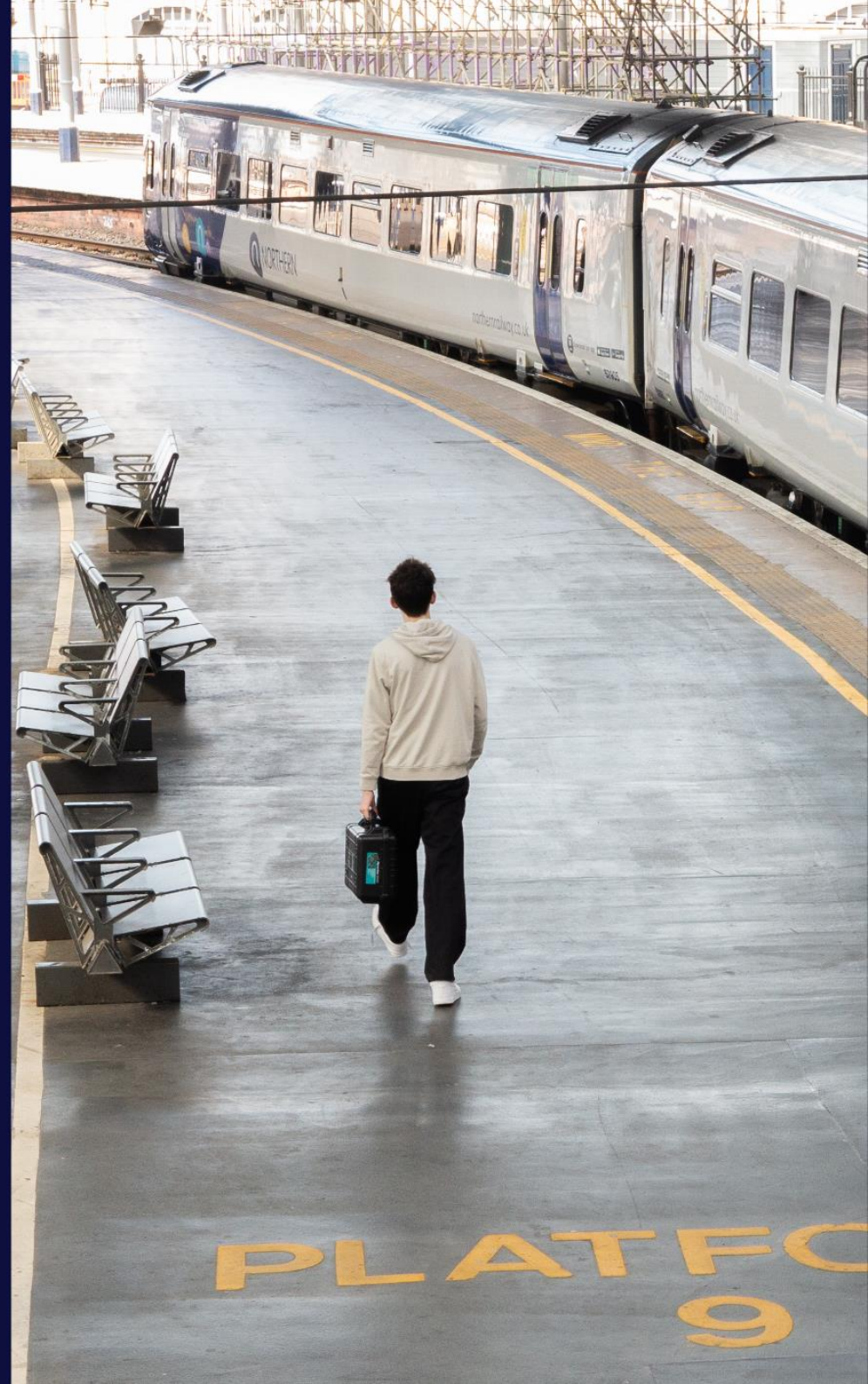# TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH

Transport and social exclusion in England in 2024/25

May 2025

About Transport for the North

Transport for the North is a statutory sub-national transport body, working with mayoral combined authorities, local transport authorities, and other stakeholders across the North of England. We advise central government on the strategic ambitions and priorities for the region's transport system. Our vision is that by 2050 the North of England will have become a thriving, socially inclusive region. Our communities, businesses and places will have benefitted from sustainable economic growth, improved health and wellbeing, and access to opportunities for all. This is to be achieved through a transformed zero emission, integrated, safe and sustainable transport system, that will enhance connectivity, resilience, and journey times for all users. For more information, visit: www.transportforthenorth.com

Report authors and acknowledgements

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The TRSE visualiser was developed by Nicholas Jackson, Luke Monaghan, and Caitlin Stokes, in collaboration with SYSTRA UK.

Sharing this report

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Summary: Transport and social exclusion in England in 2024/25

Across England, 11.2 million people face a high risk of social exclusion because of poorly performing, inaccessible, and inadequate transport systems. This is a major contributor to poverty, poor health, and social isolation, and disproportionately impacts already disadvantaged communities and areas.[1] These transport problems also form a significant barrier to economic growth, by limiting access to good quality work and education for residents, limiting access to employees for businesses, and widening inequalities. We refer to this as transport-related social exclusion (TRSE).

Since 2019, Transport for the North (TfN) has undertaken extensive research with communities across the region to understand the causes, consequences, and solutions to TRSE.[2] We have used this research to develop data tools that estimate the scale, intensity, and distribution of TRSE across England, and worked to integrate this into our regional transport planning, strategy, and investment decisions. Our data tool brings together information on socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, and combines it with information on public, private and active transport systems to identify variations in the risk of TRSE.

TfN's 2024 Strategic Transport Plan commits to reducing the number of residents facing a high risk of TRSE by 1 million by 2050.[3] This ambition means closing the gap between the cities, towns, and rural communities in the North with those in the rest of England, so that our region faces no greater level of disadvantage than any other in the country. This report provides a first update on the region's progress towards this ambition from our 2019 baseline, using the outcomes of a comprehensive update to our data tools.[4]

Our new analysis shows that the cities, towns and many rural communities in the North remain more affected by TRSE than those in the rest of England. This is despite the number of residents facing a high risk of TRSE in the North reducing to 2.95 million in 2024, compared with 3.3 million in 2019. On a national basis, our analysis shows a significant increase in the number of residents of England facing a high risk of TRSE, from 9.2 million in 2019 to 11.2 million in 2024. This change is particularly concentrated in rural areas of the South West, South East, and East of England, in what has been a rapid period of change in living standards, health, and transport systems.

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[1] Transport for the North (2024) Transport and social exclusion in the North in 2023/24. Available here.
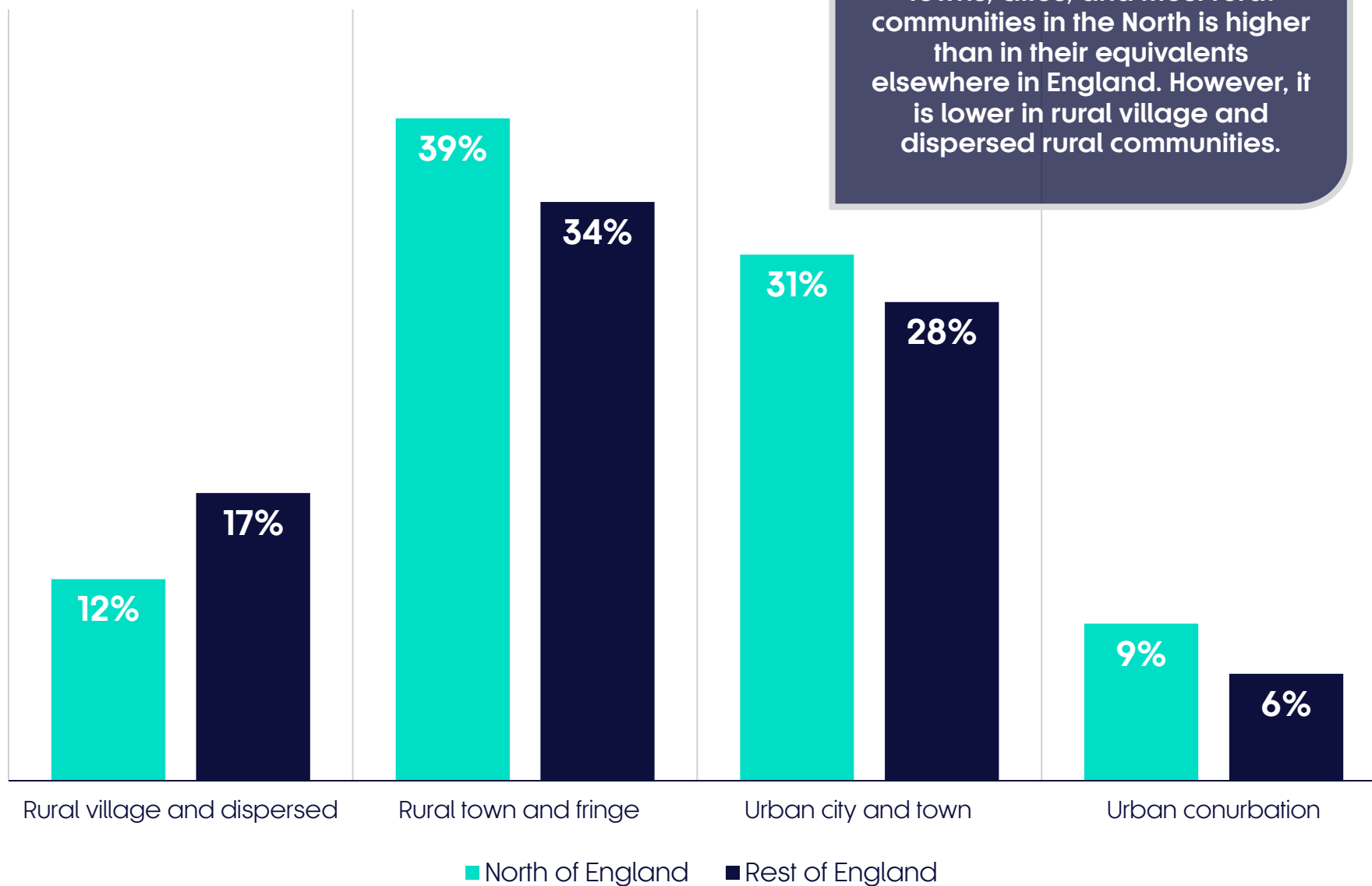[2] See https://www.transportforthenorth.com/social-inclusion
[3] Transport for the North (2024) Strategic Transport Plan. Available here.
[4] Available at: https://trse.transportforthenorth.com

On the face of it, the reduction in the number of residents facing a high risk of TRSE between 2019 and 2024 represents significant progress towards TfN's long-term ambition for the region, over a relatively short time period. However, there are five reasons to be cautious about the level and strength of progress that this represents:

- First, local authorities in the North remain over-represented among those with the highest levels of TRSE. Indeed, of the 10 local authorities with the largest proportion of the population at high risk, six are in the North (Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland, Blackpool, County Durham, Cumberland, and Northumberland). These areas have seen little if any reduction in the level of TRSE between 2019 and 2024. Further, as shown overleaf, the risk of TRSE in the North remains higher than the rest of England in three out of four rural and urban area types – particularly in rural towns and rural-urban fringes.

- Second, our analysis suggests growing inequality within the North. In particular, it highlights the growing gap between Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, and Liverpool Mayoral Combined Authorities on the one hand, and the towns and rural communities on the North East, Fylde, and Cumbrian coasts on the other. These major conurbations had lower levels of TRSE than the North's smaller cities and towns in our 2019 analysis, and this gap is wider in 2024.

- Third, we have made significant changes in our approach to measuring TRSE between 2019 and 2024, as the external datasets we had used for the 2019 analysis have not been updated. Our overall methodology has remained the same – analysing access to everyday places with the transport options available alongside the vulnerability of the population to social exclusion – but the data sources we use to do this have changed. We have taken this opportunity to improve the level of detail in our analysis, moving from around 36,000 Lower Layer Super Output Area zones in 2019 to around 186,000 Output Area zones in 2024.

- Fourth, like most measures of poverty and social inequality, our measure of TRSE is relative. This means that changes in other regions impact the relative position of the North. Comparing 2024 with 2019, there has been a significant rise in TRSE risk in rural communities in the South West, South East, and the East of England. Some of the change observed in the North is therefore caused by an increase in TRSE risk in these regions, rather than meaningful improvements in transport conditions in the North.

- Fifth, changes in TRSE reflects changes in poverty, deprivation, and demographics, as well as changes in transport systems. This reflects the fact that travel constraints, the consequences of transport issues, and the need to travel varies by these factors. The changes observed in TRSE are therefore in part a reflection of how the population of England has changed since 2019, in a time in which the COVID-19 pandemic and increases in the cost of living have led to significant societal and economic change.

Population at high risk of TRSE by area type

In 2024, the risk of TRSE in the towns, cities, and most rural communities in the North is higher than in their equivalents elsewhere in England. However, it is lower in rural village and dispersed rural communities.

	North of England	Rest of England
Rural village and dispersed	12%	17%
Rural town and fringe	39%	34%
Urban city and town	31%	28%
Urban conurbation	9%	6%

■ North of England   ■ Rest of England

What is transport-related social exclusion and why does it matter?

TRSE means that transport issues have a fundamental impact on everyday life, and that they significantly limit the full and meaningful participation in society in the way that an individual, family, or community would otherwise choose.[5] This includes:

- Having little or no access to good quality work or education opportunities.
- Being isolated from friends, family, and community life.
- Facing financial hardship because of the cost of the journeys needed for everyday life.
- Facing poor wellbeing or mental health because of the stress caused by everyday journeys.

TRSE has a wide range of causes, but our research shows that it most commonly reflects the combination of:

- Poor active travel conditions in car-dominated environments. This means that walking, wheeling, and cycling – typically the cheapest transport options for local journeys – do not feel viable for many local journeys.
- Public transport networks that fail to provide reliable, accessible, and affordable access to key everyday destinations, including work, education, healthcare, shops, and leisure.
- High levels of car dependence and forced car ownership – whereby households have no real alternative to owning one or more cars, but doing so causes them significant financial hardship.[6]

Our research also shows that three population groups are particularly likely to face TRSE:[7]

- Those living in low-income households, particularly where one or more adults is in insecure work.
- Disabled people, and those with significant long term health conditions.
- Unpaid carers, including parents of young children.

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[5] Our definition is based on Lucas, K. (2012) Transport and Social Exclusion: Where are we now? Transport Policy 20, 105-113. Available here.
[6] For an introduction to this concept, see Mattioli, G. (2017) Forced Car Ownership in the UK and Germany: Socio-spatial patterns and potential economic stress impacts. Social Inclusion 5(4), 147-160. Available here.
[7] Transport for the North (2024) Transport and social exclusion in the North in 2023/24. Available here.

These three population groups are more likely to face TRSE because they face a combination of:

- Greater consequences from transport problems: For example, a worker on a zero-hours contract may lose some or all of the pay that they otherwise would have received that day if they are late to work. In the same circumstances, an employee with more secure working conditions may face stress and inconvenience, but not face lasting financial hardship.

- Greater constraints on transport choices: For example, a disabled person may find parts of their local public transport system has not been designed in a way meets their needs, meaning that their transport choices are significantly constrained. Similarly, those in low-income households may be locked into one mode of transport, and have little flexibility once committed to a car, bus pass, or rail season ticket.

- Greater needs to travel in ways that differ from the best-served routes: For example, someone with care needs may need to regularly access support services that are located outside of the town or city centre locations that are best served by public transport. Similarly, parents may have to travel between neighbourhoods to access childcare, and those in insecure work may have to commute and different times and to different locations each day, reducing their ability to access discounted fares, and exposing them to more uncertainty.

Our research with residents across the North demonstrates that these three population groups are consistently and significantly more likely to experience TRSE than the population in general. However, the risk of TRSE is also generally greater among women, LGBTQ+ people, and ethnic minority communities. Our research shows that these populations are more likely to face harassment, anti-social behaviour, and discrimination in public transport spaces, and while travelling actively. This leads to greater constraints on transport choices, and negative impacts on wellbeing and mental health. This is in addition to impacts through income and caring responsibilities linked to gender.

Age is also significant to TRSE, but the relationship is complex. In general, age impacts TRSE through its impacts on disability, health, income, and insecure work. Additionally, age can also impact access to information about transport systems (particularly through digital technologies), lack of access to cars, and low confidence in using emerging transport technologies (such as micro-mobility and ride-hailing services). However, these effects are less consistent than those associated with income, disability, and caring responsibilities, and are smaller in scale.

"Transport issues that limit full and meaningful participation in society"

When getting to work, education, healthcare, and basic shops & services…

Costs so much it forces people to cut back on other everyday essentials

Damages people's wellbeing or contributes to poor mental health

Takes so long that it leaves people no time for leisure, family, and community life

Is impossible at some or all of the times when people need it

… it causes transport-related social exclusion

Vulnerability to social exclusion

- 20 metrics, grouped into three factors: (1) Disability, caring, and poor health, (2) Childcare and young people, and (3) Poverty and insecure work.

- Data sourced from DWP Stat-Xplore and the 2021 Census.

- Data refined using factor analysis to reduce double counting, identify statistically significant groupings, and to understand relative significance of each metric.

Access to everyday places

- Analysis of journey times to 12 destinations by all modes of public transport and by car, across weekday AM peak, weekday PM post-peak, and weekend.

- Analysis includes work, primary schools, secondary schools, further education, hospitals, GPs, dentists, pharmacies, supermarkets, retail centres, and banks.

- Metrics developed based on absolute journey time, gaps between modes, and gaps between times of day.

Risk of TRSE

- Areas are placed in one of five national TRSE risk categories, depending on their place in the national distribution for vulnerability and access. Areas at a 'high risk' are, at a minimum, in the bottom half of the distribution in access and vulnerability.

- Areas are also given a TRSE risk score based on their relative access and vulnerability percentiles, and the gap between these two factors. This enables more detailed comparisons between small areas.

How does TfN identify TRSE?

TfN's TRSE tool analyses vulnerability to social exclusion based on socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, and access to everyday places including work, healthcare, shops, and basic services. It covers all of England at the 2021 Census Output Area (OA) level, which have an average population of 315 residents. This is a significant improvement on the 2019 version of the tool, which analysed TRSE at the 2011 Census Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) level, with an average population of 1,500 residents.

The change from LSOA to OA-level analysis provides greater detail in all area types, but is particularly beneficial to the analysis of TRSE in rural communities. Within these communities, the size of LSOAs had led to averaging of access and vulnerability across relatively large geographical areas. In some instances, this meant that a small, deprived community next to a larger but less deprived community was shown as having a low risk of TRSE. OA-level analysis significantly reduces the scale and likelihood of this issue, bringing greater confidence to our analysis of TRSE in rural communities. However, it is likely that some of the change observed between 2019 and 2024 is caused by this methodological improvement, as well as actual change in vulnerability and access over this period. Direct comparisons between 2019 and 2024 should therefore be treated with caution.

Our vulnerability analysis includes a range of factors that our research with communities across the North demonstrates are significant to TRSE. In previous iterations of the tool, we had used the English Indices of Deprivation for this purpose. However, owing to the age of these datasets, we have developed a bespoke vulnerability analysis for 2024. This analysis began with a long listing of aspects of vulnerability from our research, from which we identified datasets or suitable proxies that had cross-England coverage at the OA level. Following this, we engaged factor analysis to group the variables, reduce double counting, and to understand the relative significance of each metric in explaining variations in vulnerability. The three factors that emerged from this process are: (1) Disability, caring, and poor health, (2) Childcare and young people, and (3) Poverty and insecure work.

Our access analysis considers a wide range of key everyday destinations in four categories: (1) Work, including large employers and all employers; (2) education, including primary schools, secondary schools, and further education colleges; (3) healthcare, including hospitals, GP surgeries, dentists, and pharmacies; and (4) shops and services, including supermarkets, town and retail centres, and banks. For each destination, we consider journey times to the nearest destination and the choice of destinations that is available within a defined travel time for travel by car and by public transport.[8] Where relevant, we also examine how these differ

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[8] We use Basemap TRACC for this purpose, for further information see Appendix 2.

across three time periods – a weekday morning, a weekday late evening, and a weekend afternoon. This provides relative and absolute metrics of what is available to residents with the transport options in their area.

To measure the risk of TRSE, we compare how each OA fits within the national distribution for access and vulnerability. This report focuses on the size and distribution of the population at a *high risk* of TRSE, which is a key headline metric in TfN's 2024 Strategic Transport Plan. The population of an OA is classified as having a high risk if it falls within the lower 50% of the distribution for access *and* within the lower 50% of the distribution for vulnerability. Alongside this, we also consider how OAs compare to the average for local and combined authorities, to regions of England, and to rural and urban area types. To do this, we consider how each OA ranks in access and vulnerability, and the size of the gap between these two metrics.

As in 2019, the tool identifies areas where transport in particular is a cause of social exclusion. Consequently, many areas of high deprivation are not shown as having a high risk of TRSE. This is particularly visible in London, where many highly deprived communities live in close proximity to high quality public transport links. Social exclusion is almost certainly present in these communities, but transport is unlikely to be a key cause. The three maps that follow show an example of how access and vulnerability come together to produce variations in TRSE risk.

Further information on our methodology is available in three appendixes published alongside this report. Appendix 1 sets out our approach to measuring vulnerability to social exclusion, Appendix 2 sets out how we have measured access to everyday destinations, and Appendix 3 sets out how we combine these metrics to measure TRSE.

Example: Access to everyday places in Sheffield

Best | Average | Worst

Generally good access to everyday places in central areas of the city, but becoming progressively worse towards the urban periphery.

Areas of very poor access to everyday places on the rural-urban fringe.

Background mapping from OpenStreetMap. © OpenStreetMap contributors.
OA boundaries source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2024.

Example: Vulnerability to social exclusion in Sheffield

Best Average Worst

High levels of vulnerability to social exclusion in the north and much of the east and south of the city.

Very low levels of vulnerability in much of the west and parts of the south of the city.

Background mapping from OpenStreetMap. © OpenStreetMap contributors.
OA boundaries source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2024.

Example: TRSE risk in Sheffield

Best | Average | Worst
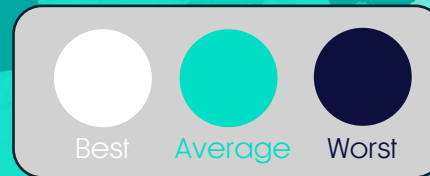
High levels of TRSE risk in the north and south east, where poor access and high vulnerability are both present.

Local differences caused by socioeconomic, demographic, and transport-related factors.

How does the risk of TRSE in 2024 compare with 2019?

11.2 million people in England face a high risk of social exclusion specifically because of transport issues. This is a 14% increase from 9.8 million in 2019. As well as the changes in our approach, this reflects changes in the transport system and in wider society, driven by the COVID-19 and sharp increases in the cost of living. Particularly significant has been the following:

- The widening of the gap between relatively advantaged and disadvantaged populations. Deprived communities have faced greater exposure to inflation in food and energy costs, and greater exposure to the impacts of the pandemic due to greater insecurity of work, a lesser likelihood of working from home, and a greater likelihood of long-term health impacts.[9] This has been alongside a general worsening of health among the working age population.[10]

- The increased demands on local authority budgets caused by rising social care spending, and the consequences this has for the ability of authorities to invest in public transport. This is particularly relevant in the many rural and semi-rural places where bus services are not sufficiently profitable for commercial operators, and rely on public support.[11]

- The fall in local bus service provision over the decade leading up to the pandemic. This is evident across service levels as a whole, but the loss of services subsidised by Local Authorities has been particularly stark – with supported service mileage in England outside of London falling by 55% between 2009 and 2019.[12] This has meant that the falls in service levels in the five years since came from an already low base.

The combination of these factors has meant that deprived rural and semi-rural places have been particularly likely to see increases in the level of TRSE between 2019 and 2024; with population vulnerability increasing at the same time as bus services – the only form of public transport available in many areas of these types – have considerably declined.

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[9] British Medical Association (2024) BMA COVID Review 5: The impact of the pandemic on population health and health inequalities. Available here; Power, M. et al (2023) How COVID-19 has exposed inequalities in the UK food system. Emerald Open Research. Available here; Shabnam, S. et al (2023) Socioeconomic inequalities of Long COVID: A retrospective population-based cohort study in the United Kingdom. The Royal Society of Medicine Journals 116(8). Available here.
[10] Office for National Statistics (2023) Rising ill-health and economic inactivity because of long-term sickness, UK: 2019 to 2023. Available here.
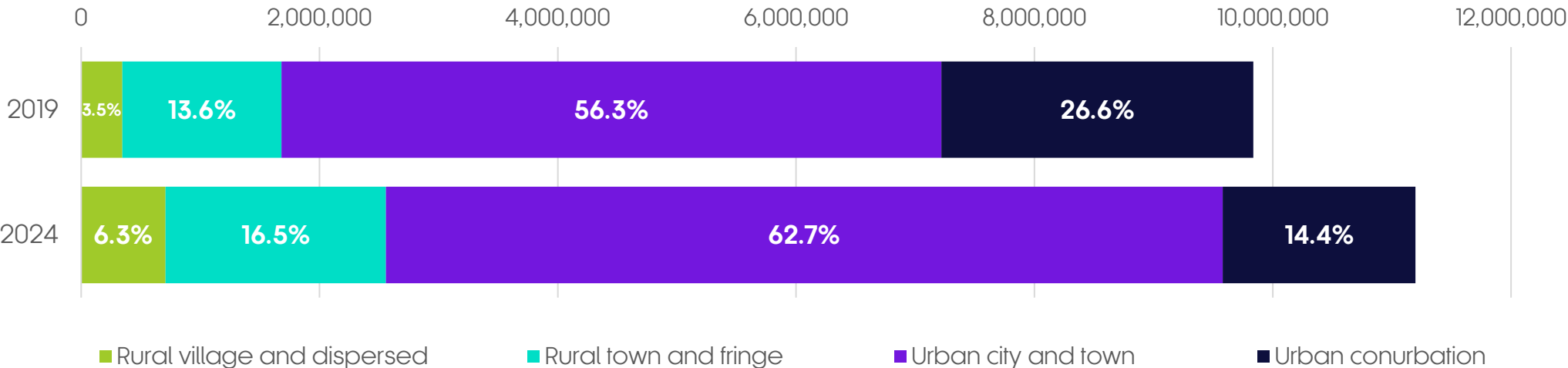[11] Foster, D. and Harker, R. (2024) Funding for adult social care in England. Available here;
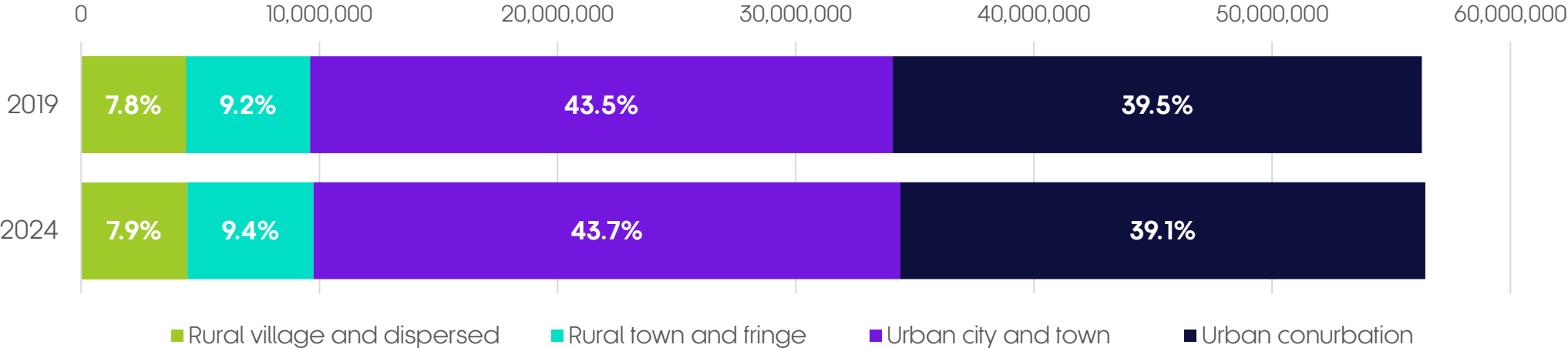[12] Bus statistics - GOV.UK

Residents of England at a high risk of TRSE by area type

Note: There are differences in our approach to measuring TRSE between 2019 and 2024, which should be considered when interpreting these results. For more information, see Appendix 1 and 2.

Year	Rural village and dispersed	Rural town and fringe	Urban city and town	Urban conurbation
2019	3.5%	13.6%	56.3%	26.6%
2024	6.3%	16.5%	62.7%	14.4%

- Rural village and dispersed
- Rural town and fringe
- Urban city and town
- Urban conurbation

All residents of England by area type

Year	Rural village and dispersed	Rural town and fringe	Urban city and town	Urban conurbation
2019	7.8%	9.2%	43.5%	39.5%
2024	7.9%	9.4%	43.7%	39.1%

- Rural village and dispersed
- Rural town and fringe
- Urban city and town
- Urban conurbation

# How does the risk of TRSE vary across England?

The distribution of the population at high risk of TRSE is very different from the distribution of the population of England as a whole. Those at high risk are significantly less likely to live in and around major cities – particularly London, but also, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester– and far more likely to live in towns and smaller cities. They are also significantly more rural than the population as a whole, with those living in rural towns particularly over-represented. But they are less likely to live in the smallest rural villages and dispersed rural communities, even with the growth in rural TRSE between 2019 and 2024.

These inequalities between rural and urban area types feed into inequalities in TRSE risk between the regions of England. In 2024, this varies from 30.3% of residents at high risk in the North East to 2.8% of residents at high risk in London. The distribution of TRSE risk between the regions of England has changed significantly. Notably, the proportion of the population of the South West at high risk has increased by nearly 10%, and by nearly 8% in the South East. Concurrently, risk levels in the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber have fallen slightly, and London now stands even further apart from the other regions of England.

The relatively large changes in the regional distribution of TRSE reflects changes in our approach to measuring TRSE between 2019 and 2024, and real-world changes in access and vulnerability conditions between regions. The scale of the change observed should be viewed in the context of both of these influences, and the significant societal, economic and demographic changes that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic and the sharp increases in the cost of living occurring in this period.

Methodologically, part of the large rise in TRSE risk in the South West and the East Midlands is explained by the increased sensitivity of our tool to TRSE in sparsely populated rural communities. The averaging effect across LSOAs in the previous version of the tool was particularly significant for these regions, meaning that small pockets of deprivation in otherwise less deprived areas were often not identified. However, the large changes in the regional balance of TRSE 2019 and 2024 also reflects the greater impacts that declining levels of local bus services has had in more rural areas. These areas have a greater proportion of routes that are not sufficiently profitable for commercial operators, and more areas where the bus is the only available form of public transport. They are also more likely to have seen the loss of local shops and amenities from town and village centres, compared with more densely populated urban areas. This combination results in a relatively greater need to travel to meet everyday needs, and relatively greater declines in the ability to travel by public transport when compared with urban conurbations.

Overall population density in 2024
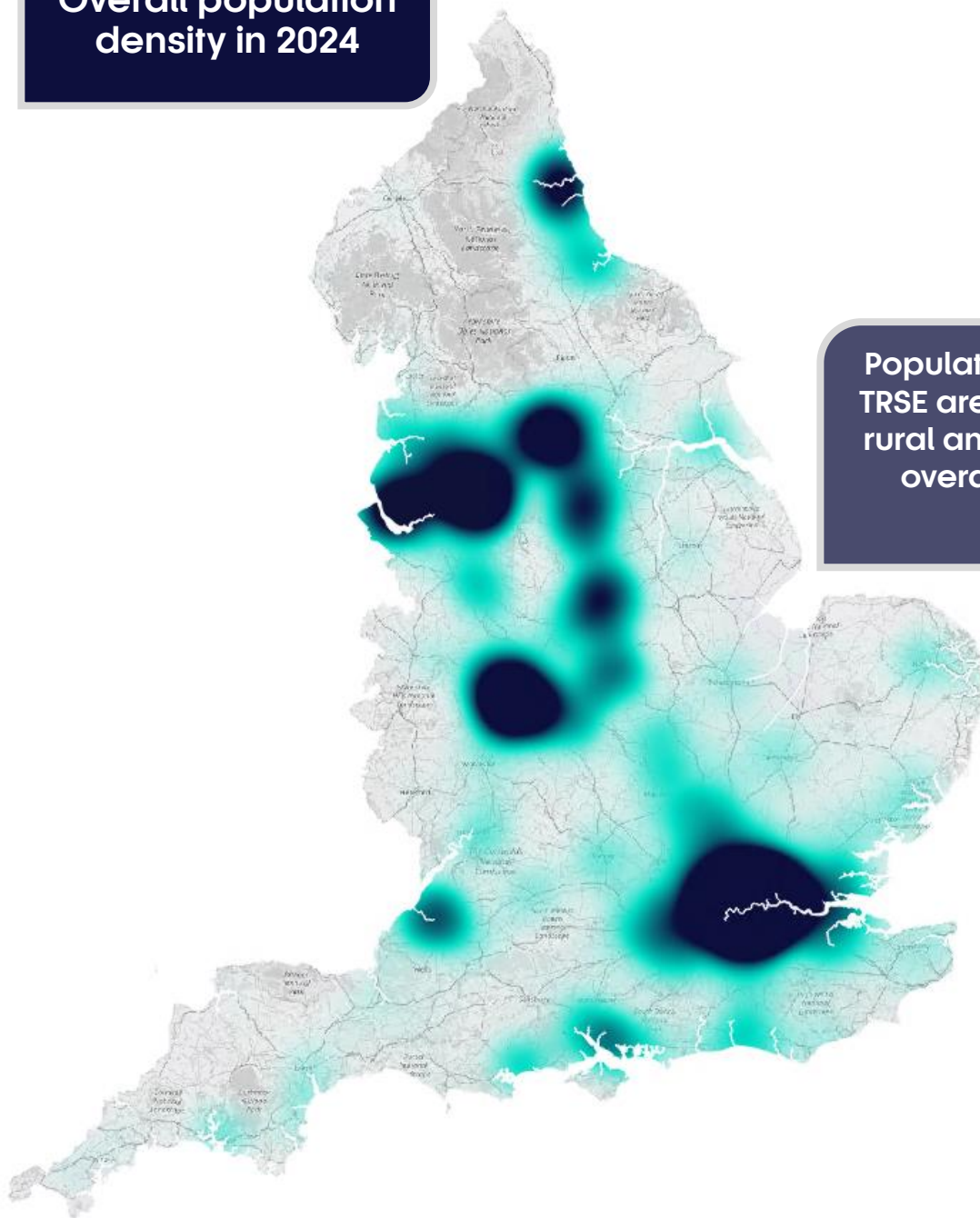
Population at high risk of TRSE in 2024

Populations at high risk of TRSE are significantly more rural and coastal than the overall population of England.
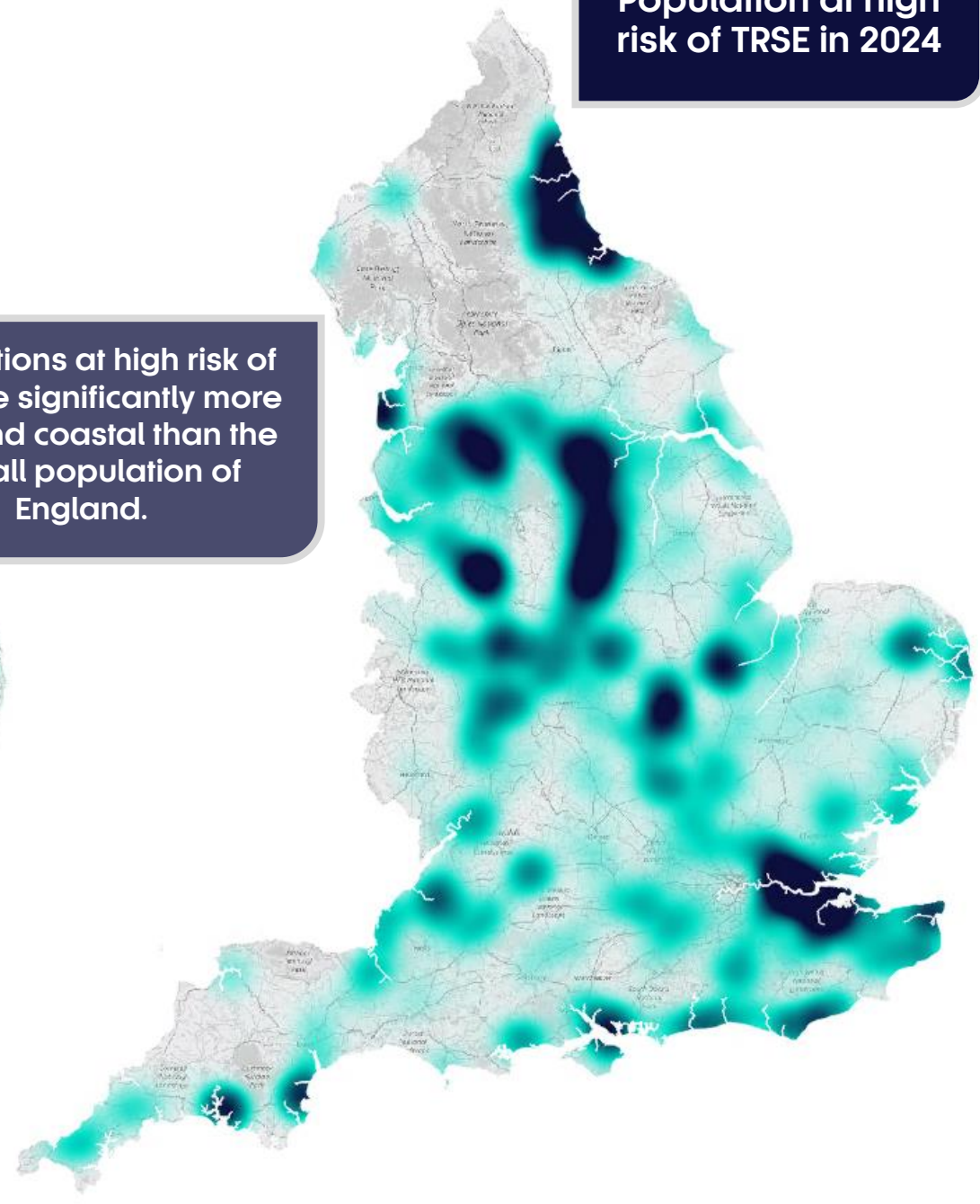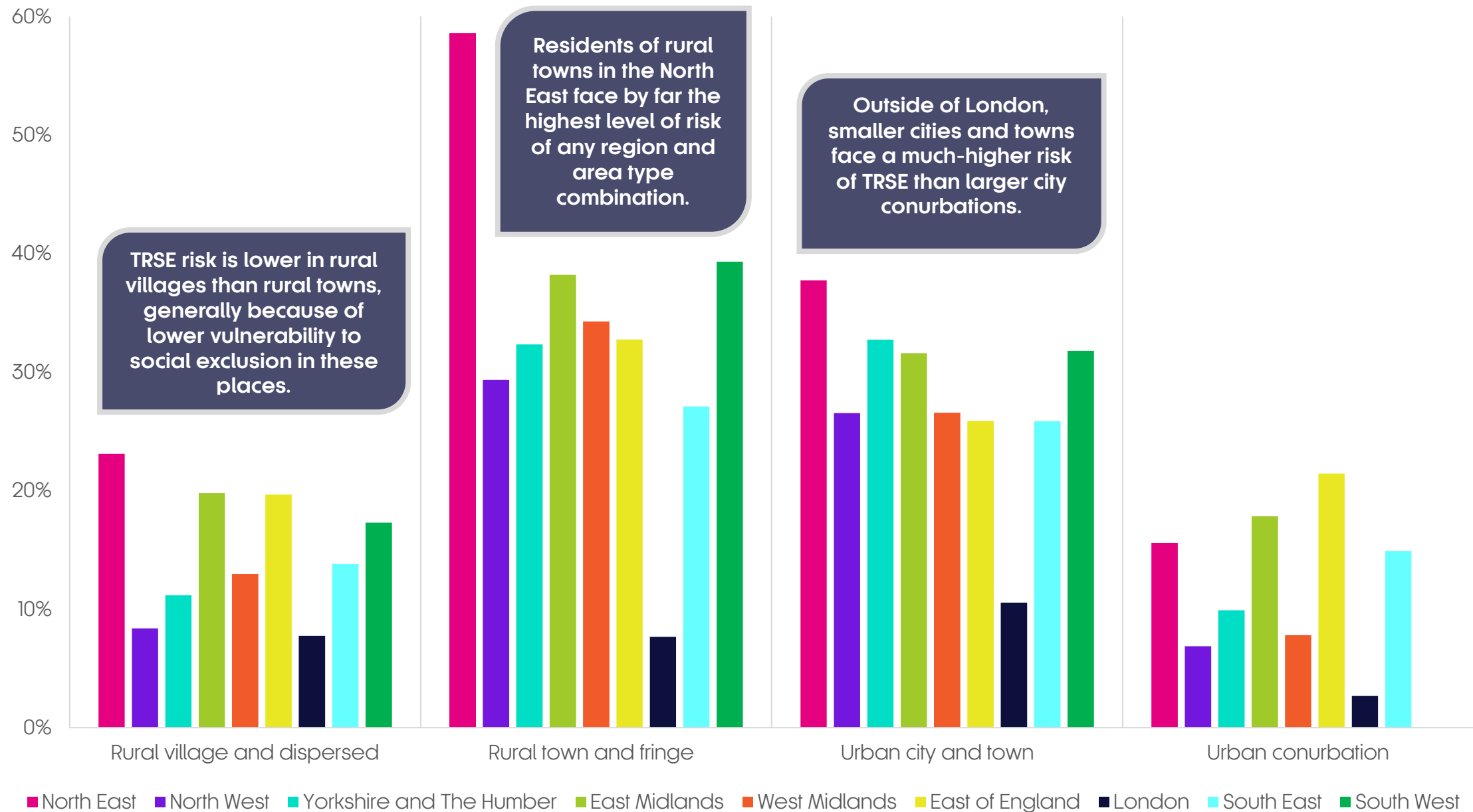
Population at high risk of TRSE in 2019

Population at high risk of TRSE in 2024

Between 2019 and 2024, the population at high risk of TRSE has shifted further from major cities towards smaller towns and coastal communities.

Note: There are differences in our approach to measuring TRSE between 2019 and 2024, which should be considered when interpreting these results. For more information, see Appendix 1 and 2. Background mapping from OpenStreetMap. © OpenStreetMap contributors. Country boundaries source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2024.

Population at high risk of TRSE by region and area type

TRSE risk is lower in rural villages than rural towns, generally because of lower vulnerability to social exclusion in these places.

Residents of rural towns in the North East face by far the highest level of risk of any region and area type combination.

Outside of London, smaller cities and towns face a much-higher risk of TRSE than larger city conurbations.

Rural village and dispersed | Rural town and fringe | Urban city and town | Urban conurbation

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

Coastal residents of England at a high risk of TRSE

Coastal residents are far more likely to face a high risk of TRSE than inland residents. However, there are large differences in the risk level along the coast of England. The map shows the different concentrations of coastal populations at high risk of TRSE, and the graph overleaf compares this by rural and urban area types.
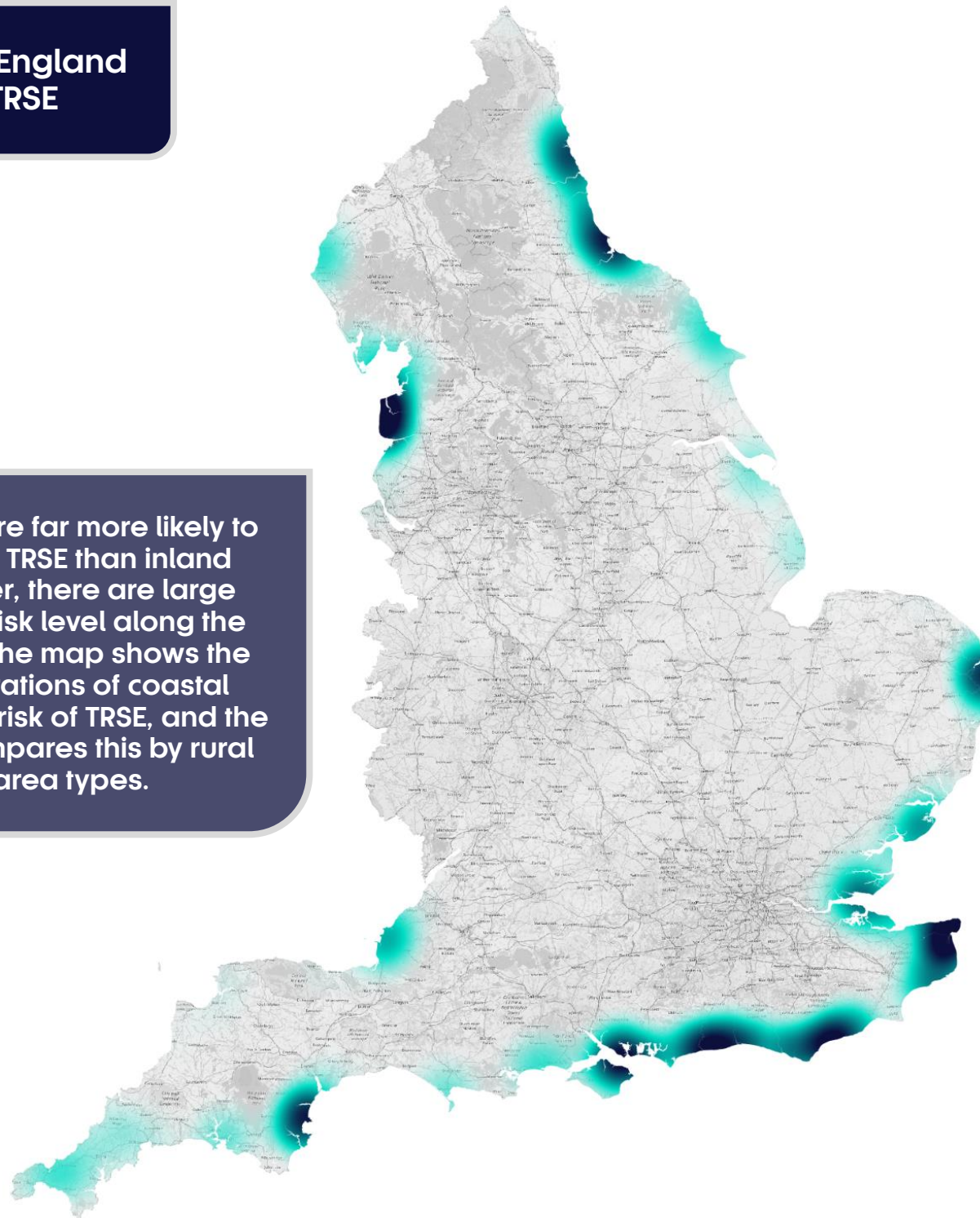
Population at high risk by rural-urban and coastal area type
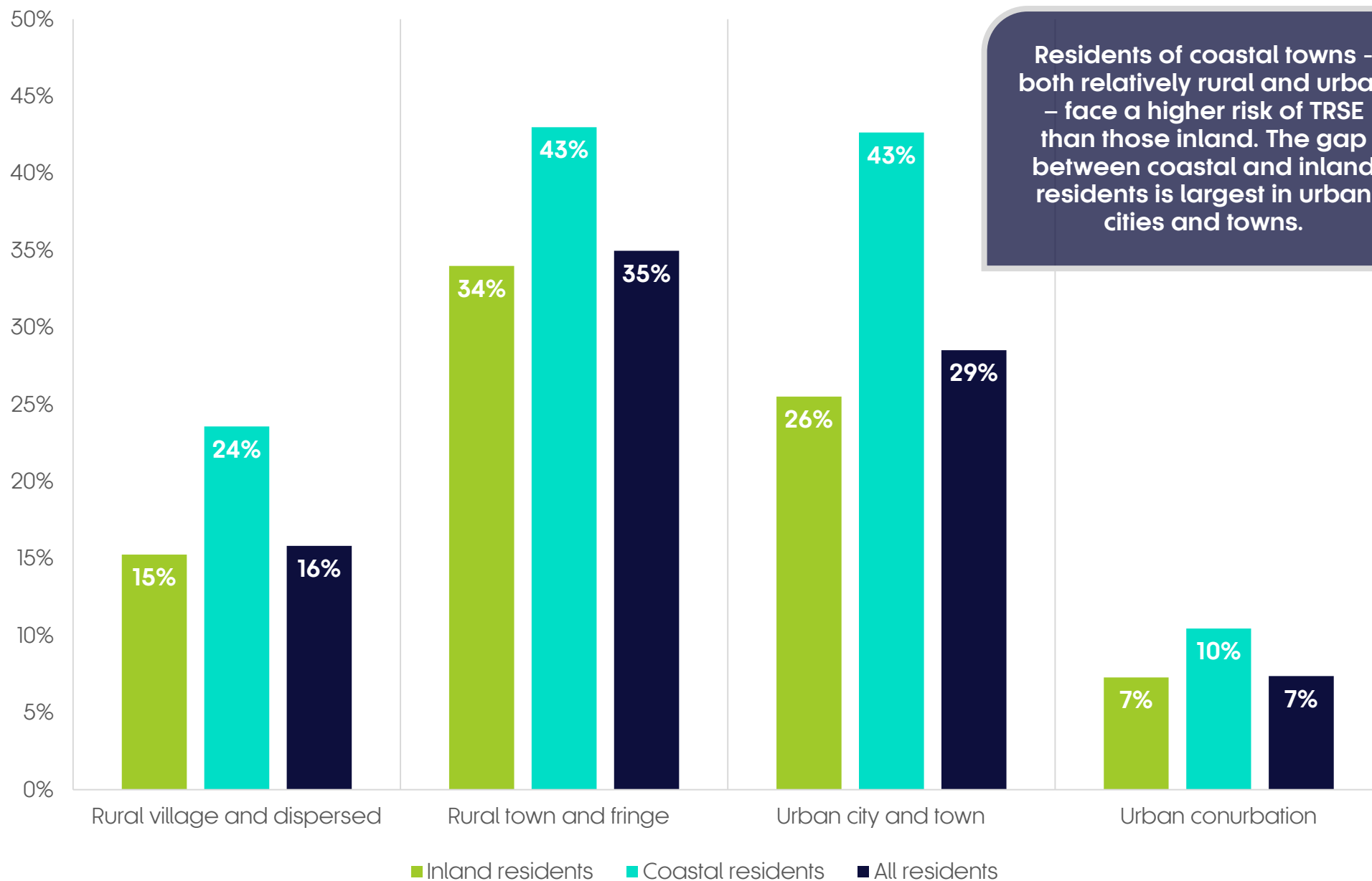
Residents of coastal towns - both relatively rural and urban – face a higher risk of TRSE than those inland. The gap between coastal and inland residents is largest in urban cities and towns.

Area type	Inland residents	Coastal residents	All residents
Rural village and dispersed	15%	24%	16%
Rural town and fringe	34%	43%	35%
Urban city and town	26%	43%	29%
Urban conurbation	7%	10%	7%

- Inland residents
- Coastal residents
- All residents

Which Local Authorities are most affected by TRSE?

There are 7 upper tier local authorities where more than half of the residents are at a high risk of TRSE. Of these, four are in the North. As shown on the maps that follow, all regions of England outside of London contain local authorities that are significantly above and below the average for England.

Hartlepool

67% at high risk

62,100 residents

Torbay

62% at high risk

86,000 residents

Redcar & Cleveland

59% at high risk

80,600 residents

Blackpool

54% at high risk

76,800 residents

North Northamptonshire

54% at high risk

194,400 residents

County Durham

52% at high risk

272,100 residents

Peterborough

51% at high risk

109,100 residents

In seven upper tier local authorities, more than half of residents face a high risk of TRSE.

Differences in TRSE risk within regions of England

North East
62% difference between Hartlepool (67%) and Darlington (5%)

Yorkshire & The Humber
31% difference between North Lincolnshire (37%) Leeds (6%)

North West
54% difference between Blackpool (54%) and Manchester (0.2%)

East Midlands
51% difference between North Northamptonshire (54%) Nottingham (3%)

West Midlands
43% difference between Stoke-On-Trent (44%) and Coventry (1%)

East of England
42% difference between Peterborough (51%) Luton (9%)

South West
52% difference between Torbay (62%) and Bristol (10%)

London
18% difference between: Havering (18%) and 11 central London Boroughs (0%)

South East
43% difference between Isle of Wight (50%) and Slough (7%)

Region boundaries source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2024.
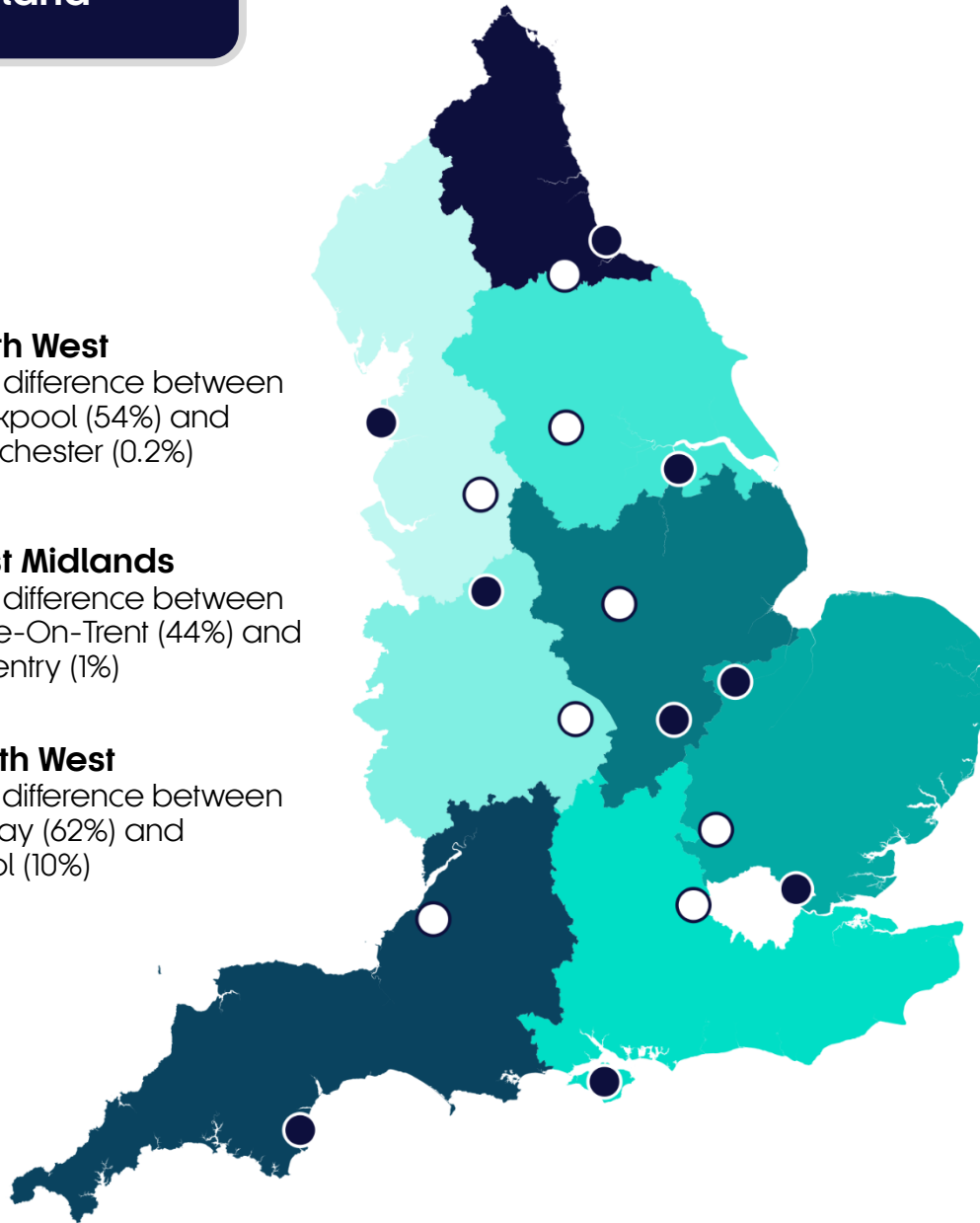
How does the risk of TRSE vary within local authorities?

All Local Authorities contain areas of higher and lower risk, and TRSE is relevant in any local authority context. The four examples below, each with a map on the following pages, show how the risk of TRSE can vary between neighbouring areas.

- **Blackpool:** A coastal town, with a very high level of TRSE risk overall, but significant variations in risk between the town centre and the communities to the south of the Local Authority Area. The residents of Blackpool generally face very high levels of vulnerability to social exclusion, influenced by poverty, poor health, and high levels of disability, but variations in transport provision and the location of shops and amenities produce large variations in TRSE risk.

- **York:** A relatively small city in a rural area, with low levels of TRSE risk. Here, TRSE is highly concentrated in a small number of neighbourhoods outside of the city centre, which have relatively higher levels of poverty and poorer health outcomes than the average for the city as a whole. Local variations in TRSE risk are also influenced by access to local public transport, particularly the bus services required for onward travel via the central railway station, which has a key role in access to jobs.

- **County Durham:** A rural county with a number of towns with very high-risk levels, but where the main city hub has much lower levels of risk. TRSE here is shaped by links to this local city hub, as well as to Darlington, Middlesbrough, Sunderland and Newcastle, where health services and major employment centres are concentrated. As is often the case, TRSE risk is shaped in significant part by the fragmentation of local public transport – with communities a similar distance from Durham having very different levels of access to everyday destinations.

- **Greater Manchester:** A major conurbation with generally low levels of TRSE in the urban centre, but with significant areas of high risk in parts of Salford, Rochdale, and Tameside. While these are more commonly found away from central Manchester, the distribution of TRSE risk across Greater Manchester is more complex than 'centre verses periphery'. Denton, Middleton, and Tyldesley, for example, have significantly higher risk levels than many communities on the edge of Greater Manchester.
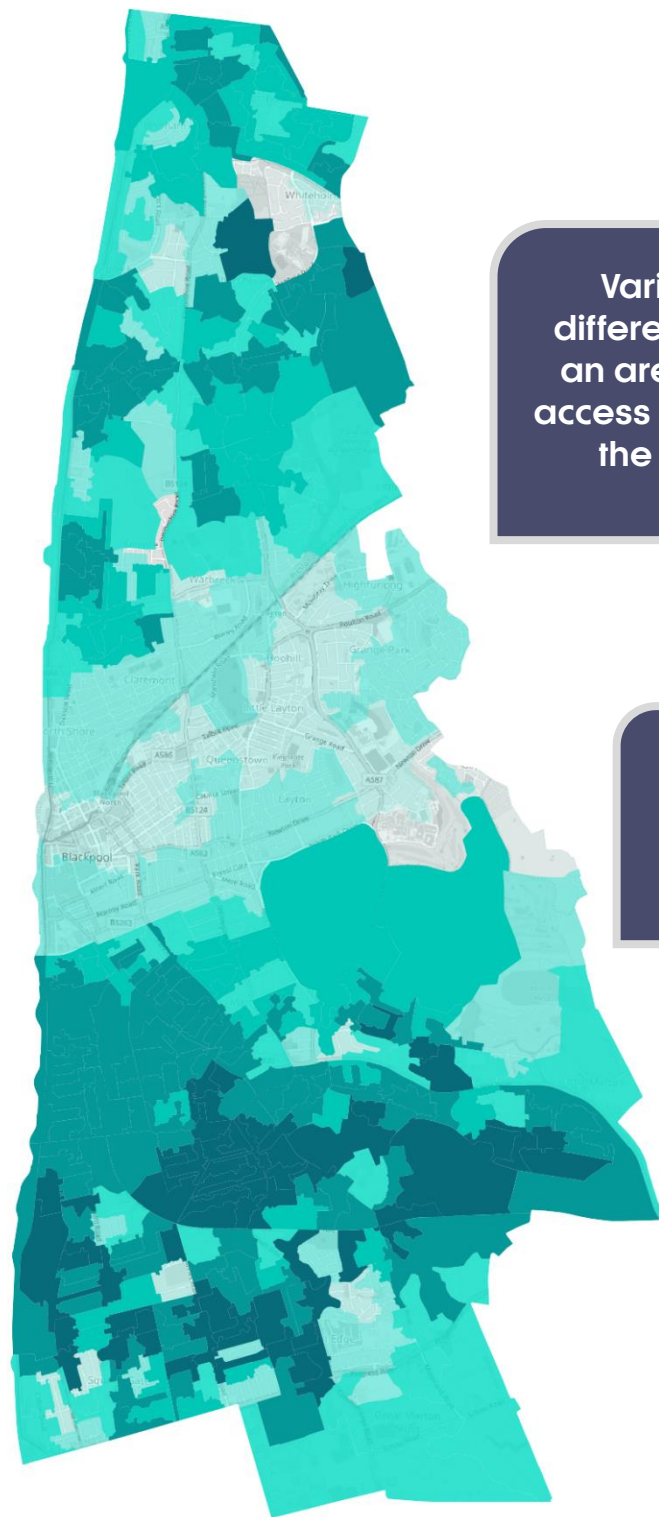
TRSE risk in Blackpool

Legend:
- Best (white)
- Average (teal)
- Worst (dark navy)

Variations produced by differences in vulnerability, in an area with generally poor access to everyday places with the transport available.

Relatively well-connected neighbourhoods, with lower TRSE risk, despite higher levels of poverty and deprivation.

Several neighbourhoods with among the highest levels of TRSE risk anywhere in England.

TRSE risk in York

Best Average Worst

A small number of more rural communities with higher levels of deprivation and poorer access than is common for York as a whole.

Several neighbourhoods outside of the city centre have higher than average risk levels, but the general risk picture is mixed.
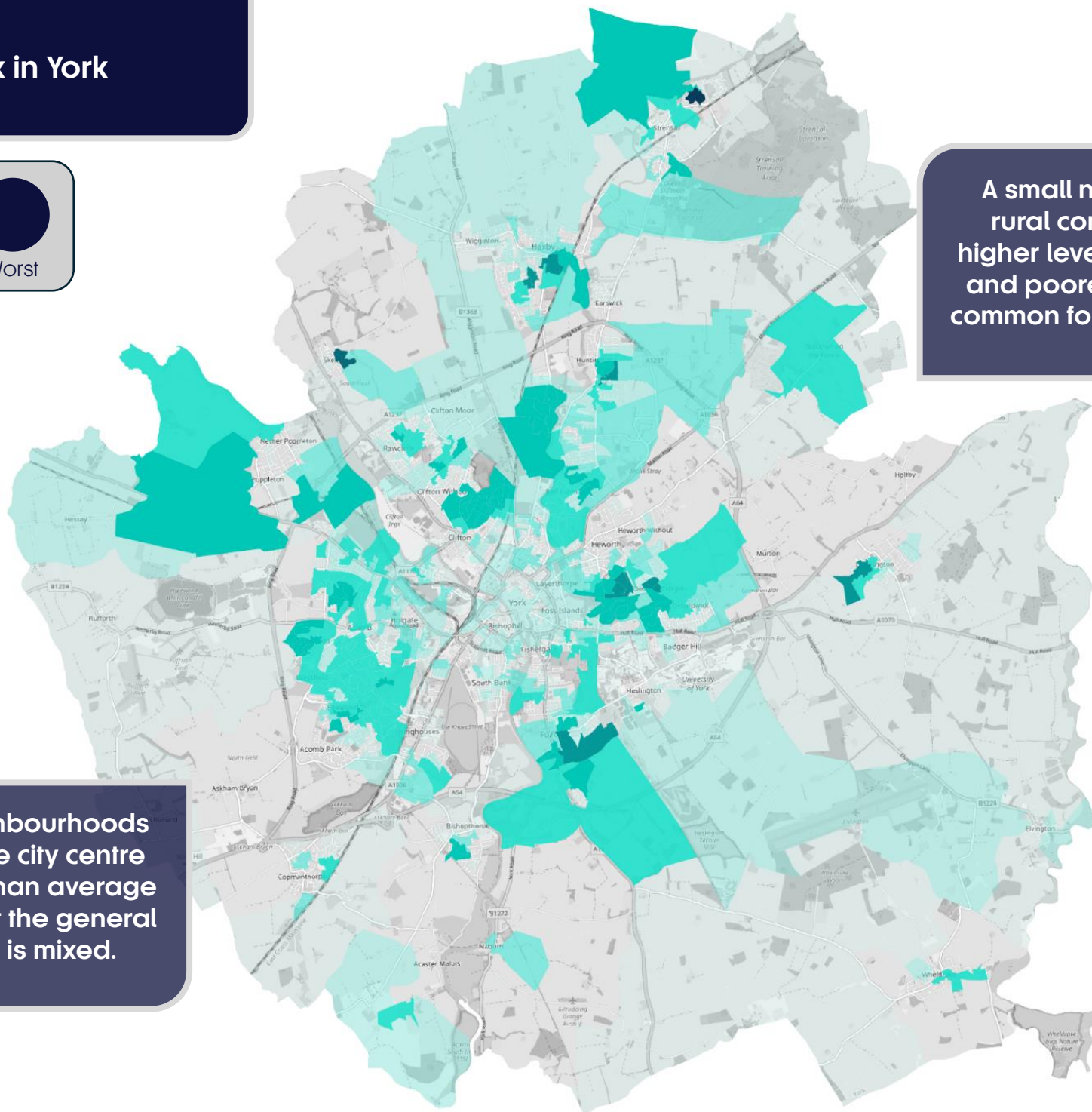
TRSE risk in County Durham

Legend: Best (white) — Average (teal) — Worst (dark navy)
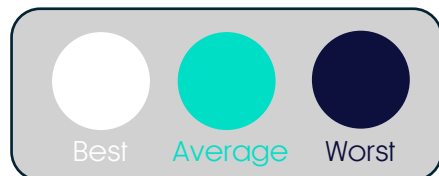
Durham contains many key everyday destinations and generally has lower levels of deprivation than the surrounding areas, meaning lower levels of TRSE.
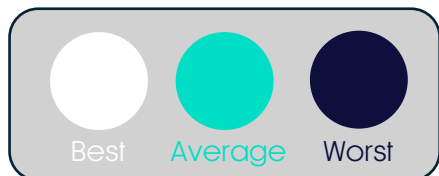
Risk levels tend to be lower in the most rural areas, which generally have much lower levels of vulnerability to social exclusion.

Rural towns across County Durham generally have very high risk levels – with highly deprived communities having particularly poor access to employment and healthcare.
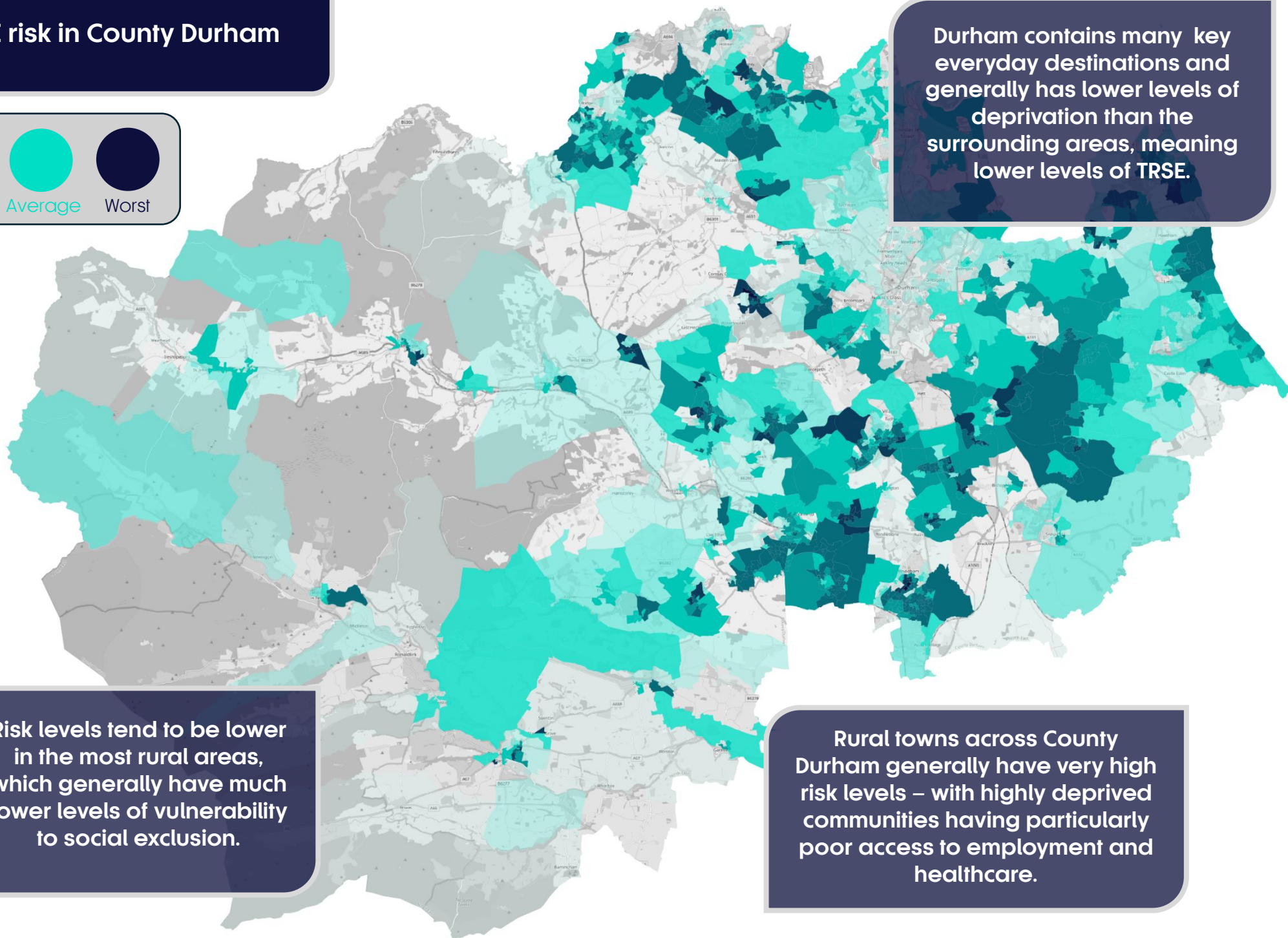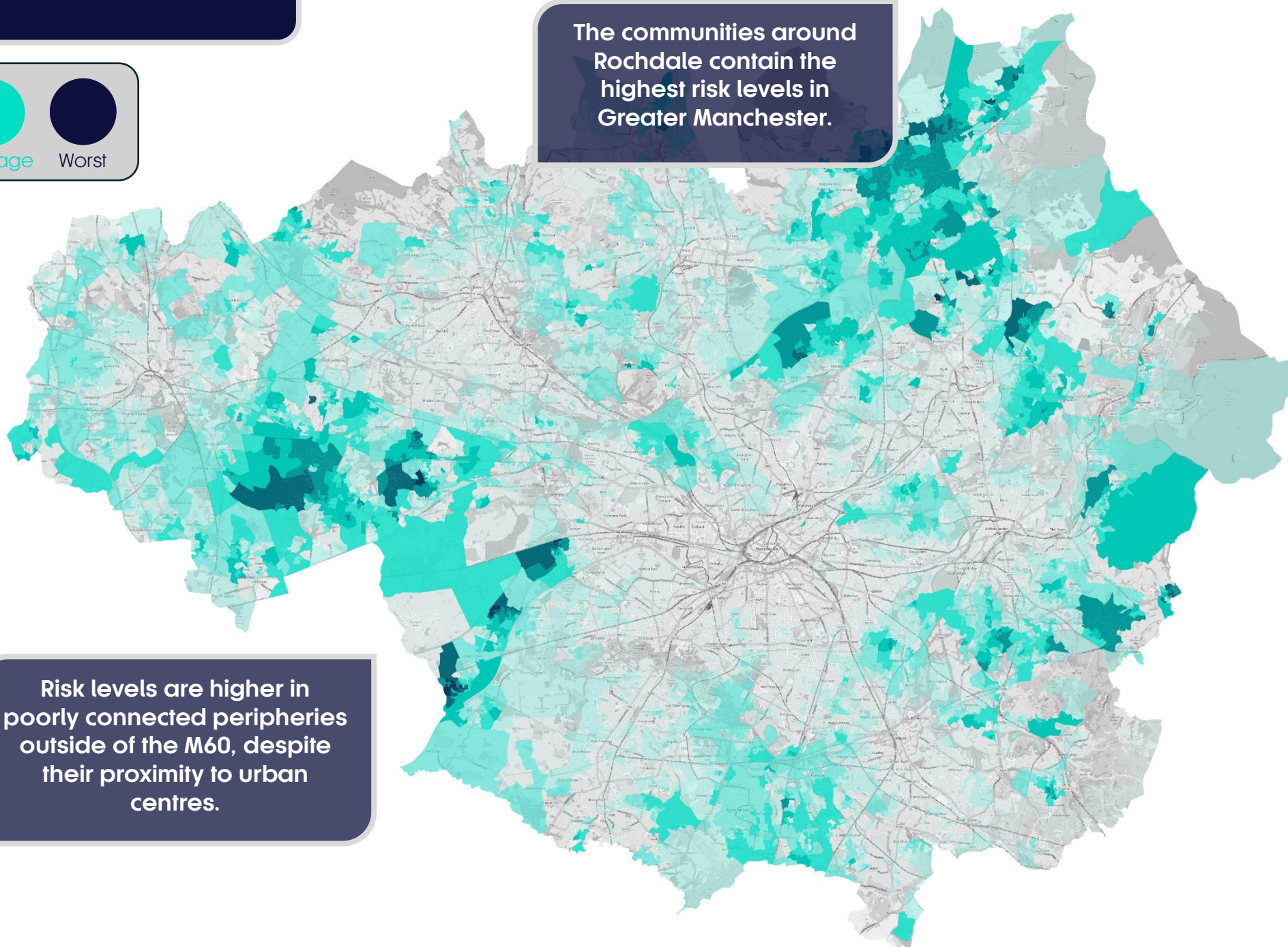
TRSE risk in Greater Manchester

Best   Average   Worst

The communities around Rochdale contain the highest risk levels in Greater Manchester.

Risk levels are higher in poorly connected peripheries outside of the M60, despite their proximity to urban centres.

How will TfN act on these findings?

Addressing TRSE is one of the three priorities set out in TfN's 2024 Strategic Transport Plan,[13] alongside rapid decarbonisation and economic transformation. These three ambitions are embedded across TfN's work to support local and combined authorities, our advice to central government, and our role in supporting investment in the strategic rail and major roads networks. In 2025/26, we will continue and expand this work by:

- Supporting Combined and Local Authorities in developing Local Transport Plans (LTP), including through sharing data to support local research and intelligence on TRSE, by sharing policy evidence on how to effectively address these local TRSE needs, and by supporting the evaluation of impacts. We will also support authorities that have already integrated TRSE data into their LTP to update this, and analyse change over time.

- Sharing TRSE data across the sub-national transport body and research communities, encouraging the further uptake of the TRSE tool outside of the North, and encouraging the use of the tool as a national metric of social exclusion.

- Providing an enhanced level of data, research, and policy support to those Local and Combined Authorities where the risk of TRSE is greatest, and where increases in TRSE risk have been observed between 2019 and 2024. This includes qualitative evidence on the experience of TRSE, area-based case studies on how TRSE can be addressed, and support to embed TRSE evidence in business cases for major schemes.

- Conducting further data analysis on the drivers of change in TRSE over time, with a particular focus on the growth of TRSE in towns and rural communities, which has been a defining feature of change over the last five years.

- Providing incremental updates to the TRSE tool, available at trse.transportforthenorth.com, as new vulnerability data becomes available. We intend to provide these updates every six months, with a full refresh every two years.

TfN's social research team encourages offers of collaboration in research, data, and policy analysis to address TRSE, both within and outside of the North of England. For further information, please contact research@transportforthenorth.com.

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[13] Transport for the North (2024) Strategic Transport Plan. Available here.

Appendixes

Further information on the methodology that we have developed and used to measure TRSE across England is given in three appendixes, published alongside this report, and available at transportforthenorth.com/social-inclusion. These are:

- Appendix 1: Measuring vulnerability to social exclusion in local areas of England.

- Appendix 2: Measuring access to everyday destinations in local areas of England.

- Appendix 3: Measuring TRSE using access and vulnerability.

TfN provides an online visualiser that shows how the risk of TRSE varies within Local and Combined Authorities, and nationally. Data can be downloaded to support research, policies, strategies, and business cases to reduce TRSE.

This is available at https://trse.transportforthenorth.com