



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Statistical Digest of Rural England

Health

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:

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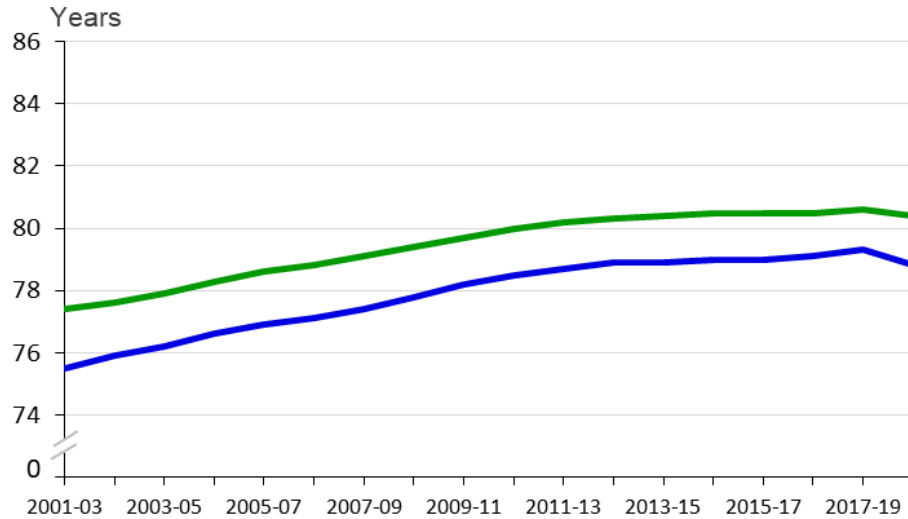
Last updated: 28th April 2022

Health

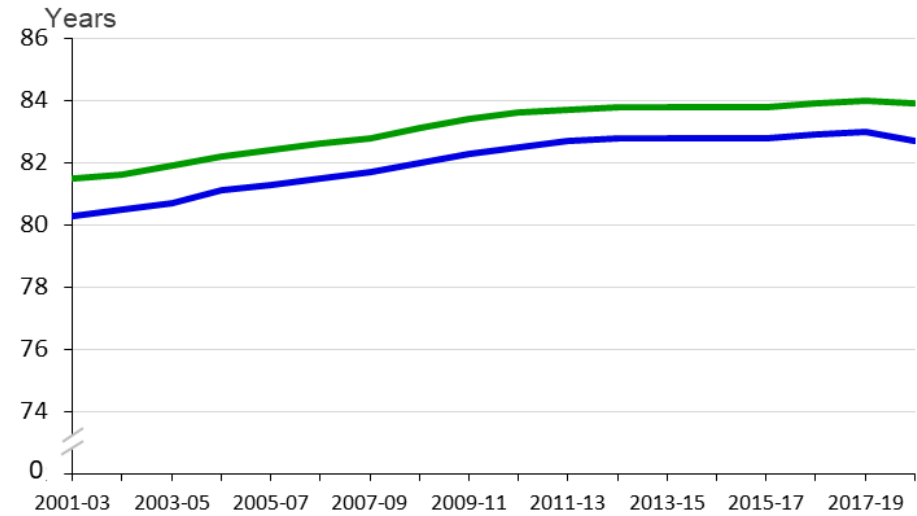
- **Average life expectancy was highest in Mainly Rural areas:** On average, people born in Mainly Rural areas in 2018-20 are expected to live two and a half years longer than people born in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas.
- The average life expectancy in 2018-20 was 79.3 years for men and 83.1 years for women in England.
- **Potential years of life lost (PYLL) from all causes of death was lower in Predominantly Rural areas than Predominantly Urban areas.** For the period 2017-2019, the highest rate of PYLL was in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas at 479 years of life lost per 10,000 population. The lowest rate of PYLL was in Mainly Rural areas, at 370 years of life lost per 10,000 population.
- **Infant mortality is lower in rural areas than in urban areas:** In 2018, the infant mortality rate in rural areas was 3.0 deaths per 1,000 live births, compared with 4.1 deaths per 1,000 live births in urban areas.

Life expectancy

Male life expectancy at birth, by Local Authority Classification, England



Female life expectancy at birth, by Local Authority Classification, England



- Life expectancy has increased in Predominantly Urban and Predominantly Rural areas since 2001-03 to 2016-18, but has started to show a slight decrease in 2018-20; this decline spans a time period affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In 2018-20 the average England life expectancy for men was 79.3 years and 83.1 years for women. This means that a newborn boy born in England can on average, expect to live to 79.3 years of age, if mortality rates stay the same throughout his lifetime. Likewise, for a newborn girl, they can on average expect to live to 83.1 years of age.
- Life expectancy was higher for people born in Predominantly Rural areas compared with Predominantly Urban areas. Highest life expectancy was in Mainly Rural areas, with male life expectancy at 80.6 years and female life expectancy at 84.2 years.
- Life expectancy was lowest for both males and females in Urban with Minor Conurbations
- Tables showing male and female life expectancy, broken down by local authority rural-urban classification for 2001-03 to 2018-20 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: Weighted average is calculated using NOMIS mid-year population estimates by Local Authority and using RUCLAD 2011. 2018-20 population data uses the new unitary authority boundaries created in 2020.

Since the last publication there has been further restructuring of local governments in England, resulting in even more changes to local authority areas. Figures based on the new boundaries are presented in the 2018-20 data.

1. Buckinghamshire UA comprises part of the Buckinghamshire county (Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks, Wycombe)
2. North Northamptonshire UA comprises part of the Northamptonshire county (Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering, Wellingborough)
3. West Northamptonshire UA comprises part of the Northamptonshire county (Daventry, Northampton, South Northamptonshire)

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) Life expectancy tables:

[Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) Life expectancy tables](#)

Potential years of life lost (PYLL)

Potential Years of Life Lost (PYLL) is the difference between the actual age of death due to a particular condition or disease and the expected age of death if that person had not suffered from that disease. This indicator measures the PYLL for all causes of death.

- The highest rate of PYLL was in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas at 479 years of life lost per 10,000 population.
- The lowest rate of PYLL was in Mainly Rural areas, at 370 years of life lost per 10,000 population.

Years of life lost per 10,000 population for all causes, by Local Authority classification, England, 2017-19

	All Causes
Mainly Rural	370
Largely Rural	394
Urban with Significant Rural	392
Urban with City and Town	454
Urban with Minor Conurbation	479
Urban with Major Conurbation	440
Predominantly Urban	448
Predominantly Rural	384
England	427

Years of life lost due to mortality from all causes, England, 2017-19



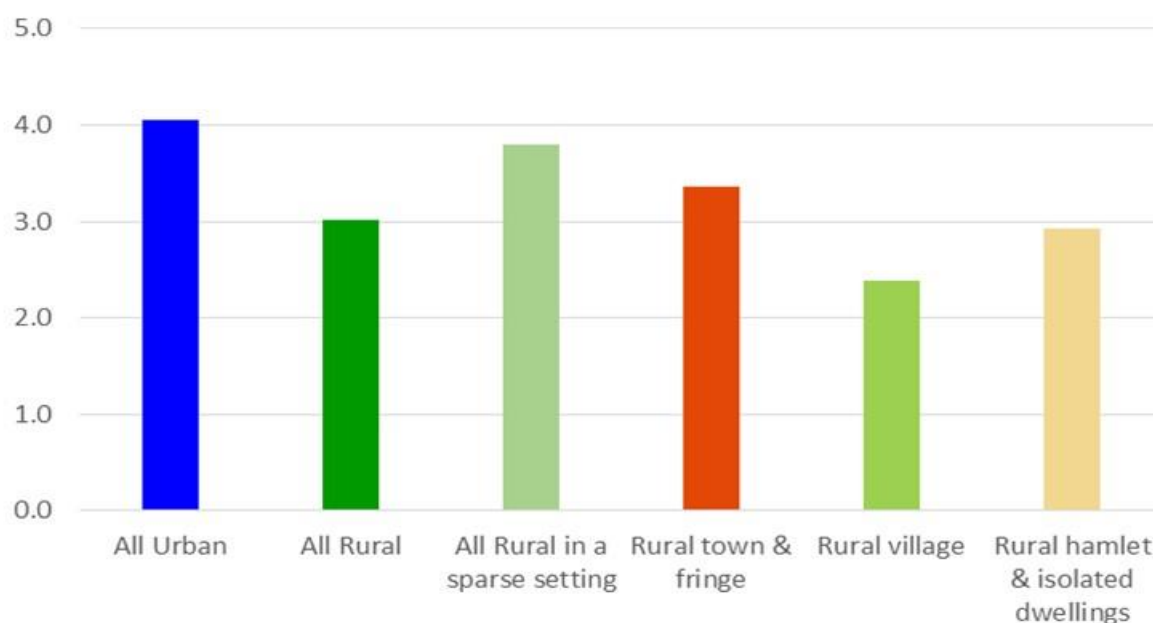
Notes: PYLL measures the average number of years a person would have lived had they not died prematurely (age 1 to 74), per 10,000 population. Data are based on the original underlying cause of death measured by directly age-standardised rates. Data for 2017-2019 are pooled and weighted by the 2018 NOMIS population estimates of local authorities.

Source: NOMIS and Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC): <https://indicators.ic.nhs.uk/webview/>

Infant mortality rate

Infant mortality rate, by settlement type in England, 2018

Deaths per 1,000 live births



Infant deaths (aged under 1 year) per 1,000 live births, by settlement type in England, 2012 - 2018

	2012	2015	2018
Urban	4.2	4.0	4.1
Rural	3.6	3.1	3.0
in a sparse setting	3.5	2.6	3.8
Rural town & fringe	3.9	3.2	3.4
Rural Village	3.2	3.1	2.4
Rural hamlet & isolated dwellings	3.1	2.8	2.9
England	4.1	3.9	3.9

- The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is the number of infant (under one year old) deaths per 1,000 live births.
- In 2018, the IMR was lower in rural areas at 3.0 deaths per 1,000 live births than the England average of 3.9 per 1,000 live births. The IMR for urban areas was 4.1 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- Rural areas in a sparse setting have an IMR of 3.8 deaths per 1,000 live births, which is 0.8 deaths per 1,000 live births higher than the overall rural IMR.
- Over the last 10 years the IMR has decreased by 0.8 deaths per 1,000 live births for rural areas and by 0.9 deaths per 1,000 live births for urban areas.

Notes: Infants are defined as less than one year old. There are many factors that can influence the IMR, including birth weight, mothers' age, and socio-economic status.

Source: ONS, Mortality@ons.gsi.gov.uk