

NORTHUMBERLAND'S POPULATION IS OUT OF BALANCE

**THE AGEING POPULATION OF NORTHUMBERLAND 2006 AND
2021**

AN INFONET BRIEFING

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2007/05

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The Northumberland Information Network is a partnership between:

ONE North East, Northumberland Strategic Partnership, Northumberland County Council, Connexions, Northumberland Care Trust, Northumberland Community Safety and CDRPs, Northumberland DAAT and GO-NE.

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The Ageing Population of Northumberland 2006 and 2021

Figures below show how the population of Northumberland is projected to change over the 15 year period from 2006 to 2021; there are charts for Northumberland, the North East and the six Northumberland districts. The figures use the 2004 based population projections from the Office for National Statistics. These are based on past trends (at 2004 and before) and therefore do not take account of any impacts of policy changes over the next 15 years.

The population of Northumberland is set to get older, with people over 55 making up a much higher proportion of the total population in 2021 than they did in 2006 (see the bars in the population pyramid in Figure 1 below). Northumberland's population has a greater proportion of older people, aged 55 and over in it, than in England as whole (compare the bars with the lines in Figure 1 below). Northumberland also has a lower proportion of people aged between 20 and 34 than in England as a whole. Projections suggest this will still be the case in 2021. The projected increase in people aged over 55 is partly due to the ageing of the "baby boom" generation born in the 1960s. However, in Northumberland's case it may also be that in the past the County failed to retain people age 20 – 35¹ and attracted people aged 50 and over. If these trends continue by 2021 the Northumberland population will have a greater proportion of older people in it than now.

Figure 2 below shows dependency ratios for 2006 and 2021. These show the ratio of older people (defined here as all those aged 65 and over) and younger people (defined here as all aged 19 and under) dependent on the number of people of working age (defined here as aged 20-64). They give a measure to show the support / economic 'burden' on the working age population due to the number of older people and younger people who are not working. The measure is crude as it assumes that all people aged 20-64 are working, and all others are not, and those that are not working need some kind of support, and or, don't contribute economically.

¹ For more information see: Johnstone and Hutcinson, (2005) "Young People, Affordable Housing and Employment", InfoNet; Working Paper 41 available at:- http://www.northumberlandinfonet.org.uk/InfoNet/ReportMenu_Y5.htm#WP_41

Dependency ratios are sometimes calculated with younger people defined as those under 15 or under 16. In this case an assumption has been made that a majority of those aged 19 and under will be in some form of full time education or training and therefore still dependent.

The dependency ratios shown are:

- Combined - Overall = (Older people + younger people)/People of working age
- Older People - Gerontic = Older people/ People of working age
- Younger People - Neontic = Younger people / People of working age

Whilst dependency ratios are going to increase for both Northumberland and England comparing 2006 with 2021, the increase is greater in Northumberland and is due mainly to an increase in the number of people aged 65 and over in the population.

It is important to note this is not just Northumberland reflecting a regional North East phenomenon; dependency ratios in the North East do increase by 2021 but are closer to England levels (compare Figure 2 and Figure 4 below).

In summary there are going to be more older people in Northumberland by 2021 and less people of working age to support them. Whilst this is an issue for England as whole, it is a bigger issue in Northumberland and will particularly affect the more rural districts, especially Berwick upon Tweed and Alnwick. Blyth Valley is the only district with a population profile very close to England as a whole. It has a population much more balanced between young and old. Policy makers need to consider what this will mean for future needs for local services and housing allocations in the future.

In the following pages there are population pyramids and dependency ratio charts for Northumberland, the North East and the 6 Northumberland districts.

Please note these charts have been prepared using data rounded to the nearest 1,000, they therefore give an overall picture of population and demographic trends but are not a precise measure of projected population change.

Northumberland
Figure 1

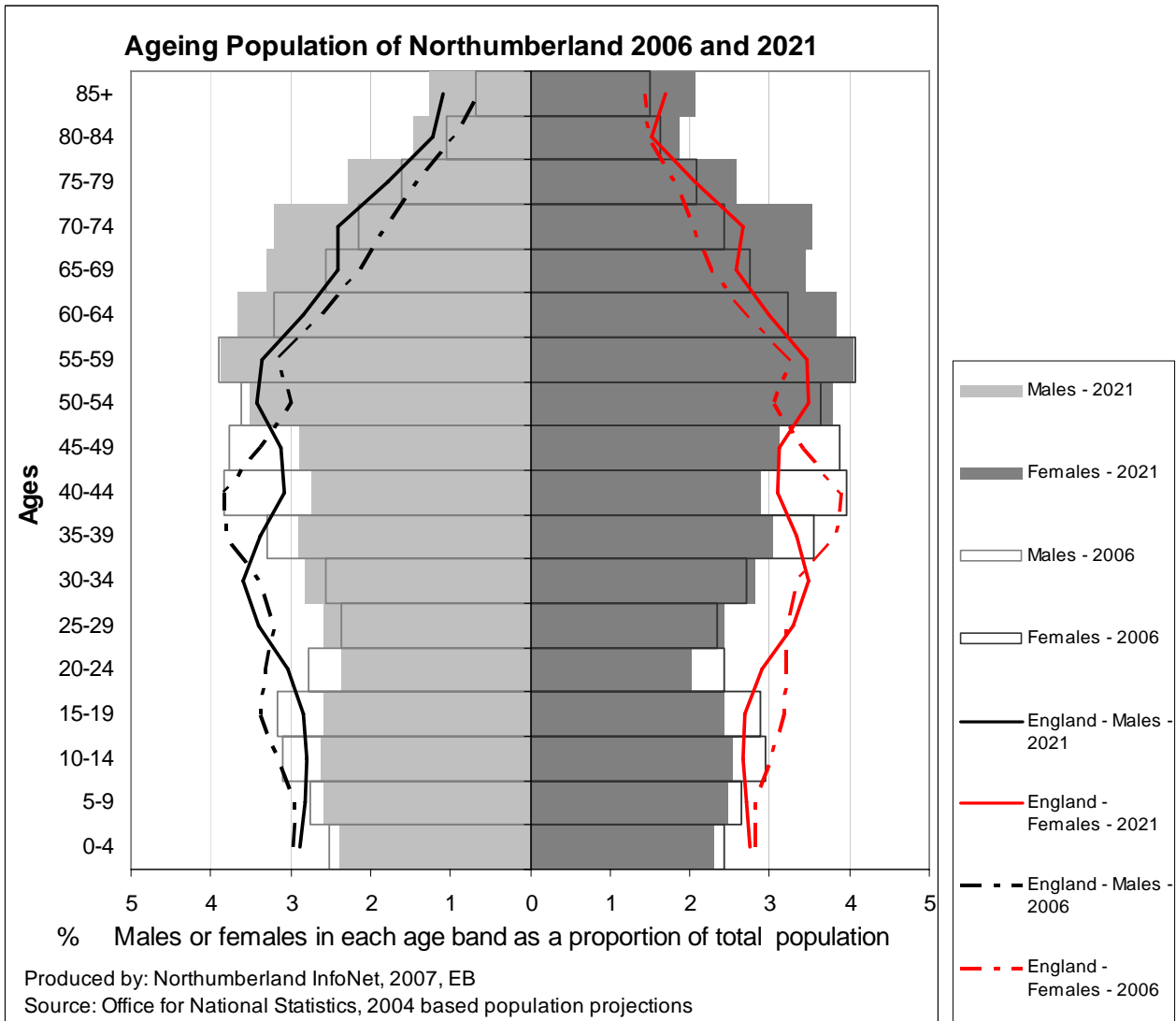
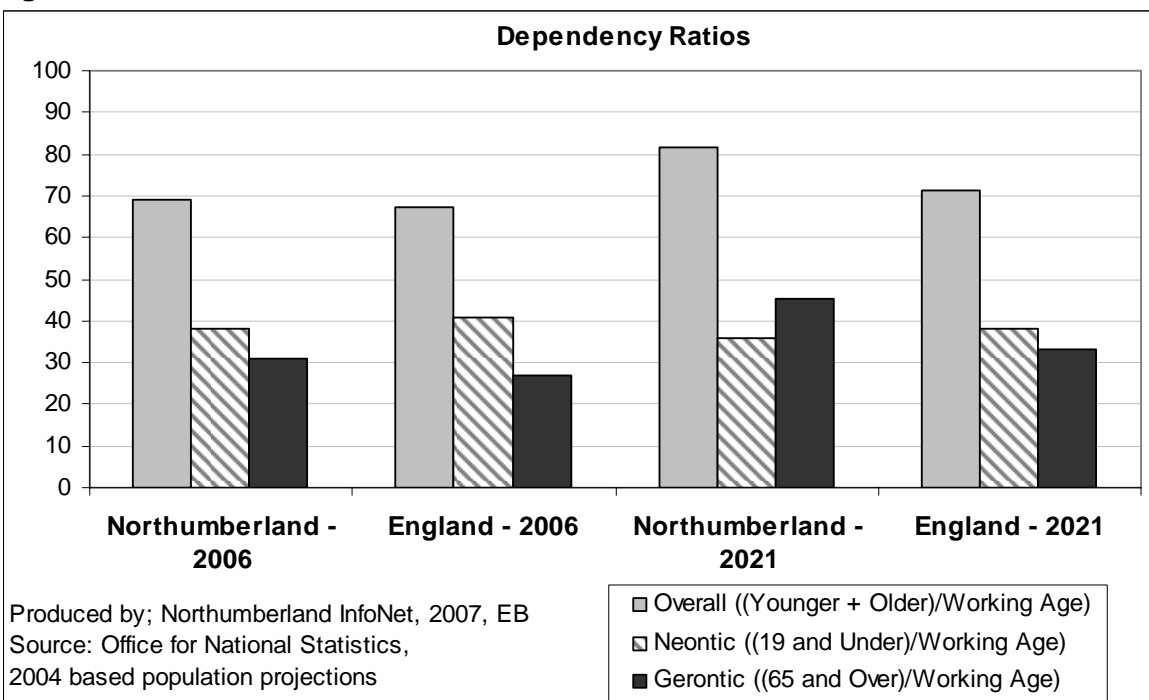


Figure 2



**North East
Figure 3**

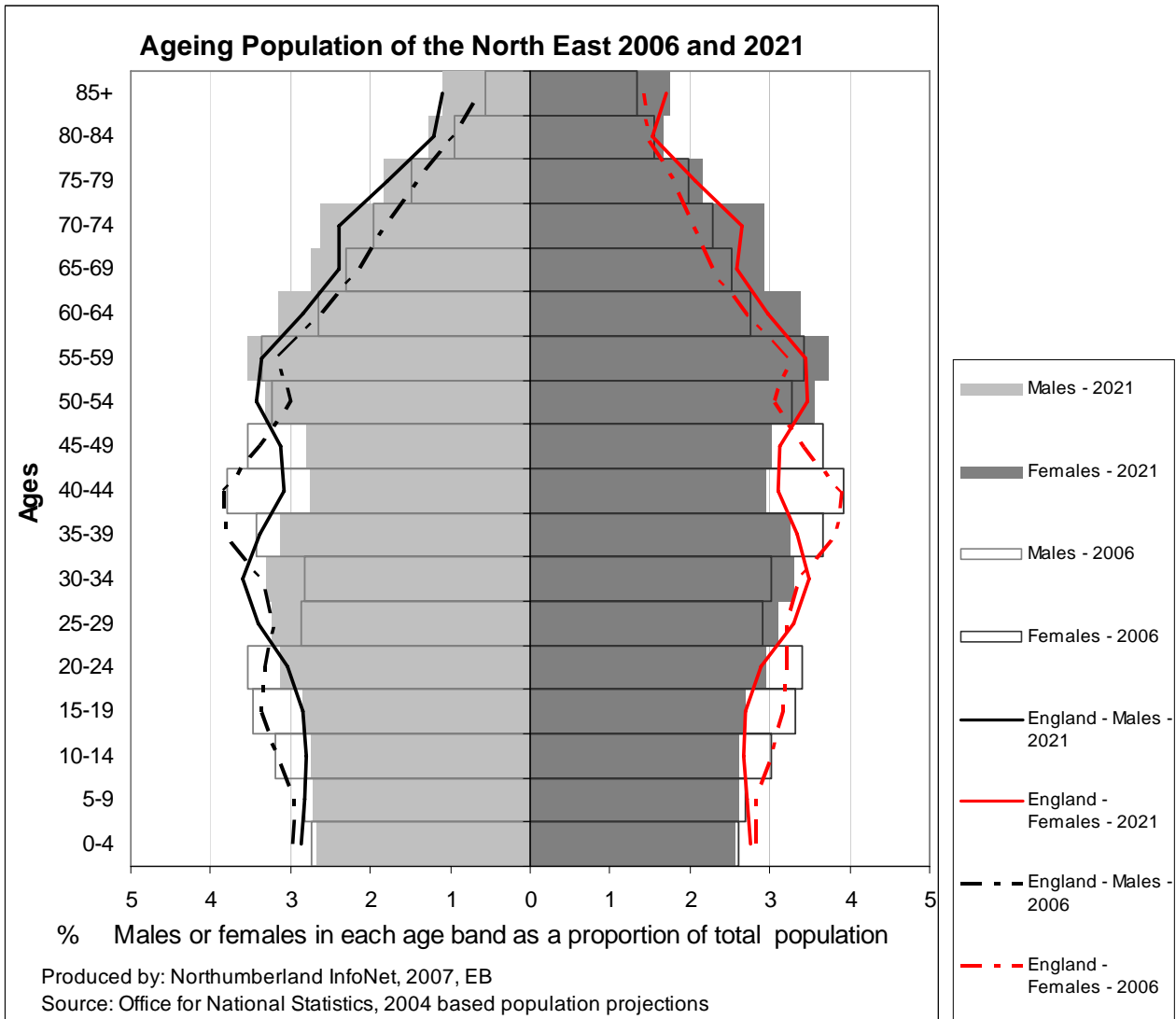
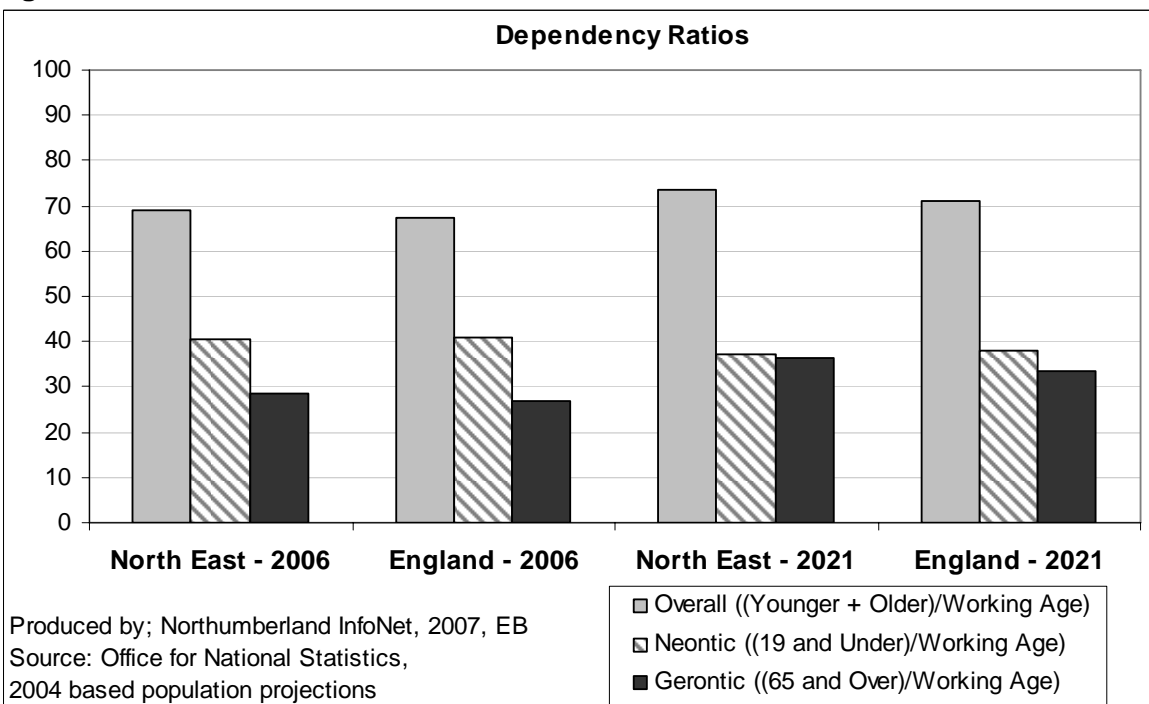


Figure 4



**Alnwick
Figure 5**

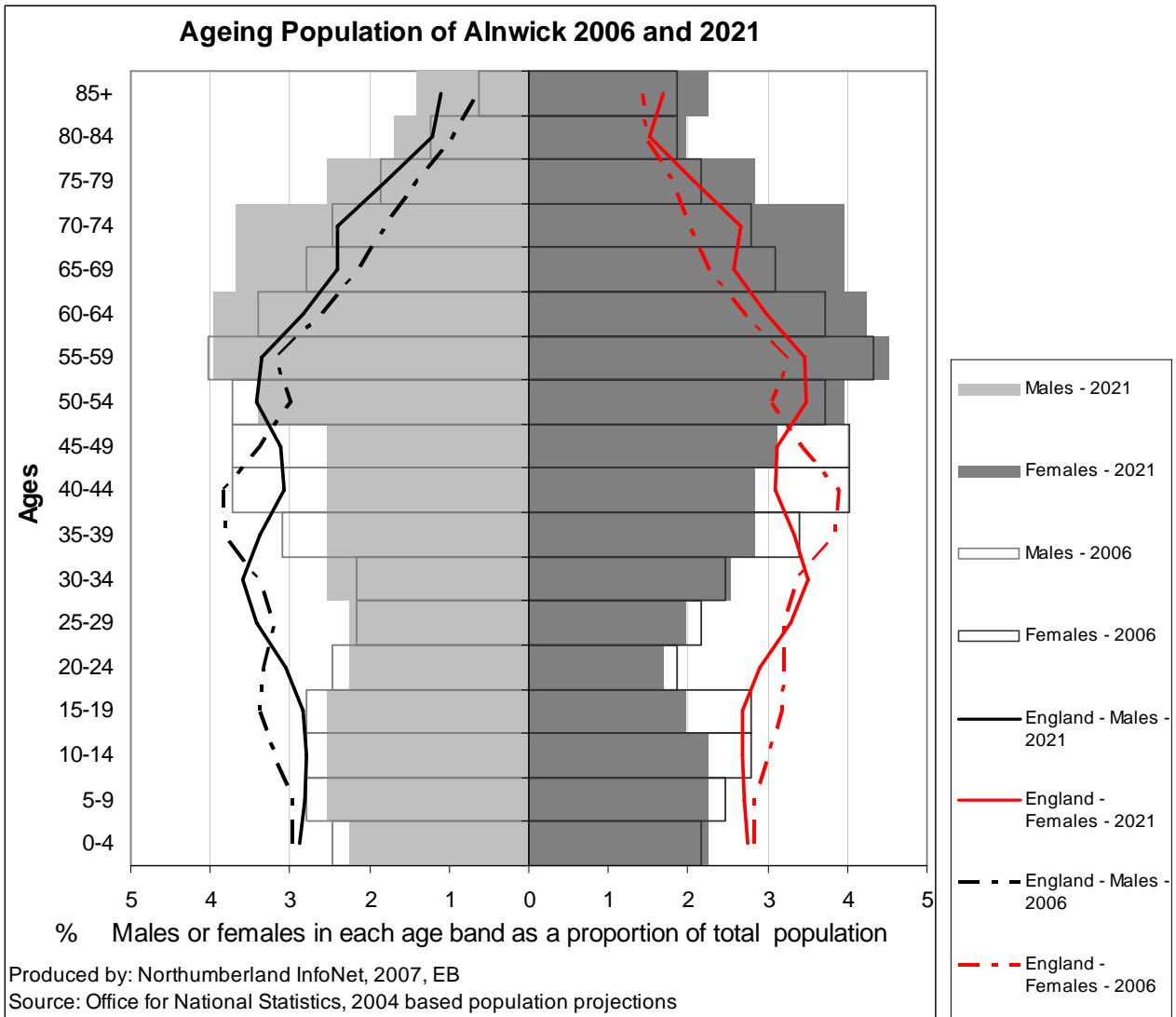
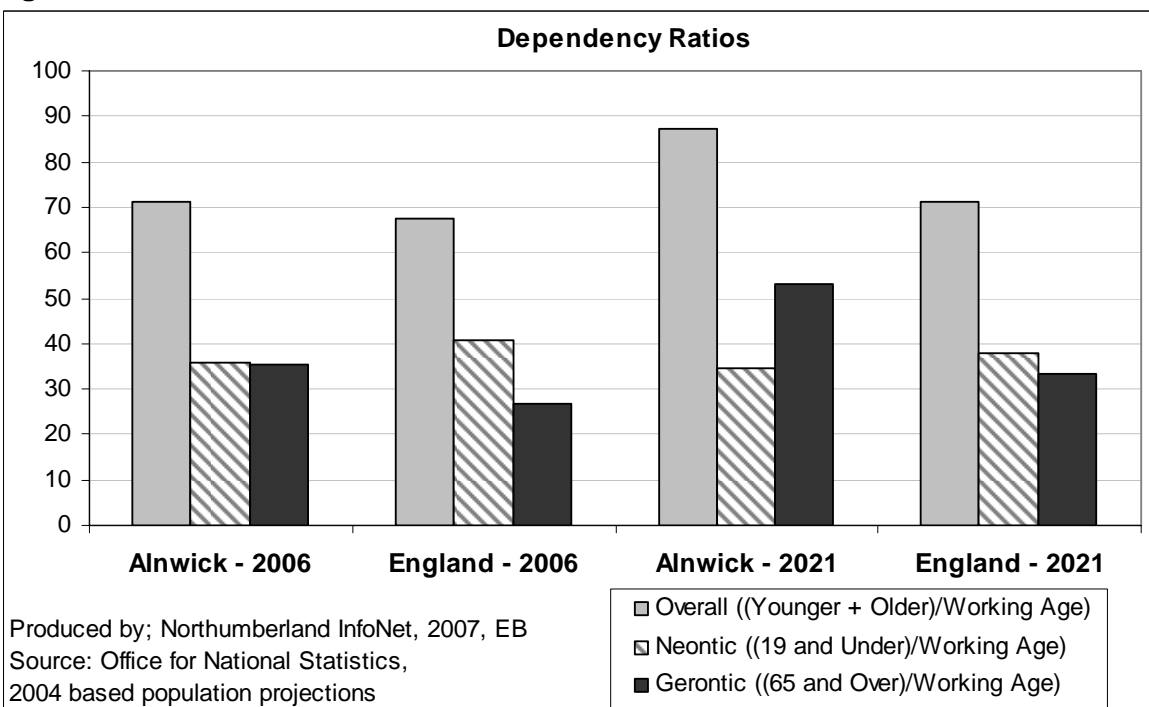


Figure 6



Berwick upon Tweed
Figure 7

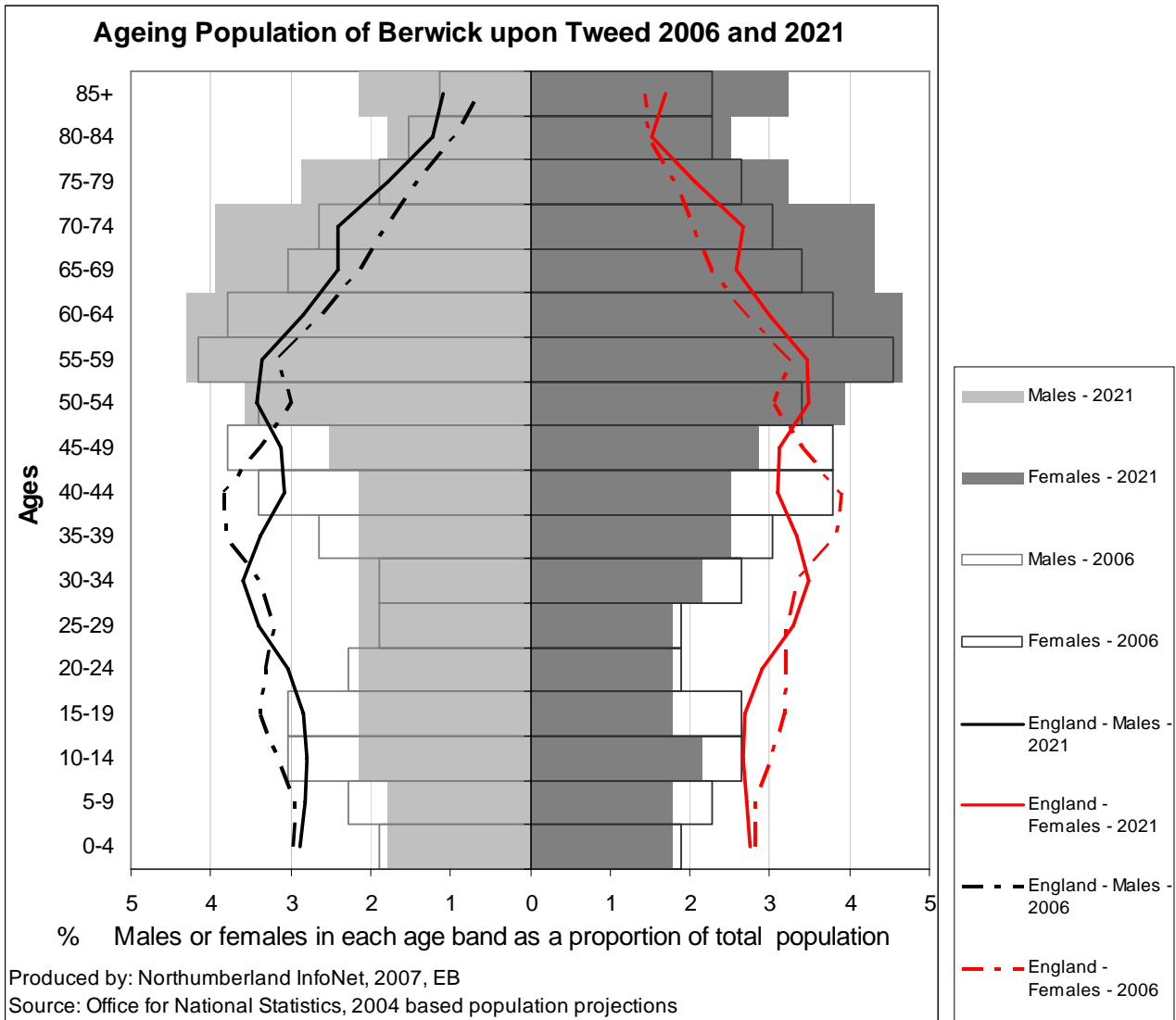
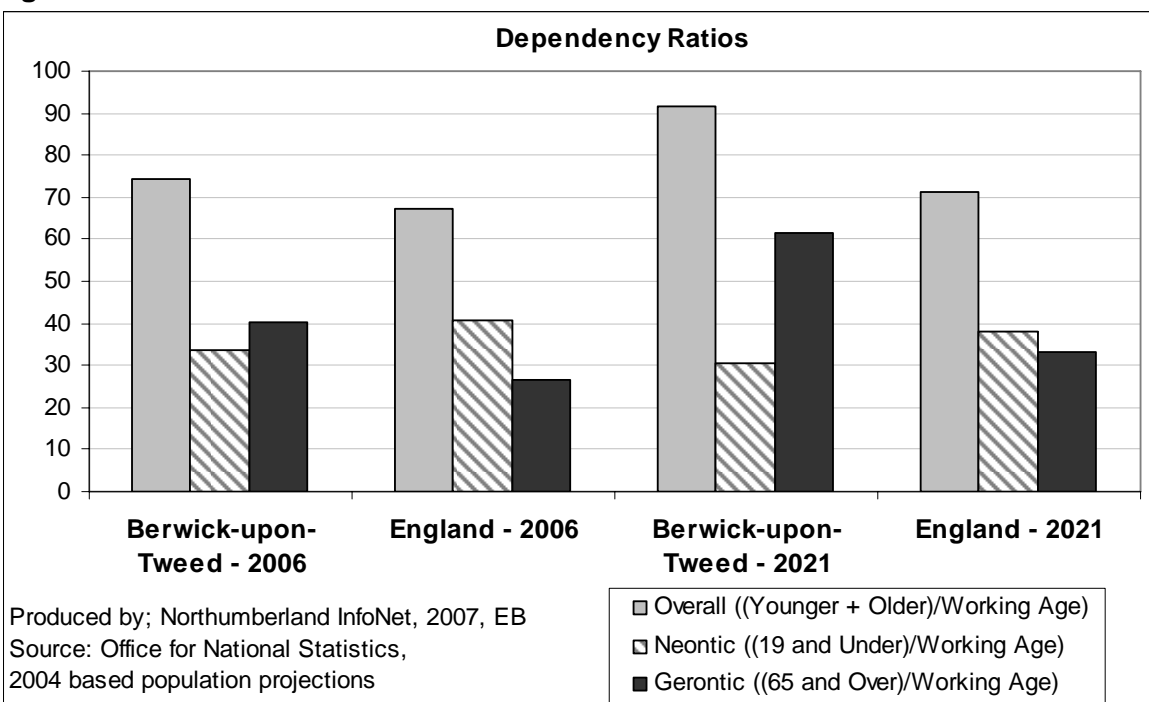


Figure 8



**Blyth Valley
Figure 9**

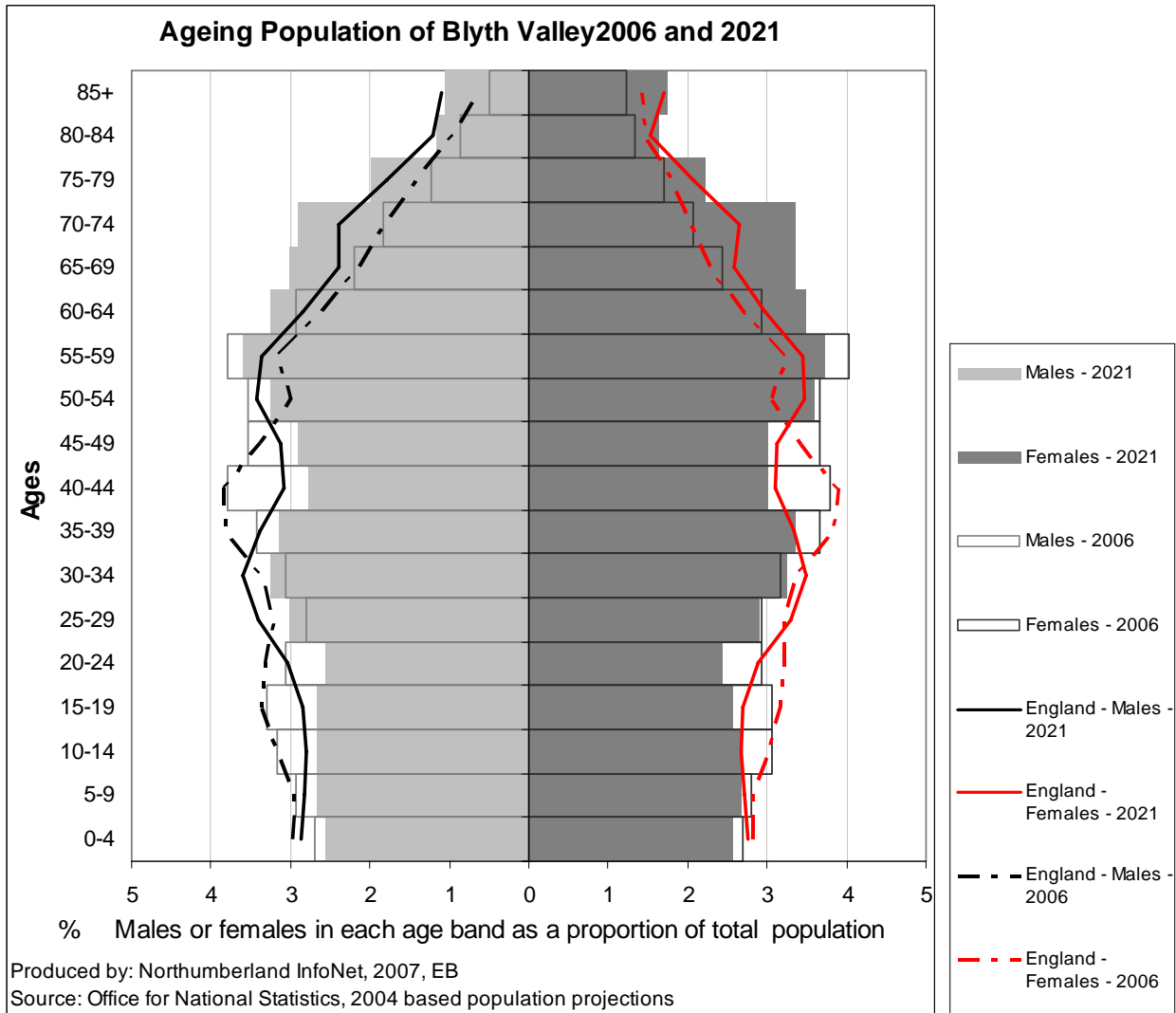
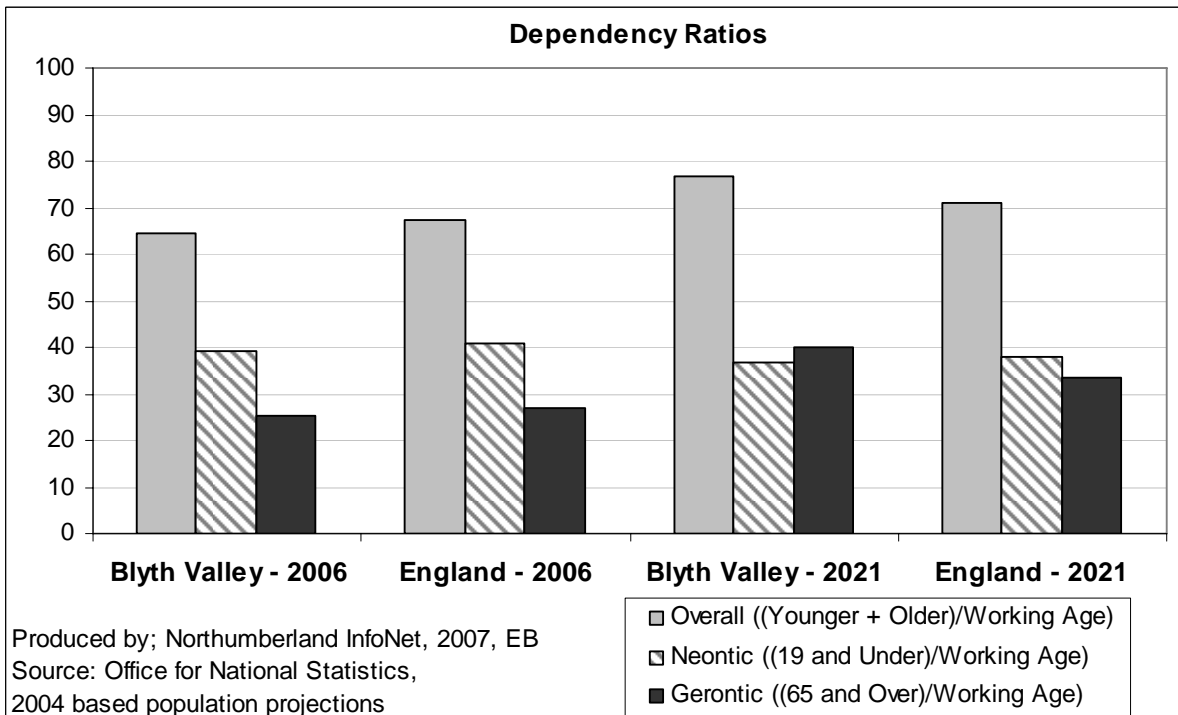


Figure 10



**Castle Morpeth
Figure 11**

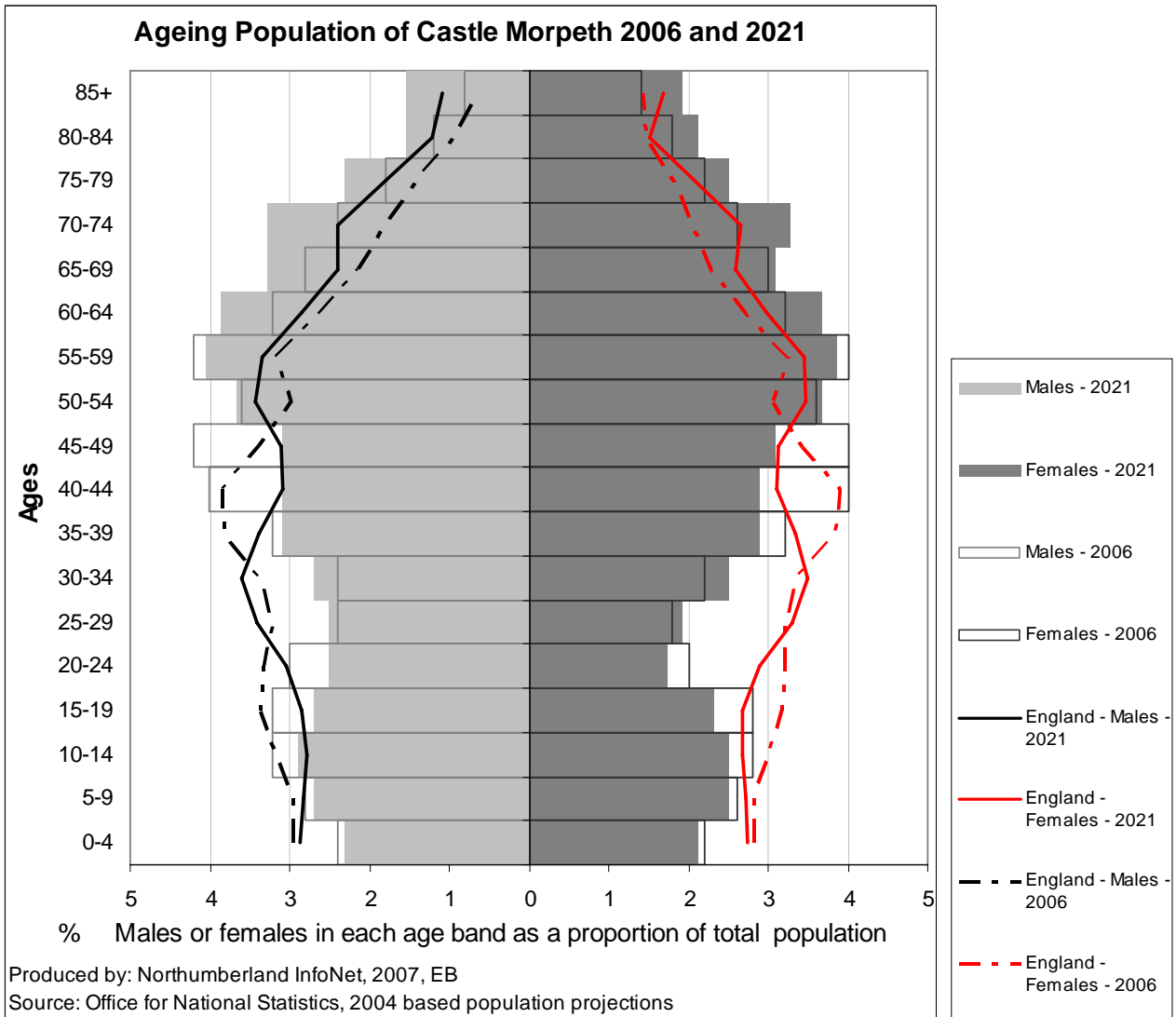
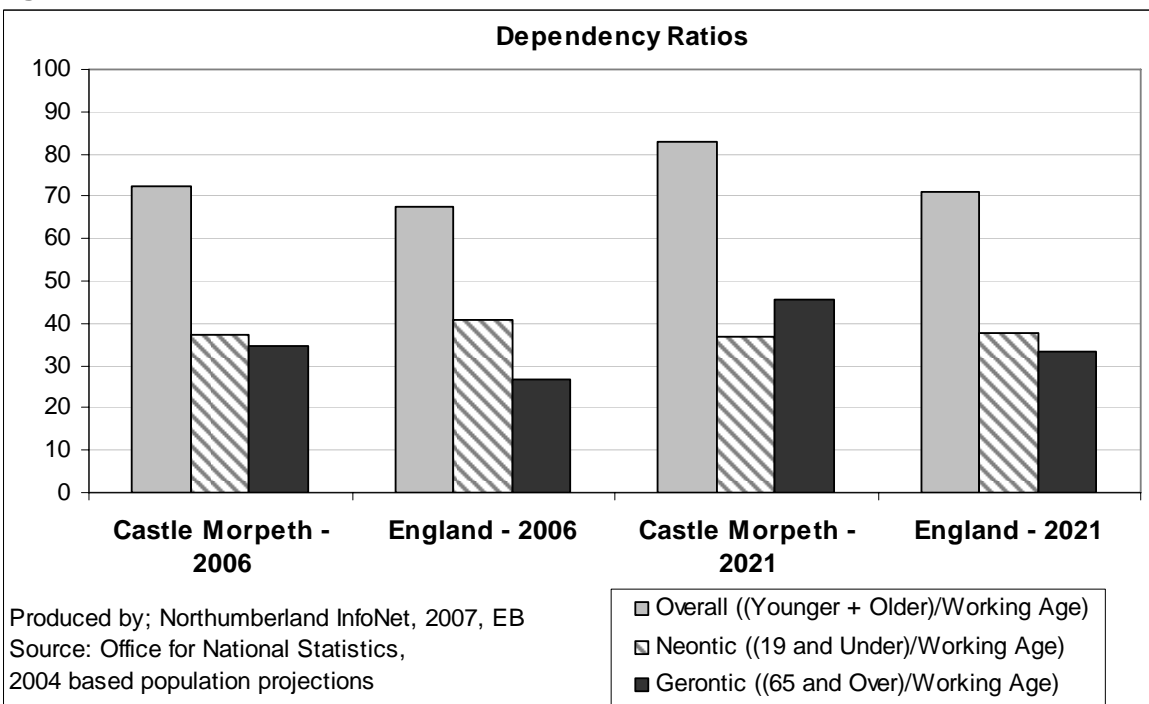


Figure 12



**Tynedale
Figure 13**

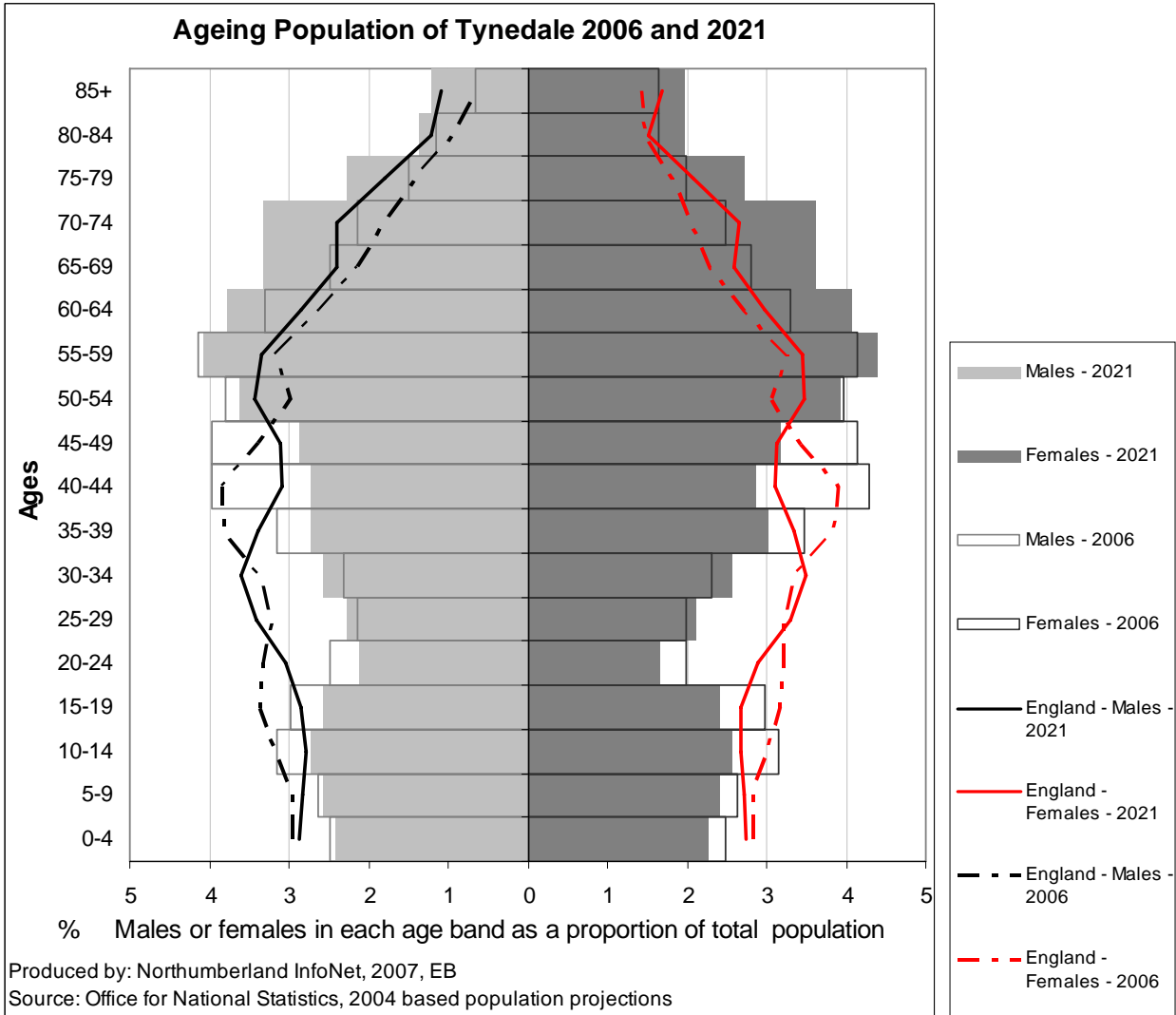
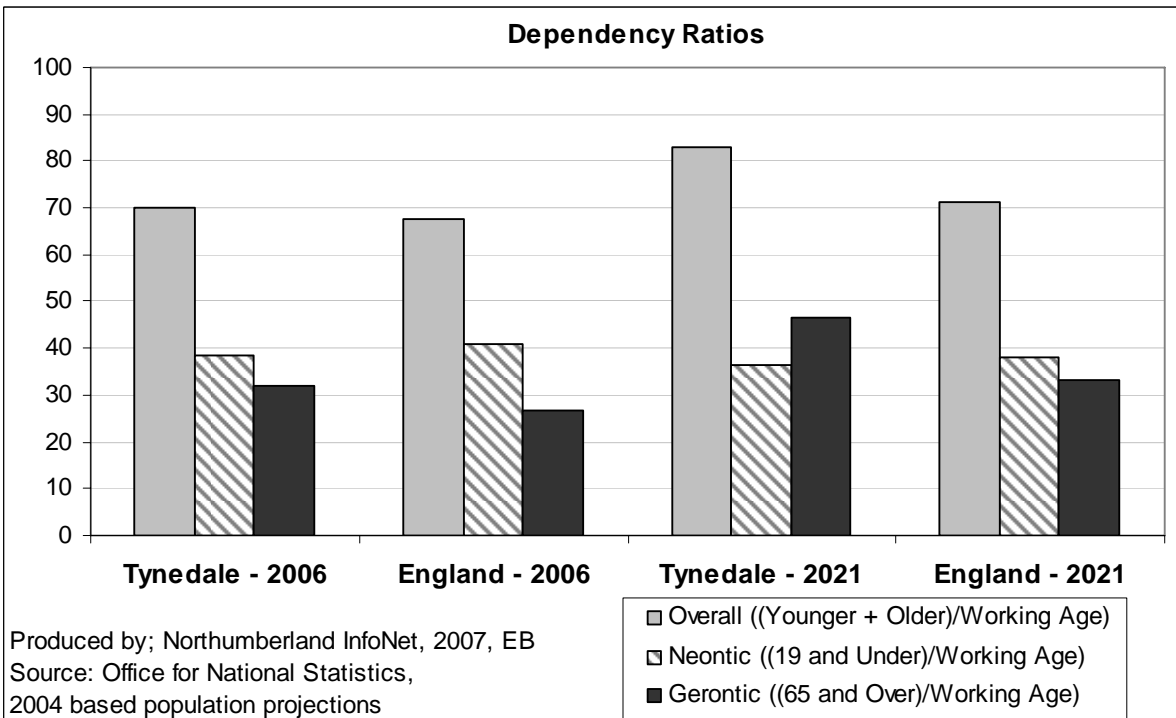


Figure 14



**Wansbeck
Figure 10**

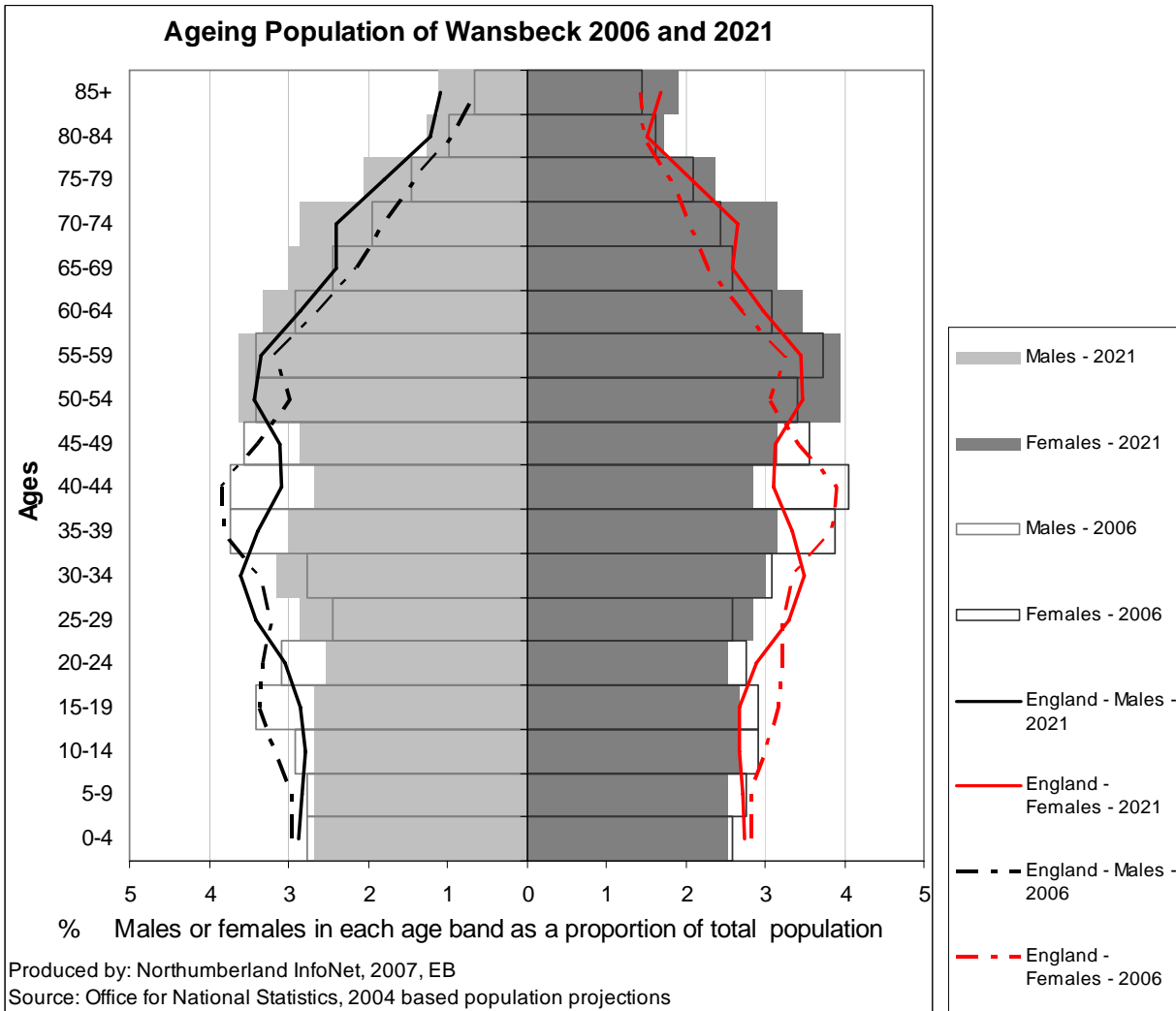


Figure 11

