

Helping to inform and engender better rural policy making by:

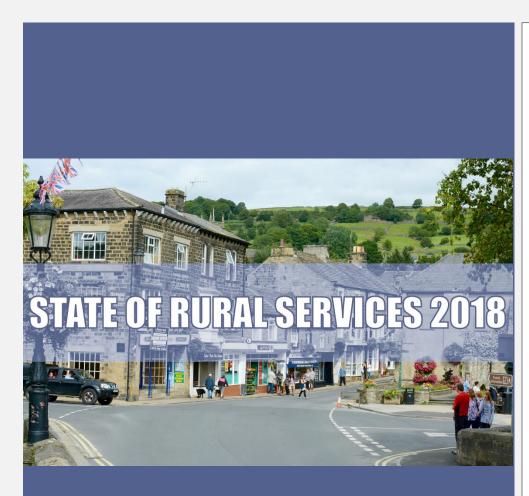
- Providing independent research and evidence
- Supporting rural information exchange
- **O Building a network of rural stakeholders**

Contact us: info@ruralengland.org

State of Rural Services 2018 What is it? Why produce it?

- A <u>resource</u> presenting facts and statistics about rural service provision
- Pulling out some overarching service <u>trends</u>
- <u>Collating</u> existing, recent rural evidence
- <u>Adding</u> some secondary (rural) analysis of data
- Noting important gaps in the evidence base

- The way services are delivered and used is quickly evolving
- What does this mean for rural people and business?
- Having this understood and debated should inform policy making
- As well as assisting better policy delivery
- Encourage others to help fill rural evidence gaps



A rural exploration of the state of:

- 1. Local buses and community transport
- 2. Broadband and mobile connectivity
- 3. Public library services
- 4. Hospitals
- 5. Public health services
- 6. Young people's services
- 7. Shops and online shopping
- 8. Personal advice services

Download the full report at: https://ruralengland.org Many services contracting in rural areas Most notably those delivered by local government which are discretionary

Subsidised bus services:

- Four rural shires no longer subsidise any bus routes
- 202 shire bus routes were withdrawn and 191 scaled back in 2016/17
- Bus passenger numbers fell
 (-7%) from 2014 to 2016 in
 predominantly rural areas

Youth clubs or centres:

- Shire local government spend on young people's services down 38% in three years
- Many local authorities no longer fund youth clubs
- Some youth clubs adapted and survive, whilst others have closed

Public funding for services Nearly always lower in rural than in urban areas

"This poses a question about the equity of service provision to rural communities. Indeed, the extent of the funding variation sometimes raises a linked question, whether it can actually be justified by levels of service need." Based on spend per resident in 2017/18. Predominantly rural areas compared with predominantly urban areas.

Bus subsidy	39% less
Discretionary concessionary fares	78% less
Public health	36% less
Library services	25% less

Digital connectivity Rural coverage is improving, but it still lags behind

Broadband (fixed line):

Mobile networks:

2018 figures	Rural areas	Urban areas	2018 figures	Rural areas	Urban areas
Average download speed	34 Mbps	52 Mbps	Phone call possible on all networks	67% of premises	97% of premises
Have access to 10 Mbps (USO level)	89% of premises	99% of premises	4G possible on all networks	42% of premises	83% of premises
Have access to 30 Mbps (superfast)	76% of premises	97% of premises	Phone call geographic coverage	90% of area	99% of area

Public health outcomes Do services meet the needs of rural young people?

Young people in rural areas score <u>better than</u> average on:

- + School exclusions
- + Emotional and mental health needs

Young people in rural areas score <u>worse than</u> average on:

- Risky behaviours
- Alcohol consumption
- Smoking
- Being bullied

Community-run rural services High expectations of communities and volunteers

Community-run Shops - about 300/nearly all rural Community-managed Libraries - 10% libraries/most rural Community Transport Schemes - 52% mainly serve rural

Volunteer-run Youth Clubs

- 12% rural based

Can deliver benefits:

- Broader service offer
- Better opening times

But there can be risks:

- Volunteer capacity limits
- Places lacking volunteers with skills and time
- Sustainability, where grant-dependent

Widening the service offer, co-location and service hubs

Rural convenience stores: 53% give cash back 44% host an ATM 32% have a PO counter **Community-run shops:** 43% include a cafe **Community-run libraries:** 25% offer IT access 19% have a room for hire 17% host cultural events

Benefits likely to include:

- Cost savings for the service providers
- Increased footfall at the service facility
- Added convenience for the service users

Rural services evidence base: Four key gaps have been identified

- 1) <u>Accessibility statistics</u> the existing access data measures too narrow a range of services
- 2) <u>Big trends</u> to think through rural implications of more online services, struggling high streets, an ageing population, etc
- 3) <u>Policy reforms</u> to evaluate rural impacts e.g. NHS Sustainability & Transformation Plans
- 4) <u>User impacts</u> to find out what rural users do if bus routes disappear, bank branches close, etc

Read the report or its summary at: https://ruralengland.org

