Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Total wealth in Great Britain: April 2016 to March 2018

Main results from the sixth round of the Wealth and Assets Survey covering the period April 2016 to March 2018.

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Release date:
5 December 2019

Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Other pages in this release

Commentary relating to the Wealth and Assets Survey in Great Britain April 2016 to March 2018 is split into three distinct bulletins. This bulletin is Total wealth in Great Britain: April 2016 to March 2018. The other two can be found on the following pages:

- Pension wealth in Great Britain: April 2016 to March 2018
- Household debt in Great Britain: April 2016 to March 2018

2 . Main points

- The total net wealth of private households in Great Britain was £14.6 trillion in April 2016 to March 2018, an increase of 13% in real terms from April 2014 to March 2016, mainly because of increases in private pension and net property wealth.
- Median household net wealth in Great Britain in April 2016 to March 2018 was £286,600, an increase of 9% from April 2014 to March 2016, after adjusting for inflation.
- Total wealth inequality in Great Britain is broadly unchanged in the most recent period, though it has increased since July 2006 to June 2008, based on a number of measures of inequality.
- Inequality in net property wealth and net financial wealth has increased between July 2006 to June 2008 and April 2016 to March 2018, while inequality in pension wealth has fallen.
- Average (mean) wealth for all wealth deciles increased in real terms between April 2014 to March 2016 and April 2016 to March 2018, with the higher deciles seeing the biggest increases; the average for the poorest decile increased 3%, and the richest wealth decile increased by 11%.
- London, the South East and the South West of England have the highest median household wealth, and also saw the largest growth between April 2014 to March 2016 and April 2016 to March 2018.
- Median household wealth in both the North East of England and the East Midlands remains below the level seen in July 2006 to June 2008, despite increases in the latest period.

Figures are deflated to April 2016 to March 2018 average prices using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) to reflect the change in the value of money over time. This is a change from previous figures, which were all in nominal terms, to allow better comparisons over time.

3 . Aggregate total wealth in Great Britain

Aggregate total net wealth is an estimate of the value of wealth held by all private households in Great Britain, including net property, net financial, private pension and physical wealth. This was £14.6 trillion for the period April 2016 to March 2018, an increase of 13% from April 2014 to March 2016 after adjusting for inflation (16% increase in nominal terms).

In real terms, total aggregate wealth was broadly unchanged between July 2006 and July 2012, and has seen above inflation growth in all survey periods since July 2012 at a rate of 10% to 13% per survey period (Figure 1). This growth in the total value of household wealth over time reflects a number of factors, including a growing and ageing population, and the rates of return on different forms of wealth.

The 13% increase in total aggregate wealth since April 2014 to March 2016 is driven primarily by increases in private pension wealth and net property wealth, which contribute six and five percentage points to the observed increase respectively (Table 1).

The increases in net property wealth over recent years are largely associated with rising house prices, as well as an increasing share of homeowners who own their property outright rather than with a mortgage. Recent increases in aggregate pension wealth reflect a number of factors, including an increased number of people with pension wealth and demographic changes associated with an ageing population. These changes are explored in more detail in Pension wealth in Great Britain.

Physical wealth has seen more modest increases than the other components and its contribution to the overall increase in total aggregate wealth is negligible. Household net financial wealth (assets, for example, savings accounts, financial investments and stocks and shares, less debts, for example, credit cards, loans and hire purchase) has grown the most quickly over this period, increasing by 15% from £1.84 trillion to £2.12 trillion. As this is a relatively small component of total household wealth, it contributes just two percentage points to the overall increase in aggregate total wealth.

Table 1: Breakdown of total aggregate wealth by component, Great Britain, April 2014 to March 2018

Breakdown of total aggregate wealth by component (£ trillion)	**April 2014 to March 2016**	**April 2016 to March 2018**	**change in component**	**contribution of component to total wealth**	**contribution to increase in total wealth (percentage points)**
Property Wealth (net)	4.49	5.09	13%	35%	5
Financial Wealth (net)	1.84	2.12	16%	15%	2
Physical Wealth	1.25	1.32	5%	9%	0
Private Pension Wealth	5.36	6.10	14%	42%	6
Total Wealth (including Private Pension Wealth)	12.94	14.63	13%	-	-
Total Wealth (excluding Private Pension Wealth)	7.58	8.53	13%	-	-

Source: Office for National Statistics - Wealth and Assets Survey

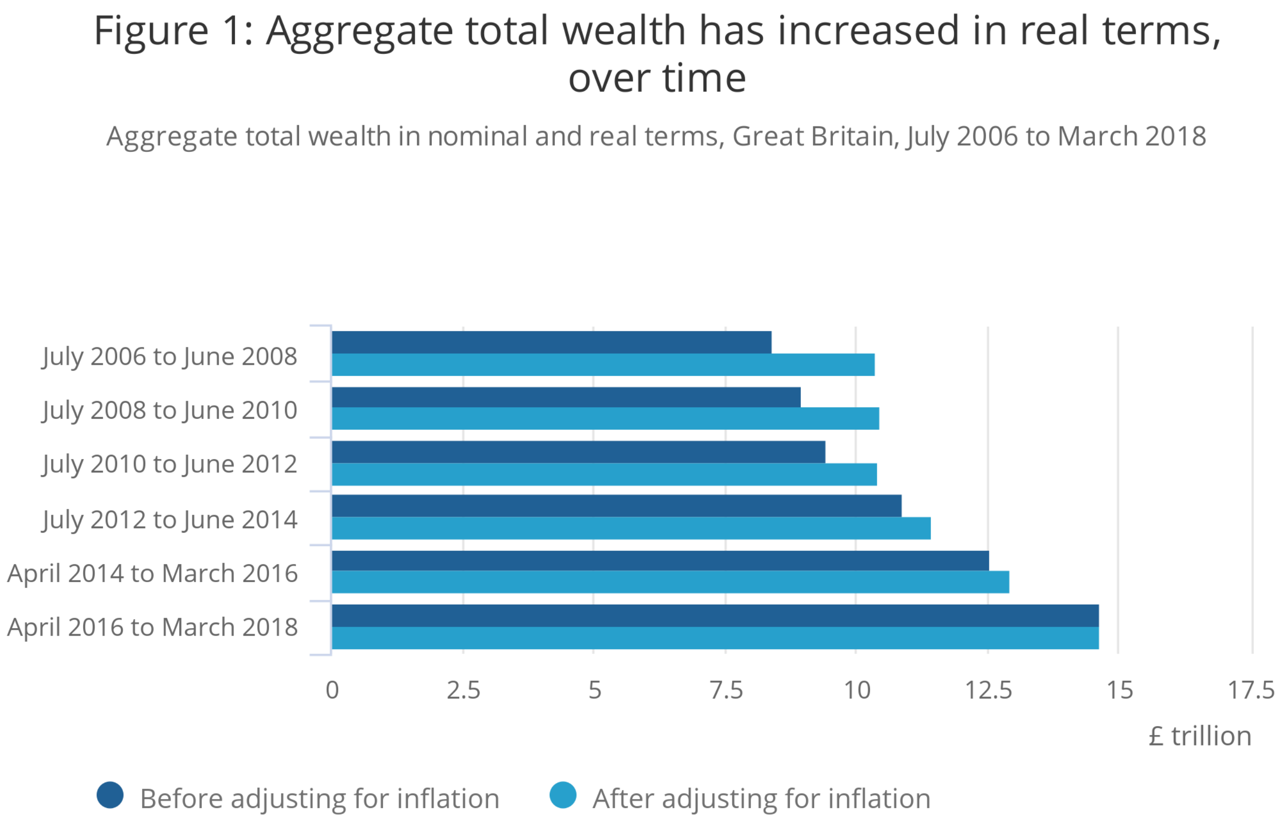
Notes

1. Figures have been deflated to April 2016 to March 2018 prices using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers’ housing costs (CPIH).

2. Nominal values are taken from the total wealth dataset table 2.1.

Figure 1: Aggregate total wealth has increased in real terms, over time

Aggregate total wealth in nominal and real terms, Great Britain, July 2006 to March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Wealth and Assets Survey

Notes:

1. Figures have been deflated to April 2016 to March 2018 prices using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH).

2. Note the change in periodicity from two-years starting in July and ended in June two years later to a two-year periodicity that starts in April and ends in March two years later (financial year-based). More information on this change can be found in the Moving the Wealth and Assets Survey onto a financial years' basis

3. Nominal values are taken from the total wealth dataset table 2.1.

4 . Trends in average wealth in Great Britain

The median and the mean are both measures of “average wealth”. Median net wealth is the wealth of what would be the middle household, if all the households in Great Britain were sorted from poorest to richest. The mean is the total wealth of all households divided by the number of households.

Both measures provide useful information and additionally, the ratio between mean and median net wealth provides an internationally recognised measure of wealth inequality, with a larger ratio indicating higher levels of inequality.

Figure 2 shows the median and mean total household net wealth over time. Median total household wealth in April 2016 to March 2018 was £286,600.

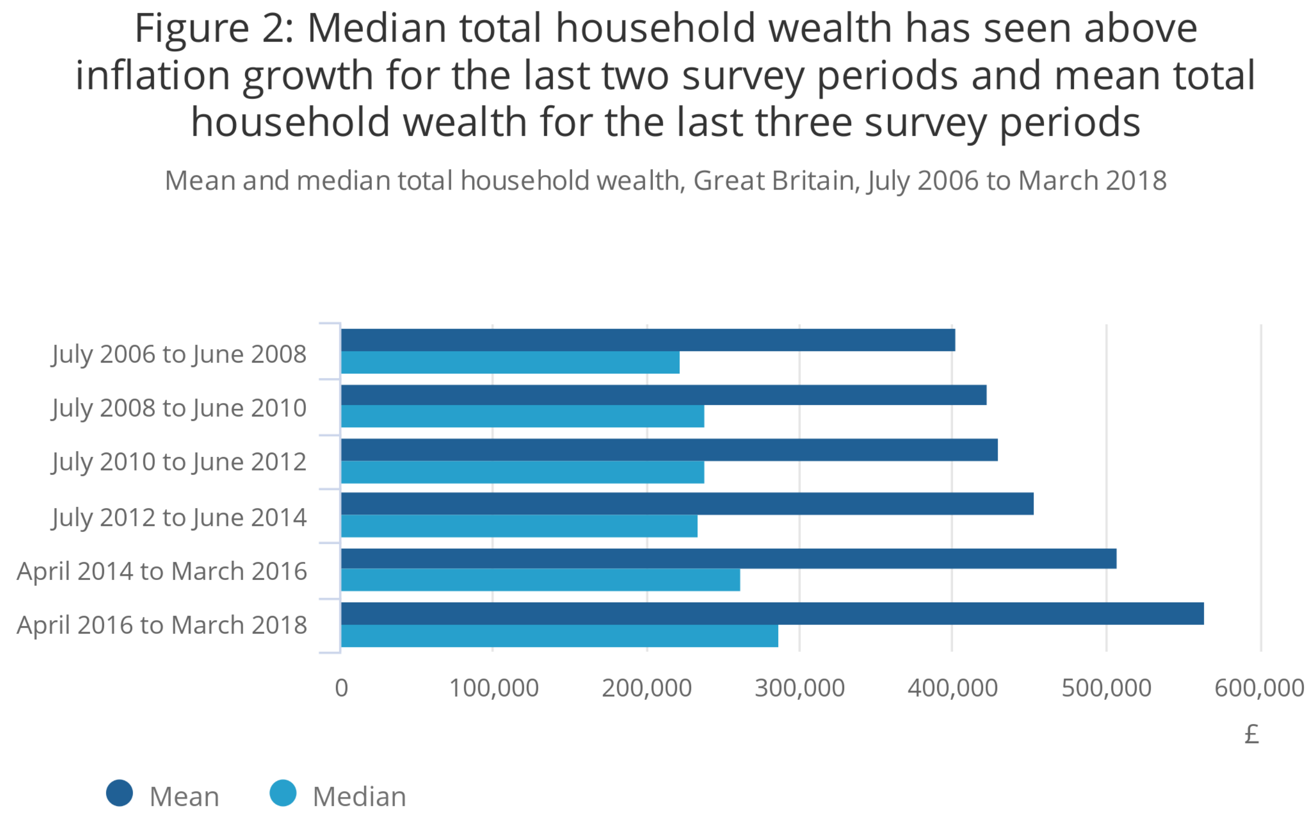
Looking at trends over time, there was an increase of 7% in median total household wealth between July 2006 and June 2008, and July 2008 and June 2010. Median wealth was then broadly unchanged between June 2010 and June 2014. Since then, median wealth has been increasing in real terms, with a 9% increase in April 2016 to March 2018, compared with the previous two-year period.

Mean total wealth is higher than the median, and was £564,300 in April 2016 to March 2018, an increase from £508,000 in April 2014 to March 2016. The fact that the mean is higher than the median shows that the distribution of wealth is “unequal”.

The mean has increased in real terms in each survey period, relative to the period before. The rate of growth observed in the last two survey periods has been higher than in the previous four periods, at 12% and 11% above inflation respectively.

Figure 2: Median total household wealth has seen above inflation growth for the last two survey periods and mean total household wealth for the last three survey periods

Mean and median total household wealth, Great Britain, July 2006 to March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Wealth and Assets Survey

Notes:

1. Figures have been deflated to April 2016 to March 2018 prices using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH).

2. Note the change in periodicity from two-years starting in July and ended in June two years later to a two-year periodicity that starts in April and ends in March two years later (financial year-based). More information on this change can be found in the Moving the Wealth and Assets Survey onto a financial years' basis.

3. Nominal median values are taken from the total wealth dataset table 2.4.

5 . Trends in total wealth inequality in Great Britain

Wealth inequality can be measured using some of the same indicators used to measure income inequality, such as mean-to-median ratios, or top wealth shares. These are often used together in order to provide a more complete picture of wealth inequalities. As wealth is normally accumulated over the life course, this means that wealth is normally always more unequally distributed than income when looking at the whole population.

The mean-to-median ratios for total wealth (for all households) are shown in Table 2. The mean-to-median ratio for total wealth in April 2016 to March 2018 was 1.97. This has increased from 1.77 in July 2008 to June 2010, suggesting increasing inequality over time, according to this measure.

Table 2: Mean and median total wealth and the mean-to-median ratio, Great Britain, July 2006 to March 2018

	July 2006 to June 2008	**July 2008 to June 2010**	**July 2010 to June 2012**	**July 2012 to June 2014**	**April 2014 to March 2016**	**April 2016 to March 2018**
Mean (£)	402,100	422,300	429,900	453,200	508,000	564,300
Median (£)	223,100	238,500	238,800	234,100	262,100	286,600
Mean:Median	1.80	1.77	1.80	1.94	1.94	1.97

Source: Office for National Statistics – Wealth and Assets Survey

Notes

1. Figures have been deflated to April 2016 to March 2018 prices using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH).

2. Note the change in periodicity from two-years starting in July and ended in June two years later to a two-year periodicity that starts in April and ends in March two years later (financial year-based). More information on this change can be found in Moving the Wealth and Assets Survey onto a financial years' basis

3. Median values are taken from the total wealth dataset, table 2.4).

A further measure of inequality is the Gini coefficient. The Gini coefficient can have a value between 0% (no inequality) and 100% (total inequality). The Gini coefficients for total wealth and its components for the first and latest survey period are shown in Figure 3.

The Gini coefficient for total wealth in the most recent period (April 2016 to March 2018) is 63%, unchanged for the last three survey periods but slightly increased (from 61%) since the earliest survey period (July 2006 to March 2008). This suggests that according to this measure there has also been a small increase in inequality of total wealth over time.

Of all components of total wealth, net financial wealth shows the greatest inequality using this measure, with a Gini coefficient of 91% in April 2016 to March 2018. This is also up slightly from July 2008 to June 2010 (89%), though broadly unchanged in more recent periods.

The higher Gini coefficient for net financial wealth accounts for the fact that there is huge variation in the distribution of net financial wealth of households in Great Britain. Some households may be in net financial debt (their debts exceed their assets), many will have relatively modest amounts in savings accounts, while others have many millions in financial investments.

Physical wealth, which includes household contents, vehicles, and other possessions and valuables, shows the lowest level of inequality, with a Gini coefficient of 47% in April 2016 to March 2018. Net property and pension wealth have similar Gini coefficients of 66% and 72% respectively for April 2016 to March 2018.

The Gini coefficients for net property and pension wealth have changed the most over time, but in opposite directions. This is reflected in the smaller change in inequality in total wealth, of which these two components are the major contributors.

Inequality in pension wealth has fallen since July 2006 to June 2008. This is likely to be partly explained by the roll-out of automatic enrolment, meaning many people who previously had no private pension wealth now do. The impact of automatic enrolment on pension wealth is discussed in more detail in Pension wealth in Great Britain: April 2016 to March 2018.

Inequality in net property wealth has increased since July 2006 to June 2008. This is likely to reflect the combination of a decrease in owner occupation rates and an increase in the share owning outright, alongside rising house prices across the survey period (see Table 3.1 in the Property wealth dataset).

Figure 3: Gini coefficients for pension and net property wealth have changed over time in opposing directions resulting in a small increase in the total wealth Gini coefficient

Gini coefficients for total wealth and its components, Great Britain, July 2006 to March 2018

Download the data

Notes:

1. Figures have been deflated to April 2016 to March 2018 prices using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH).

2. Note the change in periodicity from two-years starting in July and ended in June two years later to a two-year periodicity that starts in April and ends in March two years later (financial year-based). More information on this change can be found in Moving the Wealth and Assets Survey onto a financial years' basis.

3. Values are taken from the total wealth dataset table 2.3.

6 . Analysis by total wealth decile

Figure 4 shows the proportion of aggregate total wealth held by each wealth decile. All households are ranked low to high total wealth and split into 10 groups, each with an equal number of households. This is a useful way to look beyond averages and consider the distribution of total wealth.

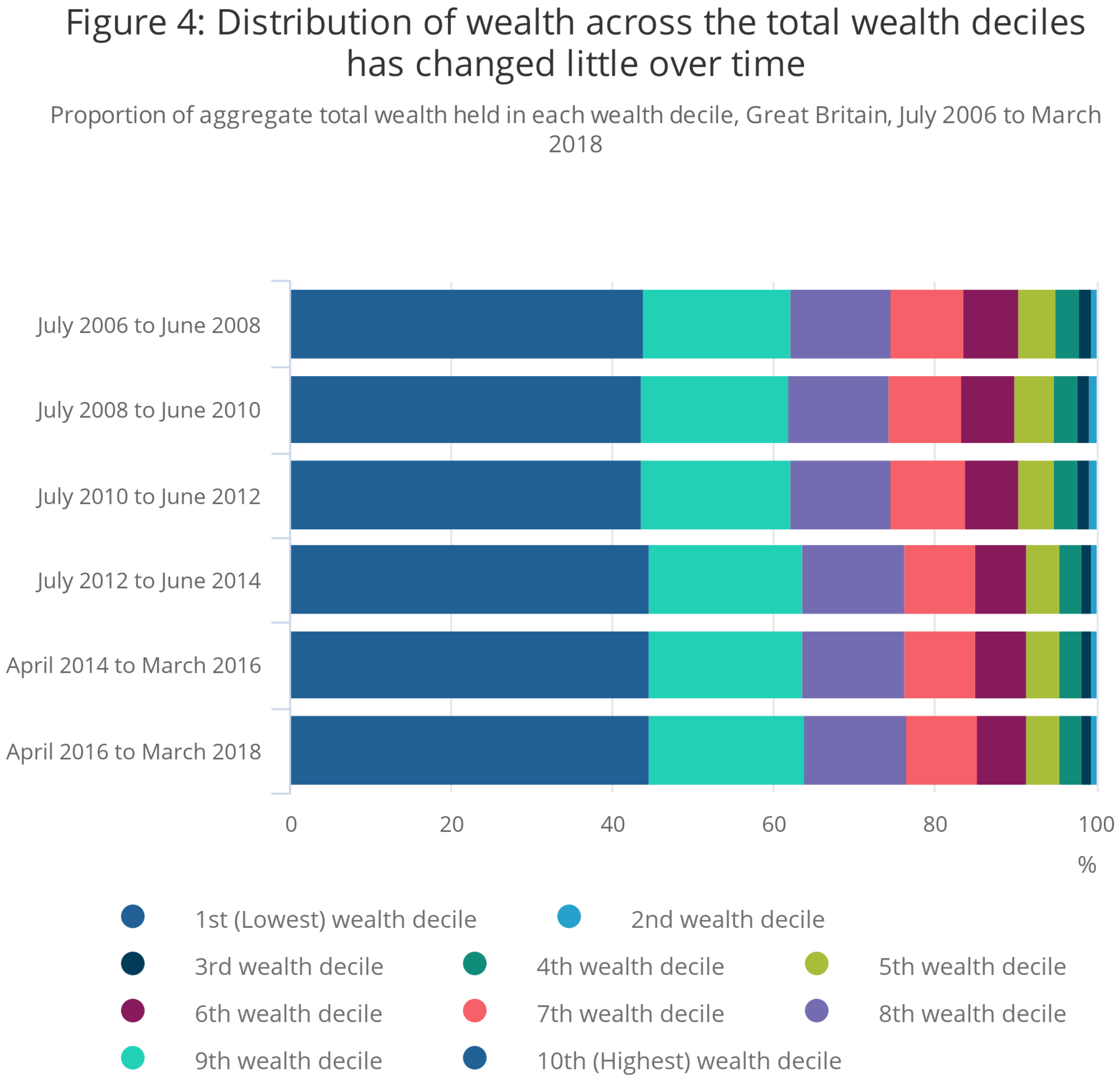
If the total wealth distribution were equal across the deciles, each bar would be equal in size. This is not the case, and the higher the wealth decile, the larger the proportion of total wealth held by that decile. The share of wealth held by the richest 10% of households is also another commonly used measure of inequality.

Figure 4 shows that the upper wealth deciles hold considerably more wealth than the lower ones. In April 2016 to March 2018, the top three wealth deciles held 76% of all wealth in Great Britain, while the bottom three wealth deciles held 2%. The top 10% wealth share was 45% in April 2016 to March 2018, largely unchanged since July 2006 to June 2008.

In April 2016 to March 2018, half of the total aggregate wealth in Great Britain (£7.3 trillion) was held by 12% of households. Since the first round in July 2006 to June 2008 this figure has been very stable.

Figure 4: Distribution of wealth across the total wealth deciles has changed little over time

Proportion of aggregate total wealth held in each wealth decile, Great Britain, July 2006 to March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics - Wealth and Assets Survey

Notes:

1. Note the change in periodicity from two-years starting in July and ended in June two years later to a two-year periodicity that starts in April and ends in March two years later (financial year-based). More information on this change can be found in Moving the Wealth and Assets Survey onto a financial years' basis

Figure 5 shows the breakdown of average total wealth by decile and component for April 2016 to March 2018. Mean averages are used in order to show how each wealth component contributes to total wealth for each decile. The least wealthy 10% of households have negative net financial and net property wealth, offset by positive physical and modest private pension wealth.

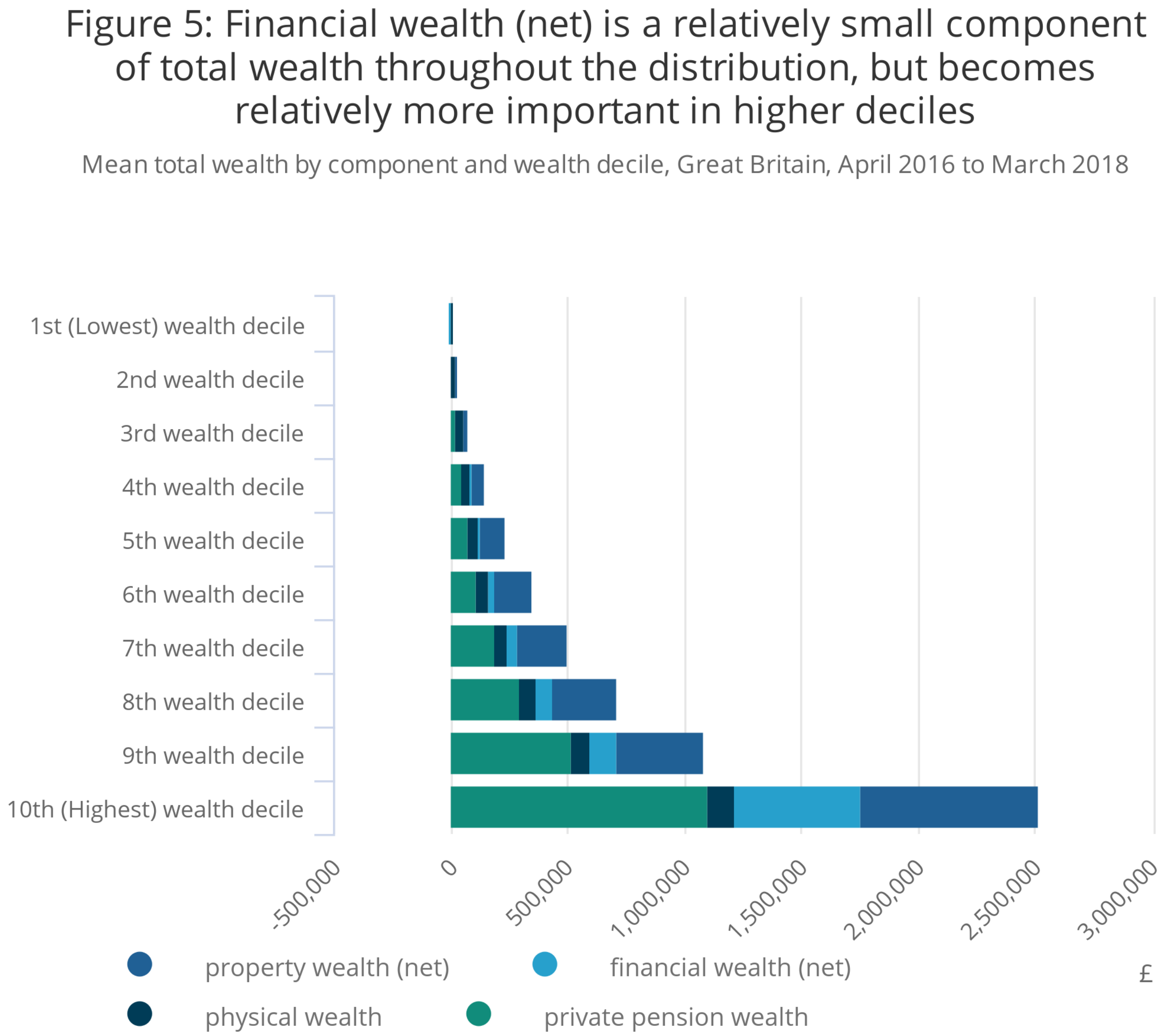
More detailed breakdowns in Table 2.2 of the Total wealth datasets show that the levels of negative net property wealth have decreased over time. For those in the second decile, physical and private pension wealth dominate total wealth, comprising 75% and 21% respectively.

From the third decile onwards, net property wealth forms a larger component of average household wealth increasing from 22% for the third, to a maximum contribution of 46% for the sixth decile.

Financial wealth (net) is a relatively small component of total wealth throughout the distribution, though is most prevalent in the higher wealth deciles, making up 22% of the average wealth of the richest 10%. Conversely, the contribution from private pension wealth to total wealth generally increases with wealth decile.

Figure 5: Financial wealth (net) is a relatively small component of total wealth throughout the distribution, but becomes relatively more important in higher deciles

Mean total wealth by component and wealth decile, Great Britain, April 2016 to March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Wealth and Assets Survey

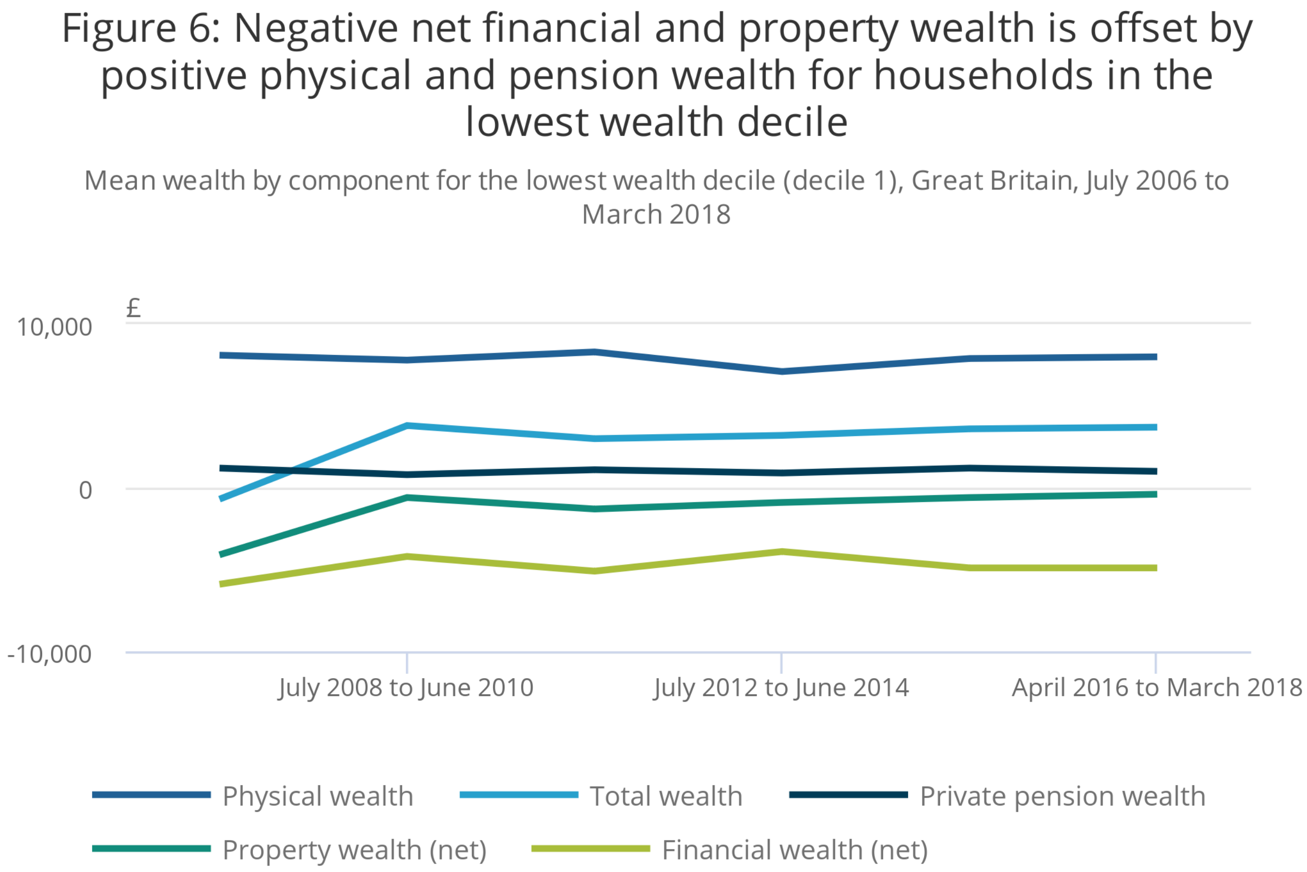
Those in the lowest wealth decile have, on average, negative net financial and net property wealth (debts exceed assets). The levels of estimated net financial wealth for the lowest decile have fluctuated over time, but show a decrease in the last two survey periods (increasing debt).

In July 2012 to June 2014, average (mean) net financial wealth for those in the lowest wealth decile was negative £3,900 and in April 2016 to March 2018, this had increased to negative £4,900. This decreasing net financial wealth has been offset to some extent by increases in physical wealth and private pension wealth. The proportion of households in the lowest wealth decile with negative net financial wealth (debts exceed assets) was 51% in April 2016 to March 2018. This is explored more in [Household debt in Great Britain: April 2016 to March 2018](#).

For net property wealth, average values for the lowest decile are negative (debts exceed assets) and have increased over time (reducing debt). There are however very few households in the lowest decile with any net property wealth (positive or negative) – just 3% in April 2016 to March 2018.

Figure 6: Negative net financial and property wealth is offset by positive physical and pension wealth for households in the lowest wealth decile

Mean wealth by component for the lowest wealth decile (decile 1), Great Britain, July 2006 to March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Wealth and Assets Survey

Notes:

1. Figures have been deflated to April 2016 to March 2018 prices using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH).

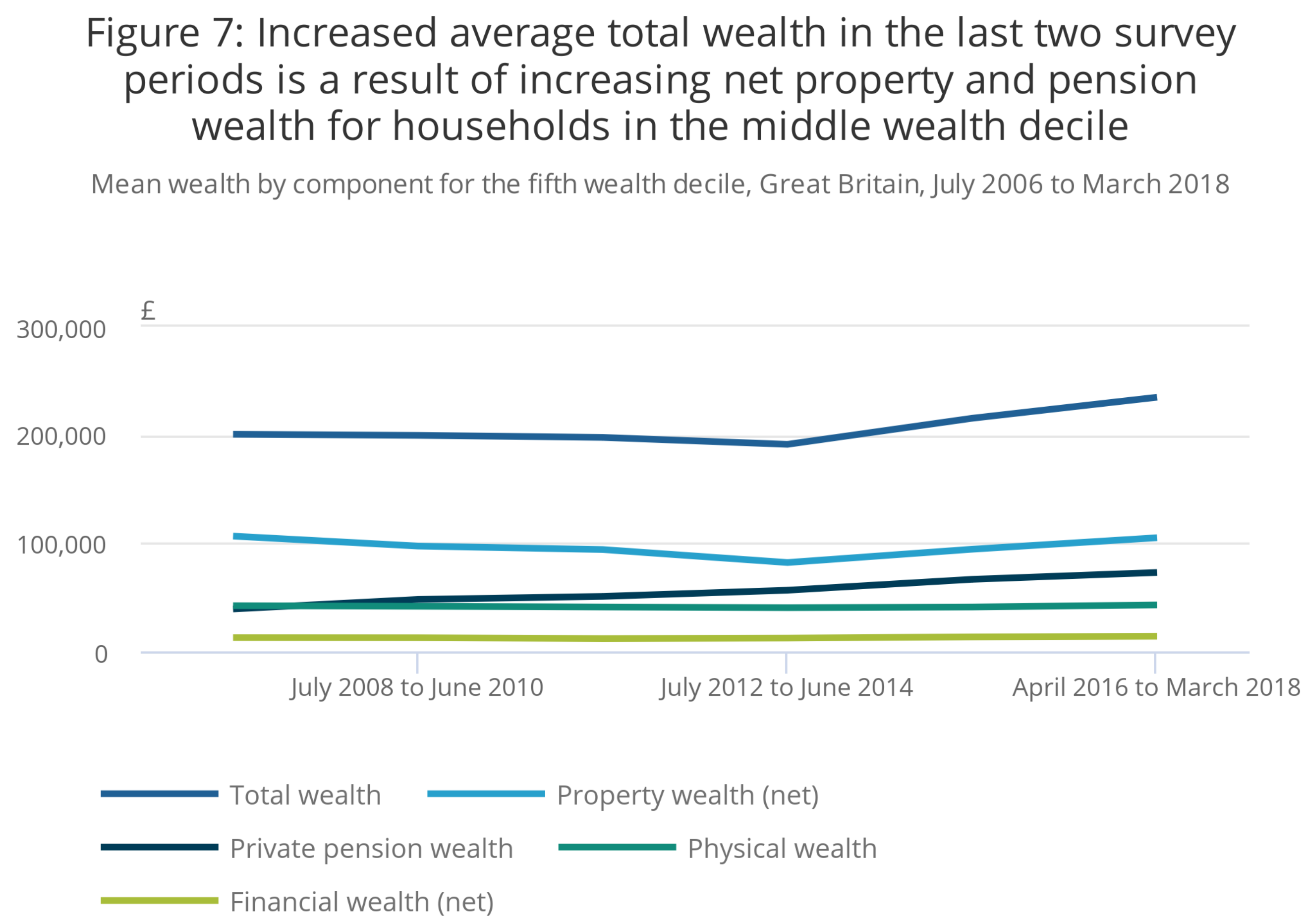
2. Note the change in periodicity from two-years starting in July and ended in June two years later to a two-year periodicity that starts in April and ends in March two years later (financial year-based). More information on this change can be found in [Moving the Wealth and Assets Survey onto a financial years' basis]()

Figure 7 shows the average wealth per household for households in the fifth wealth decile over time, by component; relative to households in the fifth decile, 40% of households have lower wealth and 50% of households have higher wealth.

Average total wealth for the fifth decile remained stable over the first three survey periods, before dropping slightly between July 2010 to June 2012 and July 2012 to June 2014. This drop was because of declining net property wealth for this decile at that time, only partly offset by increases in private pension wealth. Since June 2014 households in the fifth wealth decile have seen increased total wealth, driven by increasing net property and pension wealth. The rate of increase for this wealth decile in real terms was 13% (between July 2012 to June 2014 and April 2014 to March 2016) and 9% (between April 2014 to March 2016 and April 2016 to March 2018). Physical and net financial wealth for households in the fifth decile have changed very little over time after adjusting for inflation.

Figure 7: Increased average total wealth in the last two survey periods is a result of increasing net property and pension wealth for households in the middle wealth decile

Mean wealth by component for the fifth wealth decile, Great Britain, July 2006 to March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Wealth and Assets Survey

Notes:

1. Figures have been deflated to April 2016 to March 2018 prices using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH).

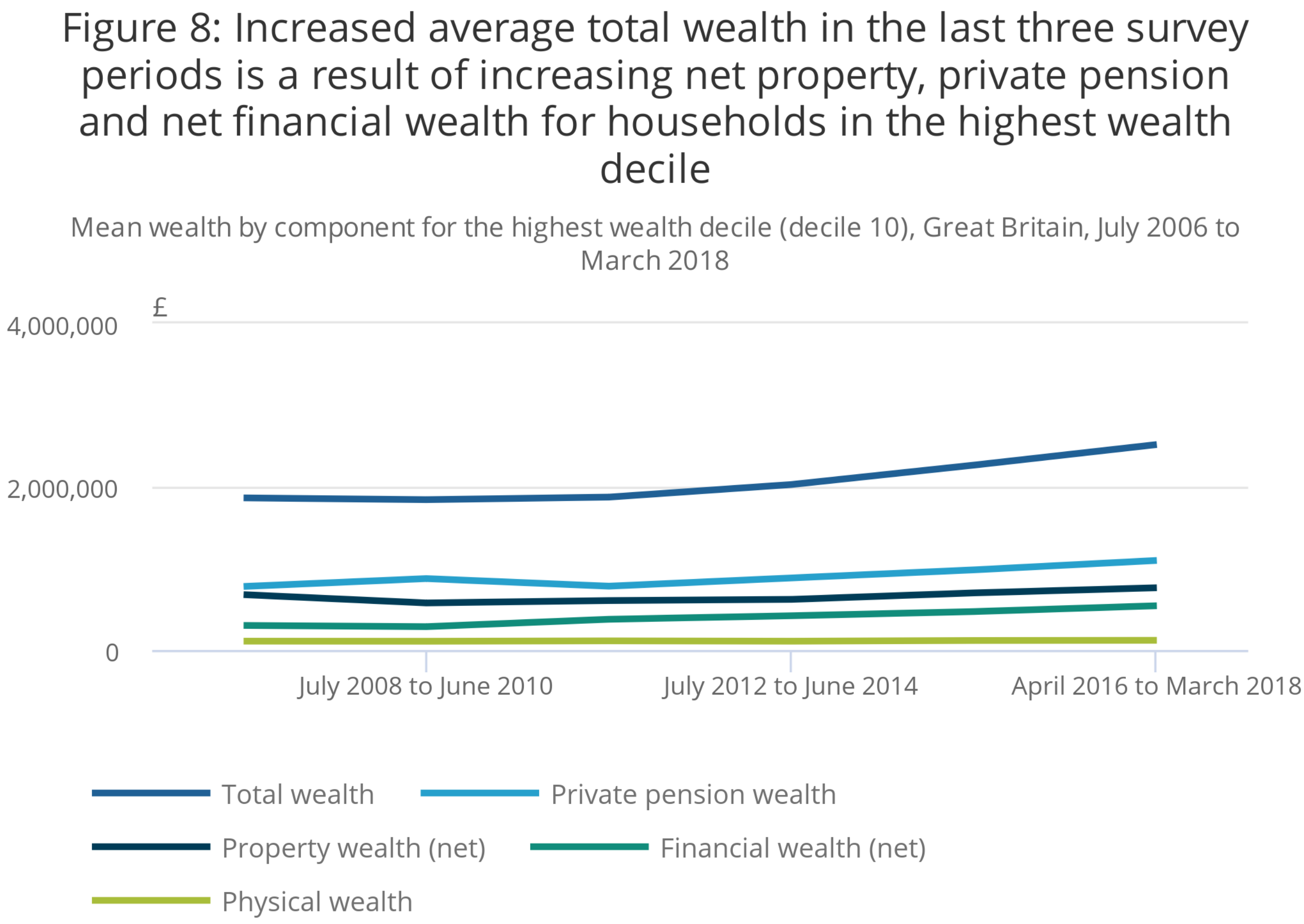
2. Note the change in periodicity from two-years starting in July and ended in June two years later to a two-year periodicity that starts in April and ends in March two years later (financial year-based). More information on this change can be found in [Moving the Wealth and Assets Survey onto a financial years' basis]

Figure 8 shows the average (mean) wealth per household for households in the 10th or highest wealth decile over time, by component. Unlike those in the middle decile, those in the highest wealth decile have seen no substantial reductions in average total wealth over time in real terms.

Total wealth for these households has on average increased, the result of increases in net property, private pension and net financial wealth for this group over the last three periods. Physical wealth has remained constant for the wealthiest households over time, after adjusting for inflation, as was the case for all deciles.

Figure 8: Increased average total wealth in the last three survey periods is a result of increasing net property, private pension and net financial wealth for households in the highest wealth decile

Mean wealth by component for the highest wealth decile (decile 10), Great Britain, July 2006 to March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Wealth and Assets Survey

Notes:

1. Figures have been deflated to April 2016 to March 2018 prices using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH).

2. Note the change in periodicity from two-years starting in July and ended in June two years later to a two-year periodicity that starts in April and ends in March two years later (financial year-based). More information on this change can be found in [Moving the Wealth and Assets Survey onto a financial years' basis](#).

7 . Total household wealth by age of household reference person (HRP)

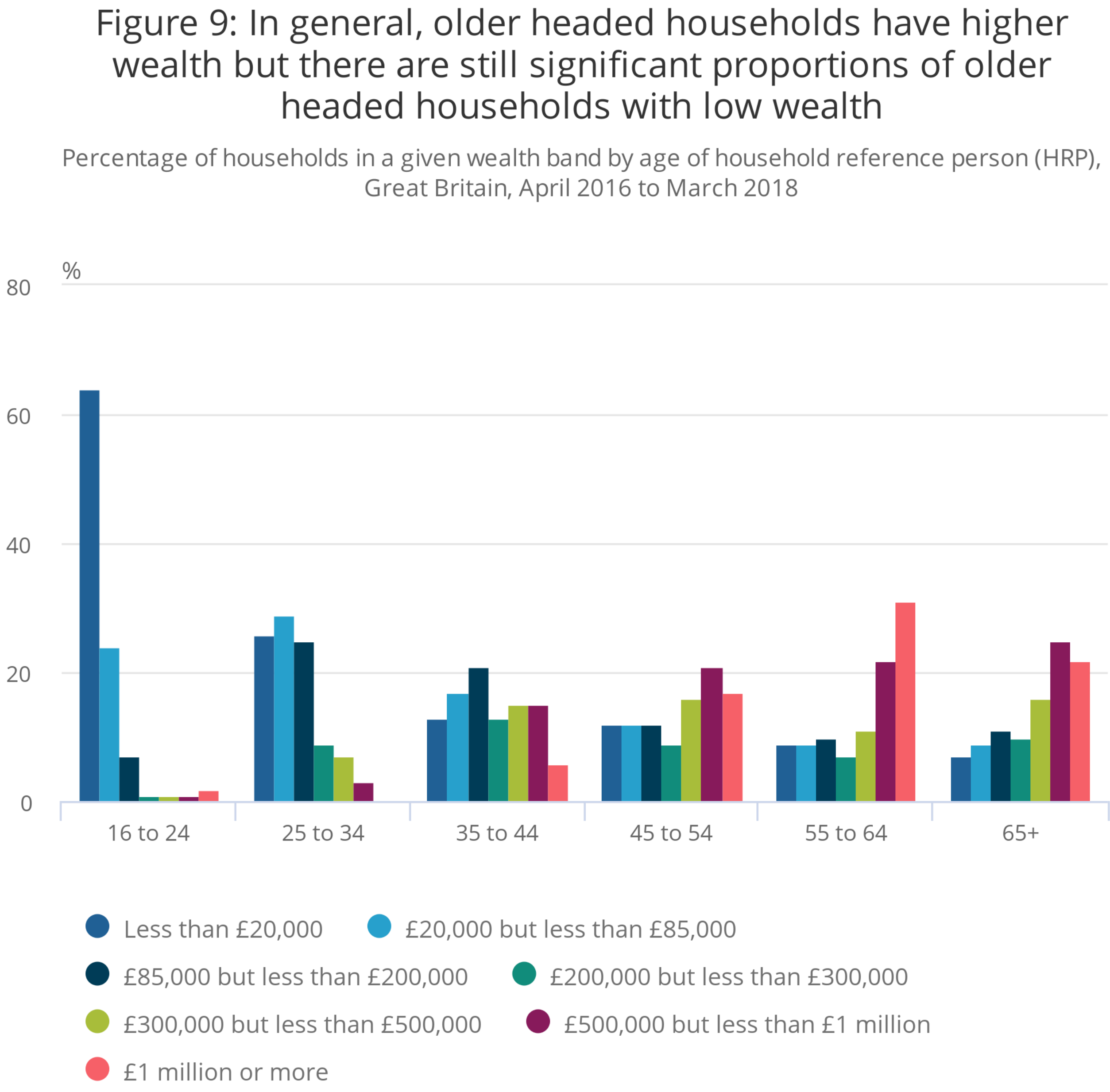
Although in general it is expected that total wealth increases with age (as wealth is typically accrued over a life course by paying into pensions and savings, or buying property for example), a more detailed breakdown of household wealth by age band of household reference person (HRP) is shown in Figure 9.

This shows that there is a prevalence for households headed by younger people to have relatively low household wealth, and for households headed by older people to have high household wealth. For example, 64% of households with an HRP aged 16 to 24 years have a household total wealth of less than £20,000, and 22% of households where the HRP is over 65 years have a household total wealth of a £1 million or greater.

For households with an HRP aged between 35 and 44 years, there is a more even spread across the wealth bands with 13% to 21% of these households falling into each total wealth band under £1 million. There are very few households with an HRP in the youngest two age bands that fall into the highest wealth band. In contrast, for households with older HRPs, there are reasonably high proportions in all total wealth bands. Notably, 18% of households where the HRP is 55 to 64 years, and 16% of households where the HRP is over 65 years have household total wealth of less than £85,000.

Figure 9: In general, older headed households have higher wealth but there are still significant proportions of older headed households with low wealth

Percentage of households in a given wealth band by age of household reference person (HRP), Great Britain, April 2016 to March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Wealth and Assets Survey

Notes:

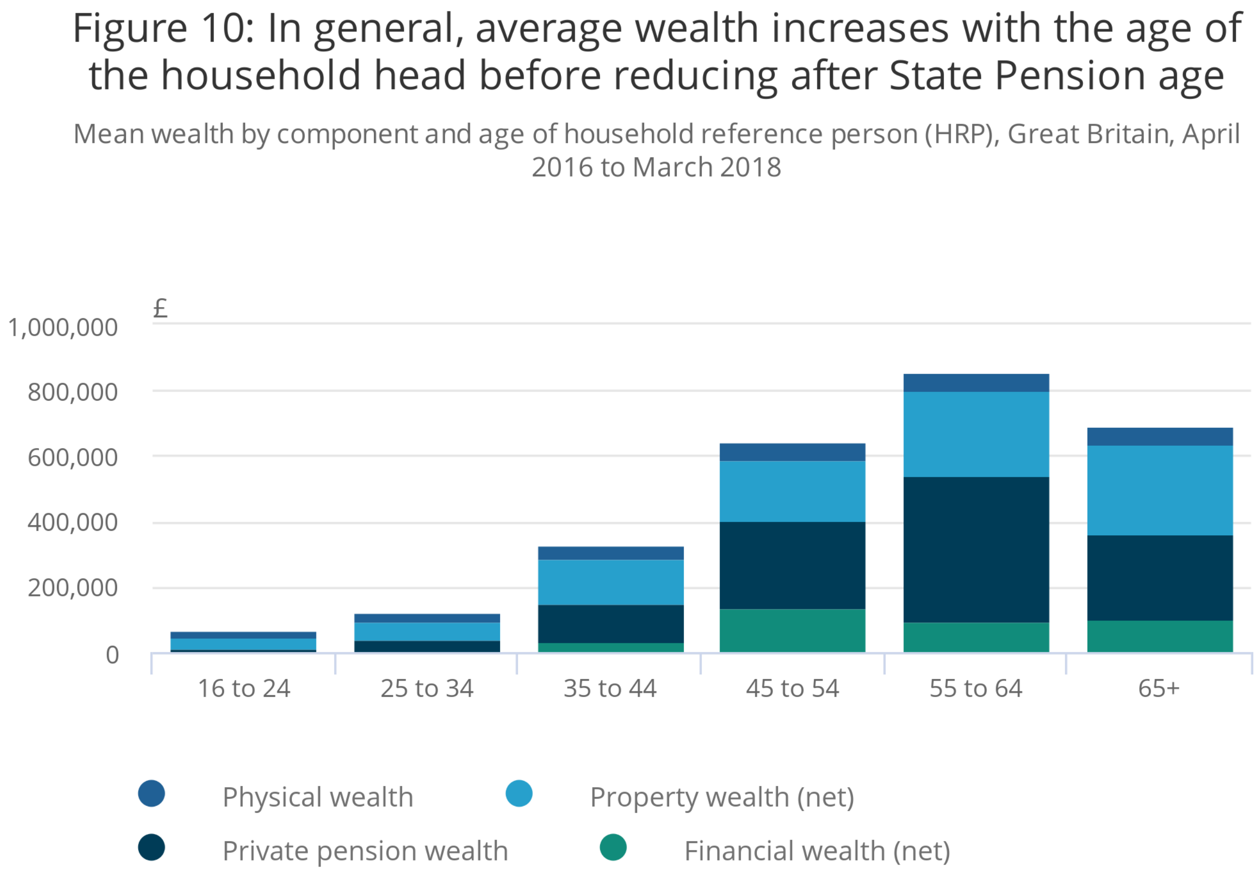
1. The household reference person (HRP) is the person that is the sole or joint householder or is responsible for household affairs. Where there are joint householders, the HRP will be the person with the highest income. In cases where income is the same for a joint householder, the eldest person is assigned as the HRP.

The breakdown of average (mean) total wealth by component and age is shown in Figure 10. As expected, the average total wealth held increases with the age of the HRP until retirement age. After this, it decreases as people typically use their accrued wealth to fund retirement. For households with an HRP under 45 years, net property and physical wealth are the major contributors, while for older households, net property and pension wealth dominate total household wealth.

For households with an HRP of 55 to 64 years, average net property wealth was £255,800 in April 2016 to March 2018. This was slightly higher (7%) for the households where the HRP was over 65 years, where average property wealth was £272,900. Pension wealth was considerably lower in households where the HRP was over 65 years, 42% lower than the households with an HRP aged 55 to 64 years.

Figure 10: In general, average wealth increases with the age of the household head before reducing after State Pension age

Mean wealth by component and age of household reference person (HRP), Great Britain, April 2016 to March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Wealth and Assets Survey

Notes:

1. The household reference person (HRP) is the person that is the sole or joint householder or is responsible for household affairs. Where there are joint householders, the HRP will be the person with the highest income. In cases where income is the same for a joint householder, the eldest person is assigned as the HRP.

8 . Regional distribution of total wealth in Great Britain

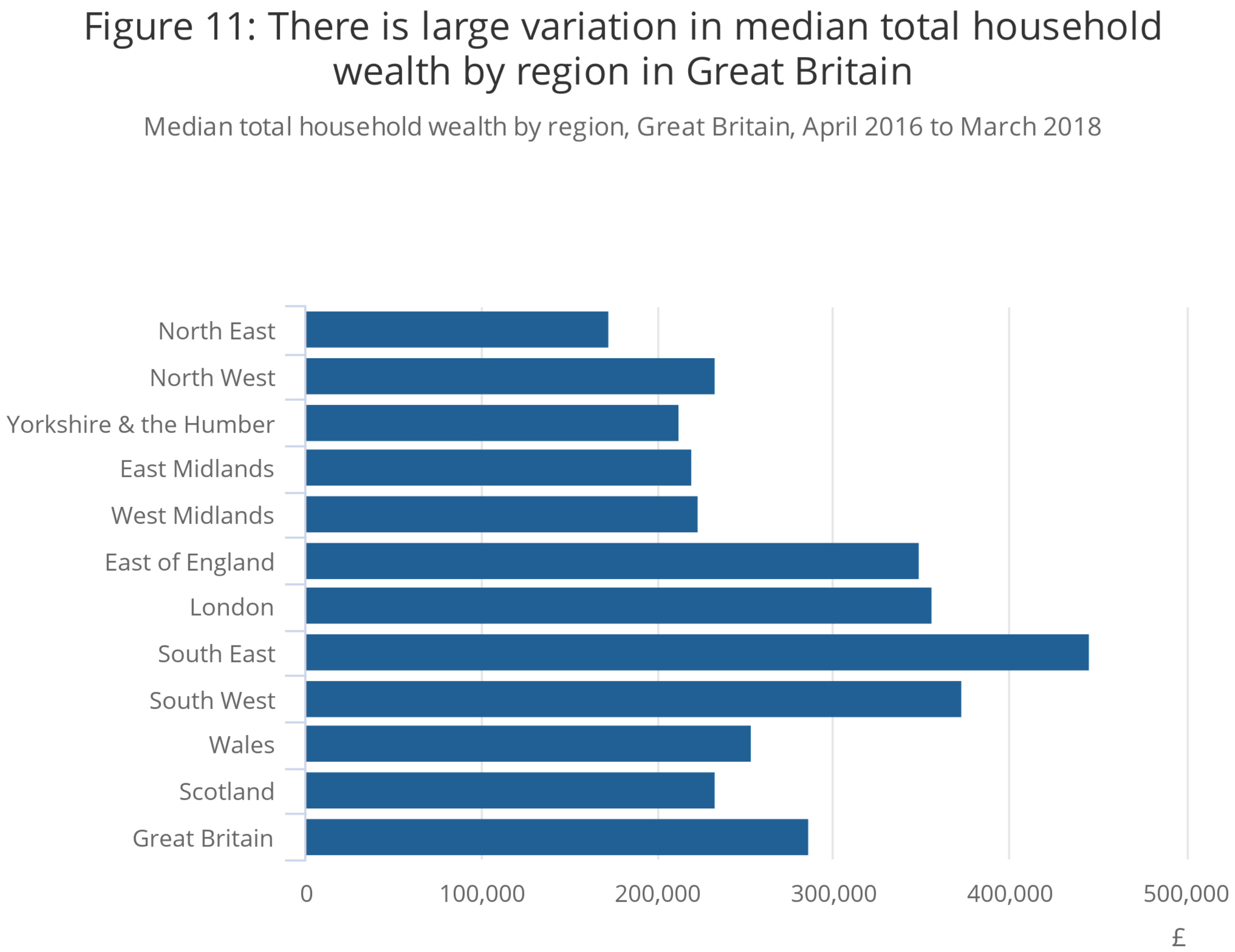
The median total wealth by region of Great Britain in April 2016 to March 2018 is shown in Figure 11. Median total household wealth in Great Britain in April 2016 to March 2018 was £286,600.

Regions with a median total wealth higher than this are in the south and east of England. The South East had the highest median wealth in April 2016 to March 2018, at £445,900. This is followed by the South West (£372,600), London (£356,400) and the East of England (£348,800). The region with the lowest median total wealth was the North East at £172,900.

Scotland, Wales, the East and West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the North West have similar levels of median total wealth, ranging from £212,800 in Yorkshire and the Humber, to Wales at £253,200.

Figure 11: There is large variation in median total household wealth by region in Great Britain

Median total household wealth by region, Great Britain, April 2016 to March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Wealth and Assets Survey

Notes:

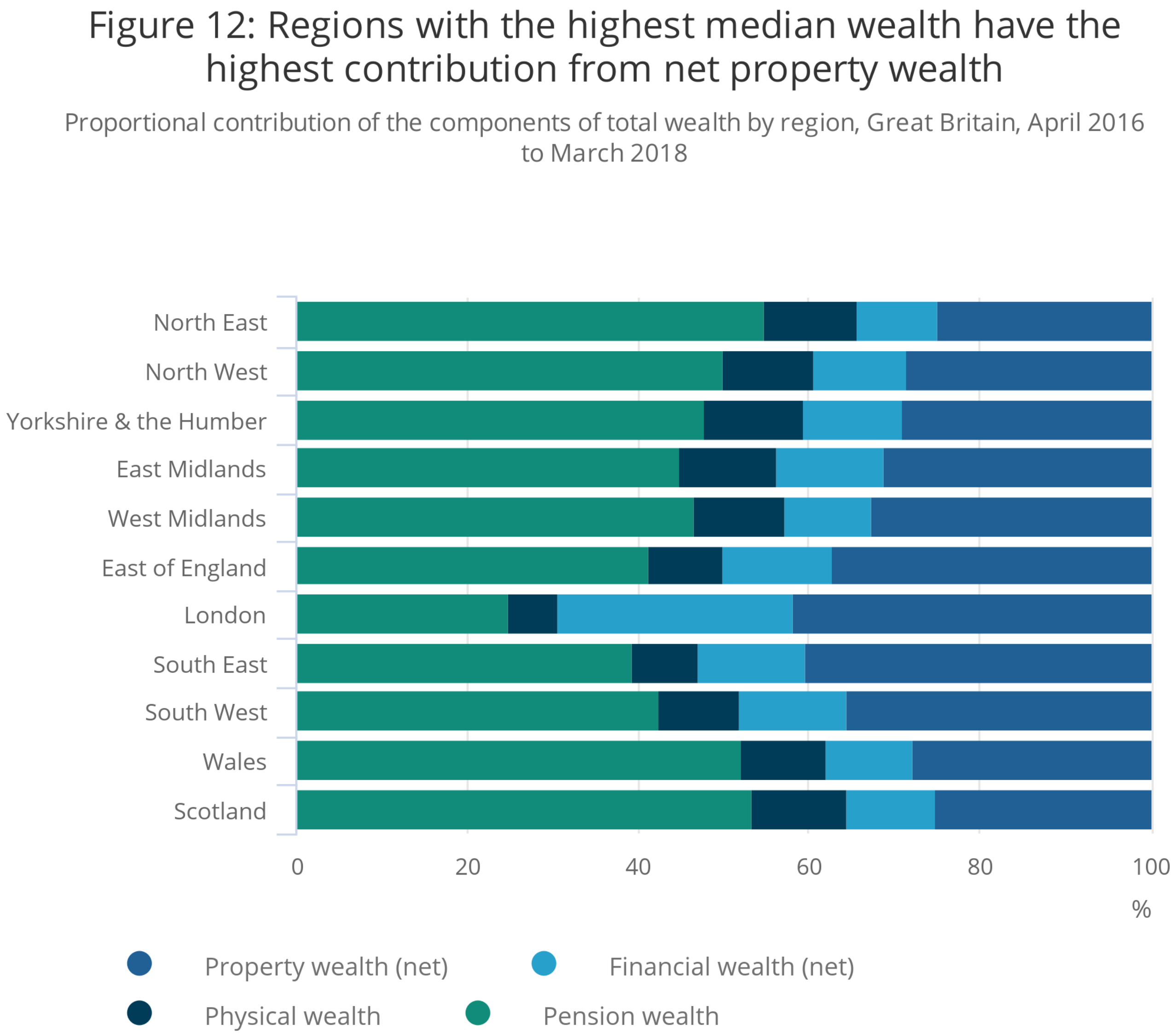
1. Values are taken from the total wealth dataset table 2.8.

Figure 12 shows the proportional contribution of each component of aggregate total wealth by region. Property (net) and pension wealth are the dominant components of total wealth in all regions except London. Physical wealth and net financial wealth are minor contributors to total wealth in all regions except London. Notably, net financial wealth is most dominant in London, accounting for 28% of total wealth in that region.

The regions with the highest median wealth (the South East, South West, London and the East of England) have the highest proportional contributions from net property wealth. The region with the lowest median total wealth, the North East, has the lowest proportion of total wealth in net property wealth.

Figure 12: Regions with the highest median wealth have the highest contribution from net property wealth

Proportional contribution of the components of total wealth by region, Great Britain, April 2016 to March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics - Wealth and Assets Survey

Figure 13 shows the change in the median total wealth by region over time, after adjusting for inflation. The three regions with the highest median total wealth (the South East, South West and London) have all seen increases in median total wealth over time.

For London, median total wealth has increased in each of the survey periods since July 2006 to June 2008. Between July 2006 to June 2008 and April 2016 to March 2018, median total wealth in London has increased by 78% to £356,400. Changes in net property and pension wealth are the major factors driving changes to total wealth.

For London, median net property wealth has increased by 51% since July 2006 to June 2008, to £410,000 in April 2016 to March 2018. Pension wealth has increased by 47% to £102,200.

In the South East (the region with the highest median total wealth in April 2016 to March 2018 at £445,900), median total wealth has increased by 32% since July 2006 to June 2008. Median net property wealth has increased by less than London, by 22%, to £300,000 and median pension wealth has increased by 77% to £153,700.

In the South West, median total wealth was £372,600 in April 2016 to March 2018, an increase of 17% since July 2006 to June 2008. Median net property in the South West has changed little over time after adjusting for inflation (£221,800 in July 2006 to June 2008 to £219,000 in April 2016 to March 2018), but median pension wealth has increased by 66% to £129,400.

The three regions with the lowest median total wealth in April 2016 to March 2018 were the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the East Midlands. In the North East, median total wealth has fallen by 12% to £172,900 since July 2006 to June 2008. Median net property wealth has fallen by 12% to £115,000, and median pension wealth has increased by 62% to £119,500.

It is worth noting that many people have no property or pension wealth. Therefore, the changes in median total wealth are not exclusively affected by changes in pension and net property wealth. In the North East for example, property ownership rates were 60% in April 2016 to March 2018, the lowest of all regions. Similarly, the North East has the second lowest (behind London) proportion of households with private pension wealth, at 76%.

Yorkshire and the Humber has the second lowest median total wealth, as Figure 13 shows, the median total wealth has increased slightly (5%) since July 2006 to June 2008, to £212,800 in April 2016 to March 2018. Median net property wealth has fallen by 14%, to £130,000 (home ownership rate is 66%) and median pension wealth has increased by 58%, to £104,700 (80% of households have private pension wealth).

The East Midlands has the third lowest median wealth (closely followed by the West Midlands) and has decreased by 13% since July 2006 to June 2008, to £220,300 in April 2016 to March 2018. Median net property wealth has fallen by 10%, to £150,000 (home ownership rate is 68%) and median pension wealth has increased by 12%, to £82,200 (82% of households have private pension wealth).

The East Midlands has a reasonably high proportion of households with private pension wealth, yet the lowest median private pension wealth of all regions. Regional variations in demographics (for example, differences in age of the population) and labour market regional variations (for example, employment rates, wage levels and employment sectors) will all affect a region's median wealth estimates.

Figure 13: Regions with the highest median total wealth have seen larger growth than those with lower median total wealth

Change in median total wealth (indexed to 100 at July 2006 to June 2008) by region, Great Britain, July 2006 to March 2018

Download the data

Notes:

1. Figures have been deflated to April 2016 to March 2018 prices using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH).

2. Note the change in periodicity from two-years starting in July and ended in June two years later to a two-year periodicity that starts in April and ends in March two years later (financial year-based). More information on this change can be found in Moving the Wealth and Assets Survey onto a financial years' basis.

9 . Inequality measures for the regions of Great Britain

As described in the Trends in total wealth inequality in Great Britain section, the mean-to-median ratio can be used as an inequality measure, where the higher the figure, the more “unequal” the distribution is. The mean-to-median ratios by region of Great Britain for the latest survey period (April 2016 to March 2018) are provided in Table 3.

The North East of England and London have above average mean-to-median values. The East of England, the South East and the South West have the lowest mean-to-median ratios, suggestive of lower wealth inequality in these regions. These are also three of the top four regions in terms of median wealth values.

Table 3: Median and mean total wealth and mean to median ratio by region, Great Britain, April 2016 to March 2018

Region	Mean:Median
North East	2.16
North West	1.95
Yorkshire & the Humber	1.98
East Midlands	1.98
West Midlands	1.87
East of England	1.70
London	2.26
South East	1.73
South West	1.71
Wales	1.89
Scotland	1.98
Great Britain	1.97

Source: Office for National Statistics - Wealth and Assets Survey

Notes

1. Values are taken from the Total wealth dataset table 2.8.

Gini coefficients were also calculated for total wealth for the regions of Great Britain for all survey periods (Figure 14). Echoing the mean-to-median ratio, London has the largest Gini coefficient and is therefore the most unequal region according to this measure, followed by the North East.

Some regions have seen an increase in the Gini coefficient over time, suggestive of increasing wealth inequality in those regions (the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber, the East Midlands, London and the South West).

Scotland and the South East have seen an opposite trend, with a reducing Gini coefficient for total wealth. The remaining regions have seen little if any change in the Gini coefficients over time. In interpreting these results, readers should be cautious as the analysis does not reveal the source of the apparent inequality. Many factors, including demographical variations by region can result in higher apparent inequality by these measures.

Figure 14: London and the North East have the highest Gini coefficients for total wealth, with higher Gini coefficients indicating higher wealth inequality

Gini coefficients for total wealth by region, Great Britain, July 2006 to March 2018

Download the data

Notes:

1. Figures have been deflated to April 2016 to March 2018 prices using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH).

2. Note the change in periodicity from two-years starting in July and ended in June two years later to a two-year periodicity that starts in April and ends in March two years later (financial year-based). More information on this change can be found in Moving the Wealth and Assets Survey onto a financial years' basis

10 . Total wealth in Great Britain data

Total wealth: wealth in Great Britain
Dataset | Released 05 December 2019
Total wealth is the sum of the four components of wealth and is therefore net of all liabilities.

Pension wealth: wealth in Great Britain
Dataset | Released 05 December 2019
The value of any pension pots already accrued that are not state basic retirement or state earning related. This includes occupational pensions, personal pensions, retained rights in previous pensions and pensions in payment.

Financial wealth: wealth in Great Britain
Dataset | Released 05 December 2019
The values of any financial assets held including both formal investments, such as bank or building society current or saving accounts, investment vehicles such as Individual Savings Accounts, endowments, stocks and shares, and informal savings.

Physical wealth: wealth in Great Britain
Dataset | Released 05 December 2019
The (self-evaluated) value of household contents, possessions and valuables owned, such as antiques, artworks, collections and any vehicles owned by individuals (including the value of any personalised number plates).

Wealth in Great Britain: quality indicators
Dataset | Released 1 February 2018
Standard error information for total mean, median and change of total wealth and its components.

Property wealth: wealth in Great Britain Dataset | Released 05 December 2019
Respondents' self-valuation of any property owned, both their main residence plus any other land or property owned in the UK or abroad.

Household debt: wealth in Great Britain
Dataset | Released 05 December 2019
Households that have liquidity problems and solvency problems only.

11 . Glossary

Financial wealth (net)

The values of any financial assets held, both formal investments such as bank or building society current or saving accounts, investment vehicles such as Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs), endowments, stocks and shares, and informal savings (money under the bed or loaned to family or friends) and children's assets; less any financial liabilities such as outstanding balances on credit cards, arrears on household bills, loans (including student loans) from formal or informal sources.

Household reference person

The household reference person (HRP) is the person that is the sole or joint householder or is responsible for household affairs. Where there are joint householders, the HRP will be the person with the highest income. In cases where income is the same for a joint householder, the eldest person is assigned as the HRP.

Physical wealth

The (self-evaluated) value of household contents, possessions and valuables owned such as antiques, artworks, collections and any vehicles owned by individuals (including the value of any personalised number plates).

Private pension wealth

The value of any pension pots already accrued that are not state basic retirement or state earning related. This includes occupational pensions, personal pensions, retained rights in previous pensions and pensions in payment. Estimating the value of some private pension pots is straightforward. For example, if a pension is a defined contribution type scheme (not in payment) the valuation is obtained from the respondents' latest statement from their pension administrator. This is an accurate estimation of each individual pension pot taking into account any relevant market influences (for example, investment returns).

Property wealth (net)

Respondents' self-valuation of any property owned, both their main residence plus any other land or property owned in the UK or abroad, less the outstanding value of any loans or mortgages secured on these properties. Self-valuation tends to yield higher estimates of worth than most other property indicators may suggest – however, when assessing individuals' opinions or behaviours, it is this perceived worth that will drive the individuals concerned.

12 . Measuring the data

Data sources and collection

The Wealth and Assets Survey (WAS) launched in 2006 and is a biennial longitudinal survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This survey measures the well-being of households and individuals in terms of their assets, savings and debt and planning for retirement. The survey also examines attitudes and attributes related to these. Classificatory variables (age, sex, employment status) are also collected.

Data from this longitudinal survey will also provide users with the ability to measure changes of wealth in Great Britain over time. The survey is currently sponsored by a funding consortium, including ONS, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Scottish Government (SG). Interviewers working on the survey refer to it as the Household Assets Survey (HAS).

The first wave of the survey commenced with interviews carried out over two years from July 2006 to June 2008 with approximately 30,000 households interviewed. A second wave took place two years on from initial interviews, covering the period July 2008 to June 2010, with approximately 20,000 households obtained. Wave 3 obtained approximately 21,000 households, Wave 4 obtained 20,000 and Wave 5 obtained 18,000.

This periodicity was maintained until Wave 5, which covered the period July 2014 to June 2016. The survey has now moved to a two-year, financial year-based periodicity (April to March) with this periodicity being referred to as a “round”. Therefore, Round 6 covers the period April 2016 to March 2018. This move to a two-year, financial basis allows WAS to be integrated with other household financial surveys that are based on financial years, and allows it to be analysed on a consistent basis alongside other components included within other household financial surveys (income and expenditure). Round 6 achieved approximately 18,000 household interviews.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the Wealth and Assets Survey (WAS) QMI.

13 . Strengths and limitations

Accounting for inflation

Accounting for inflation in wealth is more complex than for income or expenditure as the components of wealth, such as property, pensions and investments undergo complex changes over time. However, as the survey has now been in the field for over a decade, some form of adjustment for price changes is necessary to allow sensible comparison of trends over time within this report. We have used the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) for this purpose, to reflect the general change in the value of money over time. Where inflation-adjusted 'real' prices are provided, these are in April 2016 to March 2018 prices (i.e. average prices for the period April 2016 to March 2018). Note that the background tables are in nominal terms so may not match the figures quoted here. Briefly, the nominal figures, recorded over a survey period (t), are multiplied by the ratio of the average of the monthly CPIH index for round 6 months (April 2016 to March 2018) to the average of the CPIH index for the survey period (t):

$$\pounds(\mathrm{real\ (round6\ terms)}) = \pounds(\mathrm{nominal\ (t)}) * \frac{\mathrm{CPIH\ (April\ 2016\ to\ March\ 2018)}}{\mathrm{CPIH\ (t)}}$$

To allow for replication of the inflation-adjusted figures, the following table contains the deflators used for each time period. The nominal figure multiplied by the deflator for the relevant time period will give the figure in April 2016 to March 2018 prices.

Time period	Deflator
July 2006 to June 2008	1.23
July 2008 to June 2010	1.17
July 2010 to June 2012	1.10
July 2012 to June 2014	1.05
July 2014 to June 2016	1.03
April 2014 to March 2016	1.03

More detailed work on adjusting for price changes over time is planned ahead of publication of the next round of the Wealth and Assets Survey, including exploration of specific deflators for individual components of wealth.

Sampling errors and significance testing

All reasonable attempts have been made to ensure that the data are as accurate as possible. However, there are two potential sources of error that may affect the reliability of estimates and for which no adequate adjustments can be made; these are known as "sampling" and "non-sampling" errors. These concepts are explained further in the Wealth and Assets Survey (WAS) QMI.

No estimates are included that are based on fewer than 30 responding households. However, due to the complexity of the data (such as imputed values and complex weighting) no formal significance testing has been undertaken at this stage, though this will be covered in later releases.

Wave 1 half sample

A methodological decision at wave 1 (July 2006 to June 2008) of the WAS to reduce respondent burden resulted in a selection of questions, including components of physical wealth, to be asked only of a subset of households. This decision had implications for the estimation of aggregate total wealth. This subsequent "half sample" was sufficiently large to produce robust results and does not affect the reliability of the wealth distributions at a household level. Estimates of total household wealth are therefore based upon data from this half-sample of 17,316 households.

To estimate aggregate total wealth, the full sample has been used for property wealth, financial wealth and private pension wealth. However, estimates of aggregate physical wealth are based on responses for the half sample (17,316 households), which have been adjusted using a "rating up factor" in addition to our standard weighting procedures. For subsequent periods of the survey, each household were asked the full suite of questions on the components of net wealth. Consequentially, later estimates of total household and aggregate total wealth are both based upon the full responding sample.

Comparability with other data sources

Note: The estimates of household wealth in this bulletin and those produced in the National Accounts balance sheet release are not directly comparable due to differences in the concepts, data sources and methods, reflecting the different purposes for which the two sources are designed.

14 . Related links

Moving the Wealth and Assets Survey onto a financial years' basis
Article | Last revised 8 July 2019
Guidance and methodology in moving the Wealth and Assets Survey (WAS) from waves to financial years.

Measuring wealth on an individual level
Methodology | Last revised 30th October 2019
This article describes the methodology we have recently adopted to provide estimates of total wealth for individuals living in private households in Great Britain.

The UK national balance sheet estimates: 2019
Bulletin | Last revised 28th November 2019
Annual estimates of the market value of financial and non-financial assets for the UK, providing a measure of the nation's wealth.