



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Statistical Digest of Rural England

August 2022 Edition





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Contents

Sections of the Digest are updated throughout the year. In this edition the following section(s) have been updated:

- [Fuel poverty](#)

Statistical Digest of Rural England	1
Official Statistics	5
Defining rural areas	6
Rural population and migration	11
Mid-year population 2020	11
Population by age	12
Average age of the population.....	15
Population change.....	16
Ethnicity	18
Population at local authority level	20
Internal migration	25
Internal migration by age.....	27
Rural economy	30
Employment and earnings.....	30
Employment rate	31
Unemployment rate.....	32
Economic inactivity.....	33
Earnings.....	35
Home working	38
Productivity measured by Gross Value Added (GVA)	42
Contribution to England's Gross Value Added (GVA)	43
Gross Value Added (GVA) per Workforce Job.....	45
Contribution to England's Gross Value Added (GVA) by Industry	47
Businesses	49
Business composition.....	49
Businesses by industry type	52
Employment by industry type	57
Businesses by size band.....	59
Small and medium businesses.....	60
Business count.....	67
Business start-ups.....	68
Innovation and investment.....	69
Businesses engaged in innovation	69
Capital investment per employee	71
Rural accessibility.....	73
Transport and travel	73
Distance travelled.....	74
Trips made	81
Journey to School	85
Accessibility to services.....	89
Average minimum travel times	91
Access to key services	93
Average number of key services available	95
Overall measure of accessibility of services	97
Broadband.....	105

Broadband speed.....	106
Broadband coverage.....	107
Tourism	110
Gross Value Added (GVA) from Tourism.....	110
Tourism: business counts and employment.....	110
Rural living	112
Housing	112
Housing completions	112
Net additions to housing stock.....	115
Second and empty homes.....	116
Residential housing transactions.....	121
Additions to affordable housing stock.....	124
Housing and accommodation affordability.....	125
Housing affordability.....	125
Homelessness and temporary accommodation.....	128
Household expenditure	130
Nominal expenditure and disposable income	130
Expenditure on commodity or service groups.....	132
Deprivation	135
Poverty	138
Fuel poverty.....	143
Education and skills.....	147
Childcare provision.....	147
Secondary education.....	152
Pupils leaving school with English and Maths at A* to C grades or equivalent at GCSE level, based on residency of pupils	152
Pupils leaving school with English and Maths A* to C grades or equivalent at GCSE level, based on Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices (IDACI) decile and residency of pupils	154
Pupils leaving school with English and Maths at GCSE level, by geographical residency of pupils	155
Pupils leaving school with English and Maths A* to C grades or equivalent at GCSE level, based on school location	159
School inspection outcomes, based on school location	161
Higher education	162
Full-time entrants to higher education	162
Part-time entrants to higher education.....	163
Skills	164
Workplace based skills.....	164
Residence based skills.....	168
Apprenticeships.....	172
Health and Wellbeing	173
Life expectancy	174
Potential years of life lost (PYLL).....	176
Infant mortality rate.....	177
Wellbeing	178
Loneliness.....	184
Feelings about the local neighbourhood.....	186
Volunteering and charity.....	189
Crime.....	192
Commercial Victimization Survey	198
Crime Survey for England & Wales	199

Introduction

The Statistical Digest of Rural Statistics is a collection of statistics on a range of social and economic subject areas. The statistics are split by rural and urban areas, allowing for comparisons between the different rural and urban area classifications. The Digest includes high level statistics which present an overall picture for England. However, there is likely to be considerable variation in individual towns, villages and hamlets.

The Digest starts with a section on the rural and urban populations in England. This is followed by a rural economy section containing indicators on economic activity, earnings, productivity as well as a selection of indicators relating to economic growth. The Rural accessibility section includes data on transport, measuring accessibility to services and broadband. The final section of the Digest includes a selection of rural living statistics on housing, household expenditure, poverty, education, health and crime.

Sections of the Digest are updated throughout the year. In this edition the following section(s) have been updated:

- [Fuel poverty](#)

Official Statistics

These statistics have been produced to the high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which sets out eight principles including meeting user needs, impartiality and objectivity, integrity, sound methods and assured quality, frankness and accessibility.

More information on the Official Statistics Code of Practice can be found at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>.

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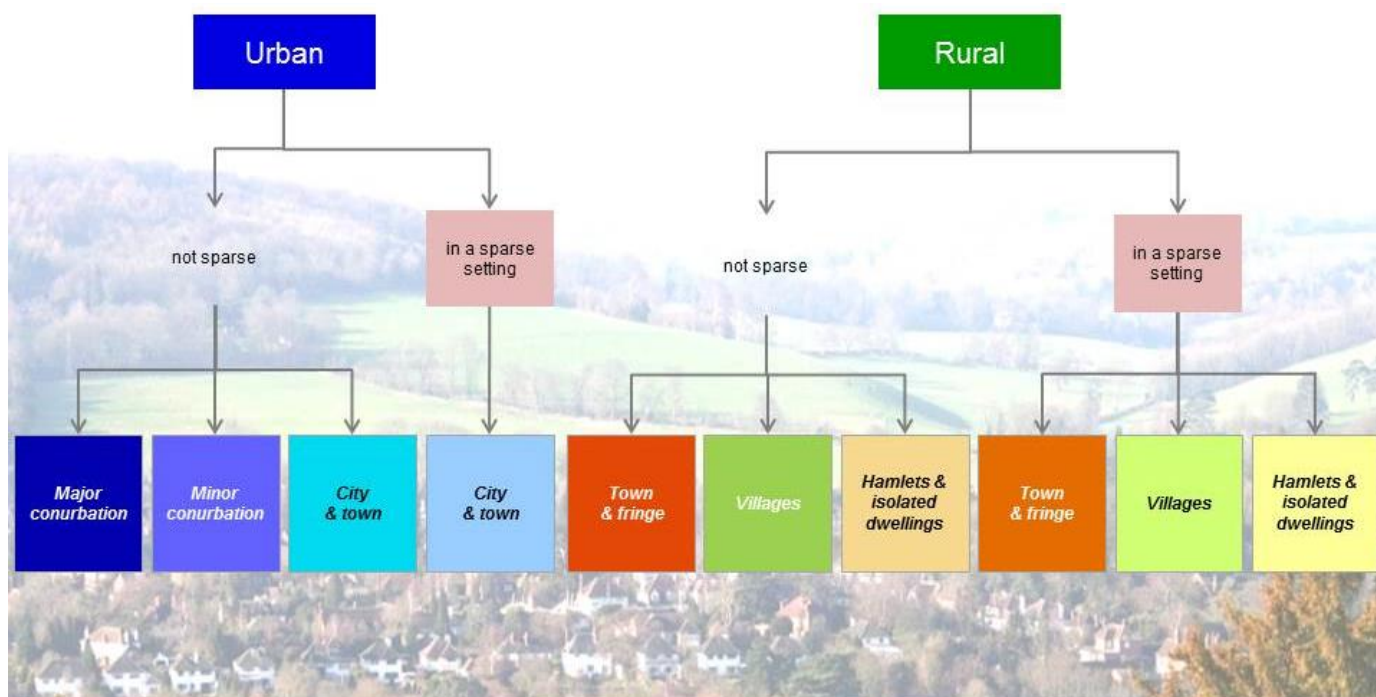
There is a special Census 2011 version of the Digest which looks at the data from the 2011 census and where possible makes comparisons to the 2001 census results.

This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2011-census-results-for-rural-england>

Defining rural areas

Wherever possible, 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.

Census Output Areas - the smallest areas for which data are available from the 2001 and 2011 Censuses - are assigned to one of four urban or six rural categories:



Those described as “in a sparse setting” reflect where the wider area is remotely populated.

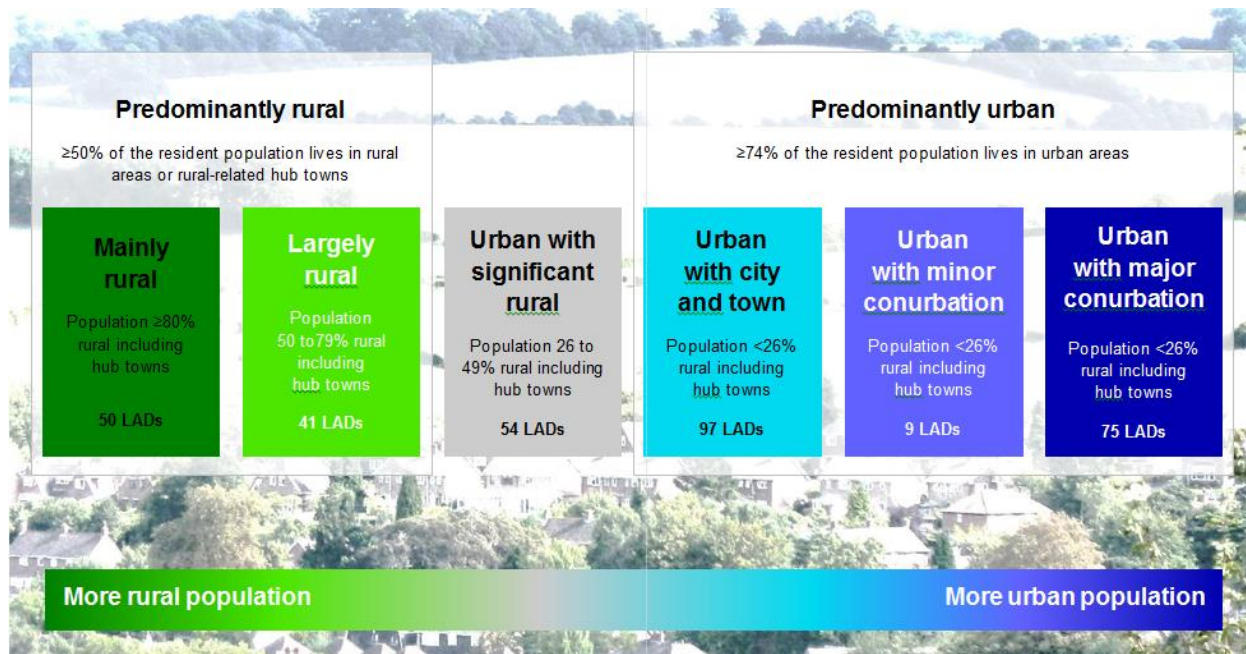
A map is shown overleaf.

When data are not available at a small enough geographical scale, it may be possible to apply the Rural-Urban Local Authority Classification. This classification categorises districts and unitary authorities on a six-point scale from rural to urban. It is underpinned by rural and urban populations as defined by the Classification.

However, the Local Authority Classification also considers some urban areas as Hub Towns (with populations of between 10,000 and 30,000). These Hub Towns have met statistical criteria to be considered hubs for services and businesses for a wider rural hinterland and their populations are therefore classified as effectively rural for the purposes of the Local Authority Classification.

Under the classification each Local Authority District is assigned to one of six categories on the basis of the percentage of the total resident population accounted for by the combined rural and Hub Town components of its population and its 'conurbation context'.

The local authority categories are:



The categories are frequently aggregated to 'Predominantly Rural', 'Urban with Significant Rural' and 'Predominantly Urban' as shown.

It should be noted that the classifications are based on populations and settlement patterns, not on how much countryside there is. Authorities classified as urban may have wide areas of countryside and may have sizeable rural populations. The classification has been made according to the proportions of the population residing in urban settlements and outside urban settlements.

A 2011-based Local Authority Classification was published in December 2014 based on the 2011 Census and the detailed 2011 rural-urban classification of Census Output Areas (published in 2013) and this replaces the previous 2001-based Local Authority Classification. The Digest is not updated in its entirety according to the 2011-based classification. Some sections will refer to the previous 2001-based classification.

The 2011-based Rural Urban Local Authority Classification, or RUCLAD11, has fewer Local Authorities categorised as being Largely or Mainly 'rural'. This is due to an overall increase in population, plus an expansion of certain settlements and the density of those built up areas. The classification is based on the proportion of people living in settlements defined as 'rural' (below 10,000 population), or living in certain 'hub towns' (populations between 10,000 and 30,000) that

have been identified as having the potential to serve the wider rural areas. The impact of population changes and settlement patterns is that fewer settlements are defined as ‘rural’ when compared with the previous Census, and hence proportionately fewer people are regarded as living in rural areas. In some cases, this means that Local Authorities which were regarded as ‘rural’ in the previous classification are no longer classed as ‘rural’.

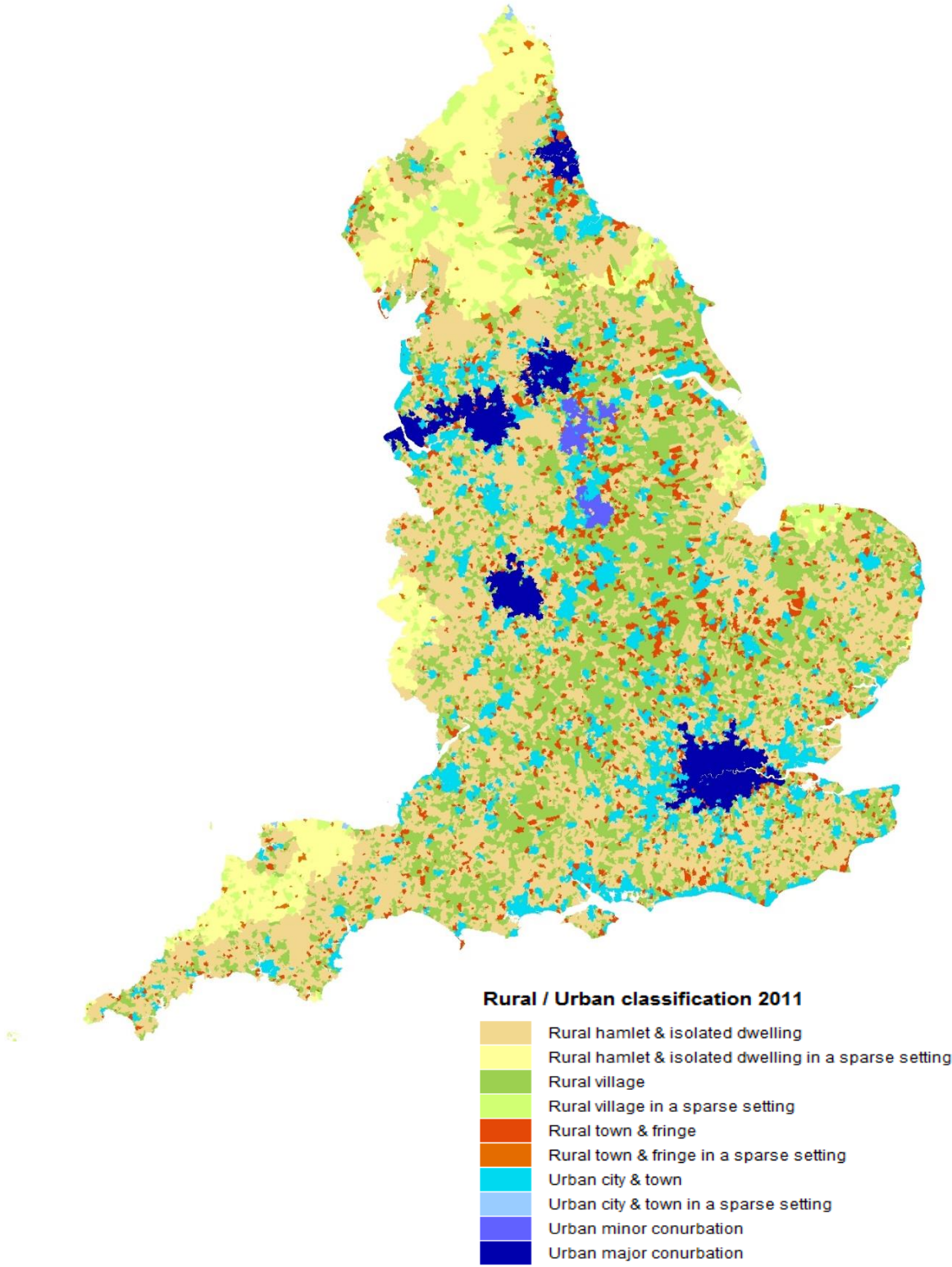
The table below shows the 2001-based Local Authority Classification and its categories on the left, and the 2011-based Local Authority Classification 2011 on the right to show how the categories align for comparison of figures.

2001-based Local Authority Classification	Broader classification	2011-based Local Authority Classification	Broader classification
London	London	London	London
Major Urban	Predominantly Urban excl. London	Urban with Major Conurbation	Predominantly Urban excl. London
Large Urban		Urban with Minor Conurbation	
Other Urban		Urban with City and Town	
Significant Rural	Significant Rural	Urban with Significant Rural	Urban with Significant Rural
Rural-50	Predominantly Rural	Largely Rural	Predominantly Rural
Rural-80		Mainly Rural	
England	England	England	England

More information on the classifications can be found at:

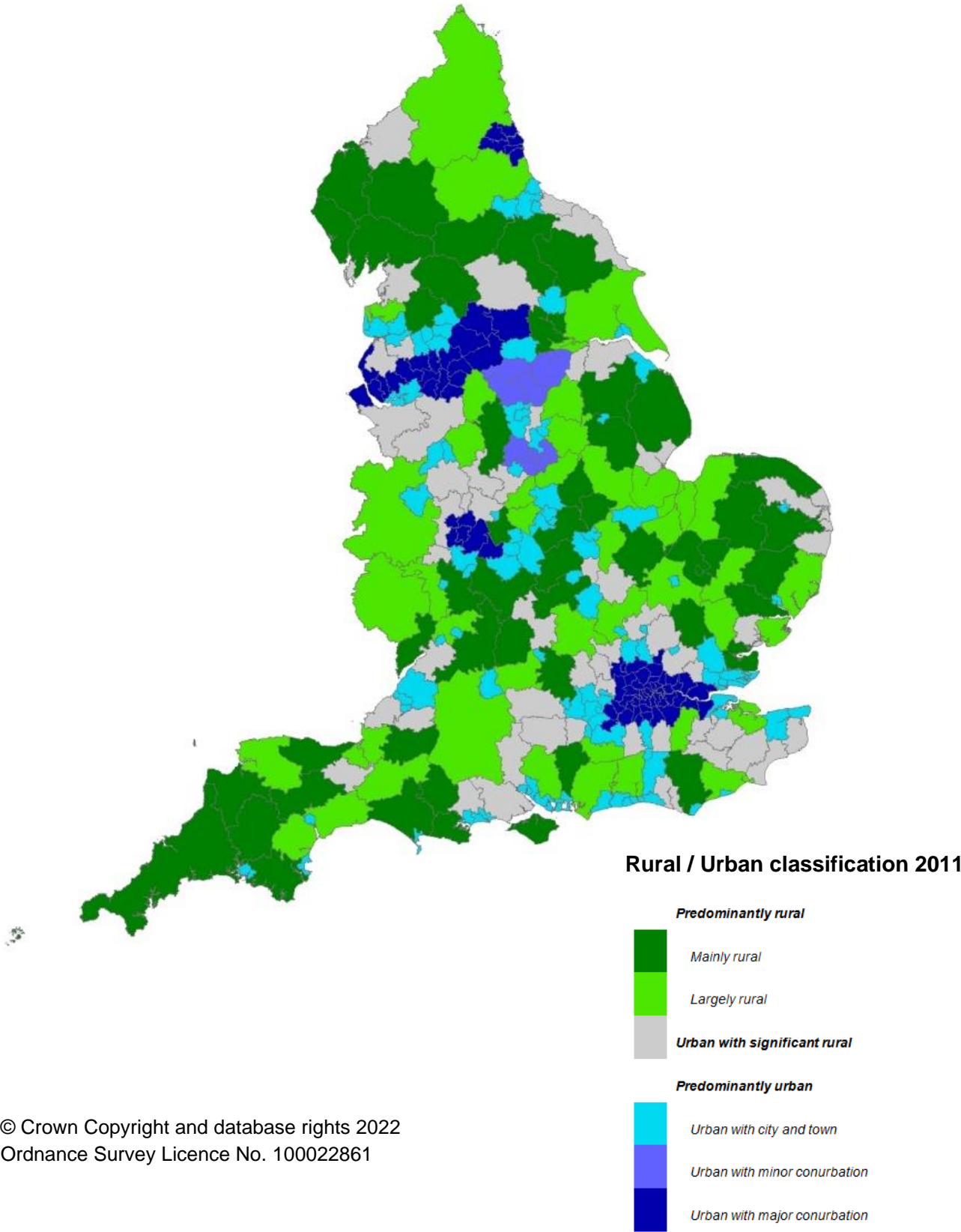
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/rural-urban-definition>

2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Census Output Areas in England



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2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Local Authorities in England



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Rural population and migration

Mid-year population 2020

- In 2020 the mid-year population estimate (based on Lower Super Output Areas, LSOAs) for England was 56.6 million, of which 9.7 million (17.1 per cent) lived in rural areas and 46.9 million (82.9 per cent) lived in urban areas.
- In 2011 the more detailed Census output area-based rural population was 9.3 million (17.6 per cent) while the mid-year population estimate based on LSOAs was 9.1 million (17.2 per cent). Further explanation can be found in footnote 1
- In comparing population estimates at LSOA level there was an increase in the rural population from 9.1 million in 2011 (LSOA-based) to 9.7 million in 2020 (LSOA-based), however the proportion of the total population has fallen from 17.2 per cent to 17.1 per cent over the same time period, as the urban population has increased at a faster rate.
- Within rural areas, 0.5 million people lived in sparse settings in 2020.



9.7 million people live in rural areas; that is **17%** of England's population

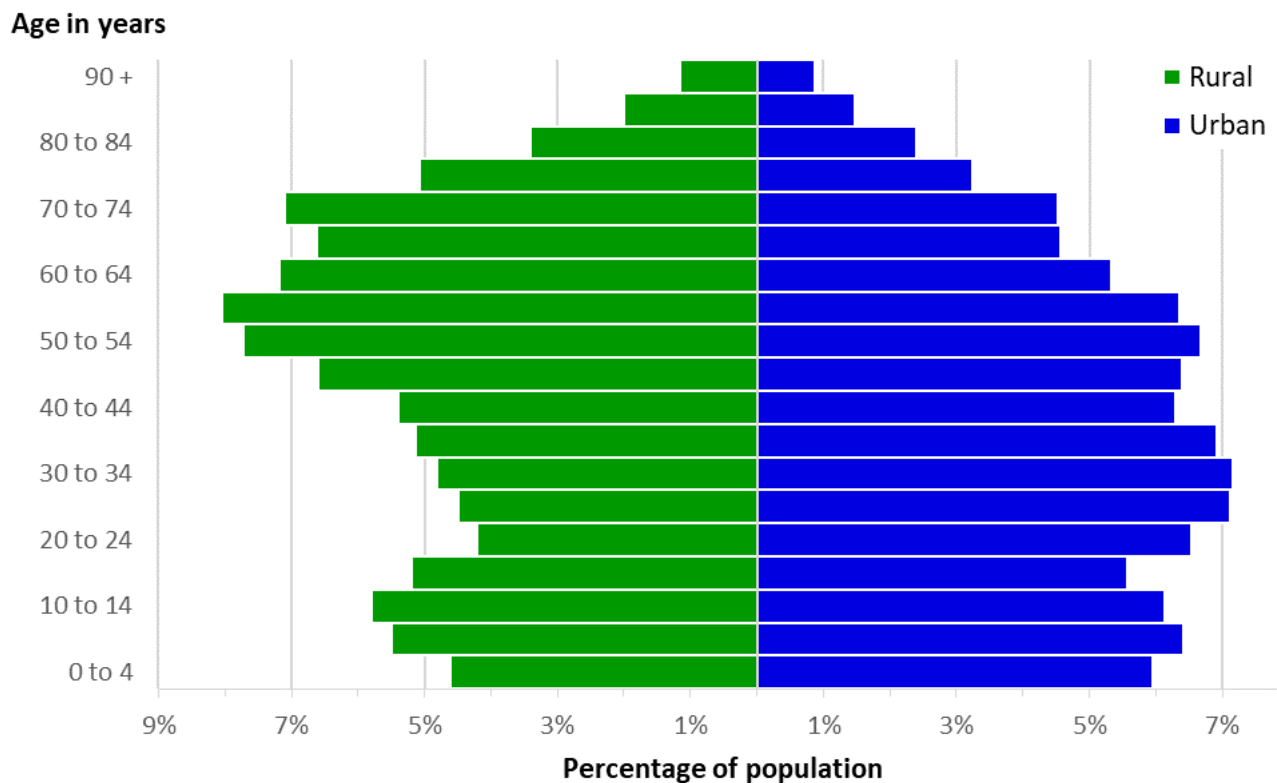
2019 Mid-year population estimates

	Population	Proportion (%)
Rural	9,683,300	17.1
Rural Town and Fringe	5,240,300	9.3
- those in a sparse setting	197,600	0.3
Rural Village and Hamlet	4,443,000	7.9
- those in a sparse setting	304,600	0.5
Urban	46,866,800	82.9
Urban Major Conurbation	20,275,900	35.9
Urban Minor Conurbation	2,031,500	3.6
Urban City and Town	24,559,400	43.4
- those in a sparse setting	91,700	0.2
England	56,550,100	100.0

- 9.7 million people, or 17.1 per cent of the population, lived in rural areas in 2020.
- Around 502,200 people, or 0.9 per cent of the population lived in rural settlements in a sparse setting.
- A further table of the mid-year population estimates broken down by detailed rural-urban classification covering 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

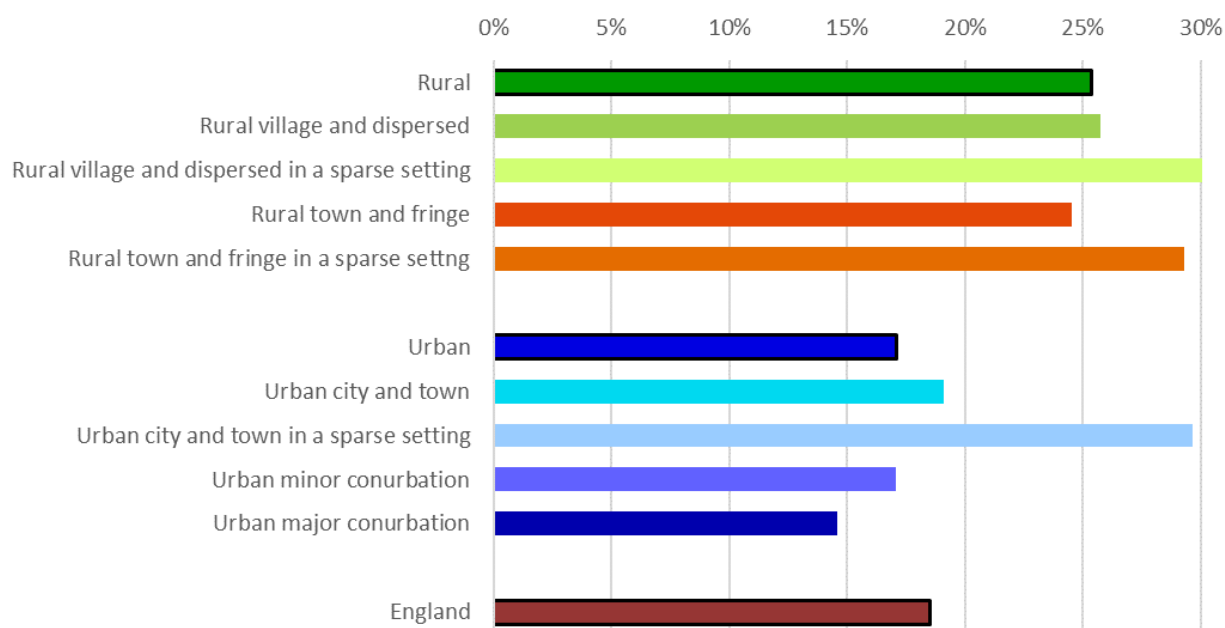
Population by age

Percentage of population within age bands by rural-urban classification (LSOA) in England, 2020

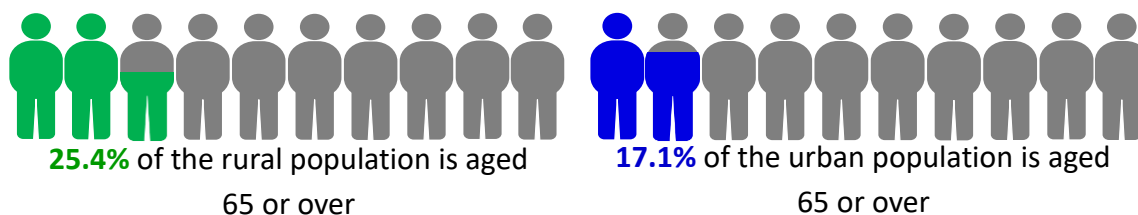


- The population in rural areas has a higher proportion of older people compared with urban areas.
- In 2020, the most prominent age groups in rural areas are *50 to 54* and *55 to 59* with 7.7 per cent and 8.0 per cent of the rural population, respectively, while the most prominent age groups in urban areas are *25 to 29* and *30 to 34* with 7.2 per cent and 7.2 per cent of the urban population, respectively.
- A table of 2020 mid-year population estimates broken down by age band and detailed rural-urban classification is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Percentage of population aged 65 and over by rural-urban classification (LSOA) in England, 2020



- The rural population has a higher proportion of those aged 65 and over, at 25.4 per cent, compared with the urban population where 17.1 per cent are 65 and over.



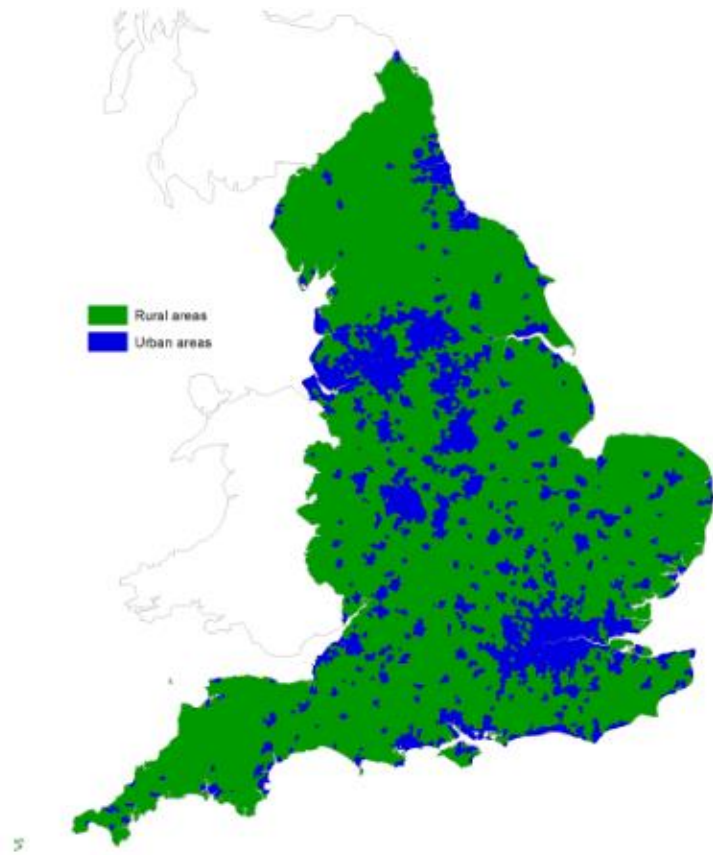
- The population of areas in a sparse setting have the highest proportion of those aged 65 and over, particularly settlements that are rural village and dispersed in a sparse setting which have 30.7 per cent of the population aged 65 and over.

Population aged 65 and over as a percentage of total 2020 mid-year population

	Population aged 65 and over	Proportion aged 65 and over (%)
Rural	2,454,800	25.4
Rural town and fringe	1,238,200	24.6
- those in a sparse setting	57,900	29.3
Rural village and hamlet	1,065,200	25.7
- those in a sparse setting	93,500	30.7
Urban	8,009,200	17.1
Urban major conurbation	2,958,900	14.6
Urban minor conurbation	346,800	17.1
Urban city and town	4,676,400	19.1
- those in a sparse setting	27,200	29.7
England	10,464,000	18.5

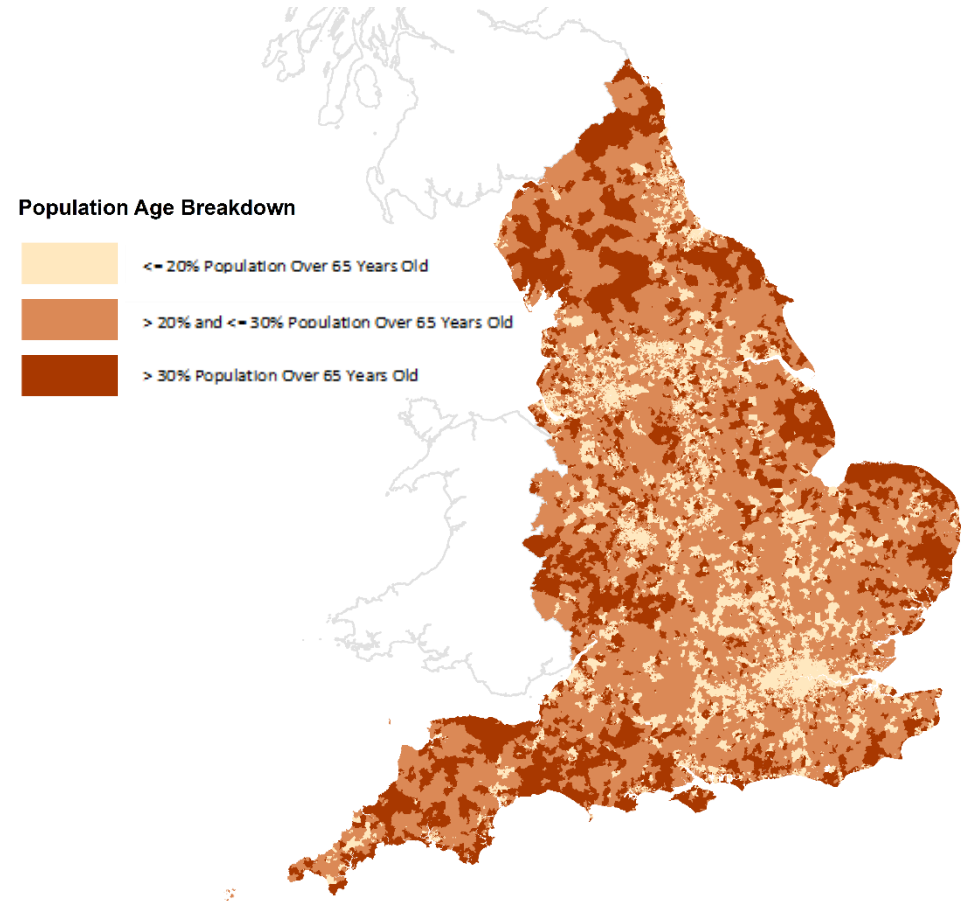
Maps showing the geographic relationship between the rural and urban populations at lower super output area level (LSOA) and areas where the percentage of population of over 65-year olds are most concentrated

Lower super output area classification of England (2011)



Source: ONS, Defra , RUC2011
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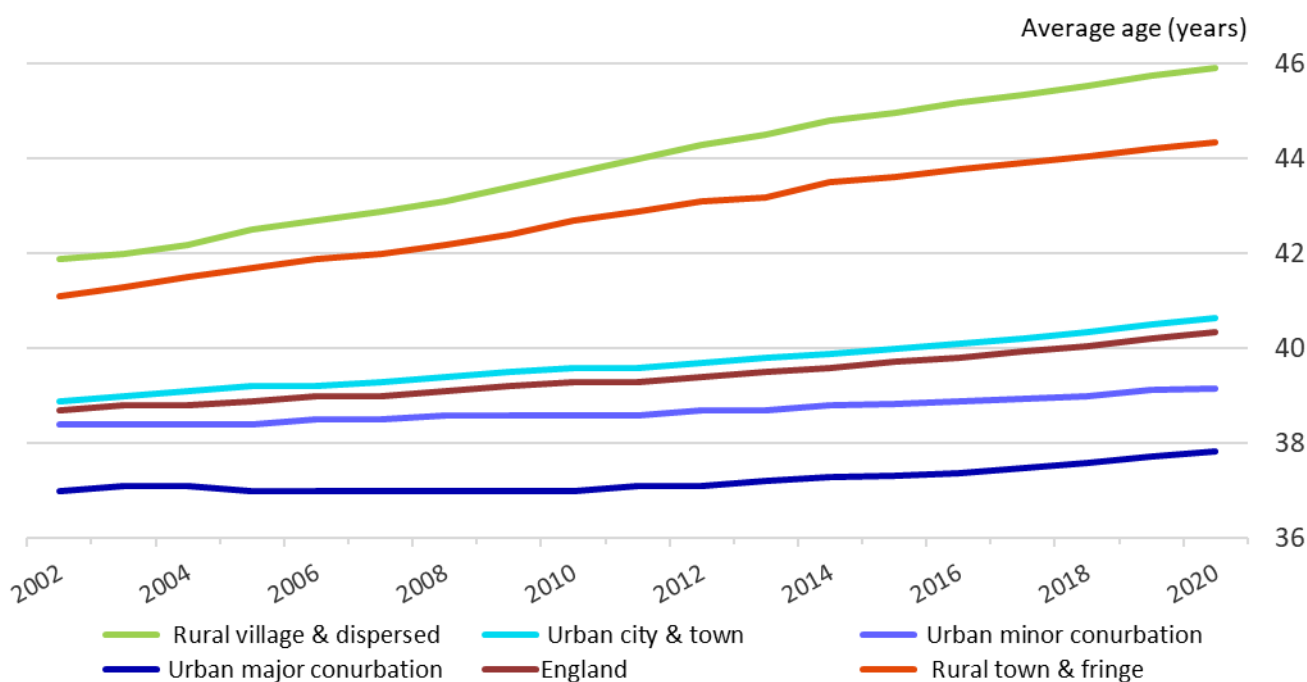
Percentage of population over the age of 65 years (2020)



Source: ONS, Defra, Mid-year population estimates for 2020 at LSOA level

Average age of the population

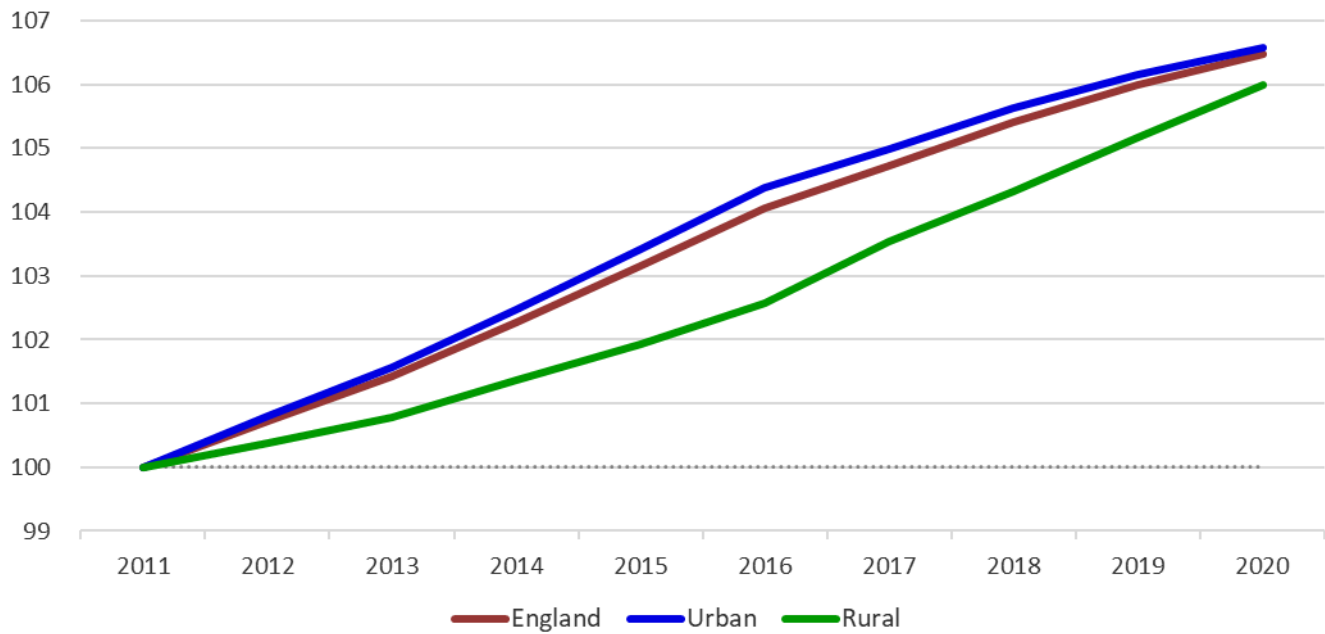
Average age in rural and urban areas in England, 2002 to 2020



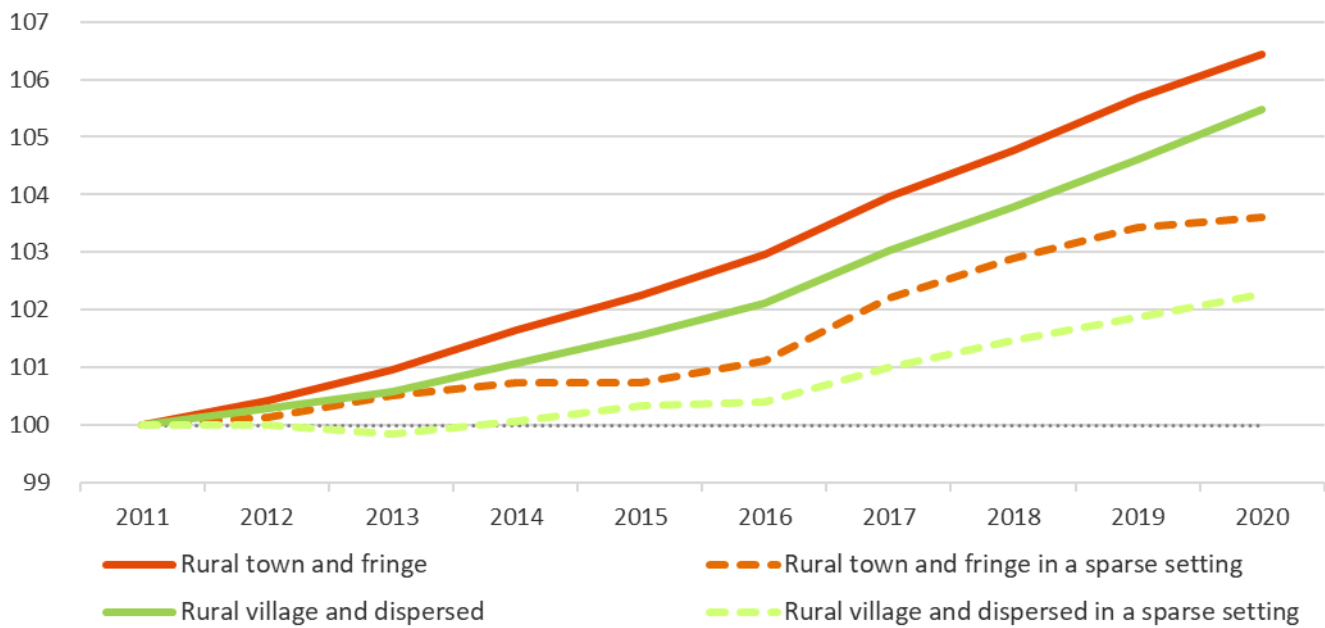
- The average age in rural areas is higher and has increased faster than in urban areas.
- In 2020, the average age of the population in rural village and dispersed areas was 45.9 years and in rural town and fringe areas it was 44.3 years, compared with the average for England of 40.3 years.
- The average age was lowest in urban major conurbations at 37.8 years.
- The average age in rural areas was 45.1 years in 2020, 5.7 years older than in urban areas. The gap in average ages between rural and urban areas widened from 3.4 years in 2002.
- The average age in England increased by 1.6 year between 2002 and 2020, but in rural town and fringe areas it increased by 3.2 years and in rural village and dispersed areas by 4.0 years.
- A table of average age broken down by detailed rural-urban classification covering 2002 to 2020 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Population change

Index of population change, 2011 to 2020, 2011 = 100



Index of population change in rural areas, 2011 to 2020, 2011 = 100

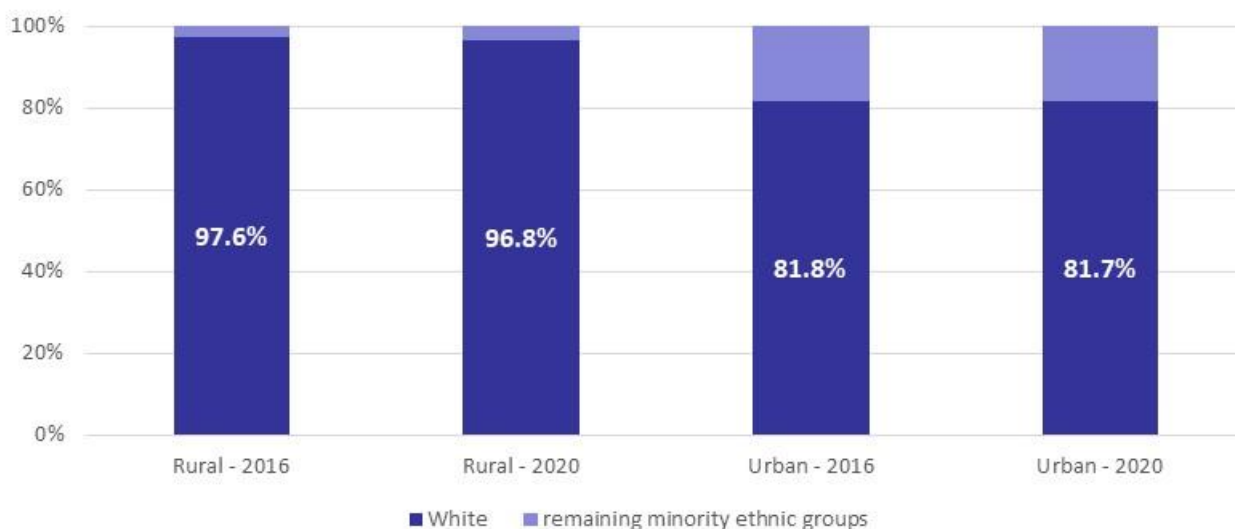


- Both rural and urban areas have seen an increase in overall population between 2011 and 2020. Rural has increased by 6.0 per cent and urban by 6.6 per cent.
- Within rural areas, the greatest rate of population increase was in rural town and fringe areas (6.4 per cent), within urban areas it was in urban major conurbation (7.3 per cent).
- Rural villages and hamlets in sparse settings showed the smallest rate of population increase within rural areas (2.3 per cent), in urban areas it was urban city and town in a sparse setting (1.2 per cent).
- A table of indexed population change broken down by detailed rural-urban classification covering 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

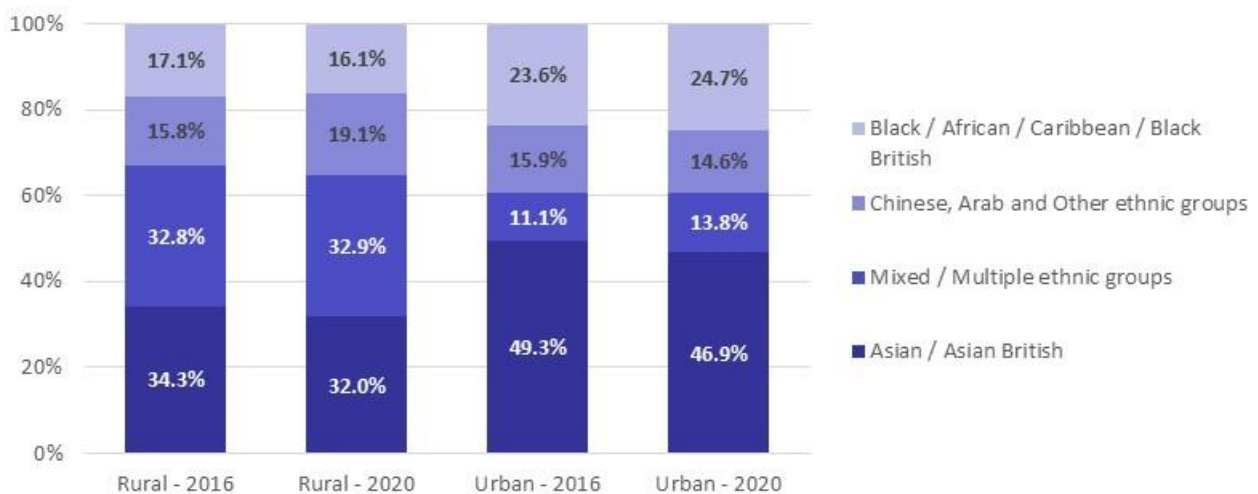
Ethnicity

- Overall, 'white' is the majority ethnic group in both rural and urban areas, however urban areas are more ethnically diverse than rural areas.
- In 2020, the 'white ethnic' group accounted for 96.8 per cent of the rural population, compared with 81.7 per cent in urban areas.
- The proportion of 'minority ethnic' groups has fallen slightly over the last 5 years in both rural and urban areas, falling by 0.8 and 0.1 percentage points respectively since 2016.
- Diversity of 'minority ethnic' groups differs between rural and urban areas. In rural areas the second largest group is the 'Mixed / Multiple ethnic group' while in urban areas it is the 'Asian ethnic' group. The smallest group proportionally in rural areas is the "black, African, Caribbean or black British' group, while in urban areas it is the 'Mixed / Multiple ethnic group'.

Ethnic groups as a percentage of population in rural and urban areas, England, 2016 and 2020



Detail for all minority ethnic group population in rural and urban areas, England, 2016 & 2020



- Ethnic diversity decreases the more sparsely populated the area is. In 2020 'minority ethnic' groups accounted for 1.5 per cent of those in rural areas in a sparse setting.
- Tables detailing ethnic groups in rural and urban areas in 2016 and 2020, and a more detailed rural-urban breakdown for 2019 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Source: Office for National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, via Annual Business Inquiry (abi2@ons.gov.uk)

Population at local authority level

Often statistics have to be compiled at the local authority level, when that is the level of the original data, and the rural urban classification for local authorities is used, as defined by April 2020 Local Authority boundaries.

This is different from looking at the population using the more detailed rural-urban classification as it is based on whole local authorities. The whole population in an authority will be attributed to the class assigned to the authority. So an authority that is Mainly Rural or Largely Rural and hence classed as Predominantly Rural will have the whole population counted as being in a Predominantly Rural area, even those living in an urban settlement within that authority, while all those living in a rural area but within an authority classed as Urban with Significant Rural or Predominantly Urban will not be counted in the Predominantly Rural figure.

- In 2020, 12.0 million people lived in a Predominantly Rural area, 21.3 per cent of the England population.
- 53 per cent of the population in Predominantly Rural areas are over the age of 44, which is the which is 1 per cent higher than in 2019.
- In comparison, 41 per cent of the population in Predominantly Urban areas are over the age of 44, which is 1 per cent higher than in 2019 as well.
- The population in Predominantly Rural areas has increased by 6.4 per cent between 2011 and 2020, compared with 6.5 per cent for England as a whole and 6.6 per cent in Predominantly Urban areas.
- However, it is longer-term comparisons that highlight significant shifts in the age structure. Comparisons have been made between 2001 and 2015 to show this.
- Predominantly Rural areas have proportionately seen large falls in the population aged 30 to 39 and higher proportional increases in the older population between 2001 and 2015.
- The population aged 65 and over increased by 37 per cent in Predominantly Rural areas between 2001 and 2015, compared with 17 per cent in Predominantly Urban areas.
- Between 2001 and 2015 Predominantly Rural areas have seen an increase of 7 per cent in infants (0 to 4-year olds) compared with a 22 per cent increase in Predominantly Urban areas.

2020 Local Authority District mid-year population estimates

	Population	Proportion (%)
Mainly Rural	4,729,000	8.4
Largely Rural	7,291,000	12.9
Urban with Significant Rural	7,181,000	12.7
Urban City and Town	14,836,000	26.2
Urban Minor Conurbation	2,229,000	3.9
Urban Major Conurbation	20,284,000	35.9
Predominantly Rural	12,019,000	21.3
Predominantly Urban	37,350,000	66.0
England	56,550,000	100.0

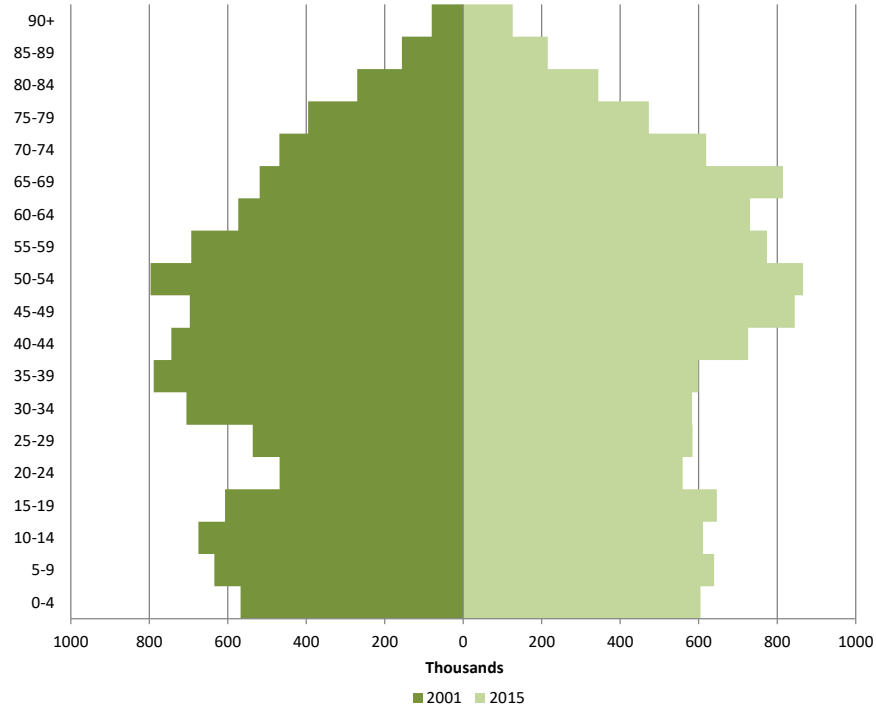
- Further tables broken down by detailed local authority rural-urban classification covering 2011 to 2020 and broken down by age band for 2020 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

The charts below show longer-term changes in the populations for Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas, by age band, comparing 2001 and 2015.

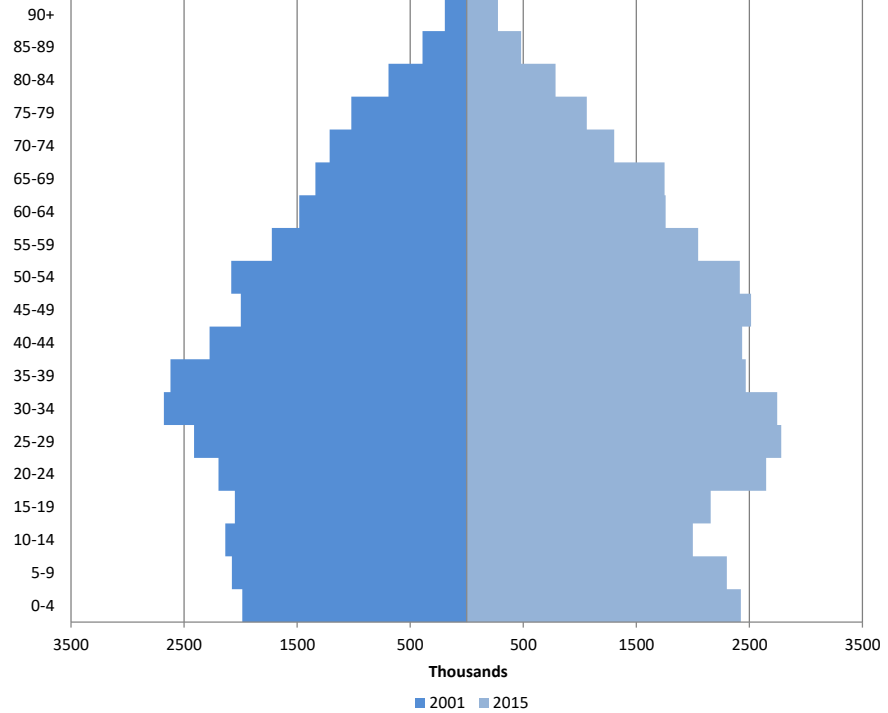
Population in Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas by age bands, 2001 and 2015, England

(scales in the charts differ and so are not directly comparable. The 2011 rural urban classification has been applied to both years to enable comparison)

Predominantly Rural areas:



Predominantly Urban areas:



A table broken down by broad local authority rural-urban classification and age bands for both 2001 and 2015 and the change between the two years is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

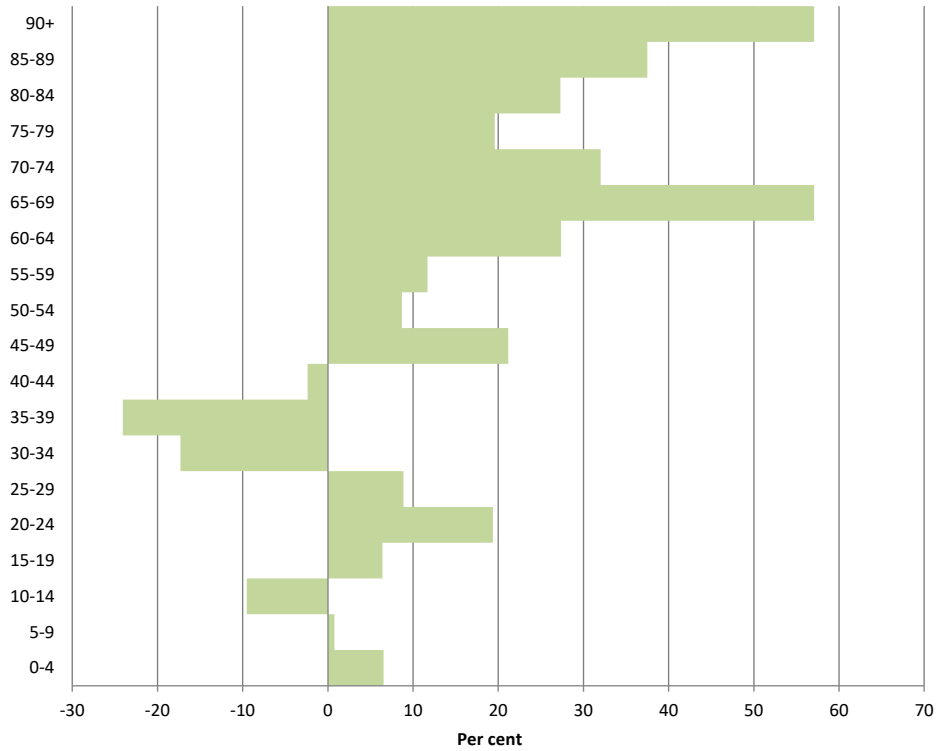
Population in Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas by age bands, 2001 and 2015, England
 (combined chart showing rural and urban at the same scale. The 2011 rural urban classification has been applied to both years to enable comparison)



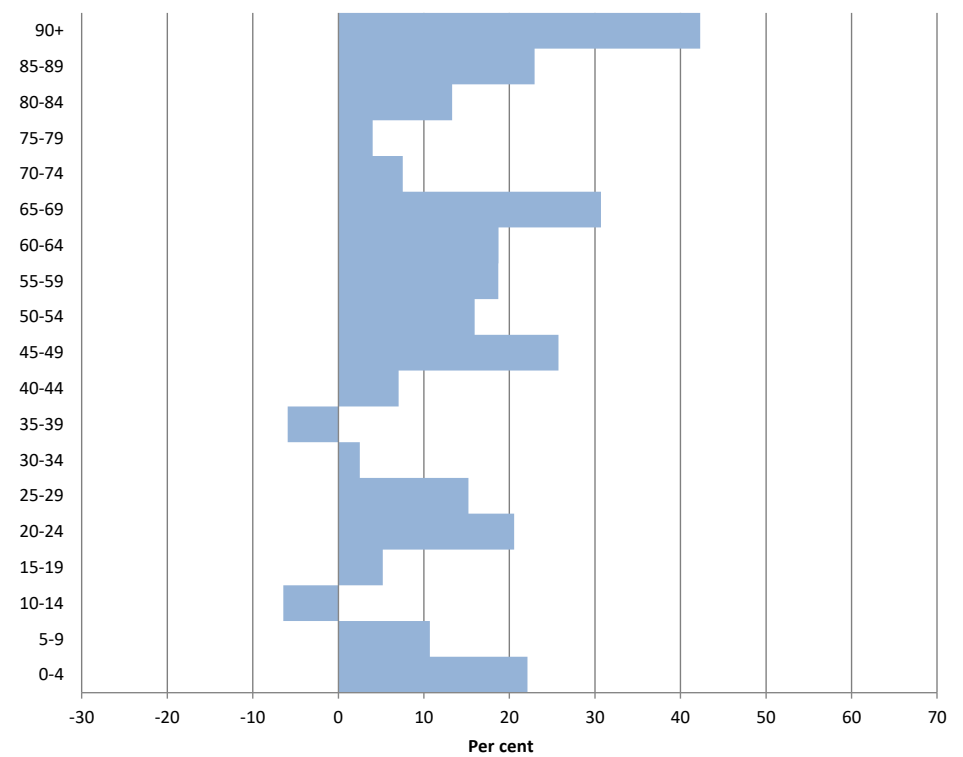
A table broken down by broad local authority rural-urban classification and age bands for both 2001 and 2015 and the change between the two years is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Percentage change in population in Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas by age bands, between 2001 and 2015, England
 (combined chart showing rural and urban at the same scale. The 2011 rural urban classification has been applied to both years to enable comparison)

Predominantly Rural areas:



Predominantly Urban areas:



A table broken down by broad local authority rural-urban classification and age bands for both 2001 and 2015 and the change between the two years is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

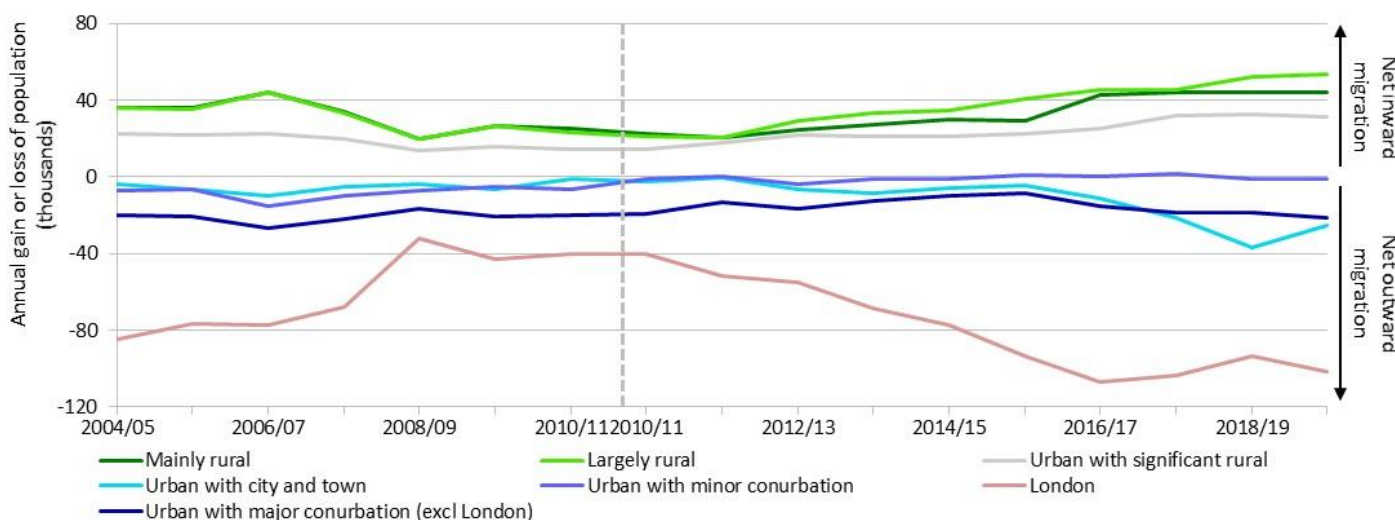
Internal migration

In the analysis presented below internal migration refers to population migration occurring between local authorities within the UK and the outcome is shown for local authorities in England, including the results of migration to and from the rest of the UK. Migration between the same class of authority will have no net effect on the population for that class and is excluded.

As the analysis is using data for local authority areas, it does not distinguish the type of settlement a migrant has moved to. So, in the case of migration to an authority classed as a Predominantly Rural area this could be migration to an urban settlement within that authority. Similarly, migration to an authority classed as a Predominantly Urban area could be migration to a rural settlement within that Predominantly Urban area.

The latest migration analysis is for the year to June 30th 2020 so is mostly for the period prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Internal migration, England, 2004/05 to 2019/20



Note: The RUC01 for Local Authorities has been applied to all data up to 2009/10. Data for 2010/11 has been classified using both RUC01 and RUC11 to show the comparison. From 2011/12 onwards the RUC11 for Local Authorities has been applied.

- Between 2004/05 and 2008/09 the general trend for internal migration in England was for net migration to Predominantly Rural areas and net migration from Predominantly Urban areas, although the extent of net migration to Predominantly Rural areas was falling.
- Since 2008/09 there has been an increase in the rate of net migration to Predominantly Rural areas.
- For 2019/20 in Predominantly Rural areas there was net internal migration inwards of 97,500 people. Within that Largely Rural areas saw net internal migration inwards of 53,600 people and Mainly Rural areas saw net internal migration inwards of 43,900 in 2019/20 (which would include migration between these two categories).
- In contrast, for Predominantly Urban areas there was net internal migration outwards of 149,100. This included net internal migration outwards from London of 101,400 (including to other Predominantly Urban areas).
- A table of internal migration figures broken down by detailed local authority rural-urban classification covering 2004/05 to 2019/20 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

The table below provides a matrix of the internal (within UK) migration movements between the different classes of authority in 2019/20.

Internal (within UK) migration between different classes of authority, 2019/20

Outward	Inward				thousands	
	Predominantly Rural	Urban with Significant Rural	Predominantly Urban	Rest of the UK	Total outwards	Net migration
Predominantly Rural		64.9	240.8	23.8	329.4	97.5
Urban with Significant Rural	81.1		184.1	16.6	281.9	31.3
Predominantly Urban	325.4	235.4		70.5	631.3	-149.1
Rest of the UK	20.4	12.9	57.4		90.7	20.3
Total inwards	426.9	313.2	482.2	110.9		0.0

Note: excludes migration within the same class of authority

Net internal (within UK) migration between Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas and other classes of authority

	thousands		thousands
Urban with Significant Rural	16.3	Predominantly Rural	-84.6
Predominantly Urban	84.6	Urban with Significant Rural	-51.3
Rest of the UK	-3.4	Rest of the UK	-13.2
Net migration for Predominantly Rural areas	97.5	Net migration for Predominantly Urban areas	-149.1

- In 2019/20 Predominantly Rural areas saw net migration from Predominantly Urban areas of 84,600 people (325,400 inwards less 240,800 outwards), and from Urban with Significant Rural areas of 16,300 people (81,100 inwards less 64,900 outwards). There was a net outward migration from Predominantly Rural areas to the rest of the UK of 3,400 people (20,400 inwards less 23,800 outwards).
- Net inward migration to Predominantly Rural areas in 2019/20 increased the Predominantly Rural population by 0.8 per cent, compared with a 0.4 per cent increase in 2010/11.
- Net outward migration from Predominantly Urban areas in 2019/20 reduced the Predominantly Urban population by 0.4 per cent, compared with a 0.2 per cent reduction in 2010/11.

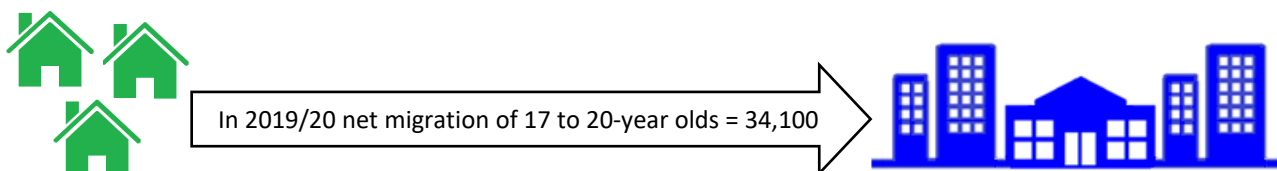
Notes: Internal migration is defined as residential moves between local authorities. Moves within a single local authority are excluded, as are international moves into or out of the UK. These statistics are based on a combination of administrative data and represent the best available source of information on internal migration. Further information on the data sources and methods, and their limitations, is available via the ONS internal migration methodology webpage (www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/population-and-migration/internal-migration-methodology/index.html).

Source: Defra analysis of ONS data - Annual internal Migration within the United Kingdom to June 2020.

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/migrationwithintheuk/datasets/internalmigrationbyoriginanddestinationlocalauthoritiessexandsingleyearofagedetailedestimatesdataset

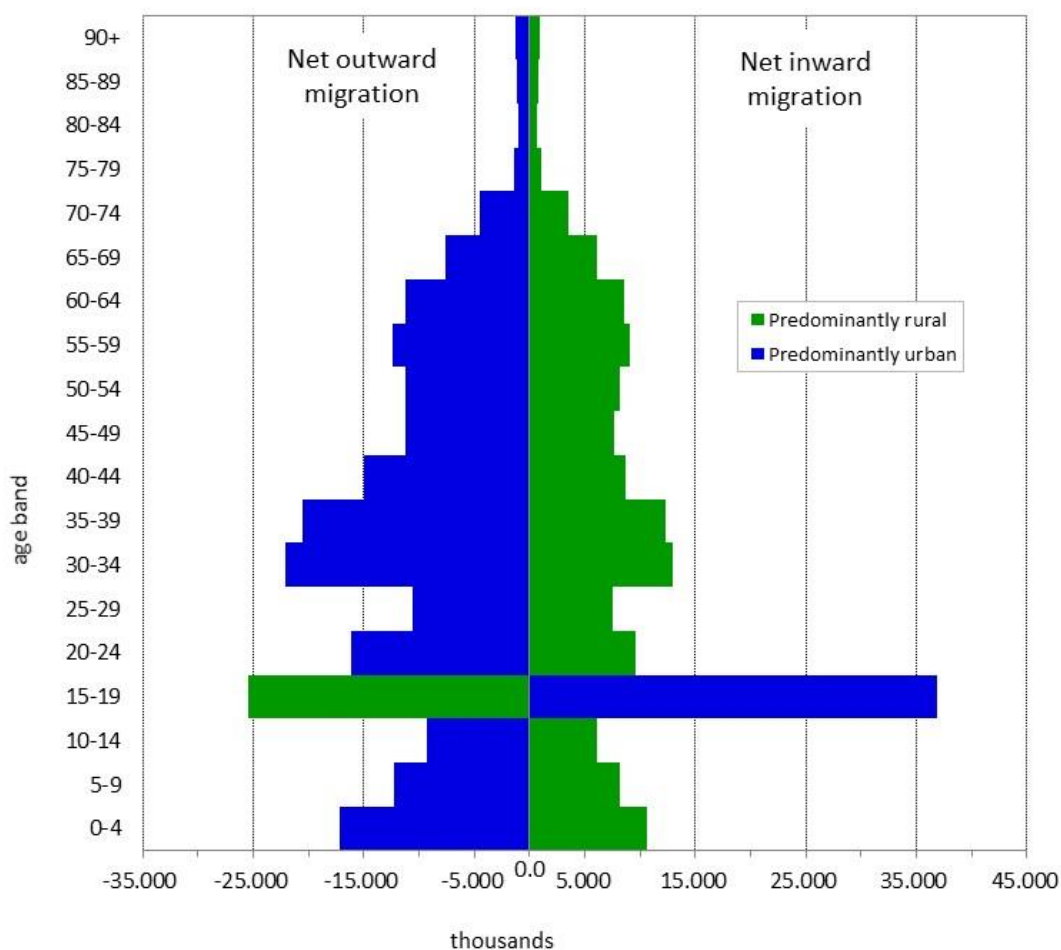
Internal migration by age

- For some years there has been net internal migration (within the UK) inwards to Predominantly Rural areas. This has been the case across all age bands except for 17 to 20-year olds. In 2019/20 within the overall net internal migration to Predominantly Rural areas of 97,500, there was net internal migration outwards of 17 to 20 years olds of 34,100.
- Net outward migration of 17 to 20 years olds can be anticipated as these are the ages when students are most likely to move from home for higher education, with the likelihood that higher education establishments will be mostly found in the more urban areas.

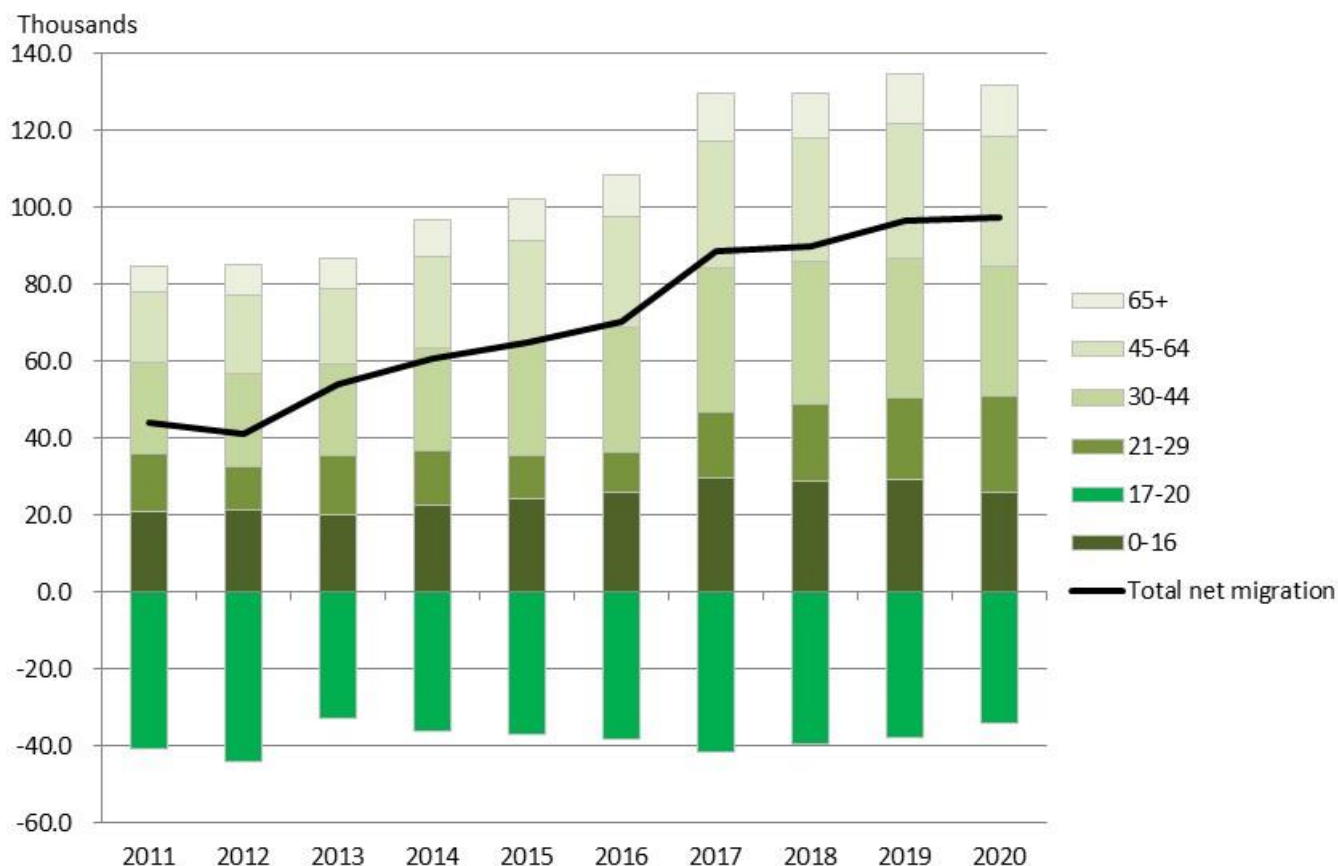


- The pattern of inward migration to Predominantly Rural areas has been consistent from at least 2011 onwards (the earliest year currently analysed by age band).

Net internal (within the UK) migration for Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas, by age band, mid-year 2020, England



Net internal migration (within UK) to Predominantly Rural areas by age bands, mid-year 2011 to mid-year 2020, England



- Breaking the migration patterns down to equal 5-year age bands, in 2019/20 there was net outward migration for 15 to 19-year olds from Predominantly Rural areas of 25,400 which would include, as above, students moving elsewhere for higher education. For the 20 to 24-year old age bracket the pattern of movement reverts to net inward migration of 9,600 to Predominantly Rural areas. There was net inward migration for 25 to 29-year olds of around 7,500.
- The largest net inward migration to Predominantly Rural areas for adults occurred for 30 to 34-year olds (13,000 people) and 35 to 39-year olds (12,300 people). Net inward migration for the age bands from 40 to 44-year olds - 65 to 69-year olds, was between 6,100 and 9,100 people for each five-year age band.
- Migration occurred between Predominantly Rural areas and Urban with Significant Rural areas and the rest of the UK, but the largest net inward migration to Predominantly Rural areas was from Predominantly Urban areas. Not surprisingly, the opposite migration patterns were therefore seen for Predominantly Urban areas. Indeed, for most age bands the equivalent opposite net migration was greater, reflecting migration also occurring between Predominantly Urban areas and Urban with Significant Rural areas and the rest of the UK.
- A table of internal migration figures for rural areas broken down by broad age bands covering 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#). A table using more detailed age bands is also available broken down by broad local authority rural-urban classification for 2020.

Notes: Internal migration is defined as residential moves between local authorities. Moves within a single local authority are excluded, as are international moves into or out of the UK. These statistics are based on a combination of administrative data and represent the best available source of information on internal migration. Further information on the data sources and methods, and their limitations, is available via the ONS internal migration methodology webpage (www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/population-and-migration/internal-migration-methodology/index.html)

Source: Defra analysis of ONS data - Annual internal Migration within the United Kingdom to June 2020.

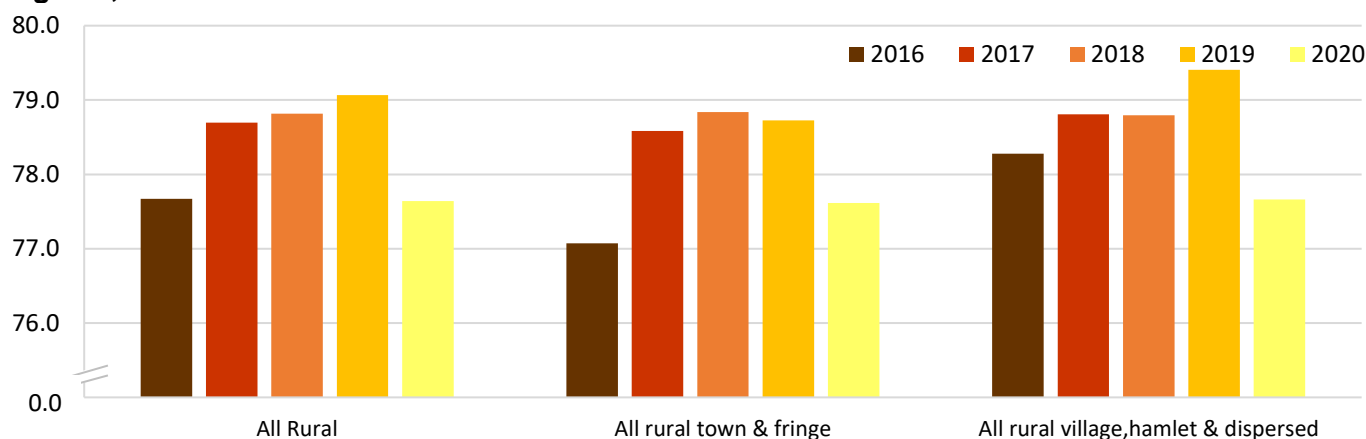
www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/migrationwithintheuk/datasets/internalmigrationbyoriginanddestinationlocalauthoritiessexandsingleyearofagedetailedestimatesdataset

Rural economy

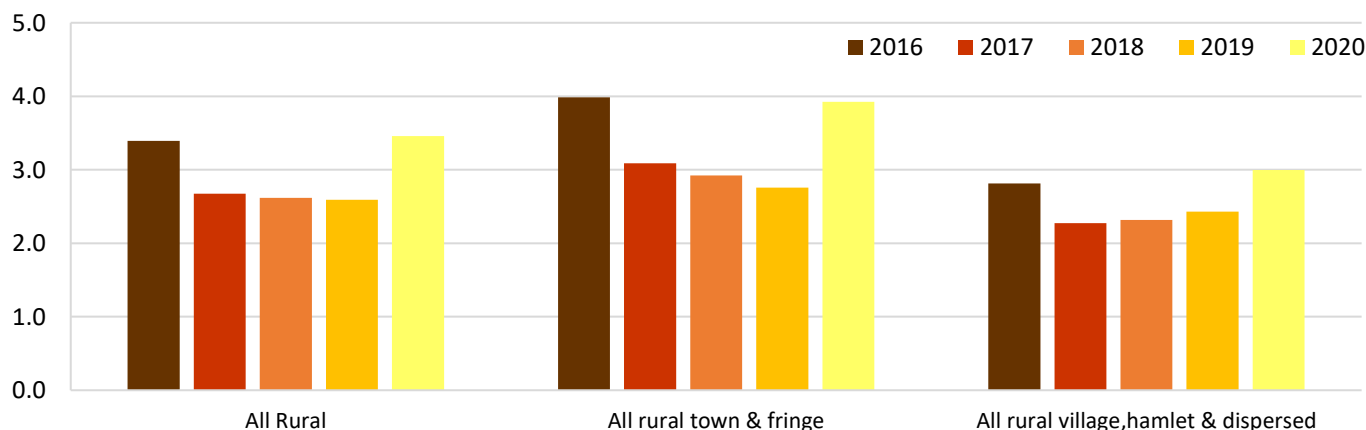
Employment and earnings

- **Employment:** The percentage of working age people in employment (employment rate) in 2020 was 75 per cent in urban settlements and 78 per cent in rural settlements. This employment rate is based on where people live and not where they work. People living in rural settlements may travel to work in larger urban settlements and vice versa for urban residents.
- **Unemployment:** The percentage of economically active people age 16 and over who were unemployed (unemployment rate) in 2020 was 5.0 per cent in urban settlements and 3.5 per cent in rural settlements.
- **Economic inactivity:** The percentage of working age people who are not available for work or not seeking work (economic inactivity rate) in 2020 was 21 per cent in urban settlements and 19 per cent in rural settlements.

Employment as a percentage of working age population (age 16 to 64 years), in rural areas of England, 2016 to 2020

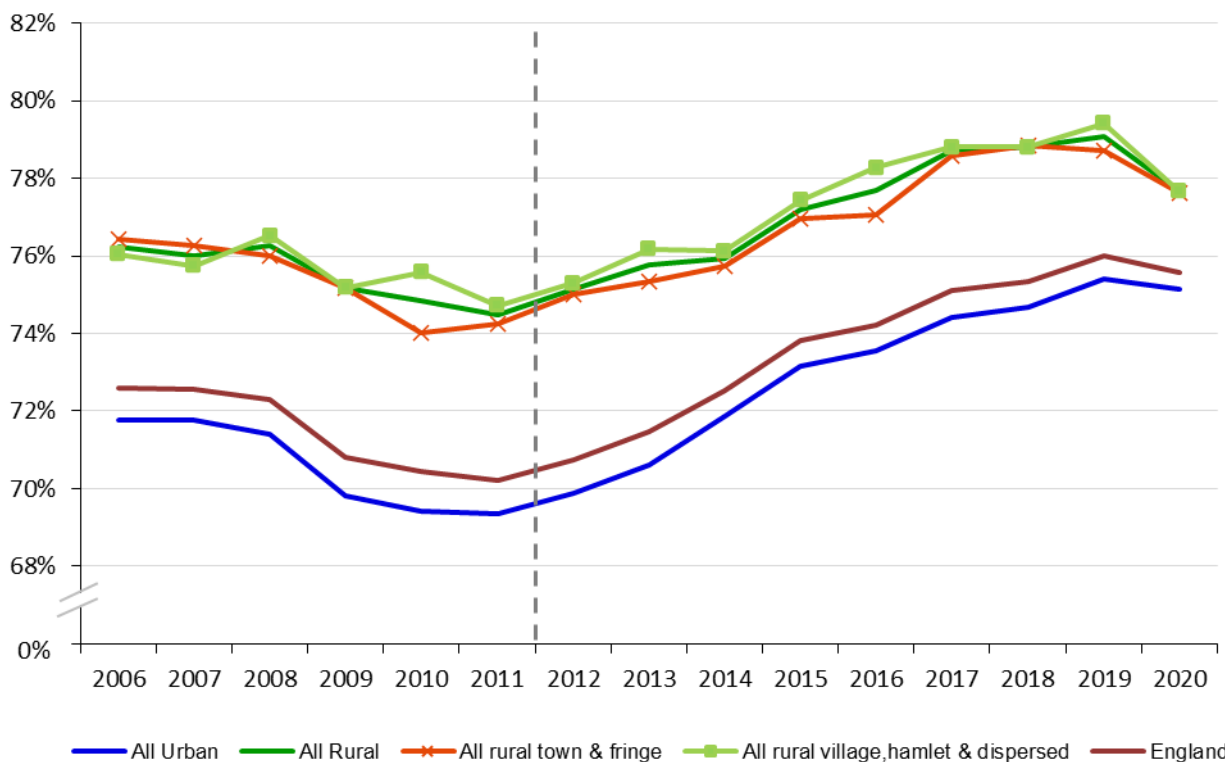


Unemployment as a percentage of economically active age 16 and over (age 16+), in rural areas of England, 2016 to 2020



Employment rate

Employment as a percentage of working age population (age 16 to 64 years), by rural-urban classification in England, 2006 to 2020

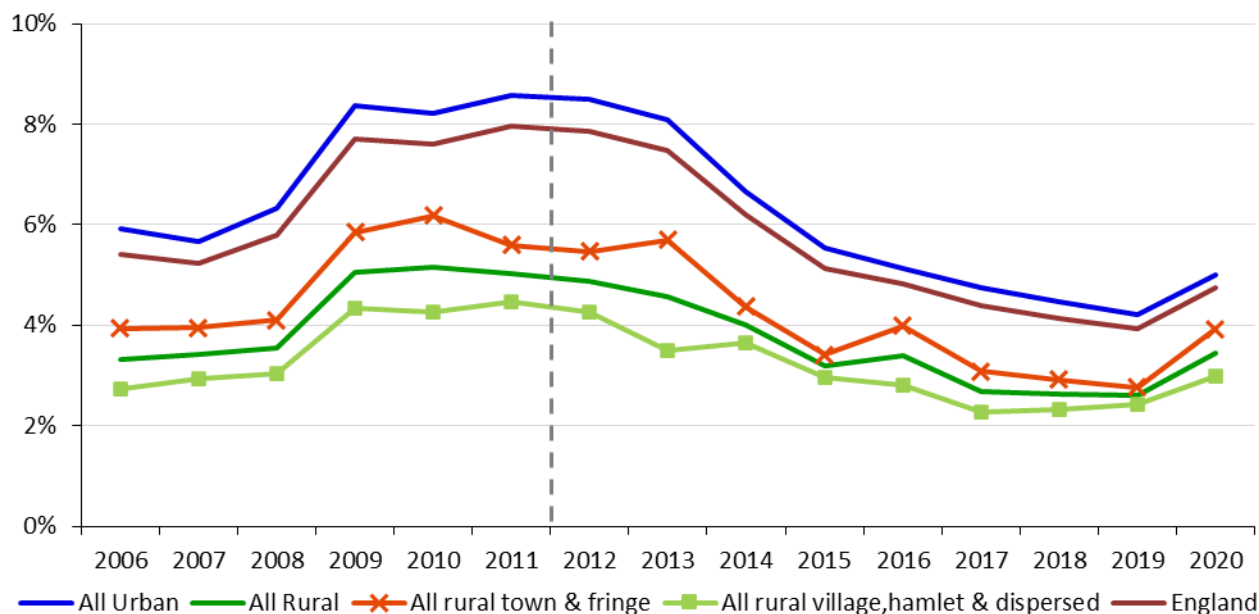


Note: The RUC01 has been applied to all data up to and including 2010. From 2011 onwards the RUC11 has been applied. See note 2.

- The employment rate in 2020 was higher in all types of rural areas compared with urban areas (in a non-sparse setting) with an average employment rate of 77.6 per cent for rural areas.
- The overall employment rate for the working age population in England had steadily increased year-on-year since 2011 until 2020 when rates fell, likely as a result of Covid-19 and the national lockdown. Between 2019 and 2020 employment rates fell by 1.4 percentage points in rural areas and 0.2 percentage points in urban areas.
- The latest England employment rate for **July to September 2021** was 75.8 per cent, up 0.4 percentage points from **April to June 2021** and up 0.3 percentage points on a year earlier^{1a}. It is not yet possible to analyse these later figures in terms of settlement type.
- The most recent figure available for rural employment is 77.2 per cent for **April to June 2021**.^{1b}
- A table of employment rates broken down by rural-urban classification covering 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Unemployment rate

Unemployment as a percentage of economically active age 16 and over (age 16+), by rural-urban classification, in England, 2006 to 2020

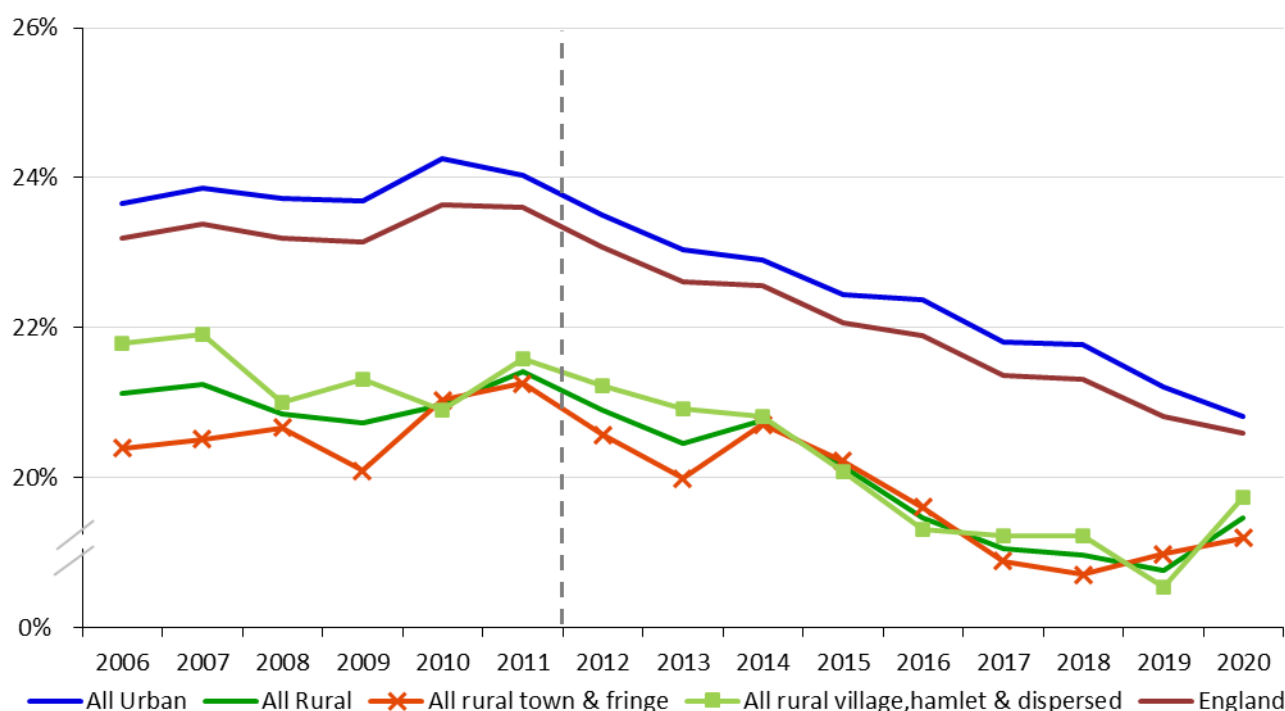


Note: The RUC01 has been applied to all data up to and including 2010. From 2011 onwards the RUC11 has been applied. See note 2.

- In 2020, the average unemployment rate in rural areas was 3.5 per cent.
- Between 2011 and 2019 the unemployment rate in rural areas had almost halved, falling from 5.0 per cent to 2.6 per cent. This trend reversed in 2020 when rates in rural areas increased by 0.9 percentage points to 3.5 per cent, likely as a result of Covid-19 and the national lockdown.
- In 2020, the average unemployment rate in urban areas was 5.0 per cent, which is 1.5 percentage points higher than the average rural unemployment rate.
- The latest England unemployment rate for **July to September 2021** was 4.3 per cent, down 0.5 percentage points on **April to June 2021** and down 0.6 percentage points on a year earlier^{1a}. It is not yet possible to analyse these more recent figures in terms of detailed settlement type.
- The most recent figure available for rural unemployment is 2.9 per cent for **April to June 2021**.^{1b}
- A table of unemployment rates broken down by rural-urban classification covering 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Economic inactivity

Percentage of working age population (16 to 64 years) who are economically inactive, by rural-urban classification in England, 2006 to 2020



Note: The RUC01 has been applied to all data up to and including 2010. From 2011 onwards the RUC11 has been applied. See note 2.

- People who are economically inactive are not available for work or not seeking work and will include students, retirees and those unable to work due to sickness or disability. People who are officially unemployed are considered to be economically active.
- In 2020, the rate of economic inactivity in rural areas was 19.5 per cent of working age people, 1.3 percentage points lower than the rate of 20.8 per cent in urban areas. Within rural areas, the percentage of economic inactivity was highest in rural in a sparse setting at 21.6 per cent of the working age population.
- The latest England inactivity rate for **July to September 2021** was 20.8 per cent, no change on **April to June 2021** and up 0.2 percentage points on a year earlier^{1a}. It is not yet possible to analyse these later figures in terms of settlement type.
- The most recent figure available for rural economic inactivity is 40.0 per cent for **April to June 2021**.^{1b}
- A table of economic inactivity rates broken down by rural-urban classification covering 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: 1a) ONS Labour Market Statistics September 2020, see table 22 of the dataset:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/summaryoflabourmarketstatistics>

1b) Labour Force Survey, Q2 2020 (April – June 2020)

2) 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.

3) In 2009 and before, working age was defined as 16-64 for males and 16-59 for females. In September 2010 the definition for working age was altered to be 16-64 for both males and females. The statistics shown here have been adjusted to this new definition for all years shown.

4) Unemployment rate is expressed as a percentage of the economically active 'age 16 and over' population, this is a departure from previous analyses and is consistent with ONS Labour Market Statistics. The employment rate and economically inactive rate are expressed as a percentage of the entire working age population. Therefore, the rates should not be expected to sum to 100%.

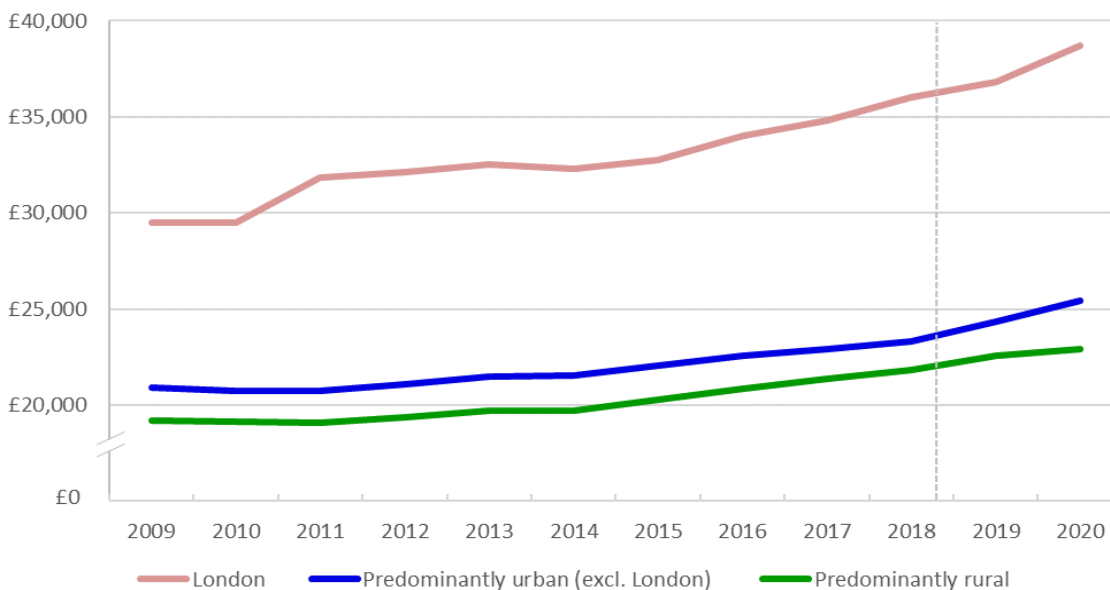
Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Business Inquiry via abi2@ons.gov.uk

Earnings

- **Average annual employee earnings** (based on the median value, or middle of the earnings distribution) give an indication of living standards people can enjoy through their disposable income (see Expenditure).
- As people do not necessarily work in the same settlement as they live, workplace and residence based average earnings may differ.
- For example, in 2020 **average residence-based earnings were lower than workplace-based earnings in urban areas**, whilst **average residence-based earnings in rural areas are higher than workplace-based earnings** because people living in rural areas may work in urban areas in higher paid jobs.
- Average workplace-based earnings are lowest in Mainly Rural areas and highest in the London area.
- All areas have seen an increase in workplace-based median earnings in 2020 with a 4.5 per cent increase in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) and a 1.7 per cent increase in Predominantly Rural areas in comparison with 2019. These compare with the Consumer Price Index including housing costs (CPIH; a measure of inflation) of 1.5 per cent in the year ending March 2020.

In 2020 there were some changes to Local Authorities boundaries where some Local Authority Districts merged to form single Unitary Authority. This reduces the number of Local Authorities Districts and Unitary Authorities in England from 317 to 314. The difference between the 2019 Local Authority Districts and the 2020 Local Authority Districts is that the 2019 local authorities of Aylesbury Vale, Chilterns, South Bucks, and Wycombe, have been merged into a single Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority.

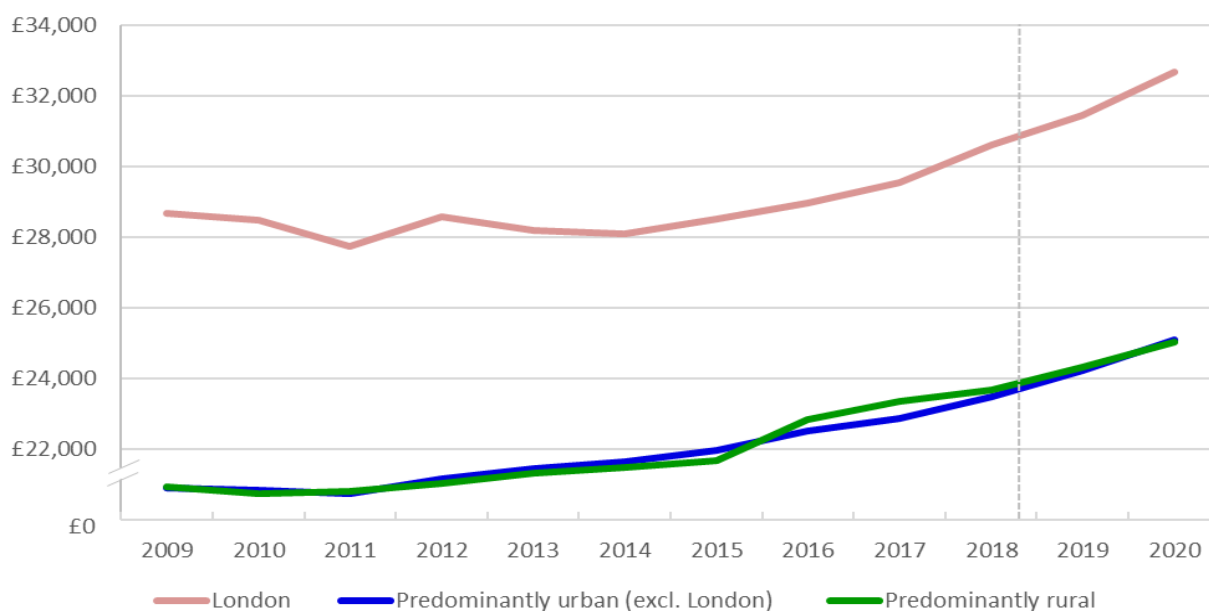
Workplace based median gross annual earnings (current prices), 2009 to 2020



Note: Data to 2017 uses the Rural Urban Classification (RUC) based on 327 Local Authority Districts (LAD's) and Unitary Authorities (UA's). From 2018 the RUC is based on revised boundaries as at April 2019, reducing the number of LAD's and UA's from 326 to 317 and in 2020 this was further reduced to 314. The difference between LAD19 and LAD20 RUC is that the 2019 local authorities of Aylesbury Vale, Chilterns, South Bucks, and Wycombe, have been merged into a single Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority.

- In 2020, median workplace-based earnings in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) were £25,400 while Predominantly Rural areas were lower at £22,900.
- Between 2009 and 2020 median workplace-based earnings increased for all settlement types. Excluding London, the rate of increase was greatest for workplaces in Urban with City and Town, increasing by 22.1 per cent, followed by Urban with Major Conurbation (21.2 per cent).
- The rate of increase was lowest in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas where median earnings increased by 17.3 per cent in the same period.
- For England, the rate of increase between 2009 and 2020 was 20.3 per cent.
- Over the same time period (2009 to 2020) the Consumer Price Index (including housing costs) has increased by 21 per cent.
- A table of workplace-based earnings broken down by detailed local authority rural-urban classification covering 2009 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Residence-based median gross annual earnings (current prices), 2009 to 2020



Note: Data to 2017 uses the Rural Urban Classification (RUC) based on 327 Local Authority Districts (LAD's) and Unitary Authorities (UA's). From 2018 the RUC is based on revised boundaries as at April 2019, reducing the number of LAD's and UA's from 326 to 317 and in 2020 this was further reduced to 314. The difference between LAD19 and LAD20 RUC is that the 2019 local authorities of Aylesbury Vale, Chilterns, South Bucks, and Wycombe, have been merged into a single Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority.

- In 2020, the median residence-based earnings in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) were £25,100, compared with £25,000 in Predominantly Rural areas.
- Between 2009 and 2020 median residence-based earnings increased for all settlement types. The rate of increase was greatest for residence-based earnings in Mainly Rural areas, increasing by 22.7 per cent, followed by Urban with Major Conurbation (20.7 per cent).
- Excluding London, the rate of increase was lowest in Largely Rural where median earnings increased by 17.3 per cent in the same period and Urban with Minor Conurbation where they increased by 17.4 per cent.
- For England, the rate of increase between 2009 and 2020 was 20.2 per cent.

- Over the same time period (2009 to 2020) the Consumer Price Index (including housing costs) has increased by 21 per cent.
- A table of residence-based earnings broken down by detailed local authority rural-urban classification covering 2009 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: ¹ Full time-series from 2009 are available on the 'Rural economy – statistical indicators' page:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/rural-economy-statistical-indicators

2018 figures are revised, 2019 are provisional.

Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings: Table 7: Place of Work by Local Authority and Table 8: Place of Residence by Local Authority:

www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2019/relateddata

Figures in the tables have been rounded to the nearest £100. Figures are on a current prices basis and have not been adjusted for inflation. Results for rural – urban categories have been weighted by the number of people employed aged 16-64 based on Annual Population Survey and Annual Population Survey – workplace analysis: www.nomisweb.co.uk/articles/1066.aspx

Consumer Price Index: www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/d7bt/mm23

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



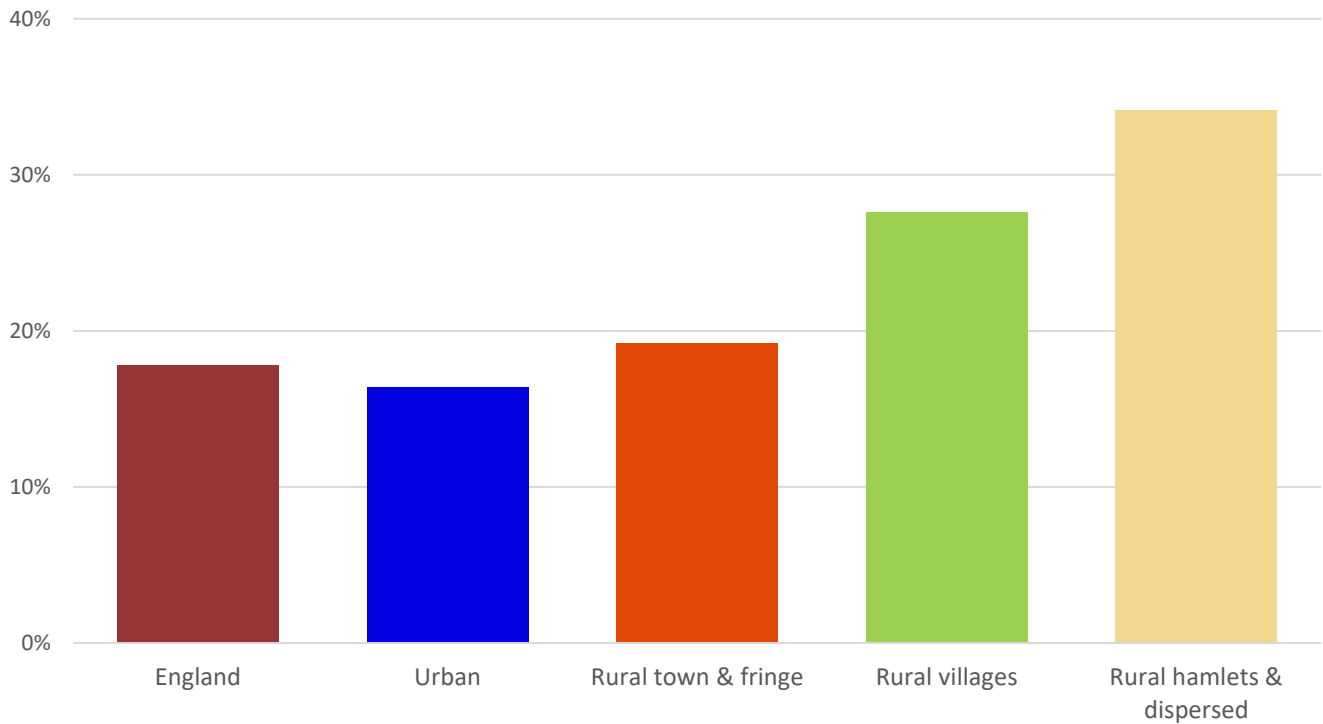
3.7m (16%)
home workers in
urban areas



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

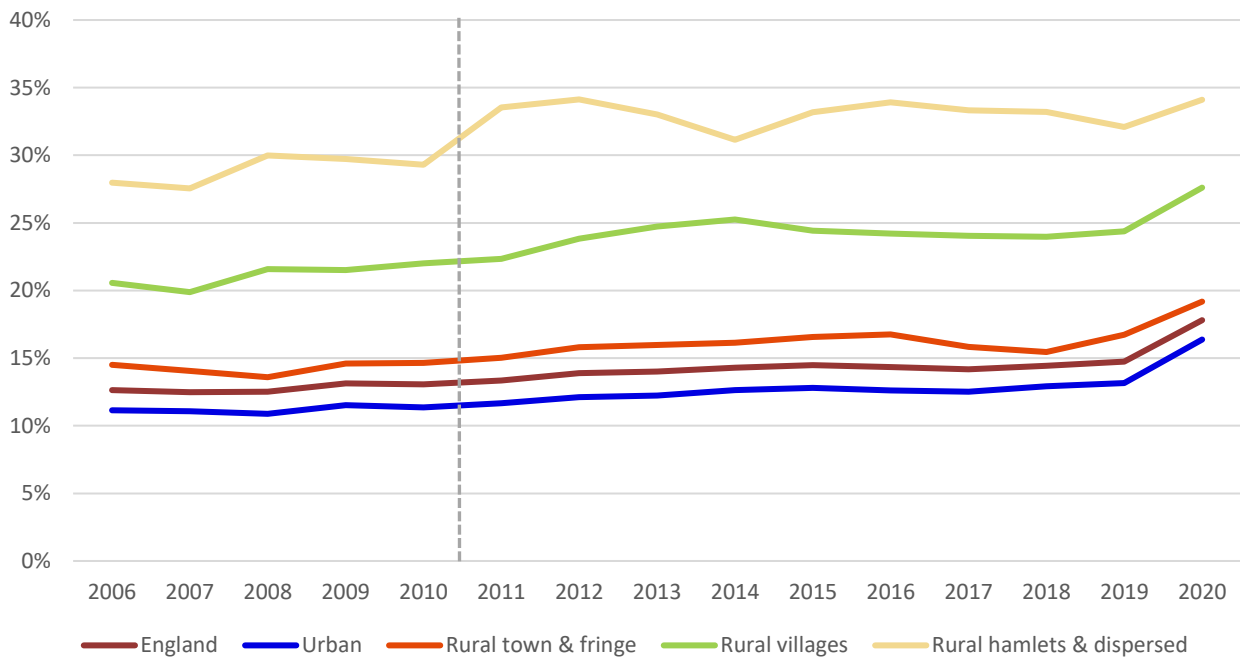
Respondents were asked to consider where they would usually work in their main job prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

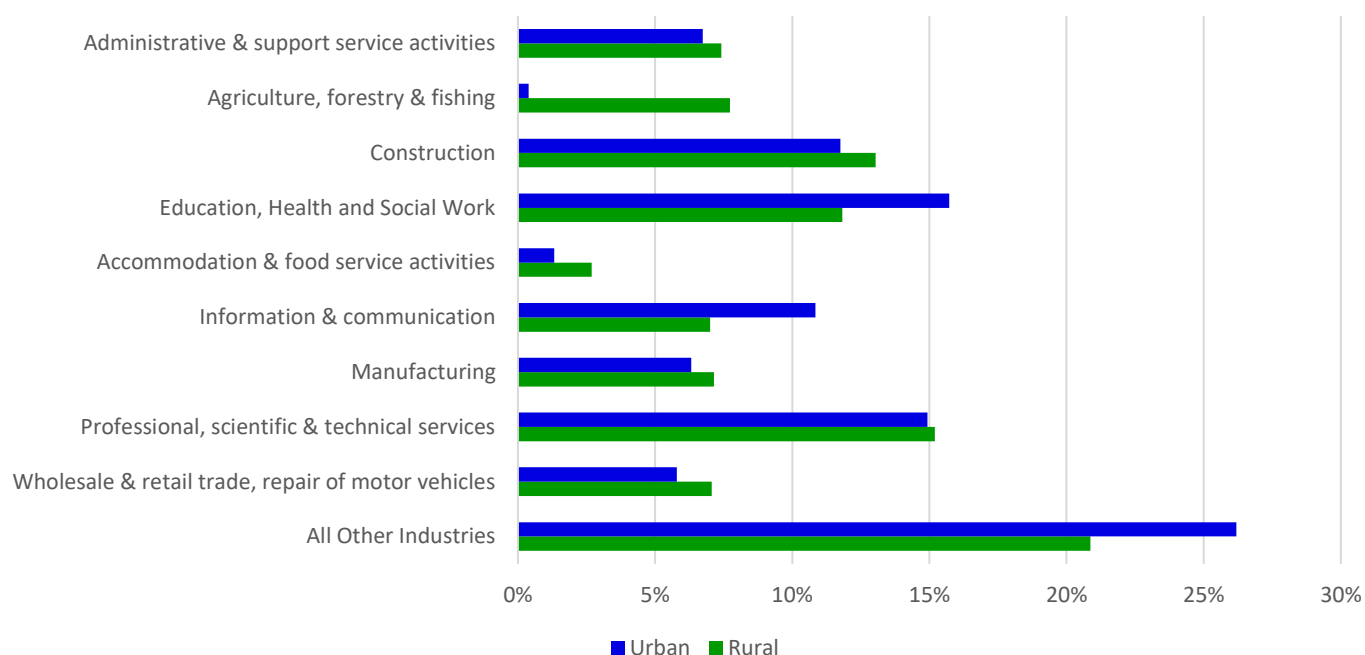


Note: 2006 to 2010 data are classified using the Rural Urban Classification 2001. Data from 2011 are classified using the Rural Urban Classification 2011.

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

Productivity measured by Gross Value Added (GVA)

Productivity measures are often used to indicate how well a country can use its human and physical resources to generate economic growth. Strong economic growth will generally mean an improvement in living standards. However, productivity alone does not tell us everything about the economic wellbeing of different areas. The potential of any given place depends on the mix of industries, the infrastructure and the size of settlements there. Based on these circumstances, even an area with low productivity might be performing as well as it can.

Gross Value Added (GVA) measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector. Simplistically it is the value of the amount of goods and services that have been produced, less the cost of all inputs and raw materials that are directly attributable to that production.

In previous years the ONS have produced two separate measures of GVA, one based on income and one based on production. These two measures have been weighted and combined to produce a new *balanced* measure of GVA¹.

In April 2020 and April 2021 there were further changes to Local Authorities boundaries where some Local Authority Districts merged to form single Unitary Authorities. This reduces the number of Local Authorities Districts and Unitary Authorities in England from 317 to 309. The impact of these changes on rural urban comparisons is that some Local Authority Districts originally categorised as Mainly Rural or Largely Rural or Urban with City and Town now form part of Unitary Authorities categorised as Urban with Significant Rural. This change has been backdated across the full time-series.

- In 2020, GVA from Predominantly Rural areas contributed 15.0 per cent of England's GVA, and was worth an estimated £253 billion. This compares with 44.6 per cent from Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) (£750 billion), 27.9 per cent from London (£470 billion) and 12.5 per cent from Urban with Significant Rural areas (£210 billion).
- All area types have seen small decreases for total GVA since 2019.
- The proportional contribution from Predominantly Rural areas to England's GVA has declined slightly between 2001 and 2020 (from 16.5 per cent to 15.0 per cent) but has shown little change in recent years.
- However, this has been affected by an increase in London's contribution. The proportional contribution of Predominantly Rural areas to the GVA of England excluding London has shown a much smaller decline between 2001 and 2020 (from 21.7 per cent to 20.8 per cent).
- In 2020, the GVA per workforce job in Predominantly Rural areas was £45,400 and in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) it was £51,700 (provisional estimates).
- In 2020, the productivity of Predominantly Rural areas was around 81 per cent of that for England as whole (provisional estimate). This had fallen from 89 per cent in 2001, however there has been little change since 2016. The decline in rural areas is in part reflecting an increase in London's contribution to England's overall productivity.

¹ For further information see the ONS website:

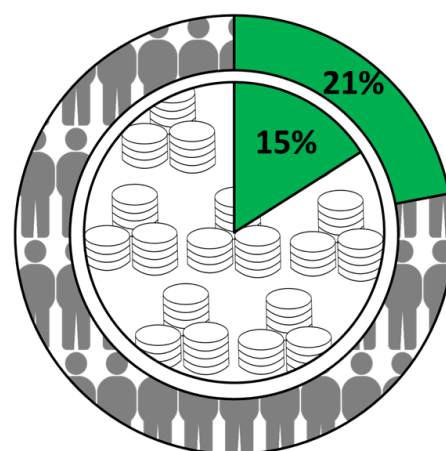
www.consultations.ons.gov.uk/national-accounts/consultation-on-balanced-estimates-of-regional-gva/

Contribution to England's Gross Value Added (GVA)

Contribution to England's Gross Value Added (GVA), by local authority rural-urban classification in England (data broadly at county level apportioned at local district level), 2020 (provisional)

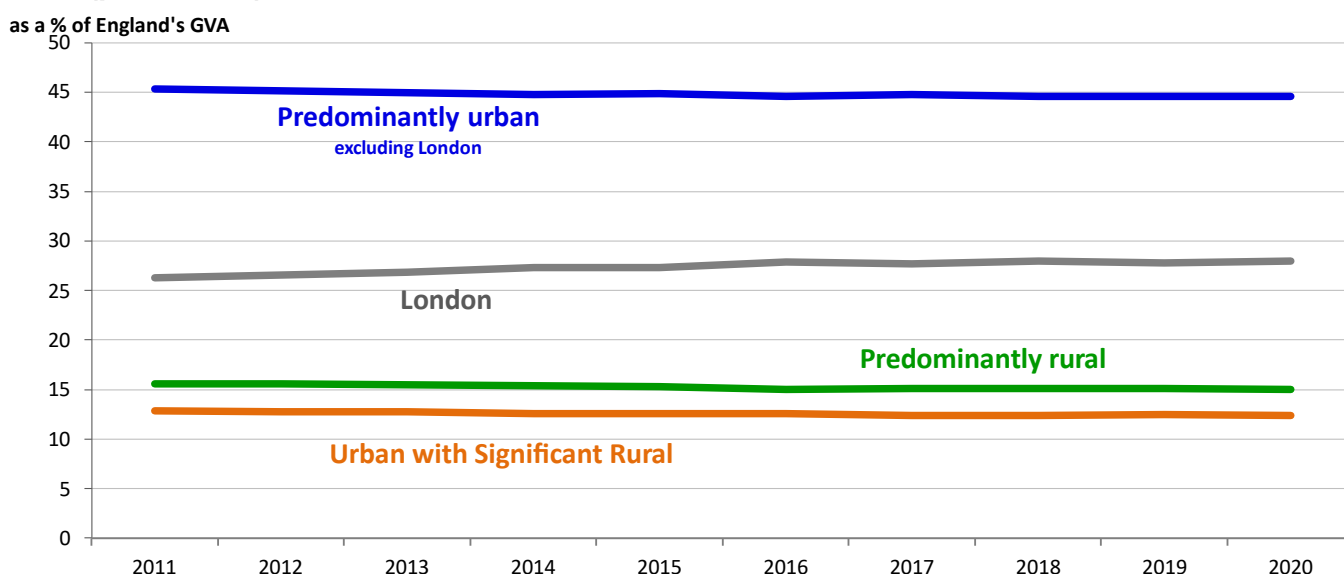
2011 Local Authority Classification	GVA (£m)	share	Broader classification	GVA (£m)	share
London	470,300	28.0%	London	470,300	28.0%
Urban with Major Conurbation	285,500	17.0%	Predominantly Urban excl. London	750,200	45.0%
Urban with Minor Conurbation	46,800	3.0%			
Urban with City and Town	417,900	25.0%			
Urban with Significant Rural	209,700	12.0%	Urban with Significant Rural	209,700	12.0%
Largely Rural	154,600	9.0%	Predominantly Rural	252,600	15.0%
Mainly Rural	98,000	6.0%			
England	1,682,800	100%	England	1,682,800	100.0%

- Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) make the largest contribution to England's GVA, estimated at £750 billion (45 per cent), followed by London's £470 billion (28 per cent). Predominantly Rural areas contributed an estimated £253 billion (15 per cent) in 2020.
- These GVA figures are based on GVA at broadly county level apportioned at local district level to provide a more refined analysis of GVA across the local authority classification. The total GVA for rural and urban areas in the table above is different to the industry breakdown following this and is less finely detailed being based on data at broadly county level.

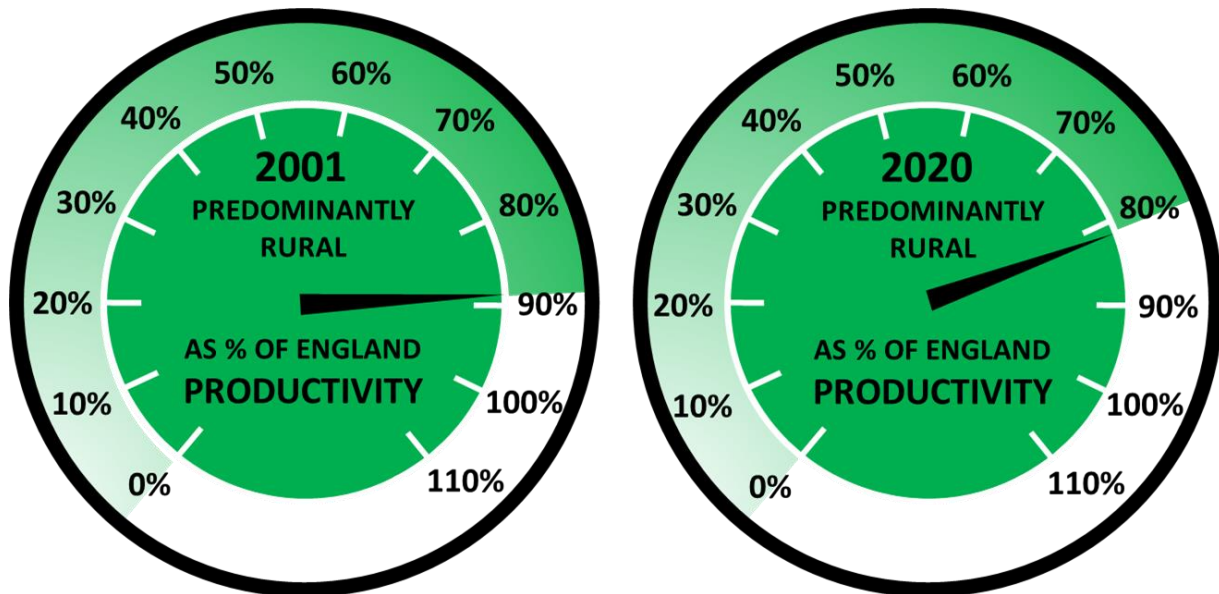


While predominantly rural areas account for **21%** of the population they contribute around **15%** of England's economy

Gross Value Added (GVA) by Local Authority Classification as a percentage of England GVA, 2011 to 2020 (provisional)



- Overall productivity (the rate of output per workforce) is lower in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas, with rural productivity as a percentage of England's overall productivity having fallen since 2001.



The productivity rate in Predominantly Rural areas fell from **89%** of the England average to **81%** between 2001 and 2020, but there was little change over the last 5 years.

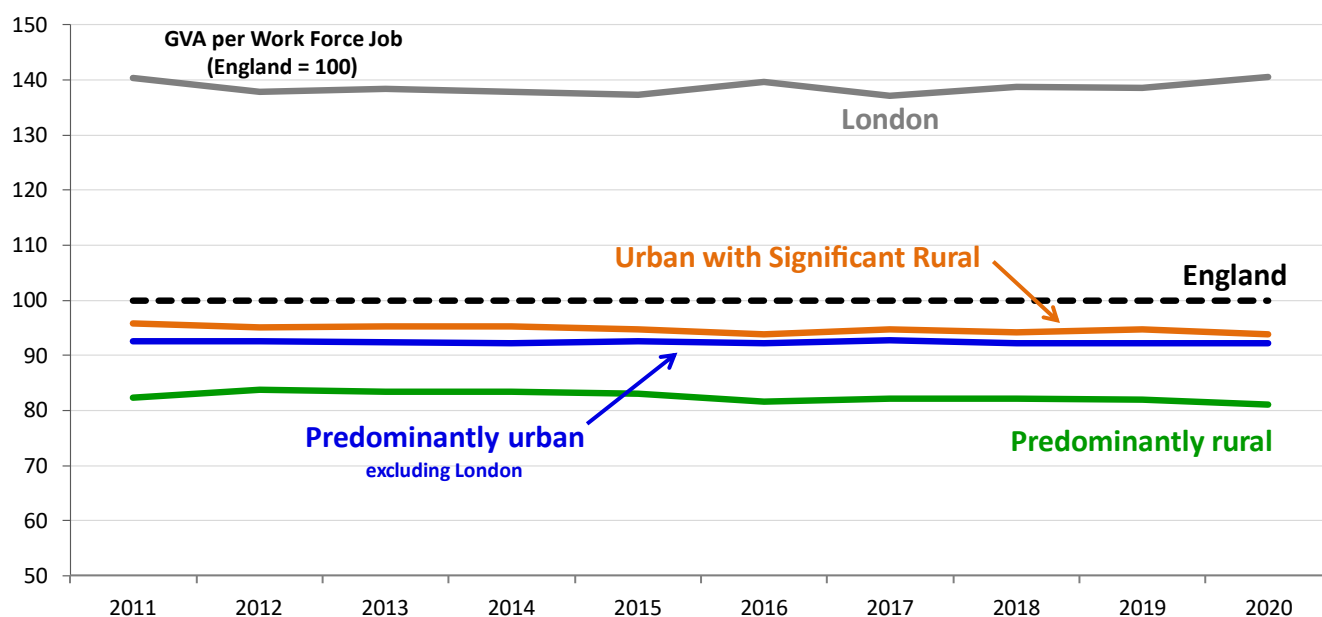
- The fact that rural areas have not kept pace with economic growth elsewhere in the country partly reflects urban growth in the financial services sector, especially in London – and other factors such as the size of economic sectors in rural areas and the size of businesses – rather than a decline in rural productivity as such.
- A table of GVA figures broken down by broad local authority rural-urban classification covering 2001 to 2020 (provisional) is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: The GVA figures are based on GVA at broadly county level apportioned at local district level to provide a more refined analysis of GVA across the local authority classification. Data have been recalculated based on ONS Local Authority GVA figures. www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/datasets/nominalregionalgrossvalueaddedbalancedperheadandincomecomponents
www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/datasets/regionalgrossvalueaddedbalancedlocalauthoritiesbynuts1region
 Balanced GVA uses the income approach and the production approach for estimating GVA. It takes the strengths from both approaches to produce a new balanced measure of regional GVA. This gives users a single measure of economic activity within a region.

Source: Defra analysis. Office for National Statistics, Gross Value Added at NUTS3 and LAD level.

Gross Value Added (GVA) per Workforce Job

GVA per workforce job (£), by Local Authority Classification compared with England as a whole, 2011 to 2020 (provisional)



Gross Value Added (GVA) per workforce job (WFJ) (£ and as percentage of England level), by Local Authority Classification in England, 2020 (provisional)

	£	As percentage of England level
London	78,700	141
Urban with Major Conurbation	50,500	90
Urban with Minor Conurbation	45,200	81
Urban with City and Town	53,300	95
Urban with Significant Rural	52,500	94
Largely Rural	45,900	82
Mainly Rural	44,600	80
Predominantly Urban (excl. London)	51,700	92
Predominantly Rural	45,400	81
England	56,000	100

- The nominal GVA per workforce job is highest in London at around £78,700 per workforce job in 2020 (provisional estimate). After London, Urban with City and Town areas had the highest values per workforce job (around £53,300).
- For 2020, the GVA per workforce job in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) areas was £51,700 and in Predominantly Rural areas it was £45,400.
- In 2020 the productivity of Predominantly Rural areas was around 81 per cent of that for England as a whole (provisional estimate). This had fallen from 89 per cent in 2001 but is affected by the increases in London's contribution affecting England's overall productivity.

- A table of GVA per workforce job figures broken down by broad local authority rural-urban classification covering 2001 to 2020 (provisional) is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: GVA per workforce job is a measure of GVA divided by the workforce number.

It is important to note that there is currently no official way of deflating nominal GVA figures to reflect underlying differences in price levels between places. This means that figures may exaggerate the variation in real GVA per job between different areas because we would expect prices (property and other living expenses) to be highest in areas of high productivity such as London. Rather than report the absolute figures the variations in productivity are shown in relation to the level for England as a whole for each year.

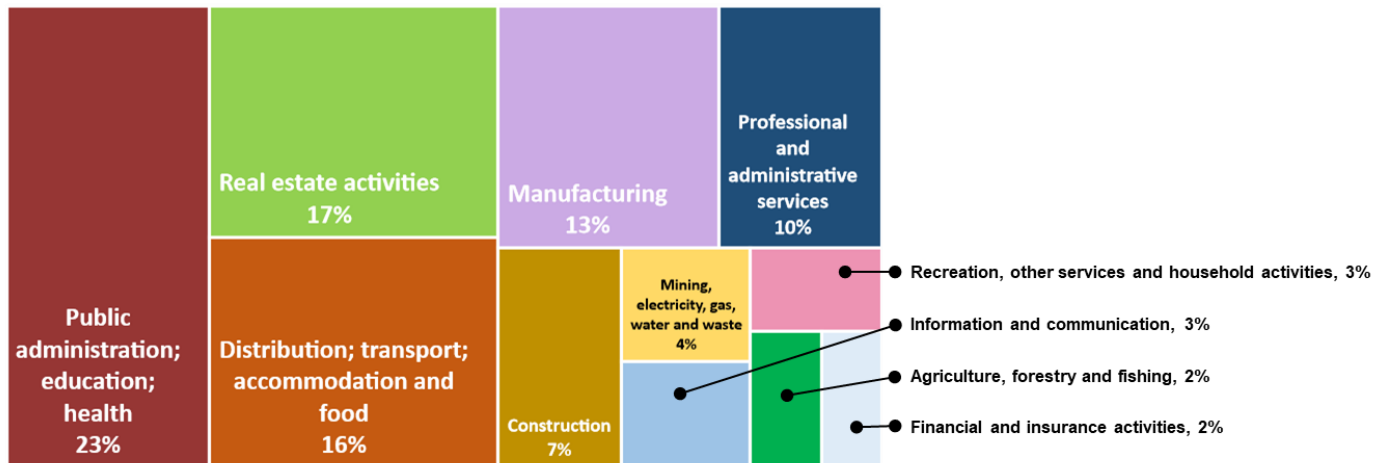
The analysis uses the 2011 Local Authority Rural Urban Classification for all years to allow comparison.

Source: Defra analysis. Workforce jobs series via Nomis (Jobs Density Total Jobs) (www.nomisweb.co.uk/Default.asp).

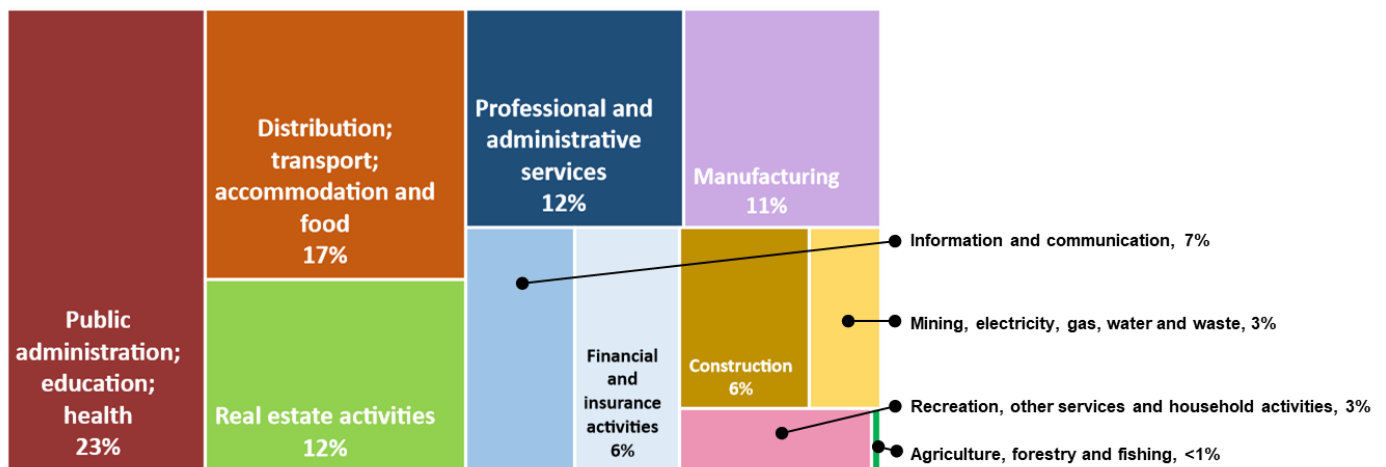
Contribution to England's Gross Value Added (GVA) by Industry

Percentage breakdown of Gross Value Added (GVA) by industry, and by Local Authority Classification in England, 2020 (provisional)

Predominantly Rural areas:



Predominantly Urban areas (excl. London):



- The industrial breakdown is broadly similar across Predominantly Rural areas and Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London). In both area types the combined sector of 'Public administration; education and health' contributes the most to GVA at 23 per cent of GVA for the area type.
- In Predominantly Rural areas the sectors where contributions to GVA are more significant are 'Real estate activities' (17 per cent in Predominantly Rural areas and 12 per cent in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) and 'Manufacturing' (13 per cent in Predominantly Rural areas and 11 per cent in Predominantly Urban areas).

- Conversely, in Predominantly Urban areas the sectors where contributions to GVA are more significant are 'Financial and insurance activities' (2 per cent in Predominantly Rural areas and 6 per cent in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London)) and 'Information and communication' (3 per cent in Predominantly Rural areas and 7 per cent in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London)). Whilst these types of specialised businesses do exist in Predominantly Rural areas, they are more prevalent in cities and larger towns.
- 'Agriculture, forestry and fishing' contributed 2 per cent (£5.7 billion) to Predominantly Rural GVA.
- The industry breakdown is based on the lowest level of geography available which is broadly at county level.
- **The totals for GVA for Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas are different from the headline figures for GVA earlier in this section. This is because the industrial breakdown is calculated using a coarser rural-urban classification which will tend to increase the areas classed as Predominantly Urban. For the total GVA of each type of area the headline figures should be used.**
- A table of 2020 (provisional) GVA figures broken down by industry and broad local authority rural-urban classification is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: Gross Value Added measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector in the country. However, there are some gaps in the coverage of the Annual Business Survey; agriculture for example is only partially covered and self-employment is not included in the data. This may lead to underestimations of economic value. Gross Value Added data by industry is only available at NUTS3 (broadly county) level, and so a broad rural-urban classification is applied. Predominantly Rural areas are those with at least half of their population living in rural settlement or large market towns. The 2011 rural urban classification for local authorities has been applied

Source: Defra analysis. Office for National Statistics, Gross Value Added (Balanced) at NUTS3 by SIC07 industry at current basic prices.

Businesses

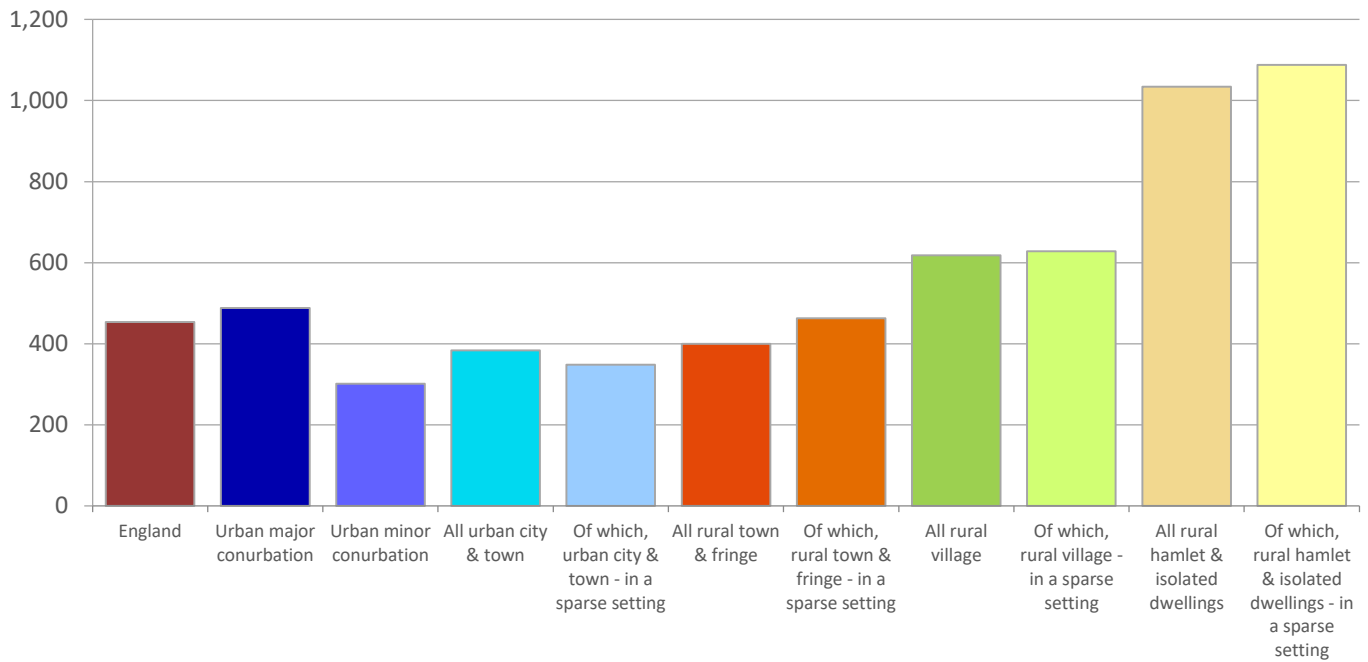
- In 2020/21 there were 549,000 businesses registered in rural areas, accounting for 23 per cent of all registered businesses in England.
- Businesses registered in rural areas employed 3.6 million people, accounting for 13 per cent of all those employed by registered businesses in England.
- There are more registered businesses per head of population in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London).
- There are proportionately more small businesses in rural areas.
- In 2019 there were 56 registered business start-ups per 10,000 population in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) compared with 45 per 10,000 population in Predominantly Rural areas.

Small and Medium Businesses, Business Count and Business Start-up sections will be updated in the May Digest update.

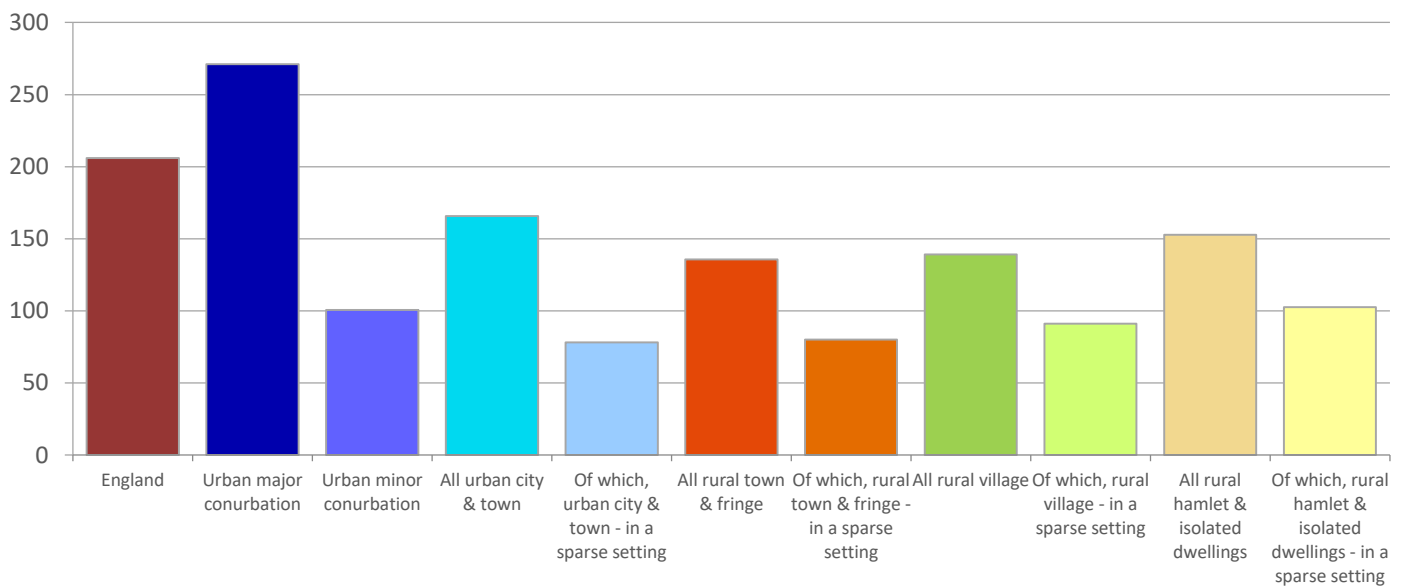
Business composition

Important note: ‘Business composition’ is based on Enterprises, which is the level at which businesses are registered for Value Added Tax and or PAYE. In the case of a business operating at only one address, it will be registered at that address, but for businesses operating in several locations, it will be the location of the headquarters that is registered. If a business has branches in rural areas, but the headquarters are registered within an urban area, then the statistics for all the outlets will be registered at the headquarters, and not counted as “rural”. The later sections on ‘Businesses by industry type’, ‘Employment by industry type’ and ‘Businesses by size band’ are based on Local Unit data, which distinguishes the location of branches.

Number of registered businesses (single-site or headquarters) per 10,000 population, by rural-urban classification, in England, 2020/21



Average turnover per person employed, by rural-urban classification, in England, 2020/21



- In 2020/21 there were 549,000 businesses registered in rural areas, accounting for 23 per cent of all registered businesses in England.
- Businesses registered in rural areas employed 3.6 million people, accounting for 13 per cent of all those employed by registered businesses in England.

- There are more registered businesses (single-site or headquarters) per head of population in rural areas than in urban areas. The more 'rural' an area is, the higher the number of registered businesses per head of population.
- The average turnover per person employed is greater in urban areas, especially *Urban Conurbations*, and lower in rural areas, especially those in a *sparse setting*.
- A table containing further key 2020/21 statistics on registered businesses including number of registered businesses, number of people employed and turnover is available broken down by detailed rural-urban classification in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Notes:

On the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), the enterprise is the statistical unit that most closely equates to a business. It holds aggregated information gathered from administrative and statistical sources within that enterprise to give an overall picture of what is going on in the business. An enterprise carries out one or more activities at one or more locations. An enterprise may be a sole legal unit.

Turnover relates to income received by a business from the 'sale of goods and or services charged to third parties'. The IDBR does not include businesses whose turnover is below the tax threshold. As turnover is reported at the enterprise level it is affected by where businesses report their headquarters to be. As such there can be variation from year to year as a result of businesses relocating

Further information: [see this ONS document about the Inter-Departmental Business Register](#)

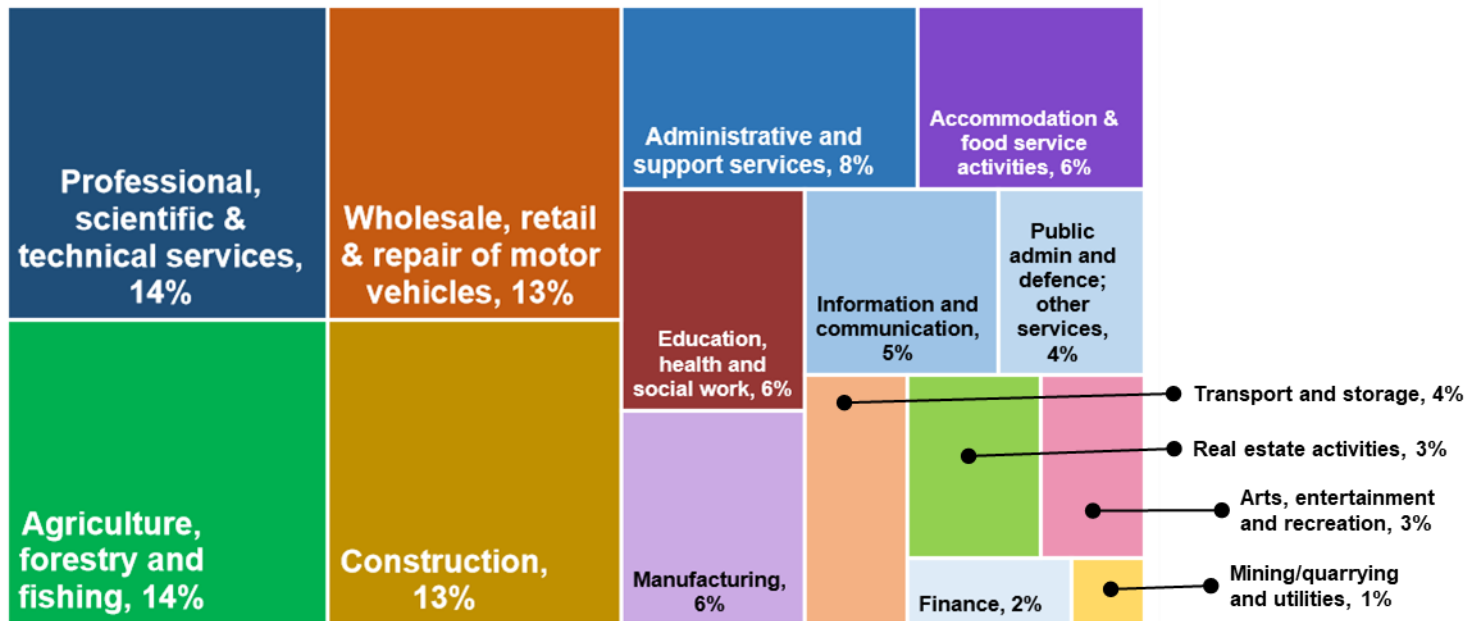
Source: ONS, Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR), 2020/21

Businesses by industry type

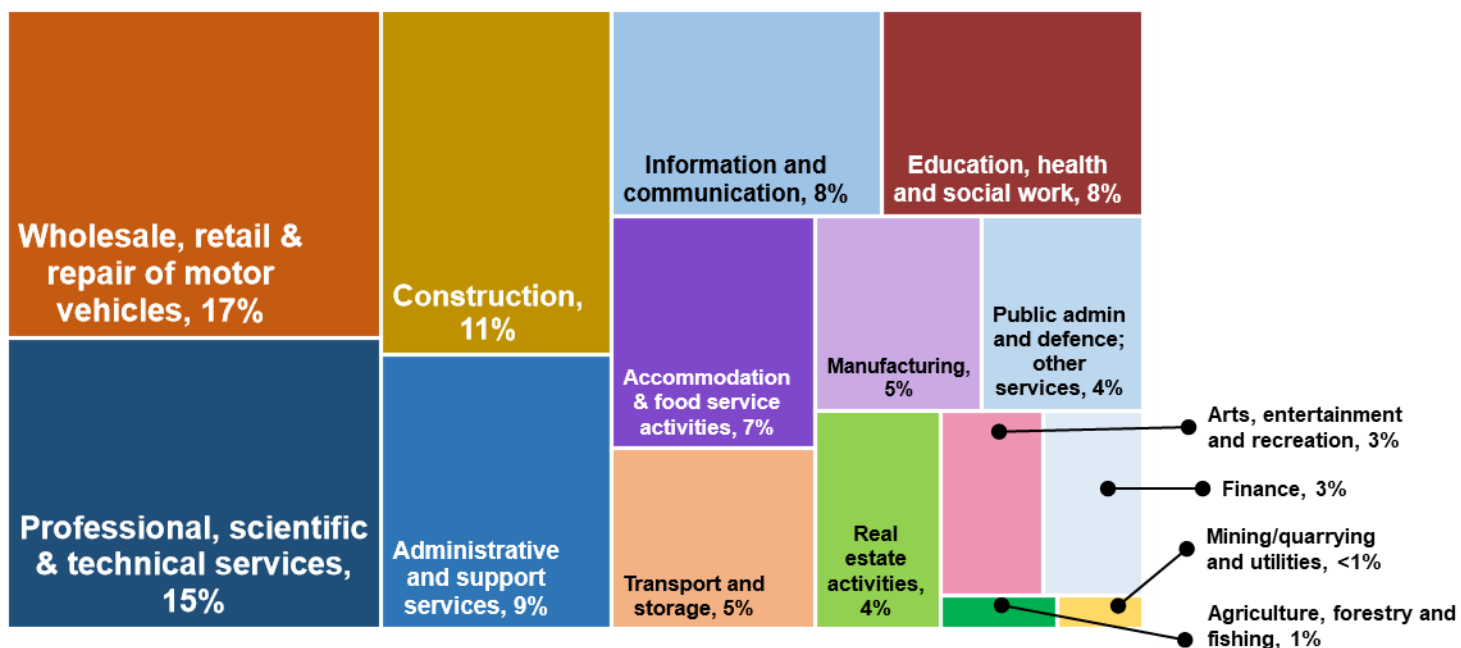
Important note: 'Businesses by industry type' and 'Businesses by size band' are based on Local Unit. This better reflects the make-up of rural businesses as there can be many local business units in rural areas whose headquarters are elsewhere (although this can apply vice versa).

Percentage of local unit registered businesses by industry, by rural-urban classification, in England, 2020/21

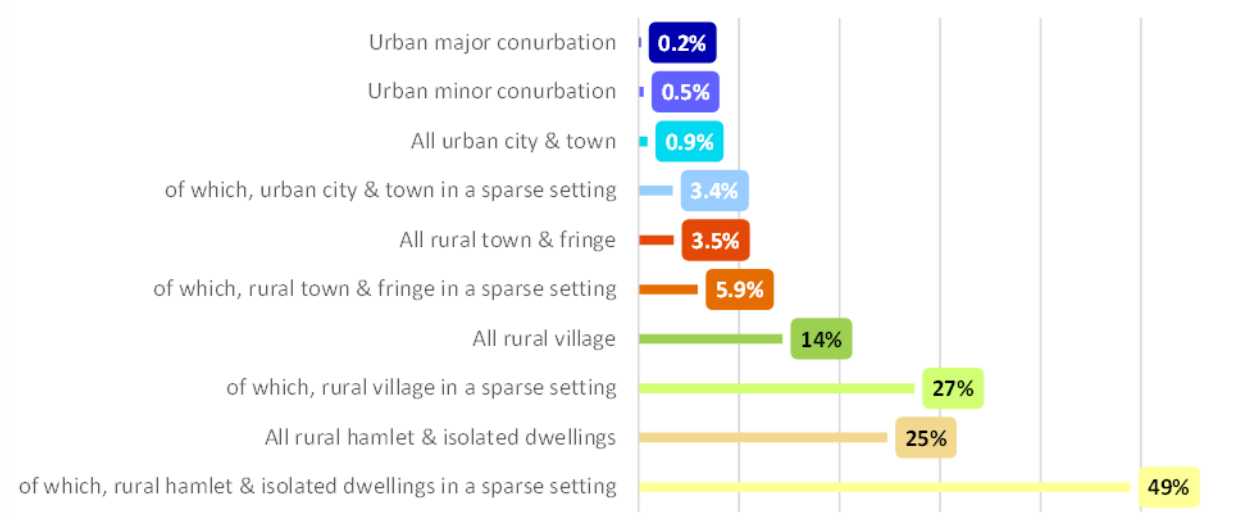
All rural areas:



All urban areas:

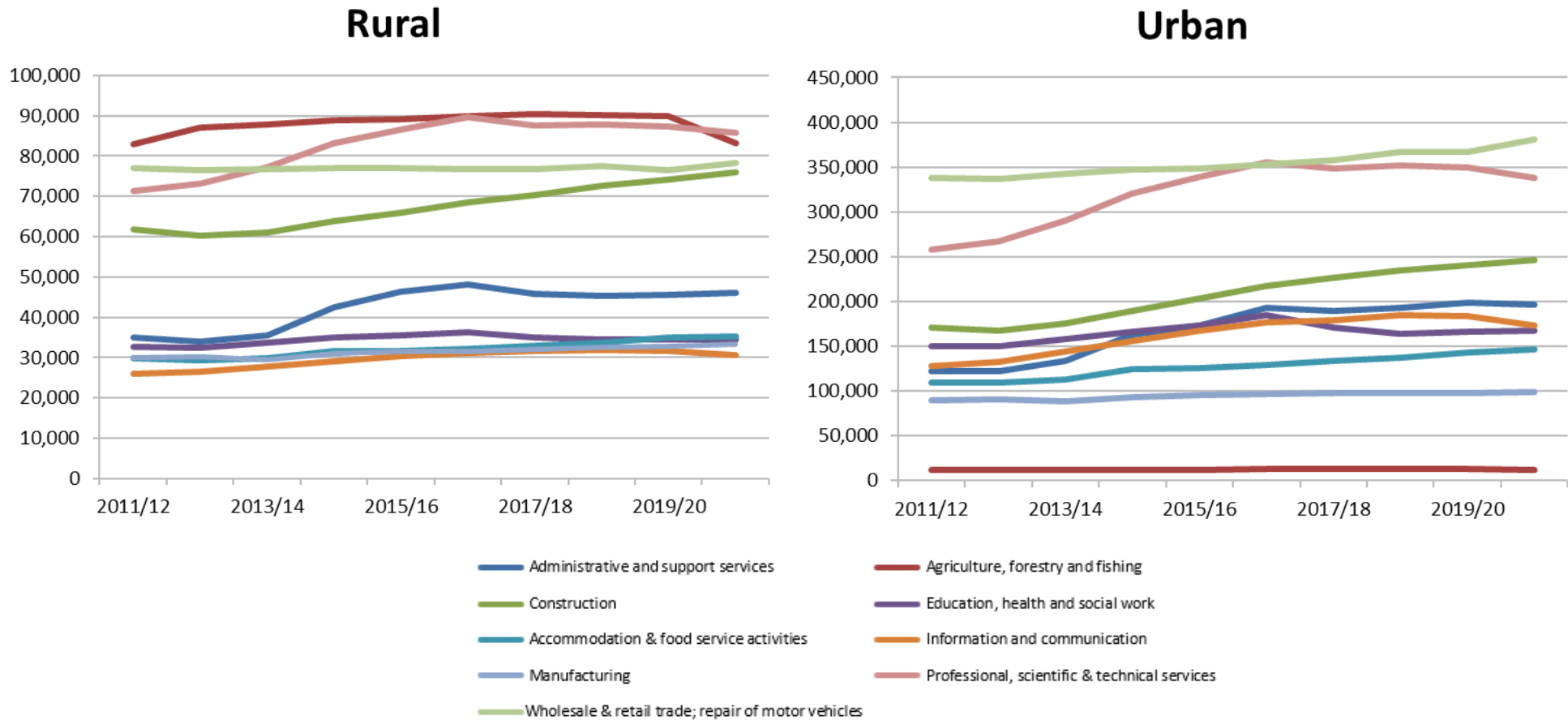


Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing businesses as a percentage of total local units of registered businesses by rural-urban classification, in England, 2020/21



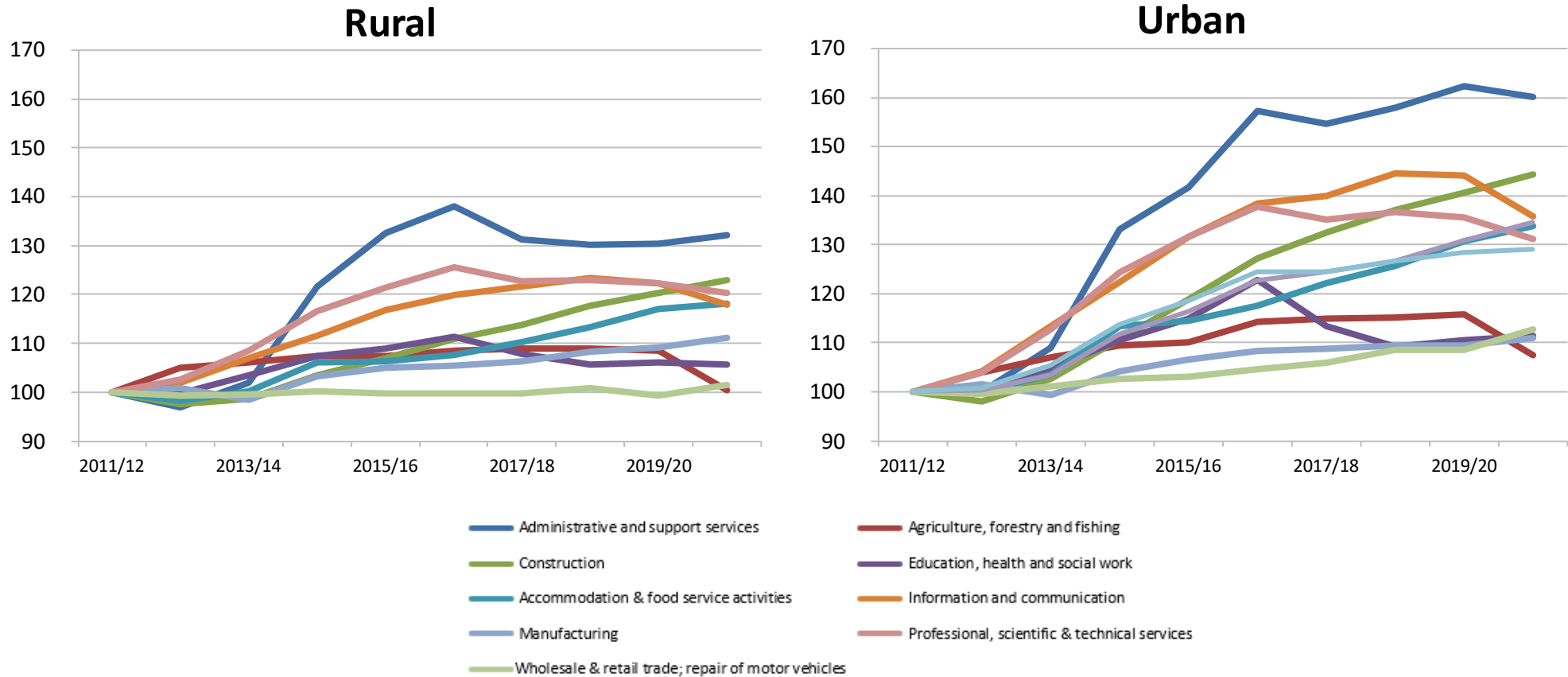
- In 2020/21 'Agriculture, forestry & fishing' accounts for 14 per cent of the local units of registered businesses in rural areas overall (30 per cent in Rural areas in a sparse setting). They are dominant sectors in rural hamlets and Rural Villages. In Rural Hamlets & Isolated Dwellings in a sparse setting, just under half the registered businesses are in these industries. In England overall the 'Agriculture, forestry & fishing' sector accounts for 3.4 per cent of the local units of registered businesses.
- Other prominent sectors in rural areas are: 'Professional, scientific & technical services' (14 per cent of businesses), 'Wholesale & retail trade; repair of motor vehicles' (13 per cent) and 'Construction' (13 per cent).
- A table of 2020/21 business figures broken down by industry and detailed rural-urban classification is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Numbers of local units of registered businesses in rural and urban areas by industry between 2011/12 and 2020/21, in England
 Please note, scales differ for the charts shown below as numbers of businesses are considerably higher in urban areas.



- A table of rural and urban business figures broken down by industry for 2011/12 to 2020/21 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#)

Index (2011/12 = 100) of change in numbers of local units of registered businesses in rural and urban areas by industry between 2011/12 and 2020/21, in England



- Various sectors saw a fall in local unit numbers between 2019/20 and 2020/21, in both rural and urban areas. In rural and urban areas the fall has been greatest for the 'Agriculture, forestry and fishing' sector where local unit numbers have fallen by 8 per cent (the 'Information and communication' sector also saw an 8 per cent fall in urban areas).
- The fall in rural areas for the 'Agriculture, forestry and fishing' sector sees local unit numbers drop back to 2011/12 levels.

- An indexed table of rural and urban business figures broken down by industry for 2011/12 to 2020/21 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

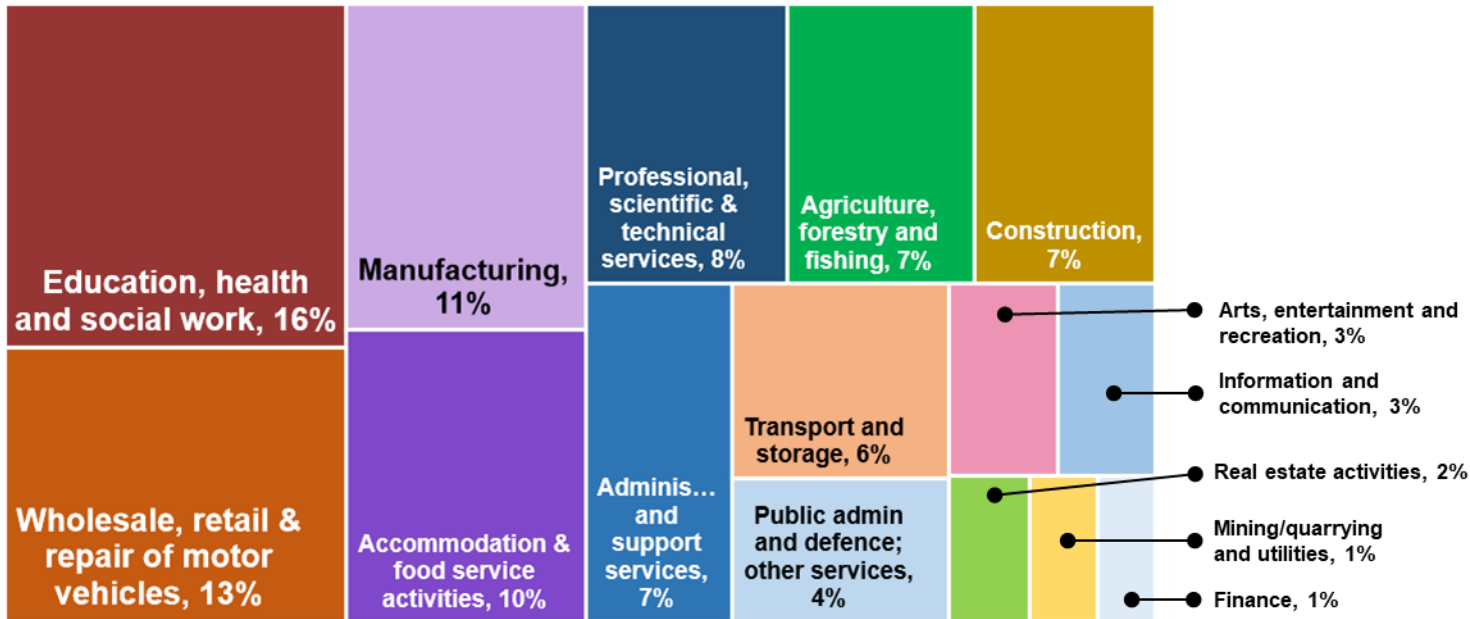
Employment by industry type

The number of **employees** refers to the number of people working within the business under a contract of employment in return for a wage or salary. A business can have no employees, if all the business is conducted by people classed as being working proprietors (i.e. sole traders or partnerships).

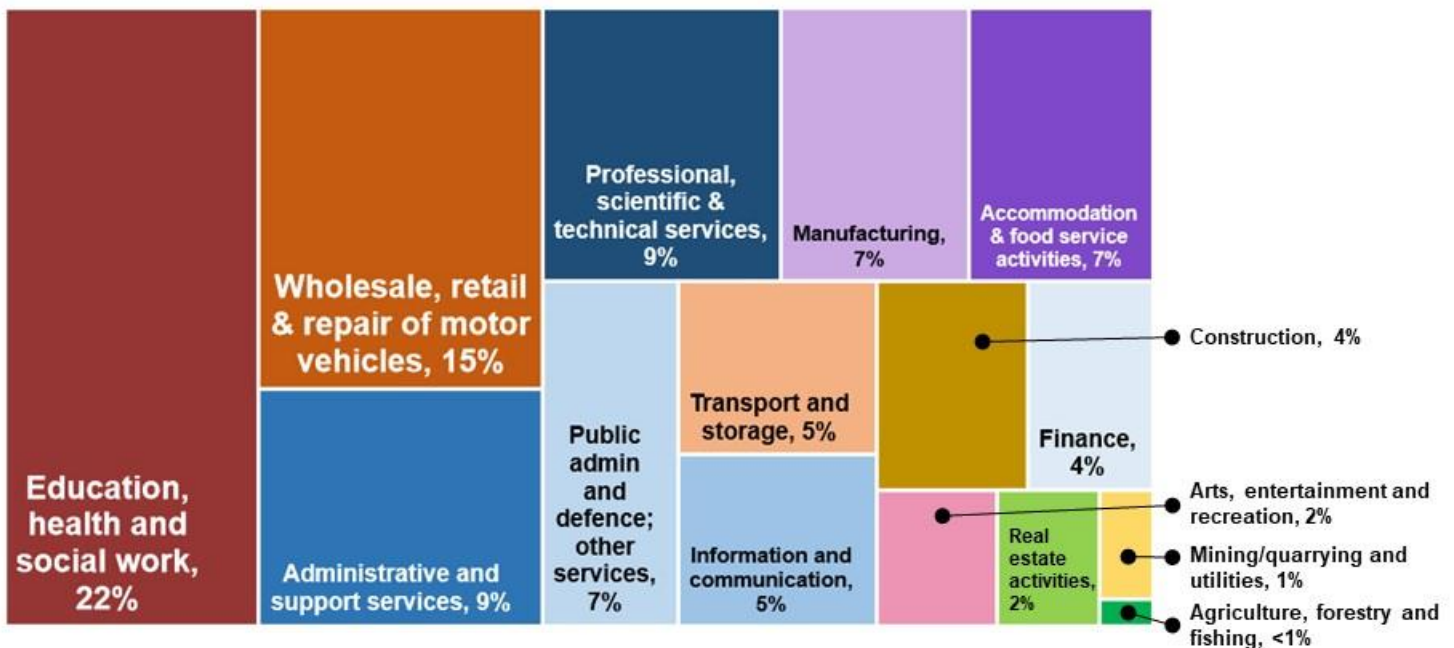
The number of people **employed** is a sum of employees and self-employed people who run the business.

Percentage of employment within local units of registered businesses by industry, by rural-urban classification, in England, 2020/21

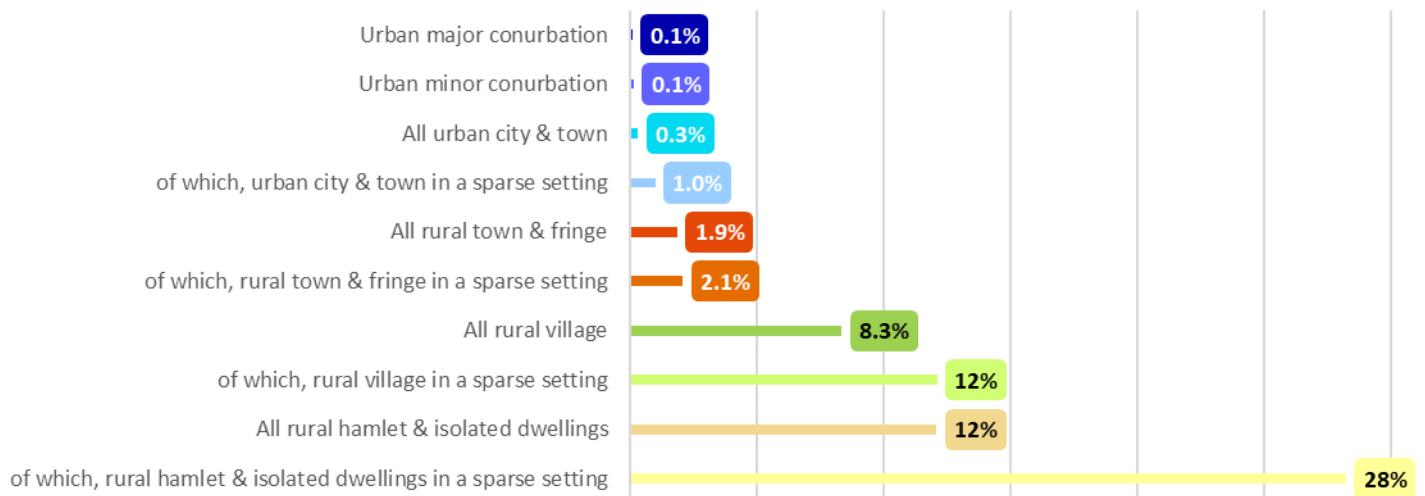
All rural areas:



All urban areas:



Employment in *Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing* businesses as a percentage of total employment in local units of registered businesses by rural-urban classification, in England, 2020/21



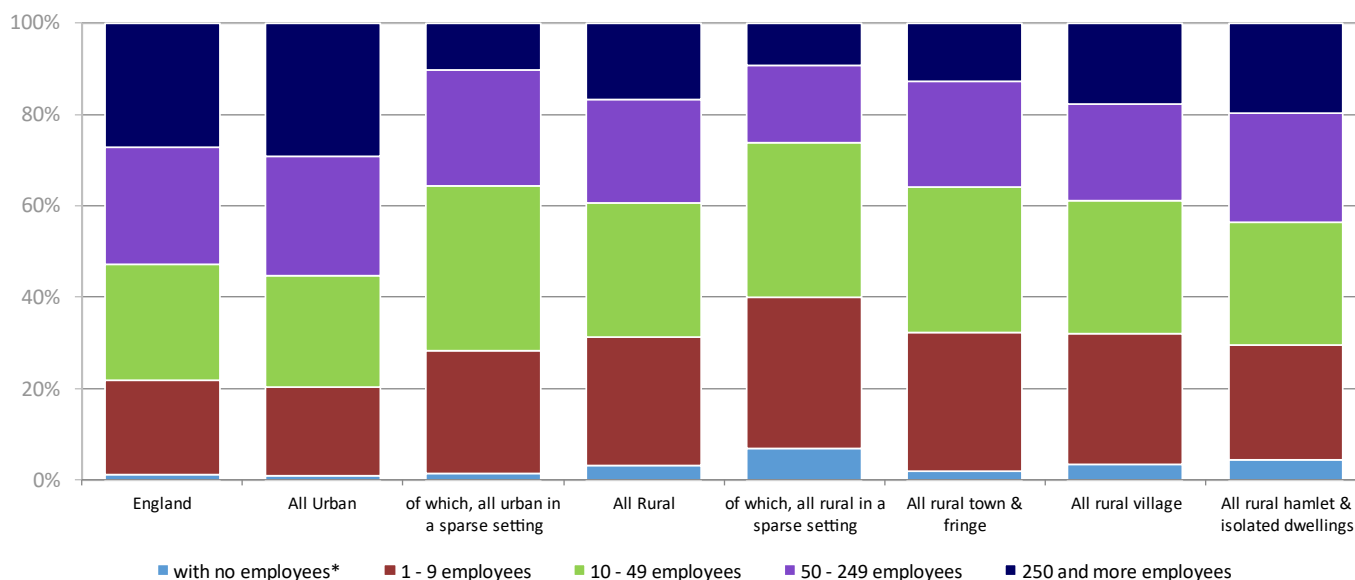
- The three sectors with the highest percentages of employment in rural areas are ‘Education, health & social work’, ‘Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles’ and ‘Manufacturing’ (16 per cent, 13 per cent and 11 per cent respectively).
- ‘Agriculture, forestry & fishing’ is the only sector that is greater in terms of actual employment numbers in rural areas than urban areas, with employment figures of 300,500 in rural areas compared with 45,000 in urban areas. All other sectors have greater employment numbers in urban areas than rural areas
- A table of 2020/21 employment figures broken down by industry and detailed rural-urban classification is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Businesses by size band

The number of **employees** refers to the number of people working within the business under a contract of employment in return for a wage or salary. A business can have no employees, if all the business is conducted by people classed as being working proprietors (i.e. sole traders or partnerships).

The number of people **employed** is a sum of employees and self-employed people who run the business.

Percentage of people employed within local units by size bands of registered businesses and rural-urban classification, in England, 2020/21



* 'With no employees' comprises mainly sole proprietorships and partnerships. This category also includes around 23,200 businesses classed as 'Other' – with no employees and no employment (about 0.8 per cent of the total business count).

- In urban areas 29.2 per cent of people employed in the local units of registered businesses are employed in those businesses with 250 or more employees overall, and in rural areas the proportion is 16.7 per cent.
- In regard to smaller businesses, in urban areas 19.4 per cent of people employed in local units of registered businesses are employed in micro businesses (those with between 1 and 9 employees overall), whilst in rural areas the proportion is 28.1 per cent.
- When looking at numbers of local units of registered businesses the category with the greatest proportion of total businesses is those with between 1 and 9 employees, with 77.5 per cent of businesses in this size band in urban areas and 72.0 per cent in rural areas.
- In urban areas 7.1 per cent of businesses have no employees (e.g. sole traders and partnerships), compared with 16.3 per cent in rural areas.
- A table of 2020/21 employment figures and businesses numbers broken down by business size band and detailed rural-urban classification is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: The statistics are based on individual business units rather than the location of the headquarters of the enterprise. There may be many local business units in rural areas whose headquarters are elsewhere, and vice versa.

Source: ONS, Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) 2020/21.

Small and medium businesses

- Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are businesses employing fewer than 250 people.
- In England in 2020/21, there are 2.4 million SMEs registered for PAYE and/or VAT, providing employment for 12.3 million people.
- However, it is estimated that in England there are an additional 2.5² million unregistered businesses i.e. those who are not registered for VAT and do not have employees registered for PAYE.
- For registered businesses, information is available on their location, principal activity, employment and turnover, and for those who operate on multiple sites, the location and employment in individual business units. Information on registered SMEs is presented below.
- Less is known of unregistered businesses and in particular until now there have been no estimates of how many are based in rural areas. However, analysis of data from the Longitudinal Small Business Survey, which included unregistered businesses, provides further insights on SMEs in rural areas. Some results from the analysis are presented later in this section. These suggest that 73.3 per cent of all SMEs in rural areas have no employees. Note that this includes both registered and unregistered businesses and hence is not comparable with statistics presented in this section for registered businesses as the majority of unregistered businesses will have no employees. Of registered SMEs in rural areas 17.5 per cent have no employees.

Registered Small and Medium Enterprises

- Enterprises are considered rural registered businesses if their single site of operation or their headquarters, as registered for PAYE (Pay-As-You-Earn tax) and/or VAT (Value Added Tax) purposes, are located in a rural area. Enterprises where the headquarters are in an urban area are regarded as urban registered businesses, even if some business units are in rural areas.
- In 2020/21, there was 548,000 registered rural SMEs, representing 99.8 per cent of all registered rural enterprises, and 23 per cent of all registered SMEs in England. In urban areas SMEs represent 99.6 per cent of registered businesses.
- In 2020/21, 2.6 million people were employed in registered rural SMEs, representing 71 per cent of all those employed by registered rural enterprises. SMEs account for 42 per cent of those employed in registered urban enterprises.

² Business population estimates for 2021 published by BEIS suggest there are 4.9 million business in England ([Business population estimates 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/business-population-estimates-2021)). Office for National Statistics estimate there are 2.4 million registered businesses in England. This suggests there are 2.5 million unregistered businesses in England.

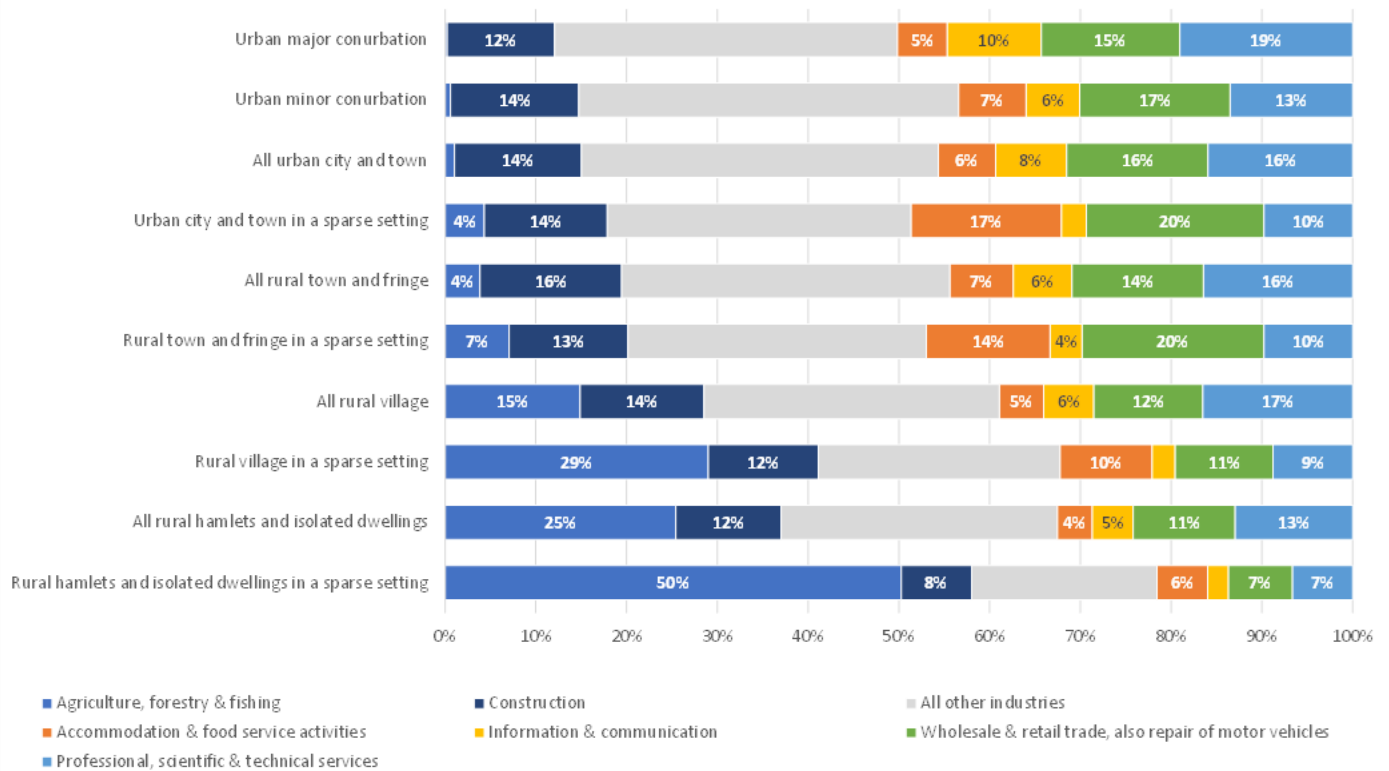
Number of registered small and medium enterprises, employment and turnover, by rural urban classification, in England, 2020/21

	Number of registered SMEs ¹ (thousands)	Employment by registered SMEs ¹ (thousands)	Employment by SMEs as a percentage of all employment by registered enterprises	Average turnover per person employed £000s
All urban	1,849	9,740	41.6	219
those in a sparse setting	3	20	85.7	79
All rural	548	2,578	70.8	125
those in a sparse setting	33	153	84.3	90
England	2,397	12,317	45.5	199

SMEs are Small and medium enterprises (employing fewer than 250 people)

- Although almost all registered businesses are small or medium enterprises (SME) in both rural and urban areas, a much higher proportion of people employed by rural registered businesses are employed by SMEs (71 per cent) than in urban areas (42 per cent).
- Average turnover per person employed is lower in rural registered SMEs (£125,000) than in urban registered SMEs (£219,000), which is dominated by those in Urban with Major Conurbations (£311,000). The average for registered SMEs in settlements in a sparse setting are somewhat lower and in particular is £79,000 per person employed in both Rural Town and Fringe in a sparse setting and Urban City and Town in a sparse setting.
- A breakdown of the table above using a more detailed rural-urban classification is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).
- A further table that breaks SMEs down by business size band (in terms of employment) and detailed rural-urban classification is also available.

Percentage of registered small and medium enterprises by industry and rural-urban classification, in England, 2020/21



- The chart above displays those sectors where the business count proportions by sector for the individual rural urban classification differs the most from England averages. Primary sectors are shown on the left and service type sectors to the right. The ‘all other industries’ grouping is made up of: (1) Administrative and support services, (2) Arts, entertainment and recreation, (3) Education, health and social work, (4) Finance, (5) Manufacturing, (6) Mining/ quarrying and utilities, (7) Public admin and defence; other services, (8) Real estate activities, (9) Transport and storage and (10) Other service activities, including activities of households as employers.
- SMEs in ‘Agriculture, forestry and fishing’ sectors account for 14.6 per cent of rural registered SMEs rising to 33 per cent of SMEs registered in rural areas in a sparse setting. These percentages are slightly higher than when considering the sector representation at a local business unit level (see [Businesses](#))
- Other sectors that are dominant at the local business unit level are similarly dominant at the SME level, such as ‘Professional, scientific and technical services’ (15.3 per cent), ‘Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles’ (12.6 per cent), and ‘Construction’ (13.6 per cent).
- 17.5 per cent of rural registered SMEs have no employees, compared with 8.4 per cent of urban registered SMEs. The majority of rural registered SMEs (74 per cent), have 1 to 9 employees, though this is lower than for urban registered SMEs (82 per cent).
- 30 per cent of registered SMEs in rural areas in a sparse setting have no employees
- A table of 2020/21 rural and urban business figures broken down by is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Analysis of small and medium enterprises from the Longitudinal Small Business Survey

The Longitudinal Small Business Survey (LSBS) was commissioned by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Over 13,400 SMEs were interviewed in England in 2015, including over 3,500 (26.5 per cent) in rural areas. The Rural Enterprise UK team at Newcastle University's Centre for Rural Economy and Business School have undertaken additional rural-urban analysis of the data and some of their findings are presented below.

Comparisons between statistics on rural and urban businesses can be difficult to interpret and in particular it is difficult to identify whether any differences reflect variations in the profile of urban and rural economies in terms of business sectors, ages and sizes or factors related to their location. The analysis attempts to match similar rural and urban businesses to take account of this where practicable.

LSBS: Number of responses from small and medium enterprises with percentage by size and rural-urban classification, England excluding London, 2015

	with no employees		1 - 9 employees		10 - 49 employees		50 - 249 employees		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban	6,361	77.7	1,480	18.1	300	3.7	49	0.6	8,190	100.0
Rural	2,687	73.3	828	22.6	133	3.6	19	0.5	3,667	100.0
Total	9,048	76.3	2,308	19.5	433	3.7	68	0.6	11,857	100.0

- The proportion of businesses with no employees is considerably higher for both rural, 73.3 per cent, and urban areas, 77.7 per cent, in the LSBS sample compared with the proportions represented as registered businesses with no employees (19.8 per cent and 9.3 per cent respectively).
- However, this is consistent with Business population estimates suggesting that enterprises with no employees, whether registered or unregistered, account for around 76 per cent of enterprises in England.
- The survey suggests that enterprises with no employees are proportionately fewer in rural areas (73.3 per cent) compared with urban areas (77.7 per cent), but that enterprises with 1-9 employees are proportionately higher in rural areas (22.6 per cent) compared with urban areas (18.1 per cent).

LSBS: Number of responses from small and medium enterprises with percentage by broad sector and rural-urban classification, England excluding London, 2015

	Production & construction		Transport, retail & food, accommodation		Business services		Other services		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban	2,095	25.6	1,451	17.7	2,660	32.5	1,984	24.2	8,190	100.0
Rural	1,085	29.6	775	21.1	1,099	30.0	708	19.3	3,667	100.0
Total	3,180	26.8	2,226	18.8	3,759	31.7	2,692	22.7	11,857	100.0

- In the survey rural enterprises were more likely to be in production and construction sectors, and transport, retail and food, and accommodation sectors, while urban enterprises were slightly more likely to be providing business and other services.

LSBS: Number of responses from small and medium enterprises with percentage by level of turnover, whether profitable and rural-urban classification, England excluding London, 2015

Turnover

	Less than £82,000		More than £82,000		Don't know / refused		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban	5,279	64.5	1,938	23.7	973	11.9	8,190	100.0
Rural	2,011	54.8	1,192	32.5	464	12.7	3,667	100.0
Total	7,290	61.5	3,130	26.4	1,437	12.1	11,857	100.0

Profit

	Yes		No		Don't know / refused		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban	6,258	76.4	1,461	17.8	471	5.8	8,190	100.0
Rural	2,907	79.3	536	14.6	224	6.1	3,667	100.0
Total	9,165	77.3	1,997	16.8	695	5.9	11,857	100.0

- The survey results would initially suggest that rural enterprises were more likely to have an annual turnover of more than £82,000 than urban enterprises and were more likely to report a profit.
- However, this is in part likely to reflect differences in the characteristics of businesses in rural and urban areas. When similar businesses are compared analysis shows that rural enterprises were likely to have similar levels of turnover to their urban counterparts, though they were still more likely to report a profit.
- The study speculates that rural enterprises could be more likely to be profitable owing to a number of factors including lower wage levels, a higher proportion of home-based enterprises, lower rents/rates, and less local competition.

LSBS: Number of responses from small and medium enterprises by age, whether family-owned and rural-urban classification, England excluding London, 2015

Age

	0 -5 years		6 - 10 years		11 - 20 years		More than 20 years		Don't know		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban	1,281	15.6	1,527	18.6	1,977	24.1	3,374	41.2	31	0.4	8,190	100.0
Rural	410	11.2	663	18.1	857	23.4	1,732	47.2	6	0.2	3,668	100.0
Total	1,691	14.3	2,190	18.5	2,834	23.9	5,106	43.1	37	0.3	11,858	100.0

Family ownership

	Yes		No		Don't know / refused		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban	7,036	85.9	1,122	13.7	32	0.4	8,190	100.0
Rural	3,185	86.9	464	12.7	18	0.5	3,667	100.0
Total	10,221	86.2	1,586	13.4	50	0.4	11,857	100.0

- The surveyed rural enterprises were more likely than urban enterprises to be more than 20 years old.
- The majority of enterprises were family owned but there was no significant difference between rural and urban enterprises. 86.9 per cent of rural enterprises were family owned.

LSBS: Number of responses from small and medium enterprises and percentage by major obstacles to businesses in general at the England level, by rural urban classification, England excluding London, 2015

		Urban	Rural	Total
Competition in the market	Number	3,788	1,476	5,264
	%	46.3	40.3	44.4
Regulations / red tape	Number	2,841	1,671	4,512
	%	34.7	45.6	38.1
Taxation, VAT, PAYE, National Insurance, Business rates	Number	2,297	1,157	3,454
	%	28.0	31.6	29.1
Late payment	Number	2,239	1,037	3,276
	%	27.3	28.3	27.6
Staff recruitment & skills	Number	1,348	718	2,066
	%	16.5	19.6	17.4
Obtaining finance	Number	1,375	663	2,038
	%	16.8	18.1	17.2
Availability / cost of suitable premises	Number	1,295	534	1,829
	%	15.8	14.6	15.4
Workplace pensions	Number	898	409	1,307
	%	11.0	11.2	11.0
Any other major issues or obstacles	Number	943	479	1,422
	%	11.5	13.1	12.0
None of these	Number	1,634	594	2,228
	%	20.0	16.2	18.8
Total	Number	8,190	3,667	11,857

Enterprises could give responses to multiple options

- When asked to identify major obstacles to businesses, rural enterprises were more likely than urban enterprises to cite 'Regulations / red tape', 'Taxation, VAT, PAYE, National Insurance, Business rates', and 'Staff recruitment and skills'.

The above is a selection of findings from the Newcastle University study. For more details and analysis refer to the full study report (see below).

Notes: On the **Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR)**, the enterprise is the statistical unit that most closely equates to a business. It holds aggregated information gathered from administrative and statistical sources within that enterprise to give an overall picture of what is going on in the business. An enterprise carries out one or more activities at one or more locations. An enterprise may be a sole legal unit. Turnover relates to income received by a business from the 'sale of goods and or services charged to third parties'. The IDBR does not include businesses whose turnover is below the tax threshold.

Further information: www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/whatwedo/paidservices/interdepartmentalbusinessregisteridbr

Source: ONS, Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR), 2015/16

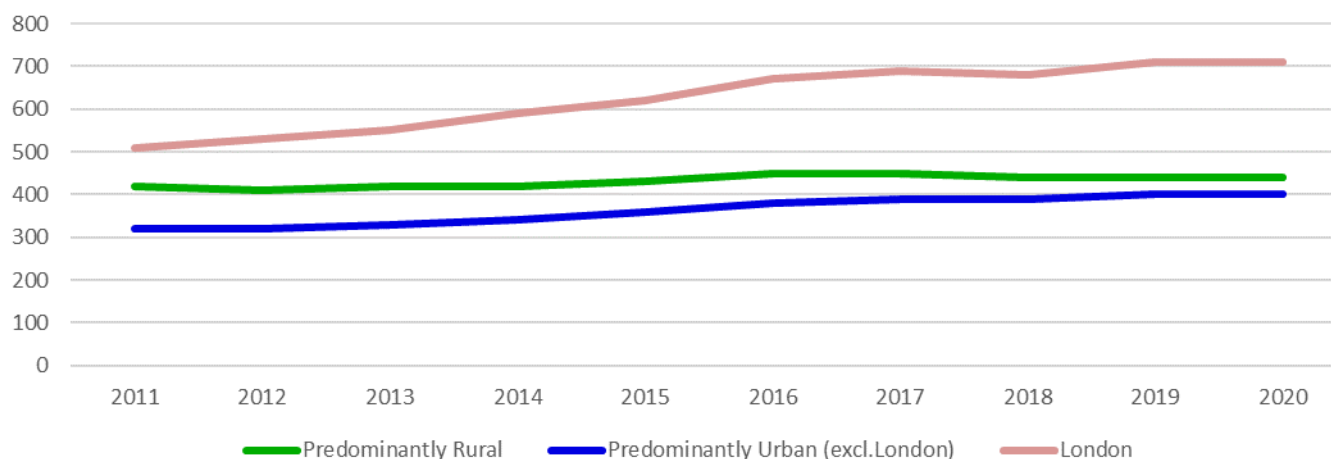
Small Business Survey reports: www.gov.uk/government/collections/small-business-survey-reports

Business Population Estimates: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/business-population-estimates>

Phillipson J, Gorton M, Maioli S, Newbery R, Tiwasing P, Turner R. (2017) **Small rural firms in English regions: analysis and key findings from the UK Longitudinal Small Business Survey, 2015**. Newcastle upon Tyne: Newcastle University Centre for Rural Economy and Business School, September 2017 update: [//research.ncl.ac.uk/ruralenterpriseuk/](http://research.ncl.ac.uk/ruralenterpriseuk/)

Business count

Registered businesses per 10,000 population by Local Authority Classification, in England, 2011 to 2020



- The number of registered businesses per head of population is higher in Predominantly Rural areas (440 per 10,000 population in 2020) than in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) (400 per 10,000 population).
- Between 2019 and 2020 the number of businesses per head of population remained the same in both Predominantly Rural areas and Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London). Historically, there was an increase in the number of businesses in Predominantly Rural areas between 2012 and 2016 but there has been little change since then, whilst Predominantly Urban areas have shown a steady increase in businesses across the period.
- A table of business figures per 10,000 population broken down by detailed local authority rural-urban classification for 2007 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

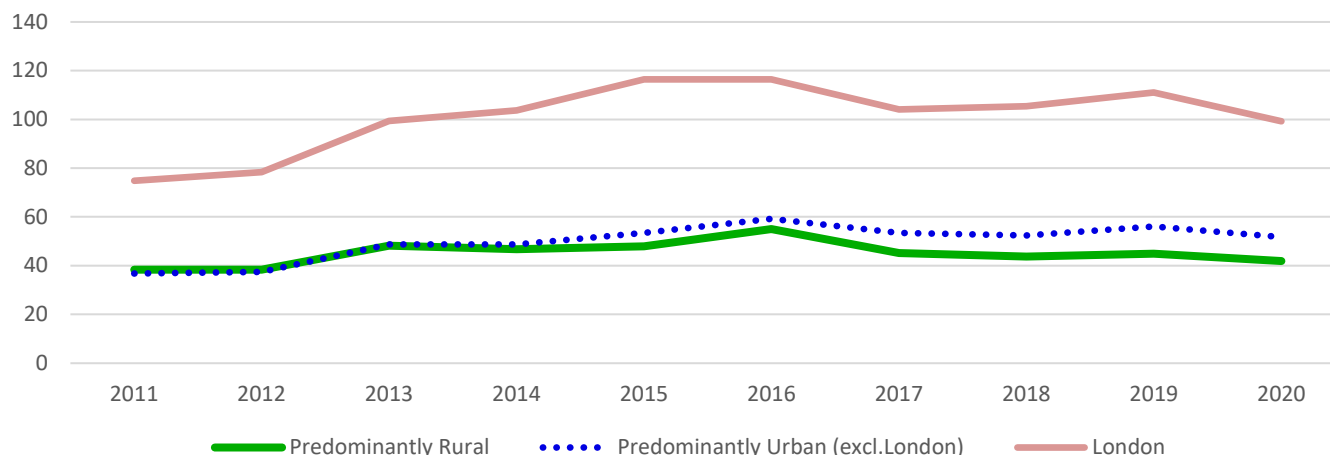
Notes: The data come from Business Demography, which includes businesses that are PAYE registered but not VAT registered. Registered businesses are based on the location of the registered head office, if in multiple locations.

Source:

[ONS - VAT Registrations and De-Registrations](#), [ONS - Business Demography 2019: Enterprise Births, Deaths and Survivals, Tables 1.1 and 3.1](#)

Business start-ups

Registered business start-ups per 10,000 population by Local Authority Classification, in England, 2011 to 2020



- During the last decade the numbers of registered business start-ups were initially higher (in relative terms) in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London). However, since 2013 the numbers of start-ups in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) have overtaken those in Predominantly Rural areas.
- In 2020 there were 52 registered business start-ups per 10,000 population in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) compared with 42 per 10,000 population in Predominantly Rural areas. These numbers show a decrease on 2019 start-ups.
- A table of business start-up figures per 10,000 population broken down by detailed local authority rural-urban classification for 2007 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: The data come from Business Demography, which includes businesses that are PAYE registered but not VAT registered.

Source:

[ONS - VAT Registrations and De-Registrations, ONS - Business Demography 2019: Enterprise Births, Deaths and Survivals, Tables 1.1 and 3.1](#)

Research on 'Drivers of rural business employment growth, decline and stability' can be found at the following link:

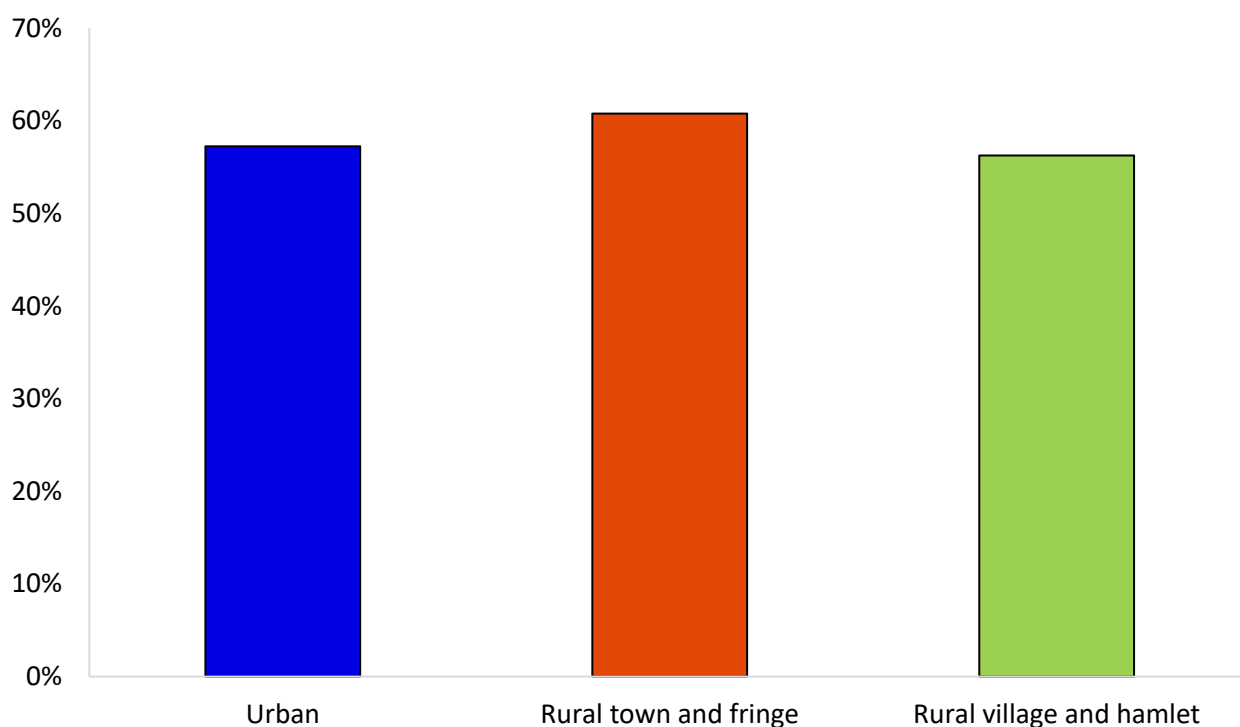
[//randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Module=More&Location=None&ProjectID=18782](https://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Module=More&Location=None&ProjectID=18782)

Innovation and investment

Businesses engaged in innovation

- Broader innovation activities were undertaken by 58 per cent of rural businesses and 57 per cent of urban businesses surveyed between 2012 and 2014.
- This suggests that being situated in a rural or urban settlement had little effect on the innovation practices of businesses surveyed.
- There is a higher proportion of businesses involved in broader innovation located in areas of Rural Town and Fringe than in areas of Rural Village and Hamlet.

Percentage of businesses in England engaged in broader innovation-related activities, 2012 to 2014



Business involvement with broader-innovation-related activities, 2012 to 2014

	Broader innovators	Not broader innovators
Urban	57%	43%
Rural Town and Fringe	61%	39%
Rural Village and Hamlet	56%	44%
Rural total	58%	42%
England total	57%	43%

Notes: These results are based on the unweighted sample of businesses surveyed for England only (therefore the England percentage totals may not match the weighted results published by BEIS). The sample mainly includes enterprise units (i.e. headquarters of businesses) but also has a small number of local units (i.e. sites belonging to enterprises).

BEIS sampling methodology is described in their report and accompanying statistics:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/506953/bis-16-134-uk-innovation-survey-2015.pdf. Owing to the small sample sizes achieved after application of the rural-urban definition, this analysis has been presented as the unweighted results from the surveyed sample. Some settlement types were underrepresented in the sample and should be treated with caution: *rural town & fringe* and *Rural Village & hamlet*. Furthermore, percentage totals for England may not match those published by BEIS due to minor discrepancies with postcode data.

The description of innovation activity in the chart and table above includes businesses that were engaged in any of the following:

1. introduced a new or significantly improved product (good or service) or process
2. engaged in innovation projects that have been abandoned or are not yet complete
3. undertaken new and significantly improved forms of organisation, business structures or practices, and marketing concepts or strategies
4. undertaken activities in areas such as internal research and development, training, acquisition of external knowledge or machinery, and equipment linked to innovation activities

A business engaged in any of the activities 1 to 4 is described as a 'broader innovator'.

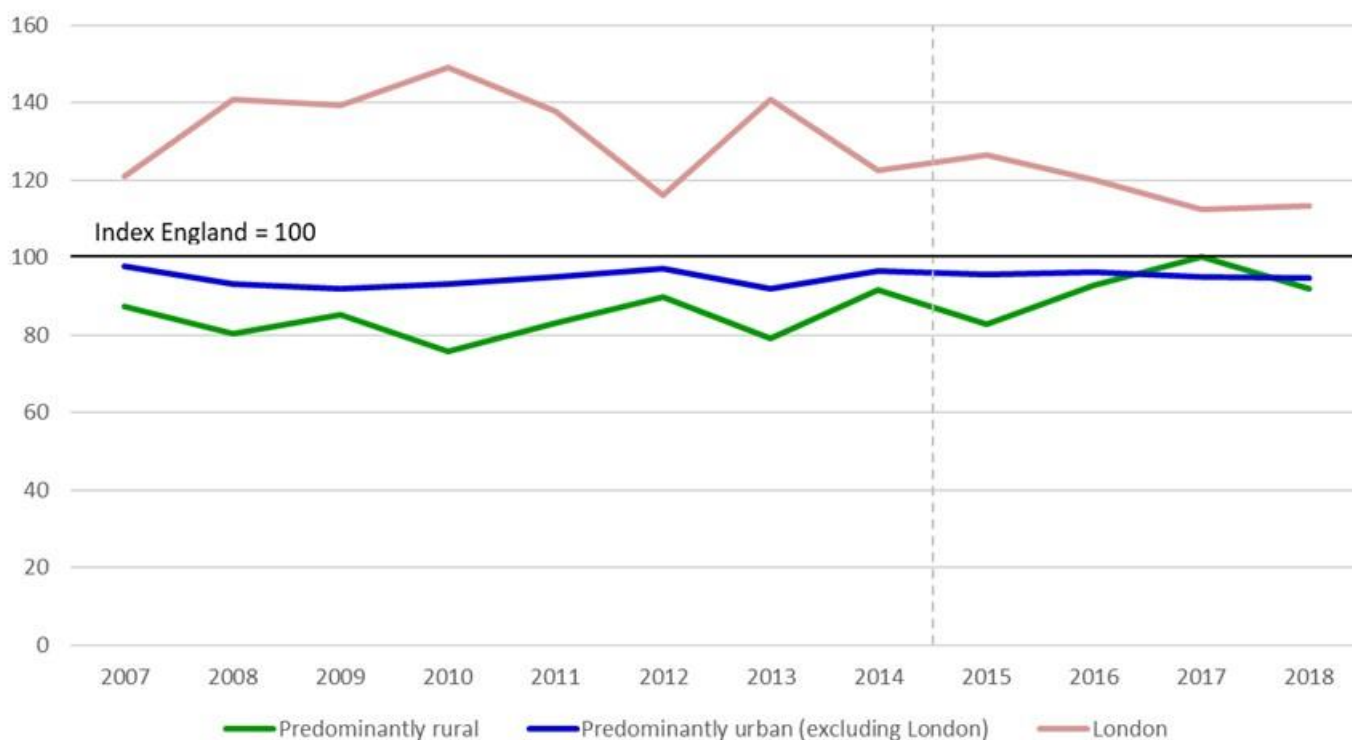
Data from the 2015 UK Innovation Survey may not be directly comparable with data from previous surveys due to changes in survey mode, methodology, sampling approach, questionnaire design and response rate. The rural-urban analyses presented here were performed by applying RUC11 to the data, RUC01 had been used previously for the 2011 UK Innovation Survey. As a result, a comparison cannot be made with previous rural-urban innovation analyses

Source: BEIS UK Innovation Survey 2015 covering innovation activity during 2012 to 2014.

Capital investment per employee

- Companies undertake 'capital investment' when spending money on fixed assets (typically land, buildings or machinery) with the expectation that productivity will increase as a result of the investment.
- Continuing recent trends, capital investment per employee in 2018 was highest in London.
- In 2018 capital investment per employee in Predominantly rural areas was around 92 per cent of the level for England as a whole. This compares with 95 per cent in Predominantly urban areas (excluding London).
- Capital investment in absolute terms is only available at current prices so caution should be used when comparing over time. Comparisons below are presented as an index in relation to the level for England as whole.
- Tables of investment per employee, both in current prices and as a percentage of the level for England, broken down by detailed local authority rural-urban classification for 2007 to 2018 are available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Capital investment per employee as a percentage of the level for England, by local authority classification in England, 2007 to 2018



Dashed line: From 2015 employee numbers include estimates from businesses that are solely PAYE based with employment counts less than 20. These businesses were excluded from estimates of employee numbers in earlier years. This has had minimum impact on the data presented.

- Overall capital investment per employee in predominantly rural areas has been consistently lower than in other areas, except in 2017.
- In 2018, investment per head in London was around £5,800, compared with £4,900 in predominantly urban areas excluding London, and £4,700 in predominantly rural areas.

Notes: Total net capital investment is calculated as total proceeds from disposals subtracted from the total cost of acquisitions. The data is at current prices, so it has already taken account of inflation.

Caution should be taken when interpreting this measure as capital investment is difficult to attribute at local authority level. The estimates are produced by taking data at a higher geographical level and apportioning it at local authority level based on employment levels. As ONS are not wholly confident that there is a sufficient correlation between investment and employment, they do not release the data as a National Statistic below National level.

London has been separated out to allow a fair comparison of major urban against all other area classifications.

Source: Bespoke data request from the ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, and Business Register and Employment Survey (classified data); via Nomis (www.nomisweb.co.uk).

Rural accessibility

Transport and travel

- **Disclaimer:** As a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, there were changes in travel behaviour, a reduction of data collected and changes in the methodology of data collection. The Department for Transport recommend that care should be taken when interpreting and comparing this data.
- In 2020 people living in the most rural areas travelled almost twice as far per year than those in the most urban areas.
- In 2020 in the most rural areas 90 per cent of travel was made using a car (as a driver or passenger) compared with 72 per cent in the most urban areas.
- In 2020 seven per cent of households in rural areas had no access to a car or van compared with 24 per cent in urban areas.

Travel behaviour

Average number of trips and total distance travelled per person per year, time spent travelling and average trip length in 2020, by settlement type, in England

	Trips per person	Distance travelled (miles) per person	Travelling time (hours) per person	Trip length (miles)
Urban Conurbation	690	3,625	262	5.3
Urban City and Town	772	4,479	269	5.8
Rural Town and Fringe	801	5,276	297	6.6
Rural Village, Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling	728	5,767	273	7.9
England	739	4,334	269	5.9

Source: DfT National Travel Survey, [Table NTS9903](#), [Table NTS9904](#), [Table NTS9913](#), [Table NTS9910](#)

- The average number of trips is only 3 per cent higher than the national average in rural areas and travelling time per person is only 6 per cent higher. However, the average total distances travelled are much higher for people living in Rural Town and Fringe areas (22 per cent higher) and in Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings (33 per cent higher).

Notes: The sample size for one year is too small to produce robust results so this analysis combines data from two years.

Trips include those made on foot, by private car or van as both a driver and passenger, by bicycle, motorcycle, private hire bus and other modes of private transport, by local bus, by rail and London Underground, and by non-local bus, taxi / minicab and other modes of public transport (air, ferries and light rail).

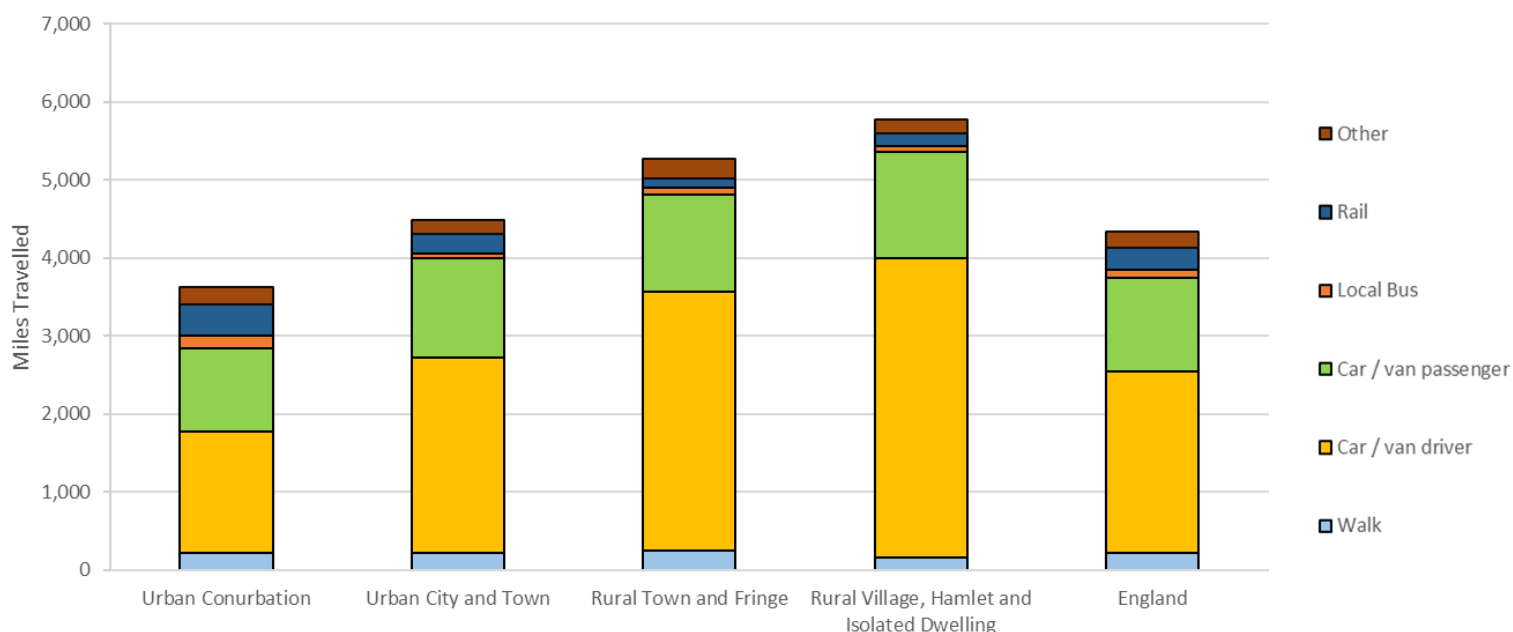
The results are weighted. Weights are applied to adjust for non-response to ensure the characteristics of the achieved sample match the population and for the drop off in trip recording. The survey results are subject to sampling error.

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>

Source: DfT, National Travel Survey, Email: national.travelsurvey@dft.gov.uk

Distance travelled

Average total distance travelled, per person per year, by mode and settlement type, in England, 2020



- In 2020 people living in Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings travelled 5,767 miles on average compared with 3,625 in Urban Conurbations and 4,334 in England as a whole.
- When travel as both a car driver and passenger are taken together, 90 per cent of the distance travelled by people living in Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings was made by car compared with 72 per cent in Urban Conurbations and 81 per cent in England as a whole.

Average total distance travelled, per person per year, by mode and settlement type, in England, 2020

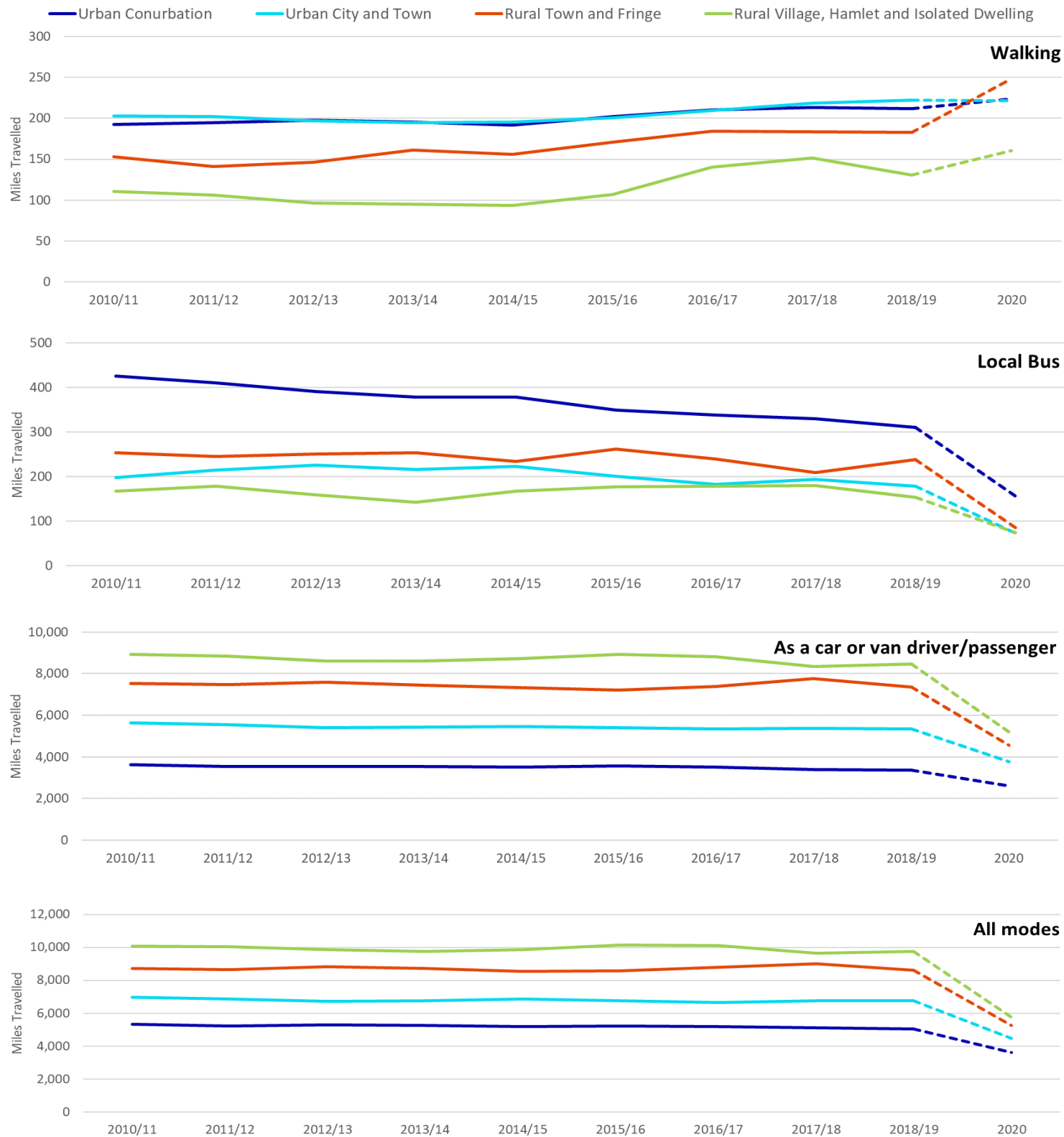
	Miles per person per year						All modes
	Walk	Car/van driver	Car / van passenger	Local bus	Rail	Other	
Urban Conurbation	223	1,545	1,079	157	397	224	3,625
Urban City and Town	222	2,499	1,267	72	246	172	4,479
Rural Town and Fringe	248	3,318	1,247	86	123	254	5,276
Rural Village, Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling	161	3,842	1,358	74	157	176	5,767
England	220	2,323	1,200	107	285	201	4,334

Source: DfT National Travel Survey [Table NTS9904](#)

Average total distance travelled, per person per year, by mode of transport and settlement type, in England, 2010/11 to 2020

Note: The scales (y-axis) in charts below differ and this should be considered when making cross-modal comparisons.

Due to a difference in data collection in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data are presented as a single year. This change is denoted by a dashed line.



- The miles travelled by walking has increased more in Rural areas than in Urban areas over the last decade, with a particularly large increase throughout 2020. This is likely to be a result of the COVID-19 enforced lockdowns increasing the amount of recreational and other walking.
 - Average distance travelled by those from Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings increased by 50 miles (31 per cent) and those living in Rural Town and Fringe by 95 miles (38 per cent) between 2010/11 and 2020.
 - In Rural Villages, average distance travelled by walking increased by 30 miles from 2018/19 to 2020, and by 65 miles in Rural Town and Fringe areas over the same period.
 - Urban areas showed significantly smaller increases; miles travelled by walking in Urban City and Town increased by 9% between 2010/11 and 2018/19, and did not change during the pandemic.
 - Walking was the only mode showing an increase across all areas for the average distance travelled in 2020. Previously, the long-term trend showed a small increase in miles travelled by walking in all areas across between 2010/11 and 2018/19.
- The long-term trend (2010/11 to 2018/19) across all areas was a steady decrease in miles travelled by local bus. When 2020 is compared to previous years there was a sharp decrease in the average number of miles travelled by bus across all areas; this is likely to be an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The miles travelled by local bus has decreased by 269 miles per person per year in Urban Conurbations over the last decade, including a major decrease of 154 miles per person per year in 2020.
 - Similarly, miles travelled by local bus has decreased in rural areas by 131 miles from 2010/11 to 2020, including a 116 miles per person per year decrease in 2020.
 - These major declines seen in the most recent data could be a result of: (a) enforced lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic restricting mobility creating and (b) large numbers [working from home](#) during the pandemic and therefore not commuting by bus.
- The miles travelled by car or van remained steady between 2010/11 and 2018/19 but showed a large decrease more recently – particularly in rural areas; this is likely to be an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The distance travelled by car has decreased by 5%, or 293 miles per person per year in Urban City and Town over the period 2010/11 to 2018/19, followed by a major decrease of 1,577 miles in 2020.
 - The distance travelled by car has also decreased by 5%, or 462 miles per person per year in Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings between 2010/11 and 2018/19, followed by a 3,265 miles per person per year decrease in 2020.
- Tables of the average total distance travelled per person per year broken down by mode of transport and rural-urban classification for 2010/11 to 2020 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: The sample size for one year is too small to produce robust results so this analysis combines data from two years, until 2020, which is reported as a standalone year.

Distance by mode is based on stage distance.

Local Bus includes London buses. Rail includes London Underground. Other includes: bicycle, motorcycle, private hire bus, other modes of private transport, non-local bus, taxi / minicab and other modes of public transport (air, ferries, light rail).

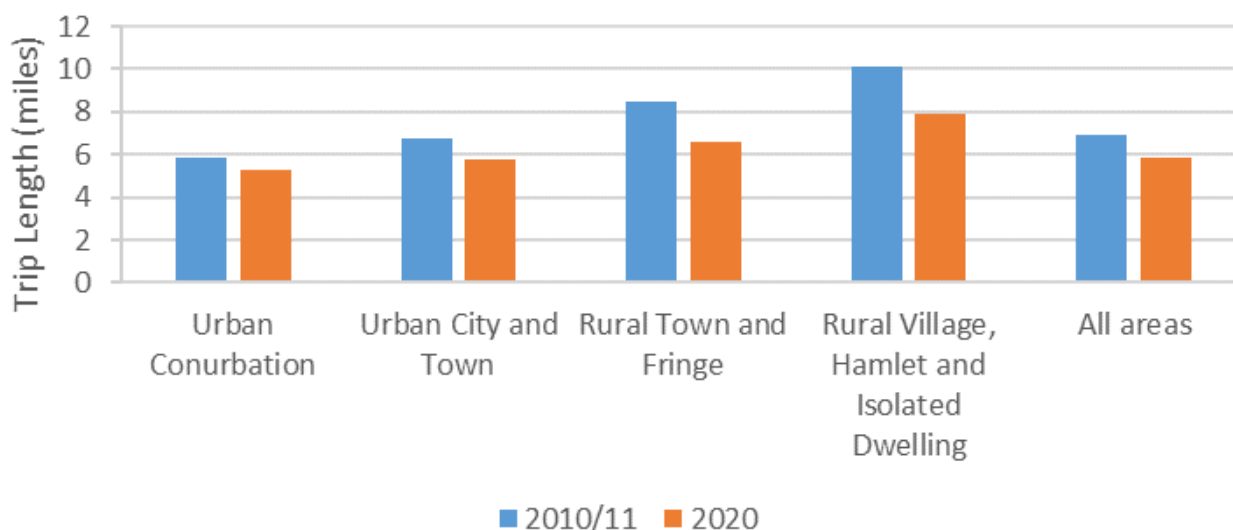
These data are available broken down into these more discrete categories in the accompanying Excel document but were presented in this manner in the digest for clarity - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2020>
National Travel Survey: 2020 Tables, [Table NTS9904](#) .

The results are weighted. Weights are applied to adjust for non-response to ensure the characteristics of the achieved sample match the population and for the drop off in trip recording. The survey results are subject to sampling error.

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>

Source: DfT, National Travel Survey, Email: national.travelsurvey@dft.gov.uk

Average trip length (miles), by settlement type, in England, 2010/11 and 2020



- There have been decreases in the average trip length for all areas between 2010/11 and 2020: Urban Conurbation (12 per cent decrease from 5.9 to 5.3 miles), Rural Village, Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling (27 per cent decrease from 10.1 to 7.9 miles), Rural Town and Fringe (29 per cent decrease from 8.5 to 6.6 miles), and Urban with City and Town (17 per cent decrease from 6.8 to 5.8 miles).
- The average trip length in England was 6.9 miles in 2010/11 and 5.9 miles in 2020, showing a 17% decrease.

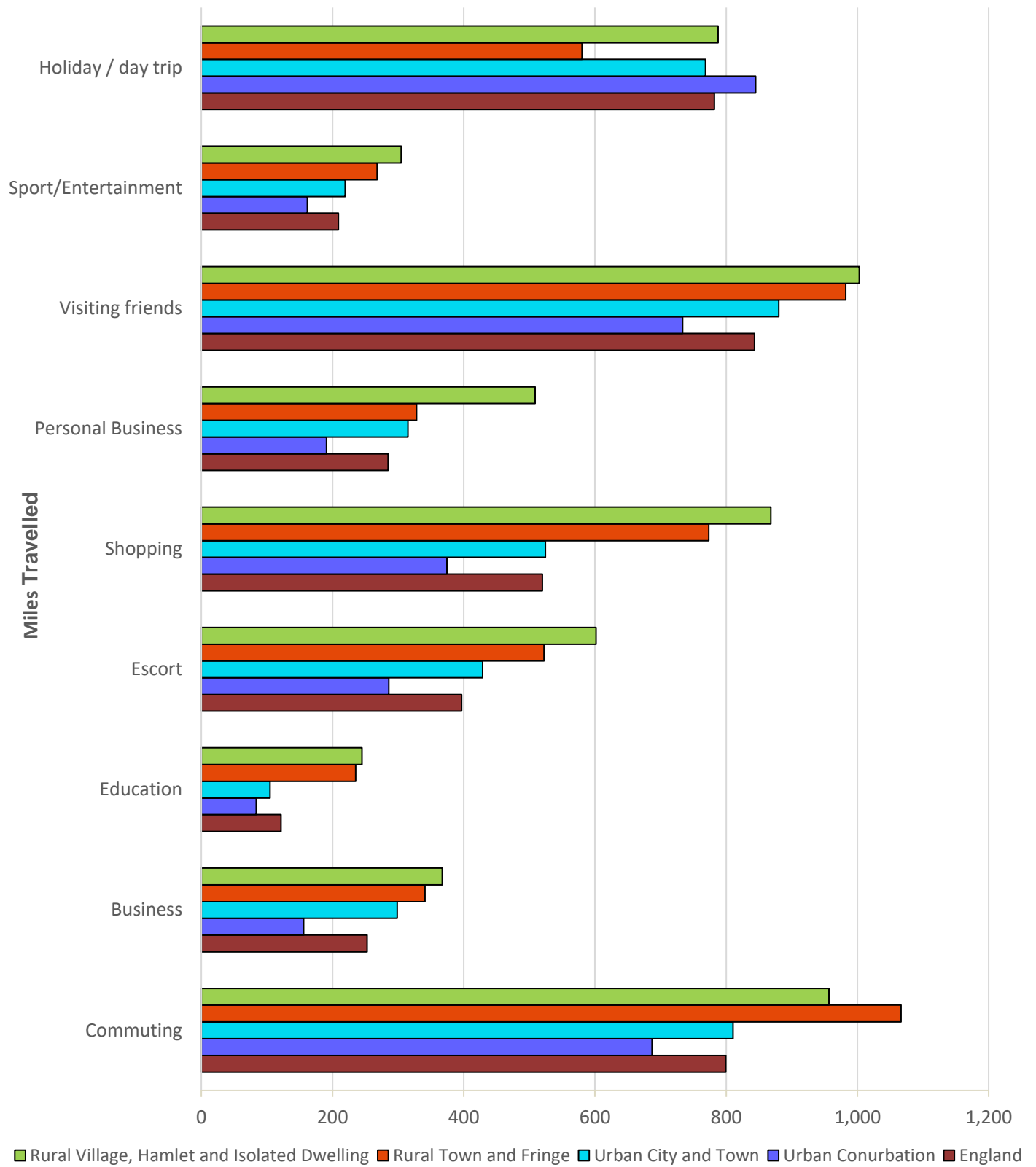
Average trip length (miles), by settlement type, in England, 2010/11 to 2020

	Average trip length (miles)	
	2010/11	2020
Urban Conurbation	5.9	5.3
Urban City and Town	6.8	5.8
Rural Town and Fringe	8.5	6.6
Rural Village, Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling	10.1	7.9
England	6.9	5.9

Source: DfT National Travel Survey [Table NTS9910](#)

Notes: The sample size for one year was initially deemed too small to produce robust results so this analysis combines data from two years at the start, but the methods of reporting have recently been changed to standalone years.
For a full time series from 2002/03 to 2020 please see the original DfT dataset
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2020> National Travel Survey: 2020 Tables, [Table NTS9910](#)
The results are weighted. Weights are applied to adjust for non-response to ensure the characteristics of the achieved sample match the population and for the drop off in trip recording. The survey results are subject to sampling error.
Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>
Source: DfT, National Travel Survey, Email: national.travelsurvey@dft.gov.uk

Average number of miles travelled, per person per year, by purpose and settlement type, in England, 2020



- In 2020 those living in rural areas travelled more miles for all purposes than those in urban areas.
- In almost all categories those living in Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings travelled farther than those in other settlement types. The only journey purpose where this was not the case was 'commuting' (for which those in Rural Town and Fringe travelled farthest)., Commuting was the purpose with the most milage, but proportionally the difference between rural urban classifications is minor; 19% of total distance travelled is taken up by commuting in urban areas, and 18% in rural areas.
- For almost all purposes, those living in Urban Conurbations travelled the fewest miles compared with those living in other settlement types. The only journey purpose where this was not the case was 'holiday/day trip', where those living in Rural Town and Fringe travelled the least. In this instance, people living in Urban Conurbations travelled the furthest to reach a holiday/trip location.
- For the purposes of 'business', 'education', 'escort', 'shopping', 'personal business' and 'sport/entertainment' those living in Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings travelled twice the distance each year when compared to those living in Urban Conurbations.
- A table of the average number of miles travelled per person per year broken down by purpose and rural-urban classification for 2020 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: The 'escort' category contains both escorting to education institutions and other escorting.

The 'visiting friends' category contains both visiting friends at a private home and visiting friends elsewhere.

These data are available broken down into these more discrete categories in the accompanying Excel document but were presented in this manner in the digest for clarity -<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2020> - National Travel Survey: 2020 Tables, [Table NTS9907](#)

The results are weighted. Weights are applied to adjust for non-response to ensure the characteristics of the achieved sample match the population and for the drop off in trip recording. The survey results are subject to sampling error.

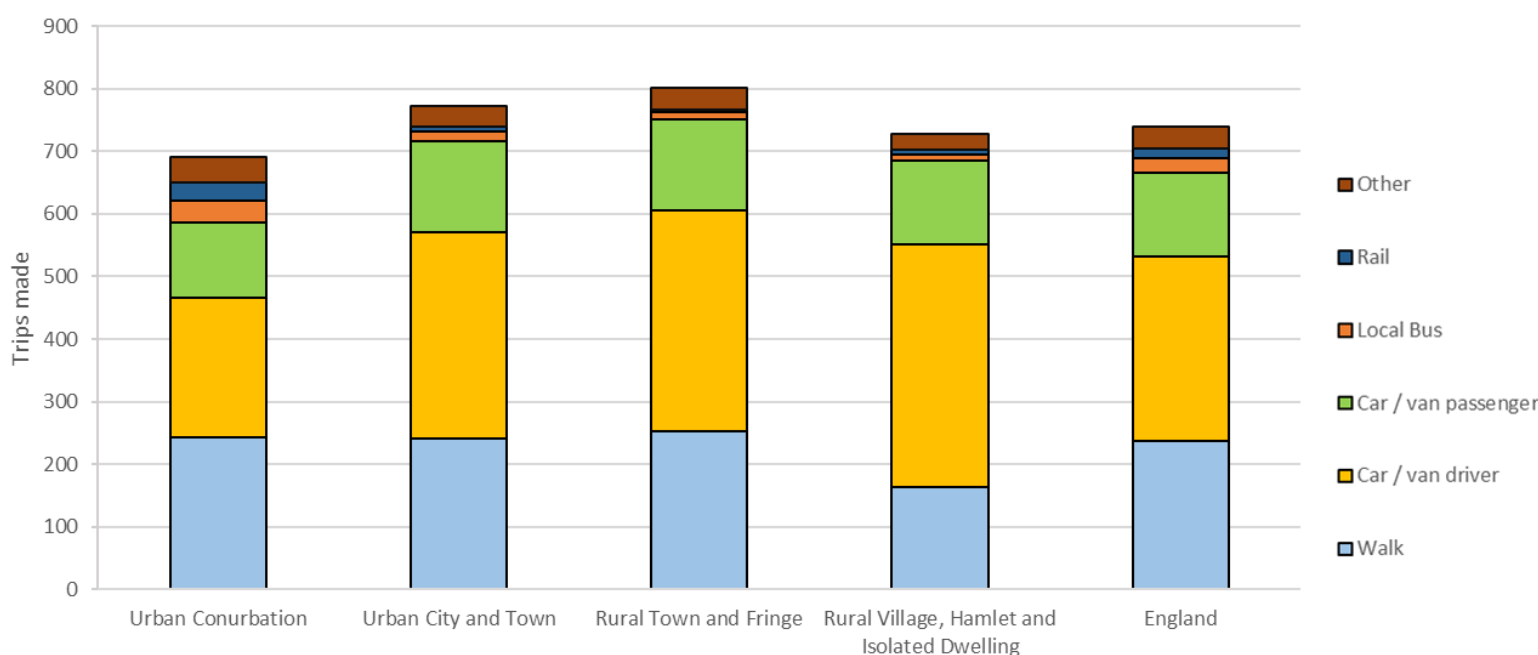
Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>

Source: DfT, National Travel Survey, Email: national.travelsurvey@dft.gov.uk

Trips made

- Those living in Rural Town and Fringe make on average 29 more trips per year compared with those in Urban with City and Town and 111 more trips than those living in Urban Conurbations.
- People living in Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings are less likely to use walking as their mode of transport, making 22 per cent of trips this way compared with 32 per cent for England as a whole.
- When combining journeys made as a car or van driver and those made as a passenger these make up 72 per cent of trips for those in Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings compared with 58 per cent for England as a whole.

Average number of trips made, per person per year, by mode and settlement type, in England, 2020



Average number of trips per person per year, by mode and settlement type, in England, 2020

	Trips per person per year						
	Walk	Car/van driver	Car / van passenger	Local bus	Rail	Other	All modes
Urban Conurbation	244	223	119	35	28	41	690
Urban City and Town	241	330	146	15	9	32	772
Rural Town and Fringe	253	354	144	13	3	35	801
Rural Village, Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling	164	387	134	11	6	26	728
England	236	295	134	22	16	35	739

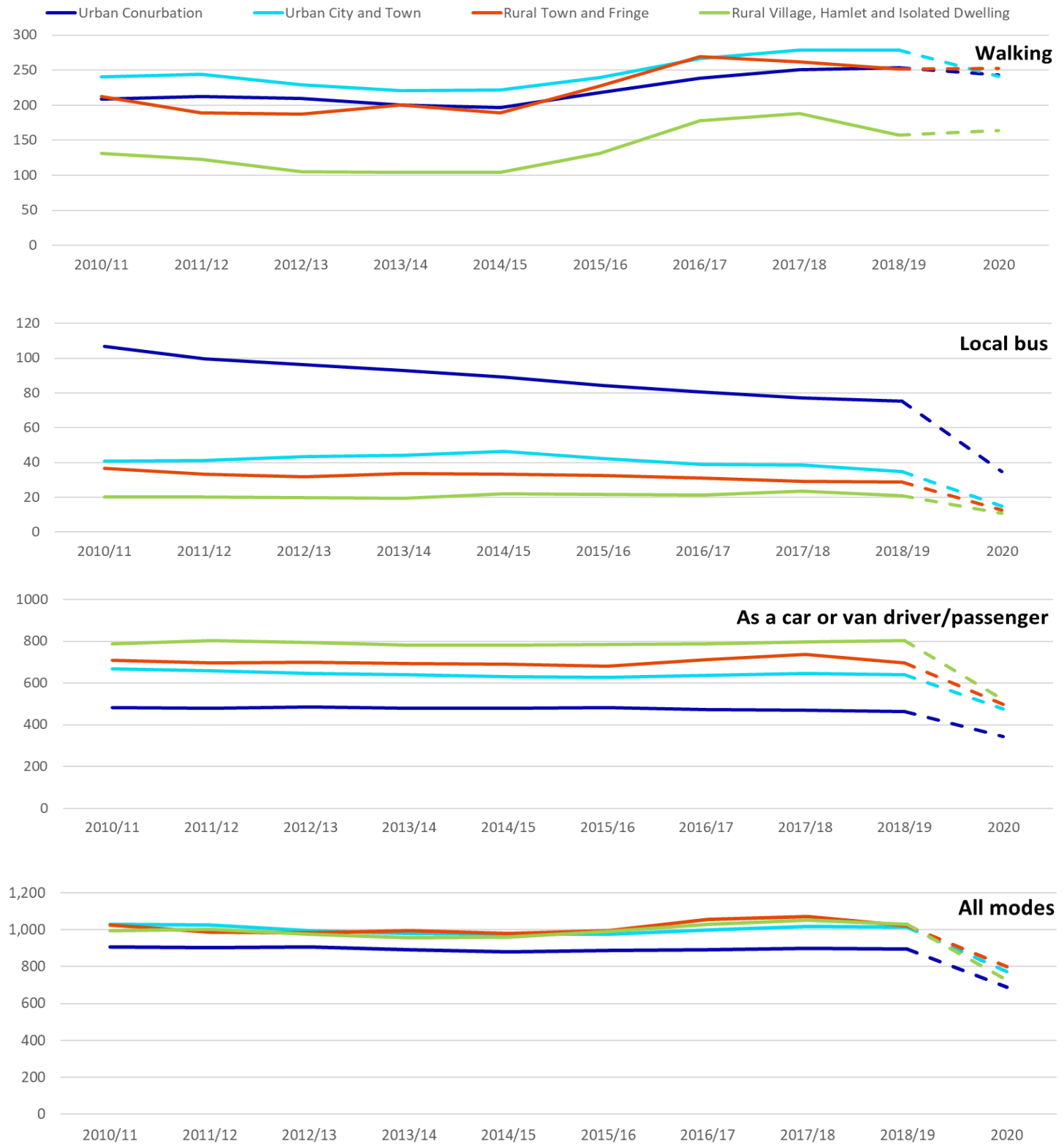
Source: DfT National Travel Survey [Table NTS9903](#)

- The data in this table and a percentage breakdown are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Average number of trips made, per person per year, by mode and settlement type, in England, 2010/11 to 2020

Note: The scales (y-axis) in charts below differ and this should be considered when making comparisons

Due to a difference in data collection in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data are presented as a single year. This change is denoted by a dashed line.



- For the time period of 2010/11 to 2020, people in Rural areas have on average made fewer than half as many trips per person by local bus as people in Urban Conurbations.
 - From 2010/11 to 2018/19, people from Rural Town and Fringe areas only showed a decrease of 8 trips per person per year, while those from Rural Villages showed an increase of 1 trip per person per year.
 - A significant drop was seen in 2020. Rural areas saw a decrease of 13 trips per person year, and urban areas showed a decrease of 30 trips per person per year. This reflects the lockdown rules put in place to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented travel itself as well as the need for travel due to the introduction of measures such as working from home.
- Over the last decade, people living in Urban Conurbations made fewer trips on average across all modes of transport than those living in Urban with City and Town or Rural areas. People from Rural Town and Fringe made the most trips on average. However, the variation between areas is small.
- People living in Urban Conurbations made the least trips as a car or van driver/passenger across the period of 2010/11 to 2020, possibly due to a greater reliance of public transport.
- The number of trips made by walking is lowest for Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings over the last decade, and highest for people living in Urban City and Town areas.

Average number of walks per person per year, by settlement type, in England, 2018/19 to 2020

Number of walks in 2020 vs 2018/19

	2018/19		2020	
	Total Walks	Of which: walks of over a mile	Total Walks	Of which: walks of over a mile
Urban Conurbation	254	59	244	83
Urban City and Town	279	76	241	92
Rural Town and Fringe	252	56	253	99
Rural Village, Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling	158	41	164	69
England	256	64	236	87

Source: DfT National Travel Survey [Table NTS9903](#)

Whilst the total number of walks by those in Rural Villages was lowest between 2011/12 and 2020, they showed the highest proportion of walks over a mile (42%) in 2020 and the second highest in 2018/19 (26%). The total number of walks per person was lower in 2020 than in 2018/19, however the number of walks over a mile was 11% higher in urban areas and 16% higher in rural areas. This could be a result of the stay-at-home order during the COVID-19 pandemic, where people opted to walk for leisure and exercise. Similarly, the decrease in walks of less than a mile could be related to a reduction in commuting, i.e., walking to a train station, throughout the pandemic.

- Tables of the average number of trips made per person per year broken down by mode of transport and rural-urban classification for 2010/11 to 2020 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: The sample size for one year is too small to produce robust results so this analysis combines data from two years, until the data format was changed for 2020, which is published as a standalone year.

Local bus includes London buses.

Rail includes surface rail and London Underground.

Other includes bicycle, motorcycle, private hire bus, non-local bus, taxi/minicab and other modes of public transport (air, ferries, light rail).

These data are available broken down into these more discrete categories in the accompanying Excel document but were presented in this manner in the digest for clarity - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2020> - National Travel Survey: 2020 Tables, [Table NTS9903](#)

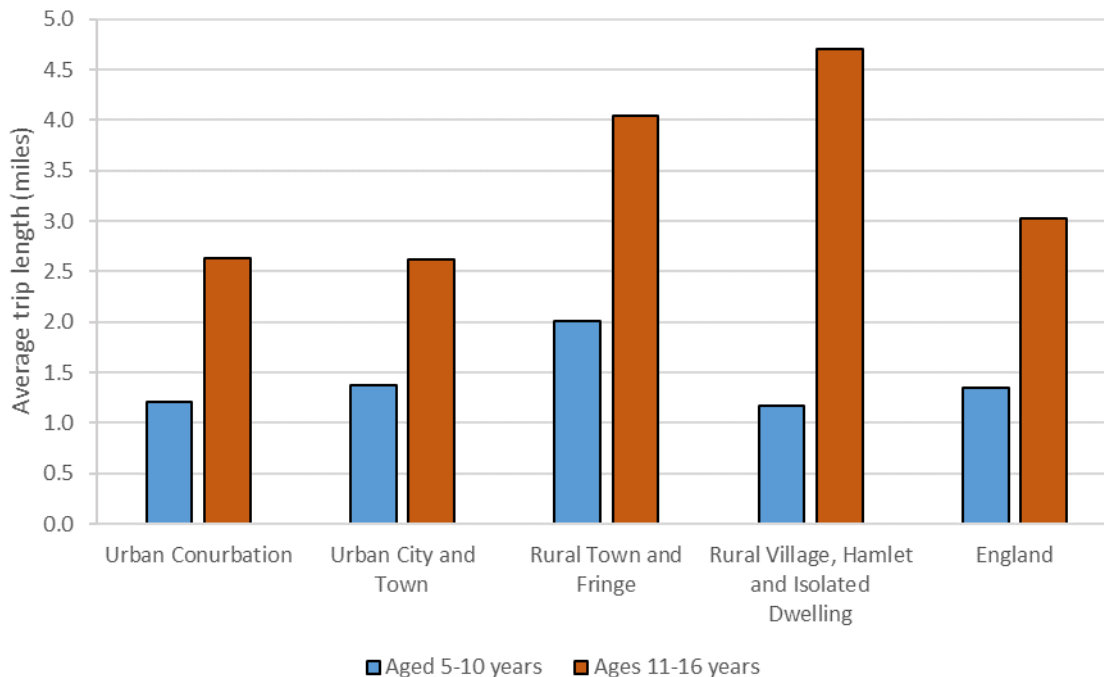
The results are weighted. Weights are applied to adjust for non-response to ensure the characteristics of the achieved sample match the population and for the drop off in trip recording. The survey results are subject to sampling error.

Source: DfT, National Travel Survey, Email: national.travelsurvey@dft.gov.uk

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>

Journey to School

Average journey length to school by settlement type and age group, in England, 2020



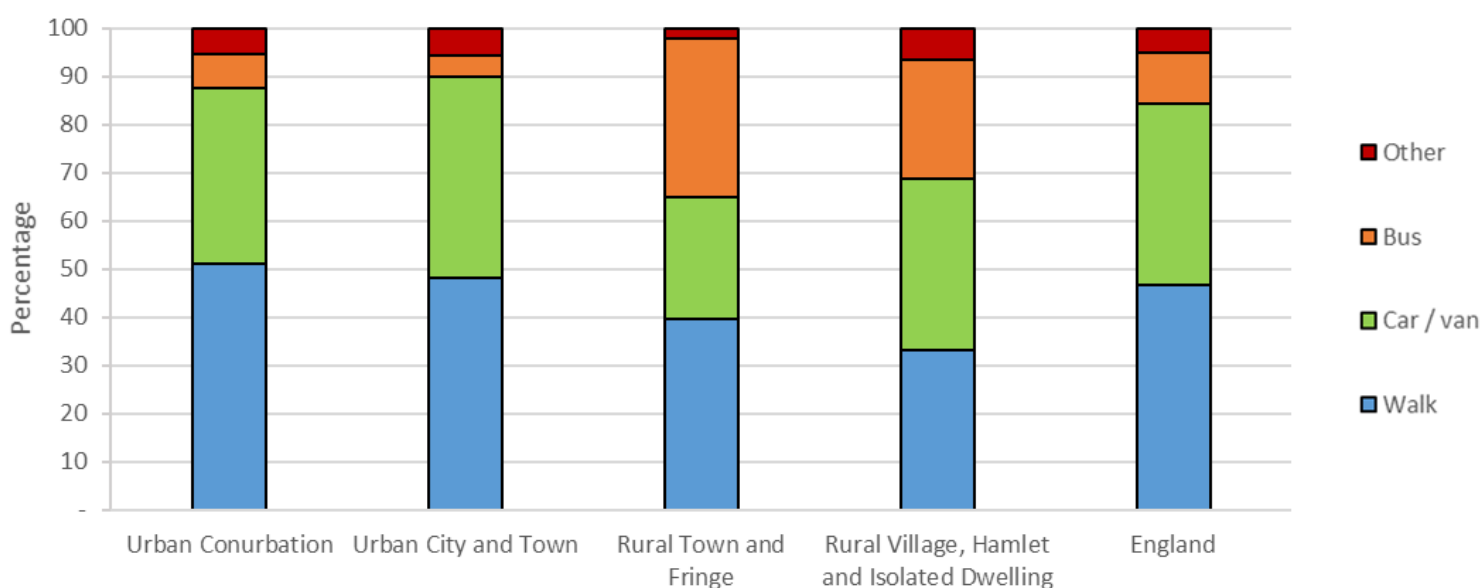
- The average journey length to school is longer for those living in rural areas than urban ones. Those with the longest journey are 11 to 16-year olds living in Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings who travel 4.7 miles on average, this compares with a journey of 2.6 miles in an Urban Conurbation for the same age group. This means 11 to 16-year olds in Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings are travelling nearly twice as far as those in Urban Conurbations to get to school.

Average journey length (miles) to school by age group and settlement type, in England, 2020

	Average journey length (miles)	
	Aged 5-10 years	Aged 11-16 years
Urban Conurbation	1.2	2.6
Urban City and Town	1.4	2.6
Rural Town and Fringe	2.0	4.0
Rural Village, Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling	1.2	4.7
England	1.3	3.0

Source: DfT National Travel Survey [Table NTS9908](#)

Mode of transport used for journey to school by settlement type, in England, 2020



- Children in urban areas are most likely to walk to school out of any other mode of transport, whereas those in rural areas tend to either utilise a car/van or bus.
- Only 36 per cent of children living in rural areas walk to school, compared with 50 per cent of those in urban areas.
- In urban areas, only 6 per cent of children commuted via a local or private bus, compared with 29 per cent of children in rural areas.
- There was a smaller difference between rural and urban areas in terms of using a car or van to get to school, with 30 per cent and 39 per cent of children opting for this method respectively.

Mode of transport used for journey to school by settlement type, in England, 2020

	Percentage			
	Walk	Car / van	Bus	Other
Rural	36	30	29	4
Urban	50	39	6	5
England	47	37	11	5

Notes: Includes trips under 50 miles only.

Bus includes public and private buses (including school buses). Other includes bicycle, rail, other private and public transport. These data are available broken down into more discrete categories in the accompanying Excel document but were presented in this manner in the digest for clarity - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2020> - National Travel Survey: 2020 Tables, [Table NTS9908](#)

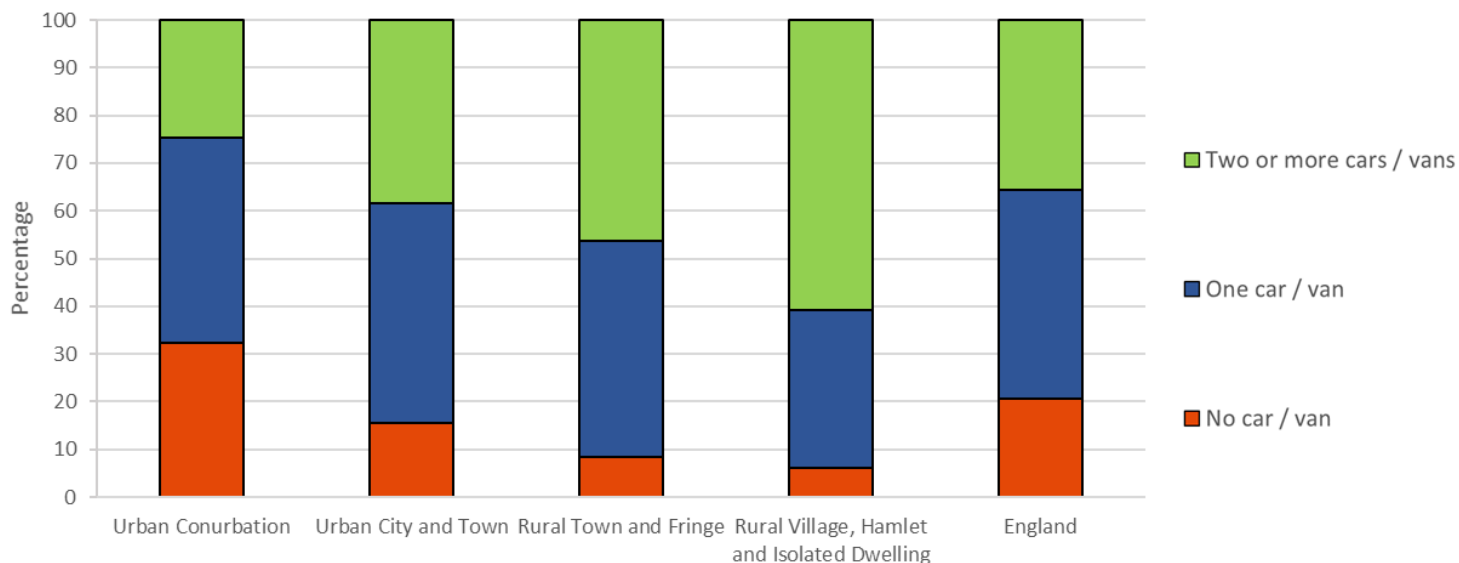
The results are weighted. Weights are applied to adjust for non-response to ensure the characteristics of the achieved sample match the population and for the drop off in trip recording. The survey results are subject to sampling error.

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>

Source: DfT, National Travel Survey, Email: national.travelsurvey@dft.gov.uk

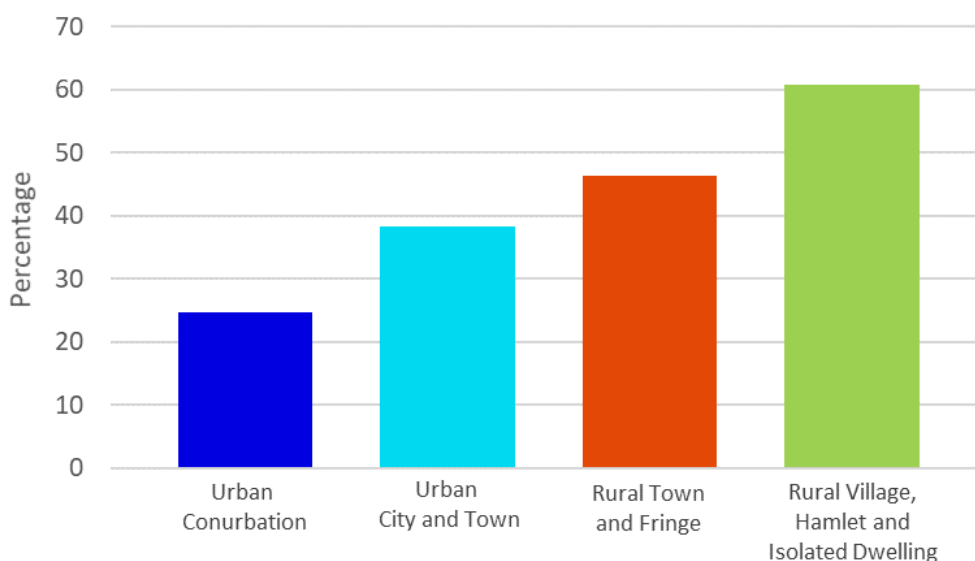
Car Availability

Household car availability by settlement type, in England, 2020



- In 2020 the percentage of households who owned one car or more was higher in rural areas than in urban areas. 94 per cent of households in Rural Villages, Hamlets or Isolated Dwellings owned a car, compared with 68 per cent in Urban Conurbations.
- 61 per cent of households in Rural Villages, Hamlets or Isolated Dwellings own two or more cars/vans compared with 25 per cent of those in Urban Conurbations.
- Between 2010/11 and 2020, the proportion of households in Urban Conurbations with no car/van was at least 4 times greater than the proportion of households from Rural Villages, Hamlets or Isolated Dwellings.
- In the last 10 years, there has been little change in the percentage of houses with a car owned for any settlement type.

Percentage of multi-car households by settlement type, in England, 2020



- There are considerably more multi-car households in rural areas (54 per cent) than in urban areas (32 per cent). The more rural an area is, the more likely it is to be a multi-car household.
- Over the last 10 years, there has been little change in the number of multi-car households.
- Tables of household car ownership, broken down by rural-urban classification for 2010/11 to 2020 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: The results are weighted. Weights are applied to adjust for non-response to ensure the characteristics of the achieved sample match the population and for the drop off in trip recording. The survey results are subject to sampling error.

For a full time series from 2002/03 to 2020 please see the original DfT dataset -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2020> - National Travel Survey: 2020 Tables, [Table NTS9902](#)

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>

Source: DfT, National Travel Survey, Email: national.travelsurvey@dft.gov.uk

Accessibility to services

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.

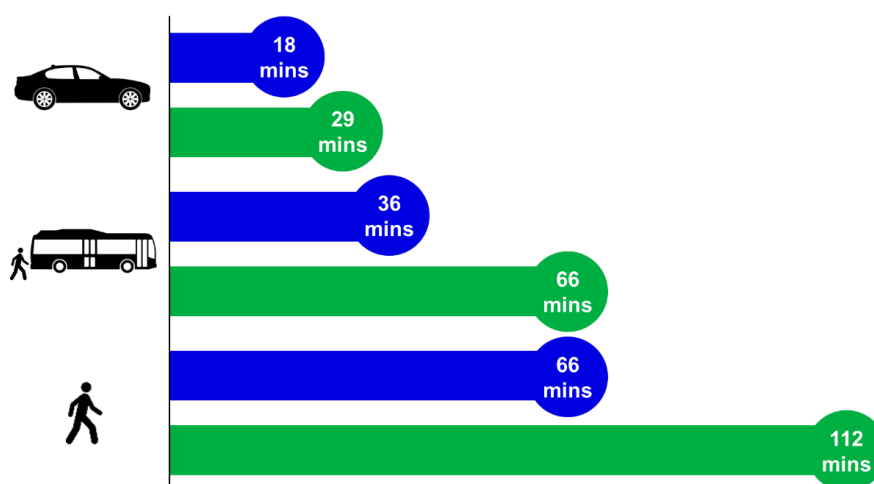
For travel by car in 2019:

- 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.

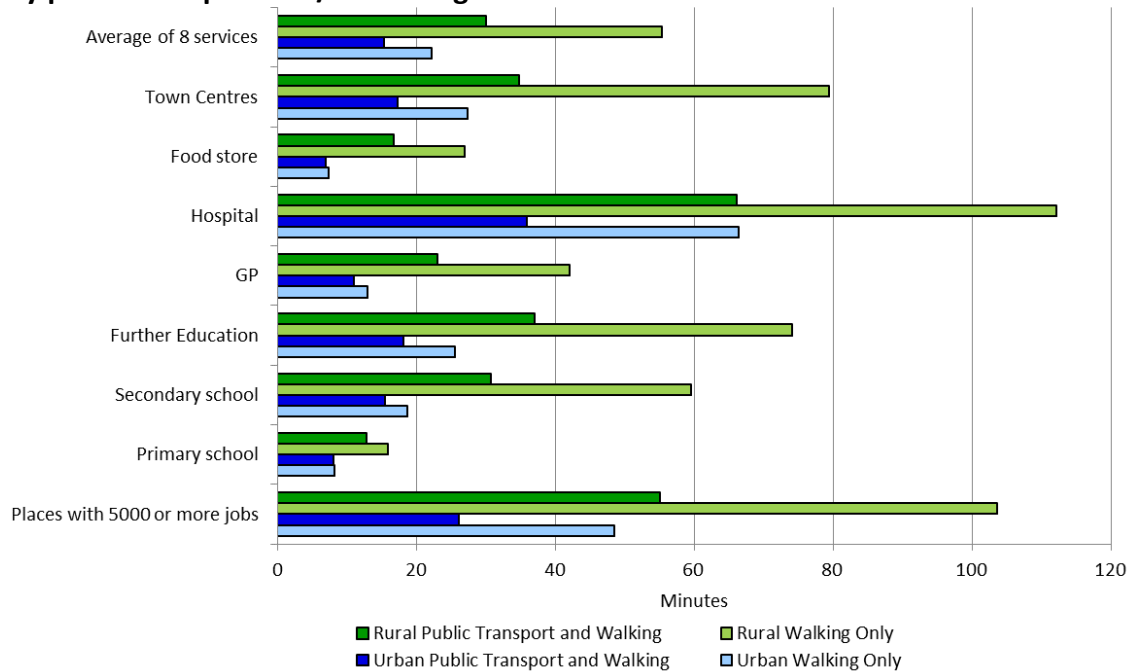
- **For travel by public transport or walking:** In rural areas the services with the lowest level of accessibility were hospitals and centres of employment with 5,000 or more jobs. The average minimum travel time to a hospital was a little over one hour in rural areas, compared with a little over half 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.



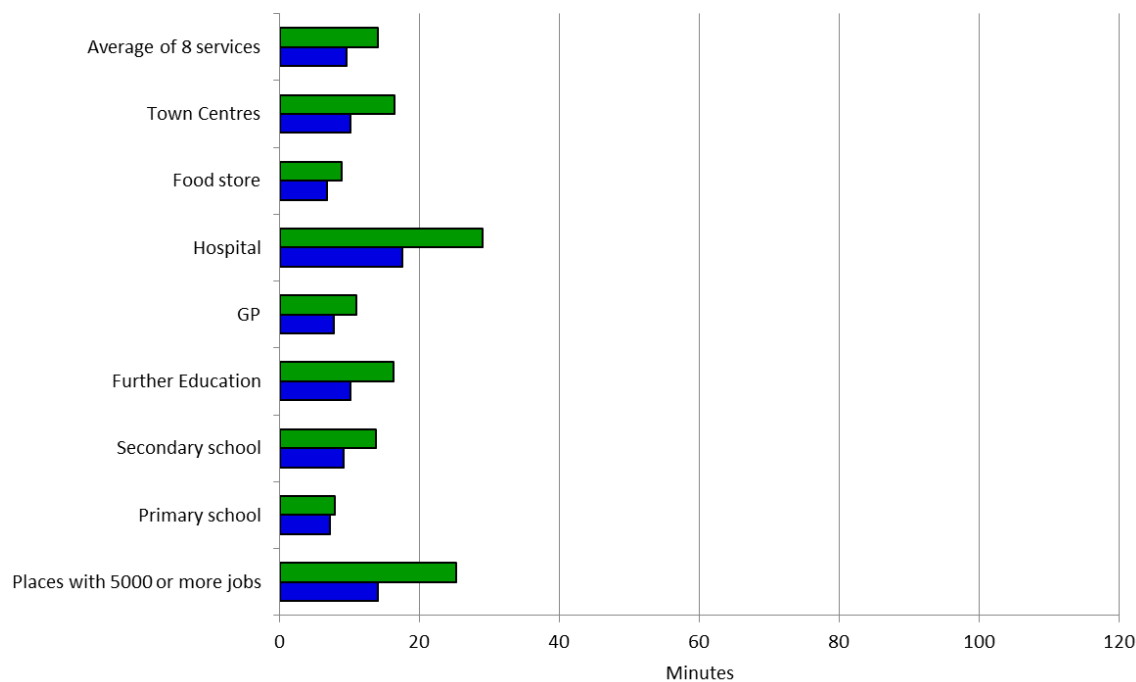
The average travel time in rural areas by public transport to a hospital is almost twice as long as the average travel time in urban areas

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

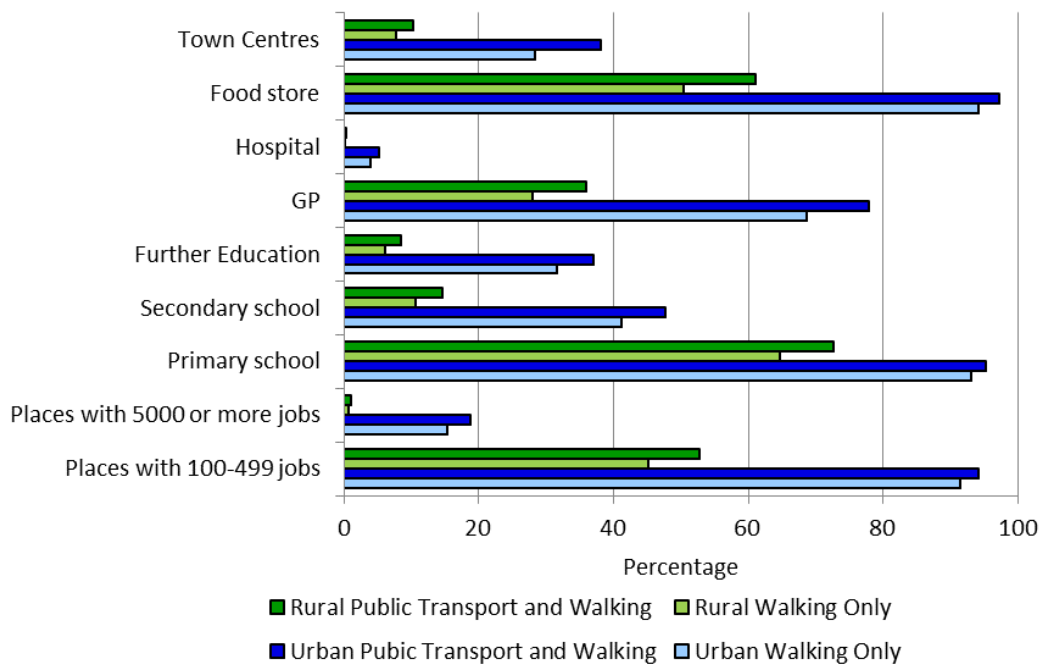
- **For travel by public transport or walking:** Fewer than half the users living in rural areas have access to places with 5,000 or more jobs within 45 minutes, compared with around 90 per cent of users living in urban areas. 51 per cent of users living in rural areas do not have access to their nearest 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.



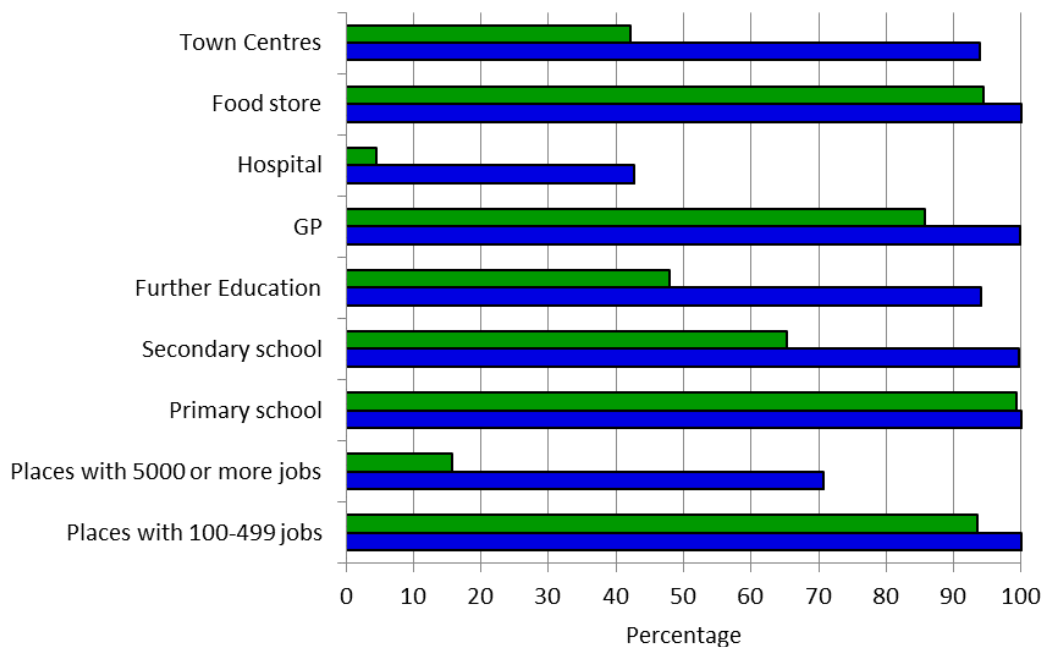
80.9 per cent of people living in rural areas have access to a GP within half an hour's travel using public transport and walking, compared with 99.8 per cent of people living in urban areas

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](#).

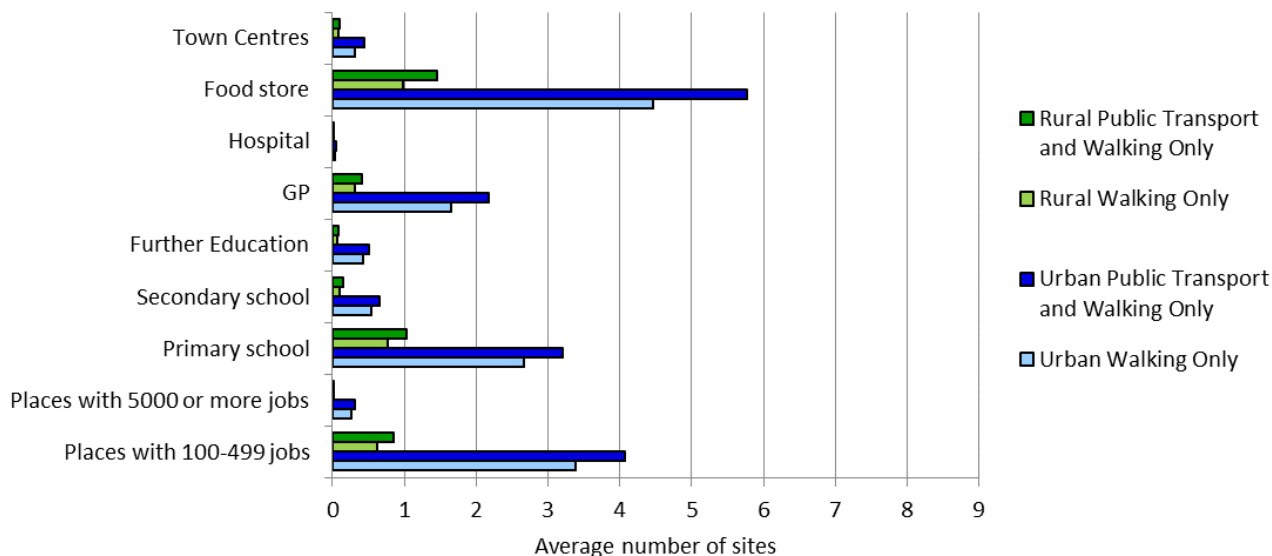
Average number of key services available

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.

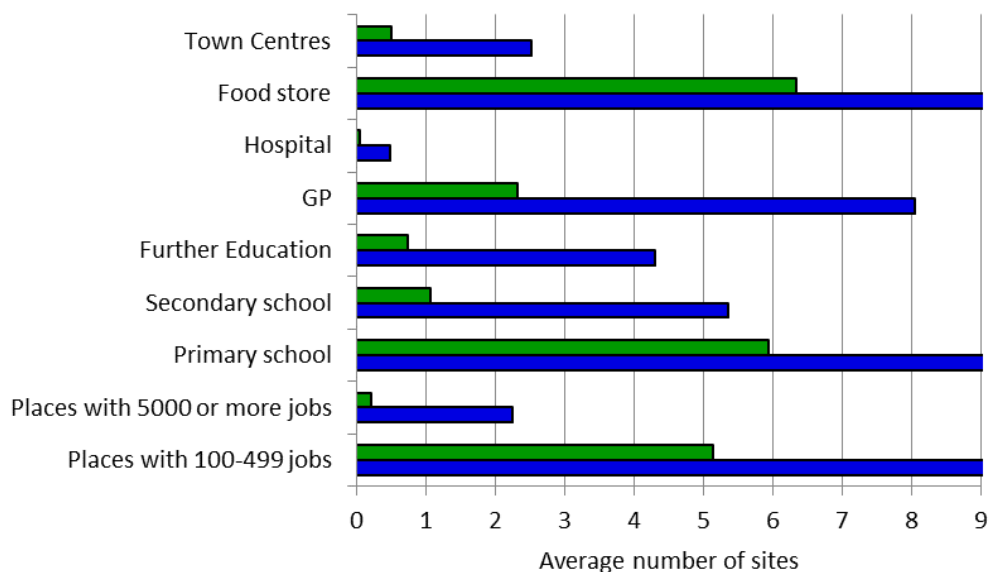
- **For travel by public transport or walking:** The average number of key service locations accessible to people living in rural areas was highest for places with 100-499 jobs, places with 500-4999 jobs, primary schools and food stores, with around 9 available within a 60 minute journey time. The services 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 (files JTS0102, JTS0202, JTS0302)

Overall measure of accessibility of services

This measure of accessibility of services is determined by looking at average minimum travel times to key services, when travelling by either public transport and walking, or by car.

To get an assessment of service accessibility the average minimum travel time to the following nine types of service have been used:

- medium and large centres of employment (locations where over 500 people are employed across the businesses and services there, such that a range of jobs are likely to be available)
- primary school
- secondary school
- further education
- doctors' surgery
- hospital
- food store
- town centre
- post office (recent post office data is currently unavailable, so these calculations are using 2016 data for post offices rather than 2017)

For each area an overall accessibility index has been calculated by indexing and weighting the minimum travel times to key services. Travel times were indexed in terms of relative travel times and weighted to take account of the frequency of use of each service. This means that infrequently used but important services (e.g. hospital) if distant do not disproportionately affect the overall index for an area (see notes for more details).

Accessibility to services (derived from minimum travel times) has been presented on maps based on this overall index for travelling by public transport and walking, and for travelling by car. Rural areas are shown in green and urban areas are shown in blue, the darker the area, the poorer the accessibility of services.

- When using public transport and walking rural areas generally have poorer accessibility to services based on minimum travel times than urban areas.
- Unsurprisingly, travelling by car generally reduces travel times to key services, but overall differences in relative travel times are similar to those experienced when using public transport and walking, and rural areas still tend to have poorer accessibility (in terms of minimum travel times), compared with urban areas.

Public Transport and Walking

- When using public transport and walking rural areas generally have poorer accessibility to services based on minimum travel times than urban areas.
- Rural areas tend to have poorer accessibility to services based on minimum travel times than urban areas when using public transport or walking.
 - 50 per cent of the rural population are living in areas that have the poorest accessibility to services (lowest 10 per cent decile) based on minimum travel times, compared with 2 per cent of the urban population).
 - 0.3 per cent of the rural population are living in areas that have the greatest accessibility to services (highest 10 per cent decile) based on minimum travel times, compared with 13 per cent of the urban population.
- As might be expected, sparsely populated areas tend to have poorer accessibility of services based on minimum travel times when using public transport or walking:
 - 9 per cent of the population living in urban city and town areas in a sparse setting have the poorest accessibility to services (lowest 10 per cent decile) services based on minimum travel times, compared with 3 per cent of the population living in urban city and town areas not in a sparse setting.
 - 26 per cent of the population living in rural town and fringe areas in a sparse setting have the poorest accessibility to services (lowest 10 per cent decile) based on minimum travel times compared with 24 per cent of the population living in rural town and fringe areas not in a sparse setting.
 - 96 per cent of the population living in rural village and dispersed areas in a sparse setting have the poorest accessibility to services (lowest 10 per cent decile) based on minimum travel times compared with 80 per cent of the population living in rural village and dispersed areas not in a sparse setting.

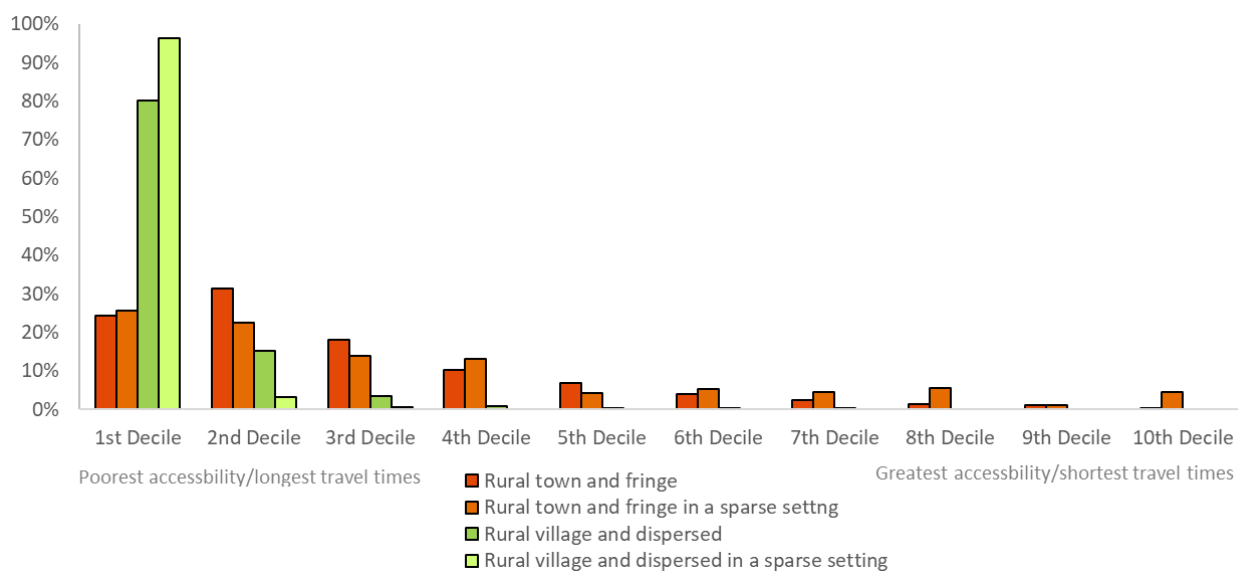
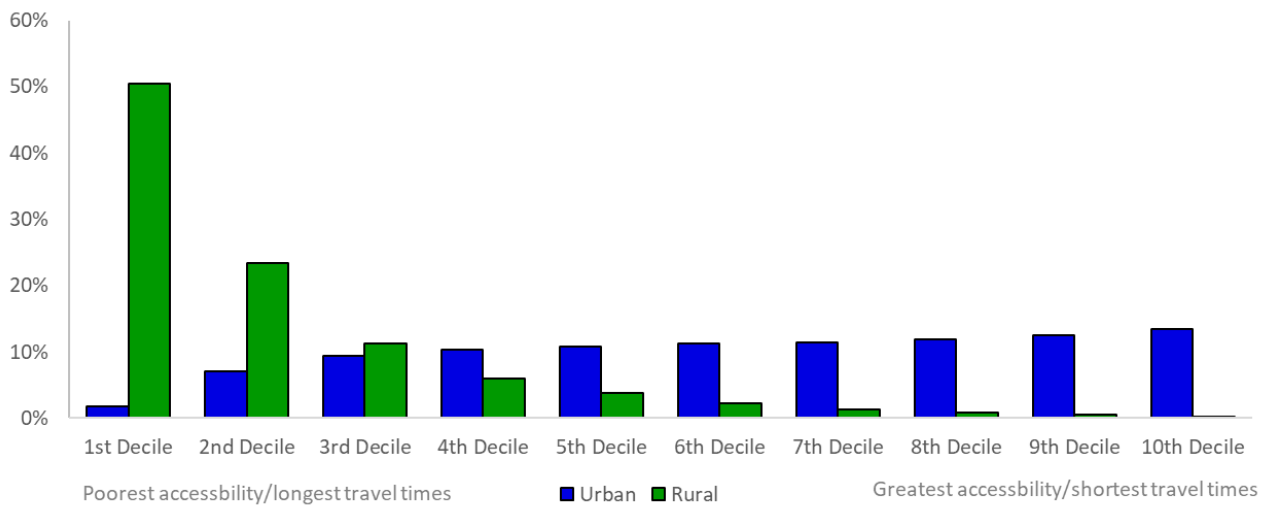
Proportion of the population within each decile for accessibility of services based on minimum travel times by public transport and walking, by rural-urban classification, England, 2019

Decile	Poorest accessibility of services					Greatest accessibility of services				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Urban	2%	7%	9%	10%	11%	11%	11%	12%	12%	13%
Rural	50%	23%	11%	6%	4%	2%	1%	1%	1%	<1%

Source: Department for Transport (DfT) ² and Defra analysis, ONS mid-year population estimates 2019³

A table showing the proportion of the population within each decile for accessibility of services by public transport and walking in 2019, broken down using a more detailed rural-urban classification is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

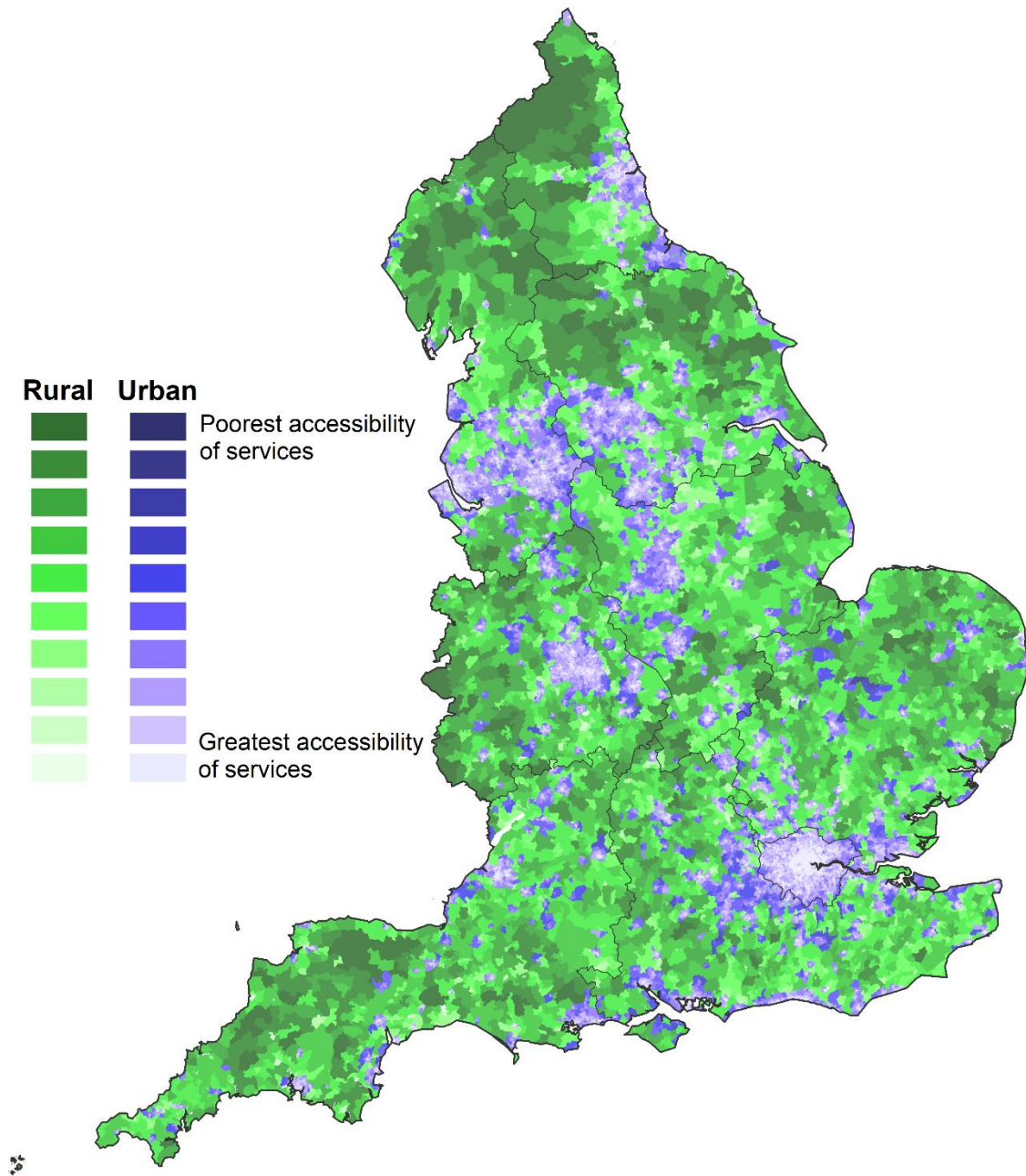
Proportion of population within each decile of accessibility of services based on minimum travel times by public transport and walking, by rural-urban classification and detailed rural classification, England, 2019



As the poorest decile of accessibility of services is predominantly made up of rural LSOAs we were unable to map the data by decile. This is because the map was almost entirely coloured in with the darkest green (denoting poorest accessibility) and therefore showed little information that was not already presented in the graphs above. Because of this we instead mapped the data using Jenks; a method which aims to group data in a way that minimises the variability within each group whilst maximising the variability between groups. **A drawback of this method is that the maps cannot be compared to previous years because the thresholds for the 10 groups will not be the same. However, this method does allow the areas with the poorest accessibility to be differentiated from those which are slightly better, and also shows which areas have similar levels of accessibility of services to each other.**

Accessibility of services based on minimum travel times using public transport and walking

Accessibility of services based on minimum travel times using public transport and walking, by rural-urban classification (Lower Super Output Areas¹), in England (2019)



Source: Department for Transport (DfT) ² and Defra analysis

Car

- Unsurprisingly travelling by car generally reduces travel times to key services compared with public transport and walking, but overall relative differences in travel times are similar, and rural areas still tend to have poorer accessibility (in terms of minimum travel times), compared with urban areas.
- Rural areas tend to have poorer accessibility to services based on minimum travel times than urban ones based on minimum travel times when using a car:
 - 49 per cent of the rural population are living in areas that have the poorest accessibility to services (lowest 10 per cent decile) based on minimum travel times compared with 2 per cent of the urban population.
 - 0.5 per cent of the rural population are living in areas that have the greatest accessibility to services (highest 10 per cent decile) based on minimum travel times compared with 13 per cent of the urban population.
- As might be expected, sparsely populated areas tend to have poorer accessibility of services based on minimum travel times when using a car:
 - 12 per cent of the population living in urban city and town areas in a sparse setting have the poorest accessibility to services (lowest 10 per cent decile) based on minimum travel times compared with 4 per cent of the population living in urban city and town areas not in a sparse setting.
 - 26 per cent of the population living in rural town and fringe areas in a sparse setting have the poorest accessibility to services (lowest 10 per cent decile) based on minimum travel times compared with 23 per cent of the population living in rural town and fringe areas not in a sparse setting.
 - 94 per cent of the population living in rural village and dispersed areas in a sparse setting have the poorest accessibility to services (lowest 10 per cent decile) based on minimum travel times compared with 78 per cent of the population living in rural village and dispersed areas not in a sparse setting.

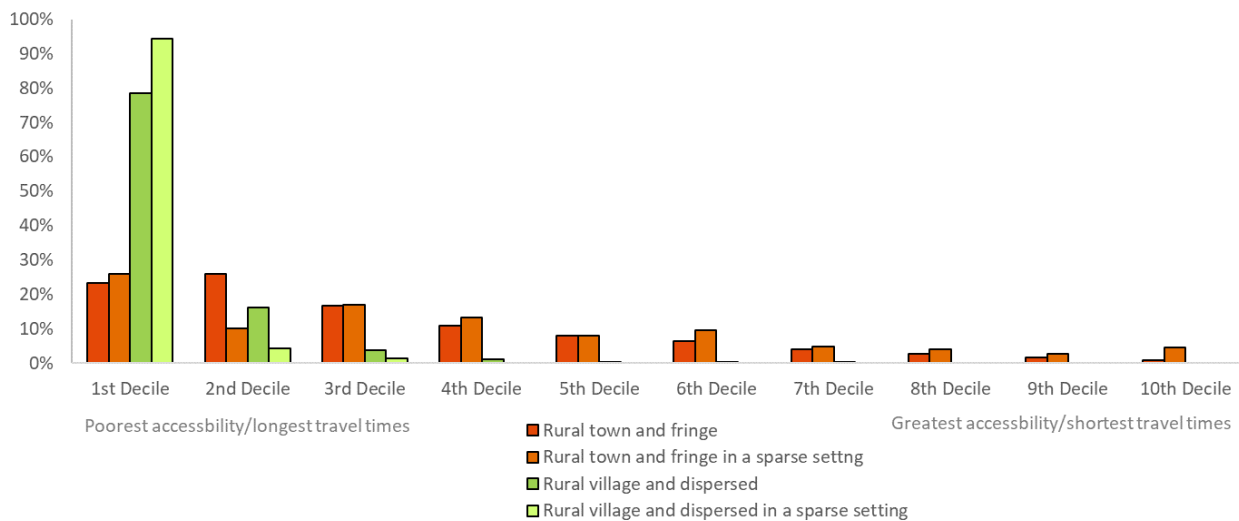
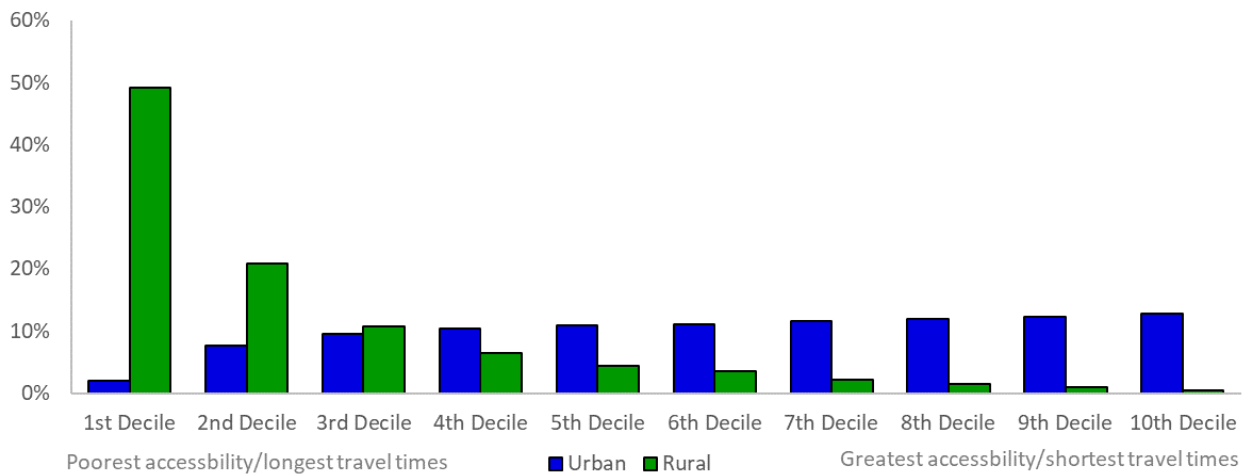
Proportion of the population within each decile of accessibility of services based on minimum travel times by car, by rural-urban classification, England, 2019

Decile	Poorest accessibility of services					Greatest accessibility of services				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Urban	2%	8%	10%	10%	11%	11%	12%	12%	12%	13%
Rural	49%	21%	11%	6%	4%	4%	2%	1%	1%	<1%

Source: Department for Transport (DfT),² and Defra analysis, ONS mid-year population estimates 2019³

A table showing the proportion of the population within each decile for accessibility of services by car in 2019, broken down using a more detailed rural-urban classification is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

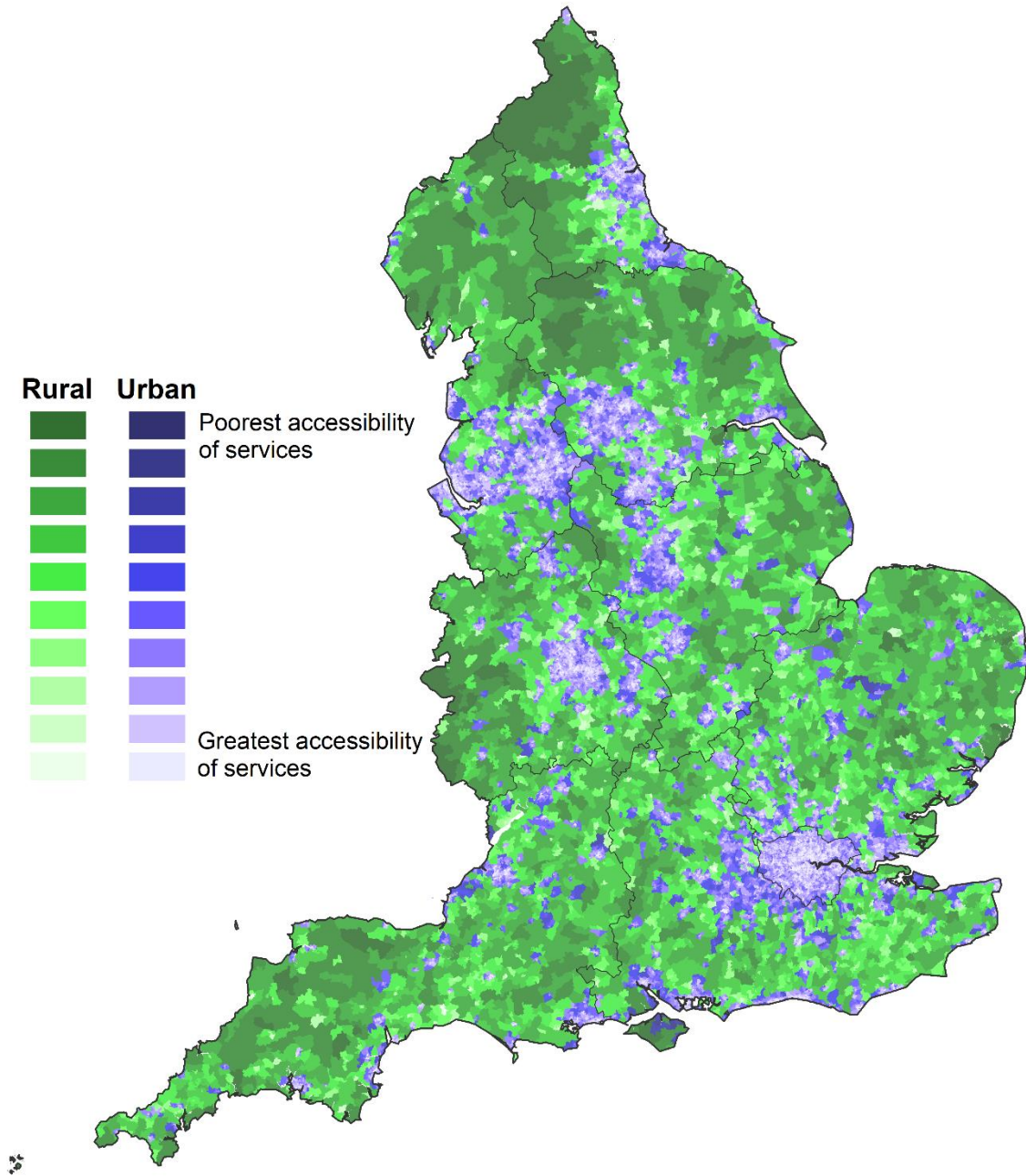
Proportion of population within each decile of accessibility of services based on minimum travel times by car, by rural-urban classification and detailed rural classification, England, 2019



Again, as the poorest decile of accessibility of services is predominantly made up of rural LSOAs we were unable to map the data by decile. This is because the map was almost entirely coloured in with the darkest green (denoting poorest accessibility) and therefore showed little information that was not already presented in the graphs above. Because of this we instead mapped the data using Jenks; a method which aims to group data in a way that minimises the variability within each group whilst maximising the variability between groups. **A drawback of this method is that the maps cannot be compared to previous years because the thresholds for the 10 groups will not be the same. However, this method does allow the areas with the poorest accessibility to be differentiated from those which are slightly better, and also shows which areas have similar levels of accessibility of services to each other.**

Accessibility of services based on minimum travel times using a car

Accessibility of services based on minimum travel times using a car, by rural-urban classification (Lower Super Output Areas¹), in England (2019)



Source: Department for Transport (DfT)² and Defra analysis

Notes: The table below shows the weightings used for the nine services and the reasons these were chosen. Assumptions have had to be made that will not hold true for every individual. These weightings are simply an attempt at ensuring that services that are typically visited very infrequently although an important service (such as a hospital) do not have undue influence over the final measure if the travel times are much greater than for other services.

Service	Weighting	Reason
Medium and Large Employment Centre	0.22	Under the assumption of 240 working days per year, one journey per day
Primary School	0.18	Under the assumption of 190 school days per year, one journey per day
Secondary School	0.18	Under the assumption of 190 school days per year, one journey per day
Further Education	0.18	Under the assumption of 190 school days per year, one journey per day
Doctors' Surgery	0.01	Under the assumption of 6 visits per year ⁴
Hospital	0.002	Under the assumption of 2.4 visits per year ⁵
Food Store	0.10	Under the assumption of a weekly visit
Town Centre	0.10	Under the assumption of a weekly visit
Post Office	0.05	Under the assumption of bi-weekly visits

In most cases the weightings are broadly of the same magnitude and hence their use does not result in significant adjustments. Where possible the weightings have been determined using statistical evidence but are otherwise based on best judgements, for example an average person will travel more frequently to their place of work or school than they would to some other services.

The weighted minimum travel times were indexed and then summed to give a single value which was then indexed again. This indexing process was used to ensure that infrequently used services did not disproportionately influence overall accessibility if travel times are large.

As an index, an actual travel time has not been determined, the index is a relative measure.

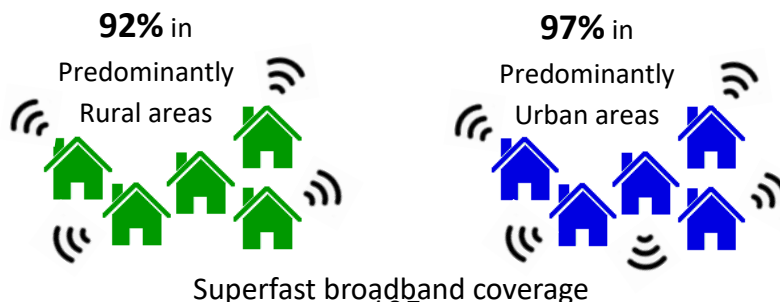
Footnotes:

1. A Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) is a geographic area built up from groups of census output areas. LSOAs were developed (along with Middle Super Output Areas) to help improve the reporting of small area statistics, allowing for greater precision than reporting at Local Authority level. Each Local Authority will be built up of many LSOAs, therefore just because one LSOA scores poorly on accessibility of services it does not mean that this is an issue for the whole Local Authority.
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/journey-time-statistics-2017>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/journey-time-statistics-guidance>
3. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/lowersuperoutputareamidyearpopulationestimates>
4. <https://www.bma.org.uk/-/media/files/pdfs/news%20views%20analysis/press%20briefings/general-practice.pdf>
5. <http://www.nhsconfed.org/resources/key-statistics-on-the-nhs>

Source: DFT Journey Time Statistics: www.gov.uk/government/collections/journey-time-statistics#data-tables

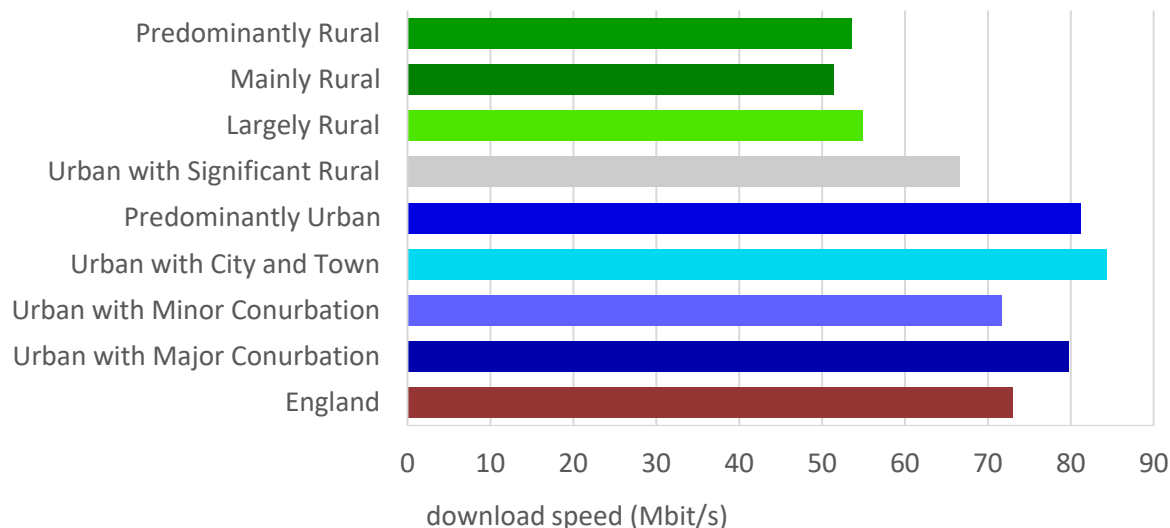
Broadband

- Availability of broadband is important for a wide range of activities. It can be used to access central services, for social activities, for businesses to operate and hence for economic development.
- Data used in this section are at Local Authority level. Some caution should be used when considering these results as the data will not distinguish where within an authority the better broadband speeds and coverage can be found such that faster broadband (and better coverage) could be within the urban areas of predominantly rural Local Authorities and vice versa.
- The following analysis uses data from Ofcom's Connect Nations report. It should be noted that the definition of 'rural' differs between the two publications. Within this Digest the Official Statistics classification is used which defines areas as rural if they are outside settlements below 10,000 resident population and open countryside. The Connected Nations report uses the Locale classification (a third-party data source based on analysis of 2011 census output areas) which defines rural areas as those settlements with a population under 2,000. Further information can be found in the methodology document here: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/infrastructure-research/connected-nations-2020/main-report>
- Overall, average broadband speeds in rural areas tend to be slower than those in urban areas. In 2020 the average speed in Predominantly Rural areas was 54 Mbit/s compared with 81 Mbit/s in Predominantly Urban areas. This is because:
 - There is less superfast broadband in rural areas; and
 - Rural premises are typically further away from cabinets, with long copper line connections, leading to slower performance.However, there are pockets of excellent broadband availability in rural areas following targeted investment via the Rural Community Broadband Fund and other community led schemes.
- For illustration, for a household with the average broadband speed in Predominantly Rural areas of 54 Mbit/s downloading a film (via On Demand) would take around 2 minutes and 15 seconds, while for a household with the average broadband speed in Predominantly Urban areas of 81 Mbit/s it would take around 1 minutes and 30 seconds (assuming a size of 858MB for a typical film). For a household with a download speed of 10Mbit/s (the minimum speed to be considered a decent broadband service) the download time jumps to 12 minutes.
- In 2020, 0.9 per cent of premises in Predominantly Rural areas were not able to access a decent broadband service (delivering a download speed of at least 10Mbit/s and upload speed of at least 1 Mbit/s). This compares with just 0.3 per cent of premises in Predominantly Urban areas.
- Superfast broadband (defined as delivering a download speed of at least 30Mbit/s) is available for 92 per cent of premises in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 97 per cent in Predominantly Urban areas.



Broadband speed

Average download speed (in Mbit/s) where broadband and speed information are available, by Local Authority rural urban classification in England, 2020



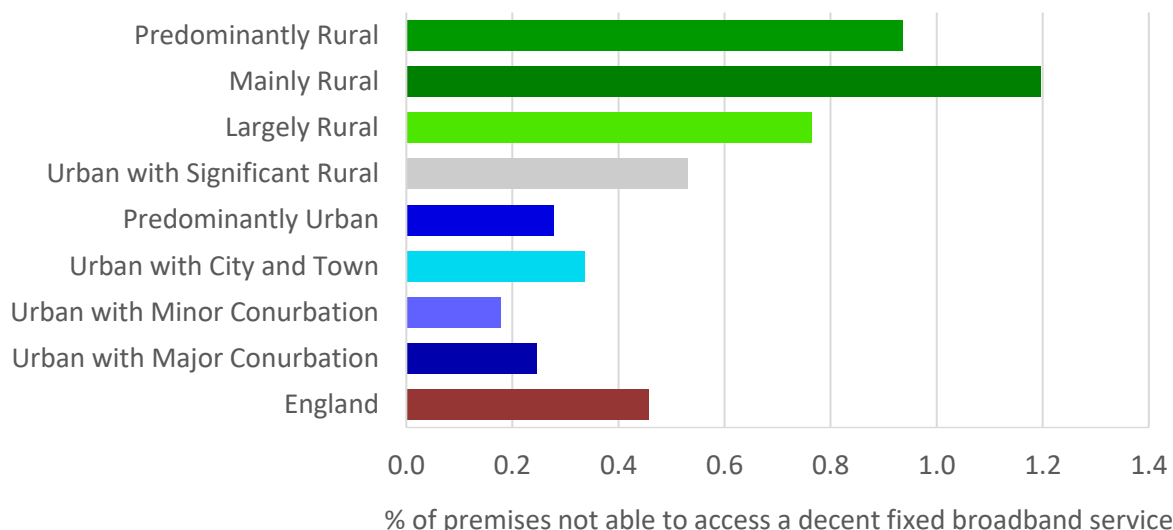
- Where broadband and speed information are available, average broadband speeds in Predominantly Rural areas tend to be slower than those in Predominantly Urban areas. In 2020 the average broadband speed in Mainly Rural areas was 51 Mbit/s compared with 84 Mbit/s in Urban with City and Town areas.
- Speeds vary because it is harder for network operators to recoup the fixed costs necessary for upgrading exchanges and cabinets in rural areas, where there are lower population densities, and therefore fewer end subscribers.

Average download speed (in Mbit/s) where broadband and speed information are available, by rural urban classification in England, 2020

	Mbit/s
Mainly Rural	51
Largely Rural	55
Urban with Significant Rural	67
Urban with City and Town	84
Urban with Minor Conurbation	72
Urban with Major Conurbation	80
Predominantly Rural	54
Predominantly Urban	81
England	73

Broadband coverage

Percentage of premises not able to access a decent fixed broadband service¹, by Local Authority rural urban classification in England, 2020



¹ Defined as delivering a download speed of at least 10 Mbit/s and upload speed of at least 1 Mbit/s.

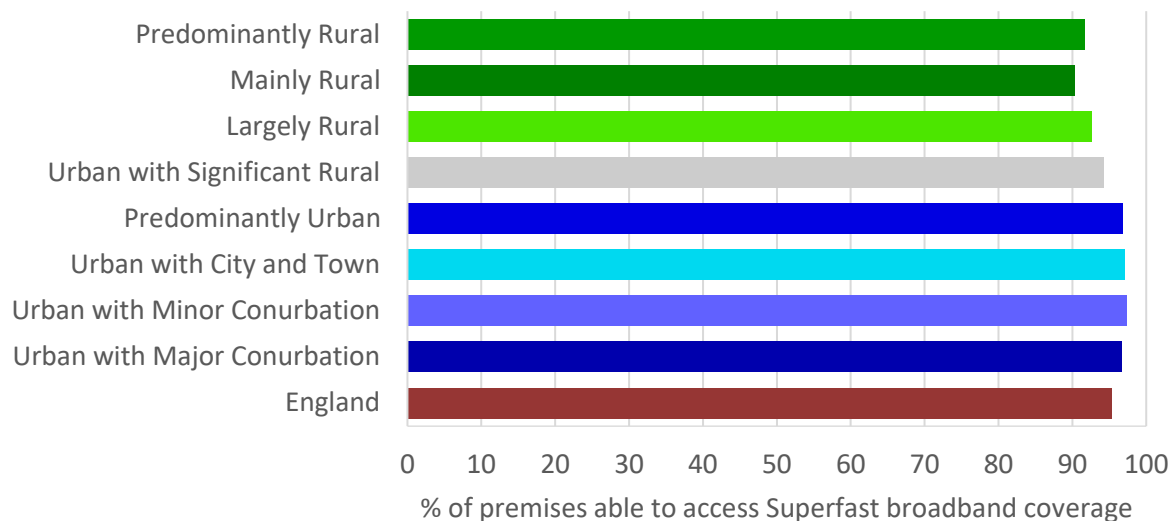
- In 2020, 0.9 per cent of premises in Predominantly Rural areas were not able to access a decent broadband service. This compares with 0.3 per cent of premises in Predominantly Urban areas.
- This provision worsens the more rural an area is so in Local Authorities classed as Mainly Rural the percentage of premises unable to access a decent broadband service rises to 1.2 per cent.

Percentage of premises not able to access a decent fixed broadband service¹, by rural urban classification in England, 2020

	% of premises
Mainly Rural	1.2
Largely Rural	0.8
Urban with Significant Rural	0.5
Urban with City and Town	0.3
Urban with Minor Conurbation	0.2
Urban with Major Conurbation	0.2
Predominantly Rural	0.9
Predominantly Urban	0.3
England	0.5

¹ Defined as delivering a download speed of at least 10 Mbit/s and upload speed of at least 1 Mbit/s.

Percentage of premises that have access to Superfast broadband coverage¹, by rural urban classification in England, 2020



¹ Defined as delivering a download speed of at least 30 Mbit/s

- In 2020, 92 per cent of premises in Predominantly Rural areas have access to Superfast broadband coverage, compared with 97 per cent of premises in Predominantly Urban areas.
- Availability differs slightly within rural areas ranging from 90 per cent of premises having availability in Mainly Rural areas increasing to 93 per cent of premises in Largely Rural areas.

Percentage of premises that have access to Superfast broadband coverage¹, by rural urban classification in England, 2020

	% of premises
Mainly Rural	90
Largely Rural	93
Urban with Significant Rural	94
Urban with City and Town	97
Urban with Minor Conurbation	97
Urban with Major Conurbation	97
Predominantly Rural	92
Predominantly Urban	97
England	95

¹ Defined as delivering a download speed of at least 30 Mbit/s.

Notes:

Figures are based on OFCOM Local Authority level data. Average speeds for fixed broadband are weighted by the number of connections while coverage data are weighted by the number of premises.

Source: OFCOM, www.ofcom.org.uk, Ofcom Connected Nations Report, 2020 ([infrastructure-2020](#)).

Department for Culture, Media and Sport publish quarterly Broadband Performance Indicators, which are available online: www.gov.uk/government/collections/broadband-performance-indicators

They show the number of premises covered per £million of broadband delivery programme expenditure.

Tourism

Gross Value Added (GVA) from Tourism

Tourism makes an important contribution to the rural economy. In 2018, GVA from tourism in Predominantly Rural areas was worth an estimated £11.5 billion, contributing 4 per cent of total GVA in Predominantly Rural areas.

Due to numerous suppressed values for local authorities in both Predominantly Urban and Urban with Significant Rural areas, values for 2018 GVA from tourism could not be accurately calculated for these areas. Therefore, it has been agreed with ONS that rather than publishing a full rural-urban breakdown for 2018 that would be affected by suppressed values we would instead only present values for Predominantly Rural, and for England as a whole.

In the future this data will be presented using the broad local authority rural-urban classification rather than the more detailed local authority classification used previously to avoid this issue reoccurring in the future.

Gross Value Added from Tourism, by Local Authority Classification in England, 2018

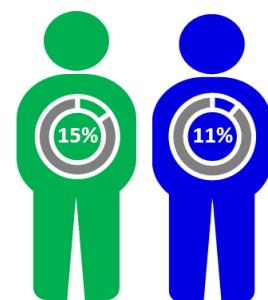
	GVA from Tourism (£m)	Total GVA (£m)	Tourism GVA as a % of total GVA for classification
Predominantly Rural	11,530	260,645	4%
England	96,355	1,643,300	6%

Source: Bespoke data request from Office for National Statistics, Annual Business Survey, specified Standard Industry Codes (SICs) relevant to the tourism industry, by Local Authority.

Tourism: business counts and employment

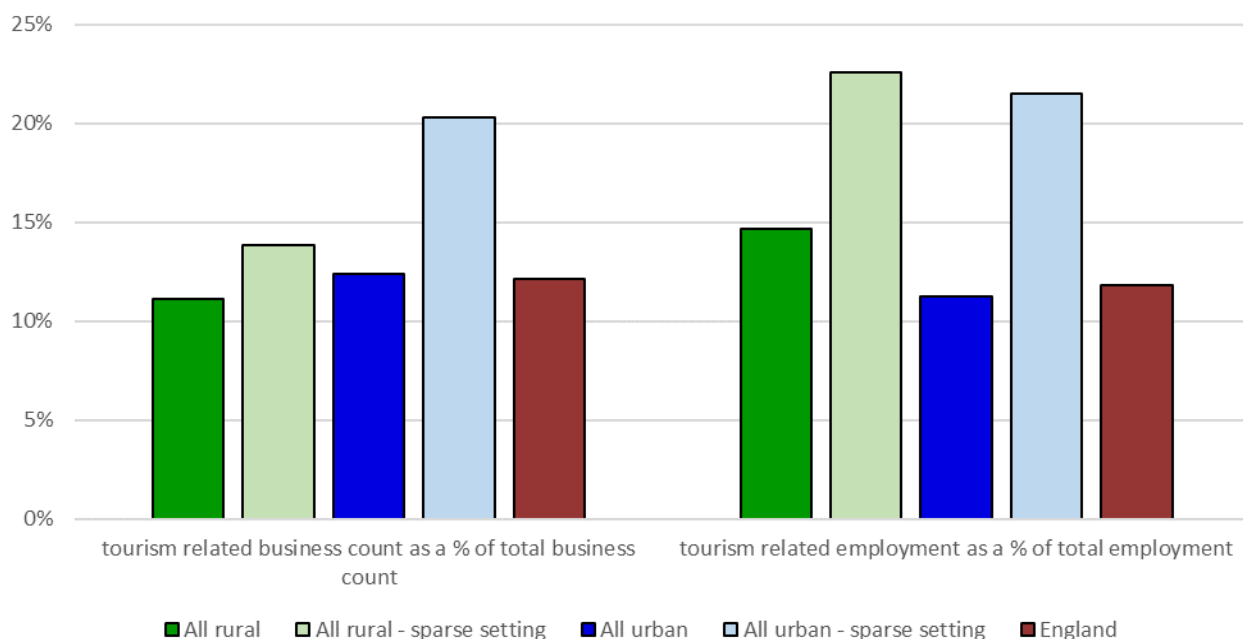
In 2019/20 there were 66,800 tourist related businesses registered in rural areas, accounting for 11 per cent of all registered businesses in rural areas. In urban areas there were 268,000 tourist related businesses accounting for 12 per cent of all businesses in urban areas.

Total employment in tourism related registered businesses is 0.6 million in rural areas, and 2.5 million in urban areas. When considered as a proportion of total employment the number is higher in rural areas with 15 per cent of total employment occurring in tourism related industries in rural areas, compared with 11 per cent in urban areas. The proportion is greater in settlements in sparse settings where employment from tourism related registered businesses is 23 per cent of total employment for rural areas and 21 per cent for urban areas..



The tourism sector makes up **15%** of the rural workforce compared with **11%** of the urban one

Tourism related business counts and employment as a proportion of total business counts and employment, by rural-urban classification, England, 2019/20



Numbers of local units of registered businesses and employment numbers for tourism related businesses, by rural-urban classification, 2019/20

	Count of businesses	Total employment (000s)	Tourism related business count as a % of total business count	Tourism related employment as a % of total employment
Rural	66,800	603	11%	15%
Rural town & fringe	23,000	165	12%	12%
- those in a sparse setting	1,900	18	18%	23%
Rural village & hamlet	38,600	389	11%	15%
- those in a sparse setting	3,300	32	12%	23%
Urban	268,000	2,540	12%	11%
- those in a sparse setting	800	8	20%	21%
England	334,800	3,143	12%	12%

A table showing the number of tourism related businesses and employment within those businesses in 2019/20, broken down using a more detailed rural-urban classification is available in the supplementary data tables. The previous table showing GVA from tourism is also replicated in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: Tourism related businesses do not have their own separate category of Standard Industrial Classification (SIC), instead the analysis in this section uses those business types that are linked to the tourism industry. These businesses fall within a number of the broad industry classifications; 'Distribution, transport, accommodation and food', 'Professional and administrative services', 'Real estate activities' and 'Recreation, other services and household activities'.

Source: ONS, Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR), 2019/20

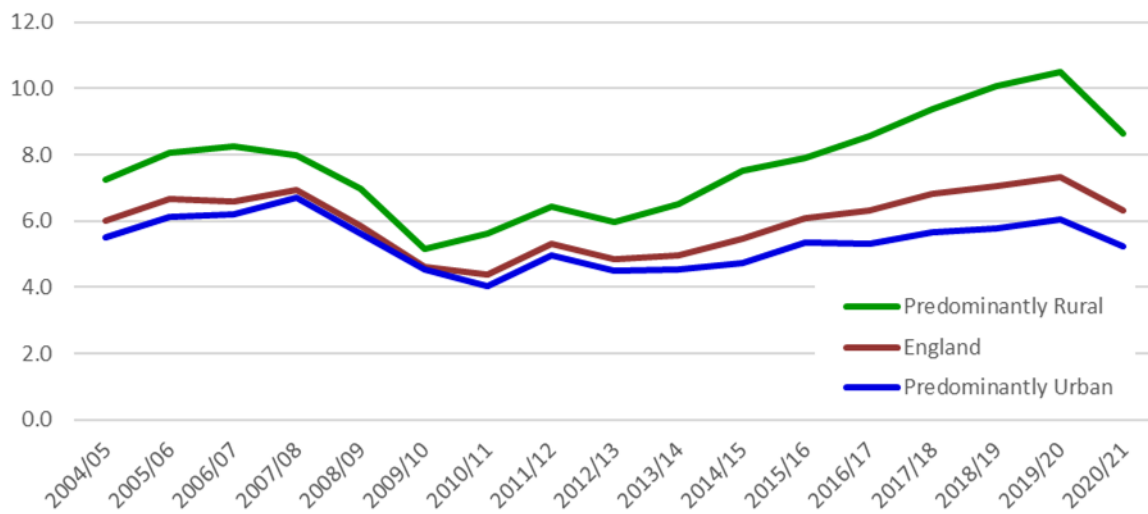
Rural living

Housing

- In order to compare levels of house building, comparisons are made based on the number of households in the area. More new dwellings are started and completed per 1000 households in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas.
- Between 2019/20 and 2020/21 the number of dwelling completions per 1,000 households decreased in all areas irrespective of their Rural or Urban classification category. This is not surprising given the lockdown restrictions associated with the pandemic.
- House prices are less affordable in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London). In 2020/21, the average lower quartile house price was 9.2 times the average lower quartile earnings in Predominantly Rural areas. This compares with 8.0 times in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London), 15.2 times in London and 9.6 times in England as a whole.
- There are proportionally fewer homeless people and people in temporary accommodation in rural areas than in urban areas.

Housing completions

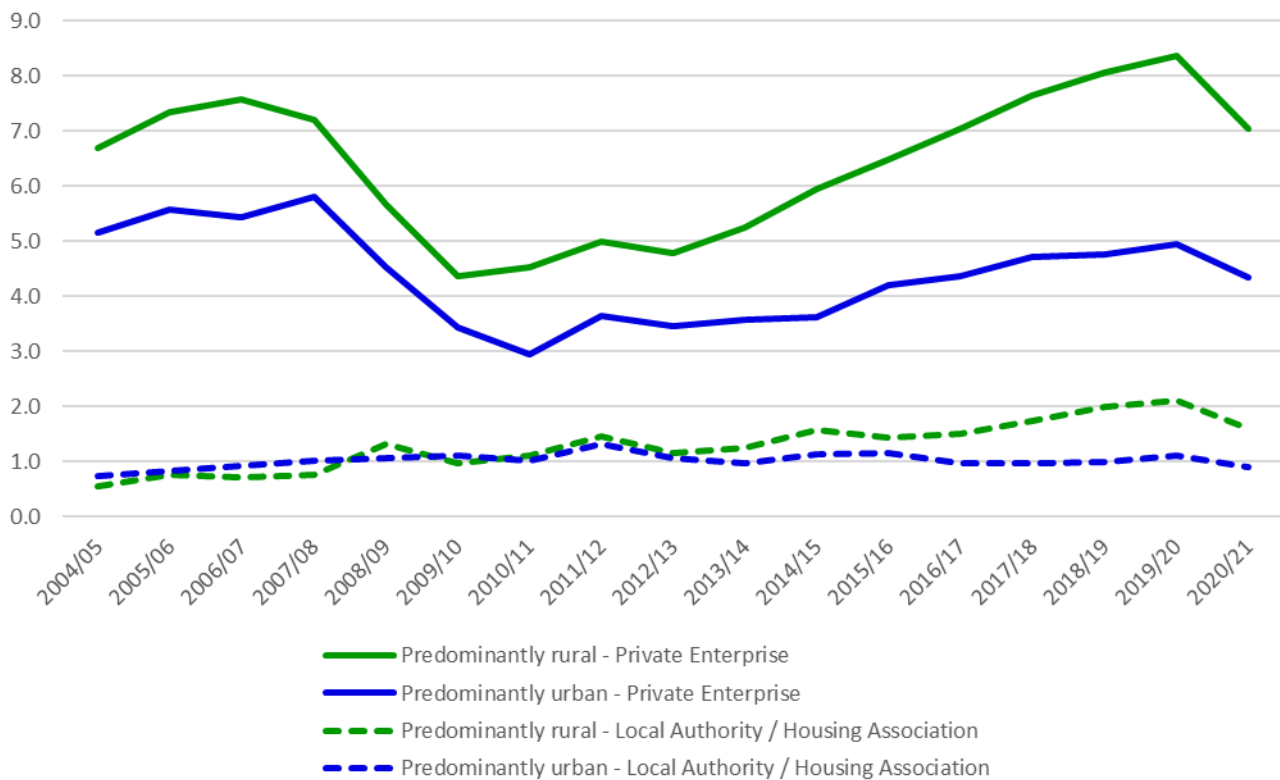
Permanent dwellings completed per 1,000 households, by Local Authority Classification, in England, 2004/05 to 2020/21



- In 2020/21 there were 8.6 dwelling completions per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas, this compares with 5.3 completions per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas.
- The number of dwelling completions were stable until 2007/08, when there was a sharp downturn. This is likely to reflect the economic downturn and later recession. After 2009/10 completions began to recover with numbers in Predominantly Rural areas now surpassing levels observed prior to 2007/08.

- The rate of dwelling completions declined sharply between 2019/20 and 2020/21. The rate of decline is sharper in predominantly rural areas (-1.8 dwelling per 1000 households) than predominantly urban areas (-0.8 dwelling per 1000 households). In absolute terms this translates to 9,300 fewer dwelling completions in predominantly rural areas compared to 11,700 fewer in predominantly urban areas. The decline in the rate dwelling starts is much smaller than for completions in both predominantly rural (-0.6 dwellings per 1000 households) and predominantly urban areas (-0.2 dwellings per 1000 households). This decline in both starts and completions is clearly linked to the restrictions imposed to combat the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020/21.
- Tables showing the number of permanent dwellings completed in total and per 1,000 households, broken down by tenure and detailed local authority rural-urban classification for 2004/05 to 2020/21 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Permanent private enterprise and Local Authority / Housing Association dwellings completed per 1,000 households, by Local Authority Classification, in England, 2004/05 to 2020/21



- In 2020/21, 7.0 dwellings were completed by private enterprise per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 4.4 per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas.
- The private sector was affected more immediately by the economic downturn of 2008, with a sharp downturn in house building, but figures for 2017/18 in Predominantly Rural areas show a return to the levels prior to the downturn.

- In 2020/21, 1.6 dwellings were completed by local authorities or housing associations per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 0.9 per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas.
- Dwelling completions in the private sector have been affected more by the Pandemic than completions for local authorities/housing associations in both Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas. The decrease in the completion rate is sharper for Predominantly Rural than predominantly Urban areas for both private sector builds and local authority / housing association builds.
- Tables showing the number of permanent dwellings completed in total and per 1,000 households, broken down by tenure and detailed local authority rural-urban classification for 2004/05 to 2020/21 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

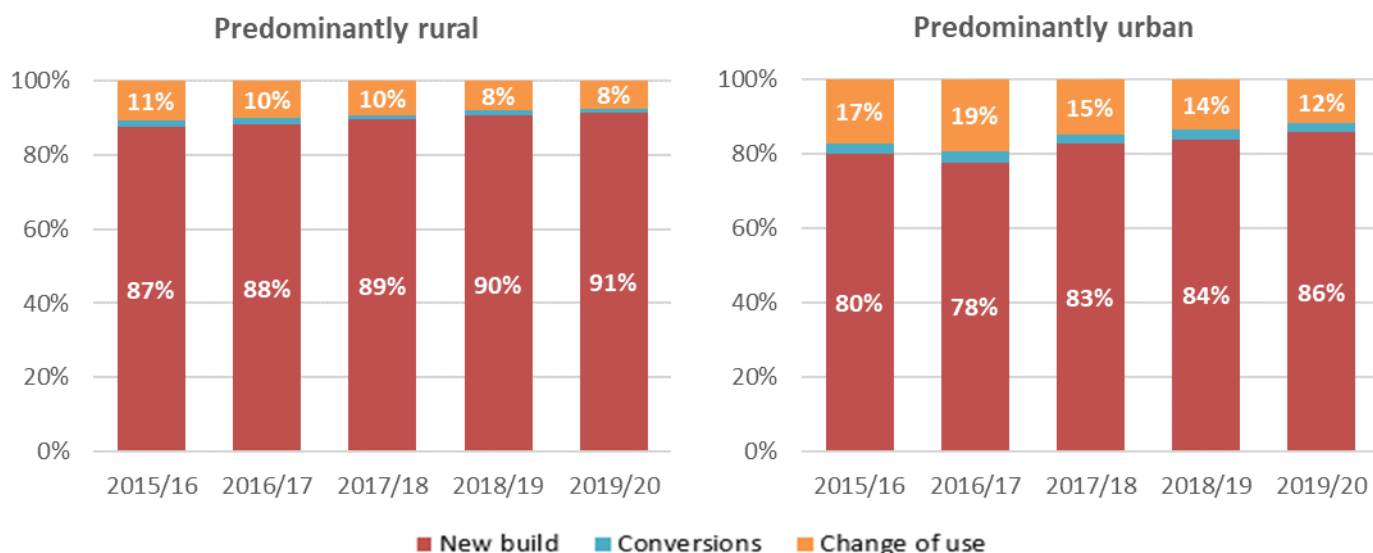
Notes: Figures on housing starts and completions are from records kept for building control purposes. It is sometimes difficult for data providers to identify whether a dwelling is being built for a housing association or for a private developer. This may lead to an understatement of housing association starts and completions recorded in these tables, and a corresponding overstatement of private enterprise figures. This problem is more likely to occur with starts than completions. Further information available from: [document on GOV.UK titled 'House building: new build dwellings data: note and definitions](#).

The figures exclude a significant number of Local Authorities for which data on building starts and completions is not available. The number of missing Local Authorities varies from 54 in 2004/05 to 37 in 2010/11. The total England figures shown in the tables do not include estimates for missing data. From 2011/12 estimates are included for missing values. Source: [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Live Tables on House Building - Table 253 Housebuilding: permanent dwellings started and completed, by tenure and district](#)

Net additions to housing stock

- In order to compare the number of new dwellings arising from new build, conversions or change of use, comparisons are made using household numbers.
- For 2019/20, in Predominantly Rural areas there were 63,700 net new dwellings, which is 12.2 per 1,000 households. While in Predominantly Urban areas there were 153,600 net new dwellings, which is 9.8 per 1,000 households.
- New-build dwelling completions accounted for 91 per cent of such net additions to the housing stock in Predominantly Rural areas in 2019/20, compared with 86 per cent in Predominantly Urban areas. A further 8 per cent of such net additions came from change of use of buildings in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 12 per cent of such net additions in Predominantly Urban areas.
- New-build dwelling completions per households in Predominantly Rural areas are higher than in Predominantly Urban areas. In 2019/20 there were 11.2 new-build dwelling completions per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 8.4 in Predominantly Urban areas.
- In 2019/20, the net number of dwellings arising from change of use in Predominantly Rural areas was 1.0 per 1,000 households and in Predominantly Urban areas it was 1.2 per 1,000 households.
- Tables showing net new dwellings arising from new builds, conversions or change of use, in total and per 1,000 households, broken down by detailed local authority rural-urban classification (2012/13 to 2019/20) are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Proportion of net additions arising from new build, conversions and change of use between 2015/16 and 2019/20 for Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas.



Notes: The net supply of housing statistics, also known as 'net additions', track changes in the size of dwelling stock due to: New builds (completions), conversions (e.g. a house converted to a number of flats), changes of use (e.g. a residential house to an office), demolitions, and other net gains and losses.

Source: [Table 123 of the Live tables on dwelling stock series \(Department for Communities and Local Government\)](#)

Second and empty homes

Second Homes

Second Homes are domestic dwellings owned by individuals who have another dwelling as their primary residence. Dwellings which are classified as second homes can receive a council tax discount of between 0% and 50%.

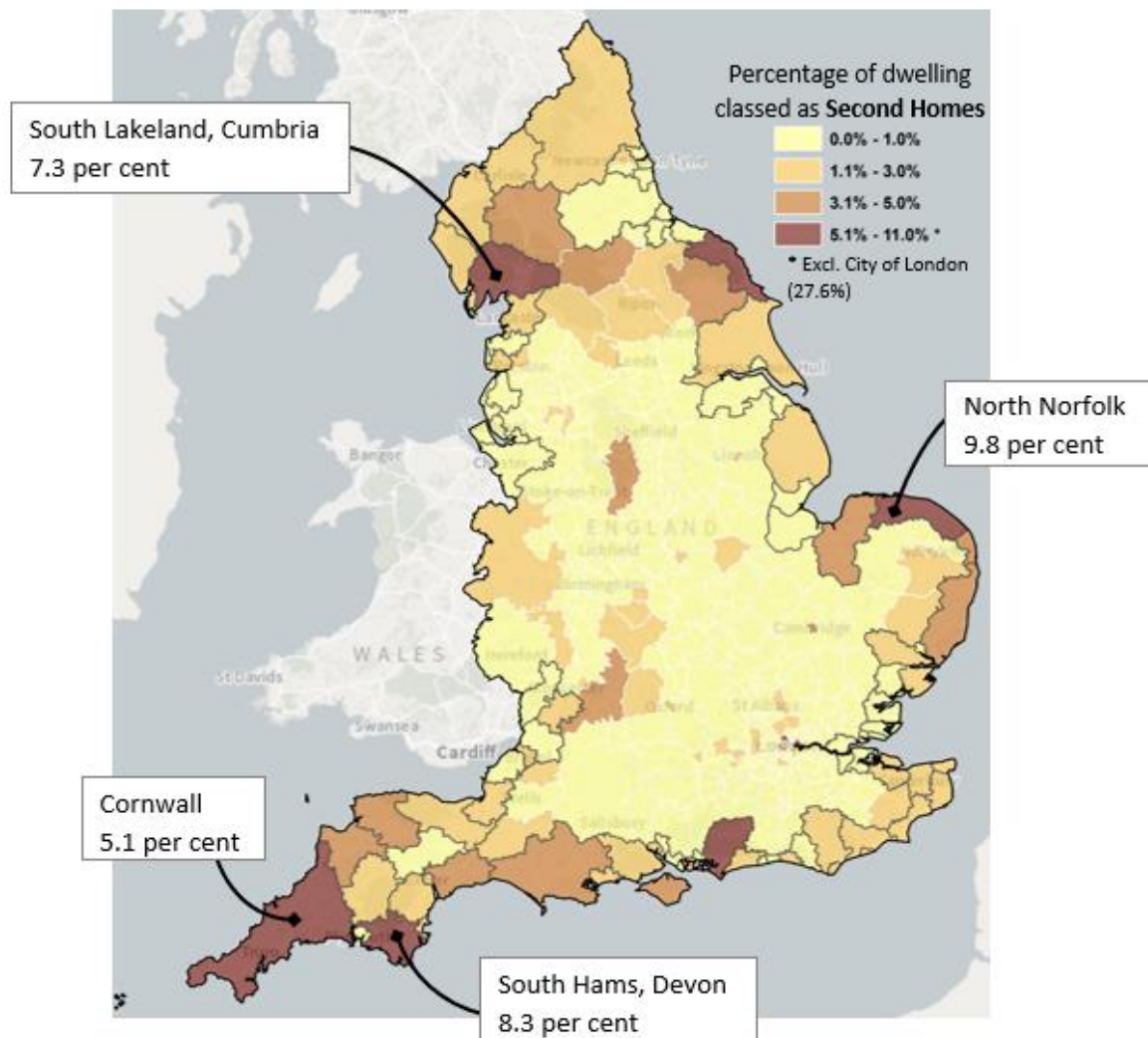
- In 2020, there were 263,000 dwellings classed as second homes in England, with 97,700 (37 per cent) in Predominantly Rural areas and 138,500 (53 per cent) in Predominantly Urban areas.
- In Predominantly Rural areas 1.8 per cent of dwellings are classed as second homes, which is twice that of Predominantly Urban areas (0.9 per cent) and Urban with Significant Rural areas (0.9 per cent).
- The difference is more pronounced in coastal areas, where 3.0 per cent of dwellings in Predominantly Rural and coastal areas are classed as second homes, compared with 0.9 per cent in areas that are Predominantly Urban and coastal.

Number & Percentage of Second Home by 2011 Local Authority Rural Classification, 2020

Rural Urban Classification	Number of second homes	Percentage of chargeable dwellings classed as second homes
Mainly Rural	51,700	2.4%
Largely Rural	46,000	1.4%
Urban with Significant Rural	26,800	0.9%
Urban with City and Town	52,600	0.8%
Urban with Minor Conurbation	3,100	0.3%
Urban with Major Conurbation	82,800	1.0%
Predominantly Rural	97,700	1.8%
Urban with Significant Rural	26,800	0.9%
Predominantly Urban	138,500	0.9%
England	263,000	1.1%

- Mainly Rural areas have the highest rate of second homes, with 2.4 per cent of dwellings classed as second homes, compared with 1.0 per cent in Urban areas with Major Conurbation (the most urban areas).
- Further tables on the estimates of second homes are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Percentage of dwellings classed as second homes by Local Authority District area in England, 2020. Coastal areas are highlighted with dark borders.



- The percentage of dwellings classed as second homes in all coastal areas was 1.7 per cent, more than twice the rate in all non-coastal areas (0.8 per cent).
- The areas with the highest percentage of dwellings classed as second homes, outside of London, were North Norfolk (9.8 per cent), Isles of Scilly (8.8 per cent), and South Hams (8.3 per cent), all of which are Mainly Rural areas.

Empty Homes

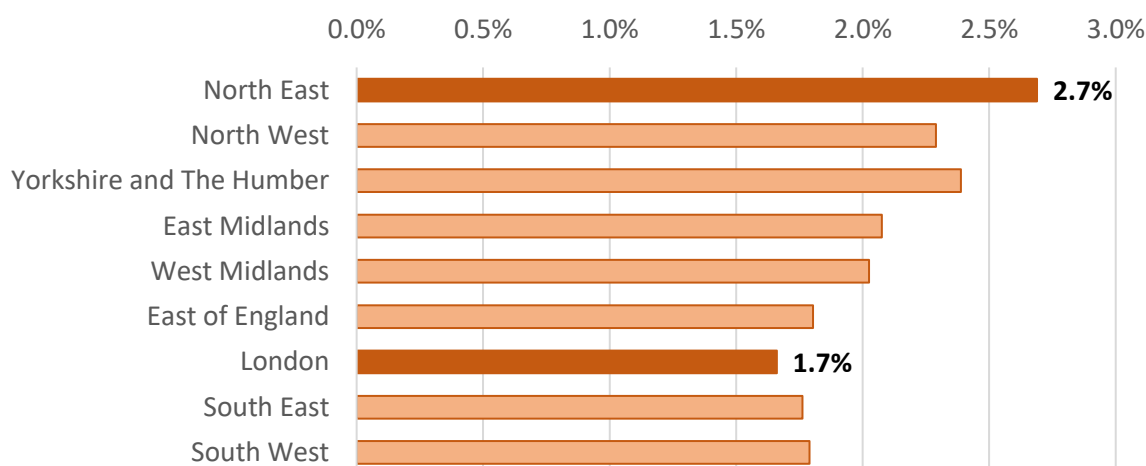
Empty Homes are domestic dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. Dwellings which are classified as empty homes can receive a council tax discount of between 0% and 100%, while those which have remained empty for between 2 and 5 years can be subject to a premium of up to 100% of their council tax rate, and dwellings which have remained empty for over 5 years can receive a premium of up to 200%, all at the discretion of each local authority.

- In 2020, there were 479,300 dwellings classed as empty homes in England, with 103,300 (22 per cent) in Predominantly Rural areas and 318,600 (66 per cent) in Predominantly Urban areas.
- The rurality of an area has little impact on the percentage of dwellings classed as empty across England, as Predominantly Rural areas have 1.9 per cent of dwellings classed as empty homes, while Predominantly Urban areas (2.0 per cent) and Urban with Significant Rural areas (1.8 per cent) have similar rates.
- The differences are more pronounced across the regions of England, where 2.7 per cent of dwellings are classed as empty in the North East, compared with 1.7 per cent in London.

Number and Percentage of Empty Dwellings by 2011 Local Authority Rural Classification, 2020

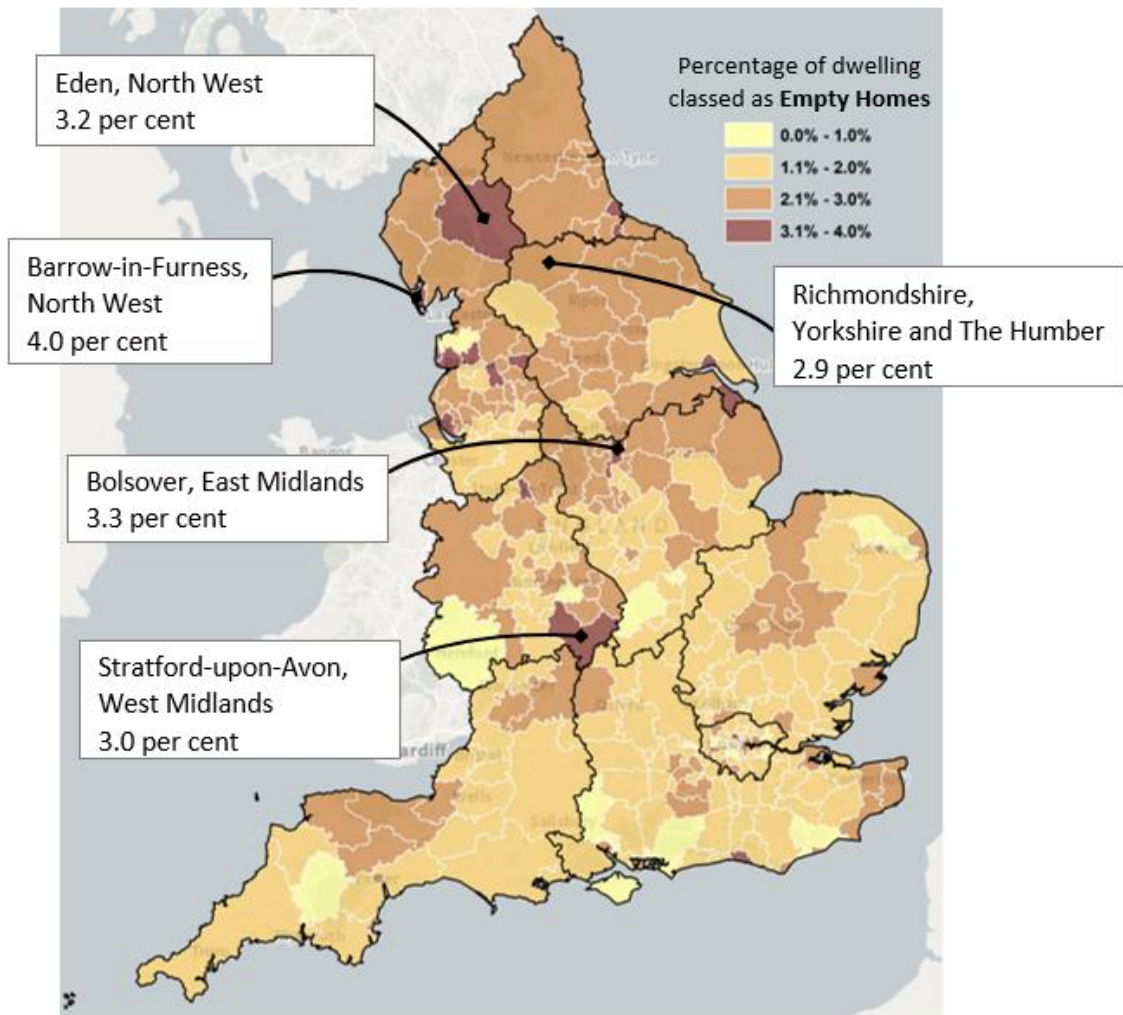
Rural Urban Classification	Number of empty dwellings	Percentage of chargeable dwellings classed as empty
Predominantly Rural	103,300	1.9%
Urban with Significant Rural	57,400	1.8%
Predominantly Urban	318,600	2.0%
England	479,300	2.0%

Percentage of chargeable dwellings classed as empty, by Region, England, 2020



- The regions of England with the highest percentage of empty dwellings are the North East, North West, and Yorkshire and the Humber, while the regions with the lowest percentage of empty dwellings are East of England, London, South East and South West.
- Further data tables on the estimates of empty homes are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Percentage of dwellings classed as empty by Local Authority District area in England, 2020.
Regions are highlighted with dark boundaries.



- The areas with the highest percentage of dwellings classed as empty homes are Blackpool, City of London, and Barrow-in-Furness, all 4.0 per cent.
- The Predominantly Rural areas with the highest percentage of empty homes are Isles of Scilly, Eden (both 3.2 per cent), and Stratford-upon-Avon (3.0 per cent).

Notes

Local Authority Districts have been defined as a coastal area if they are within 1 kilometre of the coastline of England.

The second homes council tax discount was introduced in April 2013.

In 2020, 300 out of 314 authorities reported they were charging the premium on some of their empty dwellings. This was the first year where authorities have been asked to report the premium based on the length of time the dwelling had been empty, so some caution should be taken when interpreting the split of data. 247 authorities reported premiums for dwellings that have been empty for 2 to 5 years and 5 years and over. 53 authorities did not reported figures split between the two categories. In these cases, we have used the figures as reported.

Local Authority Districts 2020 boundary definition used.

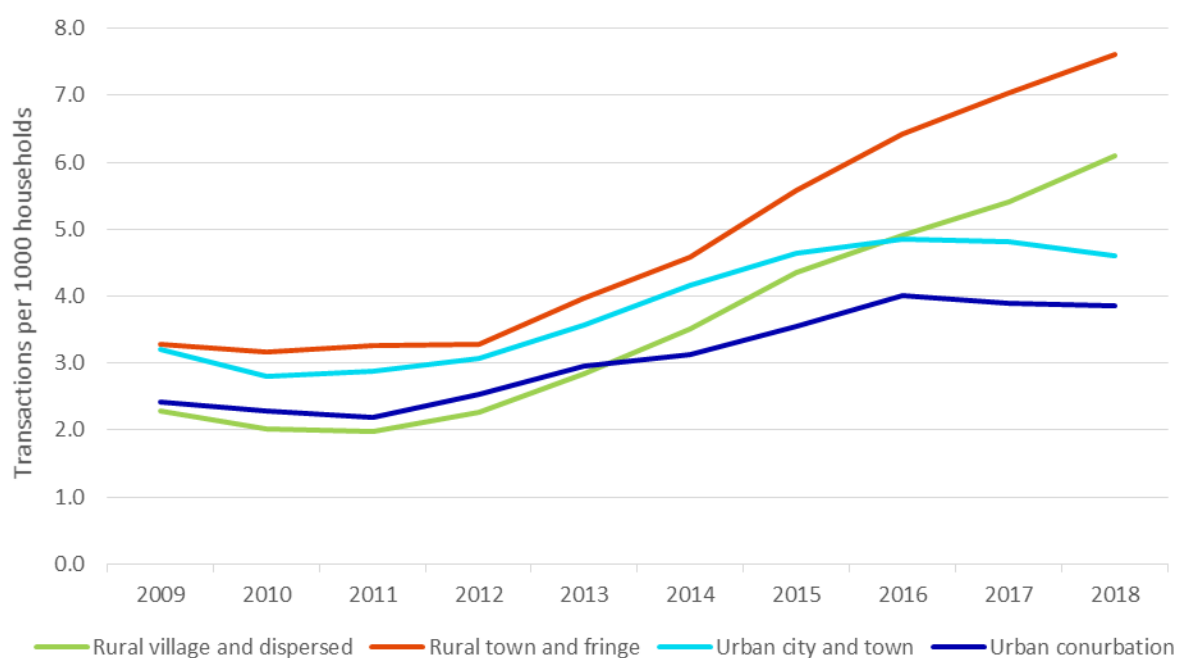
The data source is the [Local Authority Council Taxbase England 2020 dataset](#), which consists of self-reported information for each local authority area on the total number of dwellings subject to council tax by tax band, as well as any exemptions, discounts, or premiums subject to the dwellings.

Residential housing transactions

New-build residential housing transactions can be used to assess house building and the type of housing being built in rural and urban areas. After every house sale, the transaction must be registered with HM Land Registry (LR), along with an array of characteristics about the house. Looking at transactions of new-build housing provides further insight on housing development in rural areas and complements our analysis on housing completions.

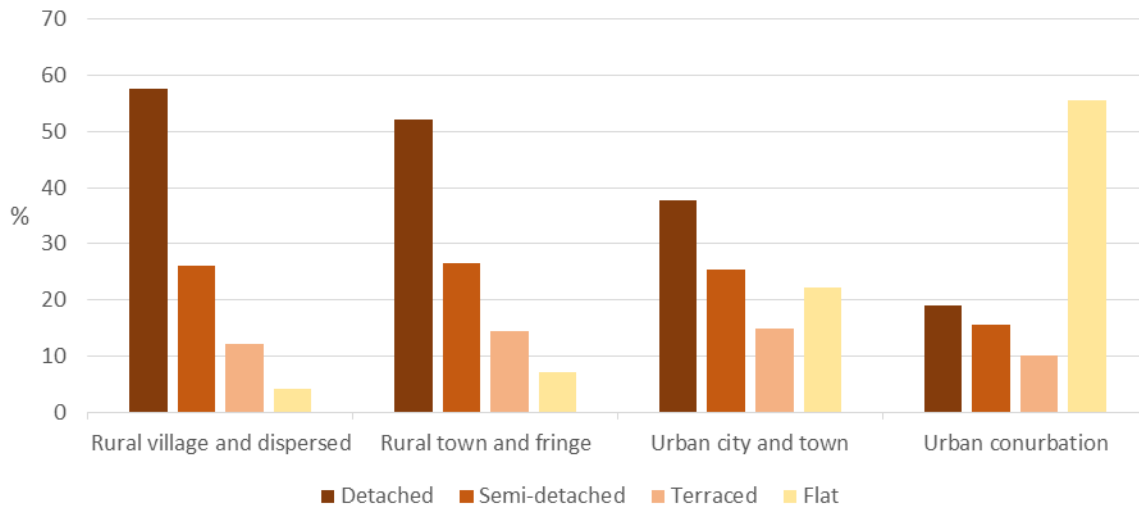
This analysis investigates the number of new-build transactions, the proportion of new-build transactions by housing type and compares this with the 2011 census profile of housing type; and looks at the change in the number of transactions by housing type over time. The underlying data are available for Middle Super Output Areas (MSOA) which range in population from 5,000 to 7,200 people and are classified using the rural urban classification.

Total number of residential transactions of new-builds, per 1,000 households, by Middle Super Output Area rural-urban classification, in England, 2009 – 2018



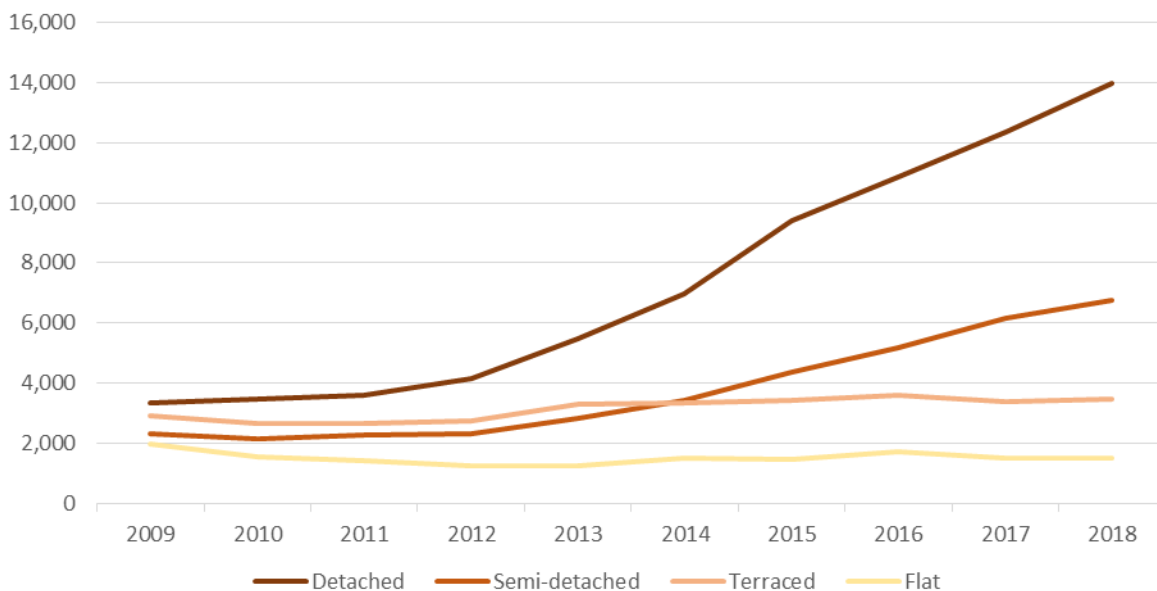
- In 2018, there were 7.6 new-build residential transactions per 1,000 households in Rural Town and Fringe, compared with 3.9 in Urban Conurbation.
- The number of new-build residential transactions per 1,000 households has increased in all areas between 2009 and 2018.
- Since 2014, the number of new-build residential transactions has increased more in rural areas than in urban areas each year.
- Tables showing the number of new-build residential housing transactions in total and per 1,000 households, broken down by rural-urban classification for 2009 to 2018 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Percentage of new-build residential housing transactions, by housing type, by Middle Super Output Area rural-urban classification, in England, 2018



- The majority of new-build residential transactions were detached properties in both Rural Village and Dispersed and Rural Town and Fringe, with 58 per cent and 52 per cent respectively.
- ‘Flats’ made up the smallest proportion of new-build housing transactions in rural areas, whereas ‘flats’ made up the majority, 56 per cent, in Urban Conurbations.
- A table showing the number and percentage breakdown of new-build residential housing transactions in 2018, broken down by housing type and MSOA rural-urban classification is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

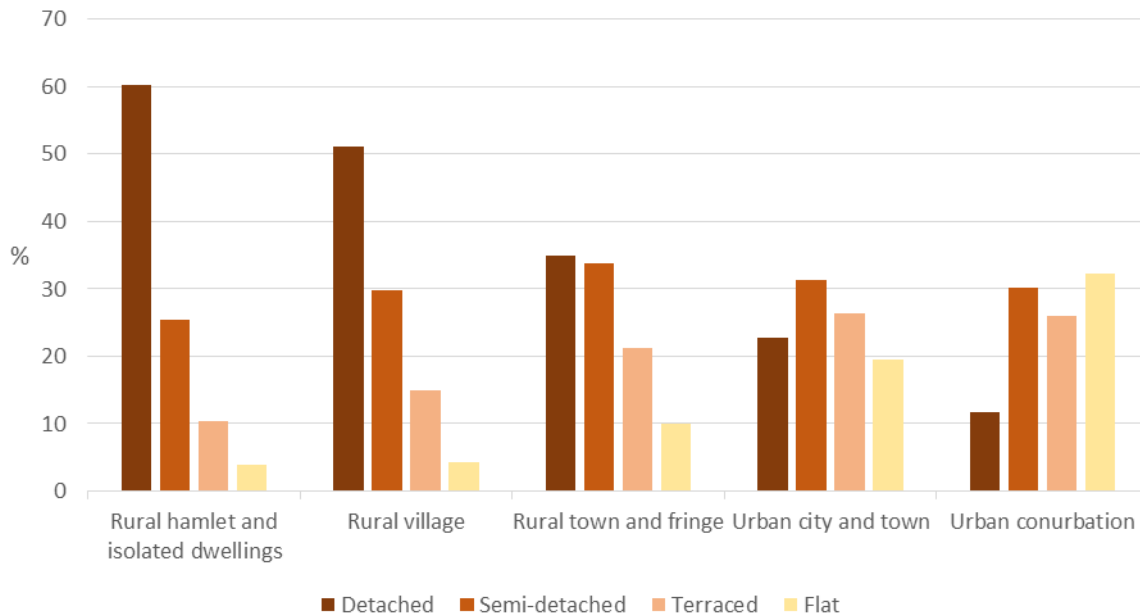
Total number of new build residential transactions in rural areas (based on Middle Super Output Area rural-urban classification), by housing type, in England, 2009 – 2018



- The number of new-build residential transactions in rural areas increased most for ‘detached’ properties, where in 2018 the 14,000 transactions were 4 times greater than in 2009.
- The number of new-build residential transactions in rural areas for ‘terraced’ housing and ‘flats’ have remained relatively unchanged between 2009 and 2018.

- A table showing the number of new-build residential housing transactions in rural areas, broken down by housing type and MSOA for 2009 to 2018 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Percentage of residential properties, by building type, by Census Output Area rural-urban classification, in England, at 2011 Census



- The 2011 census provides the most detailed geographical description of housing type in England. This makes it a useful comparison with the recent profile of housing type of new-build properties.
- In 2011, the majority of houses in both Rural Villages and Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings were ‘detached’ properties.
- The proportion of housing which are ‘flats’ or ‘terraced’ generally decreases as the settlement becomes more rural. In particular, only 4 per cent of housing were ‘flats’ in both Rural Villages and Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings.
- In rural areas, the 2011 census profile reflects the same pattern as 2018 new-build residential transaction figures.
- However, in Urban Conurbation 56 per cent of 2018 new-build residential transactions were for ‘flats’, compared with ‘flats’ making up only 32 per cent of housing in 2011.
- A table showing the number and percentage breakdown of residential at the time of the 2011 Census, broken down by housing type and rural-urban classification is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: The Middle layer Super Output Area (MSOA) Rural-Urban Classification (RUC), while a small area geography is an aggregation of smaller rural-urban geographies into a single rural-urban figure. As such, some generalisation occurs in these statistics.

These statistics aggregate multiple MSOA classifications together, producing a reduced number of classifications for comparison. Large numbers rounded to nearest 10, unless otherwise stated.

The 2008/09 housing market related recession helps explain the very low number of transactions, and subsequent rise in number of transactions, for the 10-year time series’.

Sources: Data sourced from ONS 2019 release on Leasehold and freehold residential property transactions in England and Wales: 2018, where both [freehold dataset](#) and [leasehold dataset](#) have been combined for this analysis.

Additional information and analysis can be found with the ONS’ accompanying [publication](#)

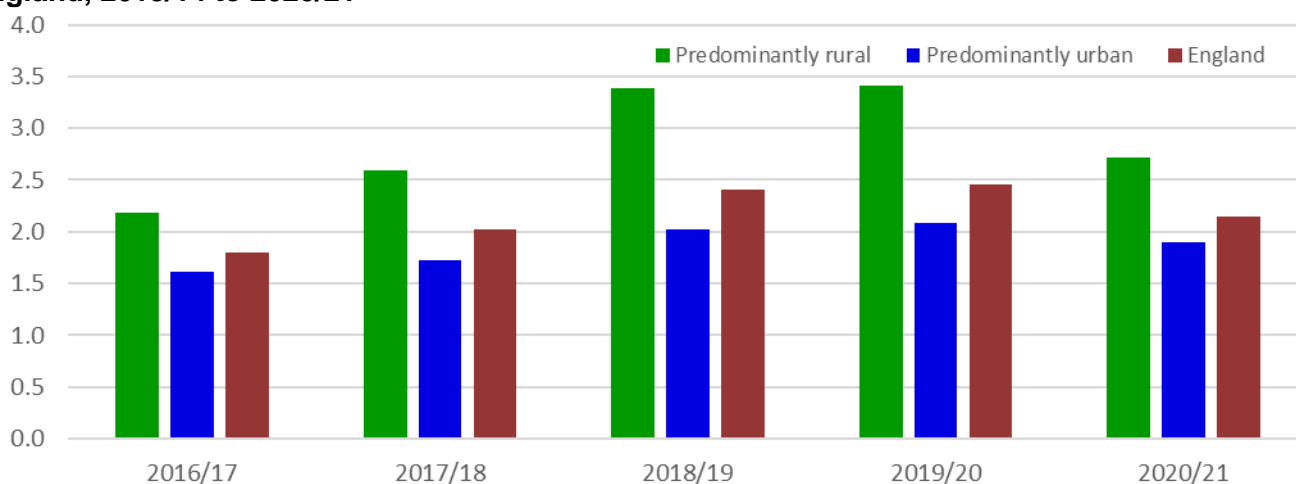
The analysis on 2011 Census is drawn from the 2011 Census results for Rural England [publication](#)

Additions to affordable housing stock

In this section, affordable housing refers to housing units provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market [note 1]. This definition is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, published 27 March 2012 [note 2]. Affordable housing can be affordable rented housing (where rent is <80% of market rate), London affordable rented housing (rent is set by GLA), social rented housing (where rents are determined by national rent regime or an equivalent rental agreement) and intermediate housing (includes intermediate rent, affordable home ownership and shared ownership).

Data used in this section are at Local Authority level. Caution should be used when considering these results as the data do not distinguish where within an authority the affordable housing has been provided such that affordable housing could be within the urban areas of Predominantly Rural Local Authorities and vice versa. It should be also noted that rural areas are less densely populated than urban areas, and therefore when calculating rates of affordable housing provision per household these rates are likely to be higher in rural areas.

Additions to affordable housing stock per 1,000 households, by Local Authority Classification, in England, 2013/14 to 2020/21



- In 2020/21 there were 2.7 additions to affordable housing stock per 1,000 households in predominantly rural areas, compared with 1.9 additions per 1,000 households in predominantly urban areas.
- The total number of additions to affordable housing stock were 13,800 in predominantly rural areas and 30,230 in predominantly urban areas.
- Tables showing additions to affordable housing stock in total and per 1,000 households, broken down by local authority rural-urban classification from 2013/14 to 2019/20 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: ¹ Can include traveller pitches, and bed spaces when describing a shared dwelling such as a hostel.

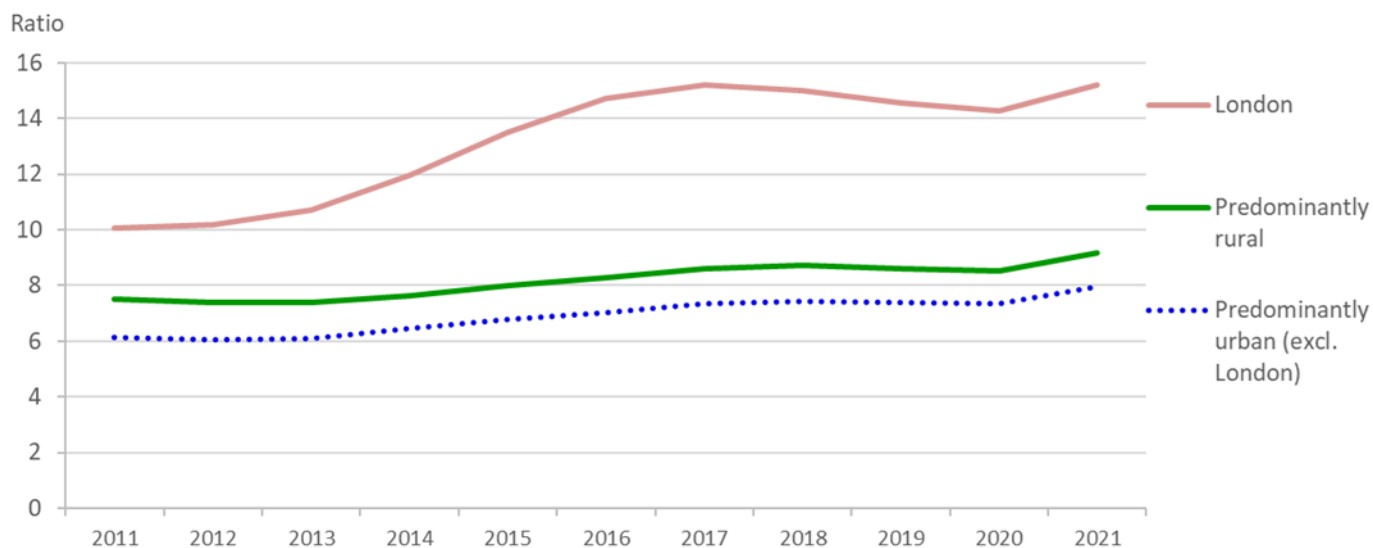
² www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, live tables on affordable housing supply, Table 1008C, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply>

Housing and accommodation affordability

Housing affordability

House prices as a multiple of earnings: ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings (residence-based), by Local Authority Classification, in England, 2011 to 2021



- The ratio between the lowest quartile (25 per cent) house prices and the lowest quartile earnings gives an indication of whether someone in the lower earnings band could afford to buy a house.
- In 2021, in Predominantly Rural areas the average lower quartile house price was 9.2 times the average lower quartile earnings, compared with 8.0 times in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London). This does not take account of a household with more than one income from earnings – for example when a couple combine their earnings to buy a house.
- The house price disparity remains consistent between Predominantly Rural areas and Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) throughout the time period, whilst London showed a particularly large increase from 2013 to 2020. The increase in ratio of house prices to earnings seen in 2021 is seen across all areas, indicating London may be returning to the normal trend.
- The ratio of lower quartile house prices to earnings is a useful indication of housing affordability.
- Housing in Predominantly Rural areas is, on average, less affordable than in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London).
- In Predominantly Rural areas in 2021 the lower quartile house price was 9.2 times the lower quartile average earnings.
- Across all areas, the ratios of house prices to earnings seen in 2021 were the highest seen in the last decade.
- A table showing house prices as a multiple of earnings, broken down by local authority rural-urban classification from 2008 to 2019 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

House prices as a multiple of earnings: most and least affordable Local Authorities based on ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile residence-based earnings, in England, 2021

	Most Affordable		Least Affordable	
London	Barking and Dagenham	11.9	Kensington and Chelsea	24.4
Urban with major conurbation	Sunderland	4.5	Hertsmere	16.5
Urban with minor conurbation	Barnsley	4.8	Gedling	7.4
Urban with city and town	Burnley	3.3	Windsor and Maidenhead	14.5
Urban with significant rural	Barrow-in-Furness	4.1	Brentwood	15.2
Largely rural	County Durham	3.7	Waverley	14.8
Mainly rural	Copeland	3.4	Cotswold	14.2
Predominantly urban (excl. London)	Burnley	3.3	Hertsmere	16.5
Predominantly rural	Copeland	3.4	Waverley	14.8
England (re-weighted)	Burnley	3.3	Kensington and Chelsea	24.4

- Both the most and least affordable local authorities across England are classified as urban. The local authority with the lowest ratio is Burnley; here, the lower quartile house price is 3.3 times the average earnings seen in the lower quartile. The local authority with the highest ratio is Kensington and Chelsea; here, the lower quartile house price is 24.4 times the average earnings seen in the lower quartile. Outside of London, the least affordable local authority is Hertsmere, where the lower quartile house price is 16.5 times the average earnings seen in the lower quartile.
- In rural areas, the local authority with the lowest ratio, and is therefore most affordable, is Copeland; the lower quartile house price is 3.4 times the average earnings seen in the lower quartile. The local authority with the highest ratio, and is therefore least affordable, is Waverley; the lower quartile house price here is 14.8 times the average earnings seen in the lower quartile.
- The difference in affordability varies greatly for the bottom 25% of earners within each local authority. In the most affordable scenario, a single individual amongst the lowest quartile of earners within their local authority is likely to be able to access a mortgage⁵ in order to purchase a home within the cheapest 25% of homes in that area. In the least affordable scenario, it could need the wages of at least 6 individuals earning amongst the lowest quartile of earners within their local authority in order to be able to access a mortgage to purchase a home within the cheapest 25% of homes in that area.

Notes: The housing affordability ratio is calculated by dividing the average lower quartile house price by the average lower quartile earnings. The 'lower quartile' property price/earnings is determined by ranking all property prices/incomes in ascending order. The lowest 25 per cent of prices/earnings are below the lower quartile; the highest 75 per cent are above the lower quartile.

The ratio is calculated for each Local Authority in England. Residence based earnings data are used so that both the average house price and average earnings data used in the ratio calculation refer to the same Local Authority. The resulting ratio is weighted by Local Authority household count projections published by the ONS to allow comparison of Local Authorities according to their 'Rural Urban' classification. It should be noted that the England figure included in the table and graph is also weighted for the purpose of this analysis and will not match the original England data published by the ONS.

Data are reported from 2008 onwards as earlier years are incomplete due to structural changes to Local Authority arrangements which mean direct comparisons are not possible.

The earnings data are from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings which provides a snapshot of earnings at April in each year. Earnings relate to gross full-time individual earnings on a place of residence basis. The house price statistics come from the House Price Statistics for Small Areas, which report the median and lower quartile price paid for residential property and refer to a 12-month period with April in the middle (year ending September).

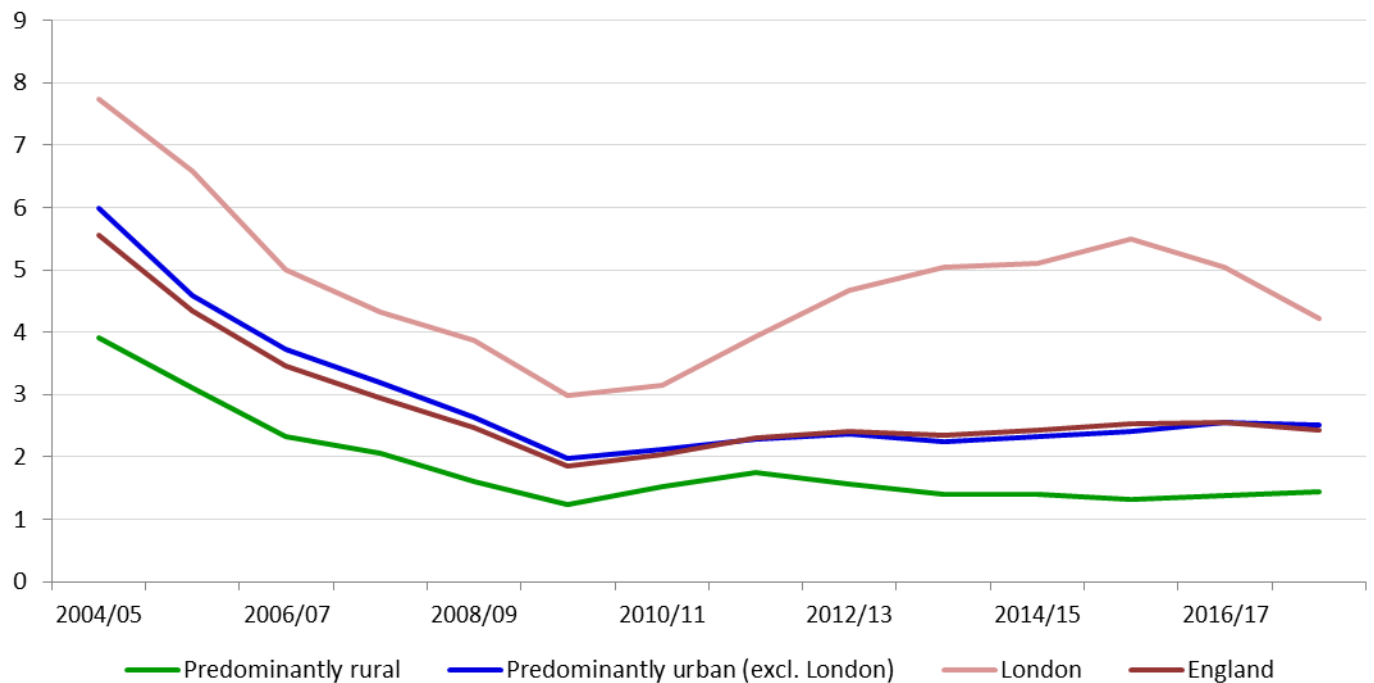
Source: [ONS, Ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile gross annual \(where available\) residence-based earnings by local authority district, England and Wales, 1997 to 2019, Table 6c](#)

Rents

There are currently no figures for comparing rents between rural and urban areas. Previous analysis on rents with private rental providers was providing a very limited and partial perspective and has been removed until such time as it is possible to produce more comprehensive analysis of rents.

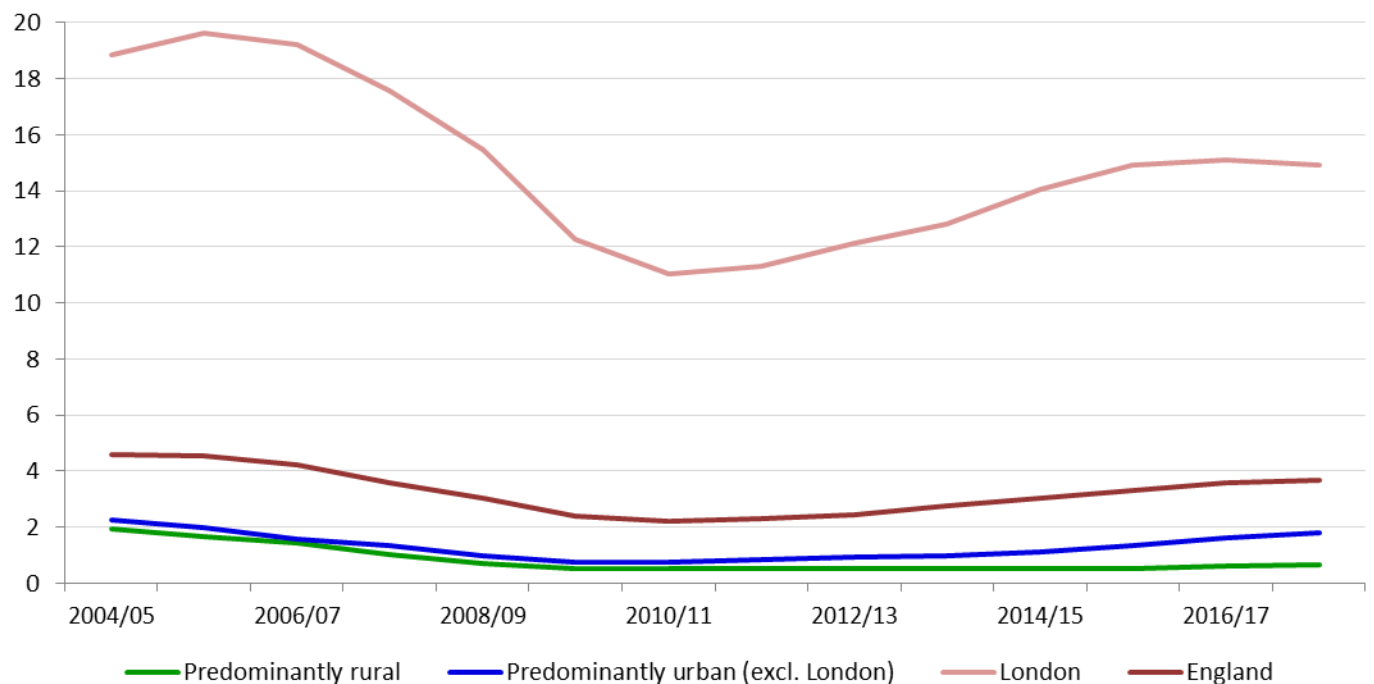
Homelessness and temporary accommodation

People accepted as being homeless and in priority need per 1,000 households, by Local Authority Classification, in England, 2004/05 to 2017/18



A table showing the number of people accepted as being homeless and in priority need per 1,000 households, broken down by local authority rural-urban classification from 2004/05 to 2017/18 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households, by Local Authority Classification, in England, 2004/05 to 2017/18



- In 2017/18 the proportion of people who were homeless and in priority need of assistance in securing permanent settled accommodation was 2.5 per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) and 1.4 in Predominantly Rural areas.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation, per 1,000 households, was 1.8 in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) and 0.7 in Predominantly Rural areas.
- The number of homeless and in priority need of assistance has remained broadly the same in Predominantly Rural areas since 2013-14, whilst there has been a small increase in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) over the same time period.
- A table showing the number households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households, broken down by local authority rural-urban classification from 2004/05 to 2017/18 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: Further information: www.gov.uk/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions

The figures exclude a significant number of Local Authorities who did not supply the data. The number of missing Local Authorities varies from 0 in 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 to 35 in 2014/15. The England totals do not include estimates for missing data.

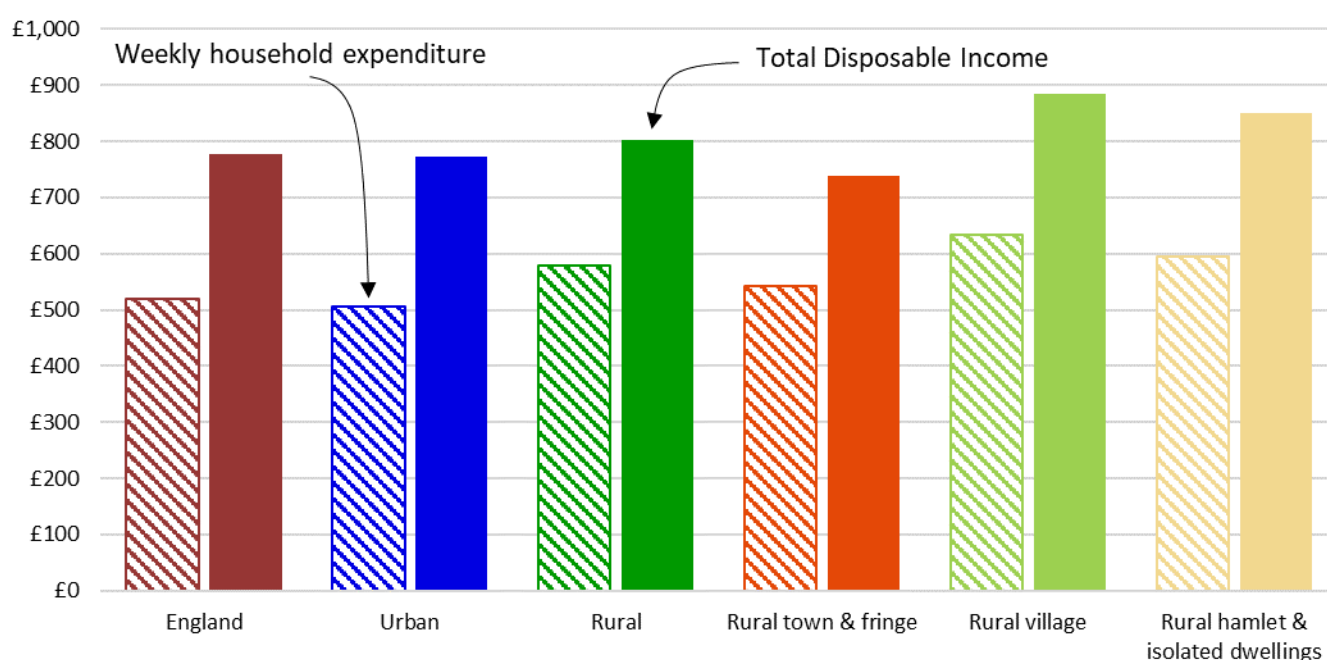
Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Live tables on homelessness: table 784 Local authorities' action under the homelessness provisions of the Housing Acts: www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness

Household expenditure

- Levels of household expenditure are unsurprisingly closely related to disposable income.
- However, there are differences in absolute and proportional spending patterns, appearing to reflect where households live.
- These differences may illustrate where changes in price or spending patterns would have the greatest impacts.
- As of March 2020, households in Rural Villages had both the highest disposable incomes, and the highest levels of expenditure. Households in Rural Town & Fringe areas had the lowest levels of disposable income, while households in Urban areas had the lowest levels of expenditure.
- The measure of average weekly household expenditure excludes mortgage payments. Please see the notes at the end of the section for further detail on this.

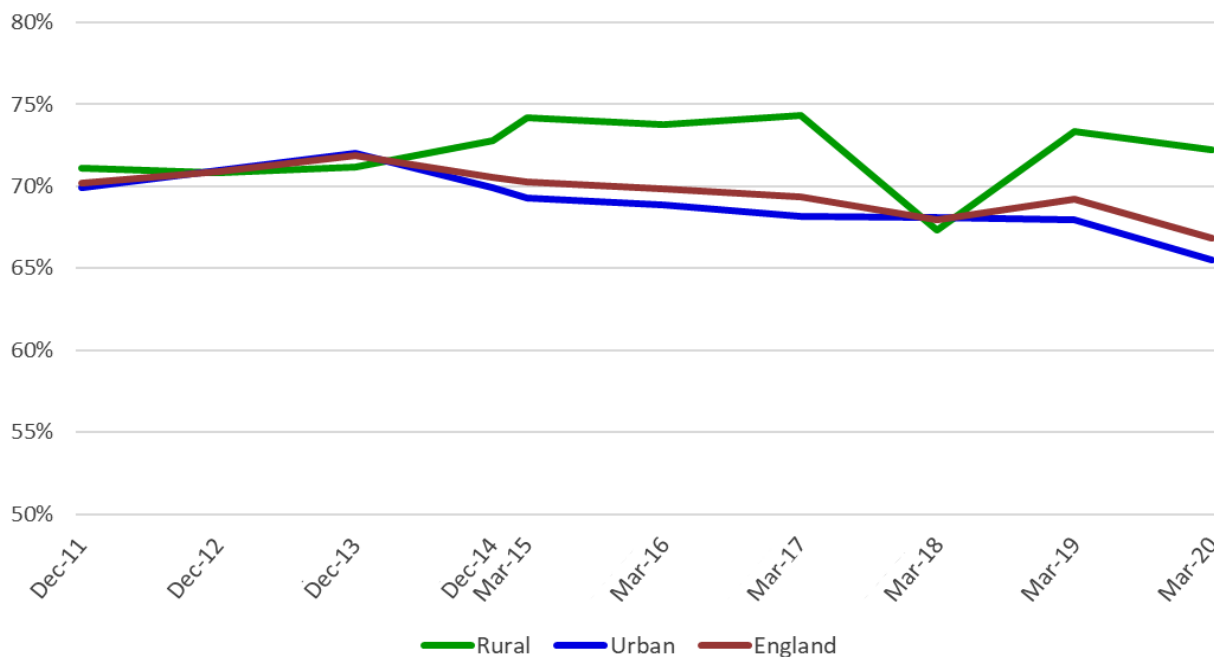
Nominal expenditure and disposable income

Average weekly household expenditure (excluding mortgage payments) and disposable income, by rural-urban classification, England, year ending March 2020



- Households in Rural Villages have the highest disposable incomes at £885 on average, which is around £113 more than the Urban average. However, they also have the highest weekly household expenditure at £634 on average, £128 higher than Urban households (household expenditure excludes mortgage payments).
- In the year ending March 2020, average household expenditure as a proportion of disposable income ranges from the lowest at 66 per cent in Urban areas to the highest at 73 per cent in Rural Town and Fringe (household expenditure excludes mortgage payments).

Average weekly expenditure (excluding mortgage payments) as a percentage of average weekly disposable income, rural-urban classification, England, for years ending December 2011 to March 2020



Note: The reporting period for weekly expenditure and income changed at the end of 2014 and moved from calendar year (ending December) to financial year (end March). All other variables stayed the same.

- In December 2011, average weekly expenditure (excluding mortgage payments) as a percentage of average weekly disposable income was highest in Rural Villages and Rural Hamlet and Isolated Dwellings at 71 per cent. It was lowest in Urban areas at 70 per cent.
- Since December 2011 there has been some fluctuation in the relationship between average income and average expenditure in both rural and urban areas. However, in March 2020 average weekly expenditure (excl. mortgage payments) as a percentage of average weekly disposable income was highest in Rural Town and Fringe areas and lowest in Urban areas.
- Historically, from the year-ending December 2014, the average weekly expenditure (excluding mortgage payments) as a percentage of average weekly disposable income has been consistently higher in rural areas than urban areas, except for the year-ending March 2018.
- For the year-ending March 2020 compared to the year-ending March 2018, there was a large increase in expenditure as a percentage of disposable income for rural areas. The largest changes of weekly expenditure on a commodity or service were a £12 increase for 'Transport costs', and an £11 increase for 'Recreation'.

Average weekly expenditure (excluding mortgage payments) as a percentage of average weekly disposable income, rural-urban classification, England, for years ending December 2011 to March 2020

	Dec - 2011	Dec - 2012	Dec - 2013	Dec - 2014	Mar- 2015	Mar- 2016	Mar- 2017	Mar- 2018	Mar- 2019	Mar- 2020
Rural	71.1	70.8	71.2	72.8	74.2	73.8	74.3	67.3	73.3	72.2
Rural town & fringe	70.3	68.7	68.7	73.4	73.7	73.8	74.8	68.1	68.1	73.4
Rural villages	71.0	73.0	68.3	72.3	75.4	74.0	73.8	66.6	80.4	71.6
Rural hamlet & isolated dwellings	71.0	68.4	74.7	72.3	71.7	72.8	73.8	67.2	71.1	70.0
Urban	69.9	71.0	72.0	69.9	69.3	68.9	68.2	68.1	67.9	65.5
England	70.2	70.9	71.9	70.5	70.3	69.9	69.3	67.9	69.2	66.9

Expenditure on commodity or service groups

Breakdown of average weekly household expenditure (excluding mortgage payments), by commodity or service, by rural-urban classification, England, year ending March 2020

Average weekly household expenditure (excluding mortgage repayments) in Rural areas:

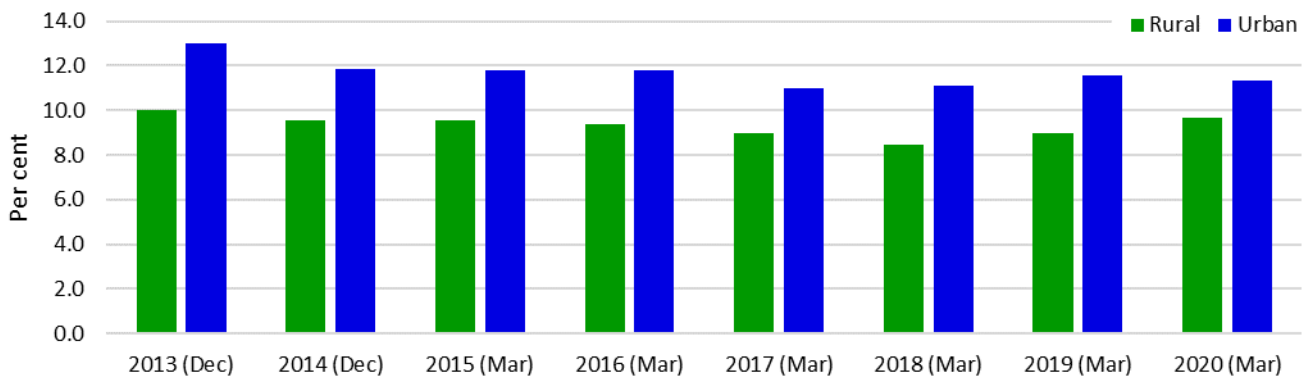


Average weekly household expenditure (excluding mortgage repayments) in Urban areas:

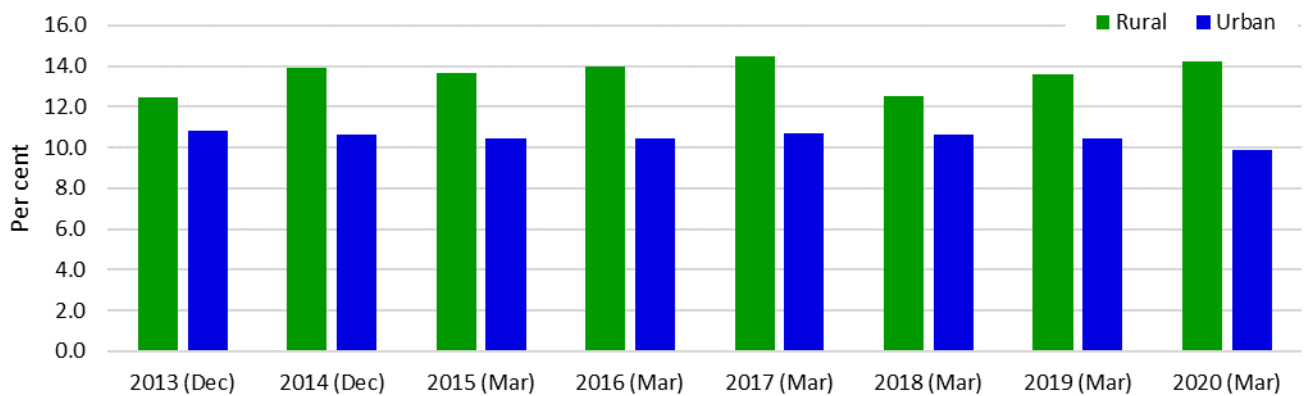


- Rural households spend a higher proportion of their disposable income on 'transport' and 'recreation' than they do on 'housing, water and energy', compared with urban areas where households on average spend the highest proportion of their income on 'housing, water and energy'.
- Rural household's average weekly 'Transport costs' were £38 greater than those of urban households. Similarly, the average weekly 'Recreation' expenditure was £27 greater for those from rural households compared with those of urban households.
- In the year ending March 2020, average weekly 'Transport costs' was greatest for those in Rural Villages at around £131, which accounted for 14.8 per cent of their weekly disposable income and was £55 higher than households in Urban areas.
- The amount spent on most commodities and services, such as 'Food', 'Alcohol', 'Recreation', and 'Hotels', was greatest for households in Rural Villages and Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings. However, both these settlement types also have the highest average weekly disposable incomes at £885 and £851, respectively.
- Tables showing the average weekly household expenditure and a percentage breakdown for the year-ending March 2020, broken down by rural-urban classification are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Average weekly Housing, water & energy expenditure (excluding mortgage payments) as a percentage of average weekly disposable income, rural-urban classification, England, for years ending December 2013 to March 2020



Average weekly expenditure on Transport costs as a percentage of average weekly disposable income, rural-urban classification, England, for years ending December 2013 to March 2020



- Average weekly expenditure on ‘housing (excluding mortgage payments), water and energy’, and ‘transport costs’ represent the two biggest expenditure items for Urban and Rural areas respectively.
- Average weekly expenditure on ‘housing (excluding mortgage payments), water and energy’ (as a percentage of average weekly disposable income) declined year-on-year in Rural areas between 2013 and 2018 but has since risen to 10 per cent of disposable income.
- Average weekly expenditure on ‘transport costs’ has increased to 14 per cent of disposable income in Rural areas, while in Urban areas it has fallen to 10 per cent of disposable income.

Notes:

1. Average weekly expenditure does not include mortgage payments. Data come from the ONS Living Costs and Food Survey which uses the Classification Of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP) system to classify expenditure items. COICOP is an internationally agreed system of classification for reporting consumption expenditure within National Accounts and is used by other household budget surveys across the European Union. COICOP classified housing costs do not include, what is considered to be, non-consumption expenditure, for example: mortgage interest payments, mortgage capital repayments, mortgage protection premiums, council tax and domestic rates.
2. The measure of income used here does not include withdrawal of savings, loans and money received in payment of loans, receipts from maturing insurance policies and proceeds from the sale of assets.
3. Transport costs include the purchase and operation of personal vehicles and fares paid on public vehicles. All journeys are recorded within the transport section. Recreation costs include for example sports equipment, admission charges, audio-visual equipment, the purchase of CDs, computer equipment and games, pets and horticultural equipment.

Source: Office for National Statistics, Living Costs and Food Survey:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/methodologies/livingcostsandfoodssurvey)

Deprivation

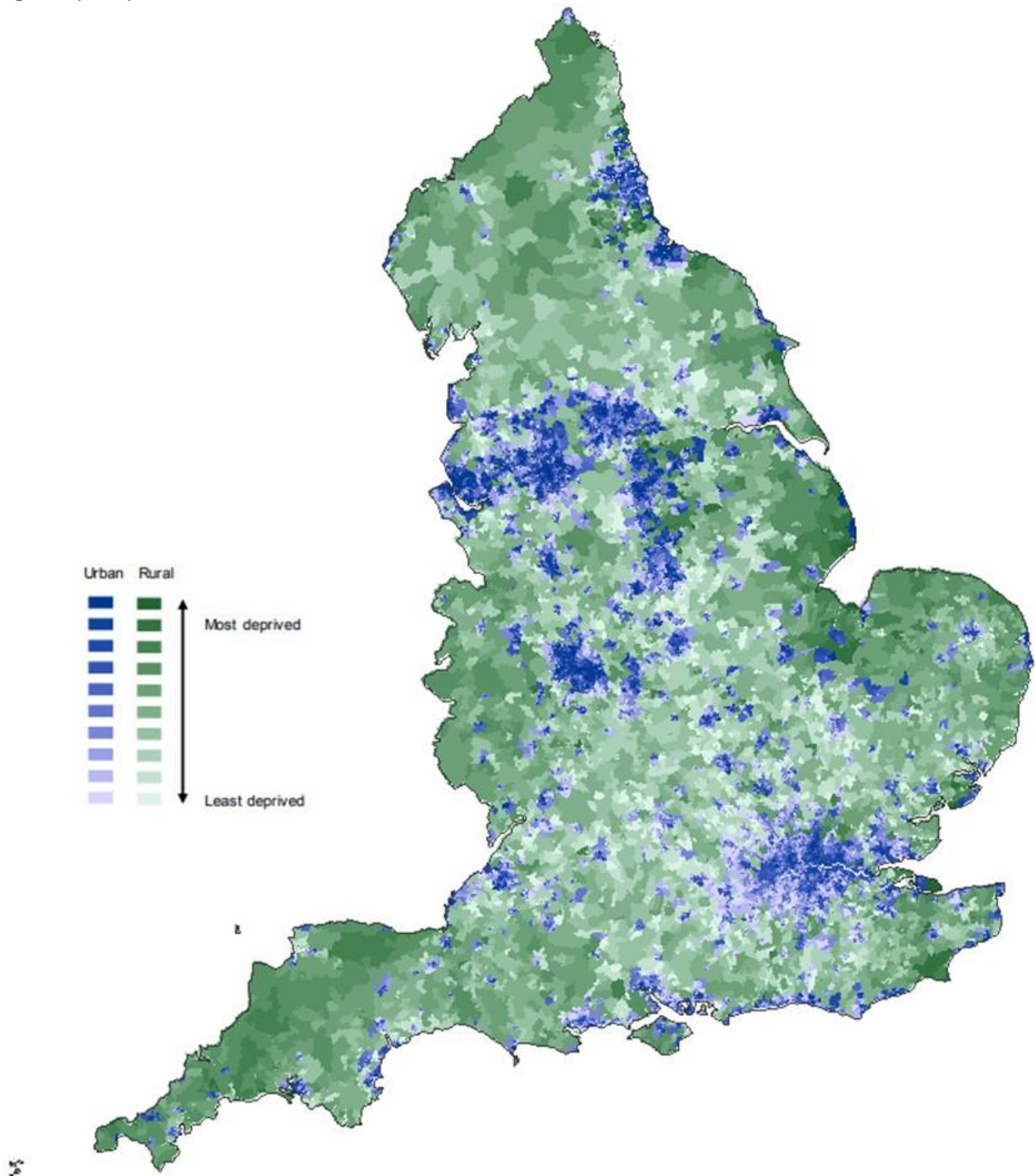
Index of multiple deprivation

- The Index of Multiple Deprivation¹ is compiled by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- It is an overall measure of deprivation that is based on seven domains of deprivation:
 - Income deprivation (including income deprivation affecting children and older people)
 - Employment deprivation
 - Education, skills and training deprivation
 - Health deprivation and disability
 - Crime
 - Barriers to housing and services
 - Living environment deprivation
- MHCLG state that “It is important to note that these statistics are a measure of relative deprivation, not affluence, and to recognise that not every person in a highly deprived area will themselves be deprived. Likewise, there will be some deprived people living in the least deprived areas”.
- This could be particularly the case in rural areas where the underlying area used to determine the index will be much more geographically spread out than in urban areas. This means that that small areas of deprivation are less likely to be identifiable amid a relatively affluent area. In urban areas deprivation is more likely to be concentrated in an area and hence more easily reflected in the index.
- Overall rural areas tend to be less deprived than urban ones.
 - 12 per cent of people living in urban areas are in areas that are within the most deprived 10 per cent of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, compared with just 1 per cent of people living in rural areas.
 - The proportion of the urban population in the most deprived 40 per cent of areas is higher than the proportion of the rural population.
- There is variation within rural areas however:
 - Whilst 18 per cent of people living in Rural Town and Fringe areas are in the least deprived 10 per cent, just 4 per cent of those living in Rural Village and Dispersed areas are and this falls to less than 1 per cent for Rural Village and Dispersed areas in a sparse setting.
 - However, at this level, the data available are less likely to identify deprivation amid an area that is relatively less deprived overall.

¹ The Index of Multiple Deprivation was last produced in 2015 see www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation.

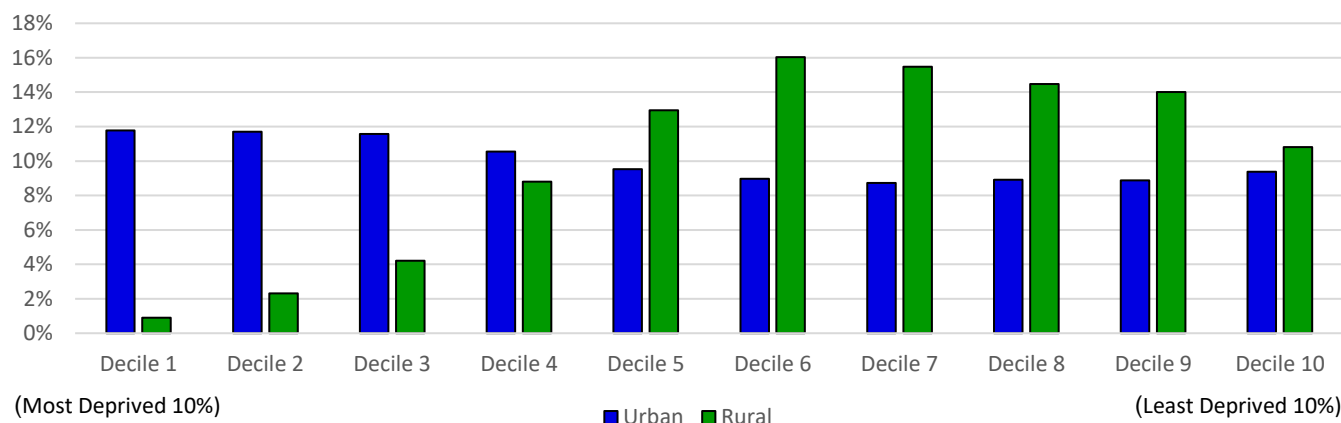
Deprivation by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)²

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) deciles, by Lower Super Output Area² and rural-urban classification, in England (2019)



Source: MHCLG and Defra analysis

Proportion of the population within each decile of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, by rural-urban classification, England, 2019



Proportion of the population within each decile of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, by rural-urban classification, England, 2019

Decile	Most Deprived							Least Deprived		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Urban with Major Conurbation	14%	15%	14%	11%	10%	8%	8%	8%	7%	5%
Urban with Minor Conurbation	20%	14%	11%	9%	9%	9%	8%	7%	7%	6%
Urban with City and Town	9%	9%	10%	10%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%	13%
Urban with City and Town in a sparse setting	13%	11%	14%	17%	16%	7%	7%	8%	8%	<1%
Rural Town and Fringe	2%	4%	5%	7%	10%	12%	12%	13%	18%	18%
Rural Town and Fringe in a sparse setting	1%	2%	12%	17%	20%	18%	11%	9%	9%	1%
Rural Village and Dispersed	<1%	1%	3%	9%	16%	21%	20%	17%	10%	4%
Rural Village and Dispersed in a sparse setting	<1%	1%	13%	33%	25%	14%	10%	5%	1%	<1%
Urban	12%	12%	12%	11%	10%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%
Rural	1%	2%	4%	9%	13%	16%	15%	14%	14%	11%

Notes: ¹ Analysis is based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, which is based on the English indices of deprivation 2019. www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation. The indices are derived for Lower Super Output Areas.

² A Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) is a geographic area built up from groups of census output areas. LSOAs were developed (along with Middle Super Output Areas) to help improve the reporting of small area statistics, allowing for greater precision than reporting at Local Authority level.

Poverty

- Households Below Average Income (HBAI) statistics give an insight into the standard of living of the household population of England. HBAI assumes that all individuals in the household benefit equally from the combined income of the household.
- Individuals are said to be in **relative low income** if they live in a household with an income that is low relative to other households, as determined by whether the income is below 60 per cent of median income (the income earned by the household in the middle of the distribution in a given year). This can be determined before or after housing costs.
- Individuals are said to be in **absolute low income** if they live in a household with an income that is below a level that was the relative low-income threshold in 2010/11 adjusted for inflation. This can be determined before or after housing costs.
- The percentage of people living in relative and absolute low income is lower in rural areas than in urban areas, but nevertheless many thousands of individuals living in rural areas are in households below average income.

Percentage of households, working-age people, children and pensioners in relative and absolute low income, before and after housing costs, in 2018/19, by rural and urban areas in England

Type of low income	Group	Rural		Urban	
		Before housing costs	After housing costs	Before housing costs	After housing costs
Relative	Households	14	17	17	23
	Working-age people	13	16	15	22
	Children	14	23	21	32
	Pensioners	17	15	18	17
Absolute	Households	13	15	15	21
	Working-age people	12	14	14	20
	Children	13	18	18	29
	Pensioners	15	12	15	14

Relative low income in 2018/19

- The percentage of **households** in rural areas in relative low income was 14 per cent before housing costs and 17 per cent after housing costs. In comparison, the percentage of households in urban areas in relative low income was 17 per cent before housing costs and 23 per cent after housing costs.
- The percentage of **working-age people** in rural areas in relative low income was 13 per cent before housing costs and 16 per cent after housing costs. In comparison, the percentage of working-age people in urban areas in relative low income was 15 per cent before housing costs and 22 per cent after housing costs.
- The percentage of **children** in rural areas in relative low income was 14 per cent before housing costs, and 23 per cent after housing costs. In comparison, the percentage of children in urban areas in relative low income was 21 per cent before housing costs and 32 per cent after housing costs.
- The percentage of **pensioners** in rural areas in relative low income was 17 per cent before housing costs, and 15 per cent after housing costs. In comparison, the percentage of pensioners in urban areas in relative low income was 18 per cent before housing costs and 17 per cent after housing costs.

Absolute low income in 2018/19

- The percentage of **households** in rural areas in absolute low income was 13 per cent before housing costs and 15 per cent after housing costs. The percentage of households in urban areas in absolute low income was 15 per cent before housing costs and 21 per cent after housing costs.
- The percentage of **working-age people** in rural areas in absolute low income was 12 per cent before housing costs and 14 per cent after housing costs. In comparison, the percentage of working-age people in urban areas in relative low income was 14 per cent before housing costs and 20 per cent after housing costs.
- The percentage of **children** in rural areas in absolute low income was 13 per cent before housing costs and 18 per cent after housing costs. In comparison, the percentage of children in urban areas in absolute low income was 18 per cent before housing costs and 29 per cent after housing costs.
- The percentage of **pensioners** in rural areas in absolute low income was 15 per cent before housing costs and 12 per cent after housing costs. In comparison, the percentage of pensioners in urban areas in absolute low income was 15 per cent before housing costs and 14 per cent after housing costs.

Percentage of households, working-age people, children and pensioners in relative and absolute low income, before and after housing costs, in 2017/18, by rural and urban areas in England

Type of low income	Group	Rural		Urban	
		Before housing costs	After housing costs	Before housing costs	After housing costs
Relative	Households	15	17	18	23
	Working-age people	13	16	15	21
	Children	19	24	23	31
	Pensioners	17	14	19	18
Absolute	Households	12	14	14	19
	Working-age people	11	14	13	18
	Children	13	19	17	27
	Pensioners	14	11	14	13

Dashboard showing the change in the percentage of households, working-age people, children and pensioners, in relative and absolute low income, before and after housing costs, between 2017/18 and 2018/19, by rural and urban areas in England

Type of low income	Group	Rural		Urban	
		Before housing costs	After housing costs	Before housing costs	After housing costs
Relative	Households	↓	—	↓	—
	Working-age people	—	—	—	↑
	Children	↓↓	↓	↓	↑
	Pensioners	—	↑	↓	↓
Absolute	Households	↑	↑	↑	↑
	Working-age people	↑	—	↑	↑
	Children	—	↓	↑	↑
	Pensioners	↑	↑	↑	↑

Key: the percentage in low income increased (↑), decreased (↓) or stayed the same (—). Multiple arrows (↑↑,↓↓) indicate a change of ±3.0 percentage points or more.

This dashboard shows the direction of change over the last year and is provided to give an indication only and may not represent a clear improvement or deterioration. Indication of change is based on a ±1.0 percentage point threshold.

Changes between 2017/18 and 2018/19

In rural areas:

- The percentage of children in relative low income, has seen a strong decrease before housing costs and a smaller decrease after housing costs.
- The percentage of pensioners in relative low income has increased after housing costs.
- The percentage of people in absolute low income has increased before housing costs for households, working-age people and pensioners and after housing costs for households and pensioners.

In urban areas:

- The percentages of households, working-age people, children and pensioners in absolute low income have all increased both before and after housing costs. The percentage of households, children and pensioners in relative low income has decreased before housing costs.
- The percentage of working-age people and children in relative low income has increased after housing costs.

Technical note:

This report presents figures on the percentage living in relative and absolute low income for households overall, and separately for working-age adults, children and pensioners. These statistics are one of the measures used to assess changes to living standards by examining low income, income inequality and poverty. Figures are presented as *before* and *after* housing costs.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) reports that **before housing costs**¹ measures allow an assessment of the relative standard of living of those individuals who were actually benefiting from a better quality of housing by paying more for better accommodation, and income growth over time incorporates improvements in living standards where higher costs reflected improvements in the quality of housing.

After housing costs¹ measures allow an assessment of living standards of individuals whose housing costs are high relative to the quality of their accommodation, and income growth over time may also overstate improvements in living standards for low-income groups, as a rise in housing benefit to offset higher rents (for a given quality of accommodation) would be counted as an income rise.

Both before and after housing costs measures can be used to examine relative and absolute low income for **households**.

DWP report that the preferred measure to examine relative and absolute low income for the **working-age population** (those aged between 16 and 64) is before housing costs. This is because after housing costs measures can underestimate the true living standard of families who choose to spend more on housing to attain a higher standard of accommodation.

DWP report that the preferred measure of low income for **children** is based on incomes measured before housing costs, as after housing costs measures can underestimate the true living standard of families who choose to spend more on housing to attain a higher standard of accommodation.

DWP report that the preferred measure of low income for **pensioners** is based on incomes measured after housing costs, as a significant percentage of pensioners own their own home. The figures for both urban and rural areas show that the percentage of pensioners in relative or absolute low income was lower after housing costs, than before housing costs.

These rural statistics are based on **relative low income** and **absolute low income**². DWP also report on measures of 'low income and material deprivation' and 'persistent poverty'.

¹ See Note (a) for explanation of what is included in *before* and *after* housing costs.

² See Note (b) for explanation of *relative* low income and *absolute* low income.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), bespoke data request.

Further notes:

(a) HBAI statistics – background information

Households Below Average Income (HBAI) uses net disposable weekly household income, after adjusting for the household size and composition, as an assessment for material living standards - the level of consumption of goods and services that people could attain given the net income of the household in which they live. In order to allow comparisons of the living standards of different types of households, income is adjusted to take into account variations in the size and composition of the households in a process known as equivalisation. The unit of analysis is the individual.

Housing costs are made up of rent (gross of housing benefit); water rates, community water charges and council water charges; mortgage interest payments (net of tax relief); structural insurance premiums (for owner occupiers); and ground rent and service charges.

Further information on HBAI statistics can be found at: [Households below average income \(HBAI\) statistics document on GOV.UK.](#)

(b) HBAI statistics – definitions of relative and absolute low income

Relative low income sets the threshold as a percentage of the average income, so it moves each year as average income moves. It is used to measure the number and percentage of individuals who have incomes that are a certain percentage below the average.

The percentage of individuals in *relative* low income will increase if the average income:

- stays the same or rises and, relative to this, individuals on lowest incomes see their income fall, or rise to a lesser extent
- falls and individuals with the lowest incomes see their income fall more than the average income

The percentage of individuals in *relative* low income will decrease if the average income:

- stays the same or rises, while those with the lowest incomes see their income rise more than the average income
- falls and, relative to this, individuals with the lowest incomes see their income rise, fall to a lesser extent, or show no change

Absolute low income sets the low-income line in a given year, here in 2010/11 then adjusts it each year with inflation as measured by variants of the Retail Prices Index (RPI). This measures the percentage of individuals who are below a certain standard of living in the UK (as measured by income).

The percentage of individuals in *absolute* low income will:

- increase if individuals with the lowest incomes see their income fall or rise less than inflation
- decrease if individuals with the lowest incomes see their incomes rise more than inflation

HBAI uses variants of the RPI to adjust for inflation to look at how incomes are changing over real time in real terms. In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, the RPI and its derivatives have been assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics. A full report can be found on the UK Statistics Authority website.

(c) The Child Poverty Act 2010, Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission

The relative low income target in the [Child Poverty Act 2010, \(section 3\)](#), is that less than 10% of children who live in qualifying households live in households that fall within the relevant income group. For the purposes of this analysis, a household falls within the relevant income group – in relation to a financial year – if its equivalised net income for the financial year is less than 60% of median equivalised net household income for the financial year.

(d) Rounding

In the tables, figures are rounded to the nearest 1.0 per cent whereas the dashboard shows change based on a ± 1.0 percentage point threshold. Increases or decreases in figures between years as noted in the tables and dashboard may therefore not match and these changes may not represent a clear improvement or deterioration.

Fuel poverty

Fuel poverty or being fuel poor is where a household is living in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D or below in a home that cannot be kept warm at reasonable cost without bringing their residual income below the poverty threshold.

Fuel poverty in England is now measured using the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator rather than the previous Low Income High Costs (LIHC) indicator. Data for both indicators were available for 2019. Data from 2020 onwards will use the LILEE indicator. Further information on these indicators and the change can be found on the [Fuel Poverty Statistics page on GOV.UK](#).

12 per cent of households in rural areas are in fuel poverty.



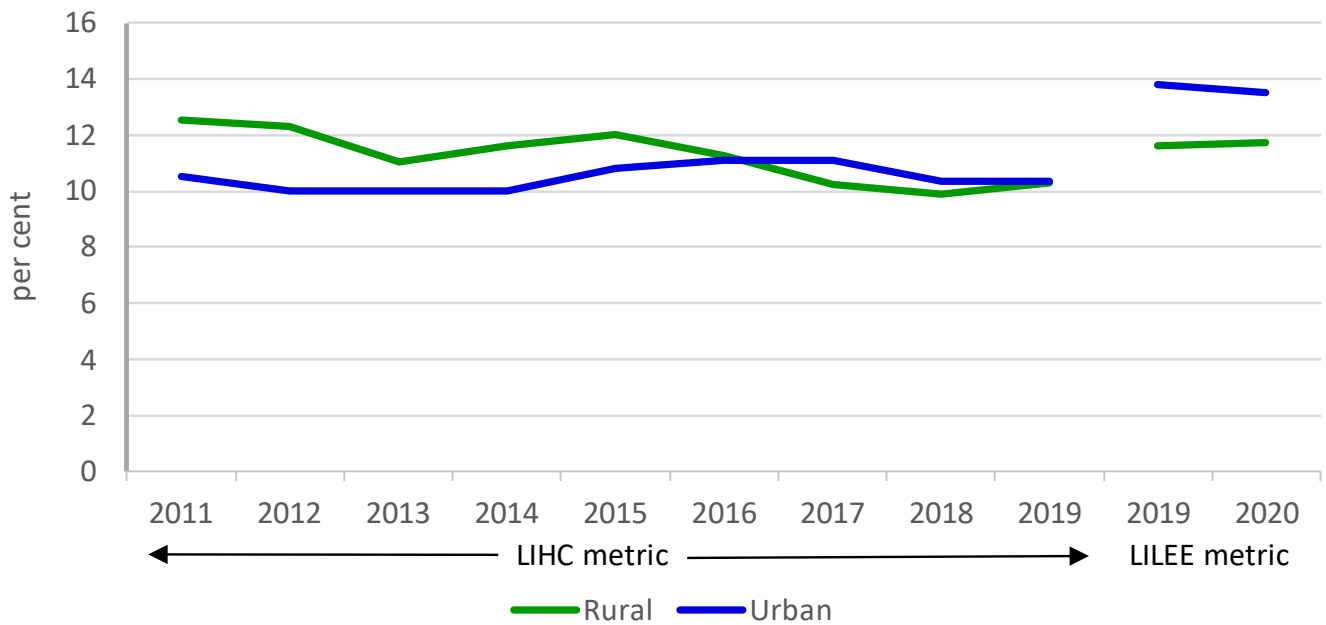
Rural households have the largest fuel poverty gap

- There were 3.2 million fuel poor households in England in 2020. Historically fuel poverty was proportionately more prevalent in rural areas. However since 2017 urban areas have had the greater proportion of fuel poor households.
- In 2020, 13.5 per cent of households in urban areas (2.7 million) were fuel poor. In rural areas 11.7 per cent of households (495,000) were fuel poor.
- Homes in rural areas are typically less energy efficient and can be more reliant on potentially more expensive heating fuels.
- The fuel poverty gap is the additional income which would be needed to bring a household to the point of not being fuel poor.
- Overall, the average fuel poverty gap for households that were fuel poor in 2020 was £223. Households in urban areas had a average fuel poverty gap of £193 compared with a gap of £388 in rural areas. This rises to a fuel poverty gap of £501 for fuel poor households in Rural Villages, Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings.
- Using the previous LIHC metric the average fuel poverty gap for urban households decreased between 2011 and 2019, while for rural households the gap had widened between 2017 and 2019. The new LILEE metric shows a drop in the fuel poverty gap between 2019 and 2020 for rural areas while urban areas have seen an increase (6 per cent drop and 7 per cent increase respectively).

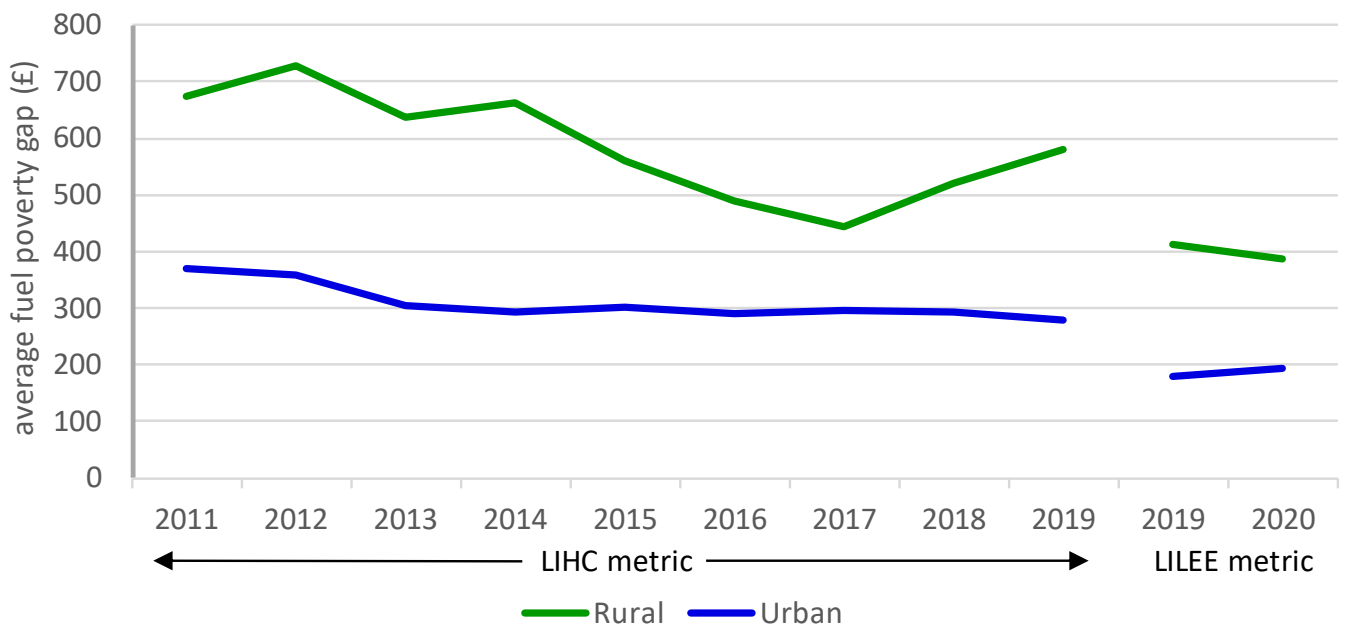


- The Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating (FPEER) is a measure of the energy efficiency of a property. In 2020 rural households with the poorest FPEER rating of F or G had an average fuel poverty gap of £1,095 compared with an average fuel poverty gap of £971 for urban households of the same energy rating.
- Tables showing the proportion of households which are fuel poor and the average fuel poverty gap for those households, broken down by rural-urban classification for 2011 to 2020 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).
- A further set of tables is available in the supplementary data tables breaking down fuel poverty in rural and urban areas in 2020 by FPEER band.

Proportion of fuel poor households (%), by settlement type, Low Income High Costs (LIHC) 2011 to 2019, Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) 2019 to 2020



Average fuel poverty gap (£), by settlement type, Low Income High Costs (LIHC) 2011 to 2019, Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) 2019 to 2020



Notes:

A household is said to be in fuel poverty if they have required fuel costs that are above average (national median level), and were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line. The low-income low energy efficiency indicator consists of two parts; firstly, the number of households that live in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D or below and have high fuel costs; and secondly the depth of fuel poverty amongst these households. The depth of fuel poverty is measured by the 'fuel poverty gap' which is the difference (£) between required energy costs for each fuel poor household and the nearest fuel poverty threshold.

There are three key elements in determining whether a household is fuel poor, which are household income, household energy requirements and fuel prices

Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating (FPEER) is a measure of the energy efficiency of a property based on the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) but accounts for policies that directly affect the cost of energy. The FPEER methodology generates a rating between 1 and 100, which is then translated into an energy efficiency Band from G (lowest) to A (highest).

Source: BEIS fuel poverty statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics

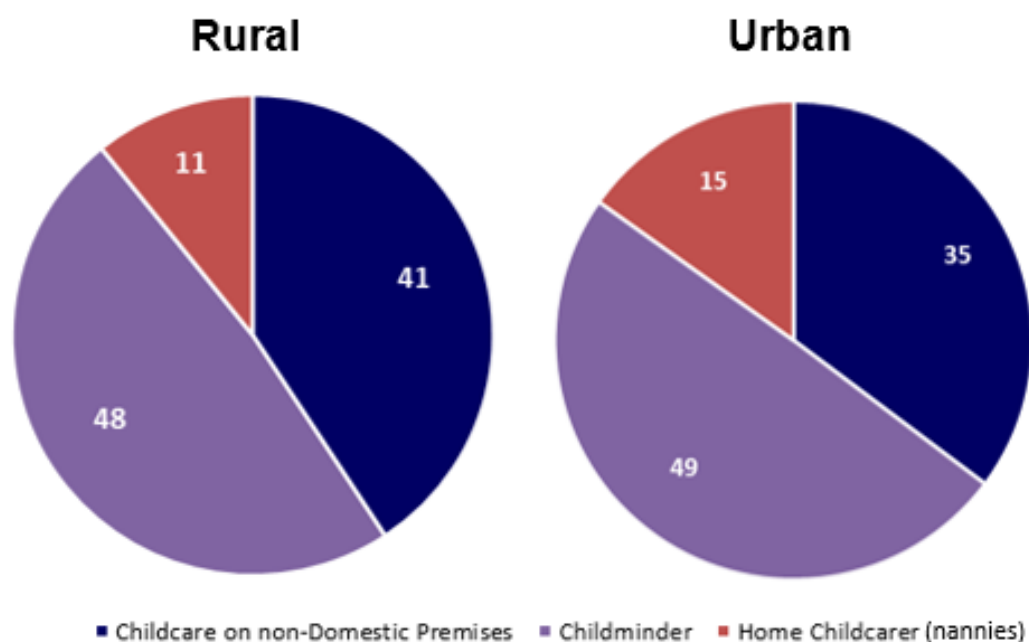
Education and skills

Childcare provision

- The type of childcare provider is proportionally similar in both Rural and Urban areas, with almost half of providers being Childminders in both settings.
- The number of active childcare providers in Rural areas and Urban with Significant Rural areas has decreased by 20 per cent since 2015, while the in Urban areas there has a 13 per cent fall.
- Ofsted notes that despite the fall in the number of providers since 2015, the number of places on the Early Years Register (EYR) has remained broadly stable.
- The overall quality of childcare providers has improved in both Rural and Urban areas since 2015. The proportion of providers judged to be Good or Outstanding has increased by 10 per cent in Rural areas and by 13 per cent in Urban areas.

Childcare provider types

Proportion of childcare providers *, by type of provider and by rural urban classification, March 2020, England



* Domestic Childcare not visible as it is less than 1 per cent of total proportion of providers

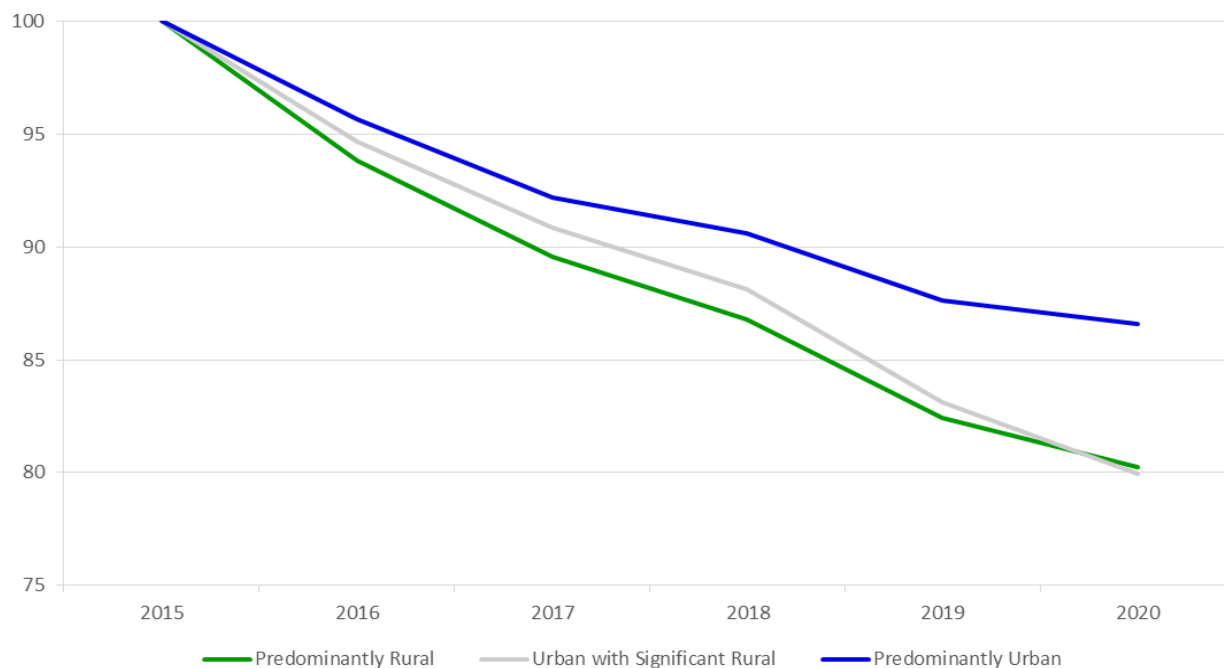
- Childminders make up almost 50 per cent of the childcare providers in both Rural and Urban areas.
- In Rural areas childcare on non-domestic premises makes up 41 per cent of total childcare providers, 6 percentage points higher than in Urban areas.
- Home Childcare (nannies) is slightly more prevalent in Urban areas, 4 percentage points higher as a proportion of providers than Rural areas.

Number and percentage of Childcare Providers, by type of provider and by Parliamentary Constituency rural urban classification, March 2020, England

Number and percentage of childcare providers					
	Childcare on Domestic Premises	Childcare on non-Domestic Premises	Childminders	Home Childcare (nannies)	Total Providers
Predominantly Rural	61	5,863	6,974	1,559	14,457
Predominantly Urban	151	18,337	25,811	7,894	52,193
England	244	27,619	36,972	10,233	75,068
Predominantly Rural	0.4	40.6	48.2	10.8	100
Predominantly Urban	0.3	35.1	49.5	15.1	100
England	0.3	36.8	49.3	13.6	100

Number of childcare providers

Index of total number of childcare providers (2015 = 100), by Parliamentary Constituency rural urban classification, March 2015 to March 2020, England



- The total number of active childcare providers has declined every year since 2015 in Predominantly Rural, Urban with Significant Rural, and predominately urban area types.
- The number of active childcare providers in Rural areas and Urban with Significant Rural areas has decreased by 20 per cent since 2015, while the in Urban areas there has a 13 per cent fall.
- Ofsted notes that despite the fall in the number of providers since 2015, the number of places on the Early Years Register (EYR) has remained broadly stable.
- Further tables showing the number of childcare providers and the index of change displayed below, broken down by rural-urban classification for 2015 to 2020 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Index of change in Childcare Providers (2015 = 100), by rural urban classification, March 2015 to March 2020, England

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Predominantly Rural	100	93.8	89.6	86.8	82.4	80.3
Urban with Significant Rural	100	94.7	90.9	88.1	83.1	80.0
Predominantly Urban	100	95.6	92.2	90.6	87.6	86.6
England	100	95.3	91.3	89.5	86.0	84.2

Quality of childcare providers

Early Year Registered (EYR) child carer inspection outcomes as percentage of total EYR childcare providers, by Parliamentary Constituency rural urban classification, March 2015 and March 2020, England



- The Early Year Register (EYR) is compulsory for providers who care for children up to the age of 5 years. Active EYR providers are inspected on a 4-year cycle and are given an Overall Effectiveness grade, in line with Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework (CIF), which measures the overall quality of childcare provision.
- Between 2015 and 2020 the percentage of EYR childcare providers judged to be Good or Outstanding in Rural areas increased from 87 per cent to 97 per cent of EYR providers, while in Urban areas it increased from 83 per cent to 96 per cent.
- The proportion of providers judged to be Good or Outstanding was higher in Rural areas compared with Urban areas in both 2015 and 2020, although the difference decreased from 4 percentage points in 2015 to 1 percentage point in 2020.

Number and percentage of Early Year Registered child carers most recent inspection outcome, by rural urban classification, March 2015 and March 2020, England

	Predominantly Rural				Predominantly Urban			
	March 2015		March 2020		March 2015		March 2020	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Inspections with known outcome	13,507	100	9,293	100	41,547	100	29,997	100
Outstanding	2,059	15	1,832	20	5,046	12	5,053	17
Good	9,716	72	7,166	77	29,590	71	23,708	79
Requires improvement	1,585	12	228	2	6,337	15	973	3
Inadequate	147	1	67	1	574	1	263	1
Inspections with unknown outcome	1,859	-	2,828	-	7,364	-	9,775	-

Notes: A rural urban classification has been applied using the parliamentary constituency of each childcare provider, since this was the lowest level of geography published that covered all providers. There are 533 parliamentary constituencies in England.

The total childcare provider data, used for the index, is drawn together from three Ofsted registers: Early Years Register (EYR), Compulsory Childcare Register (CCR) and Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR). The individual register data is found in the Ofsted providers level data sourced below.

Type of provider	Description
Childcare on non-domestic premises	Nurseries, pre-schools, holiday clubs and other group-based settings, usually registered on the Early Years Register (EYR) because they look after children aged 0 to 5.
Childminders	People who look after one or more children they are not related to for payment or reward. The care takes place in a home that is not the child's own. The majority register on the EYR because they look after children aged 0 to 5, but those who look after 5 to 7-year olds need to register on the Childcare Register (CR).
Childcare on domestic premises	Where four or more people look after children together in a home that is not the child's. The majority are registered on the EYR and some are registered on the CR, depending on the age of the children they look after.
Home childcarers (nannies)	Individuals who care for children aged 0 to 18 wholly or mainly in the child's own home. They are not required to register with Ofsted. Though they may choose to do so on the Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR).

For more information see Main findings and methodology report at the [Childcare providers and inspections as at 31 March 2020 Official Statistics homepage](#)

Source: Ofsted [Childcare providers level data as at 31 March 2020 \(ODS Format\)](#)

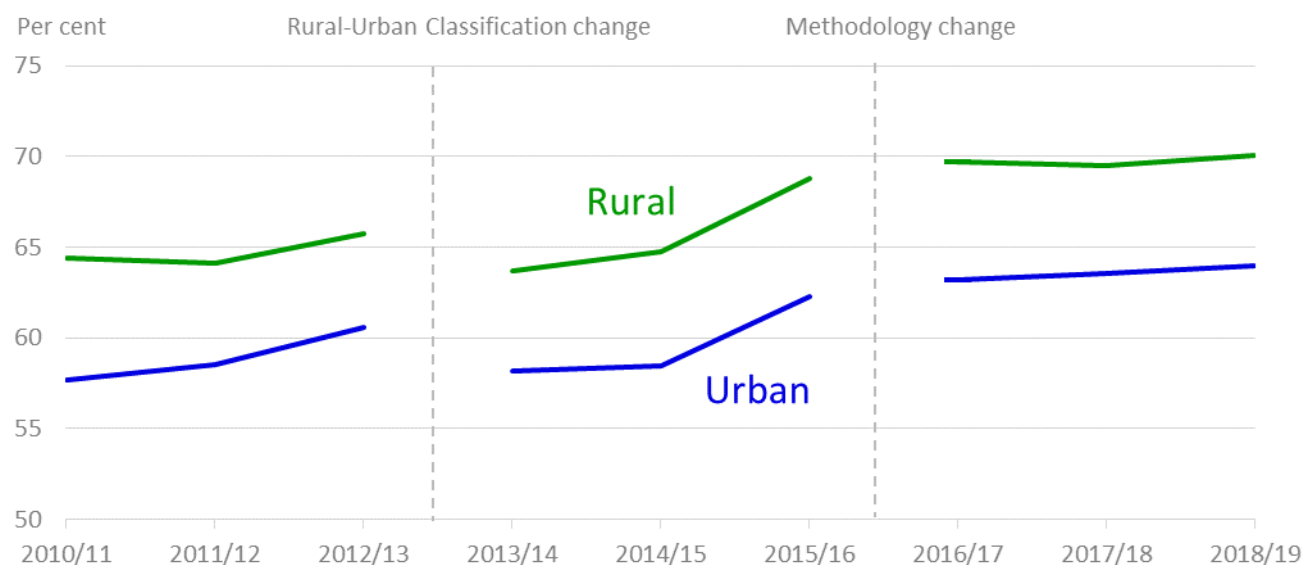
Secondary education

- The introduction of a new secondary school accountability system in 2016 has changed how GCSE performance is measured. A 9 to 1-point measure was introduced to replace the A* to G system, where a 9 to 4 score is equivalent to the previous A* to C measure. Data from 2016/17 presents the new 9 to 4 measure, whereas data prior to 2016/17 presents the previous A* to C measure.
- In the 2018/19 academic year, 70 per cent of pupils living in rural areas left school with English and Maths GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (equivalent to A* to C). This was higher than for urban areas (64 per cent) and England overall (65 per cent).
- For a given level of deprivation, the attainment levels of pupils living in rural areas were lower than for pupils living in urban areas with a similar level of deprivation.
- There is a wide variation in the English and Maths GCSE attainment results for Local Authority District (LAD) areas, but at the regional level attainment is higher in rural areas.

Pupils leaving school with English and Maths at A* to C grades or equivalent at GCSE level, based on residency of pupils

- The introduction of a new secondary school accountability system in 2016 has changed how GCSE performance is measured. A 9 to 1-point measure was introduced to replace the A* to G system, where a 9 to 4 score is equivalent to the previous A* to C measure. On the chart below, data from 2016/17 onwards presents the new 9 to 4 measure, whereas data prior to 2016/17 presents the previous A* to C measure.
- The proportion of pupils achieving English and Maths A* to C grades or equivalent in their GCSEs at the end of Key Stage 4 (end of secondary-level education), based on residency of pupil:
 - increased between 2010/11 and 2018/19 for both rural and urban areas;
 - was always at least 5 percentage points higher in rural than in urban areas; and
 - was 6.1 percentage points higher in rural than urban areas in 2018/19.

Achievement of English and Maths GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent in England, based on pupil residence 2010/11 to 2018/19



Percentage of pupils leaving school with English and Maths GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent, based on residency of pupils in England

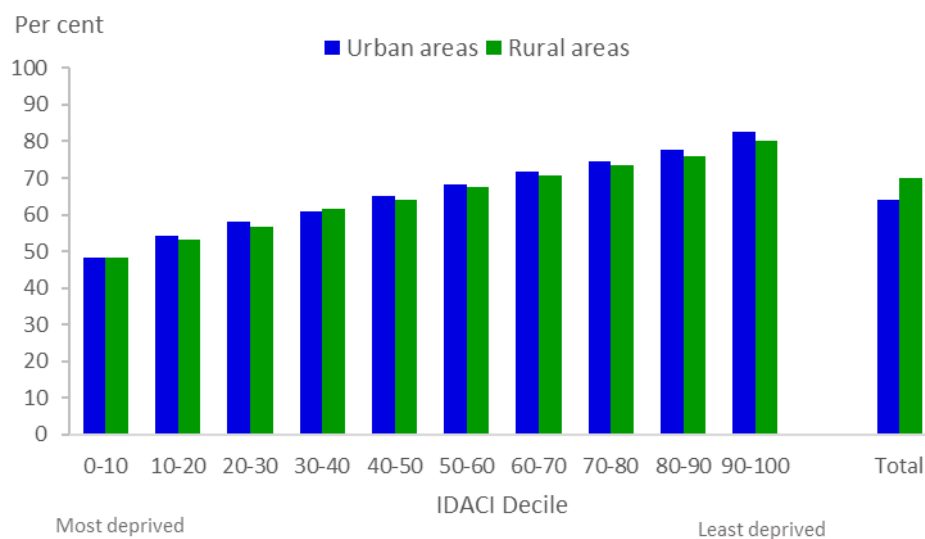
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Rural areas	64.4	64.1	65.7	63.7	64.7	68.8	69.7	69.5	70.1
Urban areas	57.7	58.5	60.6	58.2	58.4	62.3	63.2	63.5	64.0
England	59.0	59.5	61.6	59.1	59.5	63.4	64.3	64.5	65.0

The first vertical line on the chart and table indicates the introduction of the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification from 2013/14 that prevents comparison with previous years (see notes). The second vertical line indicates the introduction of the new 9-point scale for GCSE classification where a 4 or above is equivalent to the old A* to C measure (see notes).

Data in the table above are available broken down by a more detailed rural-urban classification in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Pupils leaving school with English and Maths A* to C grades or equivalent at GCSE level, based on Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices (IDACI) decile and residency of pupils

- Results by the level of deprivation in the area where the pupil lives (using the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) adds context to the results presented above by taking into account the circumstances of children outside the influence of the school.
- When comparing results using deprivation level (IDACI decile bands), rural areas had lower achievement levels in English and Maths for almost all levels of deprivation compared with urban areas.
- The differing outcome at the aggregated rural level (rural areas seeing higher levels of attainment) and individual deprivation levels is explained by the different proportions of deprivation within rural and urban areas overall.
- In rural areas in 2018/19, 26 per cent of pupils were in areas with the highest levels of deprivation (decile bands 0 to 50) compared with 60 per cent of pupils in urban areas. Those pupils in these more deprived areas generally had lower achievement levels compared with those in less deprived areas (decile bands 50 to 100) where there are proportionately more pupils in rural areas. This factor results in a higher attainment average overall for rural pupils and the converse for urban pupils.
- **Achievement of English and Maths GCSEs at a 9 to 4 pass in England, based on Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices (IDACI) decile and residency of pupil (2018/19)**



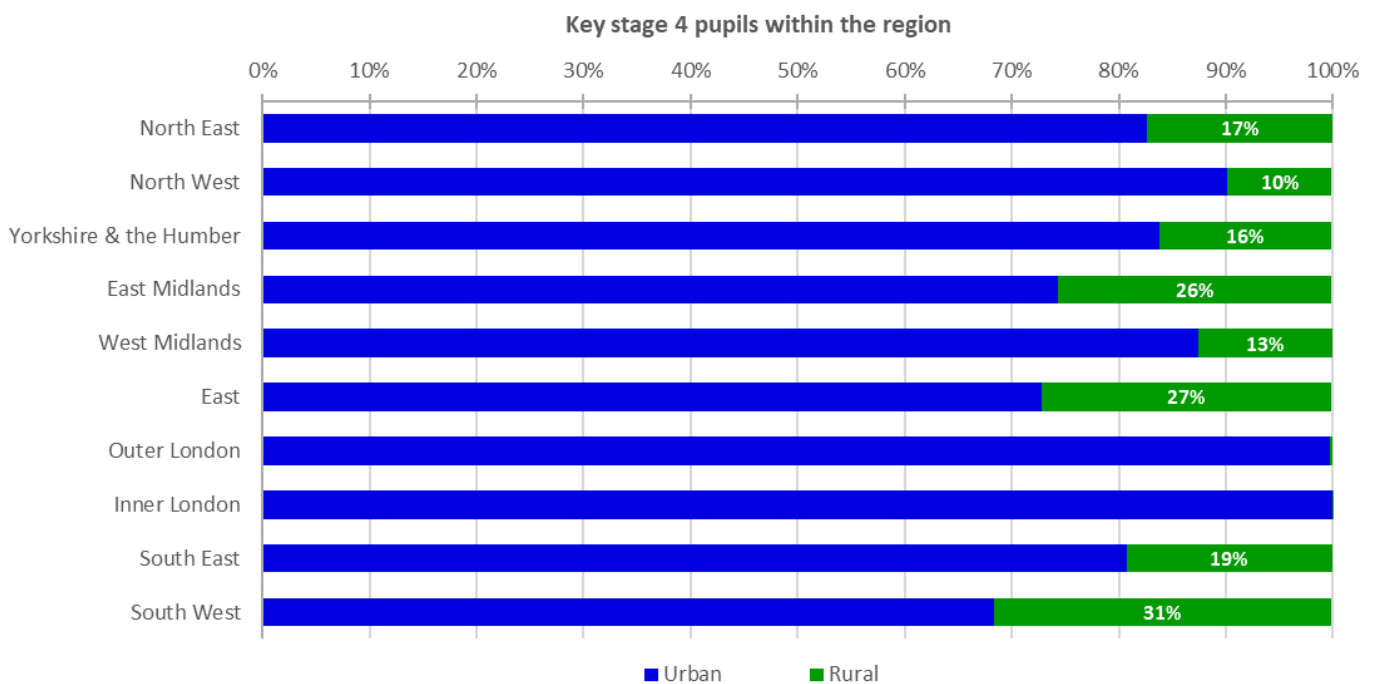
Percentage of pupils leaving school with English and Maths GCSEs at a 9 to 4 pass (equivalent to A* to C) in England, based on IDACI decile and residency of pupil (2018/19)

IDAI Decile	Most deprived								Least deprived	
	0-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100
England	48.4	54.0	58.0	61.1	64.9	68.1	71.5	74.4	77.2	82.2
Urban areas	48.4	54.1	58.1	61.0	65.1	68.2	71.8	74.7	77.7	82.7
Rural areas	48.2	53.2	56.6	61.6	64.2	67.7	70.8	73.6	76.0	80.3

Data in the table above are also available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#) with the inclusion of total pupil numbers in rural and urban areas for each of the IDACI deciles.

Pupils leaving school with English and Maths at GCSE level, by geographical residency of pupils

- In the South and East of the country the proportion of students achieving a 9 to 4 pass in English and Maths is above the England average (65 per cent), whilst in the North and the Midlands the proportion is below the England average. Nationally 16.5 per cent of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4) in the 2018/19 academic year lived in rural areas. This varies from one in ten KS4 pupils in the North West region to almost one in three in the South West region. Attainment in rural areas is higher than in urban areas in every region and the trend for lower attainment in the Midlands and the North is not replicated for rural areas.



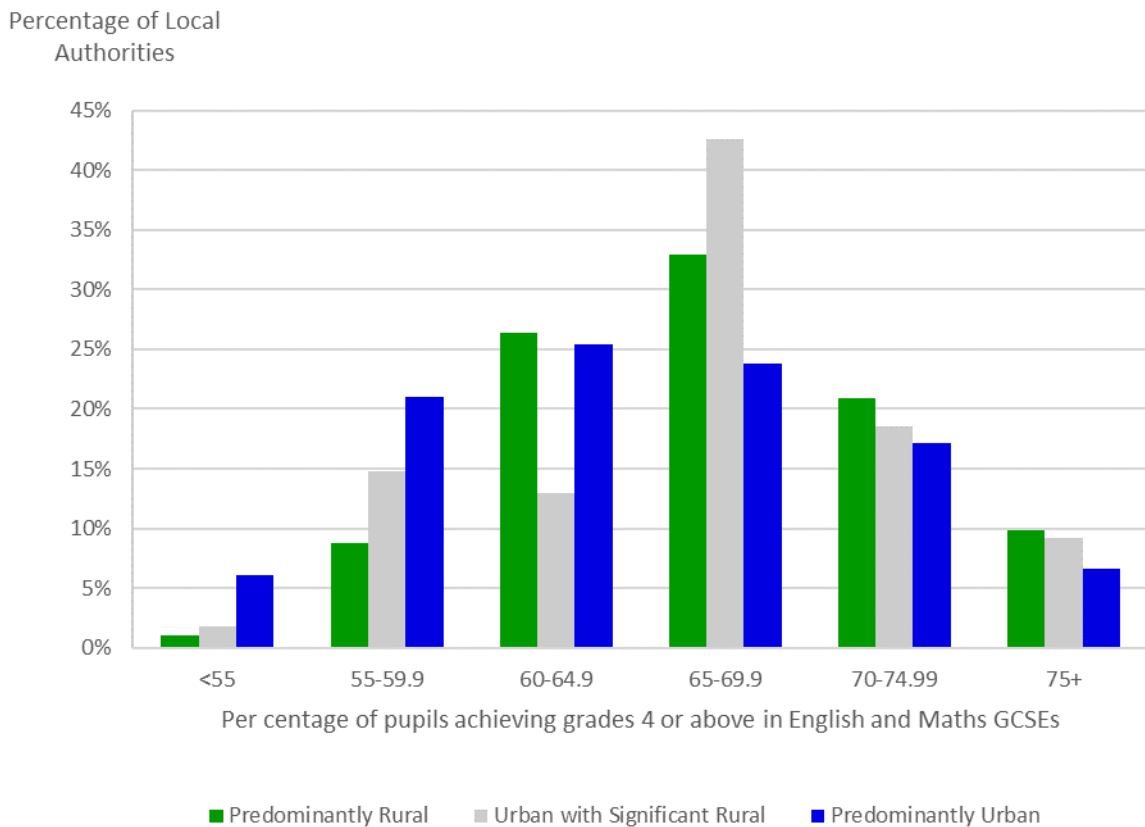
- There is a wide variation in the English and Maths GCSE A* to C grades or equivalent attainment results at Local Authority District (LAD) area level. The proportion of pupils achieving these results in their English and Maths GCSEs at the end of Key Stage 4 was highest in Rushcliffe at 86 per cent (a Predominantly Rural local authority district) and lowest in Knowsley at 50 per cent (a Predominantly Urban local authority district). The urban area with the highest attainment was St Albans (81 per cent of pupils obtaining grade 9 to 4 in Maths and English). Only one Predominantly Rural local authority district (Tendring) had less than 55 per cent of pupils achieving grades 9 to 4 in Maths and English. The locations of the 4 authorities are shown as annotations on the subsequent map.

Percentage of pupils leaving school with English and Maths GCSEs at a 9 to 4 pass (equivalent to A* to C) and a 9-5 pass in England, based on the residency region of pupils (2018/19)

Region	Number of eligible pupils	% achieving English and Maths 9-5 pass	% achieving English and Maths 9-4 pass
North East	25,300	40	62
Rural	4,400	42	65
Urban	20,900	39	61
North West	73,400	41	63
Rural	7,200	50	72
Urban	66,300	40	62
Yorkshire & the Humber	54,000	42	63
Rural	8,700	49	71
Urban	45,300	40	62
East Midlands	47,200	42	64
Rural	12,100	48	71
Urban	35,100	40	61
West Midlands	60,600	40	62
Rural	7,600	48	71
Urban	53,000	39	61
East	60,500	43	65
Rural	16,400	46	69
Urban	44,100	42	64
Outer London	53,800	51	70
Rural	100	50	72
Urban	53,700	51	70
Inner London	26,400	46	67
Rural	-	64	91
Urban	26,400	46	67
South East	85,600	46	67
Rural	16,400	52	72
Urban	69,100	45	66
South West	51,200	43	65
Rural	16,100	45	68
Urban	35,100	42	64
England	538,000	44	65
Rural	89,000	48	70
Urban	449,000	43	64

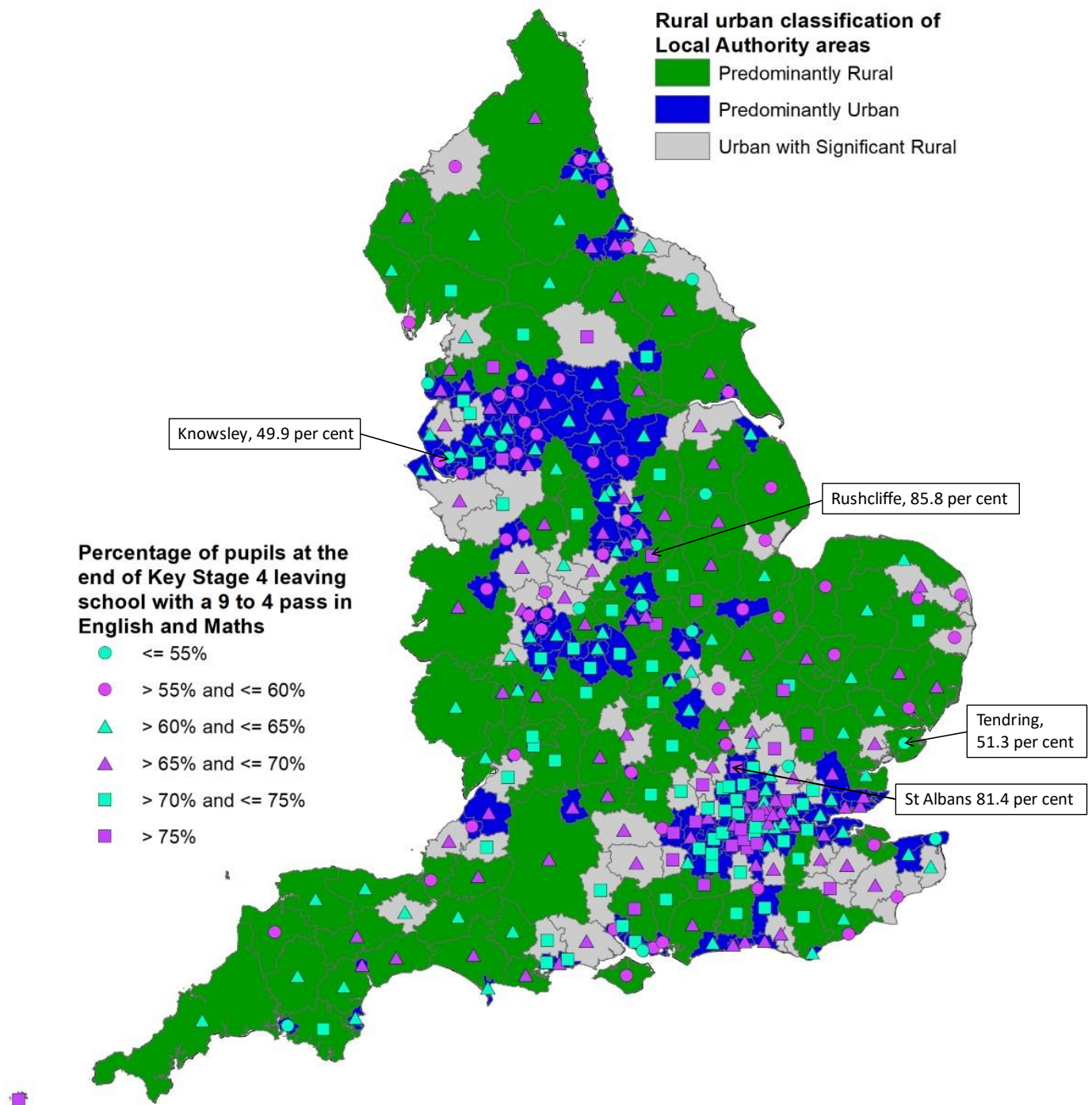
- Proportionally more Predominantly Urban Local Authorities had less than 60 per cent of pupils obtaining a 9 to 4 pass in GCSE Maths and English than for Predominantly Rural Local Authorities. Similarly, proportionally more Predominantly Rural Local Authorities had at least 75 per cent of pupils obtaining a 9 to 4 pass in GCSE Maths and English than urban areas.
- In 52 per cent of Predominantly Rural Local Authorities, at least two-thirds of students obtained a 9 to 4 pass in GCSE Maths and English in 2018/19. The median percentage of pupils obtaining a 9 to 4 pass in GCSE Maths and English for Predominantly Rural Local Authorities is higher than for Predominantly Urban Local Authorities (67 per cent compared to 64 per cent).

The distribution of Local Authority English and Maths 9 to 4 pass attainment levels based on the rural urban classification of pupil residence (2018/19)



- Coastal Local Authority District areas also show a pattern of lower attainment levels. Most of the authorities with high attainment levels can be found in the West Midlands and the South East. Very few Local Authorities with high attainment are found in the North and none of these are in the North East.

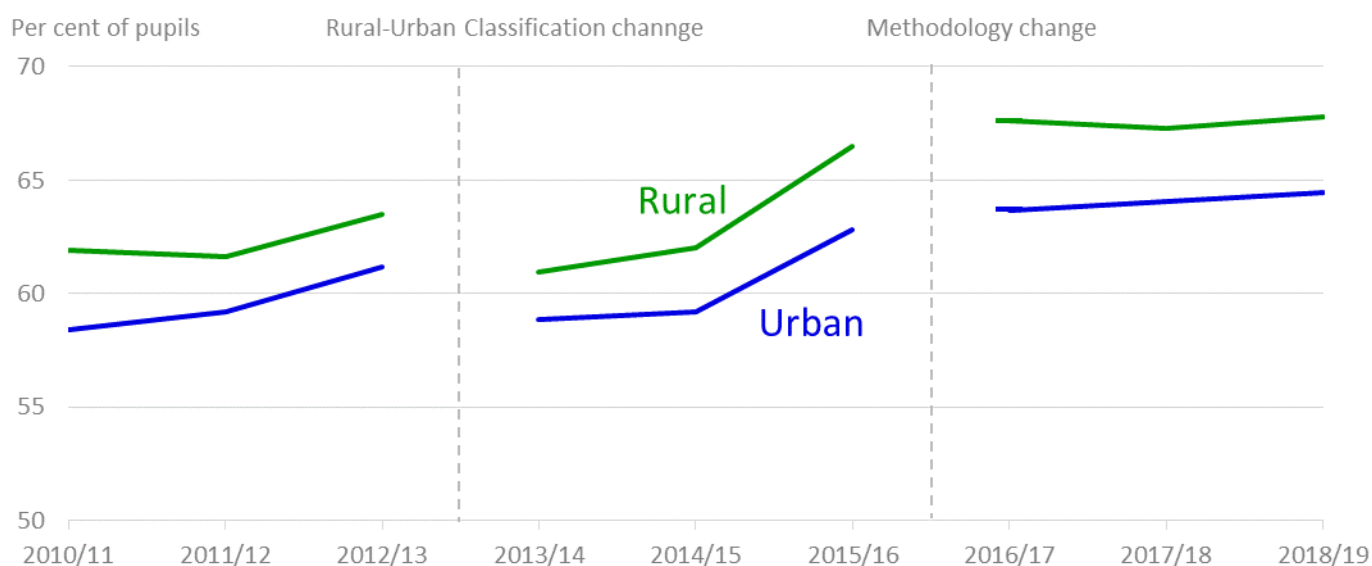
Local Authority English and Maths 9 to 4 pass attainment levels based on location of pupil, by settlement type, in England (2018/19)



Pupils leaving school with English and Maths A* to C grades or equivalent at GCSE level, based on school location

- The proportion of pupils achieving English and Maths A* to C grades or equivalent in their GCSEs at the end of Key Stage 4 (end of secondary level education) based on school location was 3.3 percentage points higher in rural than urban areas in 2018/19.
- The percentage of pupils achieving English and Maths GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent was higher for pupils who went to school in rural areas than for those who went to school in urban areas each year between 2010/11 and 2018/19.

Achievement of English and Maths GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent in England, based on school location 2010/11 to 2018/19



Percentage of pupils leaving school with English and Maths GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent, based on location of schools in England

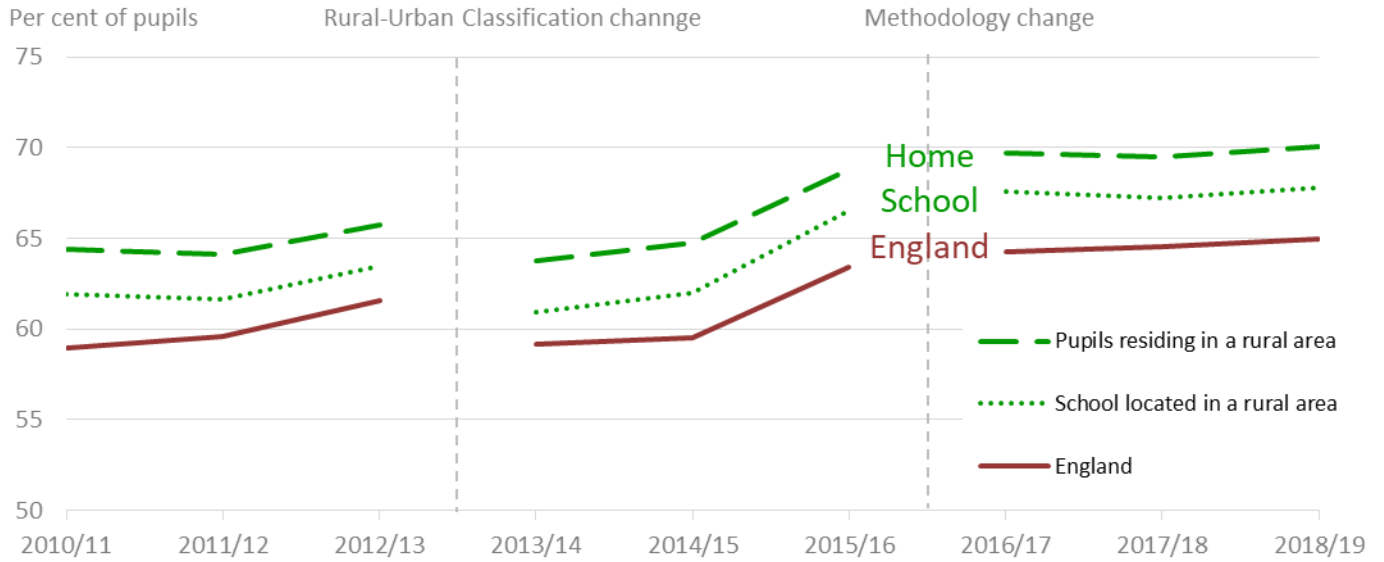
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Rural areas	61.9	61.6	63.5	60.9	62.0	66.5	67.6	67.3	67.8
Urban areas	58.4	59.2	61.2	58.8	59.2	62.8	63.7	64.0	64.5
England	58.9	59.5	61.5	59.1	59.5	63.3	64.2	64.4	64.9

The first vertical line on the chart and table indicates the introduction of the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification from 2013/14 that prevents comparison with previous years (see notes). The second vertical line indicates the introduction of the new 9-point scale for GCSE classification where a 4 or above is equivalent to the old A* to C measure (see notes).

Data in the table above are available broken down by a more detailed rural-urban classification in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

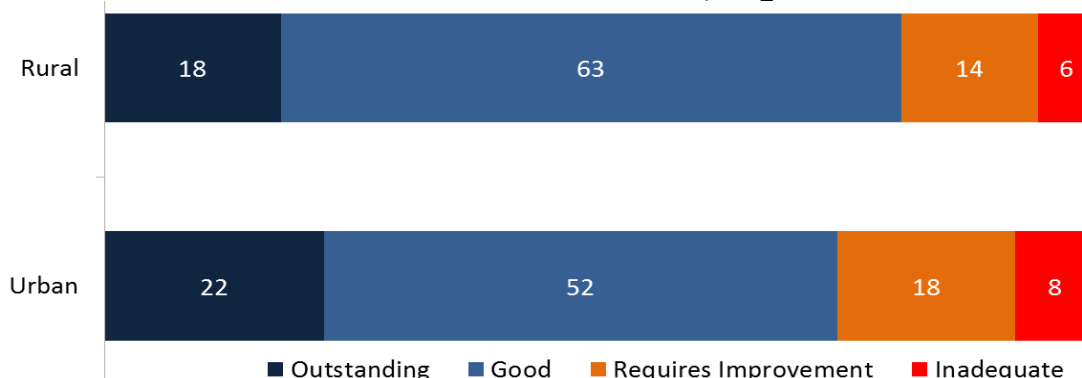
- There will be differences between pupil residency and location of school as some pupils living in rural areas will travel to schools in urban areas and vice versa. The data show that those who live in rural areas have a higher attainment than those who attend schools in rural areas. In both cases the level of attainment is higher than the England average.

Achievement of English and Maths GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent in England, comparing achievement for pupils residing in rural areas and all students at rural schools, 2010/11 to 2018/19



School inspection outcomes, based on school location

Percentage of secondary schools with most recent school inspection outcome, as at 31 March 2019, based on rural urban classification of school location, England



- As at 31 March 2019, 18 per cent of secondary schools in rural areas had received 'Outstanding' as the most recent inspection outcome, compared with 22 per cent of secondary schools in urban areas.
- 63 per cent of secondary schools in rural areas had received a 'Good' inspection outcome.
- Overall, 81 per cent of secondary schools in rural areas had received 'Outstanding' or 'Good' inspection outcomes, compared with 74 per cent in urban areas.
- A table showing data on the most recent school inspection outcomes for English secondary schools, broken down by detailed rural-urban classification are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: Data includes pupils at the end of KS4 in each academic year and those taking International GCSEs. Pupils with missing/incorrect residential postcodes are excluded so school-location and pupil-location are not the same. A small number of pupils resident in Scotland or Wales who attend school in England are in the school-location analysis, but not pupil-location analysis. The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) is a subset of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, it shows the proportion of children in each Lower-layer Super Output Area that live in families that are income deprived. IDACI bands are based on 2010 IDACI scores. Information on IDACI can be found at www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015. Methodological changes mean that from 2013/14 onwards data aren't comparable with previous years. This is due to incorporation of the recommendations of Professor Wolf's independent review of vocational education and new early entry rules. For a summary of these changes, see [Quality and methodology information: SFR41/2014](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/366555/SFR41_2014_QualityandMethodology.pdf), (www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/366555/SFR41_2014_QualityandMethodology.pdf) The Department for Education hosts the independent Wolf Report (www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report) and the final progress report (www.gov.uk/government/publications/wolf-recommendations-progress-report).

Source: Department for Education *Pupil residency and school location tables: SFR 01/2016*, part of *Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2014 to 2015* (www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2014-to-2015) and table *SFR01/2016: GCSE and equivalent results in England 2014/15 (Revised)* (www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/493479/SFR01_2016_Pupil_Residency_and_School_Location_Tables.xls).

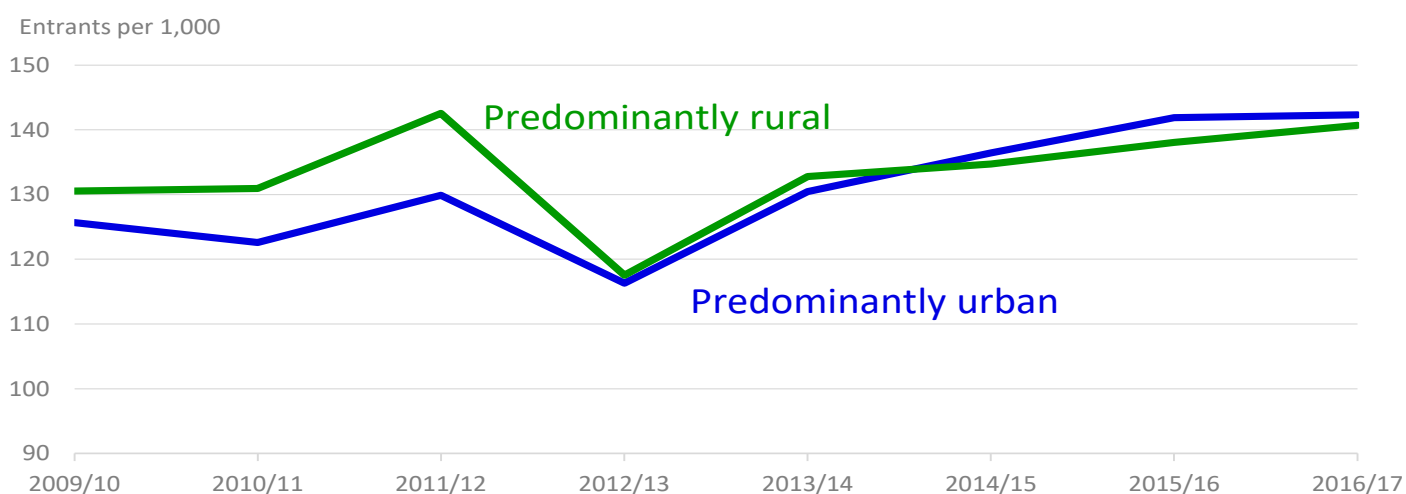
Ofsted Schools Management Information: www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/monthly-management-information-ofsted-school-inspections-outcomes and Defra analysis. For one secondary school, which had not been inspected, it was not possible to match its location and apply a rural urban classification. It has not been included in the table.

Higher education

- The rate of full-time entry to higher education institutions by 18 to 20-year olds in 2016/17 was slightly lower in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (141 compared with 142 entrants per 1,000 18 to 20-year olds respectively).
- For part-time entry the ratio was higher in Predominantly Rural areas (4 per 1,000) than in Predominantly Urban areas (3 per 1,000).
- Rates of entry to part-time higher education have been falling since around 2009/10.
- The rates for entrants to higher education institutions are based on where the students are living prior to commencing higher education and does not take account of the location of the higher education institutions.

Full-time entrants to higher education

Full-time entrants to higher education per 1,000 people aged 18 to 20 in England



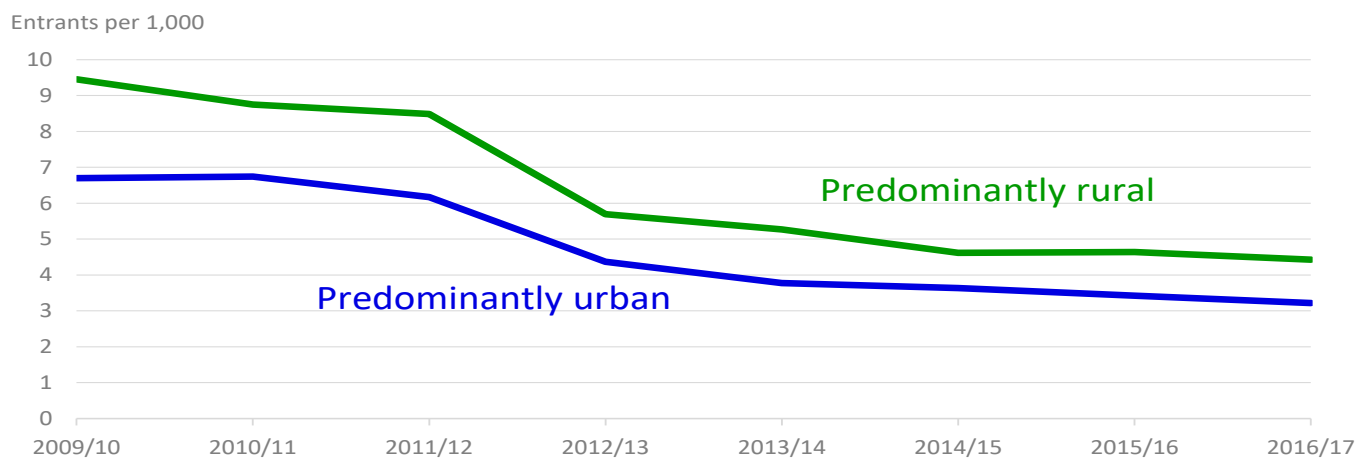
- There has been an increase in the rate of enrolment for full-time courses at higher education institutions in England since 2012/13. This followed a decrease in the previous year that coincided with changes to tuition fee arrangements.
- The rate of entry to higher education by 18 to 20-year olds has tended to be higher for those living in Predominantly Rural areas than Predominantly Urban areas, but the rate for Predominantly Urban areas rose above Predominantly Rural areas in 2014/15.

Full-time entrants to higher education per 1,000 population of 18 to 20-year olds in England

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Predominantly Rural	131	131	143	118	133	135	138	141
Urban with Significant Rural	143	142	152	129	142	145	149	151
Predominantly Urban	126	123	130	116	130	136	142	142
England	130	128	137	119	133	138	143	144

Part-time entrants to higher education

Part-time entrants to higher education per 1,000 people aged 18 to 20 in England



- The rate of 18 to 20-year olds enrolling for part-time courses at higher education institutions in England has been decreasing since 2009/10 in Predominantly Rural areas and 2010/11 in Predominantly Urban areas.
- In 2016/17 the entry rates for those living in Predominantly Rural areas prior to commencing higher education were 4 entrants per 1,000 population of 18 to 20-year olds compared with 3 entrants per 1,000 population for those living in Predominantly Urban areas.
- Predominantly Rural areas have had a consistently higher rate of part time enrolment to higher education for 18 to 20-year olds than Predominantly Urban areas.

Part-time entrants to higher education per 1,000 population of 18 to 20-year olds in England

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Predominantly Rural	9	9	8	6	5	5	5	4
Urban with Significant Rural	8	8	7	5	5	5	5	5
Predominantly Urban	7	7	6	4	4	4	3	3
England	7	7	7	5	4	4	4	4

Notes: Rates are presented as the number of people per 1,000 aged 18 to 20, using mid-year population estimates as the baseline.

Data on entrants to higher education were provided at the scale of Local Education Authorities (LEAs), which were matched to the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification for counties.

Source: Department for Education.

Skills

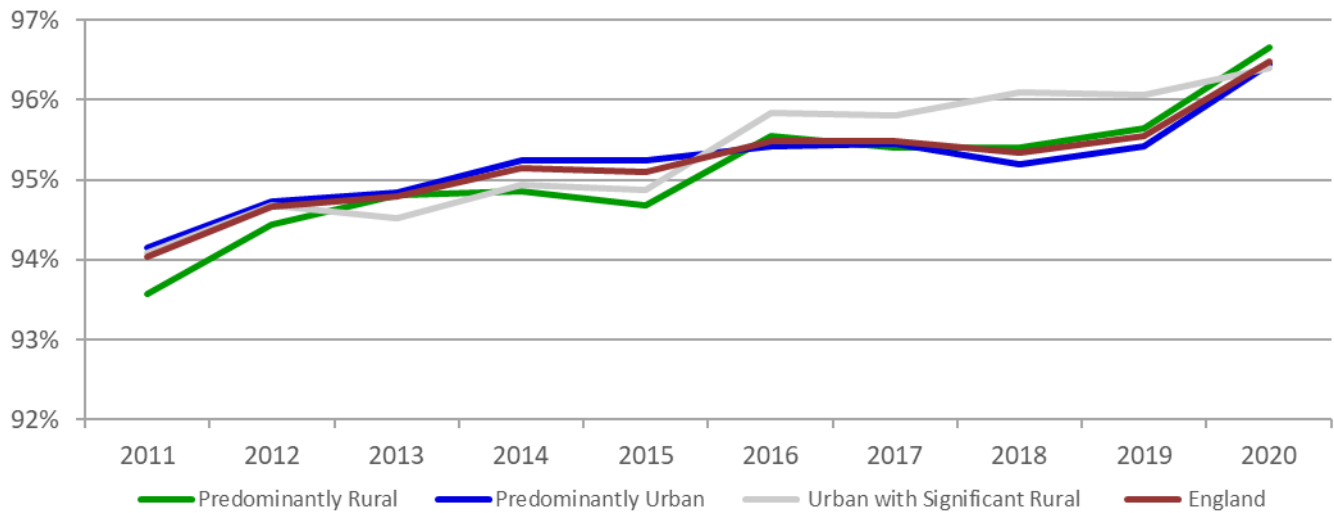
The skills detailed in this section are National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 and above – which is equivalent to 5 General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSE) at Grade A-C, NVQ4 and above –which measures qualifications at Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND) or degree level and people with at least one qualification- including GCSEs at Grade D or E.

Many people who live in rural areas will travel to urban areas for work and the skills that these people have are most likely to be utilised in their place of work rather than in the rural areas where they live.

Workplace based skills

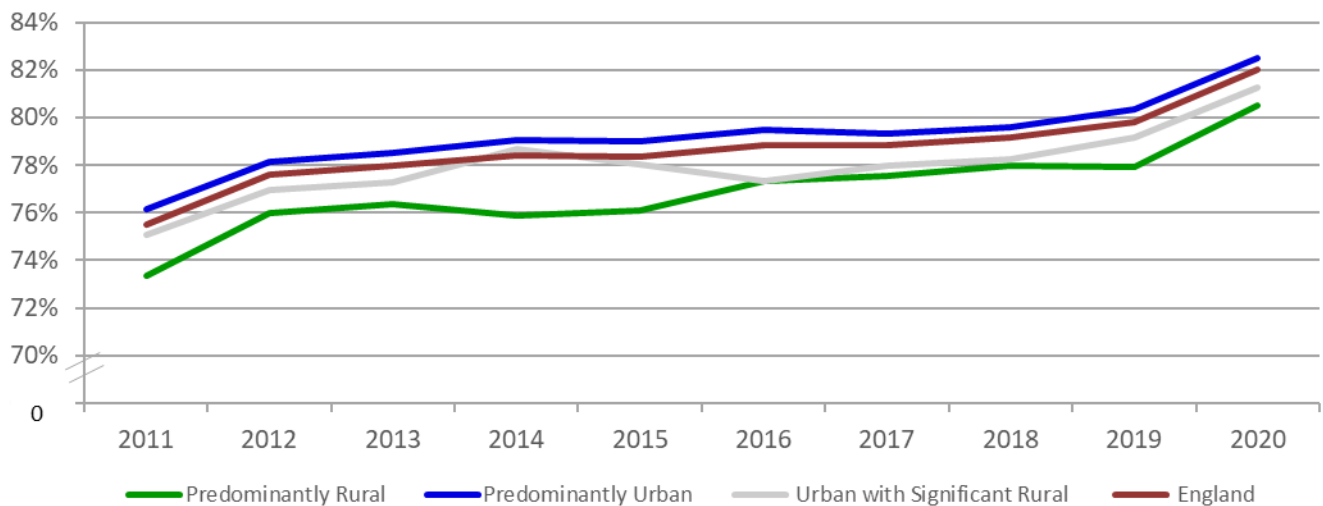
- When skill levels are looked at from a workplace-based perspective, a higher proportion of people working in Predominantly Urban areas have qualifications at NVQ4 or above than those working in Predominantly Rural areas. One reason for this is that businesses that can utilise these skills are based in urban areas where they can benefit from better infrastructure and a larger potential workforce.
- The proportion of working age population with at least one qualification was similar for those working in Predominantly Rural areas and in Predominantly Urban areas, but the proportion for Predominantly Rural areas was higher in the last 3 years. In 2020 the proportions of working age population with at least one qualification was 96.7 per cent and 96.5 per cent for Predominantly Rural areas and Predominantly Urban areas respectively.
- In 2020, the proportion of working age population with NVQ Level 2 or above working in Predominantly Rural areas was 80.5 per cent which was lower than Predominantly Urban areas at 82.5 per cent.
- In 2020, the proportion of working age population with NVQ Level 4 or above working in Predominantly Rural areas was 39.8 per cent, which was lower than the 51.1 per cent of people working in Predominantly Urban areas.
- In 2020, the proportion of employees, self-employed people and trainees who had received on the job training in the previous 4 weeks working in Predominantly Rural areas was 12.2 per cent compared with 13.4 per cent in Predominantly Urban areas.

Proportion of working age population with at least one qualification (workplace based), by Local Authority Classification in England, 2011 to 2020



- The proportion of people with at least one qualification has increased in all areas since 2011
- Up to 2015 the proportion of people with at least one qualification was generally higher for those working in Predominantly Urban areas except for 2013 when both Predominantly Urban and Predominantly Rural had the same proportion.
- Since 2015, the proportion of people with at least one qualification is similar for both those working in Predominantly Urban and Predominantly Rural areas.
- A table showing the proportion of the working age population with at least one qualification (workplace-based), broken down using a more detailed local authority rural-urban classification for 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

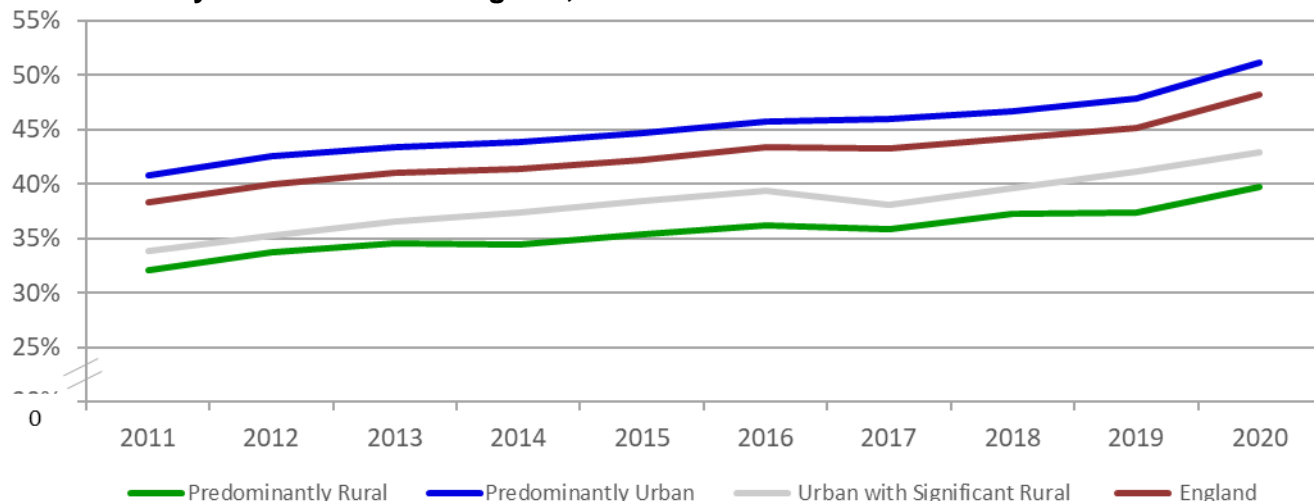
Proportion of working age population with NVQ2 (or equivalent) and above (workplace based), by local authority classification in England, 2011 to 2020



- A higher proportion of people working in Predominantly Urban areas have NVQ Level 2 or above, than people working in Predominantly Rural areas.

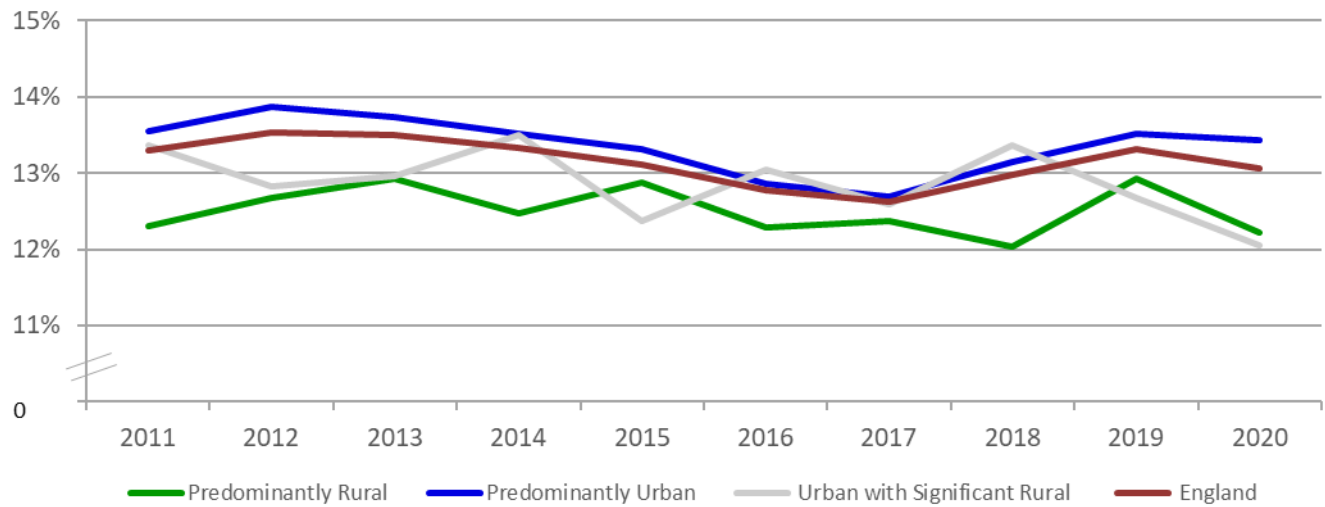
- In 2020 in Predominantly Rural areas the proportion was 80.5 per cent, compared with 82.5 per cent in Predominantly Urban areas.
- A table showing the proportion of the working age population with NVQ2 (or equivalent) and above (workplace-based), broken down using a more detailed local authority rural-urban classification for 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Proportion of working age population with NVQ4 (or equivalent) and above (workplace based), by Local Authority Classification in England, 2011 to 2020



- The proportion of working age population with NVQ Level 4 or equivalent is much higher for people working in Predominantly Urban areas, than those working in rural areas.
- In 2020 in Predominantly Urban areas the proportion with NVQ Level 4 or equivalent was 51.1 per cent compared with 39.8 per cent in Predominantly Rural areas.
- A table showing the proportion of the working age population with NVQ4 (or equivalent) and above (workplace-based), broken down using a more detailed local authority rural-urban classification for 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Proportion of employees and self-employed of working age receiving on the job training in last 4 weeks (workplace based). by local authority classification in England. 2011 to 2020

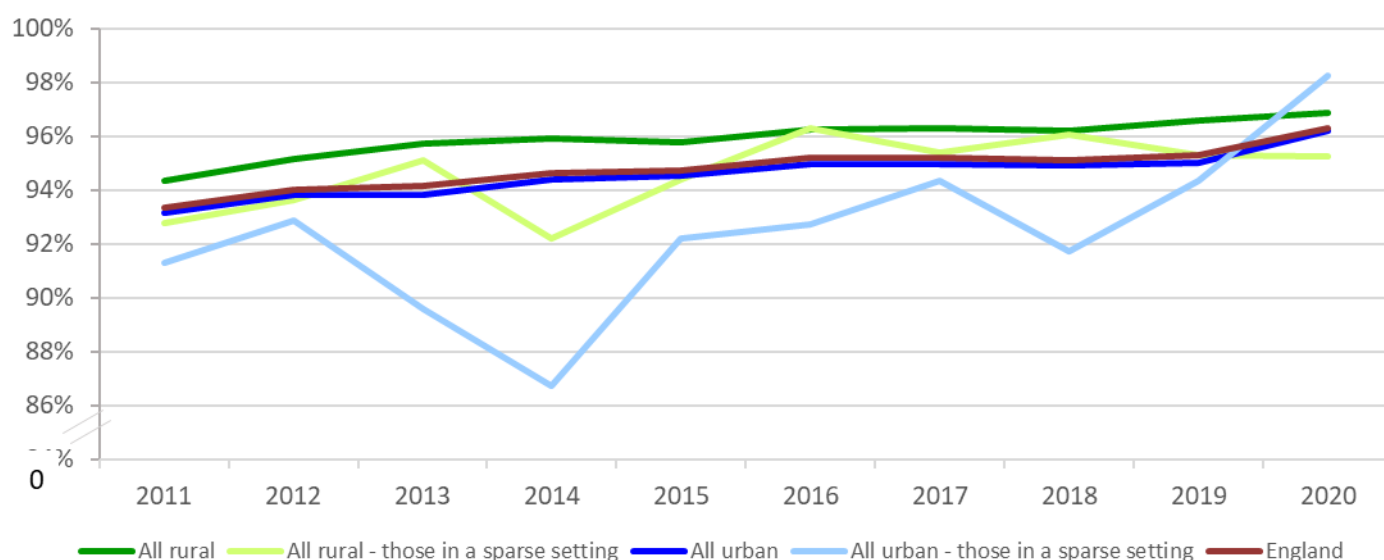


- A higher percentage of people working in urban areas received on the job training than people working in rural areas.
- In 2020 in Predominantly Urban areas the percentage receiving on the job training was 13.4 per cent compared with 12.2 per cent in Predominantly Rural areas.
- A table showing the proportion employees and self-employed working age people receiving on the job training in the last 4 weeks (workplace-based), broken down using a more detailed local authority rural-urban classification for 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Residence based skills

- When comparing rural and urban areas overall, the proportion of working age population with at least one qualification has been consistently highest in rural areas for the last ten years. In 2020, 96.9 per cent of working age people living in all rural areas had at least one qualification compared to 96.2 per cent in all urban areas.
- The proportion of working age population with NVQ2 or above was consistently higher for people living in rural areas than for those living in the urban areas for the last ten years.
- The proportion of working age population with NVQ4 was consistently higher for people living in rural areas between 2012 and 2016, between 2017 and 2020 the proportion for urban areas rose above that for rural areas.

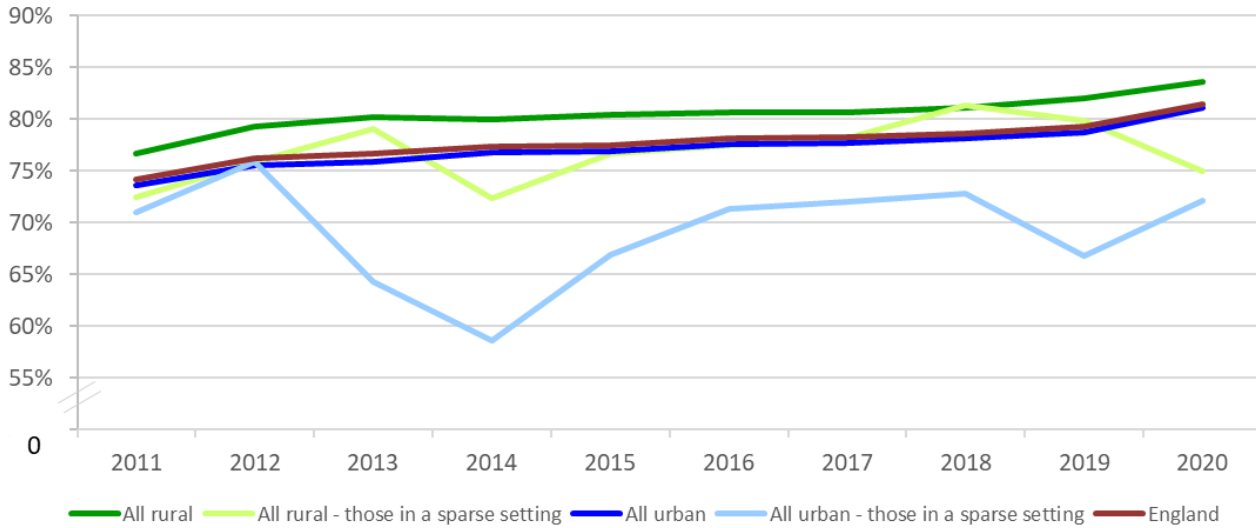
Proportion of working age population with at least one qualification (residence based), by settlement type in England, 2011 to 2020



- In 2020, the proportion of the resident working age population that had at least one qualification was higher in rural areas than in urban areas overall, 96.9 per cent and 96.2 per cent respectively.
- Across all rural settlement types (excluding those in a sparse setting), the proportion of individuals resident with at least one qualification was consistently higher than the proportion for England. This differs for rural areas in a sparse setting, as they show more fluctuations and regularly fall below the England average.
- The proportion of working age population with at least one qualification has risen in all settlement types since 2011.

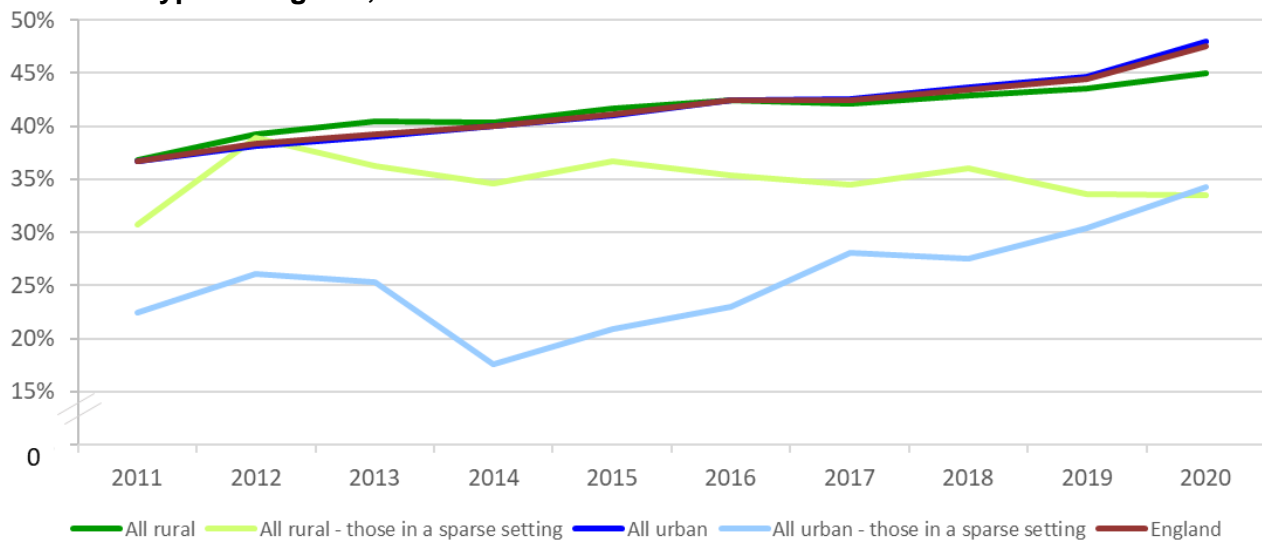
- A table showing the proportion of the working age population with at least one qualification (residence-based), broken down by detailed rural-urban classification for 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Proportion of working age population with NVQ2 (or equivalent) and above (residence based), by settlement type in England, 2011 to 2020



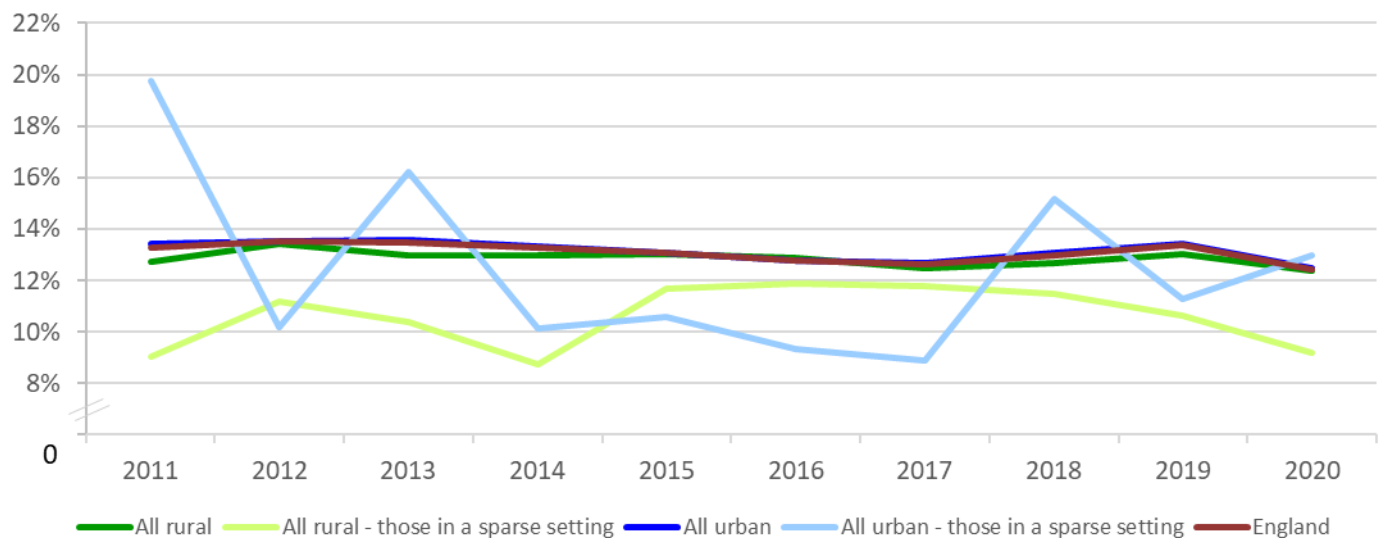
- The proportion of working age population with qualifications at NVQ Level 2 (or equivalent) and above has been consistently highest for people living in rural areas between 2011 and 2020. Those living in settlements in a sparse setting show a much greater level of fluctuation over the time period.
- In 2020, the proportion of working age people with qualifications at NVQ Level 2 or above was 83.6 per cent for people living in rural areas and 81.1 per cent for people living in urban areas.
- A table showing the proportion of the working age population with NVQ2 (or equivalent) and above (residence-based), broken down by detailed rural-urban classification for 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Proportion of working age population with NVQ4 (or equivalent) and above (residence based), by settlement type in England, 2011 to 2020



- The proportion of the resident working age population with qualifications at NVQ Level 4 (or equivalent) and above follows a general increase in both rural and urban areas.
- In 2020, 45.0 per cent of working age people living in rural areas had NVQ4 equivalent or above.
- A table showing the proportion of the working age population with NVQ4 (or equivalent) and above (residence-based), broken down by detailed rural-urban classification for 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

Proportion of employees and self-employed of working age receiving on the job training in last 4 weeks (residence based), by local authority classification in England, 2011 to 2020



- On the job training is when employees receive training at their workplace and is typically used for vocational work.

- The proportion of people receiving job-related training is broadly the same for people living in rural areas and those living in urban areas.
- A table showing the proportion employees and self-employed working age people receiving on the job training in the last 4 weeks (residence-based), broken down by detailed rural-urban classification for 2011 to 2020 is available in the [rural economy supplementary data tables](#).

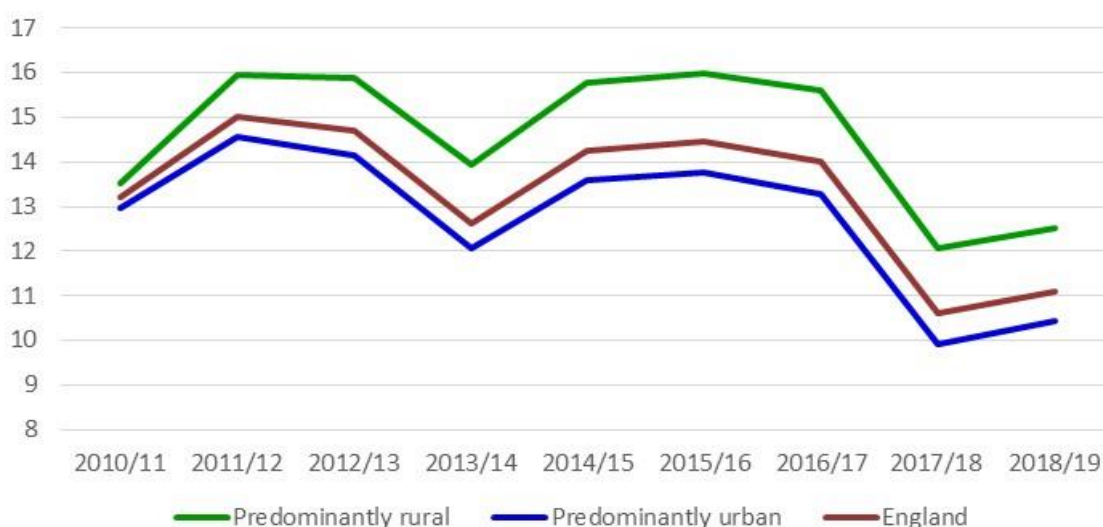
Notes: The population comprises those who responded yes and no to the question 'have you received on the job training in the last 4 weeks' and those who responded that the question was not applicable.

Apprenticeships

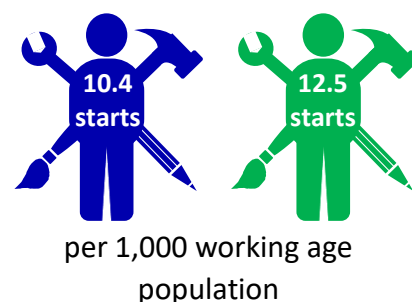
Apprentices are aged 16 or over and combine working with studying to gain skills and knowledge in a specific job. They can be new or current employees and are paid at least the minimum wage. As of May 2017, reforms were made to how apprenticeship funding works, including the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and apprenticeship service. The profile of apprenticeship starts changed significantly since the introduction of the levy which, along with the introduction of apprenticeship standards (that are replacing frameworks), has impacted on the number and nature of apprenticeship starts and participation.

The apprenticeship levy is a compulsory tax on employers in England to fund the development and delivery of apprenticeships, which aims to improve the quality and quantity of those available. For further information on the apprenticeship levy see the [policy paper 'Apprenticeship Levy'](#).

Apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age population, by Parliamentary Constituency level Classification, in England, 2010/11 to 2018/19



- In 2018/19 there were 12.5 apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age population in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 10.4 apprenticeship starts in Predominantly Urban areas. These numbers show a small increase on 2017/18 apprenticeship starts.
- Numbers of apprenticeship starts have fluctuated over time, however the relationship between rural and urban area types has remained the same with apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age population consistently higher in rural areas.
- A table showing apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age population, broken down by rural-urban classification for 2010/11 to 2018/19 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).



Notes: Numbers are a count of the number of starts at any point during the period. Learners starting more than one Apprenticeship will appear more than once. Geography is based upon the home postcode of the learner. Analysis is based on Parliamentary Constituency level data. Working age population are those aged 16 to 64.

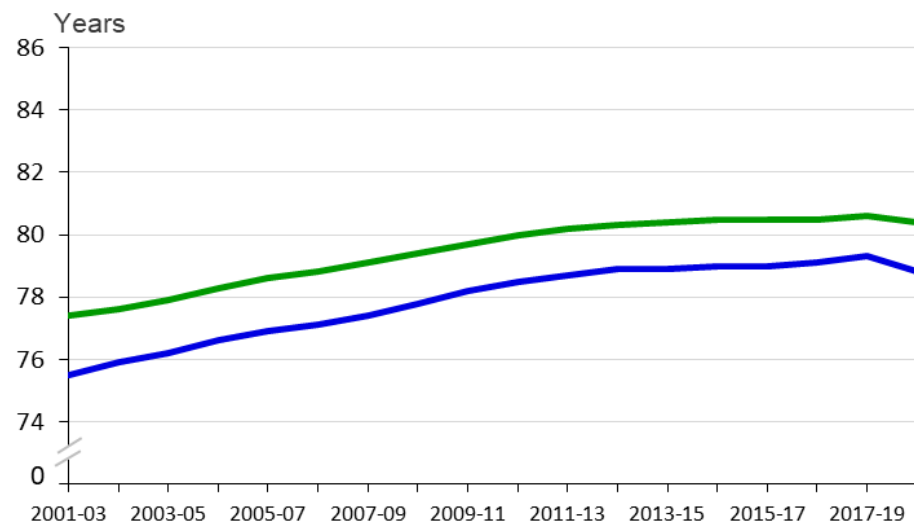
Source: [ONS published data on Apprenticeship starts by Parliamentary Constituency since May 2010](#)

Health and Wellbeing

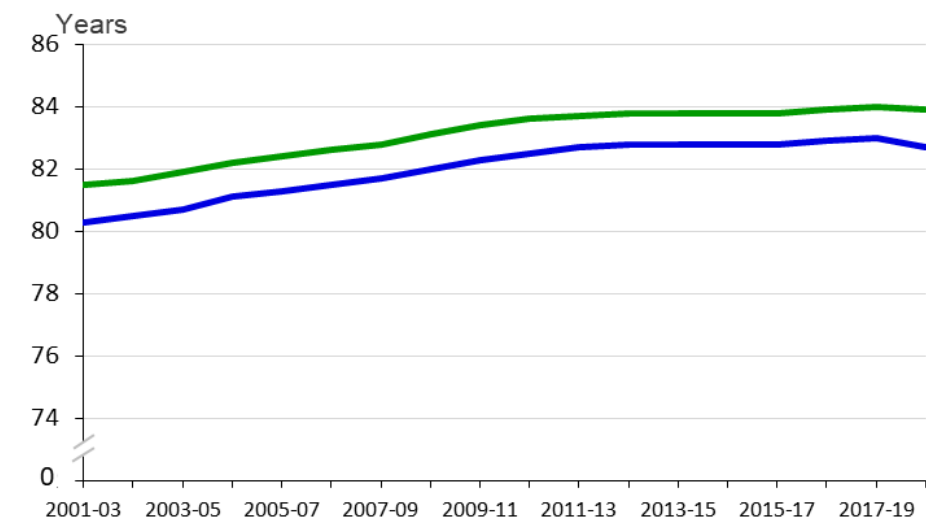
- **Average life expectancy was highest in Mainly Rural areas:** On average, people born in Mainly Rural areas in 2018-20 are expected to live two and a half years longer than people born in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas.
- The average life expectancy in 2018-20 was 79.3 years for men and 83.1 years 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 Potential years of life lost was in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas at 479 years of life lost per 10,000 population. The lowest rate of Potential years of life lost 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 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 Potential years of life lost for all causes of death.

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

Potential 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



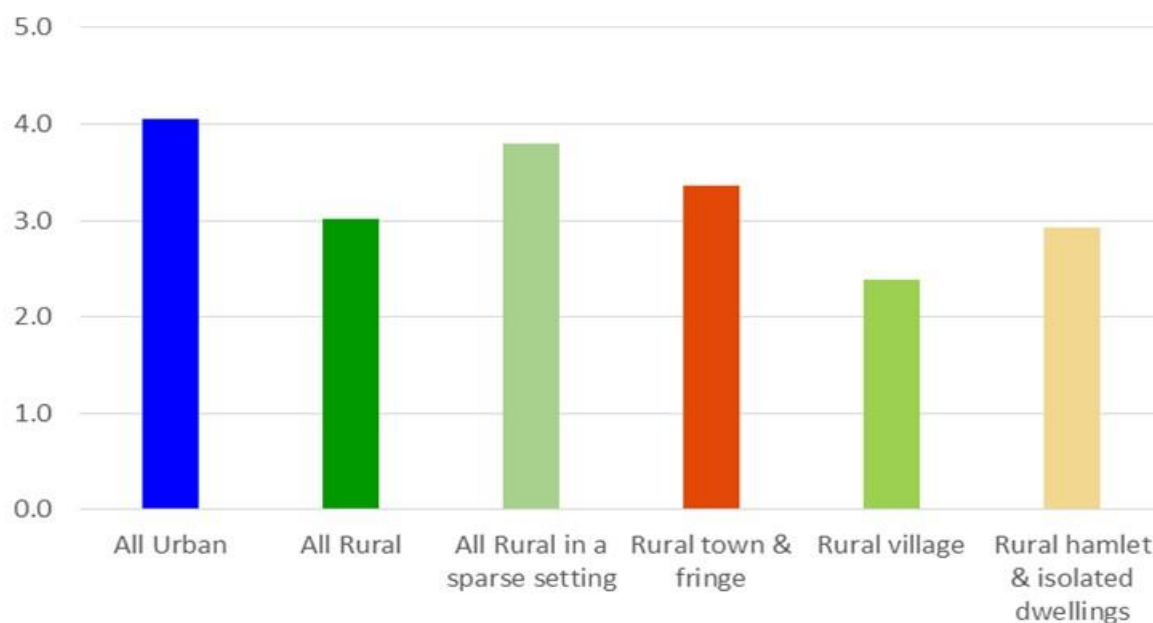
Notes: PYLL measures the average number of years a person would have lived had they not died prematurely (age 1 to 74), per 10,000 population. Data are based on the original underlying cause of death measured by directly age-standardised rates. Data for 2016-2018 are pooled and weighted by the 2017 NOMIS 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.

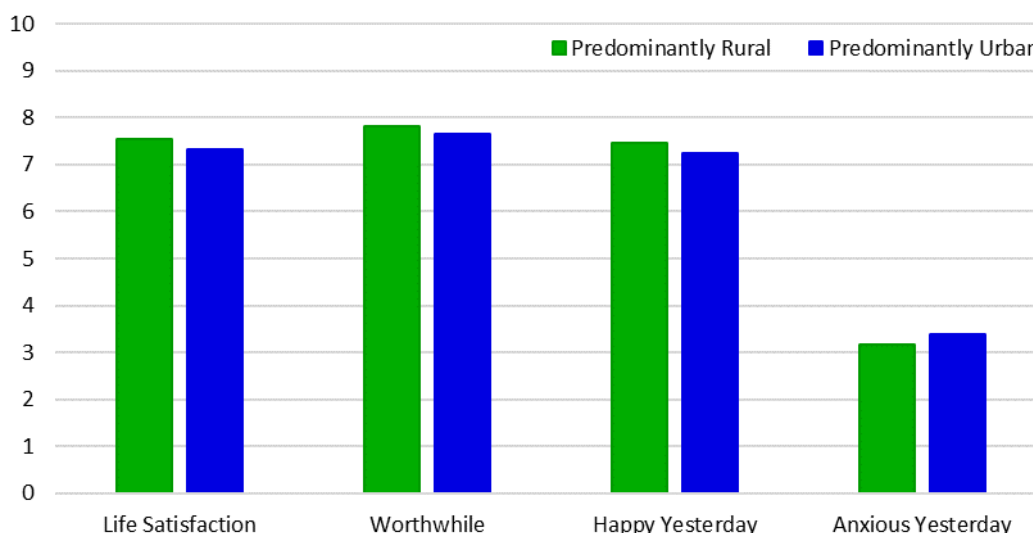
Notes: Infants are defined as less than one year old. There are many factors that can influence the IMR, including birth weight, mothers' age, and socio-economic status.

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

Wellbeing

- In 2020/21 on average people living in Predominantly Rural areas rated their wellbeing as slightly better than those in Predominantly Urban areas, although the difference is small. Individuals were asked questions on life satisfaction, how happy and how anxious they were yesterday and how worthwhile the things they do are (in respect of being anxious, a lower score indicates a more positive response).
- The difference in wellbeing ratings between rural and urban areas is small but consistent across these four measures over time.
- It should be noted that the populations in rural and urban areas differ, particularly in age structure and in terms of others measures such as deprivation. Such differences are likely to affect reported measures of wellbeing, so comparisons should be made with caution.

Average ratings (out of ten) on four measures of wellbeing, by rural and urban areas in England, 2020/21

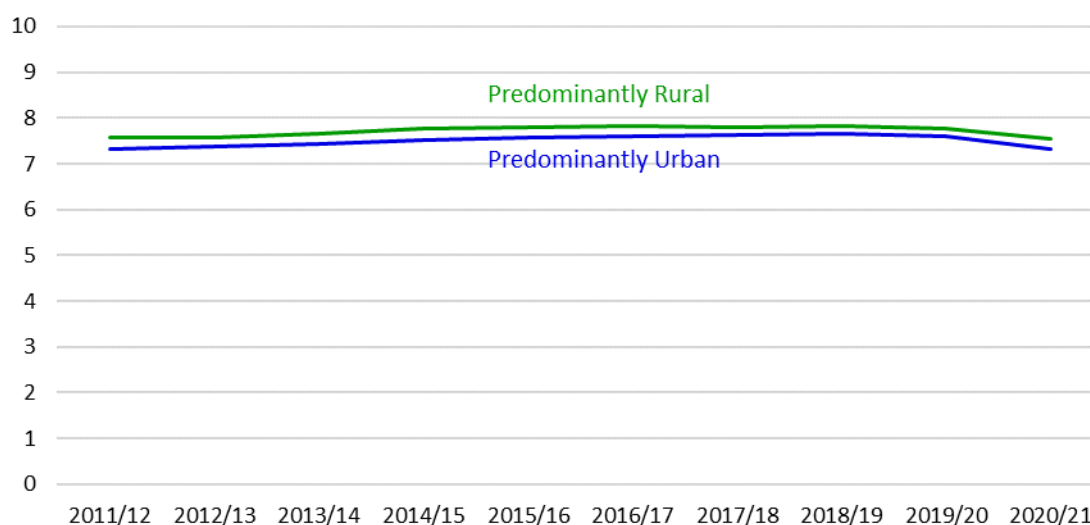


Average ratings (out of ten) on four measures of wellbeing, by local authority rural-urban classification in England, 2020/21

	Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?	Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?	Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?
Urban with Major Conurbation	7.3	7.6	7.2	3.4
Urban with Minor Conurbation	7.2	7.7	7.1	3.5
Urban with City and Town	7.4	7.7	7.3	3.3
Urban with Significant Rural	7.4	7.7	7.4	3.2
Largely Rural	7.5	7.8	7.5	3.2
Mainly Rural	7.6	7.9	7.5	3.1
Predominantly Urban	7.3	7.7	7.3	3.4
Predominantly Rural	7.5	7.8	7.5	3.2
England	7.4	7.7	7.3	3.3

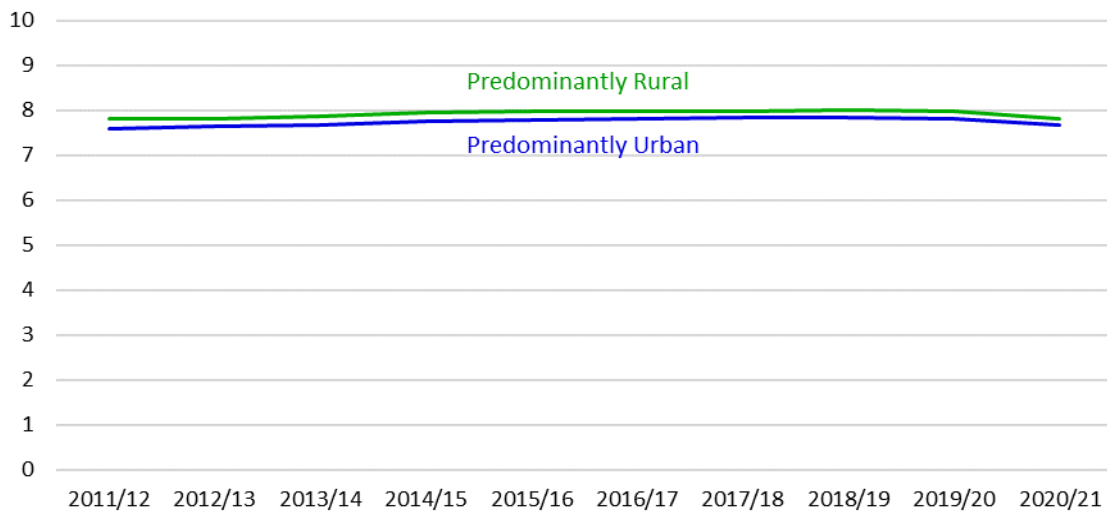
- When asked ‘Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?’ on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is ‘not at all satisfied’ and 10 is ‘completely satisfied’ those living in Predominantly Rural areas gave an average rating of 7.5 compared with an average rating of 7.3 given by those living in Predominantly Urban areas.
- When asked ‘Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?’ on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is ‘not at all worthwhile’ and 10 is ‘completely worthwhile’ those living in Predominantly Rural areas gave an average rating of 7.8 compared with an average rating of 7.7 given by those living in Predominantly Urban areas.
- When asked ‘Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?’ on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is ‘not at all happy’ and 10 is ‘completely happy’ those living in Predominantly Rural areas gave an average rating of 7.5 compared with an average rating of 7.3 given by those living in Predominantly Urban areas.
- When asked ‘Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?’ on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is ‘not at all anxious’ and 10 is ‘completely anxious’ those living in Predominantly Rural areas gave an average rating of 3.2 compared with an average rating of 3.4 given by those living in Predominantly Urban areas.

Average ratings (out of ten) on the question “Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?”, by local authority rural-urban classification in England, 2011/12 - 2020/21



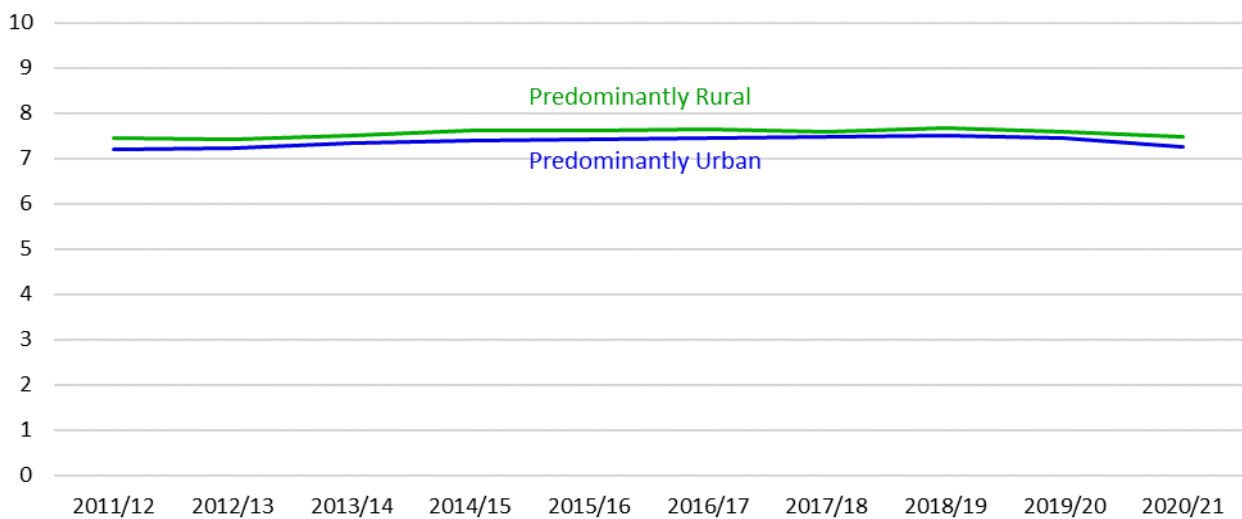
Life Satisfaction	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Predominantly Rural	7.6	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.5
Predominantly Urban	7.3	7.4	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.3
England	7.4	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.6	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.4

Average ratings (out of ten) on the question “Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?”, by local authority rural-urban classification in England, 2011/12 - 2020/21



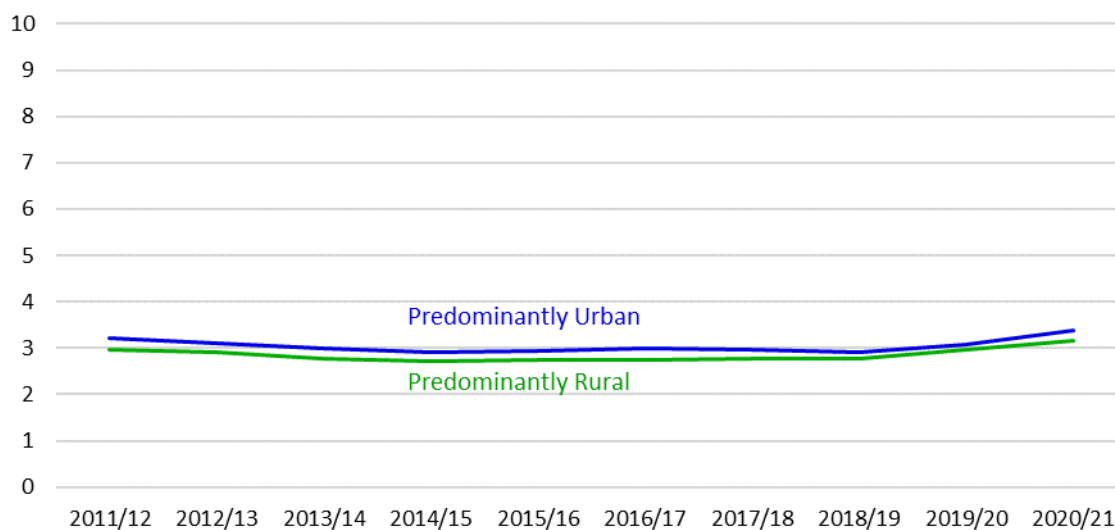
Worthwhile	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Predominantly Rural	7.8	7.8	7.9	7.9	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.8
Predominantly Urban	7.6	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.7
England	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.7

Average ratings (out of ten) on the question “Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?”, by local authority rural-urban classification in England, 2011/12-2020/21



Happiness	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Predominantly Rural	7.4	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.7	7.6	7.5
Predominantly Urban	7.2	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.4	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.4	7.3
England	7.3	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.3

Average ratings (out of ten) on the question “Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?”, by local authority rural-urban classification in England, 2011/12 - 2020/21



Anxiety	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Predominantly Rural	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.2
Predominantly Urban	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.4
England	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.3

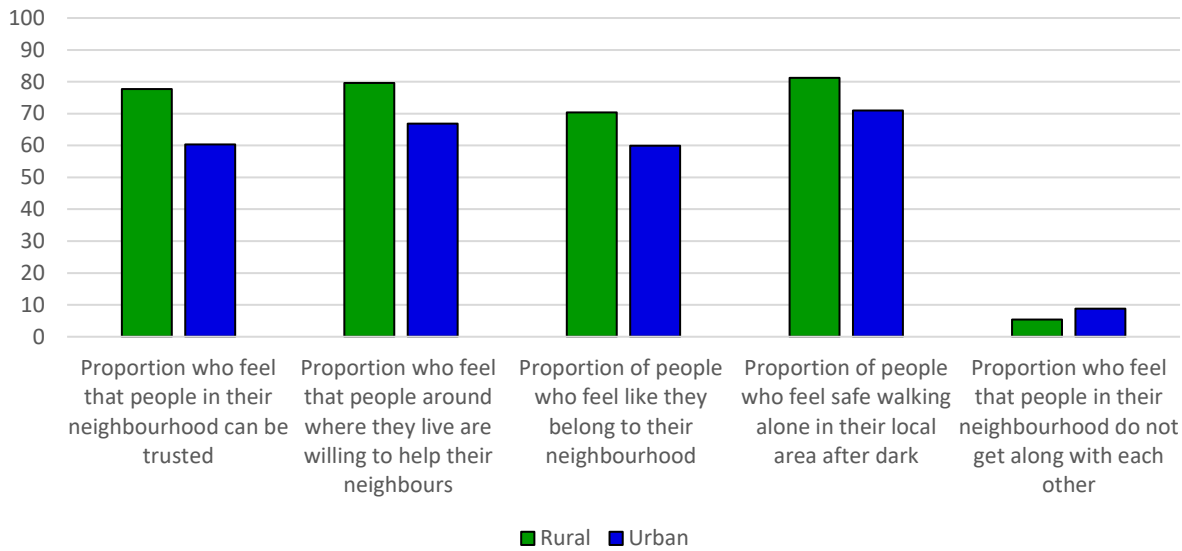
- Each category fared negatively compared to the year before in terms of an increased level of anxiety and reduced life satisfaction, sense of worthwhile, and happiness. This could be an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, and so caution should be taken when making comparisons.
- There was a very slight upward trend in the ratings for ‘life satisfaction’, ‘life worthwhile’ and ‘happiness yesterday’ across all areas between 2011/12 and 2018/19. However, in 2019/20 there was a slight decrease in these ratings, followed by a major decrease in 2020/21 for both rural and urban areas.
- Ratings of ‘anxiousness yesterday’ fell in both rural and urban areas between 2011/12 and 2014/15, remained largely the same until 2018/19, then rose until present; the ratings in 2020/21 are the highest so far in the time period.
- The differences between rural and urban areas are very small, however those living in Predominantly Rural areas consistently show slightly better ratings of reported wellbeing than those living in Predominantly Urban areas over this time period.

Notes: These data were originally collected as part of the Annual Population Survey (APS). The data presented here are reflective of the position for March 2020-March 2021.

Source: [ONS Annual personal well-being estimates](#)

- In 2011/12 a higher proportion of people living in rural areas reported a sense of belonging and safety in their local neighbourhood compared with those living in urban areas across several measures of 'neighbourliness', such as trust in those in their neighbourhood, helpfulness of those in the neighbourhood, a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood and feeling safe walking alone after dark. When asked whether they felt that people in the neighbourhood did not get along with one another, those living in urban areas were more likely to feel this way than those living in rural ones.

Percentage of people who agreed with each statement, by rural and urban areas in England, 2011/12



Percentage of people who agreed with each statement, by rural-urban classification in England, 2011/12

	Proportion who feel that people in their neighbourhood can be trusted	Proportion who feel that people around where they live are willing to help their neighbours	Proportion of people who feel like they belong to their neighbourhood	Proportion of people who feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark	Proportion who feel that people in their neighbourhood do not get along with each other
Rural	78%	80%	70%	81%	5%
Urban	60%	67%	60%	71%	9%
England	64%	69%	62%	73%	8%

- When asked whether they felt that people in their neighbourhood could be trusted 78% of people living in rural areas agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, compared with 60% living in urban areas.
- When asked whether they felt that the people around where they lived were willing to help their neighbours 80% of people living in rural areas agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, compared with 67% living in urban areas.
- When asked whether they felt like they belonged to their neighbourhood 70% of people living in rural areas agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, compared with 60% living in urban areas.

- When asked whether they felt safe walking alone in their local area after dark 81% of people living in rural areas felt safe or fairly safe, compared with 71% living in urban areas.
- When asked whether they felt that the people in their neighbourhood did not get along with each other 5% of people living in rural areas agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, compared with 9% in urban areas.

Notes: These data were originally collected as part of the Longitudinal Household Survey (UKHLS) which is an annual survey that captures information about 40,000 households. These data were released by the ONS in May 2016 and are currently the most up-to-date data published for these measures.

Source: ONS measures of social capital

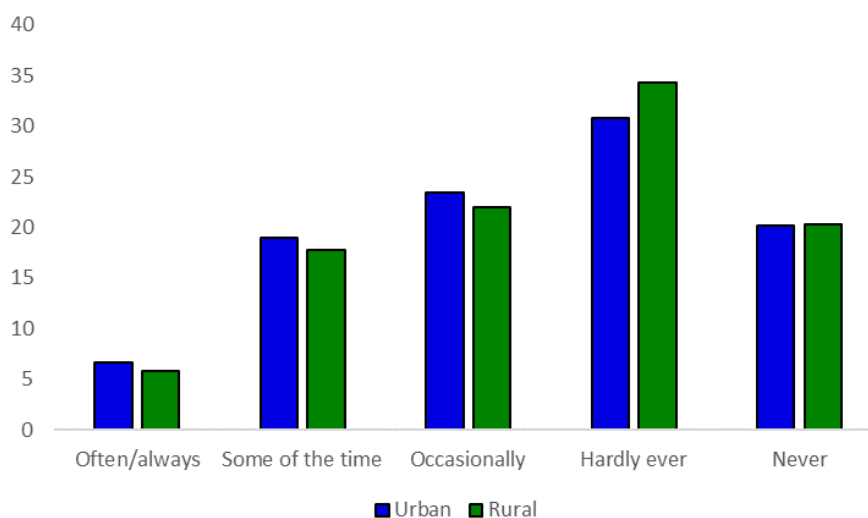
www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/5measuresofsocialcapitalbyregionandurbanandrural

Loneliness

In 2020/21 reported rates of loneliness were slightly lower in rural areas than in urban ones.

- 6 per cent of people living in rural areas report often or always feeling lonely, compared with 7 per cent of people living in urban areas.
- 34 per cent of people living in rural areas report hardly ever feeling lonely compared with 31 per cent of people living in urban areas.

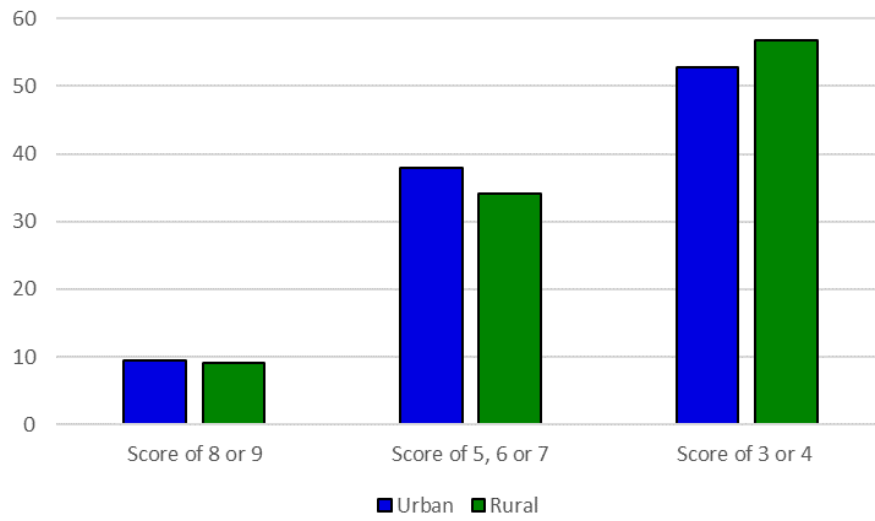
Percentage of people responding to the question “How often do you feel lonely?”, by rural-urban classification, England, 2020/21



The University of California has developed a three-item loneliness score, that takes responses from three questions and combines them into a composite loneliness score. Again, in 2020/21 people in rural areas reported a slightly lower occurrence of loneliness.

- 9 per cent of people living in both rural and urban areas score an 8 or 9.
- 34 per cent of people in rural areas scored a 5, 6 or 7 compared with 38 per cent of people in urban areas.
- 57 per cent of people in rural areas scored a 3 or 4 compared with 57 per cent in urban areas.

Percentage of people scoring different scores on the University of California's three-item loneliness scale, England, 2020/21

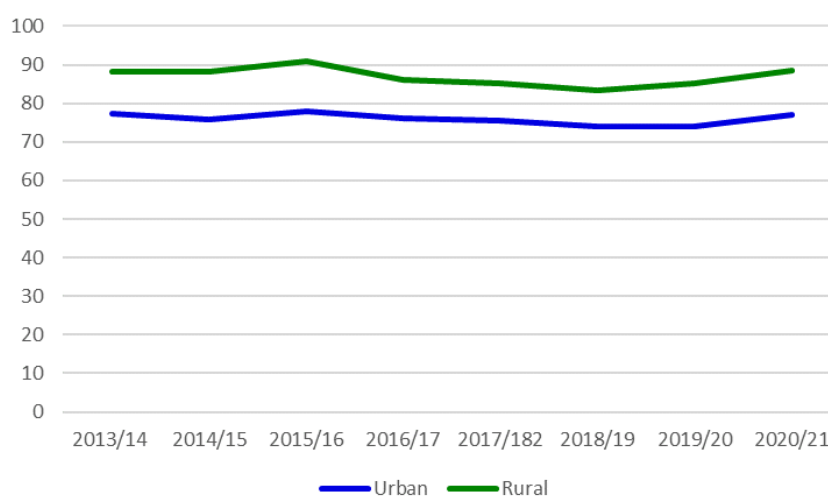


Feelings about the local neighbourhood

People living in rural areas tend to report more favourable feelings about their local neighbourhood than those living in urban areas.

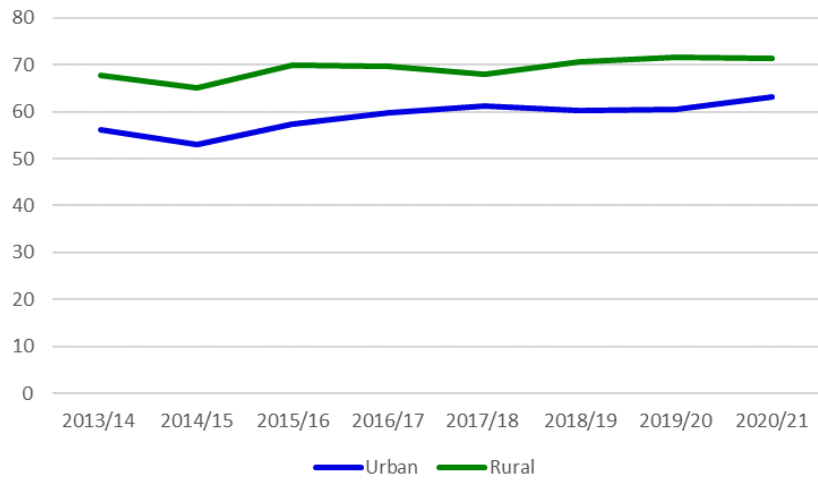
- In 2020/21 89 per cent of people living in rural areas reported that they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared with 77 per cent of those living in urban areas.
- Reports of satisfaction with the local area have remained relatively consistent over time with 88 per cent of people living in rural areas reporting this in 2013/14 compared with 77 per cent in urban areas.

Percentage of people who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, England, 2020/21



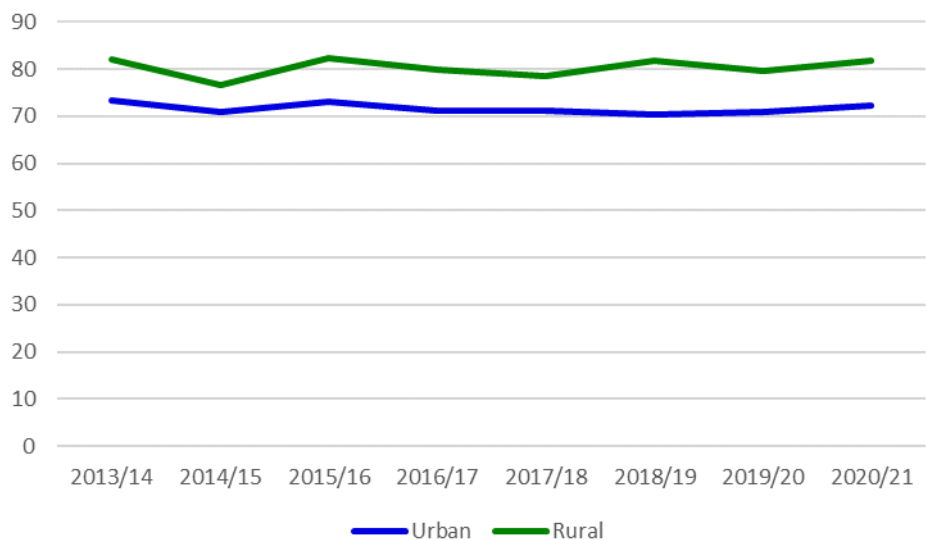
- In 2020/21, 71 per cent of people living in rural areas report feeling that they belong strongly or fairly strongly to their immediate neighbourhood, compared with 63 per cent in urban areas.
- This has risen over time in both rural and urban areas. Since 2013/14 the percentage of people reporting that they belong rose by 4 percentage points in rural areas and 7 percentage points in urban ones.

Percentage of people who feel they belong strongly or fairly strongly to their immediate neighbourhood, England, 2020/21



- In 2020/21, 82 per cent of people living in rural areas reported that they chat to the neighbours at least once a month (more than just to say hello), compared with 72 per cent of people living in urban areas.
- Reports of chatting regularly with neighbours have remained relatively consistent over time with 82 per cent of people living in rural areas reporting this in 2013/14 compared with 73 per cent in urban areas.

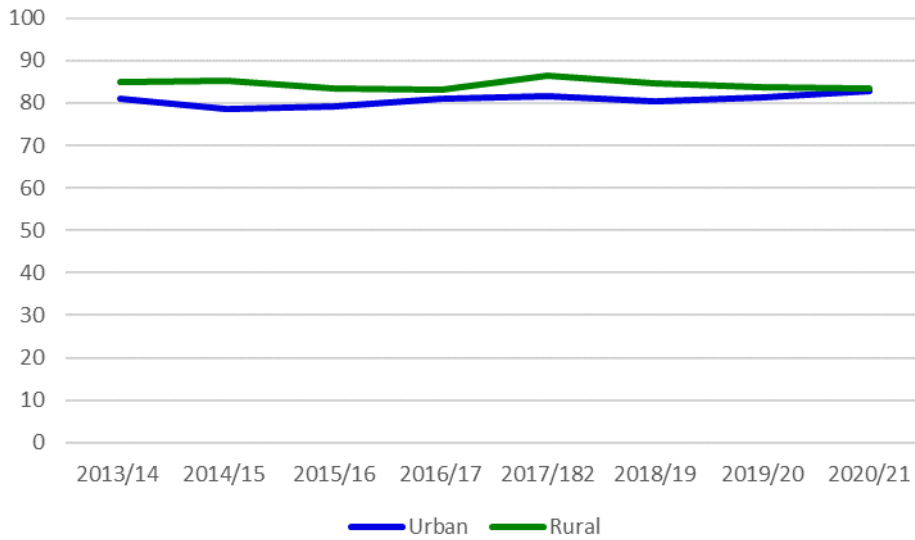
Percentage of people who chat to their neighbours (more than just to say hello) at least once a month, England, 2020/21



- In 2020/21, 84 per cent of people living in rural areas reported that they agreed that their local area is a place where people from different background get on well together, compared with 83 per cent of people living in urban areas.

- Reports of feeling that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together have remained relatively consistent over time with 85 per cent of people living in rural areas reporting this in 2013/14 compared with 81 per cent in urban areas.

Percentage of people agreeing that their local area is a place where people from different background get on well together, England, 2020/21



Notes:

The data presented on loneliness and feelings about the local neighbourhood come from the DCMS Community Life Survey.

The indirect loneliness composite score is produced by combining three indirect measures of loneliness asked in the questionnaire. More information on this measure can be found here:

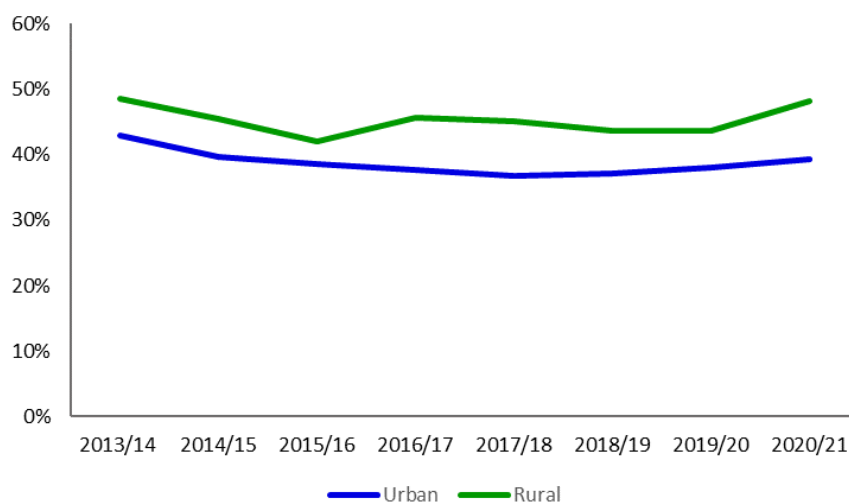
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/methodologies/measuringlonelinessguidanceforuseofthenationalindicatorsonsurveys#recommended-measures-for-adults>

Volunteering and charity

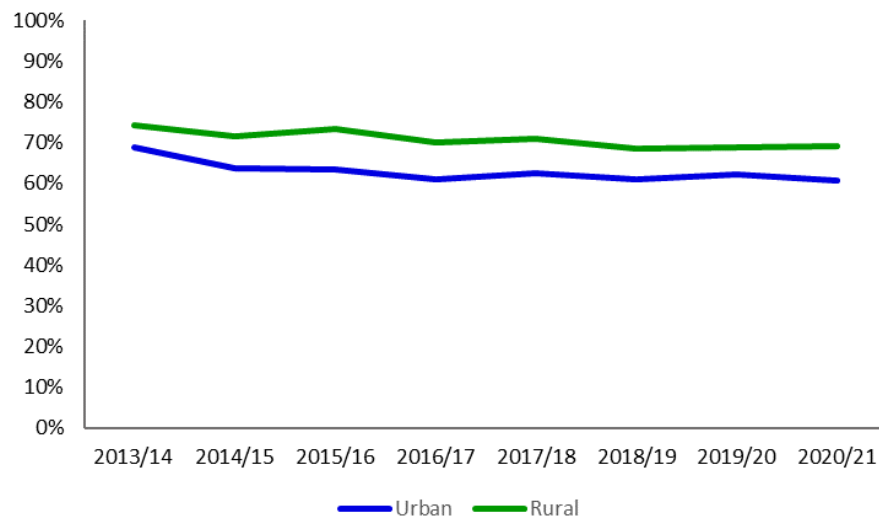
Volunteering

- In 2020/21, 48 per cent of people living in rural areas reported volunteering (either formally or informally) at least once a month, compared with 39 per cent of people living in urban areas.
- In 2020/21, 69 per cent of people living in rural areas reported volunteering (either formally or informally) at least once a year, compared with 61 per cent of people living in urban areas.
- Rates of volunteering at least once a year have fallen by 5 percentage points in rural areas and 8 percentage points in urban areas between 2013/14 and 2020/21.

Percentage of people reporting that they volunteered either formally or informally at least once a month, by rural-urban classification, England, 2013/14 - 2020/21



Percentage of people reporting that they volunteered either formally or informally at least once a year, by rural-urban classification, England, 2013/14 - 2020/21

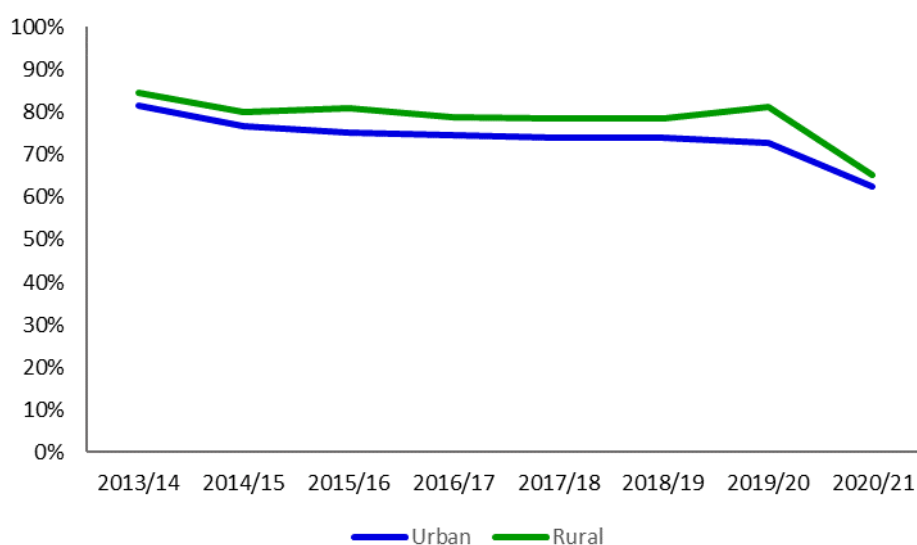


Tables detailing rates of both formal and informal volunteering broken down by broad rural-urban classification covering 2013/14 to 2020/21 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Charity

- In 2020/21, 65 per cent of people living in rural areas reported giving to charity in the past four weeks, compared with 62 per cent of those in urban areas.
- People reporting having given to charity in the last four weeks has fallen by 16 percentage points in rural areas and 10 percentage points in urban areas in the last year.
- People reporting having given to charity in the last four weeks has fallen by 20 percentage points in rural areas and 19 percentage points in urban areas since 2013/14.

Percentage of people reporting that they have given to charity in the past four weeks, by rural-urban classification, England, 2013/14 - 2020/21



A table detailing rates of charitable giving in the past four weeks, broken down by broad rural-urban classification covering 2013/14 to 2020/21 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes:

Formal volunteering refers to giving unpaid help through clubs or organisations and informal volunteering refers to giving unpaid help to individuals who are not a relative.

Figures for charitable giving between 2013/14 and 2017/18 include a very small number of respondents who had only indicated they had given to charitable causes by donating goods or prizes. 2018-19 onwards only includes those who gave money to charitable causes. This will have a minimal effect on the overall estimates

Crime

- Average crime rates (police recorded crime) are lower in rural areas than urban areas.
- In 2021, the police recorded rate of violence against the person was 2,472 per 100,000 population in Predominantly Rural areas compared with 3,727 per 100,000 population in Predominantly Urban areas.
- The police recorded rate of sexual offences in Predominantly Rural areas was 248 per 100,000 population in 2021, compared with 325 per 100,000 population in Predominantly Urban areas.
- The police recorded rate of recorded crime was also lower in rural areas than urban areas for crimes such as robbery, residential burglary, and vehicle offences (theft of, theft from or vehicle interference). For example, there were 292 vehicle offences per 100,000 population in Predominantly Rural areas and 738 per 100,000 population in Predominantly Urban areas in 2021.
- There was more crime recorded in 2021 than in 2020, with a 2% increase in rural areas and an 8% increase in urban areas. These increases were driven by crimes against persons (violence, harassment, sexual offences, etc.) whereas crimes against property and morality (residential burglary, drug offences, vehicle offences, etc.) were lower in 2021; this reflects the restrictions imposed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

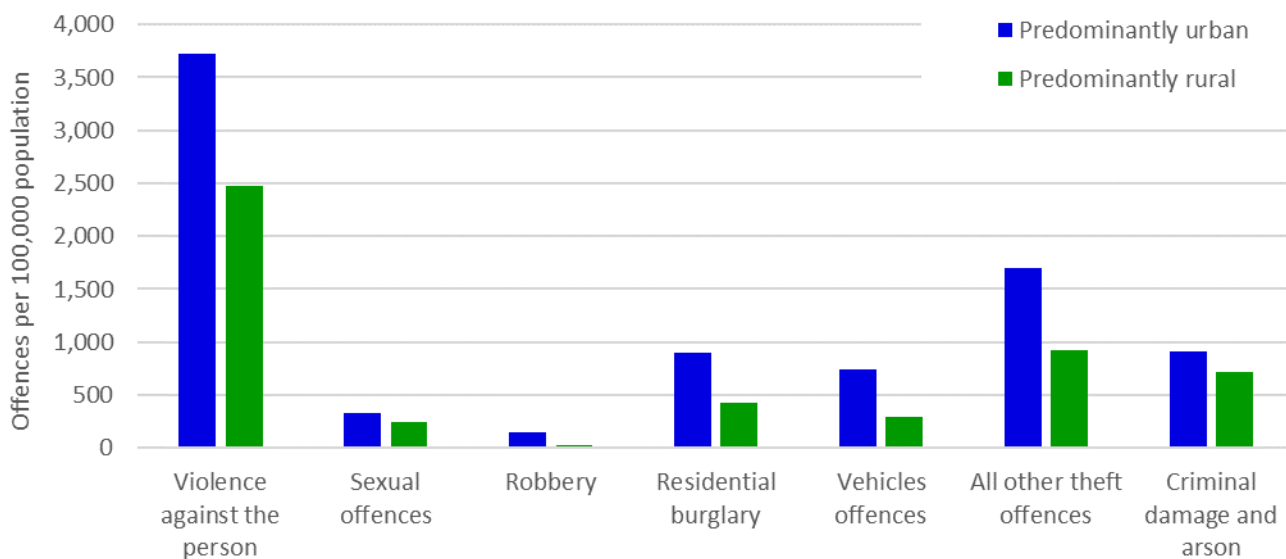
Notes: The way crimes are recorded by the police and the likelihood of victims reporting crimes may change over time. Figures on recorded crime may not be a reliable measure of year on year trends. The previous release of this publication covered the financial year up to spring 2021, whereas this edition evaluates the calendar year ending December 2021.

This analysis compares the rural and urban crime numbers as rates per head of population (or households for residential burglaries) for the latest year available, as well as the relative differences between crime rates in rural and urban areas between 2020 and 2021.

Previous years have analysed crime rate using “per 1,000 population” as the basis, whereas this edition uses “per 100,000 population” for ease of accessibility.

Further information can be found in the ONS publication ‘Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2021’: [Crime in England and Wales, year ending December 2021](#)

Police recorded crime rates per 100,000 population*, by offence type and Community Safety Partnership area, in England, 2021



Note: Crime rates are calculated per 100,000 population for all categories except residential burglary which is calculated per 100,000 households.

- **Violence against the person:** the police recorded rate of violence against a person was lowest in Mainly Rural areas, where there were 1,916 recorded acts of violent crime per 100,000 population, and highest in Urban with City and Town, at 3,822 recorded acts of violent crime per 100,000 population. This category includes ‘homicide’, ‘violence with injury’, ‘violence without injury’, ‘death or serious injury caused by illegal driving’ and ‘stalking and harassment’.
- **Sexual offences:** the police recorded rate of sexual offences was lowest in Mainly Rural areas, where there were 203 recorded acts of sexual crime per 100,000 population, and highest in Urban with City and Town areas, at 349 recorded acts of sexual crime per 100,000 population.
- **Robbery offences:** the lowest police recorded rate of robbery offences was recorded in Mainly Rural areas at 16 offences per 100,000 population, compared with the highest rate of 194 per 100,000 population which was recorded in Urban with Major Conurbations.
- **Residential burglary offences:** the lowest police recorded rate of residential burglary offences was recorded in Mainly Rural areas at 252 offences per 100,000 households, compared with the highest rate of 1,049 offences per 100,000 households recorded in Urban with Major Conurbation areas.
- **Vehicle offences:** the police recorded rate was lowest in Mainly Rural areas, where there were 199 vehicle offences per 100,000 population compared with 919 offences per 100,000 population recorded in Urban with Major Conurbation areas.
- **All other theft offences:** this category comprises all theft offences other than Residential burglary and Vehicle offences; of these other thefts, the lowest crime rate was recorded in Mainly Rural areas at 649 offences per 100,000 population, and the highest crime rate was seen in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, with 1,830 offences per 100,000 population.
- **Criminal damage and arson:** the police recorded rate of criminal damage and arson was lowest in Mainly Rural areas, with 537 offences per 100,000 population, and highest in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas, with 1,097 offences per 100,000 population.

Police recorded crime rates per 100,000 population*, by offence type and Community Safety Partnership area, in England, 2021

	Violence against the person	Sexual offences	Robbery	Residential burglary	Vehicle offences	All other theft offences	Criminal damage and arson
Urban with Major Conurbation	3,681	311	194	1,049	919	1,830	850
Urban with Minor Conurbation	3,517	296	99	1,027	650	1,617	1,097
Urban with City and Town	3,822	349	85	669	505	1,522	967
Urban with Significant Rural	2,577	237	36	448	339	972	666
Largely Rural	2,833	277	31	562	352	1,098	822
Mainly Rural	1,916	203	16	252	199	649	537
Predominantly Urban	3,727	325	145	895	738	1,695	911
Predominantly Rural	2,472	248	25	429	292	921	710
England	3,314	297	106	739	593	1,439	837

Crime rates are calculated per 100,000 population for all categories except residential burglary which is calculated per 100,000 households.

Notes:

Unlike the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), recorded crime figures do not include crimes that have not been reported to the police or incidents that the police decide not to record. It was estimated in the year ending March 2016 that around 45 per cent of CSEW comparable crime was reported to the police, although this proportion varied considerably for individual offence types. See:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/methodologies/crimeinenglandandwalesqmi/pdf

(Section 4, page 5) for more information.

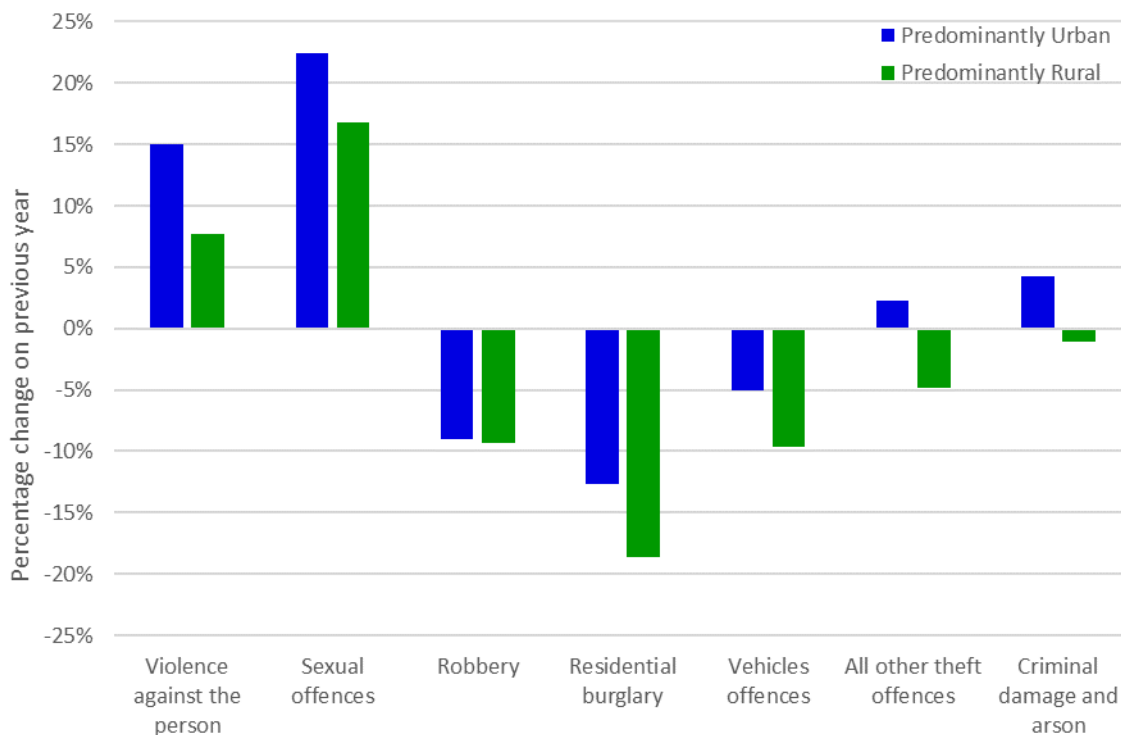
Crime rates are calculated using the mid-year population / household numbers for the year immediately prior to the crime reporting period.

The previous release of this publication (March 2021) contained an error involving the figures for Residential burglary, wherein London was weighted into the urban category incorrectly; this has since been rectified.

Source: ONS, *Recorded crime data at Community Safety Partnership*:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/recordedcrimedatabycommunitysafetypartnershiparea>

Percentage change in police recorded crime rates per 100,000 population / households by offence type and Local Authority classification, 2020 – 2021



Overall, there was more crime recorded in 2021 than in 2020, with a 2% increase in rural areas and an 8% increase in urban areas. In particular, crimes against persons (violence, harassment, sexual offences, etc.) were higher which reflects the restrictions imposed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance increased stress environments combined with fewer opportunities to leave. However, crimes against property and morality (residential burglary, drug offences, vehicle offences, etc.) were lower in 2021; this reflects the stay-at-home order used to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, where opportunity for such crimes was reduced.

In 2021, the main changes in crime rates by offence type were as follows:

- **Violence against the person:** the percentage change in the police recorded rate of violence against a person was highest in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, where a 19% increase was recorded on 2020 figures, and lowest in Largely Rural and Urban with Significant Rural areas, where a 7% increase was recorded on 2020 figures in both cases.
- **Sexual offences:** the percentage change in the police recorded rate of sexual offences was lowest in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas, where a 13% increase was recorded on 2020 figures, and highest in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, where a 27% increase was recorded on 2020 figures.
- **Robbery offences:** the largest changes in the police recorded rate of robbery offences were in Mainly Rural areas, where a 13% decrease was recorded on 2020 figures, and in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas, where a 2% increase was recorded.
- **Residential burglary offences:** the percentage change in the police recorded rate of residential burglary offences was largest in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, where a 51% decrease was recorded on 2020 figures, and smallest in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas,

where there was a 10% decrease on 2020 figures. A particularly large increase of 33% was also seen in Urban with City and Town areas compared with 2020 figures.

- **Vehicle offences:** the percentage change in the police recorded rate of vehicle offences was largest in Mainly Rural areas, where a 12% decrease was recorded on 2020 figures, and smallest in Urban with both Minor and Major Conurbation areas, where a 4% decrease was recorded on 2020 figures.
- **All other theft offences:** the largest percentage change was seen in Largely and Mainly Rural areas, where in both places a 5% decrease was recorded on 2020 levels. The smallest difference was in Urban with City and Town areas, where there was no change recorded between 2020 and 2021. The greatest increase was seen in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, where a 4% increase was recorded on 2020 figures.
- **Criminal damage and arson:** The largest increase was seen in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, where an 8% increase was recorded on 2020 figures. The largest decrease was seen in both Mainly Rural and Urban with Significant Rural areas, where in both cases a 2% decrease was recorded between 2020 and 2021. The smallest difference was in Urban with City and Town areas, where no change was recorded from 2020 figures.

Percentage change in police recorded crime rates per 100,000 population / households by offence type and Local Authority classification, 2020 – 2021

	Violence against the person	Sexual offences	Robbery	Residential burglary	Vehicle offences	All other theft offences	Criminal damage and arson
Urban with Major Conurbation	19%	27%	-10%	-51%	-4%	4%	8%
Urban with Minor Conurbation	10%	13%	2%	-10%	-4%	1%	6%
Urban with City and Town	10%	19%	-8%	-33%	-9%	0%	0%
Urban with Significant Rural	7%	22%	-12%	-20%	-10%	-4%	-2%
Largely Rural	7%	17%	-8%	-16%	-9%	-5%	-1%
Mainly Rural	9%	17%	-13%	-26%	-12%	-5%	-2%
Predominantly Urban	15%	22%	-9%	-13%	-5%	2%	4%
Predominantly Rural	8%	17%	-9%	-19%	-10%	-5%	-1%
England	13%	21%	-9%	-14%	-6%	1%	3%

Notes:

Unlike the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), recorded crime figures do not include crimes that have not been reported to the police or incidents that the police decide not to record. It was estimated in the year ending March 2016 that around 45 per cent of CSEW comparable crime was reported to the police, although this proportion varied considerably for individual offence types. See:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/methodologies/crimeinenglandandwalesqmi/pdf

(Section 4, page 5) for more information.

Crime rates are calculated using the mid-year population / household numbers for the year immediately prior to the crime reporting period. Crime rates are calculated per 100,000 population for all categories except residential burglary which is calculated per 100,000 households.

Source: ONS, *Recorded crime data at Community Safety Partnership:*

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/recordedcrimedatabycommunitysafetypartnershiparea>

Commercial Victimisation Survey

The Commercial Victimisation Survey (CVS) has been commissioned by the Home Office annually since 2012 to record the nature and extent of crime committed against business premises across a number of industry types in England and Wales, including agriculture, forestry and fishing.

Proportion of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing premises that experienced crime in 2018, by number of employees.

	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing			All Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing premises
	1–9 employees	10–49 employees	50+ employees	
Burglary with entry	9	25	-	9
Attempted burglary	4	16	-	5
All burglary (inc. attempts)	11	30	-	11
Vandalism	8	21	-	9
Theft of vehicles	1	7	-	1
Theft from vehicles	1	14	-	2
All vehicle-related theft	3	15	-	3
All robbery (inc. attempts)	1	3	-	1
Assaults and threats	2	9	-	2
Thefts by customers	1	6	-	1
Thefts by employees	0	3	-	0
Thefts by others	1	1	-	1
Thefts by unknown persons	6	11	-	6
All theft	7	17	-	8
Fraud by employees	0	1	-	0
Fraud by others	0	3	-	1
Fraud by unknown persons	3	5	-	3
All fraud	4	9	-	4
ALL CVS CRIME	25	51	-	26

- 26 per cent of business premises in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector experienced crime in 2018, compared with 30 per cent in 2013.
- Medium-sized businesses in this sector experienced a higher crime rate compared with larger and smaller businesses.
- In 2018 premises were most likely to experience burglary (including attempts) with 11 per cent of premises having experienced burglary.
- Although vandalism accounted for a third of incidents, only 9 per cent of premises had experienced this crime type, suggesting a relatively high repeat victimisation rate.

Number of incidents (000s)

	All Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing premises (000s)	Crime type as a percentage of all incidents
All burglary (incl. attempts)	17	22
Vandalism	27	34
All vehicle-related theft	3	4
All robbery (incl. attempts)	2	2
Assaults and threats	5	7
All theft	12	16
All fraud	13	16
ALL CVS CRIME	79	100

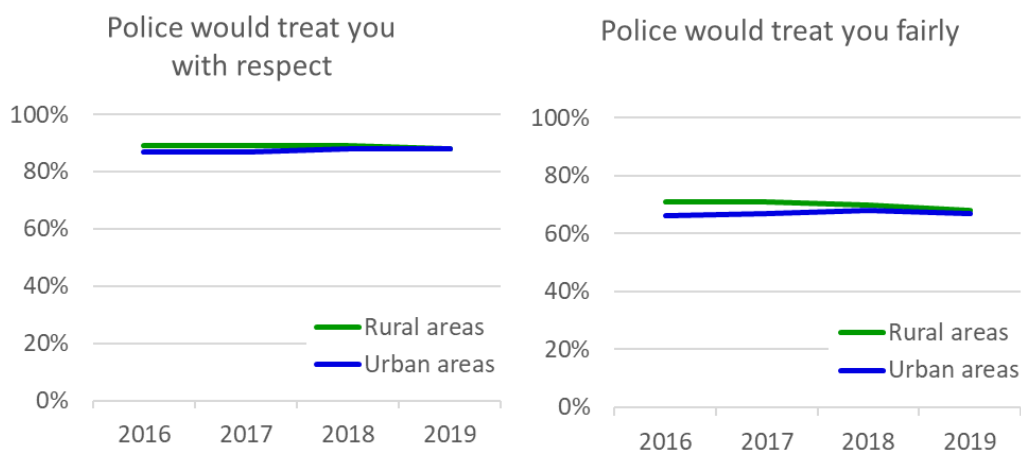
- The most common crime type was vandalism accounting for 34 per cent of all incidents, while burglary accounted for 22 per cent (including attempts), and fraud accounted for 16 per cent.

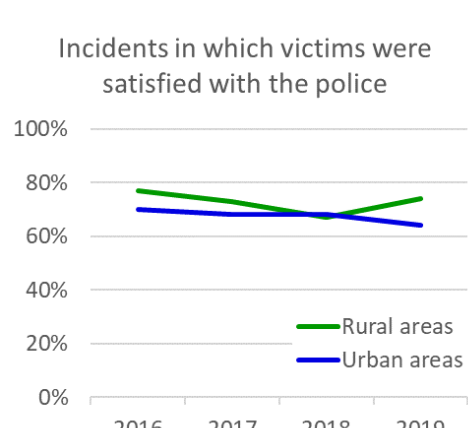
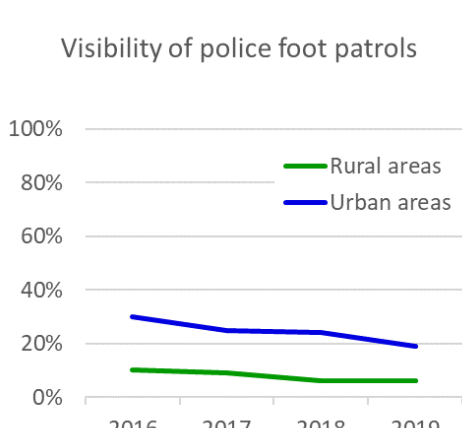
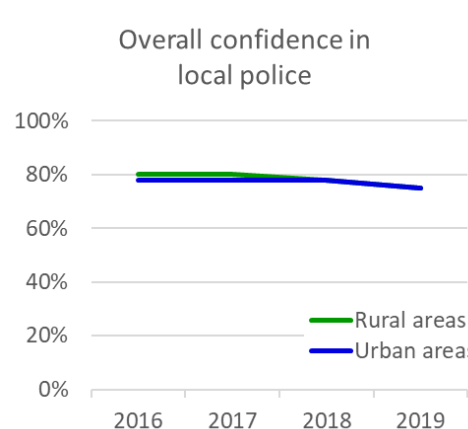
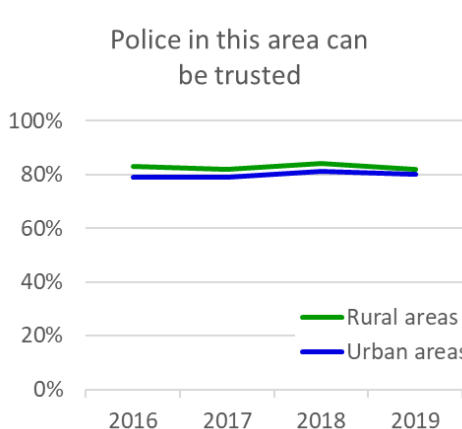
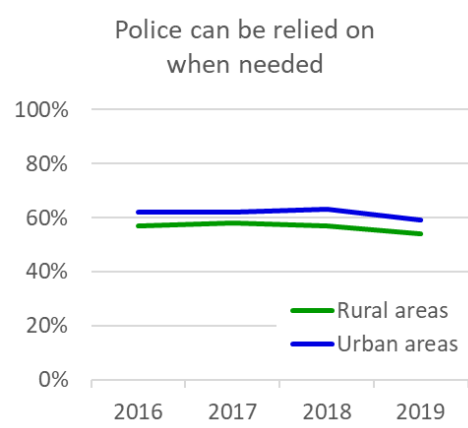
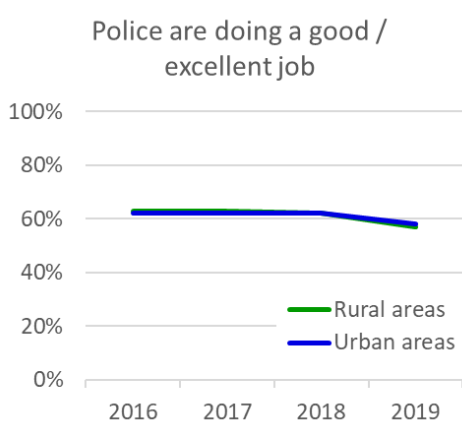
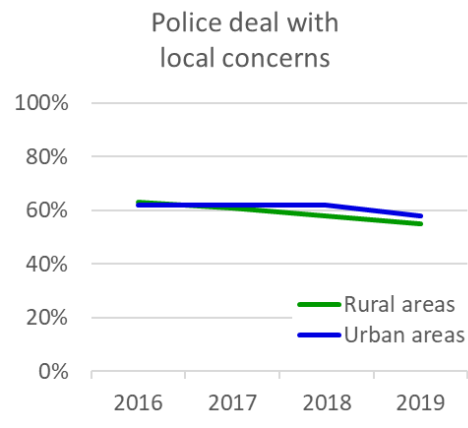
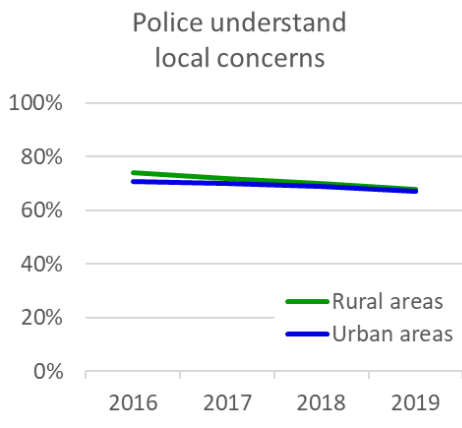
Crime Survey for England & Wales

The Crime Survey monitors the extent of crime in England and Wales. It is used to evaluate and develop crime reduction policies and provides vital information about the changing levels of crime over the last 30 years. Results for 2019 are presented below.

Perceptions of the local police

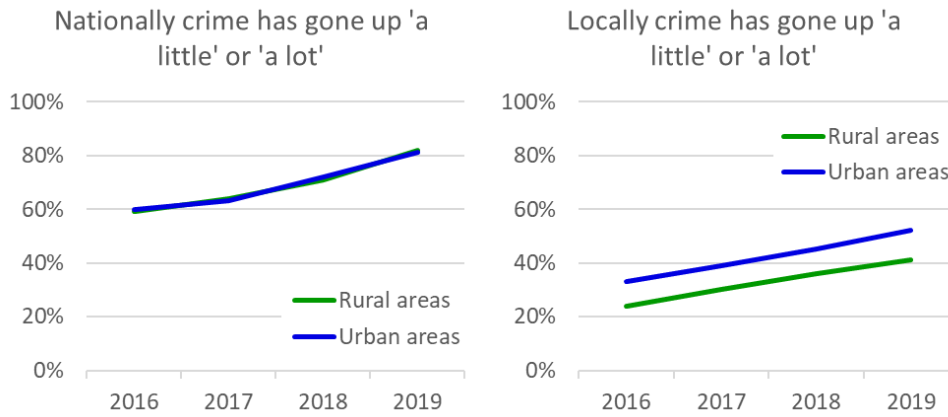
- There is little difference in people's perceptions of the local police between rural and urban areas overall.
- Both rural and urban areas have seen a decline in some measures of perception such as police dealing with local concerns.
- Fewer people in rural areas felt there was high visibility of police foot patrols, but a higher proportion of victims were satisfied with the police than in urban areas. However, declines in these measures have occurred in both rural and urban areas.





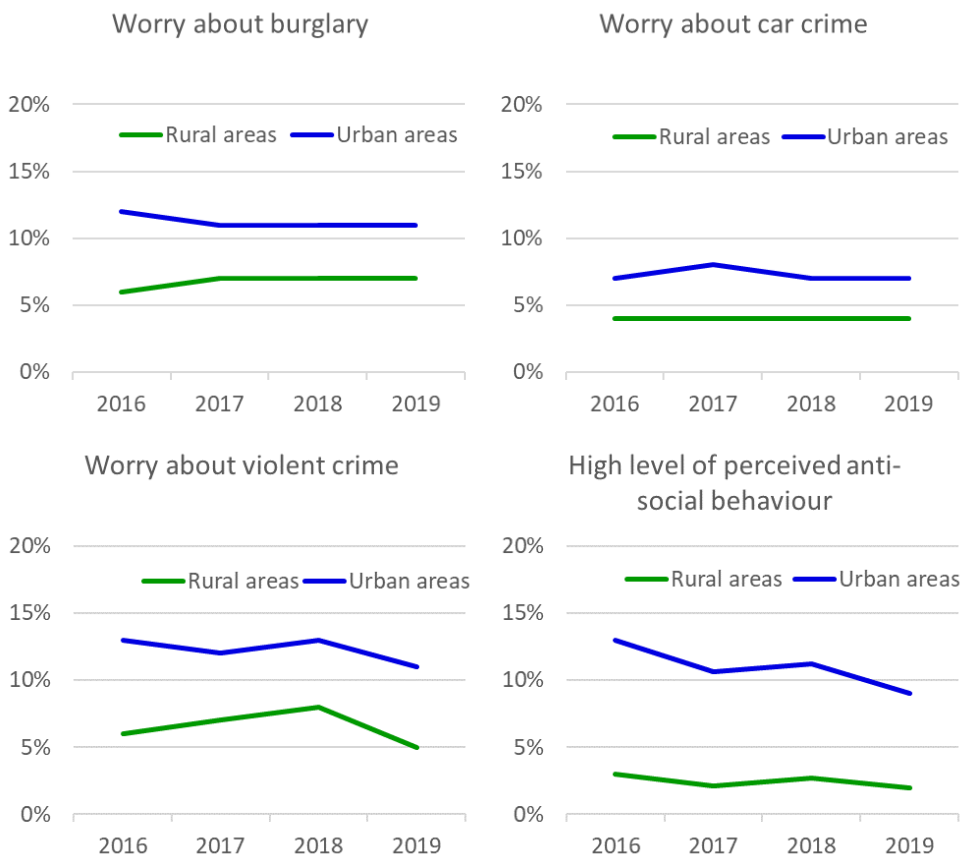
Perceptions of crime levels

- There has been an increased perception that nationally and locally crime has gone up. There is no difference between rural and urban areas in the perception about crime nationally. Perceptions about local crime going up are lower, and indeed in rural areas more so than in urban areas.



Perceptions of different crimes

- 88 per cent of rural people said they felt very or fairly safe when walking alone after dark compared with 76 per cent of people in urban areas.



Percentage of people who agree with the listed perceptions in both rural and urban areas, 2019

Perception	Rural areas 2019	Urban areas 2019
Were aware of the 101 non-emergency police number	79	74
Had used the 101 non-emergency police number	13	13
Awareness of Police and Crime Commissioners	66	54
Worry about fraud	17	20
Felt very/fairly safe when walking alone after dark	88	76

- The proportions of households worrying about crime and perceiving anti-social behaviour are lower in rural areas than in urban areas and have stayed the same or declined in recent years.
- There is little difference in people's awareness of the 101 non-emergency police number between rural and urban areas. However, only 13 per cent of people have used the number in both rural and urban areas overall.