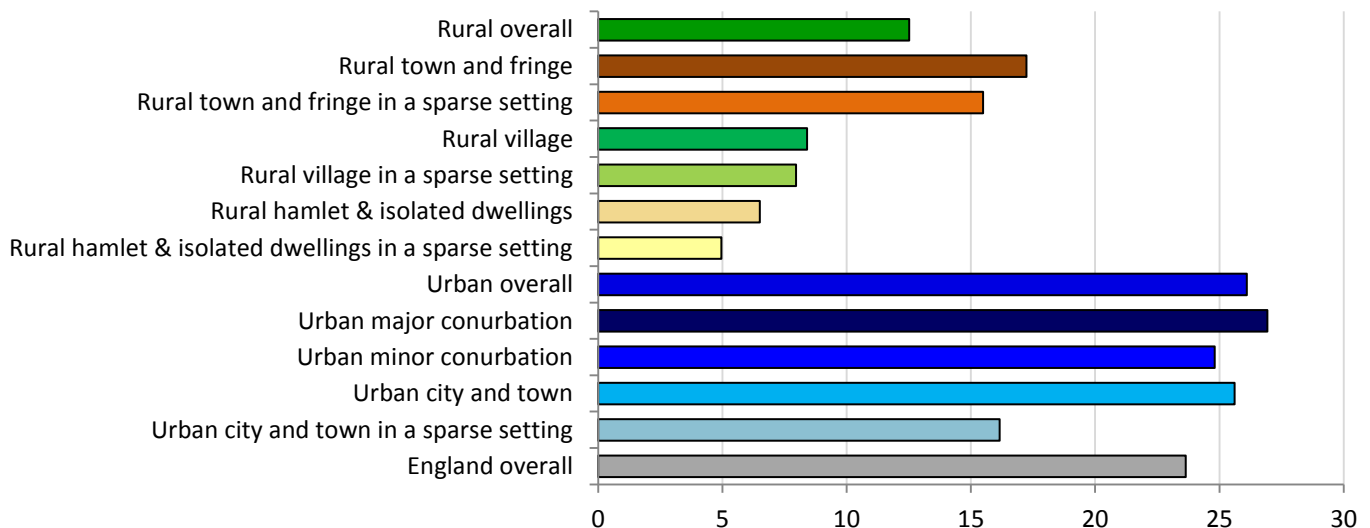# Broadband

- Superfast broadband is now available to 75% of UK premises, enabling these households to subscribe to services of at least 30 Megabites per second (Mbit/s)*.
- The availability of broadband in rural areas is increasingly important for economic development, access to services and wider social activities.
- The Government's £780m Superfast Rollout Programme will provide universal standard broadband (minimum 2Mbit/s) coverage by 2016 and 95% of UK premises with superfast broadband by 2017.
- Innovative solutions are being tested through a series of pilot projects to explore how to extend superfast broadband into the final 5% hard to reach areas.

Broadband Speed

Average Broadband Speed (Mbit/s) by rural urban classification in England, 2014

- The average broadband speeds in the majority of *rural* area types are lower than speeds in *urban* areas. In 2014 the average broadband speed in *rural hamlets & isolated dwellings in a sparse setting* was 5 Mbit/s compared with 27 Mbit/s in *major urban conurbations.*
- 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 broadband speed by rural urban classification in England, 2014

	Mbit/s
Rural overall	13
Rural town and fringe	17
Rural town and fringe in a sparse setting	15
Rural village	8
Rural village in a sparse setting	8
Rural hamlet & isolated dwellings	7
Rural hamlet & isolated dwellings in a sparse setting	5
Urban overall	26
Urban major conurbation	27
Urban minor conurbation	25
Urban city and town	26
Urban city and town in a sparse setting	16
England overall	24

- The average broadband speed for England in 2014 was 24 Mbit/s.

- Average rural speeds are more likely to be slower than those in urban areas because:
    - There is less superfast broadband in rural areas. We expect this to change as BDUK's rural broadband programme progresses; and
    - Rural premises are typically further away from cabinets, with long copper line connections, leading to slower performance.