

# Accessibility

Monitoring accessibility is important because it can help identify who has access to, and therefore benefits from, services and who might be disadvantaged. Ways of measuring accessibility include assessing the time taken to travel to particular service locations and the number of services reachable within specified travel times.

Generally, people living in rural settlements have lower overall levels of accessibility to key service locations compared with people living in urban settlements, while people living in rural areas in a sparse setting have the lowest overall accessibility.

- The average minimum travel times to reach the nearest key services were longer for people living in rural areas for all services, compared with people living in urban areas.
- More services were available on average for people living in urban areas for all service types and all journey times compared with those for people living in rural areas, when walking and using public transport.

## **For travel by public transport or walking in 2019:**

- the average minimum travel time to a hospital was a little over one hour in rural areas, compared with a little over half an hour in urban areas.
- fewer than half the users living in rural areas have access to places with 5,000 or more jobs within 45 minutes, compared with 91 per cent of users in urban areas.
- 51 per cent of users living in rural areas do not have access to their nearest hospital within an hours travel, compared with 8 per cent of users in urban areas.
- the average number of key service locations accessible to those in rural areas was highest for primary schools and food stores (9 within a 60 minute journey).
- the services with the lowest average number of service locations available to those in rural areas within a 60 minute journey time were hospitals (with around one) and places with 5,000 or more jobs available (with around two to three).

## **For travel by walking only in 2019:**

- Average minimum travel times to primary schools were twice as long on foot in rural areas as in urban ones and those to secondary schools and further education were three times as long.
- 43 per cent of users living in rural areas had access to a General Practice within half an hour's walk compared with 95 per cent of users living in urban areas.
- There are few service locations that can be reach within 15 minutes of walking in rural areas.

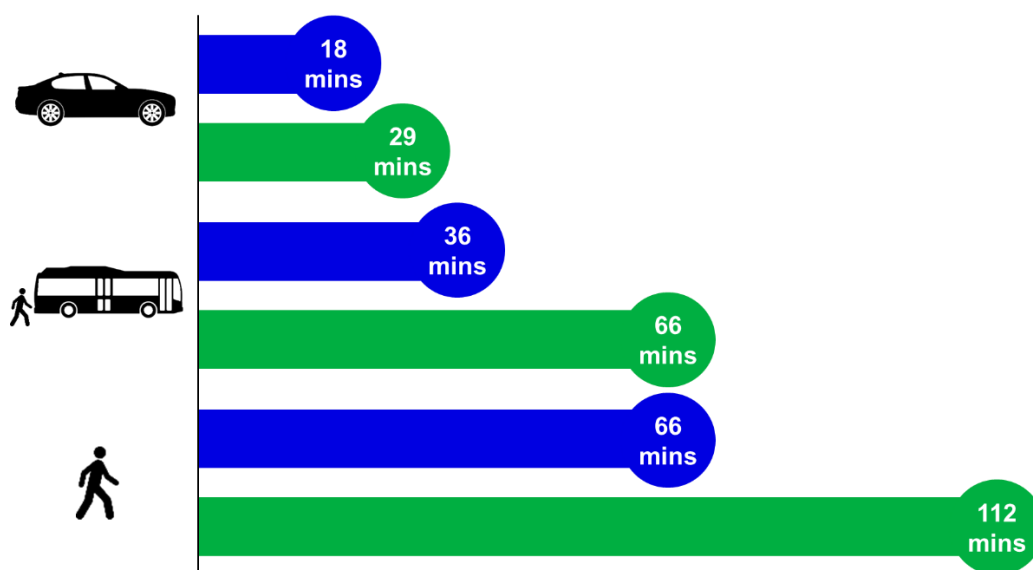
## **For travel by car in 2019:**

- for people living in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings in a sparse setting, average minimum journey times to places with 5,000 or more jobs was 50 minutes and it took on average 50 minutes to travel to the nearest hospital.
- some users in rural areas do not have access to centres of employment with over 5,000 jobs or hospitals within an hour's travel by car.
- people living in rural areas had on average two General Practices available within a 15 minute journey compared with eight General Practices in urban areas.

## Average minimum travel times

For travel by public transport and walking, cycling and by car, the average minimum travel times to reach the nearest key services were longer for people living in rural areas for all services, compared with people living in urban areas.

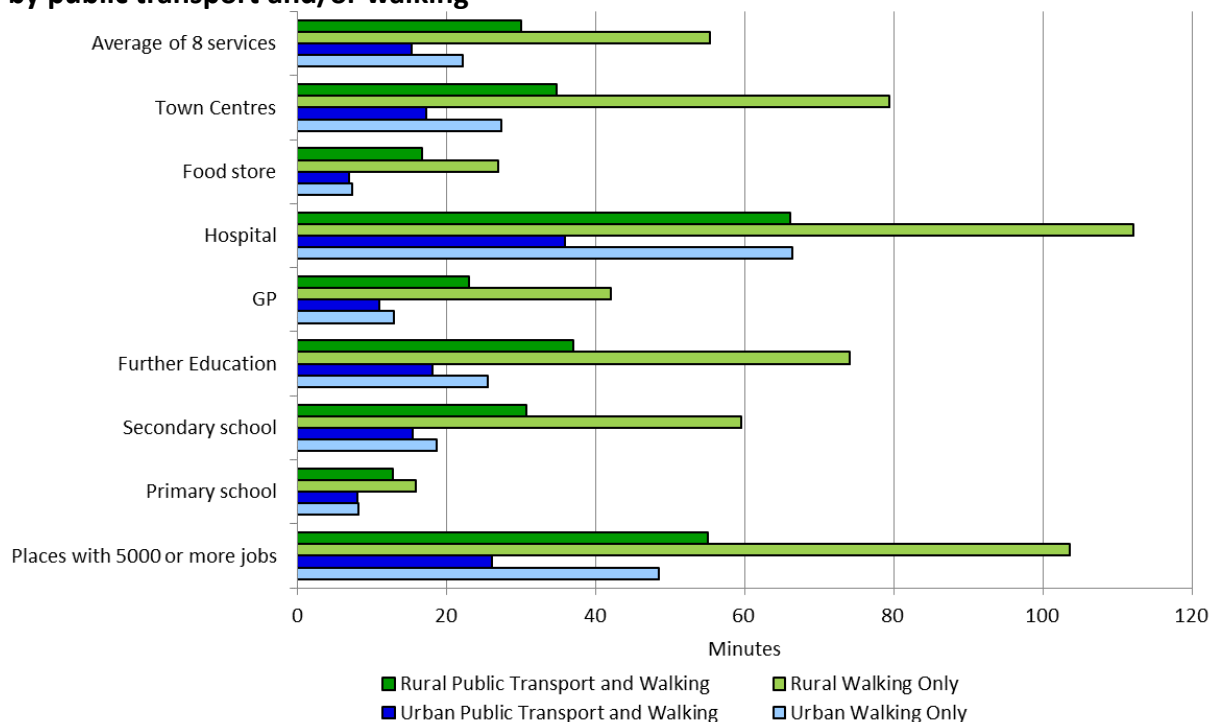
- **For travel by public transport or walking:** In rural areas the services with the lowest level of accessibility were hospitals and centres of employment with 5,000 or more jobs. The average minimum travel time to a hospital was a little over one hour in rural areas, compared with a little over half an hour in urban areas. The average travel time to places with 5,000 or more jobs was 55 minutes in rural areas compared with 26 minutes in urban areas. For most key service types the average minimum rural travel times were around double the average minimum urban travel times, however for places of employment with 100-499 jobs and food stores they were 2.5 times longer and for primary school they were 1.5 times longer.
- **For travel by walking only:** In both rural and urban areas the services with the lowest level of accessibility when walking were hospitals and centres of employment with 5,000 or more jobs, however minimum travel times were roughly twice as long in rural areas. Minimum travel times to primary schools when walking were roughly double in rural areas compared to urban ones and those to secondary schools and further education were roughly three times as long.
- **For travel by car:** For people living in rural areas, making the same journey by car compared with using public transport or walking, had the effect of halving the average minimum journey times. Urban areas also saw a reduction in travel times when comparing travel by car with public transport or walking but the difference was less consistent, travel times to hospitals and centres of employment with 5,000 or more jobs were halved, but travel times to primary school, food stores and centres of employment with 100-499 jobs were similar. The average minimum travel time across all eight services was 33 per cent higher in rural areas compared with urban areas overall. For people living in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings in a sparse setting, average minimum journey times by car to centres of employment with 5,000 or more jobs or to a hospital was around 50 minutes.



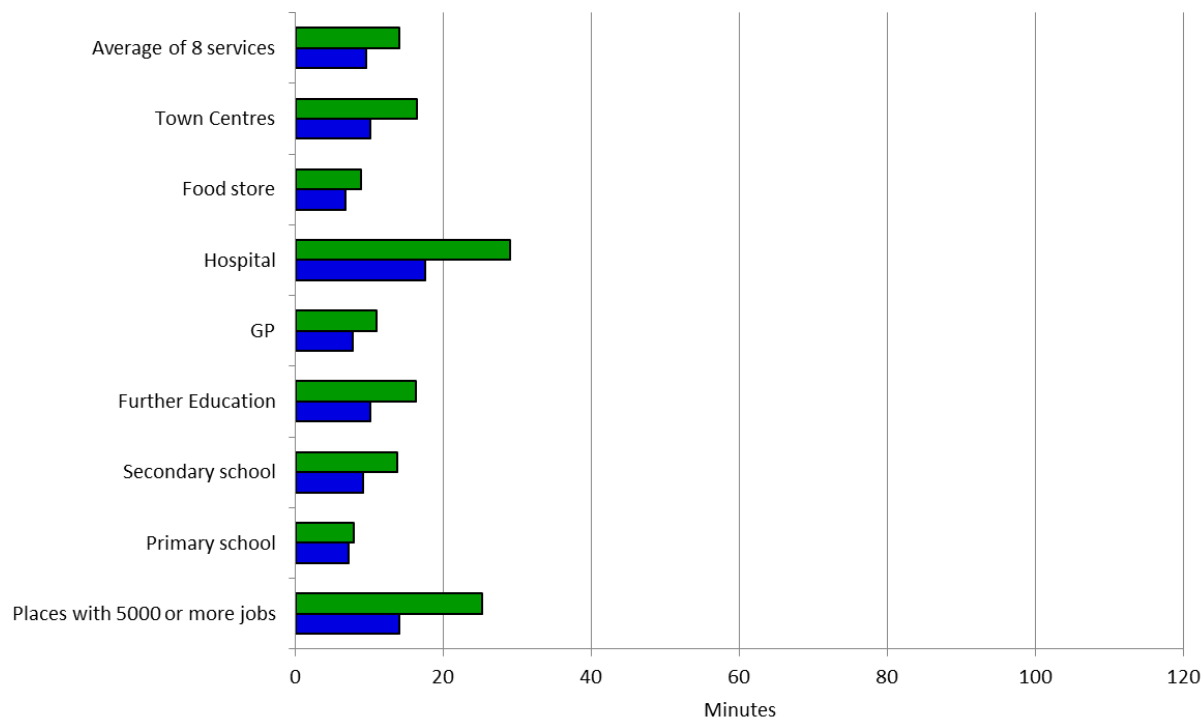
The average travel time in rural areas by public transport to a hospital is almost twice as long as the average travel time in urban areas

## Average minimum travel time to reach the nearest key services by mode of travel, by Lower Super Output Area rural urban classification, in England, 2019

### by public transport and/or walking



### by car



Tables of average minimum travel times to key services, broken down by mode of transport (public transport, car and cycling) and rural-urban classification for 2019 are available in the rural living [supplementary data tables](#).

Note: The average of 8 services is calculated from the minimum journey times to medium sized centres of employment (500-4999 jobs), primary and secondary schools, further education, GPs, hospitals, food stores and town centres.

## Access to key services

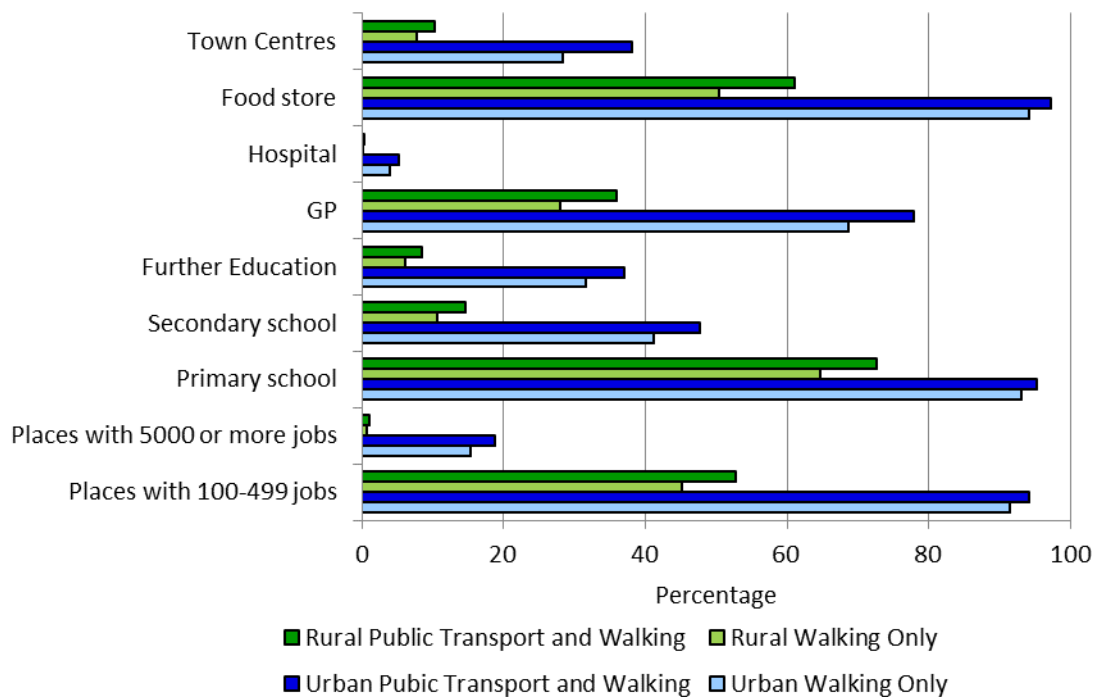
- **For travel by public transport or walking:** Fewer than half the users living in rural areas have access to places with 5,000 or more jobs within 45 minutes, compared with around 90 per cent of users living in urban areas. 51 per cent of users living in rural areas do not have access to their nearest hospital within an hour's travel, compared with 8 per cent in urban areas.
- **For travel by walking only:** 43 per cent of users living in rural areas had access to a General Practice within half an hour's walk compared with 95 per cent of users living in urban areas. 86 per cent of users living in rural areas had access to a primary school within half an hour's walk compared with all service users living in urban areas.
- **For travel by car:** All service users living in rural areas had access to places with 100 to 499 jobs and 500 to 4,999 jobs, town centres, food stores, General Practices, and key places of education within 60 minutes by car. However small proportions of users in rural areas do not have access to places with over 5,000 jobs or hospitals within 60 minutes by car.



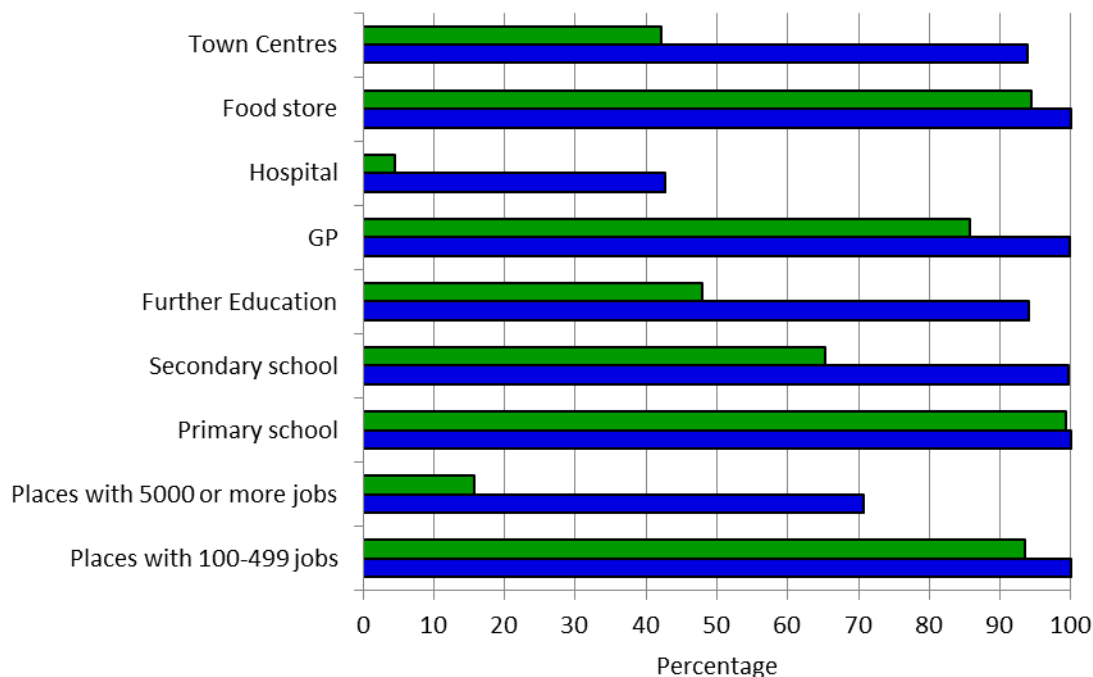
80.9 per cent of people living in rural areas have access to a GP within half an hour's travel using public transport and walking, compared with 99.8 per cent of people living in urban areas

**Percentage of service users with access to key services within selected journey times by mode of travel, by Lower Super Output Area rural urban classification, in England, 2019**

**by public transport and/or walking for journey times within 15 minutes**



**by car for journey times within 15 minutes**



Tables of percentage of service users with access to key services in rural and urban areas, broken down by mode of transport (public transport, car, cycling and walking) for 2019 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

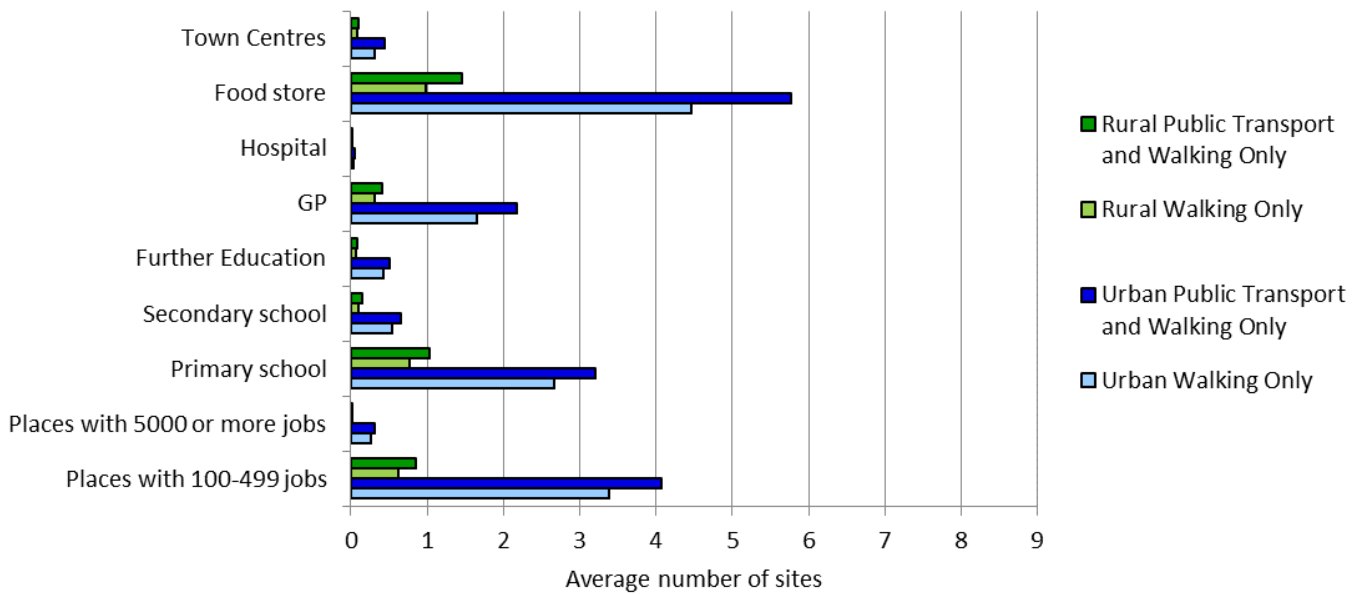
## Average number of key services available

More services were available on average for people living in urban areas for all service types and all journey times compared with those for people living in rural areas when travelling by public transport or walking, or cycling.

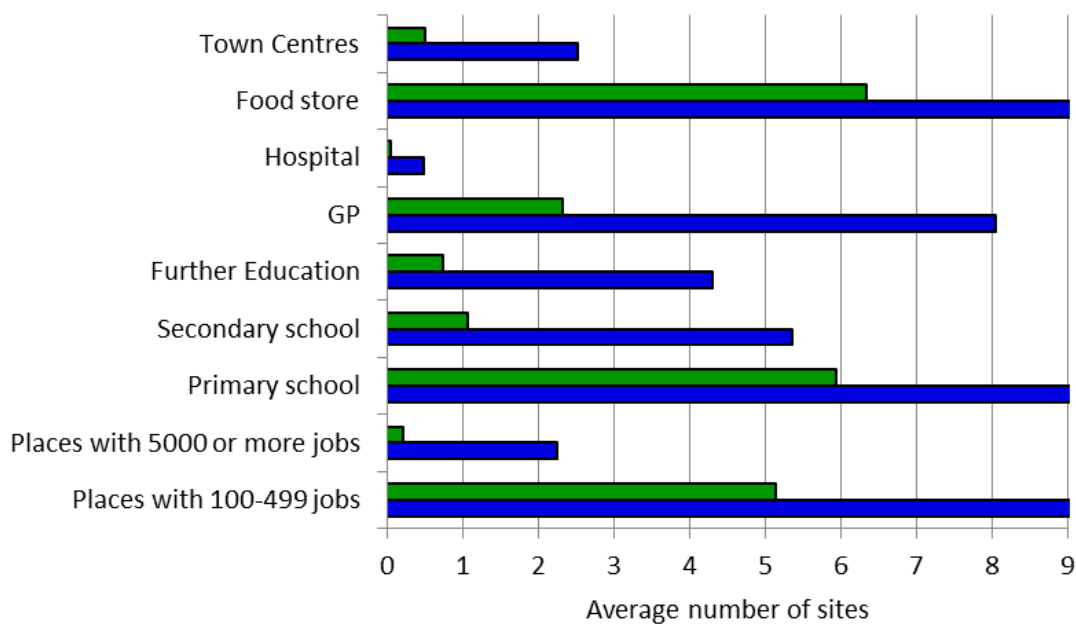
- **For travel by public transport or walking:** The average number of key service locations accessible to people living in rural areas was highest for places with 100-499 jobs, places with 500-4999 jobs, primary schools and food stores, with around 9 available within a 60 minute journey time. The services with the lowest average number of service locations available were hospitals and centres of employment with 5,000 or more jobs, with none available for either service within a 30 minute journey time, and one hospital and two to three places with 5,000 or more jobs available within a 60 minute journey time.
- **For travel by walking only:** There are few service locations that can be reach within 15 minutes of walking in rural areas. Users living in rural areas could access an average of one food store in a 15 minute walk and just under one primary school, compared with four food stores and 3 primary schools on average in urban areas.
- **For travel by car:** Similar availability of services can be observed for travel by car as to that of public transport and walking. For people living in rural areas the number of General Practices available within a 15 minute journey time by public transport or walking was less than one, however by car this increased to an average of two. For people living in urban areas, the number of General Practices available within a 15 minute journey time by public transport or walking was two and this increased to around eight General Practices when travelling by car.

**Average number of sites available within selected journey times, by mode of travel, by Lower Super Output Area rural urban classification, in England, 2019**

**by public transport and/or walking for journey times within 15 minutes**



**by car for journey times within 15 minutes**



Tables of average number of key service sites available within 15, 30, 45 or 60 minutes of travel in rural and urban areas, broken down by mode of transport (public transport, car, cycling and walking) for 2019 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: Technical information on Journey Time Statistics can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/journeytime-statistics-guidance>

Source: DfT Journey Time Statistics: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/journey-time-statistics#data-tables](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/journey-time-statistics#data-tables) (files JTS0102, JTS0202, JTS0302)