

Population Density in the UK

a) Areas with a High Population Density

An example of an area in the UK with a high population density is London, with over 200 people per km². There is many such factors for this. Firstly, there is low relief there, between 0 and 200 meters above sea level. This makes land easier to build on, which means that communications, accessibility and housing can be established quickly and without any major difficulties. As the capital city of the UK and once as the capital of the British Empire, has developed a history of trade with other countries, such as India, which used to be a colony. Accessibility is another reason why London is so densely populated; there are dense networks of communication/accessibility such as major roads, railways, airports and ports. It is/was an important port, making it a major stop on trade routes into the UK. This means that there is a very high level of employment opportunities, which in turn causes more people to migrate to London. This caused settlements and more housing to be built around and in London to cope with the enlarged population, which leads to an increased carrying capacity of the land.

b) Areas with a Medium Population Density

Large areas of the UK have a medium population density, with between 20 and 200 people per km². An example of such an Area is County Durham.

Reasons for this include the fact that it is a fertile farming area with small market towns and former mining villages. The agriculture and mining of natural resources such as coal produced employment opportunities and attracted settlers from other areas of the UK with less employment opportunities. County Durham also has good accessibility; it is situated on the River Wear, has a railway station on the East Coast Main Line, is close to the M1 and is a mere 25 miles away from both Newcastle Airport to the north and Durham Tees Valley Airport to the south. This makes it far easier for people to migrate there, which results in a net increase in population.

Low relief in County Durham means that it is easier and cheaper to build settlements/houses and further roads, railways etc. that add to accessibility and increase its carrying capacity, which means it can support a higher population.

c) Areas with a Low Population Density

The sparsely populated areas in the UK are usually mountainous regions, such as the Grampian Mountains, which have a population density of under 20 people per km².

The terrain is harsh and the relief steep, which makes the building of settlements and roads, railways etc. for easy accessibility very difficult. The low level of accessibility means it is less likely and less easy for people to migrate there. The steep slopes also have thin soils due to a high (2000mm per annum) rainfall, which causes leaching of the soil. This and the fact that there is a short growing season, prevents crop growth and therefore provides fewer employment opportunities in agriculture. The Grampian Mountains are remote, with poor services - the main one being tourism – and few natural resources, which provides fewer employment opportunities in industry.

The Grampians cannot support a large population because of these factors; so it has a low carrying capacity.