

Research and innovation in the East of England

In the 2022 Autumn Statement the UK government reaffirmed its commitment to increase public R&D investment from £14.8 billion in 2021/22 to £20 billion per year by 2024/25. It also outlined its plans to level up the UK, including a focus on infrastructure, innovation and energy security, supporting the delivery of net zero by 2050¹.

What does this ambition to increase investment in UK research and innovation mean for the East of England?

This document provides an insight into the current research and innovation landscape in the East of England to inform discussions over how people across the region can contribute to and share the benefits of R&D investment in the UK.

R&D activity in the East of England

FIGURE 1

R&D spend in the East of England, 2019²

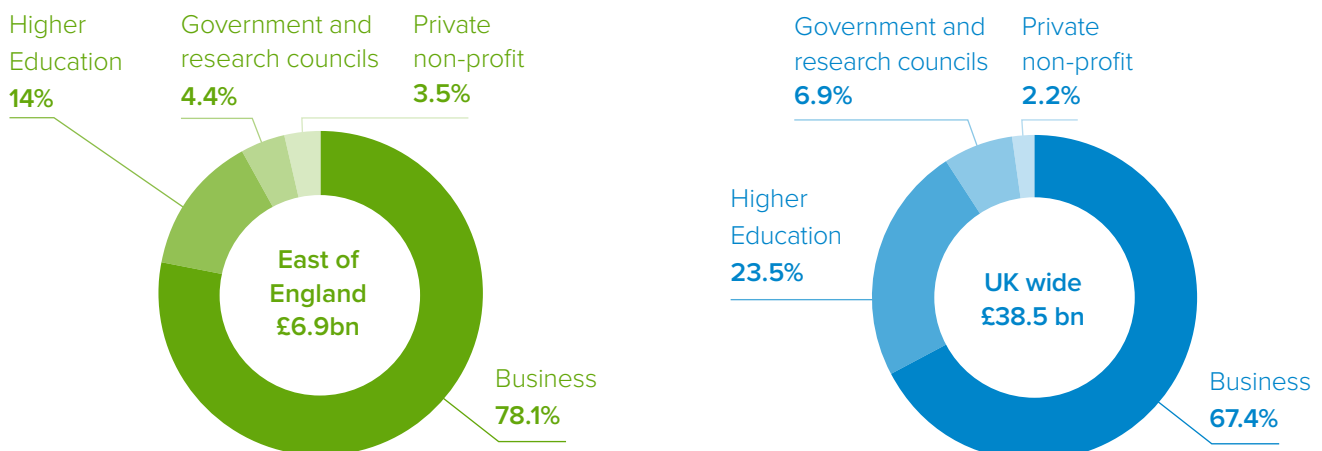
9.3% of the UK's population is based in the East of England³.



Who performs R&D in the East of England?

FIGURE 2

Percentage distribution of R&D spend in the East of England and UK wide, 2019⁴



Where does R&D take place in the East of England?

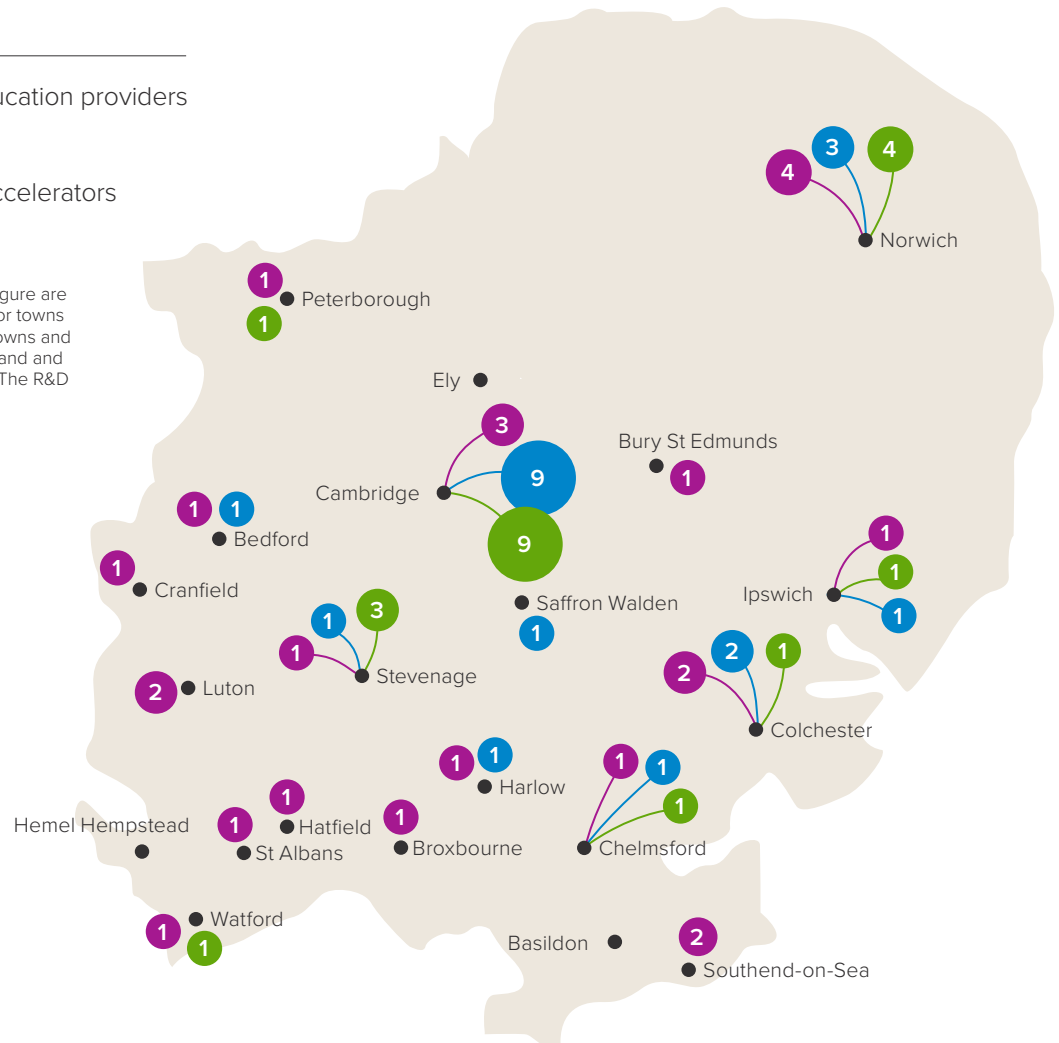
FIGURE 3

Map of R&D activity in the East of England

KEY

- Universities and higher education providers
- Science parks
- Business incubators and accelerators

Note: The geographical areas used in this figure are based on the ONS classification. List of major towns and cities from the ONS Geoportal: Major Towns and Cities (Dec 2015) Names and Codes in England and Wales. Additional towns have been added. The R&D sites listed may not be exhaustive.



870 scientific research and development workplaces⁵

25 universities and higher education providers⁶

13% of the UK's research infrastructures⁷

20 science parks⁸

21 business incubators and accelerators⁹

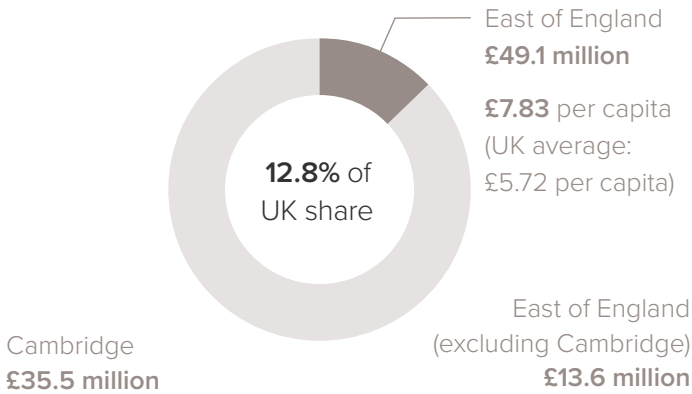
How is R&D in the East of England funded and supported?

R&D is funded and supported in many different ways. This includes direct investment from public, private, charitable and overseas sources, as well as indirect measures that encourage further private investment such as R&D tax credits.

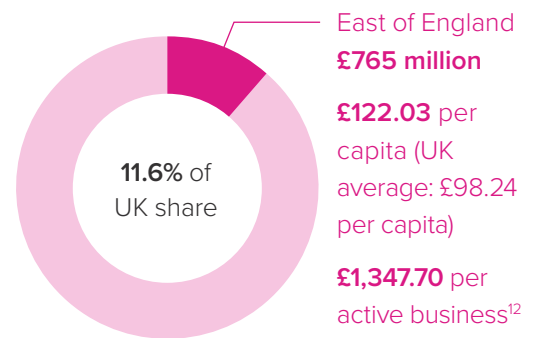
FIGURE 4

Examples of R&D funders in the East of England*

Horizon 2020¹⁰ 2021

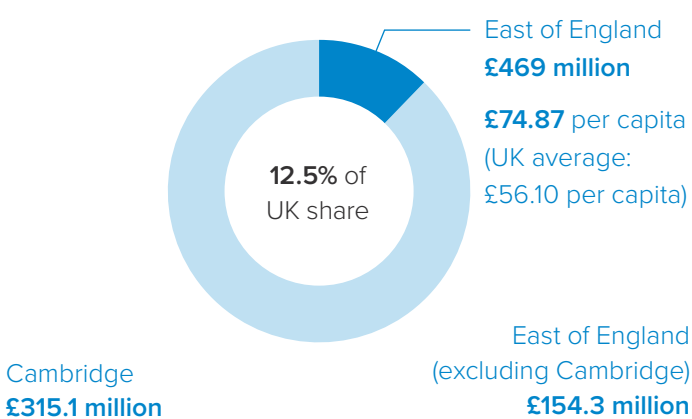


R&D tax credits¹¹ 2020 – 2021

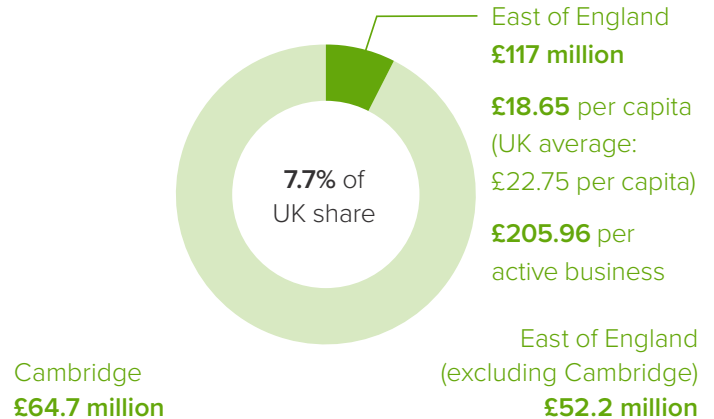


Research councils¹³

Awards started in 2020 – 2021*



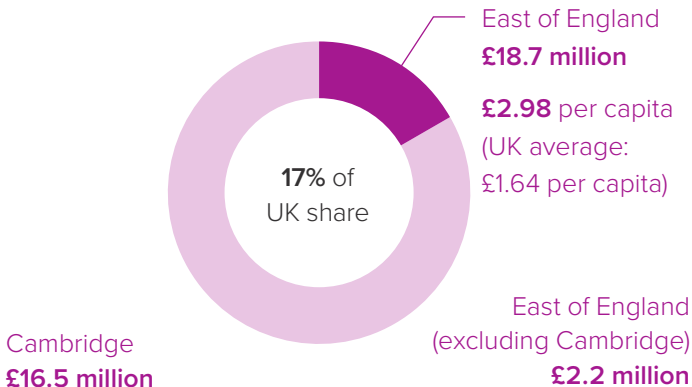
Innovate UK¹⁴ 2020 – 2021



*Includes competitively awarded grants and funding for UKRI institutes

The Royal Society¹⁵

2021 – 2022

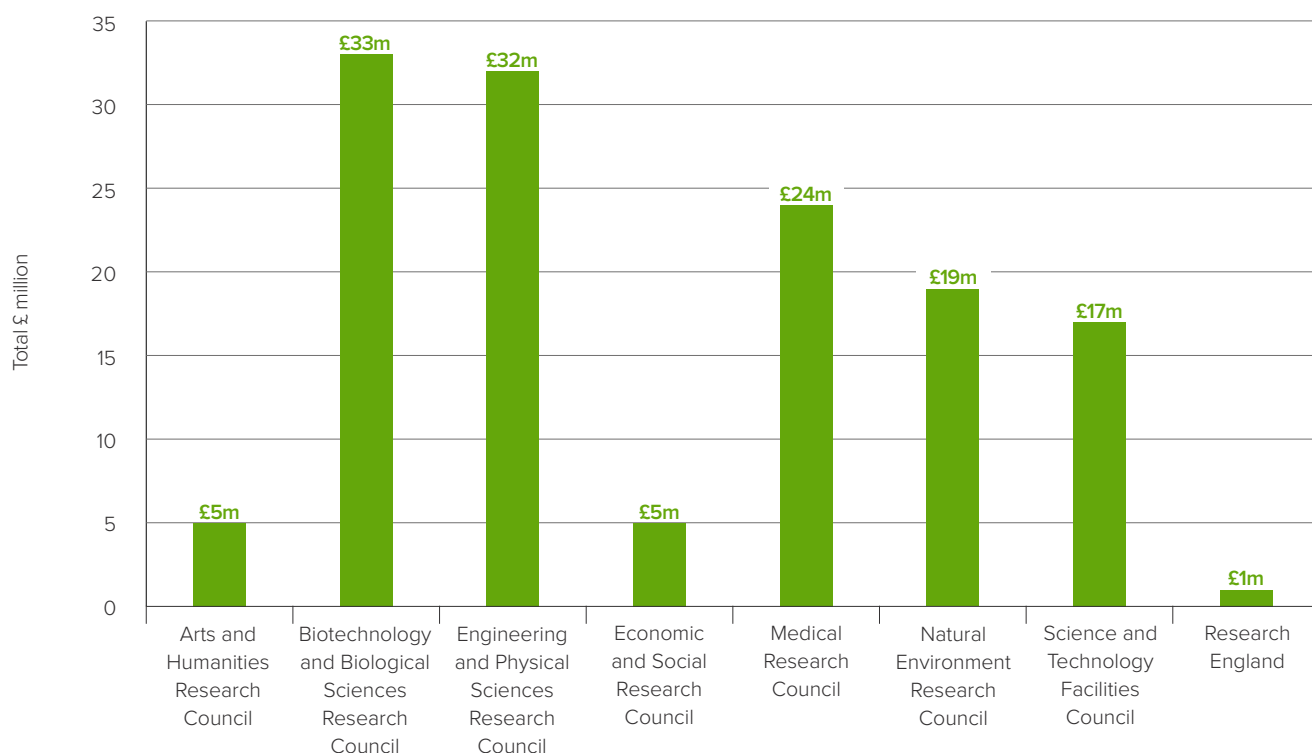


*Where the data was available, a breakdown is shown for Cambridge.

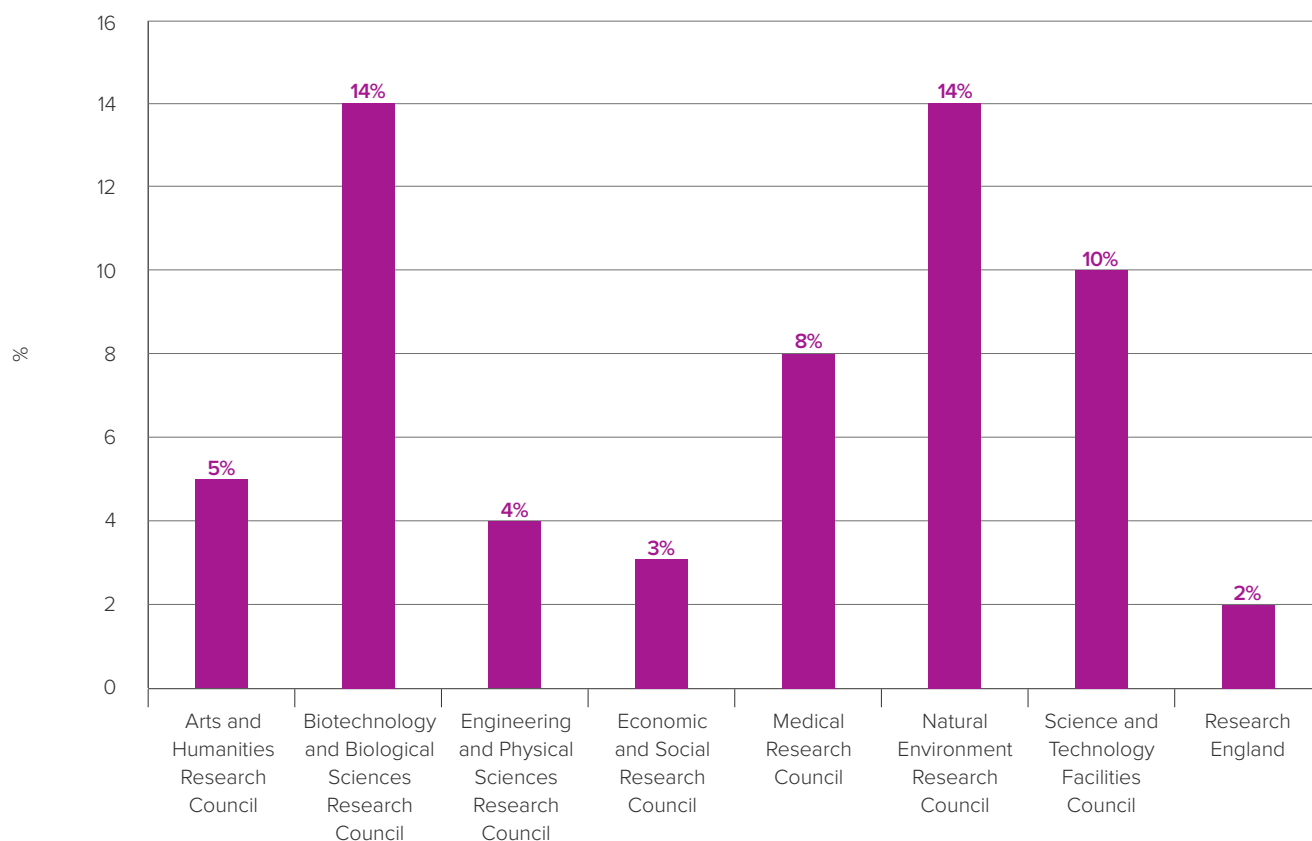
FIGURE 5

How much did each of the research councils invest in competitive funding in the East of England 2020 – 2021?¹⁶

Total value of competitive funds awarded to the East of England from each research council in 2020 – 2021



Percentage of UK competitive funding awarded to the East of England from each research council in 2020 – 2021



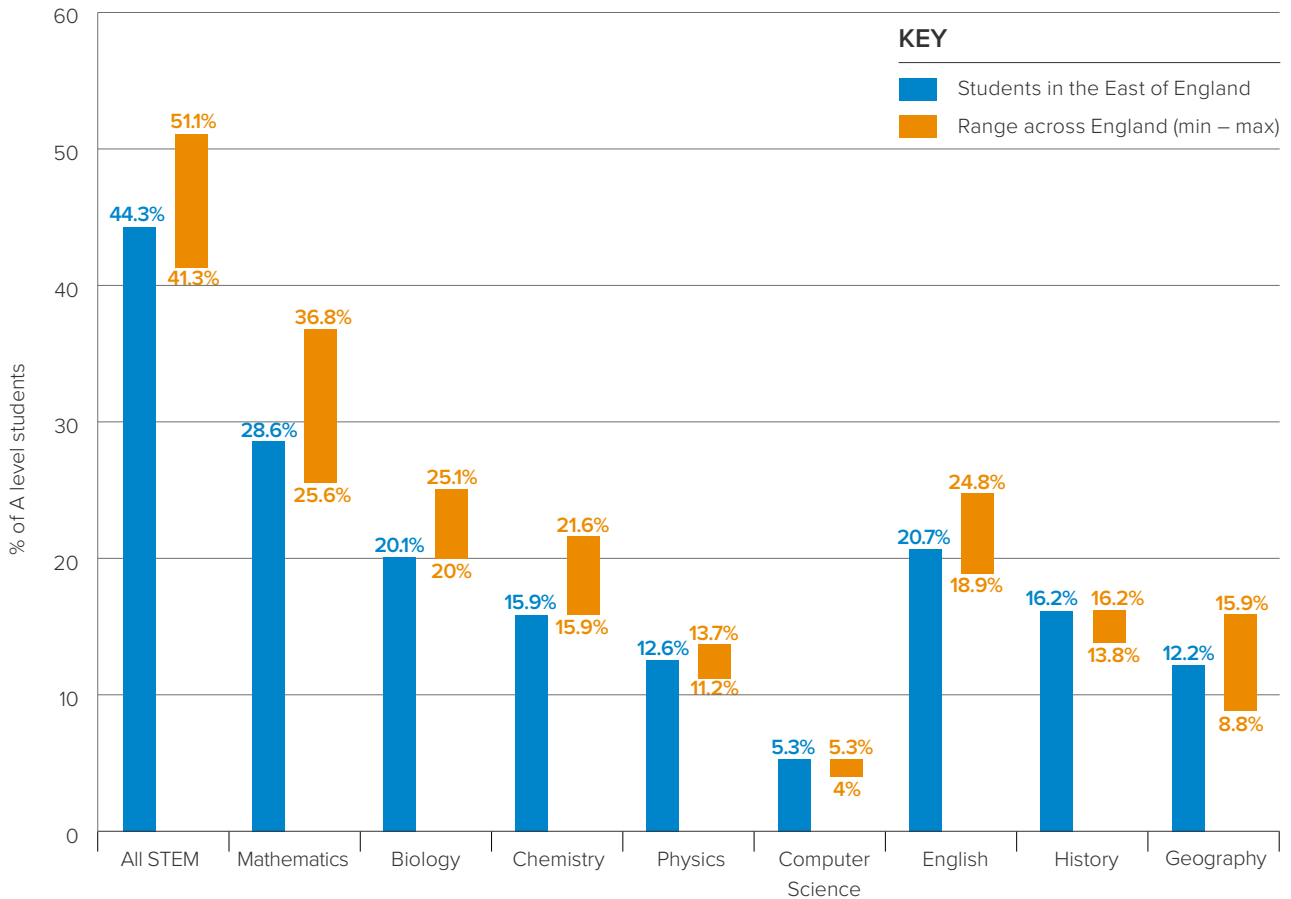
Note: This excludes non-competitive grants, such as funding for UKRI institutes.

There is no R&D without people

A thriving R&D environment in the East of England requires a talented workforce to perform research and young people in the pipeline who are equipped with the skills they will need in the future economy.

FIGURE 6

What proportion of A level students in the East of England take A levels in science subjects?¹⁷



Note: Selected non-science subjects are shown as an example of uptake in other disciplines.

FIGURE 7

Percentage of undergraduate students studying science subjects¹⁸

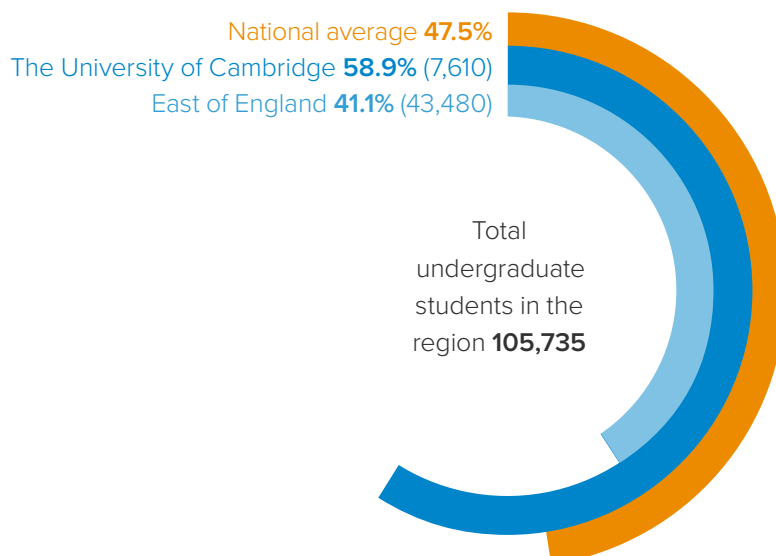
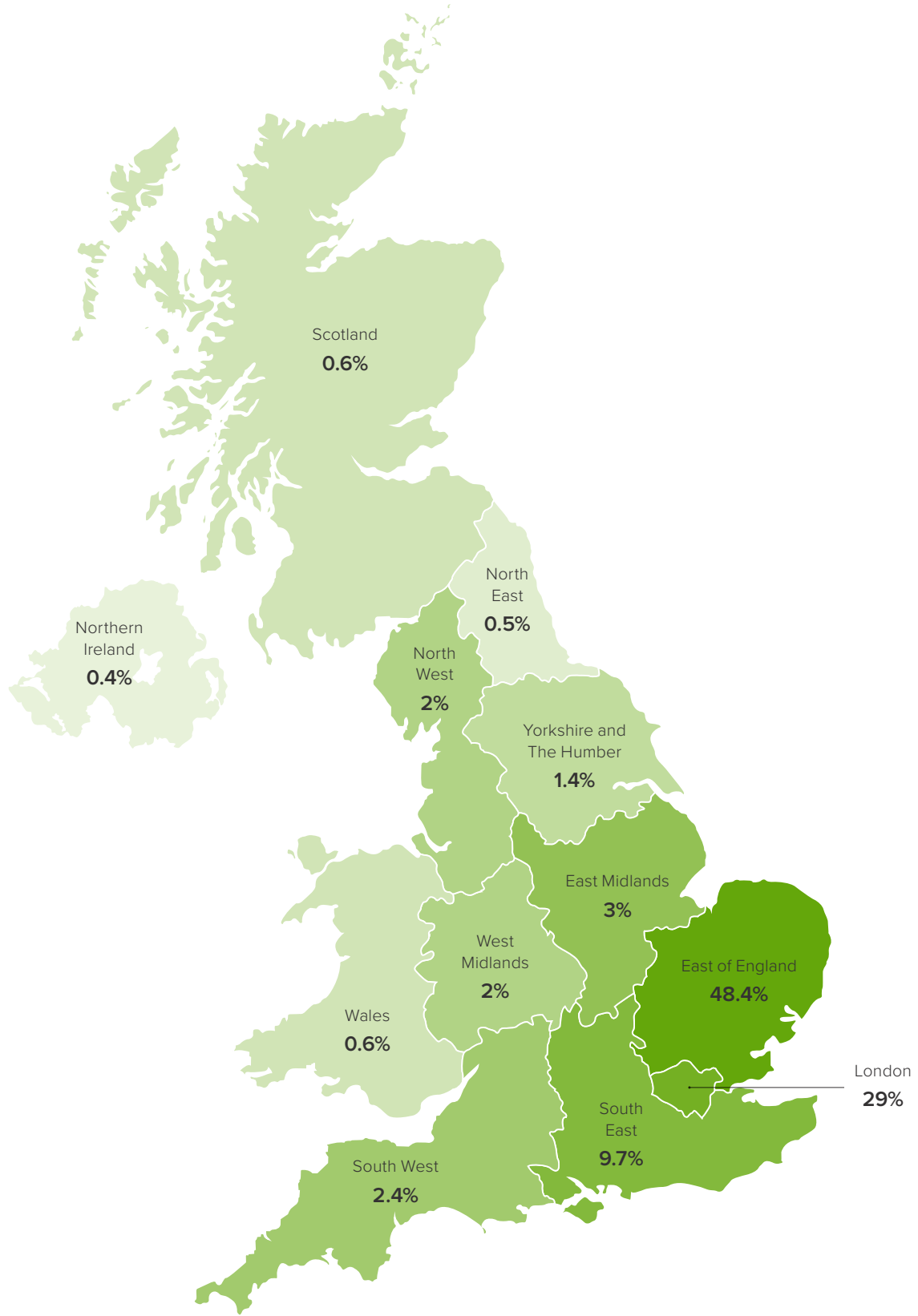
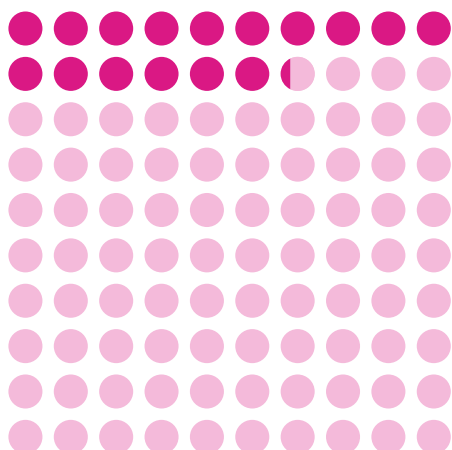


FIGURE 8

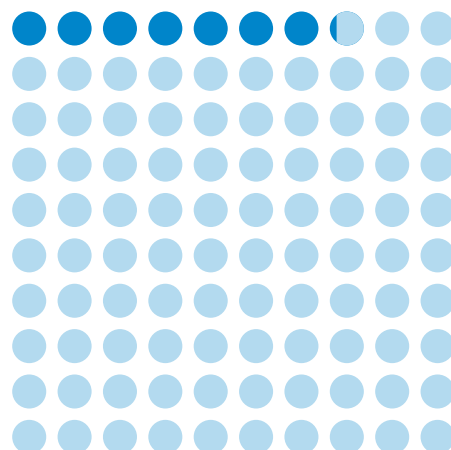
Proportion of East of England graduates working in each of the regions and nations across the UK¹⁹



How many people are employed in R&D in the East of England?²⁰



Companies in the East of England had **46,000** staff employed in R&D in 2020, **16.3%** of UK total.²¹



The East of England had **10,855** research staff employed in its universities in 2020-21, **7.2%** of the UK total. Of these, 5,875 were employed at the University of Cambridge.²²

Find out more

Investing in UK R&D

Explore research and innovation in other areas of the UK and read our briefings on R&D investment in the UK produced together with the other UK National Academies. Find out more on royalsociety.org/investing-in-uk-research-development

Industry programme

The Royal Society’s Science and Industry programme connects industry with the Society and promotes the value of science to the economy by bringing together industry, academia and government. Find out more on royalsociety.org/industry

Promoting excellence in science

We promote excellence in science and support international collaborations by funding research in the life and physical sciences, including engineering, in the UK and internationally. Find out more about our grants programmes on royalsociety.org/grants

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