

THE UK LAUNDRY CAPACITY GAP, BY REGION

Hotel employment measured against commercial laundry employment in every UK region, showing where accommodation demand sits furthest from the capacity to serve it.

Tobias Renshaw · APXXO Data — international · 16 September 2026

DATA AS AT	LAST CHECKED	MEASURED IN	ROWS
2024	2026-09-16	hotel jobs per laundry job	11

18.0

HOTEL JOBS PER LAUNDRY JOB IN THE NORTH WEST

45,000 hotel jobs against 2,500 in laundry — the widest of the 11 regions.

11.9

THE UK-WIDE RATIO

Yorkshire and The Humber is the best served at 7.6.

4/11

REGIONS WHERE LAUNDRY SHRANK WHILE HOTELS GREW, SINCE 2015

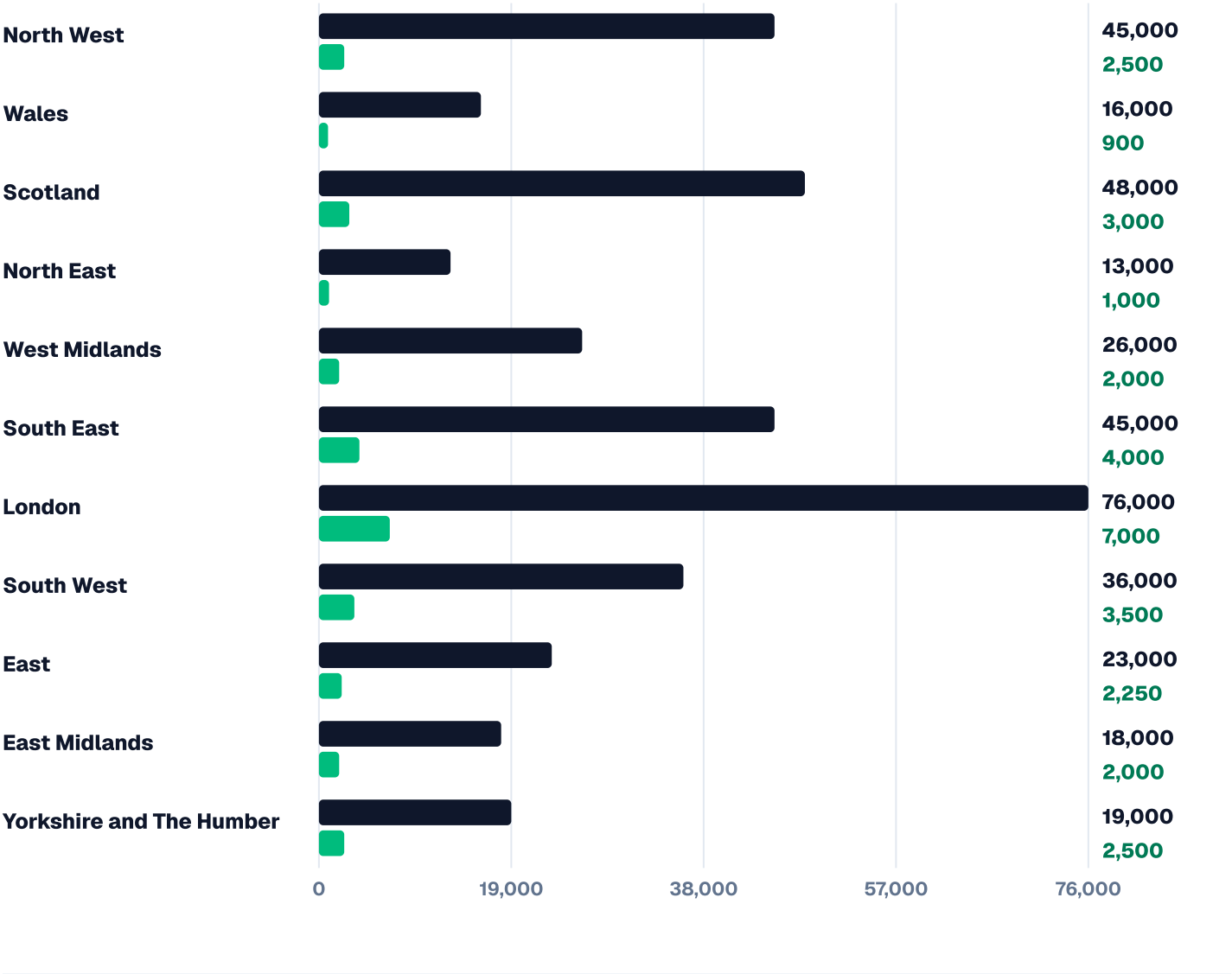
Demand up and local capacity down in the same place, over the same decade.

AT A GLANCE

TOP 11 OF 11

Every UK region, hotel employment against the commercial laundry employment serving it. Both bars are jobs on the same scale.

 HOTEL JOBS  LAUNDRY JOBS



ON THE MAP

11 OF 11 SHOWN

Hotel jobs for every laundry job, by UK region. The darker the tile, the wider the gap.



SCALE  7.60  18 Every tile carries its own figure, so the map reads without the colour.

WHAT THE FIGURES SHOW

The UK has the same shape of problem as the US, at a different scale

Across the 11 regions there are 11.9 hotel jobs for every commercial laundry job. The North West is widest at 18.0; Yorkshire and The Humber is tightest at 7.6.

That range is narrower than the American one, which is what you would expect of a smaller country with shorter distances. A plant in the Midlands can serve several regions in a way that a plant in Nevada cannot. **What the people doing that work are paid** (</en-us/data/cleaning-wages-london-new-york/>), in London against New York, is on its own page.

4 of 11 UK regions grew their hotel sector while losing laundry capacity. That is the gap widening, not holding.

The direction of travel matters more than the level

Between 2015 and 2024, laundry employment fell in 6 of the 11 regions while hotel employment rose in 5. In 4 regions both happened at once.

A high ratio that is stable is a structural fact about how a region organises its laundry. A ratio that is widening is a trend, and it is the second one that turns into a procurement problem.

Why this cannot be compared with our US page

The American figures come from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, which counts every establishment covered by unemployment insurance. These come from the Business Register and Employment Survey, which is a survey of a register.

The industry definitions differ too: SIC 5510 and 9601 here, NAICS 721 and 8123 **there** (</en-us/data/laundry-capacity-by-state/>). The two ratios answer the same question about different countries using different instruments, and setting them side by side would imply a precision neither has.

What this is useful for, and what it is not

ONS rounds BRES employment for disclosure control, so these counts arrive in round hundreds. They are reliable for comparing regions with each other and for reading direction over time; they are not reliable to a decimal place.

As with the US page, a high ratio does not prove a shortage. Hotels that run laundry in house are counted under accommodation rather than under laundry, and linen crosses regional boundaries freely in a country this size.

A high ratio that holds steady is how a region is organised. A ratio that widens every year is a procurement problem arriving slowly.

HOW WE WORKED THIS OUT

Both counts are 2024 employee figures from the ONS Business Register and Employment Survey, taken through the NOMIS API, for UK regions.

Demand is SIC 5510, Hotels and similar accommodation. Supply is SIC 9601, Washing and (dry-)cleaning of textile and fur products.

The headline figure is one divided by the other. Across the regions shown the ratio is 11.9 hotel jobs for every laundry job.

ONS rounds BRES employment for disclosure control, so these counts arrive in round hundreds and the ratios are approximate. They are reliable for comparing regions, not for reading to a decimal place.

The change columns compare 2024 with 2015, the earliest year both industries are published for here.

As with the US page, a high ratio does not prove a shortage: hotels that run laundry in-house are counted under accommodation rather than under laundry, and linen travels between regions.

This is the UK counterpart to our US page, which is built from a different survey (BLS QCEW) on a different basis. The two ratios should not be compared directly with each other.

THE NUMBERS

11 ROWS · AS AT 2024

REGION	HOTEL JOBS PER LAUNDRY JOB	HOTEL JOBS	LAUNDRY JOBS	LAUNDRY JOBS SINCE 2015 (%)	HOTEL JOBS SINCE 2015 (%)
North West	18	45,000	2,500	▼ -16.7%	▲ +7.1%
Wales	17.80	16,000	900	▼ -40.0%	▼ -15.8%
Scotland	16	48,000	3,000	▲ +33.3%	▼ -4.0%

REGION	HOTEL JOBS PER LAUNDRY JOB	HOTEL JOBS	LAUNDRY JOBS	LAUNDRY JOBS SINCE 2015 (%)	HOTEL JOBS SINCE 2015 (%)
North East	13	13,000	1,000	▲ +66.7%	0.0%
West Midlands	13	26,000	2,000	▼ -33.3%	▲ +13.0%
South East	11.30	45,000	4,000	▼ -11.1%	▼ -6.2%
London	10.90	76,000	7,000	0.0%	▲ +26.7%
South West	10.30	36,000	3,500	▲ +16.7%	▼ -5.3%
East	10.20	23,000	2,250	▼ -10.0%	▲ +4.5%
East Midlands	9	18,000	2,000	▼ -20.0%	▲ +5.9%
Yorkshire and The Humber	7.60	19,000	2,500	▲ +66.7%	▼ -9.5%

COLOUR KEY ▲ rises once adjusted ▼ falls once adjusted ☐ dearer than the US average ☐ cheaper than the US average

The arrow carries the same meaning as the colour, so neither is needed on its own.

WHAT TO TAKE AWAY

The UK runs at 11.9 hotel jobs for every laundry job, tighter than the United States and far from uniform. The number worth watching is not the level but the direction: in 4 of 11 regions hotel demand grew while the laundry sector serving it shrank.

WHERE IT CAME FROM

Office for National Statistics — Business Register and Employment Survey, via NOMIS (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/newbres6pub>)

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WHEN THIS PAGE CHANGES NEXT

ONS publishes the Business Register and Employment Survey once a year, roughly a year after the reference date. This page changes then. The pipeline checks every week and usually finds nothing, which is the expected result.

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Tobias Renshaw, "The UK laundry capacity gap, by region", APXXO, 2026.
<https://apxxo.com/en-us/data/uk-laundry-capacity-by-region/>

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