Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Government Statistical Service

Statistical Digest of Rural England:

2 - Housing

September 2025

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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 September 2025, the ‘Second and empty homes’ and ‘Homelessness’ sections were updated to reflect new analysis, and now use the 2021 rural-urban classification. New analysis of the housing stock at Census 2021 was also added to the ‘Housing stock: age and type’ section.

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	Nov 2023	Jul 2024	Dec 2024	Jun 2025	Sep 2025
Housing stock: age and type	✖	✖	✖	✖	✔
Housing stock: additions and affordable housing	✖	✖	✔	✔	✖
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:

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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

The 2021 Rural-Urban Classification was released on 6 March 2025. Details of the 2021 Rural Urban Classification can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rural-urban-classification. It will take some time for the Digest to be updated throughout using the new classification. Where relevant Statistics drawing on the 2021 Census will be added to Digest thematic reports.

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 delivery for residential purposes, including affordable housing (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)

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.

Housing stock: age and type - key findings

A higher proportion of the housing stock in rural areas is older than in urban areas

- In 2020, 28% of “rural residential” properties were pre-1919 homes compared to 18% of those in urban areas.
- There is a greater proportion of urban properties (16%) dating from the period 1919-1945 than rural properties (9%). Overall, the proportion of pre-1945 homes in rural and urban areas is similar.
- Over 1 million rural homes are pre-1919 and these are the most likely to have features that are harder to update and improve from an energy efficiency perspective such as solid walls.

A higher proportion of detached houses in rural areas

- In 2020, 49% of homes in rural areas were detached compared to 16% in urban areas.
- 2021 Census data showed that the more rural the area, the greater the proportion of detached homes; for smaller rural settlements, 54% of the homes were detached compared to 35% in larger rural settlements and 21% in urban areas outside of London.

A lower proportion of flats in rural areas

- In 2020, 7% of homes in rural areas were flats compared to 26% in urban areas.
- There were just 0.25 million flats in rural areas in 2020 compared to over 5 million in urban areas.

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 were just under 23.5 million homes in England and 31% of them were semi-detached, but in the most rural areas 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 2021

Data from the 2021 Census can be used to create estimates of the housing stock by type and 2021 rural-urban classification. More recent data can then be compared against this to determine how the addition of new housing has changed the overall housing stock profile.

In 2021, there were just under 23.5 million residential properties in England (Table A-1). The most common property type was ‘semi-detached’ (31%). There was a similar number of ‘detached’ and ‘terraced’ properties with both accounting for 23% of the residential properties in England, while ‘flats, maisonettes or apartments’ accounted for 22% of all residential properties.

When considering the type of property that makes up the total housing stock for England, proportionally there is little change between 2011 and 2021. Semi-detached properties continue to be the most dominant property type with 31% of the housing stock for both in 2011 and 2021. Terraced properties and detached properties have shown a slight shift in dominance between 2011 and 2021. In 2011, terraced properties represented a greater share of the housing stock than detached properties (25% and 22% respectively). This has changed in 2021 and both property types now represent 23% of the housing stock which is a small increase (1%) in share for detached properties and a small decrease (2%) in share for terraced properties. Flats, maisonettes and apartments continue to represent the smallest proportion of housing stock in both 2011 and 2021 at 22% of all residential properties for both years.

Table A-1: Number (millions) and proportion (%) of residential properties, by housing type, Census 2011 and 2021 (Note A-2)

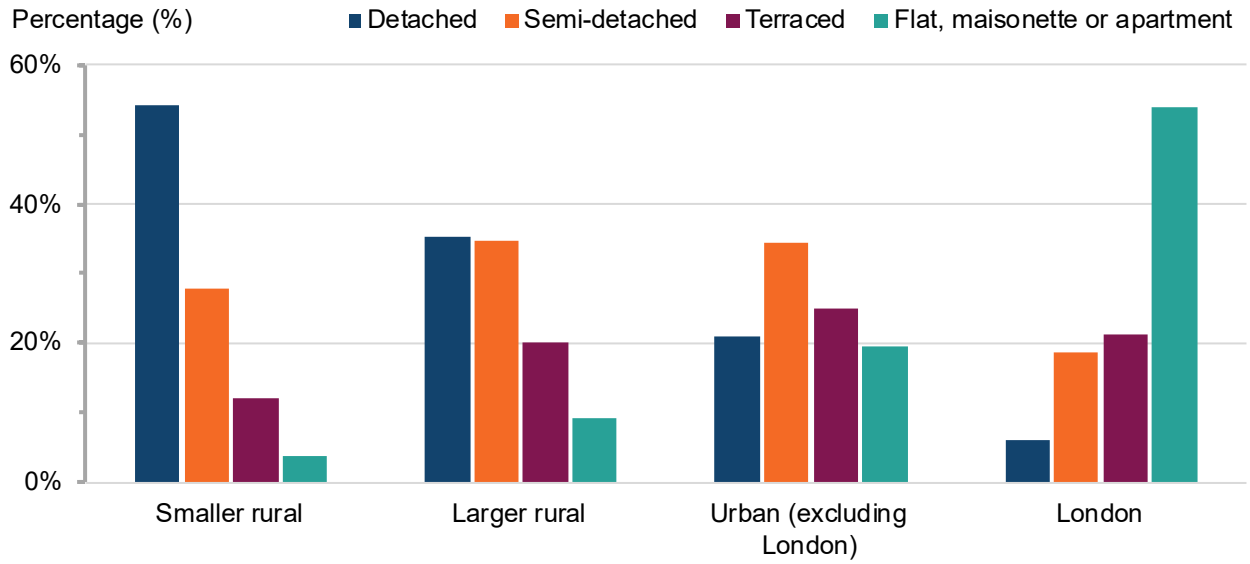
Numbers of residential properties have been rounded to the nearest 0.1 million and proportions to the nearest 1%. Individual components may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Property type	Number of residential properties, 2011	Proportion, 2011	Number of residential properties, 2021	Proportion, 2021
Detached	5.1	22%	5.4	23%
Semi-detached	7.1	31%	7.4	31%
Terraced	5.6	25%	5.4	23%
Flat, maisonette or apartment	5.1	22%	5.2	22%
All properties	**22.9**	**100%**	**23.4**	**100%**

The bar chart in Figure A-1 shows that in 2021 the majority of dwellings in smaller rural settlements were detached properties (54%), while in larger rural settlements the most common housing types were detached and semi-detached properties both with 35% of the housing stock for the settlement type. The proportion of dwellings which were flats, maisonettes or apartments is lower as the settlement becomes more rural, falling from 54% in London to just 4% in smaller rural settlements. Terraced properties are more common in urban areas, being highest in urban areas excluding London (25%) and lowest in smaller rural settlements (12%). Semi-detached properties are equally common in larger rural settlements and urban areas outside of London (35% and 34% respectively) and are least common in London (19%).

Figure A-1: Bar chart showing the percentage of residential properties, by building type, by Census output area rural urban classification (2021), in England, at 2021 Census (Note A-1, 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.

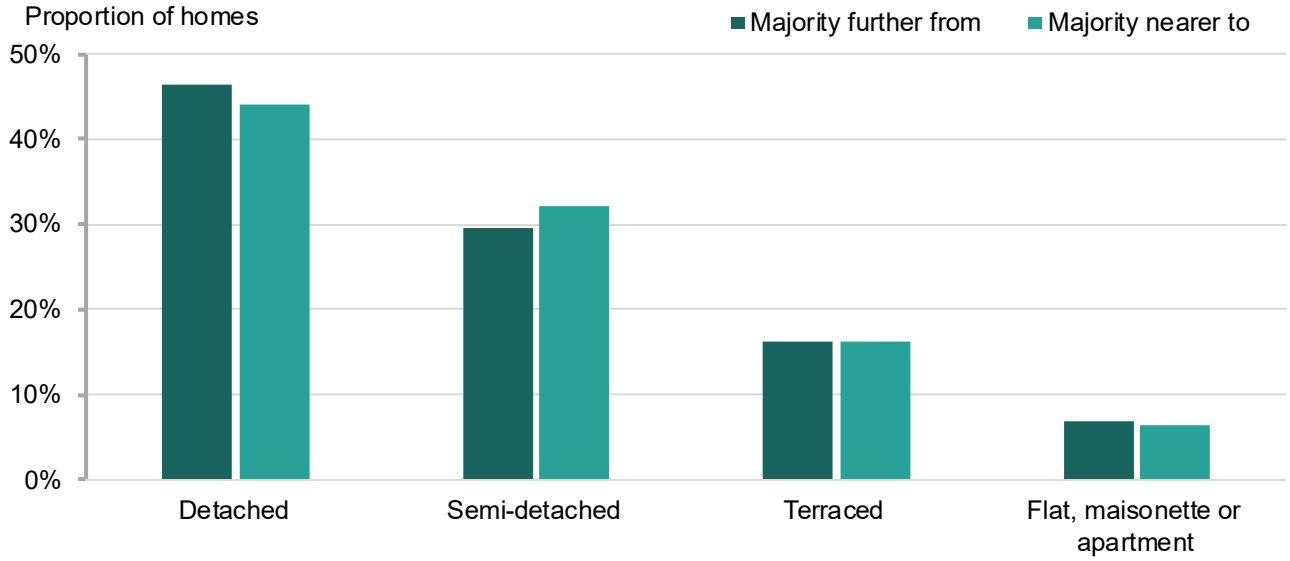


The bar chart in Figure A-2 shows how proximity to major towns or cities impacts the distribution of property type in rural areas. When rural settlements are further from a major town or city, detached

properties are slightly more common than for those settlements that are closer to a major town or city (46% and 44% respectively). Semi-detached properties are more common in rural settlements that are nearer to major town or city than those that are further from a major town or city (32% and 29%, respectively). For terraced properties and flats, maisonettes or apartments, proximity to a major town or city has little impact on the proportion of dwellings for these property types.

Figure A-2: Bar chart showing the percentage of residential properties, by building type and proximity to a major town or city, rural areas only, England, at 2021 Census (Note A-1, Note A-2)

The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns.



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-3) 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-3 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-3: 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.

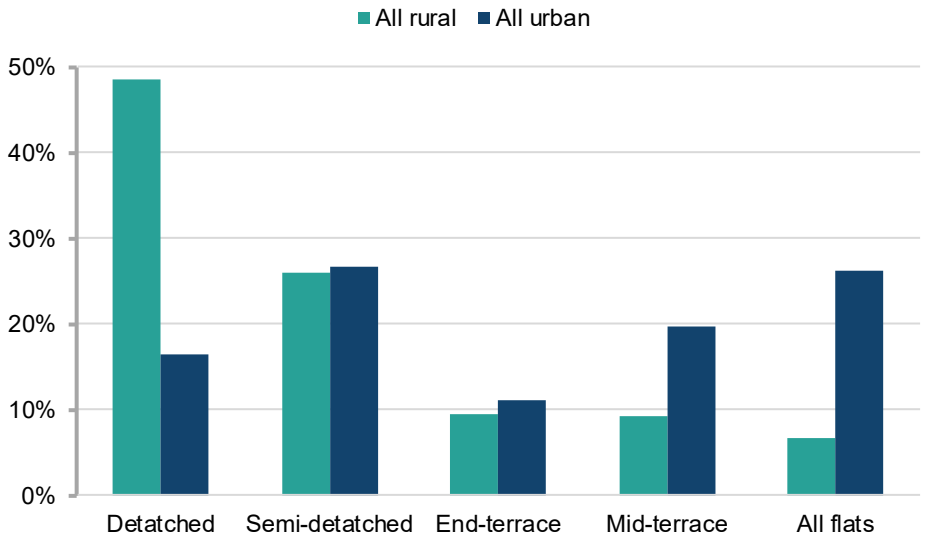


Table A-2: Number (millions) of residential properties, by building type and area type in England in 2020 from the English Housing Survey (Note A-4, Note A-5)

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

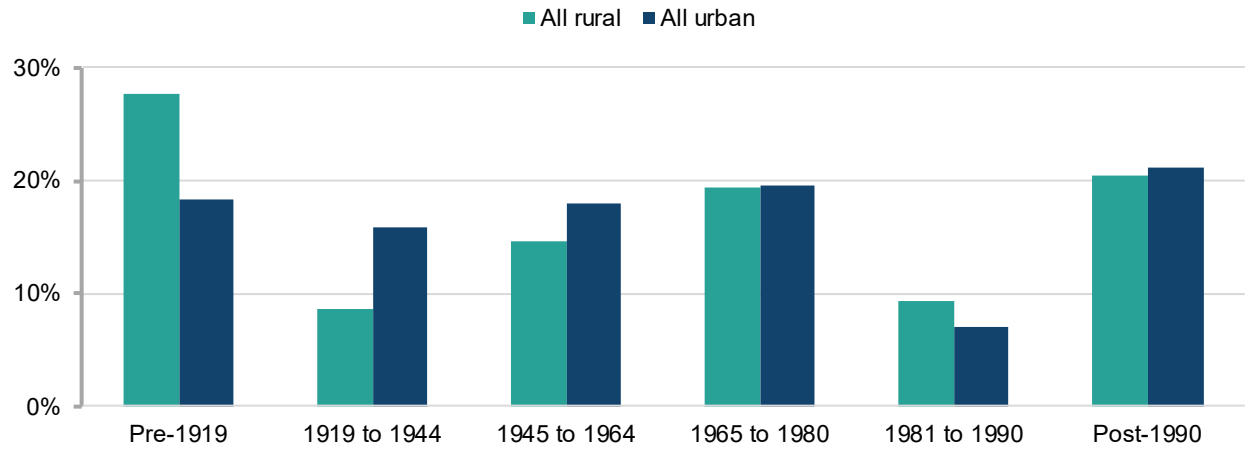
The EHS collects information on the age of the properties. At the physical survey, the properties are assigned to one of six age bands (Table A-3). There are over 1 million Pre-1919 homes in rural areas. This accounts for 28% of rural residential properties, whereas in urban areas only 18% of the residential properties are Pre-1919 (Figure A-4).

Figure A-4 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-4).

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-4: 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-5). 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.

Figure A-5: 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.

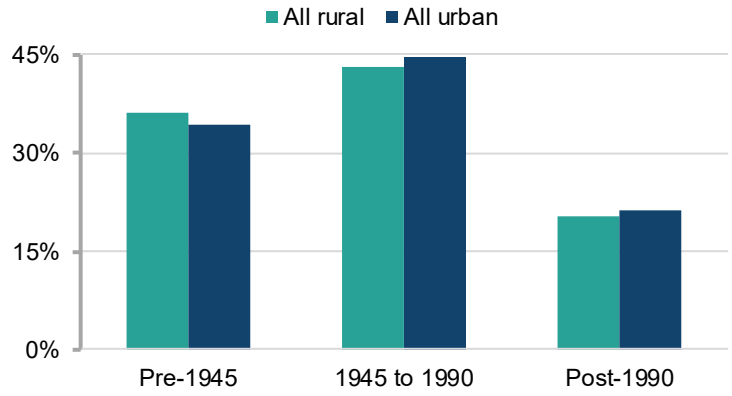
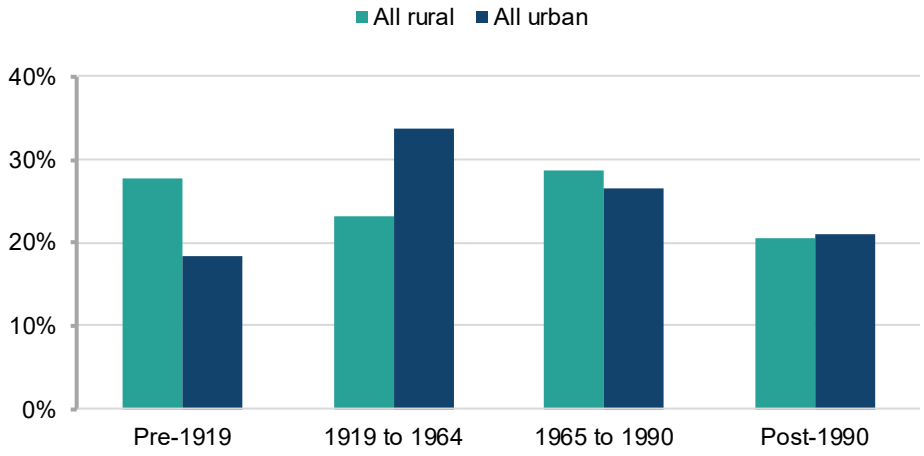


Figure A-6: Percentage of residential properties, by 4-tier building age band and area type in England in 2020 from the English Housing Survey (Note A-4, Note A-5)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the cluster of columns.



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-6, and it shows that rural areas have a higher proportion of Pre-1919 residential buildings than urban areas. Figure A-6 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.

Housing stock: age and type - explanatory notes

- **Note A-1**

Tables showing the data expressed in Figure A-1 and Figure A-2 are available in the housing supplementary data tables.

- **Note A-2**

The category 'Flat, maisonette or apartment' covers the following types of property: purpose-built block of flats or tenement; part of a converted or shared house, including bedsits; part of another converted building, for example, former school, church or warehouse; property in a commercial building, for example, in an office building, hotel or over a shop.

- **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 and affordable housing

The size of the total dwelling stock in majority rural authorities increased faster than in other classifications of local authority in England, with 3 in every 4 new homes completed by private enterprise; affordable housing accounts for 25% of housing delivery in majority rural authorities.

Housing stock: additions and affordable housing - key findings

Outside of London, the housing stock is growing fastest in majority rural authorities

- As of 2023, there were around 2.8 million homes in majority rural authorities. In urban authorities outside of London, there were more than 12.4 million homes in 2023.
- The total dwelling stock increased by 9% in majority rural authorities between 2016 and 2023; in urban authorities outside of London, it increased by around 6%.

The majority of newly built homes were for private sale or rent

- In majority rural authorities, 75% of newly built homes were for Private Enterprise (new dwellings built for private sale, private renting, and or by non-registered providers), and 25% were via Housing Associations. Less than 1% of new dwellings completed were via the local authorities themselves.
- In urban areas outside of London, 78% of new homes were for Private Enterprise, 21% were via Housing Associations, and just over 1% were via the local authorities themselves.

There were not enough council houses, particularly in majority rural authorities

- In 2022/23, 4% of households were on the waiting list for council housing in majority rural authorities; however, only 2% of homes were owned by local authorities for council housing.
- In urban areas outside of London, there was a higher proportion of households on the council housing waiting list (5%) compared to majority rural authorities; however, there are also more council-owned dwellings.

Outside of London, affordable housing delivery was highest in majority rural areas

- There were 3.3 additions to affordable housing per 1,000 households in majority rural authorities in 2022/23; this compares to 2.0 additions per 1,000 households in urban authorities outside of London.
- The number of affordable homes delivered on all rural exception sites decreased by nearly 50% between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023.
- In 2022/23, twice as many homes were delivered via Section 106 agreements in majority rural authorities as were delivered in 2015/16.

Summary

The availability of housing, and especially affordable housing, is a challenge in both rural and urban areas; to understand the development of new housing we track housing completions and the net additions to the housing stock.

As of 2023, there were around 2.8 million dwellings in majority rural authorities, with an additional 3.3 million dwellings in intermediate rural authorities. In urban authorities outside of London, there were more than 12.4 million dwellings in 2023. The total dwelling stock increased by 9% in majority rural authorities between 2016 and 2023; in urban authorities outside of London, it increased by around 6%.

In majority rural authorities, there were 24,600 new dwellings completed in year ending March 2024; 75% of these (18,500 dwellings) were for Private Enterprise (new dwellings built for private sale, private renting, and or by non-registered providers), and 25% (6,100 dwellings) were via Housing Associations. Less than 1% (less than 100 dwellings) of new dwellings completed were via the majority rural local authorities themselves in year ending March 2024. In urban areas outside of London, there were 65,300 new dwellings completed in the same year; 78% of these were for Private Enterprise, 21% were via Housing Associations, and just over 1% were via the local authorities themselves.

In year ending March 2023, there were 114,700 households on council housing waiting lists in majority rural authorities. These authorities owned 51,400 dwellings in year ending March 2023, indicating that the demand for council housing was far greater than the supply in majority rural authorities. In urban authorities outside of London, there were 642,500 households on the waiting lists for council housing, compared to the 923,800 dwellings owned by these local authorities. Between year ending March 2021 and year ending March 2023, the proportion of households on the council housing waiting list in majority rural authorities increased from 3.5% to 4.4%.

In year ending March 2023, there were 8,600 affordable homes delivered in majority rural authorities; this was double the number delivered in year ending March 2016 when 4,300 affordable homes were delivered. In urban authorities outside of London, there were 23,200 affordable homes delivered in year ending March 2023; this was 66% more than in year ending March 2016 when 14,000 affordable homes were delivered.

Total dwelling stock

As of 31st March 2023, there were 2.8 million dwellings in majority rural authorities, and 3.3 million in intermediate rural authorities; this is equivalent to 11% and 13% of the total dwelling stock in England, respectively. Table B-1 gives the total number of dwellings by 2021 rural-urban classification in 2023.

Table B-1: Total dwelling stock as at March 2023, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities as at 2023, in England (Note B-2, Note B-3)
The numbers of dwellings are presented in millions, rounded to the nearest 100,000.

Rural-Urban Classification 2021	Total number of dwellings (millions)	Proportion of total dwelling stock in England	Proportion of households
Majority rural	2.8	11.0%	10.7%
Intermediate rural	3.3	12.8%	12.8%
Intermediate urban	3.1	12.2%	12.2%
Urban (excluding London)	12.4	49.0%	49.2%
London	3.8	14.9%	15.1%
England	**25.4**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

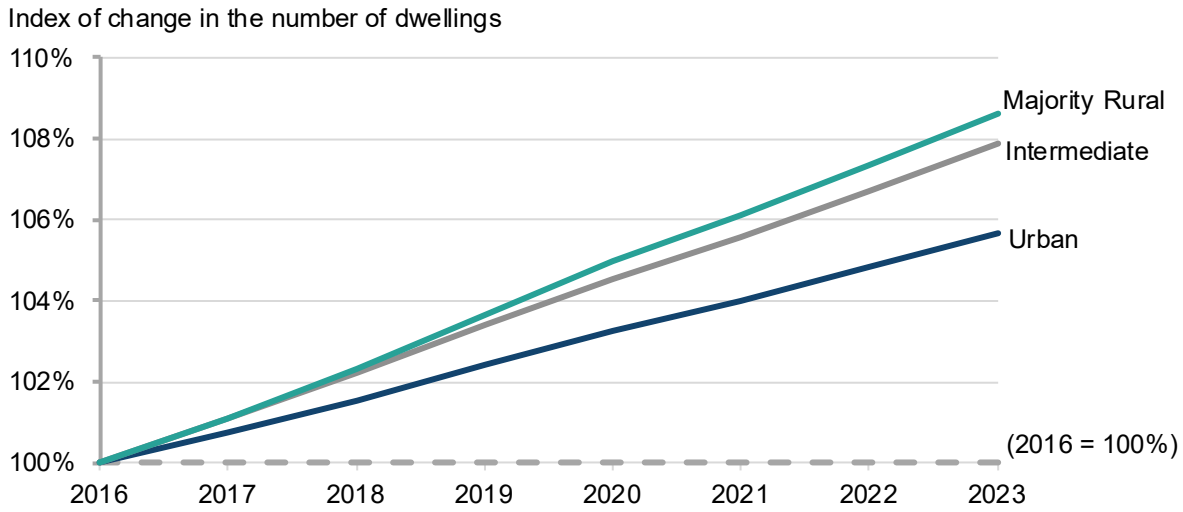
The line chart in Figure B-1 provides the index of change in the number of dwellings between 2016 and 2023. In this index of change chart, the number of dwellings in each given year has been divided by the number of dwellings in 2016; this allows the calculation of percentage changes. With index charts, it is possible to calculate percentage change by subtracting 100% from each value; for example, an index of 108% means there has been an 8% increase since 2016.

The index of change chart in Figure B-1 can be described as follows:

- The size of the dwelling stock increased faster in majority rural authorities than in intermediate or urban authorities outside of London between 2016 and 2023.
- In majority rural authorities, the number of dwellings in 2023 was 109% of the total in 2016; this means that the total dwelling stock in majority rural authorities had increased by 9% between 2016 and 2023. This was the greatest proportional increase of all local authority classifications in England. In absolute terms, the dwelling stock increased from 2.6 million to 2.8 million between 2016 and 2023.
- In intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities, the number of dwellings in 2023 was just under 108% of that in 2016, meaning that the total dwelling stock had increased by around 8%. In absolute terms, the dwelling stock increased from 5.9 million to 6.4 million between 2016 and 2023.
- In urban authorities outside of London, the number of dwellings in 2023 was just under 106% of that in 2016, meaning that the total dwelling stock had increased by around 6%. This was the smallest proportional increase of all local authority classifications in England. In absolute terms, the dwelling stock increased from 11.8 million to 12.4 million between 2016 and 2023.

Figure B-1: Line chart showing the index (2016 = 100%) of change in the number of dwellings between 2016 and 2023, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities as at 2023, as at 31st March of each year, in England (Note B-2, Note B-3)

'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Urban' excludes London. An index value of 100% is equivalent to the size of the dwelling stock in 2016; this is indicated by a horizontal dashed line. By extension, an index of 99% or 101% mean the dwelling stock was 1% smaller or larger than in 2016, respectively.



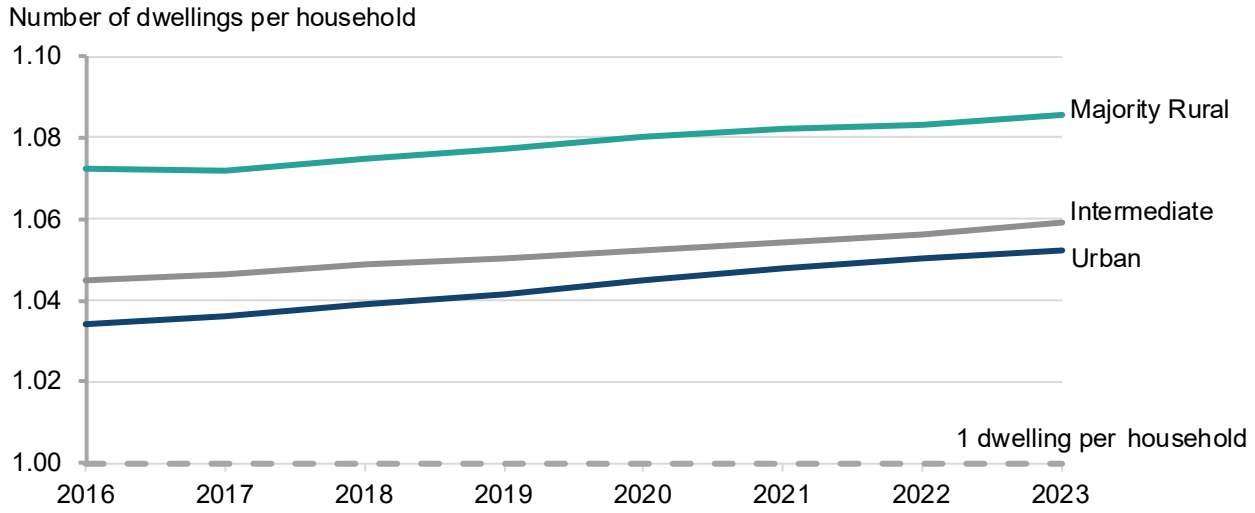
Detailed classifications specified within RUC21 provide information regarding the areas' proximity to a major town or city to indicate relative access. When considering proximity to a major town or city for the majority of the population in majority rural authorities, there was a minimal difference in the rate of total dwelling stock growth. In majority rural authorities where the majority of the population reside further from a major town or city, the total dwelling stock increased by 8% between 2016 and 2023; in majority rural authorities where the majority of the population reside nearer to a major town or city, the dwelling stock increased by 9%.

It is possible to create a ratio of dwellings to households using the total dwelling stock data. A ratio of 1.00 would indicate that there were exactly the number of dwellings needed to house the declared households in a given area. Ratios substantially higher than 1.00 indicate the presence of second and empty homes. However, it should be noted that the availability of dwellings will affect the formation of separate households – household formation is not independent of dwelling stock. The line chart in Figure B-2 shows the number of dwellings per household between 2016 and 2023. It can be described as follows:

- Majority rural authorities have consistently had the highest number of dwellings per household of all local authority classifications in England between 2016 and 2023.
- In majority rural authorities, there were 1.07 dwellings per household in 2016 and 2017. This steadily increased to 1.09 dwellings per household in 2023. This indicates that the size of the housing stock in majority rural authorities grew faster than households (through formation or due to migration) between 2017 and 2023.
- Between 2016 and 2023, the number of dwellings per household increased gradually in urban authorities outside of London, from 1.03 to 1.05 dwellings per household. These increases were similar to those seen in intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, where the number of dwellings per household increased from 1.04 to 1.06 between 2016 and 2023.

Figure B-2: Line chart showing the number of dwellings per household between 2016 and 2023, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities as at 2023, as at 31st March of each year, in England (Note B-2, Note B-3)

'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Urban' excludes London. A ratio of 1.00 (i.e., 1 dwelling per household) has been indicated on the chart with a horizontal dashed line.



In majority rural authorities where the majority of the population reside further from a major town or city, there were 1.12 dwellings per household in 2023; this was higher than in authorities where the majority of the population reside nearer to a major town or city (1.06), indicating more second or empty homes further from urban centres.

Table B-2 shows the local authority with the highest number of dwellings per household in March 2023, within each category of the 2021 rural-urban classification These figures highlight areas where there may be particularly high proportions of second and empty homes, or properties used for non-residential purposes.

Table B-2: Local Authorities with the highest number of dwellings per household in England, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities, 2023

'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Isles of Scilly' and 'City of London' represented the highest ratios in majority rural authorities and in London respectively, but have been excluded from the table due to their small number of resident households.

Rural-Urban Classification 2021	Local Authority	Dwellings per household
Majority rural	East Lindsey	1.32
Intermediate	East Riding of Yorkshire	1.16
Urban (excluding London)	Cambridge	1.32
London	Kensington and Chelsea	1.18
England	**Cambridge**	**1.32**

The highest ratio in majority rural authorities was in 'East Lindsey', where there were 1.32 dwellings per household. A higher ratio was seen in the Isles of Scilly of 1.58 dwellings per household, though as a small island community, this is not comparable with mainland authorities.

In intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, the highest ratio was seen in 'East Riding of Yorkshire' (intermediate rural), where there were 1.16 dwellings per household. In urban authorities outside of London, 'Cambridge' had the highest ratio, with 1.32 dwellings per household. 'City of London' had the highest ratio in London, with 1.79 dwellings per household in 2023; this was also the highest overall in England. However, as with the 'Isles of Scilly', this ratio was likely inflated by the small number of resident households. The second highest ratio in London was 'Kensington and Chelsea', where there were 1.18 dwellings per household.

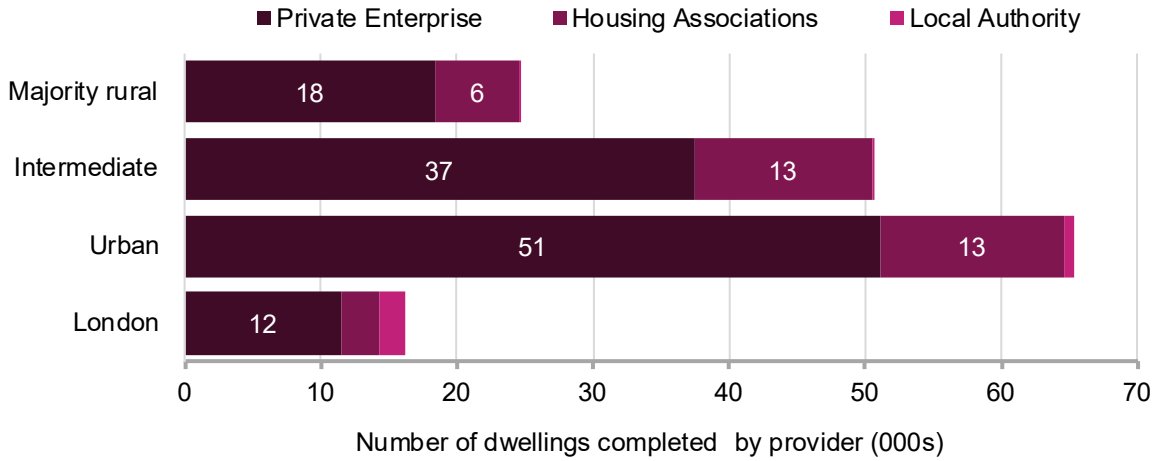
With the 'Isles of Scilly' and 'City of London' excluded, 'Cambridge' had the highest number of dwellings per household in England on 31st March 2023 (ratio = 1.32); 'Camden' in London had the smallest (ratio = 0.93).

Housebuilding completions

Increases to the size of the dwelling stock arise from building new dwellings or converting existing dwellings. In majority rural authorities, there were 24,600 new dwellings completed in year ending March 2024. In intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, there were 50,700 new dwelling completions. In urban authorities outside of London, there were 65,300 housebuilding completions. In London, there were 16,200 housebuilding completions.

The stacked bar chart in Figure B-3 shows the number of new dwellings completed by provider and 2021 rural-urban classification in 2023/24.

Figure B-3: Bar chart showing the total number of dwellings completed in year ending March 2024, by provider and 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities as at 2023, in England (Note B-2, Note B-3)
Values are given in thousands (000s), and have not been labelled on the bars where there were fewer than 5,000 dwelling completions. 'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Urban' excludes London. The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the stacked bars.



Private Enterprise (new dwellings built for private sale, private renting, and or by non-registered providers) delivered proportionally more dwellings than any other provider in year ending March 2024. In majority rural authorities, 75% of new dwelling completions were for Private Enterprise; this was similar to intermediate (rural or urban) authorities at 74%. In urban authorities outside of

London, 78% of new dwellings were for Private Enterprise; this was the highest of all local authority classifications in England. In London, 71% of new dwellings were for Private Enterprise.

Housing Associations (organisations who manage and build affordable housing) delivered 25% of new dwellings in majority rural authorities; this is similar to intermediate (rural or urban) authorities at 26%. In urban authorities outside of London, 21% of new dwellings were via Housing Associations, compared to 17% of new dwellings in London.

Local authorities delivered the smallest proportions of new dwellings in year ending March 2024. Majority rural and intermediate (rural or urban) authorities delivered fewer than 1% of the total number of new dwellings. Urban authorities outside of London delivered just over 1%. Overall local authorities in London delivered 12% of new dwellings.

In majority rural authorities, a smaller proportion of new dwellings were delivered via Housing Associations in local authorities where the majority of the population reside further from a major town or city (20%), compared to those where the majority of the population reside nearer to a major town or city (27%). In all majority rural authorities, fewer than 1% of new dwelling completions were delivered by the local authorities themselves. Therefore, a larger proportion of new dwellings were delivered for Private Enterprise in majority rural authorities where the majority of the population reside further from a major town or city (80%), compared to those where the majority of the population reside nearer to a major town or city (73%).

Council housing

Local authority owned housing (or council housing) is used to help people with a priority need for housing; they must meet the eligibility criteria to join the housing register. The criteria can differ between local authorities. Table B-3 shows the number of dwellings owned by the local authorities (i.e., council houses and flats), by 2021 rural-urban classification, in year ending March 2023.

Table B-3: Number of council dwellings in year ending March 2023, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England (Note B-2, Note B-3)
The numbers of local authority owned dwellings have been rounded to the nearest 100.
'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities.

Rural-Urban Classification 2021	Number of council dwellings
Majority rural	51,400
Intermediate	119,100
Urban (excluding London)	923,800
London	388,900
England	**1,563,200**

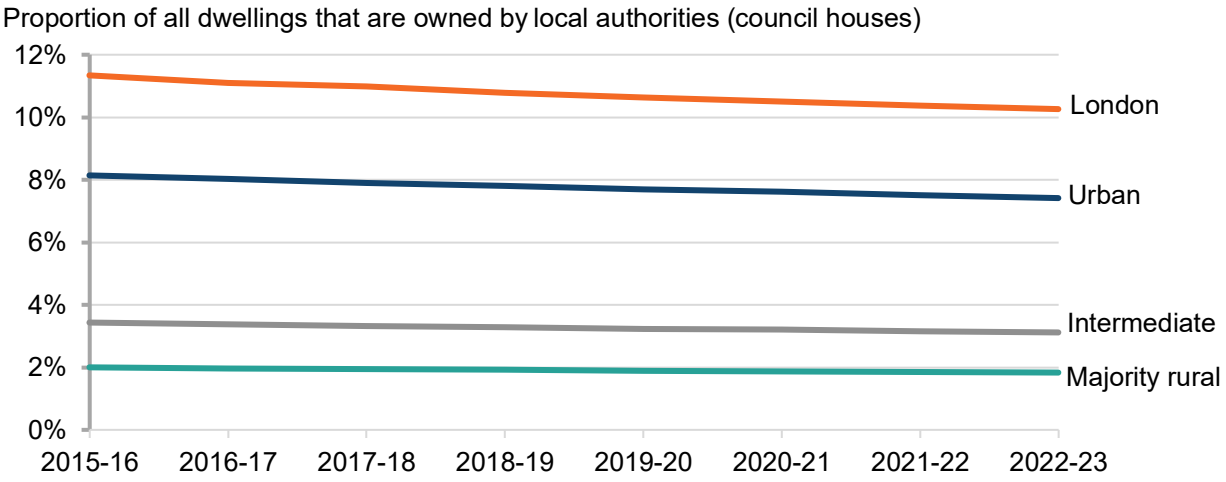
In year ending March 2023, there were 51,400 council dwellings in majority rural authorities, which accounted for 2% of the total dwelling stock; this was the lowest proportion compared with other types of authority. A smaller proportion of the total dwelling stock was owned by the local authority in majority rural authorities where the majority of the population reside further from a major town or city (1.3%), compared to those where the majority reside nearer to a major town or city (2.2%).

In intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, 3% of the total dwelling stock was owned by the local authority (119,100 dwellings); proportionally, this was slightly higher than in majority rural

authorities. In urban authorities outside of London, 7% of the total dwelling stock was owned by the local authority (923,800 dwellings); this was more than 3 times higher than in majority rural authorities. In London, 10% of the dwelling stock was owned by the local authority (388,900).

The line chart in Figure B-4 shows the change in the proportion of dwellings owned by local authorities (i.e., council dwellings) between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023.

Figure B-4: Line chart showing the change in the proportion of dwellings that were owned by local authorities between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England (Note B-2, Note B-3)
'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Urban' excludes London.



The line chart in Figure B-4 can be described as follows:

- There were proportionally fewer council dwellings in 2022/23 than in 2015/16 for all settlement types. The smallest proportional decrease was in majority rural authorities, whilst the greatest was in London.
- In majority rural authorities, the proportion of dwellings owned by councils was similar between 2015/16 and 2022/23, at around 2%; in absolute terms, the number of local authority-owned dwellings decreased from 52,400 to 51,400 dwellings across this period.
- In intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, there was a minimal decrease in the proportion of dwellings owned by councils between 2015/16 and 2022/23, with both being around 3%. In absolute terms, the number of local authority-owned dwellings decreased from 224,200 to 199,100 dwellings across this period. This indicates a greater proportional and absolute decrease in the proportion of council dwellings in intermediate authorities compared to majority rural authorities.
- In urban authorities outside of London, 8% of dwellings were owned by councils in 2015/16; by 2022/23, this decreased to 7%, indicating a greater rate of change than in majority rural and intermediate authorities. In absolute terms, the number of local authority-owned dwellings decreased from 992,400 to 923,800 dwellings across this period.
- In London, more than 11% of dwellings were owned by councils in 2015/16; by 2022/23, this decreased to 10%. In absolute terms, the number of local authority-owned dwellings decreased from 411,200 to 388,900 dwellings across this period.

Table B-4 gives the number of households on the waiting list for Local Authority housing by 2021 rural-urban classification in year ending March 2023.

Table B-4: Number of households on waiting lists for council housing in year ending March 2023, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England (Note B-2, Note B-3)
The numbers of households have been rounded to the nearest 100. 'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities.

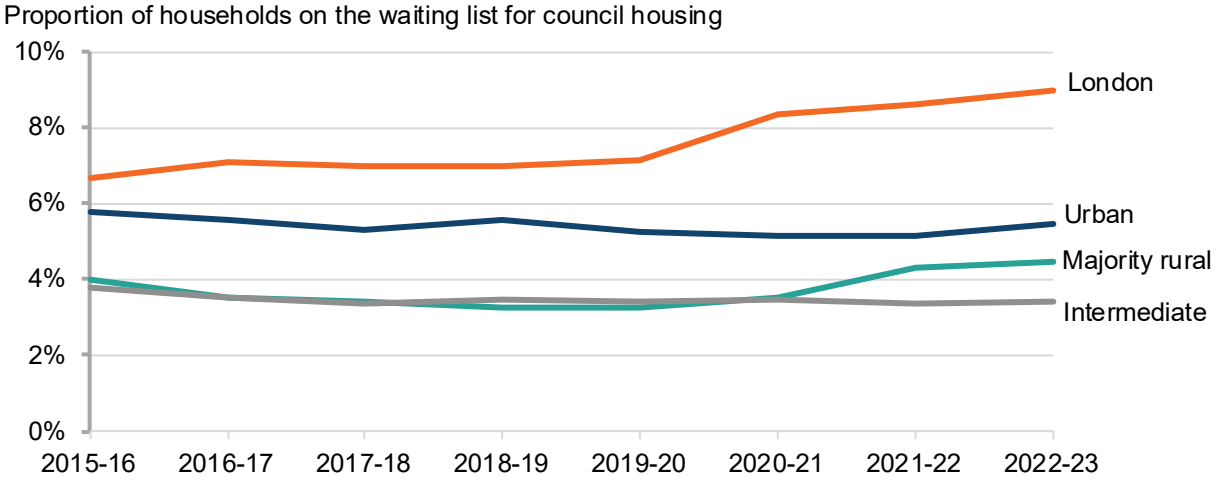
Rural-Urban Classification 2021	Number of households on council housing waiting lists
Majority rural	114,700
Intermediate	202,200
Urban (excluding London)	642,500
London	323,600
England	**1,283,000**

In year ending March 2023, 4% of households in majority rural authorities were on the waiting list for council housing, equivalent to 114,700 households; there were proportionally more households on the waiting list in authorities where the majority of the population reside further from a major town or city (5%; 60,600 households), than nearer to (4%; 54,100 households).

The proportion of households on the waiting list in majority rural authorities was higher than in intermediate (rural or urban) authorities (3%; 202,200 households), but lower than in urban authorities outside of London (5%; 642,500 households). Proportionally more households in London were on the waiting list for council housing than in other types of authority (9%; 323,600 households).

Waiting lists for council housing have grown in recent years for some categories of the 2021 rural-urban classification. The line chart in Figure B-5 shows the change in the proportion of households on council housing waiting lists between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023.

Figure B-5: Line chart showing the change in the proportion of households on council housing waiting lists between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England (Note B-2, Note B-3)
'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Urban' excludes London.



The line chart in Figure B-5 can be described as follows:

- Between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2021, there was little difference in the proportion of households on the waiting list for council housing in majority rural and intermediate (rural or urban) authorities; across this period, the proportions fluctuated between 3.3% and 4.0% of households. There was consistently a higher proportion of households on the council housing waiting list in urban authorities outside of London (and even more so in London) compared to majority rural or intermediate authorities between 2015/16 and year ending 2020/21.
- Between year ending March 2021 and year ending March 2023, the proportion of households on the council housing waiting list continued along the same trend in intermediate authorities. However, in majority rural authorities, the proportion of households increased between year ending March 2021 and year ending March 2023 to 4.4%.
- In urban authorities outside of London, the proportion of households on the council housing waiting list followed similar trends to intermediate authorities, albeit at a greater magnitude. In year ending March 2016, 5.8% of households were on the council housing waiting list in urban authorities outside London. Between 2015/16 and 2022/23, this proportion fluctuated between 5.1% and 5.8%. In year ending March 2023, 5.5% of households were on the council housing waiting list in urban authorities outside London.
- In London, there has consistently been a higher proportion of households on the waiting list for council housing compared to other types of authority. Between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2020, the proportion increased marginally, from 6.7% to 7.1%. By year ending March 2023, 9.0% of households in London were on the waiting list for council housing; this was twice the proportion in majority rural authorities.

Affordable housing delivery

As defined by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), affordable housing represents housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers).

All affordable housing

Table B-5 shows the number of affordable homes delivered (based on new building completions, acquisitions, or rehabilitations), by 2021 rural-urban classification, in year ending March 2023. A full time series since year ending March 2016 can be found in the supplementary data tables.

There were 8,600 additions to affordable housing in majority rural authorities in 2022/23; this is equivalent to 3.3 homes per 1,000 households, or 25% of all additions to housing stock. In urban authorities outside of London, the proportion of net additional dwellings that were affordable was similar to majority rural authorities, but total affordable housing delivery was higher (23,200 dwellings). There were proportionally fewer affordable homes delivered in urban authorities outside of London (2.0 dwellings per 1,000 households) compared to majority rural authorities.

In London, the proportion of net additional dwellings that were affordable was higher than any other classification of authority in England (23%). The rate of affordable housing delivery was also highest in London, at 4.4 dwellings per 1,000 households in year ending March 2023.

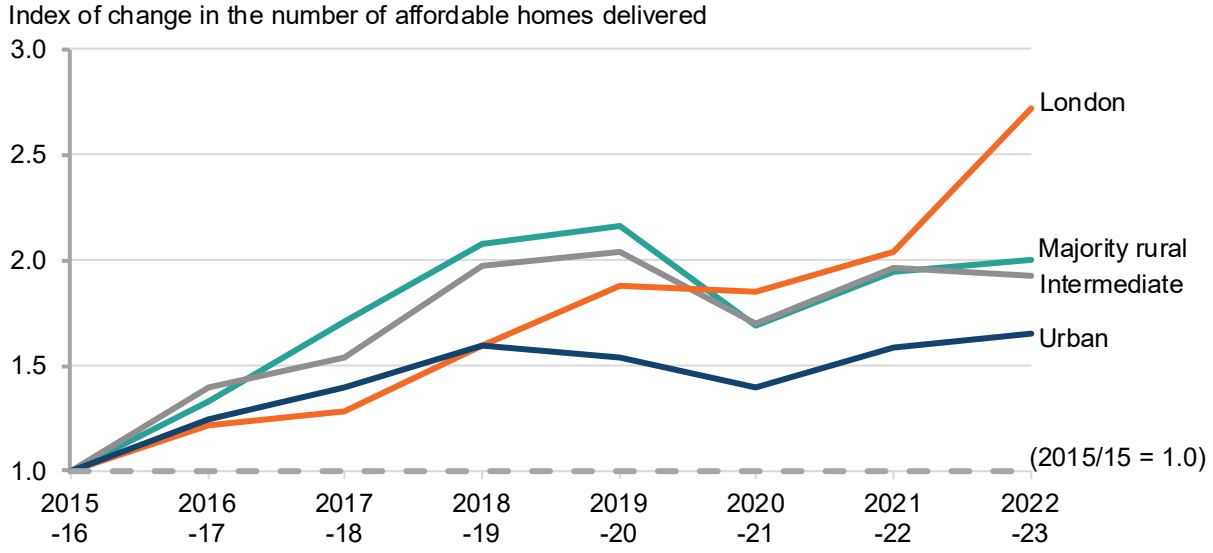
Table B-5: Number of affordable homes delivered in year ending March 2023, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England (Note B-2, Note B-3, Note B-4)
Affordable home delivery has been rounded to the nearest 100 dwellings. 'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities.

Rural-Urban Classification 2021	Number of affordable homes delivered	Affordable homes delivered per 1,000 households	Proportion of additions that were affordable
Majority rural	8,600	3.3	25%
Intermediate	16,400	2.8	23%
Urban (excluding London)	23,200	2.0	25%
London	15,800	4.4	45%
England	**63,900**	**2.7**	**27%**

Note: this table has been revised since the previous publication. To calculate the proportion of additions that were affordable, the number of affordable homes delivered (including completions and acquisitions) has been divided by the total housing additions (new builds plus acquisitions).

The line chart in Figure B-6 provides the index of change in the number of affordable homes delivered between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023. In this index of change chart, the number of affordable homes completed in each given year has been divided by the number of affordable homes completed in year ending March 2016.

Figure B-6: Line chart showing the index (2015/16 = 1.0) of change in the number of affordable homes delivered between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities (Note B-2, Note B-3, Note B-4)
'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Urban' excludes London. An index value of 1.0 is equivalent to the number of affordable homes delivered in 2016; this is indicated by a horizontal dashed line. By extension, an index of 2.0 would mean the number of council dwellings had doubled since 2016.



The index of change chart in Figure B-6 can be described as follows:

- Between 2015/16 and 2019/20, majority rural authorities generally saw the greatest proportional increases to the affordable housing stock compared to other local authority classifications in England. However, this decreased to a lower rate of delivery in 2020/21, potentially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2020/21 and 2022/23, the number of affordable homes delivered in London increased proportionally more than in other types of authority. Between 2015/16 and 2022/23, trends in the number of affordable homes delivered annually were similar between majority rural authorities and intermediate authorities.
- In majority rural authorities, the number of affordable homes delivered doubled between 2015/16 (4,300 dwellings) and 2022/23 (8,600 dwellings). The greatest increase was in 2019/20, where there were 9,200 affordable homes delivered; this is about 2.2 times higher than in 2015/16.
- In intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, affordable home delivery in 2022/23 (16,400) was almost 2 times higher than in 2015/16 (8,500 dwellings). In a similar manner to majority rural authorities, the greatest increase was in 2019/20, where there were 17,300 affordable homes delivered; this is just over 2 times higher than in 2015/16.
- In urban authorities outside of London, the number of affordable homes delivered in 2022/23 (23,200) was 1.7 higher than in 2015/16 (14,000 dwellings). In London, the number of affordable homes delivered in 2022/23 (15,800) was 2.7 times higher than in 2015/16 (5,800 dwellings).

Affordable homes can be delivered in several different ways, including: (1) Affordable Home Ownership; (2) Affordable Rent; (3) London Affordable Rent; (4) First Homes; (5) Intermediate Rent; (6) Shared Ownership; or (7) Social Rent. Definitions for these tenures are given in Note B-5.

The 100% stacked bar chart in Figure B-7 shows the proportion of affordable homes delivered by tenure and 2021 rural-urban classification in year ending March 2023. Outside of London, more than 4 in every 10 affordable homes were delivered for Affordable Rent in year ending March 2023. In the same year, more than 3 in every 10 affordable homes were delivered for Shared Ownership.

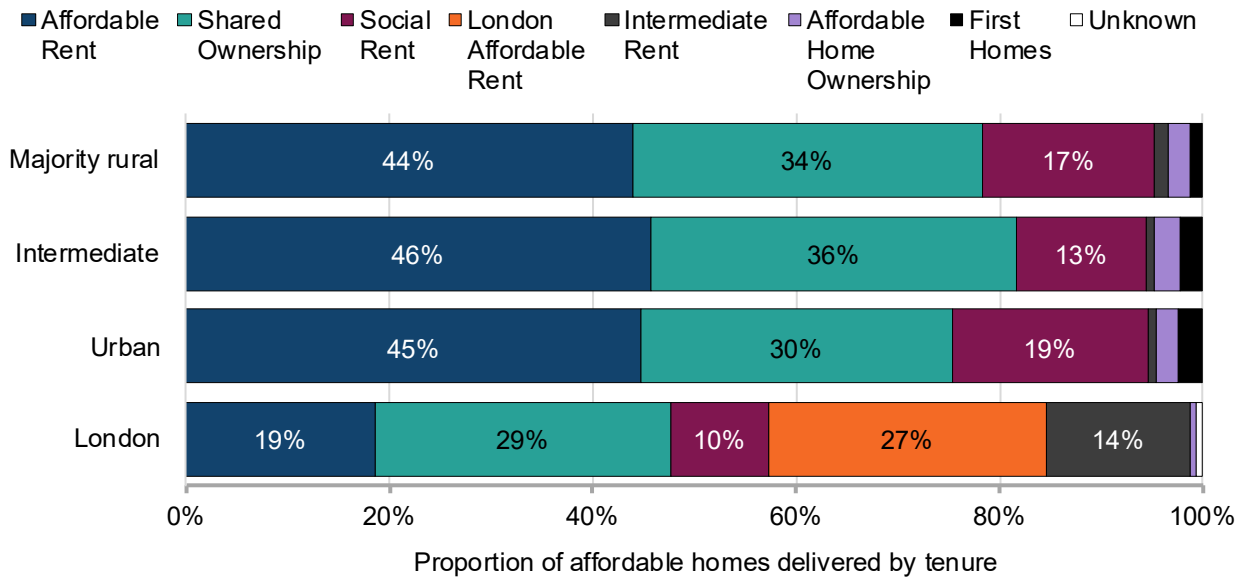
The bar chart in Figure B-7 can be described as follows:

- Across England, Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership were typically the two most common tenures for affordable home delivery in year ending March 2023 and accounted for more than 3 in every 4 homes delivered.
- In majority rural authorities, Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership represented 44% and 34%, respectively. In intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, the proportions represented were slightly higher, with 46% for Affordable Rent and 36% for shared ownership. In urban authorities outside of London, 45% of affordable homes delivered were for Affordable Rent, whilst the proportion for Shared Ownership was 30%. In London, 19% of affordable housing delivery was for Affordable Rent, and 29% was for Shared Ownership.
- Outside of London, Social Rent represented the next largest proportion of affordable housing delivery in year ending March 2023. In majority rural authorities, Social Rent represented 17%; this was higher than in intermediate authorities (13%), but lower than in urban authorities (19%). In London, Social Rent only represented 10% of affordable housing delivery in year ending March 2023, preceded by London Affordable Rent (27%) and Intermediate Rent (14%).

- All other tenures each represented less than 5% of affordable housing delivery for each local authority classification. First Homes represented 1% of delivery in majority rural authorities, and 2% each in intermediate or urban authorities.

Figure B-7: Bar chart showing the proportion of affordable homes delivered in year ending March 2023, by tenure and 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England (Note B-2, Note B-3, Note B-4, Note B-5)

'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Urban' excludes London. The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the stacked bars. "London Affordable Rent" only applies to London and therefore does not feature in other stacks of bars. Proportions smaller than 5% have not been labelled on the chart.



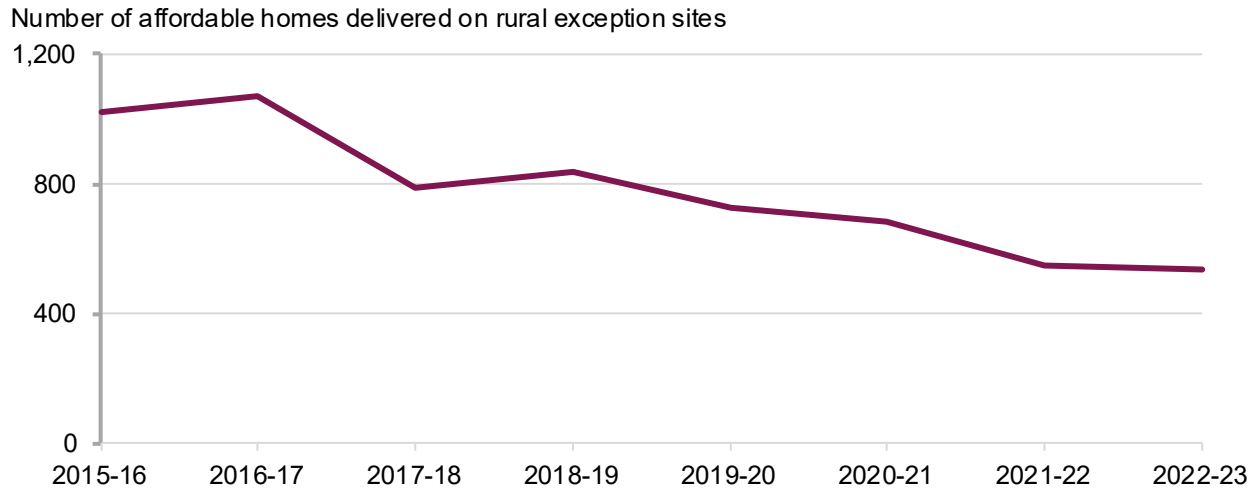
Rural exception sites

Rural exception sites are a mechanism for providing affordable housing in rural areas where it might not otherwise be permitted under standard planning rules. These sites are small plots of land, often on the edge of settlements, that can be developed to build affordable homes for local people. The key principle is that development is allowed on these sites, even if it deviates from normal planning guidelines, as long as the homes are affordable and targeted at local residents with a strong need. Intermediate (rural or urban) and urban local authorities can include rural settlements and hence rural exception sites.

The line chart in Figure B-9 shows the number of affordable homes delivered on all rural exception sites between 2015/16 and 2022/23.

The number of affordable homes delivered on all rural exception sites decreased by nearly 50% between year ending March 2016 (1,020 homes) and year ending March 2023 (530 homes); this was the lowest number of homes delivered across the period. The highest number of affordable homes delivered on rural exception sites per year was in year ending March 2017, where there were 1,070 homes delivered.

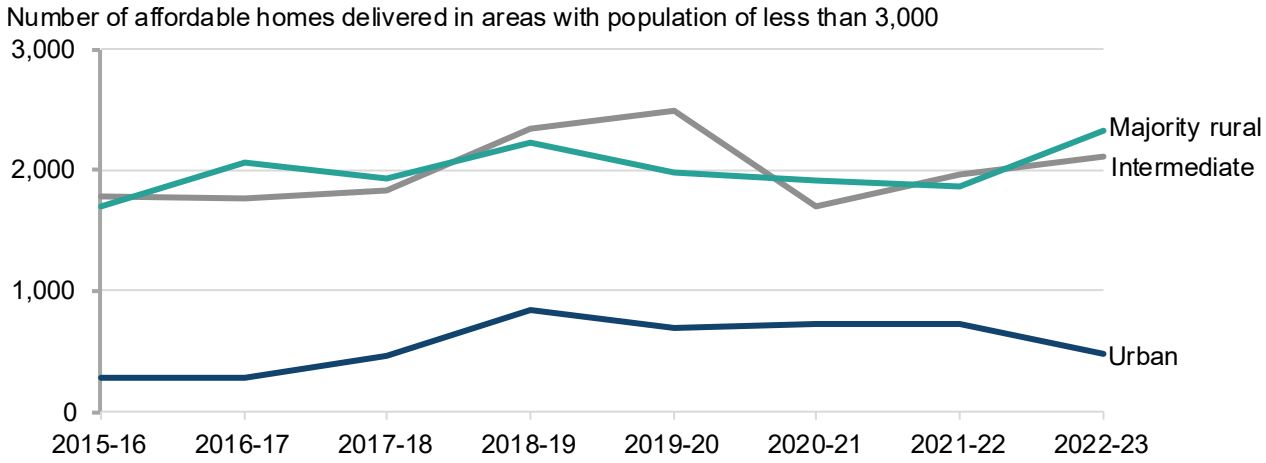
Figure B-8: Line chart showing the number of affordable homes delivered on rural exception sites in England, 2015/16 to 2022/23 (Note B-2, Note B-4)
The chart represents all areas in England, as there will be rural settlements within urban authorities. However, majority rural authorities will represent the majority of the values shown.



Areas with a population of less than 3,000

For settlements with populations of 3,000 or less there are specific regulations and mechanisms in place to enable the provision of affordable housing. The line chart in Figure B-8 shows the number of affordable homes delivered in areas with a population of less than 3,000, by 2021 local authority rural-urban classification, between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023.

Figure B-9: Line chart showing the number of affordable homes delivered in areas with population of less than 3,000, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2023 (Note B-2, Note B-3, Note B-4)
'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Urban' excludes London.



Homes England and the Greater London Authority

Homes England is responsible for delivery of affordable housing in England, except for in London, where it is the responsibility of the Greater London Authority.

Table B-6 shows the number of affordable homes delivered via funding from Homes England (or, in the case of London, from the Greater London Authority) in year ending March 2023. A full time series since year ending March 2016 can be found in the supplementary data tables.

Table B-6 can be described as follows:

- In year ending March 2023, there were 2,700 affordable homes delivered via Homes England funding in majority rural authorities; this was equivalent to 1.1 homes delivered via Homes England funding per 1,000 households.
- In intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, there were nearly twice as many affordable homes delivered (5,200 homes) compared to majority rural authorities; however, as there more than double the number of households, the rate of delivery was lower (0.9 homes delivered via Homes England funding per 1,000 households).
- In urban authorities outside of London, there were 11,800 affordable homes delivered via Homes England funding; this was equivalent to 1.0 homes delivered per 1,000 households, indicating a lower delivery rate than in majority rural authorities.
- In London, there were 6,600 affordable homes delivered via Greater London Authority funding in year ending March 2023; this was equivalent to 1.8 homes delivered per 1,000 households. Table B-6: Number of affordable homes delivered via Homes England (HE) or Greater London Authority (GLA) funding in year ending March 2023, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England (Note B-2, Note B-3, Note B-4)

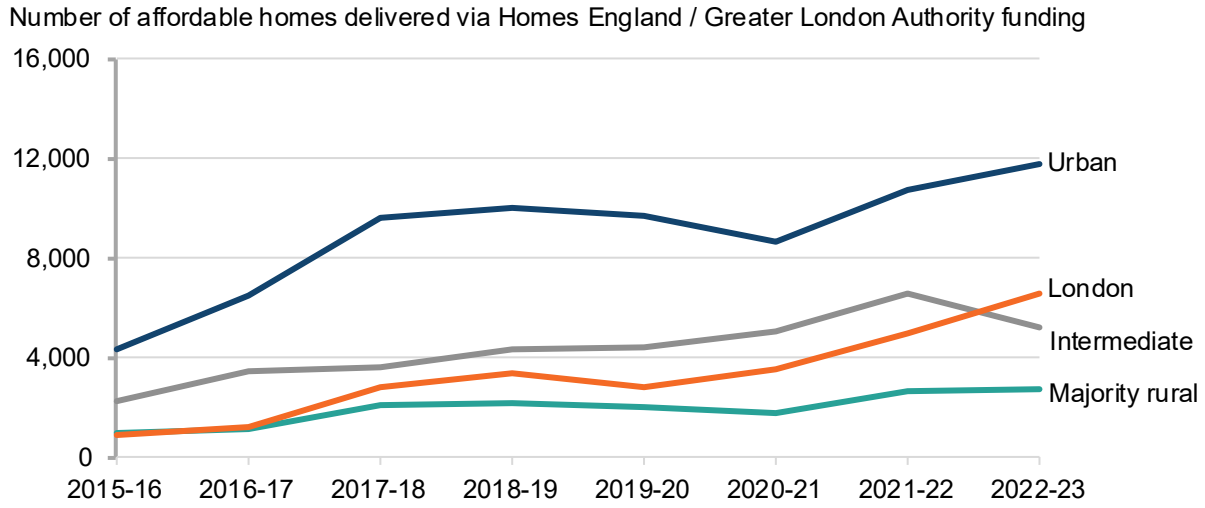
Affordable home delivery via HE/GLA funding has been rounded to the nearest 100 homes. ‘Intermediate’ represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities.

Rural-Urban Classification 2021	Number of affordable homes delivered via HE/GLA funding
Majority rural	2,700
Intermediate	5,200
Urban (excluding London)	11,800
London	6,600
England	**26,300**

In majority rural authorities where the majority of the population resided further from a major town or city, there were 1,200 affordable homes delivered via Homes England funding in year ending March 2023. The delivery rate in these authorities was marginally lower than in majority rural authorities where the majority of the population resided nearer to a major town or city, where 1,500 affordable homes were delivered via Homes England funding.

The line chart in Figure B-10 shows the number of affordable homes delivered via Homes England (HE) or Greater London Authority (GLA) funding between 2015/16 and 2022/23.

Figure B-10: Line chart showing the number of affordable homes delivered via Homes England/Greater London Authority funding between 2015/16 and 2022/23, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England (Note B-2, Note B-3, Note B-4)
'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Urban' excludes London.



The chart can be described as follows:

- Across England, all classifications of authorities saw overall proportional increases in the number of affordable homes delivered via HE/GLA funding between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2022. Except for intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, all local authorities saw continual increases in year ending March 2023.
- Majority rural authorities consistently had the lowest number of affordable homes delivered via HE/GLA funding between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023, except for at the start of the series where there were similar numbers delivered in London until year ending March 2017.
- Urban authorities outside of London had the highest number of affordable homes delivered via HE/GLA funding between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023.
- In majority rural authorities, there were 2,700 affordable homes delivered via Homes England funding in year ending March 2023; this compares to 1,000 affordable homes delivered in year ending March 2016.
- In intermediate authorities, there were 5,200 affordable homes delivered via Homes England funding in year ending March 2023. This was less than the previous year (6,600 affordable homes). In comparison, there were 2,300 affordable homes delivered via Homes England funding in intermediate authorities in year ending March 2016.
- In urban authorities outside of London, there were 11,800 affordable homes delivered via Homes England funding in year ending March 2023; this compares to 4,300 affordable homes delivered in year ending March 2016.

In London, there were 6,600 affordable homes delivered via Greater London Authority funding in year ending March 2023; this compares to 900 affordable homes delivered in year ending March 2016.

Section 106 (S106) agreements

A Section 106 agreement is a legally binding contract entered into by a local planning authority and a property developer under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 under which the developer agrees to provide defined facilities, such as affordable housing, as part of the proposed development.

Table B-7 shows the number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements in year ending March 2023. It can be described as follows:

- In year ending March 2023, there were 5,300 affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements in majority rural authorities; this was equivalent to 2.1 homes per 1,000 households, which was the highest rate of delivery of all local authority classifications in England. This was largely driven by the particularly high delivery rate in majority rural authorities where the majority of the population resided nearer to a major town or city (4,000 homes; equivalent to 2.9 homes per 1,000 households).
- In intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, there was nearly double the number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements (9,900 homes) compared to majority rural authorities; however, the delivery rate was lower, at 1.7 homes per 1,000 households.
- In urban authorities outside of London, there were 7,800 affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements in year ending March 2023; this was equivalent to 0.7 homes per 1,000 households, which was the lowest rate of delivery all local authority classifications in England.
- In London, there were a similar number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements (7,300 homes) to urban authorities outside of London. The delivery rate in London was similar to, but still marginally lower than, that in majority rural authorities (2.0 homes per 1,000 households).

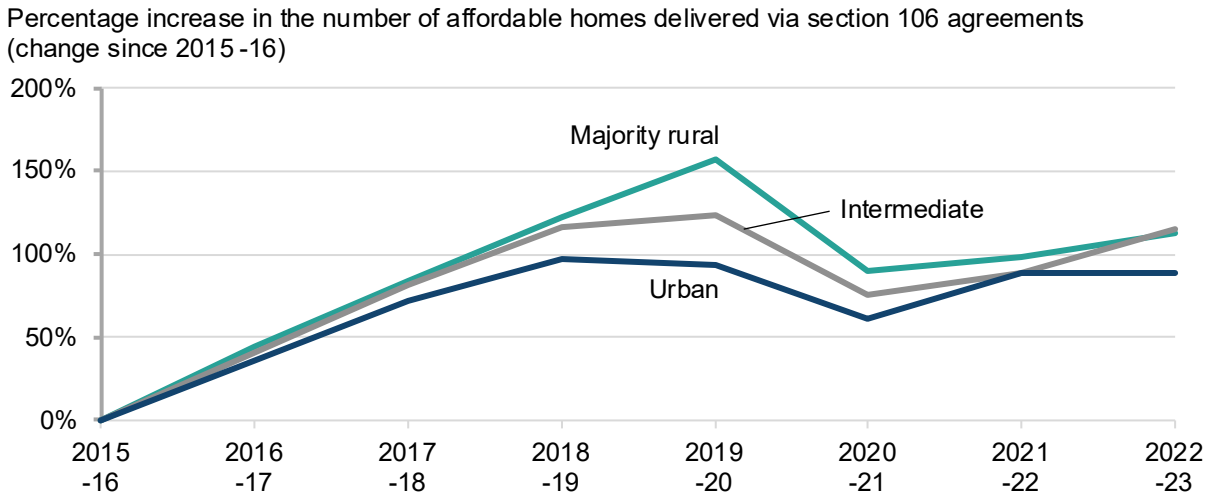
Table B-7: Number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 (s106) agreements in year ending March 2023, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England (Note B-2, Note B-3, Note B-4)

Affordable home delivery via s106 agreements has been rounded to the nearest 100 homes. 'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities.

Rural-Urban Classification 2021	Number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements	Number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements per 1,000 households
Majority rural	5,300	2.1
Intermediate	9,900	1.7
Urban (excluding London)	7,800	0.7
London	7,300	2.0
England	**30,200**	**1.3**

The line chart in Figure B-11 provides the index of change in the number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023. In this index of change chart, the number of affordable homes delivered in each given year has been divided by the number of affordable homes delivered in year ending March 2016.

Figure B-11: Line chart showing the percentage increases in the number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements between 2015/16 and 2022/23, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England (Note B-2, Note B-3, Note B-4)
'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Urban' excludes London. London has been excluded from the chart.



The line chart in Figure B-11 can be described as follows:

- Across England, all classifications of authorities saw overall proportional increases in the number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023.
- Between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023, majority rural authorities generally had the greatest proportional increases in the number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements compared to other local authority classifications in England.
- In majority rural and intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, the greatest proportional increase in the number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements since year ending March 2016 was in year ending March 2020. In majority rural authorities, the rate of delivery had increased by 157% across this period, from 2,500 homes to 6,400 homes being delivered via Section 106 agreements. In intermediate authorities, the rate of delivery had increased by 123%, from 4,600 homes in year ending March 2016 to 10,300 homes in year ending March 2020.
- In urban authorities outside of London, the greatest proportional increase in the number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements since year ending March 2016 (4,100 homes) was in year ending March 2019 (8,100 homes), where the rate of delivery had increased by 97%.
- In year ending March 2023, there were 113% more affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements than in year ending March 2016 in majority rural authorities. In intermediate authorities, the number of affordable homes delivered had increased by 115% between year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2023; this was higher than in majority rural authorities. Across the same period, the number of affordable homes delivered via Section 106 agreements increased by 88% in urban authorities outside of London; this was lower than in majority rural authorities.

Housing stock: additions and affordable housing - explanatory notes

- **Note B-1**

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

- **Note B-2**

Values are rounded to the nearest 10 dwellings unless otherwise stated. Values presented for the latest year are provisional and subject to revision.

- **Note B-3**

For the relative access categories, 'nearer to a major town or city' is defined as being within a 30-minute drive of a major town or city. Conversely 'further from a major town or city' is defined as being more than a 30-minute drive by car from a major town or city (built-up area with a population of at least 75,000 residents). More information regarding the 2021 Census-based rural-urban classification, including detailed data tables, can be found via: 2021 Rural Urban Classification - Office for National Statistics

- **Note B-4**

Affordable housing is defined as Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following: (a) Affordable housing for rent; (b) Starter homes; (c) Discounted market sales housing; or (d) Other affordable routes to home ownership. Definitions for these terms can be found via Housing statistics and English Housing Survey glossary - A to Z - GOV.UK.

- **Note B-5**

Affordable homes can be delivered via:

- **Affordable home ownership:** Affordable housing provided for sale. It includes relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent).
- **Affordable rent:** A form of social housing. Affordable rented homes are let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of up to 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).
- **London affordable rent:** London affordable rent is a tenure of affordable housing available in London by the Greater London Authority. The landlord of these homes must be registered with the Regulator of Social Housing.
- **First homes:** First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of ‘affordable housing’ for planning purposes. Specifically, First Homes are discounted market sale units which: (a) must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value; (b) are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria; (c) on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and, (d) after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London).
- **Intermediate rent:** Sub-market rent where the rent must not exceed 80% of the current market rate (inclusive of service charge). This can include schemes with specific eligibility criteria, the reduced rent is an opportunity for the tenant to save towards a house purchasing deposit.
- **Shared ownership:** An affordable housing scheme where the purchaser pays for an initial share of between 25% and 75% of the home’s value with the option to increase their ownership if they later choose and can afford to do so. The registered provider owns the remaining share, and rent is paid on the landlord’s share.

- **Social rent:** Affordable housing that is rented at social housing rents, usually owned and managed by local authorities and private registered providers, for which target rents are determined through the national rent regime.

Further information: Housing statistics and English Housing Survey glossary - A to Z - GOV.UK.

- **Note B-6**

Total dwelling stock source: Live tables on dwelling stock (including vacants) - GOV.UK

Housebuilding completions source: Live tables on housing supply: indicators of new supply - GOV.UK

Council housing source: Local Authority Housing Statistics open data - GOV.UK

Affordable housing source: Live tables on affordable housing supply - GOV.UK

Household estimate source: Household projections for England - Office for National Statistics

- **Note B-7**

Data for Total dwelling stock are calendar years; all other subsections are financial years (e.g. 2022/23 refers to the year ending March 2023).

C. Housing costs: purchases and rentals

Average sale prices of residential properties are higher in Rural areas than in Urban areas, however average rent prices are lower.

Housing costs: purchases and rentals - key findings

Sales of detached properties were more common in Rural areas than in Urban areas

- 39% of homes sold in Predominantly Rural areas in 2021/22 were detached; 27% were semi-detached, 24% were terraced, and 10% were flats/maisonettes.
- In Predominantly Urban areas, semi-detached were the most commonly sold property type (32%); 30% of sales were terraced, 21% were detached, and 17% were flats/maisonettes.

There was little difference in property sale prices between Rural and Urban areas

- In March 2024, house purchase prices were similar for detached properties in Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas outside of London.
- House prices were up to 5% higher in Predominantly Rural areas compared to Predominantly Urban areas outside of London for semi-detached and terraced properties, as well as flats/maisonettes.

Monthly rent prices were slightly lower in Rural areas than Urban areas

- In March 2024, detached properties in Predominantly Rural areas were around 10% cheaper to rent compared to Predominantly Urban areas outside of London.
- Semi-detached and terraced properties, as well as flats/maisonettes, were around 12% cheaper to rent in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London.

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 between areas, as well as the number of sales.

In Predominantly Rural areas, sales were distributed as follows: 37% detached; 28% semi-detached; 25% terraced; 10% flats/maisonettes. In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, sales were distributed as follows: 20% detached; 33% semi-detached; 32% terraced; 16% flats/maisonettes. The most common sales in Predominantly Rural areas are therefore detached properties, whilst flats are the least common. In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, sales of semi-detached and terraced properties were the most common.

When buying a property, **detached** homes had a higher average purchase price than any other dwelling type for both Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas outside of London (£455,700 and £454,800 respectively). This was followed by **semi-detached** properties, for which average purchase prices were higher in Predominantly Rural areas (£292,600) than in Predominantly Urban areas (£285,900). **Terraced** properties had the second lowest average purchase price of all dwelling types; average prices were higher in Predominantly Rural areas (£234,000) than in Predominantly Urban areas (£224,200). **Flats/maisonettes** had a lower average purchase price than any other dwelling type; in Predominantly Rural areas, the average price paid was £155,600, compared to £157,800 in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London.

When renting a property, **detached** homes had a higher average rent price than any other dwelling type for both Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas outside of London (£1,206 and £1,326 per month, respectively). This was followed by **semi-detached** properties, for which average rent prices were lower in Predominantly Rural areas (£936) than in Predominantly Urban areas (£1,045). **Terraced** properties had the second lowest average rent price of all dwelling types; average prices were lower in Predominantly Rural areas (£856) than in Predominantly Urban areas (£962). **Flats/maisonettes** had a lower average rent price than any other dwelling type; in Predominantly Rural areas, the average monthly rent was £696, compared to £782 in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London.

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:

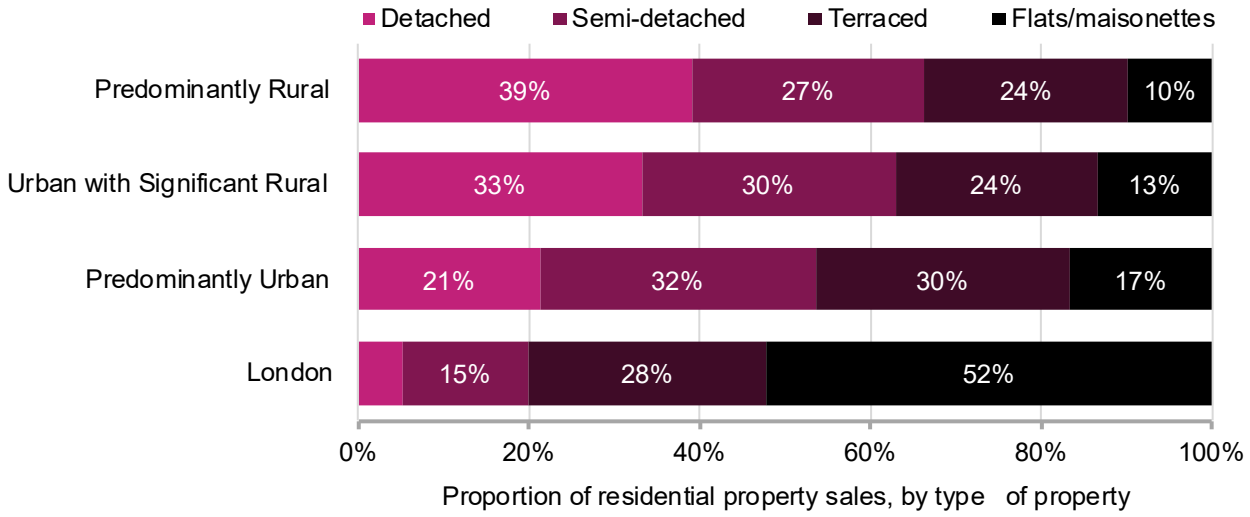
- **We have changed the data source from** HPSSA dataset 3 to Private rent and house prices - ONS. We have chosen this data source as it is one that the ONS will continue to publish monthly, and therefore we should not need to revise our methodology again; this also means we may be able to track changes over time in future publications.
- **We are no longer analysing changes over time**. Instead, we have opted to focus on the difference in prices by dwelling type. This helps to reduce the potential for average prices to have varied between areas purely due to sales compositions. For example, in one area there might be more detached homes sold and in another there might be more flats/maisonettes sold.
- **We have changed the geography used**; we will now use Local Authorities (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 Local Authorities are larger than MSOAs, a larger proportion of the dataset can be used, therefore maximising the output we can provide.
- **We have changed our average**; previous analysis focused on the arithmetic mean but now we are using the geometric mean as the latter is less sensitive to extreme property values (Note C-1).
- **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.
- **We have added in analysis of the number of residential property sales**; this was previously covered under the “Residential Housing Transactions” subsection from Section B. Due to the development of the housing stock statistics, including a focus on affordable housing, we have relocated these property sale statistics to a more suitable location; this also makes the analysis easier for users to find, as most relevant information will be within the same section.

Number of property sales

The ONS publishes housing affordability statistics, within which they include the number of residential property sales (Note C-12); the rest of this data is analysed in Section D. After every house sale, the transaction must be registered with HM Land Registry. The number of sales by dwelling type may differ due to the nature of the location; for example, a city is more likely to have a higher number of sales of terraced properties or flats/maisonettes than detached properties, whereas the opposite is true for a village.

The bar chart in Figure C-1 shows the proportion of residential property sales, by dwelling type and settlement type, in year ending March 2022; whilst more recent data are available, it is provisional due to the property registration processing time (Note C-11). The property sales analysis presented within this publication therefore focuses on most robust data, but technically not the latest.

Figure C-1: Bar chart showing the proportion of property sales, by dwelling type and Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification, year ending March 2022 (Note C-3, Note C-6)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the stacked bars. Bars have not been labelled where there were 5% or fewer sales. “Predominantly Urban” excludes London.



The more Rural the area, the higher the proportion of **detached** property sales. In Predominantly Rural areas, 39% of property sales were for detached properties in year ending March 2022; this was higher than in any other settlement type. Comparatively, in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, 21% of sales were for detached properties – 18 percentage points less than in Predominantly Rural areas. In London, just 5% of sales were for detached properties; this was considerably lower than any other settlement type.

There was little difference in the proportions of **semi-detached** property sales by rurality, however proportions were slightly lower in Predominantly Rural areas (27%) than in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London (32%). In London, 15% of sales were for semi-detached properties.

There was little difference in the proportions of **terraced** property sales by rurality, however proportions were slightly lower in Predominantly Rural areas (24%) than in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London (30%). In London, 28% of sales were for terraced properties.

The more Rural the area, the lower the proportion of sales of **flats/maisonettes**. In Predominantly Rural areas, 10% of sales were for flats/maisonettes in year ending March 2022. In comparison,

17% of sales in Predominantly Urban areas were for flats/maisonettes. In London, 52% of property sales were for flats/maisonettes; this is considerably higher than any other settlement type.

The number or proportion of house sales may not reflect the overall number of dwellings within each property type. This is because the rental market is not represented, and also there will be people who do not sell their home for many years. Data on total dwelling stock can be found in Section B.

Table C-1 shows the number of residential property sales, by dwelling type and settlement type, in year ending March 2022; this provides context for Figure C-1. Caution is advised when comparing absolute values between settlement types.

Table C-1: Number of property sales, by dwelling type and Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification, year ending March 2022 (Note C-3, Note C-6)
Values have been rounded to the nearest 100 sales and therefore may not sum to totals.
"Predominantly Urban" excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flats/ maisonettes	All properties
Predominantly Rural	97,200	67,600	59,400	24,300	**248,500**
Urban with Significant Rural	47,400	42,400	33,900	19,100	**142,800**
Predominantly Urban	94,400	142,500	132,300	73,500	**442,600**
London	5,200	15,300	28,700	53,700	**103,000**
England	**244,100**	**267,800**	**254,300**	**170,600**	**936,800**

The proportions shown in Figure C-1 are generated using the values in Table C-1. For example:

- There were 248,500 properties sold in Predominantly Rural areas in year ending March 2022. 97,200 of these properties were detached (39%), whilst 67,600 were semi-detached (27%). 59,400 properties were terraced (24%), and 24,300 were flats/maisonettes (10%).
- There were 442,600 properties sold in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London in year ending March 2022. 94,400 of these properties were detached (21%), whilst 142,300 were semi-detached (32%). 132,300 properties were terraced (30%), and the remaining 53,700 were flats/maisonettes (17%).

Generally, it is not advisable to compare absolute numbers of property sales between settlement types. For example, there were similar numbers of detached properties sold in Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, however these values represent vastly different proportions of the total dwelling stock within their respective areas.

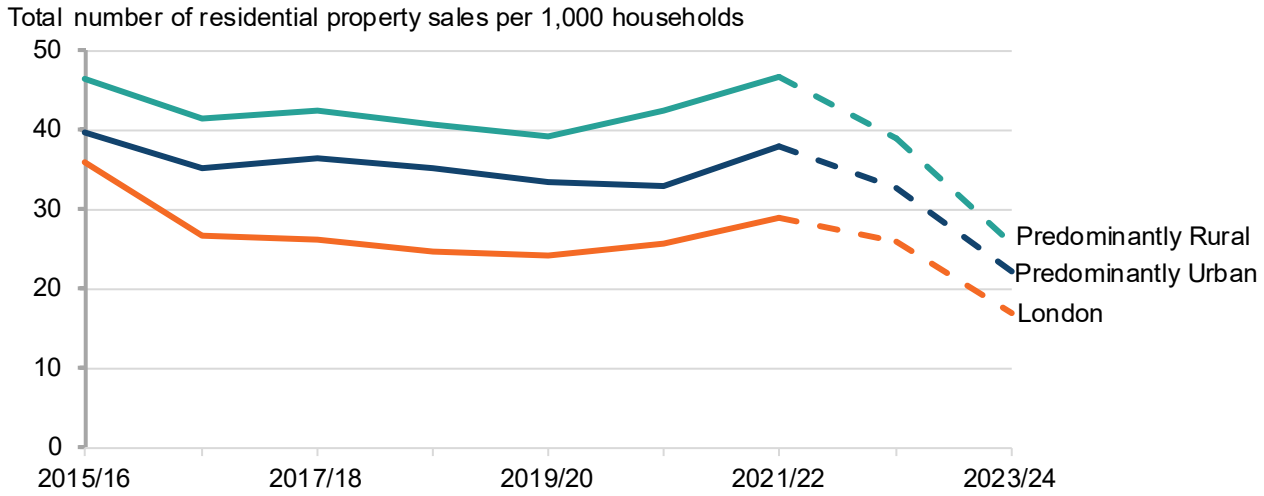
By apportioning the number of property sales to the number of households, it is possible to make comparisons between settlement types over time. The line chart in Figure C-2 shows the number of residential property sales (for all dwelling types) per 1,000 households, by settlement type, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2024.

The time series shown in Figure C-2 can be described as follows:

- Between 2015/16 and 2023/24, there were consistently more residential property sales per 1,000 households in Predominantly Rural areas than in any other settlement type.
- Between 2015/16 and 2016/17, the rate of property sales decreased in both Predominantly Rural areas (from 46.4 to 41.4 sales per 1,000 households) and Predominantly Urban areas outside of London (from 39.7 to 35.0 sales per 1,000 households). The decrease was more significant in London (from 36.0 to 26.7 sales per 1,000 households).
- In Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas, the number of residential property sales per 1,000 households increased slightly in 2017/18. This was followed by decreases in all settlement types to 2019/20.
- Between 2019/20 and 2021/22, the rate of residential property sales increased in Predominantly Rural areas (from 39.1 to 46.6 sales per 1,000 households) and in London (from 24.2 to 28.9 sales per 1,000 households). In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, the rate of property sales decreased further between 2019/20 and 2020/21, but increased between 2020/21 and 2021/22 (from 33.0 to 38.0 sales per 1,000 households).
- Between 2021/22 and 2023/24, trends are depicted with a dashed line due to the fact that they are subject to revisions caused by registration delays.

Figure C-2: Line chart showing the total number of property sales for all dwelling types, per 1,000 households, by Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2024 (Note C-3)

Totals for residential transactions in more recent years are provisional (Note C-11), and have been indicated with a dashed line where revisions may occur. “Predominantly Urban” excludes London.



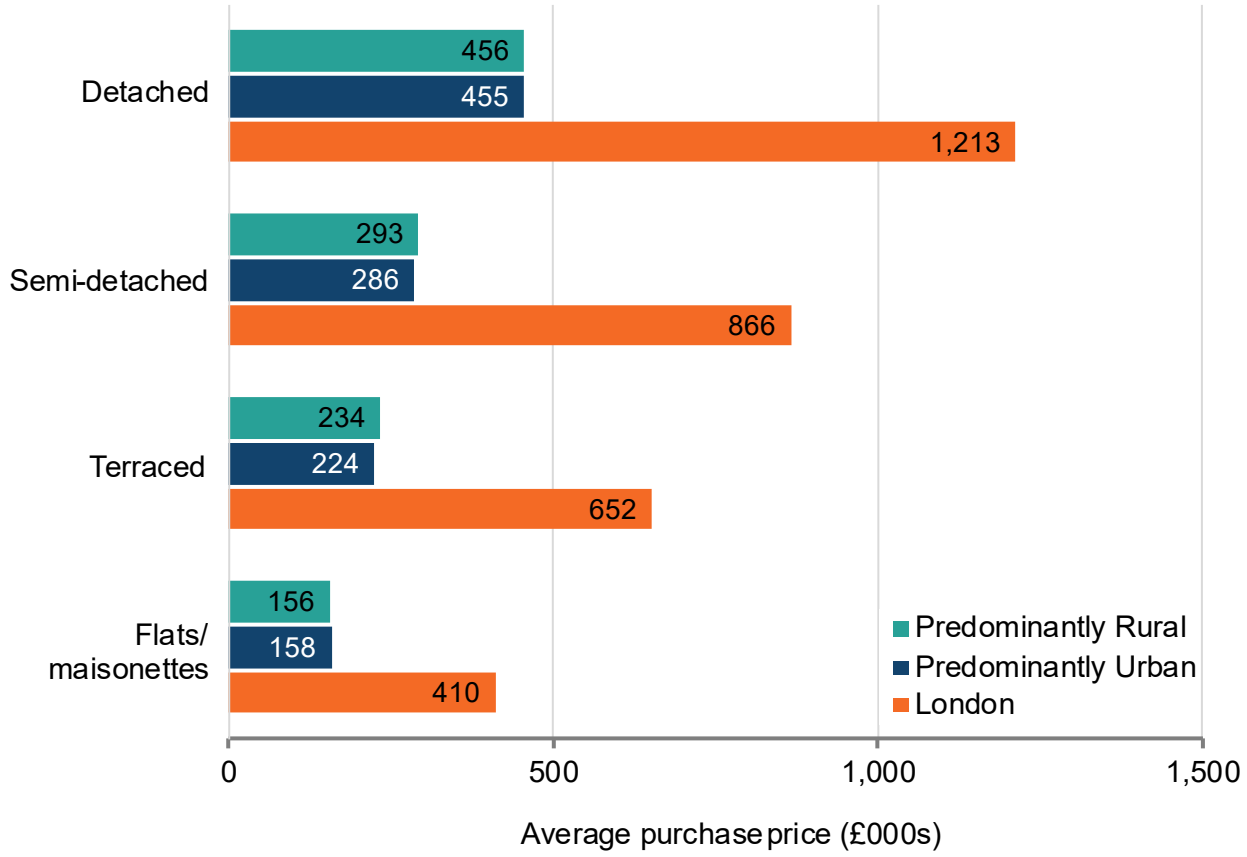
Average house purchase prices

Monthly residential property sale prices are reported by the ONS (Note C-4). Average 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 average price paid for properties sold by dwelling type and settlement type. Detached properties were typically the most expensive in March 2024, whilst flats/maisonettes were typically the cheapest.

Figure C-3: Bar chart showing the average property purchase price (£000s), by dwelling type and broad Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification, in England, March 2024 (Note C-1, Note C-3, Note C-5)

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



In March 2024, the average price paid for **detached** properties was similar in Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas outside of London (£455,700 and £454,800, respectively). The average price paid for detached properties in London was nearly three times higher than any other settlement type in England (£1,212,900).

The average purchase price for **semi-detached** properties was around £6,700 - or 2.4% - higher in Predominantly Rural areas (£292,600) compared to Predominantly Urban areas outside of London (£285,900). The average price paid for semi-detached properties in London was nearly three times higher than in any other settlement type (£866,100).

The average price paid for **terraced** properties was around £9,800 - or 4.4% - higher in Predominantly Rural areas (£234,000) than in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London

(£224,200). In London, the average price paid for terraced properties was nearly three times higher than in any other settlement type (£651,700).

The average price paid for **flats or maisonettes** was around £2,200 (or 1.4%) lower in Predominantly Rural areas (£155,600) than in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London (£157,800). The average price paid for flats or maisonettes in London was nearly three times higher than in any other settlement type (£410,300). This means that the average price paid for a flat/maisonette in London was higher in March 2024 than for semi-detached or terraced properties, and nearly as high as detached properties, in other areas of England.

Table C-2 shows the average property purchase price by detailed Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification in March 2024. The average price paid for properties in Mainly Rural areas was typically higher than in Largely Rural areas in March 2024. Urban with Significant Rural areas generally had the highest average price paid, whilst Urban Conurbation areas outside of London typically had the lowest.

Table C-2: Average property purchase price (£), by dwelling type and Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification, March 2024 (Note C-1, Note C-3, Note C-6, Note C-9)
"Urban Conurbation" excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flats/ maisonettes	All properties
Mainly Rural	482,600	313,000	252,400	166,100	**331,600**
Largely Rural	443,800	283,600	225,800	150,900	**289,700**
Urban with Significant Rural	548,400	335,600	265,100	178,500	**331,400**
Urban with City and Town	490,700	313,600	249,500	169,300	**281,700**
Urban Conurbation	416,100	256,100	197,000	145,300	**232,800**
London	1,212,900	866,100	651,700	410,300	**522,000**
England	**465,200**	**289,700**	**244,300**	**247,300**	**299,300**

Some areas of the country tend to have higher average property purchase prices than others, regardless of the settlement type. Table C-3 shows the Local Authorities with the **highest** average property purchase prices in March 2024, by property type and broad Rural-Urban Classification. It can be described as follows:

- For detached properties, "Sevenoaks" in Kent had the highest average purchase price out of all Predominantly Rural Local Authorities (£876,700). "Waverley" in Surrey had the highest average purchase price for semi-detached properties (£528,800) and flats/maisonettes (£266,200). "Winchester" in Hampshire had the highest average purchase price for terraced properties in Predominantly Rural areas (£413,500).
- For detached properties and flats/maisonettes, "Elmbridge" in Surrey had the highest average purchase prices out of all Predominantly Urban Local Authorities outside of London (£1,255,300 and £336,700, respectively). For semi-detached and terraced properties, "St Albans" in Hertfordshire had the highest average purchase prices in Predominantly Urban areas (£697,100 and £515,800, respectively).

- Outside of London, all of the Local Authorities with the highest average property purchase prices were in and around the South East of England. These areas tend to be highly desirable due to their proximity to London, allowing even Rural areas to be well connected.

Table C-3: Local Authorities with the highest average property purchase price (£), by broad Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type, March 2024 (Note C-1, Note C-3)
"Predominantly Urban" excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Property type	Local Authority	Average price
Predominantly Rural	Detached	Sevenoaks	876,700
	Semi-detached	Waverley	528,800
	Terraced	Winchester	413,500
	Flats	Waverley	266,200
Predominantly Urban	Detached	Elmbridge	1,355,300
	Semi-detached	St Albans	697,100
	Terraced	St Albans	515,800
	Flats	Elmbridge	336,700

Table C-4 shows the Local Authorities with the **lowest** average property purchase prices in March 2024, by property type and broad Rural-Urban Classification. It can be described as follows:

- For all dwelling types, "County Durham" had the lowest average property purchase prices out of all Predominantly Rural Local Authorities; here, average prices ranged from £80,100 (for flats/maisonettes) to £217,200 (for detached properties).
- For most dwelling types, "Burnley" in Lancashire had the lowest average property purchase price out of all Predominantly Urban Local Authorities outside of London; here, average prices ranged from £87,100 (for terraced properties) to £199,800 (for detached properties). "Hartlepool" in County Durham had the lowest average purchase price for flats/maisonettes in Predominantly Urban areas, at £67,100.
- Outside of London, all of the Local Authorities with the lowest average property purchase prices were in the North of England. These areas tend to have a large housing supply, in part due to the many homes built for industrial workers in the past.

Table C-4: Local Authorities with the lowest average property purchase price (£), by broad Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type, March 2024 (Note C-1, Note C-3)
"Predominantly Urban" excludes London.

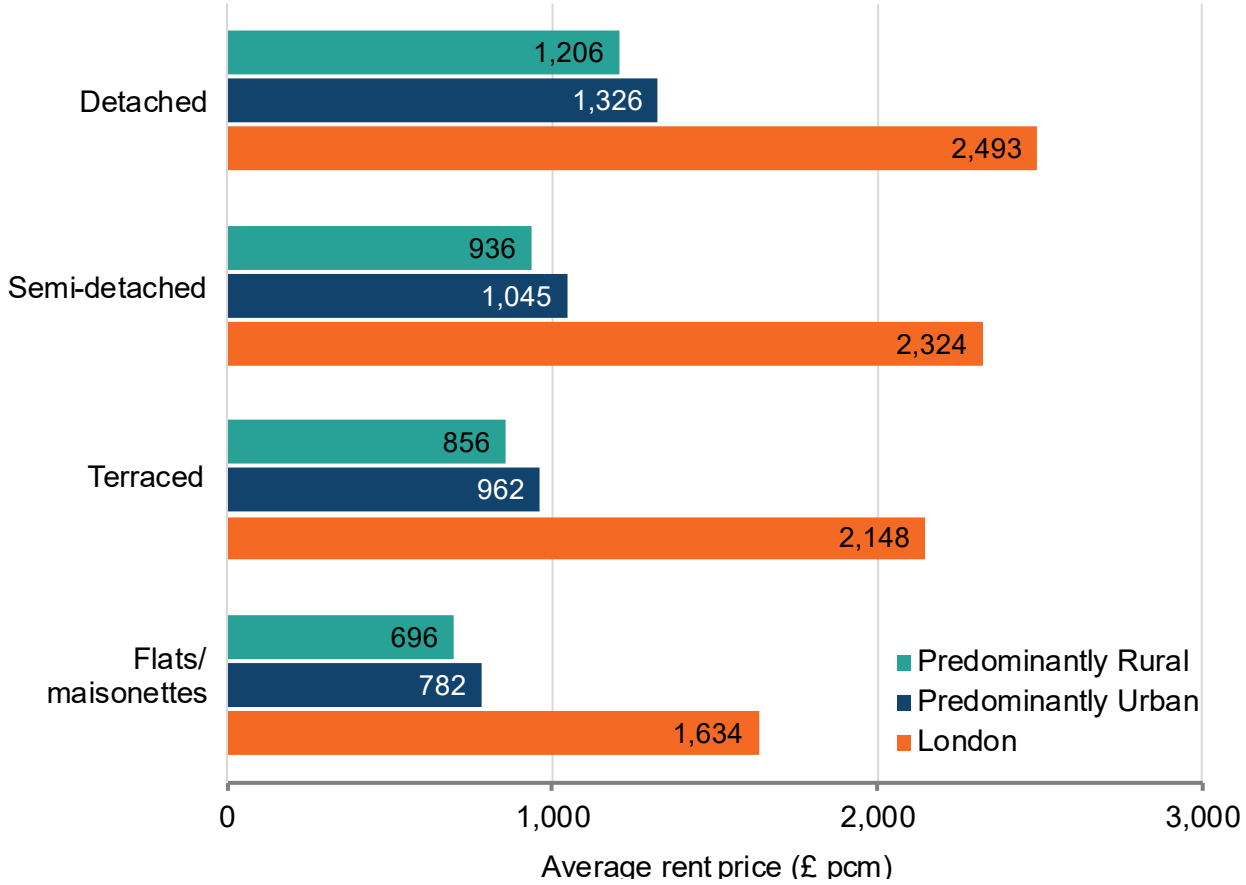
Rural-Urban Classification	Property type	Local Authority	Average price
Predominantly Rural	Detached	County Durham	217,200
	Semi-detached	County Durham	128,600
	Terraced	County Durham	105,200
	Flats	County Durham	80,100
Predominantly Urban	Detached	Burnley	199,800
	Semi-detached	Burnley	127,100
	Terraced	Burnley	87,100
	Flats	Hartlepool	67,100

Average 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. Average property rental 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-4 shows the average rent price for properties by dwelling type and settlement type. Detached properties were typically the most expensive in March 2024, whilst flats/maisonettes were typically the cheapest to rent.

Figure C-4: Bar chart showing average monthly rent price (£), by broad Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type, March 2024 (Note C-1, Note C-3, Note C-5)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the clusters of bars. "Predominantly Urban" excludes London. Prices are given as £ pcm (per calendar month).



In March 2024, for every dwelling type, average monthly rent prices were lower in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas, and prices in London were at least two times higher than anywhere else in England. This is detailed as follows:

- For **detached** properties, the average rent price was £1,206 in Predominantly Rural areas and £1,326 in Predominantly Urban areas. In London, the average rent price was £2,493.
- For **semi-detached** properties, the average rent price was £936 in Predominantly Rural areas and £1,045 in Predominantly Urban areas. In London, the average rent price was £2,324.
- For **terraced** properties, the average rent price was £856 in Predominantly Rural areas and £962 in Predominantly Urban areas. In London, the average rent price was £2,148.

- For **flats or maisonettes**, the average rent price was £696 in Predominantly Rural areas and £782 in Predominantly Urban areas. In London, the average rent price was £1,634.

Table C-5 shows the average monthly rent price by Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification in March 2024. The average rent price for properties in Mainly Rural (the most Rural) areas was typically higher than in Largely Rural areas in March 2024. Urban with City and Town areas generally had the highest average rent prices, whilst Largely Rural areas typically had the lowest.

Table C-5: Average monthly rent price (£), by detailed Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type, March 2024 (Note C-1, Note C-3, Note C-6, Note C-9)
"Urban Conurbation" excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flats/ maisonettes	All properties
Mainly Rural	1,237	970	888	722	**900**
Largely Rural	1,192	921	842	685	**854**
Urban with Significant Rural	1,443	1,104	1,011	825	**1,024**
Urban with City and Town	1,403	1,123	1,037	829	**1,032**
Urban Conurbation	1,243	961	881	732	**891**
London	2,493	2,324	2,148	1,634	**1,832**
England	**1,465**	**1,276**	**1,260**	**1,270**	**1,285**

Some areas of the country tend to have lower average monthly rent prices than others, regardless of the settlement type. Factors that contribute towards this include proximity to universities/higher student populations, as well as not having the supply to meet the demand.

Table C-6 shows the Local Authorities with the **highest** average monthly rent price in March 2024, by property type and broad Rural-Urban Classification.

Table C-6: Local Authorities with the highest average monthly rent price (£), by broad Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type, March 2024 (Note C-1, Note C-3)
"Predominantly Urban" excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Property type	Local Authority	Average rent price
Predominantly Rural	Detached	Sevenoaks	2,480
	Semi-detached	Sevenoaks	1,682
	Terraced	Sevenoaks	1,458
	Flats	Sevenoaks	1,292
Urban with Significant Rural	Detached	Epping Forest	2,197
	Semi-detached	Epping Forest	1,666
	Terraced	Bath and North East Somerset	1,650
	Flats	Epping Forest	1,204
Predominantly Urban	Detached	Elmbridge	2,572
	Semi-detached	City of Bristol	1,941
	Terraced	Brighton and Hove	1,904
	Flats	City of Bristol	1,389

Regardless of the type of property, “Sevenoaks” in Kent had the highest average monthly rent price out of all Predominantly Rural Local Authorities; here, average prices ranged from £1,292 (for flats/maisonettes) to £2,480 (for detached properties).

In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, “Elmbridge” in Surrey had the highest average monthly rent price for detached properties (£2,572). For semi-detached properties or flats/maisonettes, “City of Bristol” had the highest average rent price in Predominantly Urban areas (£1,941 and £1,389, respectively).

Outside of London, most of the Local Authorities with the highest average property purchase prices were in the South East. The exceptions to this are “City of Bristol” and “Bath and North East Somerset” in the South West of England. Average monthly rent prices for flats/maisonettes in the most expensive Local Authority in London were higher detached properties in the rest of England.

Table C-7 shows the Local Authorities with the **lowest** average monthly rent price in March 2024, by property type and broad Rural-Urban Classification.

Table C-7: Local Authorities with the lowest average monthly rent price (£), by broad Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type, March 2024 (Note C-1, Note C-3)
“Predominantly Urban” excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Property type	Local Authority	Average rent price
Predominantly Rural	Detached	East Lindsey	563
	Semi-detached	West Lindsey	481
	Terraced	Staffordshire Moorlands	440
	Flats	West Lindsey	359
Urban with Significant Rural	Detached	North Lincolnshire	613
	Semi-detached	Bolsover	470
	Terraced	Bolsover	440
	Flats	North Lincolnshire	355
Predominantly Urban	Detached	Stoke-on-Trent	591
	Semi-detached	Barnsley	479
	Terraced	Pendle	425
	Flats	Pendle	352

For detached properties, “East Lindsey” in Lincolnshire had the lowest average monthly rent price out of all Predominantly Rural Local Authorities in March 2024 (£563). For semi-detached properties or flats/maisonettes, “West Lindsey” in Lincolnshire had the lowest average rent price in Predominantly Rural areas (£481 and £359, respectively). “Staffordshire Moorlands” had the lowest average rent price for terraced properties in Predominantly Rural areas (£440).

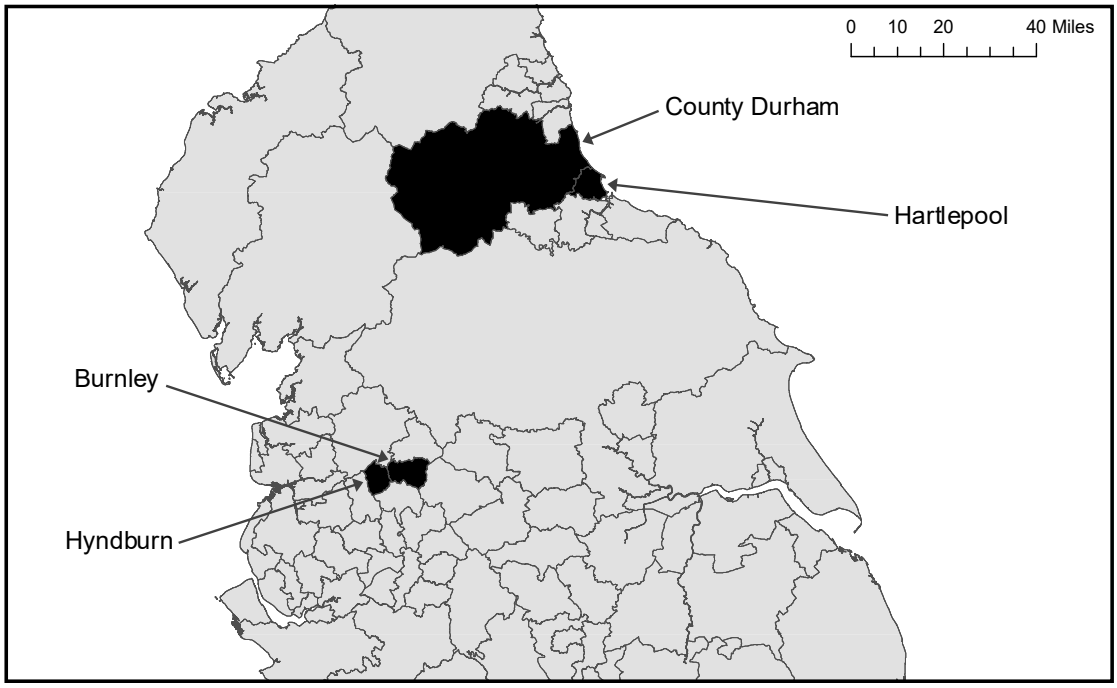
In Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, “Stoke-on-Trent” in Staffordshire had the lowest average monthly rent price for detached properties (£591), whilst “Barnsley” in South Yorkshire had the lowest average rent price for semi-detached properties (£479). “Pendle” in Lancashire had the lowest average rent price for terraced properties and flats/maisonettes in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London in March 2024 (£425 and £352, respectively).

Outside of London, all of the Local Authorities with the lowest average monthly rent prices were in the East Midlands, West Midlands, North West or Yorkshire and the Humber.

Highest and lowest average housing costs in England

Housing costs can vary for many reasons, such as housing supply/demand, buyer demographics, or perceptions of the local area. In some cases, the “cheapest” area to rent a property may not be the “cheapest” area to buy a property in. The map in Figure C-5 shows the Local Authorities with the lowest average house purchase prices or average rent prices in March 2024.

Figure C-5: Map showing the Local Authorities with the lowest average property purchase prices or rent prices in England, March 2024 (Note C-1, Note C-3)



“Burnley” had the lowest average house purchase price in England at £103,200. This is followed by “Hyndburn” at £123,000 and then “Hartlepool” at £127,600. Hartlepool also had the lowest average rent price in England, at £534 per month. Similarly, “Burnley” had one of the lowest average rent prices, at £535 per month. However, the next “cheapest” Local Authority to rent a property in was “County Durham”, at £543 per month. This shows that County Durham is “cheaper” to rent in than to buy a property in (relative to the rest of England), whilst the opposite is true for Hyndburn. All of these are Predominantly Urban Local Authorities in the North of England , except for “County Durham”, which is Predominantly Rural.

Local Authorities in London generally had the highest average housing costs in England. “Kensington and Chelsea” had both the highest average purchase price (£1,193,500) and average rent cost (£3,305 per month). This was followed by “City of Westminster” (£910,700 to buy; £2,950 per month to rent). “Richmond upon Thames” had the next highest average property purchase price in London (£745,900), whilst “Camden” had the next highest average rent price (£2,478 per month).

The map in Figure C-6 shows the Local Authorities outside of London with the highest average house purchase prices or average rent prices in March 2024.

Figure C-6: Map showing the Local Authorities with the highest average property purchase prices or rent prices outside of London, in England, March 2024 (Note C-1, Note C-3)

“Elmbridge” had the highest average house purchase price outside of London at £644,800. This is followed by “St Albans” (£575,800) and then “Three Rivers” (£553,100). “Elmbridge” also had one of the highest average rent prices outside of London, at £1,746 per month. This is followed by “Brighton and Hove”, at £1,723 per month. However, “City of Bristol” had the highest average rent price outside of London in March 2024, at £1,748 per month. All of these Local Authorities are Predominantly Urban and are in the South of England.

Housing costs: purchases and rentals explanatory notes

- **Note C-1**

Average prices in this section are based on the geometric mean, as opposed to the usual arithmetic mean. The arithmetic mean is sensitive to extreme property values and, as a result, the prices can be skewed upwards by high value property. The geometric mean is less sensitive to these values, although it continues to represent them in the calculation process.

Average 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.

- **Note C-2**

Purchase prices are shown rounded to the nearest £100. For quality and methodology information, see the Quality assurance of administrative data used in the Price Index of Private Rents - Office for National Statistics.

- **Note C-3**

Data are for 2023 Local Authorities; the corresponding Rural-Urban Classification of these Authorities can be found via 2011 Rural Urban Classification lookup tables for all geographies - GOV.UK.

- **Note C-4**

Source: Private rent and house prices, UK Statistical bulletins - Office for National Statistics.

- **Note C-5**

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.

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.

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. 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.

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. The ONS groups these two property types together.

- **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 average property purchase/rent prices for areas up to the Rural-Urban Classifications, population has been used to weight the data. Source: Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics.

- **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 (“City of London” and “Isles of Scilly”) has been suppressed where population numbers, or number of sales/rents, was small. These values are not included towards the settlement type totals, but are included within the England total.

- **Note C-10**

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

- **Note C-11**

The property registration process can take time, particularly for new build properties. Therefore, the statistics presented within this publication 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. For more information, see the House price statistics for small areas QMI - Office for National Statistics.

- **Note C-12**

Source: Residential property sales for administrative geographies - Office for National Statistics

D. House purchase affordability

Location has a bigger impact on house purchase affordability than rurality; homes are generally more affordable to buy in the North of England than the South, regardless of their settlement type.

House purchase affordability - key findings

There was little difference in house affordability between Rural and Urban areas

- In March 2024, average detached property purchase prices were around 14 times higher than earnings in Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas outside of London.
- Average purchase prices of semi-detached or terraced properties, as well as flats/maisonettes, were up to 9 times higher than earnings in Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas outside of London.

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

- In 2023/24, County Durham was the most affordable Rural area for both average buyers and first-time buyers/low earners.
- Burnley was the most affordable area outside of London for both average buyers and first-time buyers/low earners.
- Waverley and St Albans were the least affordable areas outside of London for both average buyers and first-time buyers/low earners.

Summary

Within this publication, house purchase affordability ratios are based on both median and lower quartile house prices and workplace-based earnings. Previously this section analysed rental affordability and additions to affordable housing; a summary of changes are given in the "Background information" section.

In terms of median house prices and workplace-based earnings, detached properties were the least affordable dwelling type and flats/maisonettes were the most affordable for all settlement types in England. The median price paid for **detached** properties in Predominantly Rural areas was 13.8 times higher than median earnings; this is marginally higher than in Predominantly Urban areas (13.6). The median price paid for **semi-detached** properties in either Predominantly Rural or Predominantly Urban areas was 8.9 times higher than median earnings. The median price paid for **terraced** properties in Predominantly Rural areas was 7.3 times higher than median earnings; this is similar to Predominantly Urban areas (7.2 times). The mean price paid for **flats/maisonettes** in either Predominantly Rural or Predominantly Urban areas was 4.9 times higher than median earnings.

In terms of lower quartile house prices and workplace-based earnings, detached properties were the least affordable dwelling type and flats/maisonettes were the most affordable for all settlement types in England. The lower quartile price paid for **detached** properties in Predominantly Rural areas was 14.2 times higher than lower quartile earnings; this is marginally lower than in Predominantly Urban areas (14.5). The lower quartile price paid for **semi-detached** properties in Predominantly Rural areas was 9.8 times higher than lower quartile earnings; this is marginally lower than in Predominantly Urban areas (10.0). The lower quartile price paid for **terraced** properties in Predominantly Rural areas was 7.9 times higher than lower quartile earnings; this is marginally lower than in Predominantly Urban areas (8.1).The mean price paid for **flats/maisonettes** in Predominantly Rural areas was 5.0 times higher than lower quartile earnings; this is similar to Predominantly Urban areas (5.1).

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 the analysis on housing affordability. A summary of the 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**. 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 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. This should help to show where people are less likely be able to afford to live in the same location as their place of work and hence have to live elsewhere. 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.

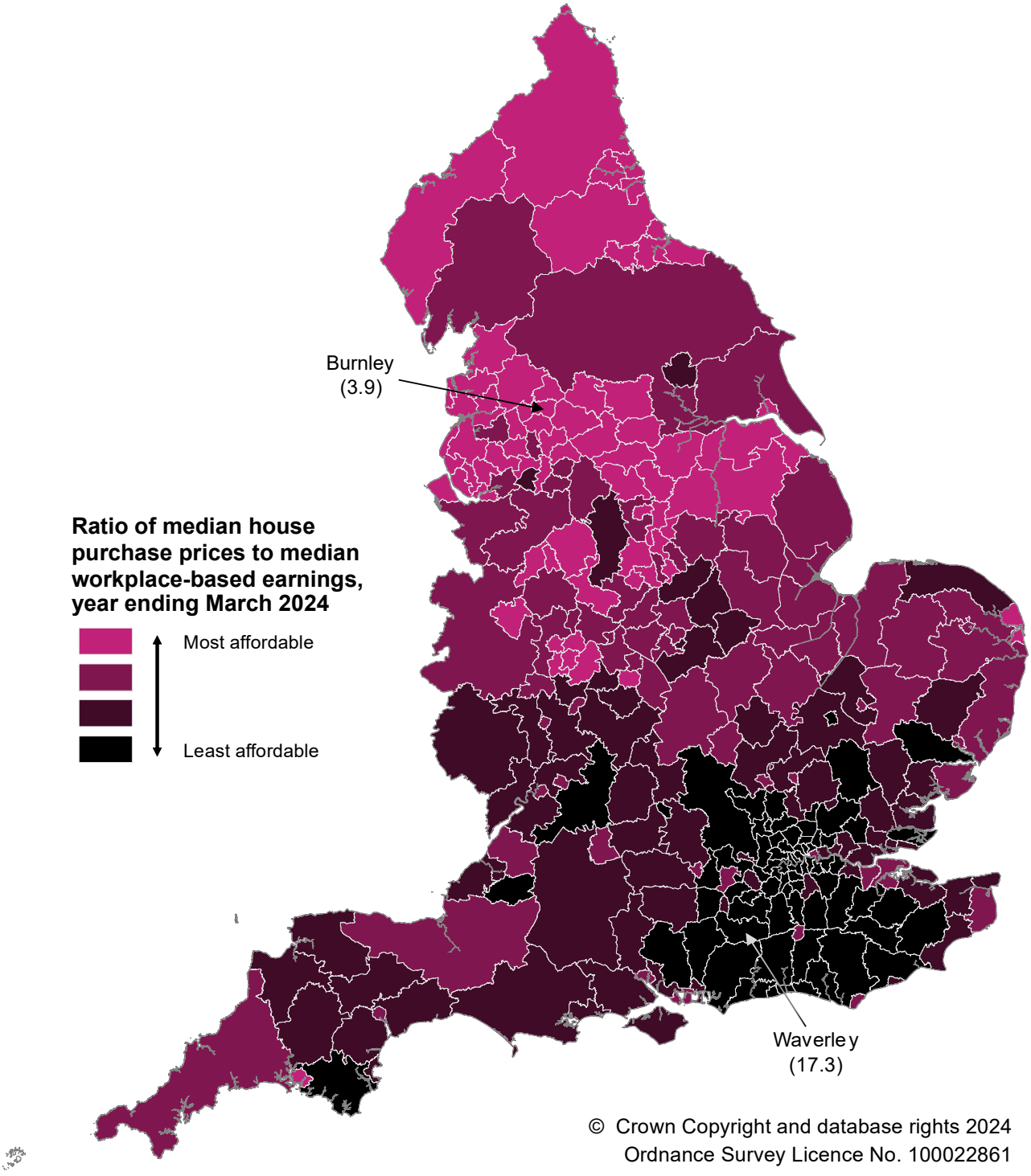
As explained within the Housing affordability in England and Wales QMI - Office for National Statistics, mortgages have traditionally been offered at multiples of four to five times income (typically gross income). This means that within this publication, only those Local Authorities with an affordability ratio of less than 5 would be considered realistic for an individual to purchase.

Median house purchase affordability

The ratio between median (Note D-5) 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 house. The map in Figure D-1 shows the median affordability ratios of Local Authorities.

Figure D-1: Map showing median house affordability (all dwellings) for Local Authorities, by quartiles, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2, Note D-3, Note D-4)

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. Data excludes City of London and Isles of Scilly. Most and least affordable areas are labelled.

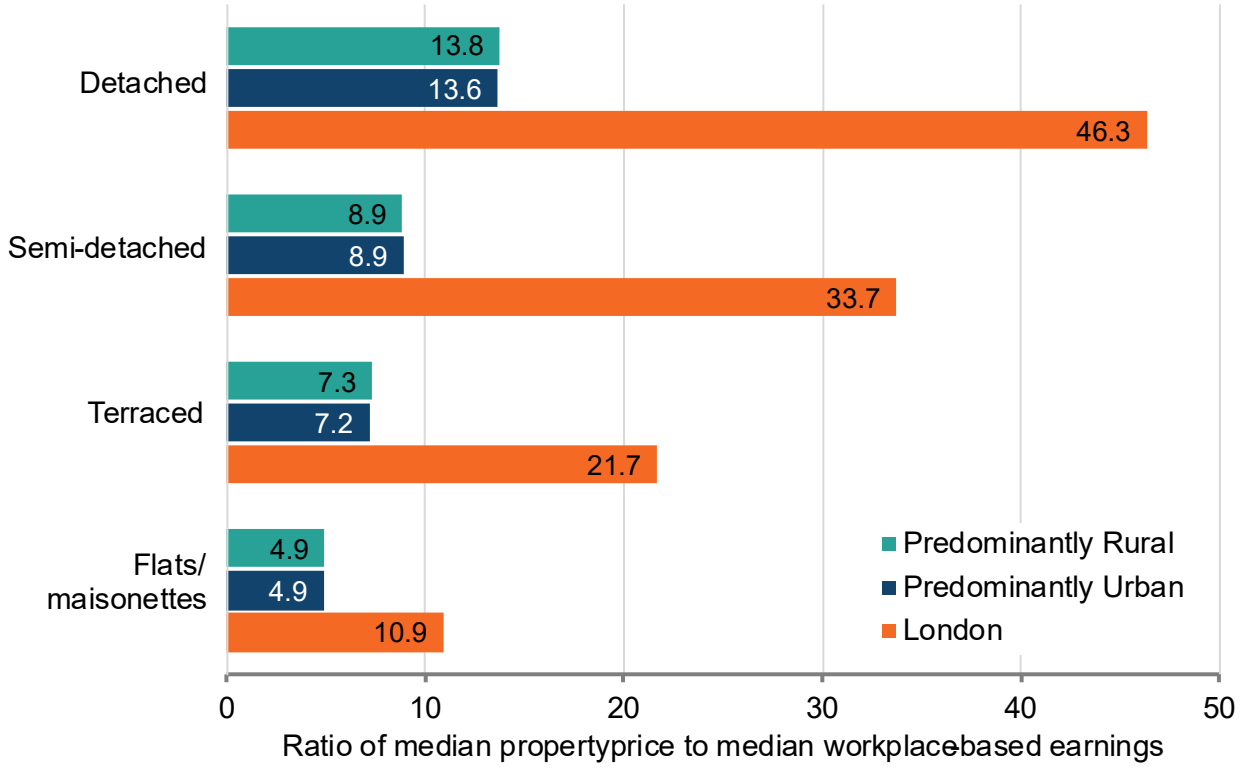


The map in Figure D-1 can be summarised as follows:

- Generally, the North of England is much more affordable to buy a property in than the South, in terms of median property purchase prices and median annual workplace-based earnings. The least affordable areas are in and around London.
- In the most affordable 25% of Local Authorities in England, median property purchase prices were up to 6.8 times higher than median annual workplace-based earnings. Of these 74 Local Authorities, 8 were Predominantly Rural and 59 were Predominantly Urban (excluding London).
- In the least affordable 25% of Local Authorities in England, median property purchase prices were between 11.2 and 33.6 times higher than median annual workplace-based earnings. Of these 74 Local Authorities, 12 were Predominantly Rural, 22 were Predominantly Urban (excluding London), and 27 were in London.
- The most affordable Local Authority overall was “Burnley” (Predominantly Urban) where median house purchase prices were 3.9 times higher than median workplace-based earnings. The least affordable Local Authority was “Kensington and Chelsea” (London) where median property prices were 33.6 times higher than median annual workplace-based earnings. Outside of London, the least affordable Local Authority was “Waverley” (a Predominantly Rural area of Surrey) where median property prices were 17.3 times higher than median annual earnings.

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.

Figure D-2: Bar chart showing median house purchase affordability ratios by settlement type and dwelling type, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2, Note D-3, Note D-6, Note D-7)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the clusters of bars. Lower values = more affordable.



For all dwelling types, there was little difference between the median affordability ratios in Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas outside of London in March 2024:

- The median price paid for **detached** properties in Predominantly Rural areas was 13.8 times higher than median workplace-based earnings; this is marginally higher than in Predominantly Urban areas (13.6). Median affordability ratios in London were more than 3 times higher than anywhere else in England; the median price paid for detached properties in London was 46.3 times higher than median earnings.
- The median price paid for **semi-detached** properties in either Predominantly Rural or Predominantly Urban areas was 8.9 times higher than median earnings. Median affordability ratios in London were nearly 4 times higher than anywhere else in England; the median price paid for semi-detached properties in London was 33.7 times higher than median earnings.
- The median price paid for **terraced** properties in Predominantly Rural areas was 7.3 times higher than median earnings; this is marginally higher than in Predominantly Urban areas (7.2 times). Median affordability ratios in London were nearly 3 times higher than anywhere else in England; the median price paid for terraced properties in London was 21.7 times higher than median earnings.
- The mean price paid for **flats/maisonettes** in either Predominantly Rural or Predominantly Urban areas was 4.9 times higher than median earnings. Median affordability ratios in London were twice as high as anywhere else in England; the median price paid for flats/maisonettes in London was 10.9 times higher than median earnings.

Table D-1 shows the median affordability ratios by detailed Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type in year ending March 2024. Mainly Rural areas were typically less affordable than Largely Rural areas. Urban with Significant Rural areas generally were the least affordable outside of London, whilst Urban Conurbation areas were typically the most.

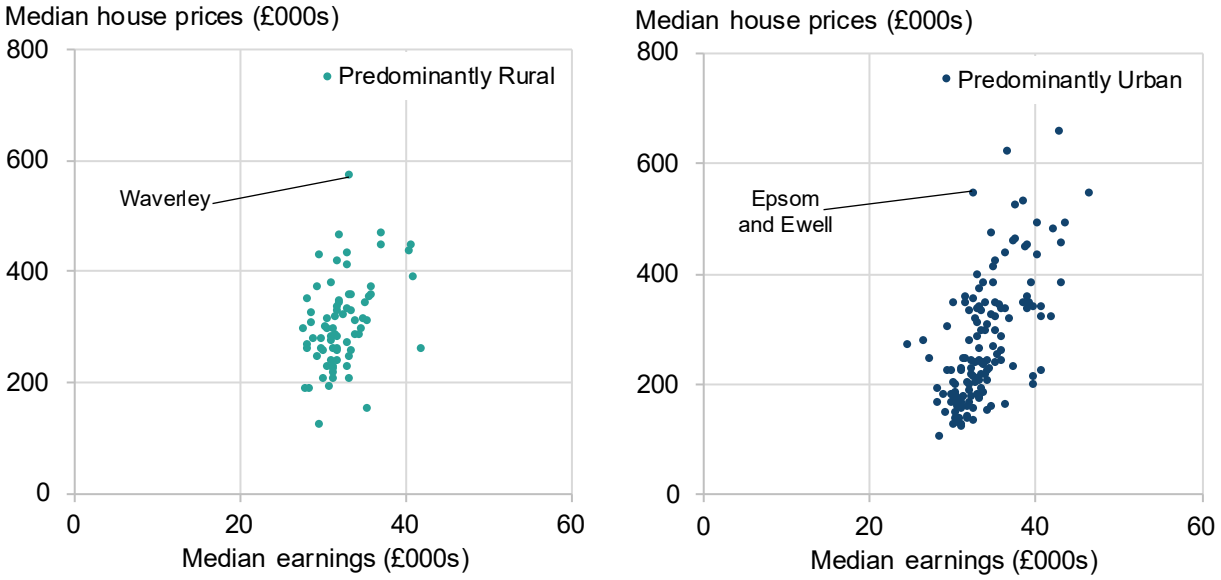
Table D-1: Median house purchase affordability ratios by settlement type and dwelling type, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2, Note D-3, Note D-6, Note D-7)
"Urban Conurbation" excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flats/ maisonettes	All properties
Mainly Rural	14.0	9.0	7.6	5.1	**10.0**
Largely Rural	13.6	8.8	7.2	4.8	**9.2**
Urban with Significant Rural	14.5	9.4	7.6	5.1	**9.4**
Urban with City and Town	13.5	9.0	7.4	4.9	**8.4**
Urban Conurbation	13.9	8.6	6.7	4.8	**7.9**
London	46.3	33.7	21.7	10.9	**14.4**
England	**17.8**	**12.0**	**9.1**	**5.7**	**9.5**

Affordability is calculated using house prices and earnings. Therefore, for example, one area may be more affordable than another - even if average earnings are similar - due to their average house prices differing. The scatter plots in Figure D-3 show the distribution of median house prices to earnings for Local Authorities, by settlement type, in year ending March 2024.

Figure D-3: Scatter plots showing median property sale prices against median annual workplace-based earnings for Local Authorities in England, by broad Rural-Urban Classification, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2, Note D-3)

Predominantly Rural Local Authorities are represented in the left-hand chart. Predominantly Urban Local Authorities outside of London are represented in the right-hand chart. Charts are plotted on the same scale to aid comparisons. Notable outliers from the general trend have been labelled, and explained below.



Whilst generally, areas with higher earnings tend to have higher house prices, this is not always the case. Some notable outliers have been labelled on Figure D-3:

- “Waverley” in Surrey has been labelled on the left-hand chart as it has a particularly high median property sale price, and is therefore less affordable, compared to other Predominantly Rural Local Authorities with similar median earnings.
- “Epsom and Ewell” in Surrey has been labelled on the right-hand chart as it has a particularly high median property sale price, and is therefore less affordable, compared to other Predominantly Urban Local Authorities with similar median earnings; it also has particularly low median earnings compared to other Predominantly Urban Local Authorities with similar median property sale prices.

Some areas of the country tend to be more affordable than others. Factors that contribute towards this include lower housing costs or higher average earnings. Table D-2 shows the **most affordable** Local Authorities in year ending March 2024.

Table D-2: Local Authorities with the lowest median affordability ratios (median house prices to median workplace-based earnings), by broad Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2)
"Predominantly Urban" excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Property type	Local Authority	Ratio
Predominantly Rural	Detached	Cumberland	8.3
	Semi-detached	Cumberland	4.5
	Terraced	County Durham	2.9
	Flats/maisonettes	South Holland	2.6
Predominantly Urban	Detached	Kingston upon Hull, City of	7.8
	Semi-detached	Hartlepool	4.6
	Terraced	Hartlepool	2.6
	Flats/maisonettes	Middlesbrough	2.1

For detached and semi-detached properties, "Cumberland" in Cumbria was the most affordable Predominantly Rural Local Authority in year ending March 2024; here, median detached property sale prices were 8.3 times higher than median earnings, whilst median semi-detached property sale prices were 4.5 times higher than earnings. "County Durham" was the most affordable Predominantly Rural Local Authority in terms of terraced properties (as median sale prices were 2.9 times higher than earnings). "South Holland" in Lincolnshire was the most affordable Predominantly Rural Local Authority in terms of flats/maisonettes (as median sale prices were 2.6 times higher than earnings).

For detached properties, "Kingston upon Hull" in East Riding of Yorkshire was the most affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority outside of London (as median sale prices were 7.8 times higher than earnings). For semi-detached or terraced properties, "Hartlepool" in County Durham was the most affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority; here, median semi-detached property sale prices were 4.6 times higher than earnings, whilst median terraced property sale prices were 2.6 times higher than earnings. "Middlesbrough" in North Yorkshire was the most affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority in terms of flats/maisonettes (as median sale prices were 2.1 times higher than earnings).

Table D-3 shows the **least affordable** Local Authorities (with the highest affordability ratios) in year ending March 2024.

Table D-3: Local Authorities with the highest median affordability ratios (median house prices to median workplace-based earnings), by broad Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2)
"Predominantly Urban" excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Property type	Local Authority	Ratio
Predominantly Rural	Detached	Sevenoaks	27.1
	Semi-detached	Waverley	16.2
	Terraced	Waverley	12.5
	Flats/maisonettes	South Hams	8.5
Predominantly Urban	Detached	Elmbridge	31.8
	Semi-detached	St Albans	19.3
	Terraced	St Albans	15.5
	Flats/maisonettes	Epsom and Ewell	10.2

For detached properties, "Sevenoaks" in Kent was the least affordable Predominantly Rural Local Authority in year ending March 2024 (as median sale prices were 27.1 times higher than earnings). For semi-detached or terraced properties, "Waverley" in Surrey was the least affordable Predominantly Rural Local Authority; here, median semi-detached property sale prices were 16.2 times higher than earnings, whilst median terraced property sale prices were 12.5 times higher than earnings. "South Hams" in Devon was the least affordable Predominantly Rural Local Authority in terms of flats/maisonettes (as median sale prices were 8.5 times higher than earnings).

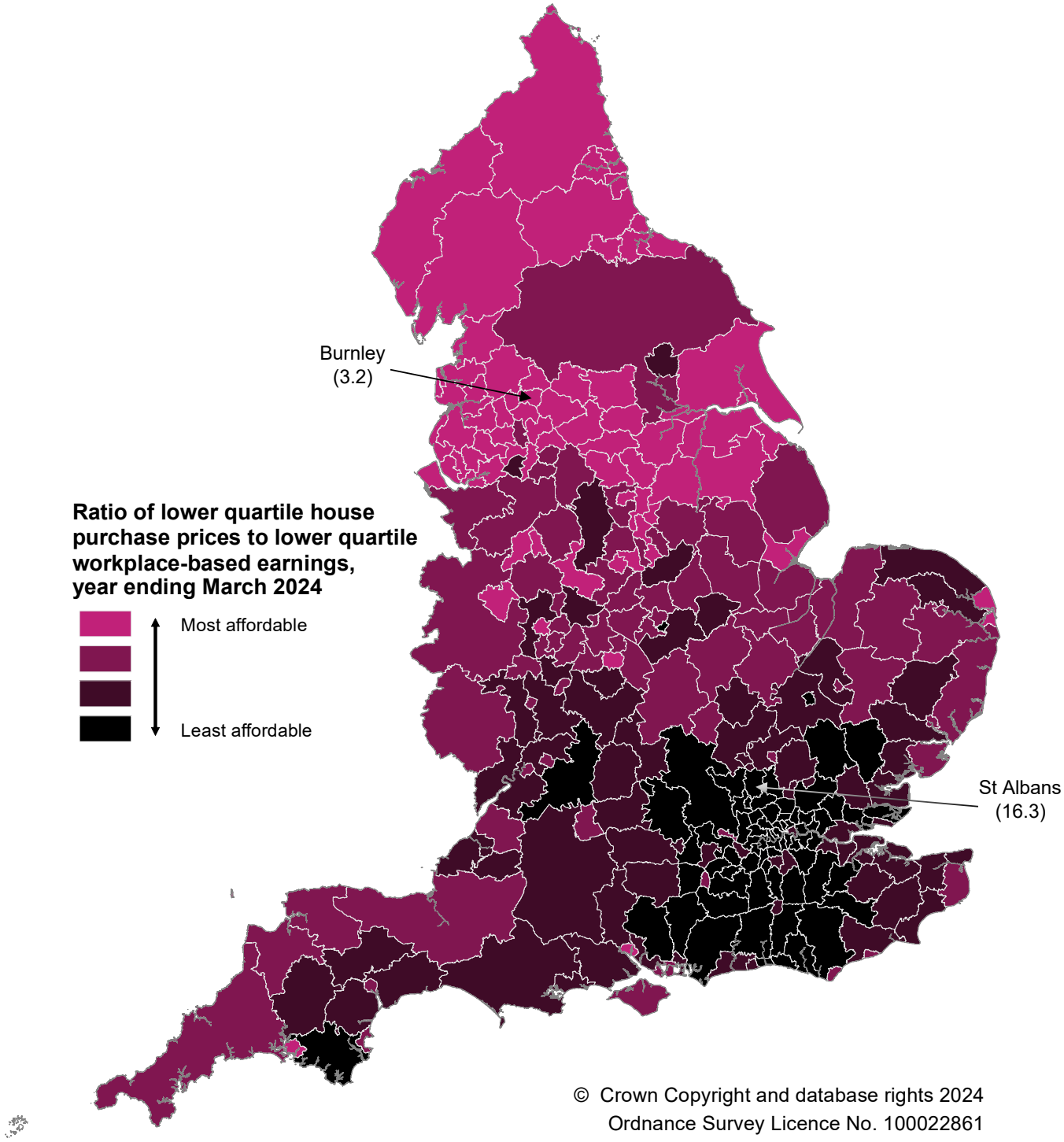
For detached properties, "Elmbridge" in Surrey was the least affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority outside of London (as median sale prices were 31.8 times higher than earnings). For semi-detached or terraced properties, "St Albans" in Hertfordshire was the least affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority; here, median semi-detached property sale prices were 19.3 times higher than earnings, whilst median terraced property sale prices were 15.5 times higher than earnings. "Epsom and Ewell" in Surrey was the least affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority in terms of flats/maisonettes (as median sale prices were 10.2 times higher than earnings).

Lower quartile house purchase affordability

The ratio between lower quartile (Note D-5) property purchase prices and lower quartile workplace-based earnings can be used to give an indication of whether typical first-time buyers or people on low income could afford to buy a house at the lower end of the housing market. The map in Figure D-4 shows the lower quartile affordability ratios of Local Authorities in year ending March 2024.

Figure D-4: Map showing lower quartile house affordability (all dwellings) for Local Authorities, by quartiles, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2, Note D-3, Note D-4)

The darker the colour, the higher the ratio of lower quartile house purchase prices to lower quartile workplace-based earnings, and therefore the less affordable the typical low-market house is. Data excludes City of London and Isles of Scilly. Most and least affordable areas are labelled.

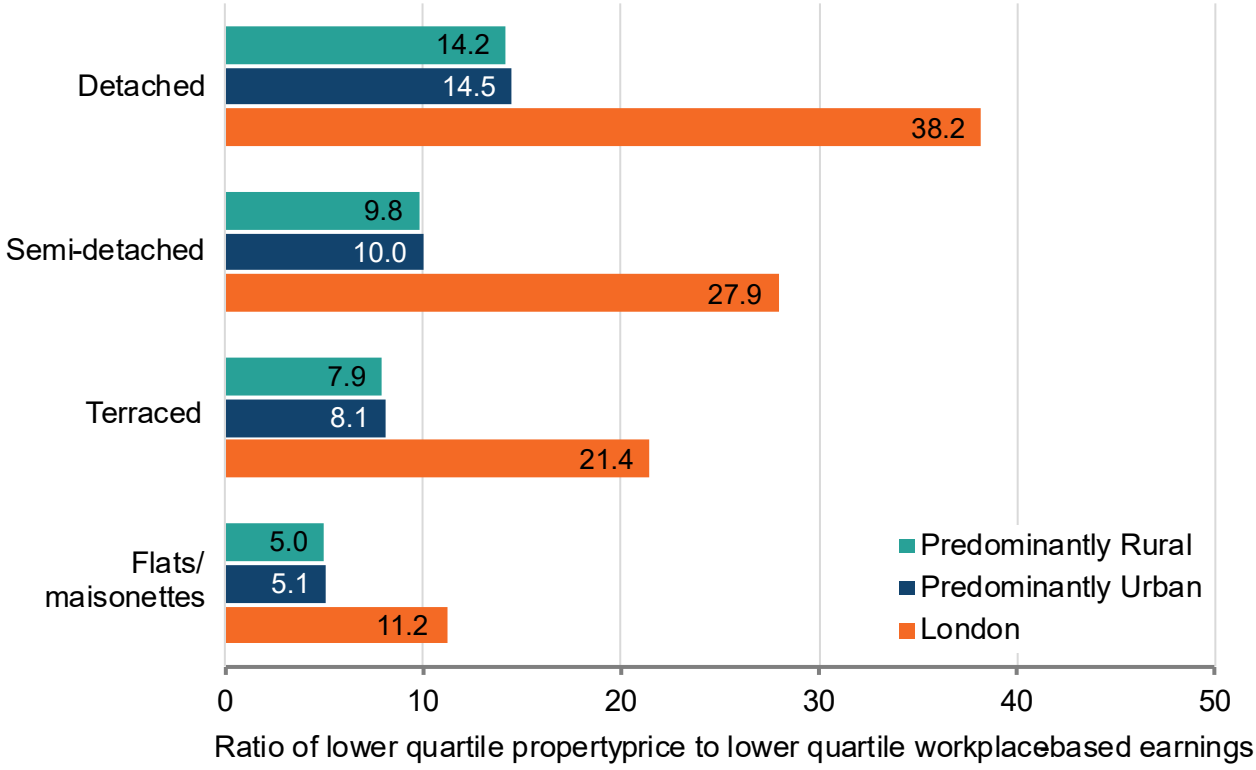


The map in Figure D-4 can be summarised as follows:

- Generally, the North of England is much more affordable to buy a property in than the South, in terms of lower quartile property purchase prices and lower quartile annual workplace-based earnings. The least affordable areas are in and around London.
- In the most affordable 25% of Local Authorities in England, lower quartile property purchase prices were up to 6.7 times higher than annual workplace-based earnings. Of these 74 Local Authorities, 9 were Predominantly Rural and 56 were Predominantly Urban (excluding London).
- In the least affordable 25% of Local Authorities in England, lower quartile property purchase prices were between 11.3 and 25.9 times higher than annual workplace-based earnings. Of these 74 Local Authorities, 12 were Predominantly Rural, 23 were Predominantly Urban (excluding London), and 29 were in London.
- The most affordable Local Authority overall was “Burnley” where lower quartile house purchase prices were 3.3 times higher than annual lower quartile workplace-based earnings. Outside of London, the least affordable Local Authority was “St Albans” where lower quartile property prices were 16.3 times higher than annual earnings.

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-5.

Figure D-5: Bar chart showing lower quartile house purchase affordability ratios by settlement type and dwelling type, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2, Note D-3, Note D-7)
The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the clusters of bars. Lower values = more affordable.



For all dwelling types, there was little difference between the lower quartile affordability ratios in Predominantly Rural and Predominantly Urban areas outside of London in March 2024:

- The lower quartile price paid for **detached** properties in Predominantly Rural areas was 14.2 times higher than lower quartile workplace-based earnings; this is marginally lower than in Predominantly Urban areas (14.5). Lower quartile affordability ratios in London were more than 2 times higher than anywhere else in England; the lower quartile price paid for detached properties in London was 38.2 times higher than lower quartile earnings.

- The lower quartile price paid for **semi-detached** properties in Predominantly Rural areas was 9.8 times higher than lower quartile earnings; this is marginally lower than in Predominantly Urban areas (10.0). Lower quartile affordability ratios in London were nearly 3 times higher than anywhere else in England; the lower quartile price paid for semi-detached properties in London was 27.9 times higher than lower quartile earnings.

- The lower quartile price paid for **terraced** properties in Predominantly Rural areas was 7.9 times higher than lower quartile earnings; this is marginally lower than in Predominantly Urban areas (8.1). Lower quartile affordability ratios in London were nearly 3 times higher than anywhere else in England; the lower quartile price paid for terraced properties in London was 21.4 times higher than lower quartile earnings.

- The mean price paid for **flats/maisonettes** in Predominantly Rural areas was 5.0 times higher than lower quartile earnings; this is similar to Predominantly Urban areas (5.1). Lower quartile affordability ratios in London were more than 2 times higher than anywhere else in England; the lower quartile price paid for flats/maisonettes in London was 11.2 times higher than lower quartile earnings.

Table D-4 shows the lower quartile affordability ratios by detailed Local Authority Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type in year ending March 2024. On average, Mainly Rural areas were less affordable than Largely Rural areas. Urban with Significant Rural areas generally were the least affordable outside of London, whilst Urban Conurbation or Largely Rural areas were typically the most affordable.

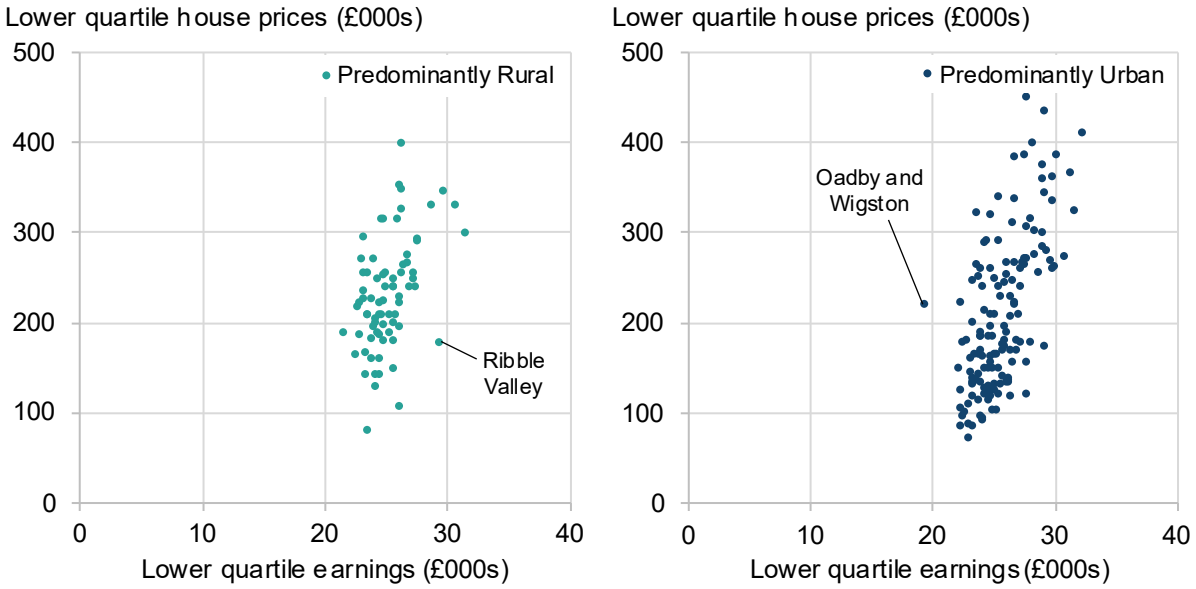
Table D-4: Lower quartile house purchase affordability ratios by settlement type and dwelling type, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2, Note D-3, Note D-6, Note D-7)
"Urban Conurbation" excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flats/ maisonettes	All properties
Mainly Rural	14.4	10.0	8.2	5.3	**9.7**
Largely Rural	14.0	9.6	7.7	4.8	**8.9**
Urban with Significant Rural	15.5	10.6	8.6	5.4	**9.4**
Urban with City and Town	14.4	10.2	8.4	5.2	**8.5**
Urban Conurbation	14.6	9.5	7.4	5.0	**7.7**
London	38.2	27.9	21.4	11.2	**13.9**
England	17.2	12.0	9.7	5.8	**9.3**

Affordability is calculated using house prices and earnings. Therefore, for example, one area may be more affordable than another - even if average earnings are similar - due to their average house prices differing. The scatter plots in Figure D-6 show the distribution of lower quartile house prices to earnings for Local Authorities, by settlement type, in year ending March 2024.

Figure D-6: Scatter plots showing lower quartile house prices against lower quartile workplace-based earnings for Local Authorities in England, by broad Rural-Urban Classification, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2, Note D-3)

Predominantly Rural Local Authorities are represented in the left-hand chart. Predominantly Urban Local Authorities outside of London are represented in the right-hand chart. Charts are plotted on the same scale to aid comparisons. Notable outliers from the general trend have been labelled, and explained below.



Whilst generally, areas with higher earnings tend to have higher house prices, this is not always the case. Some notable outliers have been labelled on Figure D-6:

- “Ribble Valley” in Lancashire has been labelled on the left-hand chart as it has particularly high lower quartile workplace-based earnings, and is therefore more affordable to buy a property in, compared to other Predominantly Rural Local Authorities with a similar lower quartile property sale price.
- “Oadby and Wigston” in Leicestershire has been labelled on the right-hand chart as it has particularly low lower quartile workplace-based earnings, and is therefore less affordable to buy a property in, compared to other Predominantly Urban Local Authorities with a similar lower quartile property sale price.

Some areas of the country tend to be more affordable than others. Factors that contribute towards this include lower housing costs or higher average earnings. Table D-5 shows the **most affordable** Local Authorities (with the lowest affordability ratios) in year ending March 2024.

Table D-5: Local Authorities with the lowest lower quartile affordability ratios (lower quartile house prices to lower quartile workplace-based earnings), by broad Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2)
"Predominantly Urban" excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Property type	Local Authority	Ratio
Predominantly Rural	Detached	County Durham	8.4
	Semi-detached	County Durham	4.3
	Terraced	County Durham	2.7
	Flats/maisonettes	County Durham	2.8
Predominantly Urban	Detached	Stoke-on-Trent	8.3
	Semi-detached	Stockton-on-Tees	5.1
	Terraced	Middlesbrough	2.6
	Flats/maisonettes	Kingston upon Hull, City of	2.1

In Predominantly Rural areas, regardless of the type of property, "County Durham" was the most affordable Local Authority in terms of lower quartile house prices and lower quartile earnings; here, the sale price for flats/maisonettes was 2.8 times higher than earnings, whilst detached property sale prices were 8.4 times higher than earnings. Terraced properties were slightly more affordable than flats/maisonettes in this Authority, as their sale prices were 2.7 times higher than earnings.

For detached properties, "Stoke-on-Trent" in Staffordshire was the most affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority outside of London (as lower quartile sale prices were 8.3 times higher than earnings). For semi-detached properties, "Stockton-on-Tees" in County Durham was the most affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority (as lower quartile sale prices were 5.1 times higher than earnings). For terraced properties, "Middlesbrough" in North Yorkshire was the most affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority (as lower quartile sale prices were 2.6 times higher than earnings). For flats/maisonettes, "Kingston upon Hull" in East Riding of Yorkshire was the most affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority (as lower quartile sale prices were 2.1 times higher than earnings).

Table D-6 shows the **least affordable** Local Authorities (with the highest affordability ratios) in year ending March 2024.

Table D-6: Local Authorities with the highest lower quartile affordability ratios (lower quartile house prices to lower quartile workplace-based earnings), by broad Rural-Urban Classification and dwelling type, year ending March 2024 (Note D-2)
"Predominantly Urban" excludes London.

Rural-Urban Classification	Property type	Local Authority	Ratio
Predominantly Rural	Detached	Waverley	25.2
	Semi-detached	Waverley	17.2
	Terraced	Waverley	13.2
	Flats/maisonettes	Sevenoaks	7.7
Predominantly Urban	Detached	Elmbridge	33.6
	Semi-detached	St Albans	21.0
	Terraced	St Albans	17.2
	Flats/maisonettes	Epsom and Ewell	10.3

For most dwelling types (detached, semi-detached, and terraced properties), "Waverley" in Surrey was the least affordable Predominantly Rural Local Authority in terms of lower quartile house prices and lower quartile earnings. Here, the sale price for terraced properties was 13.2 times higher than earnings, whilst detached property sale prices were 25.2 times higher than earnings. "Sevenoaks" in Kent was the least affordable Predominantly Rural Local Authority for flats/maisonettes (as sale prices were 7.7 times higher than earnings).

For detached properties, "Elmbridge" in Surrey was the least affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority outside of London (as sale prices were 33.6 times higher than earnings). For semi-detached or terraced properties, "St Albans" in Hertfordshire was the least affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority; here, lower quartile semi-detached property sale prices were 21.0 times higher than earnings, whilst terraced property sale prices were 17.2 times higher than earnings. "Epsom and Ewell" in Surrey was the least affordable Predominantly Urban Local Authority for flats/maisonettes (as sale prices were 10.3 times higher than earnings).

Housing stock: affordable housing - explanatory notes

- **Note D-1**

Affordability ratios are calculated by dividing median/lower quartile house prices by median/lower quartile gross annual workplace-based earnings. The earnings data are from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2023) 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 Housing affordability in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics. 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**

Data were not available for the "Isles of Scilly" or "City of London" and therefore affordability ratios could not be calculated and are excluded from all totals.

- **Note D-3**

Data are for 2023 Local Authorities; the corresponding Rural-Urban Classification of these Authorities can be found via 2011 Rural Urban Classification lookup tables for all geographies - GOV.UK.

- **Note D-4**

The colour grading on the maps within this section are based on quartiles, which divide the affordability ratios into four equal parts, ordered from smallest to largest. Lower values = more affordable. These "bounds" are given as follows:

Rural-Urban Classification	Median affordability ratios	Lower quartile affordability ratios
Quartile 1 (lowest 25%)	More than 3.9 and up to 6.8	More than 3.2 and up to 6.7
Quartile 2	More than 6.8 and up to 9.0	More than 6.7 and up to 9.1
Quartile 3	More than 9.0 and up to 11.2	More than 9.1 and up to 11.3
Quartile 4 (highest 25%)	More than 11.2 and up to 33.6	More than 11.3 and up to 25.9

- **Note D-5**

The lower quartile is the value in a data set that has 25% of the data points below it when ordered from smallest to largest. In terms of house prices, this refers to the "cheapest" 25% of homes. Similarly, this refers to the lowest 25% of earners in England. The median is the middle value of a data set when ordered from smallest to largest, and has 50% below it and 50% above it. In terms of house prices, this refers to mid-market or "average" homes. Similarly, this refers to people earning an "average" wage.

This publication assumes that people with lower quartile earnings will be aiming to buy a low-market home, and those with median earnings will aim to buy a mid-market home. However, their affordability may change if, for example, a person with median earnings bought a low-market home.

- **Note D-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 D-7**

For detached and semi-detached properties in "Tower Hamlets", average property sale price data was not provided in the source (for both median and lower quartile) due to there being small numbers of sales. To reflect this, average earnings in "Tower Hamlets" have not been included in totals or ratio calculations.

E. Second and empty homes

In 2024, the proportion of dwellings classed as second homes was more than three times as high in majority rural authorities (2.5%) than in urban authorities outside of London (0.8%), however rurality has little impact on the proportion of dwellings classed as empty.

Second and empty homes - key findings

Around one in four second homes in England were in majority rural authorities

- In 2024, there were 279,900 dwellings classed as second homes in England, with 67,000 (24%) in majority rural authorities and 96,600 (35%) in urban authorities outside of London.
- In majority rural authorities, 2.5% of dwellings were classed as second homes, which is more than three times higher than in urban areas outside of London (0.8%).

There were more ‘Band A’ properties as second homes compared to other bands

- 15,100 ‘Band A’ (the lowest Council Tax band) properties in majority rural authorities were classed as second homes in 2024; these were more prevalent as second homes than properties in other Council Tax bands.
- This was equivalent to 3.2% of all ‘Band A’ properties in majority rural authorities being classed as second homes; in comparison, in urban authorities outside of London, just 0.8% of ‘Band A’ properties were classed as second homes.

Just over one in ten empty homes in England were in majority rural authorities

- In 2024, there were 502,300 dwellings classed as empty in England; 53,800 of these (11%) were in majority rural authorities and 260,900 (52%) were in urban authorities outside of London
- In majority rural authorities, 2.0% of dwellings were empty; this was similar to in urban authorities outside of London (2.1%).

There were more empty ‘Band A’ properties compared to other bands

- 3.2% of all ‘Band A’ (the lowest Council Tax band) properties in majority rural authorities were empty in 2024; this was proportionally higher than in urban authorities outside of London (3.0%).

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 2024, 2.5% of dwellings in majority rural authorities were classed as second homes for Council Tax purposes; this was more than three times higher than the proportion of second homes in urban authorities outside of London (0.8%). Of all local authorities, those that are part of a Protected Landscape typically had a higher proportion of second homes. For example, 'North Norfolk' - which had the highest rate of second homes of all majority rural authorities – intersects both the Norfolk Coast National Landscape and The Broads National Park. When considering second homes by Council Tax band, the proportion of second homes is much higher in majority rural authorities than in urban authorities outside of London, for all bands.

In 2024, 2.0% of dwellings in majority rural authorities were classed as empty for Council Tax purposes; this was similar to the proportion in urban authorities outside of London (2.1%). Therefore, the rurality of an area had little impact on the proportion of empty dwellings.

Second homes

Second homes are domestic dwellings owned by individuals who have another dwelling as their primary residence. Within this publication, the Council Taxbase has been used to estimate the number of second homes. Since 1 April 2013, local authorities in England have had the choice to apply council tax discounts of between 0% and 50% for second homes. These are properties that may be empty for part of the year and are furnished. Since 1 April 2025, some authorities have charged a second homes premium, where they charge up to two times the normal Council Tax for a property. For more information, see the guidance on how Council Tax works.

Within this section, second homes are typically presented as a proportion of all chargeable dwellings. Where data are given by Council Tax band, the number of chargeable dwellings have been adjusted subject to disability reductions; some people have their Council Tax bill reduced to the next lowest band where they live in a larger property than needed were they not disabled. For example, a person living in a 'Band B' property may instead pay the 'Band A' rate, and therefore the property would appear as a 'Band A' for the purposes of this publication. For more information regarding the Disabled Band Reduction Scheme, see discounts for disabled people.

Second homes in 2024

As shown in Table E-1, on 7 October 2024 there were 279,900 dwellings classed as second homes in England, with around one in four being in majority rural authorities (67,000 dwellings). 2.5% of all chargeable dwellings in majority rural authorities were classed as second homes for Council Tax purposes in 2024.

The number of second homes in intermediate (rural or urban) authorities was similar to majority rural authorities, however this represented a smaller proportion of all chargeable dwellings within these authorities.

In urban authorities outside of London, there were 96,600 dwellings classed as second homes in 2024, representing 35% of all second homes in England However, compared to all chargeable dwellings in urban authorities outside of London, second homes represented just 0.8%.

Table E-1: Number of second homes, count and as a proportion of all chargeable dwellings, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England, 7 October 2024 (Note E-1)
'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. The number of second homes has been rounded to the nearest 100 dwellings. Proportions have been rounded to the nearest 0.1%.

Rural-urban classification 2021	Number of second homes	Number of second homes, as a proportion of all chargeable dwellings
Majority rural	67,000	2.5%
Intermediate	67,400	1.1%
Urban (excluding London)	96,600	0.8%
London	48,800	1.3%
England	**279,900**	**1.1%**

Whilst Table E-1 shows the proportion of dwellings that are second homes for overall rural-urban categories, there will be variation in the second homes rate for local authorities within these classifications. Table E-2 specifies the local authorities with the highest proportion of dwellings that are second homes, by rural-urban classification, as of 7 October 2024.

Table E-2: Local authorities with the highest proportion of chargeable dwellings that were classed as second homes within each category of the 2021 rural-urban classification, in England, 7 October 2024 (Note E-1)
Proportions have been rounded to the nearest 0.1%.

Rural-urban classification 2021	Local authority	Number of second homes, as a proportion of all chargeable dwellings
Majority rural	North Norfolk	10.8%
Intermediate rural	Westmorland and Furness	5.1%
Intermediate urban	Great Yarmouth	6.1%
Urban (excluding London)	Brighton and Hove	3.3%
London	City of London	25.2%
England	**City of London**	**25.2%**

As of 7 October 2024, 'North Norfolk' – in the East of England - had the highest proportion of dwellings that were classed as second homes of all majority rural authorities, at 10.8%. This was equivalent to 6,000 out of a total 55,400 chargeable dwellings being second homes. The second homes rate in 'North Norfolk' was more than four times higher than average of majority rural authorities overall (2.5%). 'North Norfolk' also had the highest proportion of second homes of all local authorities outside of London.

Of all intermediate rural authorities, 'Westmorland and Furness' – in the North West of England - had the highest proportion of second homes, at 5.1%; this was half the proportion of 'North Norfolk'. Of all intermediate urban authorities, 'Great Yarmouth' – in the East of England – had the

highest proportion of second homes, at 6.1%; this was higher than in ‘Westmorland and Furness’, and therefore the highest of all intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, but still lower than in ‘North Norfolk’.

Of all urban authorities outside of London, ‘Brighton and Hove’ – in the South East of England – had the highest proportion of second homes, at 3.3%; this was more than three times lower than in ‘North Norfolk’. The second homes rate in ‘Brighton and Hove’ was more than four times higher than the average of all urban authorities outside of London (0.8%).

Outside of London, all of the local authorities with the highest proportion of dwellings classed as second homes were in or near Protected Landscapes (National Parks and National Landscapes, previously named Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). For example, ‘North Norfolk’ intersects both the Norfolk Coast National Landscape and The Broads National Park. In these areas in particular, but also in coastal areas more generally, second home owners are likely to use their properties as holiday lets.

In London, the ‘City of London’ had the highest proportion of second homes, at 25.2%; this was more than double the second homes rate in ‘North Norfolk’, but was equivalent to 1,900 out of a total 7,500 chargeable dwellings being second homes. Therefore, the higher second homes rate is largely driven by the smaller number of dwellings within the ‘City of London’.

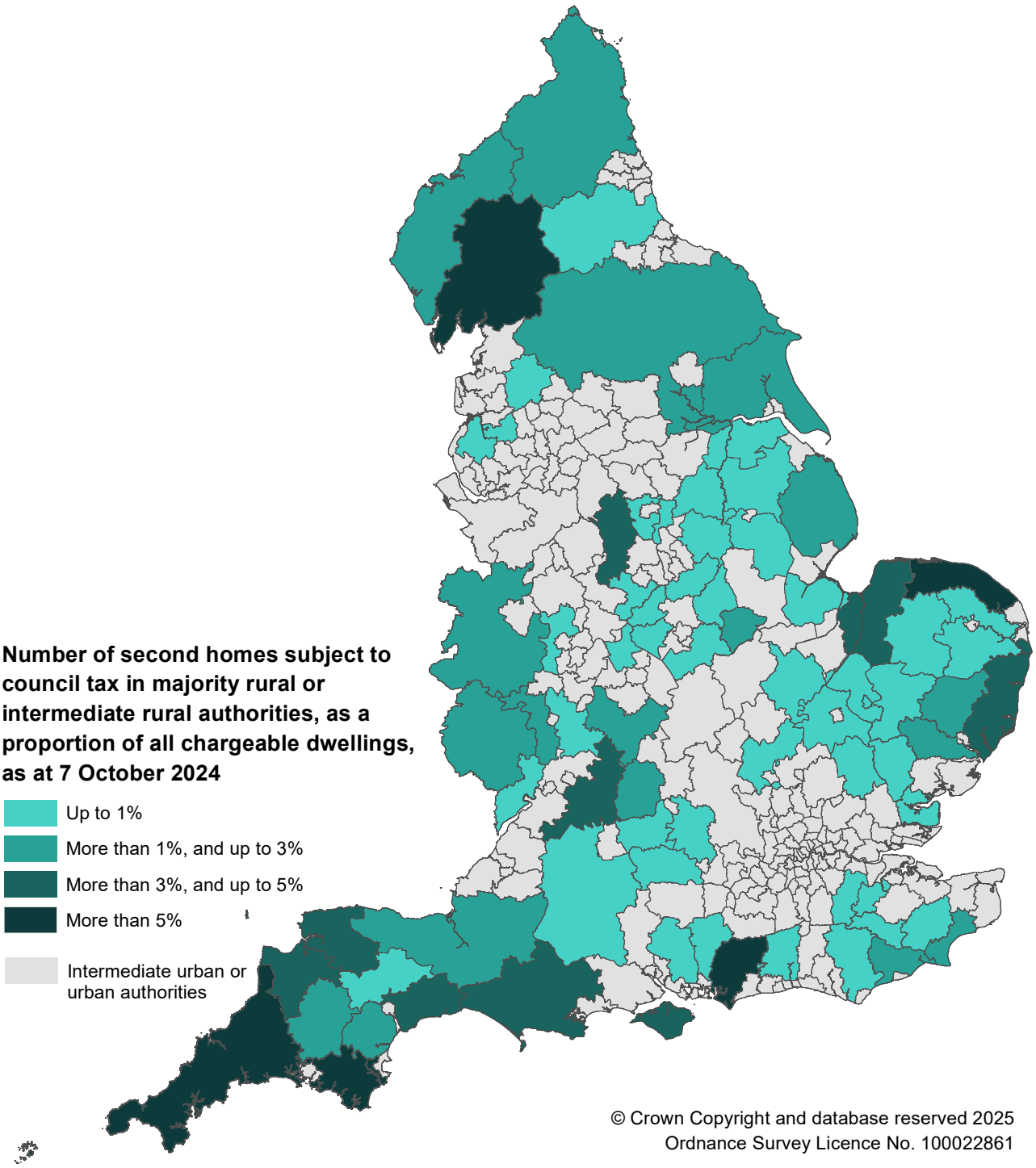
Whilst Table E-2 highlights the authorities with the highest proportion of dwellings classed as second homes, the map in Figure E-1 shows the second homes rate of all majority rural or intermediate rural authorities. Intermediate urban and urban authorities, as well as those in London, are not included on the map; their proportions of second homes can instead be found within the supplementary data tables.

As of 7 October 2024, there were 79 majority rural or intermediate rural authorities in England:

- In 46 of these authorities – equivalent to 58% - up to 1% of chargeable dwellings were classed as second homes for Council Tax purposes.
- In 18 of these authorities – equivalent to 23% - between 1% and 3% of dwellings were classed as second homes.
- In 9 of these authorities – equivalent to 11% - between 3% and 5% of dwellings were classed as second homes.
- In 6 of these authorities – equivalent to 8% - more than 5% of dwellings were classed as second homes.
- The majority rural and intermediate rural authorities with particularly high proportions of dwellings classed as second homes were either in and around Protected Landscapes, or were coastal.

Figure E-1: Map showing the proportion of dwellings classed as second homes in majority rural or intermediate rural local authorities, as defined within the 2021 rural-urban classification, in England, 7 October 2024

The darker the colour of an authority, the greater the percentage of dwellings classed as second homes. Light grey areas on the map represent intermediate urban or urban authorities.



Second homes by Council Tax Band

Comparing between Council Tax bands gives us an indication of the value of dwellings classed as second homes. For the purposes of this analysis the eight council tax bands have been grouped: 'Band A' (lowest), 'Band B', 'Bands C, D, and E', and 'Bands F, G, and H' (highest). Generally, the higher the Council Tax band, the fewer the number of dwellings. For example, as of 7 October 2024, 23% of all chargeable dwellings in England were in Band A. In comparison, just 1% were in Band H. Therefore, combining bands allows for more appropriate comparisons between the higher and lower bands.

Table E-3 is provided for context and shows the Council Tax band groupings, the 1991 property values used to establish the original Council Tax bands and an estimate of their equivalent value as of Q2 2025; the Nationwide house price calculator has been used to work out estimated progression in house value.

Table E-3: Current Council Tax bands for England and how they have been grouped for the purposes of this report.

Council Tax band	Market value of property on 1 April 1991	Estimated value in Q2 2025
Band A	up to £40,000	up to £197,000
Band B	up to £52,000	up to £256,000
Bands C, D, and E	up to £120,000	up to £591,000
Bands F, G, and H	over £120,000	over £591,000

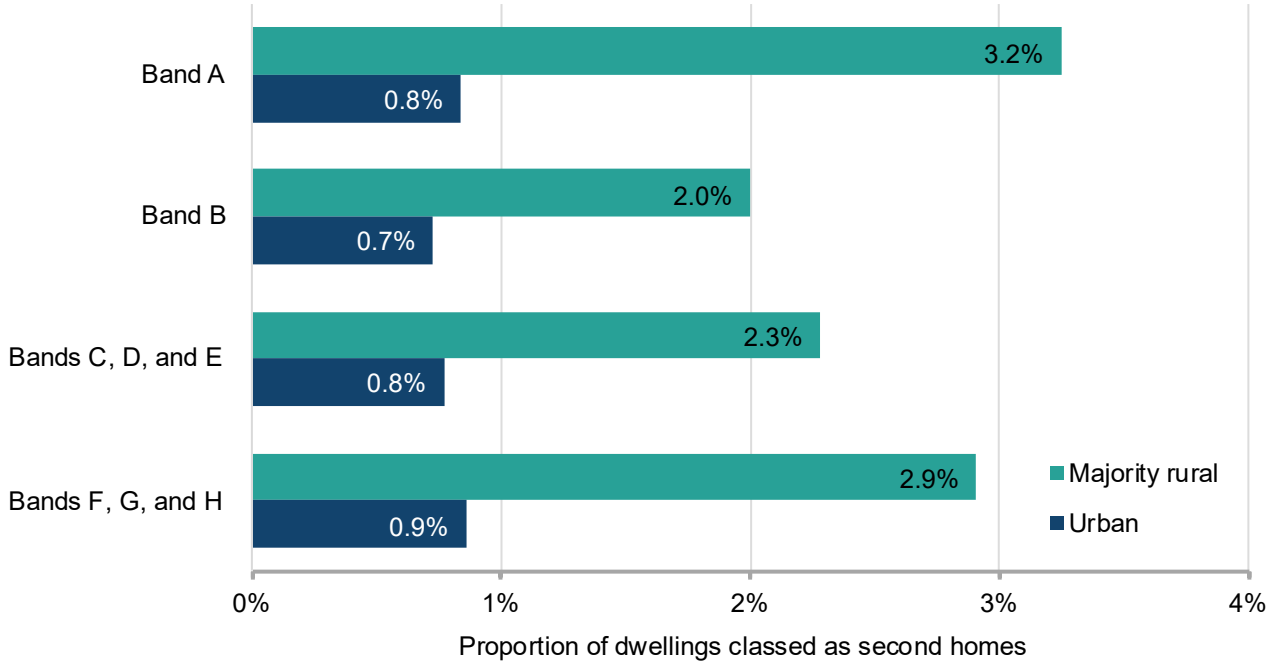
The bar chart in Figure E-2 shows the proportion of dwellings classed as second homes, by grouped Council Tax bands, as of 7 October 2024. The chart portrays the differences between majority rural and urban authorities outside of London; proportions of dwellings classed as second homes by Council Tax band in intermediate (rural or urban) authorities or in London can be found within the supplementary data tables.

Figure E-2 can be described as follows:

- As of 7 October 2024, there were proportionally more second homes in 'Band A' than in any other band or groups of bands in majority rural authorities, at 3.2%. This is equivalent to 15,100 out of a total 463,800 chargeable dwellings in 'Band A' being classed as second homes.
- The proportion of dwellings classed as second homes in 'Band B' in majority rural authorities was 1.2 percentage points lower than in 'Band A', at 2.0%.
- When combining 'Bands C, D, and E', 2.3% of dwellings in majority rural authorities were classed as second homes. When combining 'Bands F, G, and H', 2.9% of dwellings in majority rural authorities were classed as second homes; this was just 0.3 percentage points lower than in 'Band A'.
- In urban authorities outside of London, there was little difference in the proportion of dwellings classed as second homes between bands, ranging from 0.7% to 0.9%. This means that the proportion of second homes was typically three times higher in majority rural authorities than in urban authorities outside of London for 'Band B', 'Bands C, D and E', or 'Bands F, G and H'.

For ‘Band A’ properties, the proportion of second homes was around four times higher in majority rural authorities compared to urban authorities outside of London.

Figure E-2: Bar chart showing the proportion of dwellings classed as second homes in majority rural and urban authorities outside of London, as defined within the 2021 rural-urban classification, by grouped Council Tax bands, England, 7 October 2024
The bars are presented in the same order and orientation as the legend. ‘Urban’ excludes London. Proportions labelled on the bars have been rounded to the nearest 0.1%.



Whilst Figure E-2 shows the proportion of dwellings that are second homes by Council Tax band for overall rural-urban categories, there will be variation in the second homes rate for local authorities within these classifications and bands. Table E-4 specifies the majority rural local authorities with the highest proportion of dwellings that are second homes, by Council Tax band, as of 7 October 2024.

Table E-4: Local authorities with the highest proportion of chargeable dwellings that were classed as second homes within majority rural authorities, by Council Tax band, in England, 7 October 2024 (Note E-1)
Proportions have been rounded to the nearest 0.1%.

Council Tax band	Local authority	Number of second homes, as a proportion of all chargeable dwellings
Band A	Chichester	20.0%
Band B	Isles of Scilly	12.5%
Band C	North Norfolk	10.6%
Band D	Isles of Scilly	10.8%
Band E	South Hams	9.5%
Band F	North Norfolk	12.2%
Band G	Isles of Scilly	17.3%
Band H	Cornwall	30.1%

Every majority rural local authority listed in Table E-4, which had the highest proportion of dwellings classed as second homes within their respective Council Tax bands, were in or near Protected Landscapes:

- ‘Chichester’ – which intersects with both the Chichester Harbour National Landscape and the South Downs National Park - had the highest proportion of ‘Band A’ properties being classed as second homes of all majority rural authorities as at 7 October 2024 (20.0%).
- The ‘Isles of Scilly’ – which themselves form a National Landscape – had the highest proportion of ‘Band B’, ‘Band D’, and ‘Band G’ properties being classed as second homes in majority rural authorities, at 12.5%, 10.8%, and 17.3%, respectively. However, it should be noted that these proportions correspond to low counts of second homes; overall, there were just 120 second homes in this authority.
- ‘North Norfolk’ – which intersects with the Norfolk Coast National Landscape and The Broads National Park – had the highest proportion of ‘Band C’ (10.6%) and ‘Band F’ (12.2%) dwellings being classed as second homes in majority rural authorities.
- ‘South Hams’ – which intersects with the Dartmoor National Park and the South Devon National Landscape – had the highest proportion of ‘Band E’ properties being classed as second homes in majority rural authorities, at 9.5%.
- The local authority of ‘Cornwall’ – which intersects with the Cornwall and Tamar Valley National Landscapes – had the highest proportion of ‘Band H’ properties being classed as second homes in majority rural authorities, at 30.1%. It should be noted that, compared to the other Council Tax bands, there were particularly low counts of ‘Band H’ properties across England. In this case, 30.1% corresponds to 120 second homes out of a total of 390 ‘Band H’ properties.

By comparing between the Council Taxbase data for the previous year, it is possible to see how the value of the second homes stock has changed over time. The bar chart in Figure E-3 shows the proportion of dwellings classed as second homes in majority rural authorities, as at 2 October 2023 and 7 October 2024.

These dates refer to the Council Taxbase snapshots, and will henceforth be referred to in the chart commentary as just ‘2023’ and ‘2024’ for simplicity. Data for other rural-urban classifications can be found within the supplementary data tables.

Between 2023 and 2024, the proportion of ‘Band A’ dwellings classed as second homes in majority rural authorities increased by 0.2 percentage points; this was the greatest proportional increase of all Council Tax bands. In absolute terms, the number of second homes increased from 13,800 in 2023 to 15,100 in 2024.

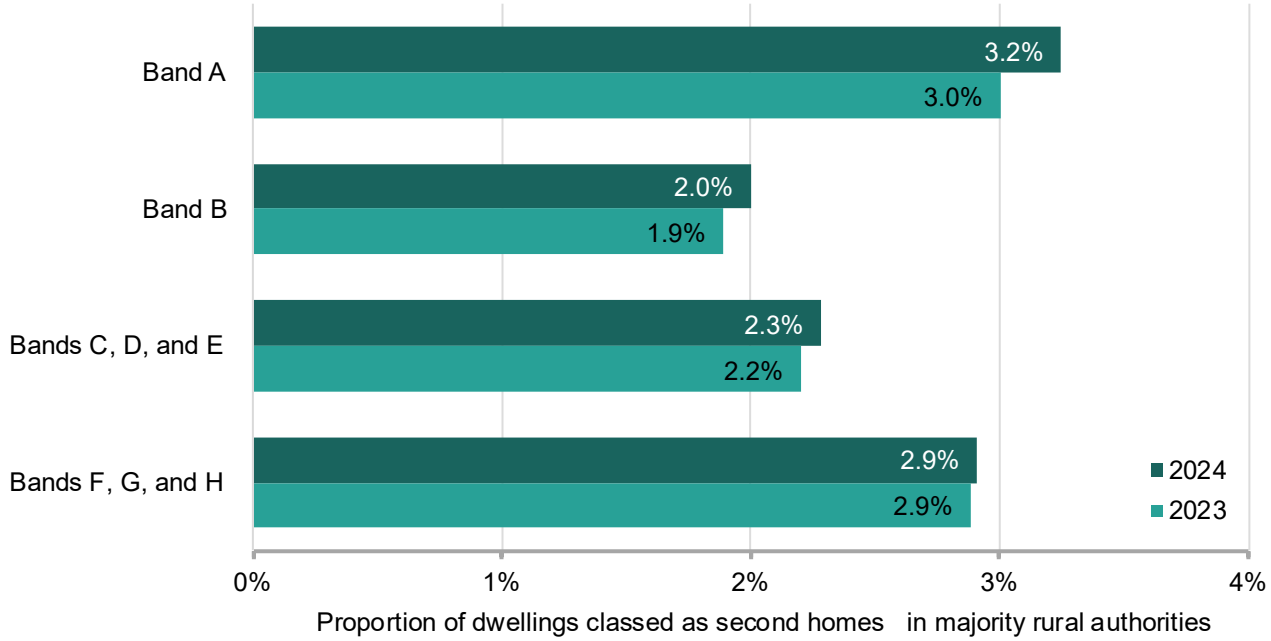
The proportion of ‘Band B’ dwellings classed as second homes in majority rural authorities increased by just 0.1 percentage point between 2023 and 2024; in absolute terms, this was an increase from 10,700 to 11,400 dwellings.

The proportion of dwellings in ‘Bands C, D, and E’ classed as second homes in majority rural authorites similarly increased by just 0.1 percentage point between 2023 and 2024; this was an increase from 30,000 to 31,600 dwellings. Therefore, whilst this was not the greatest proportional increase, it was the greatest absolute increase of all Council Tax bands/groups.

Between 2023 and 2024, there was little change in the proportion of dwellings in 'Bands F, G, and H' classed as second homes in majority rural authorities. In absolute terms, the number of second homes increased from 8,800 to 9,000 within these Council Tax bands.

Figure E-3: Bar chart showing the proportion of dwellings classed as second homes in majority rural authorities, as defined within the 2021 rural-urban classification, by grouped Council Tax bands, England, 2 October 2023 and 7 October 2024.

The bars are presented in the same order and orientation as the legend. '2023' refers to 2 October 2023, whilst '2024' refers to 7 October 2024. Proportions labelled on the bars have been rounded to the nearest 0.1%.



Empty homes

Empty homes are domestic dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. Within this publication, the Council Taxbase has been used to estimate the number of empty homes. Dwellings which are classified as empty homes can receive a council tax discount of between 0% and 100%. If the property has been empty for at least one year, an 'empty home premium' may be charged; if it has been empty for at least 10 years, the property owner may be charged up to 4 times their normal Council Tax bill. Empty homes premiums and discounts are at the discretion of each local authority. For more information, see the guidance on how Council Tax works.

Within this section, empty homes are typically presented as a proportion of all chargeable dwellings. Where data are given by Council Tax band, the number of chargeable dwellings have been adjusted subject to disability reductions; some people have their Council Tax bill reduced to the next lowest band where they live in a larger property than needed were they not disabled. For example, a person living in a 'Band B' property may instead pay the 'Band A' rate, and therefore the property would appear as a 'Band A' for the purposes of this publication. For more information regarding the Disabled Band Reduction Scheme, see discounts for disabled people.

Empty homes in 2024

As shown in Table E-5, on 7 October 2024 there were 502,300 properties classed as empty in England, with around 11% being in majority rural authorities (53,800 dwellings). 2.0% of all dwellings in majority rural authorities were classed as empty for Council Tax purposes in 2024.

In intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, 117,000 dwellings were classed as empty in 2024; this was more than double the number of empty homes in majority rural authorities, but represented a similar proportion of all chargeable dwellings.

In urban authorities outside of London, there were 260,900 empty dwellings in 2024, representing more than half of all empty homes in England; this was the largest proportional share of all rural-urban classifications of local authorities. However, compared to all chargeable dwellings in urban authorities outside of London, empty homes represented just 2.1% - a similar proportion as in majority rural authorities.

Table E-5: Number of empty homes, count and as a proportion of all chargeable dwellings, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England, 7 October 2024 (Note E-4)
'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. The number of empty homes has been rounded to the nearest 100 dwellings. Proportions have been rounded to the nearest 0.1%.

Rural-urban classification 2021	Number of empty homes	Number of empty homes, as a proportion of all chargeable dwellings
Majority rural	53,800	2.0%
Intermediate	117,000	1.9%
Urban (excluding London)	260,900	2.1%
London	70,500	1.9%
England	**502,300**	**2.0%**

Whilst Table E-5 shows the proportion of dwellings that are empty for rural-urban categories, there will be variation in the rate of empty homes for local authorities within these classifications. Table E-6 specifies the local authorities with the highest proportion of dwellings that are empty, by rural-urban classification, as of 7 October 2024.

Table E-6: Local authorities with the highest proportion of chargeable dwellings that were classed as empty homes within each category of the 2021 rural-urban classification, in England, 7 October 2024 (Note E-4)
Proportions have been rounded to the nearest 0.1%.

Rural-urban classification 2021	Local authority	Number of empty homes, as a proportion of all chargeable dwellings
Majority rural	Isles of Scilly	3.4%
Intermediate rural	Bolsover	3.7%
Intermediate urban	Fylde	2.9%
Urban (excluding London)	Liverpool	3.7%
London	Kingston upon Thames	4.2%
England	**Kingston upon Thames**	**4.2%**

As of 7 October 2024, the ‘Isles of Scilly’ had the highest proportion of empty dwellings of all majority rural authorities, at 3.4%. However, there were just 1,200 chargeable dwellings within this authority, of which fewer than 100 were empty. Therefore, the particularly low number of dwellings drives the high proportion of empty homes. The empty homes rate in the ‘Isles of Scilly’ was 1.5 percentage points higher than the average of majority rural authorities overall (2.0%). ‘Mid Devon’ had the second highest rate of empty homes of all majority rural authorities, at 2.8%.

Of all intermediate rural authorities, ‘Bolsover’ – in the East Midlands region of England – had the highest proportion of empty dwellings, at 3.7%; this was slightly higher than in the ‘Isles of Scilly’, and was the highest of all authorities outside of London. Of all intermediate urban authorities, ‘Fylde’ – in the North West of England – had the highest proportion of empty dwellings, at 2.9%; this was lower than in the ‘Isles of Scilly’.

Of all urban authorities outside of London, ‘Liverpool’ – in the North West of England – had the highest proportion of empty dwellings, at 3.7%; this was higher than in the ‘Isles of Scilly’, and similar to ‘Bolsover’ as being one of the authorities with the highest empty homes rates outside of London. The proportion of empty dwellings in ‘Liverpool’ was 1.5 percentage points higher than the average of all urban authorities outside of London (2.1%).

In London, ‘Kingston upon Thames’ had the highest proportion of empty dwellings, at 4.2%; this was 0.8 percentage points higher than in the ‘Isles of Scilly’. As of 7 October 2024, ‘Kingston upon Thames’ had proportionally more empty dwellings than any other local authority in England.

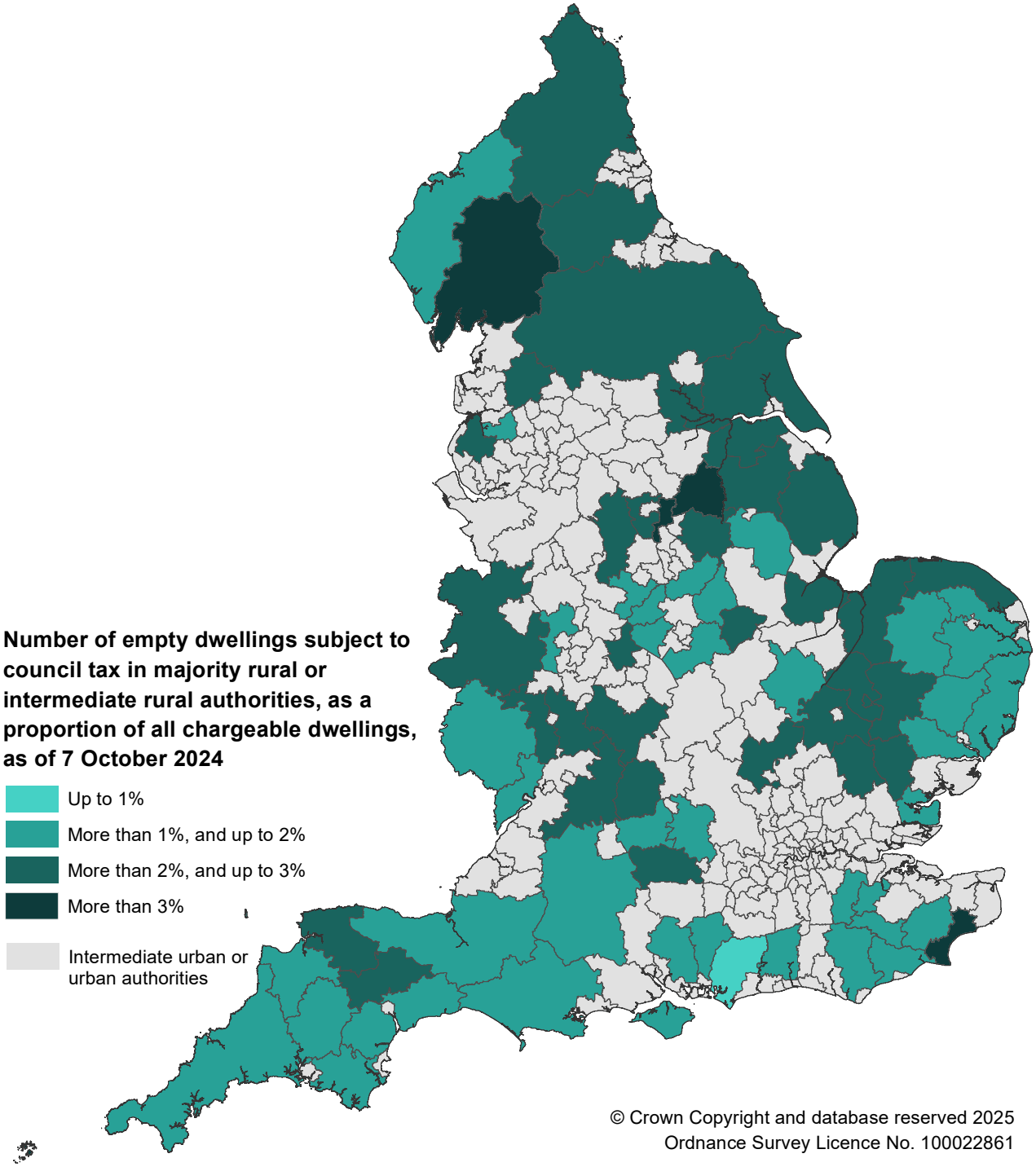
Whilst Table E-6 highlights the authorities with the highest proportion of dwellings classed as empty, the map in Figure E-4 shows the empty homes rate of all majority rural or intermediate rural authorities. Intermediate urban and urban authorities, as well as those in London, are not included on the map; their proportions can instead be found within the supplementary data tables.

As of 7 October 2024, there were 79 majority rural or intermediate rural authorities in England:

- There was just 1 of these authorities where up to 1% of chargeable dwellings were classed as empty for Council Tax purposes (‘Chichester’; 0.7%).
- In 41 of these authorities – equivalent to 52% - between 1% and 2% of dwellings were empty.
- In 32 of these authorities – equivalent to 41% - between 2% and 3% of dwellings were empty.
- In 5 of these authorities – equivalent to 6% - more than 3% of dwellings were empty.

Figure E-4: Map showing the proportion of dwellings classed as empty homes in majority rural or intermediate rural local authorities, as defined within the 2021 rural-urban classification, in England, 7 October 2024 (Note E-4)

The darker the colour of an authority, the greater the percentage of dwellings classed as empty homes. Light grey areas on the map represent intermediate urban or urban authorities.



Empty homes by Council Tax Band

Comparing between Council Tax bands gives us an indication of the value of dwellings classed as empty. For the purposes of this analysis the eight council tax bands have been grouped: 'Band A' (lowest), 'Band B', 'Bands C, D, and E', and 'Bands F, G, and H' (highest). Generally, the higher the Council Tax band, the fewer the number of dwellings. For example, as of 7 October 2024, 23% of all chargeable dwellings in England were in Band A. In comparison, just 1% were in Band H. Therefore, combining bands allows for fairer comparisons between the higher and lower bands. For figures relating to the Council Tax band groupings and property values, see Table E-3.

The bar chart in Figure E-5 shows the proportion of dwellings classed as empty, by grouped Council Tax bands, as of 7 October 2024. The chart portrays the differences between majority rural and urban authorities outside of London; proportions of empty dwellings by Council Tax band in intermediate authorities or in London can be found within the supplementary data tables.

Figure E-5: Bar chart showing the proportion of dwellings classed as empty in majority rural and urban authorities outside of London, as defined within the 2021 rural-urban classification, by grouped Council Tax bands, England, 7 October 2024 (Note E-4)
The bars are presented in the same order and orientation as the legend. 'Urban' excludes London. Proportions labelled on the bars have been rounded to the nearest 0.1%.

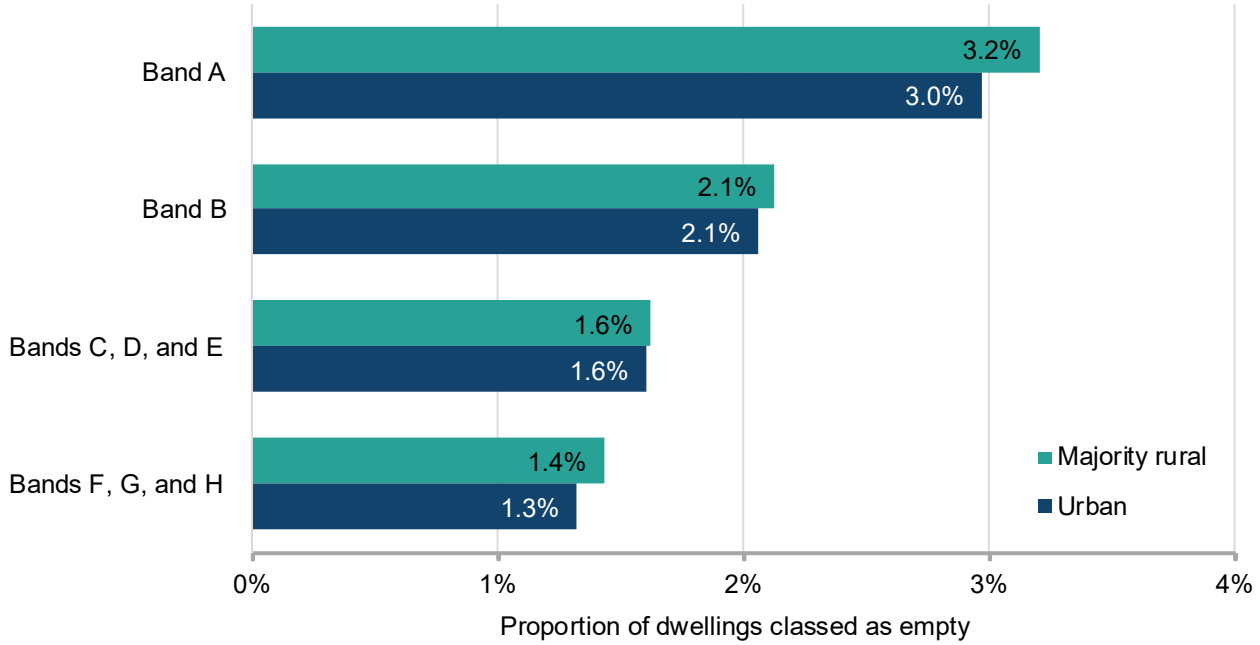


Figure E-5 can be described as follows:

- As of 7 October 2024, there were proportionally more empty dwellings in 'Band A' than in any other band or groups of bands in majority rural authorities, at 3.2%. This is equivalent to 14,900 out of a total 463,800 chargeable dwellings in 'Band A' being classed as empty for Council Tax purposes.
- The proportion of empty 'Band B' dwellings in majority rural authorities was 1.1 percentage points lower than in 'Band A', at 2.1%.
- When combining 'Bands C, D, and E', 1.6% of dwellings in majority rural authorities were empty. When combining 'Bands F, G, and H', 1.4% of dwellings in majority rural authorities

were empty. The proportions of empty dwellings in either of these groups were half the rate of empty ‘Band A’ homes.

- In urban authorities outside of London, the rate of empty dwellings was lower than in majority rural authorities for every Council Tax band or groups of bands. However, the difference between majority rural authorities and urban authorities outside of London was often minimal; for example, the rate of empty dwellings for ‘Band A’ in majority rural authorities was just 0.2 percentage points more than for those in urban authorities outside of London. This was the biggest difference of all the bands or groups of bands. The proportions of empty ‘Band B’ dwellings, or empty properties in ‘Bands C, D, and E’, were similar between majority rural authorities and those in urban authorities outside of London.

Whilst Figure E-5 shows the proportion of dwellings that are empty by Council Tax band for overall rural-urban categories, there will be variation in the empty homes rate for local authorities within these classifications and bands. Table E-7 specifies the majority rural local authorities with the highest proportion of dwellings that are empty, by Council Tax band, as of 7 October 2024.

Table E-7: Local authorities with the highest proportion of chargeable dwellings that were classed as empty within majority rural authorities, by Council Tax band, in England, 7 October 2024 (Note E-4)

Proportions have been rounded to the nearest 0.1%.

Council Tax band	Local authority	Number of empty homes, as a proportion of all chargeable dwellings
Band A	South Cambridgeshire	8.6%
Band B	Uttlesford	4.5%
Band C	Derbyshire Dales	2.9%
Band D	Isles of Scilly	3.7%
Band E	Isles of Scilly	6.1%
Band F	Cotswold	3.3%
Band G	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	3.4%
Band H	West Lindsey	14.3%

Table E-7 can be described as follows:

- The majority rural authorities with the highest proportion of either ‘Band A’, ‘Band B’, or ‘Band G’ properties being empty were located in the East of England; ‘South Cambridgeshire’ had the highest proportion of empty ‘Band A’ properties (8.6%), whilst ‘Uttlesford’ had the highest proportion of empty ‘Band B’ properties (4.5%). ‘King’s Lynn and West Norfolk’ had the highest proportion of empty ‘Band G’ properties, at 3.4%.

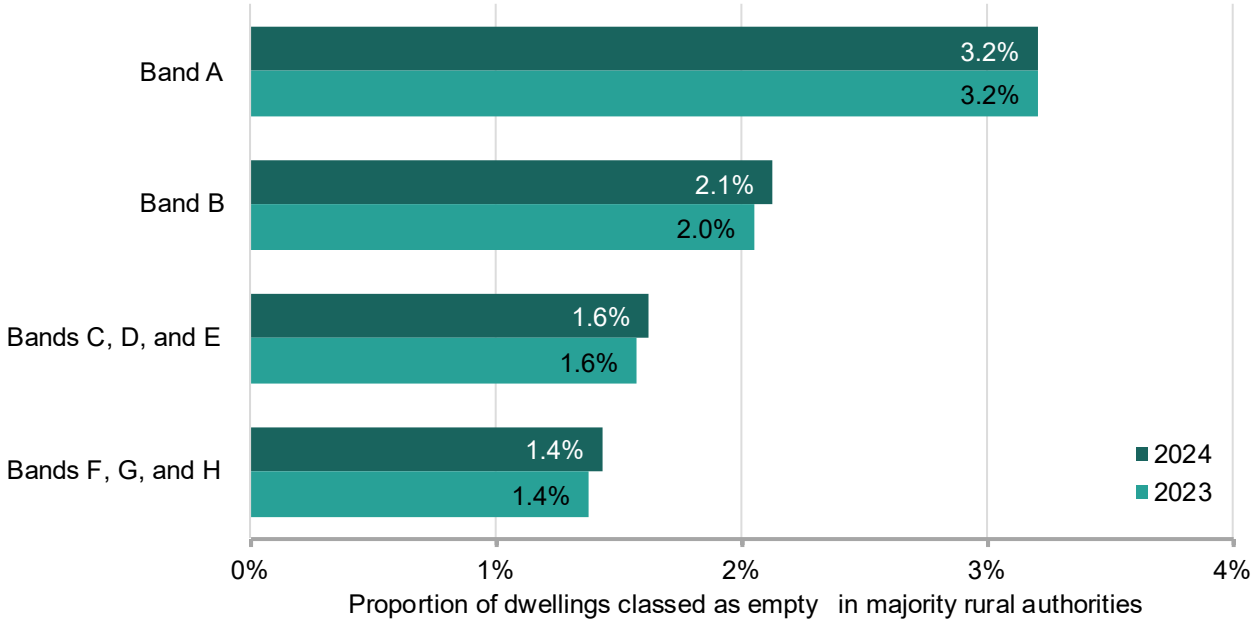
- The majority rural authorities with the highest proportion of either ‘Band C’ or ‘Band H’ properties being empty were located in the East Midlands region of England; ‘Derbyshire Dales’ had the highest proportion of empty ‘Band C’ properties (2.9%), whilst ‘West Lindsey’ had the highest proportion of empty ‘Band H’ properties (14.3%). It should be noted that, compared to the other Council Tax bands, there were particularly low counts of ‘Band H’ properties across England. In this case, 14.3% corresponds to 8 empty dwellings out of a total of 56 ‘Band H’ properties in ‘West Lindsey’.

- The ‘Isles of Scilly’ had the highest proportions of either ‘Band D’ or ‘Band E’ properties being classed as empty for Council Tax purposes, at 3.7% and 6.1% respectively. However, it should be noted that these proportions correspond to low counts of empty homes; overall, there were just 40 empty homes in this authority.
- The ‘Cotswold’ authority – in the South West region of England – had the highest proportion of empty ‘Band F’ properties of all majority rural authorities, at 3.3%.

By comparing between the Council Taxbase data for the previous year, it is possible to see how the value of the empty dwelling stock has changed over time. The bar chart in Figure E-6 shows the proportion of dwellings classed as empty in majority rural authorities, as at 2 October 2023 and 7 October 2024. These dates refer to the Council Taxbase snapshots, and will henceforth be referred to in the chart commentary as just ‘2023’ and ‘2024’ for simplicity. Data for other rural-urban classifications can be found within the supplementary data tables.

Figure E-6: Bar chart showing the proportion of dwellings classed as empty in majority rural authorities, as defined within the 2021 rural-urban classification, by grouped Council Tax bands, England, 2 October 2023 and 7 October 2024 (Note E-4)

The bars are presented in the same order and orientation as the legend. ‘2023’ refers to 2 October 2023, whilst ‘2024’ refers to 7 October 2024. Proportions labelled on the bars have been rounded to the nearest 0.1%.



Between 2023 and 2024, the proportion of empty ‘Band A’ dwellings in majority rural authorities did not change; in both years, it was 3.2%. In absolute terms, the number of empty dwellings in majority rural authorities increased from 14,700 in 2023 to 14,900 in 2024.

The proportion of empty ‘Band B’ dwellings in majority rural authorities increased by 0.1 percentage point between 2023 and 2024; in absolute terms, this was an increase from 11,600 to 12,100 dwellings.

The proportion of dwellings in ‘Bands C, D, and E’ classed as empty in majority rural authorities did not change between 2023 and 2024, remaining at 1.6%. In absolute terms, the number of empty

dwellings increased from 21,400 to 22,400 dwellings. Therefore, whilst there was no proportional change, this was the greatest absolute increase of all Council Tax bands/groups.

Between 2023 and 2024, there was little change in the proportion of empty dwellings in ‘Bands F, G, and H’ in majority rural authorities. In absolute terms, the number of empty dwellings increased from 4,200 to 4,400 dwellings.

Second and empty homes explanatory notes

- **Note E-1**

The data source is the Local Authority Council Taxbase England 2024 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-2**

Tables showing data given within this section can be found in the housing supplementary data tables.

- **Note E-3**

Definitions of rural terms can be found at: Rural Urban Classification - GOV.UK

- **Note E-4**

Between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2024, authorities were able to charge an Empty Homes Premium on properties that had been empty for two or more years.

From 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, the premium was 100%, having been increased from a 50% premium.

From 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, the premium could be up to 100% for dwellings that had been empty for between 2 to 5 years and up to 200% for dwellings that had been empty for more than 5 years.

From 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024, the premium could be up to 100% for dwellings that had been empty for between 2 to 5 years, up to 200% for dwellings that had been empty for between 5 to 10 years, and up to 300% for dwellings that have been empty for 10 years or more.

Since 1 April 2024, authorities have additionally been able to charge a premium of up to 100% for dwellings that have been empty for between 1 and 2 years.

In 2024, 292 out of 296 authorities reported they were charging the premium on some of their empty dwellings.

F. Homelessness

In recent years, there have been proportionally fewer people assessed as homeless in majority rural authorities compared to urban authorities.

Homelessness - key findings

The homeless rate in rural areas is around half the rate in London

- In 2023/24, there were 4.9 statutorily homeless households per 1,000 usual households in majority rural areas; this compares to 10.2 homeless households per 1,000 usual households in London.

Homelessness has increased in Rural areas in recent years

- In 2018/19, there were 3.4 statutorily homeless households per 1,000 usual households in majority rural authorities. By 2023/24, this had increased by 44%, to 4.9 homeless households per 1,000 usual households.

Rough sleeping levels in rural areas are lower and more stable than in urban areas

- At the 2024 autumn rough sleeping snapshot, there were 5.3 people sleeping rough per 100,000 population in majority rural authorities and 7.9 per 100,000 population in urban authorities outside of London.

Summary

In this publication, 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 the year ending March 2024, there were 4.9 households assessed as homeless per 1,000 usual households in majority rural authorities. This was 3.1 households per 1,000 fewer than in urban authorities outside of London (8.0 homeless households per 1,000 usual households). In all rural-urban classifications of authorities in England, the rate of statutory homelessness was higher in the year ending March 2024 than it was in the year ending March 2019.

In the 2024 autumn snapshot of rough sleeping, there were 5.3 people sleeping rough per 100,000 population in majority rural authorities. This compares to 7.9 people sleeping rough per 100,000 population in urban authorities outside of London. When comparing these annual snapshots between 2010 and 2024, the highest rate of rough sleeping in majority rural authorities was in 2016, where there were 5.9 rough sleepers per 100,000 population. Rough sleeping tends to occur more frequently in the warmer summer months, and less in the colder winter months.

Background information

Homelessness is a complex issue that can take many forms. It is not always easy to monitor, resulting in multiple definitions and measurements.

Defining homelessness

The term ‘homelessness’ is often considered to apply only to people ‘sleeping rough’. However, within this publication, “homelessness” also includes the statutorily homeless, i.e., those households which meet specific criteria of priority need set out in legislation. This publication focusses on those who are already homeless on approaching the specified local authority, or are homeless at the end of a prevention duty, and require help (i.e., a “relief duty”) to secure settled accommodation.

Rough sleepers are defined 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-4).

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 Homelessness data: notes and definitions - GOV.UK for further information about the definitions of homelessness.

Data sources

Within this publication, there are three data sources that are used to highlight homelessness statistics, all of which come from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) homelessness statistics collection.

For **statutory homelessness**, the latest data comes from Statutory homelessness in England: financial year 2023-24 - GOV.UK; the collection also includes the same report for previous years since 2018/19, as well as quarterly information. For each year stated within this section, data are for statutory homelessness assessments and activities in England between 1st April and 31st March of the following year (i.e., the entire financial year).

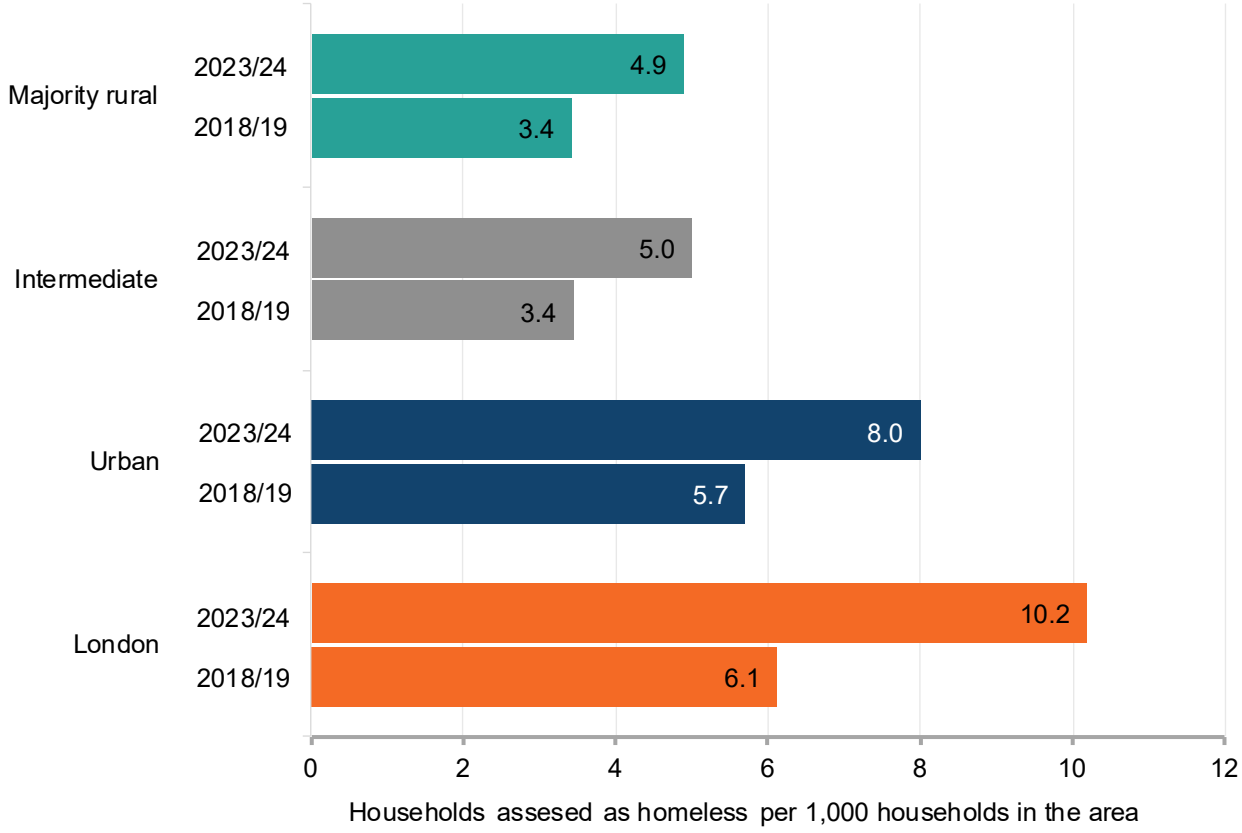
For **rough sleeping**, this section includes information from the Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2024 - GOV.UK (referred to as “the snapshot”). The snapshot includes annual single-night estimates of the number of people sleeping rough, taken between 2010 to 2024. This allows for a long-term comparison to be made without the effects of seasonality; rough sleeping tends to occur more frequently in the warmer summer months, and less in the colder winter months.

Statutory homelessness

Within this publication, the "homelessness rate" is given as the number of households assessed as homeless (and therefore owed a relief duty by the local authority) per 1,000 usual households; see Note F-2 for more information.

The bar chart in Figure F-1 shows the homelessness rate in England for year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2024, allowing for comparisons over time. Whilst homelessness data is published annually, there were a number of authorities that had not provided data across the series – particularly in year ending March 2021. This was likely an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the most recent data has been compared with just one other year to ensure estimates are maximally representative of all authorities within the specified rural-urban class (Note F-6).

Figure F-1: Bar chart showing the change in the number of households accepted as being homeless per 1,000 usual households, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England, year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2024 (Note F-7)
'Intermediate' represents the combination of intermediate rural and intermediate urban authorities. 'Urban' excludes London.



The bar chart in Figure F-1 can be described as follows:

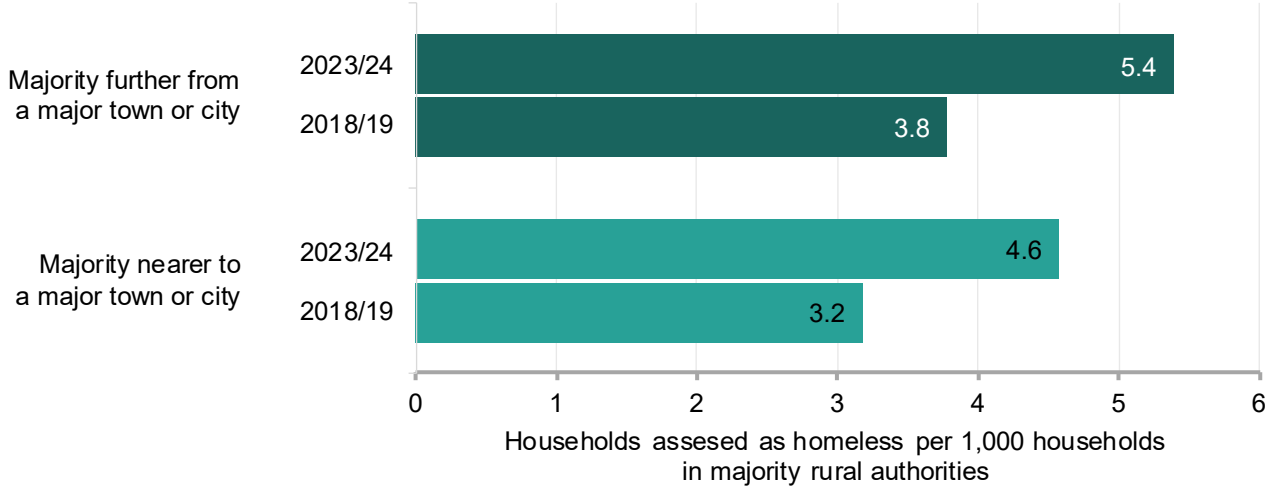
- In both year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2024, the homelessness rate was lowest in majority rural authorities and highest in London. The rate in majority rural authorities has been similar to that of intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, but much lower than that in urban authorities outside of London.
- In year ending March 2024, there were 4.9 households assessed as homeless per 1,000 usual households in majority rural authorities. This was similar to the homelessness rate in

intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, but 3.1 households per 1,000 fewer than in urban authorities outside of London. In London, the homelessness rate was more than double that of majority rural authorities, with 10.2 homeless households per 1,000 usual households.

- Between year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2024, the homelessness rate increased in all rural-urban classifications of authorities.
- In majority rural authorities, there were 3.4 households assessed as homeless per 1,000 usual households in year ending March 2019. This means that between year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2024, the homelessness rate in majority rural authorities increased by 43%. In intermediate (rural or urban) authorities, the homelessness rate saw a similar increase (of 45%).
- In urban authorities outside of London, there were 5.7 households assessed as homeless per 1,000 usual households in year ending March 2019. This means that between year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2024, the homelessness rate in urban authorities outside of London increased by 40% - at a lower rate than for majority rural authorities.
- In London, there were 6.1 households assessed as homeless per 1,000 usual households in year ending March 2019. This means that between year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2024, the homelessness rate in London increased by 66%; this was the largest proportional increase of any rural-urban class.

Proximity to a major town or city for the majority of the local authority population appeared to have an effect on homelessness rates in majority rural authorities; this is shown in the bar chart in Figure F-2. Where the majority of the population lives nearer to a major town or city, this is defined as being within a 30-minute drive of a built-up area with at least 75,000 inhabitants. For more information regarding how the relative access measure is defined see the link in Note F-5.

Figure F-2: Bar chart showing the change in the number of households accepted as being homeless per 1,000 usual households in majority rural authorities, by proximity to a major town or city for the majority of the population, year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2024 (Note F-5, Note F-7)



In both year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2024, the homelessness rate was higher in majority rural authorities where the majority of the population lived further from a major town or city, than where the majority lived nearer.

In year ending March 2024, there were 5.4 households assessed as homeless per 1,000 usual households that lived in authorities where the majority of the population were further from a major town or city. This was 0.8 more households per 1,000 more than in authorities where the majority of the population were nearer to a major town or city.

Between year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2024, the homelessness rate increased by 43% in majority rural authorities where the majority of the population were further from a major town or city. In authorities where the majority of the population were nearer to a major town or city, the homelessness rate increased at a similar rate (by 44%).

The bar charts in Figure F-1 and Figure F-2 show the trends by rural-urban classification overall, but there will be variation in the homelessness rate for local authorities within these classifications. Table F-1 specifies the local authorities with the highest rate of homelessness (with the exception of those that did not provide data), as of year ending March 2024, by rural-urban classification.

In majority rural authorities, 'North Devon' – in the South West of England – had the highest homelessness rate in year ending March 2024; here, for every 1,000 usual households, 9.2 were assessed as homeless. The homelessness rate in 'North Devon' was nearly double that of all majority rural authorities overall (4.9 households per 1,000). Whilst 'North Devon' had the highest homelessness rate amongst majority rural authorities, this was still lower than the highest rates observed in other rural-urban categories.

'Manchester' – an urban authority in the North West region of England – had the highest homelessness rate in England in year ending March 2024; here, for every 1,000 usual households, 20.2 were assessed as homeless. This is more than double the rate of homelessness in 'North Devon', as well as more than double that of urban authorities overall (8.0 households per 1,000). The homelessness rate in 'Manchester' was nearly double that in London overall (10.2 households per 1,000); although, rates varied across London with the highest rate being in Newham (18.3 households per 1,000).

Table F-1: Local authorities with the highest number of households accepted as being homeless per 1,000 usual households within each category of the 2021 rural-urban classification, in England, year ending March 2024 (Note F-6)
The homelessness rate has been rounded to the nearest 0.1 households.

Rural-Urban Classification 2021	Local authority	Homeless households (per 000s)
Majority rural	North Devon	9.2
Intermediate rural	Durham	10.5
Intermediate urban	Bedford	13.2
Urban (excluding London)	Manchester	20.2
London	Newham	18.3
England	**Manchester**	**20.2**

Table F-2 specifies the local authorities with the lowest rate of homelessness (with the exception of those that did not provide data) in year ending March 2024, by rural-urban classification.

In majority rural authorities, 'South Oxfordshire' – in the South East region of England – had the lowest homelessness rate in year ending March 2024; here, for every 1,000 usual households, 1.2 were assessed as homeless. This means that the homelessness rate in 'South Oxfordshire' was around one quarter of the rate for majority rural authorities overall (4.9 households per 1,000).

'East Hampshire' – an intermediate rural authority also in the South East of England – had the lowest homelessness rate in England in year ending March 2024; here, for every 1,000 usual households, 0.9 were assessed as homeless.

Table F-2: Local authorities with the lowest number of households accepted as being homeless per 1,000 usual households within each category of the 2021 rural-urban classification, in England, year ending March 2024 (Note F-6)
The homelessness rate has been rounded to the nearest 0.1 households.

Rural-Urban Classification 2021	Local authority	Homeless households (per 000s)
Majority rural	South Oxfordshire	1.2
Intermediate rural	East Hampshire	0.9
Intermediate urban	Boston	1.9
Urban (excluding London)	Three Rivers	1.2
London	Kingston upon Thames	1.7
England	**East Hampshire**	**0.9**

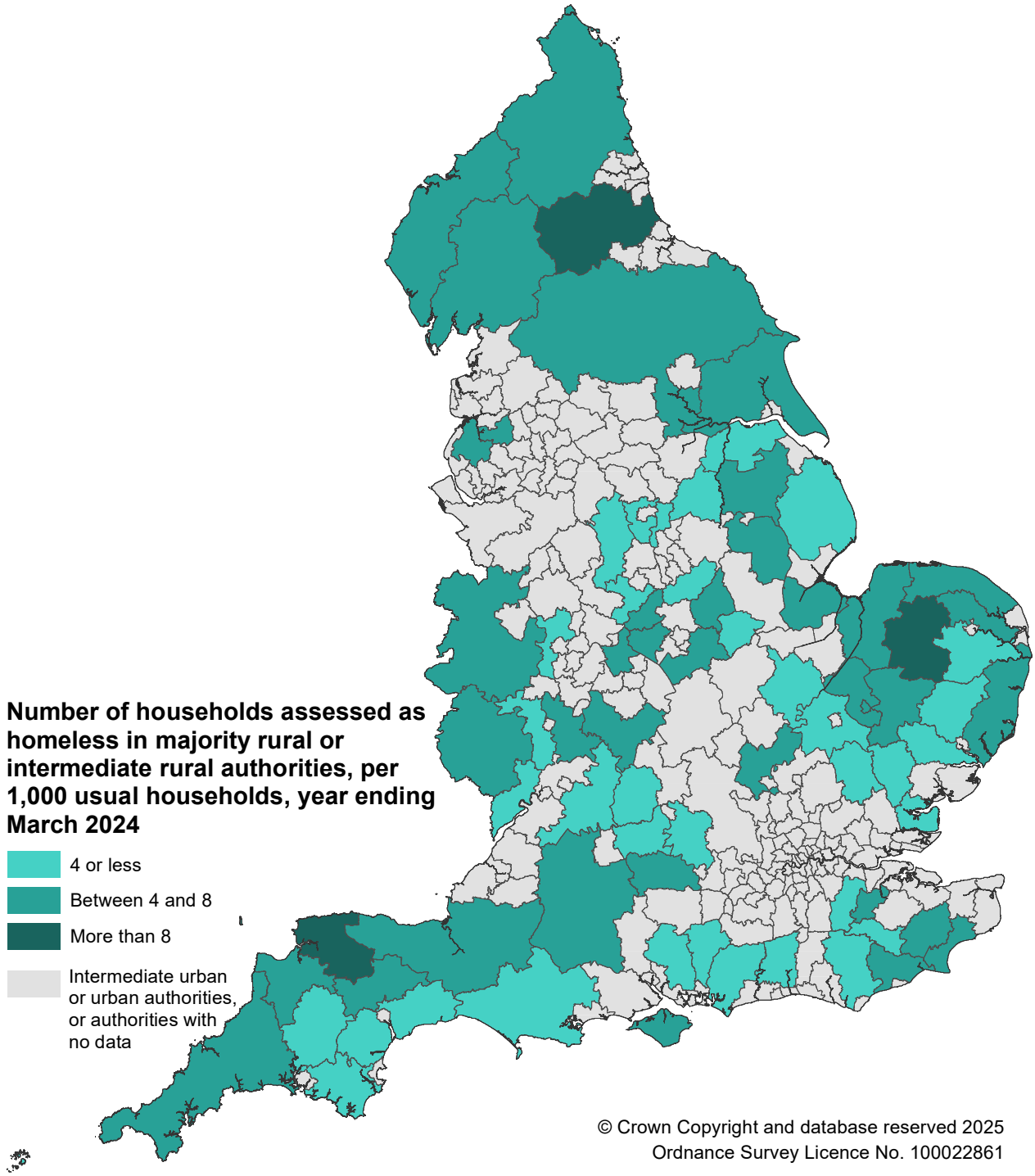
Many of the majority rural or intermediate rural authorities with low rates of statutory homelessness were in the East or South East of England; this is shown in the map in Figure F-3. Intermediate urban and urban authorities (including London) are not shown on the map, but a full table of local authority-level data can be found in the supplementary data tables.

Of the 77 majority rural and intermediate rural authorities, 37 – or just under half – had fewer than 4 homeless households per 1,000 usual households. There were 3 majority rural or intermediate rural authorities with at least double the homelessness rate, with at least 8 homeless households per 1,000 usual households: 'Breckland' (East of England), 'North Devon' (South West), and 'Durham' (North East). Therefore, whilst there was a regional pattern in terms of lower homelessness rates, there was no particular geographic pattern at the higher end of the scale.

There was just one authority – the 'Isles of Scilly' – where homelessness rates were uncertain due to the low homelessness count combined with the low resident population. There were two authorities – 'Newark and Sherwood' and 'Ribble Valley' – that gave no data in the reference year.

Figure F-3: Map showing the number of households accepted as being homeless per 1,000 usual households in majority rural and intermediate rural authorities, as defined within the 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England, year ending March 2024

Grey areas on the map represent non-rural authorities (intermediate urban, urban) as well as those that gave no data.



Rough sleeping

Within this publication, the “rough sleeping rate” is given as the number of people sleeping rough (i.e. in open air or in places not designed for habitation) per 100,000 usual resident population.

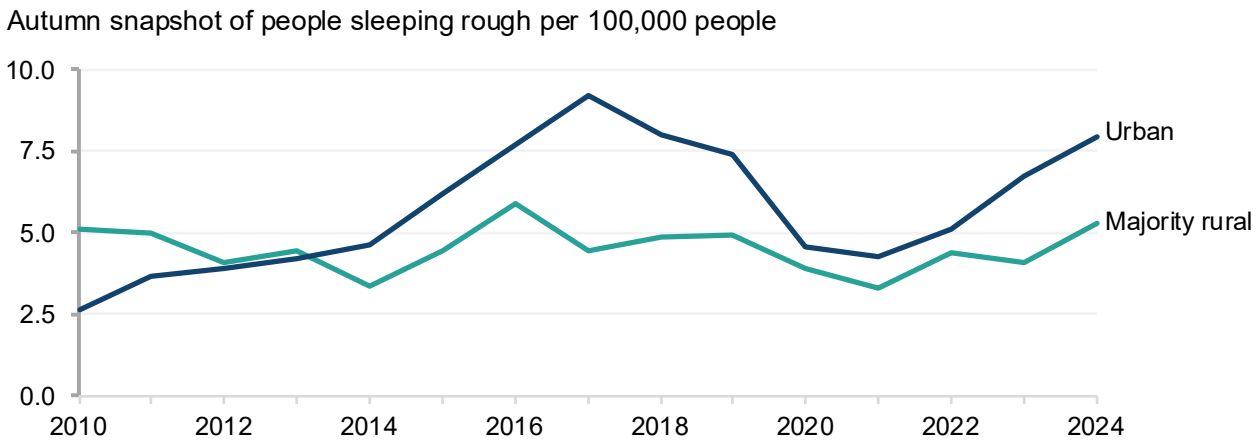
Long-term trends based on a single-night annual snapshot

Every year, a rough sleeping snapshot is captured on a single date chosen by each local authority between 1st October and 30th November. The snapshot takes place in the autumn, rather than summer where numbers are likely to be higher due to warmer temperatures, or winter, where numbers may be lower as there are more temporary night shelters set up to ensure people do not sleep on the streets in very cold weather. To minimize double counting, local authorities coordinate their counts, often on the same night, and share information about individuals to ensure they are only counted once

In 2024, there were 5.3 people sleeping rough per 100,000 population in majority rural authorities. This compares to 7.9 people sleeping rough per 100,000 population in urban authorities outside of London. In London, the rate of rough sleeping was considerably higher at 14.7 people per 100,000 population.

Comparing these annual snapshots allows for a time series to be created that is not impacted by seasonality. The line chart in Figure F-4 shows the estimated number of people sleeping rough, by local authority rural-urban classification, between 2010 and 2024. Intermediate (rural or urban) has been excluded to simplify the chart, as the rough sleeping rate in these authorities was generally similar to that in majority rural authorities. London has been excluded as the rough sleeping rate is considerably higher than other authority types. The rough sleeping rates in intermediate authorities and those in London can instead be found within the supplementary data tables.

Figure F-4: Line chart showing the number of people sleeping rough at each autumn snapshot between 2010 and 2024, by 2021 rural-urban classification of local authorities in England (Note F-7)
‘Urban’ excludes London.



At the beginning of the series (between 2010 and 2013), the rough sleeping rate was higher in majority rural authorities than in urban authorities outside of London, although the gap between these authority types closed rapidly. In 2013, the rough sleeping rate was similar in majority rural

authorities (with 4.5 rough sleepers per 100,000 people) compared to those in urban authorities outside of London (with 4.2 rough sleepers per 100,000 people).

Since 2014, the rough sleeping rate has been lower in majority rural authorities than in urban authorities outside of London. Whilst there has been a clear rise and fall in rates in urban authorities, with peaks in 2017 and 2024, there was less fluctuation in rough sleeping rates in majority rural authorities.

The highest rate of rough sleeping in majority rural authorities across the period was in 2016, where there were 5.9 rough sleepers per 100,000 population. In urban authorities outside of London, the peak was slightly later in 2017, where there were 9.2 rough sleepers per 100,000 population.

The lowest rate of rough sleeping in majority rural authorities was in 2021, where there were 3.3 rough sleepers per 100,000 population. This aligns with the "everyone in" government initiative introduced during 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.

Whilst the rough sleeping rate in urban authorities outside of London was also low in 2021 (with 4.3 rough sleepers per 100,000 population), the lowest point across the series was instead in 2010, where there were 2.7 rough sleepers per 100,000 population.

Homelessness explanatory notes

- **Note F-1**

Tables showing data presented in this section can be found in the housing supplementary data tables.

- **Note F-2**

The relief duty is owed to households that are already homeless on approaching a local authority, and require help to secure settled accommodation. The duty lasts 56 days and can only be extended by a local authority if the household is not owed the main homelessness duty; for more information, see: Statutory homelessness: Annual technical note - GOV.UK.

For the purposes of this publication, a usual household is defined as one person living alone or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room or dining area. This includes sheltered accommodation units in an establishment where 50% or more have their own kitchens (irrespective of whether there are other communal facilities) and all people living in caravans on any type of site that is their usual residence; this will include anyone who has no other usual residence elsewhere in the UK: Household projections for England - Office for National Statistics.

- **Note F-3**

Source: MHCLG: Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2024 - GOV.UK

- **Note F-4**

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

- **Note F-5**

Definitions of rural terms can be found at: Rural Urban Classification - GOV.UK

- **Note F-6**

Within the annual homelessness statistics, there have been some local authorities with missing data. In year ending March 2019, there were 10 authorities that did not provide data: of these, 3 were in London, 5 were

urban but outside of London, and 2 were intermediate (rural or urban). Therefore, all majority rural authorities provided homelessness data in this year. As a result, homelessness estimates presented within this section are representative of their whole rural-urban class as follows: majority rural = 100%; intermediate (rural or urban) = 98%; urban (excluding London) = 96%; London = 91%. Using intermediate (rural or urban) authorities as an example, this means that the statutory homelessness rates presented this section are representative of 98% of all intermediate authorities.

In year ending March 2024, 18 authorities did not provide data: of these, 3 were in London, 8 were urban but outside of London, 6 were intermediate (rural or urban), and just 1 was majority rural. As a result, homelessness estimates presented within this section are representative of their whole rural-urban class as follows: majority rural = 98%; intermediate (rural or urban) = 93%; urban (excluding London) = 94%; London = 91%.

- **Note F-7**

Previous local authority estimates of homelessness are taken as of the local authorities that exist at the time. For this publication, local government reorganisation has been considered and all estimates have been adjusted in line with the local authorities that existed in 2024. This meant that data for some authorities has been combined, as the 326 authorities that existed in year ending March 2019 have become 296 as of year ending March 2024.

By bringing forward these local authorities to 2024 boundaries, it has been possible to retrospectively apply the 2021 Rural-Urban Classification. This avoids discontinuity and ensures that data between years are comparable. When local authorities have combined, they become larger and more populous, and therefore typically more urban.

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.

Land use change for housing - key findings

Proportional more residential development in rural areas than in urban areas

- 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

Most rural residential development is on agricultural or other undeveloped land

- 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

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.

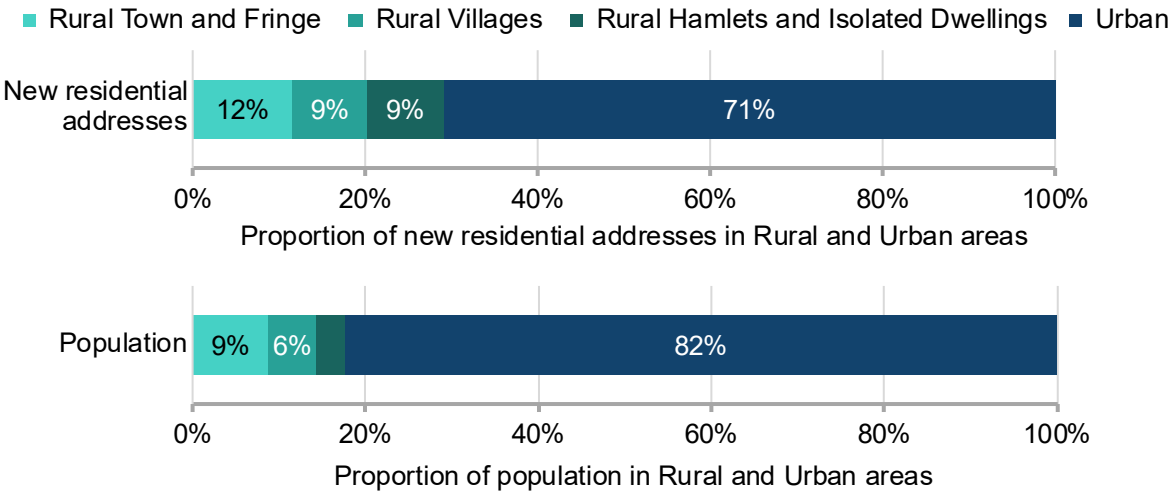
In Rural areas, land previously in agricultural use provided the majority of land on which new residential addresses were developed, accounting for 53% of new addresses. There was a slightly higher proportion of this in Rural Hamlets and Isolated Dwellings than in Rural Villages or Rural Town and Fringe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

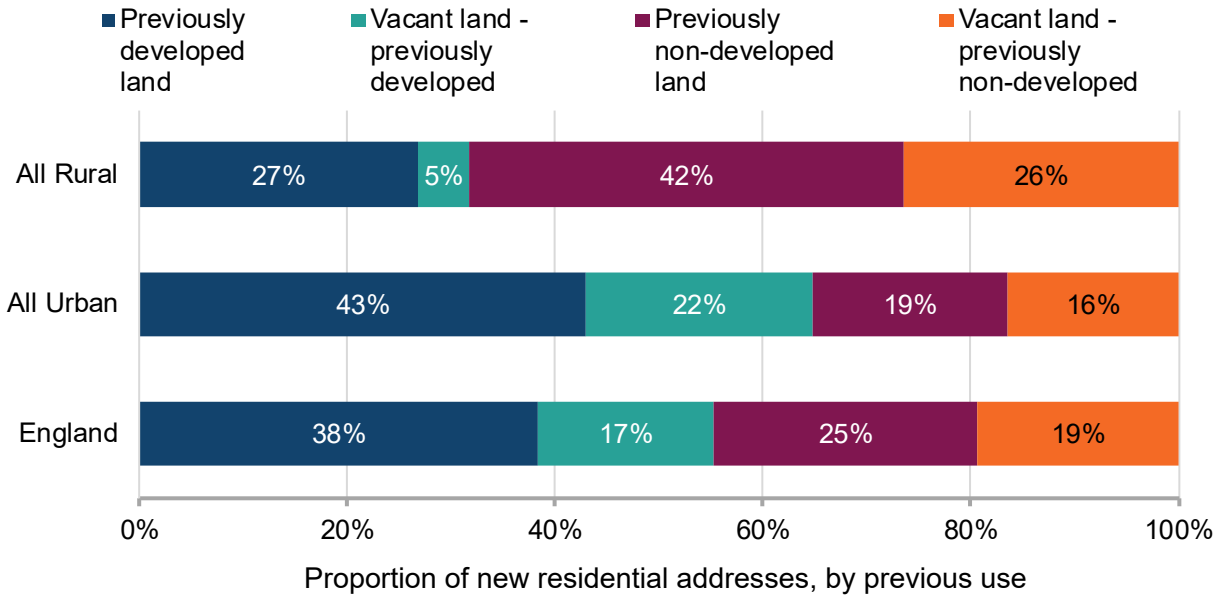
Figure G-2 shows the proportion of new residential addresses by previously developed and previously non-developed land and whether the land had been vacant.

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.

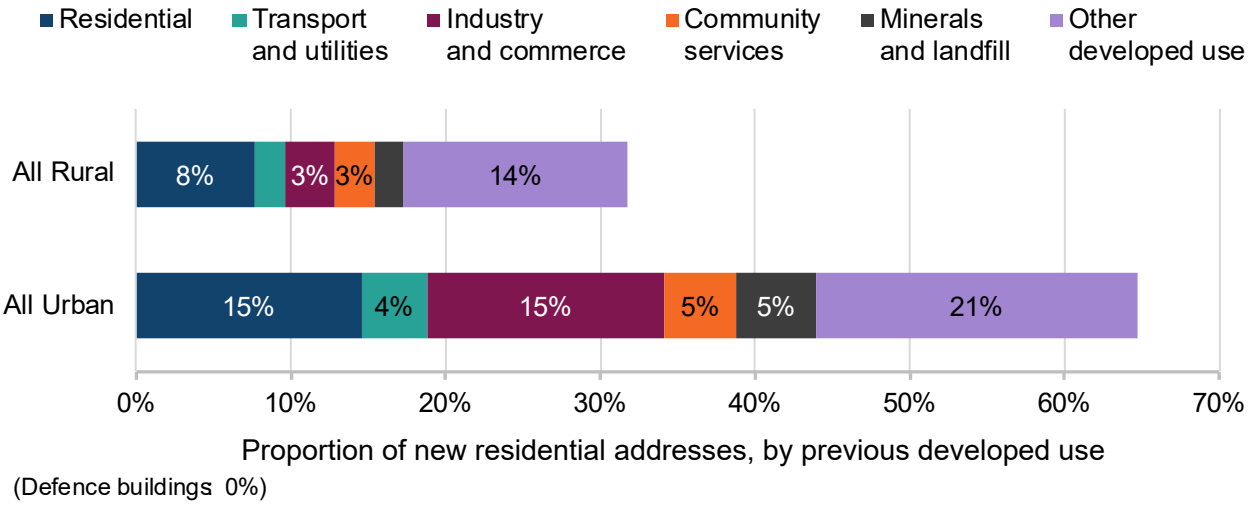


Previous land use

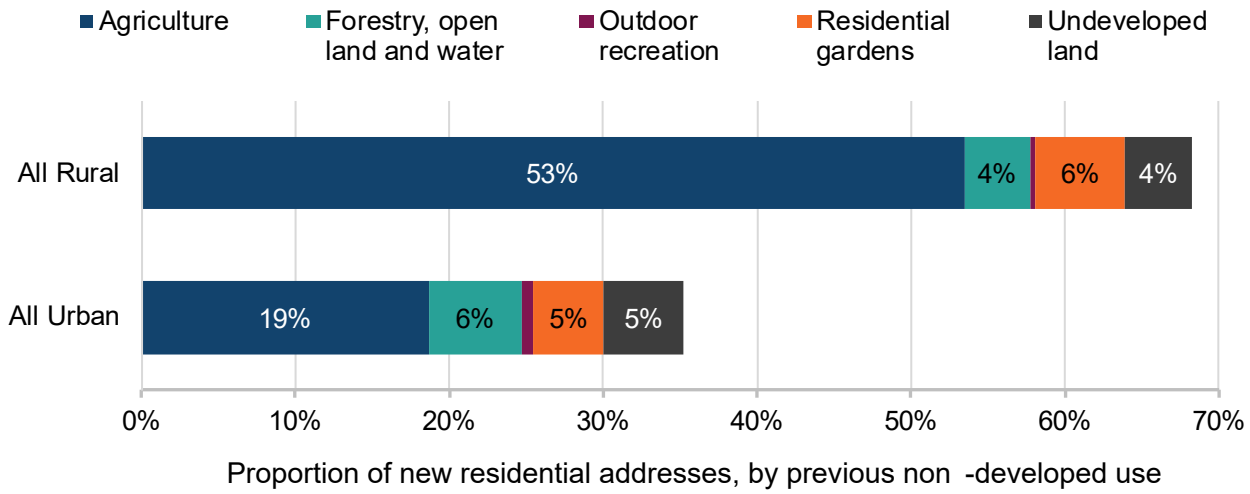
The Land Use Change Statistics include more detailed breakdowns of the previous land use, including the land use prior to land becoming vacant. In 2021/22 in Rural areas, land previously in agricultural use provided the majority of land on which new residential addresses were developed, accounting for 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.



(Defence buildings: 0%)



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:

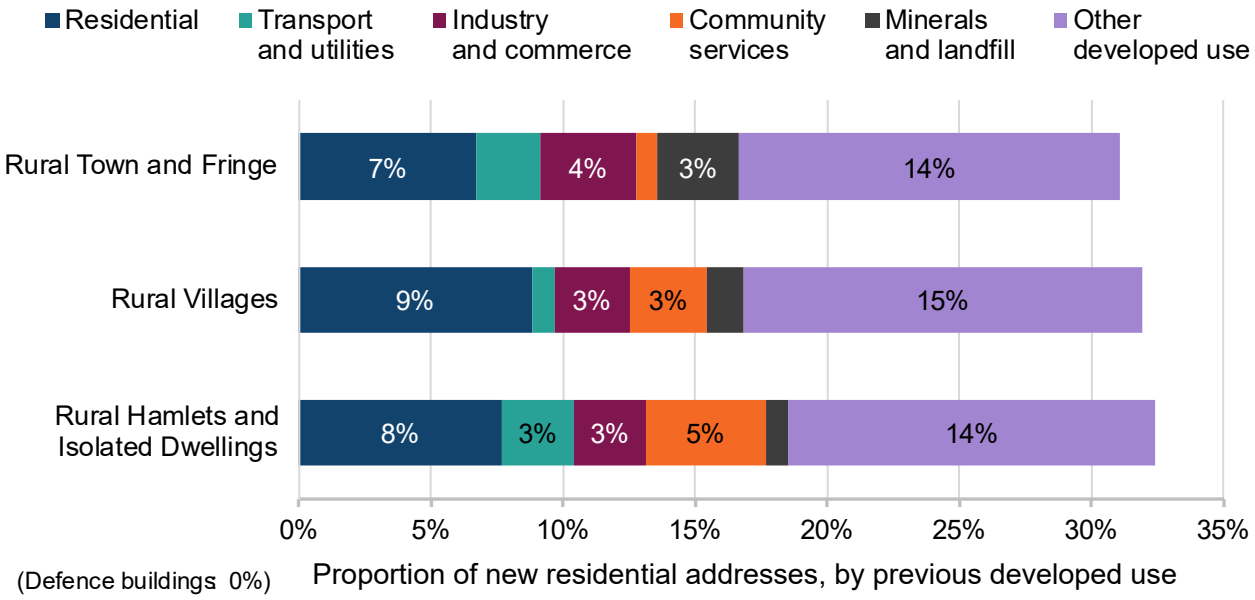
- **Agriculture**: 53% in Rural areas and 19% in Urban areas;

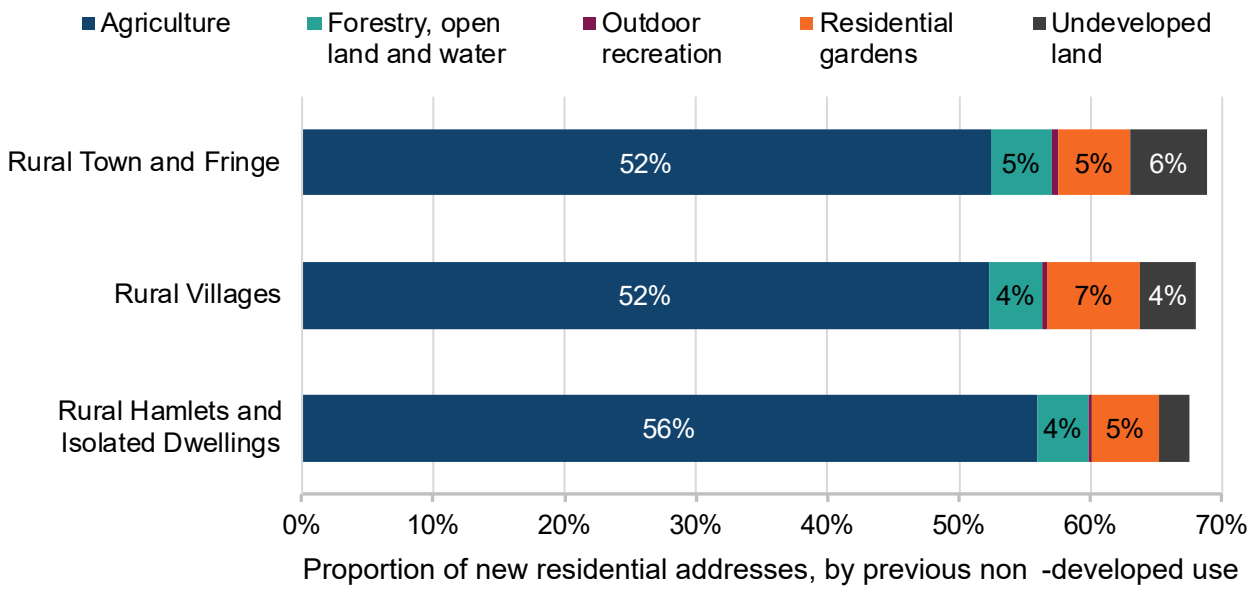
- **Forestry, open land and water**: 4% in Rural areas and 6% in Urban areas;
- **Outdoor recreation**: 0.4% in Rural areas and 1% in Urban areas;
- **Residential gardens**: 6% in Rural areas and 5% in Urban areas;
- **Other undeveloped land**: 4% in Rural areas and 5% in Urban areas.

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.





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 higher proportion of homes in rural areas than in urban areas that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard; the proportion is lowest in suburban residential areas.

Housing quality - key findings

A higher proportion of homes in rural areas are non-Decent than in urban areas

- In 2022, 20% of homes in rural areas and 16% of those in urban areas failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard. However, the proportion of rural homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard halved over the period 2008 to 2022.

The more rural the area the higher the proportion of non-Decent homes

- In 2008, 34% of homes in “rural residential” and 47% of homes in “village centres” failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard. By 2022, these figures had fallen to 15% and 23% respectively.
- In the “most rural” areas, the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard was 38% in 2022, having fallen from over 60% in 2008.

Private renters in rural areas are the most likely to live in non-Decent homes

- Within rural areas the proportion of Owner-occupied and Social rent homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard was similar (at 18%) and much lower than the 33% of Private rent homes failing to meet the Standard in 2022.
- In rural areas 33% of private rent homes are failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard compared to 21% in urban areas.

Rural homes are less likely to provide sufficient thermal comfort than urban homes

- In 2008, 16% of rural homes failed to provide sufficient thermal comfort, compared to 15% in urban areas and 11% in suburban areas.
- In 2019, 9% of rural homes failed to provide sufficient thermal comfort compared to 4% in suburban areas. This difference is likely to be because there are proportionally far fewer pre-1919 homes in suburban areas than in rural areas and older homes are likely to be less energy efficient and therefore harder to keep adequately warm.

Rural homes are slightly less prone to damp than urban homes

- In 2008, 8% rural homes had damp as did 13% of homes in urban areas; by 2022, 4% of homes in rural areas had damp compared to 6% of urban homes.
- In 2022 a smaller proportion of Social rent homes in rural areas suffer from damp than in urban areas (5% compared to 7%) however a greater proportion of Private rent homes in rural areas suffer from damp (12% compared to 9%).

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 2022, 20% of homes in rural areas failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard, but this proportion has fallen from over 40% in 2008. Between 2015 and 2022 the proportion of rural homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard was 2 to 3 percentage points higher than in urban areas, but in 2022 the gap widened to 4 percentage points higher than in urban areas. In 2022 16% 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. Within rural areas the proportion of Owner-occupied and Social rent homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard was similar (at 18%) and much lower than the 33% of Private rent homes failing to meet the Standard in 2022. Rental homes were more likely to fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard in rural areas than in urban areas.

The Decent Homes Standard focuses on homes meeting 4 criteria, two of which are meeting the current statutory minimum standard for housing and providing a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. 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 2022 a higher proportion of homes in rural areas than homes in urban areas were not decent because they contain at least one Category 1 hazard. In 2022 14% of homes in rural areas contained at least one Category 1 hazard compared to 9% of homes in urban areas. In 2019 9% of homes in rural areas failed to provide sufficient thermal comfort 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 between these two levels. In 2022 just over 4% of homes in rural areas had at least one form of damp as did just under 6% of homes in urban areas In 2008 8% of homes in rural areas had damp compared to 13% in urban areas. Social rent properties are less likely to suffer from damp in rural areas than urban areas; but for private rental properties they are slightly more likely to suffer from damp in rural areas than in urban areas.

In 2022 93% of occupied homes in rural areas had a smoke alarm, an increase of 4 percentage points more than in 2011, but the more rural the area the lower the proportion of homes with a smoke alarm.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, EHS surveyors could not conduct a full internal inspection of properties over the period 2020 to 2022. So, some EHS variables are only available up to 2019; any time-series charts with 2019 as the last data point have not been updated in this edition.

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 any 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.

The charts within this Chapter follow 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".

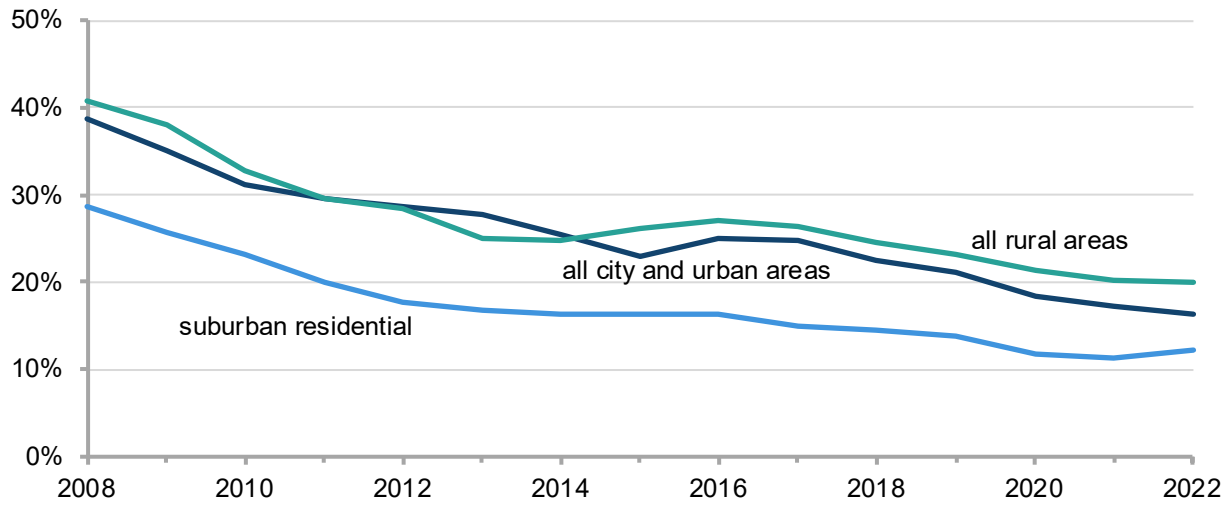
This EHS rural and urban classification system is strongly reliant on the perception of the surveyor conducting each dwelling survey. The Official Statistics Rural Urban classification has a precise definition linked to population (see Appendix 2: Defining Rural areas for details on this definition) 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) that includes both a questionnaire filled in by the household and a professional survey of the property. 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 2022. In 2022, 20% of homes in rural areas and 16% of those in urban areas failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Figure H-1: Line chart showing the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard by EHS classification areas, 2008 to 2022. (Note H-1, Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-8).



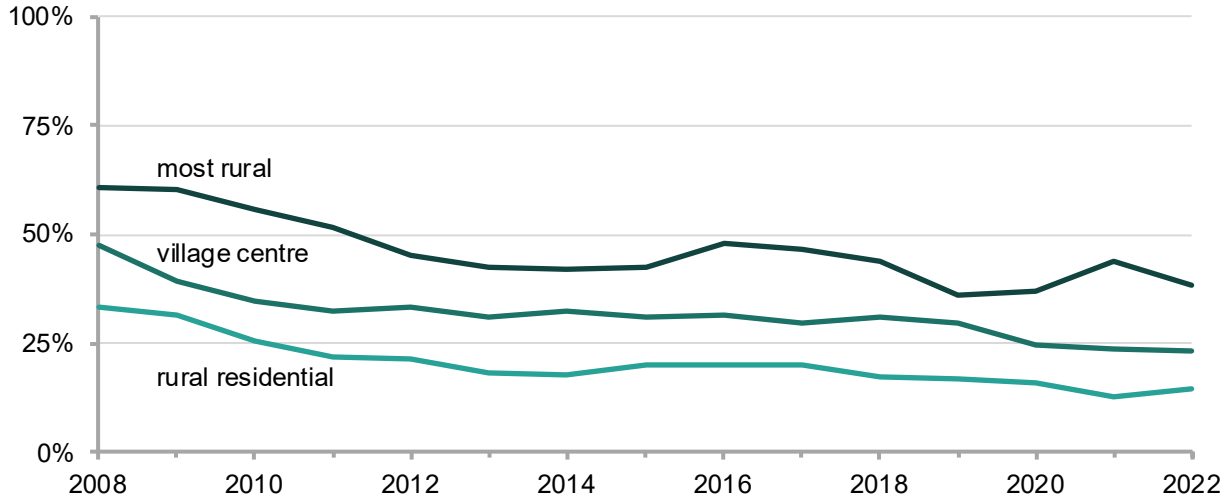
As Figure H-1 shows, this proportion has fallen from over 40% in 2008 and there have been year-on-year falls in the proportion of non-decent homes in rural areas every year since 2016. Between

2015 and 2022 the proportion of rural homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard was 2 to 3 percentage points higher than in urban areas, but in 2022 the proportion of rural homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard was 4 percentage points higher than in urban areas.

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 suburban areas. This is likely to be due to suburban areas having a smaller proportion of pre-1919 homes than other areas. In 2022 12% of suburban homes failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard

Figure H-2 is a line chart showing that over the period 2008 to 2022, 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 2022, these figures had fallen to 15% and 23% respectively. The proportion of homes in “rural residential” areas that failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard in 2022 was marginally higher than in 2021, but still following the downward trajectory seen between 2017 and 2020. In the “most rural” areas, classified as simply “rural” in the EHS classification, the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard was 38% in 2022, having fallen from over 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 2022. (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-8).



A new addition to the EHS source data tables for 2022 was information on the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard by EHS classification area and tenure. This information is shown as a bar chart in Figure H-3. The bar chart shows that for all tenure types there was proportionally more homes in rural areas than in urban areas failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard in 2022. Suburban areas had the lowest proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard for all tenure types.

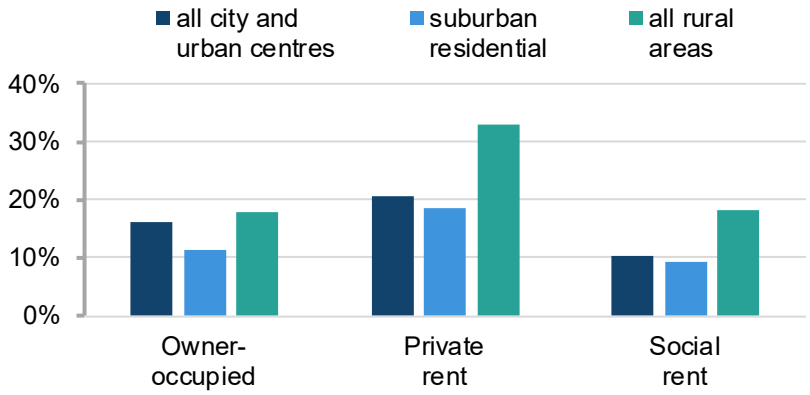
Within rural areas the proportion of Owner-occupied and Social rent homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard was similar (at 18%) and much lower than the 1 in 3 Private rent homes failing to meet the Standard in 2022.

When comparing rural areas to urban areas in 2022 there was:

- a marginally greater proportion of Owner-occupied homes in rural areas failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard (18% compared to 16%);
- a greater proportion of Social rent homes in rural areas failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard (18% compared to 10%); and
- a much greater proportion of private rent homes in rural areas failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard (33% compared to 21%).

In the suburbs the proportion of rental homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard was similar to urban areas, but for Owner-occupied homes it was 4 percentage points lower.

Figure H-3: A bar chart showing the proportion of homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard by EHS classification area and tenure 2022 (Note H-4, Note H-5).



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 over the period 2020 to 2022. Therefore, some data could not be collected in these years (Note H-6).

Homes failing to meet the minimum standards under HHSRS

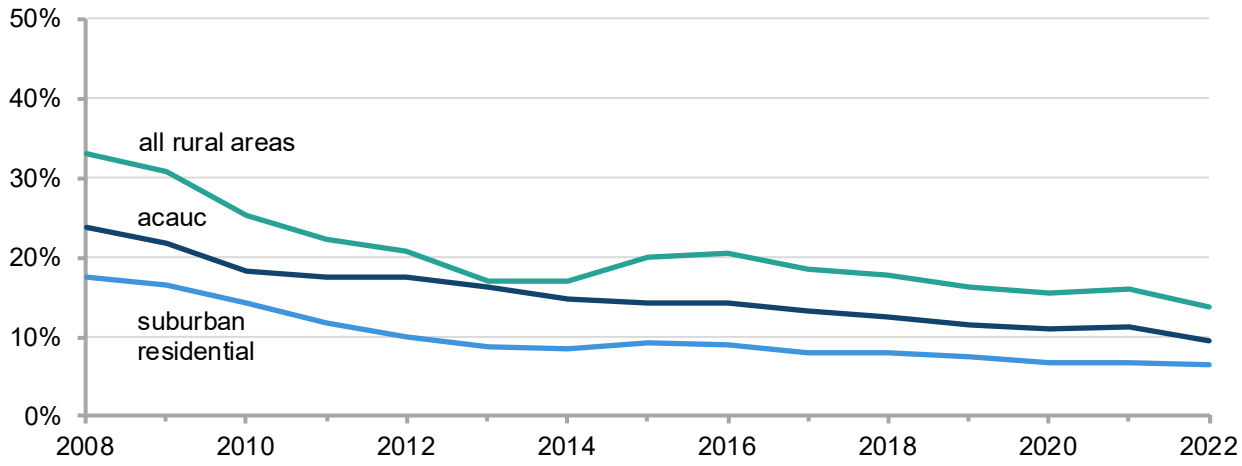
The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is used to define the statutory minimum standards that a home needs to meet to be considered decent. Dwellings posing at least one Category 1 hazard (Note H-2) under the HHSRS will fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard (Note H-3). Whilst the EHS does 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-4).

Figure H-4 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 2022. For rural areas the proportion of homes with at least one Category 1 hazard fell from 33% in 2008 to

17% in 2013. Over the period 2013 to 2022, the reduction in the proportion of homes in rural areas with at least one category 1 hazard was minimal and increased back up to 20% in 2015 before falling to 16% in 2019 where it remained until 2021. In 2022 the proportion of homes with at least one Category 1 hazard in rural areas fell to 14%.

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 24% in 2008 to 11% in 2019 and then remained at 11% through to 2021. In 2022 the proportion of homes with at least one Category 1 hazard in urban areas fell to 9%. 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 2022.

Figure H-4: Line chart showing the proportion of homes failing to meet the minimum standards set under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) by EHS classification areas, 2008 to 2022. (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-6, Note H-7, Note H-8)
The line labelled acauc is all city and urban centres.



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) 32% of the homes had at least one Category 1 hazard in 2022 (Supplementary Table HB1b, Note H-8). This corresponds to around 1 in 3 homes in the “most rural” areas and compares to at least half of the homes in the “most rural” areas having at least one Category 1 hazard over the period 2008 to 2010.

Homes in disrepair

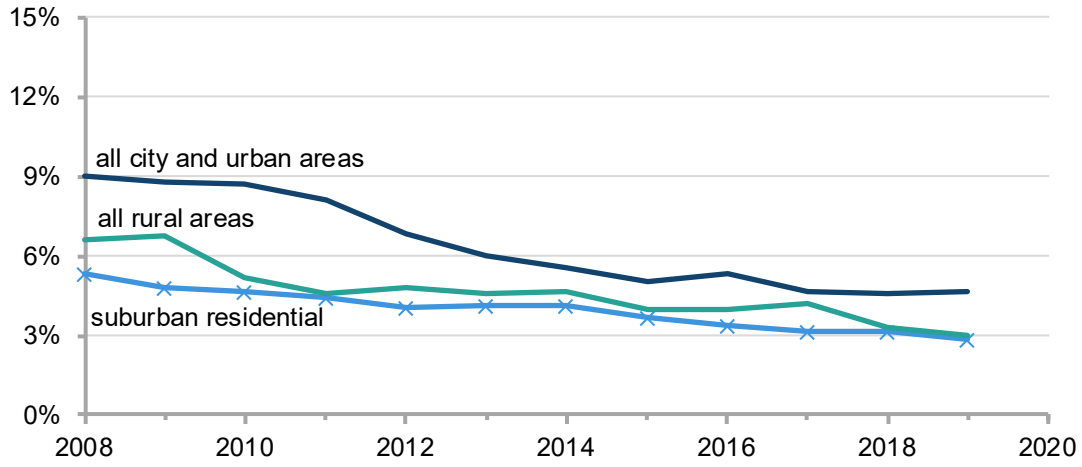
A further factor in determining whether homes are Decent is if they are in a reasonable state of repair. Figure H-5 is a line chart showing how the proportion of homes that are not in a reasonable state of repair fell over the period 2008 to 2019. In all area types fewer than 1 in 10 homes were in a poor state of repair in 2008 and by 2019 this proportion had fallen to fewer than 1 in 20.

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 in rural and suburban areas was less than 0.7%, the exceptions were 2012 and 2017.

Figure H-5: 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.

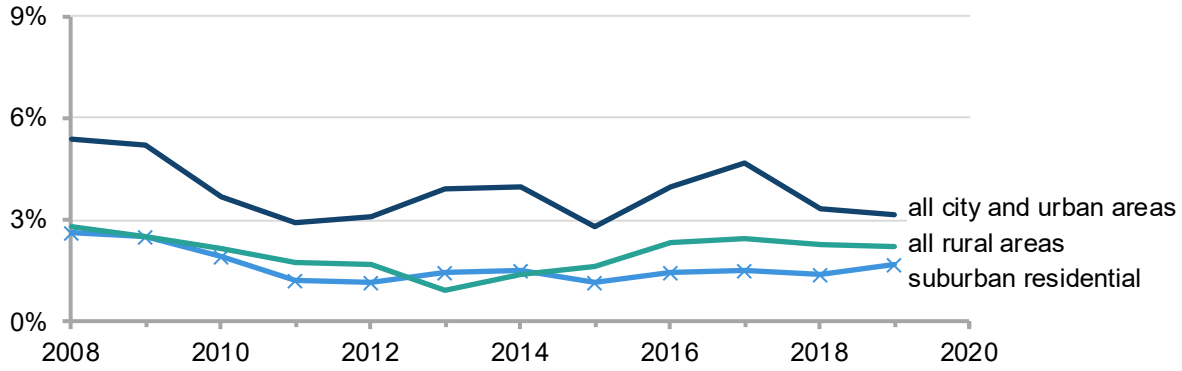


Homes without modern facilities

The third factor in the Decent Homes Standard is whether the homes have reasonably modern facilities. Figure H-6 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.

Figure H-6: 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.



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

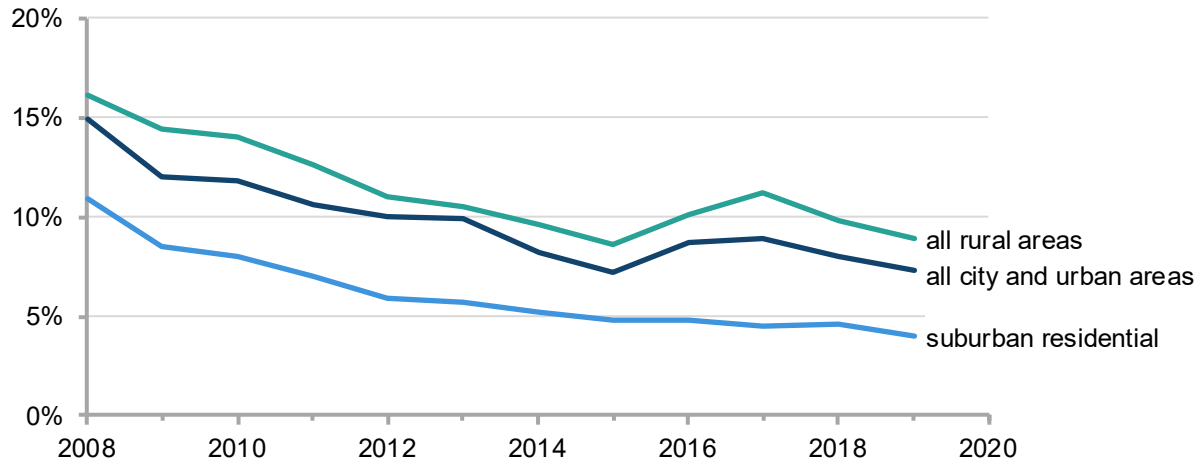
areas and in suburban areas. A larger proportion of homes in urban areas are lacking reasonably modern facilities than in rural areas. In urban areas the proportion of homes lacking reasonably modern facilities fluctuated between 3 and 6%, which means that this proportion is 1 to 3 percentage points higher than in rural areas.

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-7 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.

Figure H-7: 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)

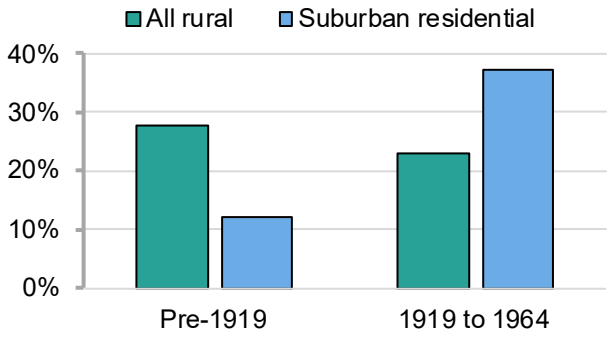


The trend for the proportion of homes in rural areas failing to provide sufficient thermal comfort (Figure H-7) has 3 components. The first is component is for the period 2008 to 2015. Over this period, the proportion of rural homes failing to provide sufficient thermal comfort fell year-on-year with the value dropping from 16% to 9%. So, the proportion almost 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.

In 2019 the proportion of urban homes failing to provide sufficient thermal comfort stood at 7%. As Figure H-7 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-8), with the balance being made up by homes constructed between 1919 and 1964. As explained 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-8: 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.

In the English Housing Survey, a home is considered to have a problem with damp if the surveyor records damp which is significant enough to be taken into consideration when making a HHSRS

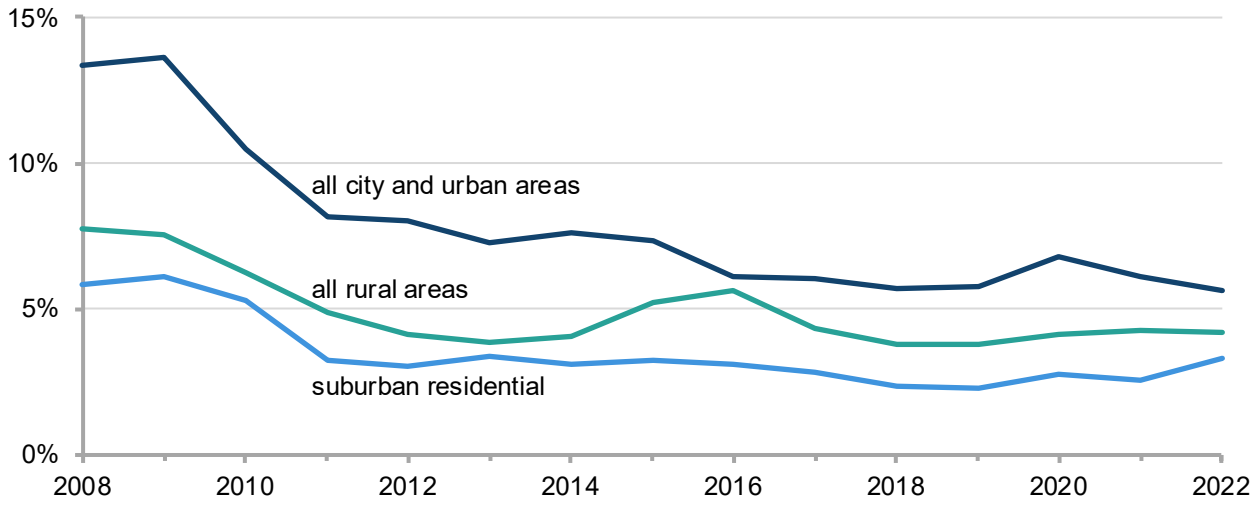
risk assessment, minor issues of damp are not recorded. A dwelling is assessed as having a damp problem where any of the following exist: penetrating damp, rising damp, or extensive patches of mould growth on walls and ceilings and/or mildew on soft furnishings

Figure H-9 is a line chart showing (a) how the proportion of homes with damp (Note H-12) has reduced over the period 2008 to 2022 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 2022 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, 8% rural homes had damp (Note H-12) as did 13% of homes in urban areas. Between 2008 and 2013, the proportion of rural homes with damp decreased year-on-year to just under 4% in 2013. Since then, the proportion has fluctuated between 4% and 5% and was just over 4% in 2022.

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 homes with damp have been more modest with the level fluctuating between 6% and 7% over the period 2013 to 2021. In 2022, just under 6% of homes in urban areas had damp In suburban areas the proportion was 6% in 2008 and dropped to 3% in 2011; and then between 2011 and 2022 it fluctuated between 2% and 3%.

Figure H-9: Line chart showing the proportion of homes suffering from any type of damp by EHS classification areas, 2008 to 2022 (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-6, Note H-8)



A new addition to the EHS source data tables for 2022 was information on the proportion of homes with damp by EHS classification area and tenure. This information is shown as a bar chart in Figure H-10. The bar chart shows that damp is most prevalent in Private rent homes and least prevalent in Owner-occupied homes for all the EHS area types. When comparing rural areas to urban areas in 2022 there was:

- the same proportion of Owner-occupied homes in rural and urban areas suffering from damp (3%);
- a smaller proportion of Social rent homes in rural areas suffering from damp (5% compared to 7%); and
- and greater proportion of Private rent homes in rural areas suffering from damp (12% compared to 9%).

Figure H-10: A bar chart showing the proportion of homes suffering from any type of damp by EHS classification area and tenure 2022.

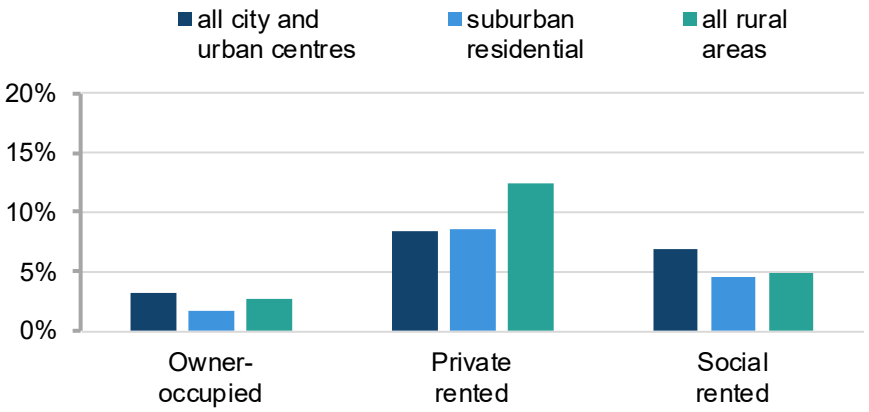
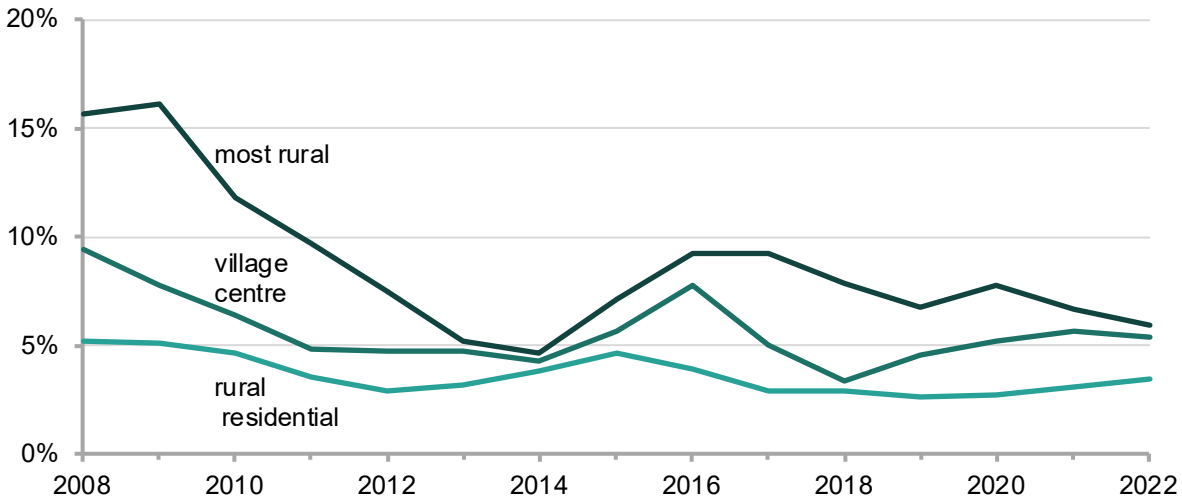


Figure H-11 is a line chart showing how the proportion of homes with damp (Note H-12) changed within rural areas (according to the EHS classification) and it shows that the more rural the area the higher the proportion of homes that have some form of damp (Note H-12). In the least rural areas, (known as rural residential in the EHS classification) the proportion of homes with damp fluctuated between 5% and 3% over the period 2008 to 2022 and it is a fairly stable proportion. In 2022 the proportion of homes that have some form of damp in rural residential areas was 3% as it had been each year since 2017.

The smaller sample sizes for the "village centre" and "most rural" categories lead to less continuity in timeseries. In the case of the "most rural" category there is a drop 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. In 2022 the proportion of homes in the "most rural" category was 6%, while for the "village centre" category it was 5%.

Figure H-11: Line chart showing the proportion homes suffering from any type of damp within rural areas on the EHS classification system, 2008 to 2022. (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-8).



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 variation by rurality seen in Figure H 9 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.

Security and safety

The EHS collects information on the safety and security of properties and publishes them in Table DA2302. This includes information on things like whether the properties have smoke alarms, burglar alarms, external lighting and secure windows and doors.

Figure H-12 is a bar chart that shows the proportion of occupied homes with a smoke alarm fitted (Note H-13) by EHS classification area for the latest data in 2022, and for 2011 to provide a long-term comparison. This bar chart shows that in all EHS area types more homes have a smoke alarm fitted in 2022 that had one in 2011. Back in 2011 more homes in rural areas had a smoke alarm fitted than in urban areas (89% versus 83%). In 2022, 93% of occupied homes in rural areas had a smoke alarm, an increase of 4 percentage points on the 2011 value. Over the period 2011 to 2022 there has been a greater growth in the proportion of homes in urban areas with a smoke alarm fitted than was the case for homes in rural areas. In 2022, 92% of occupied homes in urban areas had a smoke alarm fitted, an increase of 9 percentage points on the 2011 value. The values and changes recorded for suburban areas were very similar to those for rural areas.

Figure H-12: A bar chart showing the proportion of homes with a smoke alarm within by EHS classification area, 2011 and 2022 (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-13)

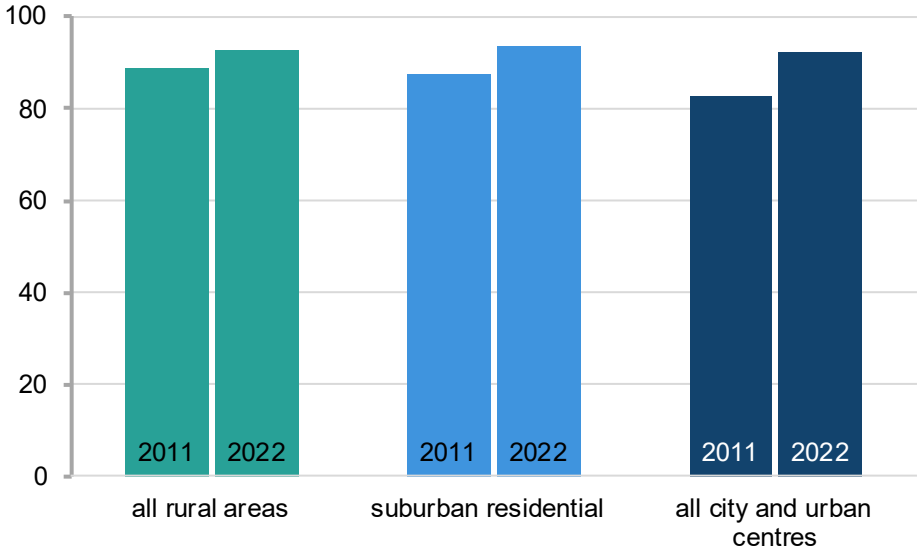


Figure H-13 is a bar chart that shows the proportion of occupied homes with a smoke alarm fitted (Note H-13) within rural areas on the EHS classification system in 2011 and 2022. This bar chart shows the more rural the area the lower the proportion of occupied homes that have a smoke

alarm fitted in both 2011 and 2022. In the “most rural” areas 86% of homes had a smoke alarm fitted in 2011 and by 2022 this proportion had increased by 2 percentage points to 88% of homes. By contrast 90% of homes in rural residential areas already had a smoke alarm fitted in 2011 and by 2022 this proportion had increased by 4 percentage points to 94%. So, homes in the “most rural” areas have proportionally fewer smoke alarms and the rate at which they are being fitted to homes is lower than in other areas.

The prevalence of a smoke-alarm is collected from the household survey and therefore was available for 2022; but the other safety and security measures are collected via the inspections done by EHS surveyors. These were paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic and so the latest available data for these variables was 2019. In 2019, 28% of rural homes had a burglar alarm compared to 18% of homes in urban areas (Table H-1). Rural homes were also much more likely to have external lighting (77%) than those in urban areas (63%) or the suburbs (70%), but they were also much less likely to have secure doors and windows (82%) than those in the suburbs (90%).

Figure H-13: A bar chart showing the increase in the proportion of homes with a smoke alarm within rural areas on the EHS classification system between 2011 and 2022 (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-13)

The dashed horizontal line demonstrates that the proportion of homes with a smoke alarm in the “most rural” areas in 2022 was lower than the proportion of homes in rural residential areas with a smoke alarm in 2011.

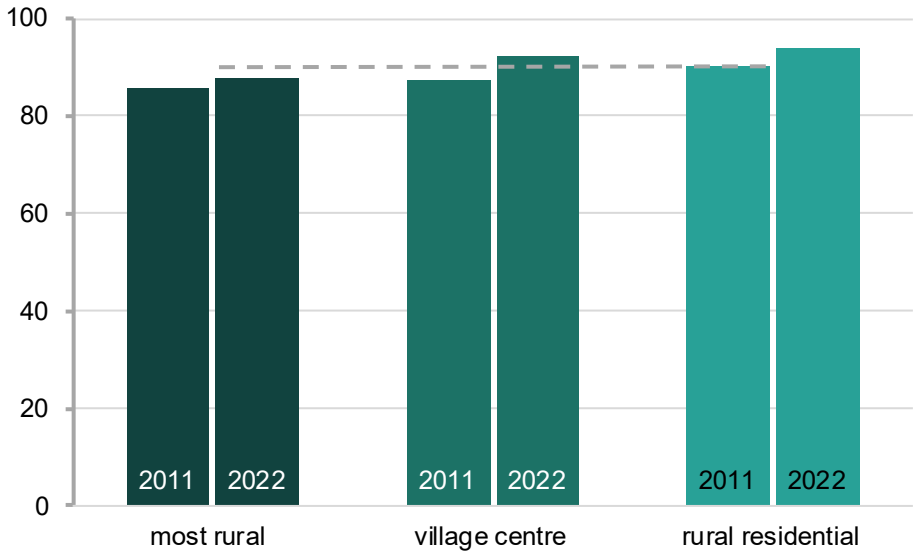


Table H-1:The proportion of homes with various safety and security features by EHS classification area in 2019 (Note H-4, Note H-5, Note H-6)

	Burglar alarm (%)	External lighting (%)	Secure doors and windows (%)
rural	28	77	82
suburban	29	70	90
urban	18	63	84

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).*

Section 254 of the Housing Act 2004 explains the legal meaning of "house in multiple occupation" (HMO).

- **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 of that guidance document. 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 over the period 2020 to 2022. 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 returned from 2021 onwards, the 2021 combined survey dwelling sample is for occupied properties only. The combined 2022 dwelling dataset includes dwelling data collected through full physical surveys in 2022-23 and 'external plus' surveys in 2021-22, both of which include vacant dwellings.
The introduction to English Housing Survey 2022 to 2023: housing quality and condition provides more details on the data collection and modelling undertaken.

- **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 in 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 2022 to 2023: housing quality and condition published in July 2024, including its associated data sets. Specifically we used Tables DA2302, 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.

- **Note H-13**

The prevalence of smoke alarms is derived from household survey data and therefore figures refer to occupied dwellings only; and is therefore effectively a self-reported prevalence.

Appendix 1: 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. Internal migration
D. Local Authority population data
E. Census 2021: Population

2. Housing

A. Housing stock: age and type
B. Housing stock: additions and affordable housing
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. Schools and their workforce
B. Class sizes
C. Secondary education attainment
D. School inspections
E. Free school meals - eligibility
F. Alternative and specialist education provision
G. Progression to higher education
H. Apprenticeships and on-the-job training
I. 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. Business demographics
G. Businesses by industry
H. Business survival and growth
I. 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. Central heating
E. Energy Consumption
F. CO_2 emissions

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.

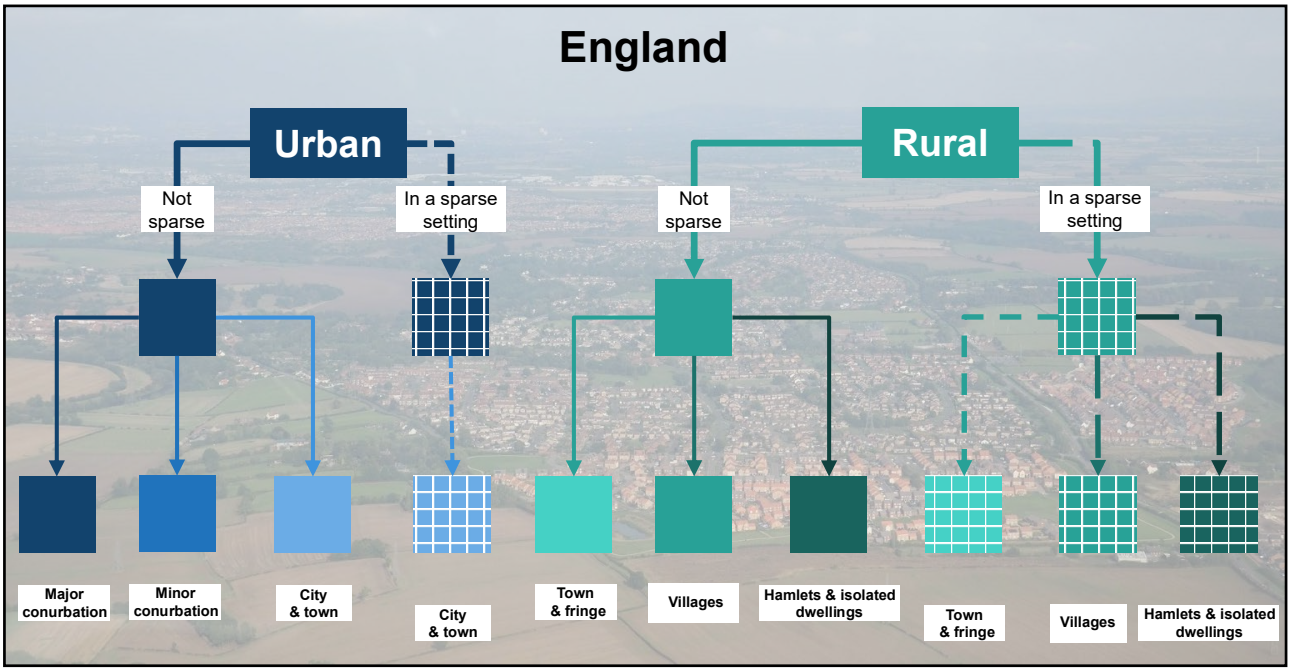
There is a further document including the individual Local Authority data tables, which have been separated for ease of use.

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

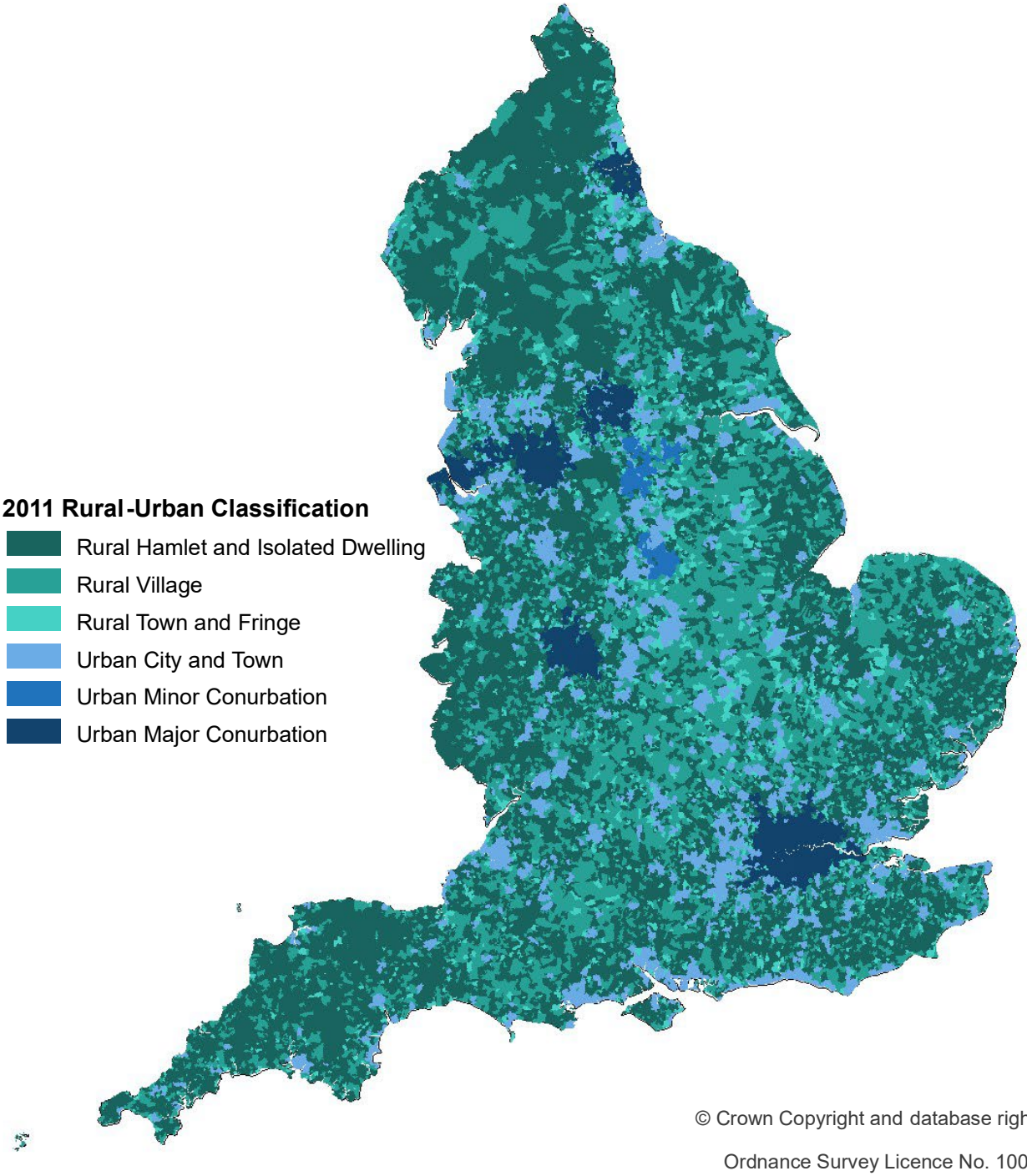
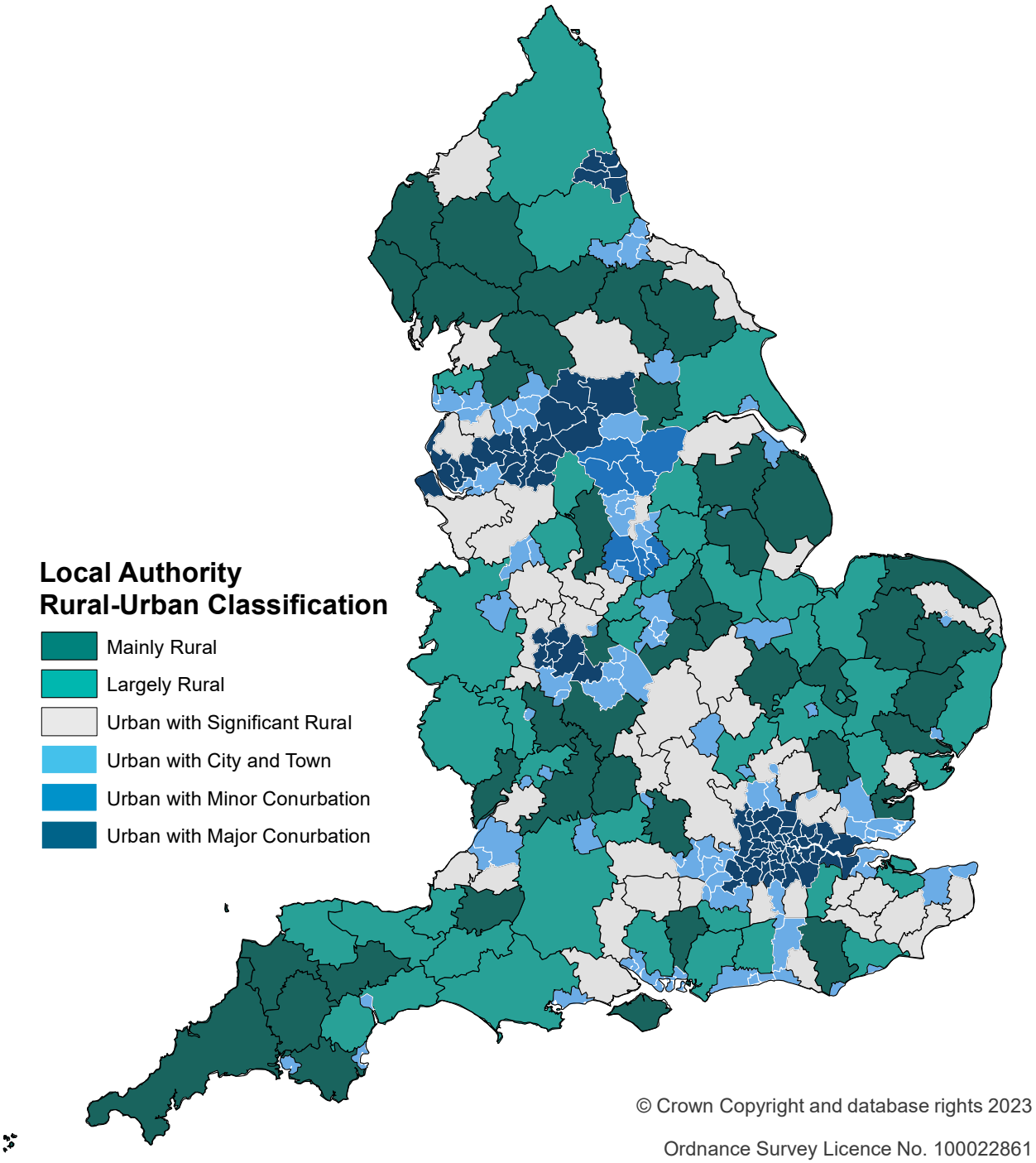
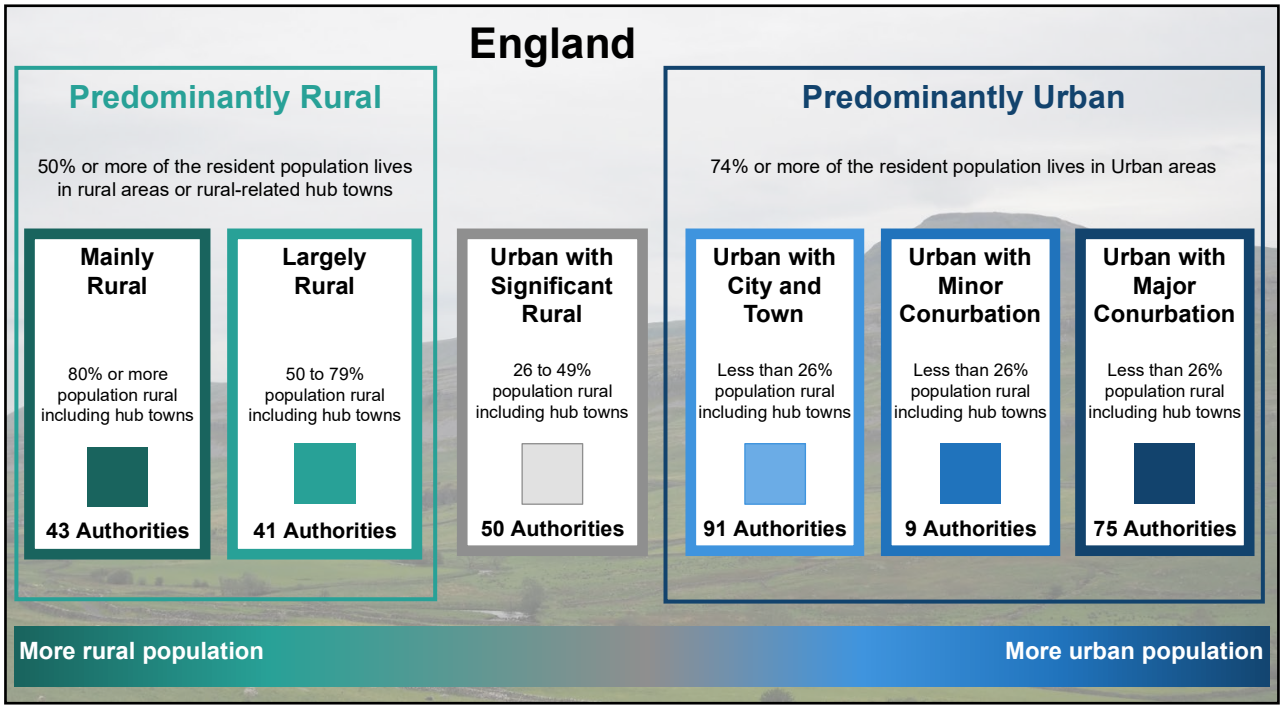


Figure X-3: Map of the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Local Authority Districts and Unitary Authorities in England



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 Authorities in England



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.

A similar approach to that for Local Authorities was used to create a classification for Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies. Under this classification, which is shown in Figure X-5, each Parliamentary Constituency 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'. A map of the geographical distribution of the Rural and Urban Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies is shown in Figure X-5. This map depicts a classification for the new rebalanced Parliamentary Constituencies that were introduced for 2024 General Election. The Parliamentary Constituency Classification categories are frequently aggregated to ‘Predominantly Rural’, ‘Urban with Significant Rural’ and ‘Predominantly Urban’ as shown on Figure X-6.

Figure X-5: Map of the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies in England

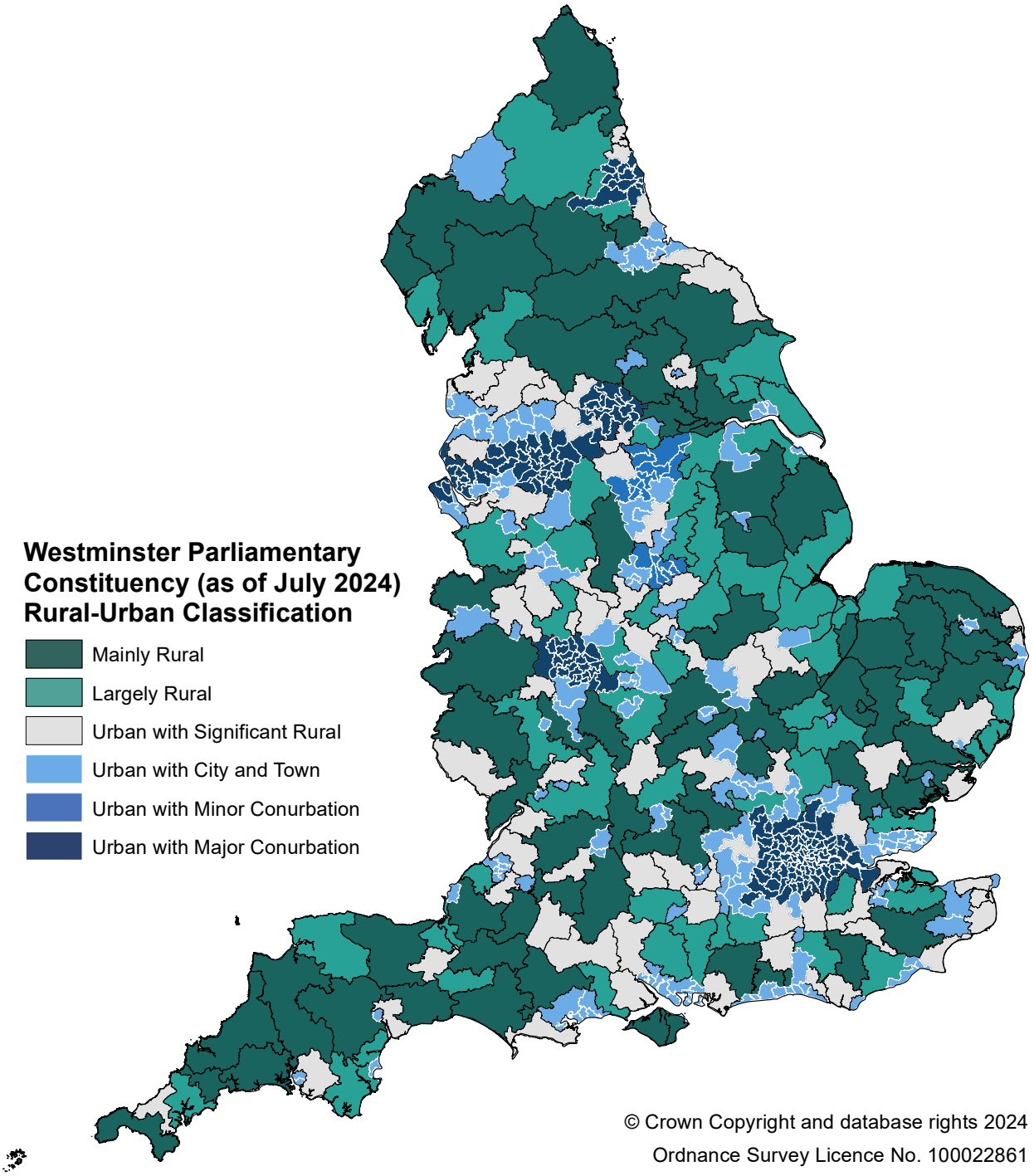
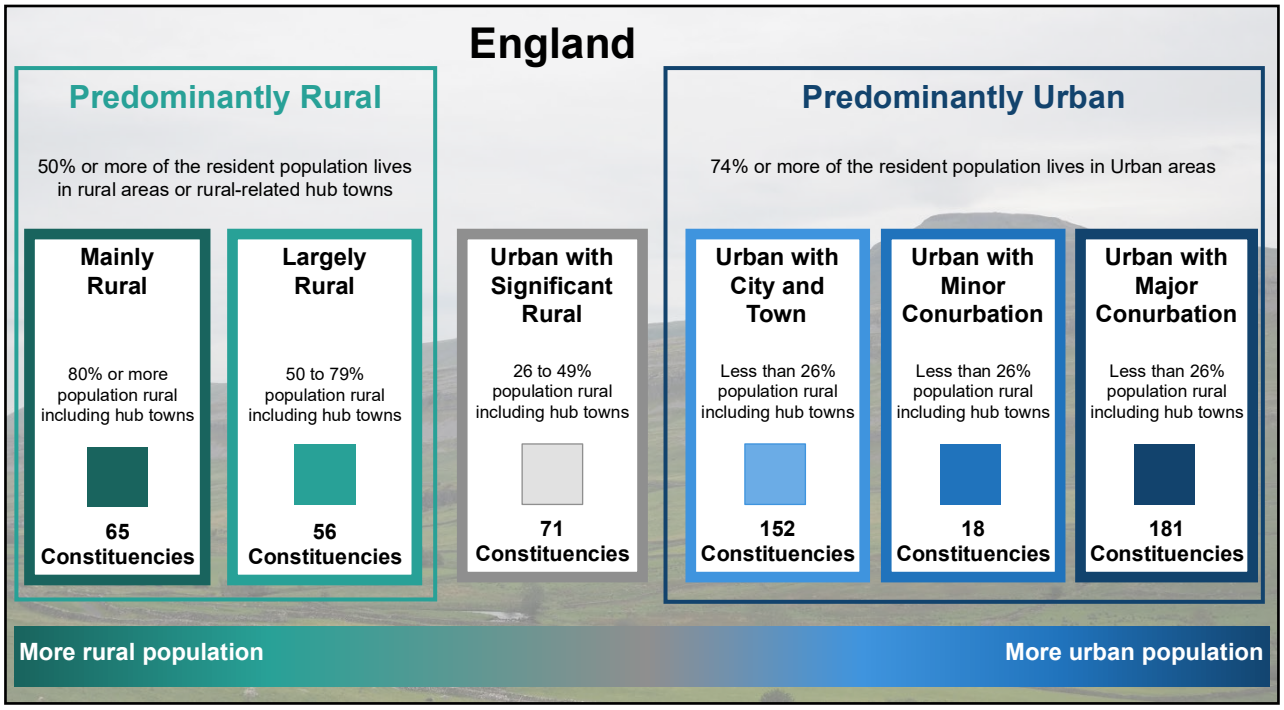


Figure X-6: 2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies in England



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