

**So, is deprivation an issue for older  
and younger people in rural areas?**

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# This presentation draws on two reports produced by the Commission for Rural Communities

- CRC 2005-2013
- Sponsored by Defra
- Remit of advice, advocacy and watchdog
- Expected to understand issues of disadvantage in rural communities, and to make recommendations to Government
- The role is now fulfilled by Defra's Rural Communities Policy Unit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/rural-and-countryside>

# The research took place against a changing economic and policy landscape

- Fragile state of the UK economy
- Policy of fiscal consolidation to reduce the deficit
- Government's stated intention to 're-balance' the economy
- Pluralism, localism and the Big Society

# Social isolation experienced by older people in rural communities (2012)

- 23% of the rural population is over retirement age (urban 18%)
- Proportion of the rural population over retirement age to increase by 186% by 2028 (UK: 149%)
- Rural areas, with their older population, have higher levels of disease and disability than urban
- These factors led the CRC to focus its attention on services for older people

# Social care

APPG, 2010:

‘Providing care to rural populations entails unavoidable additional costs due to diseconomies of scale, additional travel time and related costs, and the effects of caring for older people’

and yet, the resources allocated to rural areas for social care are lower than for urban areas

- LA funding formula allocations are made on the basis of historic usage of services, not actual need
- Rural areas receive lower levels of funding per head
- Spend per head on care:
  - 2009/10: 12 London Boroughs £1750
  - 2009/10: 27 shire counties: £773

# This has a clear effect on personal budgets for care services...

- Up to ten times higher in urban areas compared to rural
- This makes pluralism less viable
- And yet, some rural Local Authorities told us that they were planning to pull out of the delivery of front-line care services, leaving provision to 'the market'
- Recommendation: Government to commission independent research into the effects of the funding formula and relationship between funding and need , in rural /urban areas

# CRC identified some very impressive examples of care services being led by the community

## *Esk Moors Caring, North Yorkshire*

- Followed research by the Community in the 1990s
- Community social enterprise, in partnership with Abbeyfield
- 12 independent flats, plus community day centre and community outreach
- Run by a Board of Trustees with legal and financial responsibility



# Transport

- Car ownership is higher in rural areas than urban
- But public transport is vital for those without a car
- Bus services are being reduced as a consequence of reductions in LA subsidies
- RSN survey 2011: 'The hardest hit places are those which are the most rural and which have the highest proportion of retired residents'

# Local Authority Public Transport policies are inconsistent...

- The levels of subsidy for scheduled bus services vary
- The types of community transport on which concessionary bus passes can be used vary
- The approach to accepting concessionary bus passes before 9.30 also varies
- CRC recommended that DoT should explore the feasibility of replacing the concessionary fare system with a system of personal budgets for older people to use on public transport

# Housing

- Social isolation increases the risk of falls and injuries
- Appropriate housing and nearby care services can reduce this risk and alleviate the consequences
- Reduced risks = reduced state expenditure on transport and health and care services

# Different types of housing suit different people

- Adaptations to existing homes
- Purpose-built accommodation
- With or without on-site support

# Some Government activity is to be welcomed, other aspects less so

- NPPF : should speed up the planning process and give local people a greater say in decisions about the numbers and types of housing built locally
- 'Bedroom tax' – older people are exempt, but not those approaching retirement – but there are fewer small properties in rural areas
- CRC recommendation: DWP should not reduce housing benefit for people approaching retirement age unless suitable accommodation is available to them within their own community

# The CRC raised concerns about the continued provision of universal services in some rural areas

- Care, Transport, Housing
- This is largely a question of fair funding, not more funding
- The 2012 Open Public Services White Paper said 'Government will ensure that issues of fairness for people in rural areas accessing individual services are taken into account when developing policy'

# Barriers to education, employment and training for young people in rural areas (2012)

- The proportion of young people who are NEET in rural areas is lower than in urban areas
- But since 2007 it has been growing more rapidly
- And rural young people face some specific challenges

# Transport

- a car can be essential
- insurance costs can be prohibitive
- costs of student travel passes is rising
- some bus services are being withdrawn
- Wheels to Work is an effective scheme and the CRC was pleased to see it continue
- Recommendation: Government should review the cost of free transport to learning for 16-18 year olds



# Employment and training

- Rural areas have a greater proportion of small firms compared to urban
- Agriculture is still a significant sector
- Young people are more likely to be in low paid, relatively insecure employment compared to urban
- shared apprenticeship schemes are encouraging

# So rural young people have specific issues in finding and undertaking employment and training

- The Work Programme: is there a disincentive to focus on urban areas?
- Role of community organisations in delivering Work Programme activities
- Recommendation: evaluations of the Work Programme should consider the extent to which providers are reaching rural young people compared to urban

# Youth services

- Many Local Authorities are making difficult decisions about funding for youth services
- This is leading to a loss of youth workers and youth groups
- Some services are being contracted out at lower cost

# CRC identified opportunities for voluntary and community organisations

- Delivering contracts for the Work Programme
- Delivering youth services under contract
- Brokering shared apprenticeships
  
- And to oversee a mixed bag of issues for young people, CRC recommended that Government create a

*Minister for Young People*

CRC reports are now hosted on the website of the Rural Services Network

<http://www.rsnonline.org.uk/intelligence/mission-for-rural-communities>

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