2011 Census Analysis - Comparing Rural and Urban Areas of England and Wales

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Theme: Population
Theme: People and Places
Theme: Health and Social Care

Foreword

This report provides an insight into the characteristics of urban and rural areas in England and Wales in 2011. The information is derived from the 2011 Census and is presented for a variety of census topics. Where possible, comparisons are made with the 2001 Census.

Summary - Comparing rural and urban areas of England and Wales

Characteristics of Rural and Urban Areas in 2011

In 2011, 81.5 per cent (45.7 million) of the usually resident population of England and Wales lived in urban areas and 18.5 per cent (10.3 million) lived in rural areas. The location of the rural residents can be split further into 9.1 per cent in 'Rural town and fringe' areas, 5.7 per cent in 'Rural villages', and 3.5 per cent in 'Rural hamlets and isolated dwellings'.

Residents of rural areas have an older age profile than urban residents with a median age of 45 in rural areas compared with 37 in urban areas. Residents of rural areas are also more likely to be born in the UK (94.9 per cent compared with 84.7 per cent for urban areas), to be of 'White British' ethnicity (95.0 per cent compared with 77.2 per cent for urban areas) and to report a Christian religious affiliation (66.9 per cent compared with 57.6 per cent for urban areas). Among residents in employment, a larger proportion of rural residents worked in either skilled trade occupations or as managers, directors and senior officials than did residents in urban areas.

In terms of housing tenure, owner occupied households were more common in rural areas (74.1 per cent) than in urban areas (61.2 per cent). Additionally, while the most common type of household in both urban and rural areas in 2011 was a one family only household containing a married or civil partnership couple, this type of household was also more common in rural areas than in urban areas (39.9 per cent compared with 31.7 per cent).
Population Change 2001 to 2011

Areas classified as rural in 2001 grew by 6.4 per cent in population by 2011, while areas classified as urban grew by 8.1 per cent. In the North East, Yorkshire and The Humber, and the West Midlands, the population grew faster in rural areas over the 2001 to 2011 period than in urban areas. However, for Wales and all other English regions the opposite was true with urban population growing faster than the rural population.

By growing in population, some built up areas classified as rural in 2001 grew to become reclassified as urban in 2011, while others were absorbed into expanding urban areas. Taking these changes into account, the 2011 rural population of England and Wales is estimated to have been 2.5 per cent larger in 2011 than in 2001, while the urban population is estimated to have been 9.0 per cent larger.

Key changes in rural and urban characteristics 2001 to 2011

Age profiles saw a larger change in rural areas over the 2001 to 2011 period than for urban areas. The median age rose from 42 to 45 years in rural areas and from 36 to 37 in urban areas. During this period, rural areas experienced an increase in the proportion of usual residents with an activity limiting health problem or disability. The opposite was true for urban areas which experienced a decrease. However, general health still remained better in rural areas than in urban areas in 2011 despite the older population profile.

Urban areas witnessed the most change for a number of characteristics over 2001 to 2011 particularly in ethnicity of residents and housing tenure. The proportion of residents with 'White British' ethnicity fell from 85.2 per cent to 77.2 per cent in urban areas; the proportion of urban households renting privately increased from 12.0 per cent in 2001 to 18.9 per cent in 2011.

Introduction

This section defines rural and urban areas and explains methodology changes between 2001 and 2011. The main results of the rural-urban analysis are set out in the remaining sections of the report beginning with the section on ‘Rural and urban populations in 2011’.

The Rural-Urban Classification was first introduced in 2004 as a joint project between a consortium of government departments and the University of Sheffield to define the rurality of very small census based geographies. Previous definitions based on socio-economic characteristics were considered to be unsuitable, so a new settlement based definition was developed. The aim was to provide a consistent classification base for use in a number of policy areas.

Constructing the Rural-Urban Classification begins with defining built-up areas. A built-up area is characteristic of a village, town or city and is defined by land use. They include areas of built-up land with a minimum of 20 hectares (200,000m$^2$). Any areas with less than 200 metres between them are linked to become a single built-up area. This was done using an automated method that replicated the manual procedure used to create the 2001 classification.
While this change makes comparability between 2001 and 2011 somewhat complicated, it will allow future comparisons to be generated easily. For more information on the methodology used to define built-up areas, please see the following report.

The base unit for the 2011 Census is the output area. Using a best-fit methodology, output areas were allocated built-up area status where they coincide with a built-up area. In June 2013 ONS published a report on populated built-up areas in the 2011 Census. This analysis grouped built-up areas into five types based on population: 'Major', 'Large', 'Medium', 'Small' and 'Minor'. Comparisons were also made to the non built-up areas.

Built-up areas with a population of 10,000 or more usual residents\(^1\) are defined as urban. Using population densities at a number of scales, these areas are then divided into three subgroups:

- Major conurbation
- Minor conurbation
- City and town.

The ‘Minor’ built-up areas – those with a population of fewer than 10,000 usual residents – and the non built-up areas are defined as rural and further classified into one of three subgroups:

- Town and fringe
- Village
- Hamlet and isolated dwellings.

In addition, some areas have been characterised as sparse. This broadly reflects the surrounding 30 kilometres being characterised by low population density. The methodology paper gives a fuller explanation of the exact methodology by which sparse areas have been defined.

This gives a total of 10 categories:

**2011 Rural-Urban Classification Categories**

1. Major conurbation
2. Minor conurbation
3. City and town
4. City and town in a sparse setting
5. Town and fringe
6. Town and fringe in a sparse setting
7. Village
8. Village in a sparse setting
9. Hamlet and isolated dwellings
10. Hamlet and isolated dwellings in a sparse setting
Map 1 below show the Rural-Urban classification and level of sparsity for each of the 181,408 output areas in the 2011 Census.

Map 1: Rural-Urban Classification and Sparsity

England and Wales, Output Areas, 2011

Using the extent of the built-up areas on which the Rural-Urban classification is based, the total land area of the urban areas in 2011 was 1.1 million hectares (7.4 per cent of England and Wales).

Changes from 2001 to 2011

Since 2001 there has been a change in the categories and also a move from a manual to an automated mechanism for identifying rural and urban areas. The following sections describe these changes in more detail.

Eight categories were defined for the 2001 Census:
2001 Rural-Urban Classification Categories

1. Urban – sparse
2. Urban – less sparse
3. Town and fringe – sparse
4. Town and fringe – less sparse
5. Village – sparse
6. Village – less sparse
7. Hamlet and isolated dwellings – sparse
8. Hamlet and isolated dwellings – less sparse

A key difference between the 2001 and 2011 classifications is that a distinction between major conurbations, lesser conurbations and other urban areas has been introduced. Nonetheless, the two sets of categories are comparable, as the ‘Major conurbation’, ‘Minor conurbation’, and ‘City and town’ subgroups in the 2011 classification can be aggregated to be compared with the 2001 ‘Urban less sparse’ category.

This report assesses the 2011 Census results by the Rural-Urban output area classification. Further details of the classifications and methodology used to create them can be found on the ONS Open Geography Portal. Details of the 2001 Rural-Urban Classification can be found on the ONS website.

Table 1 shows the extent of the changes in output area classification that occurred between 2001 and 2011. The ‘threshold’ reason relates to a 2001 minor built-up area growing through the 10,000 population threshold to become a small built-up area in 2011. This is the threshold at which a built-up area is classified as urban, and is consistent for the 2001 and 2011 Census.

A good example is provided by the built-up area of Oakham in Rutland. Classified as a minor built-up area in 2001 with a population of 9,620, Oakham grew to 10,922 in 2011, making it a small built-up area and passing the 10,000 threshold at which it becomes reclassified from rural to urban. The effect of this is noticeable at the local authority level. In 2001, Rutland was considered to be entirely rural. In 2011, however, more than 30 per cent of the usually resident population were considered to be living in an urban area.

The ‘decrease’ reason relates to places that have fallen below the 10,000 population threshold. The ‘urban expansion’ reason concerns previously rural areas that have been encapsulated by expanding towns and cities.

The changes described above relate a change to the built environment that has altered the characteristics of an area. The ‘Change of view’ reason, however, describes situations where a change in methodology has resulted in a reinterpretation of an area's classification. It is this ‘change of view’ reason that was responsible for the greatest amount of change.

This change in methodology relates to the automated process used in 2011 to identify the built-up areas. While this makes comparisons between 2001 and 2011 complicated, it will make future comparisons much easier.
Table 1: Output area classification changes
England and Wales, 2001 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Output Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural to Urban</strong></td>
<td>3,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of view</td>
<td>2,331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threshold</td>
<td>991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Expansion</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban to Rural</strong></td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of view</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Change</strong></td>
<td>177,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>181,408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes:

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Map 2 shows the area surrounding the village of Broadbottom in the Metropolitan Borough of Tameside, Greater Manchester. In 2001, a number of the output areas were part of the Broadbottom built-up area which in turn was classified as a rural area (shaded purple). In 2011, however, these output areas were part of the Greater Manchester built-up area (as distinct from metropolitan county) and as such were classified as urban (shaded red). This change has occurred not because of any developments to the built environment in the intervening years, but because of the application of an automated methodology for identifying discrete built-up areas as opposed to the manual technique used in 2001.

When comparing rural and urban population change over time, ONS recommends that those areas for which a 'change of view' reclassification has occurred are excluded because this represents areas that have been reclassified solely due to methodology changes. Changes due to 'threshold' and 'urban expansion' however can be taken into account when considering population changes over time.

For more information on these changes, please see the [methodology paper](methodology paper) and [user guide](user guide).
Notes for Introduction

1. The usually resident population refers to people who live in the UK for 12 months or more, including those who have been resident for less than 12 months but intend to stay for a total period of 12 months or more. The population base for the 2011 Census was the usually resident population of England and Wales, defined as anyone who, on the night of 27 March 2011, was either (a) resident in England and Wales and who had been resident, or intended to be resident in the UK for a period of 12 months or more, or (b) resident outside the UK but had a permanent England and Wales address and intended to be outside the UK for less than a year.

2. In June, 2013, ONS published a report on built-up areas in the 2011 Census. Built-up areas are characteristic of settlements including villages, towns or cities. The analysis grouped areas into five types - major, large, medium, small and minor. For this analysis, the minor built-up areas and non built-up areas are classified as rural areas. The remaining four types of built-up areas are classified as urban.

Rural and urban populations in 2011

Table 2 shows the urban and rural populations for England and Wales in 2011. This data shows that 45.7 million (81.5 per cent) of the England and Wales population were resident in urban areas and 10.3 million (18.5 per cent) were resident in rural areas.
### Table 2: Usual resident population of urban and rural areas

England and Wales, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>45,726,291</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major conurbation</td>
<td>18,783,742</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor conurbation</td>
<td>1,906,101</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City and town – Total</td>
<td>25,036,448</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a non sparse setting</td>
<td>24,890,130</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a sparse setting</td>
<td>146,318</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>10,349,621</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town and fringe – Total</td>
<td>5,140,355</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a non sparse setting</td>
<td>4,844,185</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a sparse setting</td>
<td>296,170</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village – Total</td>
<td>3,245,156</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a non sparse setting</td>
<td>2,943,043</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a sparse setting</td>
<td>302,113</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamlets and isolated dwellings - Total</td>
<td>1,964,110</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a non sparse setting</td>
<td>1,714,121</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a sparse setting</td>
<td>249,989</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56,075,912</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table notes:**

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Table 2 also shows a detailed breakdown of the 2011 population into the 10 subgroups of the rural-urban classification. The ‘Urban city and town’ subgroup accounted for 44.6 per cent of the population, while 33.5 per cent lived in the ‘Urban major conurbation’ group.

For the rural subgroups, the ‘Rural town and fringe’ category accounted for the greatest population at 9.2 per cent, with 5.8 per cent resident in the ‘Rural village’ category and 3.5 per cent in the ‘Rural hamlet and isolated dwelling’ group.
The proportion of the population of England and Wales living in areas defined as ‘sparse’ was 1.8 per cent.

**Population by region**

The proportion of the usual resident population of England and Wales living in urban areas in 2011 was 81.5 per cent. Figure 1 shows how this breaks down across the nine English regions and Wales. As would be expected, London’s population is almost entirely resident in urban areas (99.8 per cent). This is 10 percentage points larger than the North West which at 89.4 per cent has the second highest percentage of usual residents in urban areas. Wales (67.2 per cent) has the lowest proportion of its population living in urban areas and therefore the highest proportion living in rural areas (32.8 per cent).

**Figure 1: Proportion of the usual resident population living in urban and rural areas**

English regions and Wales, 2011

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**Notes:**

Population change 2001 to 2011

Summary

Areas classified as rural in 2001 grew in population by 6.4 per cent. In doing so, some rural areas grew to become reclassified as urban while other rural areas were absorbed into expanding urban areas. Consequently, the 2011 rural population is estimated to be 2.5 per cent larger in 2011 than in 2001.

By contrast, areas classified urban in 2001 grew by 8.1 per cent in population by 2011. Once the impact of area reclassification is taken into consideration, the urban population of England and Wales is estimated to be 9.0 per cent larger than in 2001.

Introduction

To assess population change in rural and urban areas between 2001 and 2011 it is important that data are comparable and that results are not influenced by changes in methodology. For this reason it is not appropriate to compare directly the 2001 rural and urban populations compiled using the 2001 classification with the 2011 rural population compiled using the 2011 classification. This is because some areas changed their rural/urban identification during this period solely due to changes in the methodology being applied in 2011 compared to 2001.

However, other approaches can provide consistent estimates of population change over the period. One of these is to apply the 2001 classification to both the 2001 and 2011 data, thus avoiding the problem of reclassifications due to methodology changes in the two sets of classifications. The other option is to remove those areas that were changed for methodology reasons and to focus on the remaining areas that were not affected. These approaches are taken below to show the changes of population in rural and urban areas of England and Wales over 2001 to 2011.

By how much did population grow in rural and urban areas from 2001 to 2011?

This example applies the 2001 classification to both the 2001 and 2011 data. This approach shows that areas of England and Wales that in 2001 were classified as urban grew in population on average by 8.1 per cent to 2011. Similarly, areas that in 2001 were classified as rural experienced an average population growth of 6.4 per cent to 2011.

Applying the same method on a regional basis, Figure 2 shows that in the North East, Yorkshire and The Humber, and the West Midlands, the population grew faster in rural areas over the period...
than in urban areas. However, for Wales and the other English regions the opposite was true with population growth occurring at a faster rate in urban areas than in rural areas.

Rural population growth was largest in the East of England (8.0 per cent) and smallest, excluding London, in the North West (3.9 per cent). Urban population growth was largest in London (14.0 per cent). Elsewhere, the same regions that had the highest urban population growth also had the highest percentage rural population growth (East Midlands and East of England). The smallest growth in urban population was in the North East at 2.8 per cent.

**Figure 2: Percentage growth in the usual resident population of urban and rural areas, (applying the 2011 classification to both 2001 and 2011 data)**

English regions and Wales, 2001 to 2011

Notes:

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What was the change in the size of the rural and urban population between 2001 and 2011?
The growth in rural and urban populations highlighted above led to some areas being reclassified. For example, some built-up areas that were classified as rural in 2001 grew past the 10,000 population threshold by 2011 and were therefore reclassified as urban. Also the expansion of existing towns and cities led to some previously rural areas being absorbed into the expanding urban areas over 2001 to 2011.

To account for these changes it is necessary to compare the 2011 data based on the 2011 classification with the 2001 data based on the 2001 classification. However, as described earlier there were some methodology changes over this period that led to a small number of areas changing their rural-urban status simply due to methodological changes rather than through any genuine change in circumstances. To overcome this issue, these areas are excluded from the following comparisons. In other words, the following comparisons are based only on the 98.4 per cent of population who lived in areas that were not affected by these changes in methodology\(^1\).

Because these numbers include changes in categories due to genuine changes in circumstance, they are preferred for assessing how large the percentage difference in the rural population was in 2011 compared with 2001. The data shows that the rural population in 2011 was 250,000 or 2.5 per cent larger than the rural population in 2001. The urban population, meanwhile, was 3.7 million or 9.0 per cent larger in 2011 than in 2001.

Figure 3 shows the change in size of the rural and urban populations of English regions and Wales between 2001 and 2011. The largest increase in the size of the rural population occurred in the East Midlands with its rural population 5.1 per cent larger in 2011. By contrast, Wales (0.2 per cent) and the North West (0.4 per cent) had the smallest percentage increases in the size of rural population over the 2001 to 2011 period.

The difference between Figures 2 and 3 is explained by some local areas having been reclassified from rural to urban as described above. In this context, the largest difference is seen in Yorkshire and The Humber. The first chart shows a population growth of 6.8 per cent in rural areas from 2001 to 2011. The second chart, however, shows the rural population of Yorkshire and The Humber was 0.7 per cent larger in 2011 than in 2001. From this it can be inferred that much of the rural population increase occurred in areas that were reclassified from rural to urban between 2001 and 2011. There are also quite large differences between the rural growth rates in the two figures in other regions such as the East of England, Wales, and the South East for the same reason.
Figure 3: Percentage change in the size of the usual resident population in urban and rural areas

English regions and Wales, 2001 to 2011

Notes:
1. This is based on data covering the 98.4 per cent of the population who live in areas where the rural and urban populations were directly comparable between 2001 and 2011. That is, it excludes those areas were changes occurred due to changes in methodology.

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Population change in Rural and Urban Subgroups 2001-2011

To examine population changes in rural and urban subgroups a slightly different approach is used. In order to provide data based on the new 2011 subgroups the method adopted is to apply the 2011 classification to both the 2001 and 2011 data.

Figure 4 applies the 2011 classifications to both the 2001 and 2011 data. This is based on how each area is categorised in the 2011 classification and looks back to see how much population growth
occurred over the 2001 to 2011 period in these areas. It shows that the largest increase (9.5 per cent) was seen in the ‘Major conurbation’ category, while ‘Cities and towns’ (7.4 per cent) grew faster than the ‘Minor conurbations’ category (6.7 per cent).

Areas categorised as ‘Town and fringe’ (6.2 per cent) had the largest population growth of the rural categories, while ‘Hamlets and isolated dwellings in a sparse setting’ (2.8 per cent) had the smallest growth. For all four sets of sparse/non sparse category pairs, the sparse subgroup experienced the smaller population growth.

**Figure 4: Percentage growth in the usual resident population of urban and rural areas, (applying the 2011 classification to both 2001 and 2011 data)**

English regions and Wales 2001 to 2011

Notes:

Download chart

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Notes

1. Changes due to areas passing the 10,000 threshold or due to urban expansion are included in this comparison. Changes due to moving from a manual to an automated method between 2001 and 2011 that are excluded.

2. This method provides different results to those that occur when the 2001 classification is used for comparison purposes. For example, the growth in urban and rural populations in England and Wales using this 2011 classification approach were 8.2 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively from 2001 to 2011. This compares to the results quoted in the text based on using a 2001 classification base of 8.1 per cent and 6.4 per cent respectively. These differences are a direct result of applying two slightly different approaches to measuring the population change. There is no firm rule as to which of these approaches is better. The choices of which approach to use in this article have been based on our view of what might be most informative for users. Thus, for assessing rural and urban population growth overall the 2001 classification approach was used because it allows us to see what growth occurred in rural and urban areas prior to any shift in classification that the population growth itself caused. For subgroups, however, the 2011 classification approach was used because it allows use of the new version of the subgroup classification.

Age

The remainder of this report focuses on the population and household characteristics of urban and rural areas. The figures used are for all of England and Wales.\(^1\)

The median age\(^2\) of both rural and urban areas increased between 2001 and 2011 (Table 3). The gap between the two areas, however, grew by two years.

Table 3: Median age of the usual resident population of urban and rural areas

England and Wales, 2001 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table notes:**

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The age profiles for urban and rural areas in the 2001 and 2011 Censuses are shown in Figure 5. Comparing 2001 with 2011, the proportion of the rural population aged 60 to 74 increased by 4.1 percentage points, while urban areas experienced an increase of 0.8 percentage points for the same age group. Likewise, rural areas experienced a decrease of 3.6 percentage points in the population aged 30 to 44. This is compared to a smaller decrease of 1.7 percentage points in urban areas.

Comparing the rural and urban age profiles for 2011, it can be seen that 21.1 per cent of the urban population was aged 15-29, compared with 14.8 per cent of the rural population. Similarly, a further 21.2 per cent of the urban population was aged 30-44, compared with 17.7 per cent of the rural population. Among older age groups, 29.0 per cent of the rural population was aged 60 or over while the comparable figure for urban areas was 21.0 per cent.

**Figure 5: Usual resident population of urban and rural areas by age**

England and Wales, 2001 and 2011

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**Notes:**


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Notes

1. The data included the areas that changed classification between 2001 and 2011 due to methodological reasons. Sensitivity testing showed that including these areas when considering the characteristics of the rural and urban areas had negligible influence on the results at the national and regional levels.

2. The median ages for 2001 are estimates based on aggregating the two urban and six rural sub categories.

Health, disability and unpaid care

Figure 6 shows, for 2011, the proportion of usual residents who reported ‘Very good’ or ‘Good’ health (hereafter referred to as ‘good health’) in each of the English regions and Wales. The chart also displays the median age\(^1\) for urban and rural areas.

In urban areas, the proportion of residents reporting good health ranged from 77.4 per cent in the North East to 83.8 per cent in London. At 76.9 per cent, the North East also had the lowest proportion of rural residents reporting good health, while the South East at 84.4 per cent had the highest proportion of rural residents with good health.

Eight of the 10 areas had healthier rural populations than urban populations, despite having older populations. The greatest difference was in the North West where 81.7 per cent of the rural population reported good health, compared with 79.0 per cent in the urban areas. This is despite the fact that the median age of the rural population was six years older than the urban population in this region.
Figure 6: Percentage of usual residents with good health and usual resident median age in urban and rural areas

English regions and Wales, 2011

A direct comparison of general health status between 2011 and 2001 is not possible because of differences between the question asked in 2011 and in 2001. Furthermore, respondents were given three choices in 2001 (‘Good’, ‘Fairly good’ or ‘Not good’) compared with the five options presented in 2011 (‘Very good’, ‘Good’, ‘Fair’, ‘Bad’ or ‘Very bad’).

Nevertheless, a method developed by ONS in 2009 can be applied to convert the 2001 data into a good – bad dichotomy. The ‘good health’ category that results matches that discussed above for the 2011 data. Appendix A contains details of the coefficients applied to the three categories used in 2001 to create the good – bad dichotomy.
With the exception of the South East, all of the regions and Wales experienced a decrease in the proportion of rural usual residents who reported to be of good health (Figure 7). The largest decrease in rural good health was in the North East (1.3 percentage points). The North East also had the largest decrease in good health in urban areas (0.7 percentage points), while London had by far the largest increase at 1.4 percentage points. To some extent this may reflect the fact that the median age of London's urban population decreased from 34 in 2001 to 33 in 2011 (all other regions had increases in the median age of both rural and urban populations).

Figure 7: Percentage point change of usual residents with good health in urban and rural areas
England and Wales, 2001 to 2011

Notes:

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The above results related to a census question asking residents to describe their current health. A separate question asked residents whether they had an activity limiting health problem or disability. Table 4 shows that, as would be expected with an ageing population, rural areas experienced an
increase in the proportion of usual residents with an activity limiting health problem or disability\(^2\). The opposite, however, was true for urban areas.

**Table 4: Percentage of usual residents with an activity limiting health problem or disability in urban and rural areas**

England and Wales, 2001 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Percentage point change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table notes:**

**Download table**

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The proportion of usual residents providing unpaid care\(^3\) increased in both urban and rural areas. Table 5 shows that the proportion of people providing 20 or more hours of care is similar in rural and urban areas. There is a difference, however, between sparse and non sparse areas, with residents in sparse areas more likely to be providing 20 or more hours care (Figure 8). By contrast, there is a difference between urban and rural areas in the proportion of residents providing 1 to 19 hours of care (Table 5). In urban areas this figure decreased from 6.6 per cent to 6.2 per cent. This compares with a figure of 7.9 per cent in rural areas in 2011.

**Table 5: Percentage of usual residents providing unpaid care in urban and rural areas**

England and Wales, 2001 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Census</th>
<th>Provides no unpaid care</th>
<th>Provides 1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week</th>
<th>Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week</th>
<th>Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table notes:**
Figure 8: Percentage of usual residents providing 20 or more hours of unpaid care in urban and rural subgroups

England and Wales, 2011

Notes:

Download chart

XLS format (25.5 Kb)
Notes

1. The median ages for 2001 are estimates based on aggregating the two urban and six rural subcategories.

2. In the 2001 Census each person in a household was asked whether they have a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits activities in any way and to include problems which were due to old age (129.7 Kb Pdf). The response categories were simply 'yes' or 'no'. The question in 2011 (2.02 Mb Pdf) had different wording, excluded the reference to work limiting problems, changed the categories to plain English terms to allow individuals to state the extent of their limitations, and included a 12 month time frame for the persons' activities to have been limited.

3. The 2001 and 2011 Census forms (2.02 Mb Pdf) asked whether you provided unpaid care to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental ill health or disability, or problems related to old age, and for how many hours per week.

Ethnicity

Caution is needed when comparing census ethnicity data over time because of changes and increases in census form tick boxes and changes to the question as wording (from cultural in the 2001 Census to ethnic background in the 2011 Census).

While White British continued to be the ethnic group the majority of people identify with, it decreased between 2001 and 2011 in both urban and rural areas (Table 6). However, the 8.0 percentage point decrease in urban areas was far greater than the 1.5 percentage point decrease in rural areas.

Table 6: Percentage of usual residents living in urban and rural areas belonging to the White British ethnic group

England and Wales, 2001 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Percentage point change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>-8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>-7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes:

Download table

XLS XLS format
(27.5 Kb)
The 'White Other' ethnic group was the largest of the ethnic minorities in both rural (1.9 per cent of the rural population) and urban areas (5.0 per cent of the urban population) (Figure 9). Indians were the second most common ethnic minority in urban areas and the third most common in rural areas. Pakistanis were the third most common ethnic minority in urban areas comprising 2.4 per cent of the urban population. However, Pakistanis comprised just 0.1 per cent of the rural population in 2011 making them only the 13th most common rural ethnic minority.

As a proportion of usual residents, the only group to be more common in rural areas was the 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller’ group (0.14 per cent of the population in rural areas, compared with 0.09 per cent in urban areas).

**Figure 9: Percentage of usual residents living in urban and rural areas by ethnic group (excluding White British)**

*England and Wales, 2011*

Notes:
1. Comparability issues exist between these ethnic groups for the 2001 and 2011 Census.
2. No comparable data exists for these ethnic groups in the 2001 Census.
Figure 10 shows the percentage of each ethnic group living in rural areas in 2001 and 2011. It shows that, in 2011, 22.0 per cent of the White British population lived in rural areas; a very slight decrease on 2001 levels. By contrast, in both 2001 and 2011, 1 per cent of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis resident in England and Wales lived in a rural area.

In the categories for which comparisons over time can be made, nine had a reduction in the proportion of usual residents living in rural areas. The largest decrease was for the ‘White Other’ ethnicity at 4.4 percentage points. This ethnic group increased by more than a million people (84.8 per cent) between 2001 and 2011. This increase largely occurred in urban areas such that 7.9 per cent of this ethnic group lived in rural areas in 2011 compared with a larger 12.3 per cent in 2001.

**Figure 10: Percentage of usual residents in ethnic groups living in rural areas**

England and Wales, 2001 and 2011

Notes:
1. Comparability issues exist between these ethnic groups for the 2001 and 2011 Census.
2. No comparable data exists for these ethnic groups in the 2001 Census. Residents responding as ‘Gypsy or Irish Traveller’ or ‘Arab’ in 2011 could have identified as one of the other ethnic groups in 2001.
3. White British census tick box is labelled as ‘White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British’.

Download chart

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Notes

1. See [Census Comparability Report](#) for further details.

Country of birth

Over 2001 to 2011, the proportion of usual residents living in England and Wales who were born in the UK decreased in both urban and rural areas (Table 7). The decrease was greater in urban areas (5.1 percentage points) compared with rural areas (1.0 percentage points).

Table 7: Percentage of usual residents living in urban and rural areas born in the United Kingdom

England and Wales, 2001 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Percentage point change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>-5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>-4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes:

Download table

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(27.5 Kb)

Figure 11 shows the percentage of each country of birth group living in rural areas of England and Wales in 2001 and 2011. Wales was the country of birth with the highest proportion of residents living in rural areas. This is not surprising given the earlier finding (Figure 1) that Wales had a higher share of population living in rural areas than any of the English regions.

Migrants from the EU accession countries\(^1\) have at times been associated with agricultural work within England and Wales. It is interesting to note, therefore, that only 6.2 per cent of residents born in the EU accession countries and living in England and Wales were actually living in rural areas in
2011. Among people born in the EU member states as constituted in 2001\(^2\), 11.8 per cent lived in rural areas in 2011. This was down from 15.7 per cent in 2001.

**Figure 11: Percentage of usual residents in country of birth groups living in rural areas**

England and Wales, 2001 and 2011

Notes:
1. UK Other not included in 2001 Census
2. EU 2011: Accession countries April 2001 to March 2011 were not included in the 2001 Census

Download chart

[XLS format](28 Kb)
Notes

1. EU 2011: Accession countries April 2001 to March 2011: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia

2. EU 2001: Member countries in March 2001: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden

Religion

Nationally, there was a fall in the proportion of people reporting to be Christian, from 71.7 per cent in 2001 to 59.3 per cent in 2011. Table 8 shows that the size of this fall was broadly similar in urban and rural areas.

Table 8: Percentage of usual residents living in urban and rural areas with a Christian religious affiliation

England and Wales, 2001 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Percentage point change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>-12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>-11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>-12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes:

Download table
XLS XLS format
(27.5 Kb)

The proportion of the rural population reporting to be Christian in 2011 was larger than that of the urban population. Figure 12 shows that the opposite was true for all other religions.

In urban areas, the proportion reporting to be Muslim (5.8 per cent) was markedly larger than the next largest religion (Hindu at 1.8 per cent). Overall, 9.9 per cent of residents in urban areas of England and Wales reported a religion other than Christianity in 2011. In rural areas, 1.5 per cent of residents reported a religion other than Christianity in 2011.
Figure 12: Percentage of usual residents by religious group in urban and rural areas
England and Wales, 2011

Notes:

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Qualifications

In 2011 usual residents aged 16 and over in urban areas (at 23.0 per cent) were more likely to have no qualifications than their rural counterparts (21.4 per cent) in 2011. Table 9 shows that, compared with rural areas, a greater proportion of the urban population aged 16 and over had 'Other qualifications' as their highest level of qualification (6.0 per cent compared with 4.1 per cent). This, perhaps, reflects the diversity of urban areas with more people having foreign qualifications.
Rural residents were, compared with urban areas, more likely to have an apprenticeship as their highest qualification (4.2 per cent compared with 3.4 per cent). They were also more likely to be qualified to level 4 or above (29.4 per cent compared with 26.7 per cent).

### Table 9: Percentage of usual residents aged 16 and over by highest level of qualification in urban and rural areas

**England and Wales, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No qualifications</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 qualifications</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 qualifications</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 qualifications</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 qualifications and above</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other qualifications</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table notes:**
1. No qualifications refers to no academic or professional qualifications.
2. Level 1 qualifications are 1 to 4 O Levels/CSE/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation Diploma, NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic/Essential Skills.
3. Level 2 qualifications are 5+ O Levels (Passes)/CSEs (Grade 1)/GCSEs (Grades A* to C), School Certificate, 1 A Level/2 to 3 AS Levels/VCEs, Intermediate/Higher Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma, NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma.
4. Level 3 qualifications are 2+ A Levels/VCEs, 4+ AS Levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma, NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma.
5. Level 4 and above qualifications are Degrees (eg BA, BSc), Higher Degrees (eg MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4 to 5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, Foundation degree (NI), and professional qualifications (eg teaching, nursing, accountancy).
6. ‘Other’ qualifications are vocational/work-related qualifications and foreign qualifications (not stated/level unknown).
7. Source: 2011 Census - Office for National Statistics

**Download table**

[**XLS**](#)  [**XLS format**](#)  
(29.5 Kb)

Figure 13 shows the breakdown of residents aged 16 and over with no qualifications for the nine English regions and Wales. The proportion of urban residents with no qualifications was highest in the West Midlands at 27.5 per cent and lowest in London at 17.6 per cent.

In rural areas, the North East (25.8 per cent) and Wales (24.8 per cent) had the highest rates of people with no qualifications, while the South East had the lowest rate (18.1 per cent).
In most regions, urban residents were more likely to have no qualifications than rural residents.

**Figure 13: Percentage of usual residents aged 16 and over with no qualifications in urban and rural areas**

English regions and Wales, 2011

Notes:

Download chart

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(27.5 Kb)

**Economic activity**

The economic activity statistics derived from the 2011 Census differ to those published in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) for a number of reasons. They can be useful to compare the economic activity of residents in urban and rural areas with the following caveats:

- Data from the LFS are for people aged 16 to 64, but the data presented below are for usual residents aged 16 to 74.
The economically active full-time student category in Table 10 includes employed and unemployed students.

In 2011, usual residents aged 16 to 74 were as likely to be economically active in urban areas (69.7 per cent) as they were in rural areas (69.5 per cent) (Table 10). Rural residents, however, were more likely to be in employment (64.3 per cent compared with 61.3 per cent in urban areas). They were also much more likely to be self-employed (13.8 per cent compared with 8.8 per cent in urban areas).

A greater proportion of the urban population aged 16 to 74 was unemployed (4.7 per cent compared with 2.8 per cent in rural areas). Students, both economically active and inactive, were also more prominent in the urban population (3.7 per cent and 6.3 per cent compared with 2.4 per cent and 3.8 per cent in rural areas).

A much greater proportion of the 16 to 74 year-old rural population was retired in 2011 (18.1 per cent compared with 12.8 per cent of the urban population). For all the other economically inactive categories, however, the proportion of the urban population was larger than that in rural areas.

Table 10: Percentage of usual residents aged 16 to 74 by economic activity in urban and rural areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economically active</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In employment</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee: Part-time</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee: Full-time</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time student</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Inactive</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student (including full-time students)</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after home or family</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term sick or disabled</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes:
In 2001, a greater proportion of the usually resident population aged 16 to 74 was economically active in rural areas (67.5 per cent) compared with urban areas (66.3 per cent). As shown in table 10, however, this was no longer the case in 2011, with the share of economically active in urban areas increasing by 3.6 percentage points to 69.7 per cent and in rural areas increasing by 2.0 percentage points to 69.5 per cent.

Figure 14 shows, for the English regions and Wales, the proportion of the economically active population aged 16 to 74 that were unemployed in 2011 in urban and rural areas (excluding those economically active full-time students who were unemployed). The unemployment rate in rural areas was consistently lower than in urban areas. The largest gap was in the West Midlands where urban unemployment was 8.1 per cent and rural unemployment was 3.8 per cent.

The South East and the South West had the lowest rates of urban unemployment in 2011 (both 5.1 per cent) and the lowest rates of rural unemployment (3.5 per cent and 3.6 per cent respectively).

The highest rates of rural unemployment were in the North East at 6.5 per cent and Wales at 5.3 per cent. The North East also had the highest rate of urban unemployment at 8.5 per cent. Wales, however, had the sixth highest rate of urban unemployment at 7.2 per cent.
Figure 14: Percentage of economically active residents aged 16 to 74 who were unemployed in urban and rural areas
English regions and Wales, 2011

Notes:

Download chart
[XLS format](27.5 Kb)

Industry and occupation

Industry

In 2011, the top five most common industries of employment for usual residents aged 16 to 74 were the same for people living in urban and rural areas (Table 11).

The biggest difference between the two types of area was in the percentage of people employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing. Some 3.4 per cent of economically active residents aged 16 to 74 in rural areas were employed in this industry compared with 0.3 per cent in urban areas.
Table 11: Percentage of usual residents aged 16 to 74 by industry in urban and rural areas

England and Wales, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human health and social work activities</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes:

Download table

[XLS format](27.5 Kb)

Occupation

The most common occupation for residents of both urban areas and rural areas in 2011 was professional occupations, accounting for 17.4 per cent of workers aged 16 to 74 in both areas (Figure 15).

The biggest difference between the two types of area was in the percentages of people working in (1) skilled trade occupations, and (2) managers, directors and senior officials. Rural areas had a larger percentage of residents employed in these occupations than urban areas – 14.4 per cent compared with 10.8 per cent for skilled trade occupations and 13.7 per cent compared with 10.1 per cent for managers, directors and senior officials.

The difference in skilled trade occupations partly reflects the larger proportion of workers employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing in rural areas. For managers, directors and senior officials, the difference is probably as a result of higher earnings enabling them to live in rural areas.

With the exception of the two occupations above and professional occupations, urban areas had larger percentages of people employed in all other occupation types than rural areas.
Household composition

The most common type of household in both urban and rural areas in 2011 was a one-family-only household containing a married or civil partnership couple\(^1\) (Figure 16). This type of household was more common in rural areas than in urban areas (39.9 per cent of all households compared with 31.7 per cent).

The second most common type of household, a one person household, was more common in urban areas than in rural areas (31.0 per cent of all households compared with 26.7 per cent). Lone parent families were also more common in urban areas than in rural areas (11.3 per cent of all households compared with 7.7 per cent).
Rural areas had a larger percentage of one-family-only households where all people were aged 65 and over than did urban areas (11.7 per cent of all households compared with 7.3 per cent). This is to be expected given the older age structure of the population in rural areas.

**Figure 16: Percentage of households with at least one usual resident by composition in urban and rural areas**

England and Wales, 2011

![Bar chart showing percentage of households by composition in urban and rural areas](chart.png)

Notes:

**Download chart**

[XLS format](chart.xls) (28 Kb)

Between 2001 and 2011, both urban and rural areas experienced a decrease in the proportion of all households containing one family households consisting of a married or same-sex civil partnership couple (4.0 and 3.0 percentage points respectively) (Figure 17).

Urban areas also experienced a 1.0 percentage point decrease in the proportion of one family households where all residents were aged 65 and over. In contrast, there was a 0.2 percentage point increase in rural areas.
There was a notable increase in both rural and urban areas in the proportion of one person households for which the resident was aged below 65. By contrast, the proportion of one person households where the resident was aged above 65 declined in both rural and urban areas with a larger decrease in urban areas. The net effect is that one person households across all age groups decreased as a share of total households in urban areas by 0.1 percentage points, whilst they increased as a share of rural households by 1.2 percentage points.

**Figure 17: Percentage point change in composition of households with at least one usual resident in urban and rural areas**

England and Wales, 2001 to 2011

Notes:

Download chart

[XLS](XLS format) (28 Kb)
Notes

1. The 2011 Census collected information on civil partnerships for the first time, reflecting the fact that the Civil Partnership Act 2004 came into effect in the UK on 5 December 2005.

Tenure

In 2011, owner occupied households were more common as a percentage of all households in rural areas (74.1 per cent) than in urban areas (61.2 per cent). Figure 18 shows that this was especially true for properties that were owned outright. By contrast, socially rented properties, in particular those rented from the local authority, were more common in percentage terms in urban areas than in rural areas.

Figure 18: Percentage of households with at least one usual resident by tenure in urban and rural areas

England and Wales, 2011

Notes:

Figure 19 shows the changes that have taken place since 2001. Private renting and living rent free increased in both urban and rural areas. The growth of 6.9 percentage points in urban areas is consistent across most of the English regions and Wales. The exception is in London where the growth was 9.1 percentage points.

Over the period 2001 to 2011 the proportion of urban households living in properties owned with a mortgage or in shared ownership decreased by 6.1 percentage points. Rural areas had a lower decrease (5.3 percentage points), but much of this decrease was offset by the increase in households living in properties which were owned outright (3.6 percentage points).

**Figure 19: Percentage point change in tenure of households with at least one usual resident in urban and rural areas**

England and Wales, 2001 to 2011

Notes:
Figure 20 shows as at 2011 the variation in the levels of social renting in urban and rural areas across the English regions and Wales. The North East had the highest levels of social renting in both urban and rural areas at 24.2 per cent and 17.7 per cent respectively. This is followed by London for which 24.1 per cent of households in urban areas were living in socially rented accommodation.

The South East (14.5 per cent) and the South West (14.6 per cent) had the lowest rates of social renting in urban areas. It was the North West, however, at 8.6 per cent that had the lowest rate of social renting in rural areas.

**Figure 20: Percentage of households with at least one usual resident that were socially rented in urban and rural areas**

English regions and Wales, 2011

Notes:
Cars and vans

Across all regions, rural households were more likely to have access to at least one car or van than urban households. In 2011 the proportion of rural households with access to at least one car or van varied from 78.0 per cent in the North East to 90.2 per cent in the South East (Figure 21). Urban households in London were the least likely to have access to at least one car or van at 58.4 per cent, while urban households in the South East were most likely to have a car at 79.2 per cent.

Figure 21: Percentage of households with at least one usual resident that had access to at least one car or van,
English regions and Wales, 2011

Notes:
Background notes

1. This publication follows the 2011 Census Population and Household Estimates for England and Wales. The census provides estimates of the characteristics of all people and households in England and Wales on census night. These are produced for a variety of users including government, local and unitary authorities, business and communities. The census provides population statistics from a national to local level. This report discusses the results for England and Wales.

2. The 2011 Rural-Urban Classification can be found on the ONS Open Geography Portal and the 2001 Rural-Urban Classification can be found on the ONS website. 2011 Census data are available from the NOMIS website and 2001 Census data are available via the Office for National Statistics website.

3. Interactive data visualisations developed by ONS are also available to aid interpretation of the results.

4. ONS has ensured that the data collected meet users’ needs via an extensive 2011 Census outputs consultation process in order to ensure that the 2011 Census outputs will be of increased use in the planning of housing, education, health and transport services in future years.

5. Figures in this publication may not sum due to rounding.

6. ONS is responsible for carrying out the census in England and Wales. Simultaneous but separate censuses took place in Scotland and Northern Ireland. These were run by the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) respectively.

7. A person's place of usual residence is in most cases the address at which they stay the majority of the time. For many people this will be their permanent or family home. If a member of the armed forces did not have a permanent or family address at which they are usually resident, they were recorded as usually resident at their base address.

8. All key terms used in this publication are explained in the 2011 Census glossary. Information on the 2011 Census Geography Products for England and Wales is also available.

9. All census population estimates were extensively quality assured, using other national and local sources of information for comparison and review by a series of quality assurance panels. An extensive range of quality assurance, evaluation and methodology papers were published alongside the first release in July 2012 and have been updated in this release, including a Quality and Methodology Information document (152.8 Kb Pdf).
10. The 2011 Census achieved its overall target response rate of 94 per cent of the usually resident population of England and Wales, and over 80 per cent in all local and unitary authorities. The population estimate for England and Wales of 56.1 million is estimated with 95 per cent confidence to be accurate to within +/- 85,000 (0.15 per cent).

11. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

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This document is also available on our website at www.ons.gov.uk.

 Appendices

Appendix A

To convert the 2001 health statistics into the good/bad dichotomy, the following conversion ratios were applied:

Appendix A: Percentage of 2001 health categories used to calculate dichotomised categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2001 Category</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>87.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes:
1. Source: An investigation into the impact of question change on estimates of General Health Status and Healthy Life Expectancy

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