

Why don't people move when it would obviously pay them ..

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The Guardian [has noted this morning](#) that:

In a report entitled Troubled Waters, the thinktank Onward shows that communities set within 5km of England's coast are poorer, sicker and more crime-ridden than their inland neighbours – and calls for a £500m regeneration package.

Grim statistics highlighted in the report include the fact that early, preventable deaths are 15% more likely in coastal areas than inland, crime rates are 12% higher and average disposable incomes £2,800 lower.

They elaborate, noting that:

By analysing detailed income data, Onward shows the stark differences that emerge, even over short distances. In Great Yarmouth, on the east coast, the average income is £23,600 a year, but just over 10km inland it jumps to £33,800.

The average worker in Workington, on the Cumbrian coast, earns £25,000; but less than 10km inland at Cockermouth the average is £34,200.

To be honest, I think most people know much of this.

What few can answer is the question as to why people do not move in that case when that would seem to be the obvious solution to this problem.

The reality is that the supposedly rational act of moving is not what people do. They stay instead. The result is the demand for a levelling-up package.

I support the idea of such a package: many such areas do need help. But I also think that addressing the bigger question of why people do not move is just as important.

Is it because they do not have the capital required to move? That must be part of it. A new rent deposit is beyond the means of many, I suspect, having spent a long time looking at wealth data.

Or is it that the importance of family, place and connections is so strong that moving is simply not on people's agenda? There remain, despite low incomes and higher risk, good reasons for staying that trump the economics of moving. If so, it shows how out-of-touch supposedly rational economics is with the reality of many people's lives. That is a massively important lesson to learn.

In that case, there are also lessons to learn about 'levelling up', because what this implies is that incomes should not be the sole criteria for success: the creation of stronger communities should be.

I do not know the answers here. What I know is that the data shows we do not in too many cases ask the right questions, let alone get near the right answers.