



Tech in the UK 2024 Innovation Nation

March 2025



Funded by
UK Government





The Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

Foreword

I am delighted to welcome the Tech in the UK 2024 report from Barclays Eagle Labs in partnership with Beauhurst and funded by the Digital Growth Grant.

Among the standout areas, Scotland saw equity Boosting economic growth and creating opportunity are central missions of this government. The tech sector – one of the fastest growing sectors in our economy – is central to this ambition. This report finds an increase in the population of high-growth tech companies in every part of the UK between 2023 and 2024 (1.58% in England, 1.21% in Scotland, 1.16% in Wales, and 0.51% in Northern Ireland) despite tougher global market conditions. This is a testament to the strength of entrepreneurship we have in this country, and it is my priority to ensure that we continue to do everything we can to support and champion our world-leading tech sector.

We want to make the UK one of the best places in the world for tech founders to start, scale, and stay. We know that to do this, we must create the best possible conditions for the tech sector to thrive. And we're already taking decisive action. Since coming into government, we have launched the AI Opportunities Action Plan, which will deliver the benefits of AI across the economy, with the potential to transform lives across the UK. We're ensuring companies can access the talent and skills they need to grow and scale through the Global Talent Visa and Innovator Founder Visa, and through the creation of Skills England. And we have strengthened investment in the tech sector by extending tax relief schemes such as the Enterprise Investment Scheme,

establishing the National Wealth Fund with £5.8bn of additional funding, launching the British Business Bank's British Growth Partnership to mobilise the UK's institutional capital, creating pensions 'megafunds' to unlock £80bn, and implementing reforms to UK listing rules to enhance market competitiveness

Tech is central to our upcoming Industrial Strategy, and we will be bringing forward a dedicated Digital and Technologies Sector Plan - the first time the sector will have a dedicated plan in a UK Industrial Strategy. The sector plan will articulate how government will support growth across the tech ecosystem.

The contribution of technology to building secure and sustainable growth that benefits all parts of the country is profound. Our world-leading universities, pioneering tech companies, and trailblazing founders – many of whom are surveyed as part of this report- generate the new ideas, breakthroughs and productivity-enhancing innovations that create new industries, disrupt existing models and improve our economy and our lives.

It is our fundamental belief that anyone with a good idea, regardless of where in the country you are based and what your background is, has an equal chance to succeed. This is why we're supporting the Tech Future Taskforce on Social Mobility, launching a Digital Inclusion Action Plan, and looking at how we can work more closely with local leaders to strengthen our regional tech ecosystems.

I am grateful to all participants who took the time to answer the survey as part of this report – it is important for us to continue to hear the voices of those at the forefront of innovation. Government alone cannot deliver growth, and we will continue to work closely with industry to keep championing our world-leading tech sector.

- The Baroness Jones of Whitchurch



Executive summary

The UK remains a leading hub for high-growth tech companies, with businesses across the country benefiting from strong institutional support and targeted initiatives. In recent years, several regions have seen increased equity investment, demonstrating both resilience and the impact of government support—including initiatives such as the Digital Growth Grant—in strengthening parts of the UK’s tech ecosystem.

The UK’s high-growth tech sector remained resilient in 2024, with the number of active high-growth tech companies increasing across all four nations. England continued to account for the largest share, with 21,225 high-growth tech companies—up 1.58% from 2023. Among the standout areas, Scotland saw equity investment into high-growth tech companies grow 32.5% between 2023 and 2024, underscoring the strength of its innovation ecosystem and investor appetite. Similarly, Northern Ireland saw a 17.0% increase in equity investment into high-growth technology companies between 2023 and 2024. The East of England continued its upward trajectory, with investment reaching £1.60bn in 2024, marking consecutive years of growth since 2022.

The government plays a significant role in supporting high-growth tech companies in the UK. Organisations such as Innovate UK and regional development agencies continue to provide essential funding and business support.

Beyond funding, the UK’s high-growth ecosystem benefits from networks of incubators, accelerators, and university partnerships. The Cambridge-Oxford arc is being revitalised to improve infrastructure and investment prospects. In Edinburgh, the CodeBase Techscaler programme is helping to cultivate a strong pipeline of innovative startups. The SETSquared partnership brings together universities in the South

West and beyond, including the Universities of Bristol, Cardiff, and Surrey.

Talent remains a key driver of the UK’s high-growth ecosystem, with skilled talent coming from both the UK’s excellent academic institutions and from abroad. Government-backed visa schemes, such as the Skilled Worker visa and Global Talent visa, enable businesses to attract skilled professionals from around the world. Insights from a survey of 3,000 UK tech workers found that 51.1% of companies offer visa sponsorship for international hires, underscoring the importance of attracting global talent to sustain the UK’s tech growth.

As the UK continues to position itself as a global leader in tech innovation, ongoing investment in digital infrastructure, skills development, and access to finance will be crucial. With sustained government support and a thriving entrepreneurial landscape, high-growth tech companies are well-placed to drive economic growth and technological advancement in the years ahead.

Opportunities in digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and clean energy technologies, present great potential for the UK to strengthen its position in the global tech landscape. These technologies present an opportunity for the UK to foster growth and competitiveness on a global scale.

Introduction

The UK's technology sector continues to be a key driver of economic growth, with high-growth tech companies emerging across the country. While London remains a major hub, thriving tech ecosystems are increasingly found in regional cities, such as Belfast, Edinburgh, and Bristol. These clusters benefit from strong university links, access to funding, and targeted business support, helping startups and scaleups to establish themselves and grow.

The role of diversity in the UK's tech sector is also evolving, with increased support for female founders beginning to yield results. Julie Grieve, Techscaler mentor and Founder and CEO of Criton, highlights this progress: "The clear disparity in the number of female-led startups and scaleups is a key issue. Over the past couple of years, through various initiatives, including the Barclays Eagle Labs Ecosystem Partnership Programme (EPP) funded by UK Government, the tech ecosystem has strengthened its offering of support for female founders, and the impact is evident. In Scotland, for the first time, there is gender parity in startups. This positive metric will inevitably be a critical factor in starting to see improved parity in scaleups and, where appropriate, fundraising."

The influence of universities on the UK's tech ecosystem is also significant, playing a central role in fostering innovation and talent. Dr Phil Clare, CEO of Queen Mary Innovation, underlines their importance: "Universities are at the heart of major tech clusters across the UK. While there is more to every cluster than the universities, their role is pivotal in three ways: the provision of skilled and talented people for companies in the cluster; the creation of innovations through research that fuel spinouts and startups; and the active role they play in spinning out companies, supporting entrepreneurs, and collaborating with businesses in a deliberate and purposeful way aimed at growing the ecosystem around them. Evaluation of

government support shows that universities generate a significant return on investment, driving growth across the nations."

The ongoing evolution of the UK's tech sector presents both opportunities and challenges. While advancements in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and deeptech continue to accelerate, access to finance, talent, and infrastructure remain key factors shaping the sector's trajectory.

This report provides an in-depth analysis of current landscapes, highlighting key tech clusters, the impact of high-growth companies in local economies, and insights from a survey of 3,000 tech sector employees. It explores trends in investment, diversity, talent acquisition, and entrepreneurship, offering valuable insights for entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers.

The report is focused on the UK tech ecosystem as of December 2024. To qualify as a tech company for this report, the business must fall within the 'technology' classification developed by Beauhurst.

Benefits of high-growth ecosystems in the UK

To be classified as a high-growth company for the purpose of this report, a company must satisfy one of eight tracking triggers defined by Beauhurst. These triggers signal that a company is growing quickly or showing potential to grow. Examples of these high-growth triggers include securing equity funding or a large grant, spinning out of a university, or attending an accelerator.

More details of the high-growth triggers can be found in the methodology section.

Increased success

High-growth ecosystems thrive when ambitious businesses are supported by a strong network of incubators, accelerators, investors and universities. Startups with access to funding, partnerships and other resources are more likely to scale successfully. Many founders of fast-growing businesses later become angel investors or mentors themselves, contributing to a cycle of support that strengthens the broader ecosystem. The UK's well-established reputation for fostering innovation also attracts founders from across Europe and beyond, bringing fresh entrepreneurial talent, new ideas, job creation and wider economic gains.

Economic growth

One of the key advantages of a thriving high-growth ecosystem is its contribution to both national and regional economic development. By scaling quickly, these businesses drive revenue growth—more than 11,500 high-growth firms in the UK reported annual turnover exceeding £5m in their latest financial statements. Companies with strong revenue streams are more attractive to investors, helping to accelerate capital inflow. Between 2015 and 2024, high-growth UK tech firms secured £135bn in equity investment. Additionally, startups stimulate local economies through job creation, demand for office space, partnerships, and fostering competition that pushes continuous innovation.

Increased employment

A strong high-growth ecosystem enables companies to scale rapidly, generating employment opportunities—often at a faster pace than larger, established firms. Startups frequently provide skilled jobs or establish graduate training schemes, developing talent within the workforce. The emergence of high-growth firms outside traditional employment hubs such as London also encourages talent migration to other regions, supporting local economic development. Over time, a well-supported ecosystem helps retain highly skilled professionals within the UK while also attracting expertise from abroad.

Technological innovation

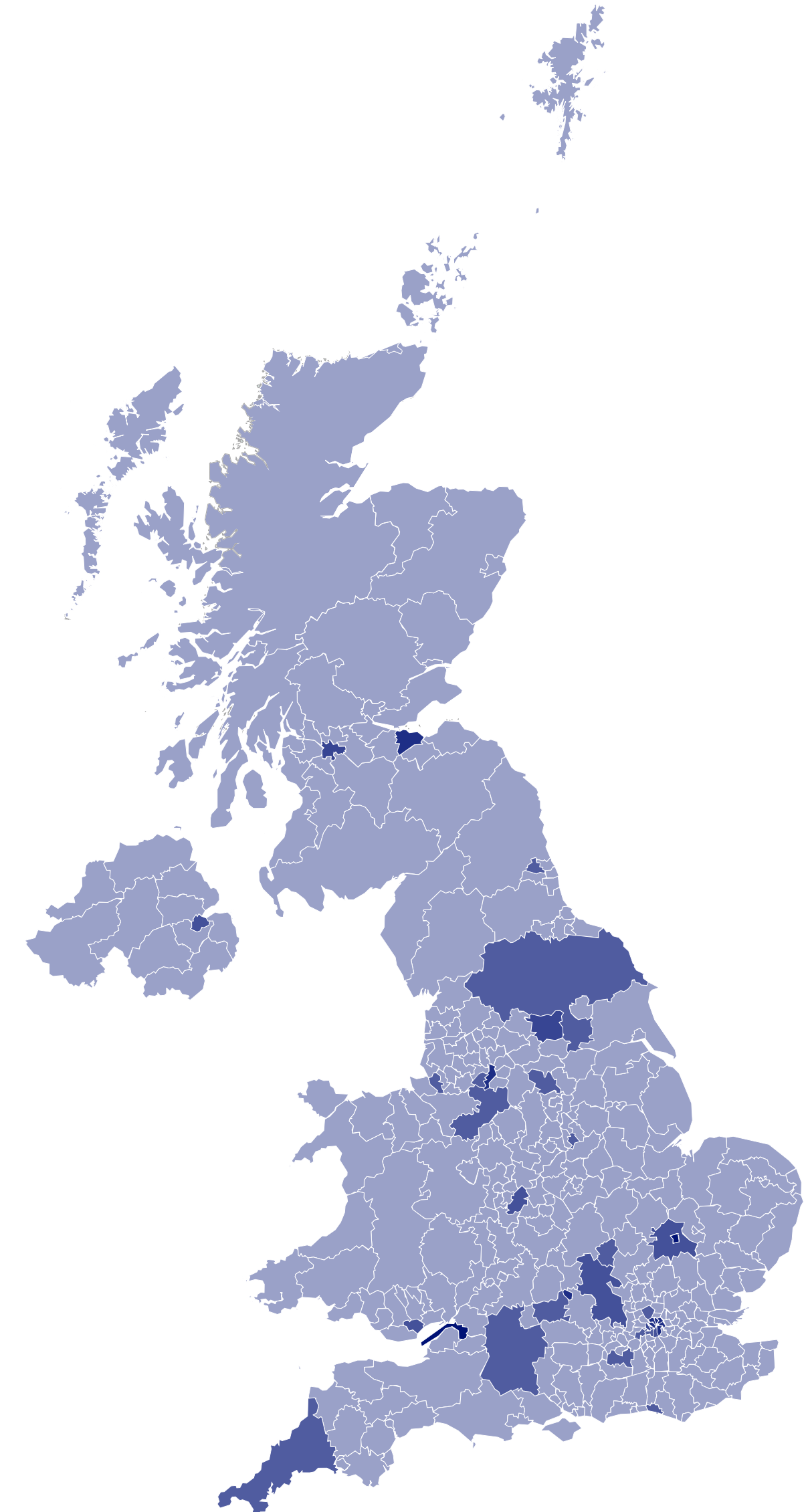
High-growth businesses are typically at the forefront of innovation, investing resources into new technologies and pioneering ideas. A well-developed ecosystem surrounding these companies provides the essential support needed to accelerate breakthroughs, whether through financial backing, access to specialised equipment, shared workspaces, or expert mentorship. With the right environment, high-growth firms can open up entirely new markets, driving economic value through disruptive innovation. The resulting products and services can deliver significant societal benefits, from medical advancements that improve patient outcomes to novel software solutions that help other startups expand and evolve.

Top tech ecosystems in the UK

There are high-growth tech clusters spread across the country. Outside of London, the local authorities of Edinburgh, Manchester and Bristol have the highest populations of high-growth tech companies. These cities are supported by strong business support systems, which help encourage the formation of high-growth tech companies. In Edinburgh, companies are often the recipient of support from Scottish Enterprise, Scotland's economic development agency. This can be in the form of equity funding and grants, as well as events and webinars to help educate and support business owners. Tech businesses in Manchester can benefit from the city's large population and many universities, which supply the skilled workers needed to build and grow high-growth tech companies.

Map of active high-growth tech companies by local authority (2025)

Number of head offices



Impact of high-growth companies on local economies

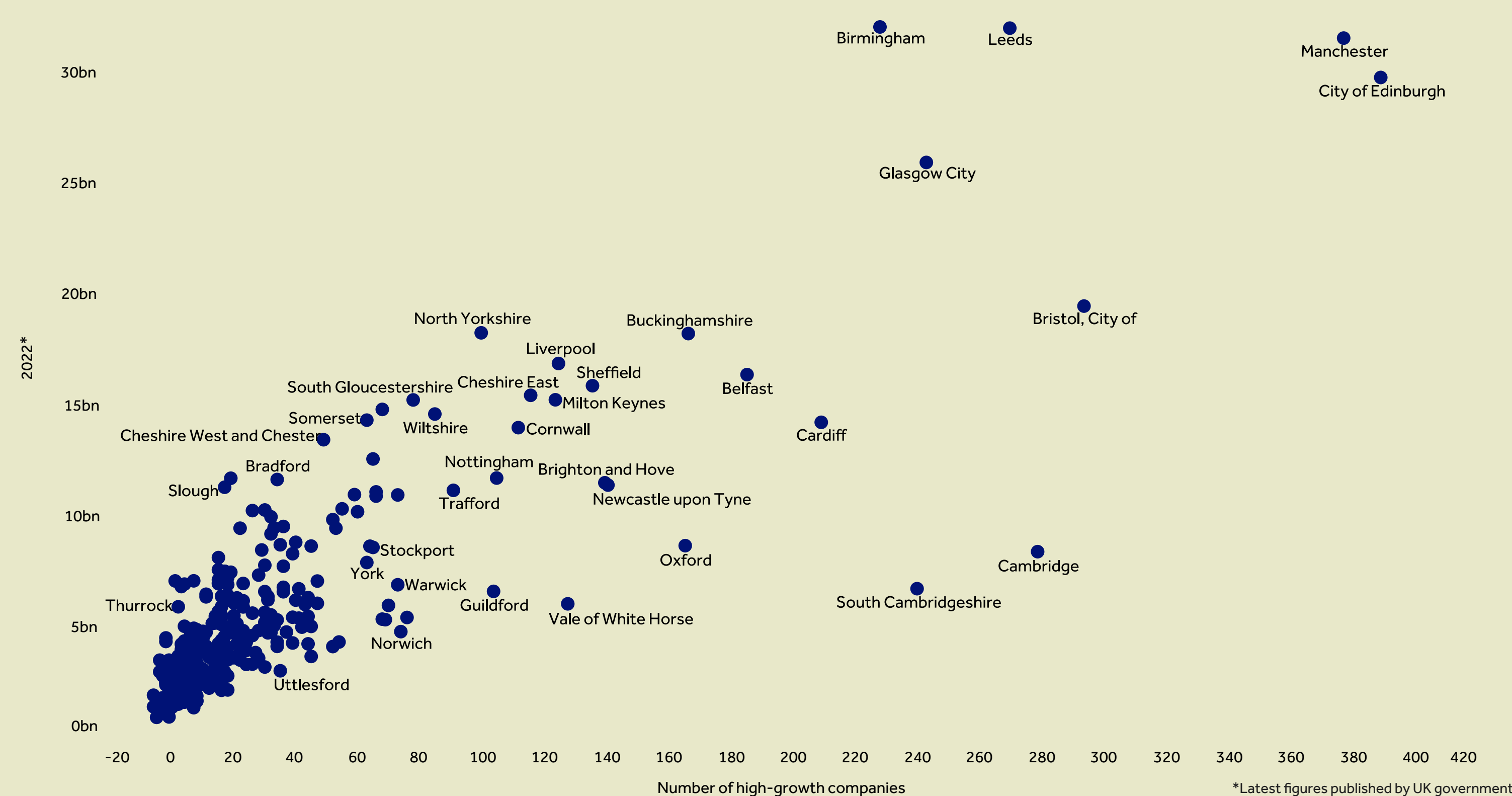
Gross Value Added (GVA) is the value produced by any economic unit that produces goods and services, providing a measure of the economic activity taking place in a given area. The number of high-growth companies in a local authority strongly correlates with the Government's latest (NOMIS, Office for National Statistics, 2022) figures on GVA, with a correlation coefficient of 0.69, demonstrating a positive relationship (where one is perfectly positive and zero means no correlation).

Outside of London, the local authorities with the highest number of high-growth companies are Edinburgh and Manchester, ranking third and fourth for GVA produced. Local authorities with more than 100 high-growth companies have an average GVA per capita of £294k compared to £27.5k for those

with less than 100. This suggests that high-growth companies assist in driving the creation of economic value. It could also be the case that local authorities

with more high-growth companies also have a higher number of companies in general, which will produce significant economic value.

The relationship between GVA and the number of high-growth companies by local authorities outside London



*Latest figures published by UK government

Survey analysis

As part of a wider study on UK tech companies, the survey gathered and analysed data from across the sector. It aimed to understand the factors that shape business success and the challenges tech companies face. Responses were collected from 3,000 employees working in the tech sector, covering key topics such as access to finance, regulation, government support, talent, infrastructure, and exit markets.

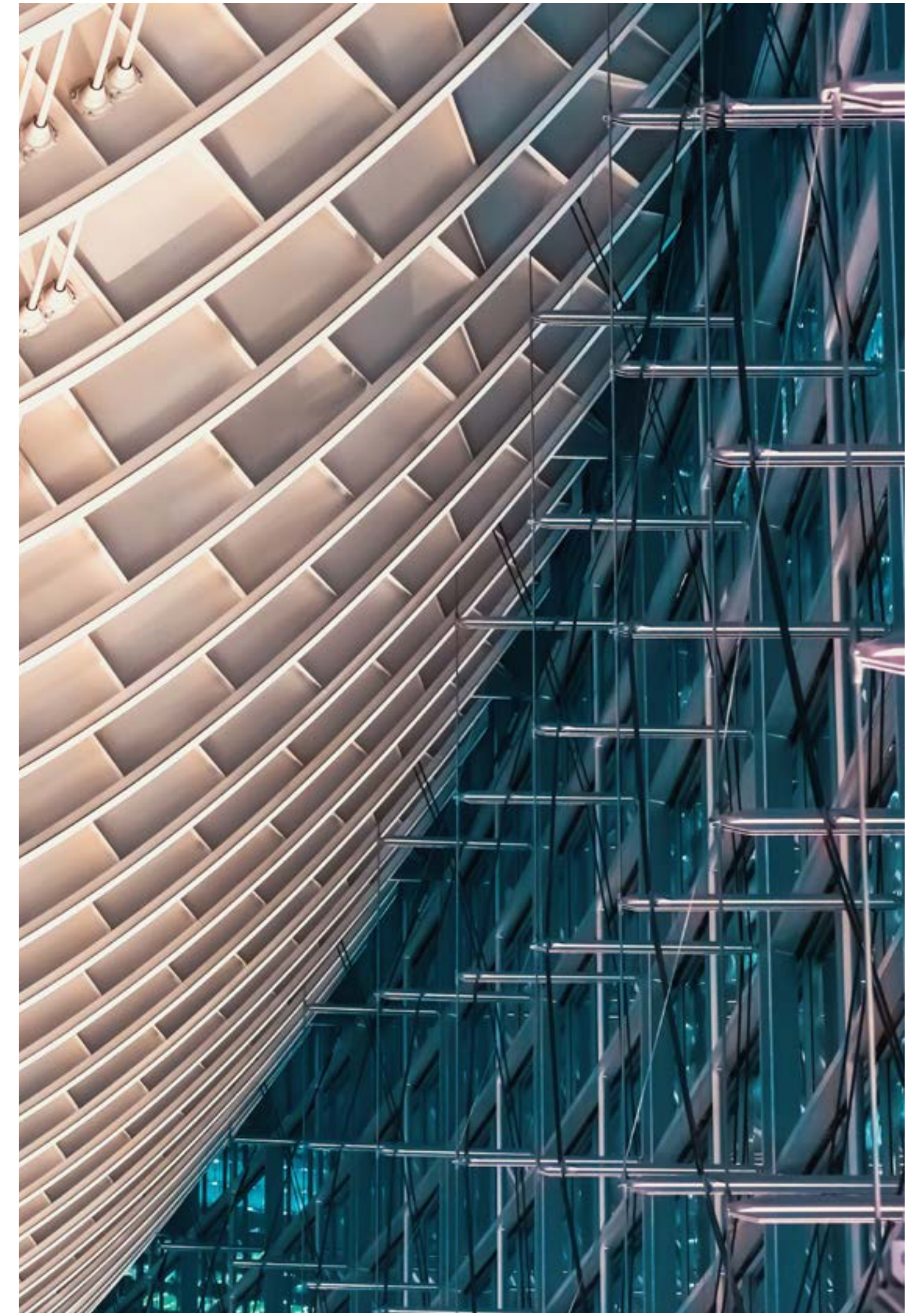
Survey methodology

The survey methodology ensured a balanced representation across factors such as company size, geographic location within the UK, and subsectors within the tech sector. To maximise reach, the survey was distributed through various channels, including industry associations, social media, and direct email campaigns.

The survey included both closed and open-ended questions, covering topics such as regulation, entrepreneurship and talent. The findings provide a snapshot of the current business landscape, highlighting opportunities that could shape decision-making in strategy, policy, and research. The survey ran from December 2024 until 3,000 responses were collected. Among the respondents, 27.5% were C-suite executives or Heads of Department and 30.6% were developers.

This report is primarily for entrepreneurs looking to better understand the tech sector's trajectory. Investors can use the insights to gauge the sector's health and growth potential. Policymakers and government officials may find the data useful in shaping regulation and economic policy. Researchers and industry analysts can also draw on these findings to explore emerging trends and the broader evolution of the tech ecosystem.

By providing a clear picture of the sector, this report aims to support informed decision-making, ensuring businesses, investors, and policymakers are well-equipped to navigate the evolving landscape.



Access to finance

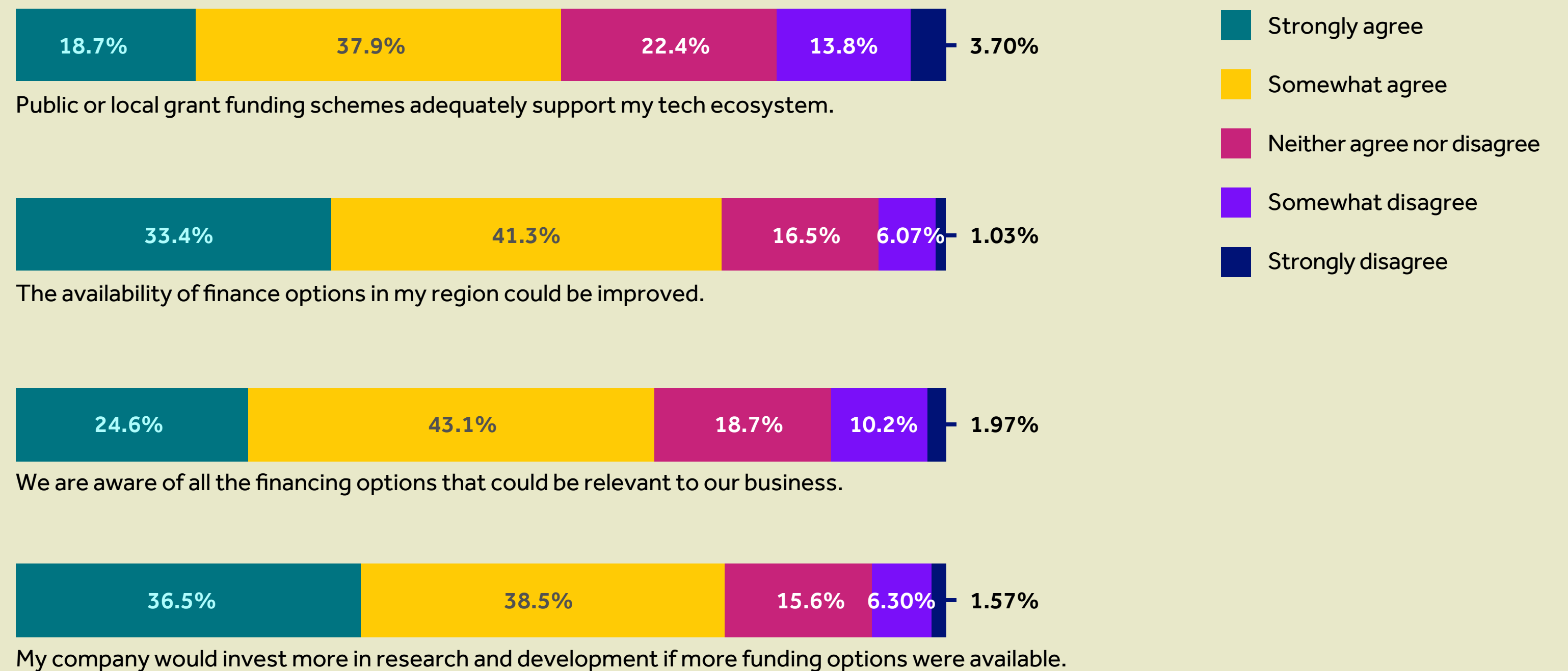
This year’s survey findings highlight both challenges and opportunities in access to finance for businesses. While the majority of respondents reported feeling more informed about their options – with 67.7% of respondents confirming that they are aware of all financing options relevant to them, both public and private. However, a significant number (74.7%) believe there is still room for improvement in finance options in their region.

Public and local grant schemes remain an important support mechanism, with 56.6% of respondents agreeing that these schemes adequately support their tech ecosystem. Improving the accessibility and awareness of these schemes could help businesses better leverage available resources.

Finance continues to shape investment decisions, with 75.0% saying they would invest more in research and development if better funding options were available.

Many companies are already making the most of available funding, and greater awareness of financial options is supporting their ability to grow.

How would you rate the effectiveness of the following government support?



Recruitment of homegrown and international talent

The UK tech sector has opportunities to strengthen both homegrown and international talent pipelines. More than half (54.7%) of tech employees see the skills gap as a key area for development, while the cost of talent (51.1%) and evolving employee expectations (44.7%) also influence workforce priorities. Attracting global talent remains a priority, with 67.9% of employees recognising the influence of immigration policies on hiring international workers.

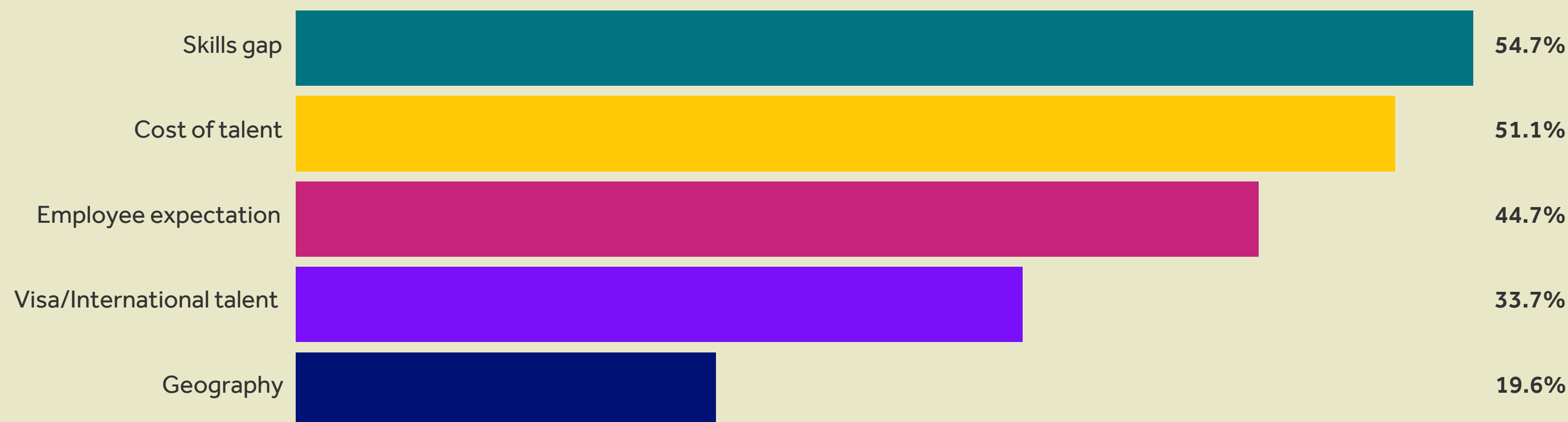
Encouragingly, over half (51.1%) of companies offer visa sponsorship, supporting access to skilled professionals from abroad. At the same time, efforts

to develop talent locally can help address skills shortages.

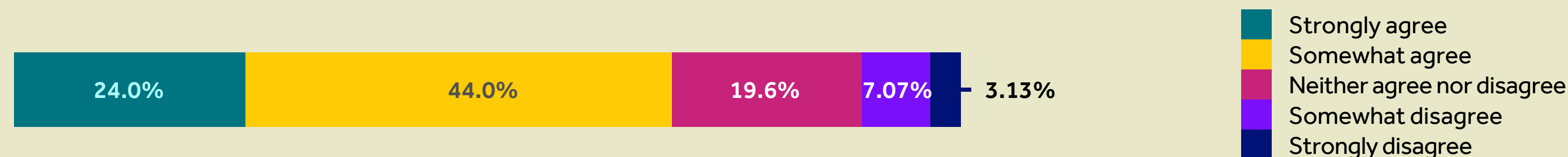
Supporting talent and international hiring will be important for keeping the UK a leading tech hub. Companies that invest in training, apprenticeships,

and partnerships with educational institutions can help strengthen the talent pipeline. At the same time, policies that make it easier to bring in skilled workers from abroad will help companies keep up with global competitors.

What, if any, workforce issue is the biggest opportunity for UK tech?



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Current immigration policies influence our ability to recruit international talent.

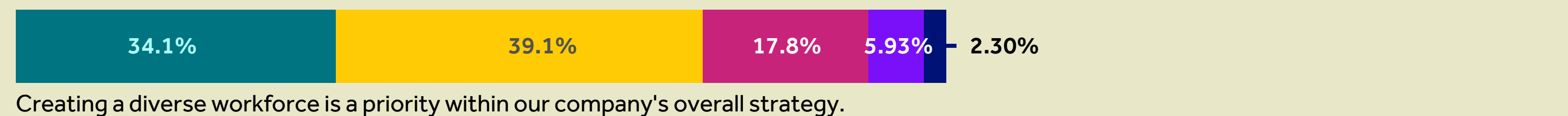
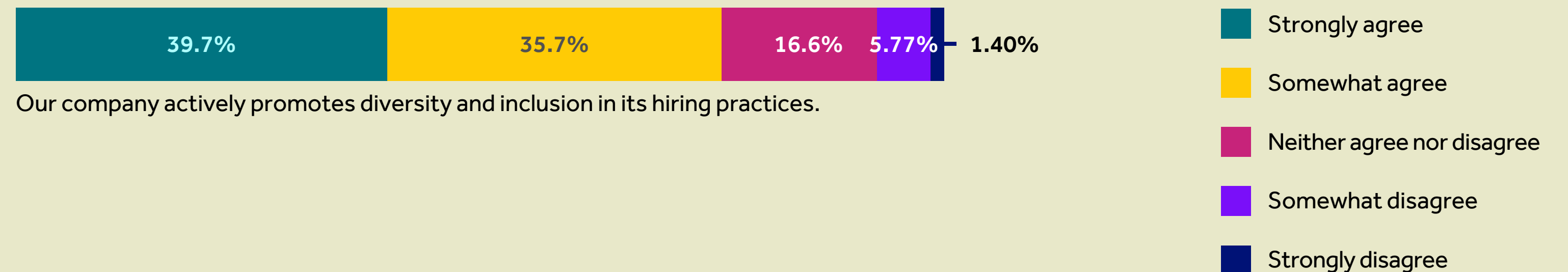


Diversity and inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are clearly prioritised by many organisations, as reflected in employee sentiment. The majority (75.4%) of employees agree that their company actively promotes diversity and inclusion in its hiring practices, with 39.7% strongly agreeing with this point. This indicates that most companies are putting real effort into creating more inclusive workplaces. In addition, 73.2% of employees say that creating a diverse workforce is a priority within their company's overall strategy, with 34.1% strongly agreeing.

This suggests that diversity is a central part of the company's goals. These results show a growing awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion for business success, with positive trends emerging in the workplace. Though there is still some room for improvement, the general outlook is encouraging. These efforts are helping to shape a more inclusive UK tech ecosystem.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?



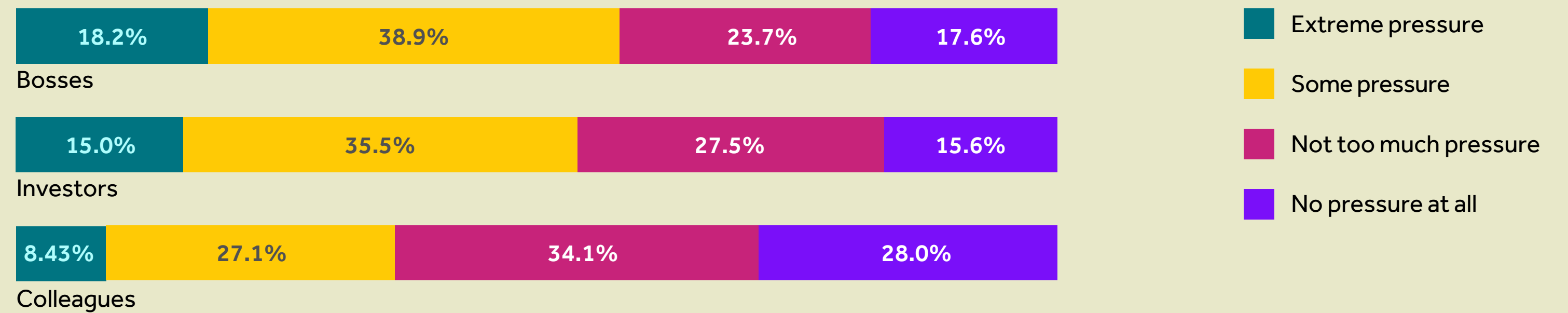
Exit markets and liquidity

Many companies are feeling the pressure to exit, but the intensity of this pressure varies significantly depending on the stakeholder. An exit is when a company is acquired, merges, or goes public through an IPO. While 35.5% of employees report feeling some level of pressure from colleagues, the majority (62.1%) feel very little pressure. The pressure from investors is more pronounced, with 50.5% feeling some form of pressure. However, a substantial portion (43.1%) of respondents still report little pressure from investors, highlighting the varied ways investors approach the exit process. Pressure from bosses is the highest, with 57.1% of respondents acknowledging some level of pressure.

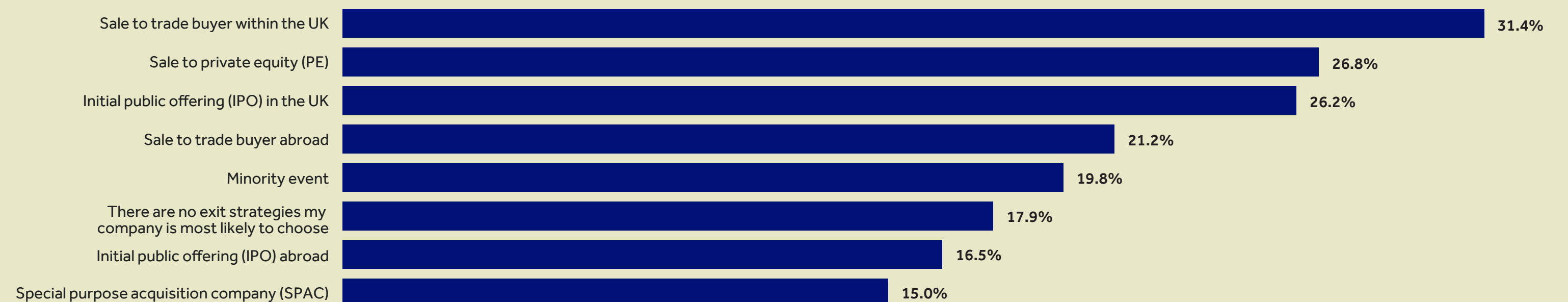
When it comes to exit strategies, UK tech companies are more inclined to pursue a sale to a trade buyer within the UK, with 31.4% selecting this option.

Other popular choices include sales to private equity (26.8%) and IPOs within the UK (26.2%). The sale to a trade buyer within the UK was also a popular choice last year. These trends reflect a clear focus on strengthening business value and ensuring successful transitions within familiar markets.

How much pressure, if any, do you feel from colleagues, investors, bosses, to exit?



Of the provided exit strategies, which is your company most likely to choose?



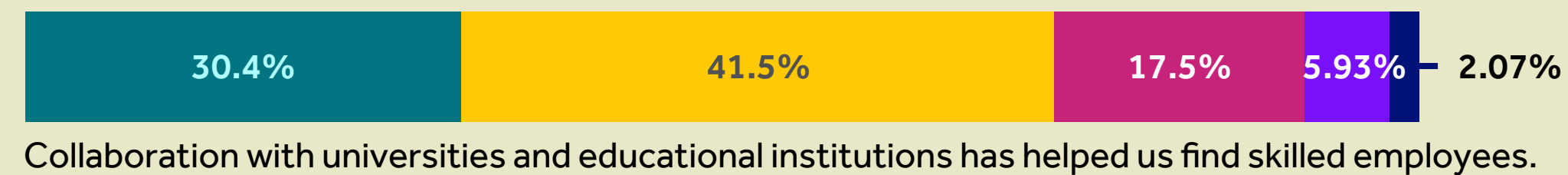
Entrepreneurship in the UK

Entrepreneurship in the UK benefits from key factors like collaboration with universities and a supportive regulatory environment. A large number of respondents (71.9%) believe that working with universities has helped them find skilled employees, highlighting the value of these partnerships in addressing workforce needs and bridging the skills gap.

Similarly, many entrepreneurs feel that the regulatory environment in the UK plays a supportive role in fostering innovation and growth for startups, with 64.4% of respondents agreeing with this view.

While some concerns were raised, most feel that the UK provides a solid foundation for startups. Access to talent and a stable regulatory framework are key reasons why many founders choose to establish and develop their companies in the UK.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?



- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree



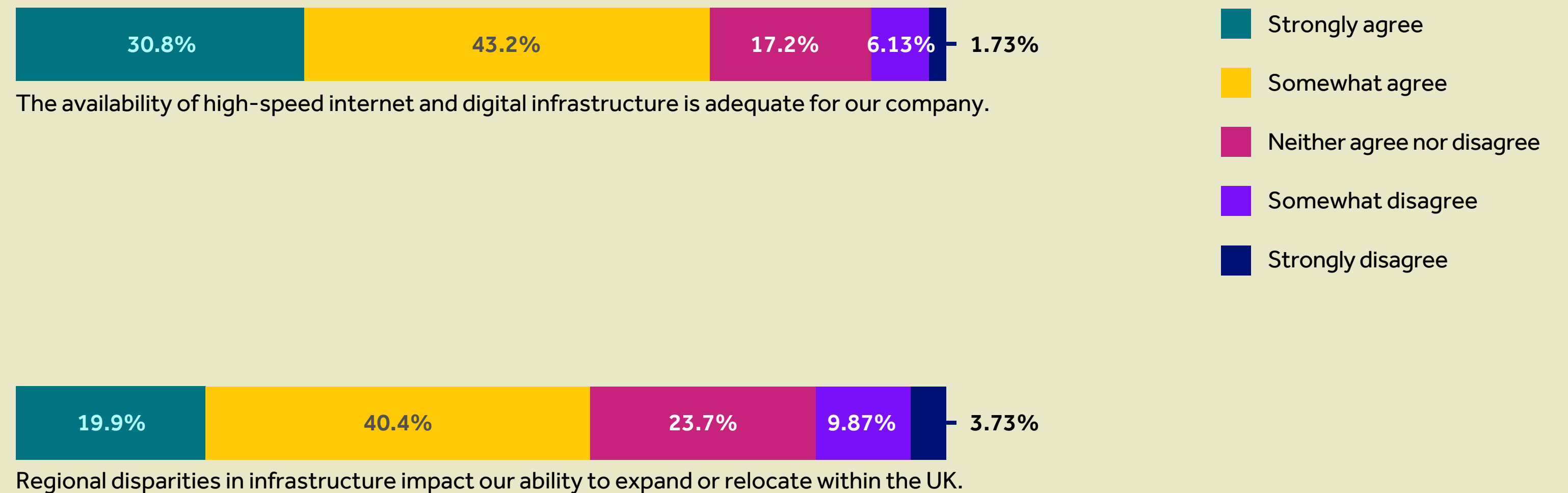
Digital infrastructure

Digital infrastructure plays a vital role in the growth of tech companies, and many entrepreneurs are optimistic about the resources available to them. A large majority of respondents (74.0%) agree that the availability of high-speed internet and digital infrastructure meets their needs, indicating a solid foundation that supports business operations. However, some regional disparities remain. Over half (60.3%) of respondents feel that differences in infrastructure across regions impact their ability to expand or relocate. This highlights the need to ensure that all regions have access to the resources necessary for growth.

While 32.3% of businesses are considering relocating due to infrastructure needs, the majority (53.7%) are not currently facing significant challenges. This suggests that most companies are satisfied with the existing digital infrastructure

or have adapted to make the most of what is available. By continuing to invest in infrastructure improvements, tech companies can continue to grow regardless of location.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?



Key themes

Entrepreneurship is thriving, with strong support networks, funding options, and incubators fostering innovation. The UK tech sector continues to grow, supported by funding initiatives, talent attraction, and a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. To support with access to finance, government-backed schemes such as SEIS and EIS provide vital investment opportunities.

Talent remains a priority, with visa schemes such as the Skilled Worker and Global Talent visas enabling international recruitment. London leads in attracting talent, but businesses across the UK are leveraging these schemes, alongside STEM education and university pathways, to strengthen the workforce.

While regional disparities exist, initiatives from the British Business Bank and Innovate UK are expanding opportunities, ensuring startups across the UK have access to the resources needed to grow.

Access to finance

Public and local funding continues to play a key role in supporting UK tech companies, with C-suite executives and founders particularly recognising its impact. Employees in the East of England, London, and the North East report the highest levels of satisfaction with these schemes, highlighting the value of targeted investment initiatives. Many employees—67.7%—feel informed about the funding options available to them. While access to finance remains a priority across the UK, Scotland and Northern Ireland report fewer difficulties. Funding challenges persist, but there is broad recognition of the support already in place and opportunities to further improve accessibility across regions.

Despite challenges in securing investment, the UK tech ecosystem benefits from a strong support network designed to help innovative startups scale. Government-backed initiatives play a crucial role, particularly in unlocking capital for early-stage companies. The Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) and Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS)

continue to incentivise investment by offering tax relief to those backing high-risk ventures.

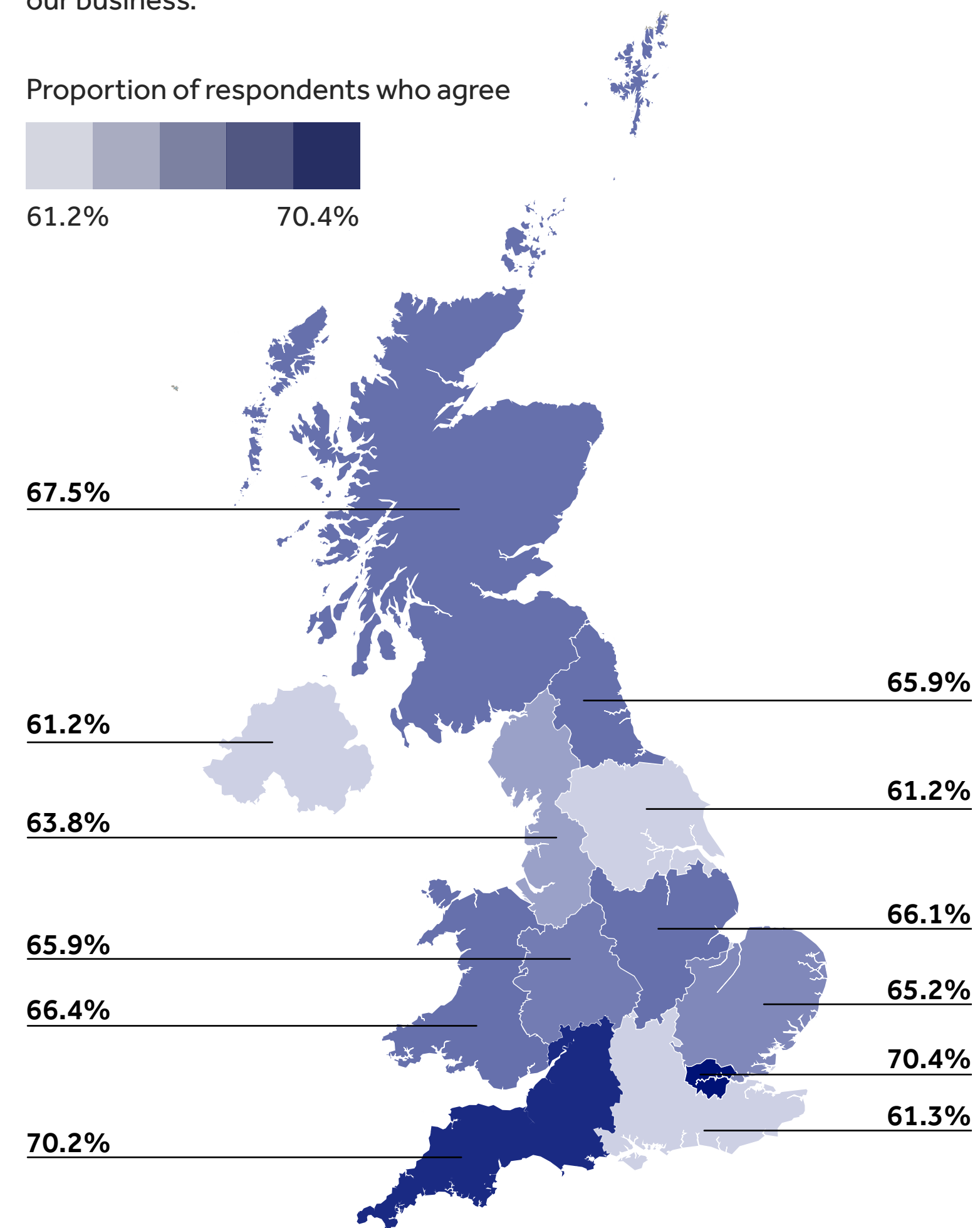
Beyond direct financial incentives, a network of incubators and accelerators across the country provides essential support. Not only do these programmes offer funding, but they also equip entrepreneurs with mentorship, business expertise, and critical industry connections—factors that are often just as important as capital when attempting to grow a business.

However, access to funding remains uneven, and founders from underrepresented backgrounds often face additional barriers to securing investment. Targeted initiatives have emerged to improve inclusivity in the funding landscape. Programmes such as the Barclays Black Venture Growth Programme and the Barclays Female Founder Accelerator, backed by government funding, provide tailored support to underrepresented entrepreneurs. By addressing specific challenges around funding, networks, and business knowledge, these initiatives help level the playing field and foster more diverse, dynamic tech ecosystems in the UK.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

We are aware of all the financing options that could be relevant to our business.

Proportion of respondents who agree



Recruitment of homegrown and international talent

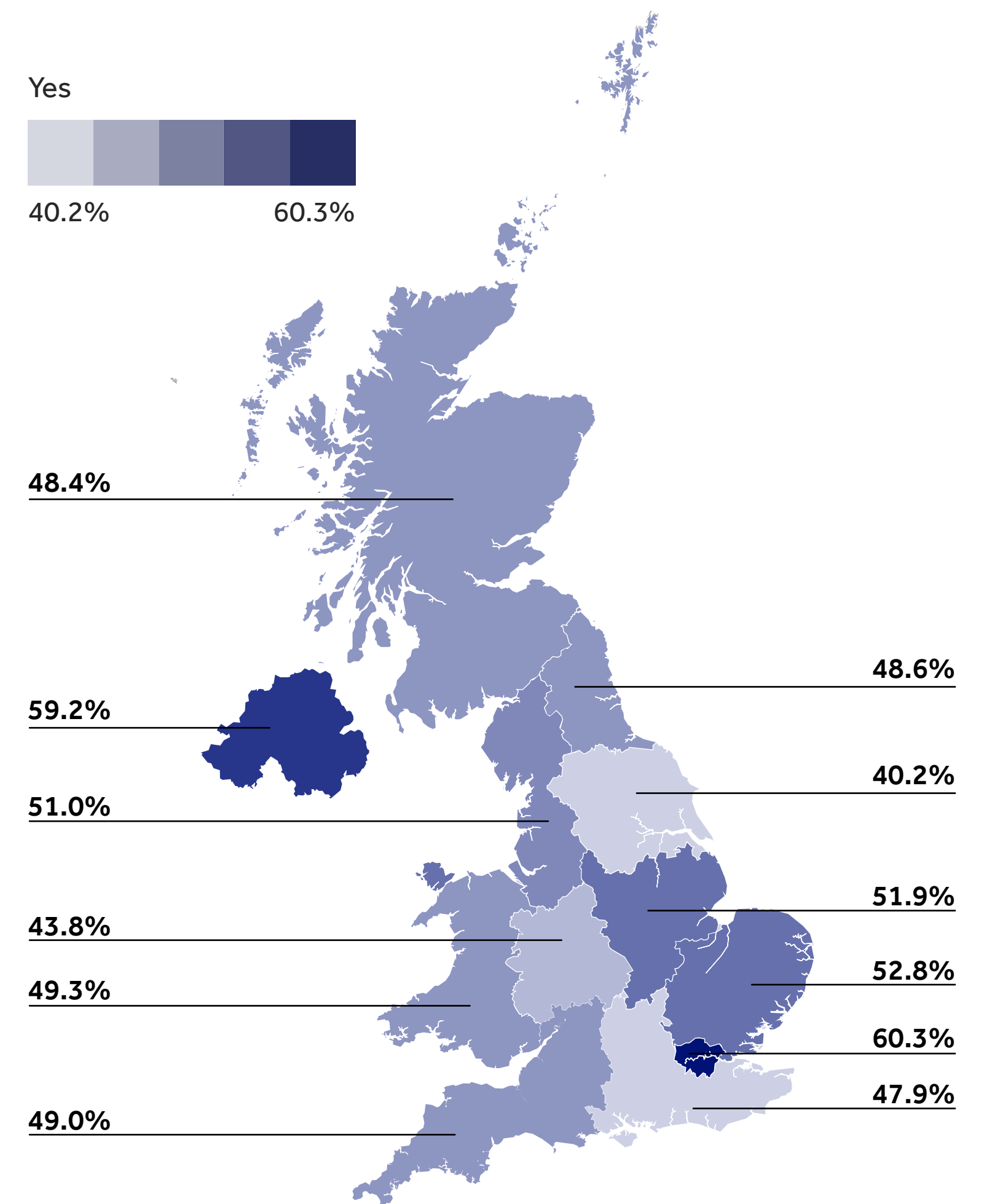
Around a third of UK tech workers surveyed feel that visa/international talent is a workforce issue creating the biggest opportunity for UK tech. This is especially true in London, where businesses may find it easier to attract international talent than in other areas of the UK, given the capital's reputation as a global financial hub and the fact that London is often the location of high-skilled jobs such as those found in the tech industry.

Just over half of those surveyed claim their company offers visa sponsorship for international talent. This is closer to 60% in both London and Northern Ireland, which could explain why tech workers in London, more than other regions, feel international

talent is an opportunity for UK tech. The UK Skilled Worker visa is vital in the UK, allowing workers from overseas who have sought-after skills to fill skill shortages and boost the UK economy. These visas can be expensive, so company sponsorship is vital in helping skilled talent immigrate when they would otherwise be unable to afford it.

The government also offers the Global Talent visa for leaders in academia, arts and culture or digital technology. This visa helps bring the world's best tech talent to the UK. Since it does not require you to have a job offer or sponsorship, it enables greater flexibility for talented foreign workers to make an impact on the UK tech industry. The student visa allows individuals over 16 to study at higher education institutions in the UK. This then leads to an increase in the supply of skilled talent coming out of universities on top of the domestic supply coming from UK students, which can be beneficial to UK tech companies.

Does your company offer visa sponsorship for international talent, if at all?



Entrepreneurship in the UK

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of innovation and economic growth in the UK. Startups across the country benefit from various support mechanisms, but perceptions of how well the regulatory environment fosters innovation vary by region. The survey reflects this, with 68.0% of respondents in London agreeing that the UK's regulatory environment supports startup growth—the highest level of agreement in the country.

London is a major centre for entrepreneurship, benefiting from strong networks, access to finance, and a well-developed business support system. The city offers a wide range of incubators, accelerators, and co-working spaces that provide founders with resources to help their businesses grow. Many venture capital firms, angel investors, and government-backed funding initiatives are also based in London, making it easier for startups to secure investment. Organisations such as

Sustainable Ventures and LawTech UK provide sector-specific support, helping businesses navigate regulatory challenges, secure funding, and scale effectively.

Outside London, regional hubs are growing and offering tailored support to local entrepreneurs. In cities like Oxford, health tech startups benefit from initiatives such as The Hill, which connects founders with industry experts and funding opportunities. Similarly, in Cardiff, Tramshed Tech fosters collaboration among tech businesses, providing access to workspace, networking, and investor connections. These regional initiatives help startups access the tools they need to scale, even outside the capital.

Despite these developments, disparities in support remain, particularly in areas such as Yorkshire and the Humber. The region has a growing entrepreneurial community, but the survey suggests that startups there may not feel as well-supported as those in London. This could be linked to fewer networking opportunities, more limited early-stage funding, or lower awareness of available resources. Factors that have been identified by the government, with solutions being explored. Expanding regional investment, increasing access to accelerators, and strengthening connections between local startups and national initiatives could help close this gap.

While progress is being made, addressing regional disparities in funding and support remains essential. Strengthening networks, improving funding availability outside major hubs, and fostering collaboration between startups, universities, and investors will help build a more balanced and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem across the UK.

UK overview

England continues to be the UK's largest hub for high-growth tech companies, with steady growth despite a decline in overall equity funding. London, Cambridge, and Manchester remain key centres for innovation, attracting investment and talent despite tougher market conditions. This fundraising trend reflects the global decline.

Scotland's tech ecosystem is expanding, supported by organisations like Scottish Enterprise, which plays a key role in funding and commercialising research.

Universities remain a driving force for innovation, producing successful spinouts and strengthening the country's position in emerging technologies.

Wales has seen an increase in high-growth companies, although overall funding levels have fallen. The Development Bank of Wales provides essential financial support.

Northern Ireland stands out for maintaining strong funding levels, supported by Invest NI and Tech Spark NI.

Three tech unicorns made in 2024

Wayve

Islington, London

Wayve develops software for self-driving cars that uses artificial intelligence and machine learning technology.

Lighthouse

Southwark, London

Lighthouse develops hotel management software, with features including pricing, events and reviews tracking.

Flo Health

Camden, London

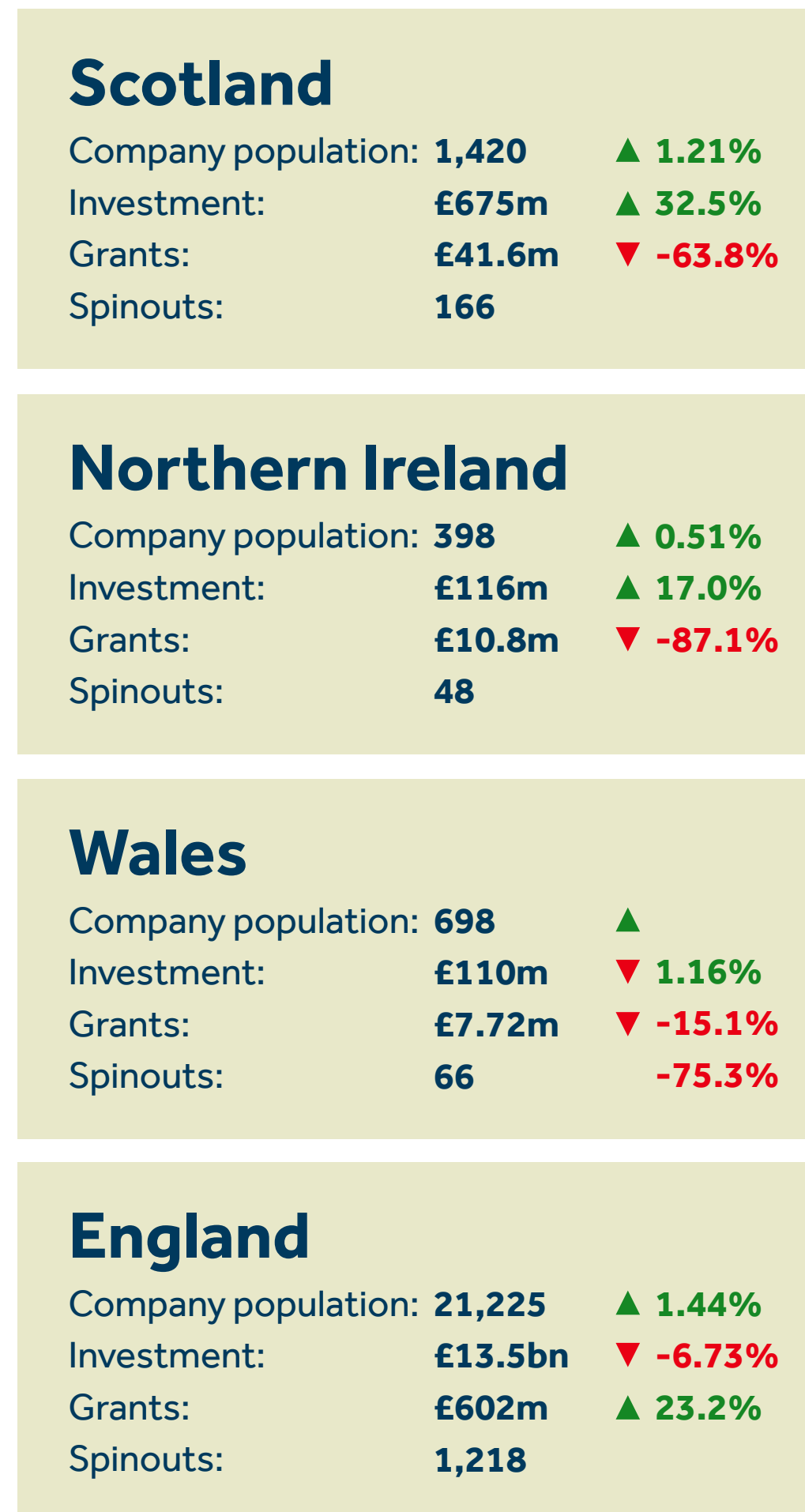
Flo Health develops an app that monitors ovulation cycles and provides advice on women's health.



Nations

Tech company population

Over the past year, the overall business population in the UK has experienced an average growth of 1.08%. While investment levels have varied across the different nations, with Scotland and Northern Ireland seeing increases since 2023, there has been a noticeable decline in funding for high-growth technology companies. This trend is particularly apparent in the metrics for grant funding, which have seen a steady decline. Encouragingly, England saw an increase in grant funding.



The map presents data on the active and dormant tech company population in 2024. Percentage changes are derived by comparing statistics from 2024 with those from the preceding year (2023). The spinout population data is accurate up to the end of December 2024.

Nation England

Home to tech powerhouses such as London, Cambridge and Manchester, England hosts the largest population of high-growth tech companies of any UK nation, growing by 1.58% between 2023 and 2024. Despite the growth in companies, equity funding amounts fell by around 6.74% across the same period. Some of the largest fundraising rounds by English companies in 2024 included software company Wayve's £833m raise in February and Cambridge-based Bicycle Therapeutic's £435m raise in May. It is positive that companies are still able to raise substantial amounts despite tougher conditions and lower fundraising amounts across the country as a whole. Globally, the fundraising environment has also been challenging.

4.88m

Active companies

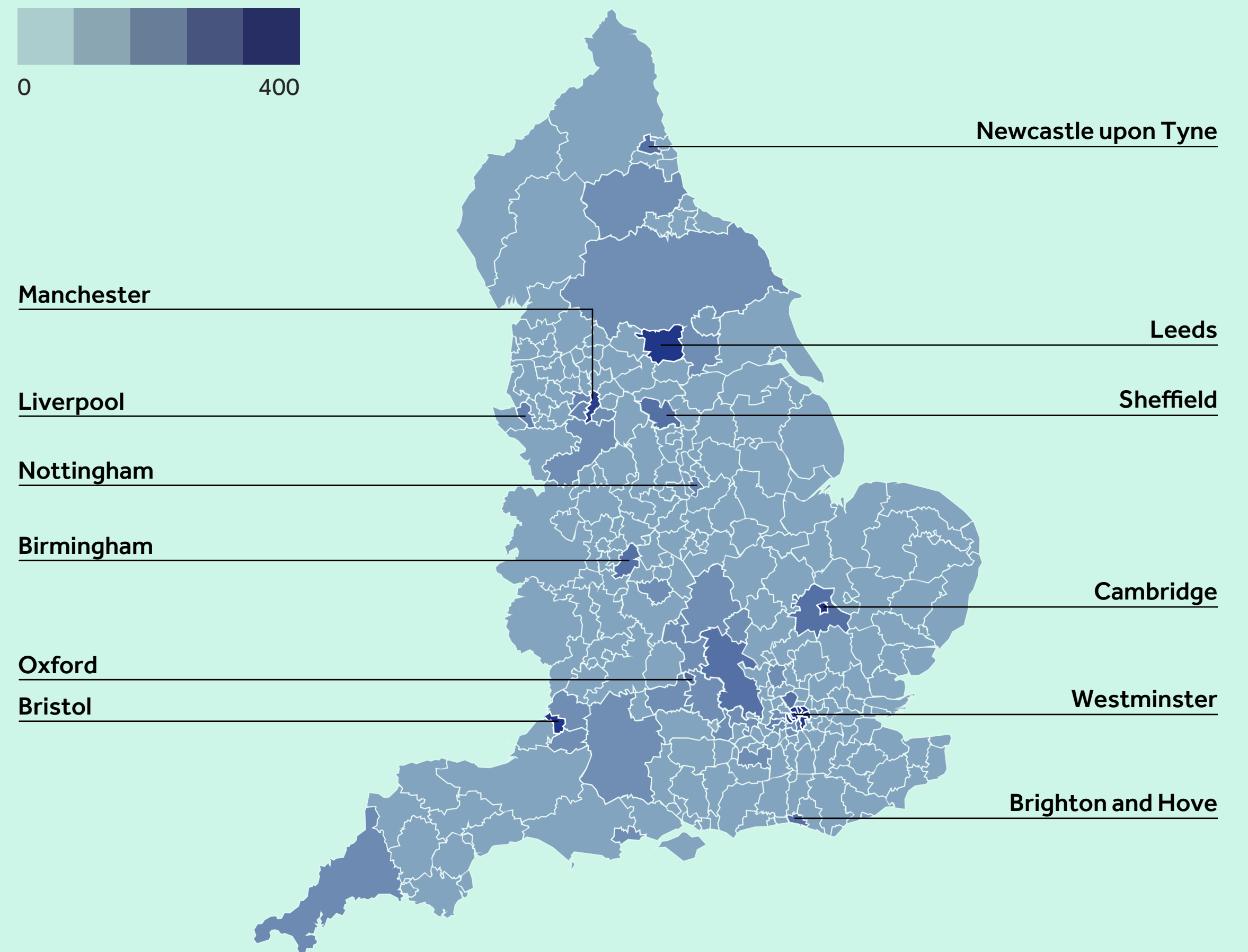
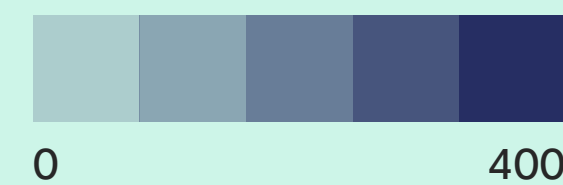
50.2k

Active high-growth companies

21.2k

Active high-growth tech companies

Map of English local authorities by active high-growth tech company population



Nation

Scotland

Scotland's population of high-growth tech companies is continuing to grow, up 1.21% from 2023. High-growth tech companies are also continuing to attract investment, a testament to the country's tech ecosystem and the support offered to companies in the region. Such support mechanisms include the nation's development agency, Scottish Enterprise, a principal investor in Scotland's high-growth companies. Scottish Enterprise was involved in several of the top funding deals in 2024, including Intelligent Growth Solutions' £22.5m raise in January. Scottish Enterprise's impact extends beyond investment, the agency also helps academics to commercialise their research and create spinout companies. Scotland has produced several highly successful spinout companies thanks to its many universities, including the University of Dundee spinout Exscientia and the University of Glasgow spinout Chemify.

304k

Active companies

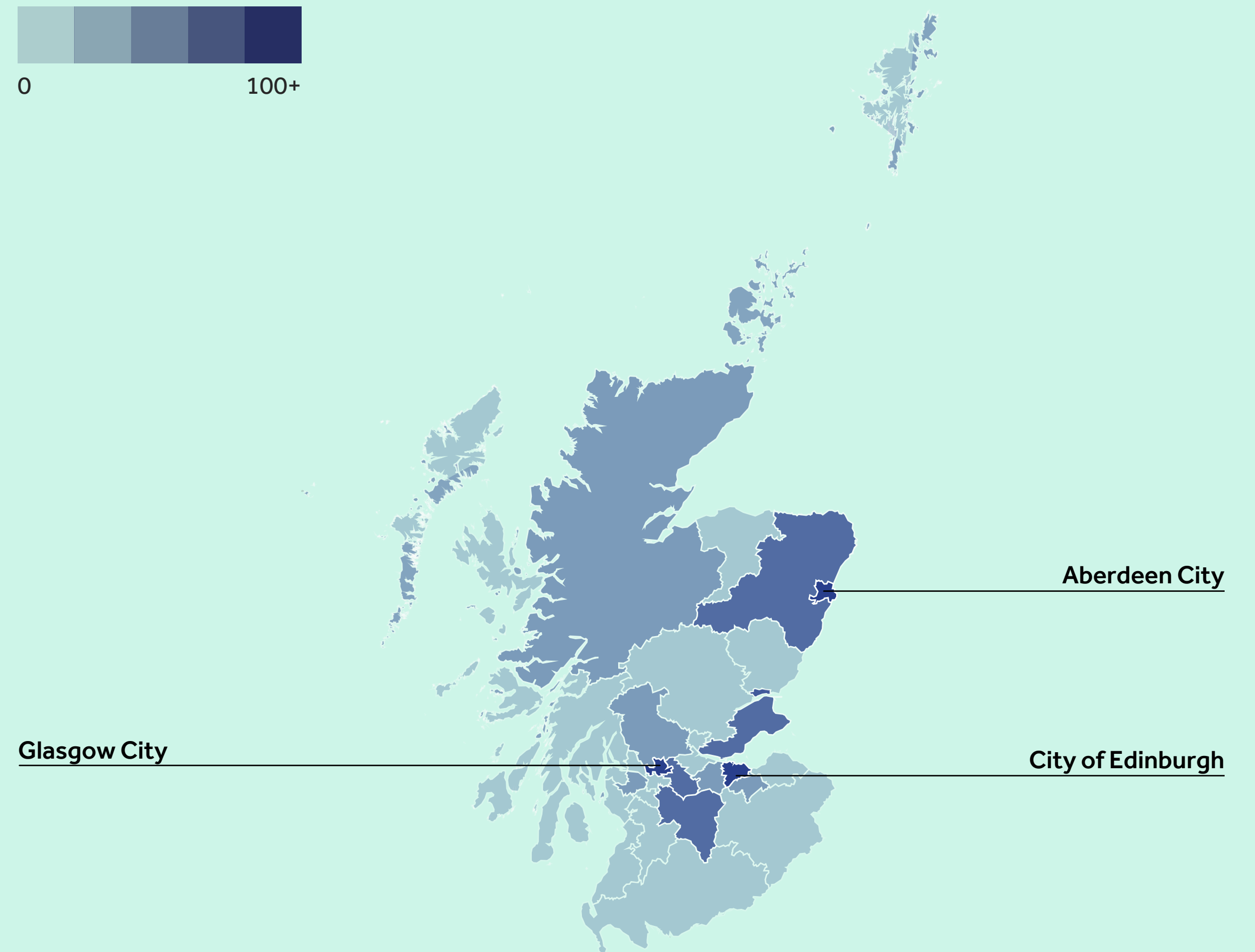
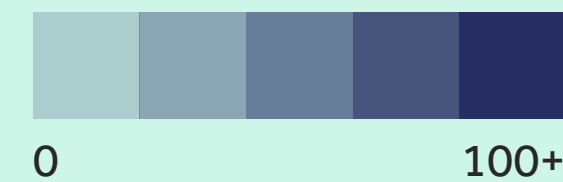
3.60k

Active high-growth companies

1.42k

Active high-growth tech companies

Map of Scottish local authorities by active high-growth tech company population



Nation

Wales

The number of high-growth companies in Wales increased by 1.16% between 2023 and 2024. However, despite this positive momentum, total equity funding fell by 15.1% between 2023 and 2024. Significant deals still came from companies such as Draig Therapeutics during this dip, with the biotechnology company securing £15.0m in September 2024. Wales has a well-established support network for scaling tech businesses. Organisations like the Development Bank of Wales provide crucial funding to businesses such as Peppercorn AI, which raised £3.25m in April 2024, partly funded by the Development Bank. University spinouts such as Morvus Technology and Ceryx Medical continue to capitalise on academic research to drive innovation.

195k

Active companies

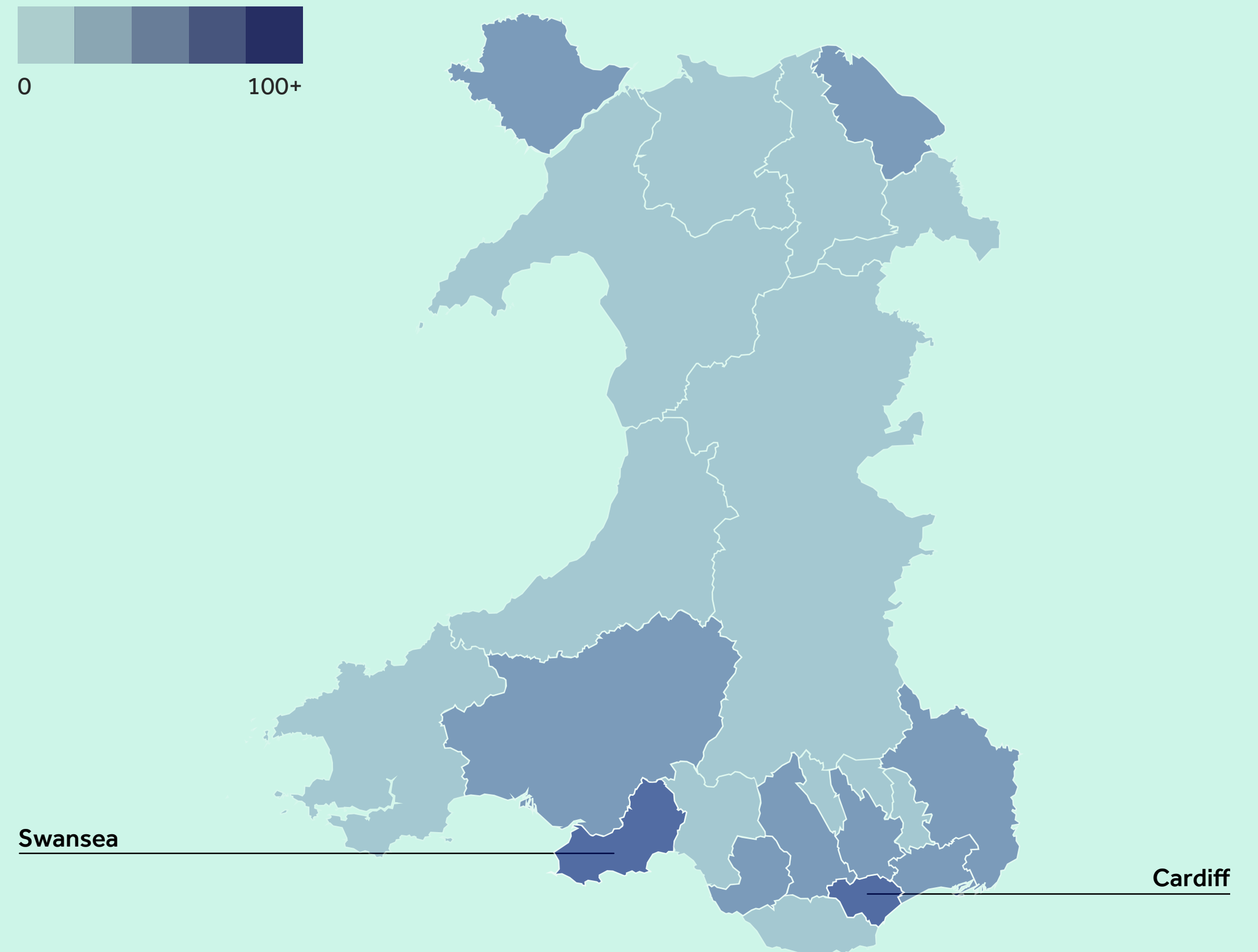
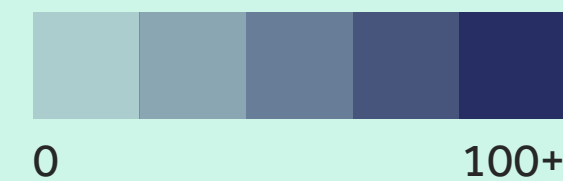
1.98k

Active high-growth companies

698

Active high-growth tech companies

Map of Welsh local authorities by active high-growth tech company population



Nation

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland was one of only two UK nations to see higher amounts of equity funding raised by high-growth tech companies in 2024 compared to 2023. The high-growth company population increased by 0.51%, however, equity funding increased by 17.0% across the year. Among the standout fundraisings from 2024 was Artemis Technologies, securing £17.9m in August.

The region benefits from strong institutional support, including Invest NI, which is key in backing startups and scaleups. Tech Spark NI is supporting women in tech in Northern Ireland through its latest accelerator programme in collaboration with Women in Business NI and Barclays Eagle Labs Ecosystem Partnership Programme funded by UK Government. Northern Ireland's universities are also major drivers of tech entrepreneurship, with universities such as Queen's University Belfast producing successful tech spinouts such as Cirdan and Re-Vana.

94.5k

Active companies

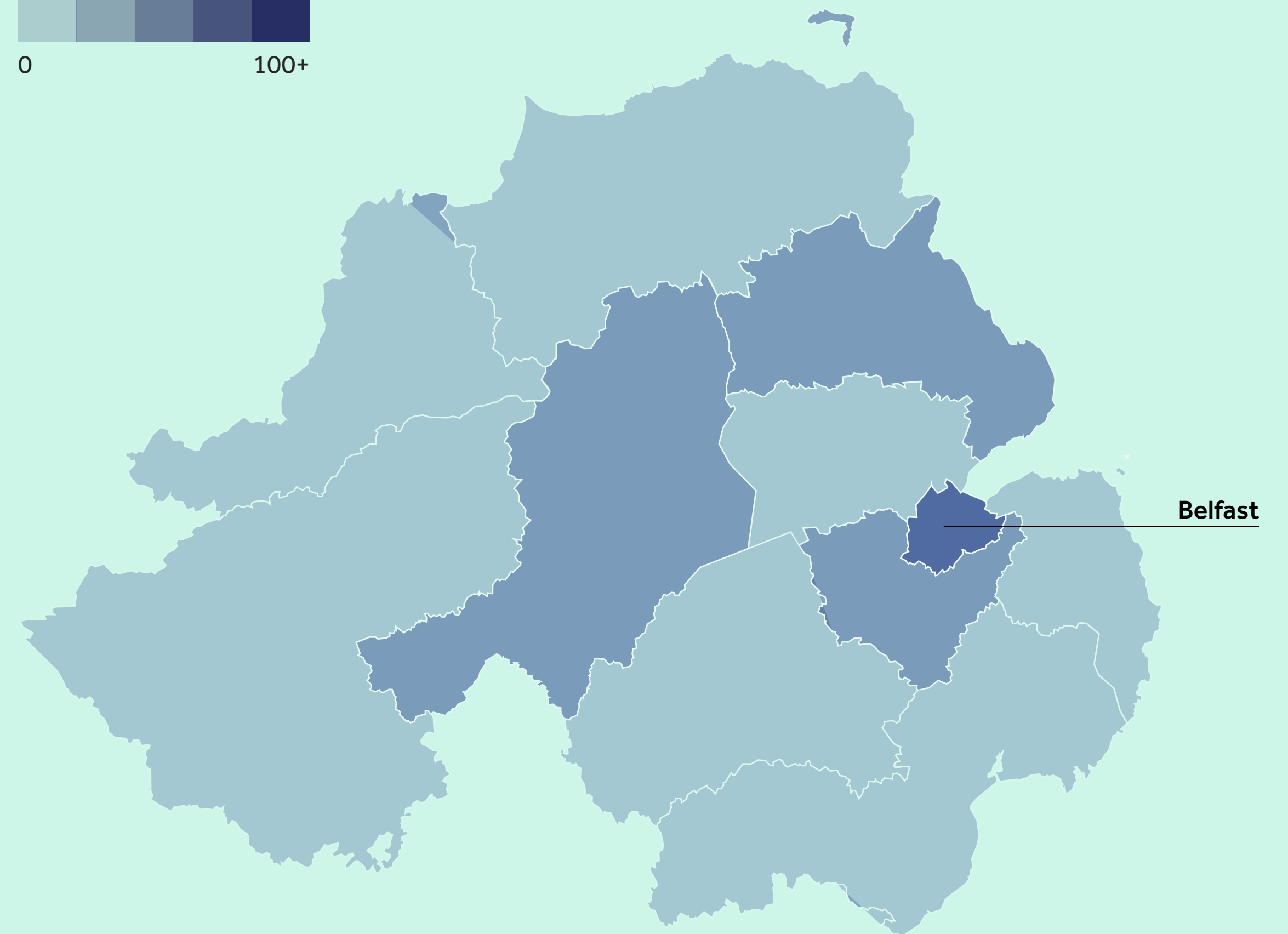
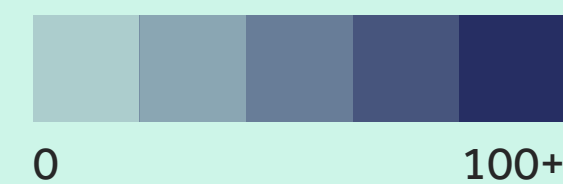
1.19k

Active high-growth companies

398

Active high-growth tech companies

Map of Northern Irish local authorities by active high-growth tech company population



English regions

London and the South East is home to 12,712 active high-growth tech companies, the most of any region in England. The region is bolstered by robust investor networks, world-class universities and a global talent influx. Equity investment into high-growth tech companies grew in The North and the East of England regions.

The East of England is emerging as a tech hub, with increasing investment and transformative projects in Cambridge driving expansion. The Midlands showed steady growth supported by dedicated business programmes and innovative tech hubs in cities like Birmingham and Nottingham.

English regions

Tech company population

In 2024, the high-growth technology sector in England experienced varied growth across investment and grant funding metrics. While overall funding was lower compared to 2023, tech companies across England still managed to secure a significant total of £13.5bn. Notably, the North West and the East Midlands recorded increases in equity funding, with the North West securing £841m, a 48.7% increase, and the East Midlands £118m, a 3.66% rise.

Grant funding depicted a more mixed landscape, with only three regions experiencing growth. Yorkshire and the Humber recorded the highest growth between 2023 and 2024, with a 156% increase in grant funding, amounting to £79.9m.

Despite a downturn in several financial metrics, London maintained its dominance in investment volume, securing £8.98bn in equity funding. It also led in the academic spinout ranking, with a total of 269 spinouts based in the capital as of 2024. Close behind was the South East, with 255 spinouts.

North East

Company population:	527	▲ 0.96%
Investment:	£152m	▼ -45.8%
Grants:	£16.1m	▼ -31.5%
Spinouts:	48	

North West

Company population:	1,702	▲ 1.49%
Investment:	£841m	▲ 48.7%
Grants:	£44.3m	▲ 17.4%
Spinouts:	127	

South East

Company population:	3,187	▲ 1.30%
Investment:	£1.06bn	▼ -29.4%
Grants:	£93.4m	▼ -50.1%
Spinouts:	255	

London

Company population:	9,525	▲ 1.71%
Investment:	£8.98bn	▼ -6.26%
Grants:	£191m	▼ -16.3%
Spinouts:	269	

South West

Company population:	1,445	▲ 1.33%
Investment:	£473m	▼ -0.35%
Grants:	£55.8m	▼ -54.0%
Spinouts:	128	

East of England

Company population:	1,966	▲ 0.92%
Investment:	£1.59bn	▲ 0.62%
Grants:	£44.8m	▼ -47.0%
Spinouts:	188	

East Midlands

Company population:	778	▲ 1.17%
Investment:	£118m	▲ 3.66%
Grants:	£11.1m	▼ -70.5%
Spinouts:	58	

West Midlands

Company population:	1,036	▲ 0.88%
Investment:	£140m	▼ -23.0%
Grants:	£65.2m	▲ 101%
Spinouts:	53	

Yorkshire & the Humber

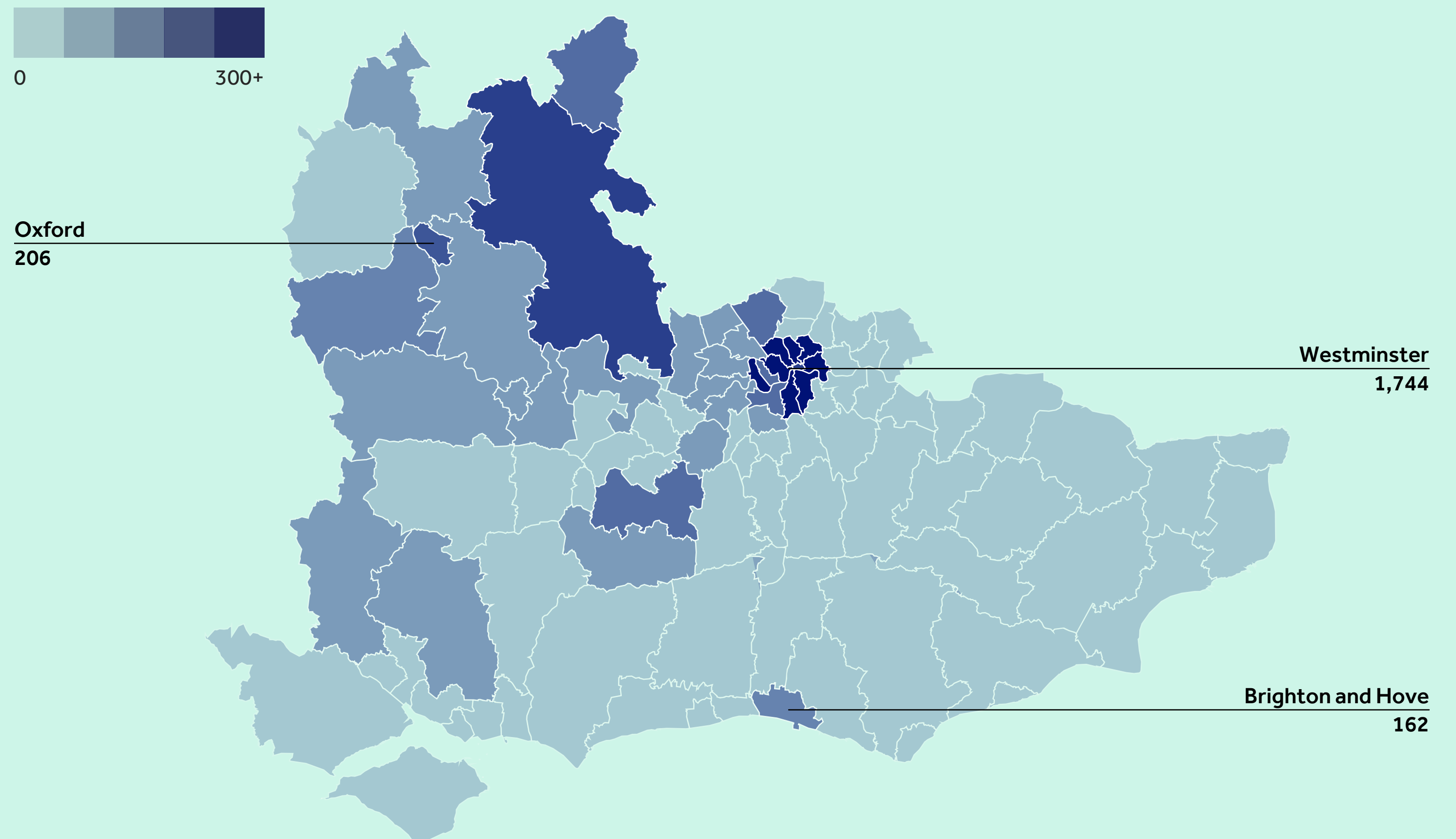
Company population:	1,059	▲ 1.44%
Investment:	£179m	▼ -23.3%
Grants:	£79.9m	▲ 156%
Spinouts:	92	



London and the South East

London and the South East are home to the highest population of high-growth tech companies in the UK, and the population continues to grow. The region benefits from London's reputation as an economic and political hub. The city has a vast network of investors, which can help high-growth companies secure funding. The city's many universities—including UCL and Imperial—produce a pipeline of skilled talent. London also attracts many skilled professionals from abroad, with these individuals bringing the skills needed to build and grow tech businesses. While the vast majority of high-growth tech companies are located in the capital, the South East still pulls its weight. Companies benefit from proximity to universities, including the University of Oxford, which has produced numerous successful spinout companies, including Oxford Nanopore Technologies and autonomous vehicle software developer Oxa.

Map of London and the South East local authorities by active high-growth tech company population

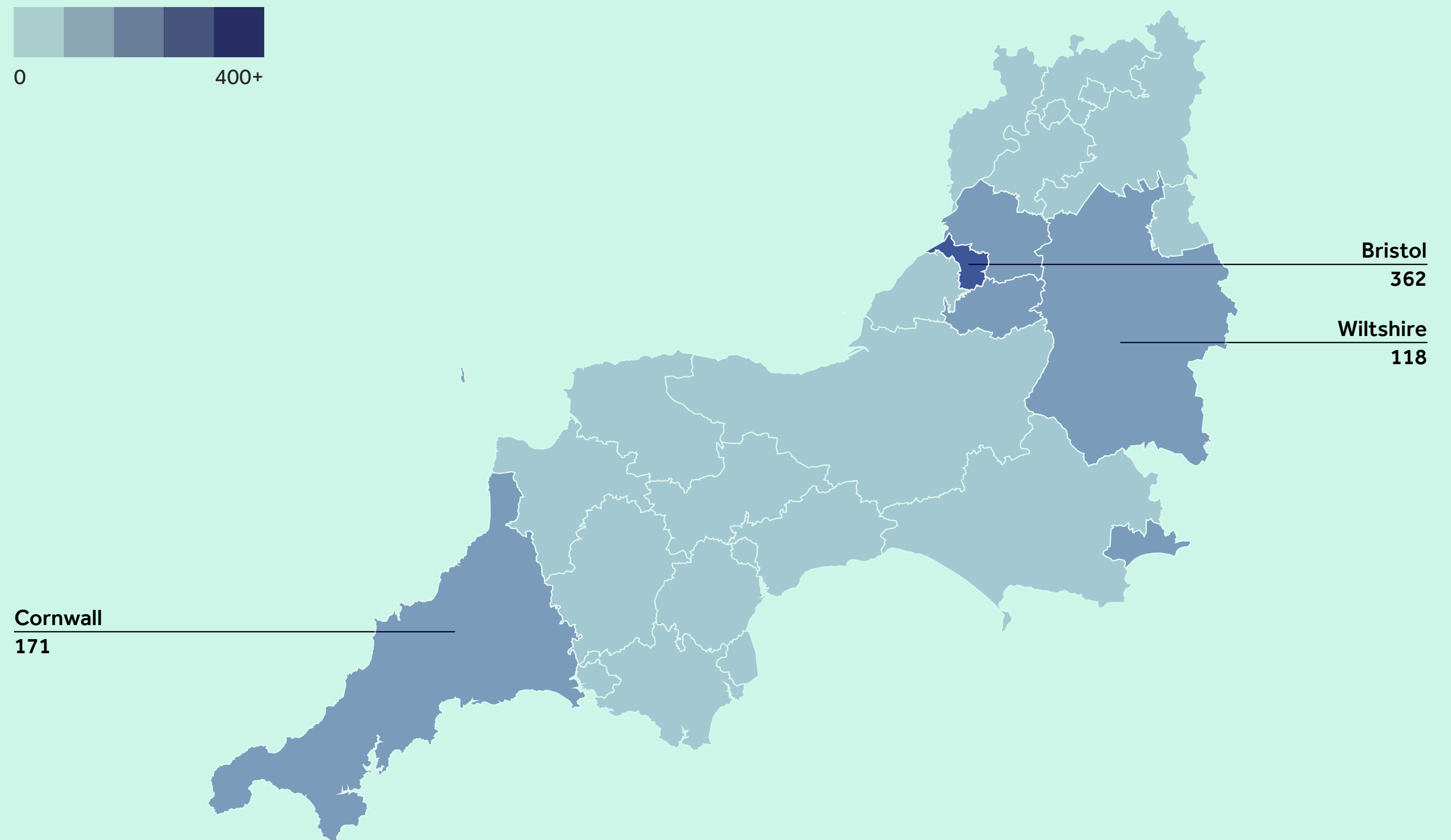
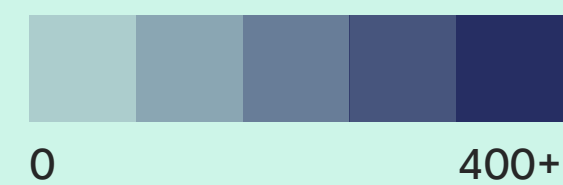


The South West

While the South West of England is home to the smallest population of high-growth tech companies, the population is growing, up 1.33% in 2024 compared to the previous year. Equity investment into tech companies in the region remained steady in 2024, a positive given the declines observed in other regions since 2023. Strong collaboration between academia and industry supports the tech sector's growth in the South West. The establishment of the Brunel Centre exemplifies this collaboration. A joint effort between the University of Bath and the University of the West of England, the data and research hub will unite businesses, universities, and policymakers to support regional growth and help further the devolution of power to the South West.¹

¹ "Innovative University-Business Partnership to Power Growth and Devolution for the West of England." 2024. Bath.ac.uk. 2024.

Map of the South West local authorities by active high-growth tech company population

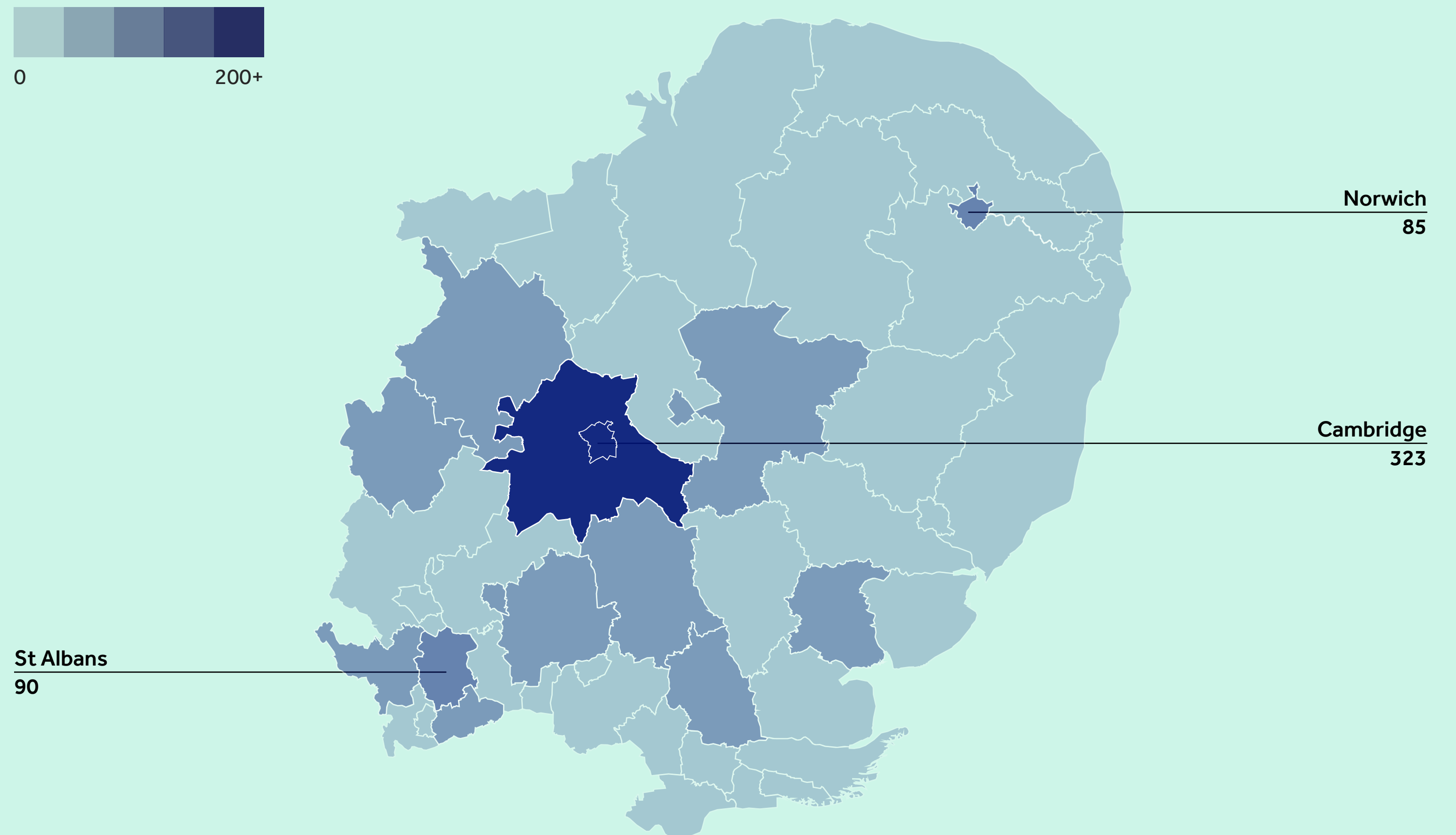
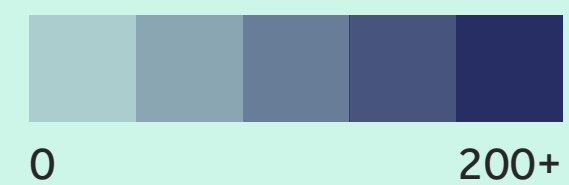


East of England

The East of England stands out among regions as a hub for high-growth tech companies, with companies raising significant equity investment despite the relatively small tech company population. Investment has increased every year since 2022, reaching £1.60bn in 2024. At the core of the East of England is Cambridge. The Crown Estate recently announced a £1.50bn regeneration project to expand the Cambridge Business Park. The development plans to increase the number of lab buildings and office spaces and improve connections and access to surrounding science parks and STEM-focused educational opportunities.²

² "The Crown Estate to Breathe New Life into Cambridge Business Park as It Unveils Bold Proposals to Support the UK's Science, Innovation, and Technology Ambitions." 2024. The Crown Estate. November 12, 2024..

Map of the East of England local authorities by active high-growth tech company population

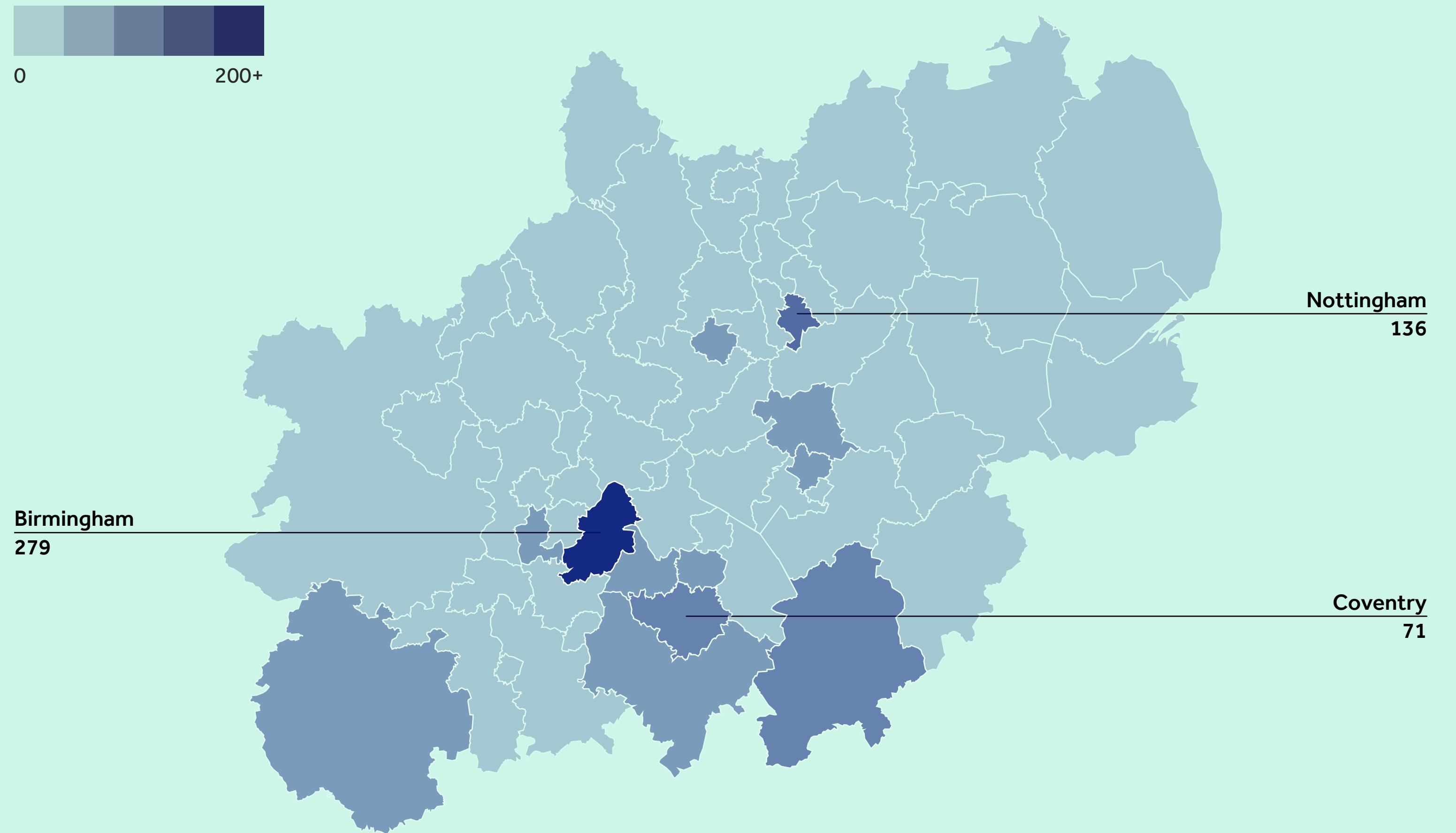
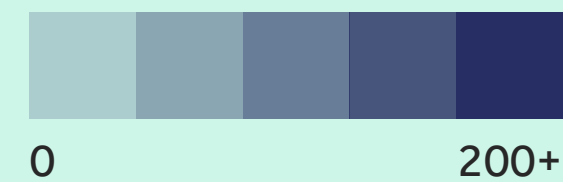


The Midlands

The Midlands, comprising the East Midlands and West Midlands, saw a 1.00% increase in the population of high-growth companies. In the Midlands, businesses are supported by schemes such as “Business Growth West Midlands,” which provides free expert advice, access to business programmes and events, and information on grants and funding opportunities. Tech hubs are emerging in cities, including Birmingham, Nottingham, and Coventry. In Nottingham, the University of Nottingham has partnered with Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust to create the Centre for Healthcare Technologies to help implement healthcare discoveries into practice. At the University of Warwick, WMG works to address skill shortages in key areas, including technology, engineering and digital healthcare. The centre also supports businesses in digitalisation, business change and product design.³

³ “University Support Boosts West Midlands Economy by £450m.” 2024. The Business Magazine. April 9, 2024. .

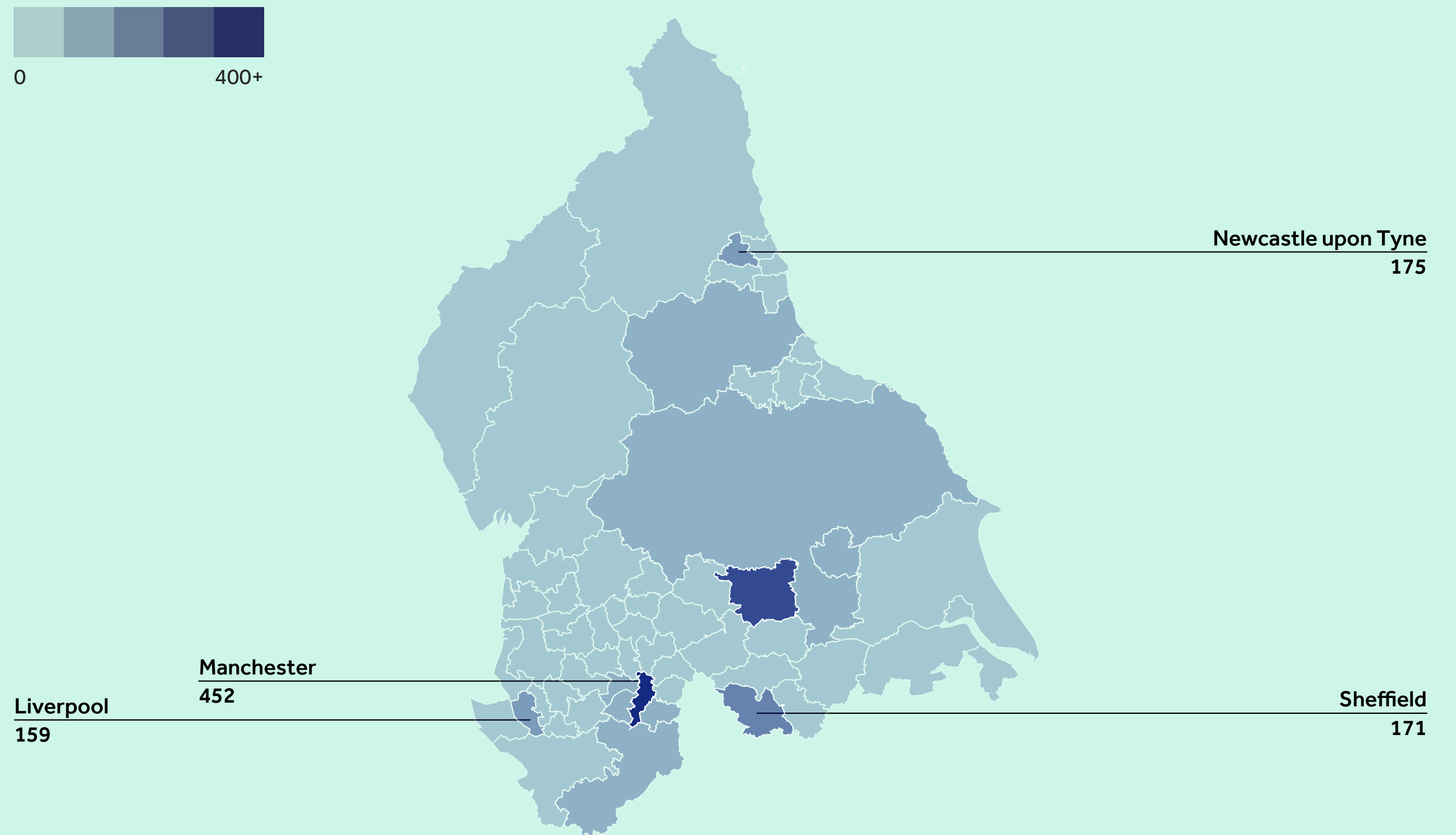
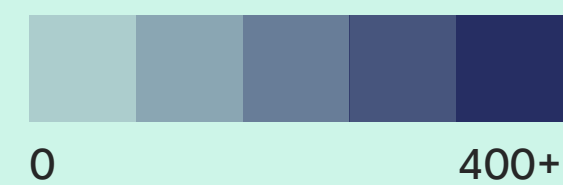
Map of the Midlands local authorities by active high-growth tech company population



The North of England

The high-growth tech company population in the North of England, made up of the North East, North West, and Yorkshire and the Humber, grew by 1.39% between 2023 and 2024. In the North East, the North East Growth Hub offers a range of services, including business support programmes, funding opportunities, and expert advice to foster innovation and growth. In Yorkshire and the Humber, the HEY Growth Hub provides resources such as funding, training courses, events, and mentoring to assist businesses in Hull and East Yorkshire. In the North West, organisations such as the North West Business Leadership Team (NWBLT) collaborate with businesses to drive innovation.

Map of the North of England local authorities by active high-growth tech company population



City analysis

The following section showcases key cities from each UK nation. Edinburgh saw the greatest increase in equity funding into high-growth tech companies between 2023 and 2024, with amounts growing 71.2%. High-growth tech companies in Belfast also received increased funding across the year, growing 22.9%. These cities are supported by a range of incubators, university networks, and economic development agencies.



Bristol

Investment overview

Bristol has a reputation for innovation, particularly in the aeronautical industry. It was this reputation that attracted Fairchild Semiconductor to move to Bristol in 1972, which ultimately began the growth of the city’s tech cluster, leading to the creation of the area now dubbed “Silicon Gorge”. Over the past year, equity investment into high-growth tech companies in Bristol has increased by 10.4%, bucking the trends of the wider region where investment amounts stagnated. Bristol’s strong startup ecosystem can help explain this. SETSquared, a business incubator in partnership with various universities, including the University of Bristol, provides early-stage companies with mentoring, investment support, and commercial expertise. The incubator’s various programmes are designed to support entrepreneurs, students and researchers. TechSPARK connects startups and scaleups across Bristol and Bath with investors, talent, and industry specialists to help foster collaborations across the region.

36.3k

Number of active companies

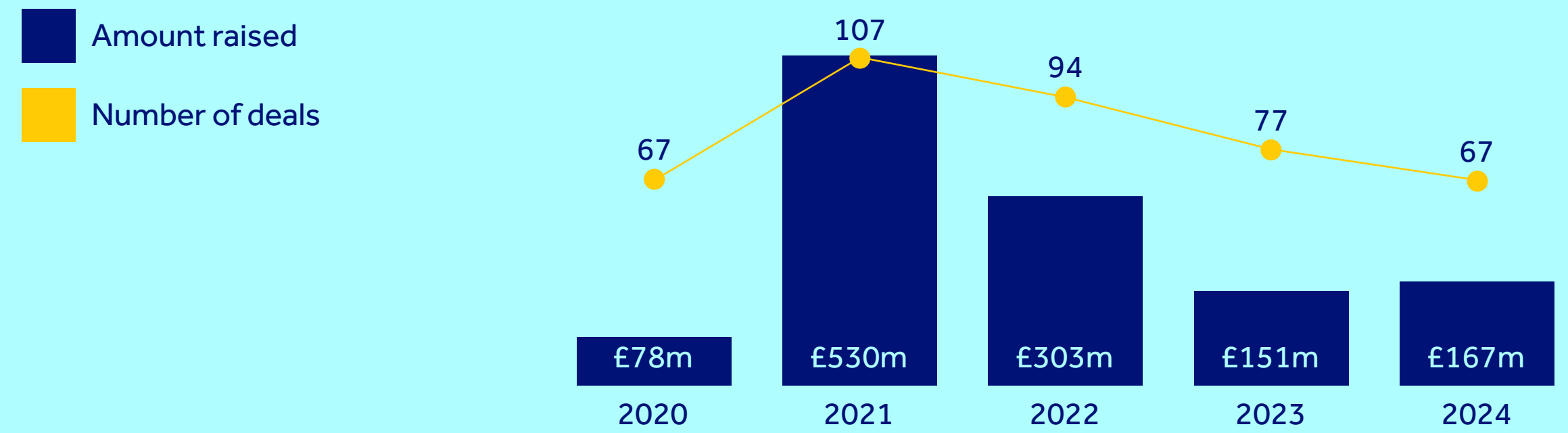
669

Number of active high-growth companies

362

Number of active high-growth tech companies

Equity investment by high-growth tech companies in Bristol (2020-2024)



Top investors into Bristol-based high-growth tech companies by number of equity deals (2020-2024)



Edinburgh

Investment overview

Equity investment into high-growth tech companies in Edinburgh increased by 71.2% between 2023 and 2024, against a backdrop of higher investment amounts throughout Scotland. The University of Edinburgh supports the city’s high-growth ecosystem through the Data-Driven Innovation Programme (DDI), which includes hubs such as The Bayes Centre, the university’s innovation hub for data science and artificial intelligence. The centre facilitates data-driven innovation by partnering with private and public institutions and collaborates with other DDI hubs across the city, such as the Edinburgh Futures Institute and the Usher Institute. Barclays Eagle Labs Ecosystem Partnership Programme (EPP) funded by UK Government has provided matched funding to PhD deeptech venture programme Conception X which operates throughout Edinburgh in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh and Heriott-Watt University.

The programme is designed to help PhD students create deeptech startups based on their research.

61.1k

Number of active companies

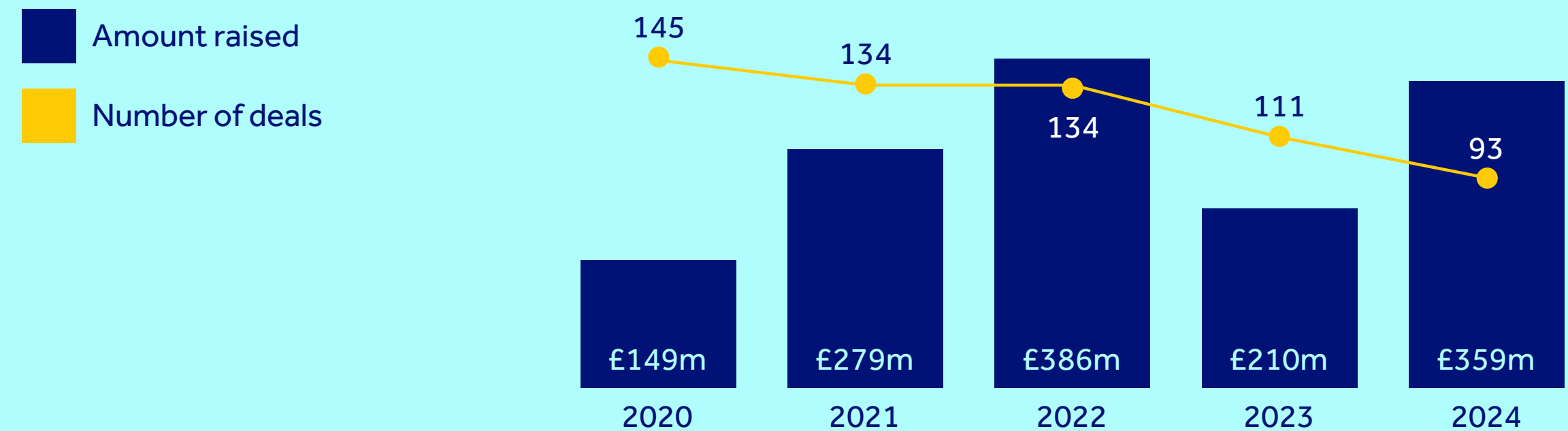
882

Number of active high-growth companies

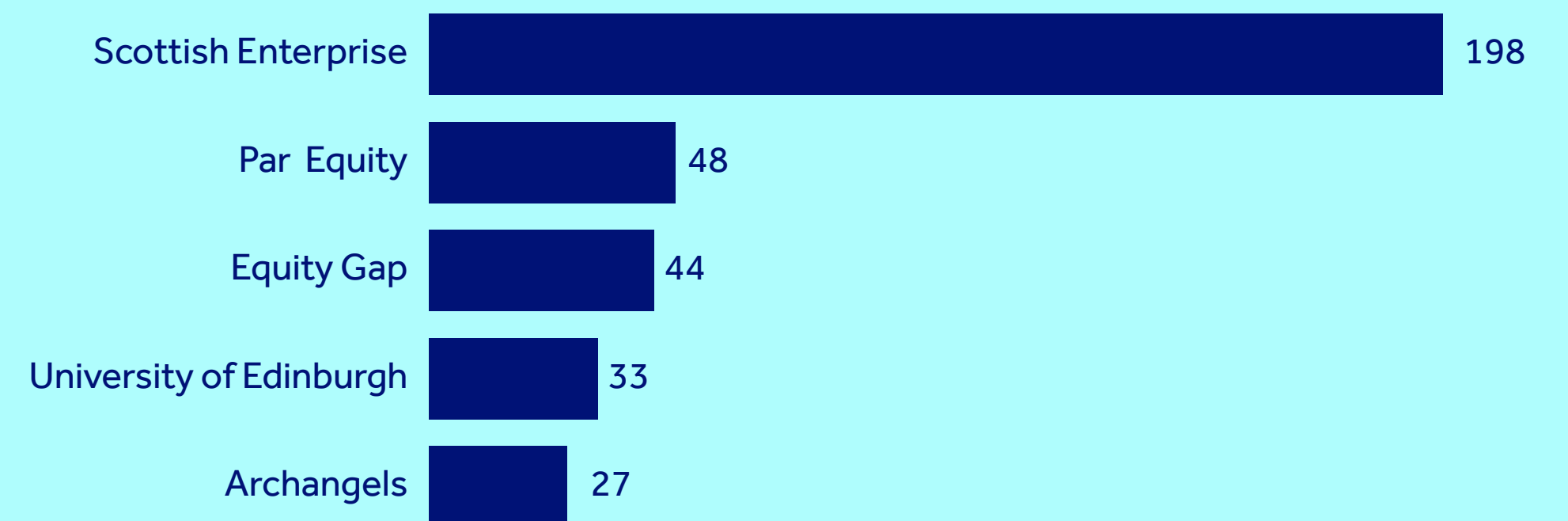
472

Number of active high-growth tech companies

Equity investment by high-growth tech companies in Edinburgh (2020-2024)



Top investors into Edinburgh-based high-growth tech companies by number of equity deals (2020-2024)



Cardiff

Investment overview

Cardiff's tech ecosystem is supported by a range of initiatives aimed at fostering high-growth companies. The Cardiff Capital Region organisation has created a £50m Innovation Investment Capital fund, investing between £2.00m and £7.00m in high-growth tech companies in Cardiff. Tramshed Tech is a collaborative workspace and innovation hub that provides workspaces, business support services, and skills programmes tailored for tech, digital, and creative industries. The Cyber Innovation Hub, led by the University of Cardiff and funded by the Welsh Government and Cardiff Capital Region, aims to make South Wales a cybersecurity cluster by 2030. Launched in 2023, the hub aims to upskill individuals through affordable training, as well as incubate businesses to grow the number of cybersecurity businesses in Wales by 50%.⁴

⁴ "Mission - Cyber Innovation Hub." 2024. Cyber Innovation Hub. March 12, 2024.



74.4k

Number of active companies

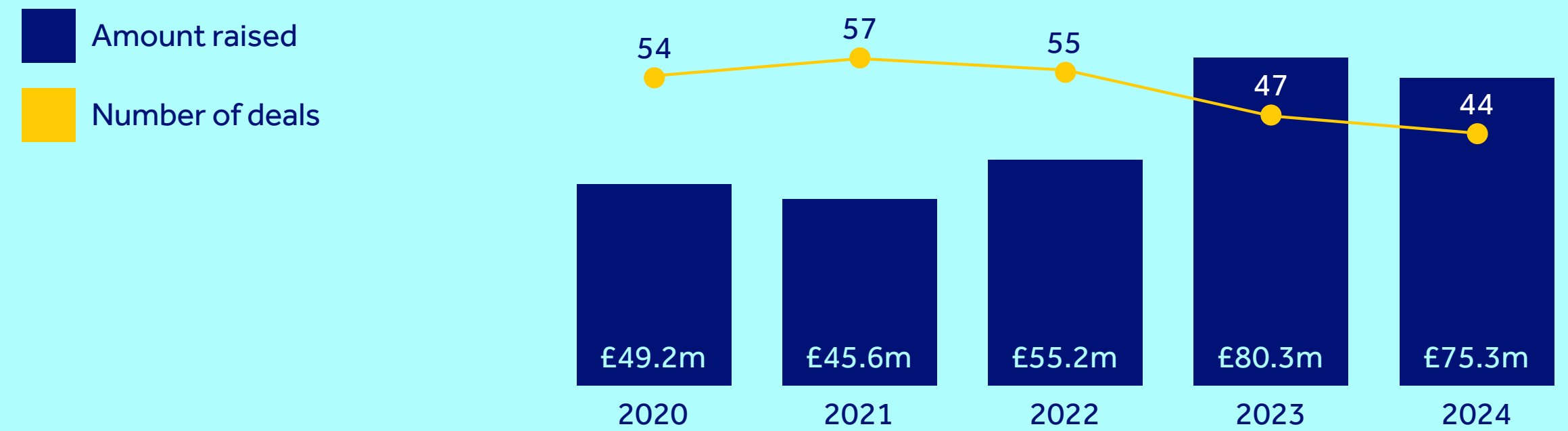
561

Number of active high-growth companies

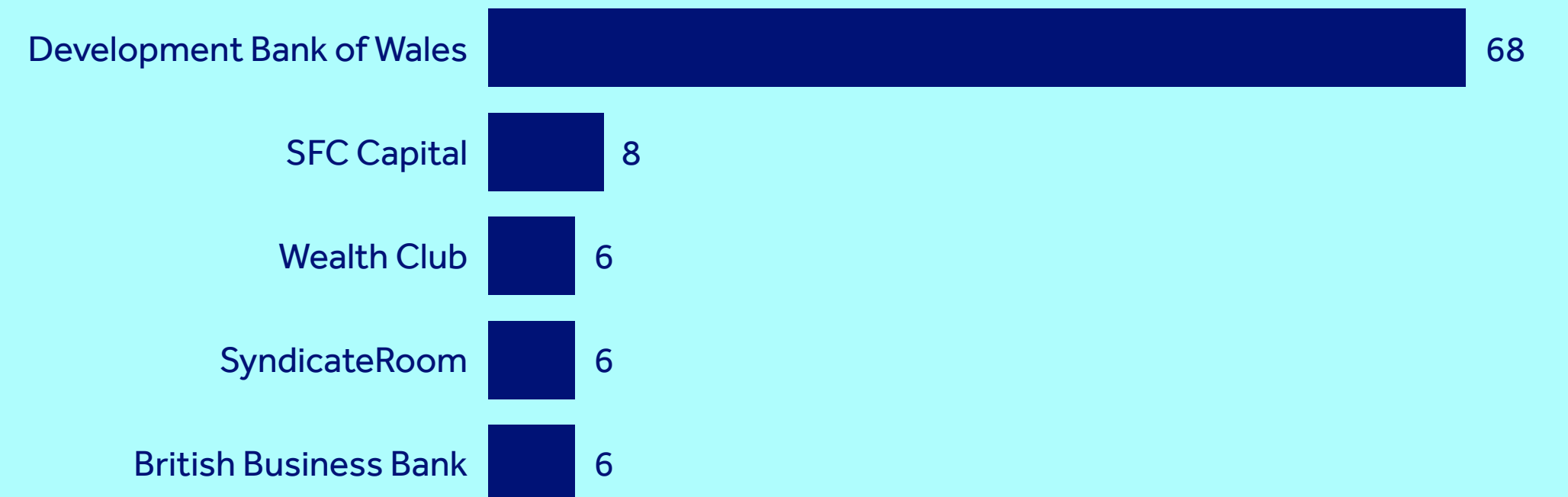
254

Number of active high-growth tech companies

Equity investment by high-growth tech companies in Cardiff (2020-2024)



Top investors into Cardiff-based high-growth tech companies by number of equity deals (2020-2024)



Cambridge

Investment overview

Cambridge is currently one of the UK's most important tech clusters, bolstered by the many successful spinout companies coming from the University of Cambridge. Business support in Cambridge is multi-faceted. Allia Impact Projects, operating through the Allia Future Business Centres in Cambridge and Peterborough, are dedicated to addressing social and environmental challenges by supporting ventures that are creating positive impacts. In January 2024, Barclays reopened Cambridge Eagle Labs as a place to support high-growth climate tech businesses, providing resources to help them scale. Additionally, Cambridge Enterprise, the commercialisation arm of the University of Cambridge, provides support for startups and access to mentoring and funding. The government has recently announced plans to revive the Cambridge-Oxford arc, which will improve infrastructure and investment prospects for high-growth companies located in Cambridge.

31.1k

Number of active companies

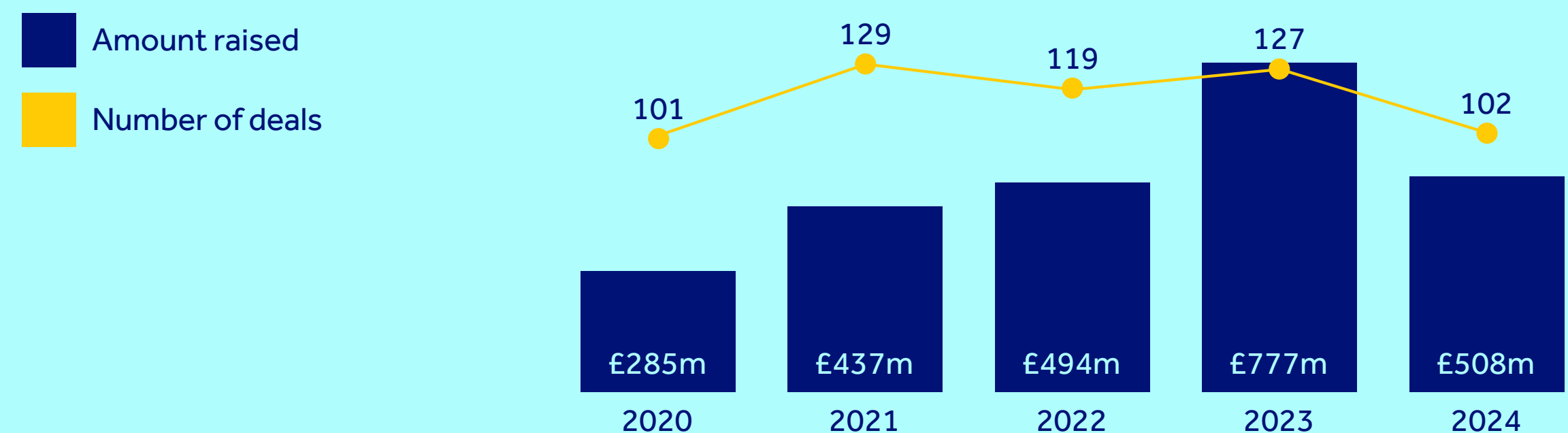
846

Number of active high-growth companies

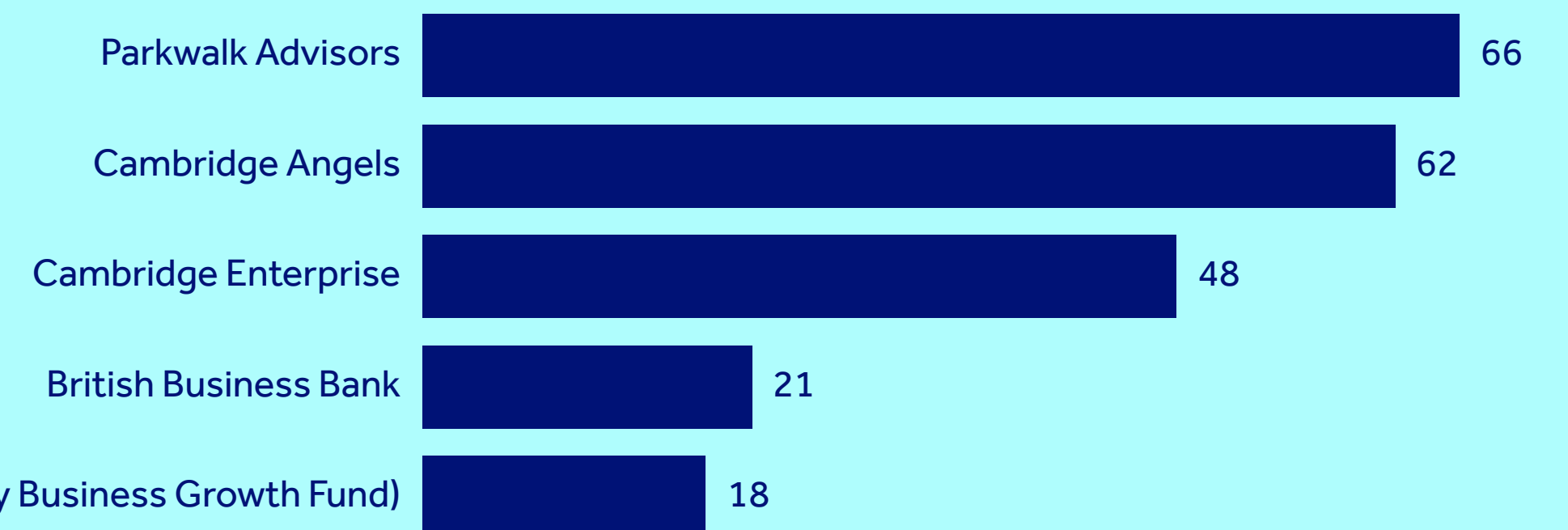
411

Number of active high-growth tech companies

Equity investment by high-growth tech companies in Cambridge (2020-2024)



Top investors into Cambridge-based high-growth tech companies by number of equity deals (2020-2024)



Belfast

Investment overview

Belfast is a growing tech hub in the UK, with equity investment in high-growth tech companies increasing 22.9% between 2023 and 2024. Businesses in Belfast are supported by the Belfast Region City Deal, which has funded projects, including the Centre of Digital Healthcare Technology. Led by Ulster University, the centre will promote faster development and commercialisation of medical technology by locating researchers alongside industry. Alongside this the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund will help support small and micro businesses to undergo digital transformation. Further digital innovation is being championed by Queen’s University Belfast’s Momentum One Zero programme which will see £70.0m invested to expand the university’s facilities at the Institute of Electronics, Communications, and Information Technology.

28.0k

Number of active companies

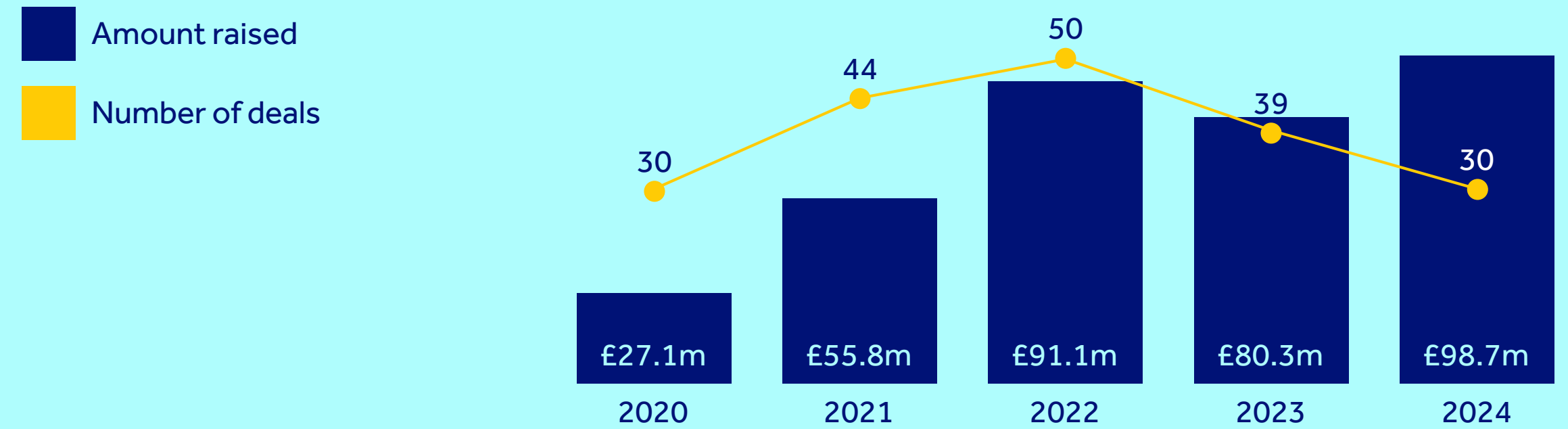
406

Number of active high-growth companies

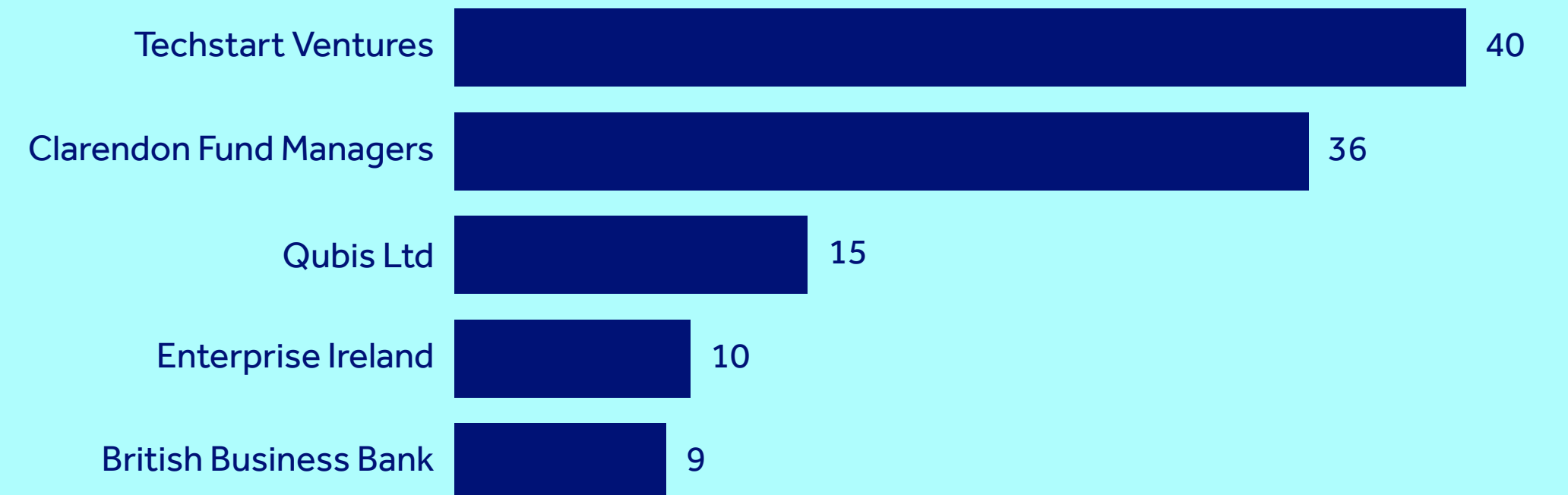
223

Number of active high-growth tech companies

Equity investment by high-growth tech companies in Belfast (2020-2024)



Top investors into Belfast-based high-growth tech companies by number of equity deals (2020-2024)

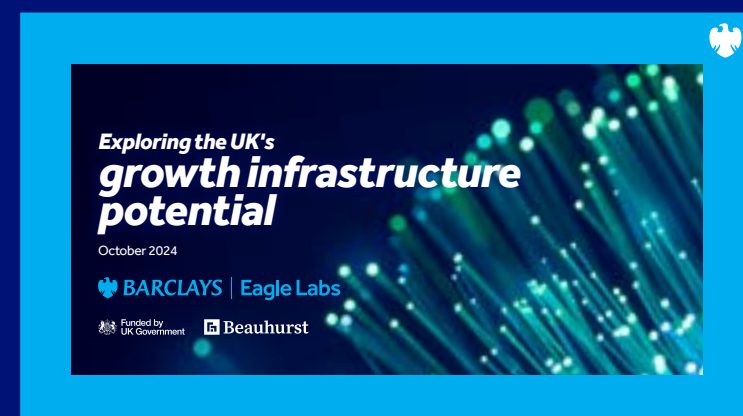


Our reports

Barclays Eagle Labs in partnership with Beauhurst has delivered a series of thought leadership reports to support the UK tech sector. The reports covered topics ranging from engineering, and artificial intelligence, to the challenges faced within the technology sector, around hiring practices and the need for specific skills.



Exploring the UK's tech skills and entrepreneurship



Exploring the UK's growth infrastructure potential



Unlocking Investment – Insights into high-growth companies



Tech in the UK 2023 – Innovation Nation



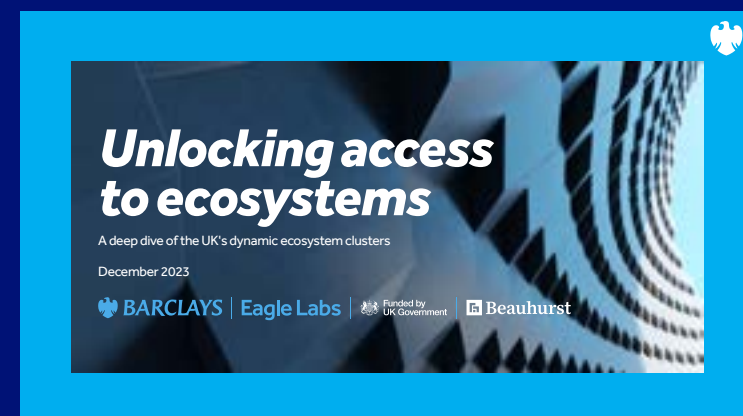
Impact, environmental and social signals in startups and scaleups



Unlocking the UK's tech talent potential



Exploring the UK's engineering biology companies



Unlocking access to ecosystems



Understanding the UK's high-growth artificial intelligence companies



A review of the UK's semiconductor clusters



Thought leadership
Unlocking Investment: Trends for high-growth companies, H1 2023



Decrypting the UK's high-growth quantum technology companies
startups and scaleups

Impact of Eagle Labs

(Information accurate as of 31 Dec 2024)

42

Eagle Labs locations

38,641

people attended our events in 2024

17,221

businesses have received our support*

£4.81bn

has been raised in lifetime funding by members, programme participants and alumni†

* Volume of members, programme participants, alumni as well as engaged ecosystem businesses since 2015

† Source: Crunchbase All data correct as of 31 December 2024 unless stated otherwise



Methodology

Beauhurst identifies high-growth startup companies using eight triggers (outlined on this page) that it believes suggests a company has high-growth potential. More detail on Beauhurst’s tracking triggers is available via its website.

Active companies

"Active" companies refers to companies that have an active or dormant Companies House status. The term excludes companies that have exited via an IPO or acquisition.

Equity investment

To be included in our analysis, any investment must be:

- Some form of equity investment
- Secured by a UK company
- Issued between 1 January 2014 and 31 Dec 2024.

Announced and unannounced fundraisings

An unannounced fundraising is an investment made into a private company that is completed without

press coverage or a statement from the recipient company or funds that made the investment. These transactions are an integral part of the UK’s high-growth economy, accounting for around 70% of all equity transactions.

Grant funding

A company that has met our innovation grant trigger is one that has formally accepted a grant offer for a specific innovation project. The project’s primary focus must be fostering ‘New to the market’ innovation, as opposed to other aims such as job creation. The grant must have been received between 1 January 2014 and 31 Dec 2024.

Academic spinouts

We define an academic spinout as a company that meets condition 1 and at least one condition out of 2-4:

1. The company was set up to exploit IP developed by a recognised UK university or research institution (this is broadly in line with the Higher Education Statistics Agency’s (HESA) definition of a spin-off)
2. The institution owns IP that it has licensed to the company
3. The institution owns shares in the company

4. The institution has the right (via an options or warrants contract) to purchase shares in the company at a later date.

High growth triggers



Equity investment



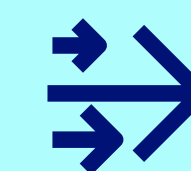
Academic spinouts



Scaleups



High-growth lists



Accelerator attendances



Major grant recipients



Management Buy-outs/ Buy-ins



Venture debt

Barclays Eagle Labs

Barclays Eagle Labs are an entrepreneurial network providing support to ambitious startup and scaleup businesses, particularly those that are focused on technology and innovation.

Our mission is to connect the UK's entrepreneurial ecosystem through our networks, support and expertise with the aim of helping businesses innovate and grow. We champion inclusivity and are committed to driving positive change and reducing barriers to entry for diverse founders.

We provide learning, dedicated growth programmes, access to experts and a collaborative community designed to help businesses on their growth journey through virtual support and physical spaces across the UK.

[Eagle Labs Academy](#) gives you access to free online courses that'll help you develop the skills you need to start or scale a business.

With:

- Knowledge and advice from experts – to help you launch and grow your business
- Practical and useful insights – within a platform that lets you learn at your own pace
- Access to continuous learning – with new content and modules added regularly.

Find out more at labs.uk.barclays

Important Information

We have pulled together the resources in this document for you to help with your independent research and business decisions. This document contains opinions from independent third parties and link(s) to third party websites and resources that we (Barclays) are not providing or recommending to you.

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Beaurourst

Beaurourst is a searchable database of the UK's high-growth companies.

Their platform is trusted by thousands of business professionals to help them find, research and monitor the most ambitious businesses in Britain. They collect data on every company that meets our unique criteria of high-growth; from equity-backed startups to accelerator attendees, academic spinouts and fast-growing scaleups.

Beaurourst's data is also used by journalists and researchers who seek to understand the high-growth economy, and powering studies by major organisations – including the British Business Bank, HM Treasury and Innovate UK – to help them develop effective policy.

For more information and a free demonstration, visit beaurourst.com

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E: consultancy@beaurourst.com



Before you go

Get in touch if you would like to find out how we can support you and your business. We'd love to hear from you.



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