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This publication was withdrawn on 18 September 2025.

This page has been withdrawn because it is no longer current. Weekly road fuel prices are published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/weekly-road-fuel-prices).

Rural Statistics Release

Diesel and Petrol Prices in Rural Areas in England (July 2011 to June 2012)

Release date: 25 October 2012

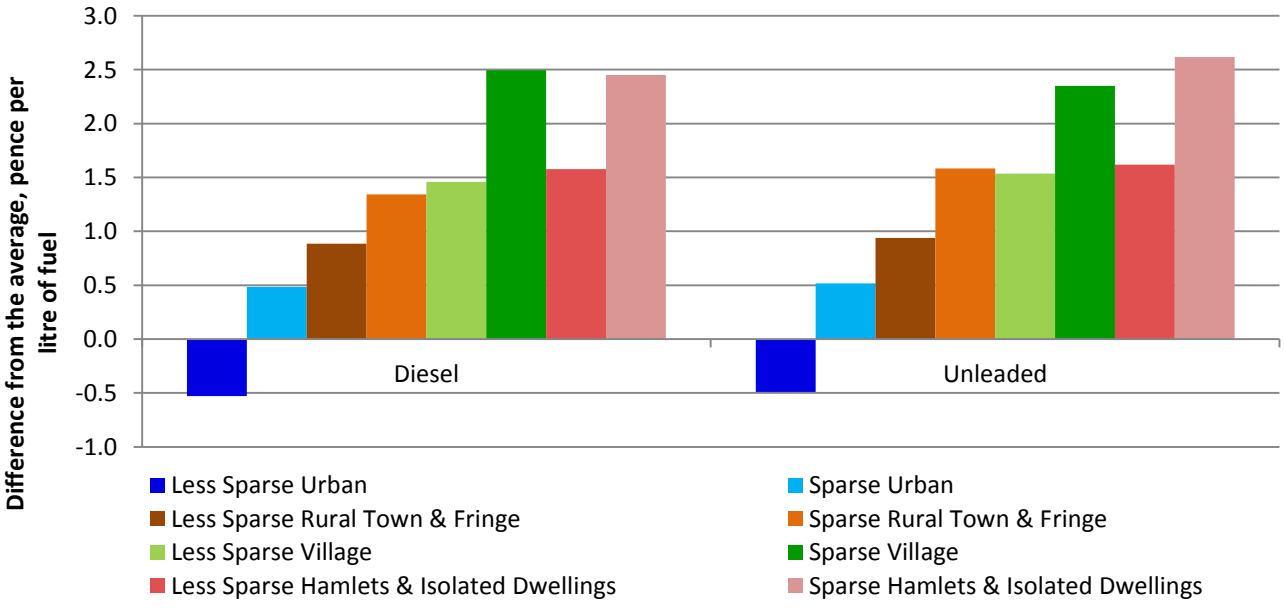
- Drivers in rural areas (settlements with populations of less than 10,000) on average paid slightly more for their fuel (1.9 pence per litre or around 1.4 per cent more) at the pump compared with drivers in urban areas (populations of more than 10,000) in England (July 2011 to June 2012).
- For a typical family car (with a fuel tank of 15 gallons/68 litres), this equated to paying an average of £1.27 more to fill the fuel tank in rural areas than in urban areas.
- Drivers in the most sparsely populated rural areas paid on average 2.0 pence per litre more for diesel and 2.1 pence per litre more for unleaded petrol than the national averages.

Use of these statistics

These statistics have been produced as an ongoing requirement to monitor the economic situation in rural areas. They add to the evidence base that allows policy makers and stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the costs of living in rural areas.

Fuel price per litre

Chart 1: Difference in average fuel prices from the national average (pence per litre of fuel) (July 2011 to June 2012), by settlement type in England



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Drivers in rural areas on average paid slightly more for their fuel (1.9 pence per litre or around 1.4 per cent more) at the pump compared with drivers in urban areas in England over the period July 2011 to June 2012.

The lowest average prices for both diesel and unleaded petrol were in less sparse (more densely populated) urban areas (at 0.5 pence per litre below the national averages) *[see Chart 1]*. The highest average price for diesel was found in areas of sparse, less densely populated areas containing villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings (2.5 pence per litre above the national average), whereas the highest average price for unleaded petrol was found in areas of sparse hamlets and isolated dwellings (2.6 pence per litre above the national average). *[Table 1 in the Annex provides further details by settlement type.]*

Drivers in sparse (remotely populated) rural areas overall paid on average 2.0 pence more per litre more for diesel and 2.1 pence more per litre for unleaded petrol than the national averages. In June 2010, the average price of unleaded fuel in sparse rural areas was reported to be 2.1 pence per litre more than the national average[1], suggesting the price gap has not changed since 2010.

Costs of filling a fuel tank

Overall, the average cost of filling a typical family car (with a 15 gallon/68 litre tank) in rural areas was around £1.27 more than in urban areas (for both diesel and unleaded petrol) (note figures are rounded).

Reflecting the variation in pence per litre above, the lowest average costs of filling a fuel tank, for both diesel and unleaded petrol were in less sparse urban areas (£0.36 and £0.33 below the national averages respectively).

The highest average cost for filling a fuel tank with diesel was found in areas of sparse villages (£1.70 above the national average), whereas the highest average cost for filling a fuel tank with unleaded petrol was found in areas of sparse hamlet and isolated dwellings (£1.78 above the national average). *[Table 2 in the Annex provides further details by settlement type.]*

Price trends

Between July 2011 and June 2012, the average diesel price was 141.1 pence per litre in urban areas, 143.0 pence per litre in rural areas and 141.7 pence per litre as the national average. Unleaded petrol prices were on average lower than diesel prices - 135.2 pence per litre for urban areas, 137.1 pence per litre for rural areas and 135.7 pence per litre as the national average.

Across settlement types, diesel prices followed broadly the same pattern, rising between quarter 3 (July-September) of 2011 and quarter 1(January-March) of 2012, and then falling slightly in quarter 2 (April-June) of 2012. In each quarter there were greater variations in diesel prices within settlement types than between settlement types *[see Chart 2 overleaf and Table 3 in the Annex for further details by settlement type.]*

Across settlement types, unleaded petrol prices followed broadly the same pattern, falling between quarter 3 (July-September) of 2011 and quarter 4 (October-December) of 2011, and then rising in

[1] www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13741-fuel-cost-rural.pdf

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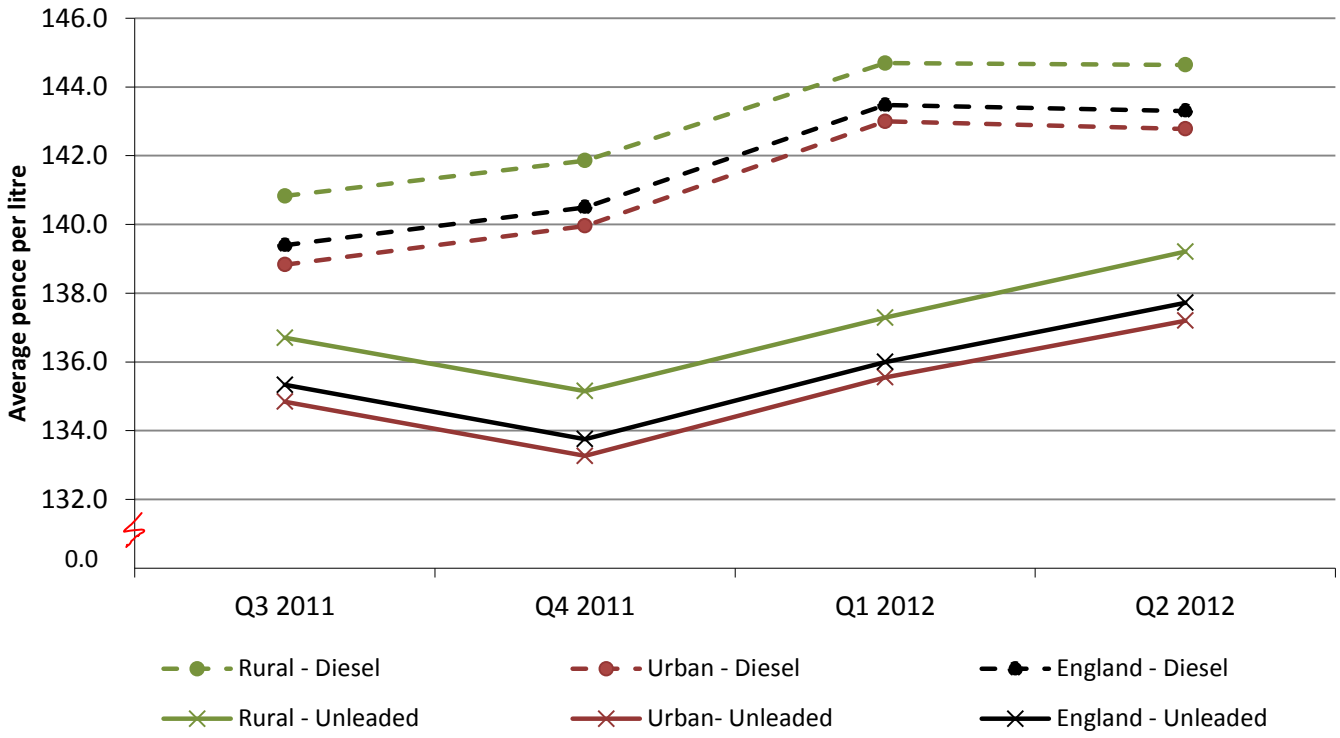
quarters 1 and 2 (January-June) of 2012. In each quarter there were greater variations in unleaded petrol prices within settlement types than between settlement types *[see Chart 2 and Table 4 in the Annex for further details by settlement type.]*

Chart 2: Diesel and unleaded petrol average quarterly prices (pence per litre), (quarter 3 of 2011 to quarter 2 of 2012) in rural & urban areas in England



Distance travelled

The above analysis provides a simple comparison of fuel prices and does not take account of how much fuel people use. In terms of total distance travelled annually (by any mode), on average people living in the most rural areas (village and dispersed areas) travelled 53 per cent further than those living in urban areas between 2006 and 2009.

In all areas, using a car made up the bulk of annual distance travelled, but in addition to travelling further, a greater proportion of travel was done as a car driver or passenger in rural areas (87 per cent of travel for those living in rural villages and dispersed areas), compared with urban areas (77 per cent of travel). *[See Transport Statistics in the Statistical Digest of Rural England 2012[2] for further details.]*

The analysis does not take account of distance to the nearest service station nor fuel purchase behaviour, such as whether drivers in areas with relatively high priced fuel have the option to choose to refuel their vehicles where fuel prices are lower.

Geographic distribution

Maps 1 and 2 overleaf show the geographical distribution of average prices for diesel and unleaded petrol respectively over the period from July 2011 to June 2012. Areas where there are isolated dark blue dots suggest that only relatively high priced fuel was available.

[2] www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2012/06/12/pb13782-stats-digest-rural-england/

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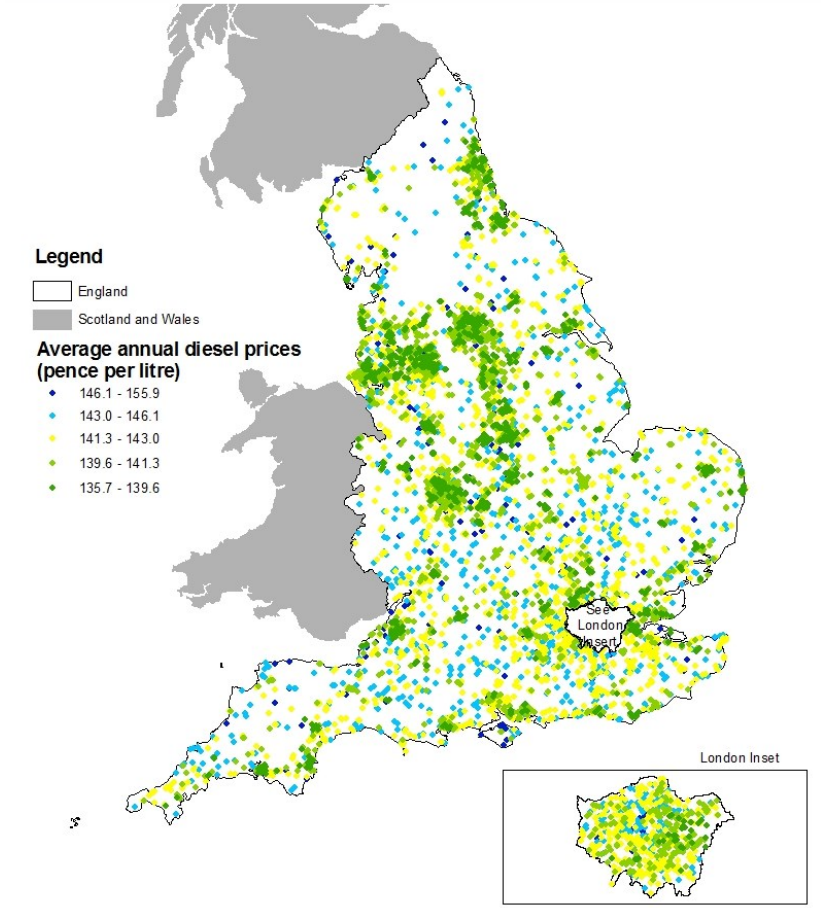
Average annual diesel prices (pence per litre) for the period covering July 2011 to June 2012



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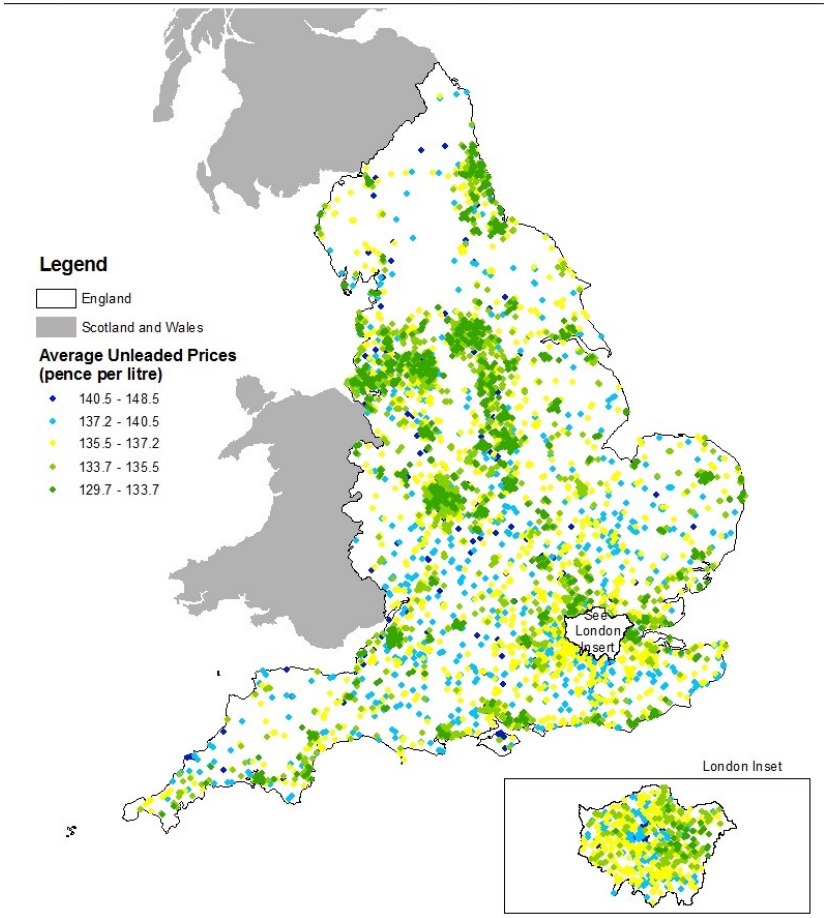
0 25 50 100 Miles

Source: Experian Catalist
The survey was based on 5,817 individual petrol stations.
The data are derived from the use of AllStar fuel cards.

Average annual unleaded prices (pence per litre) for the period covering July 2011 to June 2012



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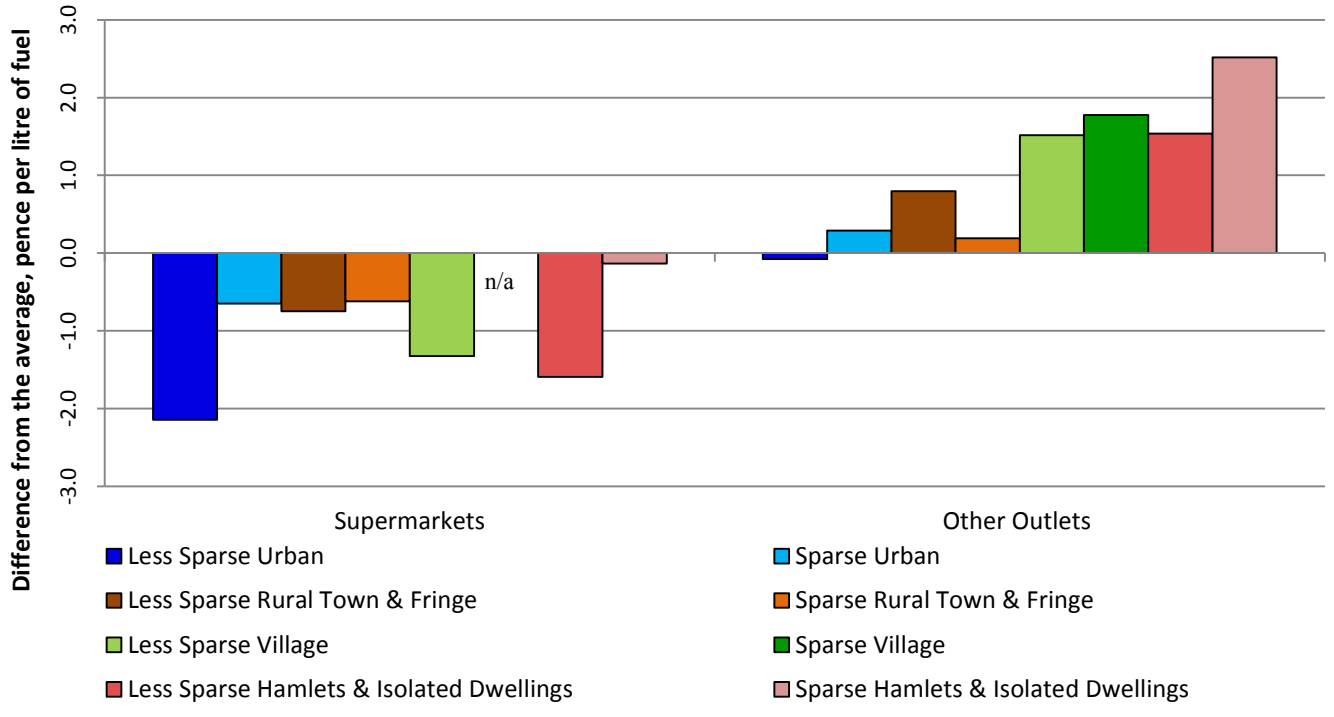
Fuel prices at supermarkets and other outlets

Chart 3: Difference in diesel average fuel prices compared with the national average for supermarket & non-supermarket outlets (pence per litre of fuel) (July 2011 to June 2012) by settlement type in England

Chart 4: Difference in unleaded petrol average fuel prices compared with the national average for supermarket & non-supermarket outlets (pence per litre of fuel) (July 2011 to June 2012) by settlement type in England



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Average supermarket fuel prices were lower than for other outlets, for all settlement types, and there was less variation between supermarket prices between rural and urban areas than for other outlets *[see Charts 3 and 4]*.

The average diesel price paid at the pump at supermarkets was 140.8 pence per litre for rural areas and 140.3 pence per litre for urban areas, compared with an overall England average of 140.6 pence per litre. The average unleaded petrol price paid at the pump at supermarkets was 134.7 pence per litre for rural areas and 134.3 pence per litre for urban areas compared with an overall England average of 134.6 pence per litre.

The average diesel price paid at the pump at other outlets was 143.0 pence per litre for rural areas and 141.8 pence per litre for urban areas, compared with an overall England average of 142.7 pence per litre. The average unleaded petrol price paid at the pump at other outlets was 137.1 pence per litre for rural areas and 135.9 pence per litre for urban areas compared with an overall England average of 136.8 pence per litre.

Supermarket fuel prices were on average 2.1 pence per litre lower than at other outlets for diesel, and 2.2 pence per litre lower on average for unleaded petrol.

For diesel, the largest difference in price between supermarkets and other outlets was seen in areas of less sparse hamlet and isolated dwellings[3], where supermarkets were on average 3.1 pence per litre lower in price. The smallest difference in price was seen in areas of sparse rural town and fringes[3], where supermarkets fuel prices were on average 0.8 pence per litre lower than at other outlets *[see Chart 3]*.

For unleaded petrol, the largest difference in price between supermarkets and other outlets, as for diesel, was seen in areas of less sparse hamlet and isolated dwellings, where supermarkets were on average 3.3 pence per litre lower in price. The smallest difference in price was seen in sparse urban areas and areas of sparse rural town and fringes where supermarkets fuel prices were on average 1.0 pence per litre lower than at other outlets *[see Chart 4]*.

For other (non-supermarket) outlets there was a greater degree of variation between urban and rural areas, with drivers in rural areas paying on average 1.2 pence per litre more than in urban areas for both diesel and unleaded petrol.

[Table 5 in the Annex provides further analysis by settlement type.]

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, sounds methods and assured quality, frankness and accessibility.

More information on the Code of Practice can be found at www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html.

Compiled in Defra by Melanie Riley and Stephen Hall, Rural Statistics Unit (rural.statistics@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

[3] Sparsity refers to the wider surrounding area of settlements

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Annex

Table 1: Average annual prices (pence per litre) of diesel and unleaded petrol (July 2011 to June 2012), by settlement type in England

Settlement type	Diesel	Diesel – difference from national average	Unleaded petrol	Unleaded petrol – difference from national average
Less Sparse Urban	141.1	-0.5	135.2	-0.5
Sparse Urban	142.1	0.5	136.2	0.5
Less Sparse Rural Town & Fringe	142.5	0.9	136.6	0.9
Sparse Rural Town & Fringe	143.0	1.3	137.3	1.6
Less Sparse Village	143.1	1.5	137.2	1.5
Sparse Village	144.2	2.5	138.0	2.3
Less Sparse Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling	143.2	1.6	137.3	1.6
Sparse Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling	144.1	2.5	138.3	2.6
Broad rural / urban				
Less Sparse Urban	141.1	-0.5	135.2	-0.5
Sparse Urban	142.1	0.5	136.2	0.5
Less Sparse Rural	142.9	1.3	137.0	1.3
Sparse Rural	143.7	2.0	137.8	2.1
Overall				
Urban	**141.1**	**-0.5**	**135.2**	**-0.5**
Rural	**143.0**	**1.3**	**137.1**	**1.4**
England	**141.7**		**135.7**	

Table 2: Comparison of estimated average vehicle fuel cost of a 15 gallon/68 litre tank (£) for diesel and unleaded cars (July 2011 to June 2012) by settlement type in England

Settlement type	Diesel	Diesel – difference from national average	Unleaded petrol	Unleaded petrol – difference from national average
Less Sparse Urban	£96.24	-£0.36	£92.20	-£0.33
Sparse Urban	£96.93	£0.33	£92.89	£0.35
Less Sparse Rural Town & Fringe	£97.21	£0.60	£93.17	£0.64
Sparse Rural Town & Fringe	£97.52	£0.91	£93.61	£1.08
Less Sparse Village	£97.60	£0.99	£93.58	£1.05
Sparse Village	£98.30	£1.70	£94.14	£1.60
Less Sparse Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling	£97.68	£1.08	£93.64	£1.10
Sparse Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling	£98.27	£1.67	£94.32	£1.78
Broad rural / urban				
Less Sparse Urban	£96.24	-£0.36	£92.20	-£0.33
Sparse Urban	£96.93	£0.33	£92.89	£0.35
Less Sparse Rural	£97.47	£0.87	£93.45	£0.91
Sparse Rural	£97.97	£1.37	£93.94	£1.41
Overall				
Urban	**£96.24**	**-£0.36**	**£92.20**	**-£0.33**
Rural	**£97.51**	**£0.91**	**£93.48**	**£0.94**
England	**£96.60**		**£92.53**	

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Table 3: Average quarterly prices (pence per litre) of diesel (quarter 3 of 2011 to quarter 2 of 2012), by settlement type in England

	Q3 (July-September) 2011			Q4 (October-December) 2011			Q1 (January-March) 2012			Q2 (April-June) 2012		
Settlement type	Diesel Average	Diesel Minimum	Diesel Maximum	Diesel Average	Diesel Minimum	Diesel Maximum	Diesel Average	Diesel Minimum	Diesel Maximum	Diesel Average	Diesel Minimum	Diesel Maximum
Less Sparse Urban	138.8	133.6	149.0	140.0	134.5	149.4	143.0	138.9	151.7	142.8	136.3	153.8
Sparse Urban	139.8	137.6	144.2	140.9	138.3	144.9	144.1	142.4	146.5	143.9	142.7	146.4
Less Sparse Rural Town & Fringe	140.3	134.8	149.2	141.4	136.4	150.1	144.3	139.5	151.7	144.2	137.3	154.6
Sparse Rural Town & Fringe	140.7	137.2	144.0	142.0	138.5	146.4	144.8	141.6	149.2	144.5	140.9	149.4
Less Sparse Village	140.9	135.5	149.1	142.0	137.0	150.5	144.8	139.8	152.0	144.8	139.1	156.7
Sparse Village	142.2	139.4	149.9	143.2	139.4	149.9	145.7	142.8	152.2	145.4	141.4	157.1
Less Sparse Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling	141.1	135.5	153.0	142.1	137.0	154.6	144.9	139.5	157.4	144.9	138.4	158.7
Sparse Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling	142.0	138.5	148.7	142.9	140.0	148.9	145.8	142.6	150.8	145.8	140.5	152.7
Broad rural / urban												
Less Sparse Urban	138.8	133.6	149.0	140.0	134.5	149.4	143.0	138.9	151.7	142.8	136.3	153.8
Sparse Urban	139.8	137.6	144.2	140.9	138.3	144.9	144.1	142.4	146.5	143.9	142.7	146.4
Less Sparse Rural	140.8	134.8	153.0	141.8	136.4	154.6	144.6	139.5	157.4	144.6	137.3	158.7
Sparse Rural	141.5	137.2	149.9	142.6	138.5	149.9	145.4	141.6	152.2	145.1	140.5	157.1
Overall												
Urban	**138.8**	**133.6**	**149.0**	**140.0**	**134.5**	**149.4**	**143.0**	**138.9**	**151.7**	**142.8**	**136.3**	**153.8**
Rural	**140.8**	**134.8**	**153.0**	**141.9**	**136.4**	**154.6**	**144.7**	**139.5**	**157.4**	**144.6**	**137.3**	**158.7**
England	**139.4**	**133.6**	**153.0**	**140.5**	**134.5**	**154.6**	**143.5**	**138.9**	**157.4**	**143.3**	**136.3**	**158.7**

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Table 4: Average quarterly prices (pence per litre) of unleaded petrol (quarter 3 of 2011 to quarter 2 of 2012), by settlement type in England

	Q3 (July-September) 2011			Q4 (October-December) 2011			Q1 (January-March) 2012			Q2 (April-June) 2012		
Settlement type	Unleaded Average	Unleaded Minimum	Unleaded Maximum	Unleaded Average	Unleaded Minimum	Unleaded Maximum	Unleaded Average	Unleaded Minimum	Unleaded Maximum	Unleaded Average	Unleaded Minimum	Unleaded Maximum
Less Sparse Urban	134.8	129.0	144.8	133.3	128.7	143.9	135.5	130.8	145.3	137.2	131.0	147.5
Sparse Urban	136.0	134.4	140.3	134.7	133.4	138.4	135.8	134.5	138.3	138.1	136.5	141.9
Less Sparse Rural Town & Fringe	136.3	130.7	144.8	134.7	129.2	143.9	136.9	131.9	145.4	138.7	134.0	146.1
Sparse Rural Town & Fringe	137.0	133.5	139.7	135.2	131.7	139.9	137.4	133.8	142.2	139.6	135.6	145.9
Less Sparse Village	136.8	131.3	144.8	135.3	129.3	143.9	137.5	132.3	146.5	139.4	133.4	150.1
Sparse Village	137.6	135.4	142.6	135.7	133.3	141.0	138.0	135.9	142.2	140.7	137.0	148.5
Less Sparse Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling	136.9	130.9	144.8	135.5	129.3	144.0	137.5	131.4	145.9	139.4	133.1	146.9
Sparse Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling	138.1	134.6	143.8	136.0	132.9	141.2	138.2	134.8	143.4	140.8	136.7	146.7
Broad rural / urban												
Less Sparse Urban	134.8	129.0	144.8	133.3	128.7	143.9	135.5	130.8	145.3	137.2	131.0	147.5
Sparse Urban	136.0	134.4	140.3	134.7	133.4	138.4	135.8	134.5	138.3	138.1	136.5	141.9
Less Sparse Rural	136.7	130.7	144.8	135.1	129.2	144.0	137.3	131.4	146.5	139.1	133.1	150.1
Sparse Rural	137.5	133.5	143.8	135.5	131.7	141.2	137.8	133.8	143.4	140.2	135.6	148.5
Overall												
Urban	**134.8**	**129.0**	**144.8**	**133.3**	**128.7**	**143.9**	**135.6**	**130.8**	**145.3**	**137.2**	**131.0**	**147.5**
Rural	**136.7**	**130.7**	**144.8**	**135.2**	**129.2**	**144.0**	**137.3**	**131.4**	**146.5**	**139.2**	**133.1**	**150.1**
England	**135.3**	**129.0**	**144.8**	**133.8**	**128.7**	**144.0**	**136.0**	**130.8**	**146.5**	**137.7**	**131.0**	**150.1**

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Table 5: Average prices (pence per litre) of diesel and unleaded petrol from supermarkets and other outlets (July 2011 to June 2012), by settlement type in England

	Supermarket		Other outlets		Difference in average price between supermarkets and other outlets	
Settlement type	Diesel	Unleaded petrol	Diesel	Unleaded petrol	Diesel	Unleaded petrol
Less Sparse Urban	139.5	133.5	141.6	135.7	-2.1	-2.2
Sparse Urban	141.0	135.1	142.0	136.0	-0.9	-1.0
Less Sparse Rural Town & Fringe	140.9	134.9	142.5	136.4	-1.5	-1.5
Sparse Rural Town & Fringe	141.0	135.0	141.9	136.1	-0.8	-1.0
Less Sparse Village	140.3	134.4	143.2	137.3	-2.8	-2.9
Sparse Village	n/a	n/a	143.4	137.4	n/a	n/a
Less Sparse Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling	140.1	134.0	143.2	137.3	-3.1	-3.3
Sparse Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling	141.5	135.3	144.2	138.3	-2.7	-3.0
Broad rural / urban						
Less Sparse Urban	139.5	133.5	141.6	135.7	-2.1	-2.2
Sparse Urban	141.0	135.1	142.0	136.0	-0.9	-1.0
Less Sparse Rural	140.4	134.5	142.9	136.9	-2.5	-2.5
Sparse Rural	141.3	135.2	143.2	136.9	-1.9	-1.8
Overall						
Urban	**140.3**	**134.3**	**141.8**	**135.9**	**-1.5**	**-1.6**
Rural	**140.8**	**134.7**	**143.0**	**137.1**	**-2.2**	**-2.4**
England	**140.6**	**134.6**	**142.7**	**136.8**	**-2.1**	**-2.2**

n/a - not available

Data source

This report analyses average quarterly prices data for diesel and unleaded petrol from the Experian Catalist Independent Survey of Petrol Stations Prices commissioned by Defra, covering the period from July 2011 to June 2012. The survey was based on 5,817 individual petrol stations surveyed throughout England, covering a total of 56 different brands which included company, dealer, supermarket-owned and motorway service stations.

The data are derived from the use of AllStar fuel cards, which are widely accepted and through these typically prices are registered for around 83 per cent of service station sites, representing around 97 per cent of the volume of fuel traded. Smaller or more remote sites may be under-represented. Price data were obtained by Catalist 5 days per week, which means they were able to report a maximum of around 60 prices each 90 day quarter. As some sites only report prices infrequently (due to a variety of reasons but primarily a lack of card usage), Catalist only provided averages where there were 20 or more prices reported in a quarter in order to maintain statistical robustness.

Rural and urban areas

The rural / urban definition is a National Statistic and defines rurality of census-based geographies. Census Output Areas forming settlements with populations of over 10,000 are urban, whilst the remainder are defined as one of three rural types: *town* and *fringe*, *village* or *hamlet* and *dispersed*. These are then qualified in terms of *sparsity* based on the number of households in the surrounding area up to a distance of 30km. *[For further details see the Rural Urban Definition[4].]*

[4] www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/rural/rural-urban-definition