

CCN

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

CCN

A n a l y s i s

Economic Inactivity Post-Pandemic Trends in Counties



February
2023

As the UK economy enters what is likely to be a prolonged period of economic recession, there has been a focus on the UK employment market and specifically the growing challenge of economic inactivity.

Economic inactivity is not a new phenomenon for the UK. As far back as five years ago, roughly one in five people aged between 16 and 64 were economically inactive¹ – meaning that they were not actively looking for employment in the labour market.

However the onset of the pandemic has hastened this trend: there are now almost 250,000 extra people economically inactive in England compared to March 2020.

This rise in people leaving the labour market has coincided with a dramatic increase in vacancies – in June to August 2022 vacancies were 470,000² – 59% above the pre-pandemic level. In short, there have not been enough people active in the labour market to fill these vacancies, with the rise in economic inactivity coupled with immigration changes the key drivers for this.

Both the Conservative government and the Labour opposition recognise economic inactivity as a growing issue, and both have said encouraging and incentivising domestic workers back into the labour market is a key policy issue. Last month the Chancellor Jeremy Hunt called the number of people economically inactive, excluding students, a 'shocking waste of talent and potential' in a keynote speech.³

To date, however, this debate has been conducted at the national level. There is a need to better understand the local trends in economic inactivity since the pandemic, and where hotspots may be located, broken down by reason and local authority.

The reasons for economic inactivity are fourfold: they comprise students, those who are looking after family at home, temporary and long-term sick, those who have taken early retirement and those who are out of the labour market for other reasons.

Focusing on these four main categories of economic inactivity (and excluding 'temporary sick') the CCN has analysed Office of National Statistics' Annual Population Survey dataset for March 2020 and September 2022 to ascertain where, and for what reason, people have left the employment market pre and post pandemic.

Key Findings

- The number of economically inactive people in England has grown from 7m to 7.243m as a result of a 11.6% (320,300) increase in the number of economically inactive people in England's 37 county and CCN unitary areas. Excluding the rise in students, these areas still witness a far greater increase (6.5%) than all other local authority types.
- In contrast, major cities and towns across the country saw a decrease in economically inactive people, with London seeing a drop of 20,100 people and the eight largest 'core cities' in England which collectively saw a drop of 26,500 people. Metropolitan boroughs saw 17,000 fewer people economically inactive.
- The number of long-term sick in county and CCN unitary members increased by 70,000 over the period, some 57% of the increase in England. The increase has been higher in county and CCN unitary areas (10.5%) compared to all other local authority types.
- In total, 100,300 extra people took the lifestyle choice of early retirement in county and CCN unitary areas compared to pre-pandemic levels, a 21% increase over the 36 months. This trend is up across England but has risen the steepest in counties - some 68% of the entire increase in England was in county and CCN unitary authorities, with the rise four times the total amount of councils in London and metropolitan borough areas.
- Some 56% of all those who have retired early are now in county areas, up from 54% from March 2020. Approximately 1 in 25 working age adults in counties are now retired early. This compares to 1 in 35 in metropolitan boroughs and 1 in 63 in London now retired early.
- County and CCN unitary areas have witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of students, with 181,800 more students compared to March 2020, with all other local authority types witnessing a reduction.
- Regionally, the East Midlands has seen the largest increase of people becoming economically inactive since the start of the pandemic (+10.4% and 60,400 people), including the highest increase of early retirees (+31.3%) and the largest rise in long-term sick (+16.6). The South East had the second largest increase (+9.7% and 93,500 people) and the North West the third highest (+6.7% and 70,700 people).

[1] Office of National Statistics: [Economic Inactivity Rate: UK](#)

[2] Office of National Statistics: [Vacancies and Jobs in the UK: September 2022](#)

[3] Chancellor Jeremy Hunt's speech at Bloomberg: [January 27th 2023](#)

While overall economic inactivity levels amongst the working age population in county and CCN unitary authorities remains slightly below other parts of the country - 1 in 5 in counties compared to 1 in 4 in London and metropolitan areas - the growth in economic inactivity since the pandemic has been concentrated in counties.

Alongside the rise in students, county and CCN unitary authorities have seen less people who are looking after a family or home returning to work, while there has been a sharp rise in people taking early retirement and those who have gone on long-term sick leave from the labour market.

In both these categories, there are both national and local policy levers that could be pulled to incentivise and influence these individuals back to the workplace.

While public and private sector policy, particularly over pay and conditions, could have a significant sway on attracting these individuals to re-join the labour market, local interventions, and devolved powers and funding over employment and welfare policy, could also have a vital influence. To tackle the long-term challenges of economic inactivity there needs to be a greater recognition that a one-size-fits all policy has its limitations: local economies have different challenges and opportunities. What is required in Durham could be markedly different to Devon; bespoke solutions are needed.

Locally, CCN member councils are already doing all they can to support people back to work through their existing economic growth, skills and employment services and initiatives. Our reports, including our most recent *County Spotlight on Economic Growth*, demonstrated how county and unitary authorities are using a wide range of interventions to promote reskilling and supporting people back into employment.

Looking ahead to 2023 and beyond, it is vital that the government provides the resources for councils to continue existing local growth initiatives. These services are under severe pressure, as inflation drives up the costs of delivering both revenue and capital projects.

But while protecting existing services and local innovations is crucial to tackling economic inactivity, government policy in reforming the provision of local skills and employment services needs to go much further.

Firstly, the government should set out further plans for the reforms of the local economic growth landscape. While CCN authorities work closely with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to deliver employment and skills services the current landscape remains fragmented and under resourced.

Last year the government set out its plans for the reforms of LEPs, integrating their functions within local authorities where an area had a new or existing devolution deal. But CCN would like the government to go further, transferring LEP functions, particularly over skills and employment, to all upper-tier councils by the end of the Parliament.

Alongside this, it is vital that the momentum on levelling up is maintained by agreeing more devolution deals – and increasing devolved adult education and welfare powers within these – with as many CCN member councils as possible. CCN has championed the transformative impact devolution deals could have in driving local growth and diversifying the skills and qualifications of individual labour markets.

There have been great strides made on the devolution agenda since early 2022 with deals agreed between the government and seven CCN members. Each of these has had a focus on adult skills provision, with a devolved adult education budget to be used locally to fund training for all adults over the age of 19 for a wide range of qualifications. These 'Level 3' deals, if ratified locally, will see the devolution of the core adult education budget, as well as input into the new local skills improvement plans.

But, by turbocharging the devolution process, CCN wants to see the government agree devolution deals with at least two-thirds of county authorities by the end of the parliament. Alongside this, we want to see departments who have traditionally been reluctant to devolve be more ambitious in transferring greater powers over employment and welfare support to Level 3 County Deals and County Combined Authorities.

Methodology

CCN analysed the numbers of economically inactive people as of September 2022 compared to March 2020 using the Office of National Statistics' Annual Population Survey dataset, which is available [here](#).

The analysis used the four main categories of economic inactivity aged 16-64;

- Students
- Looking after family at home
- Early retirement
- Those who are out of the labour market for other reasons.

Due to incomplete data for the majority of authorities, temporary sickness was excluded from the analysis.

Please note authorities contained in the Core Cities category were also included within their parent local authority type meaning the 'England' total will not add up to the local authority types collectively.

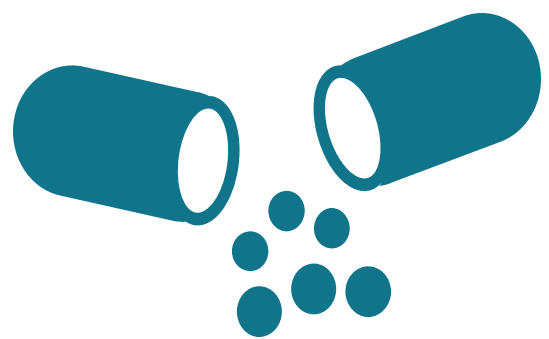
County & CCN Unitary

Key Statistics

March
2020

Sept
2022

Long-Term Sickness



667,800

<

VS

>

737,800

+

10.5%

Looking After Family/Home



588,300

<

VS

>

560,900

=

4.7%

Early Retired



480,200

<

VS

>

580,500

+

20.9%

Students



637,300

<

VS

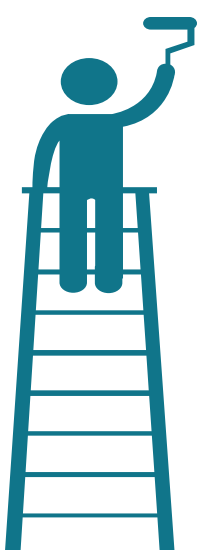
>

819,100

+

28.5%

Other Economically Inactive



379,300

<

VS

>

374,900

=

1.2%

Total Economically Inactive



2,752,900

<

VS

>

3,073,200

+

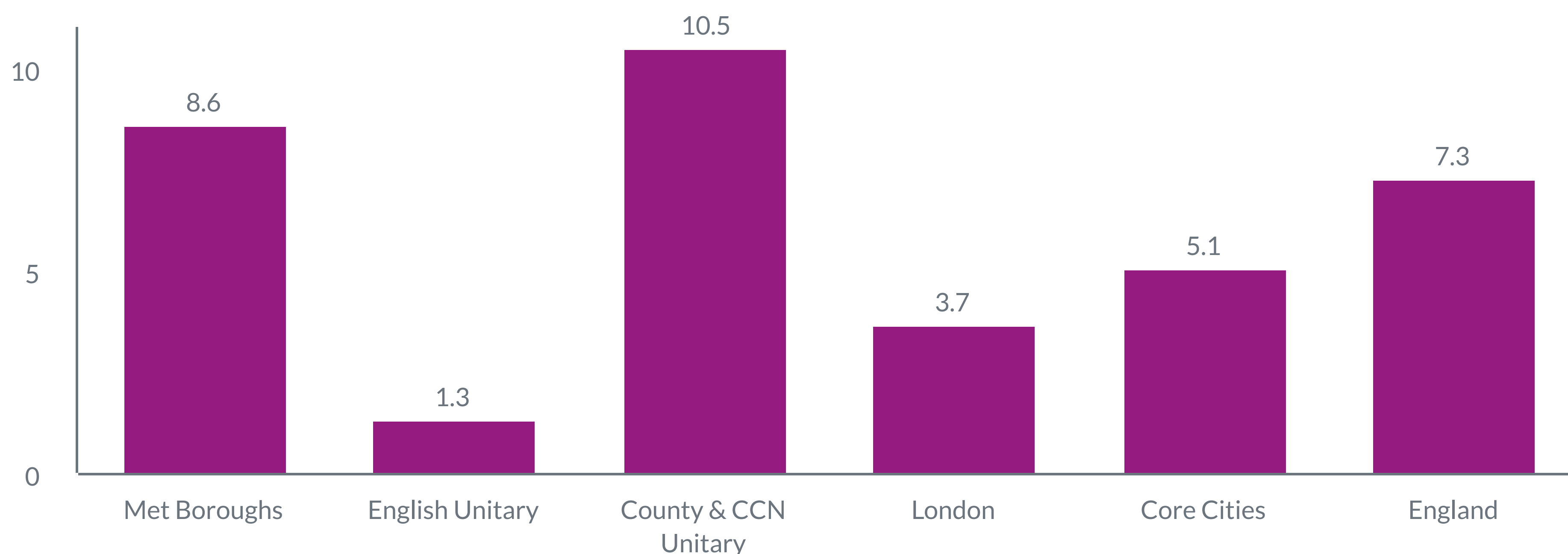
11.6%

Firstly, we analysed the change in the number of people economically inactive due to long-term sickness between March 2020 and September 2022. Table 1 shows that the number of long-term sick in county and CCN unitary members increased by 70,000 over the period, some 57% of the increase in England. Graph 1 shows that the increase has been higher in county and CCN unitary areas compared to all other local authority types. Approximately 1 in 20 working age adults in counties are now economically inactive due to long term sickness, compared to 1 in 14 in metropolitan boroughs and 1 in 22 in London.

Table 1 - Long-term sick aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

LA Type	March 2020	Sep 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Met Boroughs	453,600	492,700	39,100	8.6
English Unitary	305,700	309,800	4,100	1.3
County & CCN Unitary	667,800	737,800	70,000	10.5
London	240,300	249,200	8,900	3.7
Core Cities	177,800	186,800	9,000	5.1
England	1,667,400	1,789,500	122,100	7.3

Graph 1 - % Change long-term sick aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022



Graph 2 - No. Change in long-term sick aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

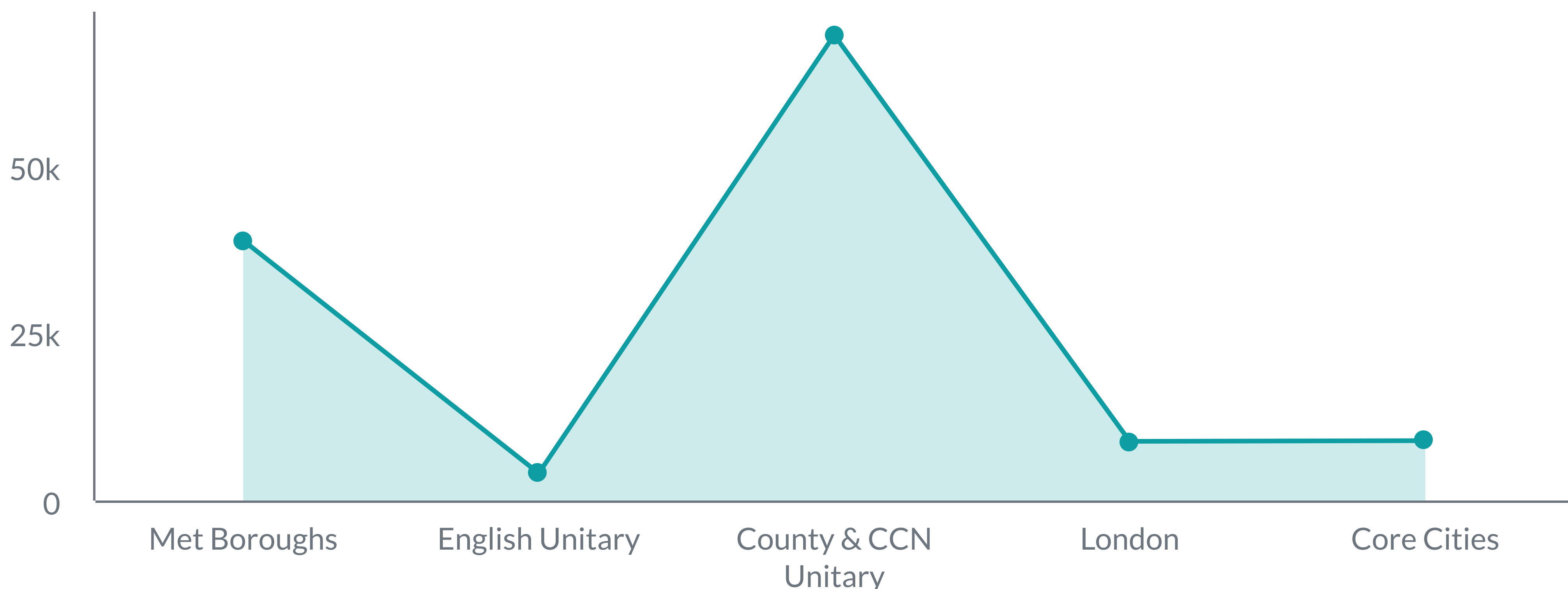


Table 2 shows the regional breakdown of all local authorities in England. Authorities in the East Midlands witnessed the largest percentage increase in those economically inactive due to long-term sickness, followed by the South East and the North East.

Table 2 - Long-term sick aged 16-64, by region (all LAs), March 2020 and September 2022

Region	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
East of England	164,500	162,200	-2,300	-1.4
East Midlands	144,100	168,000	23,900	16.6
London	240,300	249,200	8,900	3.7
North East	115,500	127,600	12,100	10.5
North West	293,000	315,300	22,300	7.6
South East	195,000	221,600	26,600	13.6
South West	141,100	147,300	6,200	4.4
West Midlands	200,200	217,200	17,000	8.5
Yorkshire & Humber	173,700	181,100	7,400	4.3

Graph 3 - % Change, long-term sick aged 16-64, by region (all LAs), March 2020 and September 2022

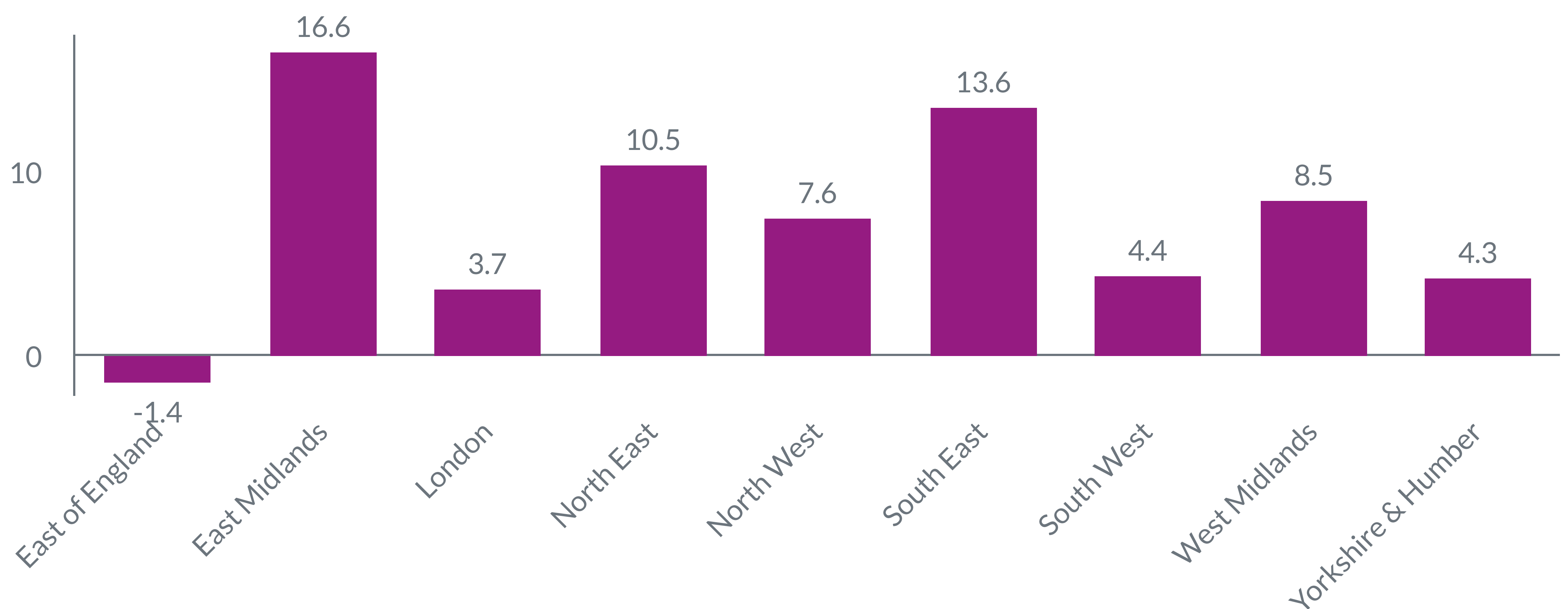


Table 3 below shows the change in long term sickness for all individual county and CCN unitary authorities. Some 20 of the 37 areas have witnessed an increase in those long-term sick above the national average. Of the 50 upper-tier authorities in England with the largest growth in percentage terms, some 13 of these authorities are county and CCN unitary authorities; North Northamptonshire, Dorset, East Sussex, Hampshire, Lincolnshire, Devon, Gloucestershire, Kent, Lancashire, North Yorkshire, Shropshire, Nottinghamshire and Central Bedfordshire.

Table 3 - County & CCN Unitary, long-term sick aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

Council	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Buckinghamshire	7,700	5,600	-2,100	-27.3
Cambridgeshire	16,500	14,400	-2,100	-12.7
Central Bedfordshire	7,200	8,700	1,500	20.8
Cheshire East	9,400	6,500	-2,900	-30.9
Cornwall	19,100	15,900	-3,200	-16.8
Cumbria	20,000	21,500	1,500	7.5
Derbyshire	31,800	28,100	-3,700	-11.6
Devon	17,000	24,000	7,000	41.2
Dorset	6,400	11,900	5,500	85.9
Durham	25,300	23,800	-1,500	-5.9
East Riding of Yorkshire	8,600	9,800	1,200	14.0
East Sussex	10,900	19,700	8,800	80.7
Essex	43,900	38,800	-5,100	-11.6
Gloucestershire	15,700	21,400	5,700	36.3
Hampshire	28,900	41,800	12,900	44.6
Herefordshire	5,300	5,800	500	9.4
Hertfordshire	25,000	27,700	2,700	10.8
Kent	38,300	51,900	13,600	35.5
Lancashire	40,500	52,200	11,700	28.9
Leicestershire	15,100	16,200	1,100	7.3
Lincolnshire	22,200	31,500	9,300	41.9
Norfolk	22,200	21,000	-1,200	-5.4
North Northamptonshire	5,800	13,600	7,800	134.5
North Yorkshire	13,000	16,600	3,600	27.7
Northumberland	10,100	11,800	1,700	16.8
Nottinghamshire	24,700	30,300	5,600	22.7
Oxfordshire	15,800	10,300	-5,500	-34.8
Shropshire	6,100	7,700	1,600	26.2
Somerset	16,100	15,700	-400	-2.5
Staffordshire	29,000	23,800	-5,200	-17.9
Suffolk	20,700	22,200	1,500	7.2
Surrey	17,600	18,400	800	4.5
Warwickshire	13,700	12,400	-1,300	-9.5
West Northamptonshire	9,900	10,300	400	4.0
West Sussex	18,600	16,300	-2,300	-12.4
Wiltshire	12,700	14,000	1,300	10.2
Worcestershire	17,000	16,200	-800	-4.7

Secondly, we analysed the number economically inactive due to looking after a family or home since March 2020. Table 4 shows the change in the number looking after a family or home in county and CCN unitary members which fell by 27,400, only 16% of the total decrease in England. Graph 4 shows that county and CCN unitary authorities witnessed a significantly smaller reduction in this economically inactive category compared to other parts of England, demonstrating that less people caring for a family have returned to the workplace in these areas.

Table 4 - Looking after family/home aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

LA Type	March 2020	Sep 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Met Boroughs	451,100	389,400	-61,700	-13.7
English Unitary	273,000	242,100	-30,900	-11.3
County & CCN Unitary	588,300	560,900	-27,400	-4.7
London	353,600	299,400	-54,200	-15.3
Core Cities	188,100	163,400	-24,700	-13.1
England	1,666,000	1,491,800	-174,200	-10.5

Graph 4 - % Change looking after family/home aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022



Graph 5 - No. Change in looking after family/home aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

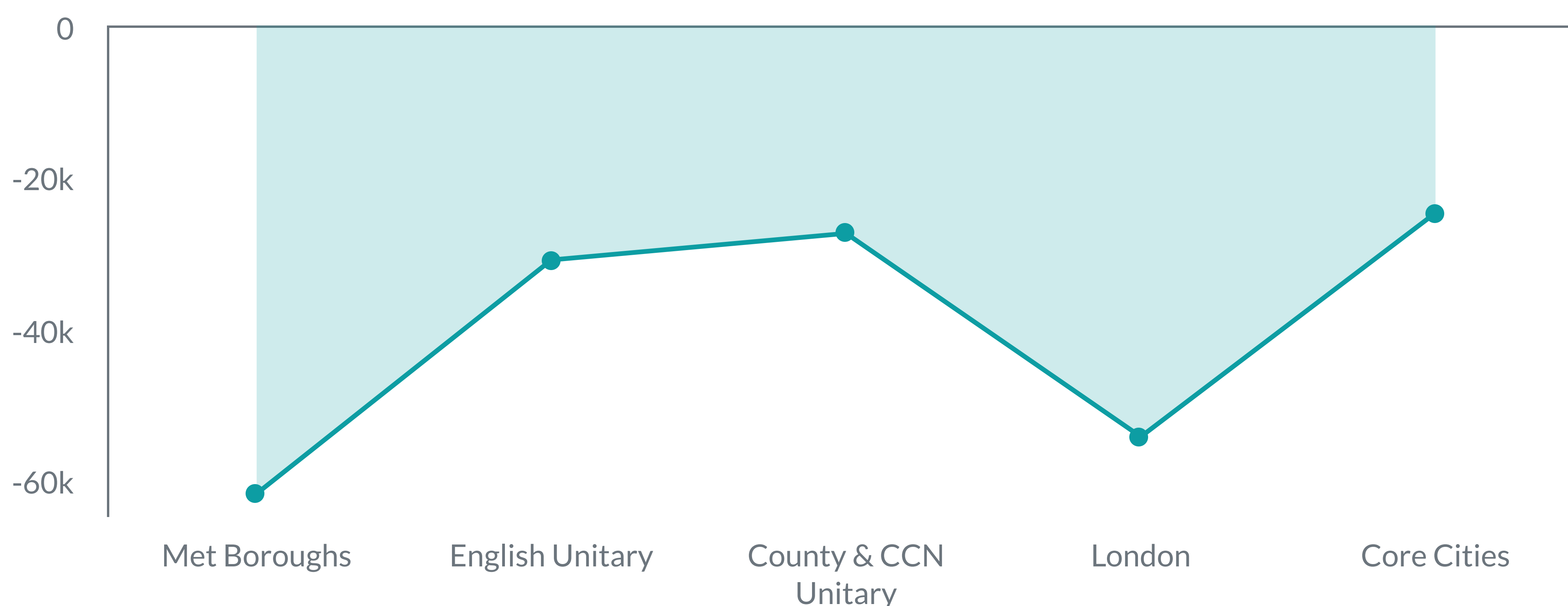


Table 5 shows the regional breakdown of all local authorities in England. Authorities in Yorkshire & Humber saw the greatest reduction in those economically inactive due to looking after a family or home, followed by the North East and London. Smaller decreases occurred in the East Midlands, while the South West witnessed a small increase.

Table 5 - Looking after family/home aged 16-64, by region, (All LAs) March 2020 and September 2022

Region	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
East of England	169,200	148,100	-21,100	-12.5
East Midlands	128,800	121,900	-6,900	-5.4
London	353,600	299,400	-54,200	-15.3
North East	92,000	75,600	-16,400	-17.8
North West	230,400	208,100	-22,300	-9.7
South East	221,400	213,200	-8,200	-3.7
South West	105,500	108,300	2,800	2.7
West Midlands	210,400	191,400	-19,000	-9.0
Yorkshire & Humber	154,700	125,800	-28,900	-18.7

Graph 6 - % Change in looking after family/home aged 16-64, by region, (All LAs) March 2020 and September 2022

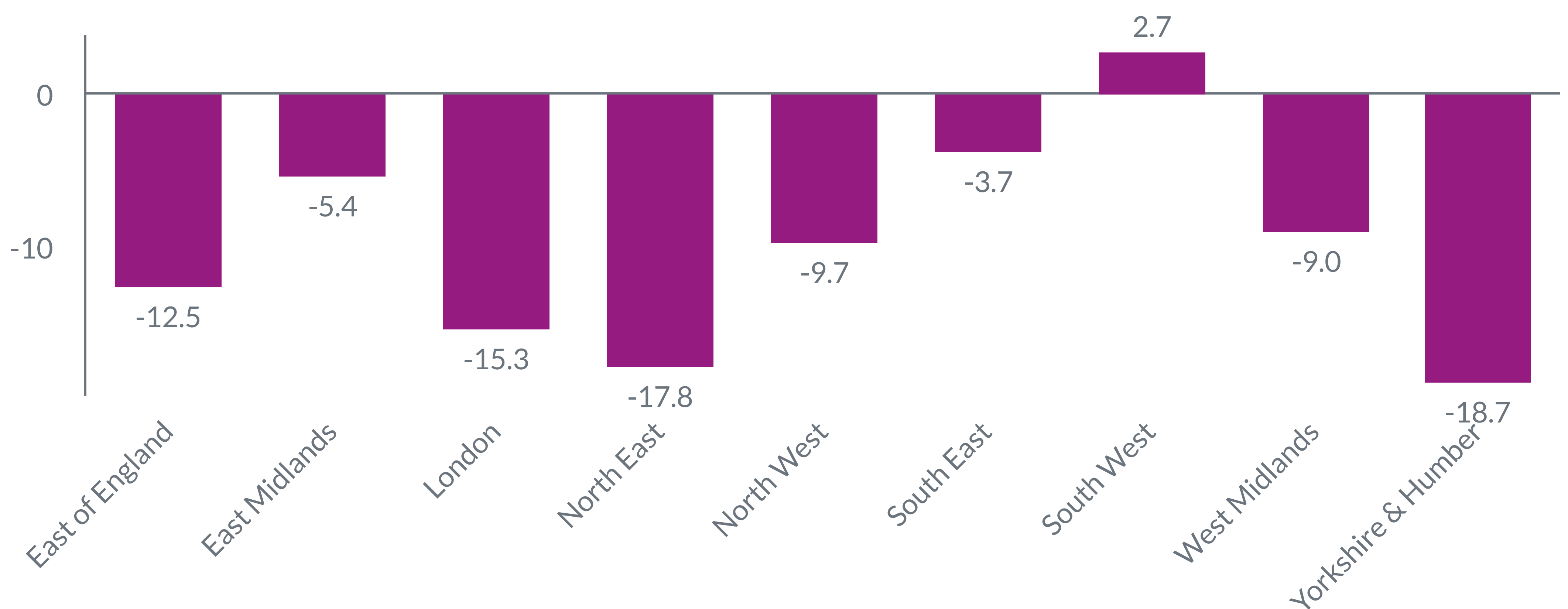


Table 6 below shows the change for all individual county and CCN unitary authorities. Some 15 of the 37 areas have seen reductions in the number of those looking after a family or home above the national average. Of the 50 upper-tier authorities in England with the largest reductions in percentage terms, only 8 of these authorities are county and CCN unitary authorities; North Yorkshire, West Northamptonshire, West Sussex, Wiltshire, Central Bedfordshire, Durham, Essex and Cambridgeshire.

Table 6 - County & CCN Unitary, looking after family/home aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

Council	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Buckinghamshire	9,600	10,400	800	8.3
Cambridgeshire	16,900	13,000	-3,900	-23.1
Central Bedfordshire	5,600	3,400	-2,200	-39.3
Cheshire East	5,000	8,500	3,500	70.0
Cornwall	12,300	12,700	400	3.3
Cumbria	8,300	8,600	300	3.6
Derbyshire	14,000	19,000	5,000	35.7
Devon	13,100	19,000	5,900	45.0
Dorset	8,600	7,700	-900	-10.5
Durham	19,500	12,400	-7,100	-36.4
East Riding of Yorkshire	5,500	6,200	700	12.7
East Sussex	12,200	10,600	-1,600	-13.1
Essex	44,400	30,000	-14,400	-32.4
Gloucestershire	9,900	10,400	0 500	5.1
Hampshire	30,500	30,600	100	0.3
Herefordshire	2,900	5,000	2,100	72.4
Hertfordshire	25,500	30,800	5,300	20.8
Kent	44,200	36,800	-7,400	-16.7
Lancashire	24,700	28,300	3,600	14.6
Leicestershire	14,600	14,900	300	2.1
Lincolnshire	23,300	19,500	-3,800	-16.3
Norfolk	20,300	20,200	-100	-0.5
North Northamptonshire	7,200	8,900	1,700	23.6
North Yorkshire	14,000	7,500	-6,500	-46.4
Northumberland	10,400	10,900	500	4.8
Nottinghamshire	18,400	17,800	-600	-3.3
Oxfordshire	13,700	15,100	1,400	10.2
Shropshire	5,600	6,200	600	10.7
Somerset	12,100	15,300	3,200	26.4
Staffordshire	16,900	14,700	-2,200	-13.0
Suffolk	21,900	18,300	-3,600	-16.4
Surrey	26,400	37,100	10,700	40.5
Warwickshire	9,500	11,100	1,600	16.8
West Northamptonshire	12,300	6,900	-5,400	-43.9
West Sussex	21,700	12,400	-9,300	-42.9
Wiltshire	15,700	9,100	-6,600	-42.0
Worcestershire	11,600	11,600	0	0.0

We now analysed the change the number of people who are economically inactive due to retirement before the age of 65. Table 7 shows that the total number of those retiring early in county and CCN unitary members increased by 100,300 over the period, some 68% of the entire increase in England. Graph 7 shows that the growth in counties has been significantly higher than all other parts of the country, although slightly below the Core Cities in percentage terms. Some 56% of all those who have retired early are now in county areas, up from 54% in March 2020. Approximately 1 in 25 working age adults in counties are now retired early, up from 1 in 31 in March 2020. This compares to 1 in 31 in metropolitan boroughs and 1 in 63 in London now retired early.

Table 7 - Total retired, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

LA Type	March 2020	Sep 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Met Boroughs	186,900	200,100	13,200	7.1
English Unitary	143,600	165,900	22,300	15.5
County & CCN Unitary	480,200	580,500	100,300	20.9
London	78,600	89,600	11,000	14.0
Core Cities	49,000	59,700	10,700	21.8
England	889,300	1,036,100	146,800	16.5

Graph 7 - % Change in total retired, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022



Graph 8 - No. Change in total retired, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

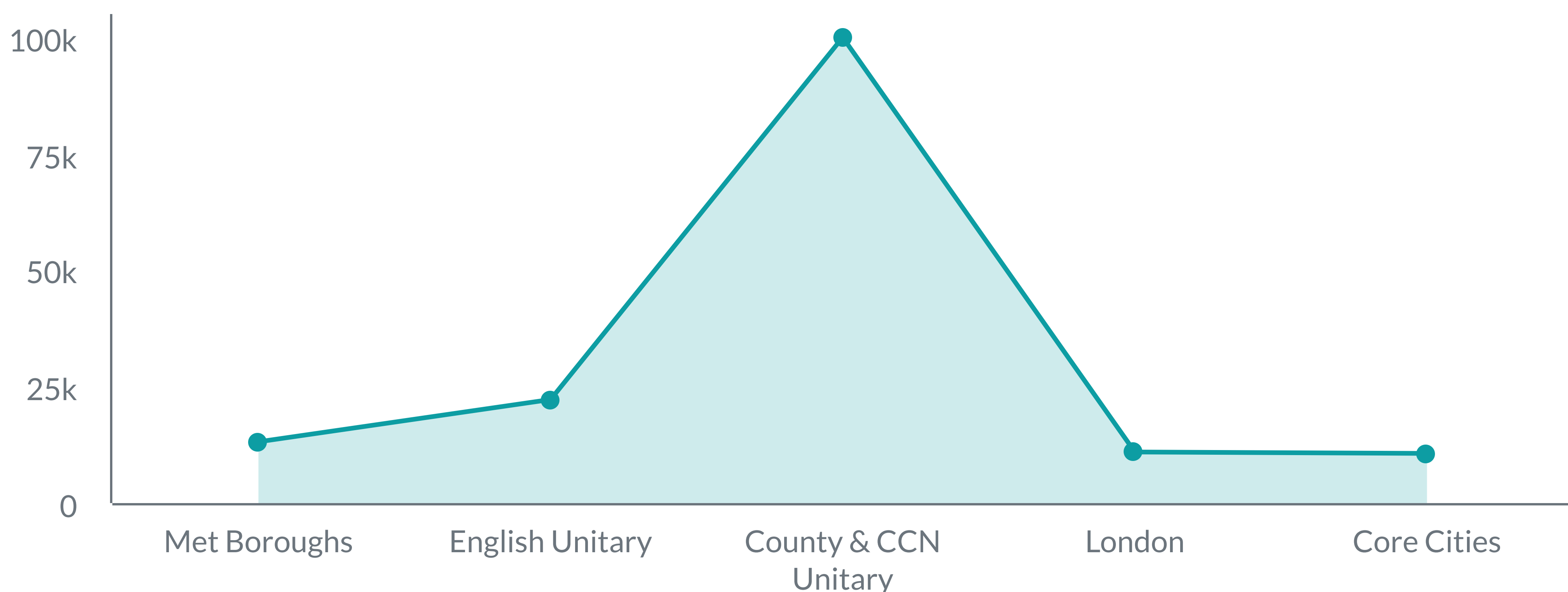


Table 8 shows the regional breakdown of all local authorities in England. Authorities in the East Midlands and South West have seen the largest percentage growth in the numbers retiring early, with the West Midlands witnessing a particularly small increase.

Table 8 - Total retired, aged 16-64, by regions (All LAs), March 2020 and September 2022

Region	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
East of England	114,100	128,700	14,600	12.8
East Midlands	79,300	104,100	24,800	31.3
London	78,600	89,600	11,000	14.0
North East	52,500	61,700	9,200	17.5
North West	131,500	155,000	23,500	17.9
South East	153,400	180,500	27,100	17.7
South West	88,300	112,300	24,000	27.2
West Midlands	100,500	101,200	700	0.7
Yorkshire & Humber	91,100	103,000	11,900	13.1

Graph 9 - % Change in total retired, aged 16-64, by regions (All LAs), March 2020 and September 2022

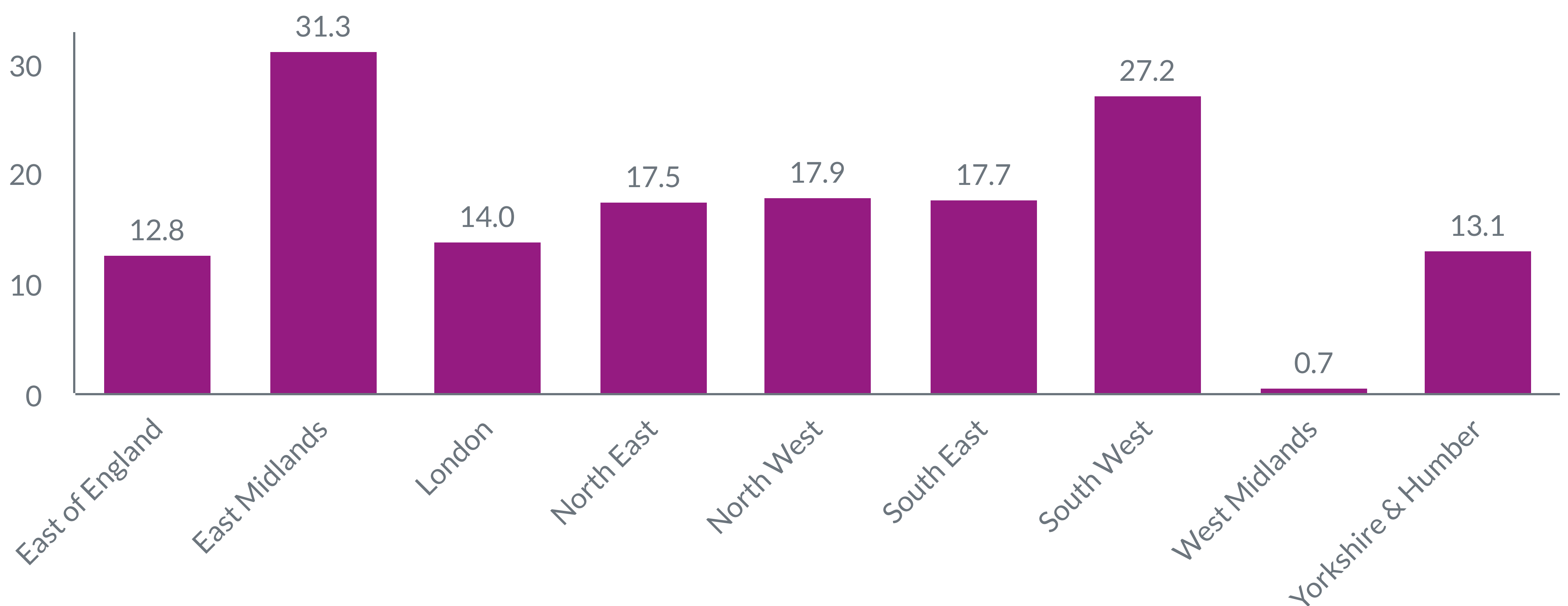


Table 9 below shows the change in the number of early retired for all individual county and CCN unitary authorities. Some 19 of the 37 areas have witnessed an increase in those long-term sick above the national average. Of the 50 upper-tier authorities in England with the largest growth in percentage terms, some 15 of these authorities are county and CCN unitary authorities; North Northamptonshire, Cheshire East, Herefordshire, Cornwall, Oxfordshire, Kent, Cumbria, Nottinghamshire, Essex, Northumberland, East Sussex, West Sussex, Somerset, Derbyshire and Dorset.

Table 9 - County & CCN Unitary, total retired, aged 16-64 March 2020 and September 2022

Council	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Buckinghamshire	6,800	8,100	1,300	19.1
Cambridgeshire	10,500	7,800	-2,700	-25.7
Central Bedfordshire	5,700	5,400	-300	-5.3
Cheshire East	5,700	14,200	8,500	149.1
Cornwall	10,000	19,300	9,300	93.0
Cumbria	8,300	13,400	5,100	61.4
Derbyshire	19,300	26,000	6,700	34.7
Devon	15,400	15,300	-100	-0.6
Dorset	11,700	15,100	3,400	29.1
Durham	9,600	10,900	1,300	13.5
East Riding of Yorkshire	7,600	9,700	2,100	27.6
East Sussex	6,700	9,800	3,100	46.3
Essex	28,200	42,400	14,200	50.4
Gloucestershire	7,300	9,100	1,800	24.7
Hampshire	29,700	24,600	-5,100	-17.2
Herefordshire	3,000	6,000	3,000	100.0
Hertfordshire	21,400	21,100	-300	-1.4
Kent	26,300	43,000	16,700	63.5
Lancashire	26,300	22,600	-3,700	-14.1
Leicestershire	9,500	10,300	800	8.4
Lincolnshire	19,700	17,400	-2,300	-11.7
Norfolk	20,300	20,700	400	2.0
North Northamptonshire	2,900	7,300	4,400	151.7
North Yorkshire	15,100	15,200	100	0.7
Northumberland	7,200	10,800	3,600	50.0
Nottinghamshire	14,500	22,800	8,300	57.2
Oxfordshire	7,500	14,100	6,600	88.0
Shropshire	6,800	8,300	1,500	22.1
Somerset	9,700	13,400	3,700	38.1
Staffordshire	18,900	20,700	1,800	9.5
Suffolk	12,200	13,800	1,600	13.1
Surrey	21,100	23,100	2,000	9.5
Warwickshire	10,200	5,800	-4,400	-43.1
West Northamptonshire	6,200	6,100	-100	-1.6
West Sussex	16,900	23,600	6,700	39.6
Wiltshire	10,500	10,500	0	0.0
Worcestershire	11,500	12,800	1,300	11.3

This section analyses the number of students that are economically inactive. Table 10 shows that county and CCN unitary areas have witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of students, with 181,800 more students compared to March 2020. This can be partly attributed to demographic trends. Student data showed that for the 2020/21 academic year, first year student numbers increased by 8% compared to 2019/20. In 2020, the number of 18 year olds in England started to increase after years of decline.

Table 10 - Total students, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

LA Type	March 2020	Sep 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Met Boroughs	524,400	501,700	-22,700	-4.3
English Unitary	345,900	295,700	-50,200	-14.5
County & CCN Unitary	637,300	819,100	181,800	28.5
London	417,100	421,300	4,200	1.0
Core Cities	288,400	256,400	-32,000	-11.1
England	1,924,700	2,037,800	113,100	5.9

Graph 10 - % Change in total students, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022



Graph 11 - No. Change in total students, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

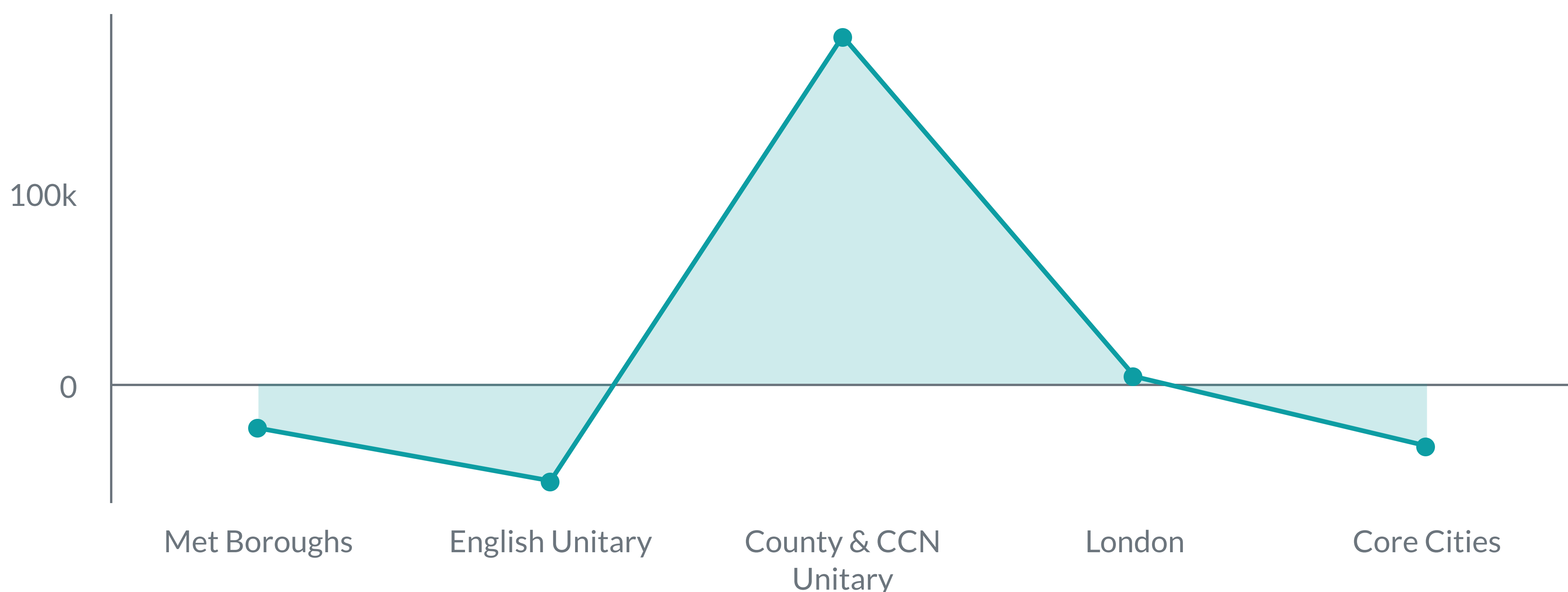


Table 11 shows the regional breakdown of all local authorities in England. Authorities in the South East witnessed the strongest growth in the number of students, followed by the East Midlands and North West. Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East are the only the two regions to witness a reduction overall.

Table 11 - Total students, aged 16-64, by region (All LAs), March 2020 and September 2022

Region	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
East of England	169,200	179,800	10,600	6.3
East Midlands	156,000	174,100	18,100	11.6
London	417,100	421,300	4,200	1.0
North East	91,600	89,200	-2,400	-2.6
North West	272,100	303,400	31,300	11.5
South East	260,700	302,900	42,200	16.2
South West	130,200	138,300	8,100	6.2
West Midlands	244,000	247,000	3,000	1.2
Yorkshire & Humber	183,800	181,800	-2,000	-1.1

Graph 12 - % Change in total students, aged 16-64, by region (All LAs), March 2020 and September 2022

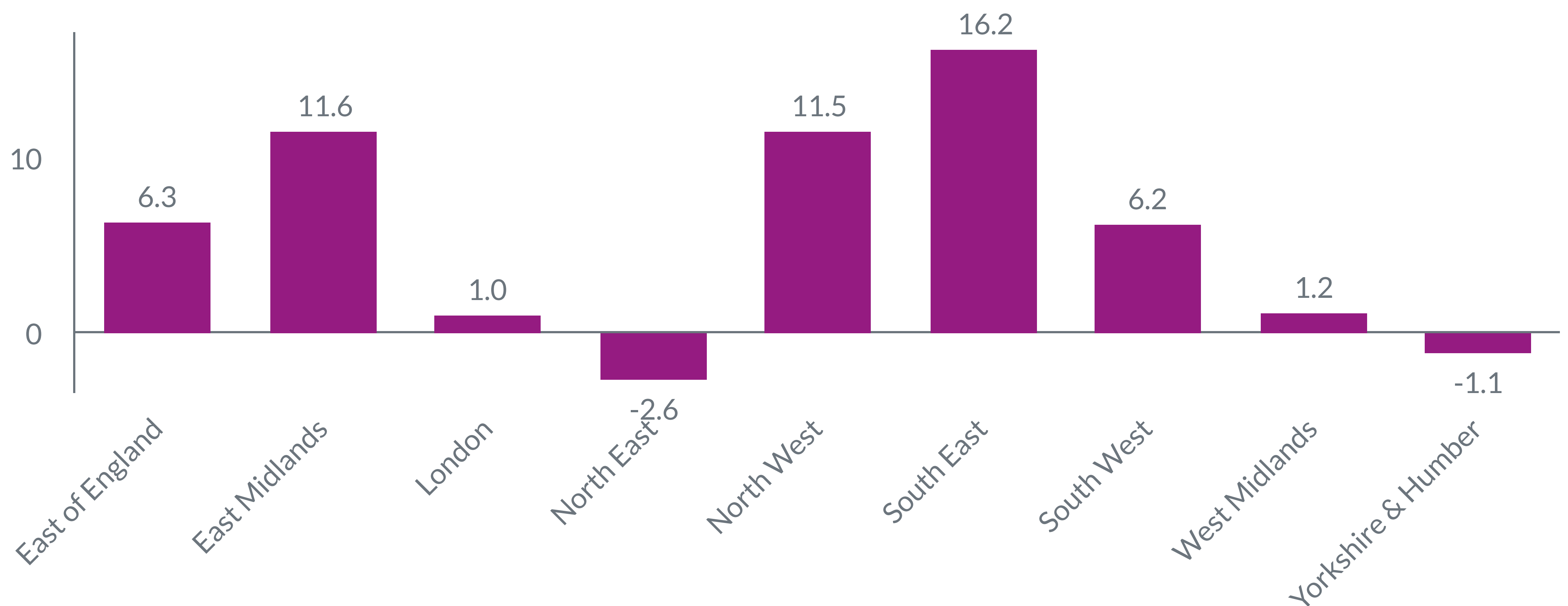


Table 12 below shows the change in the students for all individual county and CCN unitary authorities. Some 27 of the 37 areas have witnessed an increase above the national average. Of the 50 upper-tier authorities in England with the largest growth in percentage terms, some 22 of these authorities are county and CCN unitary authorities; North Northamptonshire, Cheshire East, West Sussex, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Devon, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Durham, Kent, Surrey, North Yorkshire, Wiltshire, Hertfordshire, Staffordshire, Hampshire, Suffolk, Somerset, Worcestershire, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Warwickshire.

Table 12 - County & CCN Unitary, total students, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

Council	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Buckinghamshire	16,800	14,100	-2,700	-16.1
Cambridgeshire	22,800	27,700	4,900	21.5
Central Bedfordshire	8,300	5,600	-2,700	-32.5
Cheshire East	5,200	13,000	7,800	150.0
Cornwall	10,400	11,400	1,000	9.6
Cumbria	9,700	9,100	-600	-6.2
Derbyshire	17,100	25,900	8,800	51.5
Devon	22,800	35,200	12,400	54.4
Dorset	8,700	8,200	-500	-5.7
Durham	14,400	20,700	6,300	43.8
East Riding of Yorkshire	7,800	8,800	1,000	12.8
East Sussex	12,400	10,200	-2,200	-17.7
Essex	38,000	31,700	-6,300	-16.6
Gloucestershire	13,600	21,000	7,400	54.4
Hampshire	29,700	38,900	9,200	31.0
Herefordshire	4,600	2,800	-1,800	-39.1
Hertfordshire	32,400	46,100	13,700	42.3
Kent	40,900	58,500	17,600	43.0
Lancashire	38,900	56,400	17,500	45.0
Leicestershire	20,500	21,700	1,200	5.9
Lincolnshire	20,200	25,100	4,900	24.3
Norfolk	22,100	20,900	-1,200	-5.4
North Northamptonshire	4,800	13,100	8,300	172.9
North Yorkshire	17,200	24,500	7,300	42.4
Northumberland	6,300	7,300	1,000	15.9
Nottinghamshire	20,200	23,300	3,100	15.3
Oxfordshire	18,200	29,500	11,300	62.1
Shropshire	7,700	7,400	-300	-3.9
Somerset	10,100	13,000	2,900	28.7
Staffordshire	16,000	22,100	6,100	38.1
Suffolk	16,200	21,000	4,800	29.6
Surrey	33,900	48,400	14,500	42.8
Warwickshire	17,200	20,600	3,400	19.8
West Northamptonshire	11,100	10,600	-500	-4.5
West Sussex	14,800	30,200	15,400	104.1
Wiltshire	10,400	14,800	4,400	42.3
Worcestershire	15,900	20,300	4,400	27.7

Other Economically Inactive

The last category to be analysed was the change the number of people who are economically inactive for other reasons before the age of 65. Table 7 shows that the total number of those economically inactive for other reasons, with county and CCN unitary members witnessing a small decline over the period of 4,400. Graph 7 shows that that county and CCN unitary authorities collectively were the only local authority type to see a decline over the period.

Table 13 - Other economically inactive, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

LA Type	March 2020	Sep 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Met Boroughs	174,400	189,400	15,000	8.6
English Unitary	128,800	140,400	11,600	9.0
County & CCN Unitary	379,300	374,900	-4,400	-1.2
London	173,600	183,600	10,000	5.8
Core Cities	70,800	81,300	10,500	14.8
England	856,100	888,300	32,200	3.8

Graph 13 - % Change in other economically inactive, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022



Graph 14 - No. Change in other economically inactive, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

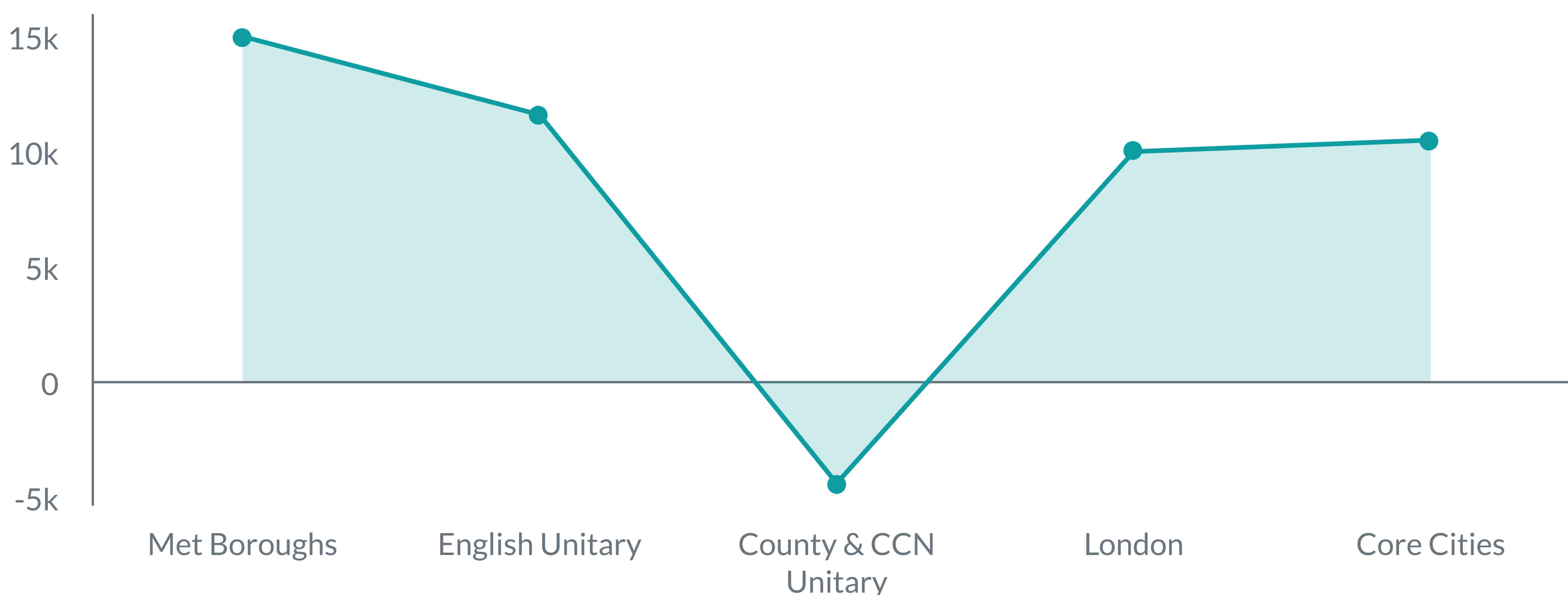


Table 14 shows the regional breakdown of all local authorities in England. Authorities in the North East and North West witnessed the strongest growth, reflecting the concentration of metropolitan boroughs and Core Cities in these areas. The South West and East of England witnessed the biggest declines, again reflecting the concentration of county authorities in these areas.

Table 14 - Other economically inactive, aged 16-64, by region (All LAs), March 2020 and September 2022

Region	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
East of England	102,300	94,300	-8,000	-7.8
East Midlands	71,300	71,800	500	0.7
London	173,600	183,600	10,000	5.8
North East	37,700	43,300	5,600	14.9
North West	97,700	113,600	15,900	16.3
South East	137,900	143,700	5,800	4.2
South West	69,600	64,200	-5,400	-7.8
West Midlands	84,700	96,200	11,500	13.6
Yorkshire & Humber	81,300	77,600	-3,700	-4.6

Graph 15 - % Change, other economically inactive, aged 16-64, by region (All LAs), March 2020 and September 2022



Table 15 below shows the change in the other inactive for all individual county and CCN unitary authorities. Some 16 of the 37 areas have witnessed an increase above the national average. Of the 50 upper-tier authorities in England with the largest growth in percentage terms, only 8 of these authorities are county and CCN unitary authorities; North Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, East Sussex, Durham, Lancashire and Worcestershire.

Table 15 - County & CCN Unitary, Other economically inactive, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

Council	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Buckinghamshire	8,100	7,300	-800	-9.9
Cambridgeshire	11,700	7,500	-4,200	-35.9
Central Bedfordshire	5,500	5,800	300	5.5
Cheshire East	6,200	2,800	-3,400	-54.8
Cornwall	8,100	6,100	-2,000	-24.7
Cumbria	5,600	5,900	300	5.4
Derbyshire	12,100	10,600	-1,500	-12.4
Devon	6,000	7,000	1,000	16.7
Dorset	7,900	3,800	-4,100	-51.9
Durham	7,800	10,400	2,600	33.3
East Riding of Yorkshire	4,500	3,800	-700	-15.6
East Sussex	9,700	14,100	4,400	45.4
Essex	30,200	23,500	-6,700	-22.2
Gloucestershire	8,200	7,900	-300	-3.7
Hampshire	23,700	21,100	-2,600	-11.0
Herefordshire	2,600	1,600	-1,000	-38.5
Hertfordshire	20,500	17,500	-3,000	-14.6
Kent	20,100	24,000	3,900	19.4
Lancashire	13,300	18,100	4,800	36.1
Leicestershire	9,700	6,500	-3,200	-33.0
Lincolnshire	10,000	9,900	-100	-1.0
Norfolk	11,300	17,000	5,700	50.4
North Northamptonshire	3,600	9,700	6,100	169.4
North Yorkshire	8,900	8,000	-900	-10.1
Northumberland	5,400	5,900	500	9.3
Nottinghamshire	11,500	12,700	1,200	10.4
Oxfordshire	5,000	7,300	2,300	46.0
Shropshire	5,400	2,300	-3,100	-57.4
Somerset	10,400	8,900	-1,500	-14.4
Staffordshire	12,400	6,500	-5,900	-47.6
Suffolk	12,100	10,400	-1,700	-14.0
Surrey	22,200	23,300	1,100	5.0
Warwickshire	6,300	10,700	4,400	69.8
West Northamptonshire	6,300	7,200	900	14.3
West Sussex	12,400	13,500	1,100	8.9
Wiltshire	6,700	6,200	-500	-7.5
Worcestershire	7,900	10,100	2,200	27.8

Total Economically Inactive

Lastly we bring together all the categories to analyse the total change in the number of people economically inactive over the period. Table 16 and Graph 16 show the change by local authority type, demonstrating that overall county and CCN unitary authorities are the only category of councils to witness an increase over the period (320,300), and therefore the strongest growth in percentage terms. Graph 17 shows that, even when excluding the rise in students, county and CCN unitary authorities have a much greater increase over the period in the number of economically inactive people. Approximately 1 in 5 working age adults in counties and London are now economically inactive, compared to 1 in 4 in metropolitan boroughs.

Table 16 - Total economically inactive, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

LA Type	March 2020	Sep 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Met Boroughs	1,790,400	1,773,300	-17,100	-1.0
English Unitary	1,197,000	1,153,900	-43,100	-3.6
County & CCN Unitary	2,752,900	3,073,200	320,300	11.6
London	1,263,200	1,243,100	-20,100	-1.6
Core Cities	774,100	747,600	-26,500	-3.4
England	7,003,500	7,243,500	240,000	3.4

Graph 16 - % Change in total economically inactive, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022



Graph 17 - % Change in total economically inactive excluding students, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

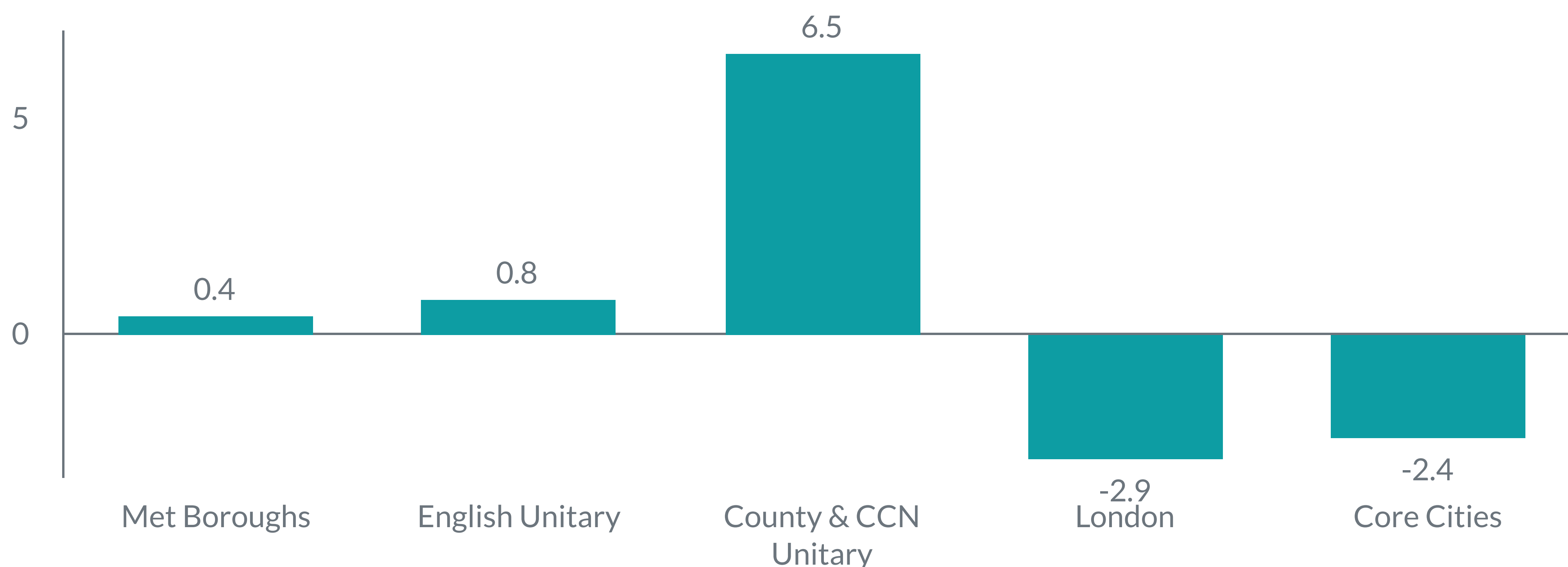


Table 17 shows the regional breakdown of all local authorities in England. Authorities in the East Midlands and South East have witnessed the strongest overall growth in economic inactivity over the period, reflecting the large number of county and CCN unitary authorities in these areas. The East of England, Yorkshire and Humber and London have all witnessed reductions over the period.

Table 17 - Total economically inactive, aged 16-64, by region (All LAs), March 2020 and September 2022

Region	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
East of England	719,300	713,100	-6,200	-0.9
East Midlands	579,500	639,900	60,400	10.4
London	1,263,200	1,243,100	-20,100	-1.6
North East	389,300	397,400	8,100	2.1
North West	1,024,700	1,095,400	70,700	6.9
South East	968,400	1,061,900	93,500	9.7
South West	534,700	570,400	35,700	6.7
West Midlands	839,800	853,000	13,200	1.6
Yorkshire & Humber	684,600	669,300	-15,300	-2.2

Graph 18 - % Change, total economically inactive, aged 16-64, by region (All LAs), March 2020 and September 2022

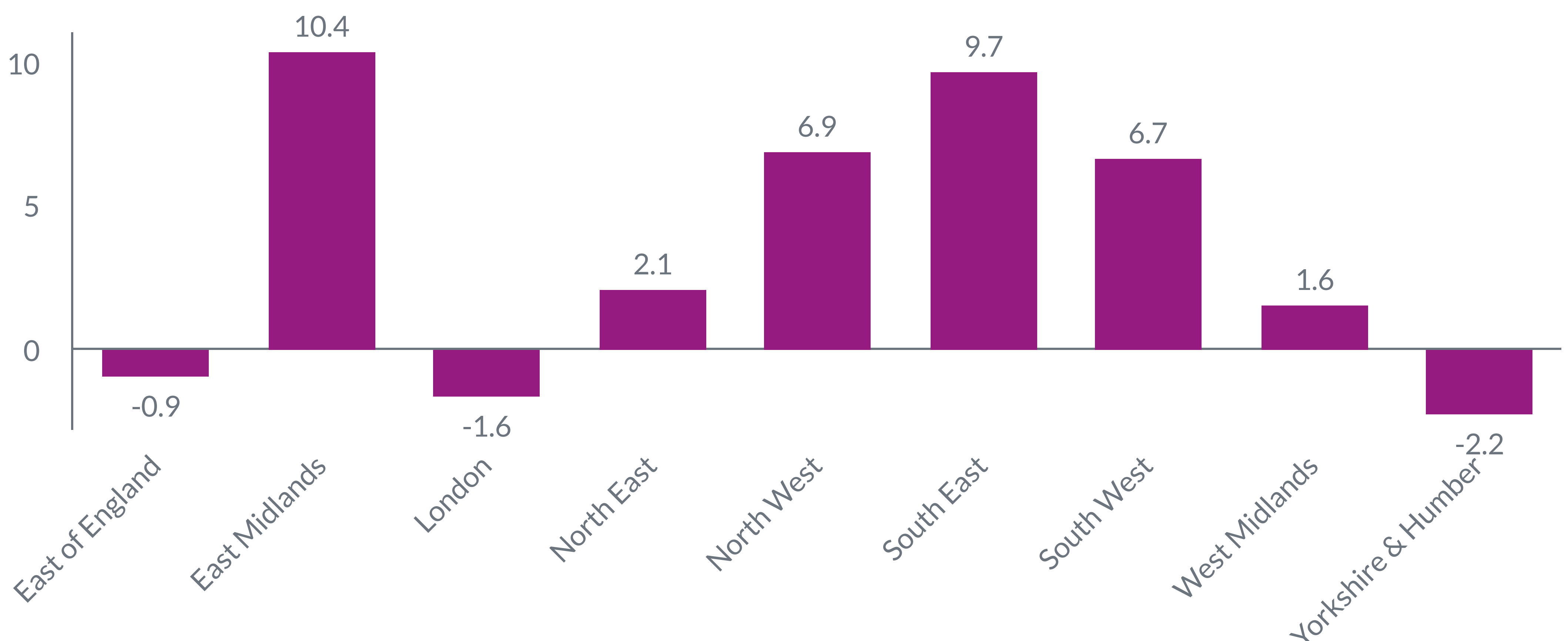


Table 18 below shows the change in the number of totally economically inactive for all individual county and CCN unitary authorities. Some 27 of the 37 areas have witnessed an increase above the national average. Of the 50 upper-tier authorities in England with the largest growth in percentage terms, some 20 of these authorities are county and CCN unitary authorities; North Northamptonshire, Cheshire East, Devon, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Kent, East Sussex, Surrey, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Northumberland, Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, West Sussex, Somerset, Cumbria, East Riding of Yorkshire, Worcestershire and Hampshire.

Table 18 - County & CCN Unitary, total economically inactive, aged 16-64, March 2020 and September 2022

Council	March 2020	Sept 2022	No. -/+	% -/+
Buckinghamshire	49,000	45,500	-3,500	-7.1
Cambridgeshire	78,400	70,400	-8,000	-10.2
Central Bedfordshire	32,300	28,900	-3,400	-10.5
Cheshire East	31,500	45,000	13,500	42.9
Cornwall	59,900	65,400	5,500	9.2
Cumbria	51,900	58,500	6,600	12.7
Derbyshire	94,300	109,600	15,300	16.2
Devon	74,300	100,500	26,200	35.3
Dorset	43,300	46,700	3,400	7.9
Durham	76,600	78,200	1,600	2.1
East Riding of Yorkshire	34,000	38,300	4,300	12.6
East Sussex	51,900	64,400	12,500	24.1
Essex	184,700	166,400	-18,300	-9.9
Gloucestershire	54,700	69,800	15,100	27.6
Hampshire	142,500	157,000	14,500	10.2
Herefordshire	18,400	21,200	2,800	15.2
Hertfordshire	124,800	143,200	18,400	14.7
Kent	169,800	214,200	44,400	26.1
Lancashire	143,700	177,600	33,900	23.6
Leicestershire	69,400	69,600	200	0.3
Lincolnshire	95,400	103,400	8,000	8.4
Norfolk	96,200	99,800	3,600	3.7
North Northamptonshire	24,300	52,600	28,300	116.5
North Yorkshire	68,200	71,800	3,600	5.3
Northumberland	39,400	46,700	7,300	18.5
Nottinghamshire	89,300	106,900	17,600	19.7
Oxfordshire	60,200	76,300	16,100	26.7
Shropshire	31,600	31,900	300	0.9
Somerset	58,400	66,300	7,900	13.5
Staffordshire	93,200	87,800	-5,400	-5.8
Suffolk	83,100	85,700	2,600	3.1
Surrey	121,200	150,300	29,100	24.0
Warwickshire	56,900	60,600	3,700	6.5
West Northamptonshire	45,800	41,100	-4,700	-10.3
West Sussex	84,400	96,000	11,600	13.7
Wiltshire	56,000	54,600	-1,400	-2.5
Worcestershire	63,900	71,000	7,100	11.1



COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

Founded in 1997, the County Councils Network is the voice of England's counties. A cross-party organisation, CCN develops policy, commissions research, and presents evidence-based solutions nationally on behalf of the largest grouping of local authorities in England.

In total, the 23 county councils and 13 unitary councils that make up the CCN represent 26 million residents, account for 39% of England's GVA, and deliver high-quality services that matter the most to local communities

The network is a cross party organisation, expressing the views of member councils to the government and within the Local Government Association.

Follow CCN on social media:



@CCNOffice



County Councils Network



County Councils Network

To discuss this document in more detail, please contact:

James Maker

Director of Policy & Communications

020 7764 3009

james.maker2@local.gov.uk

Ian Burbidge

Senior Media &

Communications Officer

ian.burbidge@local.gov.uk



COUNTIES
LEADING RECOVERY
DELIVERING RENEWAL

www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk