Demographics and the aging population

Across the East of England nearly a third of the population live in rural areas.

Of 3.97 million people in the South East Local Enterprise Partnership area (Essex, Kent and East Sussex), nearly 1 million live in a rural area (936,000).

A quarter of the working population of Essex live in rural areas. Of 12 districts, Maldon and Uttlesford are ‘Rural 80’ areas (80% or more of population), Braintree and Tendring are ‘Rural 50’ and Brentwood, Colchester and Epping Forest are ‘significantly rural’.
### Rural Population %

**Essex**

Classifications by District (including unitary authority areas)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
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<tr>
<td>Southend</td>
<td>Large Urban</td>
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<td>Thurrock</td>
<td>Other Urban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basildon</td>
<td>Other Urban</td>
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<td>Braintree</td>
<td>Rural 50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brentwood</td>
<td>Significant rural</td>
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<td>Colchester</td>
<td>Large Urban</td>
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<td>Chelmsford</td>
<td>Other urban</td>
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<td>Colchester</td>
<td>Significant rural</td>
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<td>Epping Forest</td>
<td>Significant rural</td>
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<td>Harlow</td>
<td>Other urban</td>
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<td>Maldon</td>
<td>Rural 50</td>
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<td>Rochford</td>
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<td>Tendring</td>
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<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>Rural 50</td>
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**Definitions:**
- **Major urban (MU)** — districts with either 100,000 people or 50 per cent of their population living in urban areas with a population of more than 750,000.
- **Large urban (LU)** — districts with either 50,000 people or 50 per cent of their population living in one of 17 urban areas with a population between 250,000 and 750,000.
- **Other urban (OU)** — districts with less than 26 per cent of their population living in rural settlements and larger market towns.
- **Significant rural (SR)** — districts with between 25 and 50 per cent of their population living in rural settlements and larger market towns.
- **Rural 50 (R50)** — districts with at least 50 per cent but less than 80 per cent of their population living in rural settlements and larger market towns.
- **Rural 80 (R80)** — districts with at least 80 per cent of their population living in rural settlements and larger market towns.
**Age**

The rural population is older than the urban population, with less than 50% of those living in rural areas below 45 years of age, compared with almost 60% in urban areas (Defra Statistical Digest). There is a particularly marked difference among the 16 to 29 groups, which account for 21% of the urban population compared to 15% in rural areas (Defra, Rural Development Programme).
Rural economy

From Defra’s Towards a one nation economy: A 10-point plan for boosting productivity in rural areas (August 2015)

- ‘Predominantly rural’ local authority areas in England contributed £210 billion of Gross Value Added (GVA), around 16% of total GVA.
- Rural areas in England support 15% of jobs and around half a million businesses, over 25% of all registered businesses in England.
- England’s rural areas are becoming increasingly economically diversified and economic activity in rural areas is becoming more dynamic.
- In 2013 about 1 million workers in England’s rural areas (22%) worked from home, compared to 12% in urban areas.
- There was net internal inward migration to predominantly rural areas in England in 2013/14 of more than 60,000, including significant numbers of skilled professionals.
- In 2013 productivity was around 17% below predominantly urban areas.
- If strengthened productivity increased annual average growth in GVA in rural areas (for 2001-2013) by 0.1% each year it would add an extra £7 billion to rural GVA by 2030.

Defra – Statistical Digest of Rural England (June 2015)

Employment and earnings

- The percentage of working age people in employment in 2013 was 71 per cent in urban settlements and 76 per cent in rural settlements.
- The unemployment rate was 4.6% in rural settlements, compared to 8.1 per cent in urban areas.
- The economically inactive population (including retirees) in 2013 was 23 per cent in urban settlements and 20 per cent in rural settlements.
- Workplace based annual earnings (recorded where the employee works) and residence based annual earnings (recorded where the employee lives) are consistently highest in major urban areas, and lowest in Rural-80 areas.
**Home working**

One million people in rural England are now working from home, and people in rural areas are nearly twice as likely to be working from home as people in urban areas (defined as people working at least half their working week at home). Home workers are more likely to be high skilled and to earn a higher than average hourly rate.

The 24.9¹ million workers in England in 2013 were made up of:

- 1.0m (22%) Rural
- 2.5m (12%) Urban
- 3.5m (78%) Rural
- 17.9m (88%) Working somewhere separate to home
Productivity
GVA per work is lowest in mainly rural areas

Businesses
There are more registered businesses per head of population in predominantly rural areas than in predominantly urban areas, reflecting there being more smaller businesses in rural areas.

‘Agriculture, forestry & fishing’ accounts for 16.3 per cent of registered businesses in rural areas overall.

Business start ups are now lower in rural than urban areas.
Business start-ups

Registered business start-ups per 10,000 population by Local Authority Classification, in England, 2004 to 2013

Number of registered businesses (single-site or headquarters) per 10,000 population, by rural-urban classification, in England, 2013/14

Average turnover per person employed, by rural-urban classification, in England, 2013/14
Disposable incomes and expenditure

Both disposable incomes and expenditure are higher in rural than urban areas and highest in village, hamlets and isolated dwellings.

Weekly household expenditure and disposable income, rural-urban classification, England, 2013
Rural households spend a higher proportion of their disposable income on ‘transport’ and ‘recreation’ than they do on ‘housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels’.

In 2013, average weekly transport costs for those in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings were around £98 which accounted for 12.4% of their weekly disposable income, which was £33 higher than for urban areas.

Tourism - from Defra Rural Development Programme submission

In England, tourism outside London is work £70 billion and supports 1.9 million jobs. Tourism related industries accounted for 10.4% of enterprises, 6.8% of turnover and 13.4% of employment in rural areas in 2012/13. Approximately 2.77 billion visits were taken to the natural environment between December 2011 and November 2012, with a general upward trend in visits to the natural environment since 2010. Since 2012 employment growth in the tourism sector as a whole has outperformed the wider UK economy.

Poverty

The percentage of people living in relative and absolute low income is lower in rural areas than in urban areas, but nevertheless many thousands of individuals living in rural areas are in households below average income. Fuel poverty is a particular issue.

Fuel poverty rate

Deprivation
In the 2012/13 academic year 83.1% of pupils living in rural areas left school with 5 or more A* - C GCSEs, very similar to the proportion in urban areas and England overall (83.2%).

In 2011/12 there were 165 full time entrants to higher education institutions per 1,000 18-20 year olds from predominantly rural areas compared with 159 in England overall.

The proportion of working age population with NVQ2 or above was consistently higher for people living in rural households than for those living in urban households. However for those with NVQ4 and above the proportions was similar regardless of where people lived.

The proportion of people receiving job-related training was lower for people living in predominantly rural areas than those living in predominantly urban areas.
Transport and accessibility

Defra – Statistical Digest of Rural England (June 2015)

In 2008/12 (average results over a 5 year period) people living in the most rural areas travelled 50 per cent further per year than those in England as a whole and 63 per cent further than those living in urban areas.

In 2012 11 per cent of households in rural areas had no access to a car or van compared with 28 per cent in urban areas.

In 2012 49 per cent of households in the most rural areas had a regular bus service close by compared with 96 per cent of urban households.

From the Department for Transport’s National Travel Survey: England 2014 (published on 2 September 2015)

Residents of rural areas travel around 50% further than urban residents and 90% further than London residents;

People living in rural areas make less walking trips and more car trips than average;

Rural residents spend an average of 383 hours per person per year travelling, compared to 349 hours for urban residents.
Defra – Statistical Digest of Rural England (June 2015)

Bus availability – ‘nearest bus stop is within 13 minutes walk and has a service at least once an hour’ - is lower in rural areas. Overall, bus availability in rural areas is better in 2012 than in 2002 (but with a dip for ‘all rural town and fringe’ between 2011 and 2012.

![Bus availability indicator by settlement type, in England, 2002 to 2012](image)

Service access by cycle

The percentage of users with ‘reasonable’ access by cycling to shops that sell groceries was lowest in rural villages & hamlets in a sparse setting at 27 per cent, compared with 59 per cent of users in all rural town & fringe settlements and 62 per cent in all urban settlements.

The percentage of children living in rural settlements with ‘reasonable’ access by cycling to a secondary school was 28 per cent, compared with 56 per cent in urban settlements.

Access: Broadband

The Government’s £780m Superfast Rollout Programme will provide universal standard broadband (minimum 2Mbit/s) coverage by 2016 and 95% of UK premises with superfast broadband by 2017. Availability in rural areas is recognised to be increasingly important for rural development. Broadband speeds are significantly lower in rural areas.
Access to energy supplies (from Rural Census 2011)

Central heating

Percentage of households in 2011, by type of central heating and settlement type England

Access to energy supplies (from Rural Census 2011)

Central heating

Percentage of households in 2011, by type of central heating and settlement type England
Housing – accessibility, affordability and development

There is a higher rate of house-builds started and completed in predominantly rural than in predominantly urban areas, and compared to the national average.

Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 the rate of house-builds being started and completed decreased in all areas, with the biggest decrease observed in significant rural areas.

There are proportionally fewer homeless people and people in temporary accommodation in rural areas.

Housing is less affordable in predominantly rural areas than predominantly urban areas.

Average Private Registered Provider rents per week are similar in rural areas to urban areas outside of London.
Average private registered provider (PRP) rents, £ per week, by Local Authority Classification, in England, Mar 2013

Average private registered provider (PRP) rents, £ per week, by Local Authority Classification, in England, Mar 1997 to Mar 2013
‘No usual residents’

The proportion of **household spaces with no usual residents** is significantly higher in rural than urban areas (this would include vacant properties and second homes). Source Defra Rural Census 2011 (published 2013).

![Graph showing percentage of household spaces with no usual residents in 2011, by settlement type, England.](image)

Other key points from the Census

In **rural areas** 74.3 per cent of households were living in owned accommodation, 40.5 per cent in accommodation owned outright. This compares with 61.0 per cent and 28.4 per cent in **urban areas**.

Proportionally **fewer rural households were living in rented accommodation**: 10.8 per cent in social rented and 12.4 per cent in private rented accommodation.

Proportionally fewer households in rural areas were living in accommodation with negative occupancy ratings of rooms (overcrowding).
**Self-reported health (Defra 2011 Census)**

Although the age of *rural residents* is generally higher, they are **more likely to describe their health as *very good* or *good*** than people living in *urban areas*. Between 2001 and 2011 there was a decrease of 0.5 percentage points in the proportion of urban residents having **long-term health problem or disability**. That compared with **0.8 percentage point increase** for rural residents.
A higher percentage of residents in rural areas provide unpaid care of an hour or more...

Defra Statistical digest

Overall health outcomes are more favourable in rural areas than urban areas. Average life expectancy is highest in Rural 80 areas.
Female life expectancy at birth, by Local Authority Classification, in England, 1991-93 to 2010-12
Access to the natural environment

From Defra Rural Development Programme submission

The National Ecosystem Assessment and Marmot Review Fair Society, Health Lives, describe the **positive impact of nature on mental and physical health**. There is evidence that playing in the **natural world** provides a range of **physical and mental health benefits** to children and young people and of the physical and mental health benefits of the natural environment to the population as a whole. Existing Environmental Stewardship support has increased access infrastructure, providing **2,620 kilometres of permissive routes and opening up 4,267 hectares of permissive open access**.

Initiatives include the the **EcoMinds initiative** from the Mental Health charity Mind

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**EcoMinds**

Between 2009 and 2013, Mind funded 130 ecotherapy projects across England with £7.5m support from the Big Lottery Fund. Over 12,000 people used the projects to look after their mental health by doing gardening, farming, food growing, exercise, art and craft, or environmental conservation work – supported by trained professionals.

Although projects have completed their EcoMinds-funded work, many projects remain active, having secured further funding or having succeeded in becoming sustainable social enterprises.

Find out how to get involved in ecotherapy in your area.

[> Download the directory ...](#)

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**Inequality of access (Marmot review)**

Figure 4.7 Percentage of population by social grade who visit a green space infrequently in a year; 2009

![Bar chart showing the percentage of population visiting green spaces infrequently by social grade.](#)

Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Energy Saving Trust
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