



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Statistical Digest of Rural England

Skills

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

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

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

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

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

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Skills

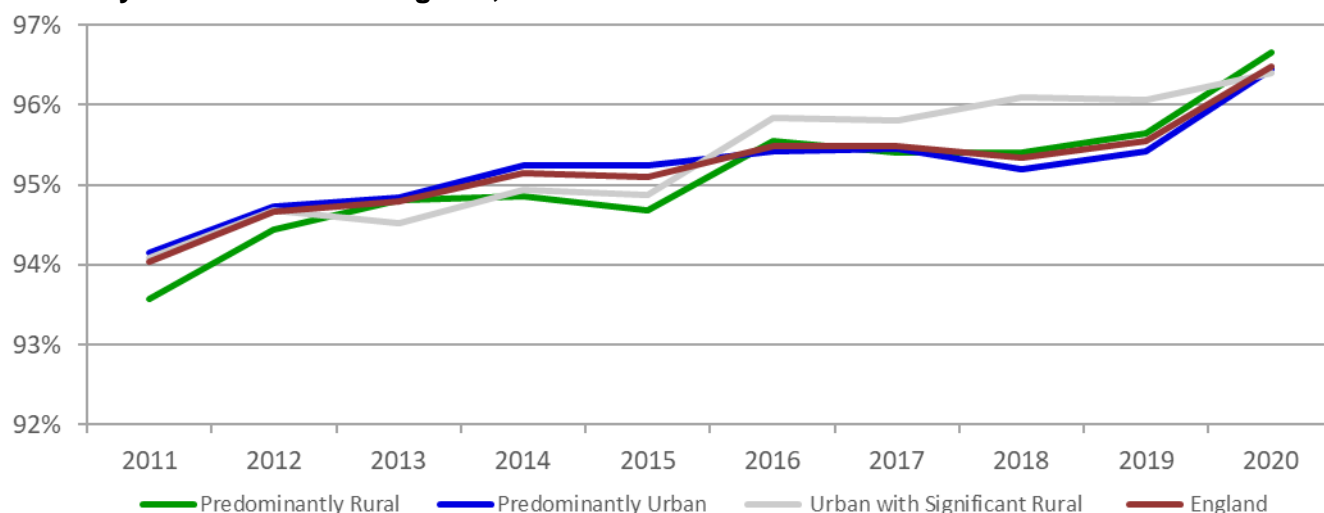
The skills detailed in this section are National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 and above – which is equivalent to 5 General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSE) at Grade A-C, NVQ4 and above –which measures qualifications at Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND) 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

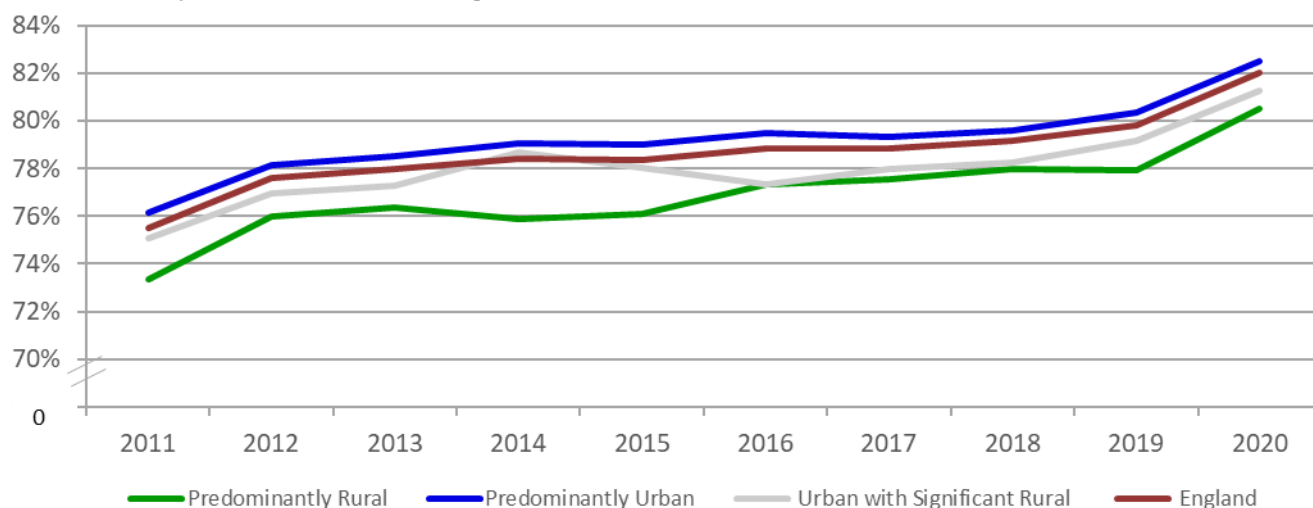
- When skill levels are looked at from a workplace-based perspective, a higher proportion of people working in Predominantly Urban areas have qualifications at NVQ4 or above than those working in Predominantly Rural areas. One reason for this is that businesses that can utilise these skills are based 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



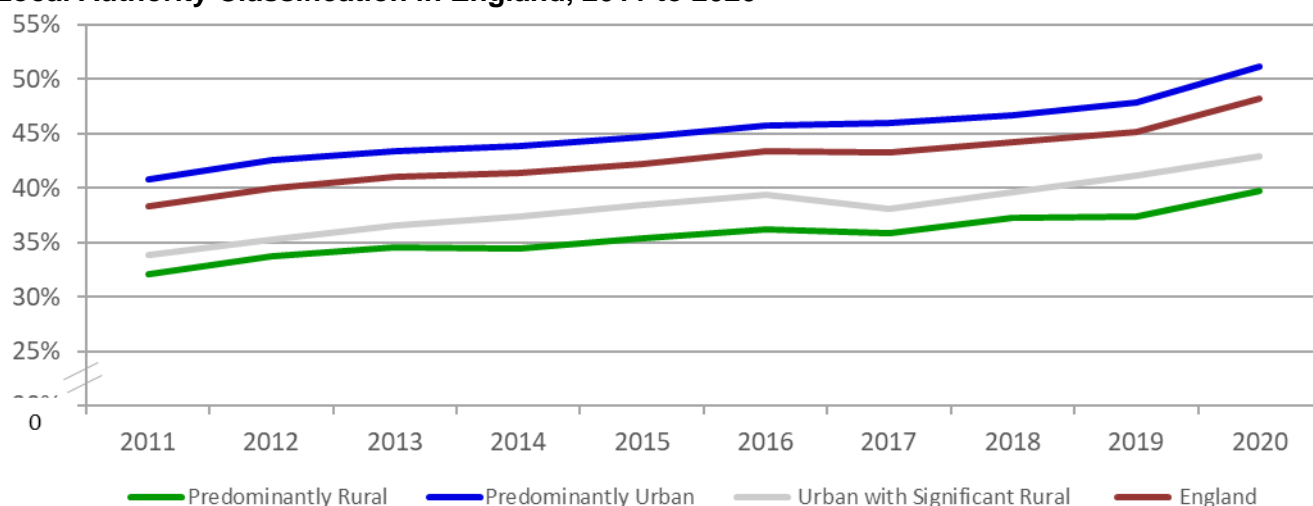
- The proportion of people with at least one qualification has increased in all areas since 2011
- Up to 2015 the proportion of people with at least one qualification was generally higher for those working in Predominantly Urban areas except for 2013 when both Predominantly Urban and Predominantly Rural 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



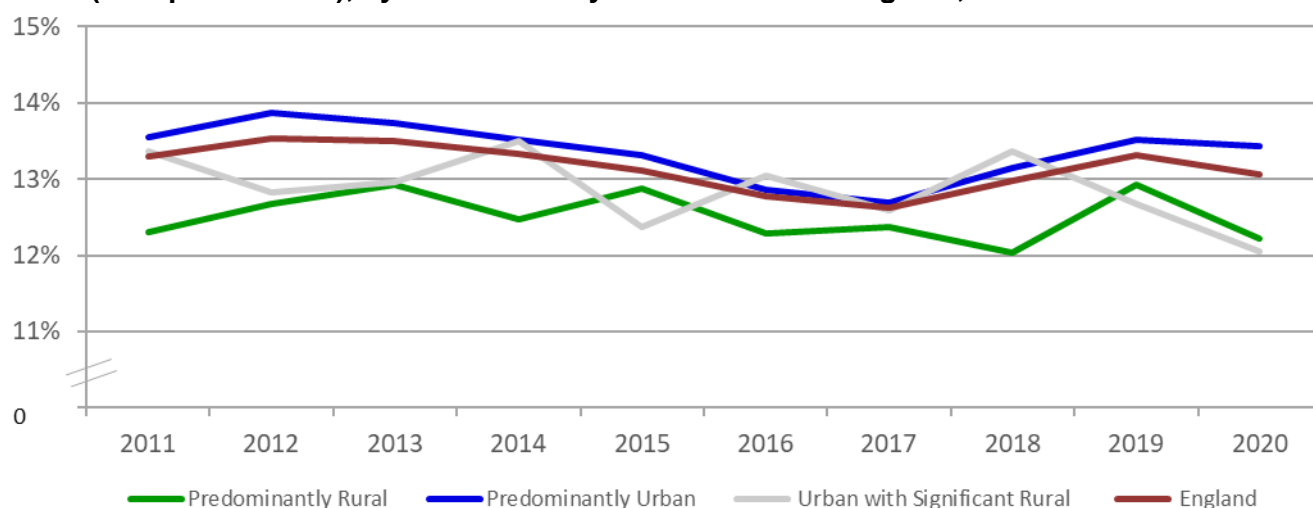
- A higher proportion of people working in Predominantly Urban areas have NVQ Level 2 or above, than people working in Predominantly Rural areas.
- In 2020 in Predominantly Rural areas the proportion was 80.5 per cent, compared with 82.5 per cent in Predominantly Urban areas.
- A table showing the proportion 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

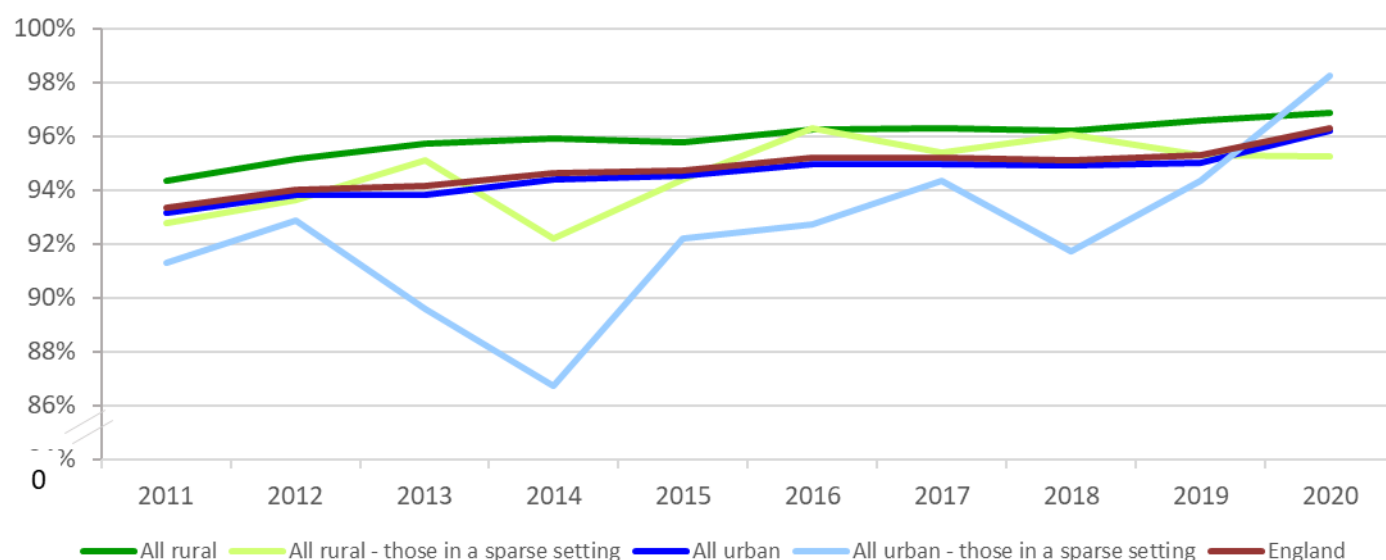


- A higher percentage of people working in urban areas received on the job training than people working in rural areas.
- In 2020 in Predominantly Urban areas the percentage receiving on the job training was 13.4 per cent compared with 12.2 per cent in Predominantly Rural areas.
- A table showing the 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

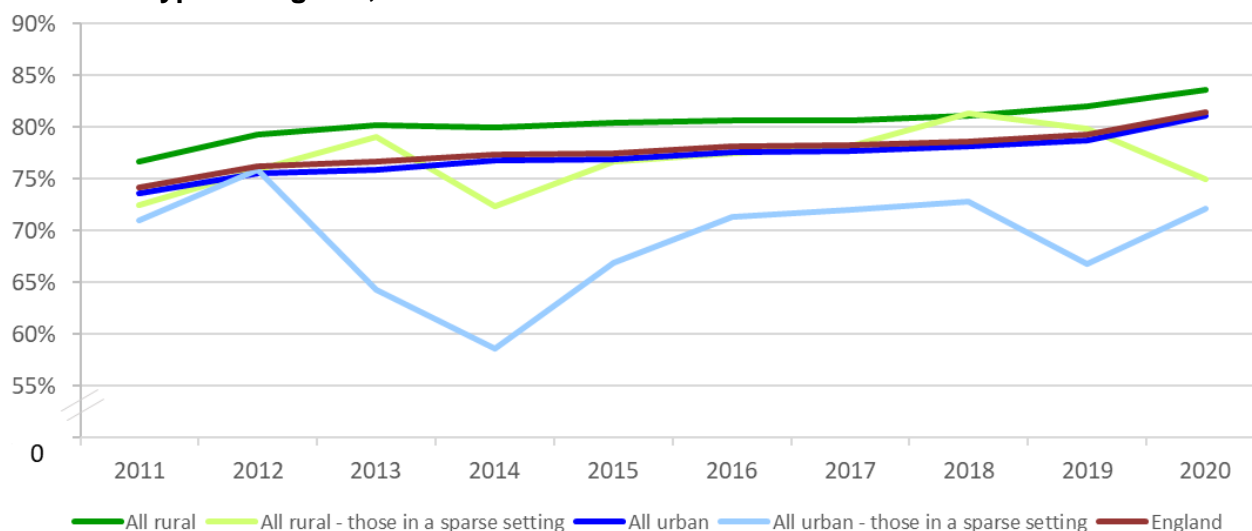
- When comparing rural and urban areas overall, the proportion of working age population with at least one qualification has been consistently highest in rural areas for the last ten years. In 2020, 96.9 per cent of working age people living in all rural areas had at least one qualification compared 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



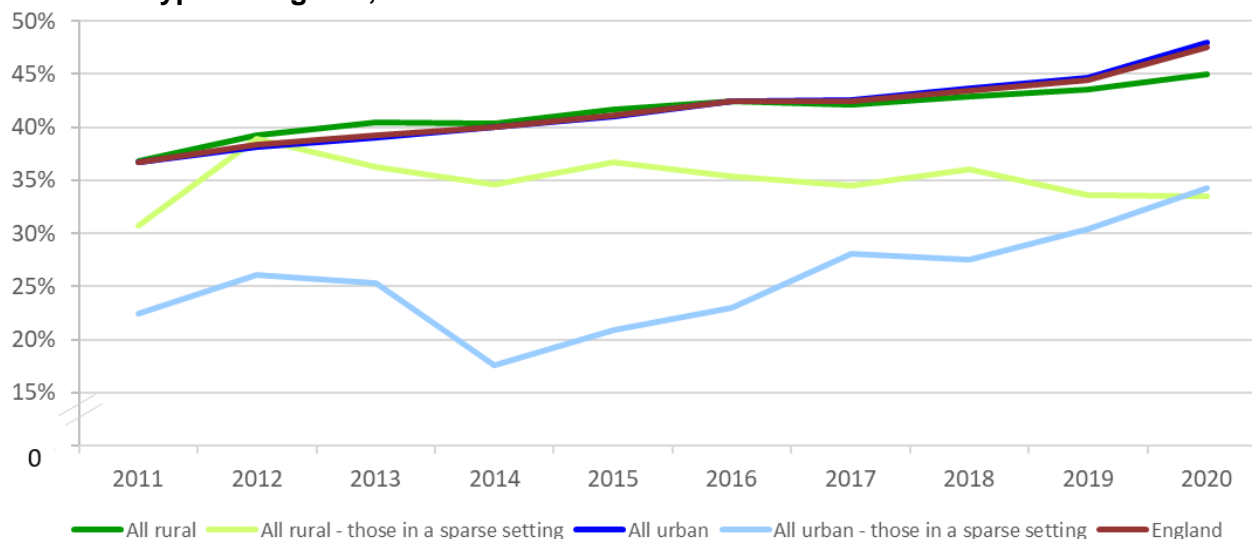
- In 2020, the proportion of the resident working age population that had at least one qualification was higher in rural areas than in urban areas overall, 96.9 per cent and 96.2 per cent respectively.
- Across all rural settlement types (excluding those in a sparse setting), the proportion of individuals 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



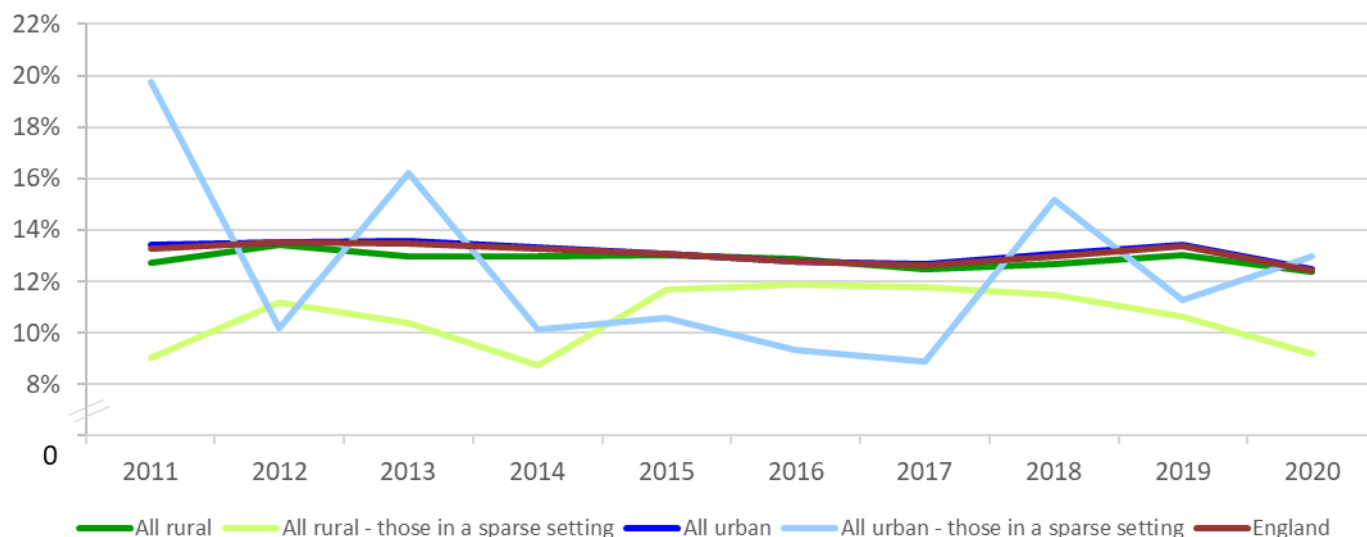
- The proportion of working age population with qualifications at NVQ Level 2 (or equivalent) and above has been consistently highest for people living in rural areas between 2011 and 2020. Those living in settlements in a sparse setting show a much greater level of fluctuation over the time period.
- 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](#).

Note: 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.