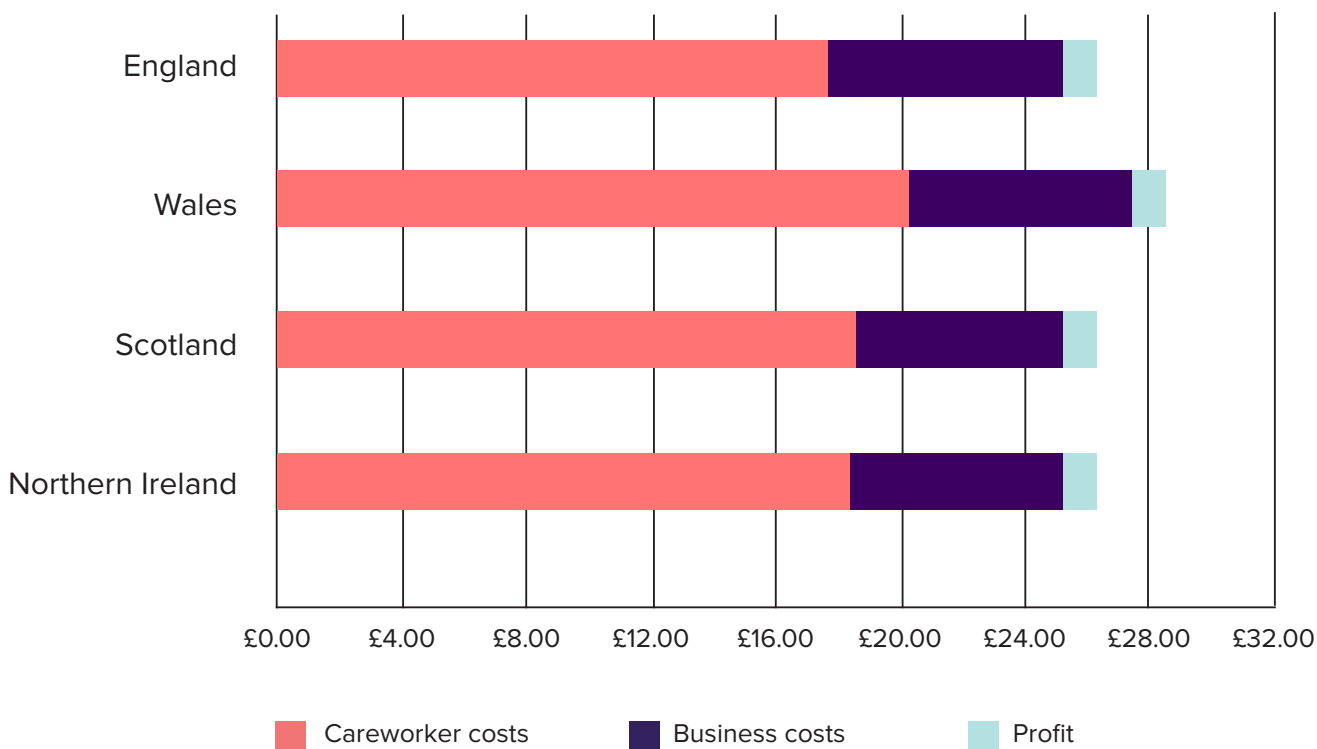
underpinned by payment of the real Living Wage (as has been pledged by the respective nations).

The four Minimum Prices, as well as a breakdown of the costs, are shown below.

Figure 9. Minimum Price for Homecare 2023-24 in each UK nation

Administration	Minimum Price for Homecare
England	£25.95
Wales	£28.64
Scotland	£26.50
Northern Ireland	£26.52

Figure 10. Distribution of costs for the Minimum Price for Homecare 2023-24 in each UK nation



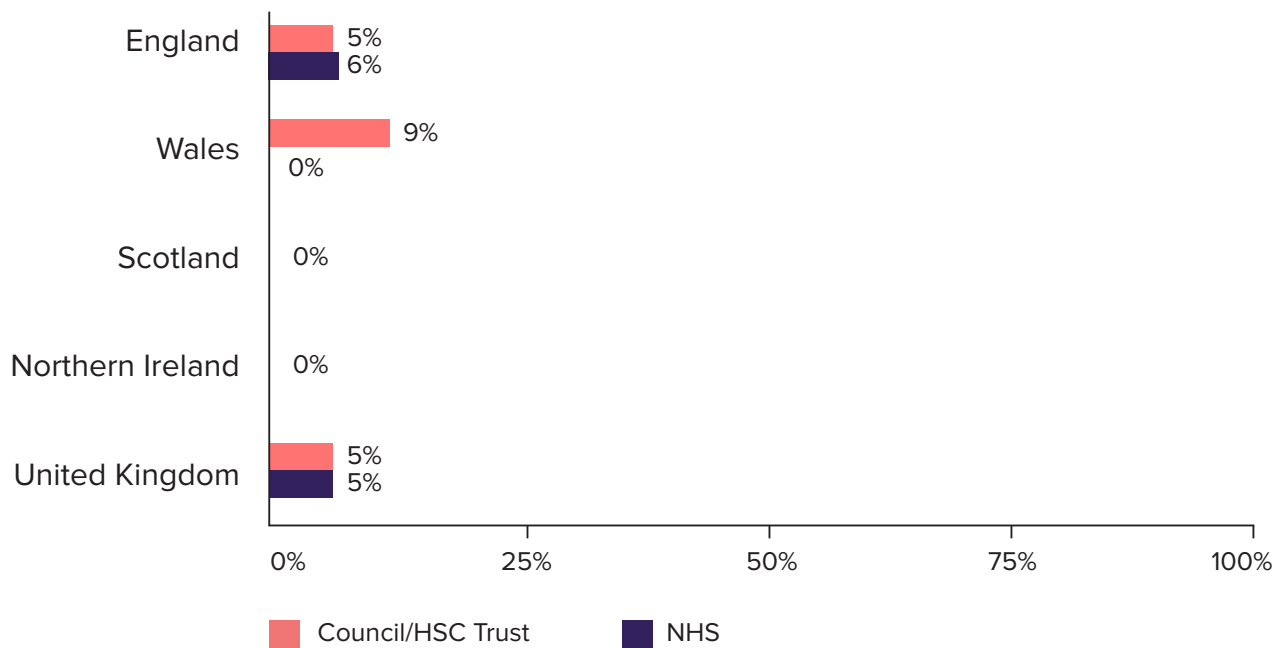
(For more information on the Minimum Price for Homecare, please visit the [Homecare Association website](#).)

In the Homecare Deficit 2021 report, we noted that only 13% of public organisations overall (that provided figures) across the United Kingdom were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association’s Minimum Price (which then stood at £21.43 per hour).

This percentage has now plummeted to a shocking 5%, amounting to just 12 organisations. No Local Health Boards in Wales, councils in Scotland or HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland had an average rate meeting their respective Minimum Price.

NB. Only 14 organisations (6%) in the United Kingdom reported an average of at least £25.95, which is the lowest Minimum Price rate for the nations.

Figure 11. Proportion of councils/HSC Trusts and NHS bodies in each administration and the United Kingdom whose average hourly price for homecare during the 2023 sample week was at, or above, the respective Minimum Price



Even worse, there were 18 public organisations, whose recorded average hourly rate was even lower than the amount required to cover careworker direct costs alone (which vary by nation). In 2021, there were only four such organisations.

Of the 18, a third were based in the Greater London government region. (Unsurprisingly,

there were no councils in Greater London who were paying an average high enough to support the London Living Wage. According to our Minimum Price 2023-24, this would require a rate of £28.78).

NB. Peterborough’s average rate was described in their response as ‘pre-uplift’.

Figure 12. Public organisations whose average price in 2023 was lower than direct careworker costs as reported in the respective Minimum Price

Organisation	Region	Average price
Halton	North West	£14.31
Ealing	Greater London	£16.04
Lewisham	Greater London	£16.29
Walsall	West Midlands	£16.38
Harrow	Greater London	£16.60
Waltham Forest	Greater London	£16.70
Gateshead	North East	£17.01
Sandwell	West Midlands	£17.43
Peterborough	East of England	£17.54
Hillingdon	Greater London	£17.60
Birmingham	West Midlands	£17.71
Sefton	North West	£17.89
Darlington	North East	£17.91
Wandsworth	Greater London	£17.92
Northamptonshire ICB	NHS Midlands	£17.96
Southern HSC Trust	Northern Ireland	£18.08
Western HSC Trust	Northern Ireland	£18.08
Belfast HSC Trust	Northern Ireland	£18.13

In our view, it should be unlawful for public organisations to commission and purchase homecare at fee rates which create a high risk of providers being non-compliant with employment or care regulations, or of becoming insolvent.

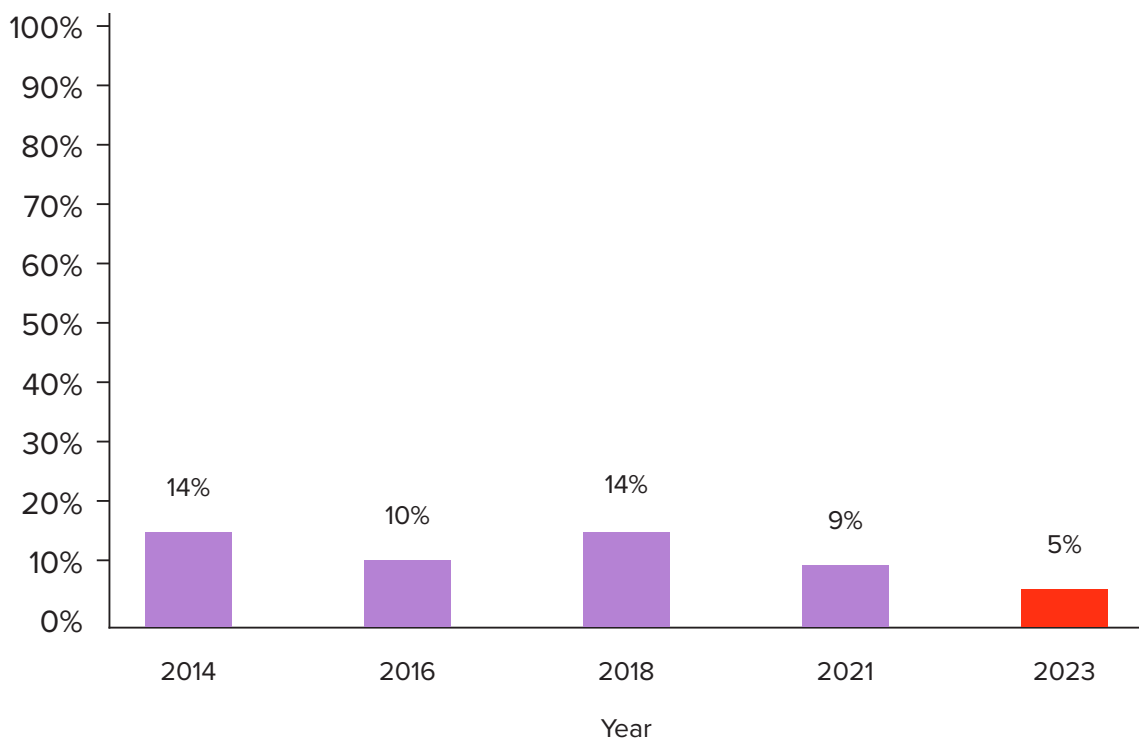
Local government may suggest that providers should not bid at prices below cost. We agree. The reality though is that councils are monopsony purchasers. For small and medium enterprises, the choice may be to bid and try to make it work, or to cease trading.

Just 10 councils/HSC Trusts were paying an hourly average of at least their nation's

Minimum Price. Out of those that submitted the required information, this equates to 5% – the lowest proportion from any of our Homecare Deficit projects (with each percentage based on the specific Minimum Price **at that time**). If we were to use England's Minimum Price as the benchmark across the United Kingdom, this figure only rises by a single percentage point.

NB. NHS averages are not used here, as the Freedom of Information exercises for the 2014, 2016 and 2018 sample weeks related to councils/HSC Trusts only.

Figure 13. Proportion of councils/HSC Trusts in the United Kingdom whose average hourly price for homecare during the sample week was at, or above, the respective Minimum Price by year



The rates paid by the State in the United Kingdom continue to suggest that there is either a risk of non-compliance with the National Living Wage, or the potential for providers to go out of business.

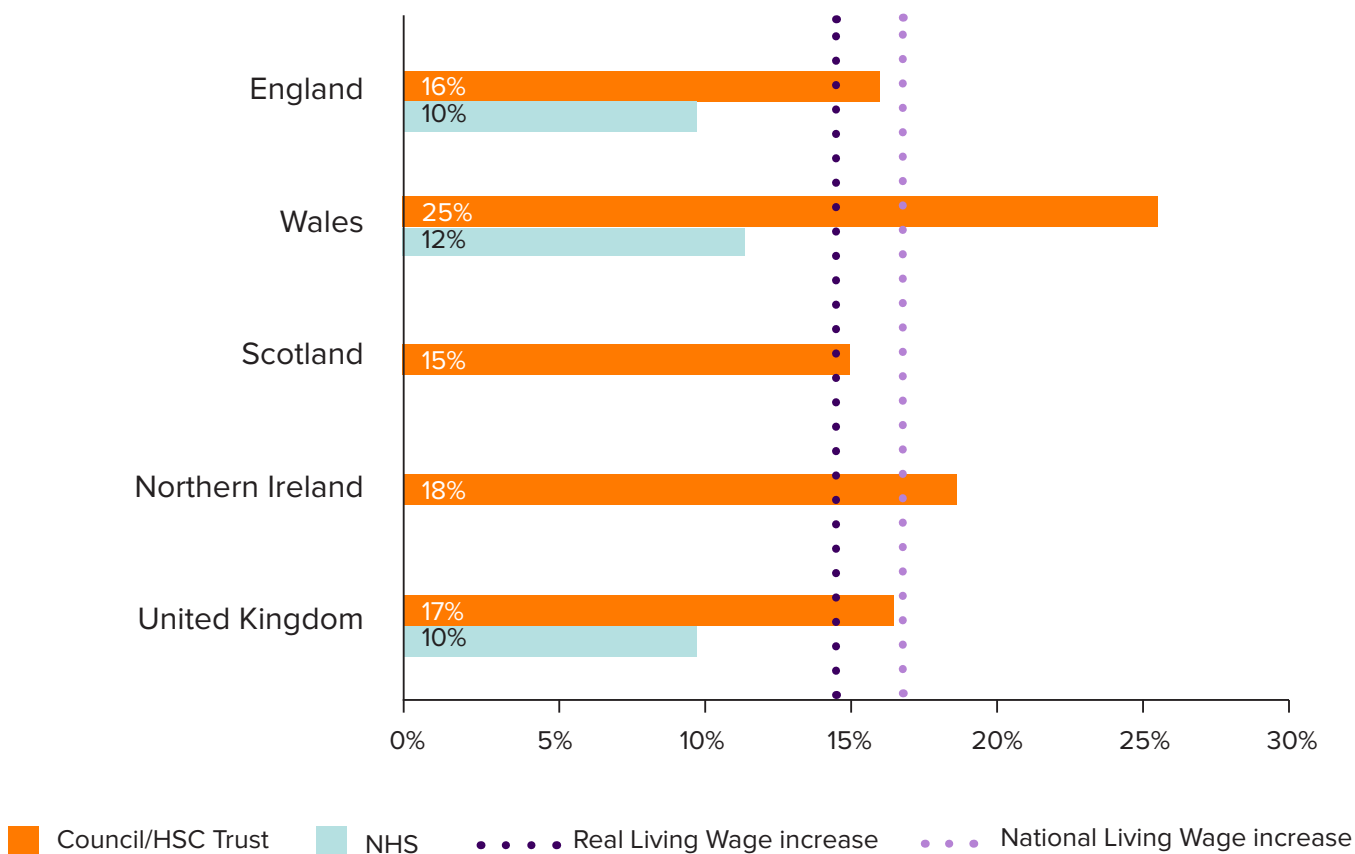
Critically, inadequate central government funding for homecare has led to poor

practices in the commissioning and purchasing by public organisations. In turn, this has led to poor pay and terms and conditions for the workforce, which is a root cause of insufficient workforce capacity to meet need.

Change in weighted averages

Since the [previous Homecare Deficit exercise in 2021](#), the National Living Wage has increased by 17%, the real Living Wage (prior to October 2023) by 15%.

Figure 14. Percentage increase in the weighted average hourly price paid by councils/HSC Trusts and the NHS (where relevant) for homecare in each administration and the United Kingdom since 2021



Weighted averages for the UK nations in local government have come close, or are keeping pace with, these uplifts, as depicted in Figure 14. Indeed, these averages have risen by at least 15%, with the figure for Welsh councils growing by a quarter from the 2021 mark. The situation in the NHS, however, is less encouraging.

Despite this, it must be stressed that increases in parallel with wage uplifts are hamstrung, if the prices being paid for homecare are too low initially. This is made clear by the following scatterplot, which focuses on England and the respective

Minimum Price (which has risen by a higher percentage than the National Living Wage).

The increase in weighted average for six government regions either exceeds, or approaches, the associated rise in the Minimum Price for England. Yet, no region, has attained the Minimum Price 2023-24 of £25.95 per hour. Greater London is a salient and worrying outlier, as it possesses the lowest current weighted average among England's government regions and smallest uplift in this statistic since 2021 among the government regions/administrations of the United Kingdom.

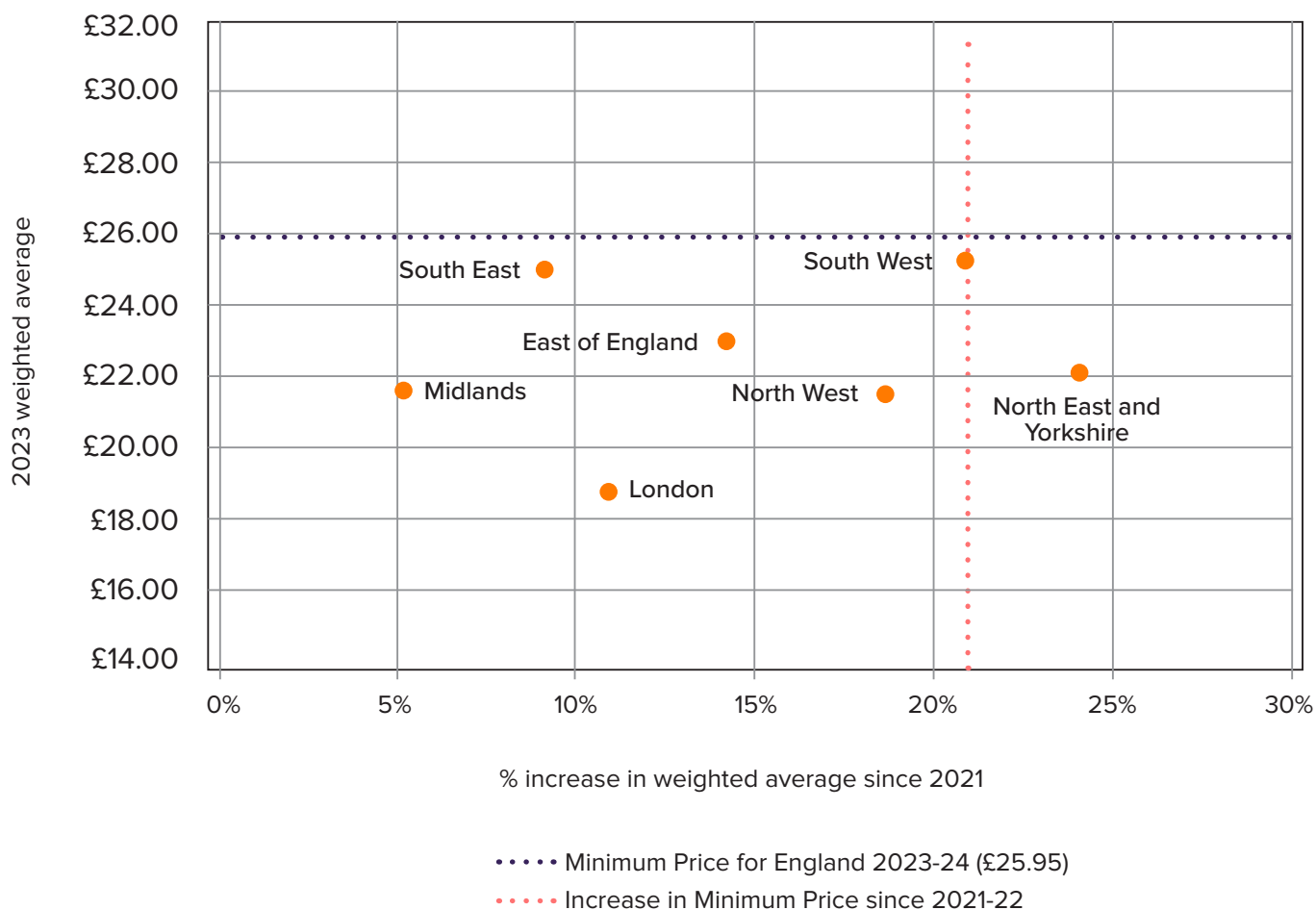
Figure 15. Scatterplot of the weighted average hourly prices paid for homecare in the 2023 sample week in the government regions of England against the respective percentage increase in weighted average since 2021



We now replicate this plot for the English NHS regions. Here, the points appear more dispersed than above. There has been a considerable improvement in the weighted average for NHS North East and Yorkshire,

but this remains somewhat adrift of the required minimum level. The only point that is within reach of both the Minimum Price and the necessary increase is NHS South West.

Figure 16. Scatterplot of the weighted average hourly prices paid for homecare in the 2023 sample week in the NHS regions of England against the respective percentage increase in weighted average since 2021



NB. On the two charts above, the vertical axis does not start at 0, so that we can see the labelling of points more easily.

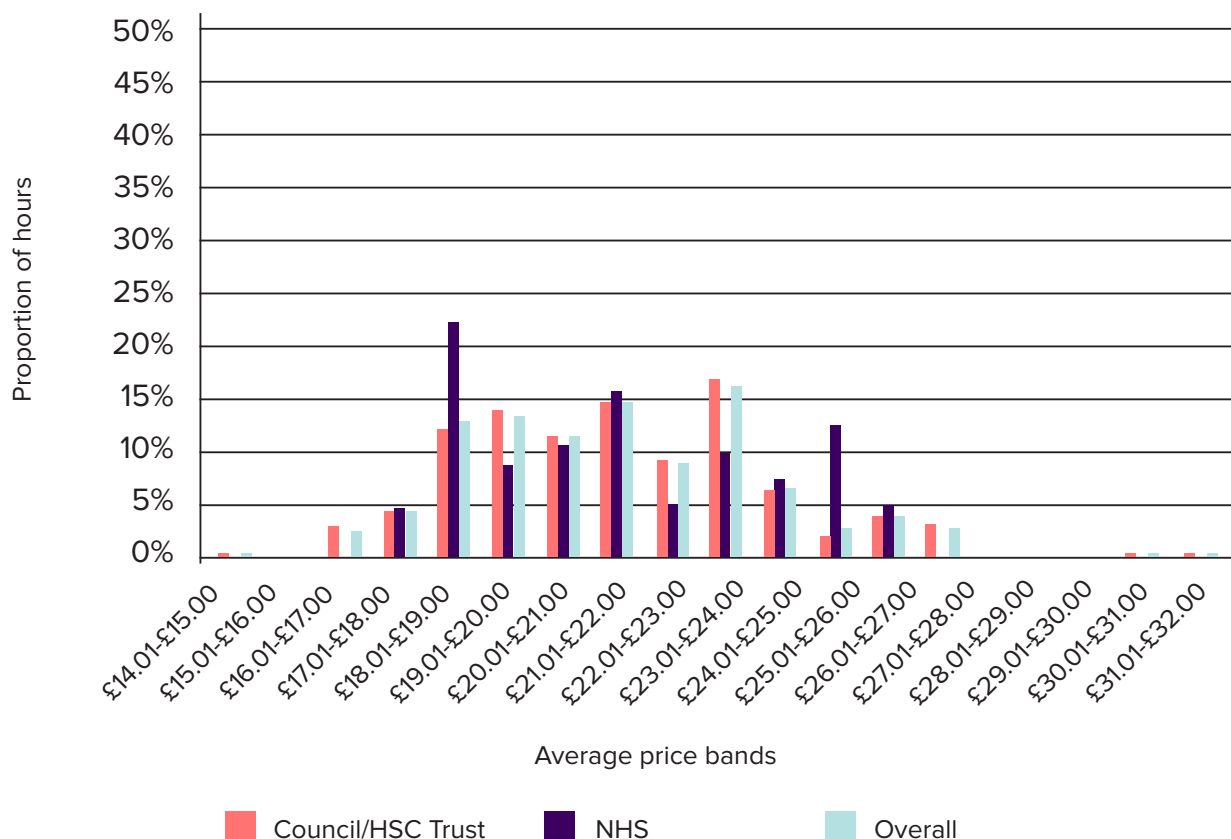
Hours of homecare purchased

Figure 17 illustrates the proportion of hours of homecare purchased by councils/HSC Trusts and NHS bodies across the United Kingdom, in £1.00 price bands, using each organisation’s average hourly rate.

In local government, more than half (52%) of hours purchased were at an average rate between £20.01 and £24.00. Meanwhile, within the NHS distribution, the largest percentage was bought in the £18.01-£19.00 band. In fact, 27% of NHS hours were commissioned for £19.00 or below, compared with only 19% for councils/HSC Trusts.

As already explained, this is not what one would expect, as people receive NHS-funded homecare if they have substantial healthcare needs, including end of life care. Their needs are thus more complex, which requires more highly trained and experienced staff and so ought to add to the cost.

Figure 17. Proportion of hours of homecare purchased by councils/HSC Trusts and the NHS in the United Kingdom during the 2023 sample week at average hourly prices in £1.00 bands



Figures 18, 19, 20 and 21 illustrate the distribution of average prices in each of the UK's four administrations. As above, our horizontal axis ranges from the lowest average price in the United Kingdom to the highest.

While the England chart (which has a breakdown for councils and NHS bodies) closely resembles that for the United Kingdom, the Wales graph (where figures have been combined, due to the low quantity of reported NHS-purchased hours) shows that no homecare was commissioned for £20.00

or below. In contrast, 8% of hours were bought at an average over £30.00.

In Scotland, the purchase of hours appears normally distributed, with 39% bought in the £21.01-£22.00 average band.

Despite only 8% of Scotland's hours being commissioned for £20.00 or under, all of Northern Ireland's hours are bought within this price bracket. Indeed, there is, essentially, an equal split in the purchasing of hours between the £18.01-£19.00 and £19.01-£20.00 categories for Northern Ireland.

Figure 18. Proportion of hours of homecare purchased by councils and the NHS in England during the 2023 sample week at average hourly prices in £1.00 bands

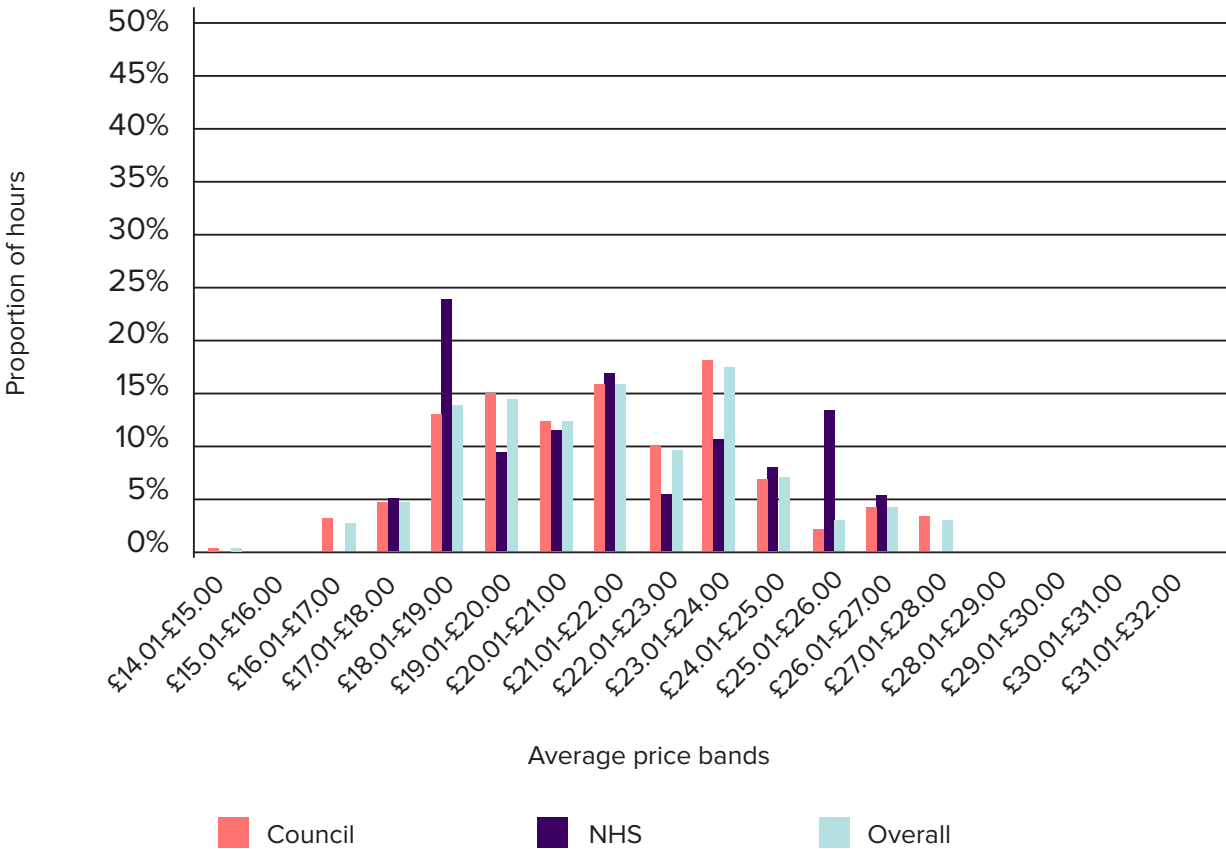


Figure 19. Combined proportion of hours of homecare purchased by councils and the NHS in Wales during the 2023 sample week at average hourly prices in £1.00 bands

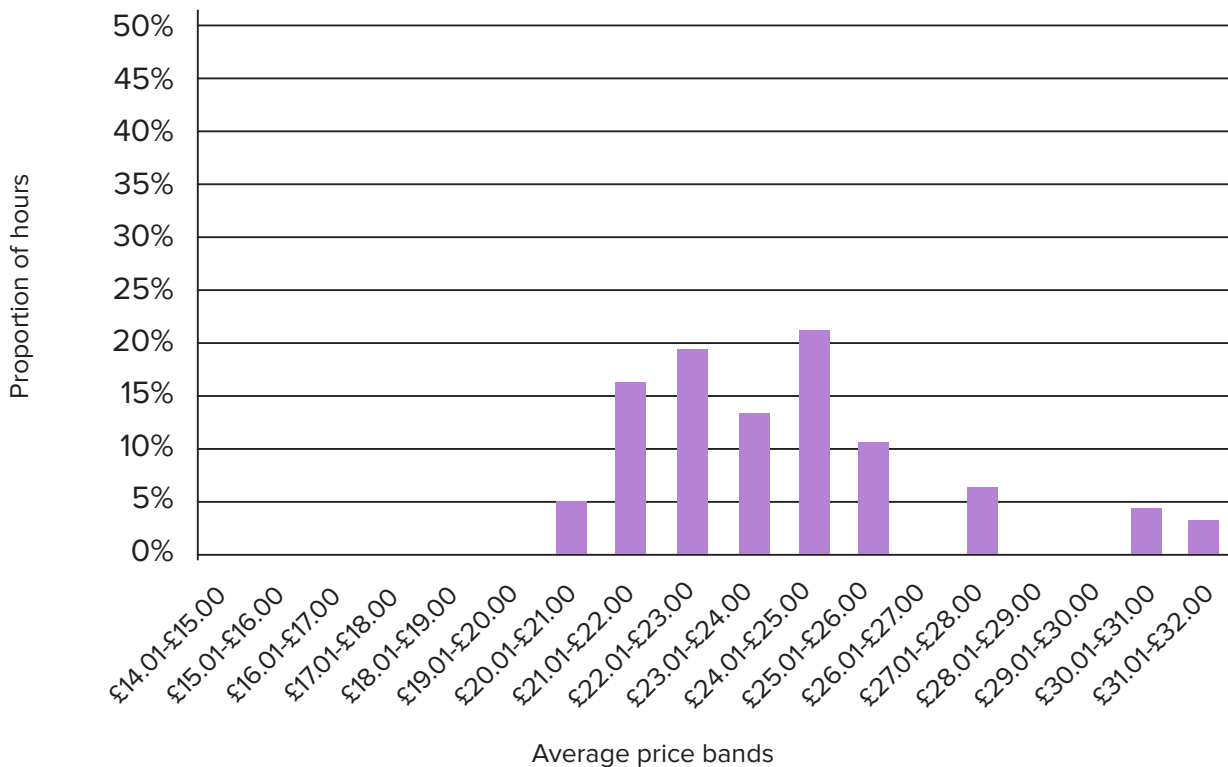


Figure 20. Proportion of hours of homecare purchased by councils in Scotland during the 2023 sample week at average hourly prices in £1.00 bands

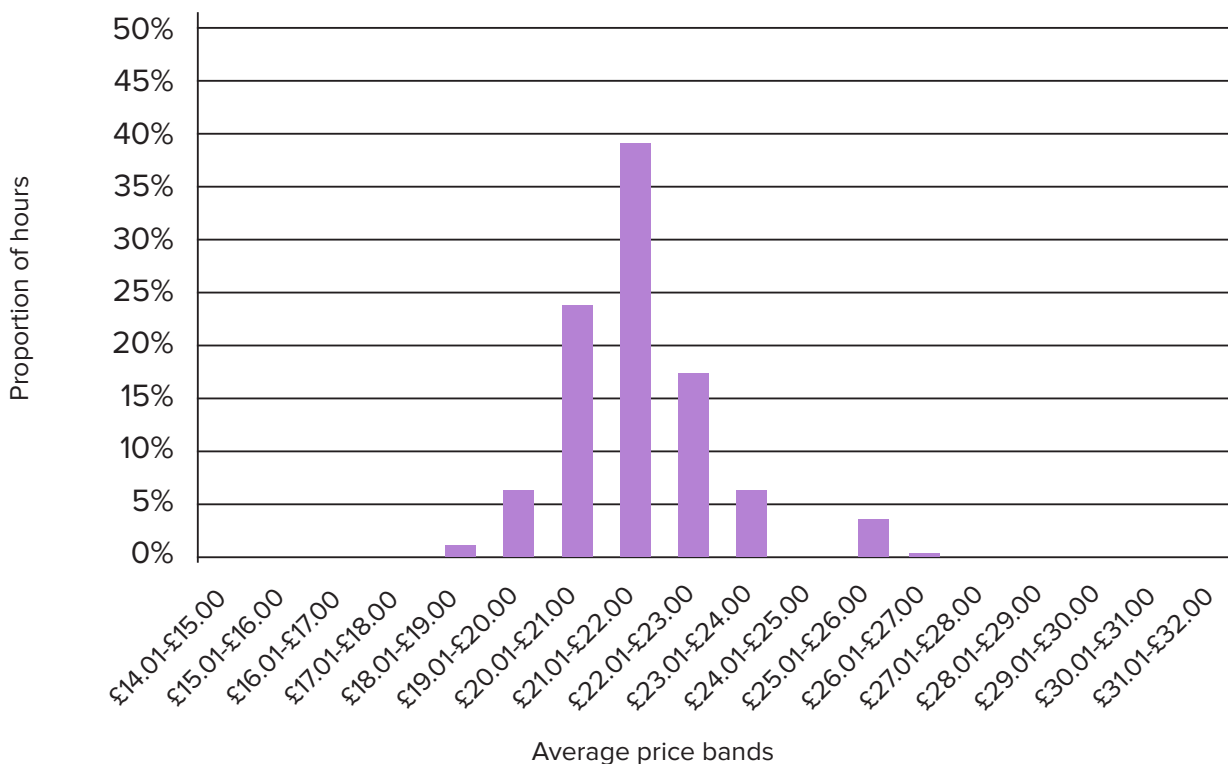
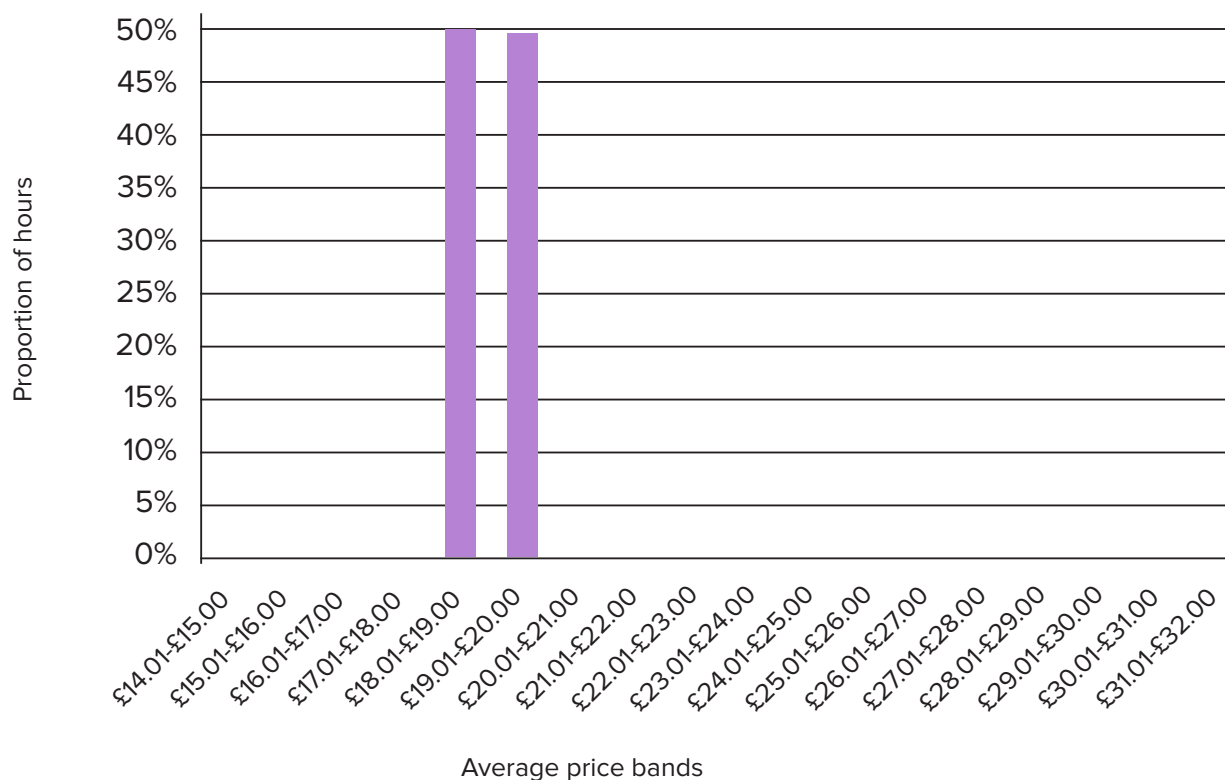


Figure 21. Proportion of hours of homecare purchased by HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland during the 2023 sample week at average hourly prices in £1.00 bands

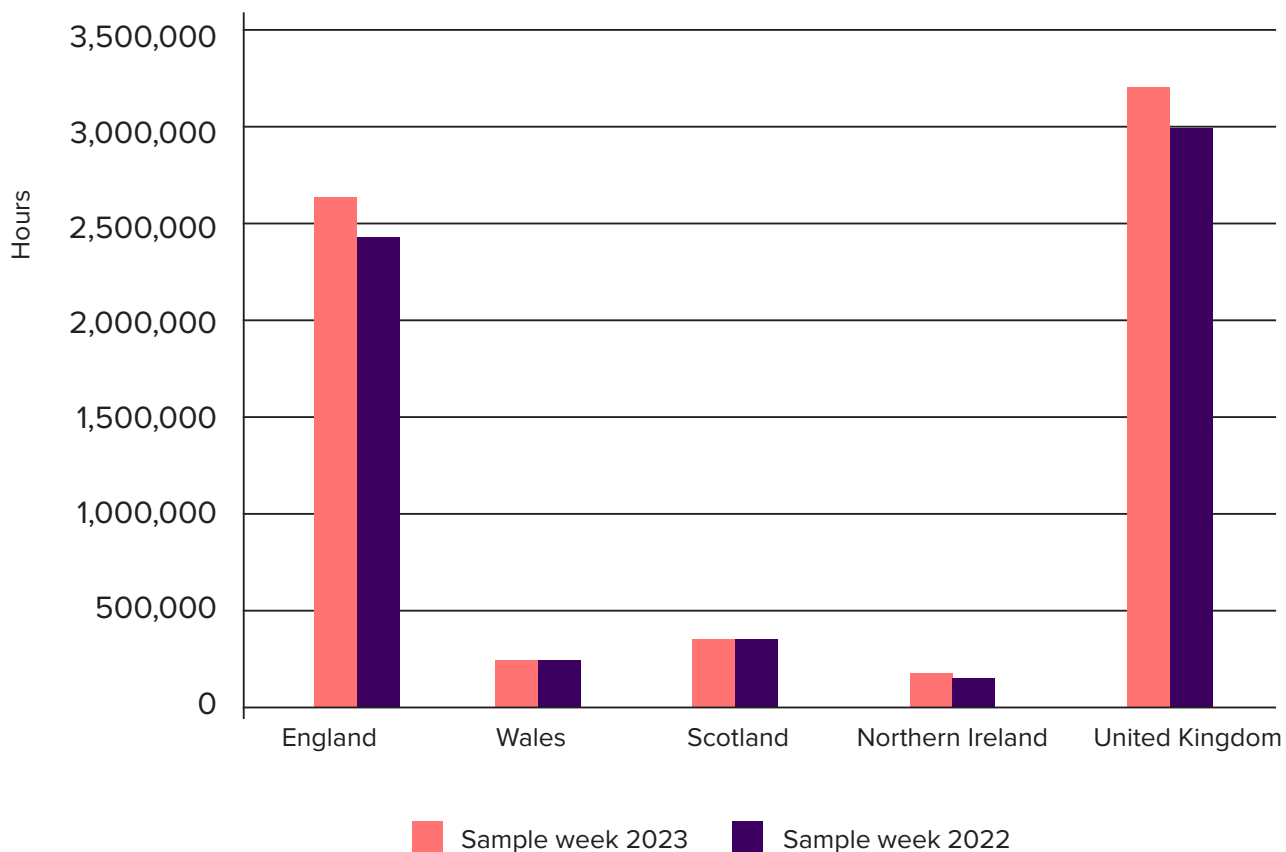


In the Freedom of Information request, the Homecare Association asked for figures on the hours of homecare purchased for sample weeks in both April 2023 and April 2022 to enable a like-for-like comparison.

This is shown in Figure 22, but only considers organisations which provided data for both sample weeks to ensure a fair contrast (thus, the total number of hours presented for each administration and the United Kingdom may be slightly lower than actual).

In the United Kingdom overall, there has been an 8% increase in the hours purchased since 2022, with the same percentage rise (to the nearest whole number) seen in England and Northern Ireland. However, in Wales, there was a very minor drop, as a result of 6% fewer hours being bought by the NHS.

Figure 22. Overall total hours of homecare purchased during the 2023 and 2022 sample weeks in each administration and the United Kingdom (where information for both weeks was provided)



Concentrating only on local government across the United Kingdom, we now plot the weighted averages for 2023 versus the change in hours since 2022. Here, it is interesting to note that the two regions with the largest weighted average – the South West and South East of England – also had the greatest rise in hours purchased (albeit,

in reverse order). Wales is an obvious outlier, with an extremely sluggish growth in the hours purchased. Meanwhile, note that the hours in the North East region actually decreased.

NB. As previously, we do not start the vertical axis at 0 to enable clarity of labels.

Figure 23. Scatterplot of the weighted average hourly prices paid for homecare in the 2023 sample week in the government regions of England and the devolved administrations against the respective percentage change in hours purchased since 2022



We now contrast the percentage change in both the average price since 2021 and the change in hours of homecare purchased since 2022 for all councils/HSC Trusts in the United Kingdom, as long as they provided data to compute these two metrics. In Figure 24, points have been coloured according to UK nation.

While the chart shows no sign of correlation, it is nevertheless concerning that 59 councils/HSC Trusts reported a decrease in hours between 2022 and 2023 which, in turn, negates an improvement in the rates being paid (note that one of these, North

Lanarkshire, is not shown on the graph, as the council did not provide a 2023 average price). While this amounts to 30% of such organisations in the United Kingdom, the proportion swells to 43% in Wales and 46% in Scotland.

Furthermore, another six reported a drop in their average price, all of which were in England (with Richmond upon Thames not shown on the graph, as the council did not provide information on hours purchased in the 2022 sample week). No public organisation in local government reported a reduction in both measures.

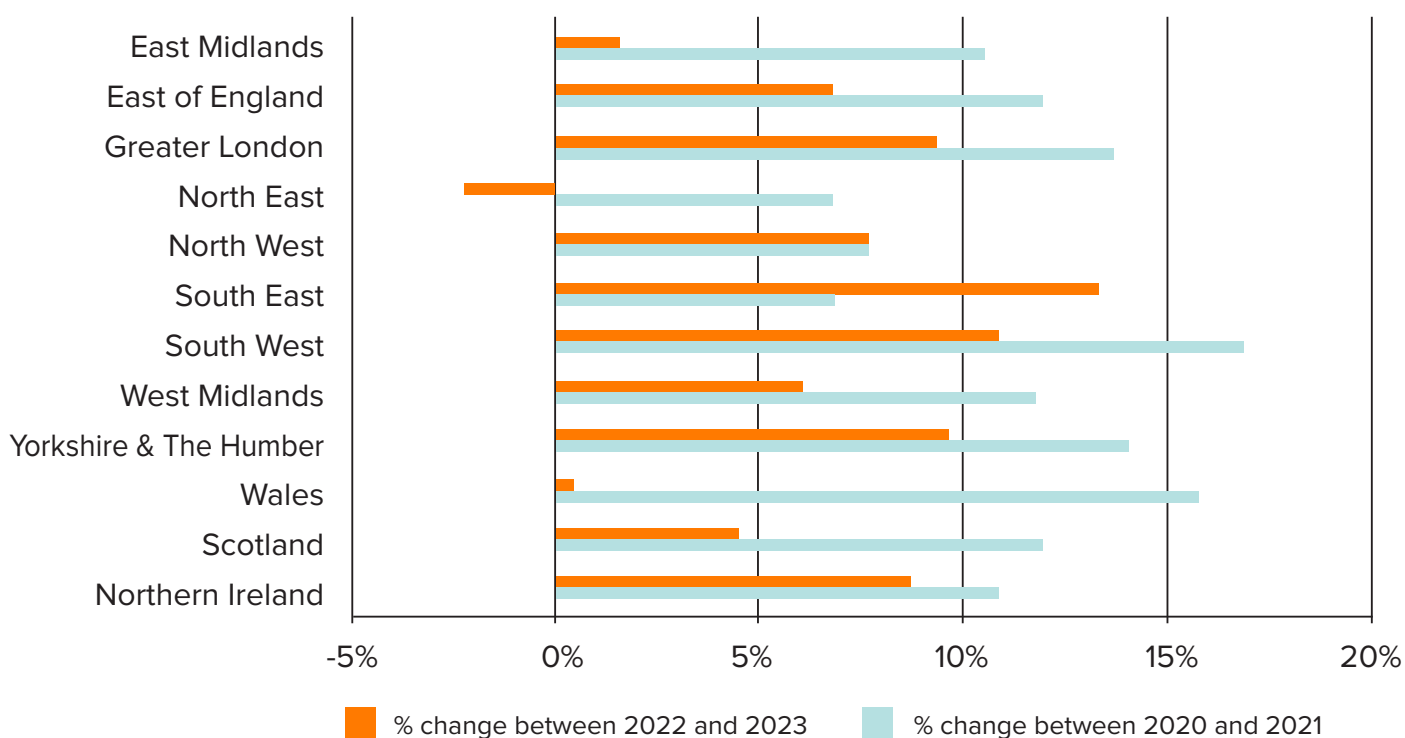
Figure 24. Scatterplot of the percentage change in the average hourly price paid for homecare since 2021 against the respective percentage change in hours purchased since 2022 for each council/HSC Trust across the United Kingdom



In the 2021 Freedom of Information request, the Homecare Association also asked for information on the hours of homecare purchased for sample weeks in 2021 and 2020. Therefore, we can start to make comparisons between the current and previous requests on this measure (while bearing in mind that there will be some data limitations for the two enquiries).

As we can see from Figure 25, the percentage change in hours between 2022 and 2023 is smaller in every English government region (apart from the South East) and devolved administration compared with the respective difference between 2020 and 2021. Indeed, for Wales and the North East of England in particular, the reversal is rather striking.

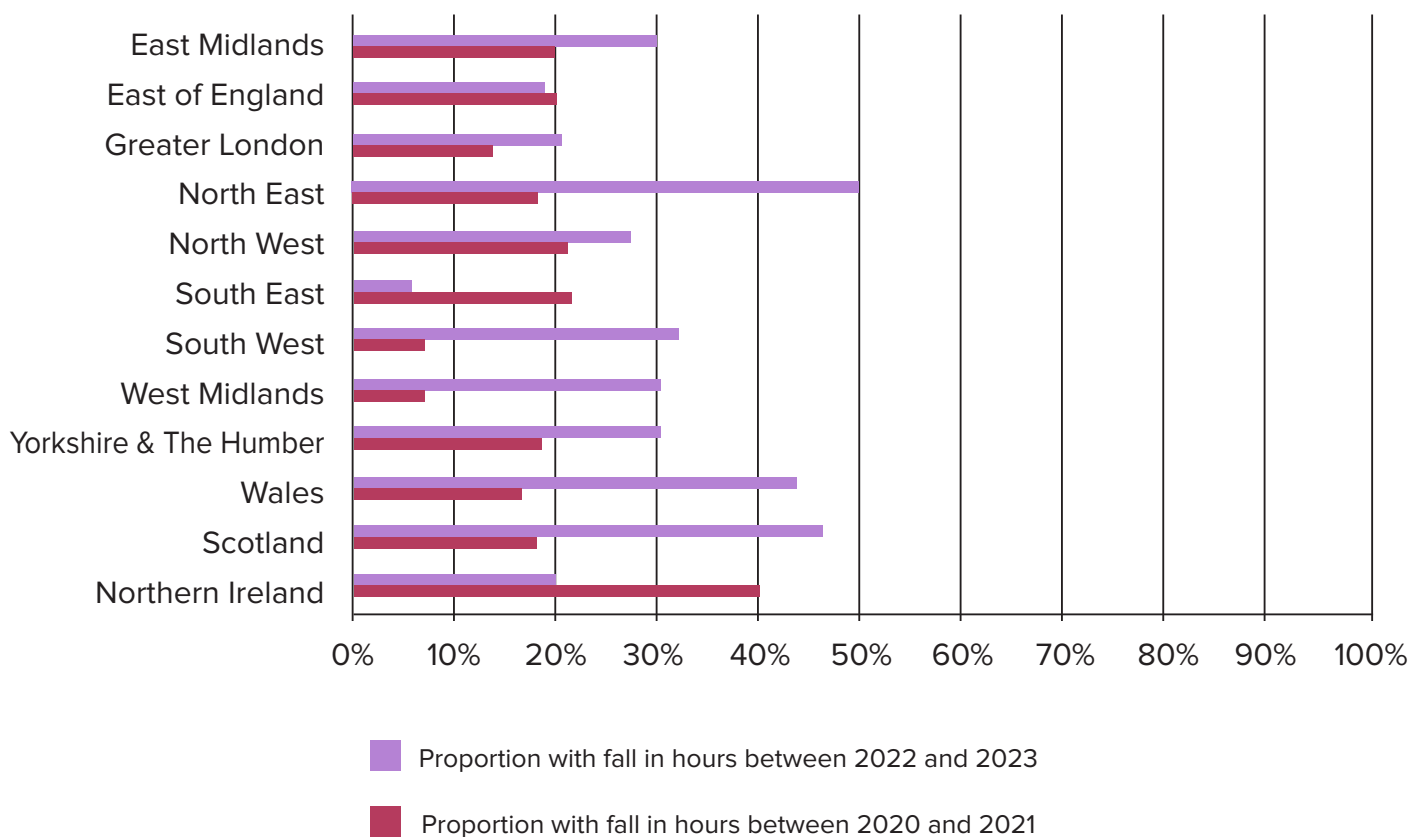
Figure 25. Comparison of the percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased in the government regions of England and devolved administrations according to the 2023 and 2021 Freedom of Information requests



Further to this, 75% of the government regions of England and devolved administrations reported a larger proportion of councils/HSC Trusts experiencing a drop in hours between 2022 and 2023, compared with between the two years prior. Indeed, half (50%) of North East of England councils bought fewer hours between 2022 and 2023, while the respective proportion for between

2020 and 2021 was just 17%. The differential was similarly substantial elsewhere – for example, 29 percentage points in Scotland and 27 percentage points in Wales. There was better news in the South East of England where a decrease in hours between 2022 and 2023 was evident in only 6% of councils – 16 percentage points less than before.

Figure 26. Percentage of councils/HSC Trusts in the government regions of England and devolved administrations that reported a fall in hours of homecare purchased, according to the 2023 and 2021 Freedom of Information requests



The size of the funding deficit

As with former years, the Homecare Association calculated a Minimum Price for Homecare 2023-24 at various wage rates for careworkers. For England, this included payment at the National Living Wage, real Living Wage, London Living Wage and NHS Band 3 with at least two years' experience. Akin to this, a Minimum Price was computed for the devolved administrations at the real Living Wage.

These and other measures can be used to compute figures for annual funding deficits for the adult homecare sector as a whole (i.e. all clients aged 18+) by comparing with the weighted averages determined from the Freedom of Information request. Indeed, the data can be broken down by administration, as well as by councils/HSC Trusts and NHS bodies, using the appropriate weighted average.

NB. As our request was confined to those aged 65 years and over and services for younger adults can often attract higher rates, these calculations are estimates and should be treated as a guide only. Nevertheless, it must also be stressed that, according to Laing and Buisson's third edition of their Homecare and Supported Living UK Market Report, a clear majority (70%) of local authority-funded homecare hours in England in 2019 delivered by the independent sector was to clients aged 65+.

To determine this difference, the annual number of state-funded homecare hours delivered to adults by the independent and voluntary sector in each breakdown is required.

For local government, these figures are available from respected sources in [England](#), [Northern Ireland](#) and [Scotland](#). In the latter case, we estimate the quantity of independent and voluntary sector hours, based on the [proportion of care at home services in these sectors in Scotland](#).

However, for the NHS in England, as well as both councils and the NHS in Wales, such data cannot be publicly sourced.

Therefore, we estimate using the number of hours reported in the 2023 sample week from our Freedom of Information request. We first scale up (if required) to incorporate those organisations that did not provide this information (as long as they purchase externally), then further adjust to include all adults (for Wales, we assume the same proportion as England for hours delivered to those aged 65+) and by the number of weeks in a year.

The results for each measure are presented in the following tables.

Figure 27. Breakdown of the 2023-24 funding deficit in England, by councils, the NHS and overall, for homecare workers in the independent and voluntary sector to be paid at the National Living Wage and businesses to be financially sustainable

	Councils	NHS	Overall
England	£741.0 million	£152.4 million	£893.4 million

Funding deficit at the National Living Wage

As the devolved administrations committed to careworkers receiving payment of the higher real Living Wage, this deficit is computed for England (councils and NHS) only.

Therefore, based on the most recent annual volume of services purchased, state-funded

homecare (delivered by the independent and voluntary sector to all adults) for England overall is running a deficit of around £893.4 million in 2023-24. In other words, this is the figure that would ensure homecare workers in England are paid at the National Living Wage (and that a care business can comply with quality requirements at a financially sustainable level).

Figure 28. Breakdown of the 2023-24 funding deficits in each administration and the United Kingdom, by councils/HSC Trusts, the NHS and overall, for homecare workers in the independent and voluntary sector to be paid at the real Living Wage or London Living Wage and businesses to be financially sustainable

	Councils/HSC Trusts	NHS	Overall
England	£957.3 million	£194.4 million	£1.15 billion
Wales	£54.8 million	£10.6 million	£65.3 million
Scotland	£160.1 million		£160.1 million
Northern Ireland	£87.9 million		£87.9 million
United Kingdom	£1.26 billion	£205.0 million	£1.47 billion

Funding deficit at the real/London Living Wage

To enable homecare workers in London to receive the London Living Wage and the real Living Wage in the rest of England, we create a blended Minimum Price at the two rates, weighted by the proportion of hours purchased in London and the rest of England, according to our Freedom of Information request, for both local government and the NHS. When weighting, we take account (if necessary) of those public organisations that failed to provide data on hours purchased in the 2023 sample week (assuming they purchase from the independent and voluntary sector). This gives a blended rate of £27.23 per hour for English councils and £27.17 for the NHS in England.

Consequently, using the Minimum Price model once again, there is a funding deficit of

around £1.47 billion in 2023-24 for the United Kingdom overall that would ensure homecare workers in the independent and voluntary sector are paid at the real Living Wage (£10.90 per hour) or, as appropriate, the London Living Wage (£11.95 per hour).

NB. This analysis is based on the Minimum Price for Homecare 2023-24. In October 2023, the hourly real and London Living Wages were increased to £12 and £13.15 respectively. Prior to this, the Scottish Government announced that social care staff in Scotland working in the independent and voluntary sector would receive a minimum of £12 per hour from April 2024. These new rates will be reflected in the Minimum Price 2024-25.

Figure 29. Breakdown of the 2023-24 funding deficits in each administration and the United Kingdom, by councils/ HSC Trusts, the NHS and overall, for homecare workers in the independent and voluntary sector to be paid at the same rate as NHS Band 3 healthcare assistants (2+ years' experience) and businesses to be financially sustainable

	Councils/HSC Trusts	NHS	Overall
England	£1.34 billion	£275.0 million	£1.62 billion
Wales	£90.8 million	£14.7 million	£105.5 million
Scotland	£244.2 million		£244.2 million
Northern Ireland	£117.7 million		£117.7 million
United Kingdom	£1.79 billion	£289.7 million	£2.08 billion

Funding deficit compared with NHS Band 3 healthcare assistants

Currently, an NHS healthcare assistant at Band 3, with two or more years of experience, receives an annual salary of £24,336, equivalent to £12.45 per hour.

We again use our model to determine a Minimum Price at this pay rate for each UK nation.

As a result, there is a funding deficit of around £2.08 billion in 2023-24 for the United Kingdom overall that would ensure homecare workers in the independent and voluntary sector are paid at the same rate as their equivalents in the NHS. Indeed, the figure for homecare purchased by councils in England is £1.34 billion alone.

Figure 30. Breakdown of the 2023-24 funding deficits in each administration and the United Kingdom, by councils/ HSC Trusts, the NHS and overall, for homecare workers in the independent and voluntary sector to be paid the same as a competitive, entry-level supermarket rate and businesses to be financially sustainable

	Councils/HSC Trusts	NHS	Overall
England	£1.03 billion	£211.6 million	£1.24 billion
Wales	£66.4 million	£11.9 million	£78.3 million
Scotland	£187.2 million		£187.2 million
Northern Ireland	£97.5 million		£97.5 million
United Kingdom	£1.38 billion	£223.5 million	£1.61 billion

Funding deficit compared with a competitive, entry-level supermarket rate

If providers are unable to offer their careworkers a wage that reflects their skill due to insufficient sector funding, there is a real danger that some of these employees could move into sectors that require less training, such as retail and hospitality. With one supermarket chain offering a starting pay rate of [£11.40 per hour for store and warehouse staff](#) working outside the M25, this forms the basis of our next deficit.

Therefore, the Minimum Price for Homecare at this wage is determined for each UK nation, utilising the Homecare Association’s model.

Thus, there is a funding deficit of around £1.61 billion in 2023-24 for the United Kingdom overall that would ensure homecare workers in the independent and voluntary sector are paid at a competitive, entry-level supermarket rate.

NB. The same supermarket chain has also increased starting pay for those working inside the M25. If we were to, in addition, take account of this, the England (and hence, United Kingdom) figures below would be even higher.

Figure 31. Breakdown of the 2023-24 funding deficits in each administration and the United Kingdom, by councils/HSC Trusts, the NHS and overall, between rates for self-funders and state-funded homecare

	Councils/HSC Trusts	NHS	Overall
England	£1.28 billion	£261.5 million	£1.54 billion
Wales	£60.4 million	£11.2 million	£71.6 million
Scotland	£242.0 million		£242.0 million
Northern Ireland	£116.7 million		£116.7 million
United Kingdom	£1.69 billion	£272.7 million	£1.97 billion

Funding deficit compared with self-funders

The most recent data shared with the Homecare Association by Birdie, a leading software solution for homecare providers, reveals that the average invoice rate for visits to clients who are only privately funded is £29.10 per hour.

Thus, there is a funding deficit of around £1.97 billion in 2023-24 for the United Kingdom overall between the rates for self-funders and for homecare purchased by public organisations.

Handing back packages

As part of the Freedom of Information request, the Homecare Association sought information on the number of care packages (relating to adults aged 65 years and over) handed back by providers in both 2022-23 and 2021-22. In these questions, we were referring to those packages that were ‘handed back’ due to, say, providers closing, ceasing trading, or no longer being able to fulfil a contract (while imposing no strict definition in the request itself).

NB. Given very few NHS bodies were able to provide the data requested, our analysis is limited to local government only.

Of those that supplied information for both years, an average of 81 packages per council/HSC Trust in the United Kingdom were handed back in 2022-23, a fall of 6% from the previous year. This decrease is broadly in line with the findings of the [Association of Directors of Adult Social Services \(ADASS\) in their Spring Survey 2023](#); they reported that 59 adults (of any age) per council in England had been subject to contract hand-backs by homecare providers in the six months between approximately November 2022 and April 2023, compared with 45 adults per council in the four months before November 2022 (equivalent to an estimated 68 per council in six months).

While this drop is welcome, these figures remain far too high, with hand-backs having an obvious detrimental impact on those receiving care – for example, we estimate that around 17,000 older people in the United Kingdom were affected by their care package being handed back to councils/HSC Trusts in 2022-23 (if the average was replicated for

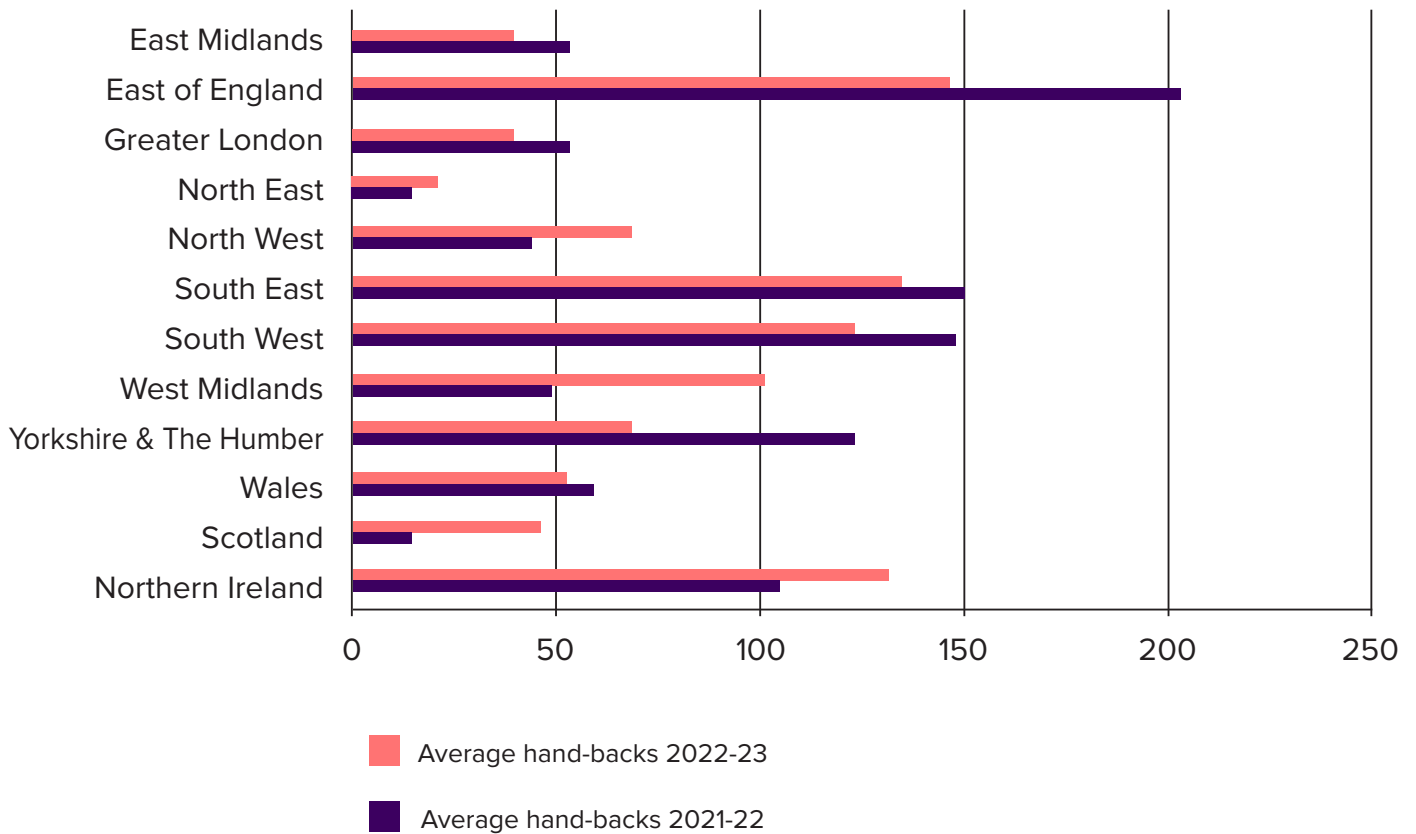
each council/HSC Trust that commissions from the independent and voluntary sector). Hand-backs under these circumstances are the result of historic underfunding of the sector by central government, leading to unsustainable fee rates being offered to providers by state commissioners and poor pay and terms and conditions for the workforce.

When splitting our Freedom of Information data geographically, there is evidence of a North-South divide within England (excluding Greater London), with the East of England, South East and South West being the English regions with the highest average quantity of hand-backs. Nevertheless, all three have experienced a drop since 2021-22, with the East of England figure falling by 29%.

Indeed, seven of the 12 regions/administrations reported a descent – in Yorkshire and The Humber, 72 packages per council, on average, were handed back in 2022-23, compared with 127 in 2021-22.

In contrast, average hand-backs in the West Midlands more than doubled from the previous year, while the figures for Northern Ireland are also worrying.

Figure 32. Average number of care packages per council/ HSC Trust handed back by homecare providers in the government regions of England and devolved administrations in 2022-23 and 2021-22



Our data, portrayed in Figure 32, is hampered (to some extent) by response rate. Of those that responded who purchase homecare externally, only 56% of UK councils/HSC Trusts could provide data on package hand-backs for both 2022-23 and 2021-22. On an important metric that demonstrates the state of the sector and the financial strain being placed upon it, this is surely cause for concern. Further to this, the vast majority of those that failed to comply were unable to provide information for either year.

Across the regions and devolved administrations, percentage response rates to these two questions varied wildly. In England, 82% of East of England councils supplied the data for both 2022-23 and 2021-22, compared with just 39% in Greater London. Similarly, in the devolved administrations, all five of Northern Ireland’s HSC Trusts answered these questions adequately; only 29% of councils in Scotland could say the same.

Figure 33. Percentage of councils/HSC Trusts in the government regions of England and devolved administrations that provided information on the number of care packages handed back by homecare providers in both 2022-23 and 2021-22



NB. A few organisations provided information on hand-backs, but without an age breakdown for older people and/or relating to only part of the year in question. In the latter case, we extrapolated a total for the full year; regarding the former, we estimated the requested figure by considering the

proportion of adults receiving homecare in [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) respectively who are aged 65 years and over (no such breakdown is available in Wales, so we assumed the same percentage as in England).

Councils/HSC Trusts in the United Kingdom

Average rates relating to England's government regions and the devolved administrations are compared in Figures 34, 35 and 36.

Figure 34. Weighted average hourly prices paid for homecare in the government regions of England and the devolved administrations for the 2023 sample week



The government regions/administrations showing the lowest weighted average hourly prices for homecare were Northern Ireland (£18.63) and Greater London and the North East in England (£19.01 and £19.82 respectively).

Public organisations in these three regions accounted for almost two-thirds (64%) of the

53 organisations in the bottom quartile of average prices among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom. Moreover, by some distance, Northern Ireland is the region/administration with the smallest range between average prices for councils/HSC Trusts.

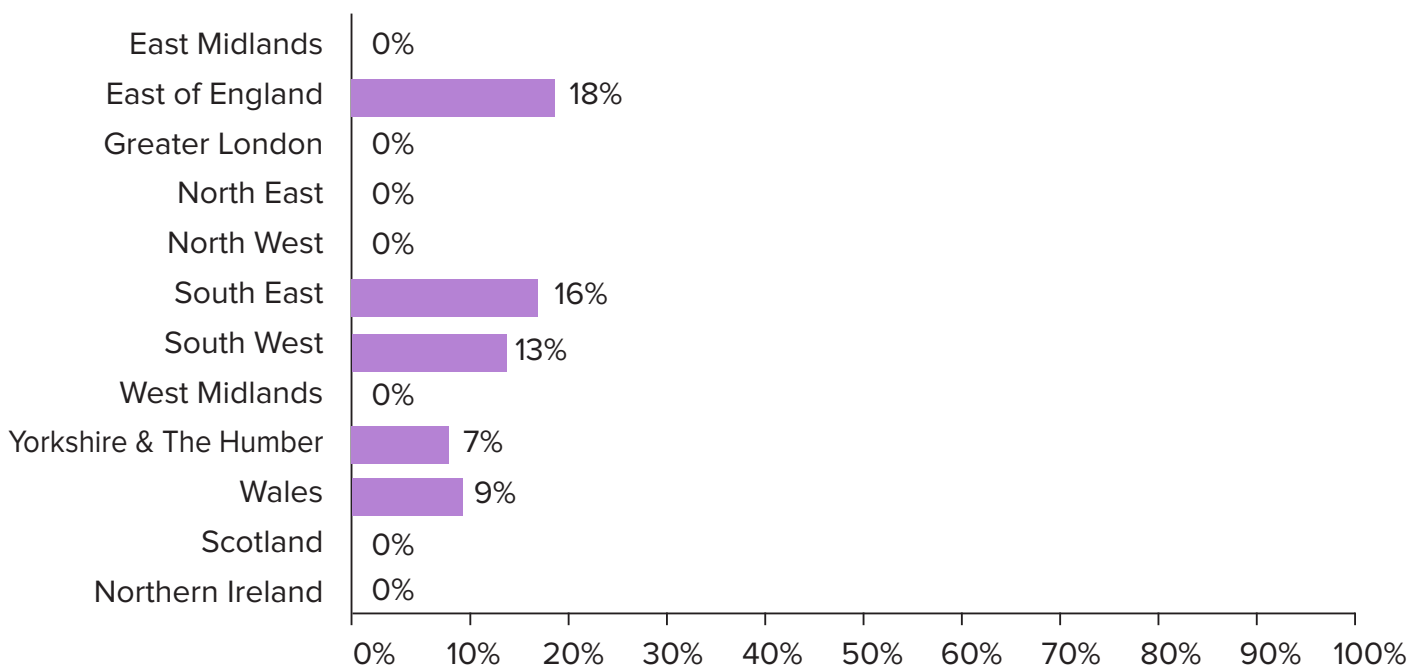
Figure 35. Average prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in the government regions of England and the devolved administrations during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Government region/ administration	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest average	Highest average	Hours	Weighted average	Weighted average	Difference in weighted average
East Midlands	£19.75	£24.64	202,566	£21.84	£19.16	£2.68
East of England	£17.54	£27.12	267,573	£23.48	£19.38	£4.10
Greater London	£16.04	£24.93	571,024	£19.01	£17.99	£1.02
North East	£17.01	£23.23	145,701	£19.82	£16.56	£3.25
North West	£14.31	£23.81	371,459	£21.32	£17.45	£3.87
South East	£18.08	£27.38	333,545	£24.24	£19.77	£4.48
South West	£19.05	£26.96	212,328	£24.40	£21.05	£3.35
West Midlands	£16.38	£23.82	313,967	£20.51	£17.15	£3.35
Yorkshire and The Humber	£21.10	£27.80	170,810	£22.47	£18.64	£3.82
Wales	£20.84	£31.95	166,605	£24.20	£19.33	£4.87
Scotland	£18.83	£26.36	287,547	£21.43	£18.62	£2.80
Northern Ireland	£18.08	£19.19	170,571	£18.63	£15.76	£2.87

In five of England’s nine government regions, no council posted an average price that reached or exceeded the Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour. To contrast, 18%

of councils in the East of England attained this level – the highest such proportion for UK regions/administrations.

Figure 36. Proportion of councils/HSC Trusts in the government regions of England and devolved administrations whose average hourly price for homecare during the 2023 sample week was at, or above, the respective Minimum Price



NB. In the following regional breakdown, we have included charts depicting the percentage change in hours purchased between the 2022 and 2023 sample weeks.

Only organisations that provided data for both years are shown.

Breakdown by English government region

East Midlands

Key facts

£21.84

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.60 for
councils in England

0

councils paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for England
of £25.95 per hour

6th highest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

10%

of authorities had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 37. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by councils in the East Midlands during the 2023 sample week



All ten local authorities that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in the East Midlands responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 37, 38 and 39.

Derby City provided a highest hourly rate, which we considered to be questionable. Therefore, this figure has not been included in our analysis. Moreover, Nottingham City was unable to split out the care element of extra care and supported living schemes from some of their data, as had been requested. North Northamptonshire claimed an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the questions relating to care packages being handed back in 2022-23 and 2021-22.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in the East Midlands during the 2023 sample week was £21.84 per hour. This was the fifth-highest weighted average in England's nine government regions and sixth-highest in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. In addition, the figure was £0.25 above the weighted average price for councils in England.

The weighted average has risen by 14% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the second-lowest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, one authority (10%) was in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom, with one authority (10%) in the East Midlands in the top quartile.

No councils were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual authorities in the region ranged from £19.75 to £24.64 per hour – a difference of £4.89.

The lowest hourly rate for local authorities in the East Midlands was £15.60 per hour, paid by North Northamptonshire, while the highest was £44.36 per hour, paid by West Northamptonshire. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 202,566. Considering councils who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was a 2% increase in hours from 2022. Three authorities (30%) reported a drop in hours between these years.

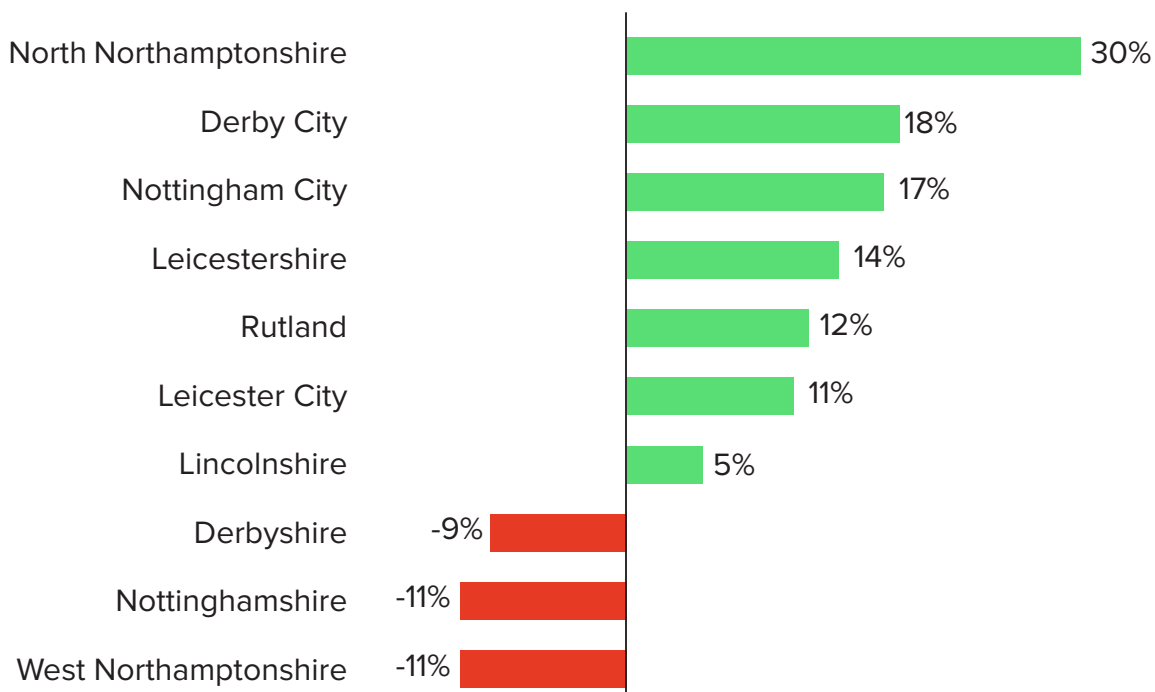
Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 41 care packages per council were handed back in the East Midlands in 2022-23, compared with 54 packages in 2021-22. Of those purchasing from the independent and voluntary sector, seven authorities (70%) were able to provide this information for both years.

In the table below, only councils that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

Figure 38. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in the East Midlands during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Council	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Derby City	£17.17	-	£19.75	13,986	£19.08	£0.67
Derbyshire	£21.79	£25.21	£24.64	45,274	£23.28	£1.36
Leicester City	£19.23	£20.32	£19.77	32,907	£16.68	£3.09
Leicestershire	£17.00	£29.00	£22.49	31,065	£19.35	£3.14
Lincolnshire	£19.00	£25.65	£21.89	22,622	£16.85	£5.04
North Northamptonshire	£15.60	£36.79	£19.76	1,245	£16.86	£2.90
Nottingham City	£18.21	£24.00	£19.94	19,574	£17.22	£2.72
Nottinghamshire	£19.22	£26.72	£22.20	19,100	£18.57	£3.63
Rutland	£19.99	£22.00	£21.97	1,257	£17.54	£4.43
West Northamptonshire	£15.71	£44.36	£20.69	15,536	£17.43	£3.26

Figure 39. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by councils in the East Midlands between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



East of England

Key facts

£23.48

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.60 for
councils in England

②

councils paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for England
of £25.95 per hour

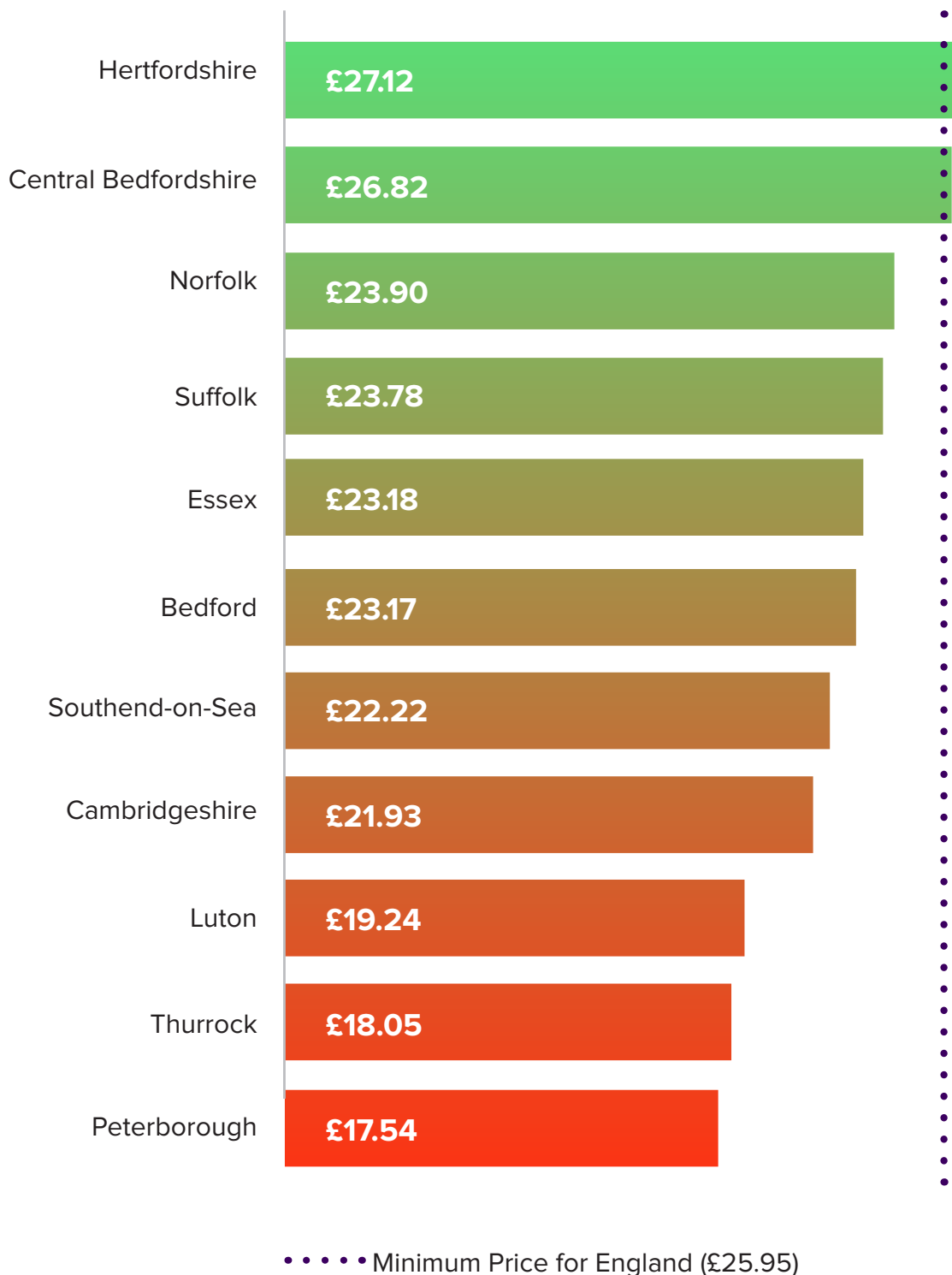
4th highest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

27%

of authorities had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 40. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by councils in the East of England during the 2023 sample week



All 11 local authorities that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in the East of England responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 40, 41 and 42.

Essex was unable to provide information for a seven-day period, instead supplying data for April 2023 and April 2022 (from which we estimated figures for the respective sample weeks, as required). Meanwhile, Peterborough's lowest, highest and average rates were described as 'pre-uplift'.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in the East of England during the 2023 sample week was £23.48 per hour. This was the third-highest weighted average in England's nine government regions and fourth-highest in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. In addition, the figure was £1.89 above the weighted average price for councils in England.

The weighted average has risen by 21% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the fourth-highest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, three authorities (27%) were in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom, with four authorities (36%) in the East of England in the top quartile. Thurrock's average price only exceeded the respective figure from 2021 by £0.14 in cash terms.

Two councils (Hertfordshire and Central Bedfordshire) were paying an average price

at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual authorities in the region ranged from £17.54 to £27.12 per hour – a difference of £9.58.

The lowest hourly rate for local authorities in the East of England was £12.68 per hour, paid by Essex, while the highest was £91.04 per hour, paid by Central Bedfordshire. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 267,573. Considering councils who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was a 7% increase in hours from 2022. Two authorities (18%) reported a drop in hours between these years.

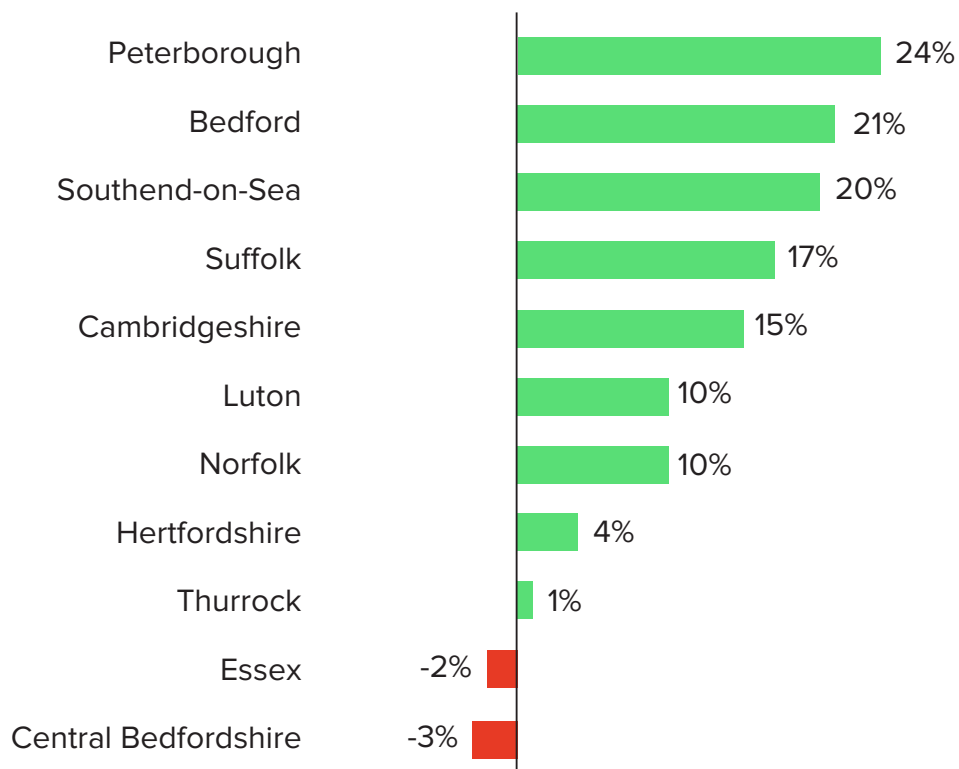
Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 145 care packages per council were handed back in the East of England in 2022-23, compared with 204 packages in 2021-22. Of those purchasing from the independent and voluntary sector, nine authorities (82%) were able to provide this information for both years.

In the table below, only councils that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

Figure 41. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in the East of England during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Council	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Bedford	£18.54	£48.57	£23.17	8,191	£17.31	£5.86
Cambridgeshire	£21.01	£29.89	£21.93	22,961	£18.02	£3.91
Central Bedfordshire	£17.75	£91.04	£26.82	12,665	£22.35	£4.47
Essex	£12.68	£36.44	£23.18	67,228	£18.16	£5.02
Hertfordshire	£14.77	£36.00	£27.12	42,502	£24.19	£2.93
Luton	£15.58	£23.55	£19.24	9,913	£16.88	£2.36
Norfolk	£18.40	£30.06	£23.90	35,497	£19.41	£4.49
Peterborough	£14.00	£32.00	£17.54	10,979	£15.86	£1.68
Southend-on-Sea	£20.84	£25.80	£22.22	6,199	£16.40	£5.82
Suffolk	£17.18	£46.00	£23.78	42,057	£19.60	£4.18
Thurrock	£13.96	£20.58	£18.05	9,381	£17.91	£0.14

Figure 42. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by councils in the East of England between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



Greater London

Key facts

£19.01

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.60 for
councils in England

0

councils paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for England
of £25.95 per hour

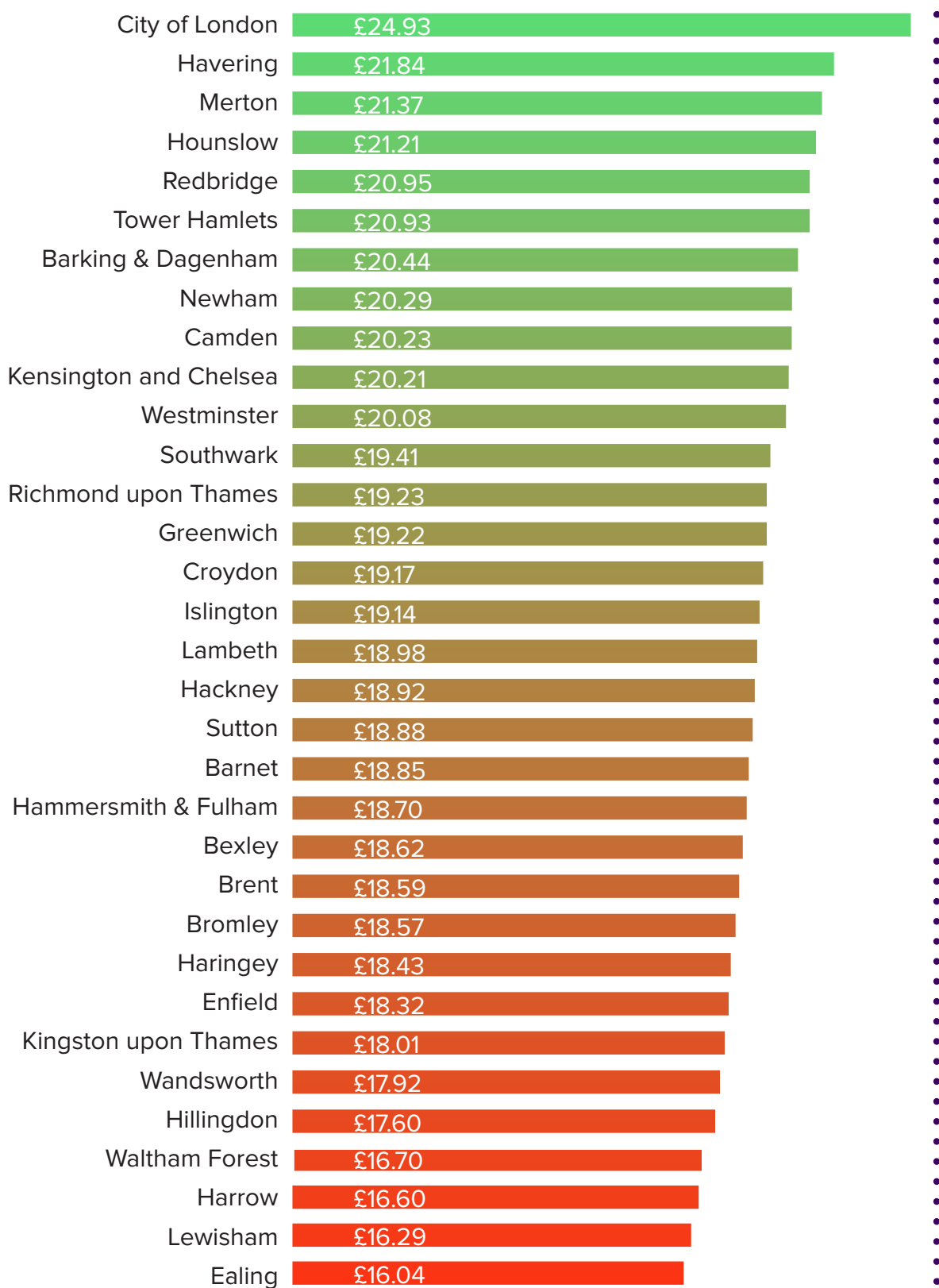
2nd lowest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

67%

of authorities had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 43. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by councils in Greater London during the 2023 sample week



All 33 local authorities that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in Greater London responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 43, 44 and 45.

Camden's highest rate per hour related to continuing healthcare (presumably commissioned by the council on behalf of the local ICB). Moreover, Hackney's lowest, highest and average rates referred to all clients (as they did not hold an age breakdown for adults).

Hillingdon's response on the hours purchased in the 2023 and 2022 sample weeks were both questionable – therefore, the former has been estimated and the latter not included in our analysis. Lewisham's lowest rate was very small and so has been excluded. Furthermore, Hillingdon, as well as Bromley, Havering and Lewisham, claimed an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the questions relating to care packages being handed back in 2022-23 and 2021-22.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in Greater London during the 2023 sample week was £19.01 per hour. This was the lowest weighted average in England's nine government regions and second-lowest in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. In addition, the figure was £2.59 below the weighted average price for councils in England.

The weighted average has risen by just 6% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the lowest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, a staggering 22 authorities (67%) were in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom, with only one authority (3%) in Greater London in the top

quartile. Moreover, four councils (Bromley, Greenwich, Richmond upon Thames and Sutton) reported a decrease in their average price from 2021 – in each case, this coincided with a salient growth in the number of hours purchased over the same timeframe.

No councils were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual authorities in the region ranged from £16.04 to £24.93 per hour – a difference of £8.89.

The lowest hourly rate for local authorities in Greater London was £12.60 per hour, paid by Tower Hamlets, while the highest was £59.52 per hour, paid by Westminster. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 571,024. Considering councils who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was a 9% increase in hours from 2022. Six authorities (21%) reported a drop in hours between these years, while the hours for Sutton and Haringey rose by 41% and 35% respectively.

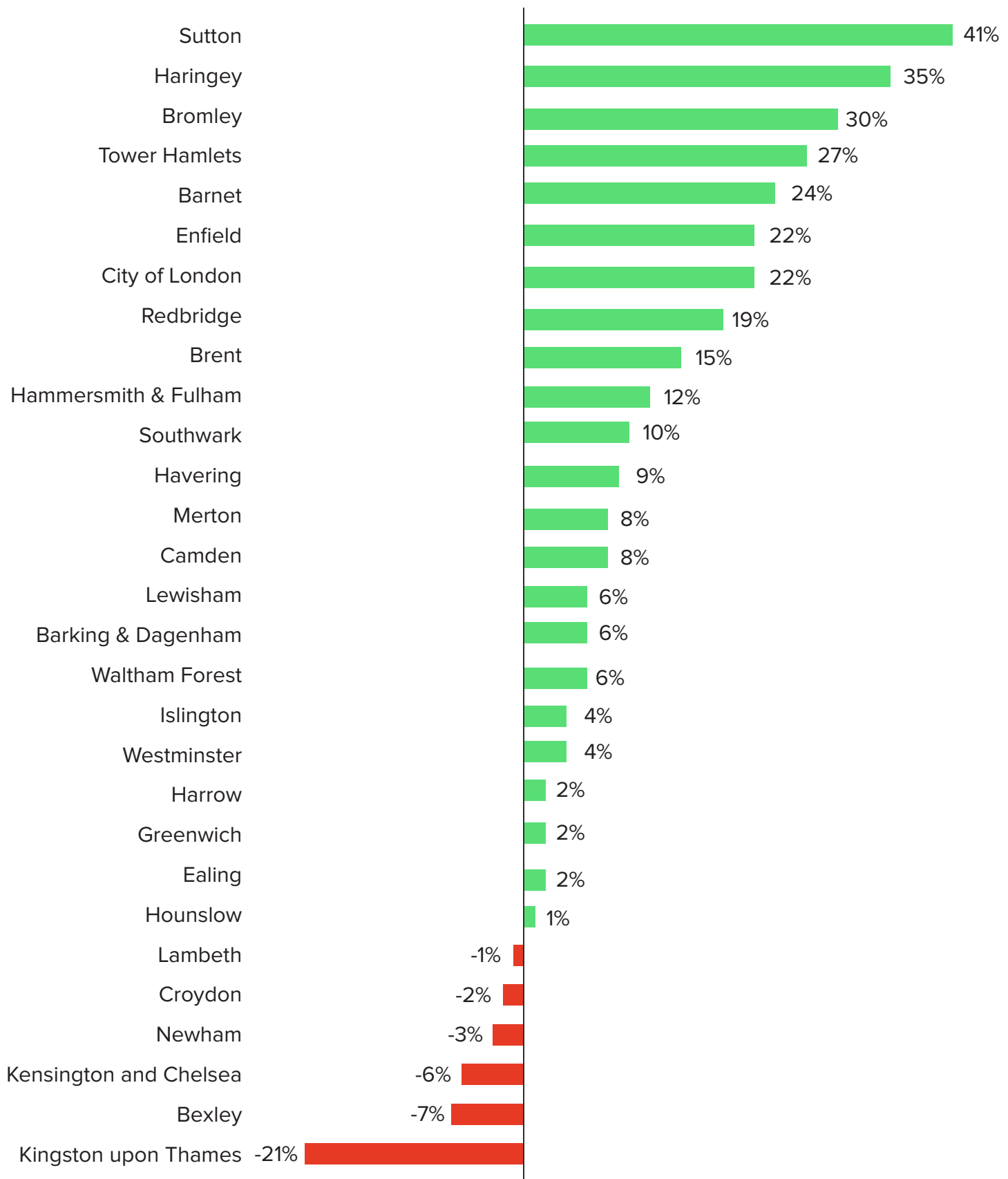
Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 37 care packages per council were handed back in Greater London in 2022-23, compared with 54 packages in 2021-22. Of those purchasing from the independent and voluntary sector, 13 authorities (39%) were able to provide this information for both years.

In the table below, only councils that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

Figure 44. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in Greater London during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Council	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Barking & Dagenham	£18.39	£23.73	£20.44	10,327	£16.84	£3.60
Barnet	£16.32	£26.00	£18.85	25,025	£18.39	£0.46
Bexley	£14.88	£49.01	£18.62	22,956	£17.96	£0.66
Brent	£16.00	£20.51	£18.59	22,925	£16.34	£2.25
Bromley	£15.17	£29.27	£18.57	17,107	£24.65	−£6.08
Camden	£16.00	£36.15	£20.23	21,078	£18.05	£2.18
City of London	£23.30	£27.50	£24.93	423	£22.84	£2.09
Croydon	£15.70	£24.14	£19.17	17,320	£16.59	£2.58
Ealing	£15.40	£21.31	£16.04	18,668	£15.00	£1.04
Enfield	£18.32	£18.32	£18.32	13,960	-	-
Greenwich	£15.00	£42.76	£19.22	18,068	£23.56	−£4.34
Hackney	£15.28	£22.19	£18.92	32,275	-	-
Hammersmith & Fulham	£17.60	£24.00	£18.70	20,434	£17.80	£0.90
Haringey	£15.00	£44.69	£18.43	15,059	£18.03	£0.40
Harrow	£16.60	£16.60	£16.60	16,143	£15.70	£0.90
Havering	£18.00	£25.86	£21.84	20,133	£18.47	£3.37
Hillingdon	£15.00	£20.76	£17.60	11,193	£17.27	£0.33
Hounslow	£16.00	£27.50	£21.21	10,978	£18.89	£2.32
Islington	£14.50	£28.69	£19.14	16,663	£18.90	£0.24
Kensington and Chelsea	£16.78	£55.00	£20.21	6,871	£18.28	£1.93
Kingston upon Thames	£17.25	£22.00	£18.01	5,945	£17.00	£1.01
Lambeth	£17.08	£25.00	£18.98	21,483	£17.47	£1.51
Lewisham	-	£34.07	£16.29	20,657	-	-
Merton	£16.50	£26.16	£21.37	7,642	£19.93	£1.44
Newham	£13.80	£20.64	£20.29	19,954	£18.41	£1.88
Redbridge	£20.95	£20.95	£20.95	17,723	£16.02	£4.93
Richmond upon Thames	£16.02	£39.50	£19.23	17,823	£19.62	−£0.39
Southwark	£13.79	£20.60	£19.41	21,421	£18.33	£1.08
Sutton	£16.05	£24.50	£18.88	19,192	£19.56	−£0.68
Tower Hamlets	£12.60	£36.28	£20.93	25,512	£19.66	£1.27
Waltham Forest	£13.00	£20.00	£16.70	24,660	£15.55	£1.15
Wandsworth	£13.39	£39.84	£17.92	11,218	£17.30	£0.62
Westminster	£14.58	£59.52	£20.08	20,188	£18.19	£1.89

Figure 45. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by councils in Greater London between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



North East

Key facts

£19.82

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.60 for
councils in England

0

councils paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for England
of £25.95 per hour

3rd lowest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

58%

of authorities had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 46. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by councils in the North East during the 2023 sample week



All 12 local authorities that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in the North East responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 46, 47 and 48.

Durham provided data regarding care packages being handed back in 2022-23 and 2021-22. However, they admitted that these figures may not be the correct totals, so have not been included in our analysis.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in the North East during the 2023 sample week was £19.82 per hour. This was the second-lowest weighted average in England's nine government regions and third-lowest in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. In addition, the figure was £1.78 below the weighted average price for councils in England.

The weighted average has risen by 20% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the sixth-highest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, seven authorities (58%) were in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom, with no authority in the North East in the top quartile.

In addition, no councils were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual authorities in the region ranged from £17.01 to £23.23 per hour – a difference of £6.22.

The lowest hourly rate for local authorities in the North East was £11.18 per hour (for sleep-in shifts only), while the highest was £46.76 per hour, each paid by Northumberland. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 145,701. Considering councils who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was a 2% decrease in hours from 2022 – the only government region/devolved administration that experienced a fall. Indeed, six authorities (50%) reported a drop in hours between these years.

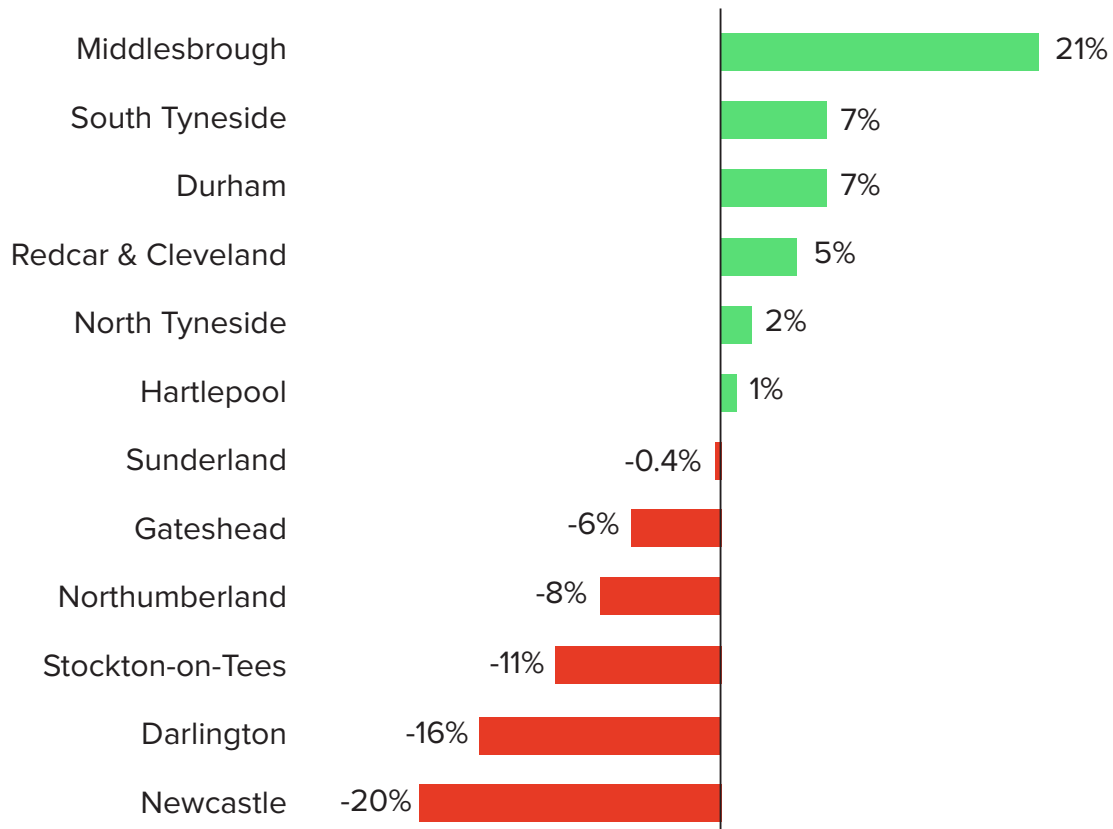
Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 19 care packages per council were handed back in the North East in 2022-23, compared with 12 packages in 2021-22. Of those purchasing from the independent and voluntary sector, six authorities (50%) were able to provide this information for both years.

In the table below, only councils that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

Figure 47. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in the North East during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Council	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Darlington	£13.53	£20.71	£17.91	4,401	£15.79	£2.12
Durham	£15.90	£32.38	£18.85	27,731	£16.29	£2.56
Gateshead	£12.98	£21.48	£17.01	9,826	£16.65	£0.36
Hartlepool	£18.36	£27.84	£21.73	2,947	£18.46	£3.27
Middlesbrough	£17.65	£23.57	£20.32	11,042	£16.60	£3.72
Newcastle	£16.28	£32.50	£19.68	18,201	£16.49	£3.19
North Tyneside	£19.28	£23.29	£19.34	6,438	£17.18	£2.16
Northumberland	£11.18	£46.76	£23.23	14,175	£18.56	£4.67
Redcar & Cleveland	£12.92	£36.60	£20.24	13,796	£16.62	£3.62
South Tyneside	£21.51	£23.97	£21.74	10,307	£15.76	£5.98
Stockton-on-Tees	£18.01	£20.42	£19.44	11,824	£15.76	£3.68
Sunderland	£17.67	£24.95	£18.97	15,015	£15.43	£3.54

Figure 48. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by councils in the North East between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



North West

Key facts

£21.32

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.60 for
councils in England

0

councils paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for England
of £25.95 per hour

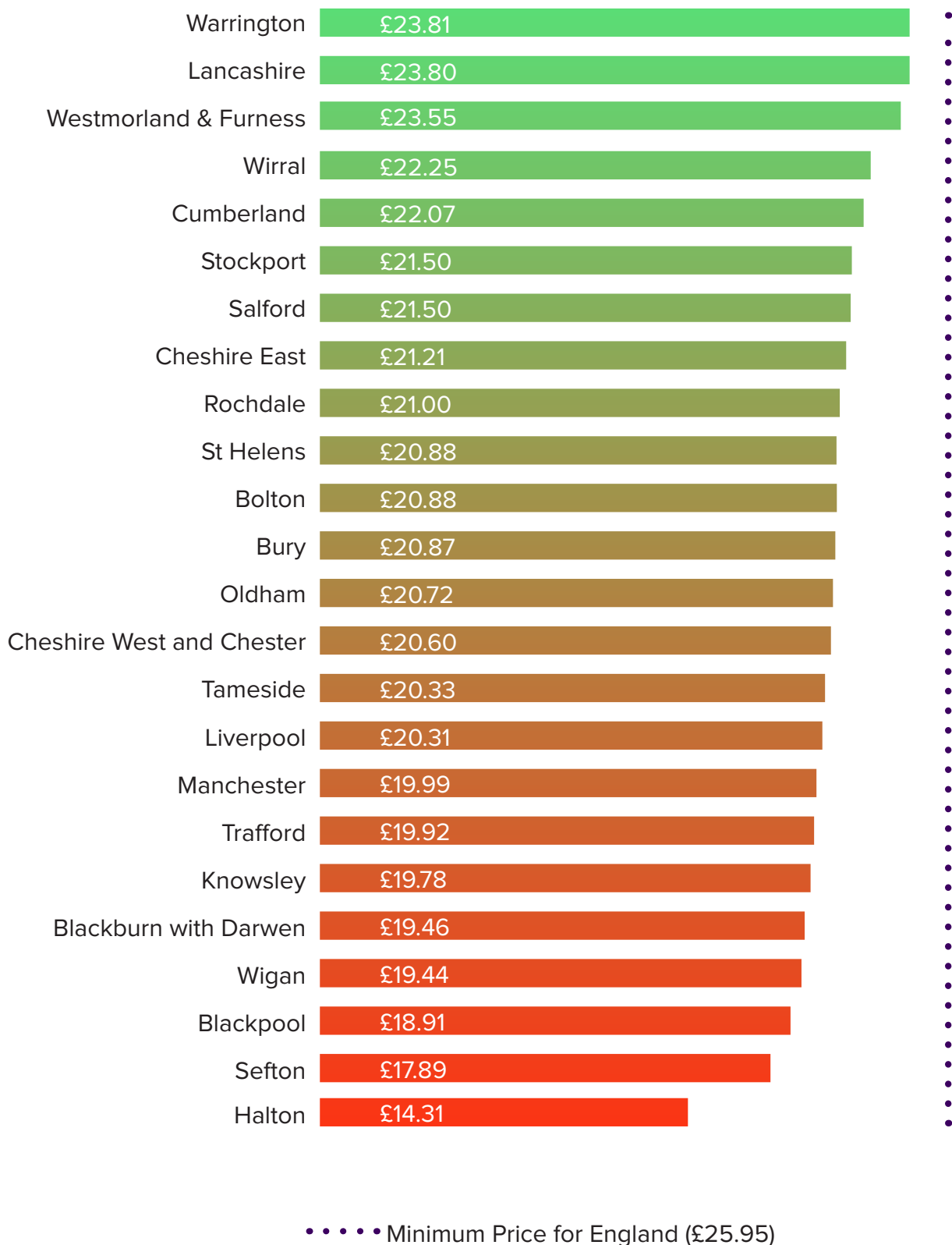
5th lowest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

21%

of authorities had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 49. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by councils in the North West during the 2023 sample week



All 24 local authorities that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in the North West responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 49, 50 and 51.

At the start of April 2023, Cumbria County Council was abolished and replaced by two new unitary authorities: Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council. Neither could provide data on hours purchased in the 2022 sample week, as this predates each council's formation.

After being challenged on their 2023 response, Lancashire changed some of the data that was provided (including the average rate) in answer to the Homecare Association's previous Freedom of Information request in 2021. Moreover, Oldham's current lowest rate per hour related to supported living provision, while Cheshire West and Chester's lowest rate was very small and so has been excluded. Trafford claimed an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the questions relating to care packages being handed back in 2022-23 and 2021-22.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in the North West during the 2023 sample week was £21.32 per hour. This was the fourth-lowest weighted average in England's nine government regions and fifth-lowest in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. In addition, the figure was £0.28 below the weighted average price for councils in England.

The weighted average has risen by 22% since the Homecare Association undertook its 2021 Freedom of Information enquiry. This was the third-highest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, five authorities (21%) were in the bottom

quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom, with three authorities (13%) in the North West in the top quartile. Moreover, Liverpool reported a decrease in their average price from 2021.

No councils were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual authorities in the region ranged from £14.31 to £23.81 per hour – a difference of £9.50.

The lowest hourly rate for local authorities in the North West was £10.80 per hour, paid by Halton, while the highest was £65.24 per hour, paid by Trafford. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 371,459.

Considering councils who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was a 7% increase in hours from 2022. Six authorities (27%) reported a drop in hours between these years – notably, this included Halton, while having the smallest average price in the United Kingdom.

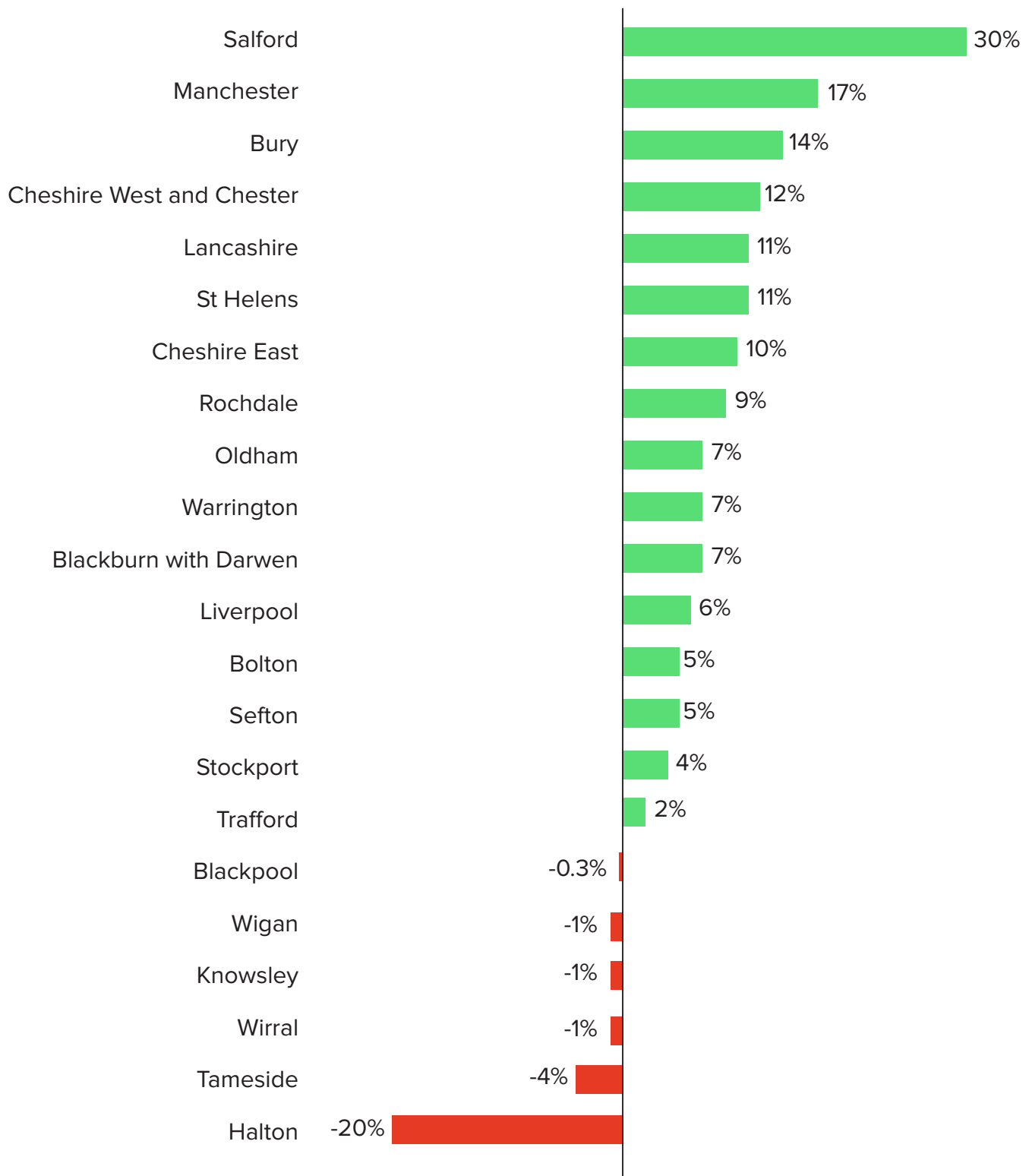
Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 73 care packages per council were handed back in the North West in 2022-23, compared with 44 packages in 2021-22. Of those purchasing from the independent and voluntary sector, 15 authorities (63%) were able to provide this information for both years.

In the table below, only councils that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

Figure 50. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in the North West during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Council	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Blackburn with Darwen	£19.46	£19.46	£19.46	7,736	£15.60	£3.86
Blackpool	£18.38	£19.04	£18.91	9,038	£17.50	£1.41
Bolton	£17.88	£25.98	£20.88	13,596	£17.67	£3.21
Bury	£20.49	£24.18	£20.87	9,731	£16.50	£4.37
Cheshire East	£17.10	£47.89	£21.21	13,938	£17.60	£3.61
Cheshire West and Chester	-	£44.24	£20.60	12,486	£18.26	£2.34
Cumberland	£21.45	£28.08	£22.07	9,537	-	-
Halton	£10.80	£17.83	£14.31	4,185	£12.68	£1.63
Knowsley	£18.83	£37.80	£19.78	8,818	£16.60	£3.18
Lancashire	£19.87	£35.13	£23.80	89,224	£19.74	£4.06
Liverpool	£15.16	£31.43	£20.31	29,022	£20.92	-£0.61
Manchester	£17.98	£22.18	£19.99	21,341	£16.54	£3.45
Oldham	£15.50	£21.00	£20.72	11,091	£16.44	£4.28
Rochdale	£21.00	£21.00	£21.00	5,448	£17.17	£3.83
Salford	£16.63	£24.00	£21.50	11,229	£15.93	£5.57
Sefton	£17.89	£28.00	£17.89	18,812	£16.77	£1.12
St Helens	£20.24	£31.16	£20.88	14,269	£17.19	£3.69
Stockport	£20.04	£42.50	£21.50	16,051	£17.16	£4.34
Tameside	£19.50	£22.00	£20.33	10,777	£17.93	£2.40
Trafford	£16.06	£65.24	£19.92	12,666	£17.64	£2.28
Warrington	£21.08	£32.00	£23.81	11,465	£18.09	£5.72
Westmorland & Furness	£16.24	£28.08	£23.55	6,442	-	-
Wigan	£19.44	£19.44	£19.44	12,547	£16.40	£3.04
Wirral	£17.62	£43.44	£22.25	12,010	£17.52	£4.73

Figure 51. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by councils in the North West between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



South East

Key facts

£24.24

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.60 for
councils in England

③

councils paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for England
of £25.95 per hour

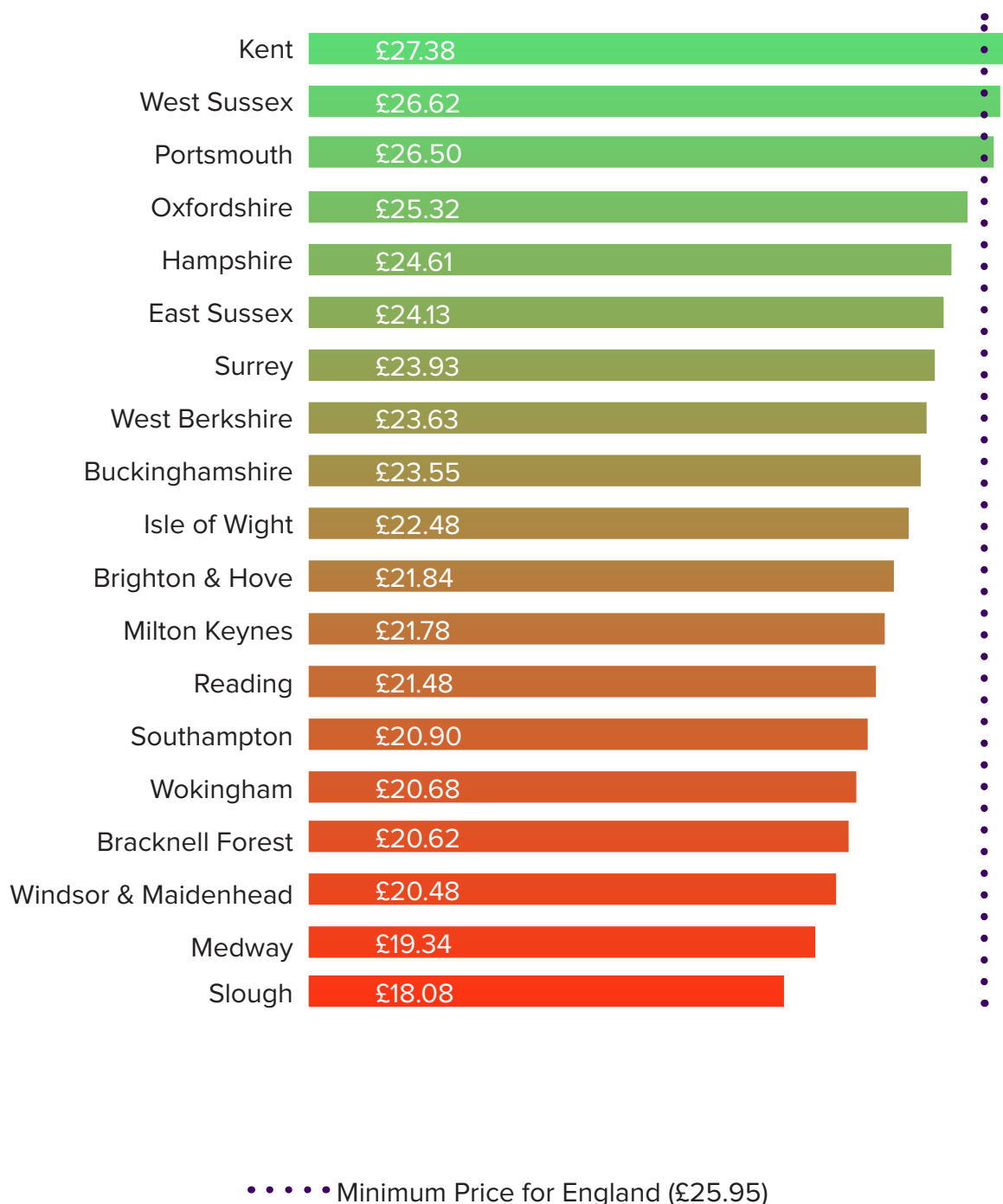
2nd highest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

11%

of authorities had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 52. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by councils in the South East during the 2023 sample week



All 19 local authorities that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in the South East responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 52, 53 and 54.

Surrey provided information that referred to a period of 2-3 weeks prior to the 2023 and 2022 sample weeks specified in the Freedom of Information request.

Portsmouth and Surrey each claimed an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the questions relating to care packages being handed back in 2022-23 and 2021-22. Meanwhile, both Slough and West Sussex exempted the hours purchased in the 2022 sample week. Slough also exempted the 2023 sample weeks hours, but this has been estimated from other data supplied.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in the South East during the 2023 sample week was £24.24 per hour. This was the second-highest weighted average in both England's nine government regions and the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. In addition, the figure was £2.65 above the weighted average price for councils in England.

The weighted average has risen by 23% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was also the second-highest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, two authorities (11%) were in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across

the United Kingdom, with nine authorities (47%) in the South East in the top quartile. Slough's average experienced a marginal rise of just £0.18, in cash terms, from 2021.

Three councils (Kent, West Sussex and Portsmouth) were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual authorities in the region ranged from £18.08 to £27.38 per hour – a difference of £9.30.

The lowest hourly rate for local authorities in the South East was £14.88 per hour, while the highest was £87.74 per hour, each paid by Hampshire. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 333,545. Considering councils who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was a 13% increase in hours from 2022. There was a substantial such rise in both Oxfordshire and Medway, despite the former's average rate only enlarging by £0.12, in cash terms, from 2021. Only one authority (6%) reported a drop in hours between these years.

Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 139 care packages per council were handed back in the South East in 2022-23, compared with 151 packages in 2021-22. Of those purchasing from the independent and voluntary sector, 14 authorities (74%) were able to provide this information for both years.

In the table below, only councils that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

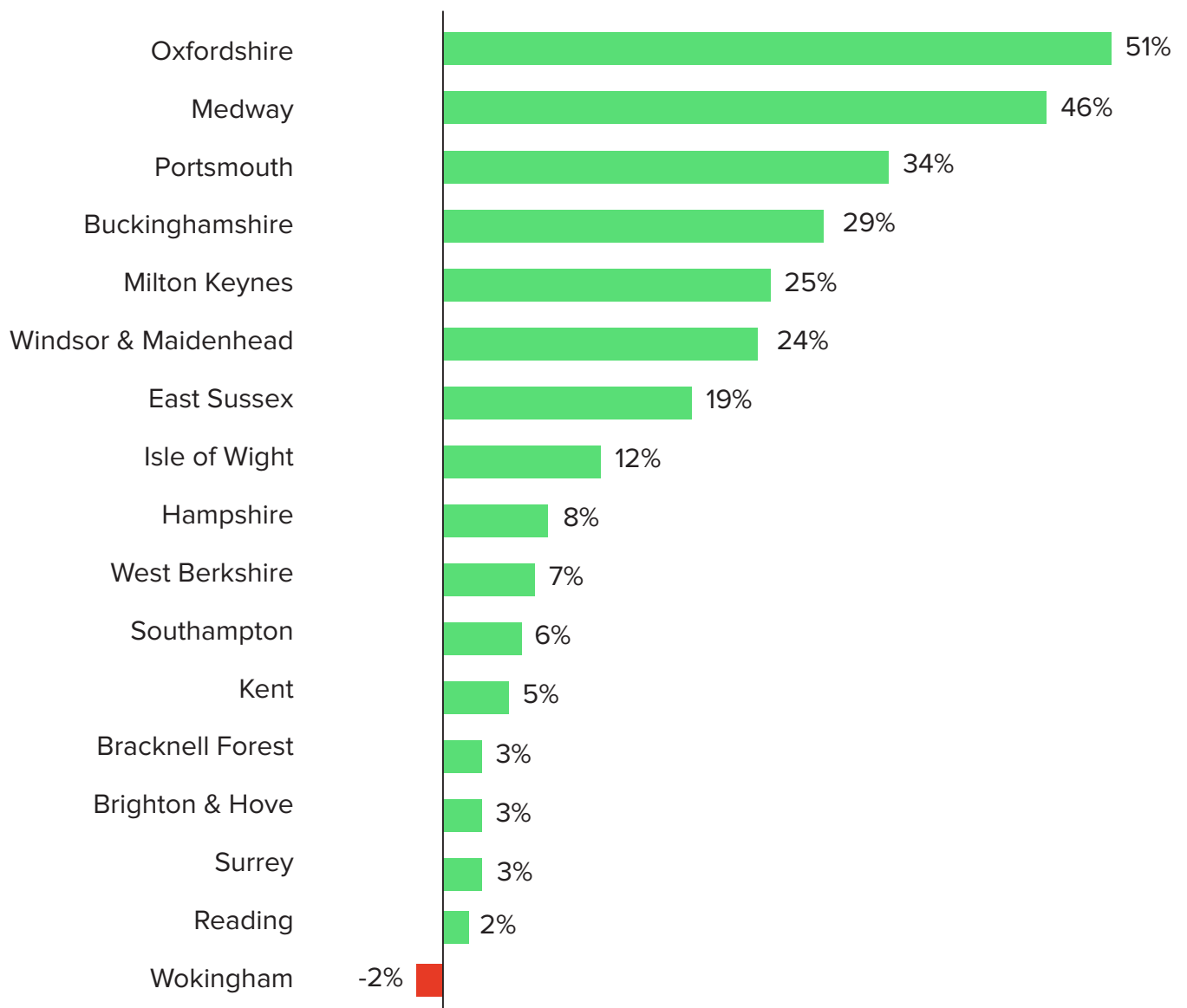
NB. Portsmouth and Surrey both reported a significant increase, in cash terms, in their average rate from 2021 (£9.10 and £7.34 respectively). By way of some explanation, Surrey’s 2023 average rate was for short visits only, while Portsmouth provided a true average rate in 2023 (only their standard rates were provided previously).

Nevertheless, when questioned on this, Portsmouth added: “Our standard rates have gone up significantly since 2021, [and] we also have a number of providers that charge higher per hour values for their care.” It is also worth mentioning that Portsmouth’s hours grew by 34% between the 2022 and 2023 sample weeks.

Figure 53. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in the South East during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Council	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Bracknell Forest	£19.50	£20.69	£20.62	4,300	£18.67	£1.95
Brighton & Hove	£21.27	£27.00	£21.84	10,982	£18.97	£2.87
Buckinghamshire	£23.00	£23.85	£23.55	17,663	£21.18	£2.37
East Sussex	£22.43	£33.60	£24.13	24,739	£22.63	£1.50
Hampshire	£14.88	£87.74	£24.61	39,419	£19.96	£4.65
Isle of Wight	£18.49	£25.50	£22.48	11,595	£19.68	£2.80
Kent	£20.54	£28.01	£27.38	41,924	£21.99	£5.39
Medway	£18.88	£19.44	£19.34	9,744	£16.73	£2.61
Milton Keynes	£17.72	£22.86	£21.78	8,594	£17.76	£4.02
Oxfordshire	£18.54	£46.29	£25.32	21,542	£25.20	£0.12
Portsmouth	£19.36	£33.50	£26.50	18,472	£17.40	£9.10
Reading	£20.13	£28.00	£21.48	7,604	£18.87	£2.61
Slough	£16.65	£21.95	£18.08	3,025	£17.90	£0.18
Southampton	£16.00	£40.00	£20.90	11,003	£19.08	£1.82
Surrey	£15.53	£53.88	£23.93	51,294	£16.59	£7.34
West Berkshire	£17.36	£35.00	£23.63	7,285	£18.38	£5.25
West Sussex	£25.29	£37.08	£26.62	32,344	£21.56	£5.06
Windsor & Maidenhead	£20.18	£28.00	£20.48	5,374	£18.35	£2.13
Wokingham	£16.93	£54.00	£20.68	6,643	£18.97	£1.71

Figure 54. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by councils in the Sout East between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



South West

Key facts

£24.40

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.60 for
councils in England

②

councils paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for England
of £25.95 per hour

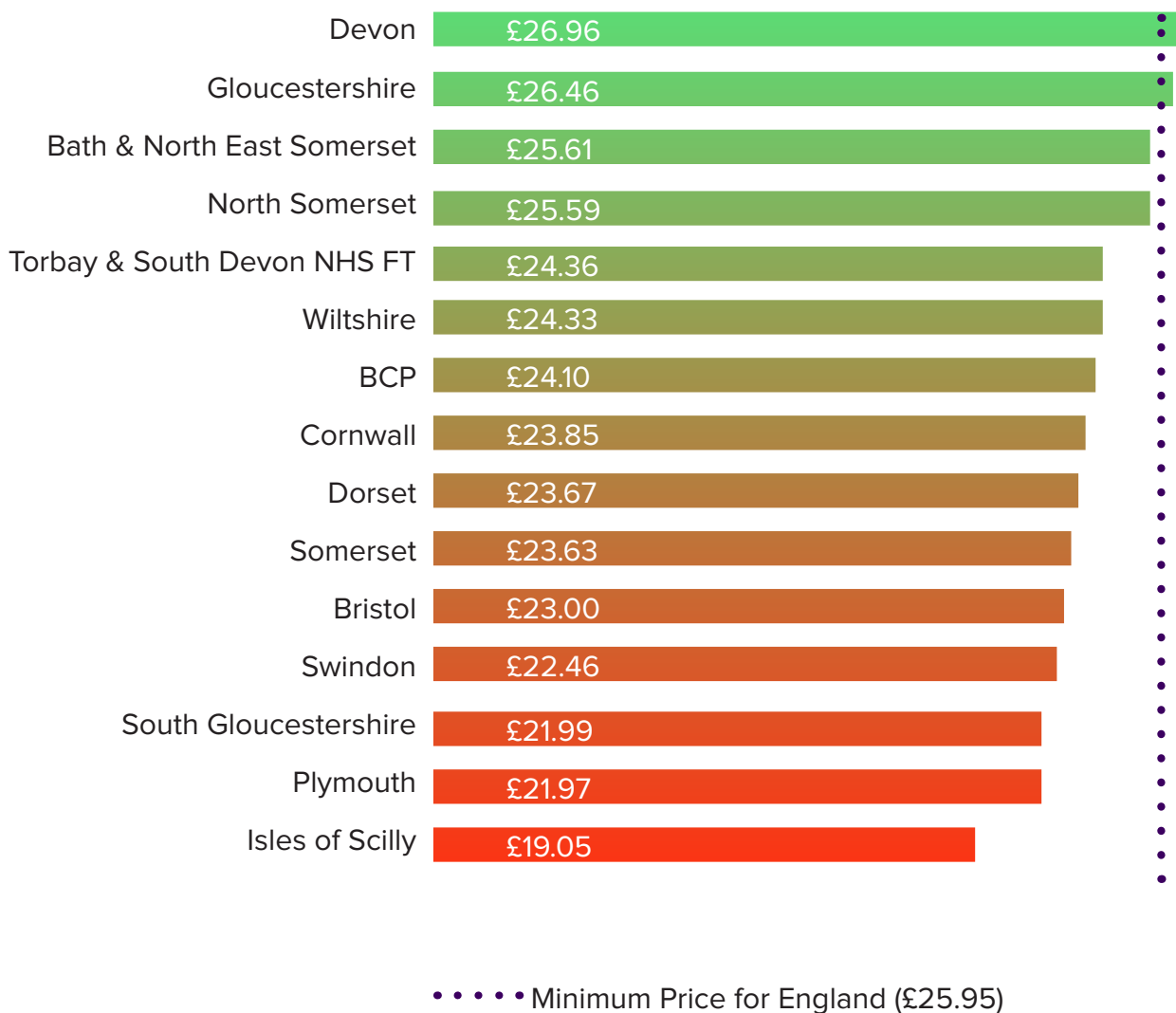
Highest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

7%

of authorities had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 55. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by councils in the South West during the 2023 sample week



All 15 local authorities that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in the South West responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 55, 56 and 57.

Torbay Council did not hold the information and recommended that the request be redirected to Torbay & South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (FT), which is responsible for adult social care within Torbay and is treated as an 'authority', both here and throughout the report.

The Isles of Scilly did not purchase any hours of homecare from external providers in either the 2023 or 2022 sample week. However, their lowest, highest and average rates indicate what would have been paid, if care had been commissioned.

Plymouth's rates and total spend figure did not include careworkers' travel time or mileage costs. The same council also claimed an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the number of care packages handed back in 2022-23 – Plymouth only provided a figure for the 2022 calendar year.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in the South West during the 2023 sample week was £24.40 per hour. This was the highest weighted average in both England's nine government regions and the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. In addition, the figure was £2.80 above the weighted average price for councils in England.

The weighted average has risen by 16% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the fourth-lowest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, one authority (7%) was in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom, with ten authorities (67%) in the South West in the top quartile. Wiltshire's

average fell by £1.78, in cash terms, from 2021, while that for South Gloucestershire saw only a minimal improvement.

Two councils (Devon and Gloucestershire) were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual authorities in the region ranged from £19.05 to £26.96 per hour – a difference of £7.91.

The lowest hourly rate for local authorities in the South West was £13.87 per hour, paid by Dorset, while the highest was £69.90 per hour, paid by BCP (Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council). Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 212,328. Considering councils who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was an 11% increase in hours from 2022. The hours of Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset rose dramatically in this time period (by 59% and 43% respectively), although the former commissions considerably more hours numerically. Five authorities (33%) reported a drop in hours between these years – most notably, Plymouth.

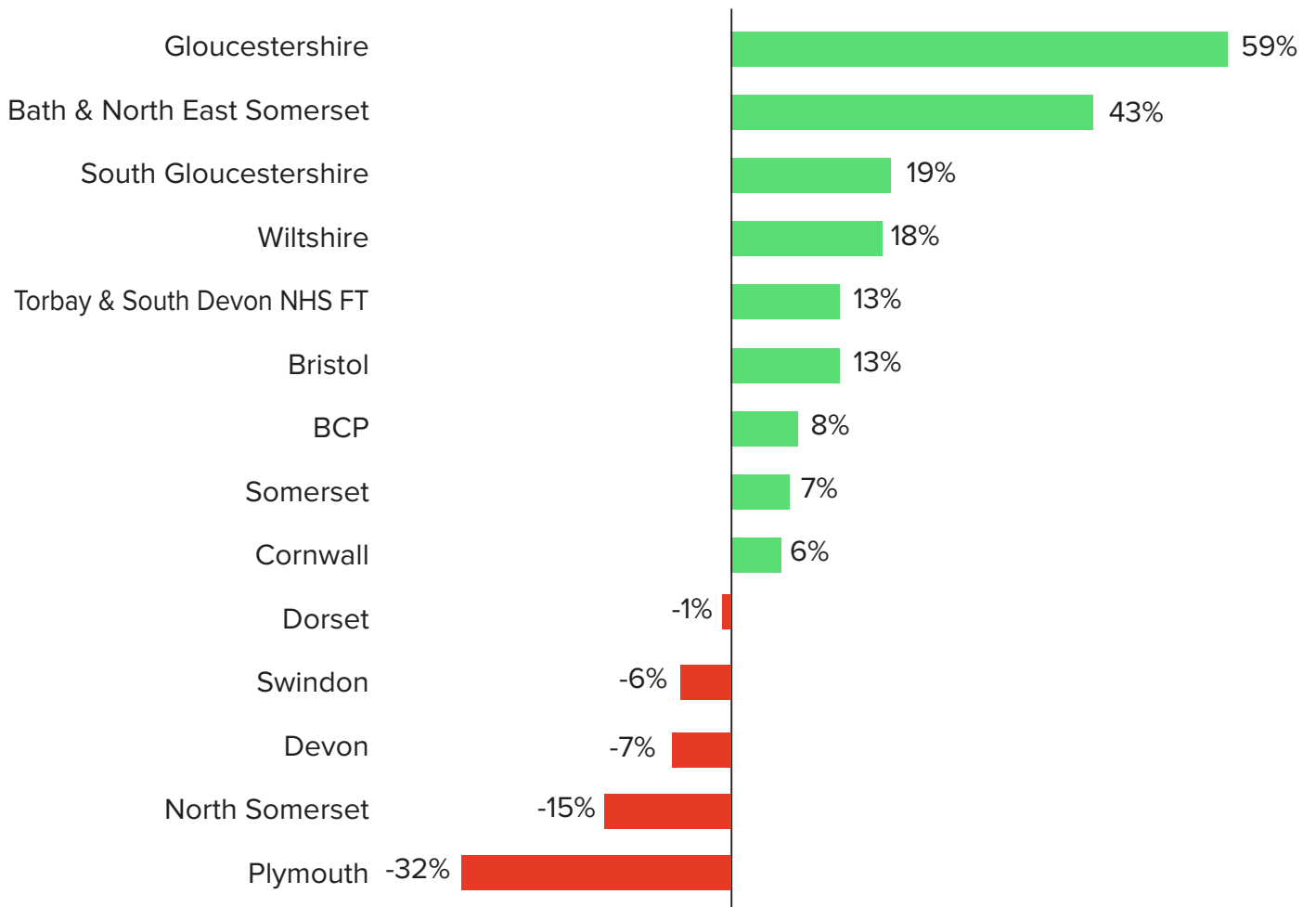
Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 127 care packages per council were handed back in the South West in 2022-23, compared with 150 packages in 2021-22. Of those purchasing from the independent and voluntary sector, eight authorities (53%) were able to provide this information for both years.

In the table below, only councils that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

Figure 56. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in the South West during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Council	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Bath & North East Somerset	£23.76	£31.95	£25.61	4,524	£23.88	£1.73
BCP	£15.00	£69.90	£24.10	19,267	£19.75	£4.35
Bristol	£23.00	£23.00	£23.00	16,593	£19.32	£3.68
Cornwall	£16.63	£35.00	£23.85	26,516	£19.94	£3.91
Devon	£24.96	£27.68	£26.96	21,805	£23.40	£3.56
Dorset	£13.87	£33.42	£23.67	10,854	£20.30	£3.37
Gloucestershire	£19.22	£44.63	£26.46	35,661	£22.88	£3.58
Isles of Scilly	£15.00	£23.10	£19.05	0	-	-
North Somerset	£19.86	£36.43	£25.59	3,753	£20.66	£4.93
Plymouth	£19.58	£25.12	£21.97	6,306	£18.12	£3.85
Somerset	£17.22	£56.84	£23.63	12,910	£20.31	£3.32
South Gloucestershire	£19.08	£33.96	£21.99	17,514	£21.86	£0.13
Swindon	£20.68	£23.52	£22.46	9,527	£19.68	£2.78
Torbay & South Devon NHS FT	£24.36	£24.36	£24.36	7,969	£20.85	£3.51
Wiltshire	£19.06	£34.98	£24.33	19,129	£26.11	-£1.78

Figure 57. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by councils in the South West between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



West Midlands

Key facts

£20.51

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.60 for
councils in England

0

councils paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for England
of £25.95 per hour

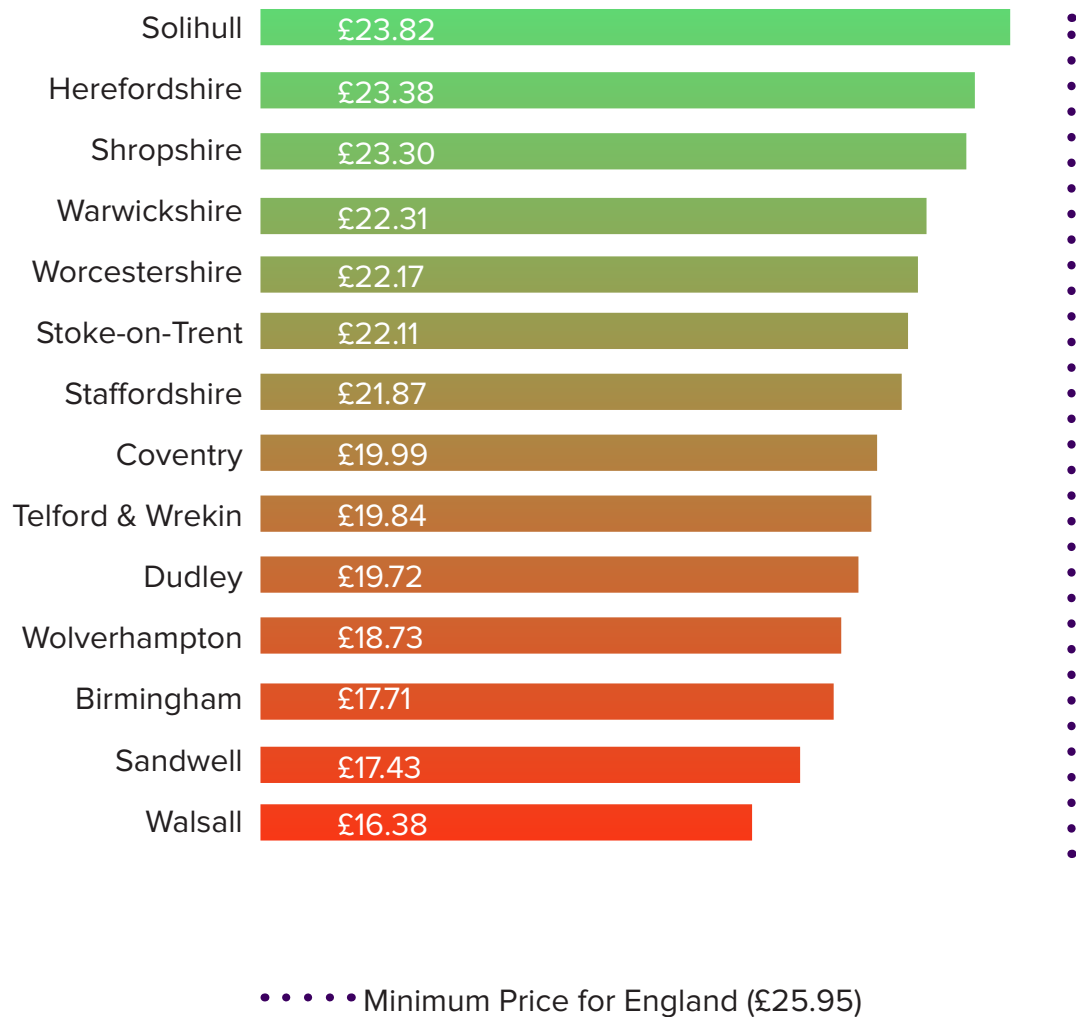
4th lowest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

36%

of authorities had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 58. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by councils in the West Midlands during the 2023 sample week



All 14 local authorities that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in the West Midlands responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 58, 59 and 60.

Shropshire provided information on the questions relating to care packages being handed back in 2022-23 and 2021-22. However, their figures referred to where indication had been made of a change of provider, which “can include choice and may not necessarily mean handed back.” Therefore, this data has not been included in our analysis. Birmingham’s lowest rate was very small and so has also been excluded.

Sandwell claimed an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the two hand-back questions, while Walsall exempted their lowest, highest and average rates – their average, however, has been estimated from other data supplied by the council.

The weighted average price paid for older people’s homecare in the West Midlands during the 2023 sample week was £20.51 per hour. This was the third-lowest weighted average in England’s nine government regions and fourth-lowest in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. In addition, the figure was £1.09 below the weighted average price for councils in England.

The weighted average has risen by 20% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the sixth-lowest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, five authorities (36%) were in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom, with two authorities

(14%) in the West Midlands in the top quartile. Walsall’s estimated average exceeded the respective rate from 2021 by only £0.19 in cash terms.

No councils were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association’s Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual authorities in the region ranged from £16.38 to £23.82 per hour – a difference of £7.44.

The lowest hourly rate for local authorities in the West Midlands was £10.50 per hour, paid by Warwickshire, while the highest was £50.48 per hour, paid by Telford & Wrekin. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 313,967. Considering councils who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was a 7% increase in hours from 2022, with Stoke-on-Trent’s hours rising by 43%. Four authorities (31%) reported a drop in hours between these years.

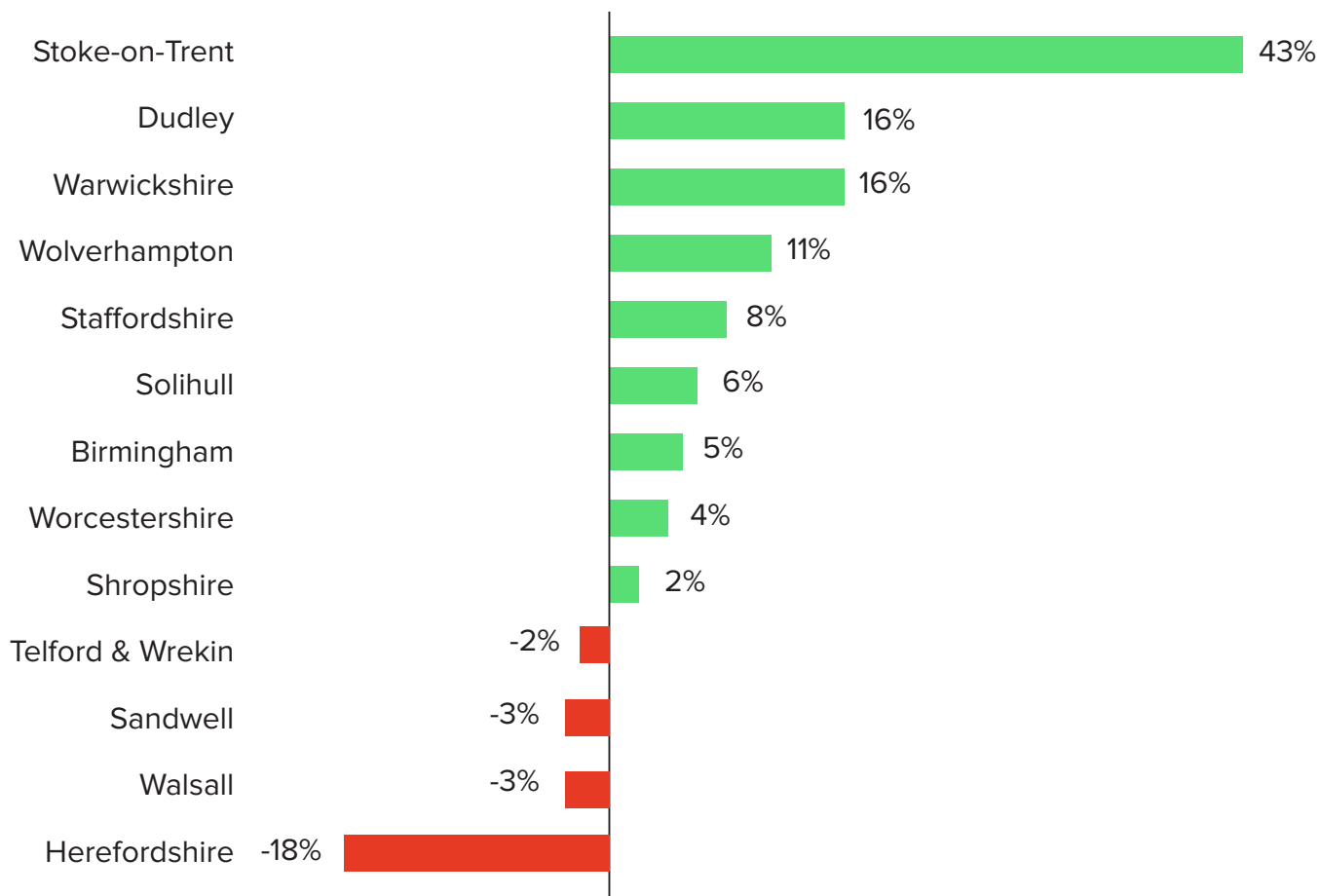
Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 103 care packages per council were handed back in the West Midlands in 2022-23, compared with 50 packages in 2021-22. Of those purchasing from the independent and voluntary sector, seven authorities (50%) were able to provide this information for both years.

In the table below, only councils that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

Figure 59. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in the West Midlands during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Council	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Birmingham	-	£35.58	£17.71	50,397	£15.46	£2.25
Coventry	£18.95	£21.03	£19.99	17,084	£16.17	£3.82
Dudley	£19.72	£19.72	£19.72	26,857	£16.32	£3.40
Herefordshire	£21.76	£25.00	£23.38	5,023	£19.64	£3.74
Sandwell	£16.00	£24.00	£17.43	17,744	£15.27	£2.16
Shropshire	£16.56	£34.25	£23.30	19,397	£19.52	£3.78
Solihull	£22.88	£31.04	£23.82	12,248	£19.33	£4.49
Staffordshire	£17.26	£39.00	£21.87	51,003	£17.58	£4.29
Stoke-on-Trent	£21.80	£27.95	£22.11	12,005	£18.65	£3.46
Telford & Wrekin	£14.00	£50.48	£19.84	12,954	£17.44	£2.40
Walsall	-	-	£16.38	9,419	£16.19	£0.19
Warwickshire	£10.50	£46.76	£22.31	27,756	£18.55	£3.76
Wolverhampton	£16.08	£18.84	£18.73	17,868	£15.80	£2.93
Worcestershire	£20.64	£25.84	£22.17	34,212	£17.69	£4.48

Figure 60. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by councils in the West Midlands between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



Yorkshire and The Humber

Key facts

£22.47

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.60 for
councils in England

①

council paid the Homecare Association's
Minimum Price for England of £25.95
per hour

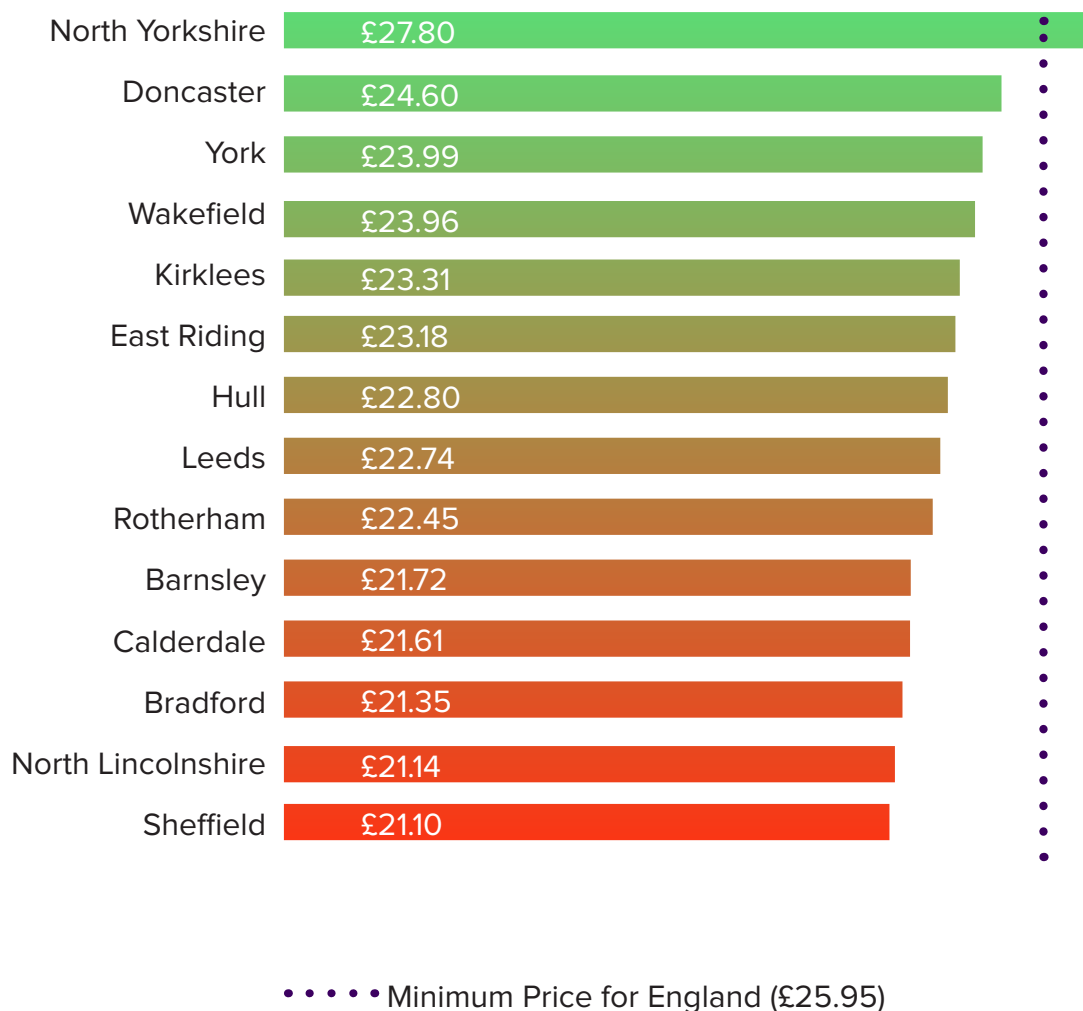
5th highest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

0%

of authorities had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 61. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by councils in Yorkshire and The Humber during the 2023 sample week



All 14 local authorities that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in Yorkshire and The Humber responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 61, 62 and 63.

North East Lincolnshire Council did not hold the information and recommended that the request be redirected to Humber and North Yorkshire ICB (whose response is included in the NHS section of this report). Leeds provided information on the total hours purchased in the 2023 sample week, but admitted in their response that they were still awaiting invoices for this period. Therefore, this figure has not been included in our analysis.

York claimed an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on questions relating to the lowest, highest and average rates – their average, however, has been estimated from other data supplied by the council.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in Yorkshire and The Humber during the 2023 sample week was £22.47 per hour. This was the fourth-highest weighted average in England's nine government regions and fifth-highest in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. The figure was also £0.87 above the weighted average price for councils in England.

The weighted average has risen by 21% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the fifth-highest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, no authorities were in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom, with five authorities (36%) in

Yorkshire and The Humber in the top quartile.

One council was paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour. This was North Yorkshire, whose average price grew by £7.58, in cash terms, from 2021.

Average prices paid by individual authorities in the region ranged from £21.10 to £27.80 per hour – a difference of £6.70.

The lowest hourly rate for local authorities in Yorkshire and The Humber was £13.92 per hour, paid by Bradford, while the highest was £46.00 per hour, paid by North Yorkshire. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 170,810. Considering councils who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was a 10% increase in hours from 2022, with the hours in Wakefield and Barnsley each growing by 38%. Four authorities (31%) reported a drop in hours between these years.

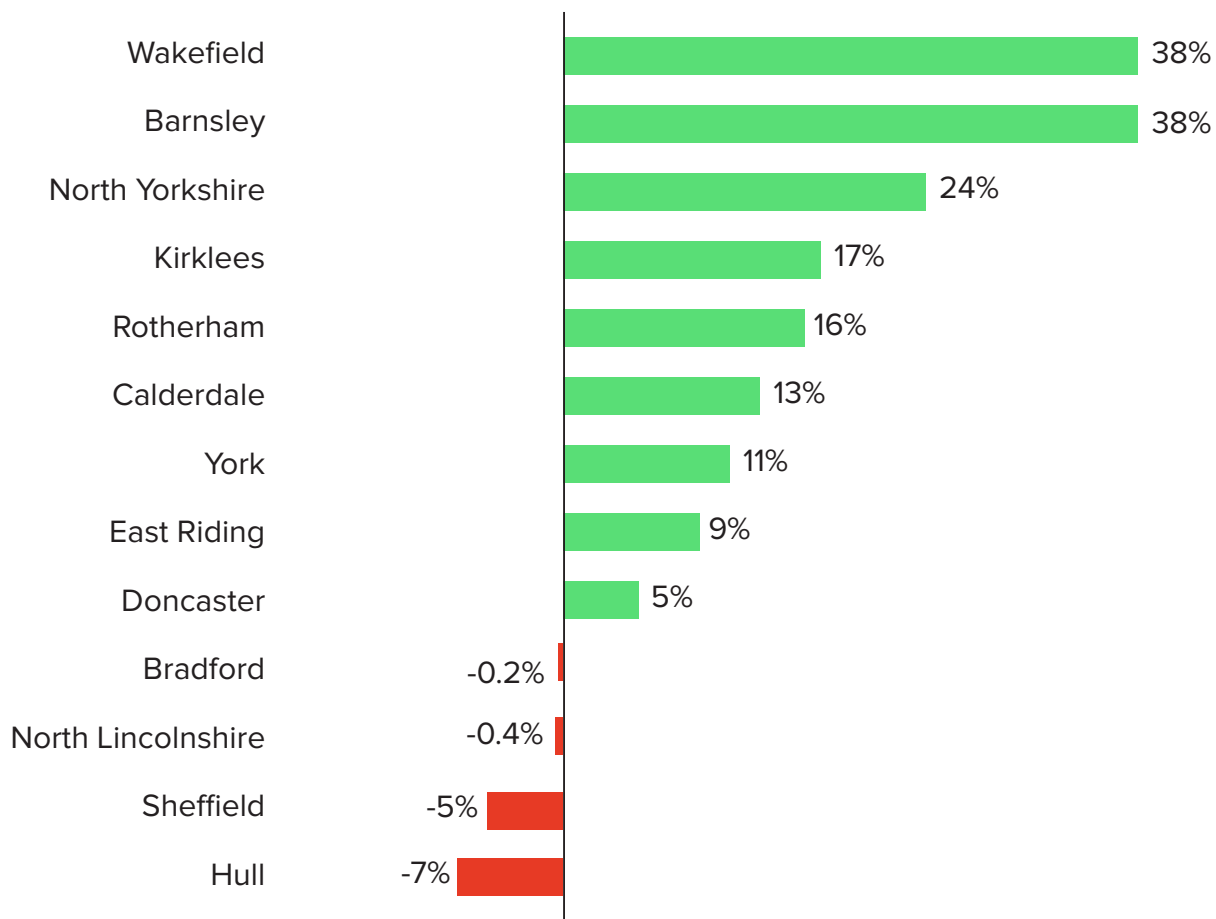
Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 72 care packages per council were handed back in Yorkshire and The Humber in 2022-23, compared with 127 packages in 2021-22. Of those purchasing from the independent and voluntary sector, nine authorities (64%) were able to provide this information for both years.

In the table below, only councils that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

Figure 62. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in Yorkshire and The Humber during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Council	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Barnsley	£17.49	£27.53	£21.72	14,976	£19.02	£2.70
Bradford	£13.92	£24.08	£21.35	23,044	£17.94	£3.41
Calderdale	£19.48	£22.66	£21.61	12,482	£19.08	£2.53
Doncaster	£24.60	£25.60	£24.60	11,861	£17.68	£6.92
East Riding	£19.88	£34.24	£23.18	16,568	£18.54	£4.64
Hull	£22.80	£22.80	£22.80	2,916	£17.77	£5.03
Kirklees	£22.80	£27.48	£23.31	12,203	£19.84	£3.47
Leeds	£22.35	£25.73	£22.74	-	£17.91	£4.83
North Lincolnshire	£16.80	£42.15	£21.14	5,399	£16.74	£4.40
North Yorkshire	£21.84	£46.00	£27.80	1,624	£20.22	£7.58
Rotherham	£20.21	£23.00	£22.45	14,041	-	-
Sheffield	£21.00	£37.20	£21.10	29,910	£18.48	£2.62
Wakefield	£21.94	£27.50	£23.96	17,759	£18.85	£5.11
York	-	-	£23.99	8,027	£20.12	£3.87

Figure 63. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by councils in Yorkshire and The Humber between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



Breakdown by devolved administration

Wales

Key facts

£24.20

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.56 for
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

②

councils paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for Wales
of £28.64 per hour

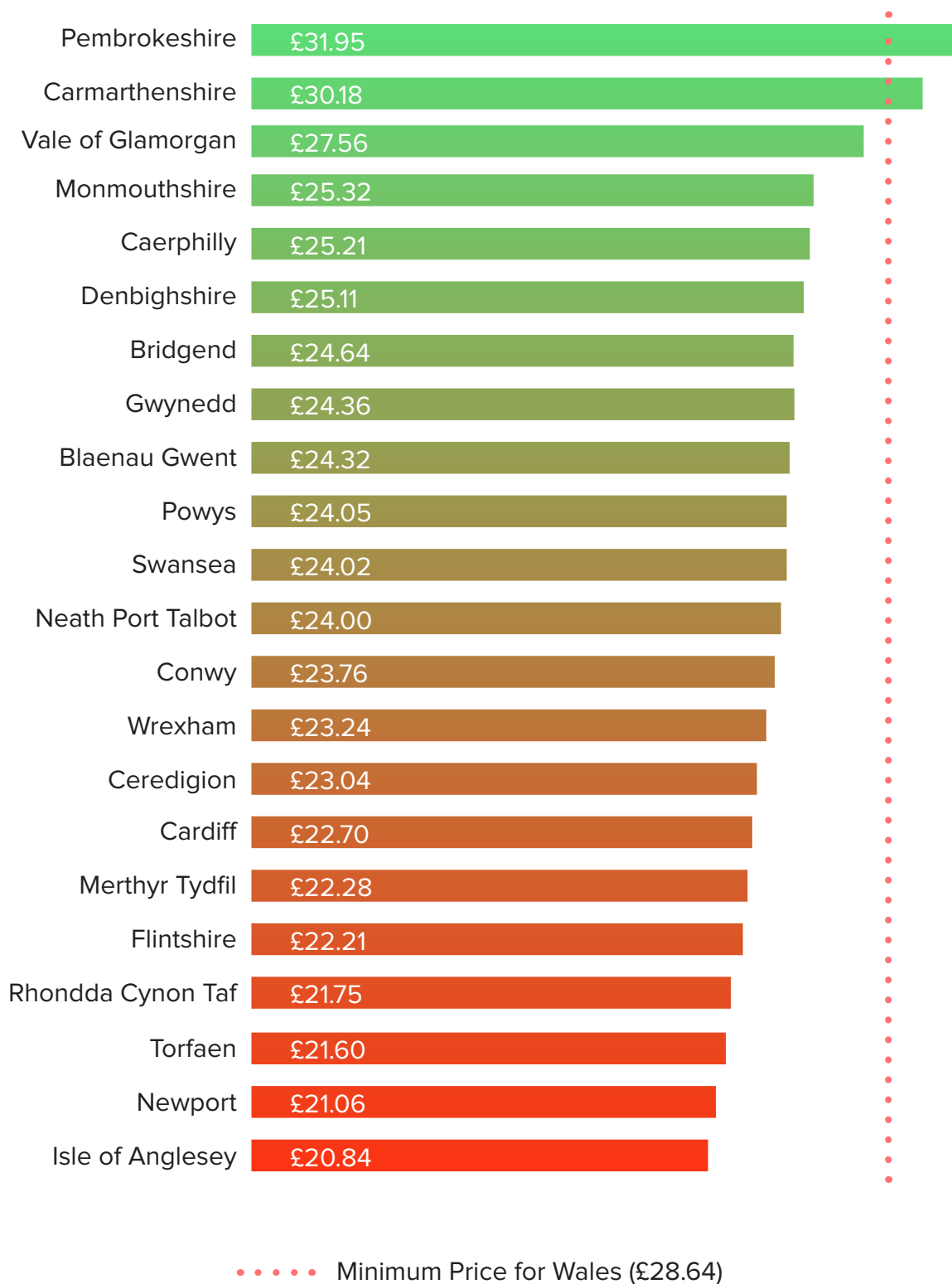
3rd highest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

0%

of authorities had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 64. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by councils in Wales during the 2023 sample week



All 22 local authorities that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in Wales responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 64, 65 and 66.

The response of both Denbighshire and Merthyr Tydfil related to all adults, not specifically those aged 65 years and over. Therefore, their figures should be treated as a guide only.

Moreover, Denbighshire's hours purchased for a comparative seven-day period in 2022 related to September of that year (rather than April as requested), since this was the earliest available data. Their figures on care packages handed back in 2022-23 and 2021-22 included those that ended as 'no further action', and so are not included in our analysis.

Flintshire and Powys each claimed an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the hand-back questions. Flintshire also exempted the hours purchased in both the 2023 and 2022 sample weeks, although the former has been estimated from other data supplied by the council. In addition, Powys exempted their lowest and highest rates in 2023.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in Wales during the 2023 sample week was £24.20 per hour. This was the third-highest in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. In addition, the figure was £2.64 above the weighted average price for councils/HSC Trusts in the United Kingdom.

The weighted average has risen by 25% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the highest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, no authorities were in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom, with 13 authorities (59%) in Wales in the top quartile.

Two councils (Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire) were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for Wales of £28.64 per hour. Indeed, Pembrokeshire's average grew by £7.19, in cash terms, from 2021 (while the enlargement for Vale of Glamorgan was even greater).

Average prices paid by individual authorities in the administration ranged from £20.84 to £31.95 per hour – a difference of £11.11.

The lowest hourly rate for local authorities in Wales was £17.61 per hour, paid by Ceredigion, while the highest was £48.38 per hour, paid by Carmarthenshire. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 166,605. Considering councils who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was only a 0.5% increase in hours from 2022. Nine authorities (43%) reported a drop in hours between these years.

Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 52 care packages per council were handed back in Wales in 2022-23, compared with 62 packages in 2021-22. Of those purchasing from the independent and voluntary sector, 15 authorities (68%) were able to provide this information for both years.

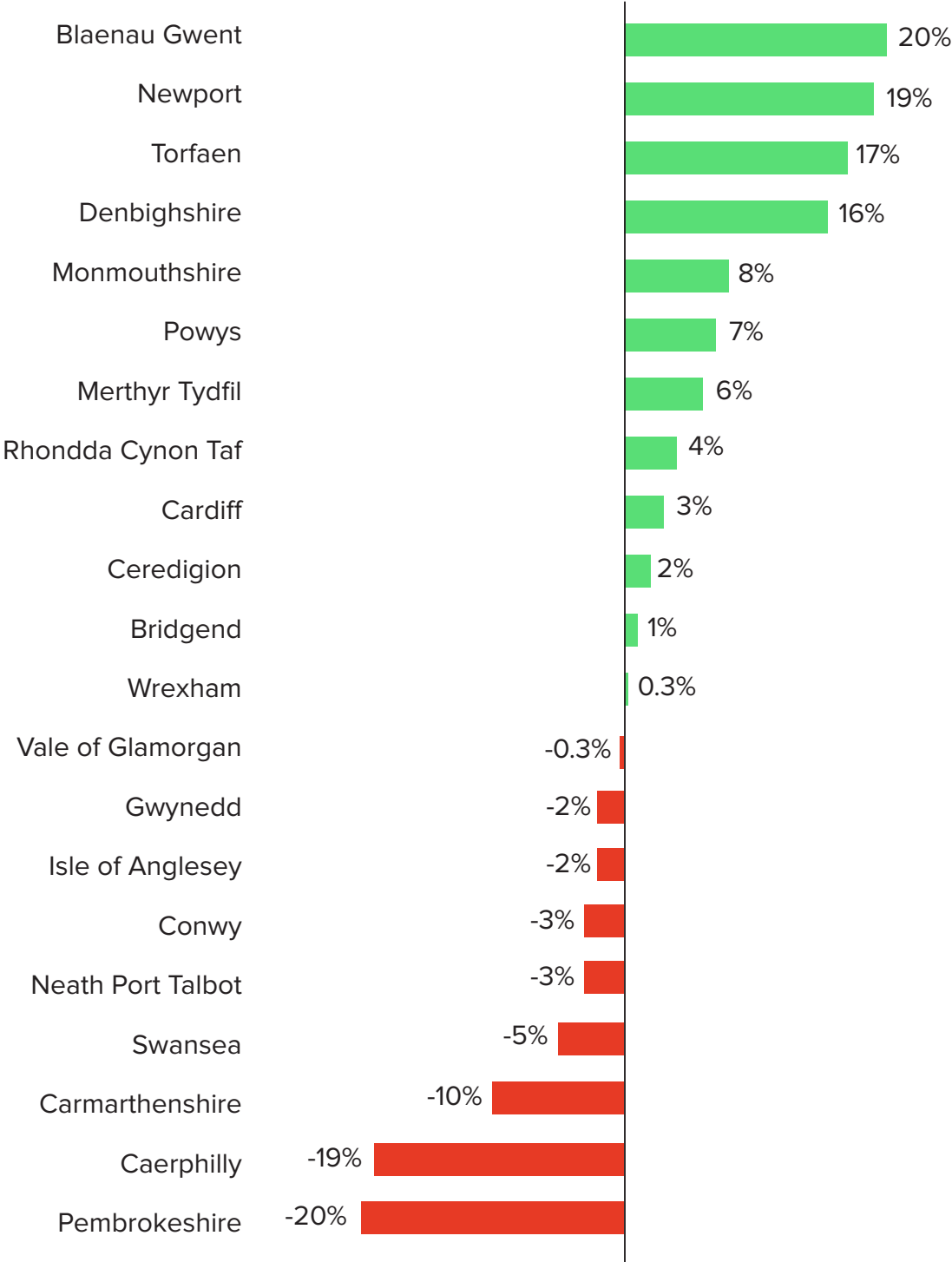
In the table below, only councils that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

NB. Vale of Glamorgan's average price figure for 2021 was revised too late to be included in the analysis of the previous Freedom of Information exercise and thus the 2021 Homecare Deficit report. The updated figure is, however, shown in the table.

Figure 65. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in Wales during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Council	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Blaenau Gwent	£22.07	£26.68	£24.32	4,155	£18.30	£6.02
Bridgend	£23.67	£24.99	£24.64	5,003	£20.12	£4.52
Caerphilly	£20.37	£29.69	£25.21	7,097	£19.86	£5.35
Cardiff	£18.68	£34.01	£22.70	22,644	£18.26	£4.44
Carmarthenshire	£20.50	£48.38	£30.18	8,081	£25.92	£4.26
Ceredigion	£17.61	£27.50	£23.04	3,761	£19.84	£3.20
Conwy	£23.76	£23.76	£23.76	7,703	£18.55	£5.21
Denbighshire	£20.90	£28.13	£25.11	4,295	£19.94	£5.17
Flintshire	£22.21	£22.21	£22.21	6,273	£18.02	£4.19
Gwynedd	£21.74	£30.93	£24.36	8,519	£19.26	£5.10
Isle of Anglesey	£20.50	£21.28	£20.84	2,792	£17.41	£3.43
Merthyr Tydfil	£18.82	£31.55	£22.28	3,413	£17.19	£5.09
Monmouthshire	£22.50	£30.00	£25.32	8,379	£21.10	£4.22
Neath Port Talbot	£24.00	£24.00	£24.00	7,503	£18.91	£5.09
Newport	£20.00	£24.15	£21.06	7,613	£16.28	£4.78
Pembrokeshire	£30.82	£42.17	£31.95	5,641	£24.76	£7.19
Powys	-	-	£24.05	8,195	£20.19	£3.86
Rhondda Cynon Taf	£19.95	£25.02	£21.75	14,171	£18.70	£3.05
Swansea	£20.31	£25.32	£24.02	11,126	£19.59	£4.43
Torfaen	£21.60	£21.60	£21.60	5,418	£16.90	£4.70
Vale of Glamorgan	£19.73	£31.50	£27.56	10,325	£18.64	£8.92
Wrexham	£21.27	£25.00	£23.24	4,498	£19.93	£3.31

Figure 66. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by councils in Wales between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



Scotland

Key facts

£21.43

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.56 for
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

0

councils paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for
Scotland of £26.50 per hour

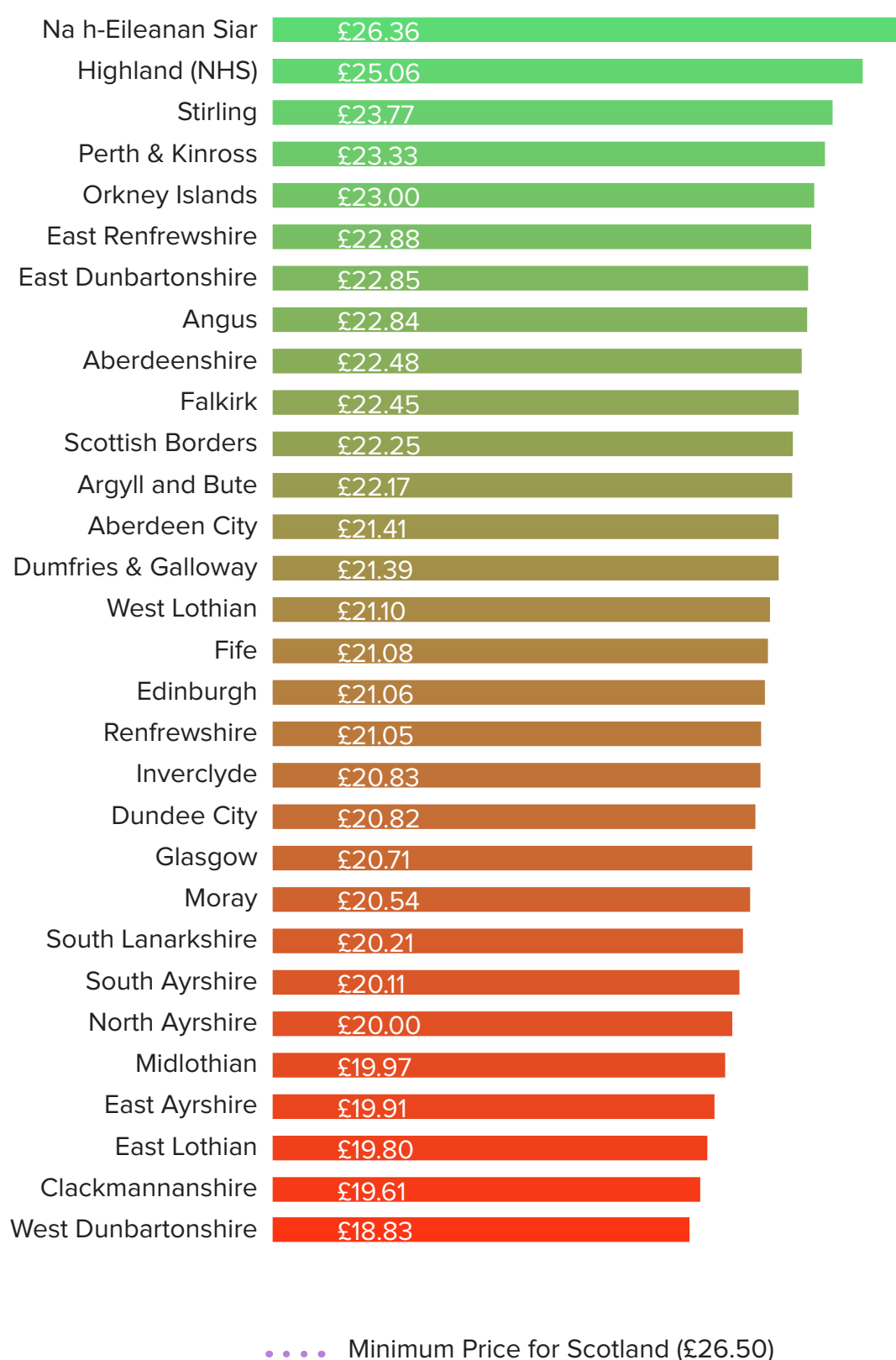
6th lowest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

7%

of authorities had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 67. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by councils in Scotland during the 2023 sample week



All 31 local authorities that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in Scotland responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 67, 68 and 69.

The Shetland Islands provides all services in-house (i.e. no external purchasing from homecare providers). Meanwhile, The Highland Council did not hold the information and recommended that the request be redirected to NHS Highland, to which services have been previously transferred. Due to the way that homecare is commissioned in Scotland, these figures are included here, rather than in the NHS section of this report (with NHS Highland being treated as an 'authority', both here and throughout the report).

After being challenged on their 2023 response, East Renfrewshire changed the hours purchased for the 2021 and 2020 sample weeks in answer to the Homecare Association's previous Freedom of Information request in 2021.

As regards data quality and limitations, there are a variety of points to elucidate:

- Angus: two average rates were provided – £23.31 (for providers that have agreed to pay careworkers at least £11.20 per hour) and £22.84 (careworkers paid at least £10.90 per hour). Our analysis uses the smaller price.
- Argyll and Bute: the 2023 sample week hours and total spend are likely to be underestimates.
- Dumfries & Galloway: their lowest, highest and average rates relate to all adults, as information was not available for other age breakdowns. These figures, therefore, should be treated as a guide only.
- Inverclyde: the standard hourly rate is set to be uplifted to £21.52, which “will be

backdated to 1 April 2023 once signed and returned”. We, however, have used the price provided at the time of the response.

- North Lanarkshire: other than the 2023 and 2022 hours, the information requested (which has been analysed in this report) was not held.
- Orkney Islands: the figure for hours purchased in 2023 relates to 1 March, which (through interpretation) was then scaled for a seven-day period. A subsequent total for 17 April (i.e. within the requested sample week) was provided too late to be included in our analysis.
- South Ayrshire: added to their hourly flat rate of £20.11 is a rurality enhancement rate at 0%, 3% or 6%. This is not included here.
- Stirling: information on the number of care packages handed back in 2022-23 and 2021-22 did not answer adequately the questions posed, so is not included in our analysis.
- Options for self-directed support (SDS): there was some variation from a few authorities regarding the [SDS options](#) that were included/excluded in their dataset. We can only present the data as provided and draw the reader's attention to this inconsistency. Note that Aberdeen City did not hold the average rate – hence, this was set at their standard hourly rate (as given for their lowest and highest figures) for option 2 care packages.

Midlothian and Scottish Borders each claimed an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 on the lowest and highest rates. Moreover, Edinburgh, South Lanarkshire and West Lothian exempted information on the quantity of care packages handed back in both 2022-23 and 2021-22. Glasgow sought an exemption on hand-backs in 2021-22, while their hours purchased in the 2023 and 2022

sample weeks did not include SDS provision (which was exempted) – the 2023 figure, however, has been estimated from other data supplied by the council.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in Scotland during the 2023 sample week was £21.43 per hour. This was the sixth-lowest in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. In addition, the figure was £0.13 below the weighted average price for councils/HSC Trusts in the United Kingdom.

The weighted average has risen by 15% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the third-lowest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, two authorities (7%) were in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom, with four authorities (13%) in Scotland in the top quartile.

No councils were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for Scotland of £26.50 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual authorities in the administration ranged from £18.83 to £26.36 per hour – a difference of £7.53.

The lowest hourly rate for local authorities in Scotland was £14.00 per hour, paid by

Clackmannanshire, while the highest was £60.41 per hour, paid by East Lothian. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 287,547. Considering councils who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was a 5% increase in hours from 2022, led by Fife. 12 authorities (46%) reported a drop in hours between these years – indeed, the decreases reported by East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and particularly North Lanarkshire (by 51%) were somewhat worrying.

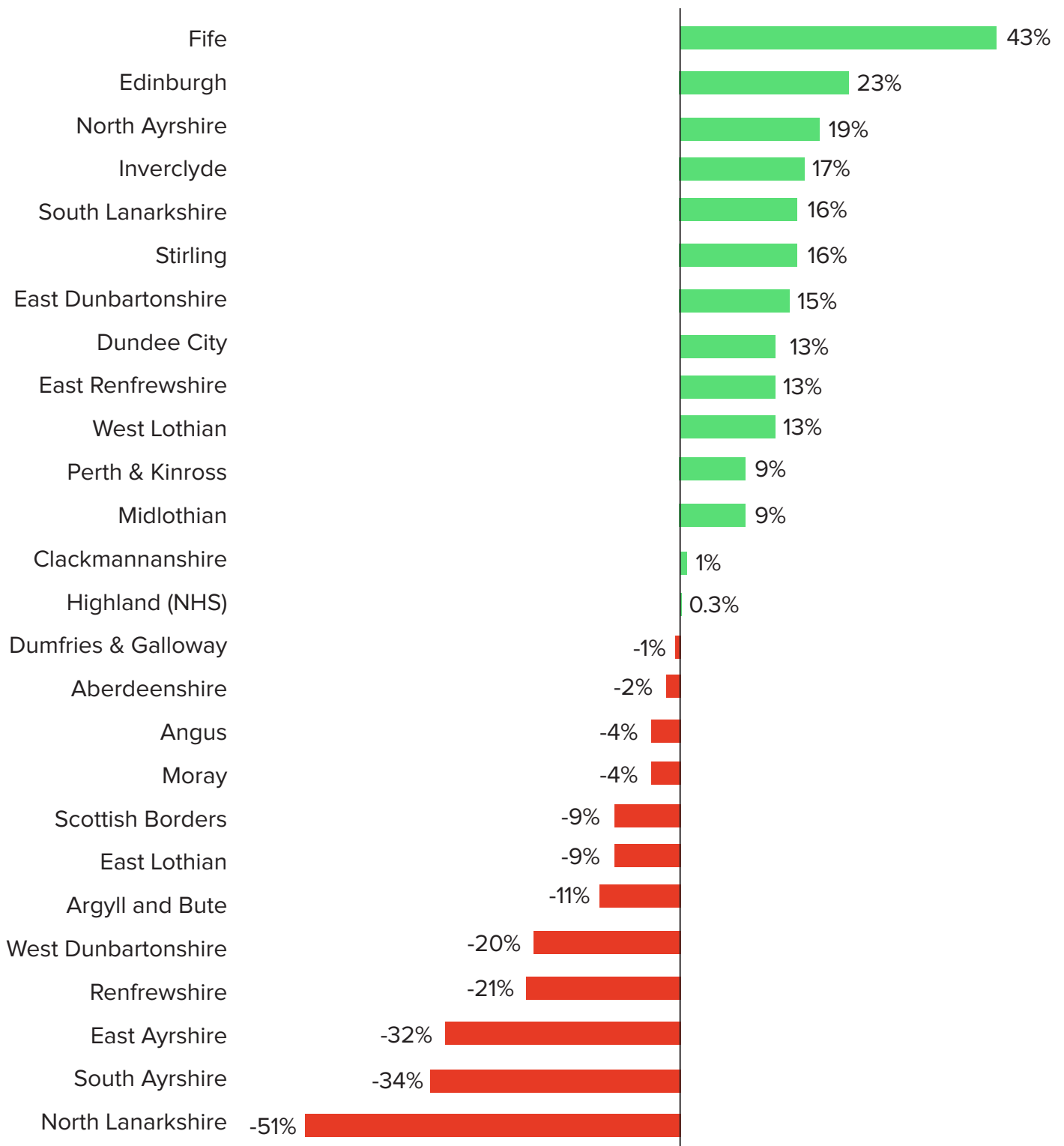
Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 47 care packages per council were handed back in Scotland in 2022-23, compared with 21 packages in 2021-22. Of those purchasing from the independent and voluntary sector, only nine authorities (29%) were able to provide this information for both years, thus hindering data quality.

In the table below, only councils that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

Figure 68. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in Scotland during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Council	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Aberdeen City	£21.41	£21.41	£21.41	3,227	£18.60	£2.81
Aberdeenshire	£22.42	£22.51	£22.48	14,667	£18.33	£4.15
Angus	£21.61	£38.75	£22.84	8,626	£19.90	£2.94
Argyll and Bute	£19.96	£25.52	£22.17	7,819	£19.06	£3.11
Clackmannanshire	£14.00	£24.27	£19.61	5,401	£17.67	£1.94
Dumfries & Galloway	£19.98	£32.95	£21.39	14,175	£17.86	£3.53
Dundee City	£20.82	£20.82	£20.82	11,248	£18.08	£2.74
East Ayrshire	£19.91	£19.91	£19.91	2,123	£17.44	£2.47
East Dunbartonshire	£19.98	£27.26	£22.85	8,630	£19.54	£3.31
East Lothian	£14.50	£60.41	£19.80	6,448	£18.02	£1.78
East Renfrewshire	£14.40	£40.90	£22.88	6,243	£17.95	£4.93
Edinburgh	£20.10	£28.95	£21.06	49,918	£19.36	£1.70
Falkirk	£20.66	£24.79	£22.45	-	£19.54	£2.91
Fife	£19.67	£26.18	£21.08	22,170	£18.39	£2.69
Glasgow	£17.34	£26.52	£20.71	19,781	£18.49	£2.22
Highland (NHS)	£22.45	£27.69	£25.06	10,470	£20.75	£4.31
Inverclyde	£20.83	£20.83	£20.83	1,254	£17.01	£3.82
Midlothian	-	-	£19.97	5,082	£19.26	£0.71
Moray	£15.00	£25.34	£20.54	4,782	£19.12	£1.42
Na h-Eileanan Siar	£25.31	£28.37	£26.36	36	-	-
North Ayrshire	£20.00	£20.00	£20.00	2,798	£17.75	£2.25
North Lanarkshire	-	-	-	4,674	£17.80	-
Orkney Islands	£22.00	£24.00	£23.00	253	-	-
Perth & Kinross	£22.19	£25.43	£23.33	8,679	£19.04	£4.29
Renfrewshire	£20.96	£25.35	£21.05	9,038	£17.85	£3.20
Scottish Borders	-	-	£22.25	4,622	£19.50	£2.75
South Ayrshire	£20.11	£20.11	£20.11	6,508	£17.37	£2.74
South Lanarkshire	£20.21	£20.21	£20.21	23,548	£17.43	£2.78
Stirling	£19.04	£37.29	£23.77	10,253	£22.64	£1.13
West Dunbartonshire	£17.83	£30.28	£18.83	2,015	£17.08	£1.75
West Lothian	£19.60	£22.60	£21.10	13,059	£18.97	£2.13

Figure 69. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by councils in Scotland between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



Northern Ireland

Key facts

£18.63

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.56 for
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

0

HSC Trusts paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for
Northern Ireland of £26.52 per hour

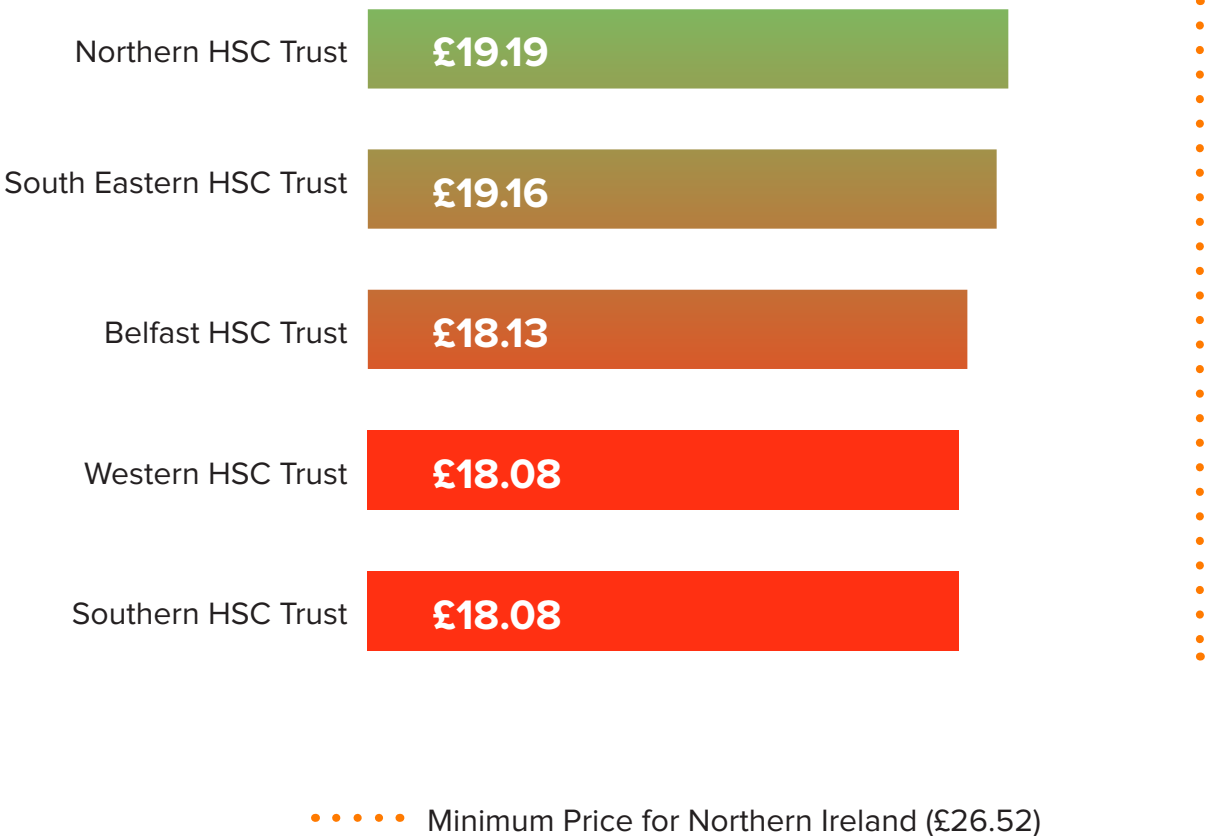
Lowest

weighted average in the 12
government regions/devolved
administrations of the UK

100%

of HSC Trusts had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
councils/HSC Trusts in the UK

Figure 70. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland during the 2023 sample week



All five HSC Trusts that purchase home-care from the independent and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 70, 71 and 72.

Northern HSC Trust provided information for a four-week period across February and March 2023 (similarly, February and March 2022), from which we estimated figures for a single week, as required. Moreover, their answers regarding care packages handed back in 2022-23 and 2021-22 referred to an earlier Freedom of Information request that they had handled – these figures were adjusted to suit the requirements of the Homecare Association’s request.

The weighted average price paid for older people’s homecare in Northern Ireland during the 2023 sample week was £18.63 per hour. This was the lowest in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom. In addition, the figure was £2.93 below the weighted average price for councils/HSC Trusts in the United Kingdom.

The weighted average has risen by 18% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the fifth-lowest percentage increase in the 12 government regions/devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, all five Trusts were in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom. Therefore, no Trust came close to paying an average at, or above, the

Homecare Association’s Minimum Price for Northern Ireland of £26.52 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual HSC Trusts in the administration ranged from £18.08 to £19.19 per hour – a difference of £1.11.

The lowest hourly rate for Trusts in Northern Ireland was £18.00 per hour, paid by South Eastern, while the highest was £24.34 per hour, paid by Northern. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 170,571.

Considering Trusts who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, there was an 8% increase in hours from 2022, with Belfast’s hours augmenting by 39%. Only one Trust (20%) reported a drop in hours between these years.

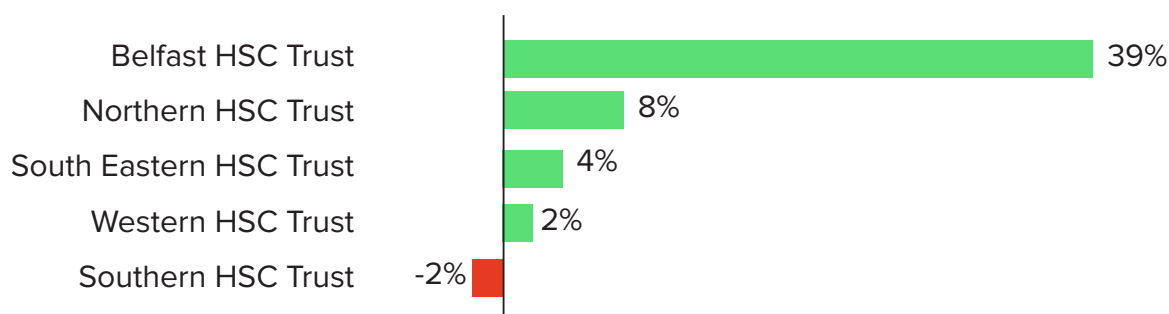
Where information was supplied for both years, an average of 130 care packages per HSC Trust were handed back in Northern Ireland in 2022-23, compared with 107 packages in 2021-22. All five Trusts were able to provide this information for both years.

In the table below, only HSC Trusts that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

Figure 71. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in Northern Ireland during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

HSC Trust	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Belfast	£18.08	£21.50	£18.13	29,270	£15.83	£2.30
Northern	£18.08	£24.34	£19.19	38,006	£16.89	£2.30
South Eastern	£18.00	£21.00	£19.16	46,520	£15.68	£3.48
Southern	£18.08	£18.08	£18.08	29,842	£15.34	£2.74
Western	£18.08	£18.08	£18.08	26,933	£14.21	£3.87

Figure 72. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



NHS bodies in England and Wales

Similar to our previous exercise in 2021, we sent our Freedom of Information request to NHS bodies in England, Wales and Scotland this year.

However, in Scotland, other than NHS Highland (whose response is entered in the government section above for analysis purposes), homecare services were not provided, or the information was not held by the regional NHS boards. Indeed, social care in Scotland is [generally purchased by local authorities](#) according to strategic

commissioning plans that are developed by Integration Joint Boards (note that [Highland has a different such arrangement](#)).

Therefore, average rates relating to England's NHS regions and NHS Wales are compared in Figures 73, 74 and 75.

Figure 73. Weighted average hourly prices paid for homecare in the NHS regions of England and by the NHS in Wales for the 2023 sample week



The NHS regions/administration showing the lowest weighted average hourly prices for homecare were London (£18.76) and Wales (£21.27). Of those that reported, none of the public organisations in these two regions

were in the top quartile of average prices among health bodies in England and Wales. Moreover, London and Wales had the smallest ranges between average prices for NHS bodies.

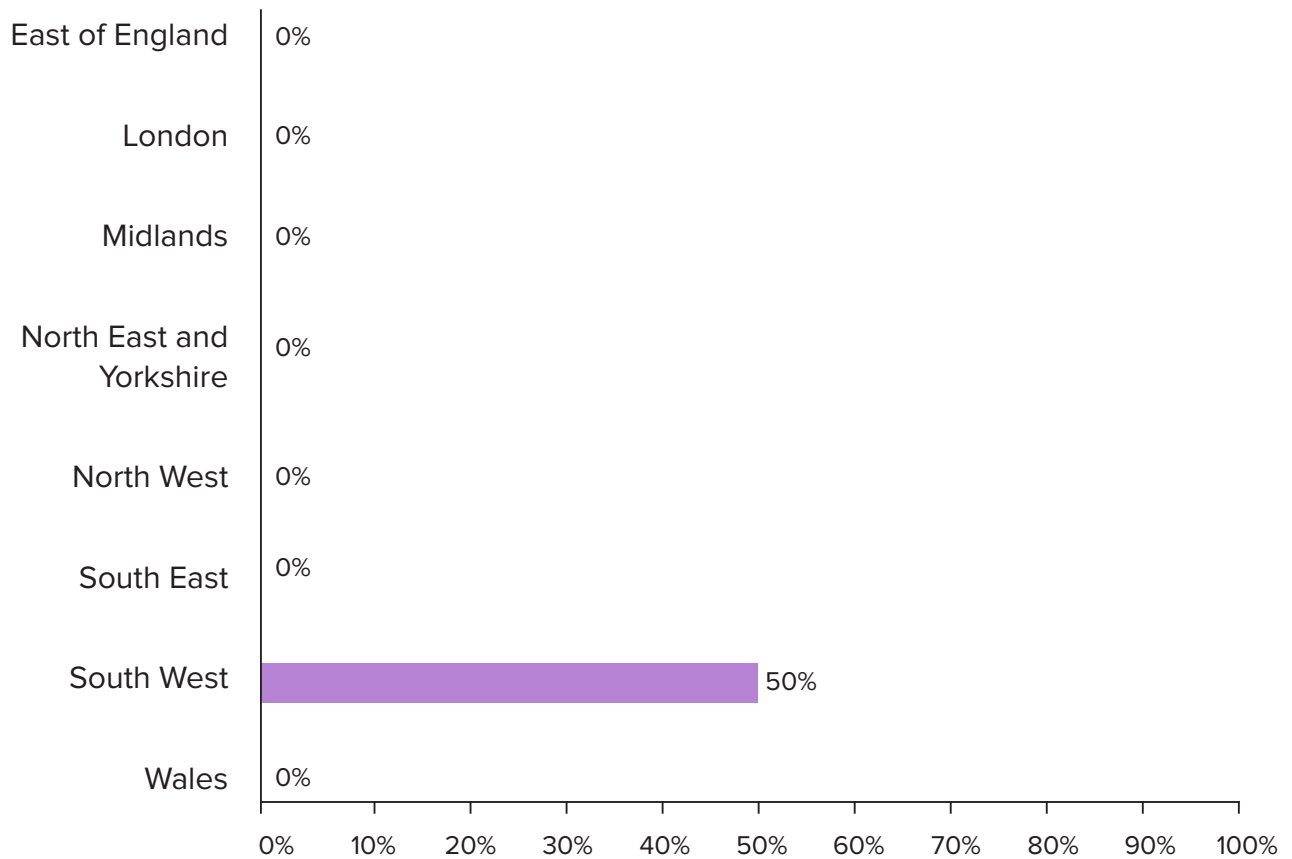
Figure 74. Average prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in the NHS regions of England and by the NHS in Wales during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

NHS region/ administration	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest average	Highest average	Hours	Weighted average	Weighted average	Difference in weighted average
East of England	£18.70	£25.64	20,220	£22.94	£20.08	£2.87
London	£18.07	£19.97	65,218	£18.76	£16.93	£1.84
Midlands	£17.96	£25.10	82,148	£21.61	£20.55	£1.06
North East and Yorkshire	£18.55	£25.65	25,132	£22.16	£17.85	£4.31
North West	£20.19	£23.85	33,144	£21.52	£18.12	£3.40
South East	£18.70	£25.42	17,769	£25.00	£22.89	£2.11
South West	£22.70	£26.52	20,553	£25.25	£20.87	£4.37
Wales	£20.43	£23.06	13,647	£21.27	£19.06	£2.21

The only NHS region/administration in which the average price of any health body reached or exceeded the respective nation's Minimum Price was the South West of England. In

Wales, no Local Health Board even attained a mark of £25.95 per hour (equivalent to the lower Minimum Price for England).

Figure 75. Proportion of health bodies in the NHS regions of England and NHS Wales whose average hourly price for homecare during the 2023 sample week was at, or above, the respective Minimum Price



Breakdown by NHS region/administration

Since the last Freedom of Information request in 2021, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in England have been abolished and replaced by Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). Some ICBs split their response by area (such as that of the former CCG) – in what follows, we explicitly state the type of health body area being referred to (if known), and where a breakdown has been provided, note the ICB that each NHS area is part of. Each area breakdown of an ICB is treated as a separate ‘health body’ for ease of analysis.

Furthermore, to enable comparison with 2021, we have considered [which CCG transitioned to each ICB](#). This is straightforward for when one CCG became the equivalent ICB. Where more than one CCG became part of a specific ICB, a weighted average of the relevant CCGs in 2021 has been calculated (as long as sufficient information to do so had been provided).

We also compare weighted average prices for government regions and NHS regions, despite the boundaries not necessarily being coterminous. When boundaries are clearly not coterminous, regions are grouped together to ensure a fairer contrast.

Where possible, charts have been included depicting the percentage change in hours purchased between the 2022 and 2023 sample weeks for individual bodies. Only organisations that provided data for both

years are shown. However, we have chosen not to contrast the total hours purchased by region, since only 43% of health bodies that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in England and Wales postulated the information for both years.

Moreover, even fewer health bodies were able to specify figures for care packages handed back in 2022-23 and 2021-22, so this also does not form part of our following analysis. **Thus, we only consider the questions on rates (lowest, highest and average), hours (2023 and 2022) and total spend.**

NB. For simplicity, we refer to NHS regions as, for example, NHS East of England, rather than using their full name (for example, NHS England – East of England).

NHS East of England

Key facts

£22.94

per hour weighted average, compared to £21.56 for the NHS in England

0

health bodies paid the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour

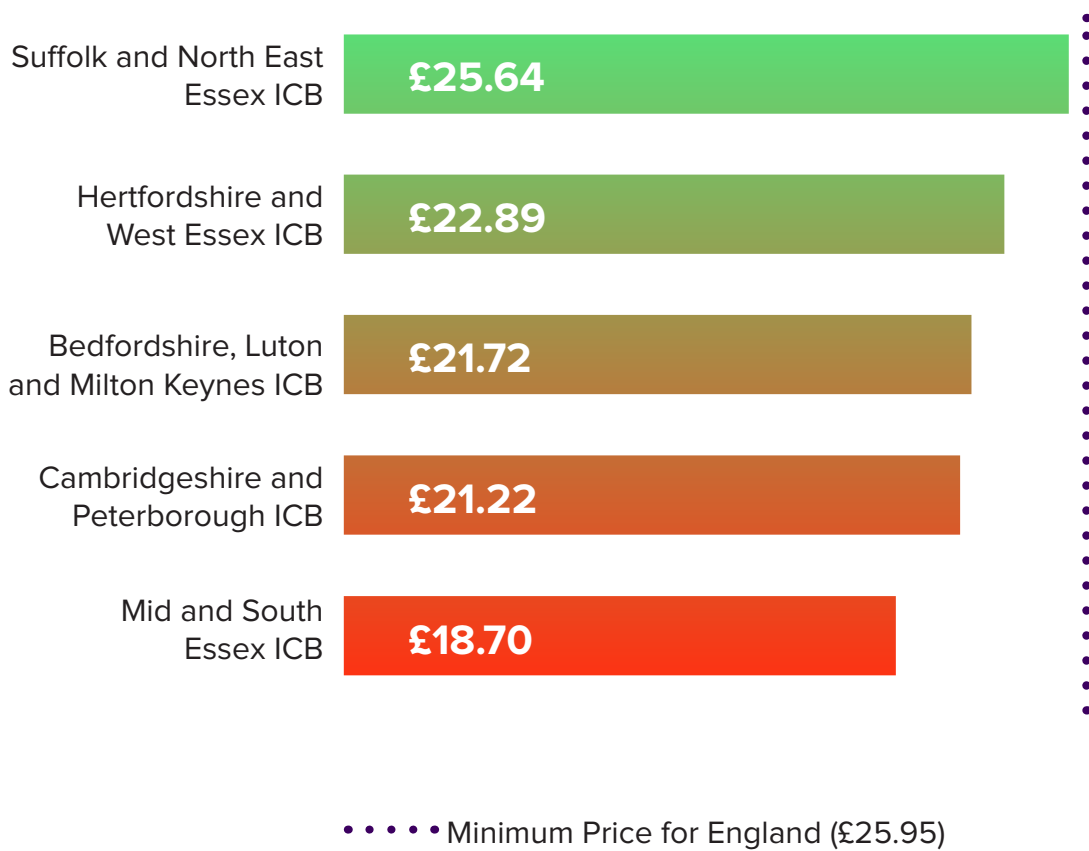
3rd highest

weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales

20%

of organisations had an average price in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales

Figure 76. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by health bodies in NHS East of England during the 2023 sample week



All six ICBs that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in NHS East of England responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 76 and 77.

Norfolk and Waveney ICB did not provide data for some questions, including their average rate. Meanwhile, Mid and South Essex ICB could not give lowest, highest and average rates for all providers, as this “would entail a vast data search of individual client casefiles.” The rates stated here, therefore, relate to the Mid Essex Alliance on weekdays for providers on their AQP [Any Qualified Provider] framework for 2022-23. Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB’s lowest rate was very small and so has been excluded.

Mid and South Essex ICB claimed an (assumed) exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on hours purchased in the 2023 and 2022 sample weeks. Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICB did likewise, but their 2023 hours, however, has been estimated from other data supplied by the health body.

The weighted average price paid for older people’s homecare in NHS East of England during the 2023 sample week was £22.94 per hour. This was the third-highest weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales. In addition, the figure was £1.38 above the weighted average price for the NHS in England, but £0.54 below that for the East of England government region.

The weighted average has risen by 14% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the fourth-highest percentage increase in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price,

one organisation (20%) was in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales, with one organisation (20%) in NHS East of England in the top quartile.

No health bodies were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association’s Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour. Indeed, Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB’s average dropped by £0.57, in cash terms, from 2021 (compared with the former CCGs that had provided data).

Average prices paid by individual bodies in the region ranged from £18.70 to £25.64 per hour – a difference of £6.94.

The lowest hourly rate for health bodies in NHS East of England was £12.64 per hour, paid by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB, while the highest was £53.55 per hour, paid by Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICB. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 20,220. Only one health body provided hours for both 2023 and 2022, so no graph is drawn to depict the information. This was Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB, whose hours fell by 19% between these years.

In the table below, only health bodies that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated. If more than one CCG became part of a specific ICB, any weighted average for 2021 that has been calculated or a 2021 average based on only one CCG (as insufficient information was available to compute a weighted average) are shown in red.

Figure 77. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in NHS East of England during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

NHS body/area	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICB	£19.27	£53.55	£21.72	5,581	£18.41	£3.31
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB	£12.64	£34.91	£21.22	6,036	£20.49	£0.73
Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB	-	£37.50	£22.89	2,176	£23.46	-£0.57
Mid and South Essex ICB	£15.29	£20.36	£18.70	-	£17.77	£0.93
Norfolk and Waveney ICB	£20.86	£23.37	-	-	£19.44	-
Suffolk and North East Essex ICB	£23.23	£30.77	£25.64	6,427	-	-

NHS London

Key facts

£18.76

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.56 for the
NHS in England

0

health bodies paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for England
of £25.95 per hour

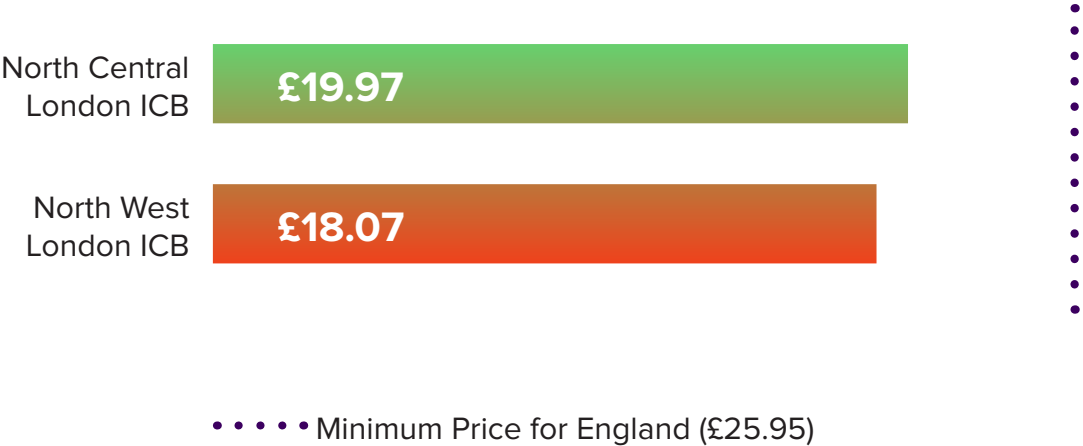
Lowest

weighted average in the eight NHS
regions/administration of England
and Wales

100%

of organisations had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
health bodies in England and Wales

Figure 78. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by health bodies in NHS London during the 2023 sample week



All five ICBs that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in NHS London responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 78, 79 and 80.

North East London ICB provided lowest, highest and average hourly rates, which we considered to be questionable. Therefore, these figures have not been used in the following analysis. Meanwhile, South East London ICB and South West London ICB each claimed a blanket exemption on all questions under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Thus, due to the small sample size, the following analysis should be treated with caution.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in NHS London during the 2023 sample week was £18.76 per hour. This was the lowest weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales. In addition, the figure was £2.80 below the weighted average price for the NHS in England and £0.25 below that for the Greater London government region.

The weighted average has risen by 11% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the third-lowest percentage increase in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales.

In 2023, the two organisations reporting an average price were both in the bottom

quartile among health bodies in England and Wales. Therefore, neither body came close to paying an average at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour.

The average prices paid by individual bodies in the region were £18.07 per hour (North West London ICB) and £19.97 per hour (North Central London ICB) – a difference of £1.90.

The lowest hourly rate for health bodies in NHS London was £13.14 per hour, while the highest was £87.10 per hour, both paid by North Central London ICB. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 65,218. Neither North Central London ICB nor North West London ICB reported a drop in hours between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023, with the latter's hours increasing by 39%.

In the table below, only health bodies that provided accepted data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated. If more than one CCG became part of a specific ICB, any weighted average for 2021 that has been calculated or a 2021 average based on only one CCG (as insufficient information was available to compute a weighted average) are shown in red.

Figure 79. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in NHS London during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

NHS body/area	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
North Central London ICB	£13.14	£87.10	£19.97	23,761	£17.12	£2.85
North West London ICB	£14.78	£34.76	£18.07	41,457	£16.75	£1.32

Figure 80. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by health bodies in NHS London between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



NHS Midlands

Key facts

£21.61

per hour weighted average, compared to £21.56 for the NHS in England

0

health bodies paid the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour

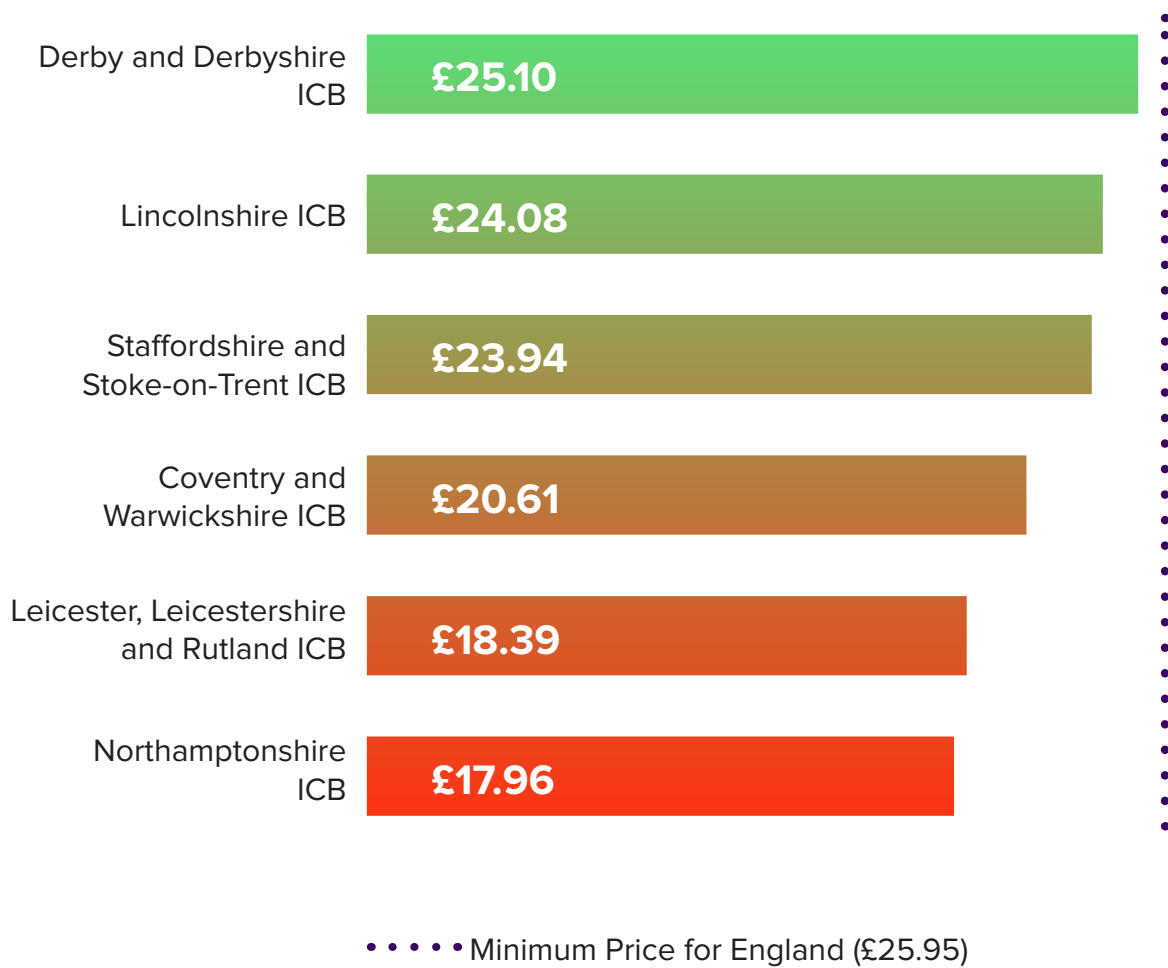
4th lowest

weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales

33%

of organisations had an average price in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales

Figure 81. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by health bodies in NHS Midlands during the 2023 sample week



All 11 ICBs that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in NHS Midlands responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 81, 82 and 83 (with Black Country ICB splitting their response).

Derby and Derbyshire ICB could not provide an average rate. Therefore, we have estimated this, based on an average of their hourly rates for standard and complex care (from their AQP [Any Qualified Provider] Framework for 2023-24) plus the median travel cost (for the 'semi-rural' travel area).

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICB provided information on their general and complex rates for 2022-23 (as uplifted rates had yet to be released). Their average was estimated from the data for their 'county zone' (as this was the travel area with the median rates).

Northamptonshire ICB's information on the hours in the 2023 and 2022 sample weeks did not answer the questions posed, so their 2023 hours have been estimated from other data supplied. Moreover, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB's lowest rate was very small and so has been excluded.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB claimed a blanket exemption on all questions under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Wolverhampton (Black Country ICB) also did not provide any information, exempting the 2022 sample week hours.

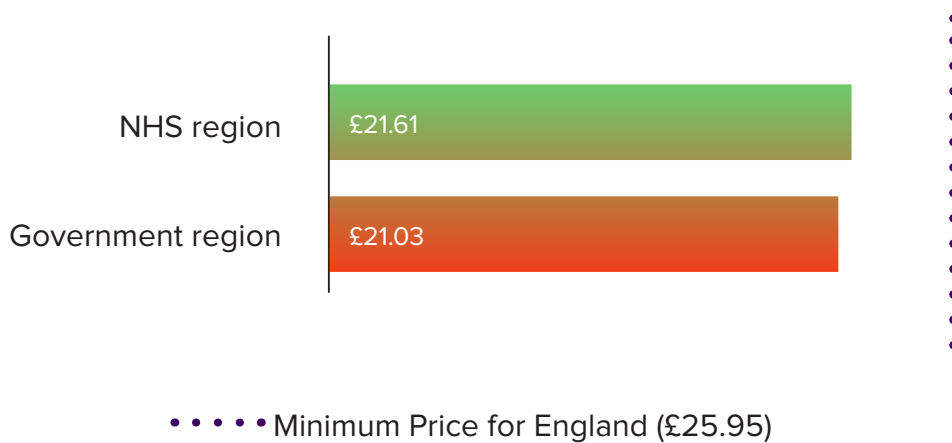
Birmingham and Solihull ICB, Sandwell (Black Country ICB), Walsall (Black Country ICB) and Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin ICB each only supplied a total spend figure (other information provided could not be used). Birmingham and Solihull ICB exempted the other questions of interest, while Sandwell and Walsall applied an exemption on the 2022 hours purchased.

Derby and Derbyshire ICB and Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICB exempted both the 2023 and 2022 hours – however, in each case, we were able to estimate their 2023 hours. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB also considered these two questions to be exempt, as well as that on the average rate.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in NHS Midlands during the 2023 sample week was £21.61 per hour. This was the fourth-lowest weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales. In addition, the figure was £0.06 above the weighted average price for the NHS in England.

To compare with the associated 'Midlands' government region, a weighted average was computed using councils in both the East Midlands and West Midlands. The following chart shows that the NHS figure was £0.58 above that for the government region.

Figure 82. Weighted average hourly price paid for homecare in NHS Midlands and the ‘Midlands’ government region during the 2023 sample week



The weighted average has risen by 5% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the lowest percentage increase in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, two organisations (33%) were in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales, with three organisations (50%) in NHS Midlands in the top quartile.

No health bodies were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association’s Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour. Nevertheless, Derby and Derbyshire ICB’s estimated average rose by £7.14, in cash terms, from 2021 (compared with the former CCG).

Average prices paid by individual bodies in the region ranged from £17.96 to £25.10 per hour – a difference of £7.14.

The lowest hourly rate for health bodies in NHS Midlands was £16.91 per hour, paid by Coventry and Warwickshire ICB, while the highest was £45.00 per hour, paid by Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 82,148. Only one health body provided reliable hours for both 2023 and 2022, so no graph is drawn to depict the information. This was Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB, whose hours grew by 14% between these years.

In the table below, only health bodies that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated. If more than one CCG became part of a specific ICB, any

weighted average for 2021 that has been calculated or a 2021 average based on only one CCG (as insufficient information was available to compute a weighted average) are shown in red.

Figure 83. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in NHS Midlands during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

NHS body/area	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Coventry and Warwickshire ICB	£16.91	£30.71	£20.61	18,789	-	-
Derby and Derbyshire ICB	£21.20	£29.43	£25.10	6,703	£17.96	£7.14
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICB	£17.44	£19.15	£18.39	11,403	£17.50	£0.89
Lincolnshire ICB	£22.18	£26.62	£24.08	18,524	-	-
Northamptonshire ICB	£17.09	£18.82	£17.96	12,639	-	-
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB	£20.25	£24.56	-	-	£18.55	-
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB	-	£45.00	£23.94	14,089	£22.70	£1.24

NHS North East and Yorkshire

Key facts

£22.16

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.56 for the
NHS in England

0

health bodies paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for England
of £25.95 per hour

4th highest

weighted average in the eight NHS
regions/administration of England
and Wales

13%

of organisations had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
health bodies in England and Wales

Figure 84. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by health bodies in NHS North East and Yorkshire during the 2023 sample week



All three ICBs that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in NHS North East and Yorkshire responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 84, 85 and 86 (with each splitting their response).

North East and North Cumbria ICB did not hold the information and recommended that the request be redirected to the local authorities in the North East (whose responses are included in the local government section of this report). Similarly, Sheffield CCG area (South Yorkshire ICB) advised to contact Sheffield City Council for the information.

Meanwhile, Bradford District and Craven, and Calderdale (both West Yorkshire ICB) each provided an average hourly rate, which we considered to be questionable. Therefore, these figures have not been used in the following analysis.

East Riding of Yorkshire HCP [Health and Care Partnership], Hull HCP, North Lincolnshire HCP and North Yorkshire HCP (all Humber and North Yorkshire ICB) claimed a blanket exemption on all questions under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Moreover, York HCP (Humber and North Yorkshire ICB) exempted the hours purchased in the 2022 sample week, while Bradford District and Craven and Calderdale (both West Yorkshire ICB) considered the 2023 and 2022 hours, as well as the total spend, to be exempt.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in NHS North East and Yorkshire during the 2023 sample week was £22.16 per hour. This was the fourth-highest weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales. In addition, the figure was £0.60 above the weighted average price for the NHS in England. To compare the NHS with the associated 'North' government region, please see the NHS North West section below.

The weighted average has risen by 24% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the highest percentage increase in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, one organisation (13%) was in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales, with one organisation (13%) in NHS North East and Yorkshire in the top quartile.

No health bodies were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual bodies in the region ranged from £18.55 to £25.65 per hour – a difference of £7.10.

The lowest hourly rate for health bodies in NHS North East and Yorkshire was £13.70 per hour, paid by York HCP (Humber and North Yorkshire ICB), while the highest was £57.33 per hour, paid by Calderdale (West Yorkshire ICB). Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

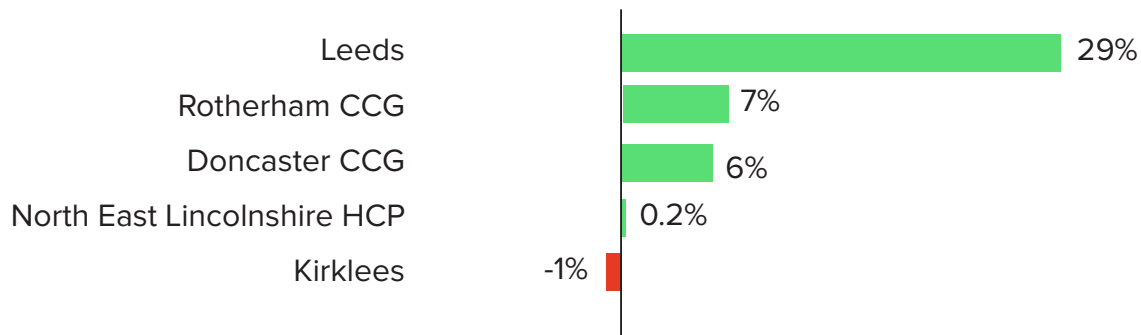
Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 25,132. Considering those who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, one health body (20%) reported a drop in hours between these years.

In the table below, only health bodies that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated. If more than one CCG became part of a specific ICB, any weighted average for 2021 that has been calculated or a 2021 average based on only one CCG (as insufficient information was available to compute a weighted average) are shown in red.

Figure 85. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in NHS North East and Yorkshire during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

NHS body/area	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Humber and North Yorkshire ICB – North East Lincolnshire HCP	£17.00	£23.00	£18.55	7,589	£15.64	£2.91
Humber and North Yorkshire ICB – York HCP	£13.70	£45.98	£25.65	5,041	-	-
South Yorkshire ICB – Barnsley CCG	£19.90	£25.60	£23.38	1,481	£18.41	£4.97
South Yorkshire ICB – Doncaster CCG	£15.00	£28.50	£23.37	3,389	£17.94	£5.43
South Yorkshire ICB – Rotherham CCG	£17.49	£32.75	£21.79	2,844	£17.26	£4.53
West Yorkshire ICB – Bradford District and Craven	£18.96	£44.88	-	-	£19.07	-
West Yorkshire ICB – Calderdale	£21.61	£57.33	-	-	-	-
West Yorkshire ICB – Kirklees	£23.10	£24.43	£23.13	2,052	£18.98	£4.15
West Yorkshire ICB – Leeds	£22.35	£24.96	£22.77	1,567	£19.18	£3.59
West Yorkshire ICB – Wakefield	£18.30	£27.50	£23.79	1,169	-	-

Figure 86. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by health bodies in NHS North East and Yorkshire between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



NHS North West

Key facts

£21.52

per hour weighted average,
compared to £21.56 for the
NHS in England

0

health bodies paid the Homecare
Association's Minimum Price for England
of £25.95 per hour

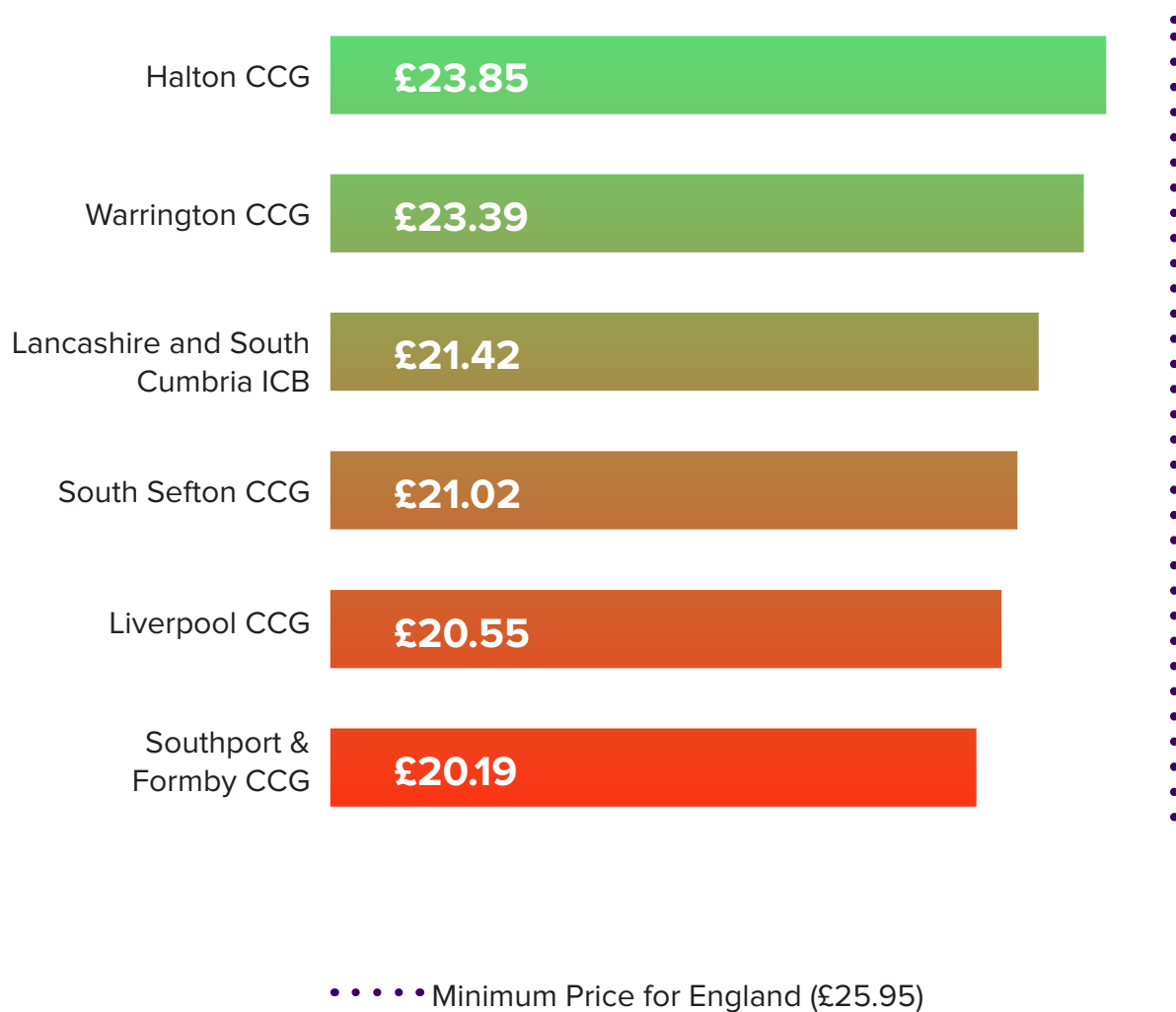
3rd lowest

weighted average in the eight NHS
regions/administration of England
and Wales

33%

of organisations had an average
price in the bottom quartile among
health bodies in England and Wales

Figure 87. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by health bodies in NHS North West during the 2023 sample week



Both ICBs that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in NHS North West responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 87, 88, 89 and 90 (with Cheshire and Merseyside ICB splitting their response).

Greater Manchester ICB concluded that they do not commission homecare services, as defined in the request. Knowsley CCG and St Helens CCG areas (both Cheshire and Merseyside ICB) did not hold the information and recommended that the request be redirected to Knowsley Council and St Helens Borough Council respectively (whose responses are included in the local government section of this report).

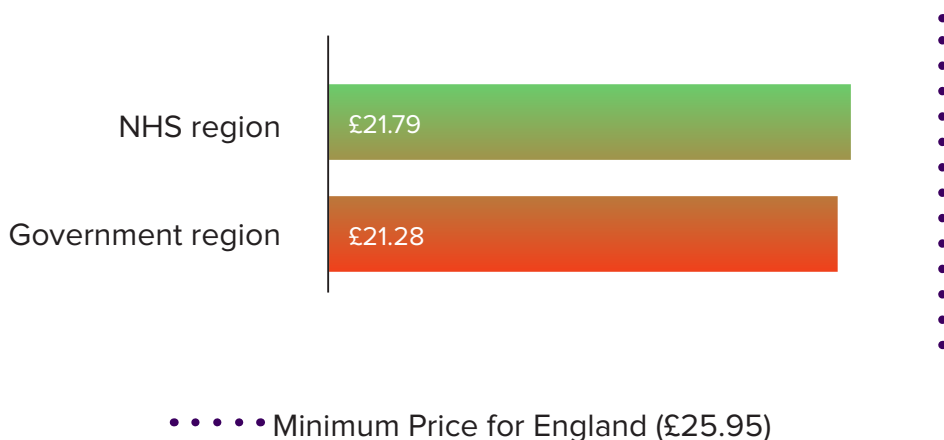
Within Cheshire and Merseyside ICB, Wirral CCG area could not provide some of the information (including the average rate), while Cheshire CCG area was only able to supply a total spend figure.

Elsewhere, Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB's lowest rate was very small and so has been excluded.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in NHS North West during the 2023 sample week was £21.52 per hour. This was the third-lowest weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales. In addition, the figure was £0.04 below the weighted average price for the NHS in England.

To compare with the associated 'North' government region, a weighted average was computed using health bodies in both NHS North East and Yorkshire, and NHS North West. This process was repeated using councils in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and The Humber government regions. The following chart shows that the NHS number is £0.51 above that for the government region.

Figure 88. Weighted average hourly price paid for homecare in the ‘North’ NHS and government region for the 2023 sample week



The weighted average has risen by 19% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the third-highest percentage increase in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, two organisations (33%) were in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales, with one organisation (17%) in NHS North West in the top quartile.

No health bodies were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association’s Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour. Indeed, the average of Southport & Formby CCG area (Cheshire and Merseyside ICB) dropped by £0.49, in cash terms, from 2021.

Average prices paid by individual bodies in the region ranged from £20.19 to £23.85 per hour – a difference of £3.66.

The lowest hourly rate for health bodies in NHS North West was £10.47 per hour, paid by Liverpool CCG area (Cheshire and Merseyside ICB), while the highest was £50.00 per hour, paid by Lancashire and

South Cumbria ICB. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

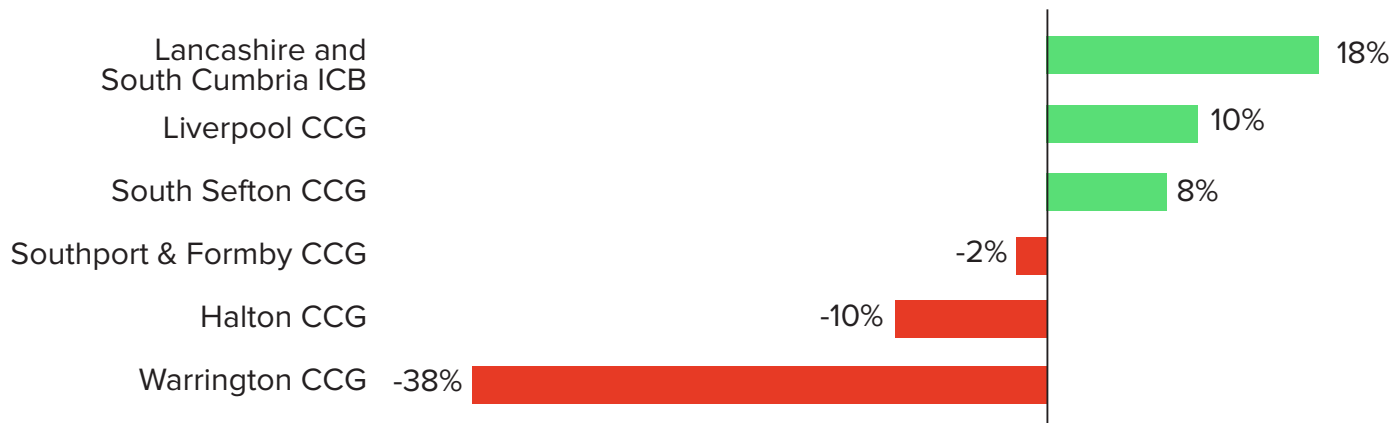
Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 33,144. Considering those who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, three health bodies (50%) reported a drop in hours between these years, including Warrington CCG area (Cheshire and Merseyside ICB) whose decrease was by 38%.

In the table below, only health bodies that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated. If more than one CCG became part of a specific ICB, any weighted average for 2021 that has been calculated or a 2021 average based on only one CCG (as insufficient information was available to compute a weighted average) are shown in red.

Figure 89. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in NHS North West during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

NHS body/area	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Cheshire and Merseyside ICB – Halton CCG	£15.40	£39.76	£23.85	1,942	£22.12	£1.73
Cheshire and Merseyside ICB – Liverpool CCG	£10.47	£42.21	£20.55	2,732	£16.37	£4.18
Cheshire and Merseyside ICB – South Sefton CCG	£14.06	£29.32	£21.02	1,566	£20.68	£0.34
Cheshire and Merseyside ICB – Southport & Formby CCG	£16.80	£27.20	£20.19	1,191	£20.68	-£0.49
Cheshire and Merseyside ICB – Warrington CCG	£16.70	£39.76	£23.39	1,565	£20.32	£3.07
Cheshire and Merseyside ICB – Wirral CCG	£21.72	£32.60	-	-	-	-
Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB	-	£50.00	£21.42	24,148	£18.56	£2.86

Figure 90. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by health bodies in NHS North West between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



NHS South East

Key facts

£25.00

per hour weighted average, compared to £21.56 for the NHS in England

0

health bodies paid the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour

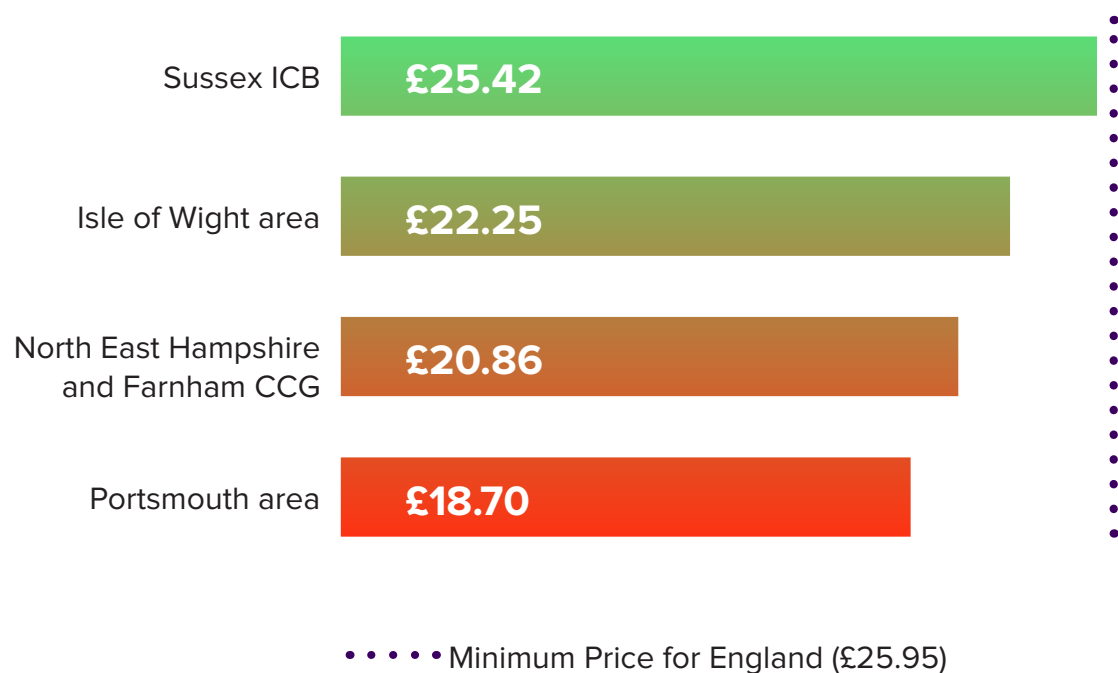
2nd highest

weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales

25%

of organisations had an average price in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales

Figure 91. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by health bodies in NHS South East during the 2023 sample week



All six ICBs that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in NHS South East responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 91, 92 and 93 (with Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB, Frimley ICB and Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB each splitting their response).

Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire (both Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB), as well as Surrey Heath CCG area (Frimley ICB), did not hold the information; Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire noted that services are commissioned by the respective local authorities, while Surrey Heath's services are undertaken by Surrey Heartlands ICB. Yet, this ICB, together with Berkshire West (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB) and East Berkshire CCG area (Frimley ICB) could only provide the total spend out of our six questions of interest – in the latter case, rates could only be given as weekly costs and the spend figure was questionable.

The hours of North East Hampshire and Farnham CCG area (Frimley ICB) in the 2023 and 2022 sample weeks also appeared debatable and have not been included in our analysis. The same body's lowest rate was also very small and so has been excluded. Meanwhile, Kent and Medway ICB only supplied their lowest and highest rates.

North and Mid Hampshire, South East Hampshire and South West Hampshire areas (all Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB) each claimed an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the questions relating to the lowest, highest and average hourly rates.

Southampton area (Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB) exempted the 2023 and 2022 hours, while their specified average price seemed doubtful (and so is not used).

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in NHS South East during the 2023 sample week was £25.00 per hour. This was the second-highest weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales. In addition, the figure was £3.45 above the weighted average price for the NHS in England, and £0.76 above that for the South East government region.

The weighted average has risen by 9% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the second-lowest percentage increase in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, one organisation (25%) was in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales, with one organisation (25%) in NHS South East in the top quartile.

No health bodies were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour. Indeed, the average of North East Hampshire and Farnham CCG area (Frimley ICB) decreased by £1.63, in cash terms, from 2021.

Average prices paid by individual bodies in the region ranged from £18.70 to £25.42 per hour – a difference of £6.72.

The lowest hourly rate for health bodies in NHS South East was £10.69 per hour, paid by Portsmouth area (Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB), while the highest was £100.50 per hour, paid by Sussex ICB. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 17,769. Considering those who provided

data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, three health bodies (50%) reported a drop in hours between these years. It should though be noted that two of these, North and Mid Hampshire, and South East Hampshire areas (both Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB) purchased very few hours. However, the other, Isle of Wight area (same ICB), experienced a 64% decrease in hours.

In the table below, only health bodies that provided data on at least one of the lowest

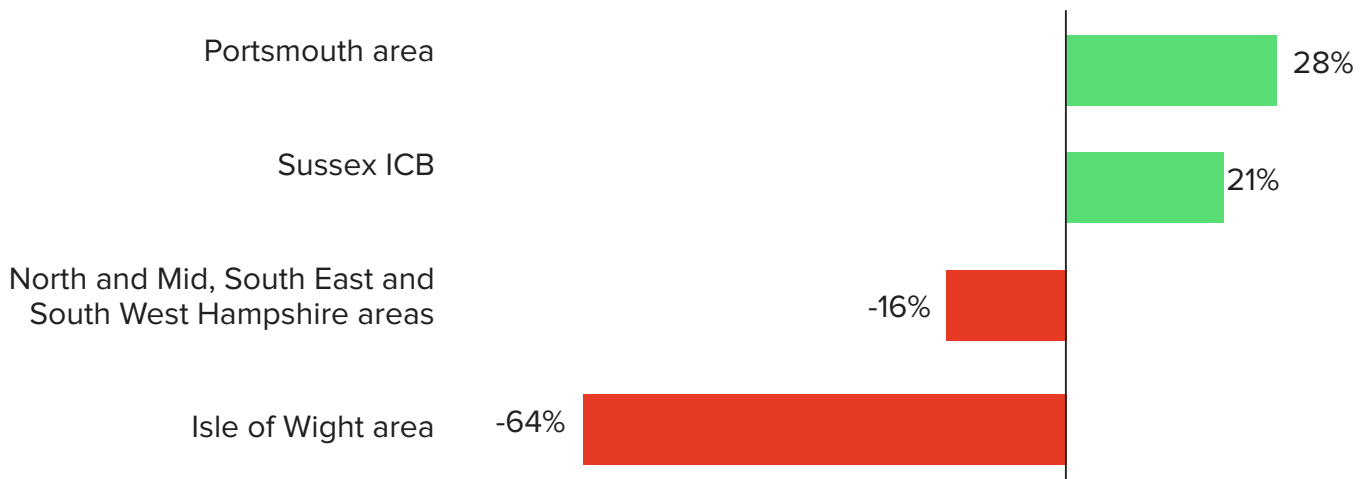
price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated. If more than one CCG became part of a specific ICB, any weighted average for 2021 that has been calculated or a 2021 average based on only one CCG (as insufficient information was available to compute a weighted average) are shown in red.

Figure 92. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in NHS South East during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

NHS body/area	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Frimley ICB – North East Hampshire and Farnham CCG	-	£47.78	£20.86	-	£22.49	-£1.63
Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB – Isle of Wight area	£12.56	£25.00	£22.25	520	£19.83	£2.42
Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB – North and Mid Hampshire area	-	-	-	138	-	-
Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB – South East Hampshire area	-	-	-	86	-	-
Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB – South West Hampshire area	-	-	-	95	-	-
Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB – Southampton area	£10.70	£23.00	-	-	£20.25	-
Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB – Portsmouth area	£10.69	£24.77	£18.70	837	-	-
Kent and Medway ICB	£13.42	£34.61	-	-	-	-
Sussex ICB	£11.59	£100.50	£25.42	16,094	£23.70	£1.72

NB. In the following graph, the hours for North and Mid Hampshire, South East Hampshire and South West Hampshire areas (all Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB) have been pooled together due to the minimal quantity of hours purchased.

Figure 93. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by health bodies in NHS South East between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



NHS South West

Key facts

£25.25

per hour weighted average, compared to £21.56 for the NHS in England

②

health bodies paid the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour

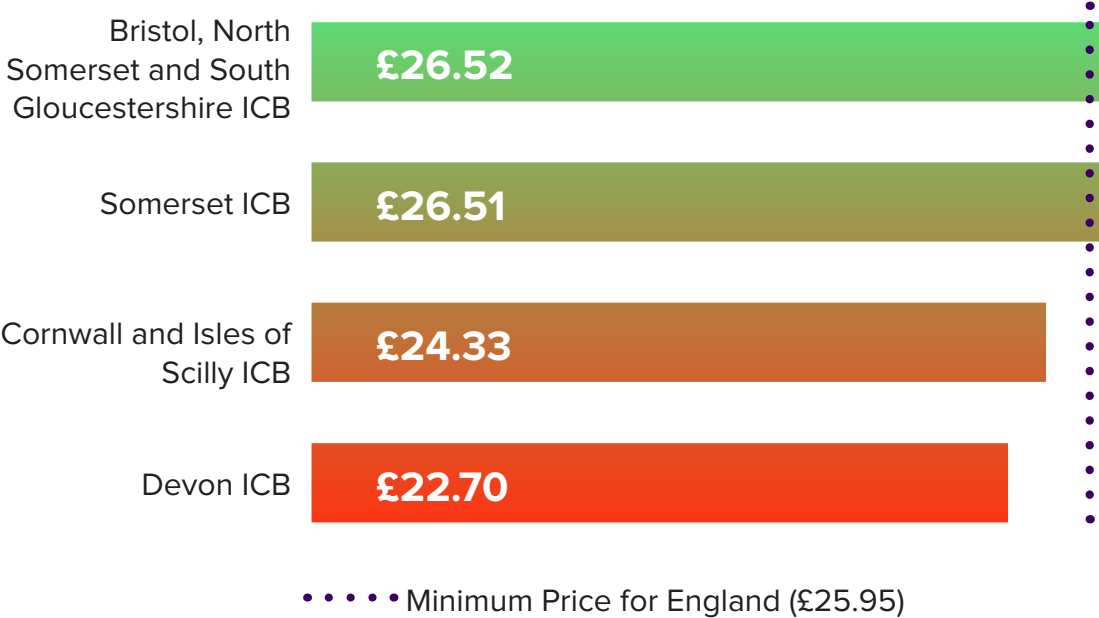
Highest

weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales

0%

of organisations had an average price in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales

Figure 94. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by health bodies in NHS South West during the 2023 sample week



All five ICBs that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector in NHS South West responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 94, 95 and 96.

Both Dorset ICB and Gloucestershire ICB did not hold the information and recommended that the request be redirected to Dorset Council/BCP Council and Gloucestershire County Council respectively (whose responses are included in the local government section of this report).

Devon ICB's lowest rate related to live-in care packages with an average over a 24-hour period and so has been excluded.

Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire ICB could only provide their lowest and highest hourly rates, with this body claiming an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the average price question.

The weighted average price paid for older people's homecare in NHS South West during the 2023 sample week was £25.25 per hour. This was the highest weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales. In addition, the figure was £3.69 above the weighted average price for the NHS in England, and £0.85 above that for the South West government region.

The weighted average has risen by 21% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the second-highest percentage increase in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, no organisations were in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales, with three organisations (75%) in NHS South West in the top quartile.

Two health bodies (Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB, and Somerset ICB) were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for England of £25.95 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual bodies in the region ranged from £22.70 to £26.52 per hour – a difference of £3.82.

The lowest hourly rate for health bodies in NHS South West was £18.97 per hour, paid by Cornwall and Isles of Scilly ICB, while the highest was £93.45 per hour, paid by Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire ICB. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 20,553.

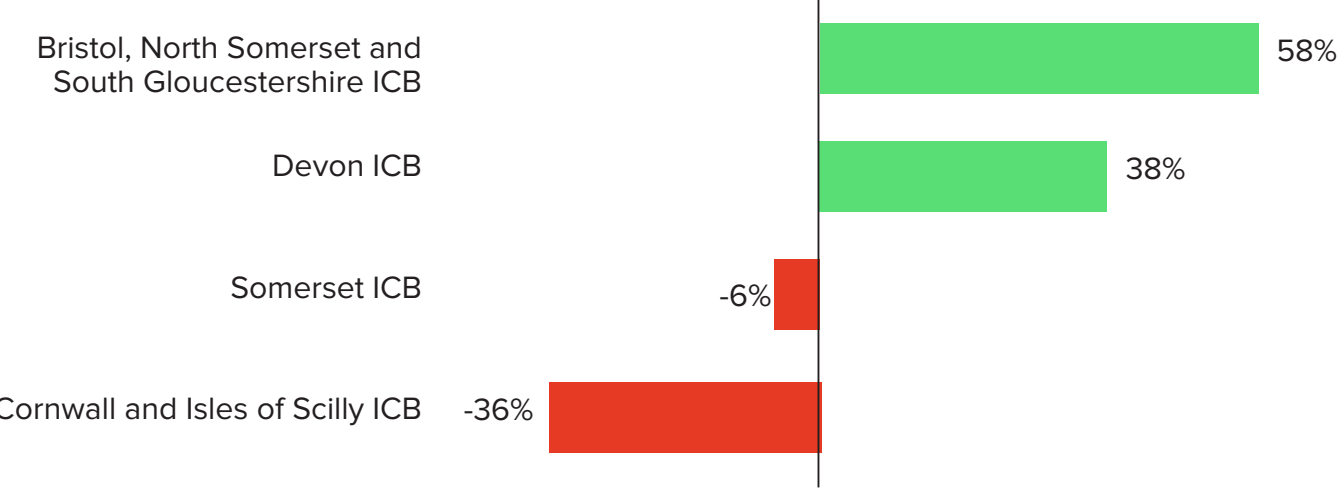
Considering those who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, two health bodies (50%) reported a drop in hours between these years, with Cornwall and Isles of Scilly ICB's hours decreasing by 36%. In contrast, hours purchased by Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB grew by 58%.

In the table below, only health bodies that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated. If more than one CCG became part of a specific ICB, any weighted average for 2021 that has been calculated or a 2021 average based on only one CCG (as insufficient information was available to compute a weighted average) are shown in red.

Figure 95. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in NHS South West during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

NHS body/area	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire ICB	£23.76	£93.45	-	-	-	-
Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB	£19.43	£46.75	£26.52	9,596	£22.02	£4.50
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly ICB	£18.97	£27.50	£24.33	1,546	£20.70	£3.63
Devon ICB	-	£39.68	£22.70	5,950	£18.36	£4.34
Somerset ICB	£21.40	£30.80	£26.51	3,461	£20.86	£5.65

Figure 96. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by health bodies in NHS South West between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



NHS Wales

Key facts

£21.27

per hour weighted average, compared to £21.54 for the NHS in England and Wales

0

health bodies paid the Homecare Association's Minimum Price for Wales of £28.64 per hour

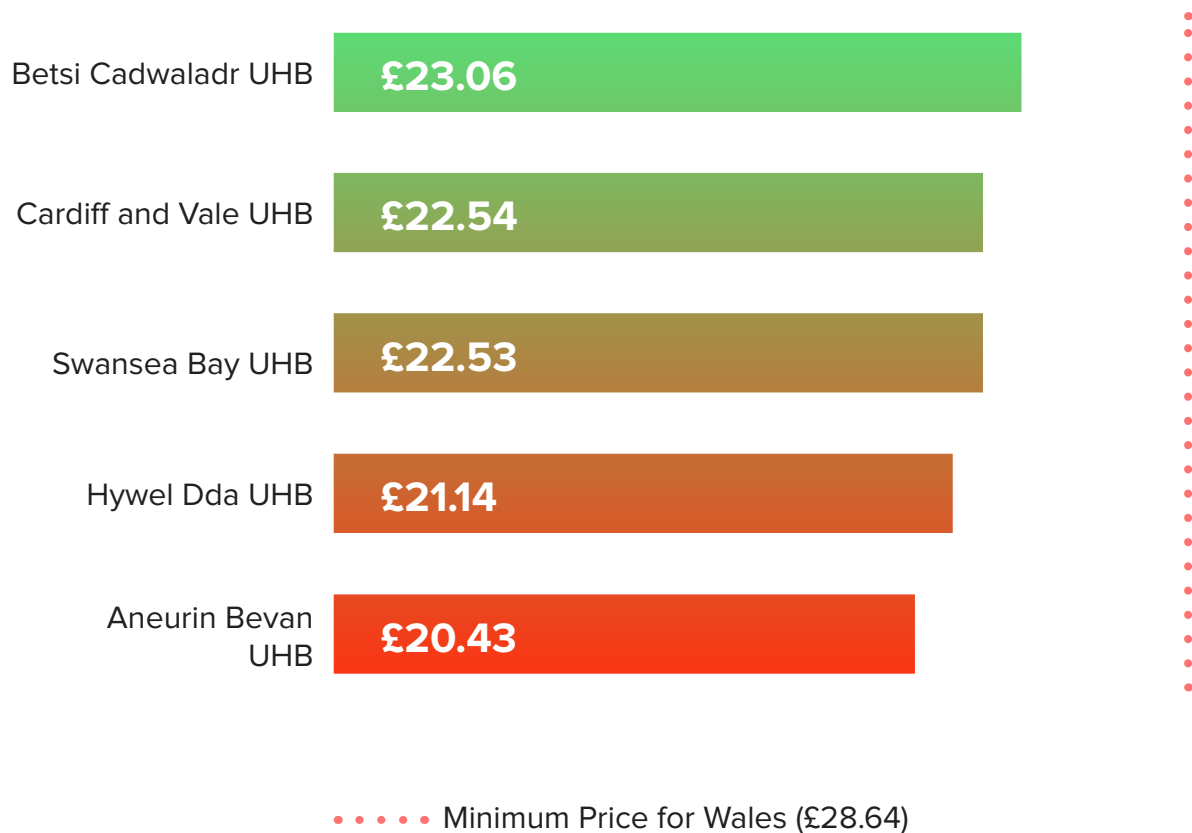
2nd lowest

weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales

20%

of organisations had an average price in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales

Figure 97. Average hourly prices paid for homecare by health bodies in NHS Wales during the 2023 sample week



In Wales, the NHS is split into seven Local Health Boards that use the operational name of University Health Board (UHB) or Teaching Health Board (THB), each of which purchases homecare from the independent and voluntary sector.

All seven Local Health Boards responded to the request for information, as summarised in Figures 97, 98 and 99.

From our six questions of interest, Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB could only provide a total spend figure, as they “record the total package and not the hourly rate/hours” via spot purchasing of homecare.

Meanwhile, Powys THB claimed an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on all questions except that for the total spend.

The weighted average price paid for older people’s homecare in NHS Wales during the 2023 sample week was £21.27 per hour. This was the second-lowest weighted average in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales. In addition, the figure was £0.27 below the weighted average price for the NHS in England and Wales, and £2.92 below that for the Wales government administration.

The weighted average has risen by 12% since the Homecare Association undertook a similar Freedom of Information enquiry in 2021. This was the fourth-lowest percentage increase in the eight NHS regions/administration of England and Wales.

In 2023, of those reporting an average price, one organisation (20%) was in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales, with no organisations in NHS Wales in the top quartile.

No Local Health Boards were paying an average price at, or above, the Homecare Association’s Minimum Price for Wales of £28.64 per hour.

Average prices paid by individual bodies in the administration ranged from £20.43 to £23.06 per hour – a difference of £2.63.

The lowest hourly rate for health bodies in NHS Wales was £13.50 per hour, paid by Hywel Dda UHB, while the highest was £44.99 per hour, paid by Swansea Bay UHB. Both these figures should be regarded as outliers, as indeed should the lowest and highest hourly rates stated by most organisations, since they are likely to be paid in exceptional circumstances.

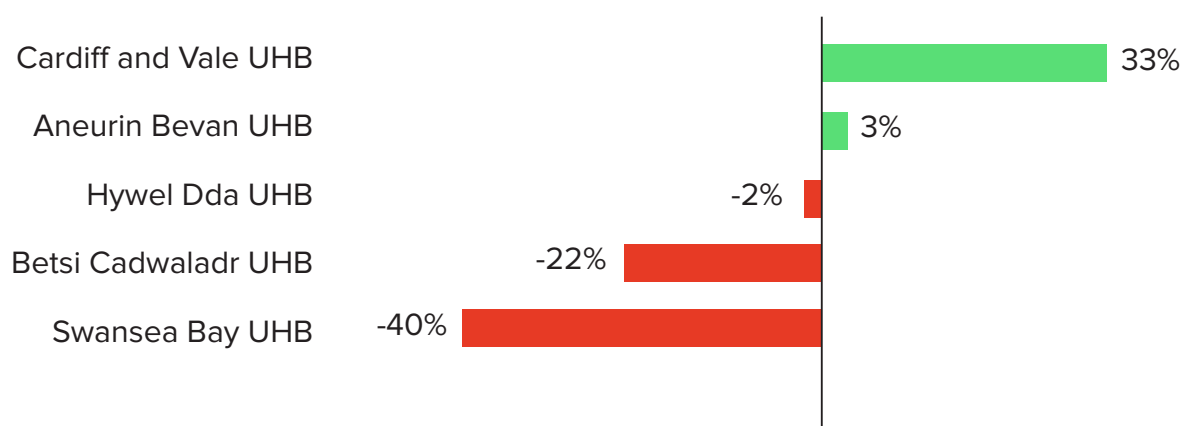
Of those that provided the information, the total number of hours of homecare purchased in the 2023 sample week was 13,647. Considering those who provided data for sample weeks in both 2022 and 2023, three health bodies (60%) reported a drop in hours between these years. These included Swansea Bay UHB, whose hours decreased by 40% and whose average rate has fallen by £1.24, in cash terms, from 2021.

In the table below, only Local Health Boards that provided data on at least one of the lowest price, highest price, average price and hours in 2023 are shown. Information excluded or not supplied is indicated.

Figure 98. Prices paid per hour and the hours of homecare purchased in NHS Wales during the 2023 sample week, compared with the 2021 sample week

Local Health Board	2023				2021	Since 2021
	Lowest price	Highest price	Average price	Hours	Average price	Difference in average price
Aneurin Bevan UHB	£16.32	£26.11	£20.43	6,368	-	-
Betsi Cadwaladr UHB	£21.41	£28.13	£23.06	1,184	£18.18	£4.88
Cardiff and Vale UHB	£17.25	£30.00	£22.54	1,418	-	-
Hywel Dda UHB	£13.50	£31.49	£21.14	3,168	£20.79	£0.35
Swansea Bay UHB	£18.00	£44.99	£22.53	1,509	£23.77	-£1.24

Figure 99. Percentage change in the hours of homecare purchased by health bodies in NHS Wales between the sample weeks of 2022 and 2023



Appendices

Appendix 1. Methodology, responses and analysis

Freedom of Information request

As previously mentioned, the Homecare Association contacted every local authority, HSC Trust, ICB, Local Health Board and regional NHS Board in the United Kingdom that has responsibility for commissioning homecare for older people (aged 65 years and over) with a request for information using the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 accordingly.

Each public organisation was specifically asked to provide the following information, in relation to a seven-day ‘reference period’ (or ‘sample week’) which included Monday, 17 April 2023 for the provision of regulated homecare services:

- (a) The lowest rate per hour paid to any individual homecare provider during the reference period, expressed in pounds and pence per hour.
- (b) The highest rate per hour paid to any individual homecare provider during the reference period, expressed in pounds and pence per hour.
- (c) The average (“arithmetic mean”) price per hour paid to all homecare providers for all hours of homecare services purchased during the reference period, expressed in pounds and pence per hour.

- (d) The total hours of homecare purchased from all homecare providers during the reference period.
- (e) The total hours of homecare purchased from all homecare providers during a seven-day period which includes Monday, 18 April 2022 (i.e. the figure which provides a like-for-like comparison with item (d), above, for the previous year).
- (f) Your organisation’s total spend on homecare services purchased from all homecare providers during the reference period.
- (g) The total number of care packages handed back by all homecare providers between Friday, 1 April 2022 and Friday, 31 March 2023.
- (h) The total number of care packages handed back by all homecare providers between Thursday, 1 April 2021 and Thursday, 31 March 2022 (i.e. the figure which provides a like-for-like comparison with item (g), above, for the previous year).

Questions (a)-(h) referred to homecare services exclusively. The following questions, (i) and (j), related to all social care services, including homecare services.

- (i) The total number of people aged 65 years and over who were awaiting assessment, review or the start of a care service on Monday, 17 April 2023 (or on a date as close to this as possible).

(j) The total number of people aged 65 years and over who were awaiting assessment, review or the start of a care service on Monday, 18 April 2022 (or on a date as close to this as possible) (i.e. the figure which provides a like-for-like comparison with item (i), above, for the previous year).

NB. Due to the inconsistent information provided by organisations in answer to (i) and (j), these questions have not been analysed and so do not otherwise feature in this report.

Questions (a)-(f) were repeated (with new dates) from the previous Freedom of Information exercise in 2021 to enable comparison, while other questions were new additions. Moreover, the week in April was chosen to allow public organisations reasonable time to have implemented price increases for the National Living Wage (and National Minimum Wage), which came into effect on 1 April 2023.

As guidance to select the correct data sample in answer to the request, each organisation was asked to **include**:

- Homecare delivered by independent and voluntary sector homecare providers.
- Services delivered to adults aged 65 years and over.
- Services which are primarily designed to provide personal care and support, including prompting people to undertake such activities for themselves.
- The care element (only) of services delivered in 'extra care housing' or 'supported living' schemes (i.e. excluding any payment for providing housing or housing services).

Each organisation was asked to **exclude**:

- Services provided to adults under the age of 65 years.
- Services which are charged by reference to a unit price, other than a price per hour (or part thereof).

- Any payments made directly to people in lieu of the provision of services by your organisation (e.g. a direct payment).
- Services provided by any 'in-house' homecare team, where the workforce is employed by your organisation.

In case of doubt, organisations were advised to apply a 'common-sense' interpretation to the request.

The sample size

Excluding those who do not purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector, all 280 public organisations responded to the Freedom of Information request. With some ICBs splitting their response by area (and each area thus being counted as a distinct 'organisation'), the overall number of responses was higher than the number of requests sent.

Figure 100 contemplates the organisations that answered all of questions (a)-(d), which we consider to be the four 'core questions' (i.e. lowest, highest and average rates, as well as the 2023 sample week hours).

Occasionally, the total spend and one of the average price or number of hours was provided. In this case, the Homecare Association could estimate a missing figure using the formula (or variant thereof):

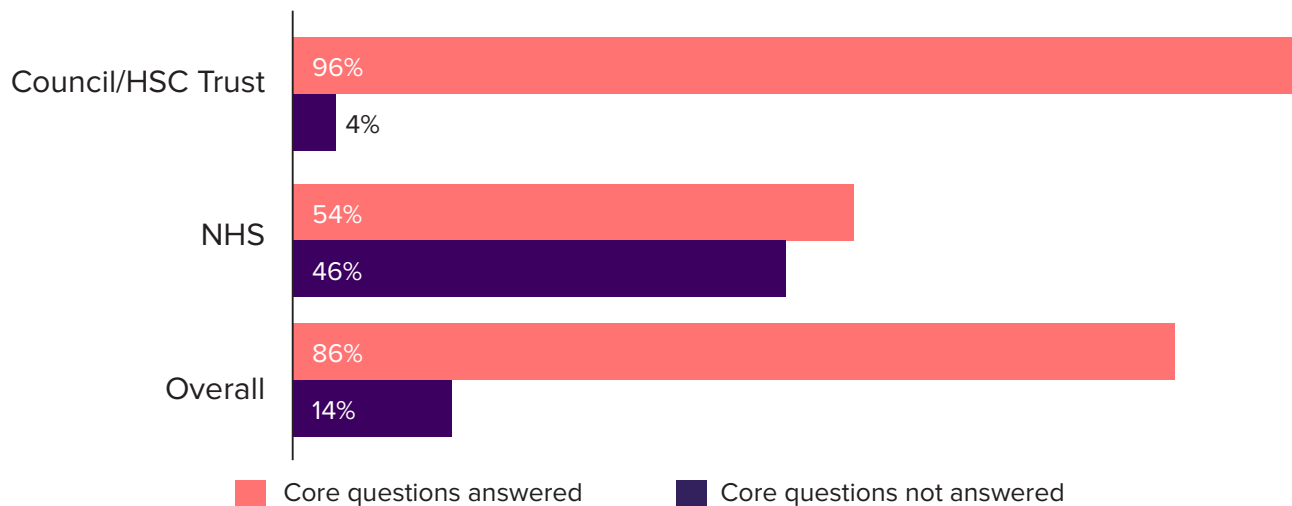
$$\text{Total spend} = \text{Average price} \times \text{Number of hours}$$

Such responses were included among those that answered the core questions.

However, the opposite was true if, for example, an exemption had been claimed or the information had been provided, but was not accepted by the Homecare Association.

As a result, a much higher proportion of NHS bodies (46%) failed to answer all of these questions compared to councils/HSC Trusts (4%). Nevertheless, 86% of organisations overall were able to supply the information.

Figure 100. Proportion of councils/HSC Trusts, NHS bodies and organisations overall that did/did not answer all four core questions in the 2023 Freedom of Information request



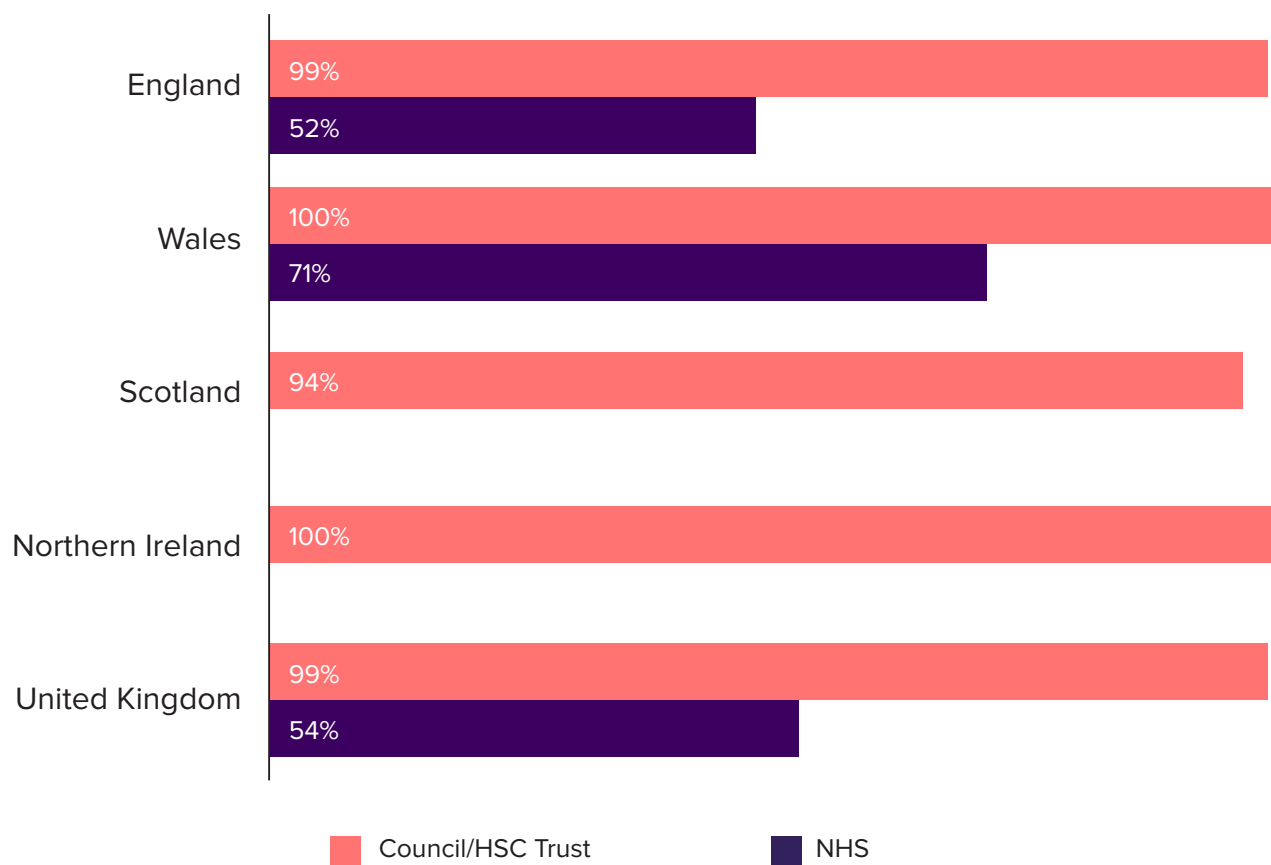
Further to this, 88% of organisations overall purchasing homecare externally supplied both an average price and the hours of homecare for the 2023 sample week, which could then be used in our weighted average calculations.

However, as above, the provision of this information varied significantly between councils/HSC Trusts and NHS bodies, with

a difference of 44 percentage points for the United Kingdom as a whole.

The Homecare Association is as confident as possible that the weighted average prices for England’s government and NHS regions, as well as for the devolved administrations and the NHS in Wales, provide a representative picture of reality.

Figure 101. Proportion of councils/HSC Trusts and NHS bodies (where relevant) in each administration and the United Kingdom that were included in weighted average calculations for the 2023 sample week



Speed of response

Each public organisation was sent the Freedom of Information request by email.

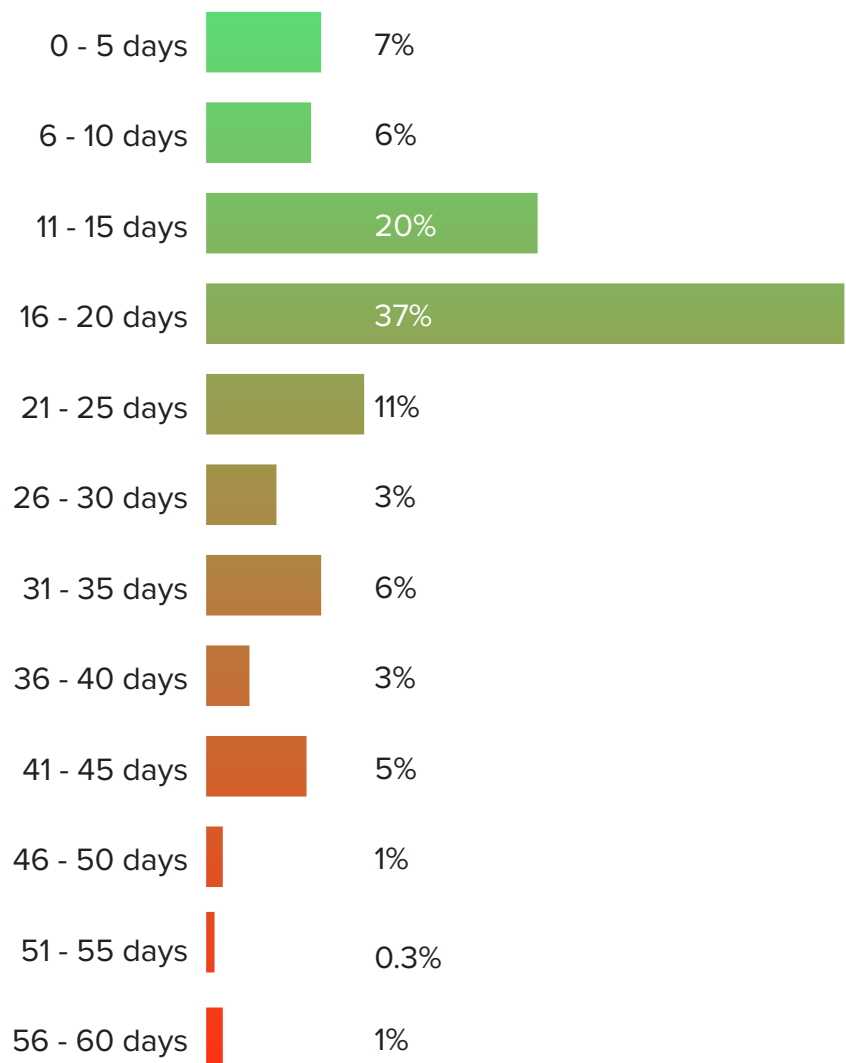
For all organisations (including those who do not buy homecare from external providers), the average (mean) response time to the request was 20 working days.

70% of organisations responded no later than 20 working days, as specified in Freedom of

Information legislation, with 37% doing so in the final working week of this limit.

After the statutory time period expired, one or more follow-up reminders were sent to organisations. Indeed, 93 organisations replied late, with two of these taking between 56 and 60 days to respond.

Figure 102. Overall proportion of responses received in working days from the date of the 2023 Freedom of Information request being sent

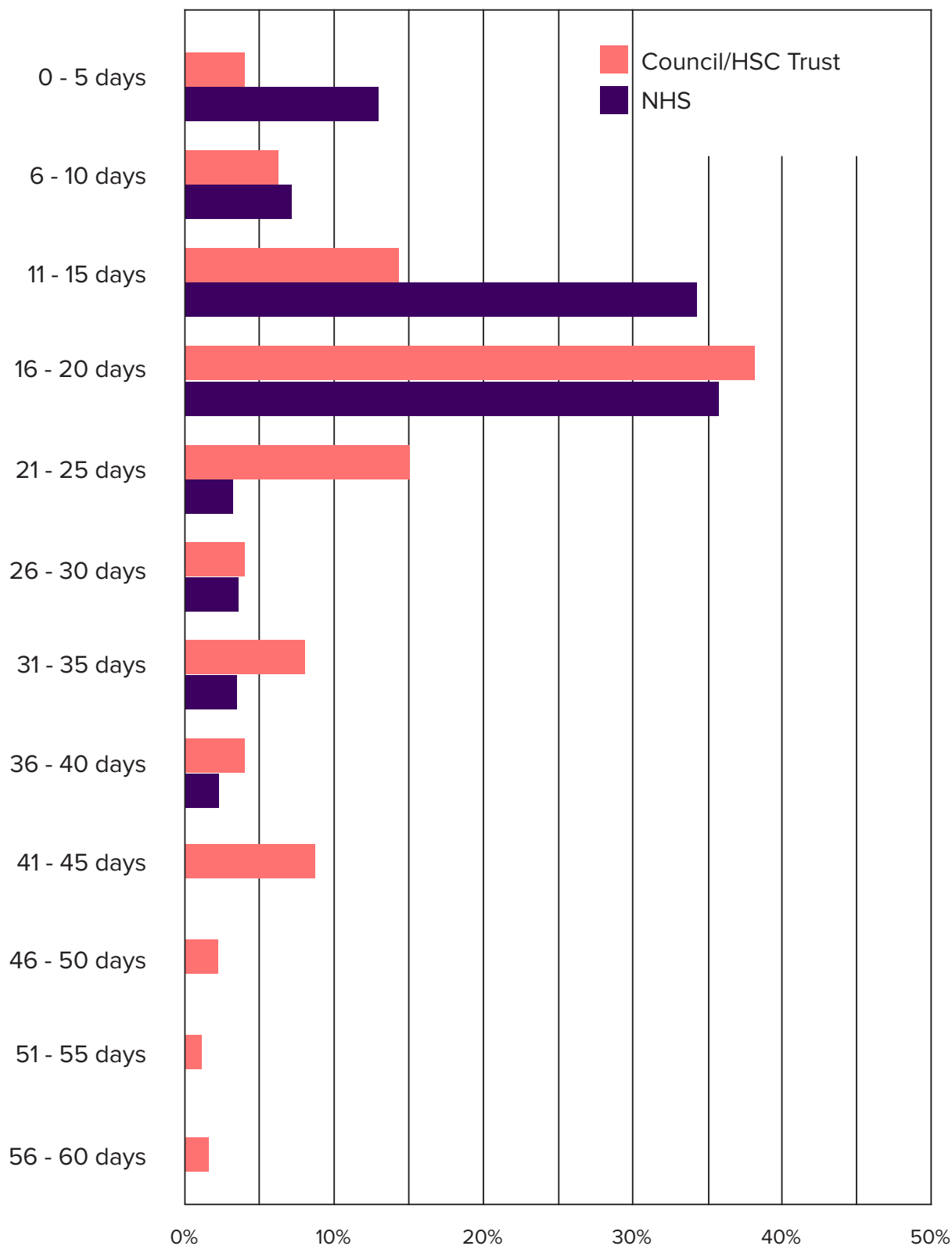


When breaking this data down, it is apparent that NHS bodies were quicker at replying than councils/HSC Trusts. Indeed, for the NHS, 89% replied within 20 working days, compared to only 61% in local government.

In fact, all health bodies had replied after 36 days.

The Homecare Association acknowledges, with thanks, all those public organisations who supplied information promptly.

Figure 103. Proportion of responses by councils/HSC Trusts and the NHS received in working days from the date of the 2023 Freedom of Information request being sent



Overall approach to analysis

For the most part, the data supplied by each organisation was analysed as it was reported in the organisation's response.

As appropriate, where there was evidence of a significant 'outlier' (data which appeared to be well outside the expected range), the Homecare Association offered the organisation the opportunity to correct or justify their original submission.

On a small number of occasions, the Homecare Association felt that it was necessary to either exclude data which appeared to be erroneous or change a response, if possible, to a question (when it was deemed that the question had not been answered appropriately or an obvious mistake had been made). As previously mentioned, we sometimes also estimated missing data, provided that the organisation had supplied sufficient information that enabled us to do so.

Where an 'average' rate is specified for an individual organisation, this refers to the 'arithmetic mean', either supplied directly by the organisation or computed/estimated by the Homecare Association.

When reference is made to a 'weighted average' for, say, a government/NHS region or UK administration, this has been calculated to provide a figure which takes into account the different volumes of care that each individual organisation in that region or administration purchases. In general, a weighted average, W , is computed using the formula:

$$W = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \omega_i X_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n \omega_i}$$

In our case, ω_i is the number of hours purchased by organisation i in the 2023 sample week, X_i is the average price for organisation i and n is the number of organisations in the region or administration that are included in the calculation.

Appendix 2.

Organisations that do not purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector

The following public organisations confirmed that they do not buy external homecare services. This includes those who did not hold any of the information.

Councils/HSC Trusts

- Highland (services previously transferred to NHS Highland, but information included under the council in this report for analysis purposes)
- North East Lincolnshire
- Shetland Islands
- Torbay.

NHS bodies

An area breakdown of an ICB is treated as a separate health body:

- Buckinghamshire (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB)
- Dorset ICB

- Gloucestershire ICB
- Greater Manchester ICB
- Knowsley CCG area (Cheshire and Merseyside ICB)
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran
- NHS Borders
- NHS Dumfries & Galloway
- NHS Fife
- NHS Forth Valley
- NHS Grampian
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
- NHS Lanarkshire
- NHS Lothian
- NHS Orkney
- NHS Shetland
- NHS Tayside
- NHS Western Isles
- North East and North Cumbria ICB
- Oxfordshire (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB)
- Sheffield CCG area (South Yorkshire ICB)
- St Helens CCG area (Cheshire and Merseyside ICB)
- Surrey Heath CCG area (Frimley ICB).

Appendix 3.

Organisations that did not answer all four core questions in the Freedom of Information request

Of those that purchase homecare from the independent and voluntary sector, 40 organisations replied to the Freedom of Information request, but did not answer all four core questions posed (due to the information not being held or/and an exemption being claimed). These questions related to the lowest, highest and average rates, together with the total hours for the 2023 sample week.

Also included here are the very small number who did provide information for each of these questions, but not to the Homecare Association's level of satisfaction.

Councils/HSC Trusts

- Derby City
- Falkirk
- Midlothian
- North Lanarkshire
- Powys
- Scottish Borders
- Walsall
- York.

NHS bodies

An area breakdown of an ICB is treated as a separate health body:

- Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire ICB
- Berkshire West (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB)
- Birmingham and Solihull ICB
- Bradford District and Craven (West Yorkshire ICB)

- Calderdale (West Yorkshire ICB)
- Cheshire CCG area (Cheshire and Merseyside ICB)
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB
- East Berkshire CCG area (Frimley ICB)
- East Riding of Yorkshire HCP (Humber and North Yorkshire ICB)
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB
- Hull HCP (Humber and North Yorkshire ICB)
- Kent and Medway ICB
- Mid and South Essex ICB
- Norfolk and Waveney ICB
- North and Mid Hampshire area (Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB)
- North East Hampshire and Farnham CCG area (Frimley ICB)
- North East London ICB
- North Lincolnshire HCP (Humber and North Yorkshire ICB)
- North Yorkshire HCP (Humber and North Yorkshire ICB)
- Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB
- Powys THB
- Sandwell (Black Country ICB)
- Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin ICB
- South East Hampshire area (Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB)
- South East London ICB
- South West Hampshire area (Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB)
- South West London ICB
- Southampton area (Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB)
- Surrey Heartlands ICB
- Walsall (Black Country ICB)
- Wirral CCG area (Cheshire and Merseyside ICB)
- Wolverhampton (Black Country ICB).

Appendix 4. Use of exemptions under Freedom of Information legislation

47 public organisations withheld information by claiming an exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 in relation to this request.

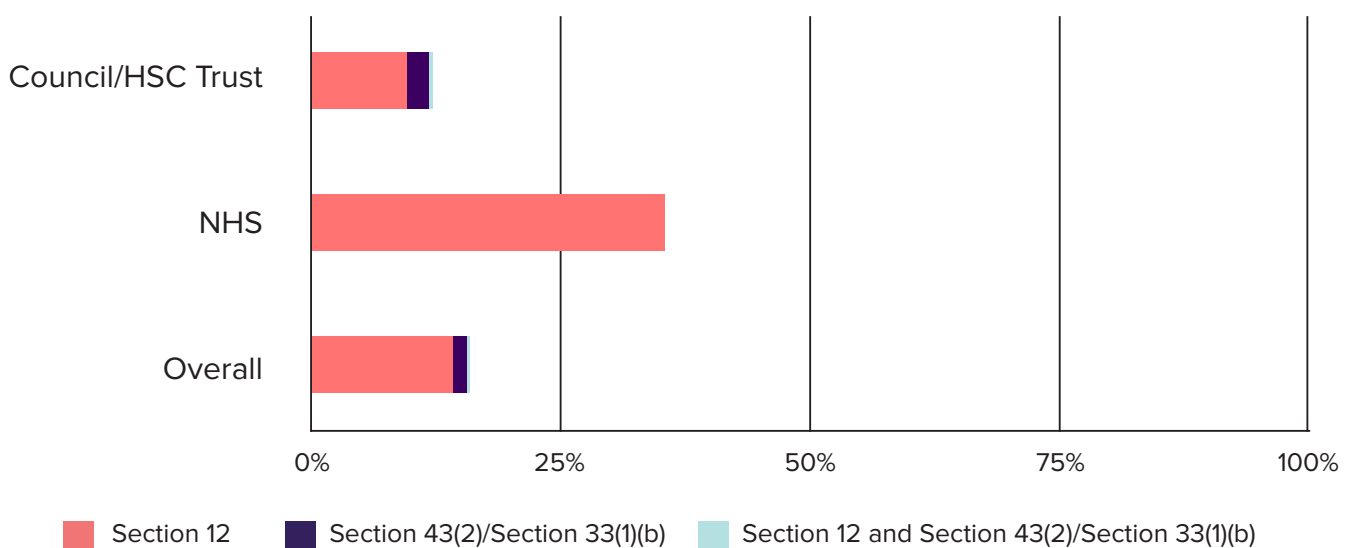
This figure relates to councils/HSC Trusts that exempted at least one of questions (a)-(h) and at least one of questions (a)-(f) for NHS bodies (see page 119 for an explanation). Exemptions that were subsequently lifted following, say, an internal review are not included.

Exemptions were on the grounds of the cost of compliance exceeding the appropriate limit/being excessive (Section 12 of the 2000 Act/2002 Act) or prejudice to commercial interests (Section 43(2) of the 2000 Act/ Section 33(1)(b) of the 2002 Act).

Where an organisation referred to, for example, the cost or time involved to answer a question without explicitly stating an exemption, then Section 12 usage was assumed.

There was a significant discrepancy between the NHS and councils/HSC Trusts on this measure, with 36% of the former (out of those purchasing externally) applying an exemption and only 10% of the latter. All NHS exemptions related to Section 12, while there was one council (Powys) that claimed both Section 12 and Section 43(2) exemptions.

Figure 104. Percentage of councils/HSC Trusts, NHS bodies and organisations overall that claimed an exemption under Freedom of Information legislation by exemption type



Appendix 5. Councils/HSC Trusts paying the highest average hourly prices in the United Kingdom

Figure 105. Organisations with an average hourly price paid for homecare during the 2023 sample week in the top quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom

Council/HSC Trust	Average price
Bath & North East Somerset	£25.61
BCP	£24.10
Blaenau Gwent	£24.32
Bridgend	£24.64
Buckinghamshire	£23.55
Caerphilly	£25.21
Carmarthenshire	£30.18
Central Bedfordshire	£26.82
City of London	£24.93
Conwy	£23.76
Cornwall	£23.85
Denbighshire	£25.11
Derbyshire	£24.64
Devon	£26.96
Doncaster	£24.60
Dorset	£23.67
East Sussex	£24.13
Gloucestershire	£26.46
Gwynedd	£24.36
Hampshire	£24.61
Herefordshire	£23.38
Hertfordshire	£27.12
Highland (NHS)	£25.06
Kent	£27.38
Kirklees	£23.31
Lancashire	£23.80
Monmouthshire	£25.32
Na h-Eileanan Siar	£26.36
Neath Port Talbot	£24.00
Norfolk	£23.90
North Somerset	£25.59
North Yorkshire	£27.80
Oxfordshire	£25.32
Pembrokeshire	£31.95
Perth & Kinross	£23.33
Portsmouth	£26.50
Powys	£24.05
Solihull	£23.82
Somerset	£23.63
Stirling	£23.77
Suffolk	£23.78
Surrey	£23.93
Swansea	£24.02
Torbay & South Devon NHS FT	£24.36
Vale of Glamorgan	£27.56
Wakefield	£23.96
Warrington	£23.81
West Berkshire	£23.63
West Sussex	£26.62
Westmorland & Furness	£23.55
Wiltshire	£24.33
York	£23.99

NB. The list right contains two NHS bodies: NHS Highland (see Appendix 2 for an explanation) and Torbay & South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (FT) (responsible for adult social care within Torbay instead of Torbay Council).

Appendix 6. Councils/HSC Trusts paying the lowest average hourly prices in the United Kingdom

Figure 106. Organisations with an average hourly price paid for homecare during the 2023 sample week in the bottom quartile among councils/HSC Trusts across the United Kingdom

Council/HSC Trust	Average price
Barnet	£18.85
Belfast HSC Trust	£18.13
Bexley	£18.62
Birmingham	£17.71
Blackburn with Darwen	£19.46
Blackpool	£18.91
Brent	£18.59
Bromley	£18.57
Clackmannanshire	£19.61
Croydon	£19.17
Darlington	£17.91
Derby City	£19.75
Dudley	£19.72
Durham	£18.85
Ealing	£16.04
Enfield	£18.32
Gateshead	£17.01
Greenwich	£19.22
Hackney	£18.92
Halton	£14.31
Hammersmith & Fulham	£18.70
Haringey	£18.43
Harrow	£16.60
Hillingdon	£17.60
Isles of Scilly	£19.05
Islington	£19.14
Kingston upon Thames	£18.01
Lambeth	£18.98
Lewisham	£16.29
Luton	£19.24
Medway	£19.34
Newcastle	£19.68
North Tyneside	£19.34
Northern HSC Trust	£19.19
Peterborough	£17.54
Richmond upon Thames	£19.23
Sandwell	£17.43
Sefton	£17.89
Slough	£18.08
South Eastern HSC Trust	£19.16
Southern HSC Trust	£18.08
Southwark	£19.41
Stockton-on-Tees	£19.44
Sunderland	£18.97
Sutton	£18.88
Thurrock	£18.05
Walsall	£16.38
Waltham Forest	£16.70
Wandsworth	£17.92
West Dunbartonshire	£18.83
Western HSC Trust	£18.08
Wigan	£19.44
Wolverhampton	£18.73

Appendix 7. Health bodies paying the highest average hourly prices in England and Wales

Figure 107. Organisations with an average hourly price paid for homecare during the 2023 sample week in the top quartile among health bodies in England and Wales

NHS body/area	Average price
Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB	£26.52
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly ICB	£24.33
Derby and Derbyshire ICB	£25.10
Halton CCG area (Cheshire and Merseyside ICB)	£23.85
Lincolnshire ICB	£24.08
Somerset ICB	£26.51
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB	£23.94
Suffolk and North East Essex ICB	£25.64
Sussex ICB	£25.42
York HCP (Humber and North Yorkshire ICB)	£25.65

Appendix 8. Health bodies paying the lowest average hourly prices in England and Wales

Figure 108. Organisations with an average hourly price paid for homecare during the 2023 sample week in the bottom quartile among health bodies in England and Wales

NHS body/area	Average price
Aneurin Bevan UHB	£20.43
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ICB	£18.39
Liverpool CCG area (Cheshire and Merseyside ICB)	£20.55
Mid and South Essex ICB	£18.70
North Central London ICB	£19.97
North East Lincolnshire HCP (Humber and North Yorkshire ICB)	£18.55
North West London ICB	£18.07
Northamptonshire ICB	£17.96
Portsmouth area (Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB)	£18.70
Southport & Formby CCG area (Cheshire and Merseyside ICB)	£20.19

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Shaping homecare together

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