



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Statistical Digest of Rural England

Home working

This document is part of the larger compendium publication the [Statistical Digest of Rural England](#), a collection of rural statistics on a wide range of social and economic government policy areas.

The Statistical Digest of Rural England is an official statistics publication meaning these statistics have been produced to the high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

More information on the Official Statistics Code of Practice can be found on the [Code of Practice web pages](#).

These statistics allow comparisons between the different rural and urban area classifications. The Rural-Urban Classification is used to distinguish rural and urban areas. The Classification defines areas as rural if they fall outside of settlements with more than 10,000 resident population.

More information on the Rural-Urban Classification can be found on the [Rural-Urban Classification web pages](#).

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

rural.statistics@defra.gov.uk

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Home working

- The following analysis uses data from the ONS Annual Population Survey. The results show little change in homeworking numbers for 2020 as respondents were asked to consider where they would usually work in their main job prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Alternative surveys were run to monitor the effects of the pandemic on homeworking however sample sizes were too small to provide detailed geographical breakdowns so can only provide high level estimates. The Labour Market Survey (UK level survey launched online at the end of March 2020) estimated that in April 2020, 46.6% of people in employment did some work at home. Further details can be found in the publication [‘Coronavirus and homeworking in the UK: April 2020’](#).
- The Annual Population Survey estimates that of the 27.4¹ million people in work in England in 2020, 4.9 million (18 per cent) were home workers² (those who usually spend at least half of their work time using their home, either within their grounds or in different places or using it as a base, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic).
- The highest rate of home workers was found in rural hamlets and dispersed areas, at 34 per cent. Overall rural areas had a higher rate of home working (25 per cent) compared with urban areas (16 per cent). Homeworking is defined as a respondent’s usual place of work in their main job prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- According to the Office for National Statistics, home workers are more likely to be working in higher skilled roles and hence earn on average a higher hourly wage³, however this will vary across rural areas.
- Overall, all types of rural areas had a higher rate of home working compared with urban areas.

The 27.4 million workers in England in 2020 were made up of:



1.2m (25%)
home workers in
rural areas



3.6m (75%) working
somewhere separate to
home in rural areas



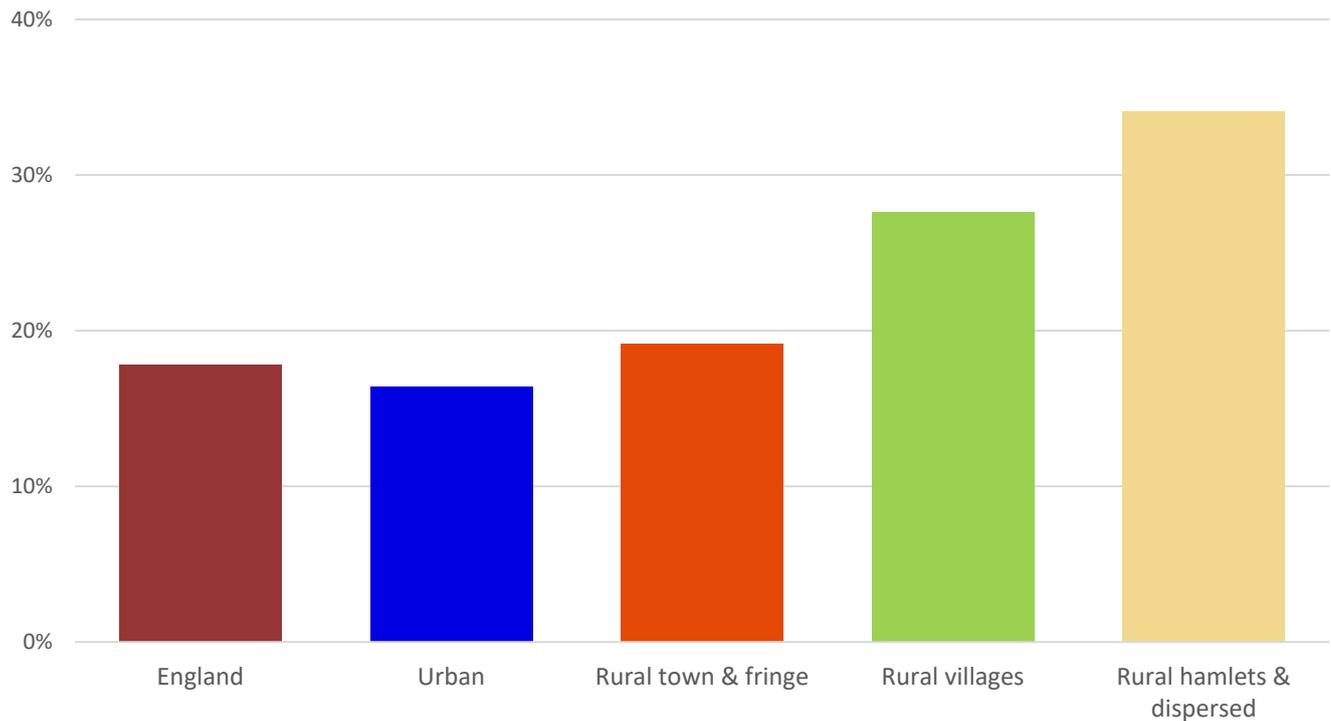
3.7m (16%)
home workers in
urban areas



19.0m (84%) working
somewhere separate to
home in urban areas

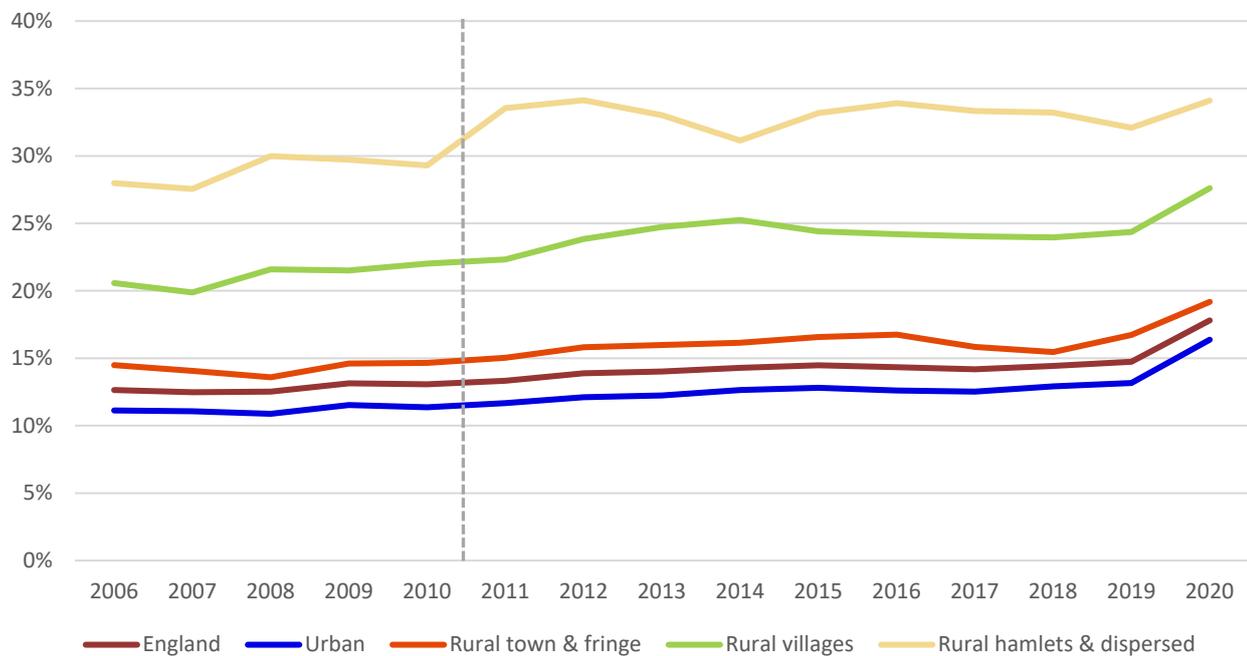
Respondents were asked to consider where they would usually work in their main job prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Home workers as a percentage of all those employed (age 16 and over), by rural-urban classification in England, 2020



Respondents were asked to consider where they would usually work in their main job prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Home workers as a percentage of all those employed (age 16 and over), by rural-urban classification in England, 2006 to 2020

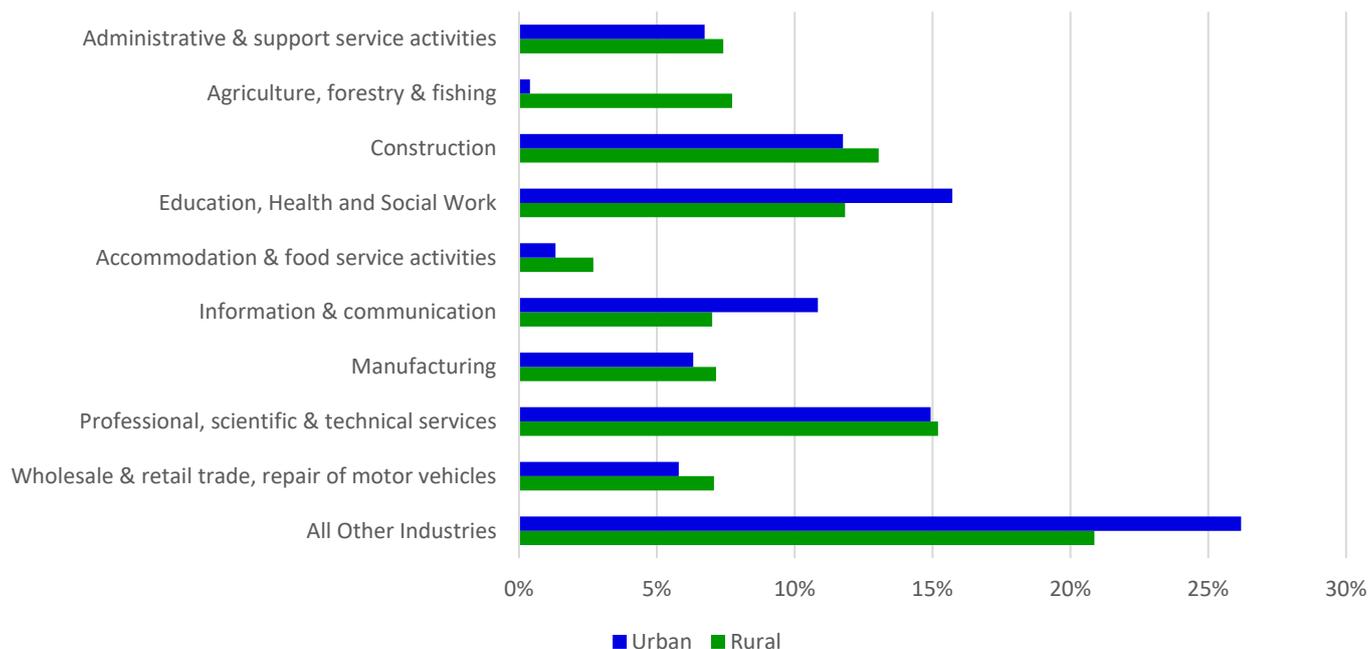


Note: 2006 to 2010 data are classified using the Rural Urban Classification 2001. Data from 2011 are classified using the Rural Urban Classification 2011.

Respondents were asked to consider where they would usually work in their main job prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- In 2020 there were 1,166,000 home workers in rural areas, accounting for 25 per cent of all workers living in rural areas. There were 3,712,000 home workers in urban areas, accounting for 16 per cent of all workings living in urban areas.
- Between 2006 and 2020 the rate of home working increased across all areas. The highest increase was in rural hamlets and dispersed areas at 6.1 percentage points and the lowest increase was in urban areas at 5.2 percentage points. However, it should be known that the classification of settlements was updated for 2011 onwards, and some settlements would have changed category.
- A table of homeworking figures broken down by rural-urban classification covering 2006 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Percentage of home workers by industry and rural-urban classification, in England, 2020



Respondents were asked to consider where they would usually work in their main job prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- The greatest difference in industry split home worker proportions occurs in “Agriculture, forestry & fishing”, where there is a 7.3 per cent difference in favour of rural areas, followed by “Education, Health and Social Work”, where there is a 3.9 per cent difference in favour of urban areas. Homeworking is defined as a respondent’s usual place of work in their main job prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The largest contributor to home workers in urban areas is “Education, Health and Social Work” at 15.7 per cent and in rural areas is “Professional, scientific & technical services” at 15.2 per cent.
- A table of 2020 rural and urban homeworking figures broken down industry is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: 1) This figure is for all those who reported their working status. It differs slightly from the total number employed as some respondents have not reported their home working status.

2) Home workers are defined as those who usually spend at least half of their work time using their home, either within their grounds or in different places or using it as a base. Home workers will include both those who are employees of organisations and those who are self-employed. The category for home workers includes the following: those who work within their home, those who work in the same grounds or buildings of their home, and those who work in different places but use their home as a base.

3) Further information can be found in the [ONS document, Characteristics of Home Workers, 2014](#)

4) The levels and rates are based on people age 16 and over who are in employment.

5) The RUC01 has been applied to all data up to and including 2010. From 2011 onwards the RUC11 has been applied. Although a key difference between the 2001 and 2011 version of the classification is that a distinction between major conurbations, lesser conurbations and other urban areas has been introduced, the urban categories are comparable in concept. Similarly, the rural 2001 and 2011 categories are comparable in concept. However, the classification of a settlement may have changed between 2001 and 2011 owing to changes in population and settlement pattern.

Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey / Labour Force Survey