Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Government Statistical Service

Statistical Digest of Rural England:

2 - Housing

July 2024

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

rural.statistics@defra.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/defra

Cover photos

		Ward 2011	Rural-Urban Classification
TL	Helmsley marketplace	Helmsley	Rural Village and Dispersed in a sparse setting
TC	Horton-in-Ribblesdale train station with Penyghent behind	Penyghent	Rural Village and Dispersed in a sparse setting
TR	St Giles Church, Skelton	Rural West York	Rural Town and Fringe
CL	Fishing Boat, Marske-by-the-Sea with Hunt cliff in the distance	St Germain's; Saltburn	Rural Town and Fringe
CR	Thornton Force Waterfall, Ingleton Waterfalls Trail	Ingleton and Clapham	Rural Village and Dispersed in a sparse setting
BL	Farmer working the fields in Knapton	Rural West York	Rural Town and Fringe
BC	Remote pub at Ribblehead viaduct	Ingleton and Clapham	Rural Village and Dispersed in a sparse setting
BR	Glamping pod in the North York Moors	Pickering East	Rural Town and Fringe in a sparse setting

All cover photos provided by Martin Fowell.

Contents

About the Statistical Digest of Rural England

The Statistical Digest of Rural England (hereafter the Digest) is a collection of statistics on a range of social and economic topics and provides broad comparisons between Rural and Urban areas by settlement type. For more information on our classifications, including maps and diagrams explaining the classification, see Appendix 2: Defining Rural areas.

The Digest has been restructured into thematic reports and incorporates the previously separate publication the Rural Economic Bulletin.

The Digest consists of the following thematic reports:

1. Population
2. Housing
3. Health and Wellbeing
4. Communities and Households
5. Connectivity and Accessibility
6. Education, Qualifications and Training
7. Rural Economic Bulletin
8. Energy

In March 2024 the content relating to energy that was previously split across the Housing and Communities and Households chapters has been consolidated into a new Energy report. Appendix 1, shows the sub-themes within each of the 8 Digest reports. Thematic reports will be updated individually and not every report with be updated every month. The most recent updates for this theme are shown in Table 1.

In July 2024, the “House prices” section was revised to remove time series analysis and provide detail on the differences in dwelling types; it was also renamed to “Housing costs: purchases and rentals”. The “Housing stock: affordable housing” section was revised to remove time series analysis, provide detail on the differences in dwelling types, and re-order some information; statistics regarding the additions to affordable housing stock have been moved and now feature within the “Housing stock: additions” section instead. Rental affordability analysis has been removed in favour of adding rent price information into the aforementioned “Housing costs: purchases and rentals” section. Housing quality is a new section for July 2024

Table 1: Update monitor for Housing subsections

where “✔" indicates the topic has been updated, “✖" indicates the topic has not been updated, and “New” indicates a new topic with analysis not previously included within the Digest.

Section	April 2023	November 2023	February 2024	July 2024
Housing stock: age and type	New	✖	✖	✖
Housing stock: additions	✔	✖	✖	✖
Housing costs: purchases and rentals	✔	✔	✖	✔
House purchase affordability	✔	✖	✖	✔
Second and empty homes	✔	✖	✖	✖
Homelessness	✔	✖	✔	✖
Land use change for housing		New	✖	✖
Housing quality				New

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: Code of Practice for Statistics.

This publication has been compiled by the Rural Statistics Team within the Rural and Place Team in Defra:

Stephen Hall
Sarah Harriss
Beth Kerwin
Martin Fowell
rural.statistics@defra.gov.uk

There is a 2011 Census 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

Analysis of the 2021 Census will follow the release of a 2021-based Rural-Urban Classification.

Housing

This part of the Statistical Digest of Rural England focuses on Housing, and covers the following:

- housing stock by age and type (Section A)
- housing completions, transactions, and additions for residential purposes (Section B)
- costs for buying or renting a property (Section C)
- house purchase affordability (Section D)
- second homes and empty dwellings (Section E)
- people who are homeless, in priority need or “sleeping rough” (Section F)
- land use change statistics for new residential addresses (Section G)
- housing quality (Section H)

The key findings from this chapter are summarised with the following set of headline clouds:

Housing stock: age and type - key findings

Almost half of homes in rural areas are detached

1 in every 14 rural homes is a flat; for urban homes it is closer to 1 in every 4

Over 1 million rural homes are pre-1919

Proportionally the amount of post-1990 housing is similar in rural and urban areas

Housing stock: additions - key findings

More new Rural dwellings were started in 2021/22 than in any of the last 15 years

Rural housing completion rates are higher in the private sector; than in the social sector

The more rural the area, the higher the proportion of new builds that are detached and the lower the proportion that are flats

Proportionally, the housing stock is growing faster in Rural areas than in Urban areas

9 out of 10 additions to the housing stock in Rural areas are new builds

Housing costs: purchases and rentals - key findings

For semi-detached or terraced properties sold, Bristol is the most expensive Urban area outside of London

Average detached properties sold in Predominantly Rural areas were around £15,000 more expensive than in Urban areas outside of London

A studio/1-bedroom property in London was typically more expensive to rent than a property with 4+ bedrooms in Rural areas

The North East of England typically has the lowest average property purchase prices overall

1 in 3 Predominantly Rural areas had an average rent price of between £766 and £900

1 in 5 Predominantly Rural areas had an average rent price of less than £650 per calendar month

"Harpenden and Berkhamsted" is the most expensive Predominantly Rural area in which to buy a house for all dwelling types

House purchase affordability - key findings

In around 1 in 5 Predominantly Rural areas, median house prices were more than 12 times higher than earnings

In 1 in 4 Predominantly Rural areas, median house prices were up to 8 times higher than median earnings

For all property types, homes tend to be less affordable to buy in Predominantly Rural areas than anywhere else outside of London

Homes are generally more affordable to buy in the North of England than they are in the South

Second and empty homes - key findings

Almost 100 thousand second homes in Predominantly Rural areas

3 in every 100 homes are second homes in Predominantly Rural coastal areas

1 in 10 homes in the North Norfolk Local Authority is a second home

Almost 200 thousand rural homes are second homes or are empty

Proportionally there are most empty homes in the North East and fewest in the South East

Homelessness - key findings

Homeless rate in Rural areas is less than half the rate in London!

Proportionally more homeless Rural households in 2022/23 than in 2018/19

1 in every 227 Rural households were homeless in 2022/23

Over the last decade levels of rough sleeping in Rural areas have been lower and more stable than in Urban areas

Levels of rough sleeping are lower than immediately prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in both Rural and Urban areas

Land use change for housing - key findings

There were almost double the number of new residential addresses per population in Rural areas than Urban areas

Rural areas account for 29% of new residential addresses in England but only 18% of England's population

More than half of new Rural addresses were on land previously in agricultural use

In Rural areas, around 2 in 3 new addresses were on previously non-developed land

Housing quality - key findings

1 in 5 rural homes fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard

The proportion of rural homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard halved over the period 2008 to 2021

The more rural the area the lower the proportion of homes that meet the Decent Homes Standard

It is more likely that rural homes provide insufficient thermal comfort for occupants than urban homes

More than one in ten rural homes fail to meet minimum standard set under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System

4 in every 100 rural homes are prone to damp compared to 6 in every 100 urban homes

A. Housing stock: age and type

In 2020, there were proportionally more rural homes that were either detached or pre-1919 than in urban areas and these two characteristics have the potential to make homes less energy efficient and therefore harder to keep adequately warm.

Summary

It is important to understand the distribution of the housing stock in rural and urban areas and how they differ because this provides the necessary context to understand some of the reasons behind the findings in later sections such as the sections covering house prices, housing affordability and housing energy efficiency.

At the last census there was 23 million homes in England and 31% of them were semi-detached, but in the most Rural areas (Rural Villages and Rural Hamlets) the majority of properties were detached. Also, the proportion of properties that were flats decreased with increased rurality.

In 2020 there was a much higher proportion of ‘detached’ properties in rural areas than in urban areas (49% versus 16%) and a much lower proportion of ‘flats’ in rural areas than in urban areas (7% versus 26%). The average urban terrace was 50% longer than the average rural terrace, and so had proportionally more mid-terraced properties which, with all other things being equal, are more energy efficient.

There are over 1 million Pre-1919 homes in rural areas, in 2020 this accounted for 28% of rural homes; in urban areas only 18% of homes were Pre-1919. Whilst there was a similar proportion of Pre-1945 homes in rural and urban areas, it is the Pre-1919 homes that are more likely to have features that are harder to update and improve from an energy efficiency perspective, for example solid walls. Post-1990 properties are likely to be the most energy efficient and there was a similar proportion of these in rural and urban areas in 2020.

Housing stock in 2011

The 2011 Census provides detailed Rural-Urban information on the stock of housing by type. More recent data can be compared against this to determine whether the addition of new housing has changed the overall housing stock profile.

In 2011, there were just under 23 million residential properties in England (Table A-1). The most common property type was 'semi-detached' (31%). There was a similar number of 'flats' and 'detached' properties with both accounting for 22% of the residential properties in England.

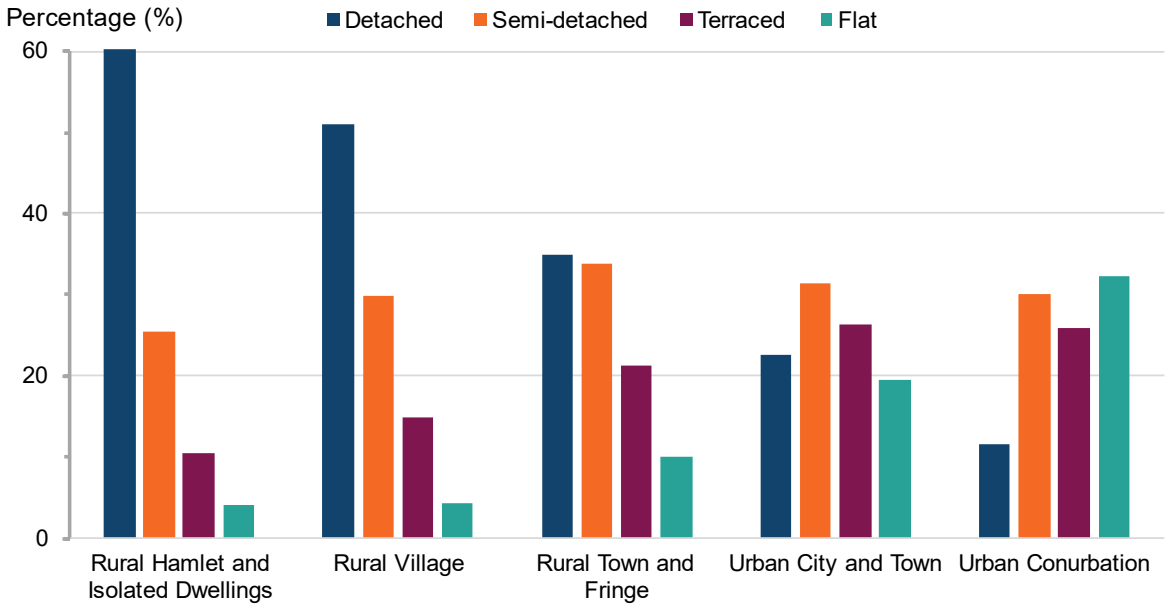
Table A-1: Number (millions) and proportion (%) of residential properties, by housing type, Census 2011

Property type	Total number	Proportion
Detached	5.1	22%
Semi-detached	7.1	31%
Terraced	5.6	25%
Flats	5.1	22%
All properties	**22.9**	**100%**

Figure A-1 shows that in 2011 the majority of dwellings in both Rural Villages and Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings were 'detached' properties. The proportion of dwellings which were 'flats' decreases as the settlement becomes more rural, falling from 32% in Urban Conurbations to only 4% in both Rural Villages and Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings. A similar, but less pronounced pattern is observed for 'terraced' housing. 'Semi-detached' properties are marginally more common in Rural Town and Fringe areas (34%) than in other areas.

Figure A-1: Percentage of residential properties, by building type, by Census Output Area Rural-Urban Classification, in England, at 2011 Census (Note A-2)

The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns. The clusters are presented in order of rurality with the most Rural on the left and most Urban on the right.



The English Housing Survey (EHS) classification areas

The English Housing Survey (EHS) is a national survey commissioned by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) that has been conducted since 1967. It collects information about people's housing circumstances and the condition of housing in England. One of the components of the survey is a physical inspection of a sub-set of the properties within the main survey sample.

The EHS does not provide results for the Rural-Urban Classification definitions used elsewhere within this document. As explained in English Housing Survey Surveyors' handbook, the surveyor decides whether the area is either urban or rural based on the immediate area surrounding the dwelling. Surveyors are instructed to consider the area as either urban (codes 1 to 3) if it is a built-up area such as a city or a town (either large or small) or rural (codes 4 to 6) for very small towns and villages and other rural type locations. The specific names associated with these 6 codes are: 1 Commercial City/Town Centre; 2 Urban; 3 Suburban residential; 4 Rural residential; 5 Village centre; and 6 Rural. A description of these 6 categories is included in Note A-4.

This EHS rural and urban classification system is strongly reliant on the perception of the surveyor conducting each dwelling survey. The Official Statistics Rural Urban classification has a precise definition linked to population (see Appendix 2: Defining Rural areas for details on this definition) and leaves no room for interpretation. Whereas this looser EHS definition has the potential, in certain circumstances, to result in different classifications with different surveyors.

Housing stock by type in 2020

The Digest uses data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) to assess the diversity of the housing stock by type in 2020. Like the Census data, the EHS data (Figure A-2) show that there is:

- a much higher proportion of 'detached' properties in rural areas than in urban areas (49% versus 16%);
- a much lower proportion of 'flats' in rural areas than in urban areas (7% versus 26%); and
- a similar proportion of 'semi-detached' properties in both rural and urban areas.

In absolute numbers, this equates to 2 million 'detached' homes and 1 million 'semi-detached' homes in rural areas in 2020 (Table A-2).

EHS data distinguishes between end-terraced and mid-terraced properties. As Figure A-2 shows the proportion of properties that are end-terraced in rural and urban areas is similar, but the proportion of properties that are mid-terraced is more than double in urban areas than it is in rural areas. 20% of the properties in urban areas are mid-terraced compared to 9% in rural areas, suggesting that terraces tend to be longer in urban areas.

In urban areas there are 2.2 million end-terrace properties (Table A-2) and therefore approximately 1.1 million terraces; and by extension with 360,000 end-terrace properties in rural areas there are around 180 thousand terraces.

With 3.9 million urban mid terrace properties and the 350 thousand rural mid-terrace properties there is an average terrace length (including the end-terraces) of 5.5 houses in urban areas and 3.9 houses in rural areas. In other words, the average urban terrace is 50% longer than the average rural terrace. All other things being equal, a mid-terraced property will be more energy efficient that an end-terraced property simply by having an adjacent property on either side of it.

Figure 3.5 of the DESNZ / BEIS fuel poverty statistics publication shows that a higher proportion of those living End-terrace properties are in fuel poverty than those living mid-terrace properties (Note A-6).

Figure A-2: Percentage of residential properties, by building type and area type in England in 2020 from the English Housing Survey (Note A-4, Note A-5)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns.

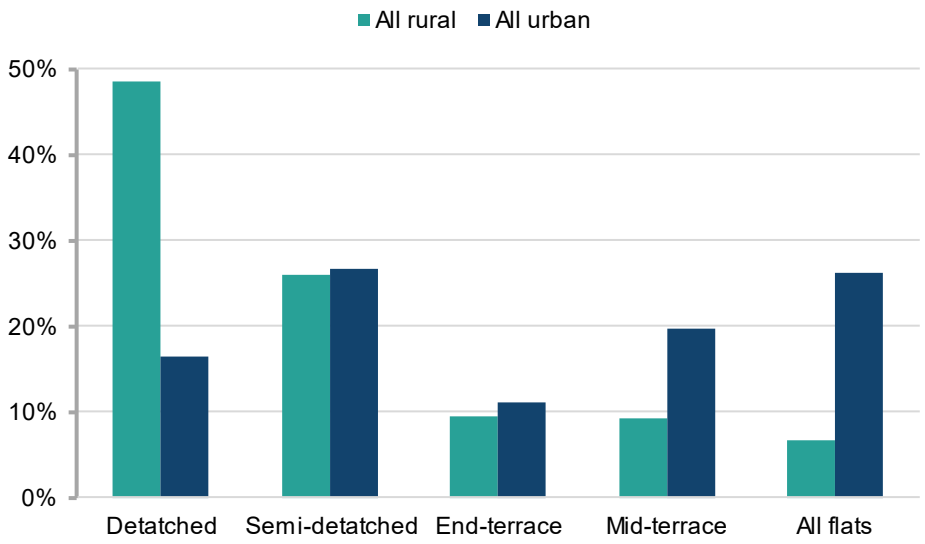


Table A-2: Number (millions) of residential properties, by building type and area type in England in 2020 from the English Housing Survey (Note A-4, Note A-5)

Property type	Detached	Semi-detached	End-terrace	Mid-terrace	All houses	All flats
All rural	1.85	0.99	0.36	0.35	**3.54**	**0.25**
All urban	3.23	5.28	2.19	3.87	**14.57**	**5.17**
England	**5.08**	**6.27**	**2.55**	**4.22**	**18.12**	**5.42**

Housing stock by age in 2020

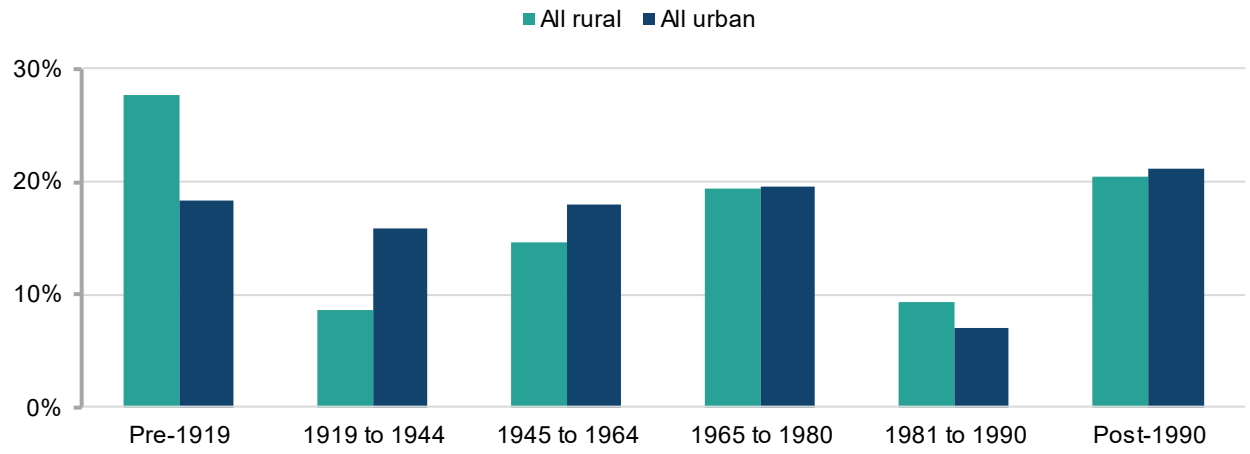
The EHS collects information on the age of the properties. At the physical survey, the properties are assigned to one of six age bands (Table A-3). There are over 1 million Pre-1919 homes in rural areas. This accounts for 28% of rural residential properties, whereas in urban areas only 18% of the residential properties are Pre-1919 (Figure A-3).

Figure A-3 also shows that there is a greater proportion of urban properties (16%) dating from the period 1919-1945 than rural properties (9%). There is a similar proportion of residential properties originating from the periods 1965 to 1980 and post-1990 in both rural and urban areas but there is a marginally higher proportion in rural areas that date from the period 1981 to 1990 than in urban areas (Figure A-3).

Table A-3: Number (millions) of residential properties, by building age band and area type in England in 2020 from the English Housing Survey (Note A-4, Note A-5)

Property age	Pre-1919	1919 to 1944	1945 to 1964	1965 to 1980	1981 to 1990	Post-1990
All rural	1.05	0.32	0.55	0.74	0.35	0.78
All urban	3.63	3.12	3.55	3.87	1.39	4.17
England	**4.68**	**3.45**	**4.11**	**4.60**	**1.75**	**4.95**

Figure A-3: Percentage of residential properties, by building age band and area type in England in 2020 from the English Housing Survey (Note A-4, Note A-5)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns.



It is a commonly held belief that there is a higher proportion of old, and therefore inefficient to heat, homes in rural areas than in urban areas. Whether or not this is true depends entirely on how one defines old homes. As a starting point we could define Pre-1945 residential properties as 'old' since these were at least 75 years old at the time of the 2020 EHS. The remaining properties can then be divided into two further categories: (1) 1945 to 1990 (30 to 75 years old) for the mid-aged properties and (2) Post-1990 (less than 30 years old) for the most modern residential properties. Doing so shows that there is a slightly higher proportion of 'Old' homes in rural areas than in urban areas, but the difference is only 2 percentage points (Figure A-4). Using this 3-tier classification leads to a slightly higher proportion of 1945 to 1990 properties in urban areas than rural areas whilst there is a similar proportion of Post-1990 properties in both rural and urban areas.

An alternative approach is to have a 4-tier scale and consider only those buildings that are more than 100 years old (Pre-1919) as 'Old'. This approach has been applied in Figure A-5, and it shows that rural areas have a higher proportion of Pre-1919 residential buildings than urban areas. Figure A-5 also shows that urban areas have a much higher proportion of 1919 to 1964 residential buildings than rural areas, whilst the proportion of 1965 to 1990 residential buildings is slightly higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

In summary, modern buildings usually offer the highest energy efficiency standards (unless older ones have been significantly improved since construction) and the proportion of these in rural and urban areas is similar. There is a similar proportion of Pre-1945 homes in rural and urban areas, but rural areas have a higher proportion of Pre-1919 homes; and these are more likely to have

features that are harder to update and improve from an energy efficiency perspective such as solid walls. Figure 3.4 of the DESNZ / BEIS fuel poverty statistics publication shows that a higher proportion of those living properties with Solid uninsulated walls are in fuel poverty than those living mid-terrace properties (Note A-6). Section G. Energy Performance Certificates discusses the energy efficiency of homes in more detail.

Figure A-4: Percentage of residential properties, by 3-tier building age band and area type in England in 2020 from the English Housing Survey (Note A-4, Note A-5)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns.

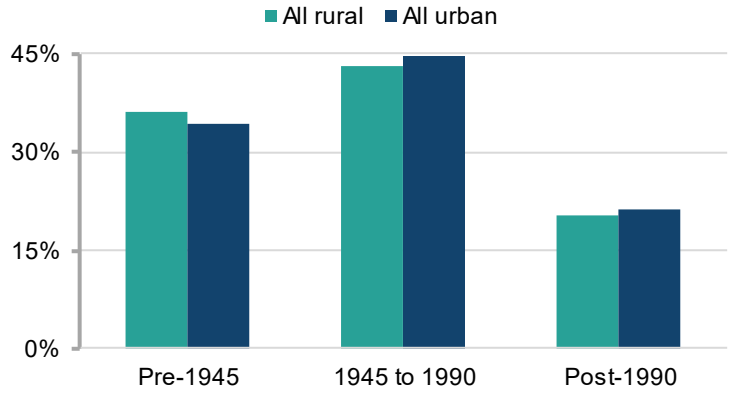
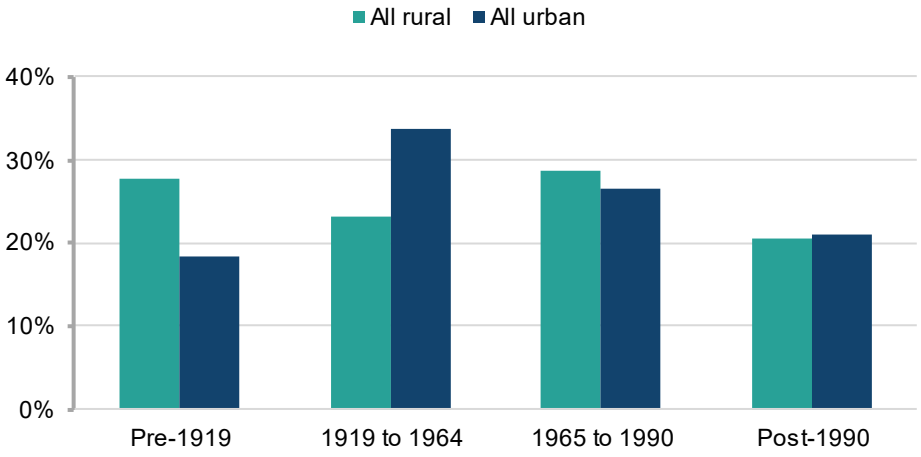


Figure A-5: Percentage of residential properties, by 4-tier building age band and area type in England in 2020 from the English Housing Survey (Note A-4, Note A-5)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns.



Housing stock: age and type - explanatory notes

- **Note A-1**

A table showing the data expressed in Figure A-1 is available in the housing supplementary data tables.

- **Note A-2**

"Urban Conurbation" refers to the combination of two categories within the Rural-Urban Classification: "Urban with Minor Conurbation" and "Urban with Major Conurbation".

- **Note A-3**

The analysis on 2011 Census is drawn from the 2011 Census results for Rural England publication.

- **Note A-4**

The English Housing Survey collects data in 2 ways. The first is an interview with the household and the second is a physical survey of a sub-sample of the properties. As part of the physical survey an assessment of the nature of the surrounding area is made.

As explained in the English Housing Survey Surveyors' handbook, prior to coding the nature of the area, surveyors need to decide whether the area is either urban or rural. This assessment is based on their perception at the time of the inspection, it is not based on pre-populated information using the Rural-Urban Classification for the Output Area where the property is located.

Surveyors are instructed to consider the area as either **urban** (codes 1 to 3) if it is a built-up area such as a city or a town (either large or small) or **rural** (codes 4 to 6) for very small towns and villages and other rural type locations. They then assess the area surrounding the dwelling and code it from 1 to 6.

1. **Commercial City/Town Centre** – this is the area that would constitute part/all of the centre of a city or town. Areas do not have to be run down to be coded as city or town centre. It is likely that these areas will have a high percentage of commercial properties such as shops and businesses.
2. **Urban** – this is the area around the core of towns and cities, and also older urban areas which have been swallowed up by a metropolis. Areas would be largely but not exclusively residential.
3. **Suburban residential** – this is the outer area of towns or cities, and would include large, planned housing estates on the outskirts of towns or larger areas of older residential stock.
4. **Rural residential** – these can be free standing residential areas or suburban areas of villages, often meeting the housing needs of people who work in nearby towns and cities.
5. **Village centre** – these are traditional English villages or the old heart of villages which have been suburbanised.
6. **Rural** – these areas are predominantly rural e.g., agricultural with isolated dwellings or small hamlets.

- **Note A-5**

The English Housing Survey (EHS) does not define rurality according to the RUC, in uses a looser definition as explained in Note A-4. Therefore, where this data source has been used in this section, we refer to rural and urban instead of Rural and Urban to denote that these are not using the strict RUC definition. To minimise the inconsistency between figures collected according to the EHS definitions and those collected according to the RUC we only analyse EHS data in terms of all rural (categories 4 to 6) and all urban (categories 1 to 3) rather than using the 6 detailed categories

- **Note A-6**

Chapter 3 of the DESNZ / BEIS fuel poverty statistics provides a more detailed analysis looking at fuel poverty by dwelling characteristics such as size, type, age and fuel type
www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics

B. Housing stock: additions

In 2021/22 there was a much higher rate of housing completions in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (10.3 dwelling completions per 1,000 households compared to 5.4 dwelling completions per 1,000 households) and in Rural areas more than half of the new builds where detached homes.

Summary

The availability of housing is a challenge in both Rural and Urban areas, and to understand the development of new housing we track housing completions and the net additions to the housing stock.

In 2021/22, there were 11.3 permanent dwellings started per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas compared to 5.4 per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas. There was also a higher rate of completions in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (10.3 dwelling completions per 1,000 households compared to 5.4 dwelling completions per 1,000 households). The dwellings completed per 1,000 households had been growing at a faster rate throughout the 2010s until the COVID-19 pandemic hit, when a sharp downturn was experienced, before the rate of completions returned to pre-pandemic levels in Predominantly Rural areas (but not in Predominantly Urban areas).

In 2021/22, there were 60,900 net new dwellings in Predominantly Rural areas (11.5 per 1,000 households) and 134,400 net new dwellings (8.4 per 1,000 households) in Predominantly Urban areas. New-build dwelling completions accounted for 91% of net additions to the housing stock in Predominantly Rural areas compared with 86% in Predominantly Urban areas. Over the last decade there have been consistently more net new dwellings in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas, although net additions in Predominantly Rural areas have fallen since 2018/19.

In 2021/22 there were 3.2 additions to affordable housing stock per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 2.1 additions per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas. In each year over the period 2017/18 to 2021/22 the additions to the affordable housing stock per 1,000 households were greater in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas.

In Rural areas, 57% of new-build residential transactions in 2019 were ‘detached’ properties and only 5% were flats. By contrast, in Urban areas the proportion of new-build residential transactions that were ‘flats’ and ‘detached’ was similar and stood at 34% and 32% respectively. The property registration process can take time for new build properties; so we have presented 2019 figures rather than the more recent provisional 2021 figures to account for this lag.

Housing starts and completions

In order to compare levels of house building, comparisons are made based on the number of households in the area. See Note B-1 for more information.

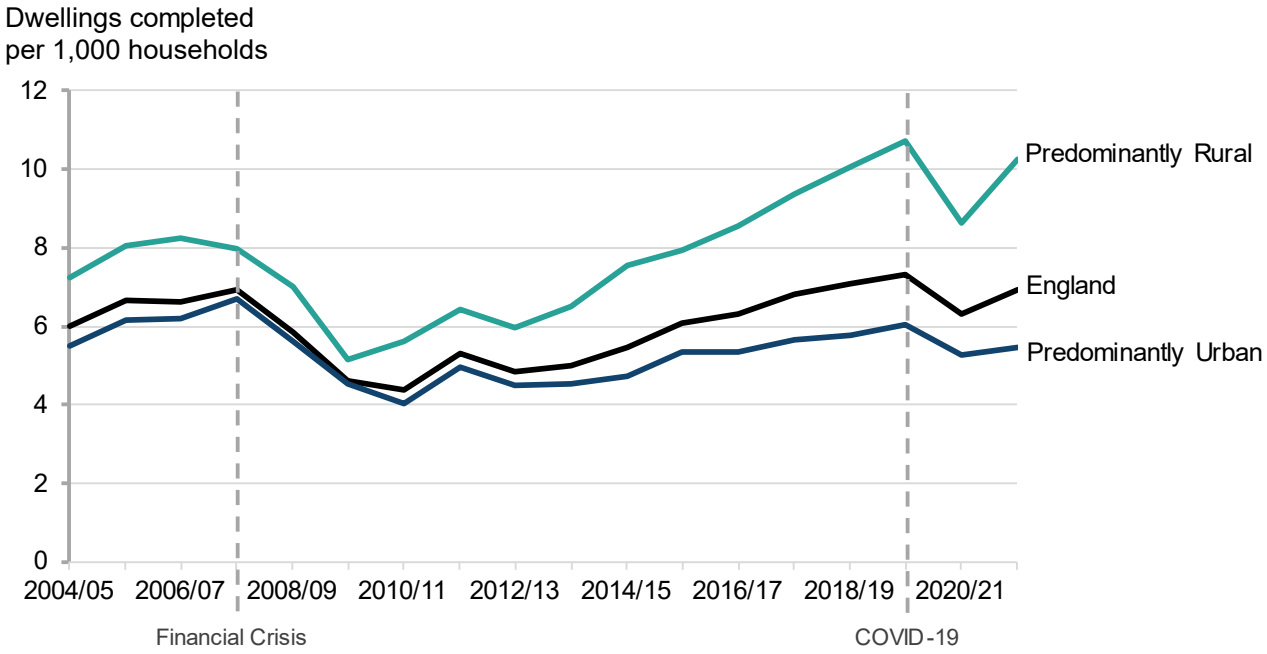
More permanent dwellings were **started** in 2021/22 than in previous years, resulting not only in a recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the highest rate of dwelling starts since data began (2004/05). In 2021/22, there were 11.3 permanent dwellings started per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas, and 5.4 per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas (see Table B-1). A decline in both housing completions and starts seen previously reflects restrictions imposed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table B-1: Rate of permanent dwelling starts per 1,000 households, by broad Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2020/21 and 2021/22 (Note B-10)

Rural-Urban Classification	2020/21	2021/22	Change	
Predominantly Rural	8.5	11.3	2.8	↑
Predominantly Urban	4.5	5.4	0.9	↑
England	**5.7**	**7.1**	**1.4**	↑

More new dwellings are **completed** per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas, as shown in Figure B-1. In 2021/22 there were 10.3 dwelling completions per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas; this compares with 5.4 completions per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas.

Figure B-1: Permanent dwellings completed per 1,000 households, by Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2004/05 to 2021/22 (Note B-10)



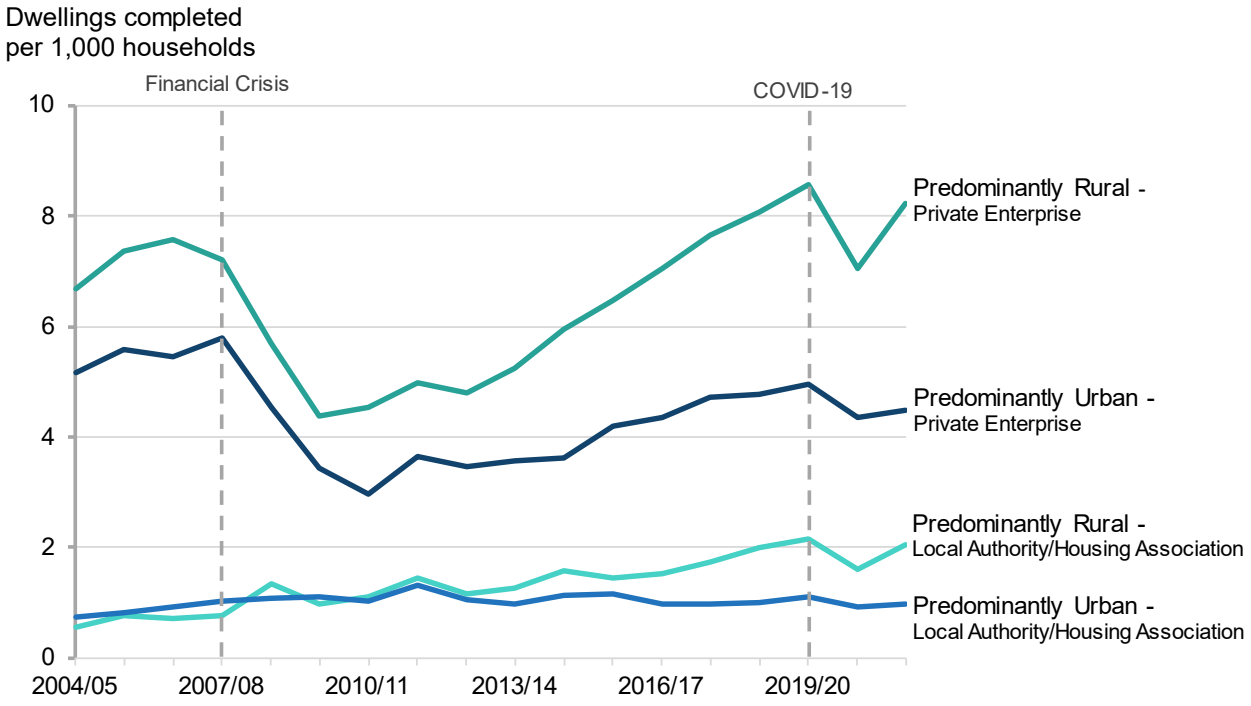
The rate of permanent dwelling completions per 1,000 households was stable until 2007/08 but dropped following the financial crisis in 2008. Rates were recovering from 2009/10 but declined sharply between 2019/20 and 2020/21 - more so in Predominantly Rural areas (falling by 2.1 dwellings per 1,000 households) than in Predominantly Urban areas (falling by 0.8 dwellings per 1,000 households). The rate of completions then quickly recovered between 2020/21 and 2021/22,

increasing by 1.6 dwellings per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas, and by 0.2 dwellings per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas.

In absolute terms this translates to 7,000 more dwelling completions in 2021/22 than in 2020/21 in Predominantly Rural areas, and 3,000 more in Predominantly Urban areas. The rate of completions has returned to pre-pandemic levels in Predominantly Rural areas, but still falls short 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 showed a return to the levels prior to the downturn as seen in Figure B-2. Rates declined sharply between 2019/20 and 2020/21 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, they began to recover in 2021/22 with an increase of 1.2 completions per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas. Nevertheless, the completion rates seen in 2021/22 was still lower than those in 2019/20 (pre-pandemic) across all areas and types of enterprise.

Figure B-2: Permanent Private Enterprise and Local Authority / Housing Association dwellings completed per 1,000 households, by Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2004/05 to 2021/22 (Note B-10)



In 2021/22, 8.2 dwellings were completed by private enterprise per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 4.5 per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas. In 2021/22, 2.0 dwellings were completed by Local Authorities or housing associations per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 1.0 per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas.

Dwelling completions in the private sector were affected more by the COVID-19 pandemic than completions for Local Authorities/housing associations in both Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas. The decrease in the completion rate between 2019/20 and 2020/21 was sharper for Predominantly Rural than Predominantly Urban areas for both private sector builds and Local Authority / housing association builds. See Note B-2 for more information regarding the data used in this section.

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. See Note B-4 for more information.

In 2021/22, there were 60,900 net new dwellings in Predominantly Rural areas, which was 11.5 per 1,000 households. In Predominantly Urban areas there were 134,400 net new dwellings in the same year, which was 8.4 per 1,000 households.

New-build dwelling completions accounted for 91% of net additions to the housing stock in Predominantly Rural areas in 2020/21 (Figure B-3: top chart), compared with 86% in Predominantly Urban areas (Figure B-3: bottom chart). A further 7% of net additions came from change of use of buildings in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 11% of such net additions in Predominantly Urban areas.

Figure B-3: Proportion of net additions arising from new build, conversions and change of use between 2017/18 and 2021/22 for Predominantly Rural areas (top chart) and Predominantly Urban areas (bottom chart) (Note B-10)

The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the stacks in the bars

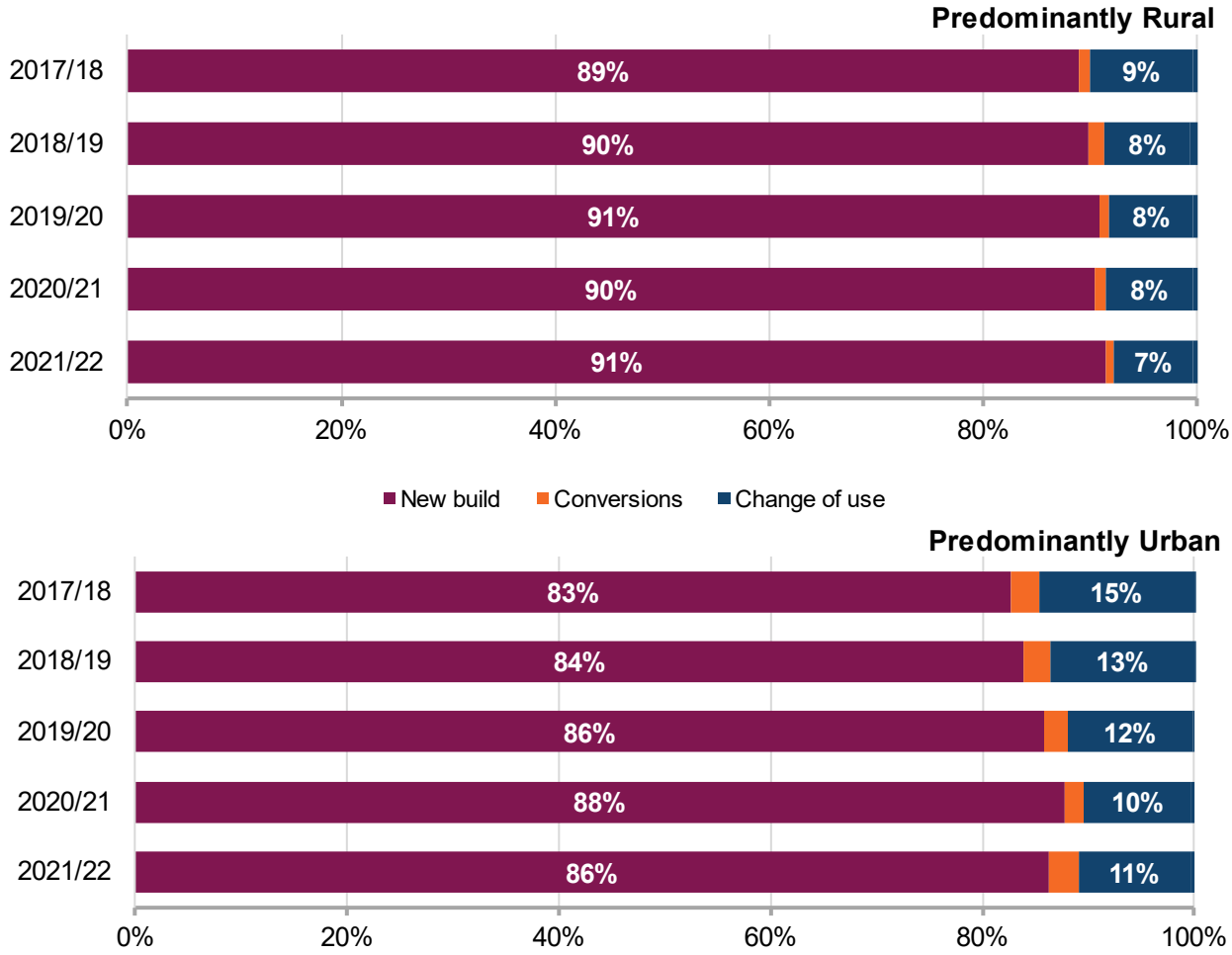


Table B-2 shows the breakdown of housing gains and losses in 2021/22 based on new builds, conversions, change of use and demolitions. New-build dwelling completions per households in Predominantly Rural areas are higher than in Predominantly Urban areas. In 2021/22 there were 10.7 new-build dwelling completions per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas,

compared with 7.4 in Predominantly Urban areas. In 2021/22, the net number of dwellings arising from change of use in Predominantly Rural areas was 0.9 per 1,000 households – the same as in Predominantly Urban areas.

Table B-2: Net additions to housing stock per 1,000 households, by broad Rural-Urban Classification, 2021/22 (Note B-10)

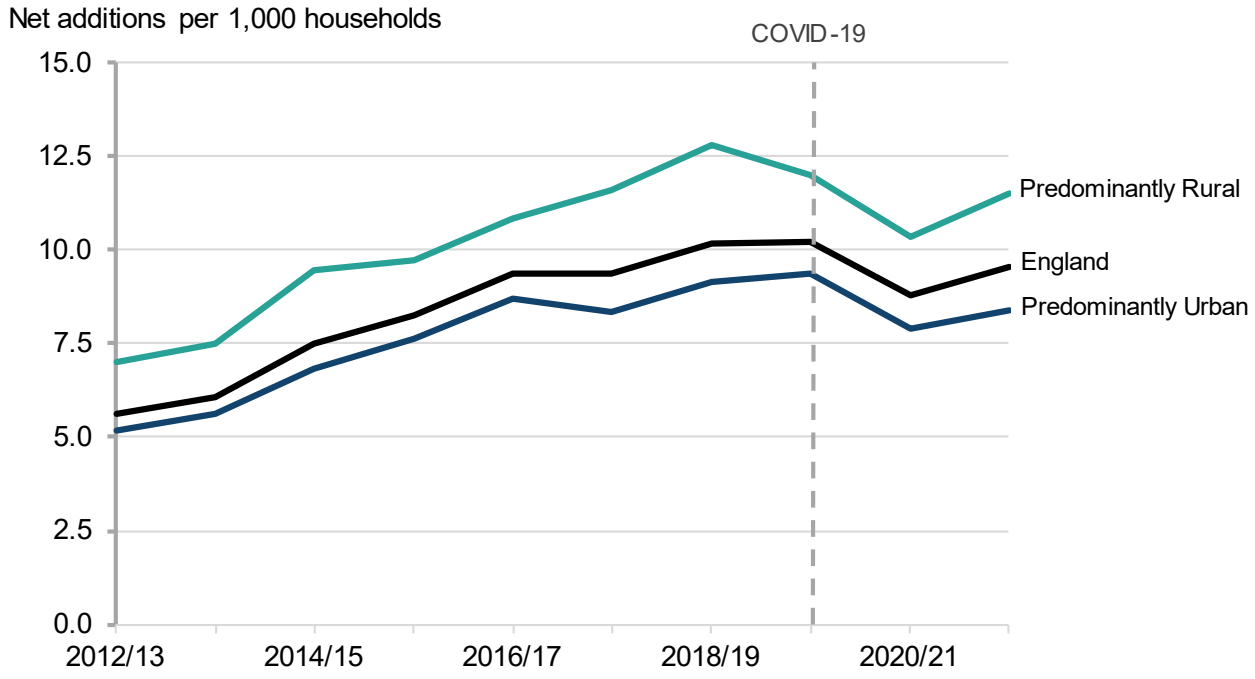
Rural-Urban Classification	New builds	Conversions	Change of use	Demolitions	Overall changes
Predominantly Rural	10.7	0.1	0.9	0.2	**11.5**
Predominantly Urban	7.4	0.2	0.9	0.2	**8.4**
England	**8.6**	**0.2**	**0.9**	**0.2**	**9.6**

There were consistently more net new dwellings in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas between 2012/12 and 2021/22.

In all areas, the rate of net additions to housing stock was highest in 2018/19 and 2019/20, and then fell in 2020/21 due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. A partial recovery was seen in 2021/22 , as shown in Figure B-4 (although the rates did not return to pre-pandemic levels).

In Predominantly Rural areas, the rate of net additions was highest in 2018/19 at 12.8 per 1,000 households in 2018/19. Following this, rates decreased to 10.3 per 1,000 households in 2020/21, before increasing again to 11.5 per 1,000 households in 2021/22; this is an increase of 1.2 net new dwellings per 1,000 households between 2020/21 and 2021/22. Predominantly Urban areas saw similar trends, but instead peaked in 2019/20 with 9.3 net new dwellings per 1,000 households. In 2021/22, the rate of net additions in Predominantly Urban areas was 8.4 per 1,000 households.

Figure B-4: Overall net additions to housing stock, by broad Rural-Urban Classification, 2012/13 to 2021/22 (Note B-10)



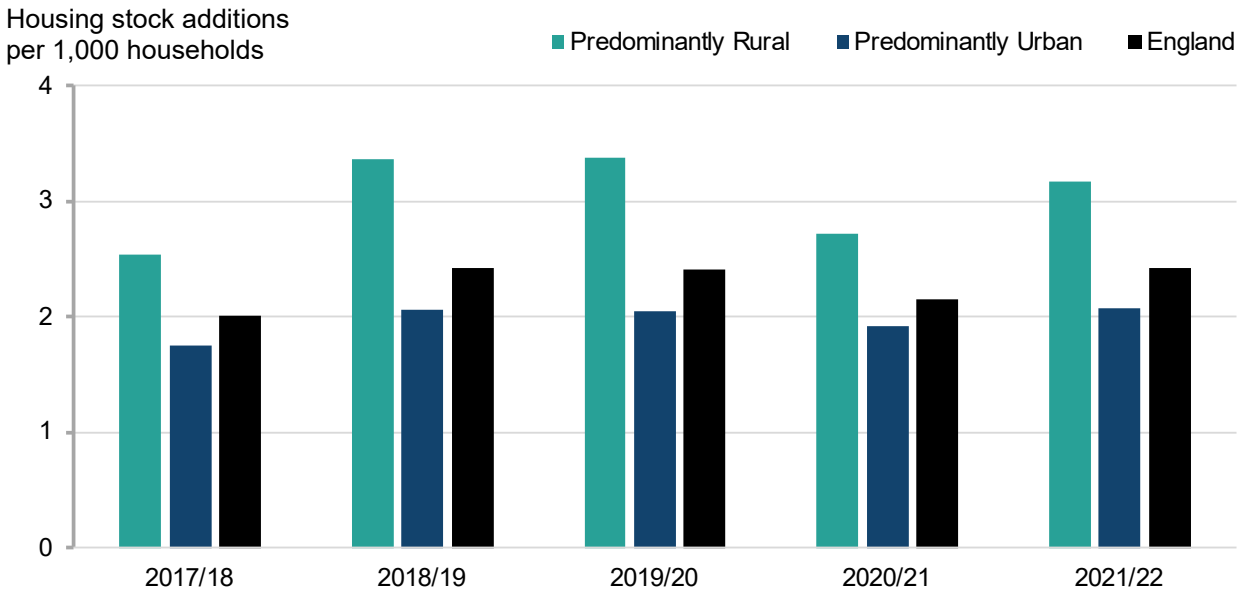
Additions to affordable housing stock

In this section, affordable housing refers to housing units provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market (Note B-11). This definition is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, published 27 March 2012 (Note B-12). Affordable housing can be affordable rented housing (where rent is less than 80% of market rate), London affordable rented housing (rent is set by the Greater London Authority), 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).

In 2021/22 there were 3.2 additions to affordable housing stock per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 2.1 additions per 1,000 households in Predominantly Urban areas. This is shown in Figure B-5. In each year over the period 2017/18 to 2021/22 the additions to the affordable housing stock per 1,000 households were greater in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas; the largest difference was in 2019/20, where there were 1.3 more additions per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas.

In 2021/22, the total number of additions to affordable housing stock were 16,200 in Predominantly Rural areas (compared with 12,550 in 2017/18) and 33,000 in Predominantly Urban areas (compared with 26,670 in 2017/18).

Figure B-5: Additions to affordable housing stock per 1,000 households, by Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2017/18 to 2021/22 (Note B-10 Note B-13)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns



Notes:

- 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.

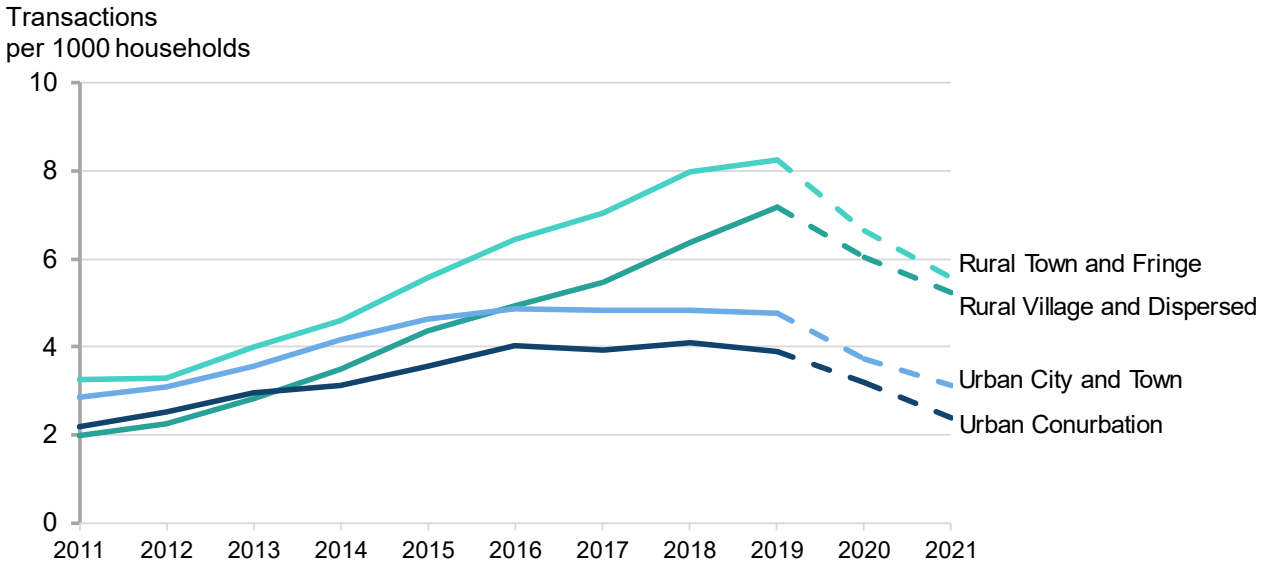
Residential housing transactions

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 (Note B-7). 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 covers the number of new-build transactions, as well as the proportion of new-build transactions by housing type / the change in the number of transactions by housing type over time. The underlying data are available for small geographical areas with a population of 5,000 to 7,200 people and are classified using the Rural-Urban Classification (Note B-5).

In 2019 there were 8.2 new-build residential transactions per 1,000 households in Rural Town and Fringe, compared with 3.9 in Urban Conurbations (Note B-6). The provisional figures for 2021 show that there were 5.6 new-build residential transactions per 1,000 households in Rural Town and Fringe areas, and 5.2 per 1,000 households in Rural Village and Dispersed areas; however, these values are subject to upward revision due to the ongoing registration process (Note B-7).

The number of new-build residential transactions per 1,000 households has increased in all areas between 2011 and 2018. Between 2012 and 2019 the number of new-build residential transactions has increased more in Rural areas than in Urban areas each year, as shown in Figure B-6.

Figure B-6: Total number of residential transactions of new-builds, per 1,000 households, by Middle Super Output Area Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2011 to 2021
Totals for residential transactions in more recent years are provisional (Note B-7), and have been indicated with a dashed line where revisions may occur.



Residential housing transactions can be broken down by type; in 2019, a larger proportion of new-build housing transactions were for ‘detached’ and ‘semi-detached’ houses in Rural areas, as well as a smaller proportion of ‘flats’, than in Urban areas. This is shown in Figure B-7.

In Rural areas overall, 57% of new-build residential transactions were ‘detached’ properties in 2019, compared to 32% in Urban areas.

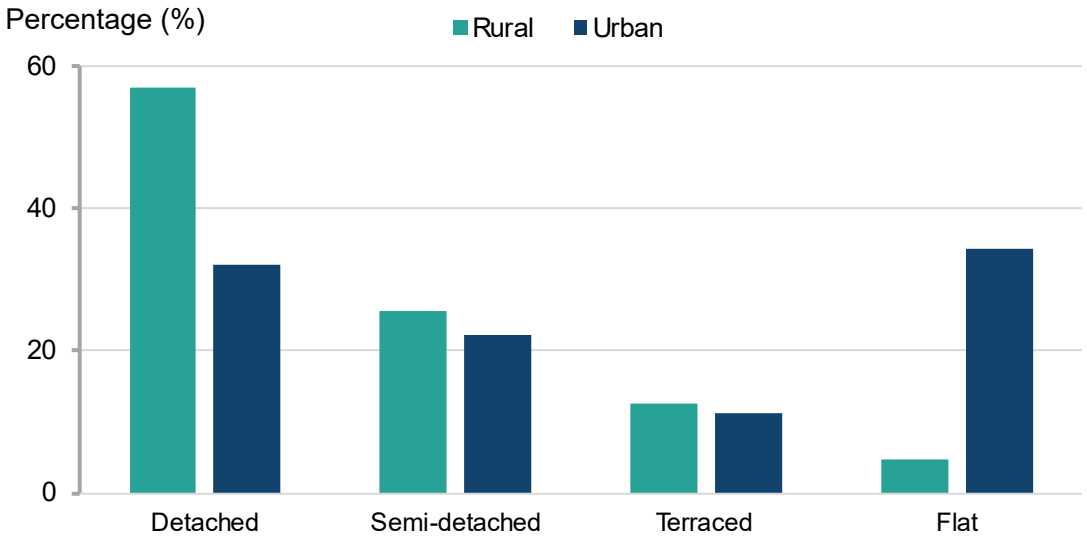
The proportion of new-build ‘semi-detached’ property transactions was 4 percentage points higher in Rural areas than Urban areas.

The proportion of new-build 'terraced' property transactions were similar between Rural and Urban areas, with there being 2 percentage points more in Rural.

Just 5% of new-build residential housing transactions were for 'flats' in Rural areas, compared to 34% in Urban areas.

Figure B-7: Proportion of new-build residential housing transactions (%), by housing type, by Middle Super Output Area broad Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2019

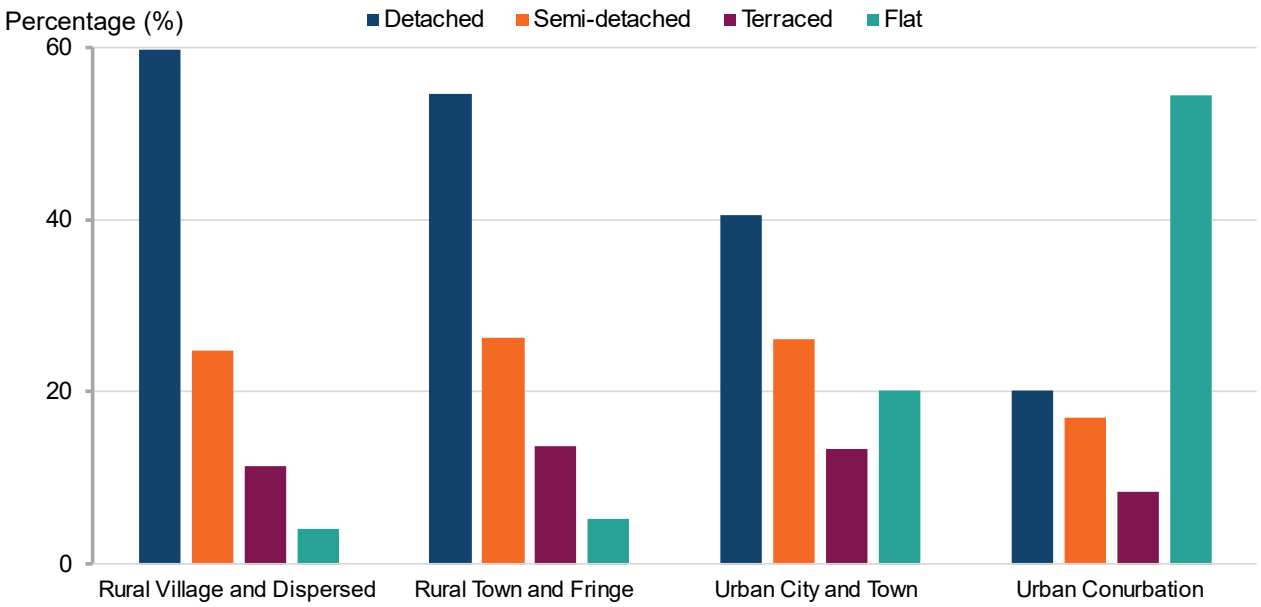
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns. The clusters are presented by property type, with 'detached' houses on the left and 'flats' on the right.



This trend continues even when breaking down the Rural-Urban Classification; the more rural an area is, the greater the percentage of 'detached' new-build properties, and the lesser the percentage of 'flats'. This is shown in Figure B-8.

Figure B-8: Proportion of new-build residential housing transactions (%), by housing type, by Middle Super Output Area detailed Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2019

The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns. The clusters are presented in order of rurality with the most Rural on the left and most Urban on the right.



In both Rural Village and Dispersed areas and Rural Town and Fringe areas, more than half of new-build residential transactions were ‘detached’ properties, representing 60% and 55% of transactions respectively in 2019. Comparatively, just 20% of properties were ‘detached’ in Urban Conurbation areas.

‘Flats’ made up the smallest proportion of new-build housing transactions in Rural areas (4-5%), but more than half (54%) in Urban Conurbations.

‘Semi-detached’ and ‘terraced’ properties were the most consistent of the building types, with less variation by rurality; for example, 26% of new-build properties were ‘semi-detached’ in both Rural Town and Fringe areas and Urban City and Town areas. 14% of new-builds were ‘terraced’ in Rural Town and Fringe areas, compared with 13% in Urban City and Town areas.

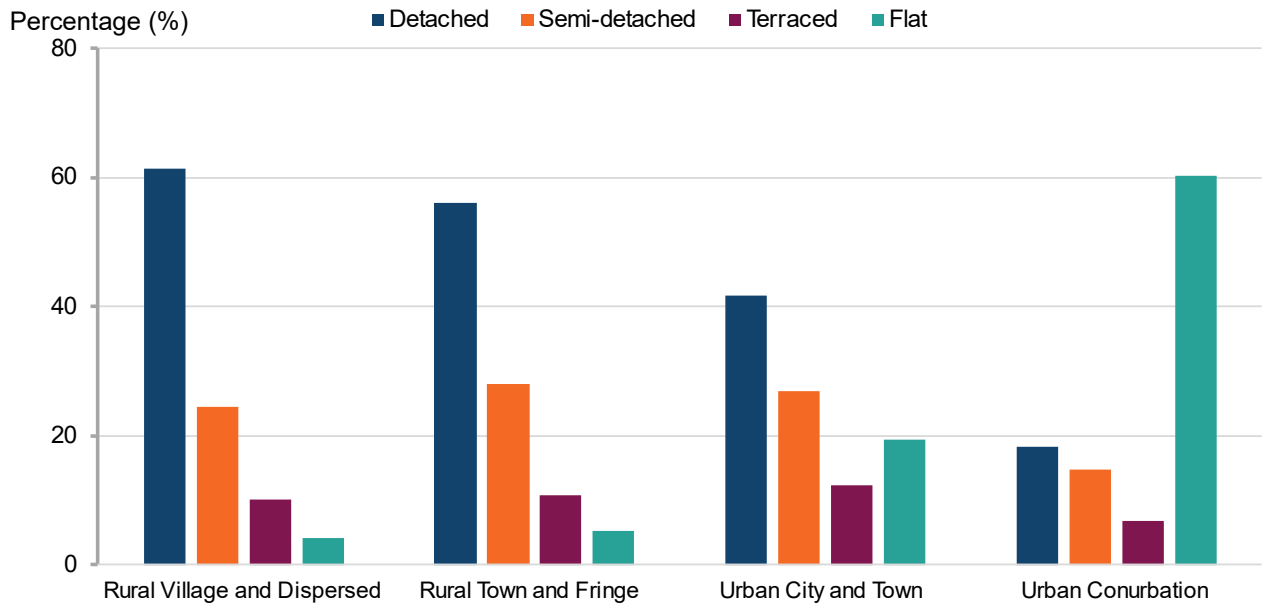
Urban City and Town areas had the most even dispersion of types of new-builds in 2019, with 40% of properties being ‘detached’, 26% being ‘semi-detached’, 13% being ‘terraced’ and 20% being ‘flats’.

Provisionally, in 2021, we see the same trends emerging (as shown in Figure B-9):

- More than half of Rural new-build residential transactions were ‘detached’ properties,
- ‘Flats’ represented fewest new-builds in Rural areas but the most in Urban Conurbations.
- So far, proportions of new ‘semi-detached’ and ‘terraced’ properties were the most consistent across all areas.

Figure B-9: Percentage of new-build residential housing transactions, by housing type, by Middle Super Output Area Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2021

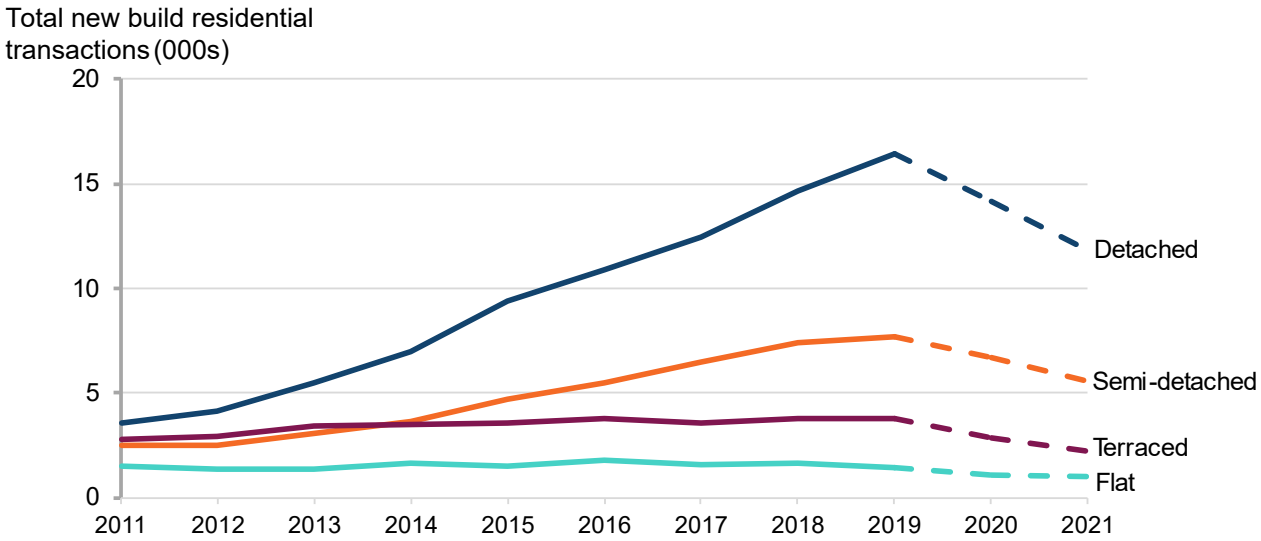
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns. The clusters are presented in order of rurality with the most Rural on the left and most Urban on the right.



Data for new-build residential transactions in Rural areas in 2020 and 2021 is provisional and is likely to change as more properties are registered (Note B-7). The apparent decrease in the number of new-build residential transactions across all building types might not materialise once data are finalised. Furthermore, specific analysis is taken from 2019:

Residential transactions for 'detached' properties increased more than any other building type in Rural areas between 2011 (where there were 3,600 transactions) and 2019 (where there were 16,400 transactions). 'Semi-detached' new-build property transactions also increased between 2011 and 2019, but at a lesser rate. The number of new-build residential transactions in Rural areas for 'terraced' housing and 'flats' have remained relatively unchanged between 2011 and 2019, as shown in Figure B-10.

Figure B-10: Total number of new-build residential transactions in Rural areas (based on MSOA Rural-Urban Classification), by housing type, in England, 2011 – 2021
Totals for residential transactions in more recent years are provisional (Note B-7), and have been indicated with a dashed line where revisions may occur.



Notes:

- Data for both 2019 and 2021 is given for the detailed analysis of transactions by type and year (Figure B-8 and Figure B-9); due to the lengthy registration process, figures for 2021 are provisional but the overall distribution of this provisional data remains robust.

Housing stock: additions - explanatory notes

- **Note B-1**

Tables showing the data expressed in this section are available in the housing supplementary data tables.

- **Note B-2**

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 on the House building; new build dwellings data: notes and definitions page, gov.uk.

- **Note B-3**

Figure B-1 and Figure B-2 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: Live tables on housing supply, DLUHC.

- **Note B-4**

Statistics on the net supply of housing, 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: Live tables on dwelling stock, DLUHC.

- **Note B-5**

For the Middle layer Super Output Area (MSOA) Rural-Urban Classification (RUC), 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. Additionally, these statistics aggregate multiple MSOA classifications together, producing a reduced number of classifications for comparison. Large numbers rounded to nearest 10, unless otherwise stated.

- **Note B-6**

"Urban Conurbation" refers to the combination of two categories within the Rural-Urban Classification: "Urban with Minor Conurbation" and "Urban with Major Conurbation". "Rural Village and Dispersed" refers to the combination of "Rural Village" and "Rural Hamlet and Isolated Dwellings".

- **Note B-7**

The property registration process can take time, particularly for new build properties. Therefore, the datasets we use may not fully reflect all transactions that have taken place in the reference period and may be subject to revision. The ONS suggests that users should use caution when drawing conclusions from these data.

- **Note B-8**

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'.

- **Note B-9**

Source: Residential property sales by middle layer super output area: HPSSA dataset 1 - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

- **Note B-10**

Data included within this section refers to financial years rather than calendar years (e.g., 2021/22 refers to the period from April 2021 to March 2022).

- **Note B-11**

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

- **Note B-12**

Data Source: http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

- **Note B-13**

Figure D-1 contains data from Table 1008C within the DLUHC live tables on affordable housing supply.

C. Housing costs: purchases and rentals

The average sale price of residential properties in Rural areas is higher than in Urban areas for all property types. Average rent prices are lower in Rural areas than Urban areas for properties with any number of bedrooms.

Summary

The average price paid for residential properties will be affected by the types of dwelling such as detached, semi-detached, terraced houses, and flats/maisonettes. Changes in purchase or rent prices can be used to indicate changes in the housing market. This section analyses changes in average property sale and rent prices (year ending September 2023) between areas.

Detached properties had a higher median purchase price than any other dwelling type for both Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas outside of London (£459,400 and £444,200 respectively). This was followed by **semi-detached** properties, for which median purchase prices were similar in Predominantly Rural areas (£291,600) to in Predominantly Urban areas (£291,800). **Terraced** properties had the second lowest median purchase price of all dwelling types; median prices were higher in Predominantly Rural areas (£242,300) than in Predominantly Urban areas (£234,700). **Flats/maisonettes** had a lower median purchase price than any other dwelling type; in Predominantly Rural areas, the median price paid was £161,200, compared to £157,700 in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London.

The higher the number of bedrooms for, the higher the median property rent price. Properties were generally cheaper to rent in Rural areas than in Urban areas. Rented properties with **4 or more bedrooms** cost £1,361 per calendar month (pcm) on average in Predominantly Rural areas, compared to £1,605 pcm in Predominantly Urban areas. **3-bedroom properties** were typically cheaper in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (£914 and £966 respectively, pcm). **2-bedroom properties** cost around £752 pcm to rent in Predominantly Rural areas, compared to £837 pcm in Predominantly Urban areas. The median rent price for **rooms, studios, or properties with 1 bedroom** was lower in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (£602 and £673 respectively, pcm).

Background information

Prior to July 2024, this publication analysed the difference in house prices using the mean price paid at Middle-layer Super Output Area (MSOA) level; this was from house price statistics for small areas (HPSSA), dataset 3 - ONS. As described in their accompanying bulletin, many of the HPSSA datasets were discontinued on 20 September 2023; this included dataset 3. Therefore, it was necessary to refresh the analysis of house prices within this section using a new data source.

In needing to revise the house price statistics, we took this opportunity to adapt the style of the analysis in order to be more beneficial to users. A summary of changes are as follows:

- **We have changed the data source**; instead of HPSSA dataset 3, we will now use Parliamentary Constituency house price statistics for small areas - ONS. This was formerly part of HPSSA datasets 21 and 24. We have chosen this data source as it is one that the ONS will continue to publish, and therefore we should not need to revise our methodology again.
- **We are no longer analysing changes over time**; the ONS advise that:

  "HPSSA estimates reflect average house prices at particular points in time and do not account for changes in property mix between time periods. This means that each 12-month period estimate is not comparable with other 12-month period estimates. Users are advised not to infer trends in the house price market over time by comparing price estimates".

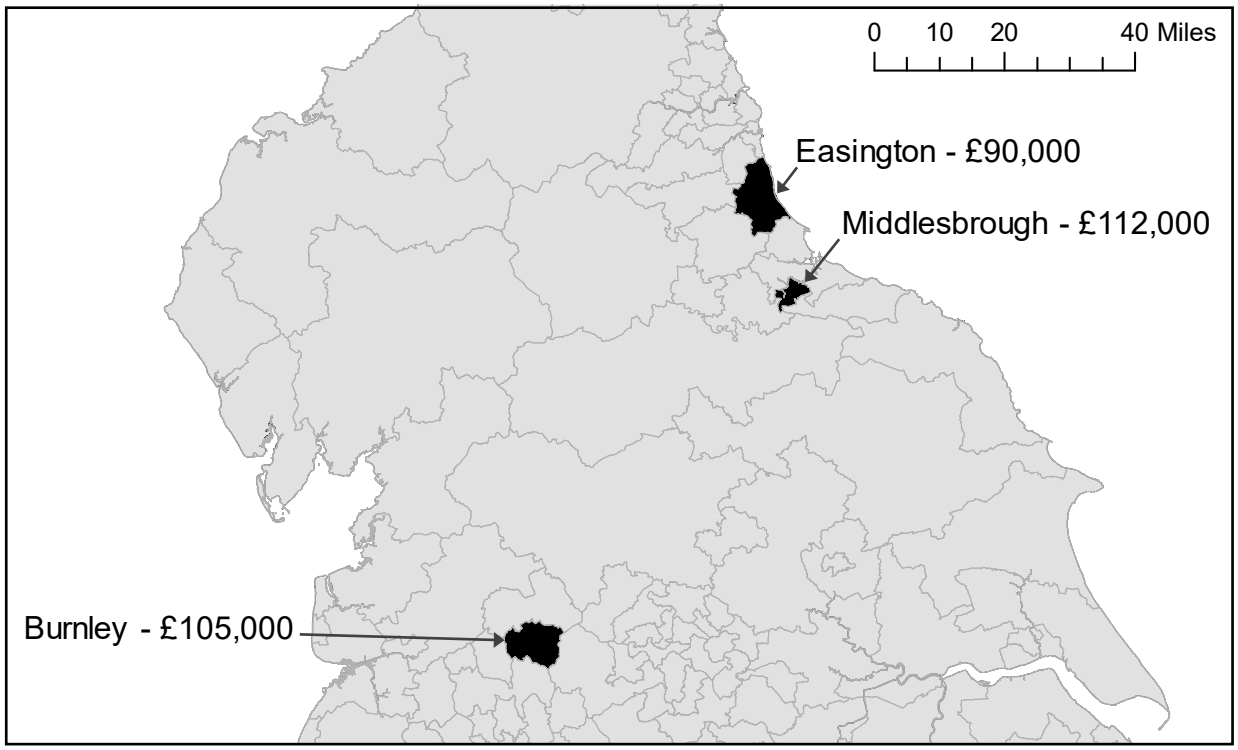
  Instead, we have opted to focus on the difference in prices by dwelling type. This helps to reduce some of the issues where average prices may have varied between areas purely due to sales compositions; for example, in one area there could've been many detached homes sold and in another there could've been many flats/maisonettes sold.
- **We have changed the geography used**; we will now use Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies (Note C-3). We have changed the geography used as the MSOA-level data is unsuitable for analysis by dwelling type; the small nature of the areas results in many disclosure issues. As Parliamentary Constituencies are larger than MSOAs, a larger proportion of the dataset can be used, therefore maximising the output we can provide users.
- **We have changed our average**; previous analysis focused on mean price paid but now we are using median price paid (Note C-1). The median is the value determined by putting all the house sales for a given year, area and type in order of price and then selecting the price of the house sale that falls in the middle, such that an equal number of transactions lie above and below that value. The median is less susceptible to distortion by the presence of extreme values than is the mean. The ONS believe that it is the most appropriate average to use because it best takes account of the skewed distribution of house prices (Note C-2).
- **We will no longer provide updates on a quarterly basis**; alongside the discontinuation of many of the HPSSA datasets, the ONS have reduced the frequency of some of their publications to bi-annually. Therefore, we will move in step with them in an attempt to maintain up-to-date analysis.
- **We have introduced new analysis of rents**; rental affordability statistics have been removed from Section D (previously called Housing stock: affordable housing). In order to retain some statistics regarding the rental market, a new data source has been analysed and included within this section.

Median house purchase price

Quarterly residential property sale prices are reported by the ONS (Note C-4). Whilst this data does not consider the difference in the number of bedrooms, it does evaluate the different types of dwelling, such as detached, semi-detached, terraced houses, and flats/maisonettes.

The map in Figure C-1 shows the Parliamentary Constituencies with the lowest median house purchase price in year ending September 2023. “Easington” (an Urban with Significant Rural constituency) had the lowest median house price in England at £90,000. This is followed by “Burnley” at £105,000 and then “Middlesbrough” at £112,000; both of these Parliamentary Constituencies are Predominantly Urban. The three Parliamentary Constituencies with the lowest median house prices in year ending September 2023 were all in the North of England.

Figure C-1: Map showing the Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with the lowest median property prices in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-2, Note C-3)

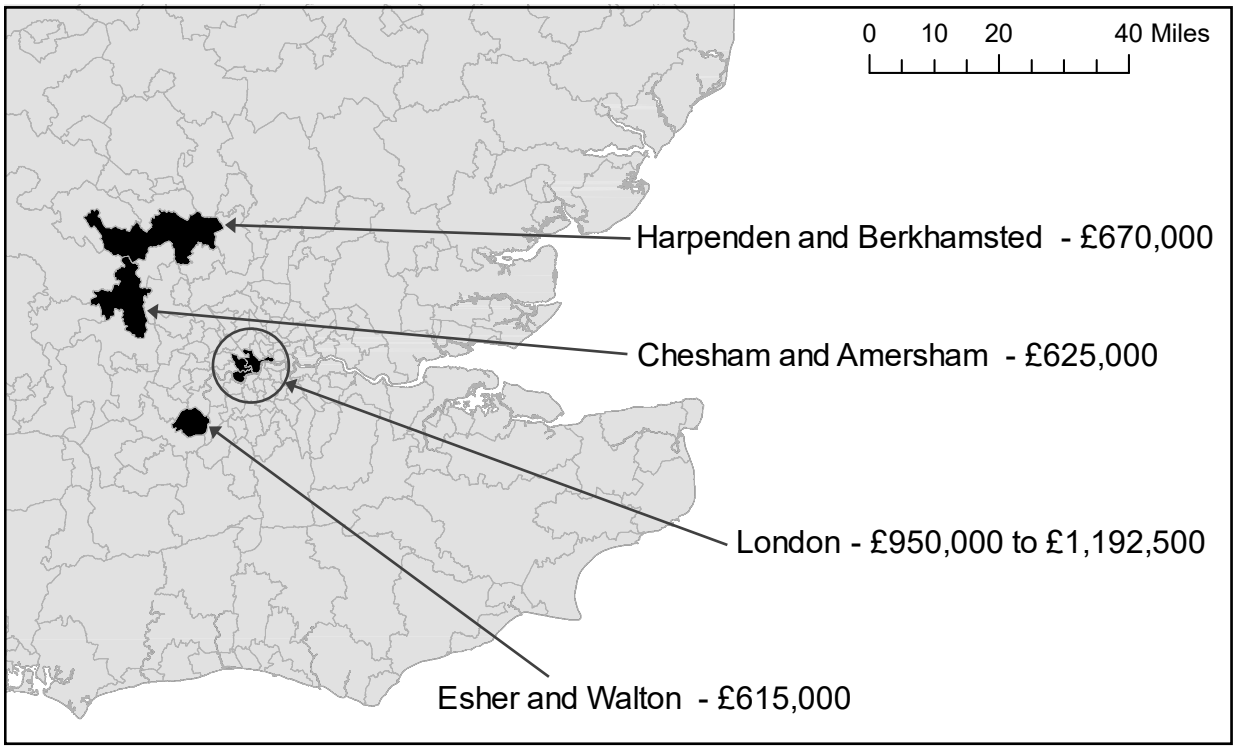


The map in Figure C-2 shows the Parliamentary Constituencies with the highest median house purchase price in year ending September 2023. “Kensington and Bayswater”, “Cities of London and Westminster”, and “Chelsea and Fulham” were the three Parliamentary Constituencies with the highest median prices in England, ranging from £950,000 to £1,192,500; all three of these Parliamentary Constituencies are in London.

Outside of London, “Harpenden and Berkhamsted” (a Predominantly Rural constituency) had the highest median house price at £670,000. This is followed by “Chesham and Amersham” at £625,000 and then “Esher and Walton” at £615,000; both of these Parliamentary Constituencies are Predominantly Urban. These three Parliamentary Constituencies, whilst not directly in London, are in the surrounding areas of Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Surrey respectively.

Median purchase prices in the most expensive Constituency outside London (Harpenden and Berkhamsted) were more than 7 times higher than the least expensive Constituency (Easington).

Figure C-2: Map showing the Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with the highest median property prices in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-2, Note C-3)
Values for "London" represent the range of highest median property prices for the top three constituencies in Greater London.



Residential property purchase prices differ depending on the type of dwelling; for instance, in most cases, a flat or maisonette will be less expensive than a detached home in the same area. The bar chart in Figure C-3 shows the median price paid for properties sold by dwelling type and settlement type. The greater the number of bedrooms in the property, the higher the median property purchase price; detached properties were typically the most expensive in year ending September 2023, whilst flats/maisonettes were typically the cheapest.

In the year ending September 2023, the median price paid for **detached** properties was higher in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (£459,400 and £444,200 respectively). The median price paid for detached properties in London was more than double any other settlement type in England (£1,201,400).

The median purchase price for **semi-detached** properties was higher in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (£291,600 and £291,800 respectively). The median price paid for semi-detached properties in London was more than three times higher than in any other settlement type (£1,030,300).

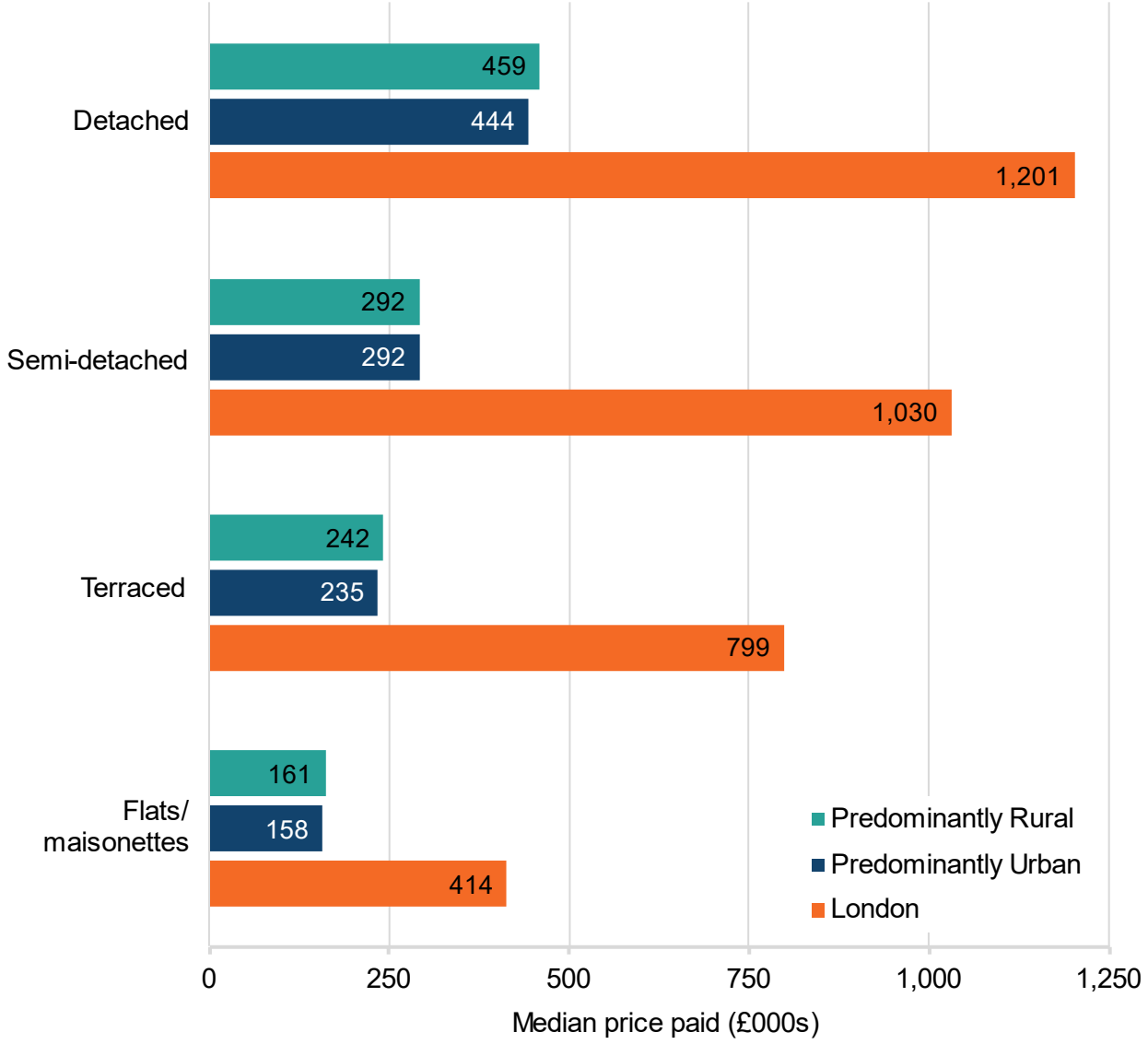
The median price paid for **terraced** properties was higher in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (£242,300 and £234,700 respectively). In London, the median price paid for terraced properties was more than three times higher than in any other settlement type (£798,500).

The median price paid for **flats or maisonettes** was higher in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (£161,200 and £157,700 respectively). The median price paid for flats or maisonettes in London was nearly three times higher than in any other settlement type

(£413,800). This means that the median price paid for a flat/maisonette in London was higher in year ending September 2023 than for semi-detached or terraced properties, and nearly as high as detached properties, in other areas of the country.

Figure C-3: Bar chart showing median property purchase price (£), by broad Westminster Parliamentary Constituency Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type, England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-3)

The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the clusters of bars. “Predominantly Urban” excludes London.

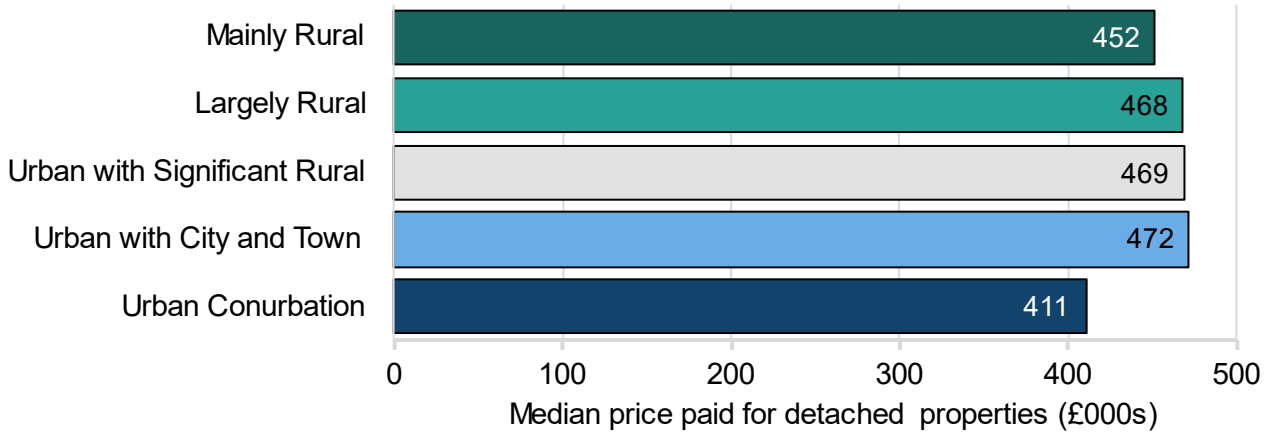


Median price paid for detached properties

A detached property is one where none of the living accommodation is attached to another property (but can be attached to a garage). Section A - Housing stock: age and type shows the proportion of properties that are detached in Rural and Urban areas; there are typically proportionally more detached properties in Rural areas than Urban areas. As shown in Figure C-3, the median price paid for detached properties was higher than for any other type of dwelling in year ending September 2023.

Outside of London, median purchase prices were broadly similar across settlement types; the bar chart in Figure C-4 shows the median price paid for detached properties by detailed Rural-Urban Classification.

Figure C-4: Bar chart showing median detached property purchase price, by detailed Westminster Parliamentary Constituency Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-3, Note C-6, Note C-8)
The data shown in the chart excludes London, where the median price paid for detached properties was £1,201,400; this is instead shown in Figure C-3.



In the most Rural Parliamentary Constituencies (Mainly Rural), the median price paid for detached properties was £451,600; this was £16,700 less than in Largely Rural areas. In the most Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London (Urban Conurbation), the median price paid for detached properties was £410,500; this is £27,300 less than in Mainly Rural areas, £36,200 less than in Largely Rural areas, and is also the lowest of all settlement types.

Table C-1 shows the Parliamentary Constituencies with the **lowest** median price paid for detached properties in year ending September 2023, by broad Rural-Urban Classification.

Table C-1: Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with the lowest median price paid for detached properties, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-2, Note C-3)
(e) = excluding London

Rural-Urban Classification	Constituency	Median price paid (£)
Predominantly Rural	Bishop Auckland	240,000
Urban with Significant Rural	Easington	220,000
Predominantly Urban (e)	Middlesbrough and Thornaby East	225,000
London	Erith and Thamesmead	477,500

The Predominantly Rural constituency with the lowest median purchase price for detached properties was “Bishop Auckland” in County Durham (£240,000). “Easington” had the lowest median price paid for detached properties in Urban with Significant Rural areas, and “Middlesbrough and Thornaby East” had the lowest median price in Predominantly Urban areas. All three of these Parliamentary Constituencies are in the North East of England. In London, “Erith and Thamesmead” had the lowest median price paid for detached properties (£477,500); this was double the lowest median price paid in other settlement types.

The Parliamentary Constituencies with the **highest** median price paid for detached properties in year ending September 2023 are given in Table C-2.

Table C-2: Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with the highest median price paid for detached properties, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-2, Note C-3)
(e) = excluding London

Rural-Urban Classification	Constituency	Median price paid (£)
Predominantly Rural	Harpenden and Berkhamsted	1,050,000
Urban with Significant Rural	Beaconsfield	970,000
Predominantly Urban (e)	Esher and Walton	1,300,000
London	Kensington and Bayswater	13,000,000

The Predominantly Rural constituency with the highest median purchase price for detached properties was “Harpenden and Berkhamsted” in Hertfordshire (£1,050,000). “Beaconsfield” had the highest median price paid for detached properties in Urban with Significant Rural areas, and “Esher and Walton” had the highest median price in Predominantly Urban areas. All three of these Parliamentary Constituencies are just outside of London. In London, “Kensington and Bayswater” had the highest median price paid for detached properties (£13,000,000); this was 13 times higher than the most expensive Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituency.

As explained in Note C-1, the median price paid is the middle value such that an equal number of house sales are above and below this threshold if ordered by the sale price. This means that in the most expensive Predominantly Rural area, half of the detached properties sold would’ve been priced at more than £1,050,000 in year ending September 2023. In the least expensive Predominantly Rural area, half of the detached properties sold would’ve been priced at less than £240,000. This means the range of median detached property prices in Predominantly Rural areas was £810,000 in year ending September 2023.

Median price paid for semi-detached properties

A semi-detached property is one where the living accommodation is joined to one other house or bungalow by a common wall that they share. As shown in Figure C-3, semi-detached properties had the second highest median purchase price in September 2023 across the different dwelling types. Outside of London, median purchase prices were broadly similar across settlement types; the bar chart in Figure C-5 shows the median price paid for semi-detached properties by detailed Rural-Urban Classification.

In the most Rural Parliamentary Constituencies (Mainly Rural), the median price paid for semi-detached properties in year ending September 2023 was £287,500; this was £8,900 less than in Largely Rural areas. In the most Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London (Urban Conurbation) the median price paid for semi-detached properties was £260,200; this is £27,300 less than in the most Rural areas. The median price paid for semi-detached properties was highest in Urban with City and Town areas, at £317,600.

Figure C-5: Bar chart showing median semi-detached property purchase price, by detailed Westminster Parliamentary Constituency Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-3, Note C-6, Note C-8)

The data shown in the chart excludes London, where the median price paid for semi-detached properties was £1,030,300; this is instead shown in Figure C-3.

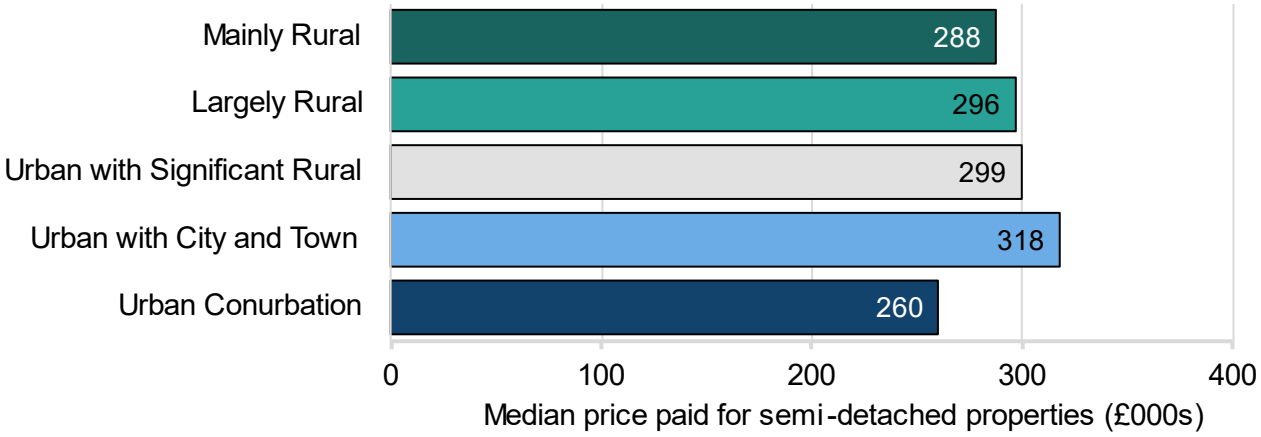


Table C-3 shows the Parliamentary Constituencies with the **lowest** median price paid for semi-detached properties in year ending September 2023.

Table C-3: Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with the lowest median price paid for semi-detached properties, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-2, Note C-3)

(e) = excluding London

Rural-Urban Classification	Constituency	Median price paid (£)
Predominantly Rural	Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor	125,000
Urban with Significant Rural	Easington	100,000
Predominantly Urban (e)	Washington and Gateshead South	140,000
London	Barking	430,000

The Predominantly Rural constituency with the lowest median purchase price for semi-detached properties was “Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor” in County Durham (£125,000). “Easington” had the lowest median price paid for semi-detached properties in Urban with Significant Rural areas, and “Washington and Gateshead South” had the lowest median price in Predominantly Urban areas. All three of these Parliamentary Constituencies are in the North East of England. In London, “Barking” had the lowest median price paid for semi-detached properties (£430,000); this was more than three times higher than the lowest median prices in other settlement types.

As explained in Note C-1, the median price paid is the middle value such that an equal number of house sales are above and below this threshold if ordered by the sale price. This means that in the least expensive Predominantly Rural area, half of the semi-detached properties sold would’ve been priced at less than £125,000 in year ending September 2023. In the most expensive Predominantly Rural area, half of the semi-detached properties sold would’ve been priced at more than £700,000 (Table C-4). This means the range of median semi-detached property prices in Predominantly Rural areas was £575,000 in year ending September 2023.

The Parliamentary Constituencies with the **highest** median price paid for semi-detached properties in year ending September 2023 are given in Table C-4.

Table C-4: Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with the highest median price paid for semi-detached properties, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-2, Note C-3)
(e) = excluding London

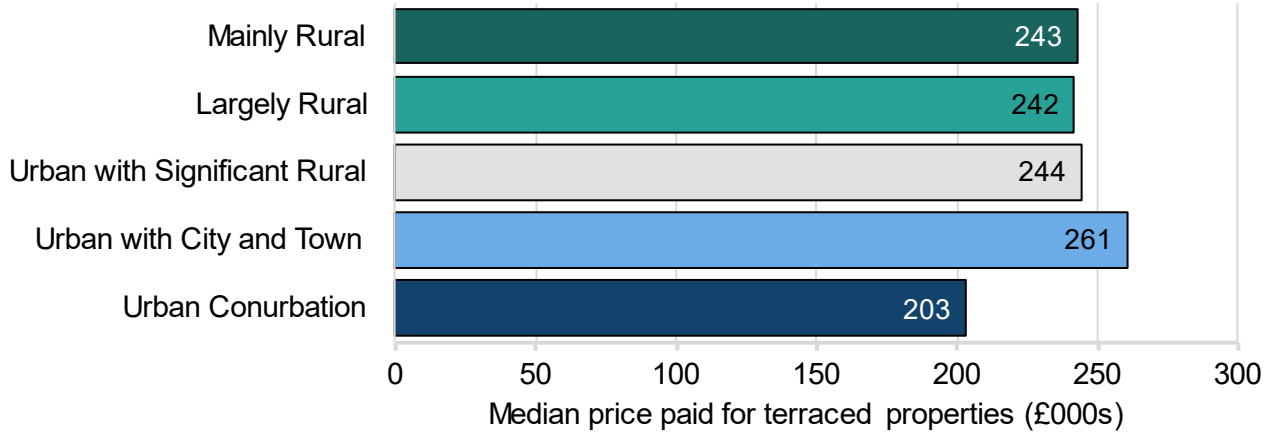
Rural-Urban Classification	Constituency	Median price paid (£)
Predominantly Rural	Harpenden and Berkhamsted	700,000
Urban with Significant Rural	Beaconsfield	580,000
Predominantly Urban (e)	Bristol Central	905,000
London	Kensington and Bayswater	5,812,500

The Predominantly Rural constituency with the highest median purchase price for semi-detached properties was “Harpenden and Berkhamsted” in Hertfordshire (£700,000). “Beaconsfield” had the highest median price paid for semi-detached properties in Urban with Significant Rural areas, and “Bristol Central” had the highest median price in Predominantly Urban areas. Two of these Parliamentary Constituencies are just outside of London, and the other in the South West of England. In London, “Kensington and Bayswater” had the highest median price paid for semi-detached properties (£5,812,500); this was at least six times higher than the highest median prices in other settlement types.

Median price paid for terraced properties

A mid-terraced house is usually located between two other houses and shares two common side walls; an end-of-terrace house is part of a terraced development but only shares one common side wall (Note C-5). As shown in Figure C-3, terraced properties had the second lowest median purchase price in September 2023 across the different dwelling types. Outside of London, median purchase prices were broadly similar across settlement types; the bar chart in Figure C-6 shows the median price paid for terraced properties by detailed Rural-Urban Classification.

Figure C-6: Bar chart showing median terraced property purchase price, by detailed Westminster Parliamentary Constituency Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-3, Note C-6, Note C-8)
The data shown in the chart excludes London, where the median price paid for terraced properties was £798,500; this is instead shown in Figure C-3.



In the most Rural Parliamentary Constituencies (Mainly Rural), the median price paid for terraced properties in year ending September 2023 was £242,800; this is just £1,200 more than in Largely Rural areas. In the most Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London (Urban Conurbation), the median price paid for terraced properties was £203,100; this is £39,700 less than in Mainly Rural areas.

Table C-5 shows the Parliamentary Constituencies with the **lowest** median price paid for terraced properties in year ending September 2023.

Table C-5: Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with the lowest median price paid for terraced properties, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-2, Note C-3)
(e) = excluding London

Rural-Urban Classification	Constituency	Median price paid (£)
Predominantly Rural	Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor	85,000
Urban with Significant Rural	Easington	74,000
Predominantly Urban (e)	Middlesbrough and Thornaby East	82,000
London	Barking	385,000

The Predominantly Rural constituency with the lowest median purchase price for terraced properties was “Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor” in County Durham (£85,000). “Easington” had the lowest median price paid for terraced properties in Urban with Significant Rural areas, and “Middlesbrough and Thornaby East” had the lowest median price in Predominantly Urban areas. All three of these Parliamentary Constituencies are in the North East of England. In London, “Barking” had the lowest median price paid for terraced properties (£385,000); this was around £300,000 more than in other settlement types.

The Parliamentary Constituencies with the **highest** median price paid for terraced properties in year ending September 2023 are given in Table C-6.

Table C-6: Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with the highest median price paid for terraced properties, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-2, Note C-3)
(e) = excluding London

Rural-Urban Classification	Constituency	Median price paid (£)
Predominantly Rural	Harpenden and Berkhamsted	500,000
Urban with Significant Rural	Beaconsfield	466,000
Predominantly Urban (e)	Bristol Central	600,000
London	Cities of London and Westminster	3,150,000

The Predominantly Rural constituency with the highest median purchase price for terraced properties was “Harpenden and Berkhamsted” in Hertfordshire (£500,000). “Beaconsfield” had the highest median price paid for terraced properties in Urban with Significant Rural areas, and “Bristol Central” had the highest median price in Predominantly Urban areas. Two of these Parliamentary Constituencies are just outside of London, and the other in the South West of England.

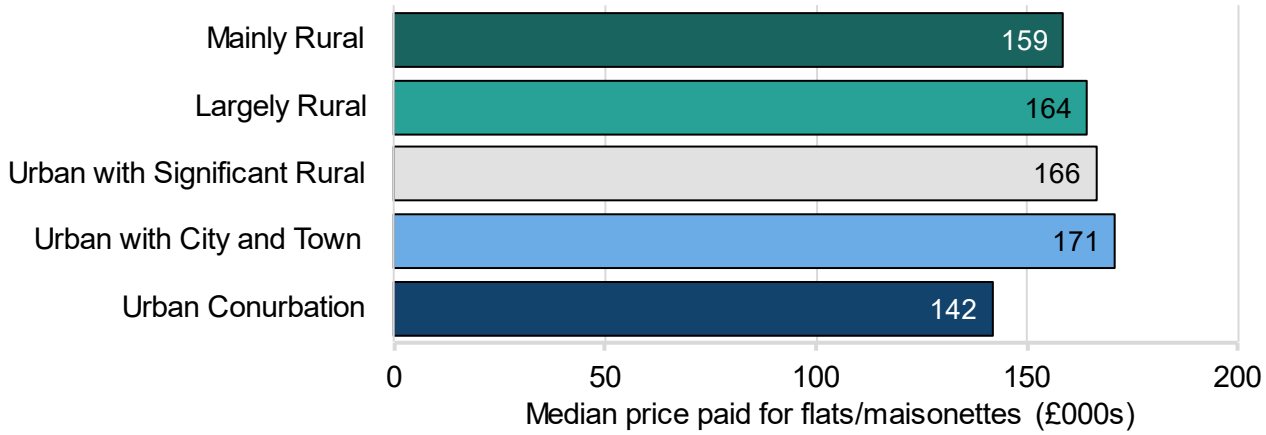
In London, “Cities of London and Westminster” had the highest median price paid for terraced properties (£3,150,000); this was at least five times higher than the highest median prices in other settlement types.

As explained in Note C-1, the median price paid is the middle value such that an equal number of house sales are above and below this threshold if ordered by the sale price. This means that in the least expensive Predominantly Rural area, half of the terraced properties sold would’ve been priced at less than £85,000 in year ending September 2023. In the most expensive Predominantly Rural area, half of the terraced properties sold would’ve been priced at more than £500,000. This means the range of median terraced property prices in Predominantly Rural areas was £415,000 in year ending September 2023.

Median price paid for flats/maisonettes

A flat is a single-level residence within a larger building, often sharing common areas such as hallways and staircases; a maisonette is a two-storey flat. As shown in Figure C-3, flats and maisonettes had the lowest median purchase prices in September 2023 across the different dwelling types. Outside of London, median purchase prices were broadly similar across settlement types; the bar chart in Figure C-7 shows the median price paid for flats/maisonettes by detailed Rural-Urban Classification.

Figure C-7: Bar chart showing median purchase price for flats or maisonettes, by detailed Westminster Parliamentary Constituency Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-3, Note C-6, Note C-8)
The data shown in the chart excludes London, where the median price paid for flats/maisonettes was £413,800; this is instead shown in Figure C-3.



In the most Rural Parliamentary Constituencies (Mainly Rural), the median price paid for flats/maisonettes in year ending September 2023 was £158,600; this is £5,600 less than in Largely Rural areas. In the most Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London (Urban Conurbation), the median price paid for flats/maisonettes was £141,700; this was £16,900 more than in Mainly Rural areas.

Table C-7 shows the Parliamentary Constituencies with the **lowest** median price paid for flats/maisonettes in year ending September 2023.

Table C-7: Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with the lowest median price paid for flats/maisonettes, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-2, Note C-3)
(e) = excluding London

Rural-Urban Classification	Constituency	Median price paid (£)
Predominantly Rural	Bishop Auckland	70,500
Urban with Significant Rural	Easington	63,000
Predominantly Urban (e)	Washington and Gateshead South	60,000
London	Barking	235,000

The Predominantly Rural constituency with the lowest median purchase price for flats/maisonettes was “Bishop Auckland” in County Durham (£70,500). “Easington” had the lowest median price paid for flats/maisonettes in Urban with Significant Rural areas, and “Washington and Gateshead South” had the lowest median price in Predominantly Urban areas. All three of these Parliamentary Constituencies are in the North East of England. In London, “Barking” had the lowest median price paid for flats/maisonettes (£235,000); this was around £170,000 more than in other settlement types.

The Parliamentary Constituencies with the **highest** median price paid for flats/maisonettes in year ending September 2023 are given in Table C-8.

Table C-8: Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with the highest median price paid for flats/maisonettes, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-2, Note C-3)
(e) = excluding London

Rural-Urban Classification	Constituency	Median price paid (£)
Predominantly Rural	Harpenden and Berkhamsted	317,000
Urban with Significant Rural	Beaconsfield	315,000
Predominantly Urban (e)	Esher and Walton	340,000
London	Cities of London and Westminster	1,030,000

The Predominantly Rural constituency with the highest median purchase price for flats/maisonettes was “Harpenden and Berkhamsted” in Hertfordshire (£317,000). “Beaconsfield” had the highest median price paid for flats/maisonettes in Urban with Significant Rural areas, and “Esher and Walton” had the highest median price in Predominantly Urban areas. All three of these Parliamentary Constituencies are just outside of London. In London, “Cities of London and Westminster” had the highest median price paid for flats/maisonettes (£1,030,000); this was around £700,000 more than the highest median prices in other settlement types.

As explained in Note C-1, the median price paid is the middle value such that an equal number of house sales are above and below this threshold if ordered by the sale price. This means that in the least expensive Predominantly Rural area, half of the flats or maisonettes sold would’ve been priced at less than £70,500 in year ending September 2023. In the most expensive Predominantly Rural area, half of the flats or maisonettes sold would’ve been priced at more than £317,000. This means the range of median flat or maisonette prices in Predominantly Rural areas was £246,500 in year ending September 2023.

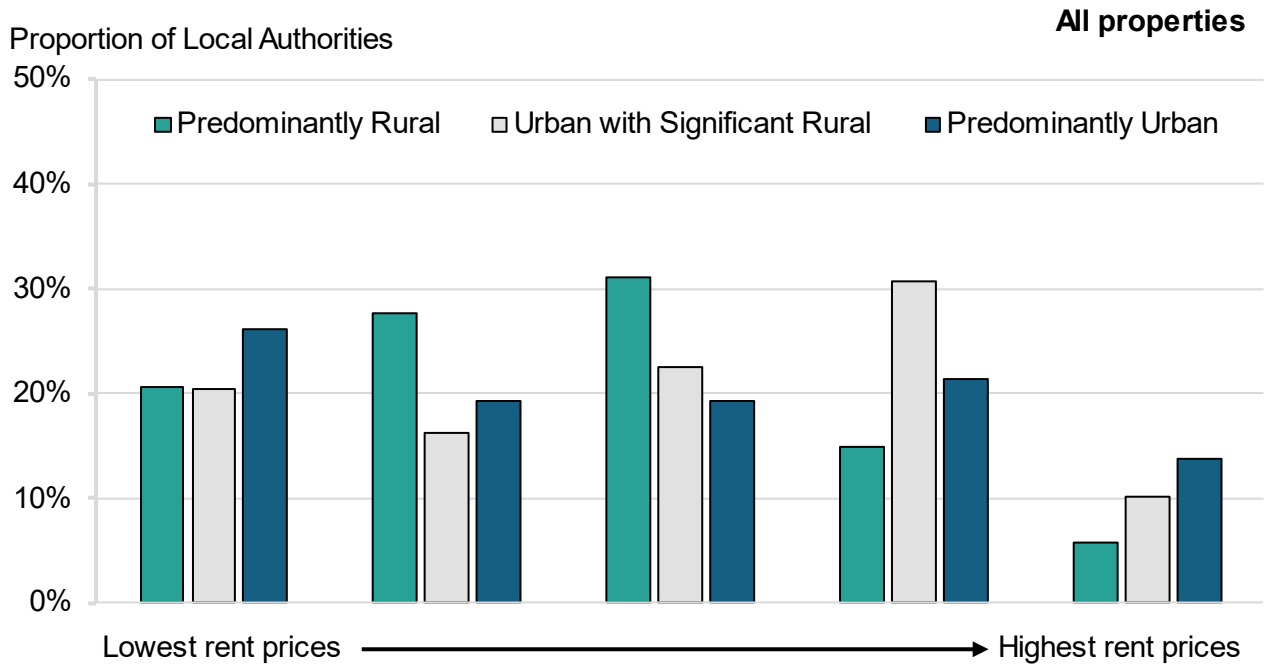
Median rent prices

The Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR) measures private rent inflation for new and existing tenancies, and is presented monthly by the ONS. In this section, data are presented for year ending September 2023 to align with the house purchase prices timeframe. Please note that data comparing rent prices uses Local Authority boundaries, whereas the house purchase prices in the previous section used Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies and are therefore not comparable.

The bar chart in Figure C-8 shows the proportion of Local Authorities within each quintile of median property rental price (for all sized properties); it is categorised by Rural-Urban Classification and is for year ending September 2023.

Figure C-8: Bar chart showing the proportion of 2021 Local Authorities within each quintile of median property rent price, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-9)

The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the clusters of bars.
The data in this chart excludes London. There are no areas in London that would be in quintiles 1 to 4, and therefore 100% of Local Authorities in London would be in quintile 5; this means they are amongst the group of authorities with the highest median rent prices in England.



The chart can be summarised as follows:

- In Predominantly Rural areas, 21% of Local Authorities were in the quintile with the lowest median rent prices (quintile 1 - up to £650 per calendar month). In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, 26% of Local Authorities were in this quintile; this is a larger proportion than for any other quintile. This means that proportionally fewer Rural areas than Urban areas had a median rent price of £650 or less.
- 6% of Local Authorities were in the quintile with the highest median rent prices (quintile 5 – more than £1,191 per calendar month). In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, 14%

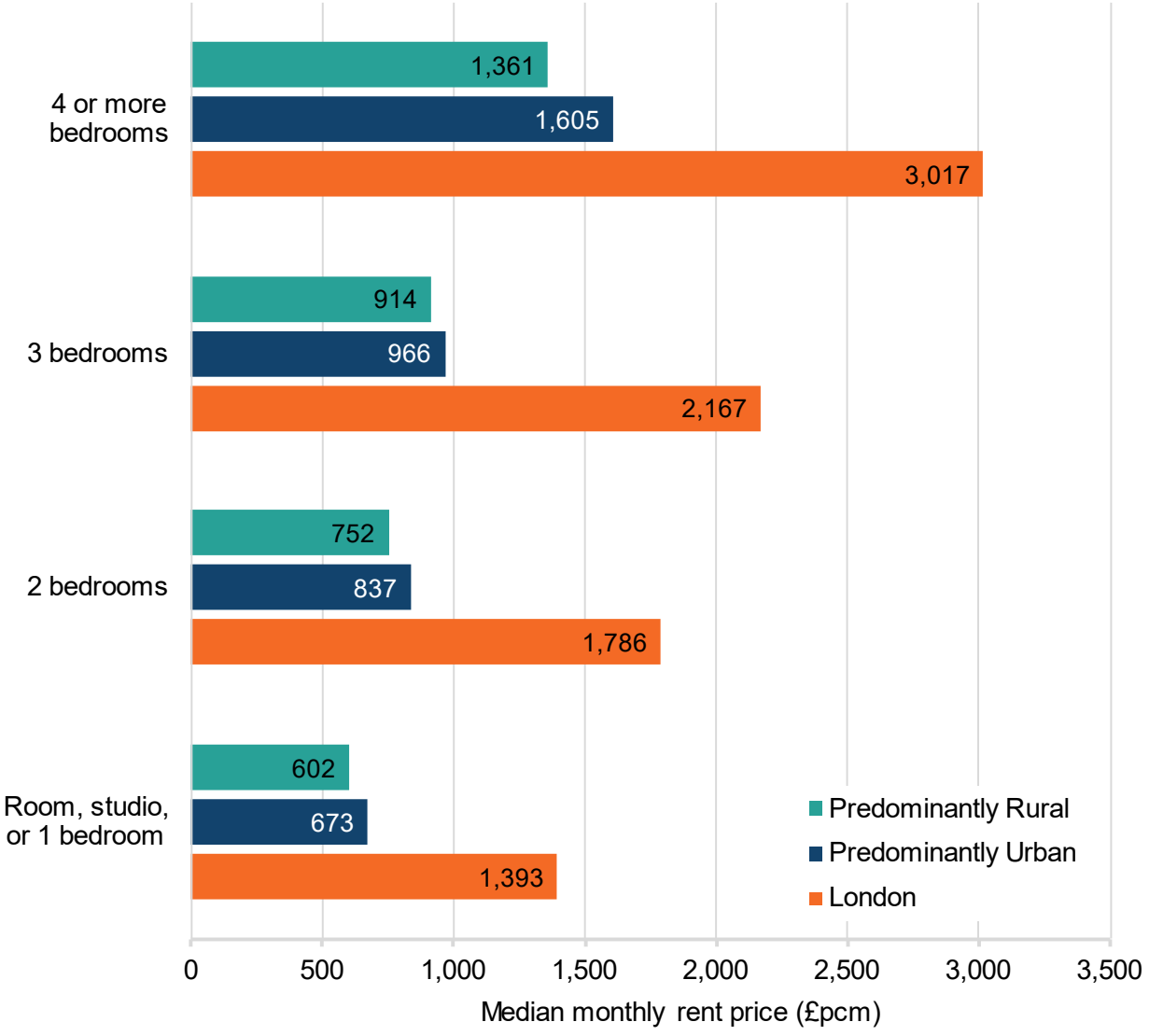
were in this quintile. This means that proportionally fewer Rural areas than Urban areas had a median rent price of more than £1,191.

- In Predominantly Rural areas, a larger proportion of Local Authorities were in quintile 3 than in any other quintile (31%); this means that the median rent price was between £766 and £900 per calendar month. In comparison, 19% of Predominantly Urban Local Authorities were in this quintile.

Median property rent prices differ depending on the size of the property. For instance, in most cases, a studio flat will cost less per calendar month than a rented house with 4 or more bedrooms in the same area. The bar chart in Figure C-9 shows the median rent price for properties by size and settlement type. The greater the number of bedrooms, the higher the median rent price; properties with 4 or more bedrooms were typically the most expensive in year ending September 2023, whilst rooms, studios and properties with 1 bedroom were typically the cheapest.

Figure C-9: Bar chart showing median property rent price (£), per calendar month (pcm), by size of property and broad Rural-Urban Classification for 2021 Local Authorities, England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-9)

The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the clusters of bars.



In year ending September 2023, the median rent price for properties with **4 or more bedrooms** was lower in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (£1,361 and £1,605 respectively, per calendar month). However, the median rent price for this size property in London was double that of any other settlement type in England (£3,017 pcm).

The median rent price for properties with **3 bedrooms** was lower in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (£914 and £966 respectively, pcm). The median rent price for these properties in London was more than double that of any other settlement type (£2,167 pcm).

Median rent prices for properties with **2 bedrooms** was lower in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (£752 and £837 respectively, pcm). In London, the median rent price for properties this size was more than double that of any other settlement type (£1,786 pcm).

The median rent price for **rooms, studios, or properties with 1 bedroom** was lower in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (£602 and £673 respectively, pcm). The median rent price for this sized property in London was more than double that of any other settlement type in year ending September 2023 (£1,393). In addition, the median rent price for properties with 1 bedroom or less in London was higher than for properties with 4 or more bedrooms in Predominantly Rural areas.

Median rent prices by number of bedrooms

The bar chart in Figure C-9 expressed that the greater the number of bedrooms in a property, the higher the median rent price. The bar charts in Figure C-10 show the median rent price by number of bedrooms and detailed Rural-Urban Classification; they indicate that this trend is largely true when evaluating the detailed Rural-Urban Classification, although there is some variation.

Properties were generally cheaper to rent in Rural areas than in Urban areas. Rented properties with **4 or more bedrooms** cost £1,337 per calendar month (pcm) on average in the most Rural areas (Mainly Rural), compared to £1,502 pcm in the most Urban areas outside of London (Urban Conurbation). Properties with 4 or more bedrooms were the most expensive in Urban with City and Town areas, where the average property could cost £1,659 pcm to rent in year ending September 2023.

3-bedroom properties were slightly more expensive in the most Rural areas than in the most Urban areas outside of London (£901 and £866 respectively, pcm). Urban City and Town was the most expensive area, where the median rent price for 3-bedroom properties was £1,035 pcm in year ending September 2023.

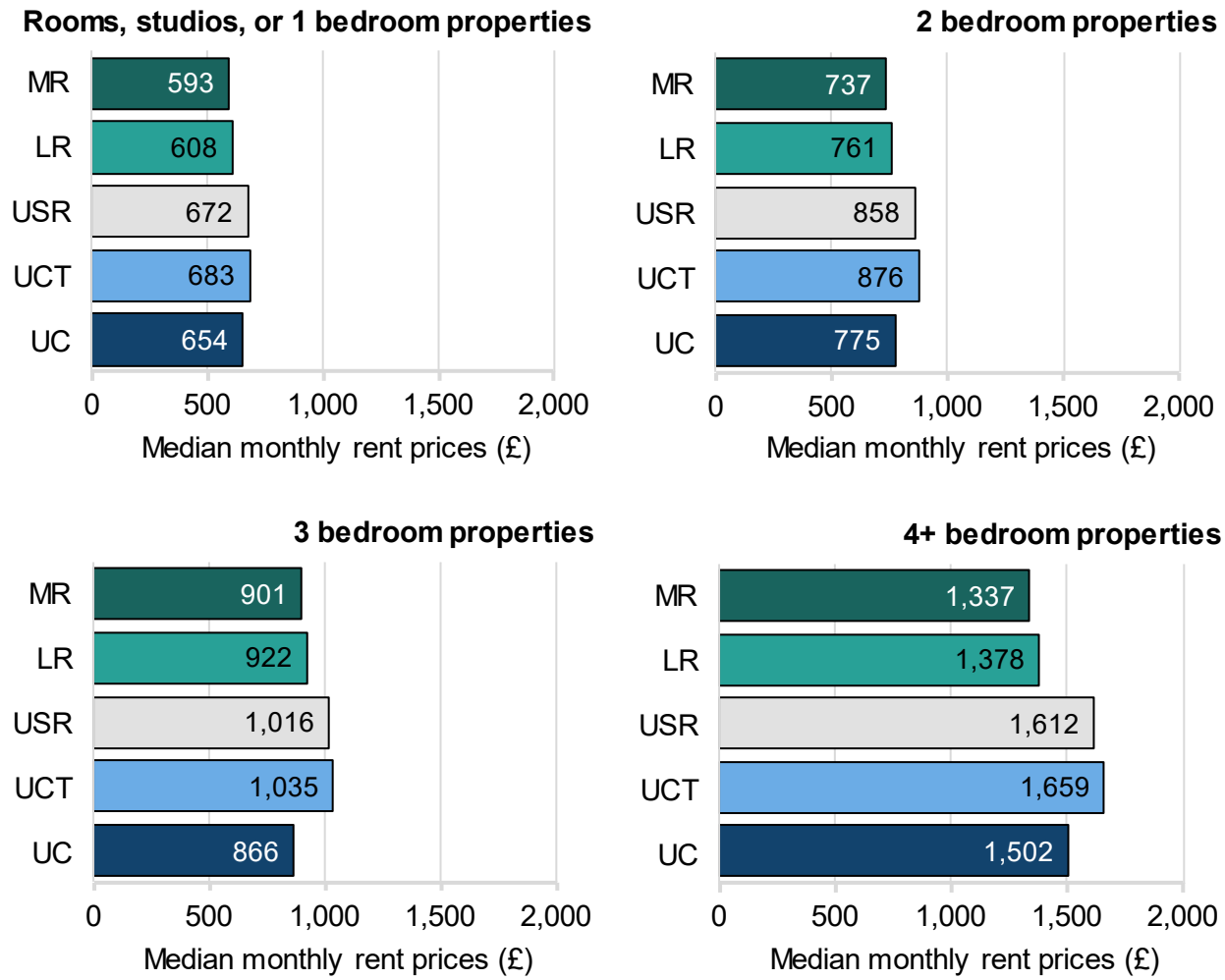
2-bedroom properties cost around £737 pcm to rent in the most Rural areas, compared to £775 pcm in the most Urban areas outside of London; this means that they were slightly cheaper to rent in the most Rural areas. The most expensive settlement type was Urban with City and Town areas, where the median rent price for 2-bedroom properties was £876 pcm in year ending September 2023.

The median rent price for **rooms, studios, or properties with 1 bedroom** was lower in the most Rural areas than in the most Urban areas outside of London (£593 and £654 respectively, pcm). Whilst median rent prices were similar across all settlement types, they were highest in Urban with City and Town areas; the median rent price for properties with 1 bedroom or less here was £683 pcm in year ending September 2023.

Furthermore, median rent prices were only higher in the most Rural areas compared to the most Urban areas outside of London for 3-bedroom properties.

Figure C-10: Bar chart showing median rent price (£), per calendar month (pcm), by number of bedrooms and detailed Rural-Urban Classification for 2021 Local Authorities in England, year ending September 2023 (Note C-6, Note C-8, Note C-9)

The data shown in the charts exclude London; these values are instead shown in Figure C-9. Top left chart = properties with 1 bedroom or less. Top right chart = 2-bedroom properties. Bottom left chart = 3-bedroom properties. Bottom right chart = properties with 4 or more bedrooms. "MR" = Mainly Rural; "LR" = Largely Rural; "USR" = Urban with Significant Rural; "UCT" = Urban with City and Town"; "UC" = Urban Conurbation.



Housing costs: purchases and rentals explanatory notes

- **Note C-1**

Median property prices stated in this section are based on the prices that were current at the time rather than constant prices, and therefore have not been adjusted for inflation. The median is the value determined by putting all the house sales for a given year, area and type in order of price and then selecting the price of the house sale that falls in the middle, such that an equal number of transactions lie above and below that value.

- **Note C-2**

Prices are shown rounded to the nearest £100. For quality and methodology information, see the House price statistics for small areas QMI - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk).

- **Note C-3**

Data are for Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies as of July 2024. The boundaries for these Parliamentary Constituencies can be seen on the Open Geography Portal (statistics.gov.uk). The Rural-Urban Classification of these July 2024 Parliamentary Constituencies is derived from the 2011 Census-based classification: 2011 Rural Urban Classification - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). As these are added to the source data retrospectively, the Parliamentary Constituencies shown might not necessarily reflect the constituency a house was part of at the point of sale.

- **Note C-4**

Source: ONS Parliamentary constituency house price statistics for small areas

- **Note C-5**

Back-to-Back terraces still occur in large numbers in some urban areas such as parts of Leeds and Bradford. These houses share 3 common walls if they are in the middle of a row and 2 common walls when on the end of a row.

- **Note C-6**

“Urban Conurbation” refers to the combination of two categories within the Rural-Urban Classification: “Urban with Minor Conurbation” and “Urban with Major Conurbation”.

- **Note C-7**

In order to aggregate median purchase prices for areas up to the Rural-Urban Classifications, the number of sales/rents have been used to weight the data.

- **Note C-8**

Please note that the scales differ between the charts in this section; caution is advised when comparing between these bar charts.

- **Note C-9**

Data for some Local Authorities have been suppressed where there were fewer than 5 observations; as a result, aggregated Rural and Urban figures may not be true estimates. In addition, Housing Benefit claimants were not included in the sample for the source dataset (Private rental market summary statistics in England - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk))

- **Note C-10**

Tables showing the data given in this section are included within the housing supplementary data tables

D. House purchase affordability

Houses are typically more affordable in the North of England than the South; they are also generally less affordable to buy in Rural areas than in Urban areas, particularly when comparing the most Rural to the most Urban.

Summary

Within this publication, house purchase affordability ratios are based on average (median) house prices and workplace-based earnings. Previously this section analysed lower quartile affordability (e.g. first-time buyers), rental affordability, and additions to affordable housing; a summary of changes are given in the “Background information” section.

In the most affordable 20% of areas in England, median property prices were up to 6.1 times higher than annual workplace-based earnings. This was the case in 7% of all Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituencies and 32% of all Predominantly Urban Constituencies outside of London. However, this is for all dwelling types; trends differ when analysing specific types of homes. Detached properties were the least affordable dwelling type, and flats/maisonettes were the most affordable, for all settlement types in England.

Detached properties in the most Rural areas were less affordable than in the most Urban areas outside of London. In the most Rural areas, median detached property prices were 13.9 times higher than annual median workplace-based earnings. In the most Urban areas outside of London, median detached property prices were 12.5 times higher than earnings.

Semi-detached properties in the most Rural areas were less affordable than in the most Urban areas outside of London, but were the least affordable in Urban with City and Town areas. In the most Rural areas, median semi-detached property prices were 8.9 times higher than annual median workplace-based earnings. In the most Urban areas outside of London, median semi-detached property prices were 7.9 times higher than earnings.

Terraced properties in the most Rural areas were less affordable than in the most Urban areas outside of London. In the most Rural areas, median terraced property prices were 7.5 times higher than annual median workplace-based earnings. In the most Urban areas outside of London, median terraced property prices were 6.2 times higher than earnings.

Flats and maisonettes in the most Rural areas were less affordable than in the most Urban areas outside of London. In the most Rural areas, median prices for flats/maisonettes were 4.9 times higher than annual median workplace-based earnings. In the most Urban areas outside of London, median prices for flats/maisonettes were 4.3 times higher than earnings.

Background information

Prior to July 2024, this publication analysed the difference in lower quartile affordability ratios at Local Authority level; this was from house price to residence-based earnings ratio - ONS. In light of the datasets used in our house prices analysis being discontinued, we took this opportunity to also revise any related analysis – namely, the housing affordability section. A summary of changes are as follows:

- **We have moved or removed some analysis**; the additions to affordable housing analysis now features in Section B - Housing stock: additions. Also, the rental affordability analysis has been removed in favour of adding in rent prices information into Section C - Housing costs: purchases and rentals.
- **We are no longer analysing changes over time**; many of the HPSSA datasets have been discontinued. As the affordability analysis uses the house price figures presented from the HPSSA datasets, it follows that it is not advisable to compare affordability ratios over time. Instead, we have opted to focus on the difference in affordability by dwelling type. This helps to reduce some of the issues where affordability may have varied between areas purely because of sales compositions; for example, in one area there could have been many detached homes sold and in another there could have been many flats/maisonettes sold.
- **We have changed the geography used**; we will now use Westminster Parliamentary Constituency (Note D-3). We have changed the geography used as Parliamentary Constituencies are smaller than Local Authorities, and therefore allows for more geographically detailed analysis. This change is also in line with our house prices analysis, meaning the figures are more directly related.
- **We have changed our earnings metric**; we will now use workplace-based earnings, instead of the residence-based measure that we were using before. Workplace-based earnings refer to where people work, rather than where they live. People may have to live away from where they work, and therefore are subject to additional commuting costs, due to homes being less affordable near their workplace.
- **We have (temporarily) changed our average**; previous analysis focused on lower quartile affordability, focussing on groups such as first-time buyers. For this edition of the publication, we have only provided median affordability so that we were able to use median house prices as in Section C. The lower quartile estimates were not published whilst the ONS assessed demand; when they republish these in future, we will include lower quartile estimates once again in our analysis.

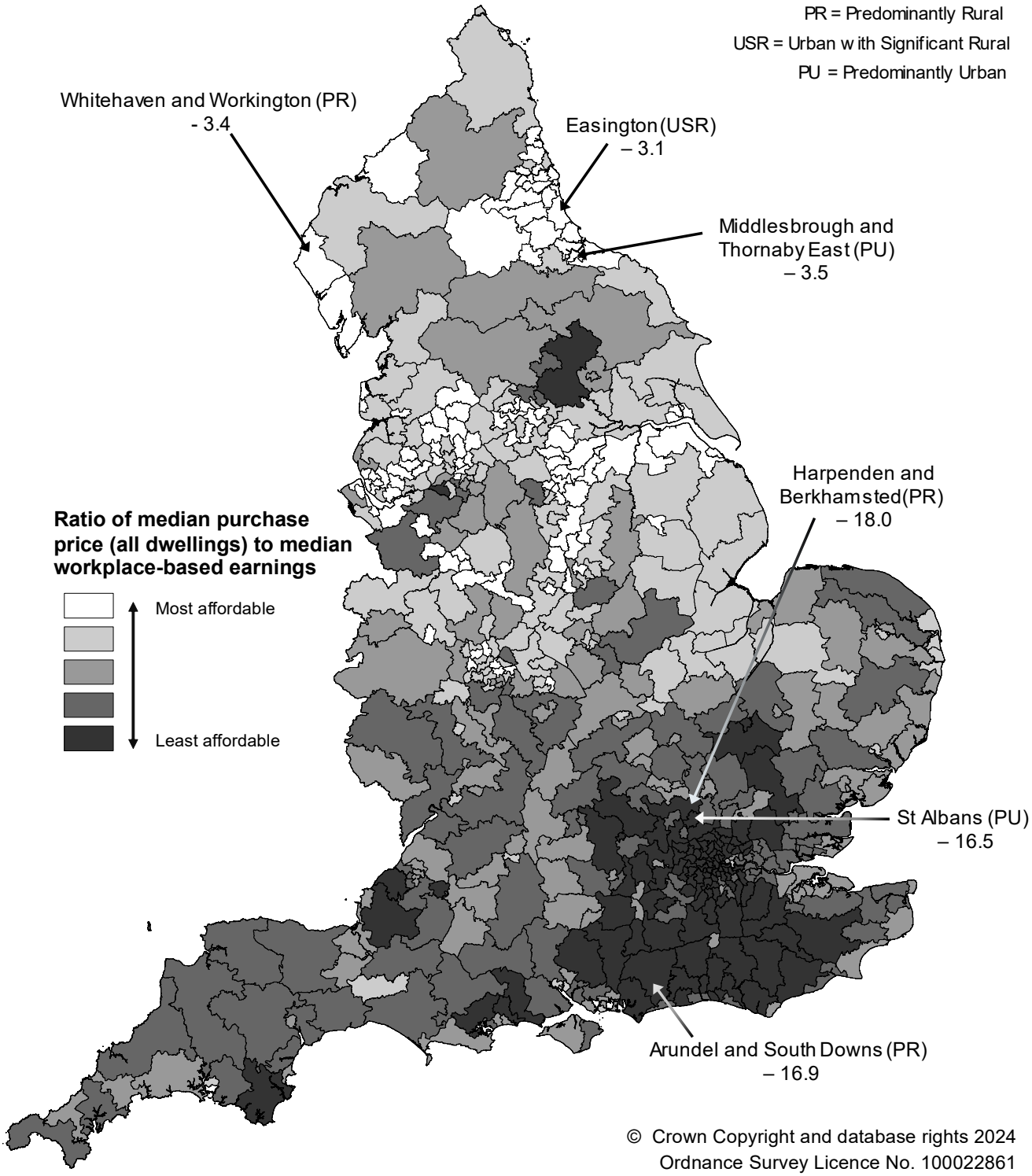
House purchase affordability ratios are based on average house prices and workplace-based earnings. The earnings figures used are for individuals (not households) and therefore the ratios presented are based on a single person trying to buy a house. Affordability ratios will be reduced when a household has more than one income from earnings – for example when a couple combine their earnings to buy a house.

Median house purchase affordability

The ratio between median property purchase prices and median workplace-based earnings can be used to give an indication of whether the average person could afford to buy a mid-market house. House sale prices are reported quarterly by the ONS, and are described in Section C. The map in Figure D-1 shows the median affordability ratios of Constituencies in England.

Figure D-1: Map showing house affordability (all dwellings) for Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies, by quintiles, year ending September 2023 (Note D-2, Note D-6)

The darker the colour, the higher the ratio of median house purchase prices to median annual workplace-based earnings, and therefore the less affordable the average house is in the area.



The map in Figure D-1 can be summarised as follows:

- In the most affordable 20% of Parliamentary Constituencies in England (quintile 1), median property prices were up to 6.1 times higher than annual workplace-based earnings. Of these 108 Constituencies, 9 were Predominantly Rural and 89 were Predominantly Urban. This means that 7% of all Predominantly Rural Constituencies (and 32% of all Predominantly Urban Constituencies outside of London) were amongst the most affordable areas in England.
- The most affordable Parliamentary Constituencies overall were “Easington” (Urban with Significant Rural – ratio = 3.1), “Whitehaven and Workington” (Predominantly Rural – ratio = 3.4), and “Middlesbrough and Thornaby East” (Predominantly Urban – ratio = 3.5). These are all in the North of England.
- In the most affordable 40% of Parliamentary Constituencies in England (quintiles 1 and 2; more affordable than the national average), median property prices were up to 8.0 times higher than annual workplace-based earnings. Of these 216 Constituencies, 31 were Predominantly Rural and 157 were Predominantly Urban (excluding London). This means that at least 26% of Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituencies (and 57% of Predominantly Urban Constituencies outside of London) were more affordable than the national average. 1 Constituency in London - “Poplar and Limehouse” – was also amongst the most affordable 40% of Constituencies in England.
- In the least affordable 20% of Parliamentary Constituencies (quintile 5), median property prices were between 11.9 and 27.4 times higher than annual workplace-based earnings. Of these 108 Constituencies, 20 were Predominantly Rural and 21 were Predominantly Urban (excluding London). This means that 17% of all Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituencies (and 8% of all Predominantly Urban Constituencies outside of London) were amongst the least affordable areas in England. 56 of these Constituencies were in London, meaning 78% of all London Constituencies were amongst the least affordable areas.
- The least affordable Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London were “St Albans” (Predominantly Urban – ratio = 16.5), “Arundel and South Downs” (Predominantly Rural – ratio = 16.9), and “Harpenden and Berkhamsted” (Predominantly Rural – ratio = 18.0). These are all in the South East of England; typically, homes are more affordable to buy in the North of England than the South. Besides a few outliers, the majority of Parliamentary Constituencies within quintile 5 (the least affordable areas) were in London and its surrounding areas.

Residential property purchase prices differ depending on the type of dwelling; for instance, in most cases, a flat or maisonette will be less expensive than a detached home in the same area. As a result, properties in the same area may be more or less affordable to the same person, based on their earnings staying the same. This is shown in the bar chart in Figure D-2.

In the year ending September 2023, the median price paid for **detached** properties was 14.0 times higher than annual median workplace-based earnings in Predominantly Rural areas, and 13.1 times earnings in Predominantly Urban areas outside London. This means they were less affordable than any other type of dwelling. In London, the median price paid for detached properties was 30.5 times higher than earnings; this is more than double the ratios seen in other settlement types.

The second least affordable type of dwelling was **semi-detached** properties, where the median price paid was 8.9 times higher than annual median earnings in Predominantly Rural areas (and

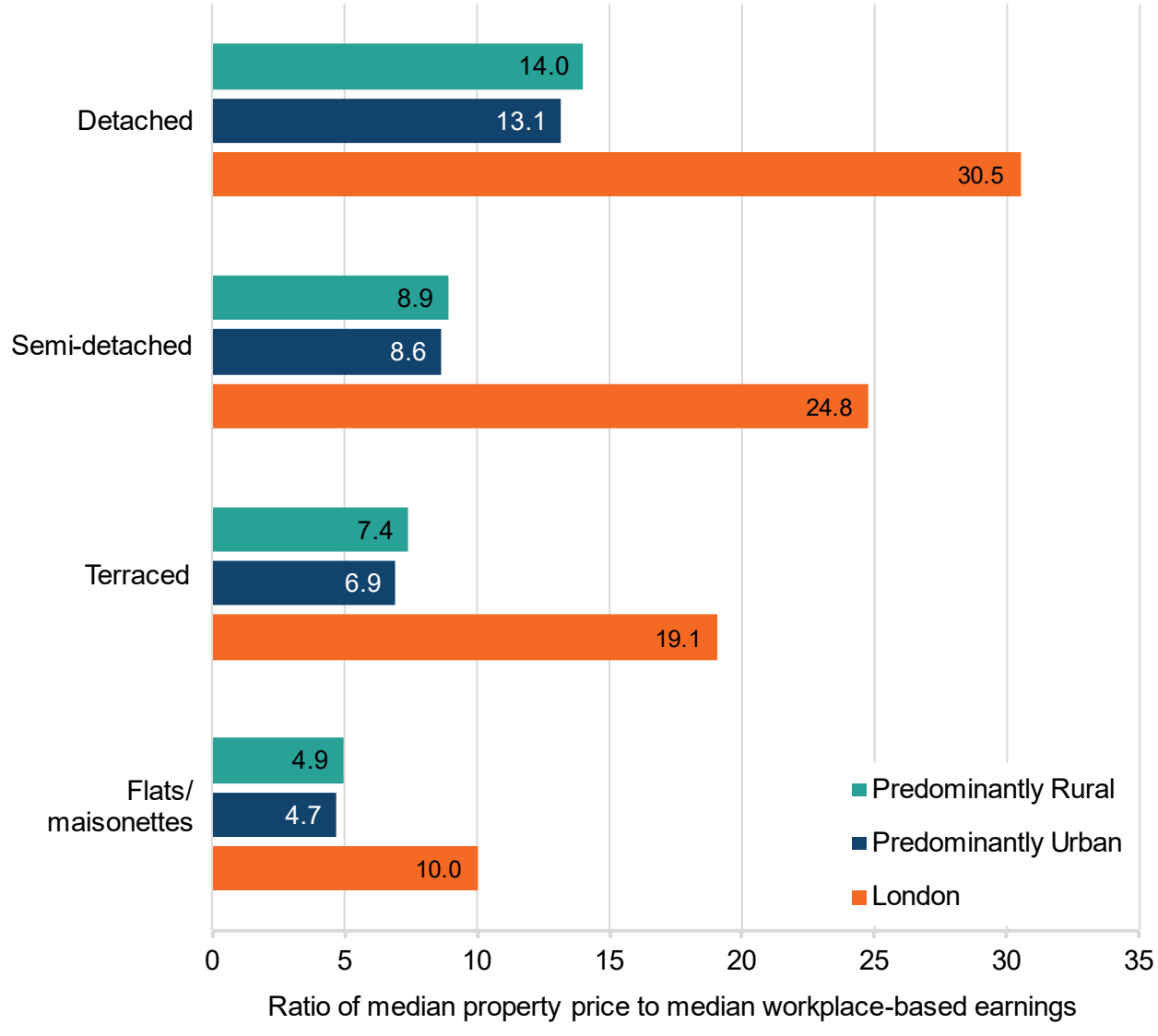
8.6 times earnings in Predominantly Urban areas outside London). In London, the median price paid for semi-detached properties was 24.8 times higher than earnings; this is almost triple the ratios seem in other settlement types for this property type.

The second most affordable type of dwelling was **terraced** properties, where the median price paid was 7.4 times higher than annual median earnings in Predominantly Rural areas (and 6.9 times earnings in Predominantly Urban areas outside London). In London, the median price paid for terraced properties was 19.1 times higher than earnings; this is almost triple the ratios seen in other settlement types for this property type.

The most affordable type of dwelling was **flats or maisonettes**, where the median price paid was 4.9 times higher than annual median earnings in Predominantly Rural areas (or 4.7 times earnings in Predominantly Urban areas outside London). Properties in Predominantly Rural Constituencies were less affordable than in Predominantly Urban Constituencies outside London for all dwelling types. In London, the median price paid for flats or maisonettes was 10.0 times higher than earnings; this is more than double the ratios seen in other settlement types for this property type.

Figure D-2: Bar chart showing median house purchase affordability by settlement type and dwelling type, year ending September 2023 (Note D-3, Note D-4)

The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the clusters of bars. Lower values = more affordable.

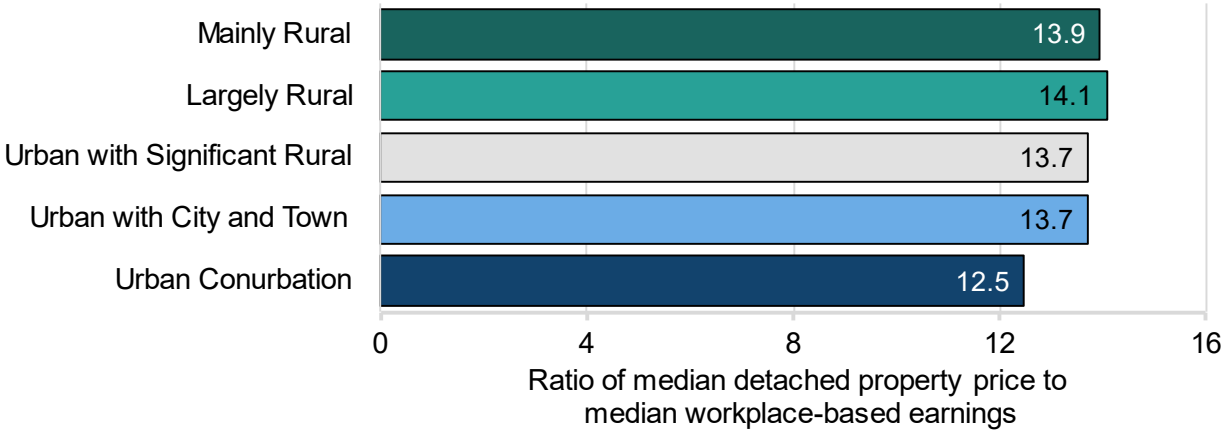


Median affordability: detached properties

A detached property is one where none of the living accommodation is attached to another property (but can be attached to a garage). Section A - Housing stock: age and type shows the proportion of properties that are detached in Rural and Urban areas. As shown in Figure D-2, detached properties were less affordable than any other type of dwelling for all settlement types.

The bar chart in Figure D-3 shows the median affordability ratios (based on median property prices and workplace-based earnings) for detached properties, by settlement type, in year ending September 2023. Detached properties were less affordable in Predominantly Rural areas than in any other area outside of London.

Figure D-3: Bar chart showing median detached property affordability, by detailed Westminster Parliamentary Constituency Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note D-3, Note D-4, Note D-7)
The data shown in the chart excludes London, where the median affordability ratio for detached properties was 30.5; this is instead shown in Figure D-2. Lower values = more affordable.



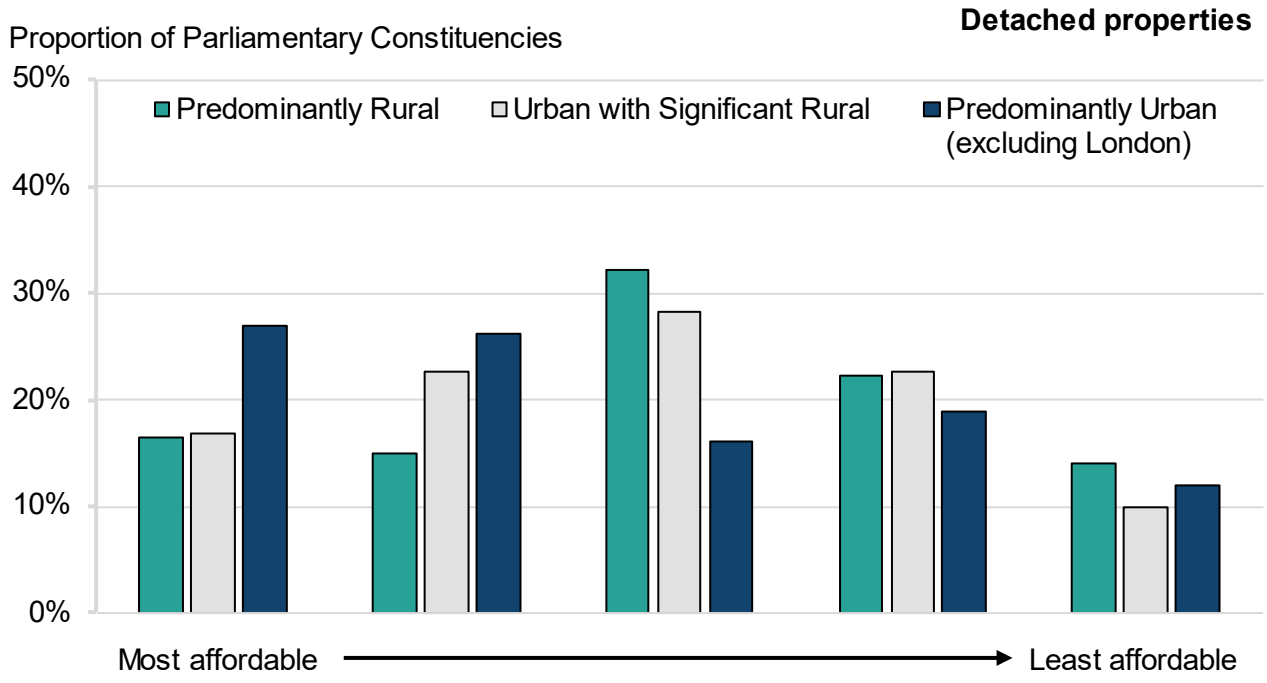
In the most Rural Parliamentary Constituencies (Mainly Rural), median detached property prices were 13.9 times higher than annual median workplace-based earnings in year ending September 2023; this is similar to the median affordability ratio of Largely Rural areas, albeit marginally lower. In the most Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London (Urban Conurbation), median detached property prices were 12.5 times higher than earnings; this means that detached properties in the most Urban areas were more affordable (but often less available) than in the most Rural areas.

The bar chart in Figure D-4 shows the proportion of Parliamentary Constituencies within each quintile of affordability (based on median property prices and workplace-based earnings) of detached properties; it is categorised by Rural-Urban Classification and is for year ending September 2023. The chart can be summarised as follows:

- In Predominantly Rural areas, 17% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the most affordable quintile, and therefore had a median affordability ratio of 10.1 or less. In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, 27% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the most affordable quintile; this is a larger proportion than for any other quintile. This means that proportionally fewer Rural areas than Urban areas had a median affordability ratio of 10.1 or less.

- 14% of Parliamentary Constituencies in Predominantly Rural areas were in the least affordable quintile, and therefore had a median affordability ratio of 18.2 or more. In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, 12% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the least affordable quintile. This means that proportionally more Rural areas than Urban areas had a median affordability ratio of 18.2 or more.
- In Predominantly Rural areas, a larger proportion of Parliamentary Constituencies are in quintile 3 than in any other quintile (32%); this means that the median affordability ratio was between 12.3 and 14.8. In comparison, just 16% of Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London had the same range of median affordability ratios.
- Proportionally fewer Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituencies were more affordable than the national average when compared to Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London. 31% of Rural areas were in quintiles 1 or 2 (and therefore had an affordability ratio of 12.3 or less), compared to 53% of Urban areas outside of London.
- Proportionally more Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituencies were less affordable than the national average when compared to Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London. 36% of Rural areas were in quintiles 4 or 5 (and therefore had an affordability ratio of more than 14.8), compared to 31% of Urban areas outside of London.

Figure D-4: Bar chart showing the proportion of Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies within each quintile of median detached property affordability, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note D-3, Note D-4, Note D-6)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the clusters of bars.
The data in the chart excludes London. There were no areas in London that would be in quintiles 1 or 2. 3% of areas would be in quintile 3, 18% in quintile 4, and 79% in quintile 5. Therefore, London was typically less affordable than any other settlement type for detached properties.

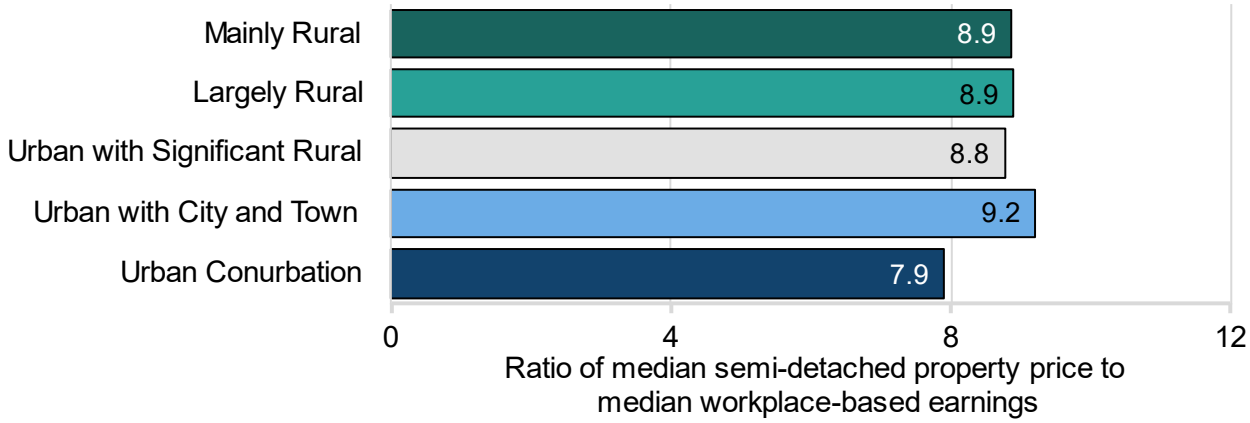


Median affordability: semi-detached properties

A semi-detached property is one where the living accommodation is joined to one other house or bungalow by a common wall that they share. As shown in Figure D-2, semi-detached properties were the second least affordable dwelling type for all settlement types.

The bar chart in Figure D-5 shows the median affordability ratios (based on median property prices and workplace-based earnings) for semi-detached properties, by settlement type, in year ending September 2023. Affordability was similar across settlement types, with Urban City and Town being the least affordable and Urban Conurbation being the most.

Figure D-5: Bar chart showing median semi-detached property affordability, by detailed Westminster Parliamentary Constituency Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note D-3, Note D-4, Note D-7)
The data shown in the chart excludes London, where the median affordability ratio for semi-detached properties was 24.8 (Figure D-2). Lower values = more affordable.



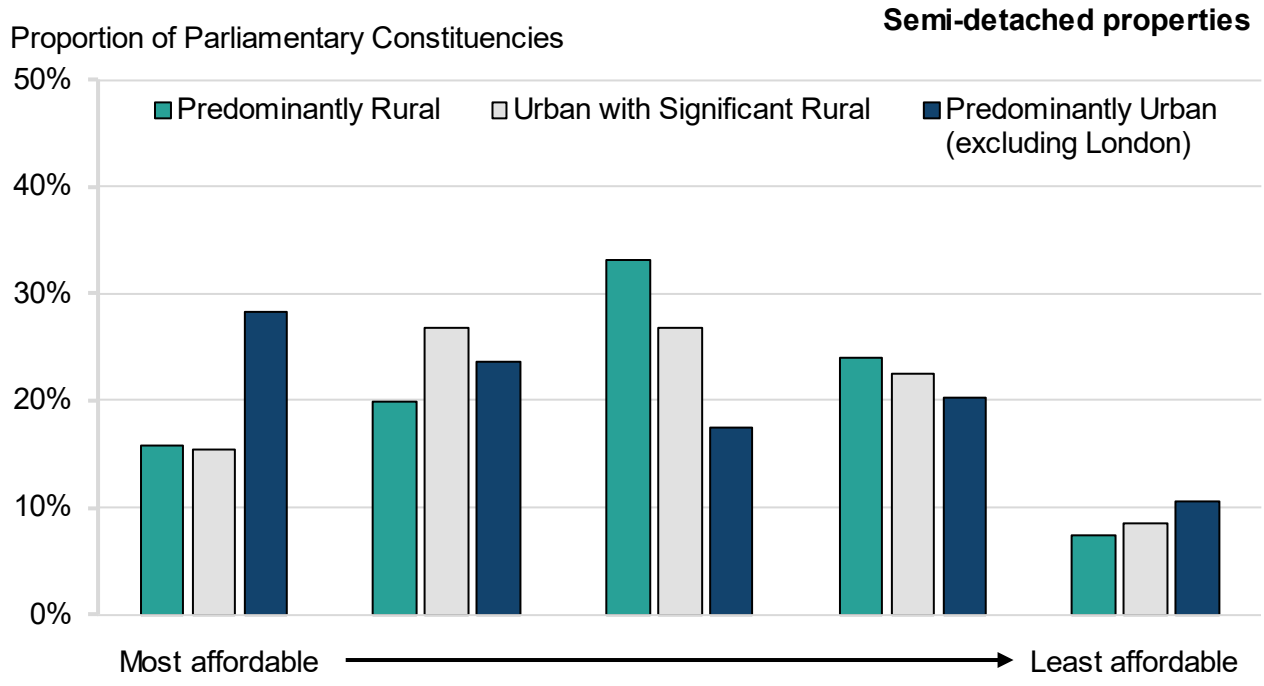
In the most Rural Parliamentary Constituencies (Mainly Rural), median semi-detached property prices were 8.9 times higher than annual median workplace-based earnings in year ending September 2023; this is similar to the affordability ratio seen in Largely Rural areas. In the most Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London (Urban Conurbation), median semi-detached property prices were 7.9 times higher than earnings; this means that semi-detached properties in the most Urban areas were more affordable than in the most Rural areas. The least affordable settlement type was Urban City and Town, where median semi-detached property prices were 9.2 times higher than earnings.

The bar chart in Figure D-6 shows the proportion of Parliamentary Constituencies within each quintile of affordability (based on median property prices and workplace-based earnings) of semi-detached properties; it is categorised by Rural-Urban Classification and is for year ending September 2023. The chart can be summarised as follows:

- In Predominantly Rural areas, 16% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the most affordable quintile, and therefore had a median affordability ratio of 6.3 or less. In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, 28% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the most affordable quintile; this is a larger proportion than for any other quintile. This means that proportionally fewer Rural areas than Urban areas had a median affordability ratio of 6.3 or less.

- 7% of Parliamentary Constituencies in Predominantly Rural areas were in the least affordable quintile, and therefore had a median affordability ratio of 12.6 or more. In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, 11% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the least affordable quintile. This means that proportionally more Rural areas than Urban areas had a median affordability ratio of 12.6 or more.
- In Predominantly Rural areas, a larger proportion of Parliamentary Constituencies are in quintile 3 than in any other quintile (33%); this means that the median affordability ratio was between 8.1 and 9.9. In comparison, just 17% of Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London had the same range of median affordability ratios.
- Proportionally fewer Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituencies were more affordable than the national average when compared to Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London. 36% of Rural areas were in quintiles 1 or 2 (and therefore had an affordability ratio of 8.1 or less), compared to 52% of Urban areas outside of London.
- Proportionally more Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituencies were less affordable than the national average when compared to Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London. 31% of Rural areas were in quintiles 4 or 5 (and therefore had an affordability ratio of more than 9.9), compared to 31% of Urban areas outside of London.

Figure D-6: Bar chart showing the proportion of Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies within each quintile of median semi-detached property affordability, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note D-3, Note D-4, Note D-6)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the clusters of bars.
The data in the chart excludes London. There were no areas in London that would be in quintiles 1, 2, or 3. 10% of areas in London would be in quintile 4, and 90% in quintile 5. Therefore, London was typically less affordable than any other settlement type for semi-detached properties.

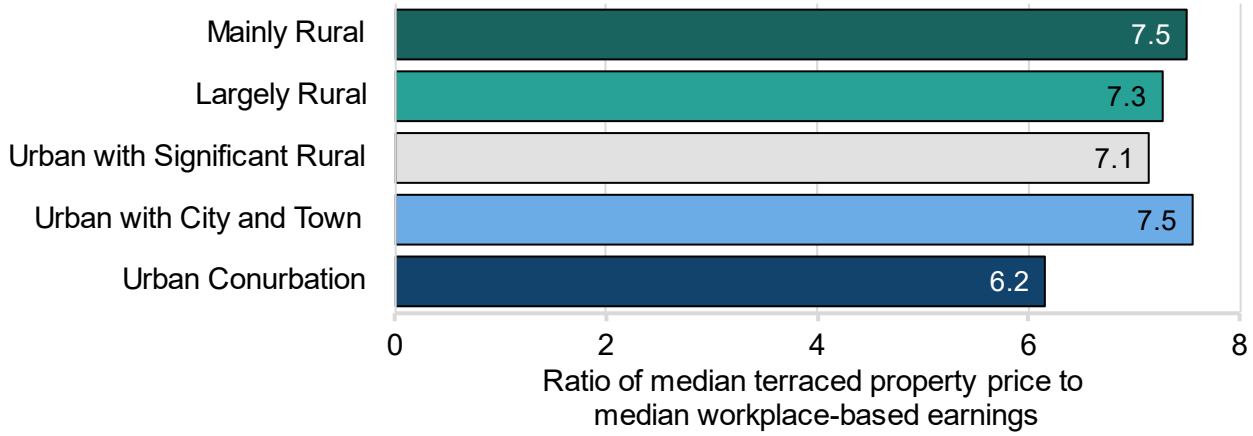


Median affordability: terraced properties

A mid-terraced house is usually located between two other houses and shares two common side walls; an end-of-terrace house is part of a terraced development but only shares one common side wall. As shown in Figure D-2, terraced properties were the second most affordable dwelling type for all settlement types.

The bar chart in Figure D-7 shows the median affordability ratios (based on median property prices and workplace-based earnings) for terraced properties, by settlement type, in year ending September 2023. Affordability was similar across settlement types, with both Mainly Rural and Urban City and Town being the least affordable, and Urban Conurbation being the most.

Figure D-7: Bar chart showing median terraced property affordability, by detailed Westminster Parliamentary Constituency Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note D-3, Note D-4, Note D-7)
The data shown in the chart excludes London, where the median affordability ratio for terraced properties was 19.1; this is instead shown in Figure D-2. Lower values = more affordable.



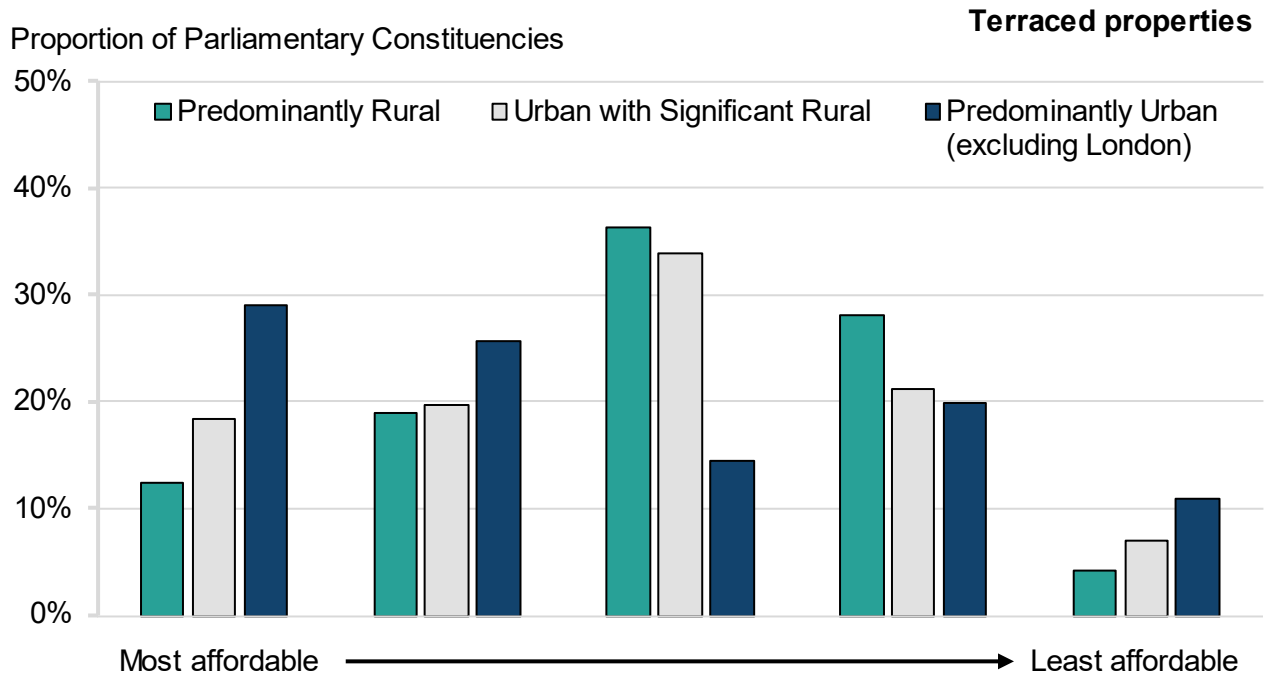
In the most Rural Parliamentary Constituencies (Mainly Rural), median terraced property prices were 7.5 times higher than annual median workplace-based earnings in year ending September 2023; this is the same as in Urban with City and Town areas, and both of these are the least affordable settlement types. The affordability ratio in Mainly Rural areas was slightly higher than in Largely Rural areas, where terraced properties were more affordable with prices that were 7.3 times higher than earnings. In the most Urban areas outside of London (Urban Conurbation), median terraced property prices were 6.2 times higher than earnings; this means that terraced properties in the most Urban areas were more affordable than in the most Rural areas.

The bar chart in Figure D-8 shows the proportion of Parliamentary Constituencies within each quintile of affordability (based on median property prices and workplace-based earnings) of terraced properties; it is categorised by Rural-Urban Classification and is for year ending September 2023. The chart can be summarised as follows:

- In Predominantly Rural areas, 12% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the most affordable quintile, and therefore had a median affordability ratio of 4.9 or less. In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, 29% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the most affordable quintile; this is a larger proportion than for any other quintile. This means that proportionally fewer Rural areas than Urban areas had a median affordability ratio of 4.9 or less.

- 4% of Parliamentary Constituencies in Predominantly Rural areas were in the least affordable quintile, and therefore had a median affordability ratio of 10.8 or more. In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, 11% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the least affordable quintile. This means that proportionally more Rural areas than Urban areas had a median affordability ratio of 10.8 or more.
- In Predominantly Rural areas, a larger proportion of Parliamentary Constituencies are in quintile 3 than in any other quintile (36%); this means that the median affordability ratio was between 6.7 and 8.3. In comparison, just 14% of Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London had the same range of median affordability ratios.
- Proportionally fewer Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituencies were more affordable than the national average when compared to Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London. 31% of Rural areas were in quintiles 1 or 2 (and therefore had an affordability ratio of 6.7 or less), compared to 55% of Urban areas outside of London.
- Proportionally more Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituencies were less affordable than the national average when compared to Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London. 32% of Rural areas were in quintiles 4 or 5 (and therefore had an affordability ratio of more than 8.3), compared to 31% of Urban areas outside of London.

Figure D-8: Bar chart showing the proportion of Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies within each quintile of median affordability for terraced properties, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note D-3, Note D-4, Note D-6)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the clusters of bars.
The data in the chart excludes London. There were no areas in London that would be in quintiles 1, 2, or 3. 6% of areas in London would be in quintile 4, and 94% in quintile 5. Therefore, London was typically less affordable than any other settlement type for terraced properties.

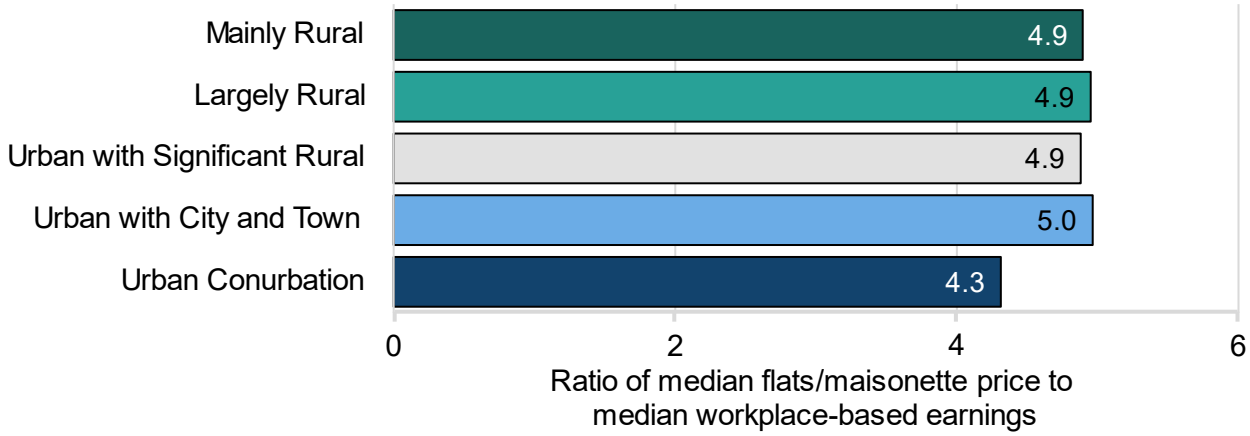


Median affordability: flats/maisonettes

A flat is a single-level residence within a larger building, often sharing common areas such as hallways and staircases; a maisonette is a two-storey flat. As shown in Figure D-2, flats or maisonettes were the most affordable dwelling type in each area, for all settlement types.

The bar chart in Figure D-9 shows the median affordability ratios (based on median property prices and workplace-based earnings) for flats/maisonettes, by settlement type, in year ending September 2023. Affordability was similar across settlement types, with Urban City and Town being the least affordable and Urban Conurbation being the most.

Figure D-9: Bar chart showing median affordability for flats/maisonettes, by detailed Westminster Parliamentary Constituency Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note D-3, Note D-4, Note D-7)
The data shown in the chart excludes London, where the median affordability ratio for flats/maisonettes was 10.0; this is instead shown in Figure D-2. Lower values = more affordable.



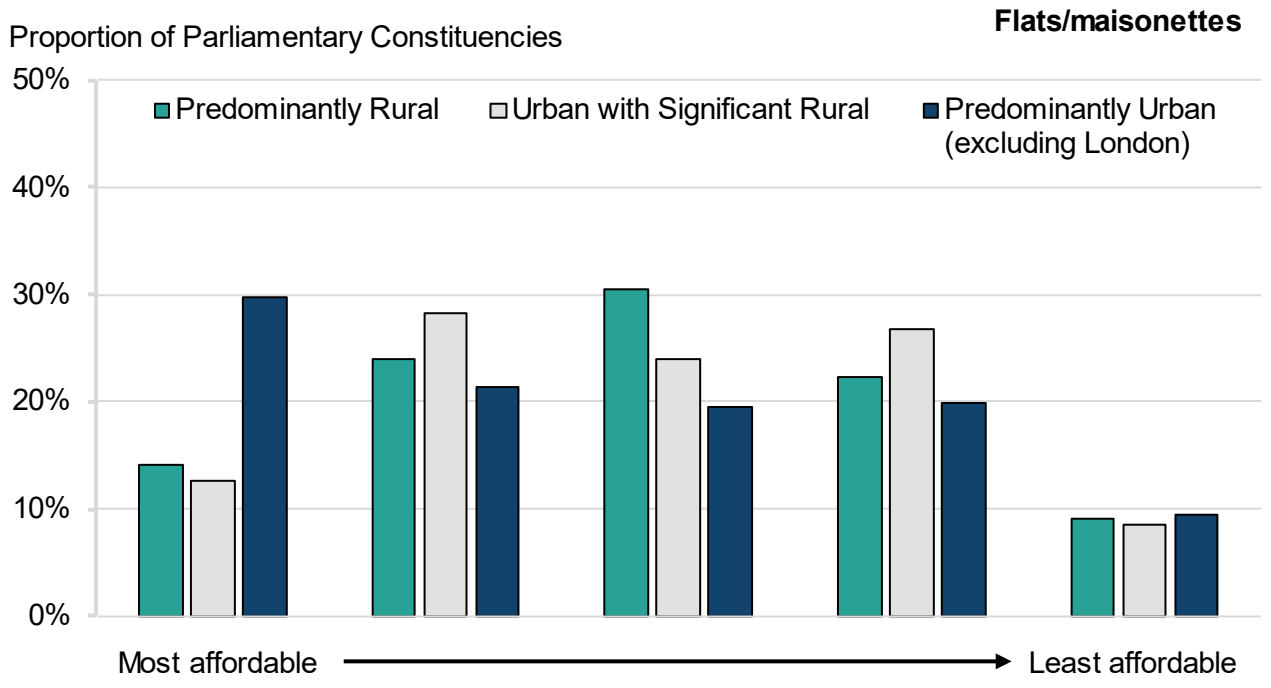
In the most Rural Parliamentary Constituencies (Mainly Rural), median prices for flats/maisonettes were 4.9 times higher than annual median workplace-based earnings in year ending September 2023; this is similar to the affordability ratio seen in Largely Rural areas. In the most Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London (Urban Conurbation), median prices for flats/maisonettes were 4.3 times higher than earnings; this means that flats and maisonettes in the most Urban areas were more affordable than in the most Rural areas. The least affordable settlement type was Urban City and Town, where median prices for flats/maisonettes were 5.0 times higher than earnings.

The bar chart in Figure D-10 shows the proportion of Parliamentary Constituencies within each quintile of affordability (based on median property prices and workplace-based earnings) of flats and maisonettes; it is categorised by Rural-Urban Classification and is for year ending September 2023. The chart can be summarised as follows:

- In Predominantly Rural areas, 14% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the most affordable quintile, and therefore had a median affordability ratio of 3.6 or less. In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, 30% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the most affordable quintile; this is a larger proportion than for any other quintile. This means that proportionally fewer Rural areas than Urban areas had a median affordability ratio of 3.6 or less.

- 9% of Parliamentary Constituencies in Predominantly Rural areas were in the least affordable quintile, and therefore had a median affordability ratio of 7.1 or more. In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, 9% of Parliamentary Constituencies were in the least affordable quintile. This means that similar proportions of Rural and Urban areas had a median affordability ratio of 7.1 or more.
- In Predominantly Rural areas, a larger proportion of Parliamentary Constituencies are in quintile 3 than in any other quintile (31%); this means that the median affordability ratio was between 4.4 and 5.4. In comparison, 20% of Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London had the same range of median affordability ratios.
- Proportionally fewer Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituencies were more affordable than the national average when compared to Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London. 38% of Rural areas were in quintiles 1 or 2 (and therefore had an affordability ratio of 4.4 or less), compared to 51% of Urban areas outside of London.
- Proportionally more Predominantly Rural Parliamentary Constituencies were less affordable than the national average when compared to Predominantly Urban Parliamentary Constituencies outside of London. 31% of Rural areas were in quintiles 4 or 5 (and therefore had an affordability ratio of more than 5.4), compared to 29% of Urban areas outside of London.

Figure D-10: Bar chart showing the proportion of Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies within each quintile of median affordability for flats/maisonettes, by broad Rural-Urban Classification in England, year ending September 2023 (Note D-3, Note D-4, Note D-6)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the clusters of bars.
The data in the chart excludes London. There were no areas in London that would be in quintiles 1, 2, or 3. 10% of areas in London would be in quintile 4, and 90% in quintile 5. Therefore, London was typically less affordable than any other settlement type for flats/maisonettes.



Housing stock: affordable housing - explanatory notes

- **Note D-1**

Affordability ratios are calculated by dividing median house prices by median gross annual workplace-based earnings. The earnings data are from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2022) which provides a snapshot of earnings at April in each year (via NOMIS). Earnings relate to gross full-time individual earnings on a place of work basis. The house price statistics come from the House Price Statistics for Small Areas, which report the median price paid for residential property and refer to a 12 month period with April in the middle (year ending September). For more information regarding the methodology, see the Housing affordability in England and Wales QMI - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk).

- **Note D-2**

Earnings data were not available for three Constituencies ("Tottenham", "Hackney South and Shoreditch", and "Hackney North and Stoke Newington") and therefore affordability ratios could not be calculated.

- **Note D-3**

The affordability ratio is calculated for each Westminster Parliamentary Constituency in England, as at July 2024 - Open Geography Portal (statistics.gov.uk). The Rural-Urban Classification of these Parliamentary Constituencies is derived from the 2011 Census-based classification: 2011 Rural Urban Classification - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). As these are added to the source data retrospectively, the Parliamentary Constituencies shown might not necessarily reflect the Constituency a house was part of at the point of sale.

- **Note D-4**

Parliamentary Constituency affordability ratios are weighted by population estimates; the latest data available at the time of publication is 2022, via Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics (nomisweb.co.uk). This allows for the figures to be aggregated to create Rural and Urban estimates. Population is used instead of household counts, as earnings are based on a single person; this is explained in the "Background information" section.

- **Note D-5**

For more information on house purchase affordability, see Housing affordability in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk).

- **Note D-6**

A "quintile" is one of five equal measurements that a set of things can be divided into; in this case, quintiles are a way of splitting datasets into groups that represent 20% of the metric. When ordering the affordability ratios of Parliamentary Constituencies from smallest to largest, the first quintile (quintile 1) would represent the most affordable 20% of areas. Quintile 2 would represent the next most affordable 20% of areas. If quintiles 1 and 2 are combined, they represent the most affordable 40% of areas. Similarly, quintile 5 represents the least affordable 20% of areas. The range of affordability ratios represented within each quintile are as follows (≤ means "less than or equal to"; > means "more than") :

Quintile	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flats/maisonettes
1	≤ 10.1	≤ 6.3	≤ 4.9	≤ 3.6
2	> 10.1 but ≤ 12.3	> 6.3 but ≤ 8.1	> 4.9 but ≤ 6.7	> 3.6 but ≤ 4.4
3	> 12.3 but ≤ 14.8	> 8.1 but ≤ 9.9	> 6.7 but ≤ 8.3	> 4.4 but ≤ 5.4
4	> 14.8 but ≤ 18.2	> 9.9 but ≤ 12.6	> 8.3 but ≤ 10.8	> 5.4 but ≤ 7.1
5	> 18.2	> 12.6	> 10.8	> 7.1

- **Note D-7**

"Urban Conurbation" refers to the combination of two categories within the Rural-Urban Classification: "Urban with Minor Conurbation" and "Urban with Major Conurbation".

E. Second and empty homes

In 2022, there was a similar number of Predominantly Rural dwellings classed as second homes or empty homes (100 thousand each); but whilst empty homes are fairly uniformly distributed across the country, there were 5 Rural areas where the proportion of properties that were second homes were particular high - at least 5.5% (more than 3 times the average proportion of second homes in Predominantly Rural areas).

Summary

Second homes and empty homes both attract a council tax discount thereby reducing the pot of money available to local authorities to spend on services for their residents. Further, if a property in a Rural area is being used as a second home it is then not available as a primary home for a Rural household.

In 2022 1.8% of dwellings in Predominantly Rural areas were classed as second homes, which is more than twice the proportion classified as second homes in Predominantly Urban areas (0.8%). The difference is more pronounced in coastal areas, where 2.9% of dwellings in Predominantly Rural coastal areas were classed as second homes, compared with 0.9% in Predominantly Urban coastal areas.

In 2022, there were 480,000 dwellings classed as empty homes in England and 100,000 of them were in Predominantly Rural areas. The rurality of an area has little impact on the percentage of dwellings classed as empty; in Predominantly Rural areas it was 1.8% of dwellings and in Predominantly Urban areas it was 2.0%. Instead, the geographical picture is one of a north south divide with proportionally more empty homes in the North than the South.

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% (Note E-3).

As shown in Table E-1 in 2022 there were 256,900 dwellings classed as second homes in England, with 96,100 (37%) in Predominantly Rural areas and 133,100 (52%) in Predominantly Urban areas. In Predominantly Rural areas 1.8% of dwellings are classed as second homes, which is more than twice that of Predominantly Urban areas (0.8%) and Urban with Significant Rural areas (0.8%).

Table E-1: Number and Percentage of second homes by 2011 broad Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification, 2022

Rural-Urban Classification	Number of second homes	Percentage of chargeable dwellings classed as second homes (%)
Predominantly Rural	96,100	1.8
Urban with Significant Rural	27,700	0.8
Predominantly Urban	133,100	0.8
England	**256,900**	**1.0**

The difference is more pronounced in coastal areas, where 2.9% of dwellings in Predominantly Rural coastal areas are classed as second homes, compared with 0.9% in areas that are Predominantly Urban coastal areas (see Note E-1).

Table E-2 analyses the number of second homes and percentage of chargeable dwellings classed as second homes by detailed Rural-Urban classification. Mainly Rural areas have the highest rate of second homes, with 2.4% of dwellings classed as second homes, compared with 0.9% in Urban areas with Major Conurbation (the most urban areas).

Table E-2: Number and Percentage of second homes by 2011 Detailed Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification, 2022

Rural-Urban Classification	Number of second homes	Percentage of chargeable dwellings classed as second homes (%)
Mainly Rural	50,700	2.4
Largely Rural	45,400	1.4
Urban with Significant Rural	27,700	0.8
Urban with City and Town	54,900	0.9
Urban with Minor Conurbation	3,300	0.3
Urban with Major Conurbation	74,900	0.9

The percentage of dwellings classed as second homes in all coastal areas was 1.7%, more than twice the rate in all non-coastal areas (0.8%). See Note E-2 for more information regarding coastal area definitions.

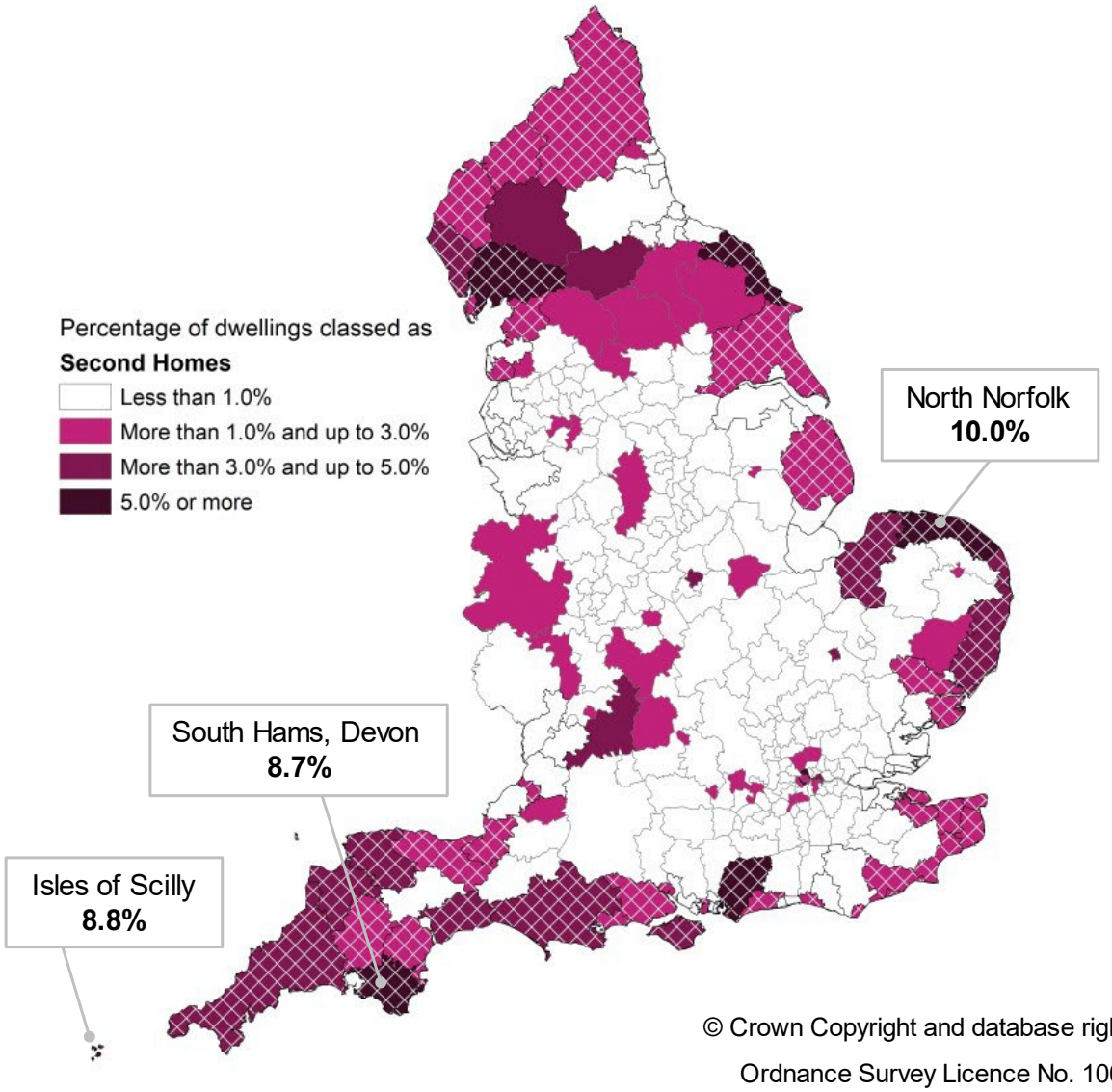
There were 5 Predominantly Rural areas where the proportion of properties that were second homes were particular high - at least 5.5% (more than 3 times the average proportion of second homes in Predominantly Rural areas). The areas with the highest percentage of dwellings classed

as second homes, outside of London, were North Norfolk (10.0%), Isles of Scilly (8.8%), and South Hams (8.7%), all of which are Mainly Rural areas as well as being coastal; this is shown in Figure E-1. The other Predominantly Rural areas with at least 5.5% of properties being classed as second homes are South Lakeland and Chichester.

There were no Predominantly Urban Local Authorities outside of London with at least 5% of properties being classed as second homes in 2022. The only Local Authority classified as Urban with Significant Rural with at least 5% of properties being classed as second homes in 2022 was Scarborough.

Figure E-1: Percentage of dwellings classed as second homes, by Local Authority in England, 2022

Coastal areas are highlighted with white cross-hatching. The darker the colour of a Local Authority, the greater the percentage of dwellings classed as second homes.



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%; 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. Dwellings which have remained empty for over 5 years can receive a premium of up to 200%. This is all at the discretion of each Local Authority.

Table E-3 shows that in 2022, there were 478,900 dwellings classed as empty homes in England, with 98,800 (21%) in Predominantly Rural areas and 319,100 (67%) in Predominantly Urban areas.

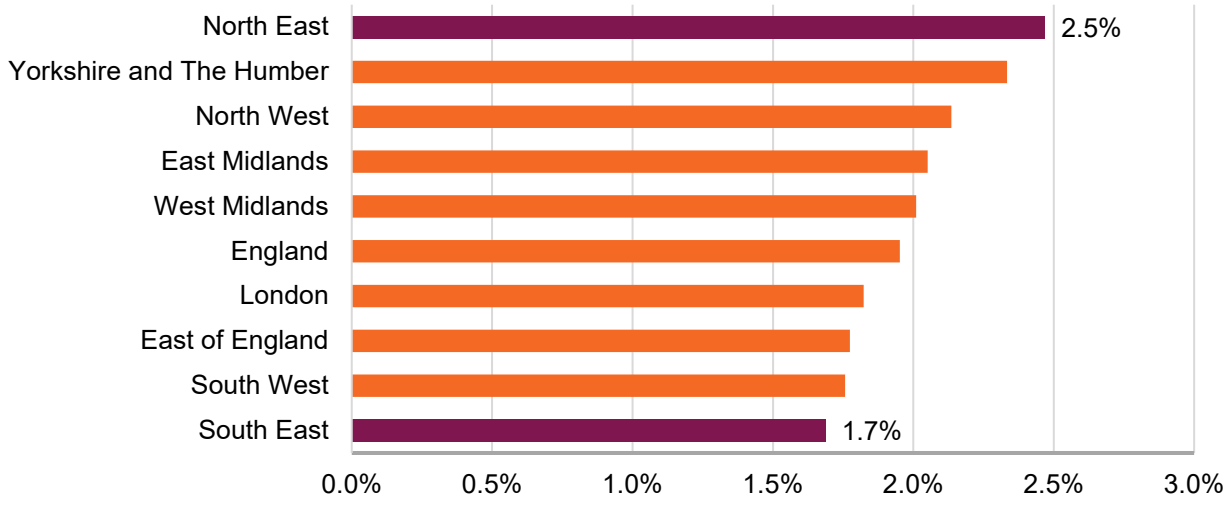
The rurality of an area has little impact on the percentage of dwellings classed as empty across England, as Predominantly Rural areas have 1.8% of dwellings classed as empty homes, while Predominantly Urban areas (2.0%) and Urban with Significant Rural areas (1.8%) have similar or the same rates.

The differences are more pronounced across the regions of England, where 2.5% of dwellings are classed as empty in the North East, compared with 1.7% in the South East. This is shown in Figure E-2. The regions of England with the highest percentage of empty dwellings are in the north. The percentage of empty dwellings decreases the further south you get.

Table E-3: Number and Percentage of Empty Dwellings by 2011 Local Authority broad Rural-Urban Classification, 2022

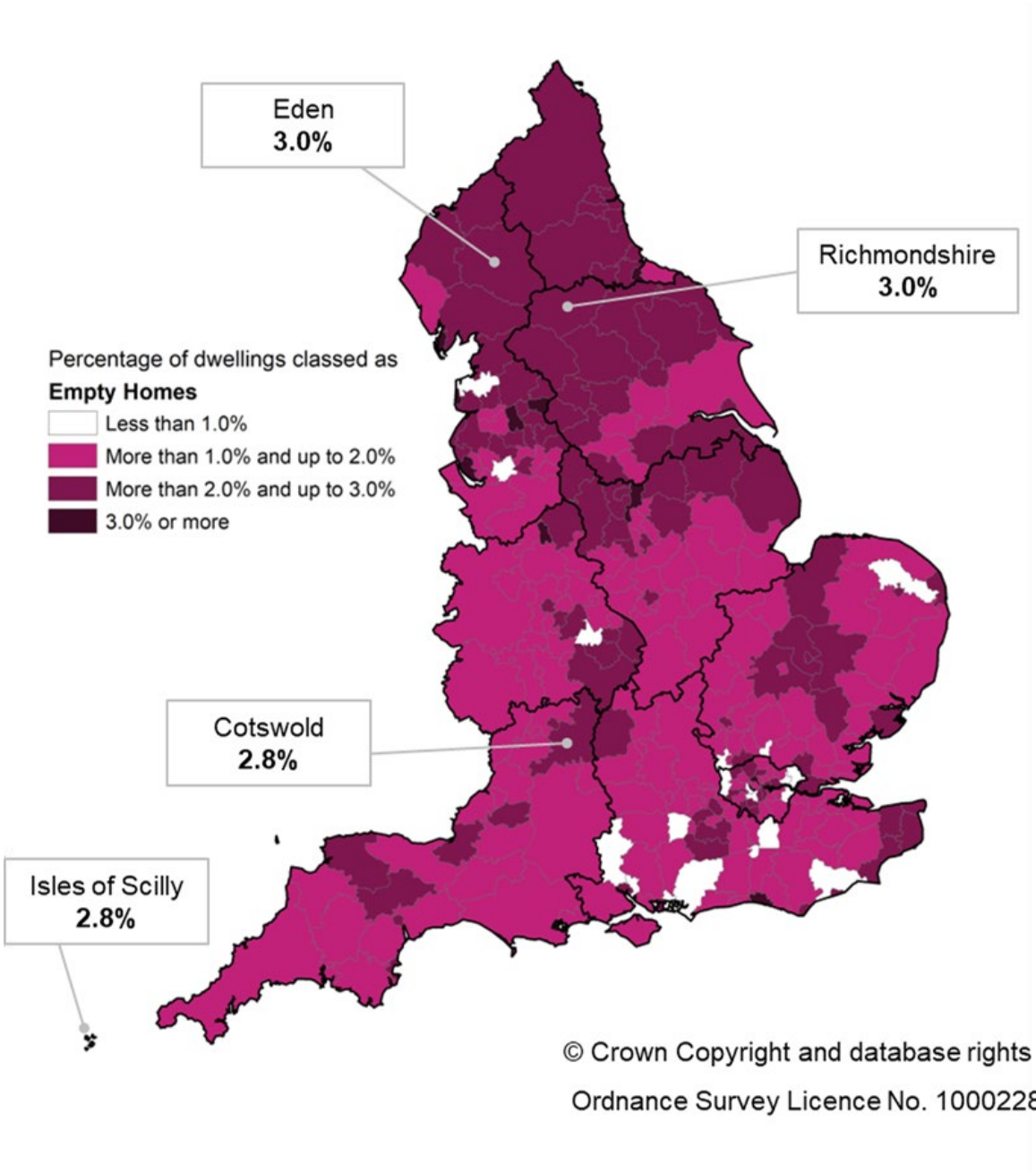
Rural-Urban Classification	Number of empty dwellings	Percentage of chargeable dwellings classed as empty (%)
Predominantly Rural	98,800	1.8
Urban with Significant Rural	61,100	1.8
Predominantly Urban	319,100	2.0
England	**478,900**	**2.0**

Figure E-2: Percentage of chargeable dwellings classed as empty, by Region, England, 2022
Regional bars are given in descending size order, with the maximum and minimum values shown in purple.



The Local Authority areas with the highest percentage of dwellings classed as empty homes are City of London (4.3%), Barrow-in-Furness (3.9%), Liverpool and Camden (both 3.7%). The Predominantly Rural areas with the highest percentage of empty homes are Richmondshire, Eden (both 3.0%), Isles of Scilly and Cotswold (both 2.8%). See Note E-3 and Note E-4 for more information regarding reporting on empty dwellings used for Figure E-2 and Figure E-3.

Figure E-3: Percentage of dwellings classed as empty, by Local Authority in England, 2022
Regions are highlighted with dark boundaries (Note E-6), and Predominantly Rural areas with the highest values are indicated. The darker the colour of a Local Authority, the greater the percentage of dwellings classed as empty homes.



Second and empty homes explanatory notes

- **Note E-1**

Tables showing data given in Table E-2 and Table E-3 can be found in the housing supplementary data tables.

- **Note E-2**

Local Authority Districts have been defined as a coastal area if they are within 1 kilometre (0.6 miles) of the coastline of England. Local Authority Districts 2020 boundary definition used.

- **Note E-3**

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.

- **Note E-4**

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

- **Note E-5**

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.

- **Note E-6**

As of 1 January 2021, the internationally comparable regional geography for the UK is the International Territorial Levels (ITLs) geography. These regional boundaries have been used. This has replaced the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) geographies for the UK that were operational when the UK was a member of the European Union. See the ONS "International, regional and city statistics" page for more information.

F. Homelessness

In 2022/23, there were proportionally fewer homeless households needing assistance in securing permanent settled accommodation in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London).

Summary

In the context of this Digest Section, homelessness is more than just ‘sleeping rough’; it also includes the statutorily homeless. These are households which meet specific criteria of priority need set out in legislation.

In 2022/23 the statutory homelessness rate was 4.4 households per 1,000 in Predominantly Rural areas and 7.1 households per 1,000 in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London). These rates are both higher than they were in 2018/19.

In 2022 the proportion of people sleeping rough was 4.0 per 100,000 population in Predominantly Rural areas and 5.2 per 100,000 population in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London. Over the period 2010 to 2022 the highest rough sleeping rate in Predominantly Rural areas was seen in 2018, at 5.1 per 100,000 population.

Defining homelessness

The term ‘homelessness’ is often considered to apply only to people ‘sleeping rough’. However, most of our statistics on homelessness relate to the statutorily homeless, i.e., those households which meet specific criteria of priority need set out in legislation, and to whom a homelessness duty has been accepted by a Local Authority. See Note F-2 for further background information.

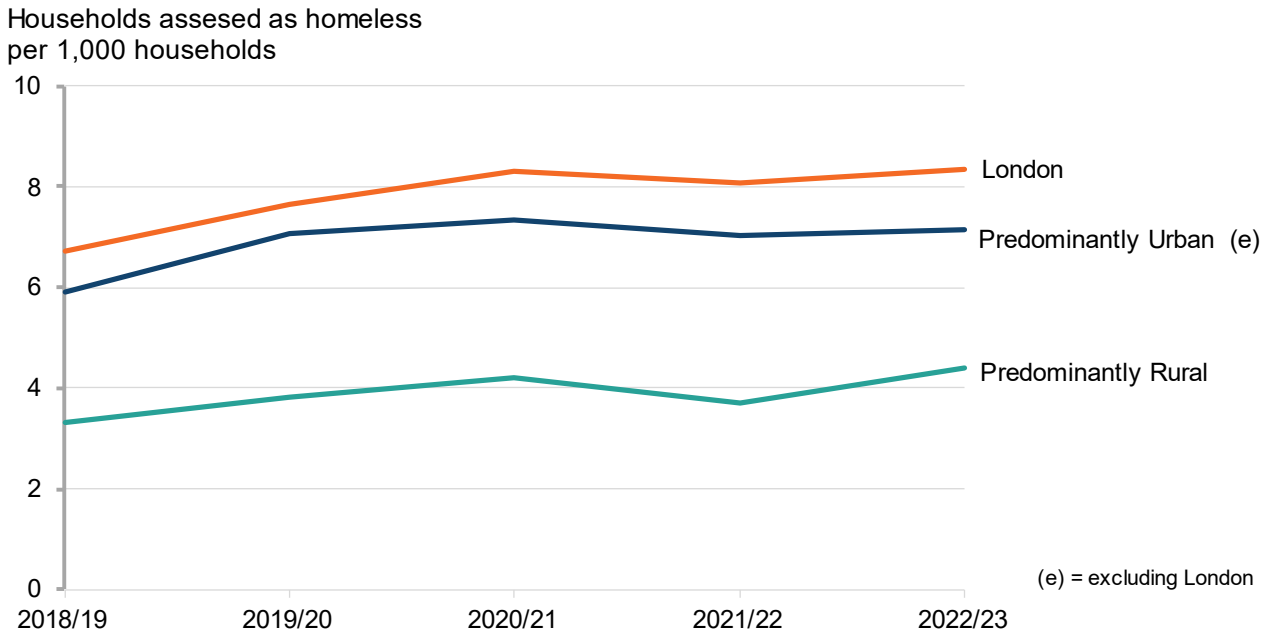
Statutory homelessness

Figure F-1 shows that in all areas the proportion of households accepted as being homeless and in priority need of assistance in securing permanent settled accommodation increased until 2020/21, followed by a slight decrease in 2021/22, but then continued to increase in 2022/23 (Note F-3, Note F-4).

In 2022/23 the homelessness rate was 4.4 households per 1,000 in Predominantly Rural areas and 7.1 households per 1,000 in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London). In comparison, there were 3.3 households per 1,000 accepted as homeless in Predominantly Rural areas in 2018/19, and 5.9 households per 1,000 in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London). This means that overall, the homelessness rate has increased by 1.1 households per 1,000 in Predominantly Rural areas and 1.2 households per 1,000 in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London. The rate of homelessness was consistently highest in London between 2018/19 and 2022/23.

Although there were minor increases in the homelessness rate in all areas between 2021/22 and 2022/23, the greatest increase was seen in Predominantly Rural areas, as there were 0.7 more households per 1,000 accepted as homeless in 2022/23. In comparison, the homelessness rate increased by 0.1 households per 1,000 in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London) and by 0.3 households per 1,000 in London.

Figure F-1: Number of households accepted as being homeless per 1,000 households, by Local Authority broad Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2018/19 to 2022/23



The tables below highlight the Local Authorities with the lowest (Table F-1) and highest (Table F-2) homelessness rates in 2022/23, by Rural-Urban Classification.

In Mainly Rural areas, East Hampshire had the lowest rate of homelessness in 2022/23 (1.4 households per 1,000). In Largely Rural areas, Vale of White Horse had the lowest homelessness rate (1.2 households per 1,000). The lowest homelessness rate in England was seen in Cannock Chase (an Urban with Significant Rural authority), where there were 1.0 households per 1,000 accepted as homeless.

Table F-1: Number of households accepted as being homeless per 1,000 households, for the Local Authorities with the lowest rate of homelessness within their Classification group, by detailed Rural-Urban Classification in England, 2022/23

Rural-Urban Classification	Local Authority	Homeless households (per 000s)
Mainly Rural	East Hampshire	1.4
Largely Rural	Vale of White Horse	1.2
Urban with Significant Rural	Cannock Chase	1.0
Urban with City and Town	Eastleigh	1.4
Urban with Minor Conurbation	Gedling	2.1
Urban with Major Conurbation (e)	Three Rivers	1.7
London	Kingston upon Thames	2.7
England	**Cannock Chase**	**1.0**

In Mainly Rural areas, Melton had the highest homelessness rate in 2022/23 (7.7 households per 1,000). In Largely Rural areas, North Devon had the highest homelessness rate (9.0 households per 1,000). The highest rate of homelessness in England was seen in Manchester (Urban with Major Conurbation), where there were 19.1 households per 1,000 accepted as homeless.

Table F-2: Number of households accepted as being homeless per 1,000 households, for the Local Authorities with the highest rate of homelessness within their Classification group, by detailed Rural-Urban Classification in England, 2022/23

Rural-Urban Classification	Local Authority	Homeless households (per 000s)
Mainly Rural	Melton	7.7
Largely Rural	North Devon	9.0
Urban with Significant Rural	Bedford	10.4
Urban with City and Town	Portsmouth	16.7
Urban with Minor Conurbation	Sheffield	11.3
Urban with Major Conurbation (e)	Manchester	19.1
London	Islington	15.3
England	**Manchester**	**19.1**

Rough sleeping

Rough sleepers are defined for the purposes of rough sleeping counts and estimates as:

- people sleeping, about to bed down, or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments)
- people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes' (Note F-7).

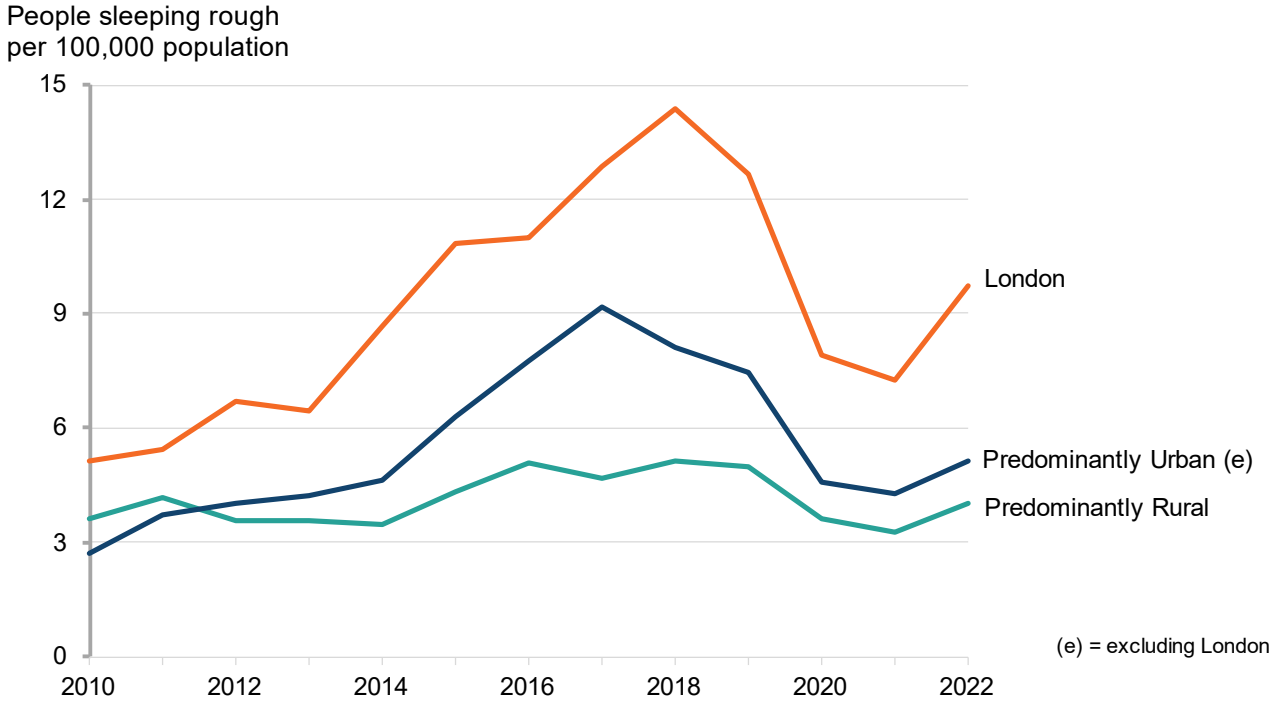
The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travellers. Bedded down is taken to mean either lying down or sleeping. About to bed down includes those who are sitting in/on or near a sleeping bag or other bedding. See Note F-2 for more information.

Figure F-2 shows that, in all areas, the proportion of people sleeping rough per 100,000 population increased between 2010 and 2016. In Predominantly Rural areas, the rough sleeping rate then stayed level until 2019, where it then decreased until 2021. In Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London), the rough sleeping rate continued to increase until 2017, then decreased until 2021. All areas have seen increases in rates since 2021.

The rough sleeping rate was consistently higher in London than any other area between 2010 and 2022; in 2022, the proportion of people sleeping rough in London was 9.8 per 100,000 population. In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, the rough sleeping rate was 5.2 per 100,000 population in 2022, and in Predominantly Rural areas it was 4.0 per 100,000 population.

The highest rough sleeping rate in Predominantly Rural areas was seen in 2018, at 5.1 per 100,000 population; in Predominantly Urban areas (excluding London), this was instead in 2017 at 9.2 per 100,000 population. The highest rate in London was seen in 2018, at 14.4 per 100,000 population.

Figure F-2: People sleeping rough per 100,000 population, by Local Authority broad Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2010 to 2022 (Note F-5)



The rough sleeping rate decreased drastically around 2020 due to the introduction of the "everyone in" policy at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, where there was a push to protect homeless people by offering temporary accommodation. Once lockdown restrictions began to ease and the risk of infection decreased, many Local Authorities closed this scheme due to the costs involved.

Notes:

- In Figure F-1 and Figure F-2, "Predominantly Urban (e)" represents the Predominantly Urban areas of England outside of London.
- In Table F-1 and Table F-2, "Urban with Major Conurbation (e)" represents the Urban with Major Conurbation areas of England outside of London.
- Data included in Figure F-1 refers to financial years rather than calendar years (e.g., 2021/22 refers to the period from April 2021 to March 2022).

Homelessness explanatory notes

- **Note F-1**

Tables showing data given in Figure F-1 and Figure F-2 can be found in the housing supplementary data tables.

- **Note F-2**

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

- **Note F-3**

Statistics in this section are not comparable with those reported previously, which used data prior to April 2018. This is because amendments to legislation, as introduced by the 2017 HRA, have introduced new duties that mean more people will be eligible for assistance out of homelessness from local authorities.

- **Note F-4**

The national totals in this section include imputed estimates for missing values based on previous submissions. 26 Local Authorities failed to provide accurate assessments data in 2022-23, estimated to comprise 12.1% of total assessments in England.

- **Note F-5**

Since rough sleepers would be difficult to track regularly, the data in this section is instead based on an annual single night snapshot of the number of people sleeping rough in Local Authorities in England to generate an estimate. As such, actual values will likely differ.

- **Note F-6**

Sources: DLUHC, Live tables on homelessness: Tables on homelessness - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and rough sleeping snapshot: Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- **Note F-7**

"Bashes" are makeshift shelters, often comprised of cardboard boxes.

G. Land use change for housing

In 2021/22, there were almost double the number of new residential addresses per population in Rural areas than Urban areas.

Summary

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) produces Land Use Change Statistics (Note G-1). From these data it is possible to look at new residential addresses (i.e., new dwellings) in Rural areas to complement our Local Authority level housing completions analysis. The land use change data provide information on the previous land use and whether the resulting dwellings arise through new building (completions of new dwellings) or involve conversions and demolitions. The data also allow analysis using the most detailed Rural-Urban Classification.

Of 300,000 new residential addresses arising from new development or conversions in England in 2021/22, 87,000 or 29% were in Rural areas – a higher proportion than the 18% of England's population in Rural areas. This is equivalent to 9 new residential addresses per 1,000 population in Rural areas compared with 5 new residential addresses per 1,000 population in Urban areas.

In 2021/22 in Rural areas just under a third of new residential addresses were on previously developed land and just over two-thirds on previously non-developed land. In Urban areas it was close to the opposite, with just under two-thirds on previously developed land and just over a third on previously non-developed land.

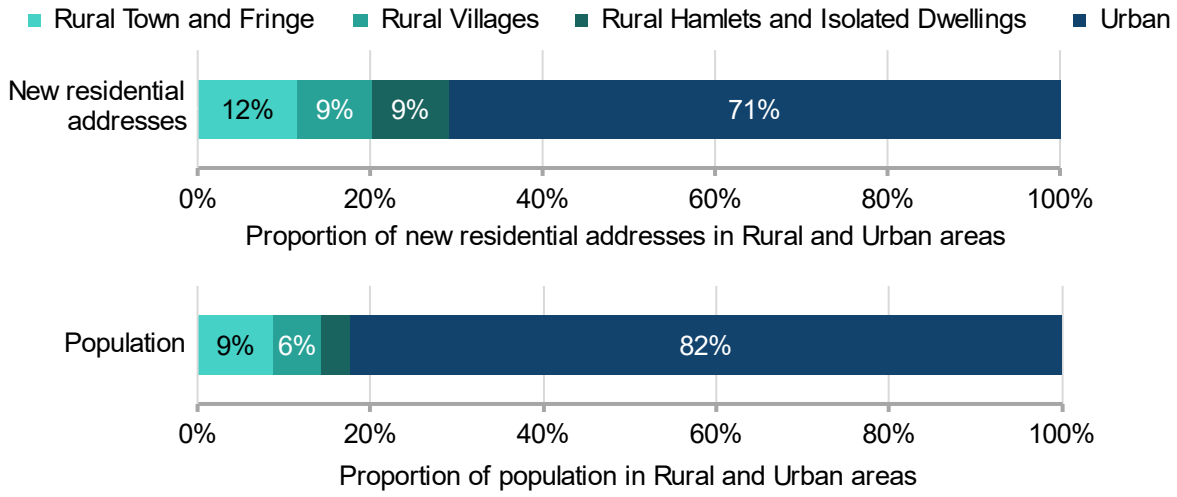
In Rural areas, land previously in agricultural use provided the majority of land on which new residential addresses were developed, accounting for 53% of new addresses. There was a slightly higher proportion of this in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings than in Rural Villages or Rural Town and Fringe areas.

New residential addresses

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) produces Land Use Change Statistics (Note G-1). From these data it is possible to look at new residential addresses (i.e., newly built dwellings – "completions" - and conversions to residential use) in Rural areas to complement our Local Authority level housing completions analysis. In 2021/22 in England there were almost 300,000 new residential addresses. 87,000 or 29% of these were in Rural areas. To put this in context, the Rural population accounts for under 18% of England's population, so there were more new residential addresses relative to population in Rural areas than in Urban areas – 9 new dwellings per 1,000 population in Rural areas compared with 5 new dwellings per 1,000 population in Urban areas.

In Figure G-1 Rural Town and Fringe areas account for 9% of the population but 12% of the new residential addresses; Rural Villages account for 6% of the population but 9% of new residential addresses; Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings account for 3% of the population but 9% of new residential addresses; Urban areas account for 82% of the population but 71% of the new residential addresses.

Figure G-1: New residential addresses compared with population, by settlement type within the Rural Urban Classification, in England, 2021/22 (Note G-2)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the stacks of bars.



Notes

- Proportions smaller than 3% have not been labelled on the bar charts in Figure G-1.

New residential addresses on previously developed and non-developed land

In 2021/22 in Rural areas just under a third of new residential addresses was on previously developed land and just over two-thirds on previously non-developed land. In Urban areas it was close to the opposite, with just under two-thirds on previously developed land and just over a third on previously non-developed land.

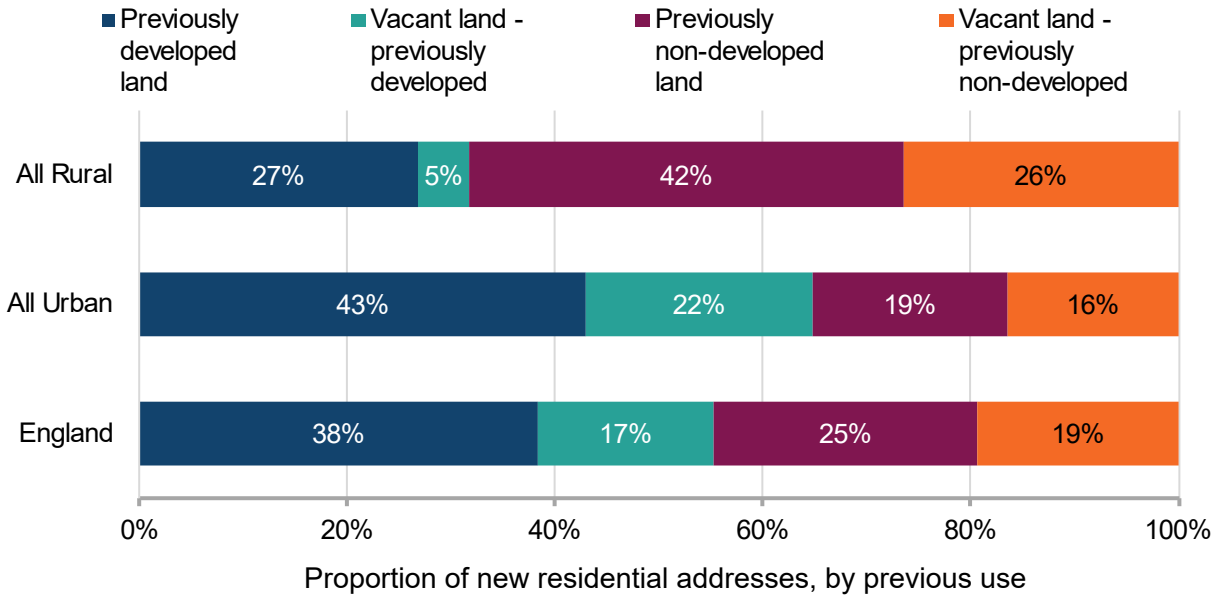
Figure G-2 shows the proportion of new residential addresses by previously developed and previously non-developed land and whether the land had been vacant.

In England, 55% of new residential addresses were on previously developed land (38% on land that was previously developed and 17% on land that was vacant but which had been previously developed). 45% of new residential addresses were on previously non-developed land (25% on land that was previously non-developed and 19% on land that was vacant but which had been previously non-developed) (Note G-3).

In Rural areas, 32% of new residential addresses were on previously developed land (27% on land that was previously developed and 5% on land that was vacant but which had been previously developed). 68% of new residential addresses were on previously non-developed land (42% on land that was previously non-developed and 26% on land that was vacant but which had been previously non-developed).

In Urban areas, 65% of new residential addresses were on previously developed land (43% on land that was previously developed and 22% on land that was vacant but which had been previously developed). 35% of new residential addresses were on previously non-developed land (19% on land that was previously non-developed and 16% on land that was vacant but which had been previously non-developed).

Figure G-2: Proportion of new residential addresses, by previous developed or non-developed land use, by Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2021/22
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the stacks of bars.

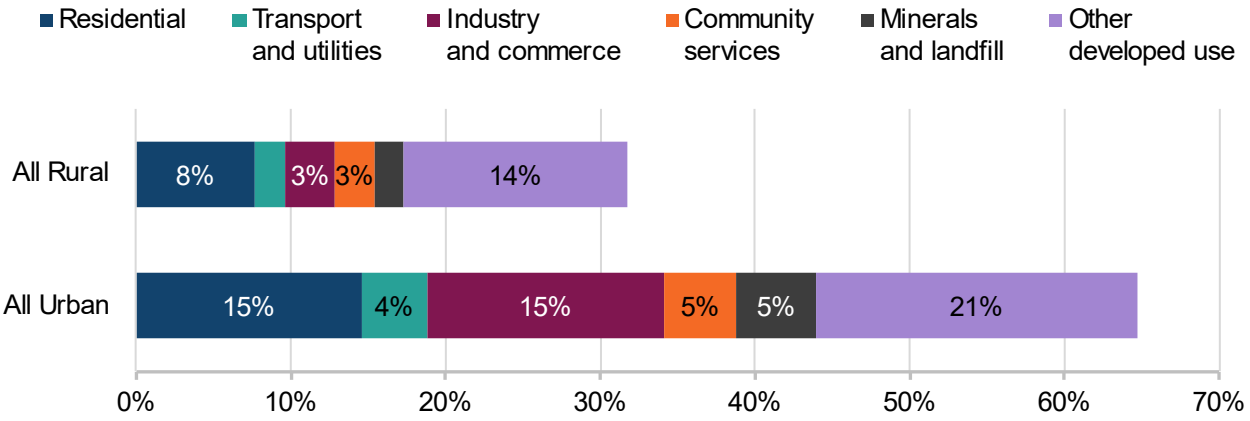


Previous land use

The Land Use Change Statistics include more detailed breakdowns of the previous land use, including the land use prior to land becoming vacant. In 2021/22 in Rural areas, land previously in agricultural use provided the majority of land on which new residential addresses were developed, accounting for 53% of new residential addresses (including land that was vacant, but which had been previously in agricultural use). Agricultural land also accounted for 19% of new residential addresses associated with Urban areas. Figure G-3 shows the proportions of new residential addresses by previous land use.

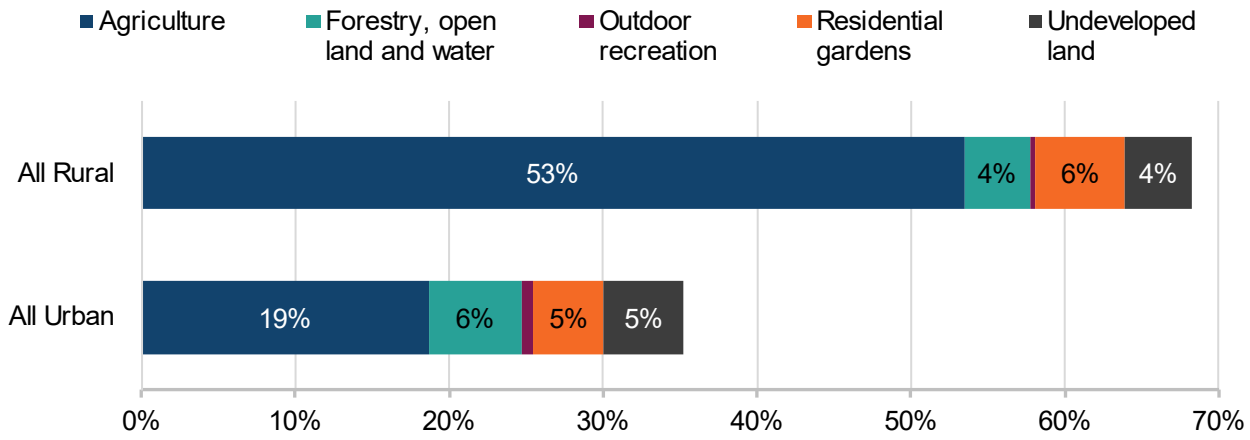
Figure G-3: Proportion of new residential addresses, by previous land use, by Rural-Urban Classification, in England, 2021/22 (Note G-4)

The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the stacks of bars. 0% of new residential addresses were built on land previously used for defence buildings. Land that was previously developed is represented in the top chart, and not previously developed is in the bottom chart.



Proportion of new residential addresses, by previous developed use

(Defence buildings: 0%)



Proportion of new residential addresses, by previous non -developed use

Of new residential addresses in 2021/21 the proportions on previously developed land uses (Figure G-3 – top stacked bar chart) were:

- **Residential**: 8% in Rural areas and 15% in Urban areas;
- **Transport and utilities**: 2% in Rural areas and 4% in Urban areas;
- **Industry and commerce**: 3% in Rural areas and 15% in Urban areas;
- **Community services**: 3% in Rural areas and 5% in Urban areas;
- **Minerals and land fill**: 2% in Rural areas and 5% in Urban areas;
- **Other developed use**: 14% in Rural areas and 21% in Urban areas.

Of new residential addresses in 2021/21 the proportions on previously non-developed land uses (Figure G-3 – bottom stacked bar chart) were:

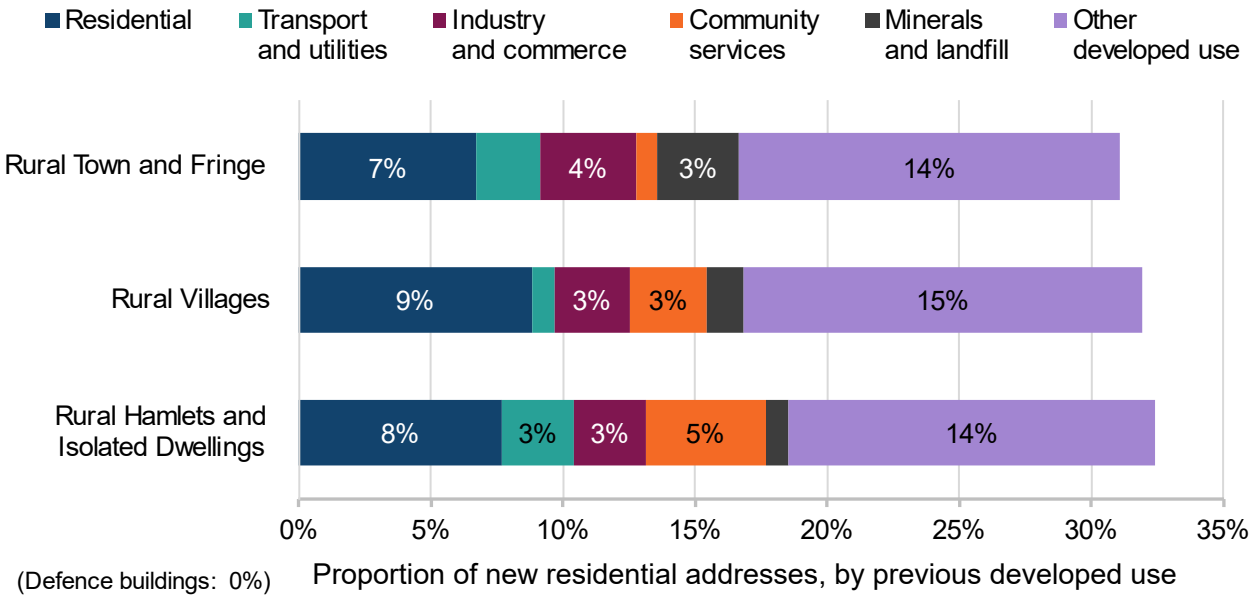
- **Agriculture**: 53% in Rural areas and 19% in Urban areas;

- **Forestry, open land and water**: 4% in Rural areas and 6% in Urban areas;
- **Outdoor recreation**: 0.4% in Rural areas and 1% in Urban areas;
- **Residential gardens**: 6% in Rural areas and 5% in Urban areas;
- **Other undeveloped land**: 4% in Rural areas and 5% in Urban areas.

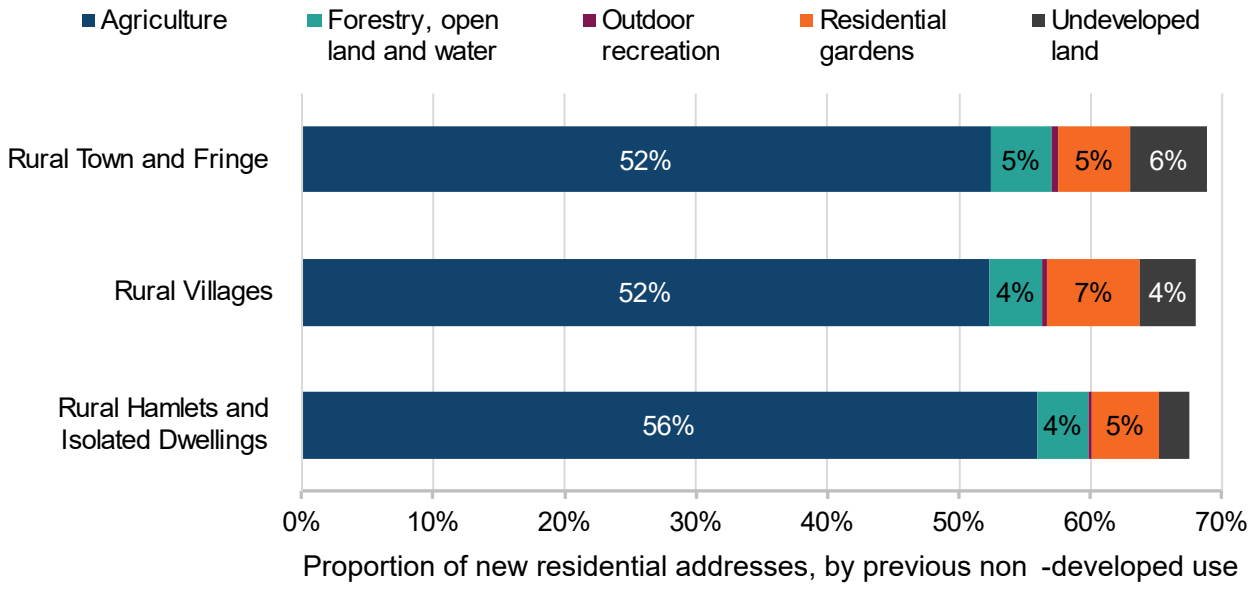
In 2021/22 between Rural settlement types there was only a slight variation in the proportions of new residential addresses developed on different previous land uses as seen in Figure G-4.

Figure G-4: Proportion of new residential addresses, by previous land use, by settlement type in Rural Areas, in England, 2021/22 (Note G-4)

The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the stacks of bars. 0% of new residential addresses were built on land previously used for defence buildings. Land that was previously developed is represented in the top chart, and not previously developed is in the bottom chart.



(Defence buildings: 0%)



Of new residential addresses in 2021/21 the proportions on previously developed land uses (Figure G-4– top stacked bar chart) were:

- **Residential**: 7% in Rural Town and Fringe areas; 9% in Rural Villages and 8% in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings;
- **Transport and utilities**: 2% in Rural Town and Fringe areas; 1% in Rural Villages and 3% in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings;
- **Industry and commerce**: 4% in Rural Town and Fringe areas; 3% in Rural Villages and 3% in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings;
- **Community services**: 1% in Rural Town and Fringe areas; 3% in Rural Villages and 5% in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings;
- **Minerals and land fill**: 3% in Rural Town and Fringe areas; 1% in Rural Villages and 1% in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings;
- **Other developed use**: 14% in Rural Town and Fringe areas; 15% in Rural Villages and 14% in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings.

Of new residential addresses in 2021/21 the proportions on previously non-developed land uses (Figure G-4 – bottom stacked bar chart) were:

- **Agriculture**: 52% in Rural Town and Fringe areas; 52% in Rural Villages and 56% in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings;
- **Forestry, open land and water**: 5% in Rural Town and Fringe areas; 4% in Rural Villages and 4% in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings;
- **Outdoor recreation**: 1% in Rural Town and Fringe areas; 0.4% in Rural Villages and 0.2% in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings;
- **Residential gardens**: 5% in Rural Town and Fringe areas; 7% in Rural Villages and 5% in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings;
- **Other undeveloped land**: 6% in Rural Town and Fringe areas; 4% in Rural Villages and 2% in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings.

Notes

- Proportions smaller than 3% have not been labelled on the bar charts in Figure G-3 and Figure G-4.

Land use change for housing - explanatory notes

- **Note G-1**

Source: DLUHC Land Use Change Statistics: Land use change: new residential addresses 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) includes explanatory notes on previous land uses

- **Note G-2**

Population based on 2011 Rural-Urban Classification and 2011 population data.

- **Note G-3**

The previous land use portions differ slightly from those published by DLUHC owing to differences in how the data have been geographically referenced for the analysis here.

- **Note G-4**

If the land was vacant prior to residential development, then the land use prior to becoming vacant is recorded.

H. Housing quality

There is a marginally larger proportion of homes in rural areas than in urban areas that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard; but in both cases the proportion is several percentage points higher than in suburban residential areas.

Summary

Having a minimum standard for housing is important and housing quality can be assessed using the criteria for the Decent Homes Standard alongside data from the English Housing Survey.

In 2021, 20% of homes in rural areas failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard, but this proportion has fallen from over 40% in 2008. Since 2015 the proportion of rural homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard has been 2 to 3 percentage points higher than in urban areas. In 2021 17% of urban homes failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard. Within rural areas, the more rural the area the higher the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Dwellings posing a Category 1 hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) will fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard. Over the period 2008 to 2021 a higher proportion of homes in rural areas than homes in urban areas are not decent because they contain at least one Category 1 hazard. In 2021 16% of homes in rural areas contained at least one Category 1 hazard compared to 11% of homes in urban areas. In 2019 the proportion of homes in rural areas failing to provide sufficient thermal comfort stood at 9%, compared to 7% of homes in urban areas. Whereas in suburban residential areas only 4% of homes offered insufficient thermal comfort. This difference is likely to be due to the much lower proportion of pre-1919 homes in suburban areas than in rural areas.

Prolonged exposure to damp can have health implications for the occupants of the property. Homes in urban areas are the most susceptible to damp, and homes in suburban areas are the least susceptible to damp with homes in rural areas slotting in between these two levels. In 2021 the proportion of homes in rural areas with at least one form of damp stood at just over 4% while the proportion of homes in urban areas with damp stood at just over 6%. Back in 2008 the proportion of homes in rural areas with damp was 8%, and in urban areas it was 13%.

Defining Decent homes

The Decent Homes Standard is a technical standard originally introduced for public housing. The standard focuses on homes meeting 4 criteria (Note H-1):

1. homes must meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing;
2. homes must be in a reasonable state of repair;
3. homes must have reasonably modern facilities and services; and
4. homes must provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

The Housing Act 2004 (Note H-2), introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to define the statutory minimum standards. The HHSRS is a risk-based assessment that identifies hazards in dwellings and evaluates their potential effects on the health and safety of occupants and their visitors, particularly vulnerable people. The underlying principle of the HHSRS is that: “Any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor” (Housing Health and Safety Rating System Operating Guidance).

There are 29 hazards defined under HHSRS and they can be grouped into the following 4 main groups:

1. Physiological Requirements - Hygrothermal conditions and Pollutants (non-microbial);
2. Psychological Requirements - Space, Security, Light, and Noise;
3. Protection against Infection - Hygiene, Sanitation, and Water supply;
4. Protection against Accidents - Falls, Electric shock, Burns and Scalds, and Building related Collisions.

In an assessment of the property, each hazard has a weighting for its class of harm (extreme, severe, serious, and moderate) and the likelihood of an occurrence of harm is determined. These factors are used to generate a hazard score and in turn a hazard band. These scores and bands are for the hazard and not an overall score for the property. There are 10 hazard bands, A to J - Band A is the most serious and Band J the least serious. A hazard which falls into Bands A to C is termed a ‘Category 1’ hazard while a hazard in bands D to F is a ‘Category 2’ hazard. Category 1 hazards represent a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety. Where any Category 1 hazards exist in a home, it fails to meet the statutory minimum standard for housing in England.

The hazards and how to assess them are fully described in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System Operating Guidance. Note H-3 contains a grid detailing all 29 hazards and the group that they are assigned to.

The English Housing Survey (EHS) classification areas

The English Housing Survey (EHS) is a national survey commissioned by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) that has been conducted since 1967. It collects information about people’s housing circumstances and the condition of housing in England. One of the components of the survey is a physical inspection of a sub-set of the properties within the main survey sample.

The EHS does not provide results for the Rural-Urban Classification definitions used elsewhere within this document. As explained in English Housing Survey Surveyors’ handbook, the surveyor decides whether the area is either urban or rural based on the immediate area surrounding the

dwelling. Surveyors are instructed to consider the area as either urban (codes 1 to 3) if it is a built-up area such as a city or a town (either large or small) or rural (codes 4 to 6) for very small towns and villages and other rural type locations. The specific names associated with these 6 codes are: 1 Commercial City/Town Centre; 2 Urban; 3 Suburban residential; 4 Rural residential; 5 Village centre; and 6 Rural. A description of these 6 categories is included in Note H-4.

Within this Chapter on charts we have followed the convention established in the source data tables of presenting categories 1 and 2 as "all city and urban centres", leaving category 3 on its own as "suburban residential" and grouping categories 4 to 6 as "all rural areas". To simplify the commentary the 3 categories are just referred to as urban, rural and suburban areas respectively. Where the commentary refers to only category 6 the convention will be to use the term most rural.

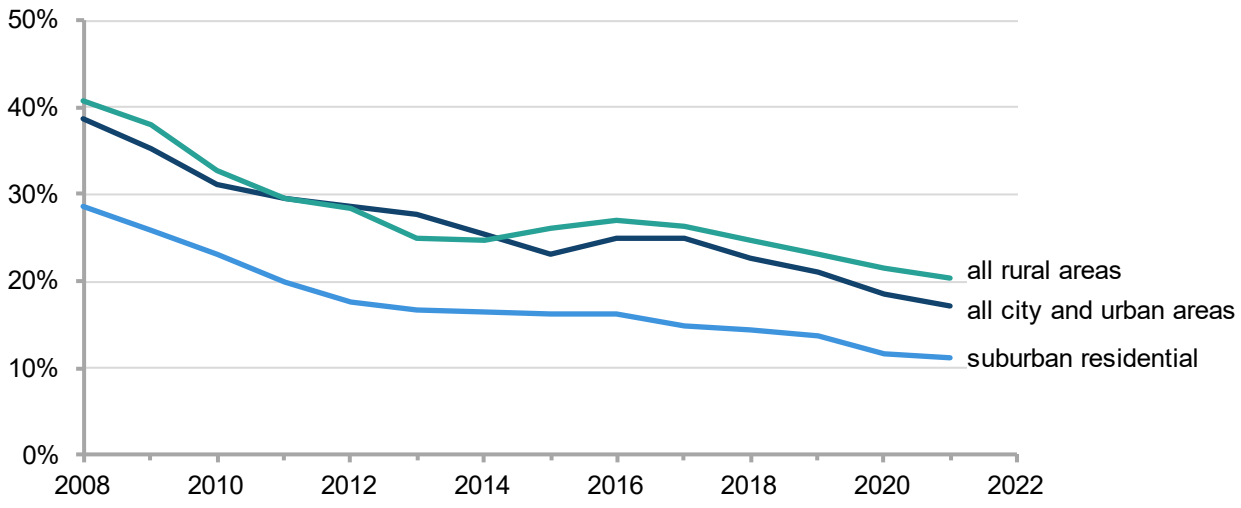
This EHS rural and urban classification system is strongly reliant on the perception of the surveyor conducting each dwelling survey. The Official Statistics Rural Urban classification has a precise definition linked to population (see Appendix 2: Defining Rural areas for details on this definition) and leaves no room for interpretation. Whereas this looser EHS definition has the potential, in certain circumstances, to result in different classifications with different surveyors.

Failure to meet the Decent Homes Standard

The English Housing Survey (EHS) is a national survey commissioned by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). One of the pieces of information collected by the survey is whether or not homes meet the Decent Homes Standard - the section called Defining Decent homes explains this standard.

Figure H-1 is a line chart showing how the proportion of homes falling to meet the Decent Homes Standard has fallen in both rural and urban areas over the period 2008 to 2021.In 2021, 20% of homes in rural areas failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard. As Figure H-1 shows, this proportion has fallen from over 40% in 2008 and there have been year-on-year falls in the proportion of non-decent homes in rural areas every year since 2016. Since 2015 the proportion of rural homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard has been 2 to 3 percentage points higher than in urban areas.

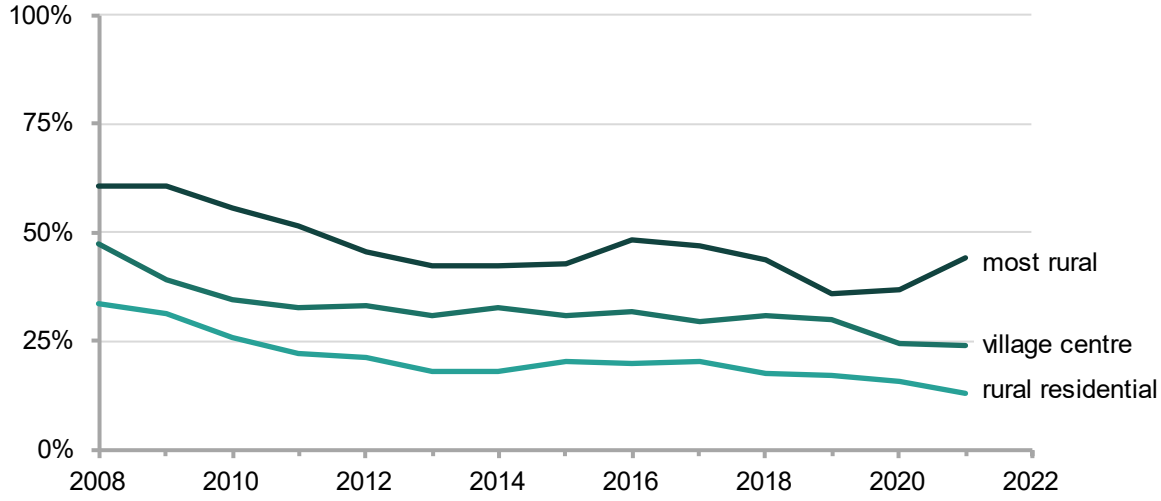
Figure H-1: Line chart showing the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard by EHS classification areas, 2008 to 2021. (Note H-1, Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-8).



The trend in suburban areas is similar to rural areas; but on average over the period 2008 to 2022, the proportion of homes in rural areas failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard was 10 percentage points higher than in the suburban areas. This is likely to be due to suburban areas having a smaller proportion of pre-1919 homes than other areas.

Figure H-2 is a line chart showing the over the period 2008 to 2021, the more rural the area the higher the proportion of homes falling to meet the Decent Homes Standard. In “village centres” and in “rural residential” areas the proportion of homes failing to meet the standard has fallen over the period 2008 to 2022. In 2008, 34% of homes in “rural residential” and 47% of homes in “village centres” failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard. By 2021, these figures had fallen to 13% and 24% respectively. In the most rural areas, officially known as simply “rural” in the EHS classification, the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard was 44% in 2021, having fallen from 60% in 2008.

Figure H-2: Line chart showing the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard within rural areas on the EHS classification system, 2008 to 2021. (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-8).



Factors causing homes to be rated non-decent

As explained in the Defining Decent homes section, there are 4 factors involved in the Decent Homes Standard. A home that is rated as non-decent could fail on one or more of these criteria. In this section the proportion of homes failing under each of these criteria is considered. For some criteria, there is insufficient data to provide an intra-rural split, so the analysis just focuses on the overall broad rural, urban and suburban categories from the EHS classification (The English Housing Survey (EHS) classification areas) comparison.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible for EHS surveyors to conduct a full internal inspection of properties in both 2020 and 2021. Therefore, some data could not be collected in these years (Note H-6).

Homes failing to meet the minimum standards under HHSRS

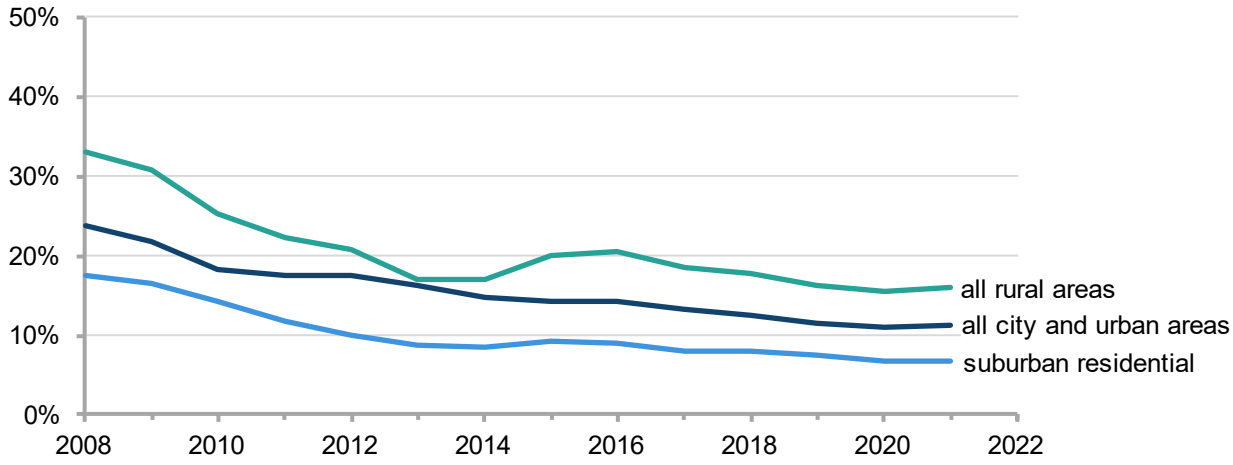
The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is used to define the statutory minimum standards that a home need to meet to be considered decent. Dwellings posing at least Category 1

hazard (Note H-2) under the HHSRS will fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard (Note H-3). Whilst the EHS does not capture every hazard (Note H-7), it still allows us to determine the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard because of the presence of at least one Category 1 hazard (Figure H-3).

Figure H-3 is a line chart showing how the proportion of homes with at least one Category 1 hazard has fallen in all broad area types under the EHS classification over the period 2008 to 2021. For rural areas the proportion homes with at least one Category 1 hazard fell from 33% in 2008 to 17% in 2013. Since 2013, the change in the proportion of homes in rural areas with at least 1 category 1 hazard has been minimal and in 2021 the value stood at 16%.

The reduction in the proportion of homes with at least one Category 1 hazard has been more gradual, but also more consistent, in urban areas than it was in rural areas. The value fell from 18% in 2008 to 11% in 2019 and then remained at 11% through to 2021. The proportion of homes with at least one Category 1 hazard has been below 10% in suburban areas since 2012 and stood at 7% in 2021.

Figure H-3: Line chart showing the proportion of homes failing to meet the minimum standards set under Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) by EHS classification areas, 2008 to 2021. (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-6, Note H-7, Note H-8)



Within rural areas, the more rural the area the higher the proportion of homes with at least one Category 1 hazard and in the most rural areas, known as simply “rural” in the EHS classification, 40% of the homes had at least one Category 1 hazard in 2021 (Supplementary Table HB1b, Note H-8).

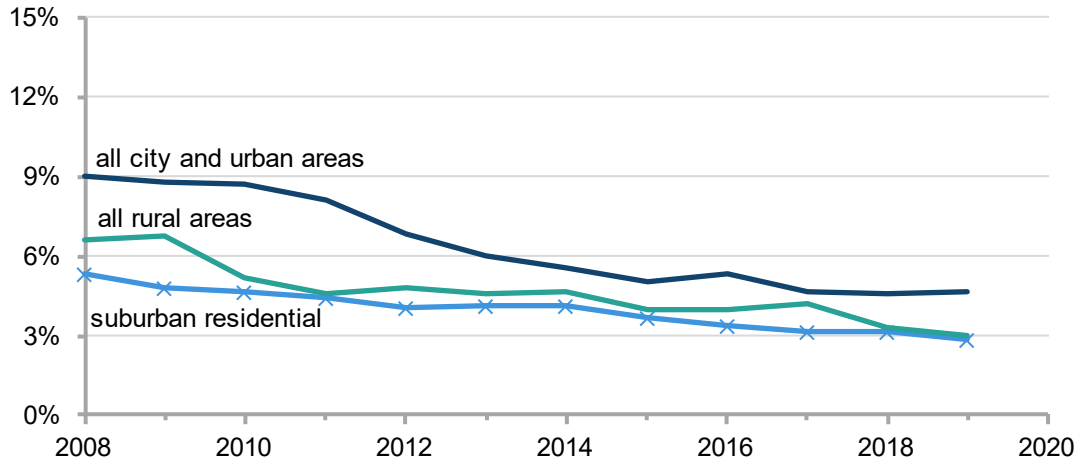
Homes in disrepair

A further factor in determining whether homes are Decent is if they are in a reasonable state of repair. Figure H-4 is a line chart showing how the proportion of homes that are not in a reasonable state of repair fell over the period 2008 to 2019. In all area types fewer than 1 in 10 homes were in a poor state of repair in 2008 and by 2019 this proportion had fallen to fewer than 1 in 20. Over

Proportionally fewer homes in rural areas were in a state of disrepair than in urban areas. In 2008, 7% of rural homes and 9% of urban homes were not in a reasonable state of repair. By 2019 this proportion had fallen to in 3% rural areas and to 5% in urban areas. The lowest proportion of houses in disrepair occurred in suburban areas. For most years over the period 2010 to 2019 the difference in the proportion of houses in disrepair was less than 0.7%, the exceptions were 2012 and 2017.

Figure H-4: Line chart showing the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard due to being in a state of disrepair by EHS classification areas, 2008 to 2019. (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-6, Note H-8)

Markers have been applied to the suburban residential series because the contrast ratio between the teal and light blue is low and the lines are close together on the chart.

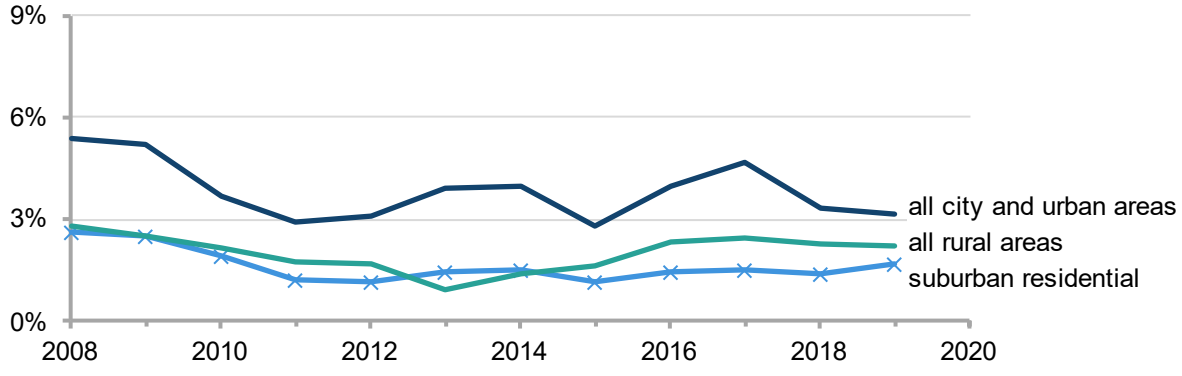


Homes without modern facilities

The third factor in the Decent Homes Standard is whether the homes have reasonably modern facilities. Figure H-5 is a line chart showing the small proportion of homes without reasonably modern facilities and how this proportion has changed over the period 2008 to 2019. In rural areas, over the period 2008 to 2019, the proportion of homes without reasonably modern facilities has fluctuated between 1% and 3%. This is a similar proportion to in suburban areas. With the exception of the period 2016 to 2020 (when the difference was 1 percentage point) there was less than 0.5 percentage points between the proportion of homes lacking modern facilities in rural areas and in suburban areas. A larger proportion of homes in urban areas are lacking reasonably modern facilities than in rural areas. In urban areas the proportion of homes lacking reasonably modern facilities fluctuated between 3 and 6%, which means that this proportion is 1 to 3 percentage points higher than in rural areas.

Figure H-5: Line chart showing the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard due to lacking modern facilities by EHS classification areas, 2008 to 2019. (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-6, Note H-8)

Markers have been applied to the suburban residential series because the contrast ratio between the teal and light blue is low and the lines cross over on the chart.



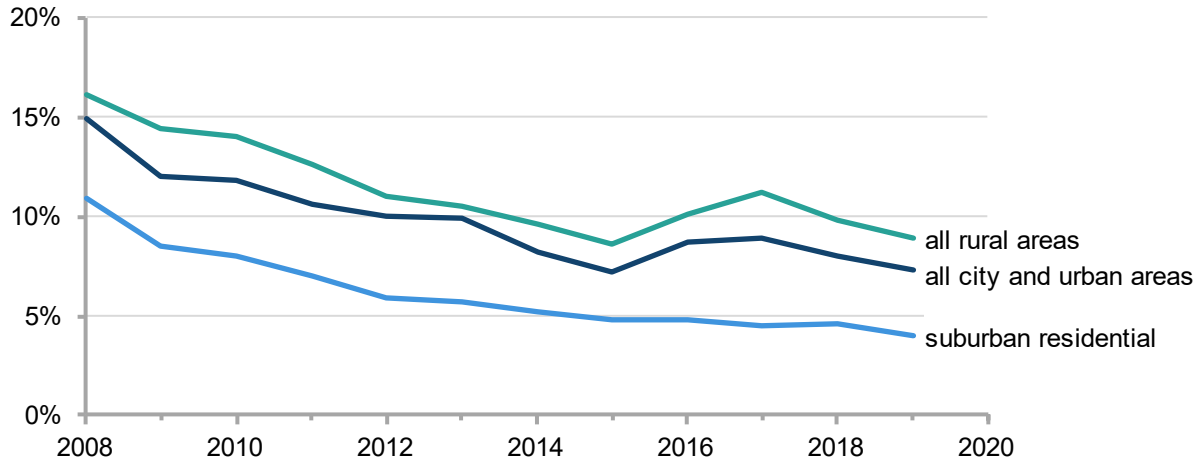
Homes not offering sufficient thermal comfort

The final factor in the Decent Homes Standard is whether the homes offer a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. Section A Housing stock: age and type showed that in 2020, there were proportionally more homes in rural areas that were either detached or pre-1919 than in urban areas. These two characteristics have the potential to make homes less energy efficient (Note H-9) and therefore harder to keep adequately warm. Given this knowledge one can hypothesise that there might be a higher proportion of homes in rural areas failing to meet the Decent Home Standard because they offer insufficient thermal comfort.

Figure H-6 is a line chart showing the proportion of homes that failed to provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort and how this proportion has fallen over the period 2008 to 2019. The chart confirms the hypothesis above; proportionally more homes in rural areas fail to provide sufficient thermal comfort than for homes in urban areas. In 2008, 16% of rural homes failed to provide sufficient thermal comfort, compared to 15% in urban areas and 11% in suburban areas.

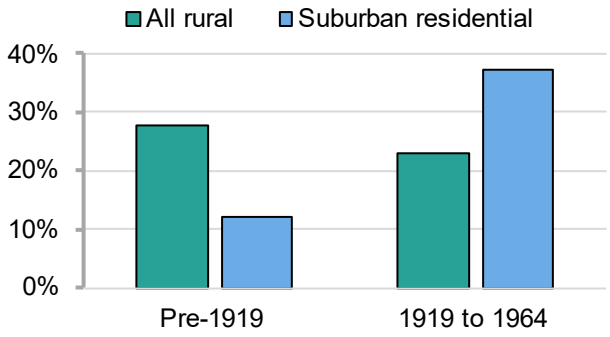
The trend for the proportion of homes in rural areas failing to provide sufficient thermal comfort (Figure H-6) has 3 components. The first is component is for the period 2008 to 2015. Over this period, the proportion of rural homes failing to provide sufficient thermal comfort fell year-on-year with the value dropping from 16% to 8%. So, the proportion halved over the seven-year period. The second component was a rise back up to 11% over the next 2 years. The third component is for the period 2017 onwards. Over this period the proportion of homes in rural areas failing to provide sufficient thermal comfort fell to 9% in 2019.

Figure H-6: Line chart showing the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard due to not providing a reasonable degree of thermal comfort by EHS classification areas, 2008 to 2019 (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-6, Note H-8)



In 2019 the proportion of urban homes failing to provide sufficient thermal comfort stood at 7%. As Figure H-6 shows homes in suburban areas are much less likely to offer insufficient thermal comfort than those in rural areas. This difference is likely to be because there are proportionally far fewer pre-1919 homes in suburban areas than in rural areas (Figure H-7), with the balance being made up by homes constructed between 1919 and 1964. As explain in Energy Statistics for Rural England older homes are likely to be less energy efficient (Note H-9) and therefore harder to keep adequately warm.

Figure H-7: Bar chart showing the percentage of residential properties, constructed 'pre-1919' and between '1919 and 1964 'in rural areas and in suburban areas of England in 2020 from the English Housing Survey (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-6)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns



Dampness

Damp is the build-up of moisture in a property; it affects the building structure (such as walls, floors and ceilings) as well as home furnishings and belongings (such as carpets, curtains, wallpaper, furniture and clothing). In addition to causing damage, damp can also lead to the growth of mould and other microorganisms. There are four main types of damp (Note H-12) and it can occur in homes for a variety of reasons including inadequate ventilation, inadequate heating, low building energy efficiency or structural defects of the property.

The guidance document Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home, published in September 2023 provides details on the risks of damp and mould (Note H-11). This document states that:

- "Everyone is vulnerable to the health impacts of damp and mould in their home; but people with certain health conditions, children and older adults are at greater risk of more severe health impacts";
- "Damp and mould primarily affect the airways and lungs, but they can also affect the eyes and skin. The respiratory effects of damp and mould can cause serious illness and, in the most severe cases even death; and
- "The presence of damp and mould can also affect occupants' mental health".

Section A Housing stock: age and type showed that in 2020, there were proportionally more rural homes that were either detached or pre-1919. These two characteristics have the potential to make homes less energy efficient (Note H-9) and therefore potentially more susceptible to damp. Given the health implications of prolonged exposure to damp there is value in determining whether or not rural homes actually are more susceptible to damp.

Figure H-8 is a line chart showing (a) how the proportion of homes with damp (Note H-12) has reduced over the period 2008 to 2021 and (b) that homes in urban areas were the most susceptible to damp over this period. Homes in suburban areas were the least susceptible to damp over the period 2008 to 2021 with homes in rural areas homes slotting in between the urban and suburban levels but with a proportion that was usually much closer the suburban proportion.

In 2008, the proportion of rural homes with damp (Note H-12) was 8%, and in urban areas it was 13%. Between 2008 and 2013, the proportion of rural homes with damp decreased year-on-year

reaching just under 4% in 2013. Since then, the proportion has fluctuated between 4% and 5% and stood at just over 4% in 2021.

The proportion of homes in urban areas with damp (Note H-12) fell sharply between 2009 and 2011. Since then, the reductions in the proportion of home with damp have been more modest with the value fluctuating between 6% and 7% over the period 2013 to 2021. In 2021, the proportion of homes in urban areas with damp stood at just over 6%. In suburban areas between 2011 and 2021 the proportion of properties with damp fluctuated between 2% and 3%.

Figure H-8: Line chart showing the proportion of homes suffering from any type of damp by EHS classification areas, 2008 to 2021 (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-6, Note H-8)

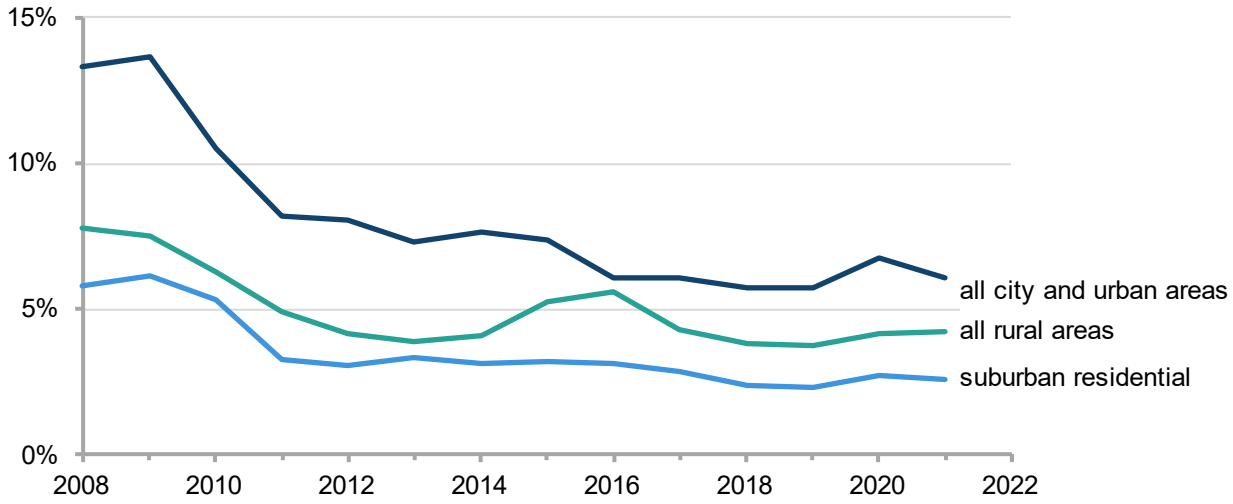
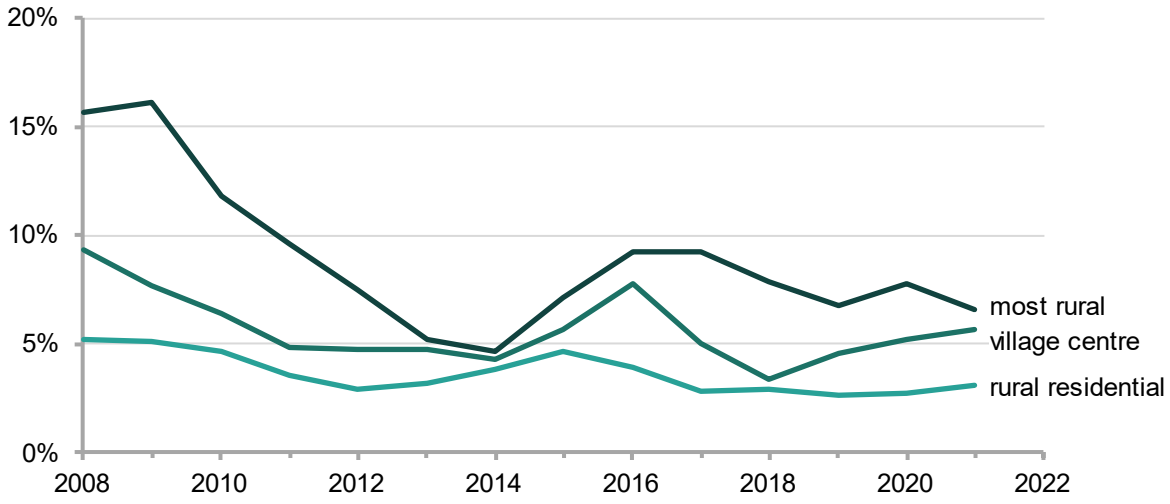


Figure H-9 is a line chart showing how the proportion of homes with damp (Note H-12) changed within rural areas (according to the EHS classification) and it shows that the more rural the area the higher the proportion of homes that have some form of damp (Note H-12). In the least rural areas, (known as rural residential in the EHS classification) the proportion of homes with damp fluctuated between 5% and 3% over the period 2008 to 2021 and it is a fairly stable proportion.

Figure H-9: Line chart showing the proportion homes suffering from any type of damp within rural areas on the EHS classification system, 2008 to 2021. (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-8).



Whereas the smaller sample sizes for the “village centre” and “most rural” categories lead to two timeseries that are much less stable. In the case of the “most rural” category there is a swing of more than 11 percentage points between 2009 when 16% of the properties had damp and 2014 when only 5% had damp. The “village centre” category varies between 3% of properties with damp in 2018 and 9% in 2008.

When considering the difference types of damp (Note H-12), the prevalence of **rising damp**, **penetrating damp** and **condensation damp** is similar in rural areas. In 2019 the values stood at just under 1.0% for penetrating damp, just over 1.5% for rising damp and just under 2.0% for condensation damp (Note H-8). For all 3 types of damp, this represents a reduction on the proportions of 3.0% to 4.0% seen in 2008. The hierarchy by rurality seen in Figure H-8 is largely replicated for each of the damp types with the greatest prevalence in “city and urban areas”, however for condensation damp there is little difference in the prevalence between rural areas and suburban areas(Note H-8). Whilst charts have not been shown for the different types of damp the time-series of data are available in sheet HC in the housing supplementary data tables.

Housing quality explanatory notes

- **Note H-1**

The original 4 factors in the Decent Homes standard are available on the national archives of The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG): https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20060905175526/http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1153927

- **Note H-2**

The Housing Act 2004: defines Category 1 and 2 hazards as follows:

  - “**category 1 hazard**” means a hazard of a prescribed description which falls within a prescribed band as a result of achieving, under a prescribed method for calculating the seriousness of hazards of that description, a numerical score of or above a prescribed amount;
  - “**category 2 hazard**” means a hazard of a prescribed description which falls within a prescribed band as a result of achieving, under a prescribed method for calculating the seriousness of hazards of that description, a numerical score below the minimum amount prescribed for a category 1 hazard of that description; and
  - “**hazard**” means any risk of harm to the health or safety of an actual or potential occupier of a dwelling or HMO which arises from a deficiency in the dwelling or HMO or in any building or land in the vicinity (whether the deficiency arises as a result of the construction of any building, an absence of maintenance or repair, or otherwise).

- **Note H-3**

There are 29 hazards contained within the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) operating guidance: housing inspections and assessment of hazards provides a profile for all of these potential health and safety hazards in dwellings in Annex D. This profile describes the hazard, its potential harm, its causes and preventative measures. The 29 hazards are detailed in the grid below.

Hazard group	Hazard sub-group	Hazard
Physiological Requirements	Hygrothermal Conditions	Damp and mould growth; Excess cold; Excess heat
	Pollutants (non-microbial)	Asbestos (and MMF); Biocides; Carbon Monoxide and fuel combustion products; Lead; Radiation; Uncombusted fuel gas; Volatile Organic Compounds
Psychological Requirements	Space, Security, Light and Noise	Crowding and space; Entry by intruders; Lighting; Noise
Protection Against Infection	Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply	Domestic hygiene, Pests and Refuse; Food safety; Personal hygiene, Sanitation and Drainage; Water supply
Protection Against Accidents	Falls	Falls associated with baths etc; Falling on level surfaces etc; Falling on stairs etc; Falling between levels
	Electric Shocks, Fires, Burns and Scalds	Electrical hazards; Fire, Flames; hot surfaces etc
	Collisions, Cuts and Strains	Collision and entrapment; Explosions; Position and operability of amenities etc; Structural collapse and falling elements

- **Note H-4**

The English Housing Survey collects data in 2 ways. The first is an interview with the household and the second is a physical survey of a sub-sample of the properties. As part of the physical survey an assessment of the nature of the surrounding area is made.

As explained in the English Housing Survey Surveyors' handbook, prior to coding the nature of the area, surveyors need to decide whether the area is either urban or rural. This assessment is based on their perception at the time of the inspection, it is not based on pre-populated information using the Rural-Urban Classification for the Output Area where the property is located.

Surveyors are instructed to consider the area as either **urban** (codes 1 to 3) if it is a built-up area such as a city or a town (either large or small) or **rural** (codes 4 to 6) for very small towns and villages and other rural type locations. They then assess the area surrounding the dwelling and code it from 1 to 6.

1. **Commercial City/Town Centre** – this is the area that would constitute part/all of the centre of a city or town. Areas do not have to be run down to be coded as city or town centre. It is likely that these areas will have a high percentage of commercial properties such as shops and businesses.
2. **Urban** – this is the area around the core of towns and cities, and also older urban areas which have been swallowed up by a metropolis. Areas would be largely but not exclusively residential.
3. **Suburban residential** – this is the outer area of towns or cities, and would include large, planned housing estates on the outskirts of towns or larger areas of older residential stock.
4. **Rural residential** – these can be free standing residential areas or suburban areas of villages, often meeting the housing needs of people who work in nearby towns and cities.
5. **Village centre** – these are traditional English villages or the old heart of villages which have been suburbanised.
6. **Rural** – these areas are predominantly rural e.g., agricultural with isolated dwellings or small hamlets.

- **Note H-5**

The English Housing Survey (EHS) does not define rurality according to the RUC, it uses a looser definition as explained in Note H-4. Therefore, where this data source has been used in this section, we refer to rural and urban instead of Rural and Urban to denote that these are not using the strict RUC definition.

- **Note H-6**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible for EHS surveyors to conduct a full internal inspection of properties in 2020 and 2021. This means that some data could not be collected and as a result, 2020 and 2021 data has been modelled differently to the EHS 2019.
Also due to the COVID-19 pandemic, EHS surveyors did not conduct any inspection of vacant properties in 2020. Although an external inspection of vacant homes occurred in 2021, the 2021 combined survey dwelling sample is for occupied properties only.

- **Note H-7**

Dwellings failing to meet the minimum standard are those posing a Category 1 hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). From 2008 the survey is able to estimate the presence of 26 of the 29 HHSRS hazards. Prior to the EHS 2020, to maintain consistency and avoid a break in the time series from 2006, Decent Homes estimates continue to be based on 15 hazards for the 'minimum standard' criterion.

- **Note H-8**

Tables showing the data expressed in the time series charts this section, alongside some additional breakdowns discussed more briefly in the text without visual aids are available in sheets HA, HB and HC in the housing supplementary data tables.
Please note that the time series charts use different vertical scales, take care when making comparisons between charts.

- **Note H-9**

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) provides information on the energy efficiency of a building. Since 2007, an EPC is required when a building is constructed, sold or let; the higher the energy efficiency score the more efficient the building. EPCs and the energy efficiency of homes is covered in sections B and C of the: Statistical Digest of Rural England: 8 - Energy.

- **Note H-10**

The information used in this chapter comes from the English Housing Survey 2021 to 2022: housing quality and condition including its associated data sets. Specifically we used Table DA3202 and DA5102.

- **Note H-11**

Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home, a guidance document published by Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities on 7 Sep 2023.

- **Note H-12**

As explained in Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home there are 4 types of damp.
Condensation damp happens when moisture generated inside the home cools and condenses onto colder parts of the buildings (for example window frames, corners and low points on walls behind sofas or wardrobes). This is the most common form of damp.
Penetrating damp is water that gets into the building from outside due to defects in the walls, roofs, windows or floors.
Rising damp is moisture from the ground that rises up through parts of the buildings in contact with the ground (walls and floors); it is usually found in older properties and is often misdiagnosed. It can be identified through visual inspection; however chemical testing is the most appropriate way of confirming it. Often it is due to defective damp proof courses and membranes.
Traumatic damp can be caused by leaking water from waste and heating pipes, overflowing baths or sinks, burst pipes or defective water storage vessels inside the building. Traumatic damp can also originate from outside the property, for example from another building or from environmental flooding.

Appendix 2: The 8 thematic reports that make up the Statistical Digest of Rural England (and the topics included within them)

1. Population

A. Population level and change
B. Population age profile
C. Ethnicity
D. Internal migration
E. Local Authority population data

2. Housing

A. Housing stock: age and type
B. Housing stock: additions
C. Housing costs: purchases and rentals
D. House purchase affordability
E. Second and empty homes
F. Homelessness
G. Land use change for housing
H. Housing quality

3. Health and Wellbeing

A. Life expectancy and Mortality
B. Wellbeing
C. NHS Dentistry provision
D. NHS General Practices
E. Childcare provision
F. Loneliness
G. Volunteering and charity

4. Communities and Households

A. Deprivation
B. Poverty due to low income
C. Household expenditure
D. Police recorded crime and outcomes
E. Crime surveys: local police and businesses
F. Feelings about the local neighbourhood

5. Connectivity and Accessibility

A. Broadband and mobile
B. Travel behaviours
C. Access to personal transport
D. Access to services
E. Home working

6. Education, Qualifications and Training

A. Secondary education attainment
B. School inspections
C. Free school meals - eligibility
D. Alternative and specialist education provision
E. Progression to higher education
F. Apprenticeships and on-the-job training
G. Workforce education level

7. Rural Economic Bulletin

A. Employment
B. Earnings
C. Redundancies
D. Claimant count - Jobseeker's Allowance
E. Output and productivity measured by Gross Value Added (GVA)
F. Businesses - status, structure and composition
G. Innovation and investment

8. Energy

A. Fuel poverty
B. Energy Performance Certificates: average Energy Efficiency Score
C. Energy Performance Certificates: achieving energy efficiency category C
D. Energy Costs
E. Energy Consumption

Each of the 8 themes also has their own set of supplementary data tables that include the larger source data that could not be included in the presented document. The chapter headings above are hyperlinked to the home page for that specific digest theme. The supplementary tables can be accessed from these home pages.

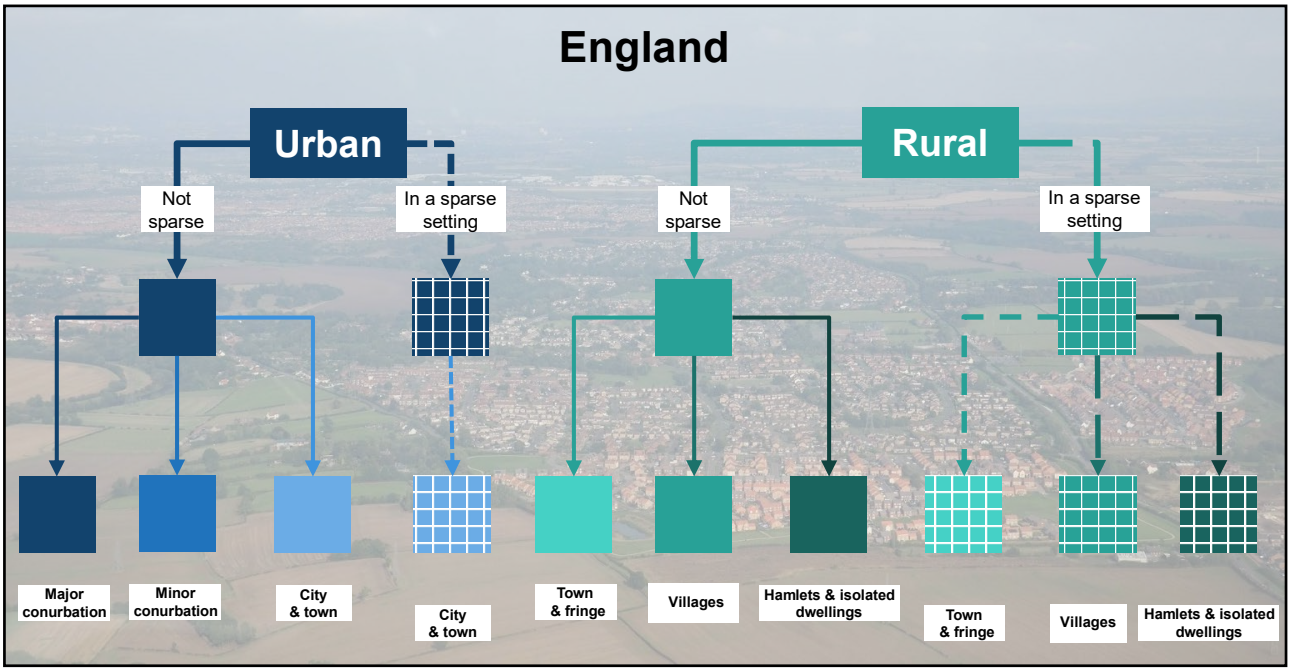
There is a further document including the individual Local Authority data tables, which have been separated for ease of use.

Appendix 2: 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 are the smallest areas for which data are available from Censuses. These Census Output Areas are assigned to one of four Urban or six Rural categories (Figure X-1) based on dwelling densities. Those described as “in a sparse setting” reflect where the wider area is sparsely populated (again based on dwelling densities). From Census Output Areas, other small area geographies can be classified based on how they map to Census Output Areas (such as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), Wards, and postcodes – Note 1).

Figure X-1: Classifying Rural and Urban areas for small geographical areas



A map showing the distribution of the Rural and Urban Census Output Areas is shown in Figure X-2.

When data are not available at a small geographical scale, it may be possible to apply the Rural-Urban Local Authority Classification or a similar classification for other larger geographies. 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 Census Output Area Classification. A map of the geographical distribution of the Rural and Urban Local Authorities is shown in Figure X-3.

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 (based on dwelling and business premise densities) 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 determining the classification of the authority.

Figure X-2: Map of the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Census Output Areas in England

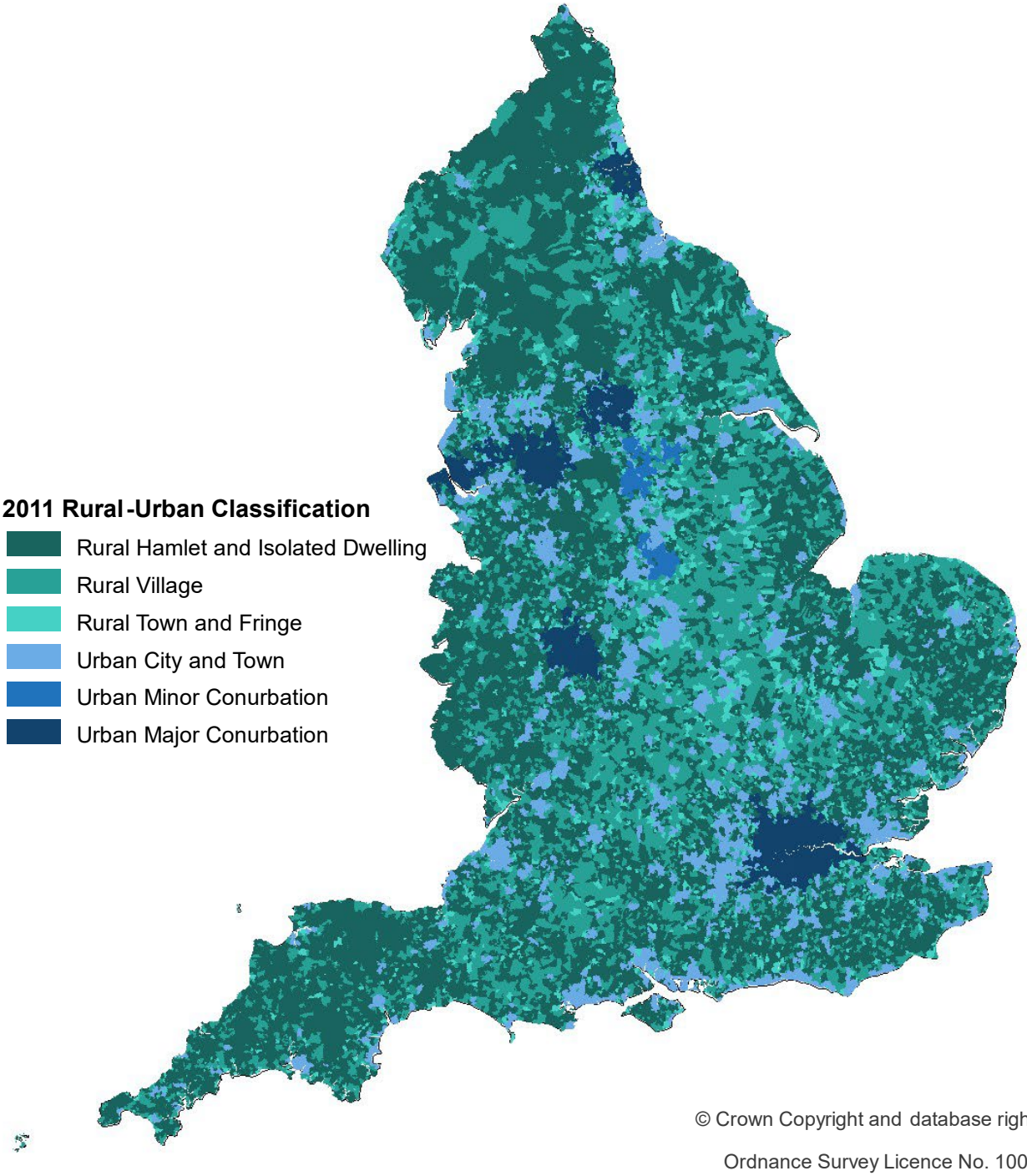
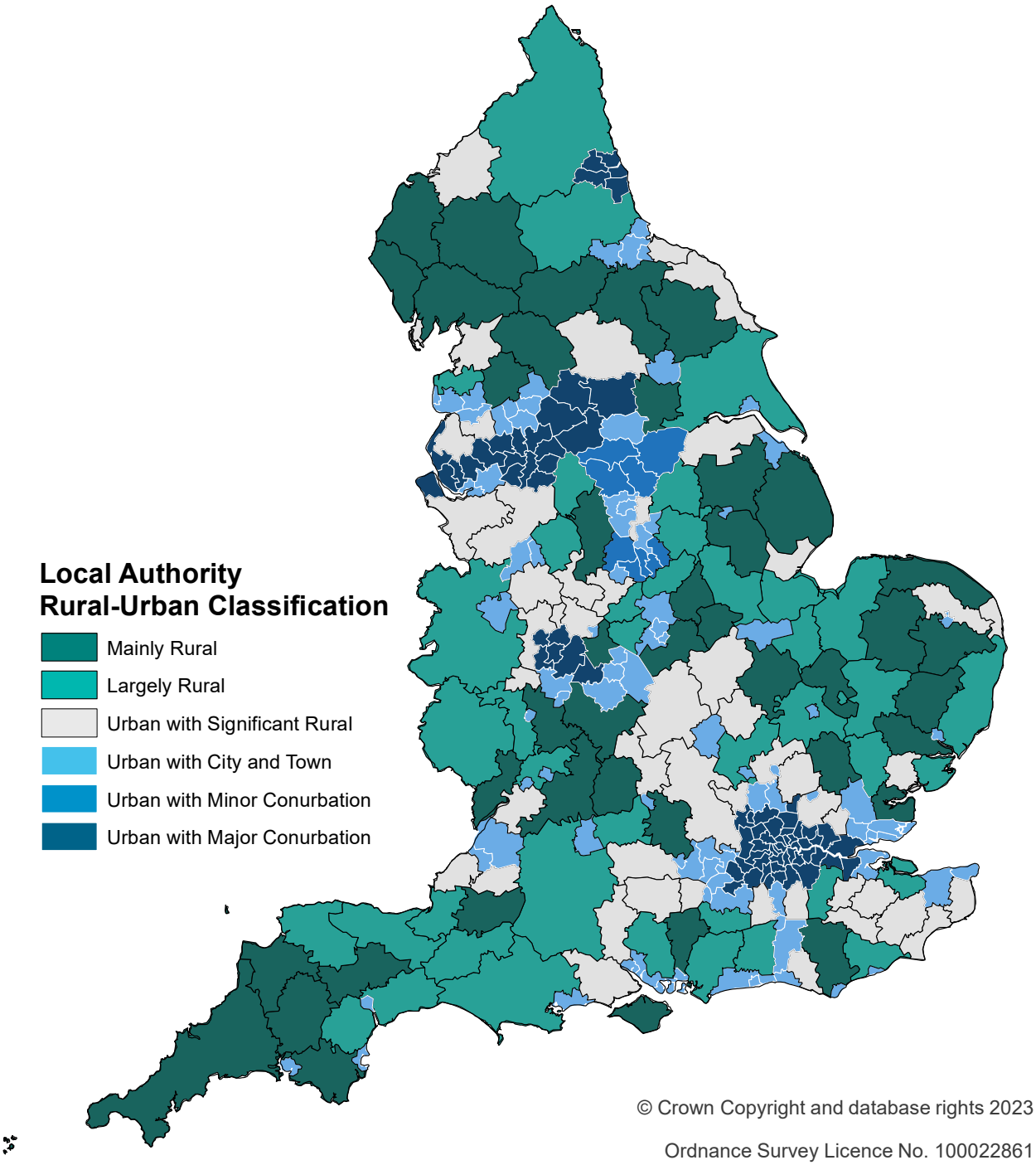
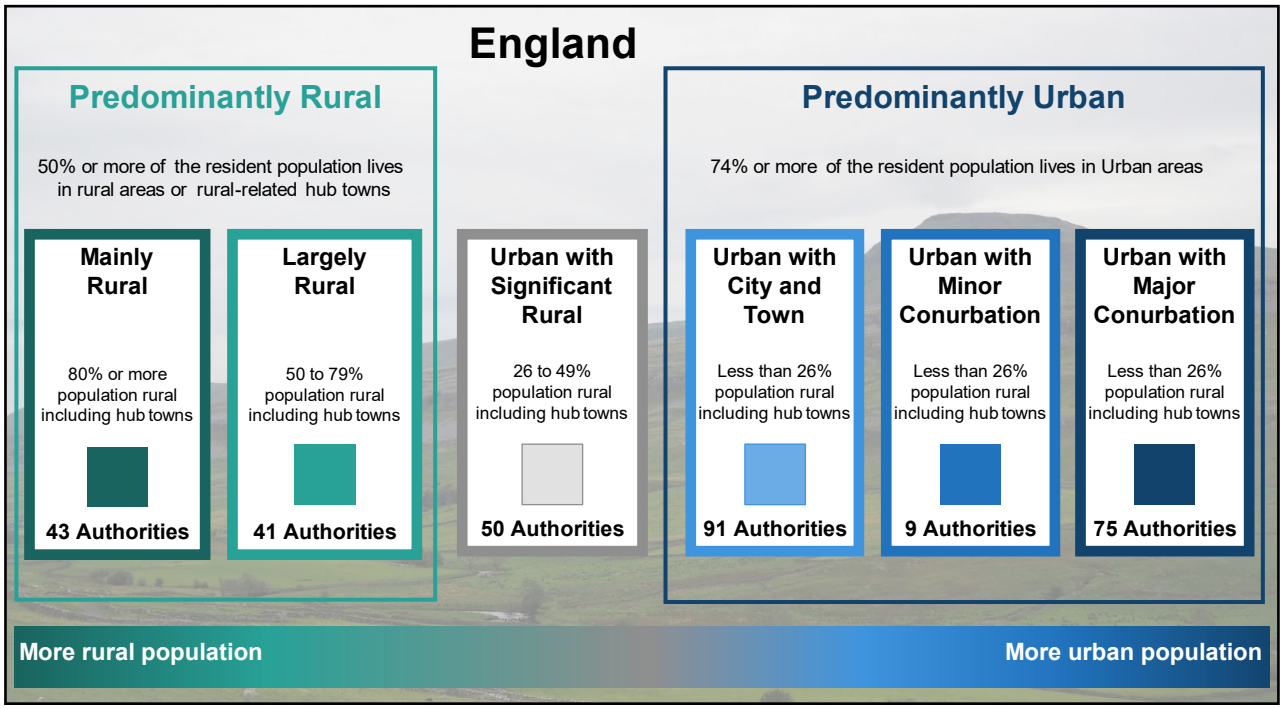


Figure X-3: Map of the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Local Authority Districts and Unitary Authorities in England



Under the classification, which is shown in Figure X-4, each Local Authority 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 Classification categories are frequently aggregated to ‘Predominantly Rural’, ‘Urban with Significant Rural’ and ‘Predominantly Urban’ as shown on Figure X-4.

Figure X-4: 2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Local Authority Districts and Unitary Authorities in England



It should be noted that the Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification is 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. More information on the classifications can be found at: The Rural-Urban Definition.

Defining Rural areas explanatory notes

- **Note 1:** Defining Super Output Areas and Wards

Census Output Areas (OAs) were created for publication of the results of the recent Censuses. They cover around 125 households. In practice few datasets are produced at OA level. However, other larger geographies can be built up from OAs. These include *Lower Layer Super Output Areas* (LSOAs) which typically contain 5 OAs, so contain approximately 625 households or a population of approximately 1,500 and a minimum 1,000. Their Rural-Urban Classification is based on the majority category of OAs they contain. Some other geographies, for example postcodes are classified based on the location of their central point and the classification of respective OA.

- **Note 2:** Accessibility of Figure X-2

We accept that this map might not be accessible for all users, but it is difficult to develop a map containing six colours that will provide enough contrast between all colours to enable every user to see them, especially when the shaded areas are small. Separate maps (showing only three levels of shading) for Rural and Urban areas are available on request from: rural.statistics@defra.gov.uk