

Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020

May 2022

Scottish Government

**Geographic Information Science & Analysis Team
Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division**

May 2022

Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction 3
- 2. Overview 4
- 3. Methodology 12
- 4. Significant Changes with this Release..... 15
- 5. Classifying Other Geographies and Land Area calculations 20
- Annex 1: Outputs of the Classification..... 24

Tables

- Table 2.1: Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification, 6-fold 5
- Table 2.2: Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification, 8-fold 5
- Table 2.3: Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification lookup table 6
- Table 3.1: Data Sources for the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020..... 12
- Table 3.2: Road classes and average speed applied in the classification 13
- Table 4.1: Changes between population categories, 2016 vs 2020 Settlements 15
- Table 5.1: Urban Rural Classification of Output Areas by centroid location and Data Zone classification 22
- Table 5.2: Percent of population in each 6-fold Urban Rural category, by Local Authority.... 22
- Table 5.3: Percent of population in each 8-fold Urban Rural category, by Local Authority.... 23

Maps & Figures

- Map 2.1: Scottish Government 8-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020 8
- Map 2.2: Scottish Government 6-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020 9
- Map 2.3: Scottish Government 3-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020 10
- Map 2.4: Scottish Government 2-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020 11
- Figure 4.2: Changes in classification of Data Zone centroids in Coupar Angus town due to improved algorithm, SG Urban Rural 8-fold Classification 2016 vs. SG Urban Rural 8-fold Classification 2020..... 11

1. Introduction

The Scottish Government is committed to improving its understanding of life in rural Scotland. The Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division works to continuously improve evidence available on rural communities.

We understand that issues such as transport, education and health can have a distinct impact on rural communities and reflect this when developing or implementing policy. To do this we need accurate and up-to-date information on our rural communities, and our main tool to identify rural communities is the Urban Rural Classification. This classification aids in developing our understanding of the issues facing urban, rural and remote Scotland.

The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification (version 2020, which updates the 2016 version) was first released in 2000 and is consistent with the Government's core definition of rurality which defines Settlements of less than 3,000 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.

The publication includes background information, methodology and guidance on the use of the classification, and also the geographic information to allow analysts to use the classification in their research.

The wider dissemination and use of the classification will improve the evidence base on urban, rural, and remote Scotland.

Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division
Scottish Government
May 2022

2. Overview

The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification provides a consistent way of defining urban and rural areas across Scotland. The classification is based upon two main criteria: **(i) population**, as defined by the National Records of Scotland (NRS), and **(ii) accessibility**, based on drive time analysis to differentiate between accessible and remote areas in Scotland. The classification is available in multiple forms, including a 6-fold classification which distinguishes between urban, rural, and remote areas through six categories, and an 8-fold classification which further distinguishes between remote and very remote regions.

The population criteria is derived from the Settlements dataset produced by NRS, which defines areas of contiguous high density postcodes that make up a Settlement. Using the population thresholds of 125,000, 10,000 and 3,000 people, Settlements can be grouped into the following categories:

- (1) Large Urban Areas** - populations of 125,000 or more
- (2) Other Urban Areas** - populations of 10,000 to 124,999
- (3) Small Towns** - populations of 3,000 to 9,999
- (4) Rural Areas** - populations less than 3,000

Accessibility is measured in terms of drive times to an urban area. This is done by calculating 30 and 60 minute drive times from the population weighted centroids of Settlements with a population of 10,000 or more (i.e. Large and Other Urban Areas). The results allow areas to be classified in terms of accessibility by the following categories:

- (1) Accessible** - Areas within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.
- (2) Remote** - Areas that are more than a 30 minute drive time (6-fold classification), **or** areas that have a drive time between 30 and 60 minutes (8-fold classification) from a Settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.
- (3) Very Remote** - Areas that are more than a 60 minute drive time from a Settlement with a population of 10,000 or more (8-fold classification only).

By combining both the population and accessibility measures, a Scotland-wide Urban Rural Classification is defined. Categories of the 6- and 8-fold classifications are shown in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 below.

Table 2.1: Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification, 6-fold

Class	Class Name	Description
1	Large Urban Areas	Settlements of 125,000 people and over.
2	Other Urban Areas	Settlements of 10,000 to 124,999 people.
3	Accessible Small Towns	Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
4	Remote Small Towns	Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
5	Accessible Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
6	Remote Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.

Table 2.2: Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification, 8-fold

Class	Class Name	Description
1	Large Urban Areas	Settlements of 125,000 people and over.
2	Other Urban Areas	Settlements of 10,000 to 124,999 people.
3	Accessible Small Towns	Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
4	Remote Small Towns	Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
5	Very Remote Small Towns	Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
6	Accessible Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and within a drive time of 30 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
7	Remote Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
8	Very Remote Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.

The Scottish Government core definition of rurality classifies areas with a population of fewer than 3,000 people to be rural. The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification can be collapsed to this core definition, to create a 2-fold classification (see Table 2.3). Categories 5 and 6 are rural and categories 1 to 4 make up the rest of Scotland (Urban Areas and Small Towns).

(1) Rest of Scotland – (1) Large Urban Areas, (2) Other Urban Areas, (3) Accessible Small Towns, and (4) Remote Small Towns.

(2) Rural Scotland – (5) Accessible Rural and (6) Remote Rural Areas.

Table 2.3: Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification lookup table

UR 8-fold Class	UR 6-fold Class	UR 3-fold Class	UR 2-fold Class
1	1	1	1
2	2	1	1
3	3	1	1
4	4	1	1
5	4	1	1
6	5	2	2
7	6	3	2
8	6	3	2

An alternative grouping of categories can be used to distinguish between Accessible and Remote areas. Settlements containing fewer than 10,000 people, or areas of Scotland not included in a Settlement, with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more are defined to be remote areas. These are categories 4 and 6 in the 6-fold classification.

(1) Accessible – (1) Large Urban Areas, (2) Other Urban Areas, (3) Accessible Small Towns, and (5) Accessible Rural

(2) Remote – (4) Remote Small Towns and (6) Remote Rural Areas

Versions

The Scottish Government hold the current and previous versions of the classification, as listed below. All previous versions are readily available and, depending on the analysis, users may want to apply these or the current version to historic datasets. Users are encouraged to reference the version of the Urban Rural Classification used.

The classification was last produced based on 2016 Settlements, and named the ‘2016 Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification’. This updated version is reflective of 2020 Settlements, and has been named the ‘2020 Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification’.

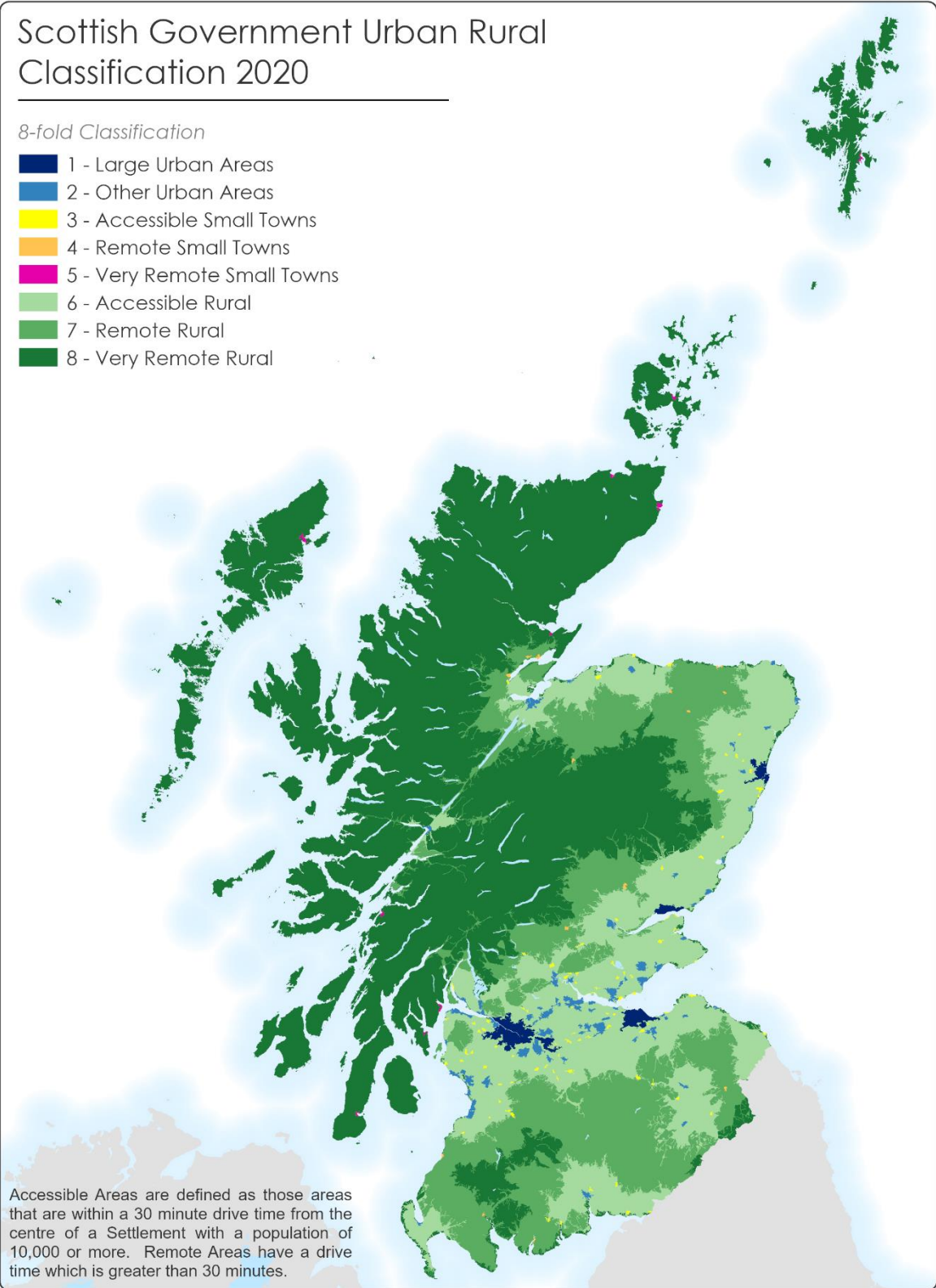
Note; the classification was previously called the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) Urban Rural Classification. Its original name reflected the fact that it was developed within the context of the SHS. To reflect its wider use beyond SHS, its name was been changed to the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification.

- 2020 Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification
- 2016 Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification
- 2013-2014 Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification
- 2011-2012 Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification
- 2009-2010 Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification
- 2007-2008 Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification
- 2005-2006 Scottish Executive Urban Rural Classification
- 2003-2004 Scottish Executive Urban Rural Classification
- 2001 Scottish Household Survey Urban Rural Classification (6-fold only)

Comparison with other UK classifications

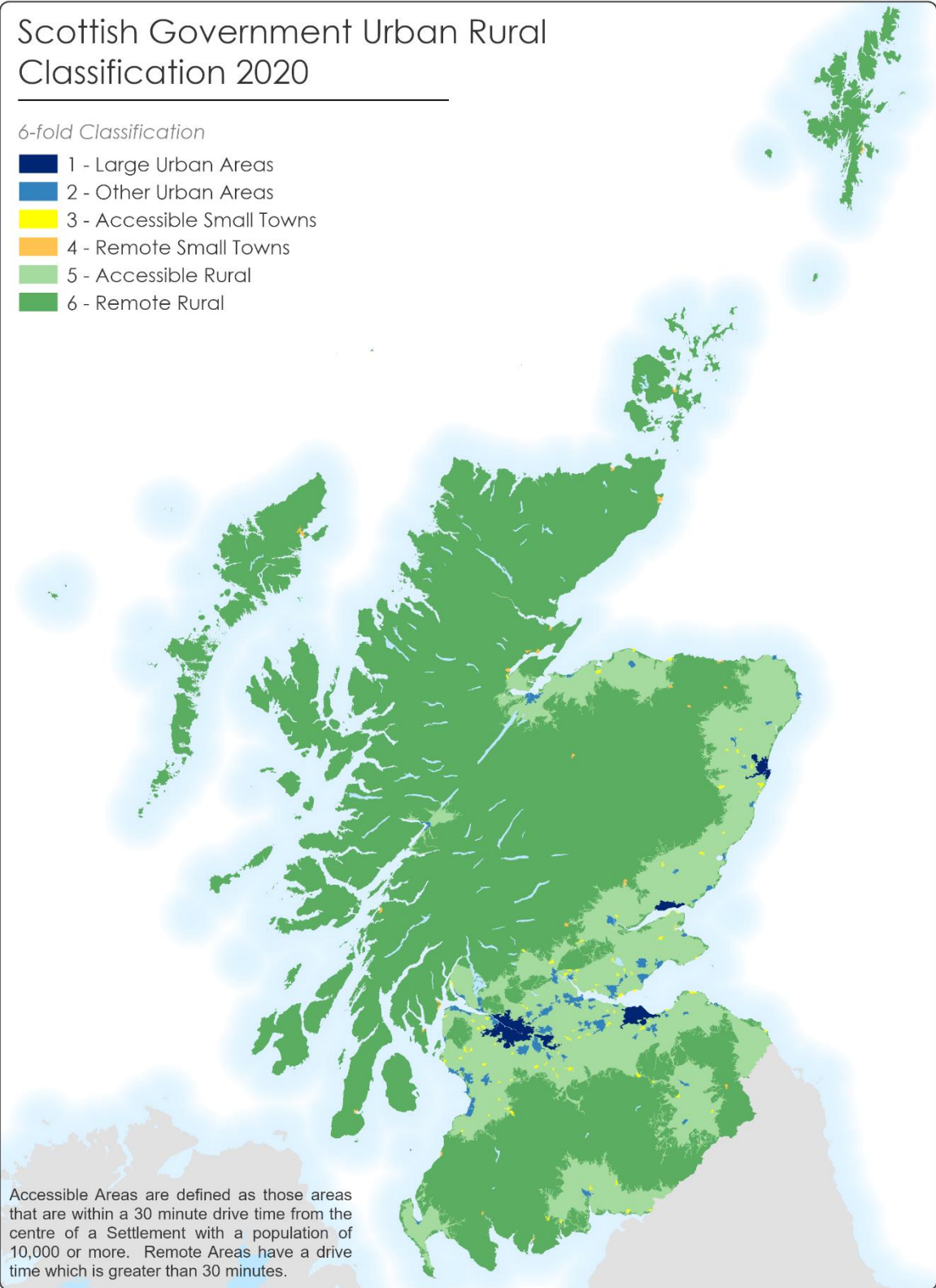
Different urban rural definitions are required as the nature of rurality is different in each country. Separate definitions in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and England and Wales have been in use for a number of years. A [review paper](#) is available which provides more information on the Northern Ireland 2015 classification. A definition for England and Wales was introduced in 2004 and most recently updated in 2011. For more information see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2011-rural-urban-classification>.

Map 2.1: Scottish Government 8-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020



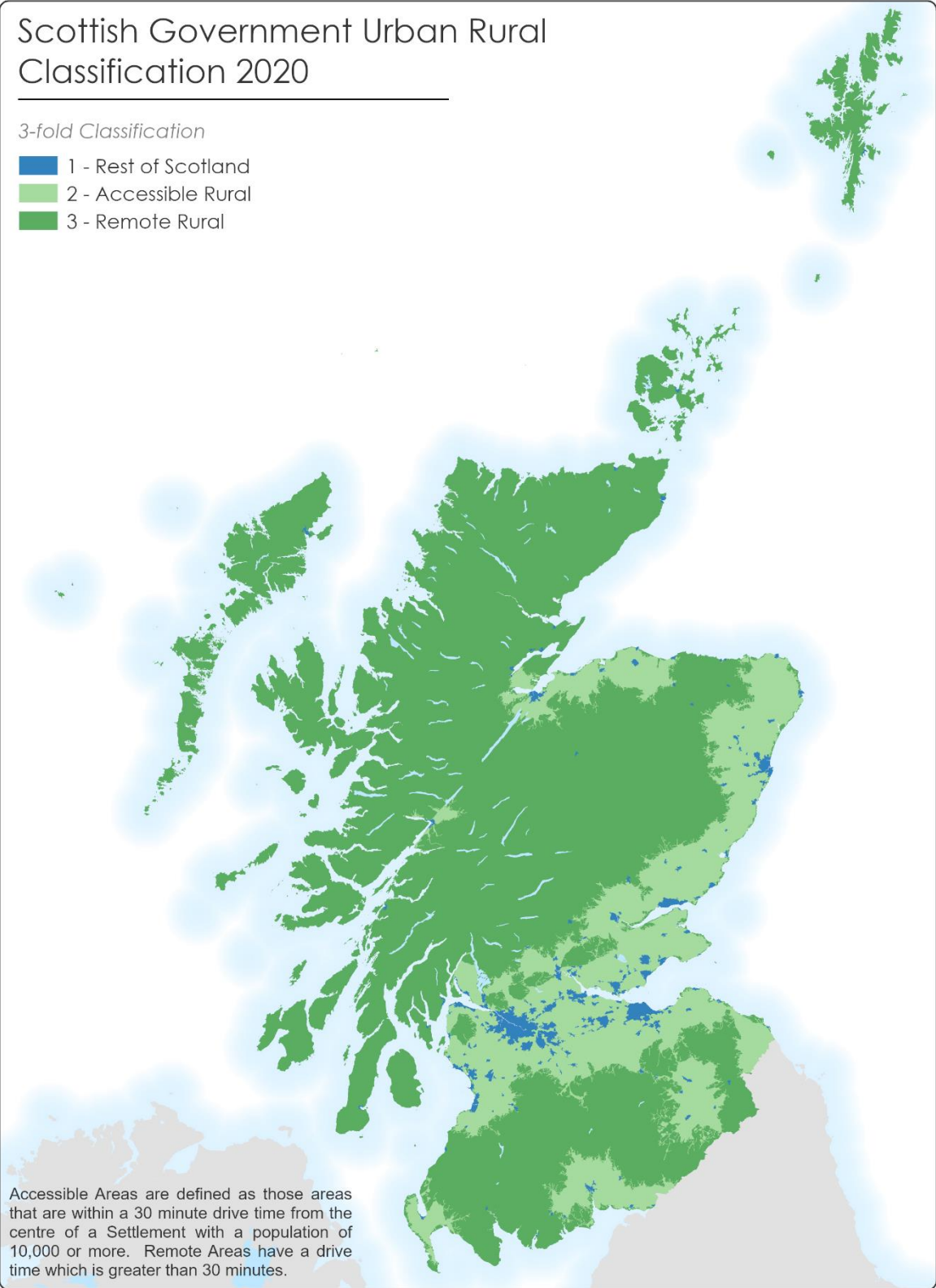
© Crown copyright and database rights 2022. Ordnance Survey (OS Licence number 100024655).

Map 2.2: Scottish Government 6-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022. Ordnance Survey (OS Licence number 100024655).

Map 2.3: Scottish Government 3-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022. Ordnance Survey (OS Licence number 100024655).



Map 2.4: Scottish Government 2-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022. Ordnance Survey (OS Licence number 100024655).



3. Methodology

Data Sources

The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020 was created by combining population and accessibility information to distinguish between urban and rural areas across Scotland. Population information is sourced from the Settlements dataset provided by National Records of Scotland (NRS), and accessibility information is obtained by calculating drive times from the centres of Settlements with a population of 10,000 or more (i.e. Large and Other Urban Areas). Table 3.1 summarises the datasets used to create the 2020 version of the classification.

Table 3.1: Data Sources for the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020

Dataset	Source
Scottish Settlement boundaries, centroids and population estimates	National Records of Scotland (NRS), 2020 version (released March 2022)
Centroids for Berwick-upon-Tweed and Carlisle	Ordnance Survey (OS) 50K Gazetteer, 2014
OS MasterMap Highways (RAMI)	OS MasterMap Highways (RAMI), 2022 (January)
OS MasterMap Highways (Paths)	OS MasterMap Highways (Paths), 2022 (January)
SG Ferry Routes	Scottish Government, 2021
Extent of the Realm (EoR) and Mean High Water (MHW) Coastlines	OS BoundaryLine, 2021 (October)

Settlements define built-up areas in Scotland, and are generally more identifiable as the traditional towns and cities than administrative boundaries such as Council Areas, much of which consist of land that is not developed and unpopulated. The Settlements dataset is produced by NRS, with the current version (Settlements 2020) having been released in March 2022. Small Area Population Estimates, together with information from the Royal Mail Postal Address File, were used to classify 2020 postcodes as high or low density. A Settlement is defined to be a group of high density postcodes whose combined population rounds to 500 people or more. They are separated by low density postcodes. For more information on how Settlements are created, see the [NRS website](#).

Settlement centroids for Carlisle and Berwick-upon-Tweed in Northern England were also included in the analysis as they have populations of over 10,000 and are within a 30-minute drive of the Scottish border, and thus will influence accessibility results. For consistency, the same centroids which were used in 2013-14 and 2016

Classifications were used in the 2020 analyses. These were based on the OS 50k Gazetteer product.

Transport Network Creation

For the calculation of drive times, a network dataset including road and ferry routes was required. Roadways were obtained from Ordnance Survey (OS) MasterMap Highways (RAMI and Paths) for Scotland with an extension beyond the border to include routes for Northern England. OS Highways gives a current, comprehensive network view of Great Britain's roads. In the previous 2016 Classification, another OS product - Integrated Transport Network (ITN) - was used. This network dataset has since been retired.

The Scottish Government maintain a dataset of Scotland’s ferry routes which have been digitised against OS background mapping. Both vehicle and passenger only services are included in the SG Ferry Routes, though only the vehicular routes are used within the Urban Rural analysis.

A network dataset was built from the road and ferry networks, and each road type was assigned an average speed, shown in Table 3.1. Settlement 2020 boundaries identified whether the rural or urban speed was applied. For example, motorways would have been assigned an average speed of 104.6 kph in rural areas, and 70.8 kph in urban (built up) areas. It should be noted that the process does not take into account peak and non-peak travel times; the speeds for each road type are the average for that class¹. For consistency, the figures used for the 2020 analyses match those used in the 2016 and 2013-14 Classifications.

Table 3.2: Road classes and average speed applied in the classification

Route Type	Rural Speed (kph)	Urban Speed (kph)
Motorway	104.6	70.8
A Road	64.4	30.6
B Road	54.7	25.8
Minor and Local Road	40.2	22.5
Alley	40.2	22.5
Pedestrian Road	0	0
Private Road – Publicly accessible	40.2	22.5
Private Road	40.2	22.5

The ferry speeds were already available on the Scottish Ferry Routes dataset, calculated from the online timetables, and a standard 30-minute boarding time was added for the drive times.

¹ Figures originate from DTLR (Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions).

Analysis and Classification

The first stage in creating the classification is to categorise the Settlements dataset using the population thresholds of 125,000, 10,000 and 3,000 to identify the Settlements from which drive times will be calculated. Settlements were grouped into the following categories:

- (1) Large Urban Areas** - populations of 125,000 or more
- (2) Other Urban Areas** - populations of 10,000 to 124,999
- (3) Small Towns** - populations of 3,000 to 9,999
- (4) Rural Areas** - populations less than 3,000

The next step was to distinguish between accessible and remote areas. The drive times were calculated from the centroids of the Settlements with a population of 10,000 or more (i.e. Large and Other Urban Areas). The drive time analysis was performed using GIS software (ESRI ArcGIS Pro Network Analyst extension). The following definitions of remoteness were defined:

- (1) Accessible** – areas within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.
- (2) Remote** – areas that are more than a 30 minute drive time (6-fold classification), **or** areas that have a drive time more than 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes (8-fold classification) from a Settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.
- (3) Very Remote** – areas that are more than a 60 minute drive time from a Settlement with a population of 10,000 or more (8-fold classification only).

Accessibility categories were assigned to the Settlement boundary layer based upon the location of the Settlement population weighted centroids. Classifying the settlements by their centroids means that the entire settlement will be assigned to a single class, regardless of whether the area is split by the drive time extent boundary.

The re-classified settlement boundaries and drive time datasets were combined to form one national dataset containing the 2, 3, 6 and 8-fold urban rural definitions. All layers were clipped to both the Mean High Water and Extent of the Realm coastlines.

4. Significant Changes with this Release

The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification was last produced based on 2016 Settlements (2016 version). This updated version is reflective of 2020 Settlements. The differences between the classifications stem from changes to Settlement populations and Settlement boundaries and, to a lesser extent, changes to the road network, the network dataset used, and the software used. There have not been any major changes to the methodologies used to create Settlements or to measure accessibility from the previous version of the Urban Rural Classification. However, the replacement of OS ITN with OS Highways necessitated a change in software used to produce the drive times; from Esri ArcGIS Desktop to Esri ArcGIS Pro. Due to an improved algorithm in ArcGIS Pro Network Analyst – the tool used to produce drive times from settlements - there are very slight changes to the edges of drive time polygons.

Settlement Changes

The classification of a particular area will change if the Settlement population crosses the 3,000, 10,000 or 125,000 thresholds which are used to distinguish between urban and rural areas. Of the 514 Settlements identified in Scotland based on 2020 data, the population of eight had increased or decreased enough by 2020 to pass one of the key population thresholds. These changes are shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Changes between population categories, 2016 vs 2020 Settlements

Settlement Name 2020	Local Authority	Population	
		2016	2020
Increased to more than 3,000:			
Danderhall	Midlothian	2,810	3,164
Increased to more than 10,000:			
Dunbar	East Lothian	9,030	10,270
Haddington	East Lothian	9,130	10,350
Nairn	Highland	9,960	10,199
South Queensferry	City of Edinburgh	9,350	10,934
Decreased to less than 3,000:			
Overtown	North Lanarkshire	3,340	2,952
Decreased to less than 10,000:			
Dalgety Bay	Fife	10,050	9,709
Forres	Moray	10,100	9,903

These changes in population impacted the total number of centroids used for the drive time calculations. There were a total of 69 centroids used to calculate drive times in the 2016 classification. This increased to 71 centroids for the 2020

classification. The difference was due to the addition of removal of two Settlements centroids for Dalgety Bay and Forres and the addition of four Settlements centroids for Dunbar, Haddington, Nairn, and South Queensferry. The population of Dalgety Bay and Forres decreased beneath the threshold of 10,000 between 2016 and 2020, making them ineligible for inclusion in the drive time calculations. The populations of Dunbar, Haddington, Nairn, and South Queensferry increased above the 10,000 threshold between 2016 and 2020, making them eligible for inclusion in the drive time calculations. The biggest impact on service areas appears to be the removal of Forres, which has decreased accessibility in this part of the country, and the addition of Haddington and, in particular, Dunbar, which has noticeably increased accessibility in this part of the country.

Analysis of Data Zone changes

One of the most common uses of the Classification is the assignment of urban rural categories to Data Zones, which is the core geography used for the dissemination of small area statistics in Scotland². It is therefore interesting to note the changes in category assignments between versions of the classifications, particularly Data Zones which swap between the 2-fold categories of Urban Scotland and Rural Scotland. There are 6,976 Data Zones 2011 in Scotland. Each Data Zone has been assigned to an urban rural category based upon the location of its population weighted centroid. There are twelve which have changed from being classified as Rural in 2016 to Urban in 2020 (i.e. 0.17% of all Data Zones), and seventeen which have changed from Urban in 2016 to Rural in 2020 (i.e. 0.24% of all Data Zones). Twenty of these Data Zones have changed due to Settlement boundary changes, and the remaining nine have changed due to being located within Settlements which have passed a population threshold since 2016 (see Table 4.1 above).

Road Network Changes

Due to the fact that the drive time analyses are based on average speeds applied by road type to the whole country, the results will not be impacted by improvements made to sections of existing roads, e.g. widening a motorway to ease localised congestion. Unless there are new roads, the network used for the 2020 Classification will behave exactly the same as in the 2016 Classification, as both are based on the same average speeds. There were no noticeable drive time boundary changes due to any new roads. Please note; the road network dataset used in the 2016 Classification (OS Integrated Transport Network (ITN)) has been retired. The 2020 Classification was produced using the replacement product; OS Highways.

Software Changes

The change from OS ITN to OS Highways necessitated a change in software; from Esri ArcGIS Desktop to Esri ArcGIS Pro. Testing in each network in each software was undertaken to ensure transferability of the drive time methodology. Where

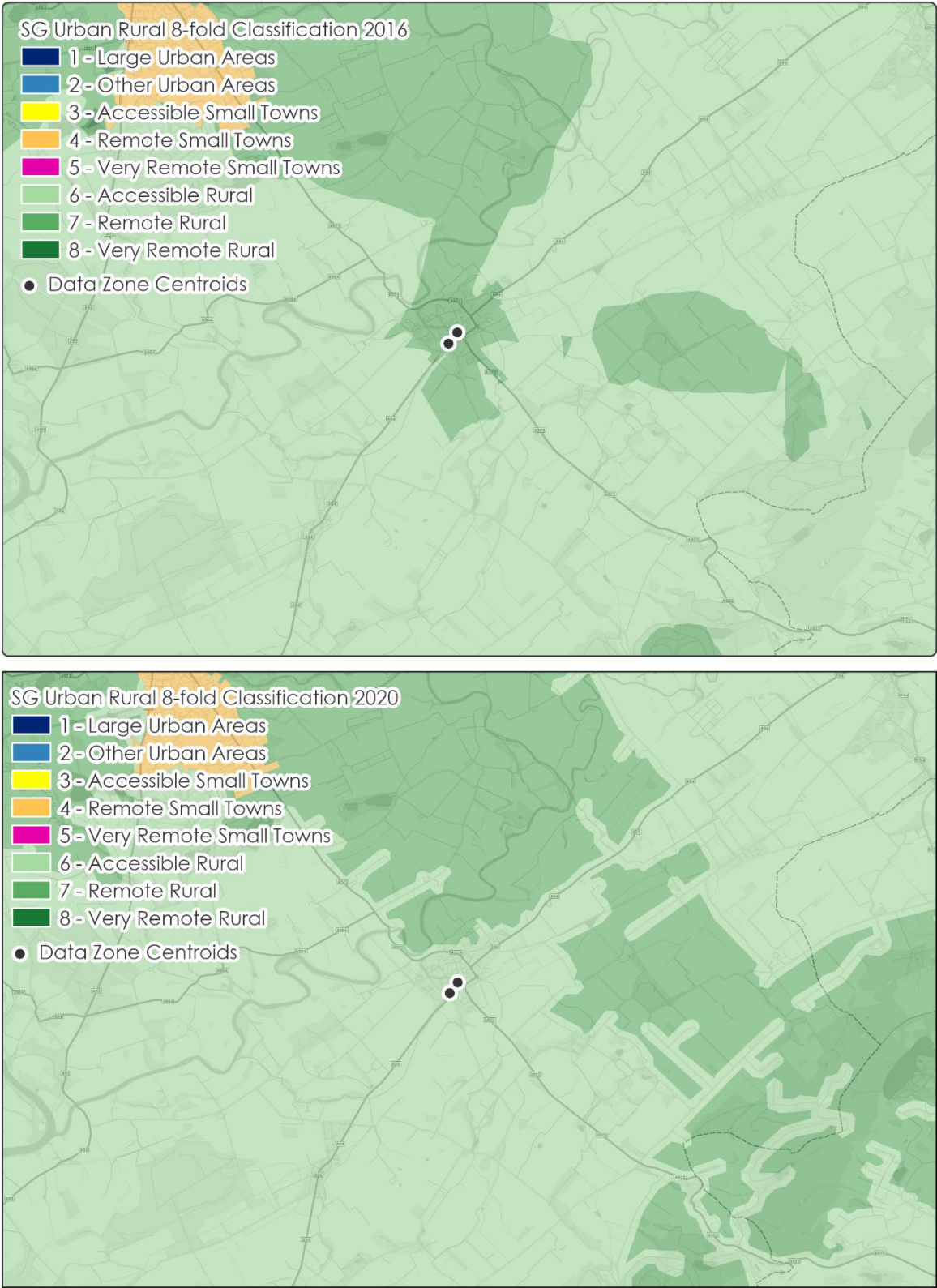
² See [Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics Data Zones Background Information](#) for more information on the Data Zone geography.

possible, parameters were matched to the equivalent parameters in ArcGIS Pro. However, due to some improvements to the underlying Network Analyst algorithm in the Esri ArcGIS Pro software, there are some changes to the edges of the drive time polygons produced. As a result of these edge changes, 58 Data Zones have changed category in the 8-fold Classification (i.e. approx. 0.8% of all Data Zones). However, on investigation, these changes appear to present a more realistic view of accessibility.

An example of this is Coupar Angus (Figure 4.2). In the 2016 Urban Rural Classification, the two Data Zones in Coupar Angus town were classed as Remote Rural, and the countryside areas surrounding Coupar Angus town were classed as Accessible Rural. Coupar Angus town is situated on the A94, which is the primary route in the area for access to two Settlements with a population greater than 10,000 people; Perth and Forfar. The countryside areas along the A94 up to the boundary of Coupar Angus town are all defined as Accessible Rural. It is perhaps unrealistic that Coupar Angus town could be defined as more rural than the countryside areas around it.

In the 2020 Urban Rural Classification, the Accessible Rural area encompasses the length of the A94 and therefore also encompasses Coupar Angus town, whereas the surrounding countryside areas are defined as Remote Rural. This is likely a more realistic representation of this area, as the town – being on a main road and therefore having a higher average speed – should be more accessible than the surrounding countryside areas.

Figure 4.2: Changes in classification of Data Zone centroids in Coupar Angus town due to improved algorithm, SG Urban Rural 8-fold Classification 2016 vs. SG Urban Rural 8-fold Classification 2020



© Crown copyright and database rights 2022. Ordnance Survey (OS Licence number 100024655).

5. Classifying Other Geographies and Land Area calculations

The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification can be used to classify other geographies as urban, rural and remote. However, due to the detail of the boundaries, a direct link to the classification is only advisable to geographies that are smaller in area. As part of creating the classification, the Scottish Government provides look-up tables for **postcodes**, **Census Output Areas** and **Data Zones** to the Urban Rural Classification. When applying the classification to other geographies, users are encouraged to make use of the smallest geography possible (i.e. postcodes)³.

Where larger geographies are concerned (i.e. Local Authority), it is more meaningful to show the proportion of the population living in each of the 6- and 8-fold categories. Applying the classification rigidly to these geographies would result in the detail of the classification being lost in aggregation, and likely result in Scotland appearing more urban than it is in reality.

Data Zones

Data Zones are the core geography used for the dissemination of small area statistics in Scotland⁴. Each Data Zone has been assigned to an urban rural category based upon the location of its population weighted centroid. Data Zones were not designed to nest within the urban rural classification and as a result some Data Zones do straddle the classification boundaries. Therefore, it may be possible to have postcodes and Output Areas that belong to one urban rural category when classified based on the locations of their centroids, but belong to another class when the Data Zone in which they are located is used to classify them. To illustrate, Table 5.1 below measures the degree of straddling in terms of Output Areas that are classified differently based upon the Data Zones that they fall within.

³ Please note; the Postcode 2022_1 to SGUR_2020 lookup, initially realised alongside this publication, will only be available temporarily. This is due to a new release of NRS Scottish Postcode Directory (SPD) which will be published in Autumn 2022. If the Postcode 2022_1 to SGUR_2020 lookup is unavailable for download as a supporting document from the SGUR 2020 publication webpage, users are advised to access the latest SPD from [Scottish Postcode Directory \(SPD\) | National Records of Scotland \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk) which will have a postcode to SGUR 2020 lookup incorporated.

⁴ See [Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics Data Zone Background Information](#) for more information on the Data Zone geography.

Table 5.1: Urban Rural Classification of Output Areas by centroid location and Data Zone classification

Output Area Classification, based upon centroid location		Output Area Classification, based on Data Zone classification					
		Large Urban Areas	Other Urban Areas	Accessible Small Towns	Remote Small Towns	Accessible Rural	Remote Rural
Large Urban Areas	17,640	17,628	2	0	0	10	0
Other Urban Areas	15,640	0	15,605	0	0	34	1
Accessible Small Towns	3,856	0	1	3,819	0	34	2
Remote Small Towns	1,328	0	0	0	1,317	1	10
Accessible Rural	5,198	48	152	101	5	4,818	74
Remote Rural	2,689	0	0	6	31	96	2,556
Total	46,351	17,676	15,760	3,926	1,353	4,993	2,643

The effect of straddling can also be expressed by the percentage of Output Areas which are assigned to the same category under their centroid classification and their classification based upon the Data Zone in which they are located:

- **99.9%** of Census Output Areas are correctly assigned to Large Urban Areas
- **99.7%** of Census Output Areas are correctly assigned to Other Urban Areas
- **99.0%** of Census Output Areas are correctly assigned to Accessible Small Towns
- **99.1%** of Census Output Areas are correctly assigned to Remote Small Towns
- **92.7%** of Census Output Areas are correctly assigned to Accessible Rural
- **95.0%** of Census Output Areas are correctly assigned to Remote Rural

As shown above, the degree of straddling is most apparent in Accessible and Remote Rural Areas. This is the result of the fact that Data Zones can be very large in rural areas, in order to meet the minimum population threshold, and therefore are more likely to straddle the drive time areas and Settlement boundaries.

Classification of higher geographies

Where larger geographies are concerned, the classification can be used to show the degree of urbanity, rurality and remoteness as a proportion of the population living within each of the 6- and 8-fold categories. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 below show the percent of population by Urban Rural category for each Local Authority.

Tables showing the proportion of the population living within each of the 6- and 8-fold categories for Health Boards, Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies, Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies, and Multi-Member Wards will also be available for download from the [Urban Rural Classification](#) section of the Scottish Government website.

Land area

As well as calculating the proportion of the population within each of the Urban Rural categories, it is also possible to calculate the proportion of the land area covered by each category. Tables on the land area for the 2-, 3-, 6- and 8-fold Urban Rural Classifications are available for download from the [Urban Rural Classification](#) section of the Scottish Government website.

Table 5.2: Percent of population in each 6-fold Urban Rural category, by Local Authority

Local Authority	Large Urban	Other Urban	Accessible Small Towns	Remote Small Towns	Accessible Rural	Remote Rural
Aberdeen City	96.3	0	2.1	0	1.5	0
Aberdeenshire	0	30.5	14.3	6.5	36.4	12.3
Angus	8.3	53.4	11.5	0	26.1	0.7
Argyll and Bute	0	17.7	4.3	30.4	4.4	43.2
Clackmannanshire	0	40.5	44.9	0	14.6	0
Dumfries and	0	29.8	20.1	5	25	20.1
Dundee City	99.1	0	0	0	0.9	0
East Ayrshire	0	42.2	29.3	0	22	6.4
East Dunbartonshire	59.8	27.5	7.5	0	5.2	0
East Lothian	22.7	39.9	12.2	0	25.2	0
East Renfrewshire	87.2	0	9	0	3.8	0
City of Edinburgh	96	2	1	0	1	0
Falkirk	0	89.7	1.9	0	8.4	0
Fife	0	64.1	17.7	0	18.2	0
Glasgow City	99.6	0	0	0	0.4	0
Highland	0	35.7	1.4	15.4	10.4	37
Inverclyde	0	85.2	9.6	0	5.1	0
Midlothian	0	76.3	12.3	0	11.4	0
Moray	0	26.2	26.9	4.8	32.6	9.5
Na h-Eileanan Siar	0	0	0	27.5	0	72.5
North Ayrshire	0	71.9	17.3	0	6.5	4.3
North Lanarkshire	38.8	48.4	4.2	0	8.6	0
Orkney Islands	0	0	0	33.5	0	66.5
Perth and Kinross	1.2	31.2	11	10.9	35	10.9
Renfrewshire	75.8	9.4	10.7	0	4.2	0
Scottish Borders	0	25.3	21.7	6	38.3	8.8
Shetland Islands	0	0	0	29.6	0	70.4
South Ayrshire	0	68.9	4.1	5.6	17.9	3.5
South Lanarkshire	19.2	59.4	11	0	8.7	1.6
Stirling	0	53.1	13.2	0	29.5	4.3
West Dunbartonshire	47.6	51.1	0	0	1.2	0
West Lothian	0	81.2	10.6	0	8.2	0
Scotland	37.8	33.9	8.6	2.6	11.6	5.5

Table 5.3: Percent of population in each 8-fold Urban Rural category, by Local Authority

Local Authority	Large Urban	Other Urban	Accessible Small Towns	Remote Small Towns	Very Remote Small Towns	Accessible Rural	Remote Rural	Very Remote Rural
Aberdeen City	96.3	0	2.1	0	0	1.5	0	0
Aberdeenshire	0	30.5	14.3	6.5	0	36.4	11.2	1.1
Angus	8.3	53.4	11.5	0	0	26.1	0.7	0
Argyll and Bute	0	17.7	4.3	0	30.4	4.4	5.2	38
Clackmannanshire	0	40.5	44.9	0	0	14.6	0	0
Dumfries and Galloway	0	29.8	20.1	5	0	25	20	0
Dundee City	99.1	0	0	0	0	0.9	0	0
East Ayrshire	0	42.2	29.3	0	0	22	6.4	0
East Dunbartonshire	59.8	27.5	7.5	0	0	5.2	0	0
East Lothian	22.7	39.9	12.2	0	0	25.2	0	0
East Renfrewshire	87.2	0	9	0	0	3.8	0	0
City of Edinburgh	96	2	1	0	0	1	0	0
Falkirk	0	89.7	1.9	0	0	8.4	0	0
Fife	0	64.1	17.7	0	0	18.2	0	0
Glasgow City	99.6	0	0	0	0	0.4	0	0
Highland	0	35.7	1.4	7.8	7.6	10.4	13.7	23.3
Inverclyde	0	85.2	9.6	0	0	5.1	0	0
Midlothian	0	76.3	12.3	0	0	11.4	0	0
Moray	0	26.2	26.9	4.8	0	32.6	9.4	0.1
Na h-Eileanan Siar	0	0	0	0	27.5	0	0	72.5
North Ayrshire	0	71.9	17.3	0	0	6.5	0.9	3.4
North Lanarkshire	38.8	48.4	4.2	0	0	8.6	0	0
Orkney Islands	0	0	0	0	33.5	0	0	66.5
Perth and Kinross	1.2	31.2	11	10.9	0	35	9.6	1.3
Renfrewshire	75.8	9.4	10.7	0	0	4.2	0	0
Scottish Borders	0	25.3	21.7	6	0	38.3	8.8	0
Shetland Islands	0	0	0	0	29.6	0	0	70.4
South Ayrshire	0	68.9	4.1	5.6	0	17.9	3.5	0
South Lanarkshire	19.2	59.4	11	0	0	8.7	1.6	0
Stirling	0	53.1	13.2	0	0	29.5	3.2	1.1
West Dunbartonshire	47.6	51.1	0	0	0	1.2	0	0
West Lothian	0	81.2	10.6	0	0	8.2	0	0
Scotland	37.8	33.9	8.6	1.4	1.2	11.6	2.8	2.7

Annex 1: Outputs of the Classification

The following boundaries, datasets, maps, and look-ups are produced as outputs of the Scottish Government Urban Rural (SGUR) Classification. All outputs are available for download from the [Urban Rural Classification](#) section of the Scottish Government website.

- SGUR 2020 boundaries
- Printable maps of the 2-, 3-, 6- and 8-fold SGUR 2020
- SGUR 2020 code descriptions
- Postcode 2022_1 to SGUR 2020 lookup
- Census 2011 Output Area to SGUR 2020 lookup
- Data Zone 2011 to SGUR 2020 lookup
- Settlements 2020 to SGUR 2020 lookup
- Population tables
- Land Area tables

Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification (SGUR) 2020 boundaries

Digital boundaries of the Urban Rural Classification are created and supplied in ESRI shapefile (.shp) format. The dataset has full coverage for Scotland and is clipped to the Ordnance Survey (OS) Mean High Water coastline. Fields included in the shapefile are listed below:

UR2FOLD: 2-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR3FOLD: 3-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR6FOLD: 6-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR8FOLD: 8-fold Urban Rural Classification

The shapefile can be accessed from urban rural classification record on the [Scottish Spatial Data Infrastructure website](#).

Printable Maps of the 2-, 3-, 6- and 8-fold SGUR 2020

Static maps of the classification are produced at A4 size. There are maps showing the 2-, 3-, 6- and 8-fold classifications, both with and without OS background mapping. Maps are available in Portable Document File (.pdf) format.

SGUR 2020 code descriptions

Two look-ups are also produced detailing the categories of the classification, one for the 6-fold and another for the 8-fold version. The class code is given, along with the name of the category and a detailed text description. Fields included in the look-ups are listed below:

URCLASS: 6 or 8-fold Urban Rural Class
URNAME: 6 or 8-fold Urban Rural Class Name
URDESC: 6 or 8-fold Urban Rural Class Description

Postcode 2022_1 to SGUR 2020 lookup

The postcode to SGUR lookup shows the geographic relationship between 2022_1 postcode centroids and the SGUR 2020. Fields included in the index are listed below:

POSTCODE:	Small and large user postcode units, both current and deleted
INT_DATE:	Date that the postcode came into use
DEL_DATE:	Date that the postcode was removed from use
TYPE:	Whether the postcode is a larger user, and if it is split
LINKPC:	Linked Small User Postcode
SPLIT_IND:	Split Indicator
CA_CODE:	Council area S-code
UR2FOLD:	2-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR3FOLD:	3-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR6FOLD:	6-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR8FOLD:	8-fold Urban Rural Classification

The lookup includes both current and deleted postcodes to allow deleted postcodes to be classified and used in any subsequent analysis.

The TYPE field identifies whether the postcode is a small user, large user, and if it is split. The TYPE field uses the following codes:

- 0 = Small user postcode
- A = Split small user postcode
- L = Large user postcode matched with small user postcode – no split area
- Z = Large user postcode matched with a split small user postcode

Large user postcodes are those postcodes that receive more than 50 mail items per day. All Large users postcodes are allocated linked small user postcodes.

A split postcode occurs when a postcode straddles two or more Local Authority boundaries, or when a postcode straddles the Scottish/English border, or where an island shares a postcode with the mainland or another island. The most populous part is identified by suffix A and the smaller parts by suffixes B, C etc. Split postcodes have been stripped out of the Urban Rural Classification Index and only the largest part (in terms of households, identified by an 'A') is included in the index. For large user postcodes which have a split small user linked postcode, the 'A' part of the split should be used to determine the relevant urban rural classification.

Please note; the Postcode 2022_1 to SGUR_2020 lookup, initially realised alongside this publication, will only be available temporarily. This is due to a new release of NRS Scottish Postcode Directory (SPD) which will be published in Autumn 2022. If the Postcode 2022_1 to SGUR_2020 lookup is unavailable for download as a supporting document from the SGUR 2020 publication webpage, users are advised to access the latest SPD from [Scottish Postcode Directory \(SPD\) | National Records of Scotland \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk) which will have a postcode to SGUR 2020 lookup incorporated.

Census 2011 Output Area to SGUR 2020 lookup

The Output Area to SGUR lookup shows the relationship between the Census Output Area 2011 population weighted centroids and SGUR 2020. Fields included in the index are listed below:

OUTPUTAREA:	Census Output Area code
UR2FOLD:	2-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR3FOLD:	3-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR6FOLD:	6-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR8FOLD:	8-fold Urban Rural Classification

Data Zone 2011 to SGUR 2020 lookup

The Data Zone to SGUR lookup shows the relationship between Data Zones 2011 population weighted centroids and SGUR 2020. Fields included in the index are listed below:

DZ_CODE:	Data Zone code
UR2FOLD:	2-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR3FOLD:	3-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR6FOLD:	6-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR8FOLD:	8-fold Urban Rural Classification

Settlements 2020 to SGUR 2020 lookup

The Settlements to SGUR lookup shows the relationship between Settlements 2020 population weighted centroids and SGUR 2020, and includes the population estimates for Settlements. Fields included in the index are listed below:

SETT_CODE:	Settlement code
SETT_NAME:	Settlement Name
POPEST2020:	Mid-2020 Population Estimate
POP_CLASS:	Population Class Name (i.e. Large Urban Areas, etc)
UR2FOLD:	2-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR3FOLD:	3-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR6FOLD:	6-fold Urban Rural Classification
UR8FOLD:	8-fold Urban Rural Classification

Population Tables

Percentage population estimates are provided for the 6-fold and 8-fold SGUR 2020 for Council Areas, Health Boards, Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies, Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies and Multi-Member Wards. The population data are based on 2020 mid-year estimates. The data are available in an Excel spreadsheet, with a separate tab for each lookup. Note that rows in these tables may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Land Area tables

Land area and proportion of land area figures are available for the 2-, 3-, 6- and 8-fold classifications. The figures give the area to mean high water, excluding areas of inland water larger than 1km², based on building the SGUR2020 categories from Census Output Areas 2011 (i.e. using the OA2011_SGUR20_Lookup file).



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

© Crown copyright 2022

OGL

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80435-481-0 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, May 2022

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1084022 (05/22)

W W W . g o v . s c o t