

Special Area Population Estimates

Population Estimates by Urban Rural Classification

Background

1. The Scottish Government Urban Rural classification was first released in 2000 and is consistent with the Government's core definition of rurality which defines settlements of 3,000 or less people to be rural. It also classifies areas as remote based on drive times from settlements of 10,000 or more people. The definitions of urban and rural areas underlying the classification are unchanged. Version 2016 is used here and updates earlier versions.
2. Settlements increase and decrease in size over time, so the Urban Rural classification of areas can also change. This means that the population of urban or rural areas in, for example, 2011, may not be the same as the estimates for 2011 shown here. Instead, the estimates available here show how the population of the areas making up each category of the 2016 Urban Rural classification has changed over time.
3. Data zones have been assigned to the 6-fold classification based upon the location of the population weighted centroid. Users should be aware that this best fit classification of data zones means that a small number may straddle urban/rural classification boundaries. Data zone populations are then used to give the total population for each Urban Rural category.
4. The 6-fold Urban Rural classification categories are:

Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification

• Large urban areas	Settlements of over 125,000 people
• Other urban areas	Settlements of 10,000 to 125,000 people
• Accessible small towns	Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people and within 30 minutes drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more
• Remote small towns	Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
• Accessible rural	Settlements of less than 3,000 people within 30 minutes drive to a settlement of 10,000 or more
• Remote rural	Settlements of less than 3,000 people and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more

5. An 8-fold version of the classification has been produced which includes two additional categories – very remote small towns and very remote rural. The 8-fold version classifies remote areas on drive times of 30 and 60 minutes.
6. The 8-fold Urban Rural classification categories are in the following table.

Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification

• Large urban areas	Settlements of over 125,000 people
• Other urban areas	Settlements of 10,000 to 125,000 people
• Accessible small towns	Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people and within 30 minutes drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more
• Remote small towns *	Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people and with a drive time of between 30 and 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
• Very remote small towns	Settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
• Accessible rural	Settlements of less than 3,000 people within 30 minutes drive to a settlement of 10,000 or more
• Remote rural *	Settlements of less than 3,000 people and with a drive time of between 30 and 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
• Very remote rural	Settlements of less than 3,000 people and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more

* The remote small towns and remote rural categories in the 8-fold classification should not be confused with the similarly labelled categories in the 6-fold classification.