
Socio-economic profile of rural Hampshire 2016

Fuel poverty

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Contents

Introduction and key findings	2
Fuel poverty	3
Households not connected to gas	5
Central heating	6
Conclusion	7
Appendix: Rural Urban Classification	8

Introduction and key findings

1. The rural profile brings together a variety of socio-economic data relating to rural Hampshire, and with the aim of providing a wide ranging evidence base for Hampshire County Council and partners to inform future rural programmes, assist in the targeting of investment and undertake effective action.
2. The profile comprises a number of themed reports covering diverse areas of importance to the future well-being and prosperity of rural Hampshire. The Office for National Statistics Rural Urban Classification (RUC 2011) is linked to the data to achieve a cogent definition describing the rural-urban landscape. The RUC 2011 provides a consistent hierarchical spatial framework based on the make-up of rural-urban populations. Where possible, the smallest geography (output area) is used and aggregated upwards to create a spatial definition that is more precise and, by association, more robust. This approach does however mean that there is no one catch-all rural-urban definition to describe rural Hampshire. See the Appendix for a graphic representation and the Supplementary Report for a fuller description.
3. This report summarises fuel poverty across Hampshire's rural population, including those estimated to be living in fuel poverty, those not connected to the gas network and those without any form of central heating. Additional tables and charts can be found in the Supplementary Report.

Key findings

- The proportion of people living in fuel poverty across Hampshire is significantly lower than the national average. However, levels do vary and with the exception of the unitary authority of Portsmouth; and to a lesser extent Southampton; levels appear highest for those living in the most rural communities. Forecasts suggest a rising elderly population, those aged 85 and over, particularly in rural areas, this coupled with probable increases in fuel prices might give rise to greater disparities in the coming years.
- Households not connected to the gas network are much greater across Hampshire's rural communities, with more than 50% of all households living in the most rural communities across Basingstoke and Deane, the New Forest and Test Valley, not on the gas network. Such households are more likely to be using more expensive fuels to heat their homes, including electricity and oil. However, only a very small proportion of households across Hampshire do not have some level of central heating.

Fuel poverty

4. Fuel poverty can be described as a low income household that also faces high costs in keeping adequately warm and other basic energy services. Fuel poverty is largely driven by three factors: household income, the current cost of energy and the energy efficiency of the home.
5. Fuel poverty is associated with colder homes and with the country's older housing stock that are often made up of relatively energy inefficient properties. The result is a greater number of homes that are costly to heat. In contrast, newer homes subject to stricter regulation and built with better insulation tend to offer better fuel efficiency¹.
6. There is also a very strong link with income and fuel poverty; those on lower household incomes are more likely to be at risk of fuel poverty, contributing to social and health inequalities².
7. In 2013, the government introduced a new definition of fuel poverty (low income - high costs) following recommendations made by John Hills in the Hills Fuel Poverty Review³. Under the new definition a household is in fuel poverty if:
 - Income levels takes it below the poverty line (taking into account the cost of energy)
 - Energy costs are higher than is typical for that household type⁴
8. In 2013, the number of households in England that were classed as being in fuel poverty was estimated at 2.35 million, representing approximately 10.4% of all households⁵.
9. It is possible to investigate estimated proportions of households that are fuel poor at the local level with the modelled fuel poverty data. When looking at Hampshire County as a whole the average percentage of households classified as fuel poor is estimated to be just 6.7%, and well below the national figure (10.7%). Fuel poverty varies significantly across districts and by the urban rural classification.

¹ Platt R, Aldridge J, Washan P, Price D. Help to Heat: A solution to the affordability crisis in energy. London: 2013.

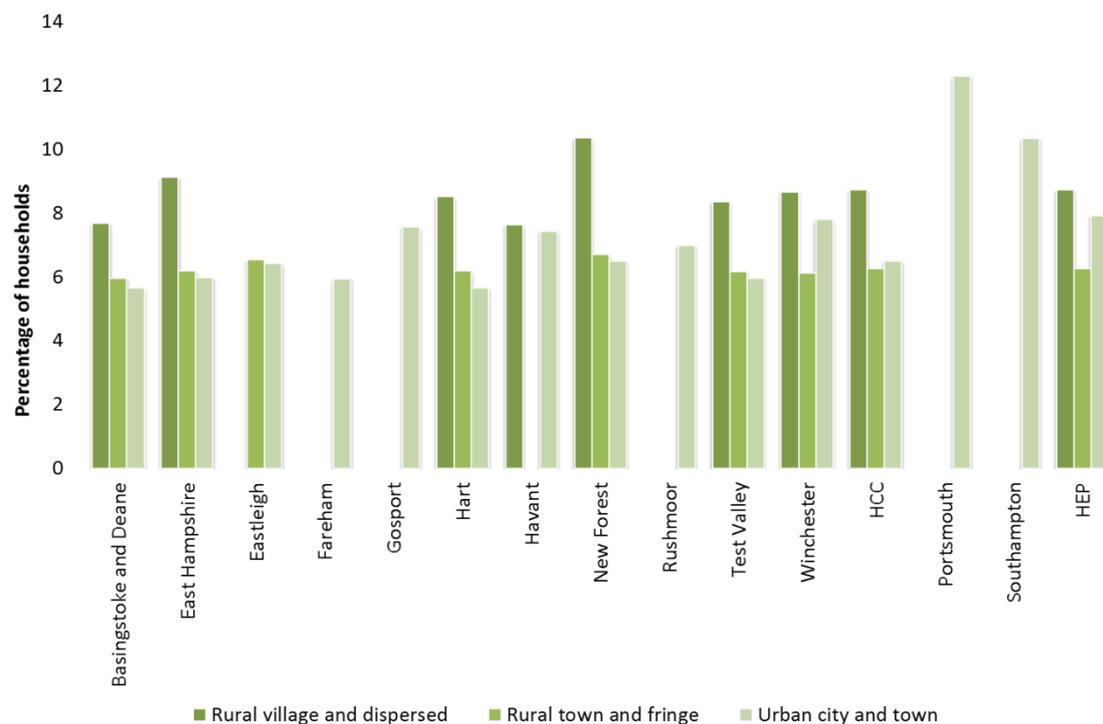
² Public Health England: Local action on health inequalities: fuel poverty and cold home related health problems, 2014

³ Hills J. Getting the measure of fuel poverty: Final Report of the Fuel Poverty Review. London: 2012

⁴ Department of Energy and Climate Change. Fuel Poverty: a Framework for Future Action. London: 2013.

⁵ Department of Energy and Climate Change. Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report, 2015. London: 2015.

Figure 1: Estimated % of households in fuel poverty by district and rural classification, 2013



Source: Sub-regional Fuel Poverty England 2013, DECC. Classified using the LSOA RUC2011 rural classification.

10. Figure 1 shows that households in districts where there are rural village and dispersed communities are more likely to be fuel poor, as measured by the low income high costs definition. However, this varies across districts, such that the highest average levels of fuel poor can be seen in the New Forest, where 10.3% of rural village and dispersed households are estimated to be fuel poor, compared to 7.6% of those in Basingstoke and Deane and Havant. Interestingly even at the highest levels, the proportion is still lower than the national average, perhaps unsurprising given Hampshire’s relative affluence. Highest overall levels are seen in Portsmouth, with 12.3% of households estimated to be fuel poor.

11. Cold weather experienced in the winter months can also affect or exacerbate a range of health problems, including respiratory and circulatory conditions, cardiovascular disease, mental health and accidental injury. In some circumstances, health problems can be aggravated by such a degree that they may cause death. In England, there were an estimated 29,200 excess winter deaths in 2012-13⁶. Estimates suggest that some 10% of excess winter deaths are directly attributable to fuel poverty and 21.5% of excess winter deaths are attributable to the coldest 25% of homes⁷. As such, even the

⁶ Office for National Statistics. Excess Winter Mortality in England and Wales, 2012/13 (Provisional) and 2011/12 (Final): Office for National Statistics; 2013. Available from: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_337459.pdf.

⁷ UCL Institute of Health Equity. The health impacts of cold homes and fuel poverty 2011. Available from: www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/the-health-impacts-of-cold-homes-and-fuel-poverty.

relatively low levels of households across Hampshire in fuel poverty should not be ignored in light of the significant health risks.

12. Indeed as the Demography and area report highlighted, it is the elderly, aged 85 and over, that are forecast to increase most overall and with proportionately greater increases in rural areas. It is those aged 75 and over that are more likely to be vulnerable to cold weather. Statistical data also shows that people aged 75 and over are subject to the greatest increases in excess winter deaths of any age group⁸. Furthermore, projections suggest the price of fuel will continue to rise in the future. This is likely to have consequences for the number of households in fuel poverty and cold home related-health problems⁹.

Households not connected to gas

13. Properties not connected to the mains gas network are more likely to be using expensive fuels to heat their homes, including electricity and oil¹⁰. Whilst there is no definitive source of information on households that are off the gas grid, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has produced estimates of the number of households without gas based on the difference between the number of gas meters in each area¹¹. From this data it is estimated 9.1% of households across England were not connected to the gas network in 2014. Figure 2 provides estimates from Hampshire, broken down by district and urban rural classification.
14. Across Hampshire County as a whole the estimated percentage of households that are not connected to the gas network is 9.5%, which is slightly higher than the national average (9.1%). Again, these figures vary markedly by both district and rural classification as Figure 2 demonstrates. Those households living in the most rural communities (classified as rural village and dispersed), are significantly less likely to be connected to the gas network, even when compared to those living in rural areas classified as rural town and fringe. Indeed, more than 50% of rural village and dispersed households in Basingstoke and Deane, the New Forest and Test Valley are not on the gas network. This compares to fewer than 9% of those living in urban parts of Hampshire's Economic Area.

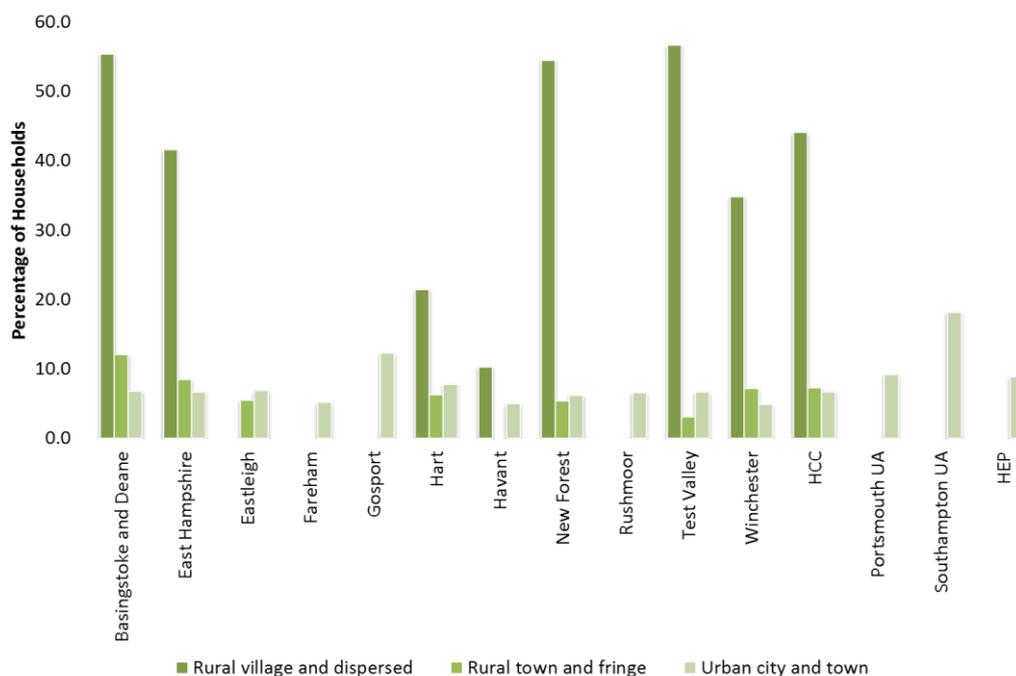
⁸ Wilkinson P, Pattenden S, Armstrong B, Fletcher A, Kovats RS, Mangtani P, et al. Vulnerability to winter mortality in elderly people in Britain: population based study. *British Medical Journal*. 2004;329(7467):647-51.

⁹ Public Health England: Local action on health inequalities: fuel poverty and cold home related health problems, 2014

¹⁰ Department of Energy and Climate Change. Areas and types of properties off the gas grid 2013. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/266468/off_gas_grid.pdf.

¹¹ DECC: LSOA estimates of households not connected to the gas network, 2014

Figure 2: Estimated % of households not connected to the gas network by District and Rural Classification, 2013



Source: LSOA estimates of households not connected to the gas network DECC. Classified using the LSOA RUC2011 rural classification.

Central heating

15. The previous section showed the significant proportions of, particularly rural households that are not connected to the gas network. For the purposes of this analysis, a household's accommodation is classified as having central heating if it is present in some or all rooms (whether used or not). Central heating can be through: gas, electric (including storage heaters), oil, solid fuel (for example wood or coal), or other types (including solar, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) or other bottled gas).
16. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the percentage of households with no central heating by district and urban-rural classification. The table suggests a higher proportion of urban households do not have access to central heating compared to rural communities (when rural areas measured as a whole). However, this overall comparison hides a good deal of variation both across Hampshire districts but also across the rural categories. Those living in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings are most at risk of having no central heating across nine of Hampshire's 11 districts (the exceptions being Gosport and Rushmoor where there are no such rural dwellers).
17. The figures are nonetheless very low, suggesting that whilst a significant proportion of rural households in particular might not be connected to the gas network, most do have some form of central heating in their home.

Table 1: Percentage of households with no central heating by their Urban/Rural Classification for Hampshire and Districts, 2011

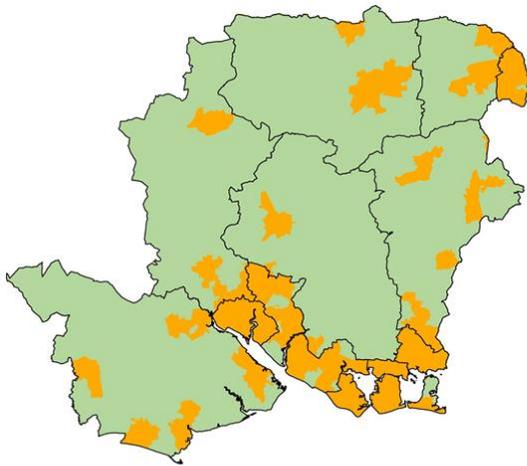
	Rural hamlets and isolated dwellings		Rural village		Rural town and fringe		Rural Total		Urban city and town	
	H'holds	%	H'holds	%	H'holds	%	H'holds	%	H'holds	%
Basingstoke and Deane	4,092	2.2	4,925	1.5	9,301	0.9	18,318	1.4	50,997	1.3
East Hampshire	4,116	2.9	5,327	2.4	6,989	0.9	16,432	1.9	30,826	1.6
Eastleigh	208	4.3	111	2.7	4,873	2.3	5,192	2.4	46,985	2.1
Fareham	216	2.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	216	2.8	46,363	2.3
Gosport	0	0.0	0	0.0	135	3.0	135	3.0	35,295	3.7
Hart	1,440	1.7	2,747	1.1	6,259	0.8	10,446	1.0	25,064	1.2
Havant	60	8.3	736	2.0	0	0.0	796	2.5	50,515	3.6
New Forest	5,453	4.3	3,959	2.9	11,691	1.6	21,103	2.6	55,736	2.1
Rushmoor	0	0.0	0	0.0	47	2.1	47	2.1	36,297	1.7
Test Valley	4,391	2.8	8,678	2.0	4,183	0.9	17,252	2.0	30,374	1.2
Winchester	4,858	2.9	6,749	2.0	15,573	1.3	27,180	1.8	19,685	1.6
HCC	24,834	3.0	33,232	2.0	59,051	1.3	117,117	1.9	428,137	2.1
Portsmouth	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	85,473	5.4
Southampton	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	98,254	3.8
HEA	24,834	3.0	33,232	2.0	59,051	1.3	117,117	1.9	611,864	2.8

Source: 2011 Census, using OA RUC2011 rural classification

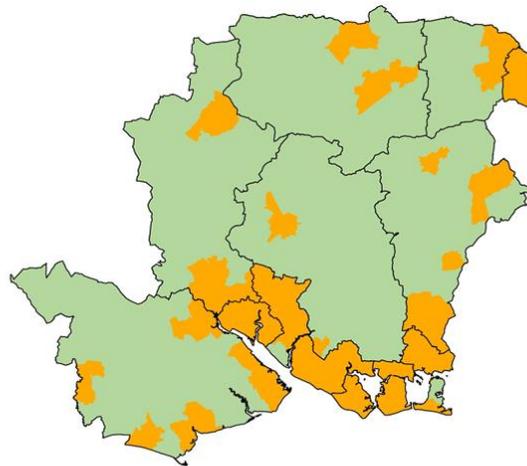
Conclusion

18. The level of fuel poverty across Hampshire is significantly lower than the national average. However, levels do vary and with the exception of the unitary authority of Portsmouth; and to a lesser extent Southampton; levels appear highest for those living in the most rural communities. Increasing levels of elderly, aged 85 and over, are forecast, particularly in rural areas, and coupled with probable increases in fuel prices might give rise to greater disparities in the coming years. With fuel poverty linked to poor health outcomes, any uplift in fuel poverty should be seen as an issue.
19. Households not connected to the gas network are much greater across Hampshire's rural communities with more than half of all households not on the gas network living in the most rural communities across Basingstoke and Deane, the New Forest and Test Valley, compared to an average of 8.9% across all urban centres of the HEA. Such households are more likely to be using more expensive fuels to heat their homes, including electricity and oil. Census data however, shows that the vast majority of households do have some form of central heating, while highest levels without are across rural hamlets and isolated dwellings.

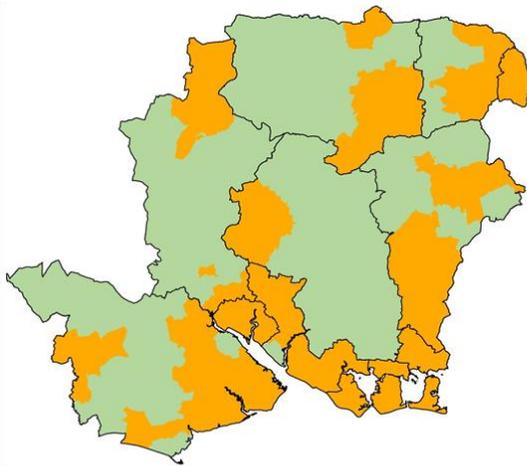
Appendix – Rural Urban Classifications (2011)



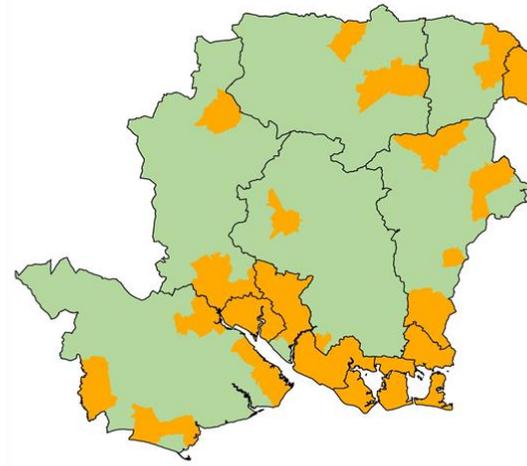
2011 Output Area (OA)



2011 Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)



2011 Middle Super Output Area (MSOA)



2011 Census Ward

**ONS Census Output
(based on resident
population)**

Middle (layer) Super
Output Area (largest
output geography)

Lower (layer) Super
Output Area

Output Area
(smallest output
geography)

**Census Ward
(based on electoral
population)**

2011 Census Ward
(closest in size to
MSOA)

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