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Coverage  
England and Wales

## Rutland the most rural area in England and Wales

Rutland Unitary Authority is the most rural county or unitary authority in England and Wales, according to statistics based on a new area classification, released today by the Office for National Statistics. This shows that all of Rutland's population live in areas classified as rural (settlements of fewer than 10,000 people).

Other counties and unitary authorities with large rural populations are all in Wales: Gwynedd (87 per cent), Powys (87 per cent), Isle of Anglesey (83 per cent), Ceredigion (79 per cent) and Pembrokeshire (77 per cent). Other than Rutland, the area in England with the highest proportion of population living in rural areas is Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (62 per cent).

According to the new classification, around 1 in 5 people in England and Wales live in a rural area. Wales (36 per cent) has the highest proportion of people living in rural areas compared with the English regions, where the South West has the most rural population (34 per cent), followed by the East (31 per cent).

The *Rural and Urban Area Classification 2004* is the result of a project, jointly sponsored by several government departments, to create a harmonised classification of both urban and rural areas for England and Wales. For the first time, 2001 Census results for rural categories in counties and unitary authorities are released.

The *Rural and Urban Area Classification 2004* is currently available for a range of different areas, from Census Output Areas to wards. The statistics released today are arrived at by adding Census Output Areas together by classification type, to county and unitary authority level.

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Other key statistics showing rural and urban differences include:

- Forty-four per cent of rural households comprise a married couple household, compared with 35 per cent of urban households. Eighteen per cent of the rural population is aged 65 and over, compared with 15 per cent of the urban population.
- There is a higher proportion of the urban population born outside the UK (10 per cent) and who identify as non-White (11 per cent) compared with the rural population, where the corresponding proportions are 4 per cent and 1 per cent.
- Eight in 10 of the rural population described themselves as 'Christian', compared with 7 in 10 of the urban population.
- Twelve per cent of the rural population are self-employed, compared with 7 per cent of the urban population. Fewer than 1 per cent of the urban population work in the industries of agriculture, hunting, forestry, mining and quarrying, compared with 5 per cent of the rural population, and 10 per cent resident in the most rural 'isolated dwellings' areas.
- Over 30 per cent of employed males and 9 per cent of employed females in rural areas work 49 or more hours per week, compared with 22 per cent and 6 per cent in urban areas.
- Fourteen per cent of people in employment aged 16-74 years resident in rural areas work mainly at or from home, compared with 8 per cent in urban areas.
- The average distance travelled to work is greater for rural residents than for urban residents (18 km compared to 12 km) and a greater proportion travel to work by car or van (69 per cent compared with 59 per cent for urban residents). One in 10 rural households have 3 or more cars compared to fewer than 1 in 20 urban households.
- In Wales, 17 per cent of the rural population identifies as Welsh compared with 13 per cent of urban dwellers.



## BACKGROUND NOTES

1. Under the National Statistics rural and urban classification 2004, Census Output Areas are described as urban or rural depending on whether the majority of the Census Output Area population falls inside a settlement of population 10,000 or more. Census Output Areas defined as rural are subject to further classification through the identification of rural towns, villages, and isolated dwellings and the use of a grid framework of 100x100 metre squares. Each Census Output Area is assigned a rating of Sparse or Less Sparse according to the density of the population, and then classified by its location as one of the following:  
Code 1: Urban (Sparse)  
Code 2: Town and Fringe (Sparse)  
Code 3: Village (Sparse)  
Code 4: Isolated Dwellings (Sparse)  
Code 5: Urban (Less Sparse)  
Code 6: Town and Fringe (Less Sparse)  
Code 7: Village (Less Sparse)  
Code 8: Isolated Dwellings (Less Sparse)
2. More detailed statistics produced using the new classification are available free on the National Statistics website at:  
[www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=13768&More=n](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=13768&More=n)
3. Information about the *Rural and Urban Area Classification 2004*, including an introductory guide and the classification in full (in Excel, CSV and .txt formats) can be found on the National Statistics website at  
[www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/nrudp.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/nrudp.asp).
4. The development of a Rural and Urban Area Classification for Local Authority Districts and Primary Care Trusts is currently undergoing a consultation exercise and is due to be published later in 2005.
5. In 2004, the Office for National Statistics released *Key Statistics for Urban Areas in England and Wales* from the 2001 Census. This provides data on individual named towns and cities throughout England and Wales with populations of 1,500 or more regardless of where administrative boundaries run, and also allows users to make comparisons with results for urban areas from the 1981 and 1991 Censuses. *Key Statistics for the Rural and Urban Classification 2004* provides complementary data for the populations of the rural and urban parts of administrative areas classified on a consistent basis (where urban areas are defined as containing a population greater than 10,000).
6. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
7. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2005.