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Welcome to Ashington in Northumberland



INTRODUCTION

A World's Largest Mining Village Reborn

Ashington, situated in the heart of Northumberland, was once celebrated as the “world’s largest coal-mining village,” transformed in the 1840s by the Duke of Portland, who brought workers escaping Ireland’s Great Famine to fuel nearby collieries. Today, this industrious heritage weaves through the town’s identity and cultural revival.

Culture & Community Spirit

- A distinctive Pitmatic dialect, closely related to Geordie, preserves the voices of Ashington’s mining roots
- Northumberland’s rich folk traditions—including rapper sword dance, clog dancing, and the soulful sound of the Northumbrian smallpipes—are cherished across the region and contribute to the cultural tapestry
- Ashington is home to the remarkable Pitmen Painters—miners turned artists—whose vivid, honest depictions of working-class life form part of the permanent collection at Woodhorn Museum
- The Ashington Folk Club and a calendar of community festivals ensure that music, art, and storytelling remain alive and community-driven

Landmarks & Heritage Sites

- Woodhorn Museum stands as a beautifully preserved former colliery. With original pit infrastructure—including winding houses, engine rooms, and stables—it narrates the tale of Northumberland’s mining era, enriched by exhibitions, archives, and space for events
- The museum grounds also host the Woodhorn Narrow Gauge Railway and lie next to Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Country Park, which offers scenic trails, a lake, and outdoor leisure opportunities
- Ashington’s architectural heritage includes the elegant Town Hall, built in 1913 in neoclassical style; it once hosted the famous Charlton brothers during their return from England’s 1966 World Cup victory
- Nearby historic gems include Bothal Castle, ancient churches like St Andrew’s, and various listed buildings connected to Ashington’s early industrial and residential development

Cuisine & Local Flavors

While Ashington itself offers local pubs such as the Block & Tackle and The Elephant, the area’s culinary character extends to nearby coastal spots. Visitors particularly recommend popping into Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, where Caffè Bertorelli—still run by the original Italian family—serves delicious fare steeped in local history and warmth.

Further afield, Ashington serves as a gateway to Northumberland’s coastal and countryside gastronomy—think smoked kippers from Craster and hearty seafood by the sea

The recently reopened Northumberland railway line now brings direct passenger services from Newcastle to Ashington, restoring a vital link that enhances sustainable tourism and accessibility

Position Ashington as a dynamic destination: a town steeped in industrial legacy yet resurgent through culture, art, and welcoming community life. Feature its museum, heritage buildings, local storytelling, and as a hub for exploring Northumberland’s natural and culinary delights. Let the images and narrative invite visitors to discover both the historic and contemporary heart of this remarkable place.



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Investment Overview

Town Centre Regeneration: £36 million in Progress

- Ashington is undergoing a £36 million town centre transformation, supported by UK Government funds (via the Shared Prosperity Fund), Northumberland County Council, the North East Combined Authority, and Advance Northumberland

Key highlights include:

- Portland Park: Plans are advancing for a six-screen cinema (operated by REEL Cinemas under a 25-year lease), restaurants, upgraded public space, and parking. Planning approval is forthcoming after a July 2024 public consultation.
- Wansbeck Square: Demolition is underway, with construction of a new cultural, community, and youth facility expected to begin in spring 2025.
- Public Realm Works: Infrastructure improvements around Woodhorn Road, Lintonville Terrace, Portland Park, and the Memorial Garden are ongoing—expected completion by mid-2025. This initiative builds on an earlier £30 million investment specifically allocated for the cinema and Wansbeck Square schemes.

Transport & Connectivity: Northumberland Line Reopened

- Passenger train services between Ashington and Newcastle resumed in December 2024 after a £300 million restoration. Services currently stop at Ashington, Seaton Delaval, and Newcastle.
- The new rail line is rapidly gaining popularity, with over 50,000 passengers traveling in its first month.
- Enhanced rail access is a cornerstone in boosting footfall, spurring visitor spending, unlocking business growth, and improving economic vibrancy.

Skill Development: Net-Zero Ashington Campus

- Construction is now underway for a £52 million ‘net-zero’ Ashington Campus—part of Northumberland College, located at Wansbeck Park

Slated to open in 2026, this high-specification educational facility will include:

- An Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering & Construction Skills Centre
- Dedicated technical and academic spaces, including support for young people with special educational needs
- A Student Life Centre, theater, labs, workshops, dining, and immersive learning environments

Built with modern sustainable design (biophilic architecture, rain gardens, off-site construction), this campus enhances educational access and attracts regional investment aligned with green skills.

Business Support & Cultural Activation

- The Accelerate Ashington initiative, part of the High Street Innovation Programme, supports local businesses and entrepreneurs with digital marketing, website development, and operational audits—running since November 2022 until mid-2024.
- Animating Ashington, a cultural events program funded by the UK Government and NECA, brings immersive public art and interactive community experiences to the town centre through August 2025.





Growth Sectors

Ashington, Northumberland, is emerging as a strategic growth hub driven by diverse sectors that underpin its economic resilience and future potential. Advanced manufacturing remains a cornerstone, with Ashwood Business Park offering 62 acres for expansion and hosting major players like AkzoNobel, while clean energy and offshore renewables—anchored by the nearby Port of Blyth—position the area as a leader in sustainable energy solutions. Complementing this, the life sciences and pharmaceutical sector benefits from Northumberland’s integration within the NEPIC cluster, supporting R&D and advanced production. The digital economy is also accelerating, with a surge in ICT, data infrastructure, and AI-driven investment creating new opportunities for high-tech employment. Meanwhile, tourism and the visitor economy continue to thrive, with Northumberland attracting over 10.5 million visitors in 2024, bolstered by the reopening of the Northumberland Line, which reconnects Ashington to Newcastle and enhances accessibility. Additional growth is evident in construction, logistics, and professional services, all supported by ongoing regeneration projects and infrastructure upgrades. This combination of advanced industry, green technology, digital innovation, and tourism diversification firmly establishes Ashington as a prime location for sustainable economic development.

Why These Sectors Matter for Ashington

- Enterprise readiness: Ashington is strategically positioned for further investment via Ashwood Business Park and a skilled local workforce.
- Connectivity boost: The reopened Northumberland Line is a catalyst, improving access for business, tourism, and logistics
- Diversified economy: By combining traditional strength in manufacturing with emerging strengths in tech, pharma, energy, and tourism, Ashington is forging a more resilient economic profile.
- Wide-based employment: Growth across multiple sectors—including healthcare, construction, and public administration—strengthens local job prospects.





Urban Regeneration

Ashington is currently undergoing a major £36 million transformation under the Ashington Regeneration Programme, supported by Northumberland County Council, the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, the North East Combined Authority, and Advance Northumberland.

Key Projects & Progress

- Portland Park Cinema & Leisure Complex - Planning approval has been secured for a six-screen REEL Cinema, plus leisure space and two restaurants. Construction is anticipated to begin in autumn 2025, backed by government, council, and NECA funding
- Public Realm Upgrades - Enhancements between Lintonville Terrace, Woodhorn Road, and Portland Park include road surfacing, improved lighting, signage, newly paved areas, and new green space on formerly vacant ground—all near completion
- Wansbeck Square Gateway - Demolition has begun and is set to complete by mid-2025. Construction of a new community, culture, and youth facility, serving as a welcoming gateway from the station to the high street, is slated to start in early 2026
- Memorial Garden Enhancements - Landscaping improvements to the Memorial Garden—adjacent to the new rail station—are nearly done, creating a dignified, accessible space for remembrance and reflection

Regeneration Context

- Strategic Site Acquisitions & Design Teams - The council acquired key central sites—including Wansbeck Square and the “Grand Corner” site—for approximately £1.5 million in early 2024. Design teams led by Identity Consult, Ryder Architects, GT3 Architects, and Turner & Townsend are guiding the masterplan, including public realm reconnects and leisure developments
- Connectivity Focus - A core objective is improving pedestrian access between the new Northumberland Line station and the town centre—bridging Portland Park, the high street, and public spaces with enhanced gateways and pathways
- Community Engagement & Cultural Activation - The Animating Ashington cultural program runs until August 2025, delivering events and activities in and around the town centre—designed to enliven high streets and involve businesses and locals

Ashington's urban regeneration is transforming the town into a vibrant, connected community hub through strategic infrastructure upgrades, cultural investment, and smart urban design. These improvements are poised to enhance accessibility, leisure, and community life, signalling a bold new chapter for the town.





Education Sector

Ashington is witnessing a transformative shift in its education landscape, anchored by the development of a pioneering new Net-Zero Ashington Campus. This is a nearly £52 million investment led by Northumberland College (part of Education Partnership North East), with full backing from the Department for Education

Landmark: The New Campus at Wansbeck Business Park

- Spanning 5.7 acres, this purpose-built campus comprises three distinct buildings: an Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering & Construction Skills Centre, a central Academic and Technical “Heart” (featuring a SEND hub), and a dynamic Student Life Centre
- Designed to support education pathways across T Levels, apprenticeships, vocational programs, A-Levels, and more, the new campus is scheduled to open for the 2026–27 academic year

Sustainability & Innovation: Built for the Future

- As a “Gen Zero” prototype, this campus will operate as a near ultra-low carbon facility, employing cutting-edge sustainable construction and operational technologies
- Utilising Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), much of the campus will be prefabricated off-site, enhancing build efficiency, reducing waste, and minimising disruption
- Energy is designed to come from renewable and smart systems: solar panels, air-source heat pumps, heat recovery systems, rain gardens, biophilic design elements, and timber-based materials that contribute to both sustainability and wellbeing

Industry Alignment & Community Impact

- The campus is crafted to align tightly with regional and industry skills priorities, offering training in sectors like manufacturing, engineering, green transport, digital technology, healthcare, and more
- A School of Health, created in partnership with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, will deliver nursing, midwifery, and health science training—reinforcing local workforce pipelines
- Situated near the reopened Northumberland Line train station, the campus improves accessibility, supports the town’s regeneration, and strengthens linkages between education, community, and opportunity

Excellence in Secondary Education

- Ashington Academy, serving ages 11–18, recently achieved GCSE results above both local and national averages. Its Progress 8 score is +0.45, while EBacc entry is an impressive 68%—well above regional and national levels
- In October 2024, the Academy revised its admissions process to establish a geographical catchment area, ensuring fairer access for local children—especially from neighboring villages like Linton, Pegswood, and Ellington
- Another significant institution, NCEA Duke’s Secondary School, caters to ages 11–19 and was established in 2009. It integrates secondary, primary, and special needs provisions into one cohesive facility—backed by a £48 million investment

Wider Educational Initiatives - Nearby in Blyth, the Energy Central Campus is a new centre for training in offshore renewables and green skills, offering T-levels and diplomas with future links to Durham and Newcastle Universities—complementing Ashington’s educational ecosystem



Visitor Economy

Although tourism data is tracked at the Northumberland county level rather than specifically for Ashington, Ashington plays a vital role within the broader visitor economy, mainly through its cultural heritage, improved accessibility, and welcoming public spaces.

County-Wide Tourism Success (Relevance to Ashington)

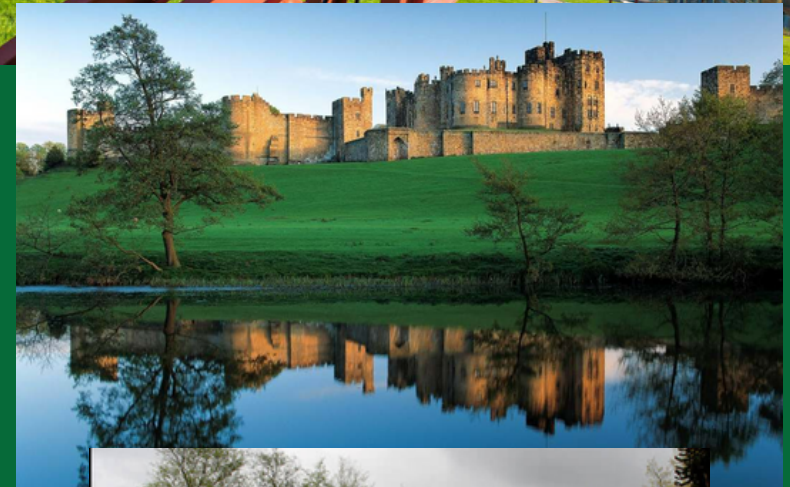
- In 2024, Northumberland's tourism industry achieved a record-breaking £1.443 billion in economic impact, supported by nearly 10.5 million visitors, including both day-trippers and overnight guests
- In 2023, the region also saw notable growth—with 10.12 million visitors and economic output of £1.262 billion, marking strong post-pandemic recovery and momentum [visitnorthumberland.org.uk](https://www.visitnorthumberland.org.uk)
- Guest trends show increasing overnight stays, with average lengths of stay rising and staying visitors accounting for 65% of total tourist spend

Ashington's Role in the Visitor Economy

- Woodhorn Museum is one of Ashington's key attractions—offering immersive mining heritage exhibits and art from the Ashington Group, and drawing both regional tourists and locals
- The Northumberland Line's reopening in late 2024 re-established direct rail links from Newcastle to Ashington, dramatically improving ease of access and positioning the town as a convenient gateway for tourists exploring heritage and coastal sites
- The Ashington Regeneration Programme, alongside the Animating Ashington cultural events (running until August 2025), is strengthening town-centre appeal through public realm enhancements, art, pop-ups, and community-oriented experiences that attract both day visitors and residents

Economic & Experiential Enhancements

- Tourism is Northumberland's second-largest employment sector, supporting over 14,600 jobs and helping sustain thousands of businesses, including in hospitality, retail, and food & drink—sectors that Ashington local businesses plug into
- Ashington benefits from upward county-wide trends in tourism spend and footfall while also contributing distinct local attractions, improved access, and an emerging cultural calendar.





Local Transport

Ashington's public transport has received a major boost with the reopening of the Northumberland Line. Regular passenger rail services to Newcastle, including stops at Seaton Delaval, Ashington, and Manors, resumed on 15 December 2024—reintroducing passenger rail to the town after more than six decades.

Here's what you need to know:

- **Service Frequency:** Trains run twice per hour during weekdays and Saturdays, with hourly services during evenings and Sundays.
- **Journey Time & Fare:** A one-way trip to Newcastle takes about 35 minutes, with fares capped at around £3, and discounted single fares for U21s from £1 with a Pop Blue card.
- **Patronage:** The first month of operation recorded over 50,000 journeys, highlighting strong local uptake.
- **Infrastructure Works:** Significant upgrades, including signalling enhancements between Bedlington and Ashington, were completed to support service reliability.

Looking ahead, additional stations—Newsham, Blyth Bebside, Bedlington, and Northumberland Park—are under construction and expected to open progressively through 2025 and early 2026, further extending regional access.

Beyond rail, Ashington is served by a local Arriva bus network connecting to nearby areas such as Morpeth, Blyth, Bedlington, and Newcastle. The town is also well-connected by major roads, including the A189 (Spine Road) to Newcastle and A19, A1068 north toward Alnwick, and A196/A197 west toward Morpeth and onward to the A1.

Ashington has been transformed into a well-connected hub thanks to the revived Northumberland Line, delivering regular, fast, and affordable rail links to Newcastle. New stations under development will further expand reach and convenience. Complemented by robust bus services and key arterial roads, the town enjoys a multimodal transport framework that enhances accessibility, encourages sustainable travel, and supports economic and social vitality.





Housing and Property Market

Ashington's housing market is undergoing notable transformation, driven by both new development and evolving affordability dynamics.

Market Overview & Residential Prices:

- The average home price in Ashington over the past year stands at approximately £142,095. Terraced properties average around £98,033, semi-detached about £149,447, and detached houses average £257,370. While this represents a 9% year-on-year decline, current values remain close to the 2022 peak of £141,054.

New Developments & Planning Updates:

- Woodhorn Meadows: A major estate east of Wansbeck General Hospital now progressing into phase D, with planning approved for 56 executive homes (47 four-bedroom, 9 five-bedroom), adding to earlier phases already housing residents
- Adjacent expansion is underway: a reserved matters application was approved in early 2025 for 95 four- and five-bedroom homes on the southern part of the Summerhouse Lane site, with 105 homes approved on the northern section, including a mix of affordable and market-rate properties
- In July 2024, construction began on 25 new affordable homes by Thirteen housing association at the former St Aidan's First School site on Norham Road. These timber-frame houses will incorporate sustainable features such as solar panels and air-source heat pumps, completing by the end of next year

Investment & Rental Trends:

- For prospective investors, Ashington remains appealing: property values have risen by ~0.9% over the past three months—outperforming the national average of 0.4%.
- The rental market is robust: several two-bedroom properties have seen dramatic rent increases—from £370 to £595 per month—suggesting yields as high as 14%, driven by strong tenant demand
- Published rental benchmarks confirm this, estimating one-bedroom rentals at £400–£500/month, two-bedroom units at £500–£700, and larger family homes at £700–£900 per month

Final Thoughts

Ashington's property landscape is characterized by a mix of continuity and change: traditional terraced homes coexist with significant new development, including executive estates and sustainable affordable housing. While average property values remain stable and accessible, rental growth and yield potential make Ashington particularly compelling for investors. Expansion and regeneration projects continue to enhance the town's housing diversity and financial attractiveness.

