



Rural Health and Care Seminar

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Rural Planning

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

Delivering for Rural

Unlocking Rural Prosperity

- RURAL PLANNING
- RURAL ECONOMIES
- RURAL TRANSPORT
- RURAL NET ZERO
- RURAL HEALTH & CARE
- RURAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- RURAL CONNECTIVITY
- FAIR FUNDING

The infographic features a central dark green circle with the title and tagline. Surrounding it are several smaller circles, each containing an image and a label: an elderly woman (Rural Planning), a bus on a road (Rural Transport), a hand holding a smartphone (Rural Transport), wind turbines and solar panels (Rural Net Zero), a smiling man in a workshop (Rural Health & Care), a group of children (Rural Connectivity), and a map of the UK (Rural Connectivity). The Rural Services Network logo is at the top center.

Fair Funding

 Almost 10 million people live in rural England...
...that is **MORE THAN** the whole of **GREATER LONDON**



 Urban voters receive 36% more per head in government funding

 Rural voters pay 20% more in Council Tax per head

Find out more [here](#)

Access to Health & Care

 74% of 65+ year olds voted in the General Election (2019)

Over 30% of rural voters are 65+



 Urban Councils receive 57.5% more per head to spend on public health

 Rural voters can wait 3 times longer for an ambulance

Find out more [here](#)

Rural Transport

 Improved public transport is better for the environment...
...reduces issues of social isolation
...provides access to training, skills and employment



 Urban councils budget to spend 3.5 times more than rural on public transport

 Rural voters have fewer transport options and are reliant on private vehicles which can be expensive to run


Find out more [here](#)

Rural Connectivity

 Unlocking the digital potential of rural areas could add up to £26bn annually to the UK economy...
...growing turnover for rural businesses by £15bn each year



 Only 47% of rural voters have Gigabit capability

 49% of rural voters do not get 4G mobile coverage on all networks indoors

Find out more [here](#)

Rural Economy

 There are over half a million rural businesses in England...
...that is 23% of all registered businesses



 Productivity and GVA in rural areas is lower than urban

 Rural voters earn £1,600 less a year

Find out more [here](#)

Affordable Housing

 Ten new affordable rural homes create an economic boost of £1.4m GVA...
...and yet they only cost £1.1m to build





 The rural fuel poverty gap is nearly double the national average


 Houses in rural areas are less affordable to purchase for those in the bottom 25% of earners compared to urban


Find out more [here](#)

Rural Net Zero

 Rural households emissions are 19% higher than urban...
...yet rural areas have the resources to contribute to Net Zero



 25% of rural homes are not connected to the gas network

 Rural voters are more reliant on costly fossil fuels

Find out more [here](#)

Rural Planning

 Over 600 Neighbourhood Plans have been made in rural communities showing how voters want to influence how their local area is developed



 There are almost 100,000 second homes in rural areas

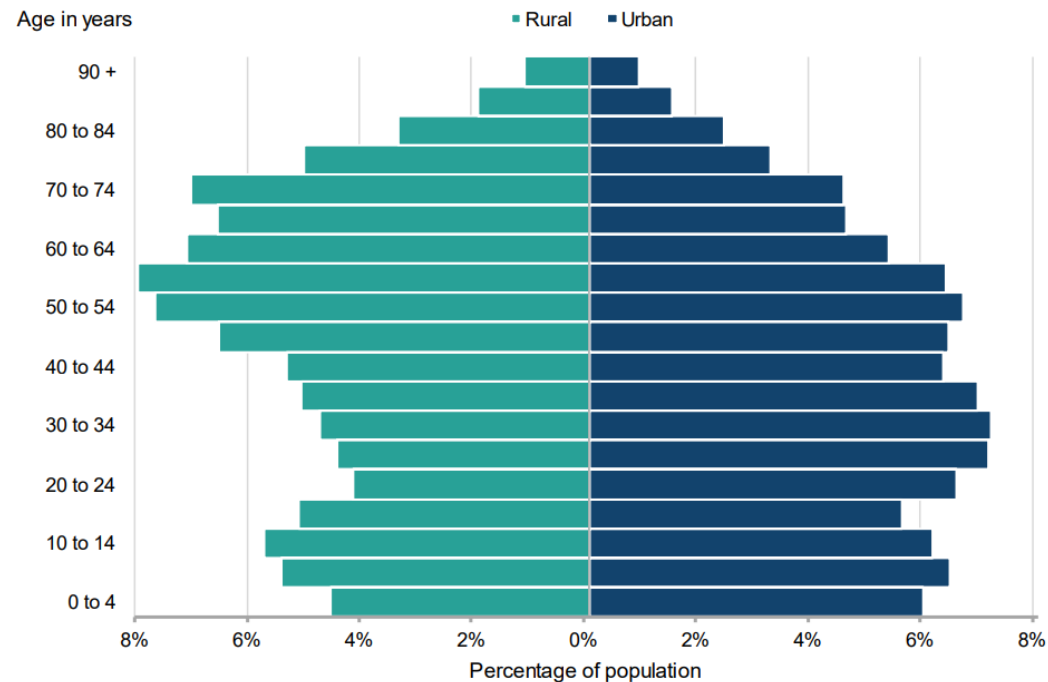
 Most rural developments are too small to include affordable homes

Find out more [here](#)

Demographic challenges for rural areas

Figure B-1: Percentage of population within age bands of 5-year intervals from 0 to 90+, by Rural-Urban Classification in England based on LSOA level data, 2020

The legend is presented in the same order and orientation as the stacks in the bars



Rural areas have a greater proportion of older residents

These residents can place additional demands on services

Darzi Review

Introduction

1. The National Health Service is in serious trouble

The British people rely on it for the moments of greatest joy - when a new life comes into being - and those of deepest sorrow. We need it when we are suffering from mental distress or hurting from physical pain and for all the times when care and compassion matter most. Yet public satisfaction - which stood at a record high in 2009 - is now at its lowest ever.

2. The first step to rebuilding public trust and confidence in the NHS is to be completely honest about where it stands

Everyone knows that the health service is in trouble and that NHS staff are doing their best to cope with the enormous challenges. The sheer scope of issues facing the health service, however, has been hard to quantify or articulate. That is why this report has not held back, even if it has been a rapid assessment over just 9 weeks. Although I have worked in the NHS for more than 30 years, I have been shocked by what I have found during this investigation - not just in the health service but in the state of the nation's health.

What does this mean for rural?

We need measures and metrics that set out the situation in rural areas to fully understand the policy challenges



Rural Health and Care

The proportion of GP registered population that is over 75 years old is **markedly greater** for rural practices than urban.



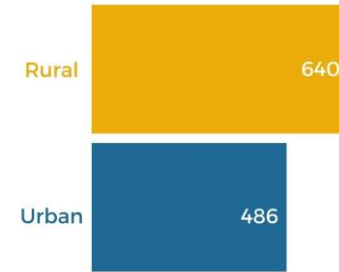
Source: Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, Fingertips, Public Health Data 2024

Rural Areas accounted for **59%** of hard to recruit training places for GP Speciality Trainees in 2023-2024.



Source: Homes England - Fact Sheet 10: New homes in Rural Areas, 2023/24

In 2021/2022, rural areas of England had a **higher rate** of people diagnosed with an invasive cancer (excluding non melanoma skin cancer) than in urban areas.



Source: Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, Fingertips, Public Health Data 2021/22

There is more pressure on NHS dentistry services in rural areas due to a higher ratio of residents to dentists.



Source: Defra analysis of NHS Dental Statistics for England, 2022/23

Commissioned NHS dental work delivered in March 2024.



Source: Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, Fingertips, Public Health Data 2024

Both in rural areas and urban, the proportion of patients waiting over 6 weeks for a diagnostic test is above the NHS target by a significant margin.



The situation being worse in rural areas.

Source: RSN analysis of Waiting Times and Activity for Diagnostic Tests and Procedures, 2024

Everyone deserves access to adequate health and care services

- Rural residents face distinct healthcare challenges, including limited access to transport, longer distances to medical facilities, an aging demographic, housing inadequacies, digital connectivity gaps, and recruitment hurdles for healthcare workers.
- These factors collectively impede the delivery of equitable health and care services, a fundamental NHS principle. While the EFRA report highlights the neglect of rural needs in mental health policy, rural councils grapple with delivering social care amidst escalating costs and demand.
- The healthcare system confronts a critical dilemma: balancing the need for specialised, centralised services with the necessity for geographic accessibility. Innovations in community-based healthcare and digital health solutions offer promising avenues, yet their success hinges on robust network connectivity.
- Addressing mental wellbeing, particularly in isolated communities, and ensuring consistent care support through diverse networks, are pivotal for maintaining the health and independence of rural populations.

Rural Health and Care

First 18 months

Deliver a rural work force strategy to aid training and recruitment across all health and care services including dentistry.

Protect rural communities now by accepting the recommendations of the May 2023 EFRA Committee report into rural mental health. Immediately action the recommendation to establish a “new joint rural health policy and delivery team to lead and improve on current “rural proofing” of health policy; and work with NHS England to set targets to measure and improve outcomes for rural mental health services and support rural health providers”.

Ensure strategy is Rural Proofed, especially proposals designed to tackle the core drivers of disparities in health outcomes including quality of housing, and access to good quality jobs and training. This must also take into account the whole range of extra costs of delivering services in rural areas and ensure that they are accurately reflected in funding formulae.

First 3 years

Address the lack of understanding of the distinctive health and care needs of rural areas to deliver services that are suited to the specific needs of rural places.

Develop integrated services that provide holistic person-centered care

Create a culture which ensures the Third Sector is included as a partner in the integrated planning system and resourced accordingly, where it is cost effective to do so and in the community's interests. The contribution of community and voluntary organisations must not be underestimated, not least with respect to prevention and wellbeing.

Rural Solutions