

Young Carers

Introduction

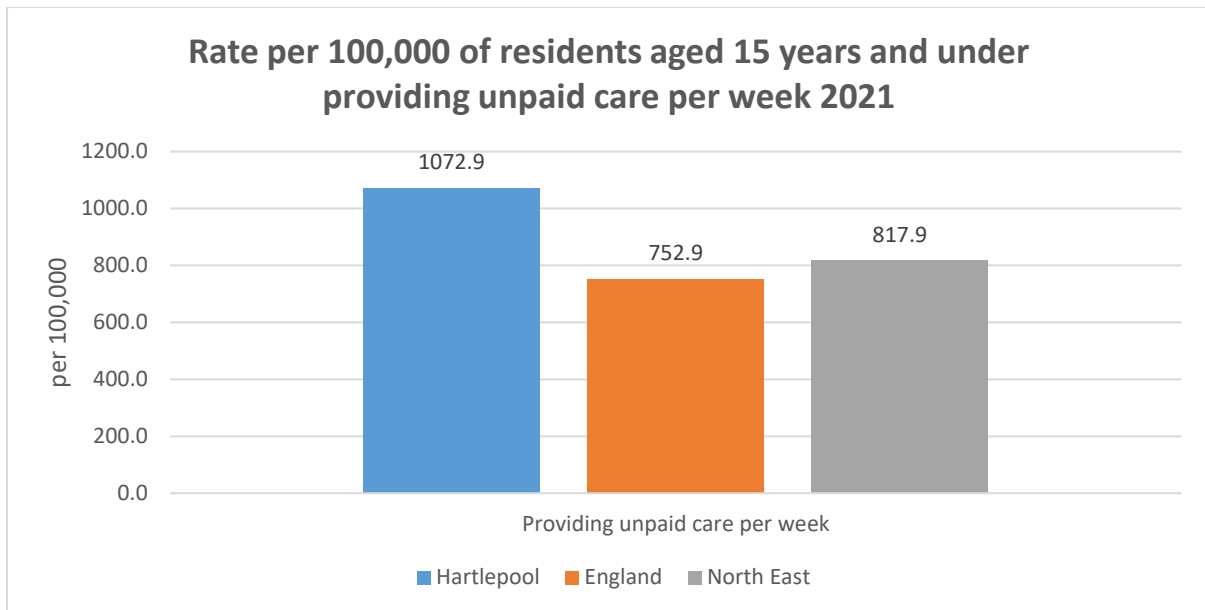
The definition of a carer, as set out in the government's National Carers Strategy is someone who "spends a significant portion of their life providing unpaid support to family and potentially friends. This could be caring for a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has a mental health problem or substance misuse problems" (DoH, 2008). This definition equally applies to Young Carers (under the age of 18) and Young Adult Carers (aged between 16 and 25).

For some young carers becoming a carer occurs very rapidly, but for others it gradually accrues over a period of time, until in some cases they have care responsibility for siblings as well as other family members. Many people rely on the support unpaid young carers to enable them to lead their daily lives. However many of the young people providing this support do not consider themselves carers, as relationship is simply part of their everyday life. Information provided by Carers UK in 2019 indicated that carers save the UK economy £132 billion per year.

With so many adult responsibilities, young carers often miss out on opportunities that other children have to play and learn. Young carers often struggle academically and are often targeted for bullying.

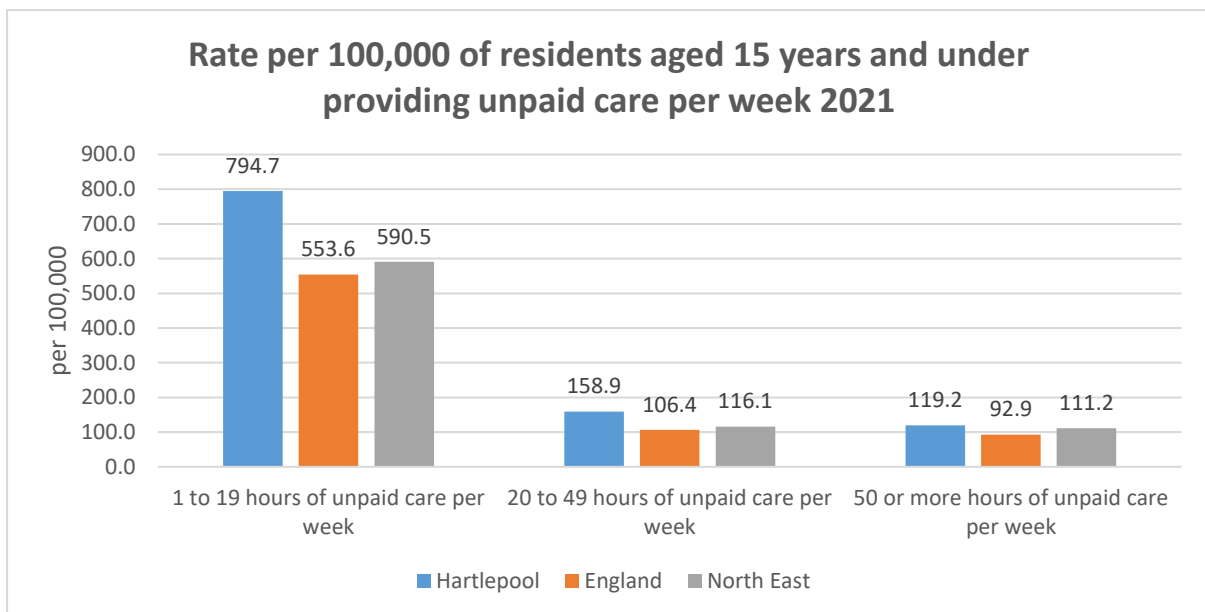
Main Issues

Young people providing unpaid care to family members, friends or neighbours is captured in the national census, with the latest edition occurring in 2021. Hartlepool's rate per 100,000 population was 42.5% higher than the England rate, 1072.9 and 752.9 respectively. Hartlepool was 31.2% higher than the north east regional average.



Source: Census 2021

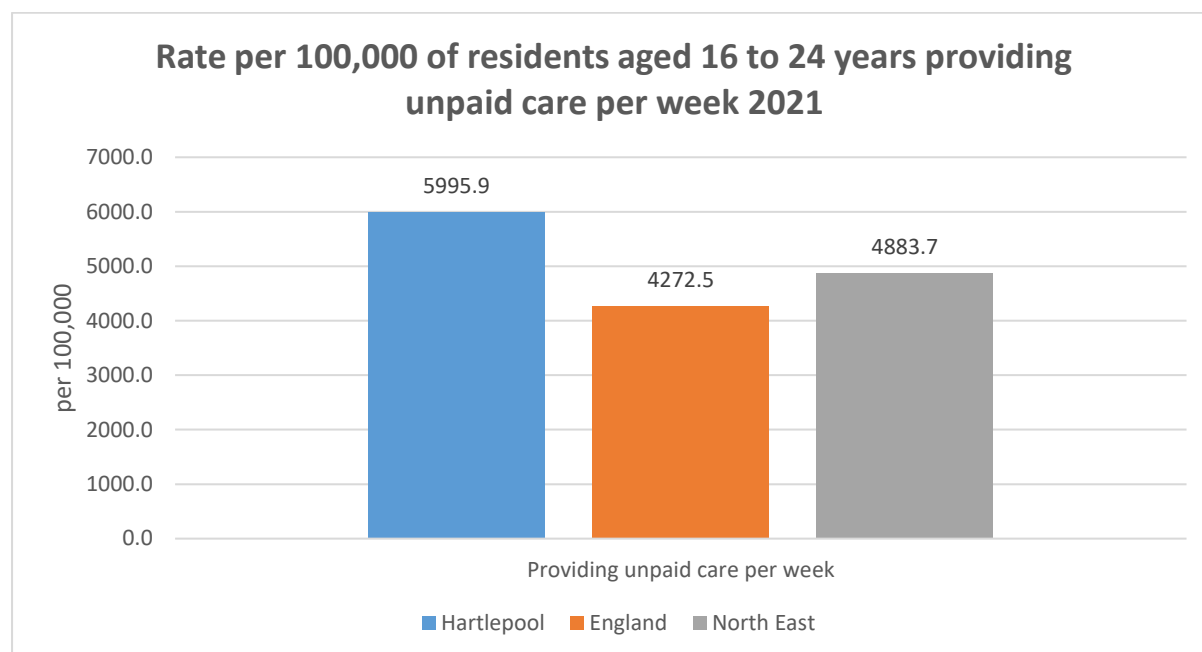
When this rate is broken down by the volume of unpaid care provided by those aged 0-15, Hartlepool again has the highest rate in every subgroup.



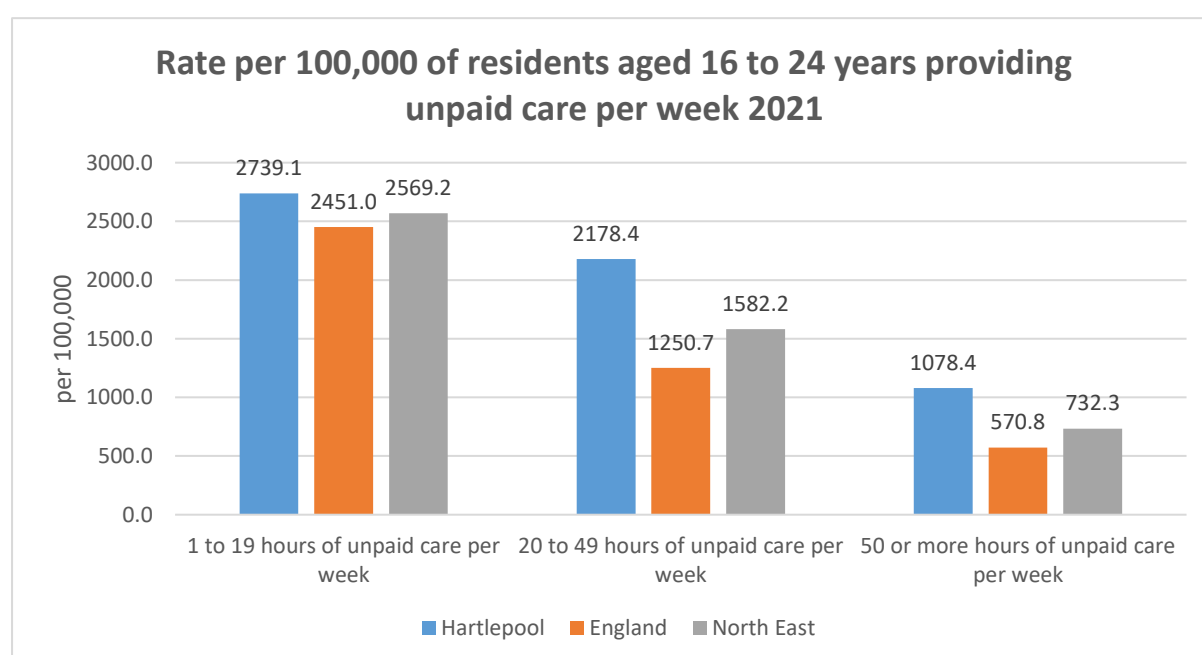
Source: Census 2021

For both 1-19 and 20-49 hours of unpaid care Hartlepool is larger than the England rate by a similar amount to the overall rate, however for 50+ hours the gap narrows to only 28.3%. At this more extreme end of volume of unpaid care Hartlepool's young carers begin to reduce down more toward the England average.

For young people aged 16-24, Hartlepool has a rate per 100,000 population which is 40.3% larger than the England rate, 5995.9 and 4272.5 respectively. Hartlepool's rate is 22.8 larger than the north east regional average.



When the rate for unpaid care by 16 to 24 year olds is broken down by volume of unpaid care, the pattern is the opposite of those 15 and under, here the difference between Hartlepool and England increases as the volume of weekly unpaid care increases.



For 1-19 hours of weekly unpaid care the gap between Hartlepool and England is 11.8%, but this increases to 74.2% for 20-49 hours and 88.9% for 50+ hours. Here it is the more extreme levels of care, where the demands on the unpaid carer are the greatest that Hartlepool have the biggest difference with the England average.