

LIST OF RURAL SCHOOLS

Scottish Ministers are required to maintain a list of “rural schools” as referred to in Section 14 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 which is published on the Scottish Government’s website. It was last updated on 26 March 2010.

DEFINITION OF “RURAL SCHOOLS”

35% of Scotland’s schools are classified as “rural schools”. A “rural school” is defined as those located within the areas covered by the three “rural” categories in the table below. This would mean that schools in settlements of under 3,000 people would be classified as a “rural school”. In numerical terms, there are currently approximately 1,000 rural schools in Scotland of which around 900 would be primary, 90 secondary and 10 special. This would mean that 41% of Scotland’s primary schools and 23% of Scotland’s secondary schools would be classified as “rural”.

Scottish Government’s Urban / Rural Classification

The Government’s Urban / Rural Classification was created to develop understanding of the issues facing urban, rural and remote Scotland and is now used for a variety of purposes, particularly when presenting statistics and information, and is set out in the table below.

The classifications are straightforward and easy to understand and are updated every two years to ensure that it is responsive to changes in population. The classification was last published in August 2008 and a 2009-10 classification will be produced in Autumn 2010 to coincide with the two year sweep of the Scottish Household Survey.

How was classification produced?

Two main criteria have been used to produce the Scottish Government 6 and 8 fold urban rural classifications: **settlement size (i.e. population or community size)** as defined by the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) and **accessibility based on drive time** analysis to differentiate between accessible and remote areas in Scotland. The Settlements and accessibility data are then combined to create a Scotland wide classification.

How are settlement sizes estimated and what settlement size thresholds are used?

GROS [Small Area Population Estimates](#) (SAPE) together with information from the Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF) were used to classify 2006 postcode units as high or low density. This information was then used to identify areas of contiguous high density postcodes with a population of 500 or more that make up a Settlement. Details of the methodology used for the Mid-2006 Population Estimates for Settlements can be found at [Mid 2006 population estimates for settlements](#).

Population thresholds used to distinguish between urban and rural areas (i.e. 3,000, 10,000 and 125,000) are used to classify the Settlements dataset into 'large urban areas', 'other urban areas', 'small towns' or 'rural areas'.

GROS recommend users exercise caution when comparing the 2006 settlement population estimates with previous years. Whilst an increase in population may be due to new build, it may also be due to the inclusion of existing housing which had previously been separated by a low density postcode (and vice versa for a population decrease).

How are drive times estimated?

Drive times are then estimated around Settlements classed as 'large urban areas' and 'other urban areas' (population greater than 10,000) to distinguish between accessible and remote areas. For example, in the 6-fold classification, Remote Small Towns are those that fall outwith the 30 minute drive time from a settlement of 10,000 people or more. The 6 fold urban rural classification can also be broken down further into an 8 fold classification. This splits the 'Remote small towns' and 'remote rural' into 'remote' and 'very remote' based on whether the area is over 60 minutes drive from a centre of population.

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 fewer than 3,000 people and within 30 minutes drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more.
Remote Rural	Settlements of fewer 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 fewer than 3,000 people and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more.

Further information

The Office of the Chief Statistician's report for 2007-08:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/07/29152642/0>.

Further information on the definition of the 6 or 8 fold classification, and previous publications:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification>