



A Beginner's Guide to UK Geography

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Contacts

This publication

For information about the content of this publication, contact
ONS Geography Customer Services
Tel: 01329 444971
Email: ons.geography@ons.gov.uk

Other customer enquiries

ONS Customer Contact Centre
Tel: 0845 601 3034
International: +44 (0)845 601 3034
Email: info@ons.gov.uk
Post: Room D265, Government Buildings,
Cardiff Road, Newport, South Wales NP10 8XG
ons.gov.uk

Media enquiries

Tel: 0845 604 1858
Email: media.relations@ons.gov.uk

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Contents

1.	Introduction	6
2.	Administrative Geography	6
2.1	The Countries of the UK	6
2.2	Our Changing Geography	7
2.2.1	Boundary Changes	7
2.2.1.1	Lower Level (Electoral Ward/Division) Changes	7
2.2.1.2	Higher Level Changes	8
2.2.2	Local Government Restructuring	9
2.3	England	11
2.3.1	Regions (former GORs)	11
2.3.2	The former Standard Statistical Regions (SSR)	12
2.3.3	Greater London and the London Boroughs	12
2.3.4	Metropolitan Counties and Districts	12
2.3.5	Counties, Non-metropolitan Districts and Unitary Authorities	13
2.3.6	Electoral Wards/Divisions	13
2.3.6.1	County Electoral Divisions	14
2.3.6.2	Statistical Wards	14
2.3.6.3	Census Area Statistics (CAS) Wards	14
2.3.6.4	Standard Table (ST) Wards	15
2.3.7	Parishes and Communities	15
2.3.7.1	English Parishes	15
2.3.7.2	English Non-civil Parish Areas	16
2.3.7.3	Welsh Communities	16
2.3.7.4	Scottish Communities	16
2.4	Scotland	17
2.4.1	Council Areas	17
2.4.2	Electoral Wards	17
2.4.3	Communities	17
2.5	Wales	17
2.5.1	Unitary Authorities (UA)	18
2.5.2	Electoral Wards	18
2.5.3	Communities	18
2.6	Northern Ireland	18
2.6.1	Local Government Districts (LGD)	19

2.6.2	Electoral Wards	19
3.	Census Geography	19
3.1	The UK Censuses	19
3.2	Built-up Areas (BUA) and Built-up Area Sub-divisions (BUASD).....	20
3.3	Enumeration Districts (ED)	20
3.3.1	2011 EDs.....	20
3.3.2	2001 EDs.....	20
3.3.3	1991 EDs.....	21
3.4	Output Areas (OA)	21
3.4.1	2001 OAs.....	21
3.4.2	2011 OAs.....	21
3.4.3	Modification of OAs in England and Wales	22
3.4.3.1	Thresholds used in Modification (England and Wales)	22
3.5	Statistical Wards, CAS Wards and ST Wards.....	23
3.5.1	Statistical Wards	23
3.5.2	Census Area Statistics (CAS) Wards.....	23
3.5.3	Standard Table (ST) Wards.....	23
3.6	Super Output Areas (SOA)	23
3.6.1	2011 SOAs	23
3.6.2	2001 SOAs	24
3.7	Workplace Zones (WZ)	25
3.8	Census Merged Areas	26
3.8.1	Census Merged Counties and Local Authority Districts (LAD).....	26
3.8.2	Census Merged Wards.....	26
3.9	Travel to Work Areas (TTWA).....	26
3.9.1	2011 TTWAs	26
3.9.2	2001 TTWAs	27
4.	Electoral Geography	27
4.1	European Electoral Regions (EER)	28
4.2	Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies.....	28
4.2.1	Boundary Changes and Geographic Constitution	28
4.2.2	County and Borough Constituencies	29
4.3	Devolved Parliaments.....	29
4.3.1	Scottish Parliament	30
4.3.2	National Assembly for Wales	30

4.3.3	Northern Ireland Assembly	30
4.3.4	London Assembly	30
4.4	Regional Government	31
4.5	Local Authorities and Smaller Units	31
5.	Health Geography	31
5.1	English Health Geography	31
5.2	Welsh Health Geography	33
5.3	Scottish Health Geography	33
5.4	Northern Ireland Health Geography	34
6.	Postal Geography	34
6.1	Postcode Structure	34
6.2	Unit Postcodes	35
6.3	Using Postcodes as a Geographic Reference	35
6.4	Information on Postcode Recoding	35
7.	Eurostat Geography	35
7.1	Former Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) and Local Administrative Units (LAU) and International Territorial Levels (ITL)	36
7.1.1	Relationship of ITLs to UK Administrative Geographies	36
7.1.2	Listings of Subdivisions of ITL and LAU Areas	36
8.	Address-level Geography	36
8.1	UPRN Structure	36
8.2	Using Addresses as a Geographic Reference	36
9.	Other Geographies	37
9.1	Local Education Authorities (LEA) and Education Authorities (EA)	37
9.2	National Parks	37
9.3	Training and Enterprise Councils (TEC), Local Enterprise Companies (LEC) and Enterprise Regions (ER)	38
9.4	Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSC), Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) and Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS)	39
9.5	Registration Districts	39
9.6	Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP)	39
	Annex A - Useful Downloads and Links	40
	Annex B - A Glossary of Terms	41
	Annex C - ITL Hierarchical Breakdown	95

1. Introduction

This guide is a simple tour of the UK geographical areas used in National Statistics work. You can use it to get basic facts on each type of area as well as more specialist information on topics such as boundary change.

Many sections provide access to area names and codes listings, and there is also a separate downloads Annex.

Whether you want to know the difference between a ward and a parish, how many Westminster constituencies there are in the UK, or simply the name of the longest river in Wales, 'A Beginner's Guide to UK Geography' is your ideal reference source. This version includes the latest health geographies.

A comprehensive range of products is available to download from the [Open Geography portal](#).

2. Administrative Geography

Administrative geography is concerned with the hierarchy of areas relating to national and local government in the UK, and this multi-layered hierarchy is complicated by the differing structure in each constituent country of the UK. In addition, the boundaries of many of the layers in the hierarchy are subject to either periodic or occasional change.

2.1 The Countries of the UK

The top-level division of administrative geography in the UK is the four countries – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

As well as the national government at Westminster, there are devolved administrations in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast.

The UK and its countries: facts and figures

	UK	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Area* (km ²)	248,717.56	132,929.09	80,232.83	21,225.88	14,329.76
Population** (millions)	66.8	56.2	5.5 [^]	3.1	1.9 [^]
Population** (percentage)	100	84	8	5	3
Highest Mountain (metres)	Ben Nevis (1,346)	Scafell Pike (978)	Ben Nevis (1,346)	Snowdon (1,085)	Slieve Donard (850)
Longest River (km)	Severn ⁺ (354)	Thames ⁺⁺ (346)	Tay (188)	Towy ⁺⁺ (120)	Bann (129)
Largest Lake (km ²)	Lough Neagh (381.8)	Windermere (14.7)	Loch Lomond (71.3)	Lake Vyrnwy (4.5)	Lough Neagh (381.8)

* Extent of the Realm measurements.

** Mid-2019 population estimates.

[^] Please note that the Scotland population figures are sourced from National Records of Scotland (NRS) and the Northern Ireland population figures are sourced from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

[†] The Severn rises in Wales and flows through England to its estuary in the Bristol Channel.

^{††} The Thames and the Towy are the longest rivers entirely in England and Wales respectively.

2.2 Our Changing Geography

The UK has numerous administrative boundary changes every year. This section explains why and how boundary changes occur and also reviews the major reorganisations of local government.

2.2.1 Boundary Changes

An explanation of the need for boundary changes for electoral wards/divisions.

2.2.1.1 Lower Level (Electoral Ward/Division) Changes

Electoral wards/divisions are the building blocks of both administrative and electoral geography, as well as a basis for other geographies. However, their boundaries change frequently – in some years several hundred electoral wards or divisions are affected, and in the extreme case of 2002 no fewer than 1,549 were changed. This potential for change can have serious implications when trying to keep track of statistics over time, so it is essential that all those who collect and manipulate data are familiar with its occurrence.

Rationale for boundary change

The fundamental principle of ward/division organisation is electoral equality, meaning that within a higher administrative area, each elector's vote bears a similar weight. As population sizes should be approximately equal and because people are constantly moving, the boundaries need frequent review and alteration.

Process of boundary change

The review and definition of ward/division boundaries is carried out by different bodies in each country:

England

On 1 April 2010 the [Local Government Boundary Commission for England \(LGBCE\)](#) took over the role of conducting reviews of local authority electoral arrangements from the Boundary Committee for England. Changes can occur every year, usually on the first Thursday in May when local government elections take place. Wards and divisions may also be affected by parish boundary changes, which can occur throughout the year. The LGBCE works together with each local authority district (LAD) to make recommendations for change, which are finally specified in a Statutory Instrument (SI).

As well as boundary changes, recommendations may also include new wards/divisions, changes to the total number of councillors in a LAD, changes to the number of councillors representing each ward/division (multi-member wards are common in some administrations) and changes to the names of electoral areas. Although population is the primary determinant, boundaries should be easily identifiable on the ground and thus often follow features such as rivers, major roads and railways. Community identities should be taken into account, meaning that a smaller road may run through rather than delineate a ward/division. In addition the boundaries of parishes must be considered.

These factors mean that, although electoral equality is the primary aim, in practice there can still be substantial variation of ward/division population size within a LAD.

Wales

The equivalent body in Wales is the [Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales \(LDBCW\)](#). This has a similar remit to the LGBCE, but the National Assembly for Wales has responsibility for approving any recommendations. Wales has electoral wards and communities (the Welsh equivalent of English parishes). Electoral wards must, however, be based on community boundaries (or, where they exist, the community council electoral subdivisions known as community wards). This means that if community boundaries change (as a result of a review by the relevant unitary authority), so must electoral ward boundaries. In practice, however, community boundary change is infrequent, thereby limiting the number of electoral ward changes occurring between statutory reviews.

Scotland

The responsible body in Scotland is the [Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland \(LGBCS\)](#), which reports to the Scottish Government. The LGBCS is also a permanent body, but, as in Wales, it is rare for changes to occur between statutory reviews. Accordingly the last nationwide changes were implemented in 1999, with only minor modifications since. Unlike in England and Wales, multi-member wards are not permitted. In addition, Scottish communities (which in any case are not defined by statute) have no influence on ward boundaries.

Northern Ireland

The responsible body in Northern Ireland is the [Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland](#). Note though that this commission undertakes one review every ten years or so and is disbanded during the intervening period.

2.2.1.2 Higher Level Changes

As well as ward/division changes, the external boundaries of higher administrative areas can also be moved.

In Wales and Scotland changes are proposed by the LDBCW and LGBCS respectively. In England the LGBCE will undertake reviews of higher administrative areas at the request of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), individual LADs and individual counties or on their own initiative. Formal recommendations for change are made and presented to the Secretary of State.

The only exception to the above is for structural changes – that is, when an area changes from being a two-tier local authority district to a single-tier unitary authority. In this case the Secretary of State will ask the LGBCE to carry out a review.

The boundaries of the four constituent countries of the UK may not be changed.

From time to time much more substantial reviews of the whole local government structure are undertaken. These can lead to major boundary changes, the creation of new administrative areas, and the splitting, merging or abolition of others.

2.2.2 Local Government Restructuring

Reviews of major changes to local government structure since the 1960s. This includes information on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in the 1990s and 2009 as well as details of possible future changes.

A recent history of UK local government restructuring

As a result of attempts to introduce the most efficient system of local government for different areas, several major structural changes have been made since the 1960s. In the early 1960s the UK was covered by two-tier administrations, based on administrative counties and a mixture of sub-administrations including municipal boroughs, county boroughs, rural districts and urban districts. The Isles of Scilly had their own single-tier administration.

In 1965 a new structure was introduced to London whereby Greater London was formed from segments of the surrounding administrative counties, with the boroughs being the lower tier of the system.

In 1974 a similar two-tier structure was introduced to the rest of England and Wales whereby revised (and in many cases larger) counties provided the top tier of local government and districts the lower tier. In heavily urbanised areas in England six of these counties were known as metropolitan counties, with the subdivisions called metropolitan districts. The Isles of Scilly retained their single-tier administration. The counties in the remainder of England and in Wales were called non-metropolitan counties (or commonly shire counties, although this is not an official term).

Scotland had the same structure introduced in 1975 except that the upper-tier units were known as regions.

In Northern Ireland, in 1973, they replaced their two-tier system with a single-tier district council system.

In 1986 the Greater London Council (GLC) and the six metropolitan county councils (but not the counties) were abolished, leaving the boroughs and districts to operate as single-tier units, although the abolished larger areas are still recognised for some purposes such as statistical presentation.

Then, in the 1990s and again in 2009, it was decided that the two-tier system might not be the most efficient in many cases.

Scotland and Wales replaced their two-tier systems in 1996, Scotland with a single-tier system of council areas and Wales with a similar system of unitary authorities (UA).

In England the situation became rather more complex, as described below:

Local government reorganisation (LGR) in England

The [Local Government Boundary Commission for England \(LGBCE\)](#) reviewed the administrative structure of non-metropolitan areas and, following considerable research and consultation, recommended that some areas retain the existing two-tier structure and others be set up as single-tier unitary authorities (UA). Parliament approved reorganisation in 25 counties and the subsequent process of restructuring occurred in phases between 1995 and 1998. In 2009 there was further local

government reorganisation, in which 10 new UAs were created. Plans to create two new UAs in 2011 were revoked by Parliament. Further changes took place in 2019:

1995 – The two districts of the Isle of Wight were merged and the county became a UA.

1996 – The counties of Avon, Cleveland and Humberside were abolished and divided into UAs. The city of York was separated from North Yorkshire and became a UA.

1997 – A number of other large towns and cities were detached from their counties and became UAs. The historic county of Rutland was detached from Leicestershire and converted to a UA.

1998 – Several more urban UAs were created. The county of Hereford and Worcester was divided into the two-tier Worcestershire and the UA, County of Herefordshire. Also the county council of Berkshire was abolished and the county divided into six UAs.

2009 – Ten new UAs were created. These involved the county of Bedfordshire being abolished and split into two UAs and the county of Cheshire also being abolished and split into two UAs. In addition, five complete counties were abolished and created as five separate UAs – Cornwall, County Durham, Northumberland, Shropshire and Wiltshire. Due to the changes in Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly are considered as a UA for coding purposes.

2011 – Plans to create two new UAs in Exeter and Suffolk were revoked by Parliament.

2019 – The UAs of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole were merged, and the districts of East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck and Weymouth and Portland were merged to form Dorset UA. The districts of Taunton Deane and West Somerset were merged to form the district of Somerset West and Taunton. The districts of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury were merged to form the district of West Suffolk, and the districts of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney were merged to form the district of East Suffolk.

2020 – The districts of Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe, and Buckinghamshire county were merged to form Buckinghamshire UA.

2021 – The districts of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough were merged to form North Northamptonshire UA, and the districts of Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire were merged to form West Northamptonshire UA.

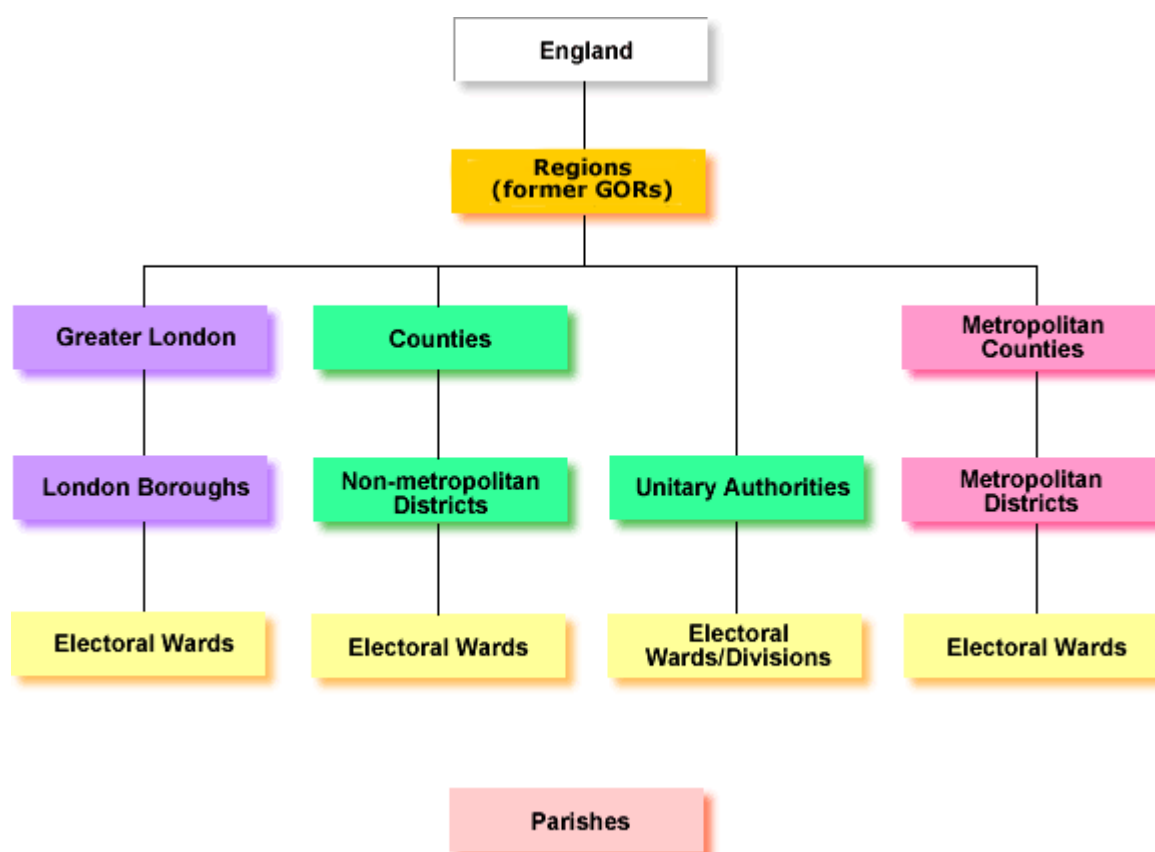
Prior to the LGR there were 39 shire counties, split into 294 districts. The current structure consists of 25 shire counties split into 181 districts, and 59 unitary authorities. Only 13 pre-1995 shire counties were unaffected by the LGR changes. Metropolitan districts were not included in the LGR and have retained their post-1986 status, and in 2000 the London boroughs became subject to the London-wide authority.

The Isles of Scilly have retained their own administration throughout.

Regional government

In 2004 legislation was passed to allow referendums on regional government in the English Regions (formerly Government Office Regions (GOR)). On 4 November 2004 a referendum was held in the North East which produced a major 'no' vote (78%). Consequently, the plans for referendums elsewhere were dropped, with plans for regional assemblies shelved. However, should regional assemblies be introduced at a later date, this will almost certainly lead to a major reorganisation of local government structures.

2.3 England



England does not have its own devolved parliament and so is entirely subject to the administration of the UK Government in Westminster. The subdivisions of England are shown in the diagram above. Note however that the diagram shows the geographic structure rather than the administrative reporting structure. In practice, neither metropolitan counties nor regions are truly part of the administrative hierarchy, and electoral wards/divisions are simply the 'building blocks' from which higher units are constituted. Parishes, on the other hand, can have their own council but have been isolated from the geographic structure, as, unlike electoral wards/divisions, they are not found across the whole of England.

2.3.1 Regions (former GORs)

Government offices for the regions (GOR) were established across England in 1994. Reflecting a number of government departments, their aim was to work in partnership with local people and organisations in order to maximise prosperity and the quality of life within their area. In 1996 the GORs became the primary classification for the presentation of regional statistics. There were originally 10 GORs, but in 1998 Merseyside was merged with the rest of the North West. GORs were built up of complete counties/unitary authorities, so although they were subject to change, they always reflected administrative boundaries as at the end of the previous year.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were not subdivided into GORs but are listed with them as regions in UK-wide statistical comparisons. After the Comprehensive Spending Review, it was confirmed that the GORs would close on 31 March 2011, shifting focus away from regions to local areas. However, there is still a requirement to maintain a region-level geography for statistical purposes. The GSS Regional and Geography Committee (GSS RGC) agreed that from 1 April 2011,

the former GORs should be simply referred to as 'regions'. These areas retain the names, codes and boundaries of the former GORs.

2.3.2 The former Standard Statistical Regions (SSR)

The eight SSRs were the primary classification for English regional statistics prior to the adoption of GORs, but are now very rarely used. They were based on whole administrative units, but did not have any administrative function. Most of them had the same names and boundaries as the GORs, but with the following differences:

- The North SSR consisted of the North East GOR together with Cumbria (which was part of the North West GOR).
- London did not exist as an SSR in its own right; instead it was part of the South East SSR.
- The East of England GOR did not exist as an SSR. Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough formed the East Anglia SSR; the rest of the GOR was part of the South East SSR.
- The Yorkshire and The Humber GOR covered the same area as the Yorkshire and Humberside SSR.

Note that between 1996 and 1999 there were several changes to the GORs. Region boundaries for use in GIS, names and codes, lookup files and pdf maps are available on the [Open Geography portal](#).

From 2011 the region names and codes listing has included the 9-character codes (operative from 1 January 2011). For more information, please see the Code History Database (CHD) on the [Open Geography portal](#).

2.3.3 Greater London and the London Boroughs

Greater London was established in 1965 as an administrative unit covering the London metropolis. It was not defined as a county but had a two-tier structure, with the lower tier being the London boroughs. Following the abolition of the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1986 the London boroughs became single-tier authorities, but Greater London was still widely recognised, especially for statistical and mapping purposes. In 2000, however, a two-tier structure was re-established when the new Greater London Authority (GLA) adopted responsibility for a range of citywide policy areas. There are 32 London boroughs with a status similar to metropolitan districts, and also the City of London, which is a City Corporation and has a number of additional roles. London boroughs are subdivided into electoral wards. You can find a full listing of London borough names and codes on the [Open Geography portal](#). The names and codes are in the UK LAD downloadable file. Within this file the London boroughs have codes beginning with 'E09'. For more information on the coding, please refer to the CHD on the [Open Geography portal](#).

Boundaries for the London boroughs can be found in the LAD boundary files, for use in GIS. There is also a pdf map showing the London boroughs. These files are all available to download free of charge from the [Open Geography portal](#).

2.3.4 Metropolitan Counties and Districts

In 1974 a new two-tier system of counties and districts was established across England and Wales. Six of the upper-tier units, all in England and representing heavily built-up areas (other than Greater London), were designated 'metropolitan counties' and were subdivided into metropolitan districts. As with non-metropolitan areas the respective authorities covered all areas of local government, but the distribution of responsibilities was different to that of the county/local authority district structure.

In 1986 the metropolitan county councils were abolished, although the county areas are still recognised, especially for statistical purposes. The 36 metropolitan district councils were left as single-tier authorities – a status retained to date – and accordingly they have more powers than their non-metropolitan LAD equivalents. Metropolitan districts are subdivided into electoral wards and from 2011 the names and codes listing has included the 9-character codes (operative from 1 January 2011). For more information, please see the CHD on the [Open Geography portal](#).

2.3.5 Counties, Non-metropolitan Districts and Unitary Authorities

In 1974 a two-tier administrative structure of (shire and metropolitan) counties and non-metropolitan districts was set up across England and Wales, except for the Isles of Scilly and Greater London. Council functions were divided according to the level at which they could be practised most efficiently. As a consequence, counties took on functions including education, transport, strategic planning, fire services, consumer protection, refuse disposal, smallholdings, social services and libraries, whereas each LAD had responsibility for local planning, housing, local highways, building, environmental health, refuse collection and cemeteries. Responsibility for recreation and cultural matters was divided between the two tiers.

Following the Local Government Reorganisation in the 1990s, major changes were implemented to create administrations most appropriate to the needs of the area concerned. The key feature of this change was the introduction of unitary authorities: single-tier administrations with responsibility for all areas of local government. Between 1995 and 1998 these were established in a number of areas across the country, especially in medium-sized urban areas, whilst other areas retained a two-tier structure. Further local government reorganisation occurred in 2009, 2020 and 2021 and there are currently 59 unitary authorities (UA) in England, and 25 shire counties split into 181 (non-metropolitan) districts.

Note that due to the changes in Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly are considered a UA for coding purposes. Counties, LADs and UAs are subdivided into electoral wards/divisions.

From 2011 the region names and codes listing has included the 9-character codes (operative from 1 January 2011). For more information, please see the CHD on the [Open Geography portal](#).

2.3.6 Electoral Wards/Divisions

Electoral wards (and electoral divisions) are the key building blocks of UK administrative geography. They are the spatial units used to elect local government councillors in metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts, UAs and the London boroughs in England; UAs in Wales; council areas in Scotland; and local government districts (LGD) in Northern Ireland. Electoral wards are found in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and most of England. In the Isle of Wight and several of the UAs created as part of the Local Government Reorganisation in 2009, the equivalent areas are legally termed 'electoral divisions', although they are frequently referred to as wards. Wales changed to using the term 'electoral wards' instead of 'electoral divisions' in August 2013.

The only part of the UK without electoral wards/divisions is the Isles of Scilly, which has its own council but no electoral zoning. For statistical purposes, however, ONS treats the islands' five parishes as electoral wards. Electoral wards/divisions (and the Scilly parishes) cover the whole of the UK; in addition, all higher administrative units are built from whole electoral wards/divisions. They are also used to constitute a range of other geographies such as the Eurostat Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) geographies, health geographies and Westminster parliamentary

constituencies. English LADs (both metropolitan and non-metropolitan), London boroughs and UAs average around 23 electoral wards/divisions each, Northern Irish LGDs around 42, Scottish council areas around 11 and Welsh UAs about 40. Population counts can vary substantially, even within a single LAD, but the national average is about 5,500. More populous electoral wards/divisions tend to occur in large urban areas. Electoral ward/division boundary changes are usually enacted on the first Thursday in May each year, to coincide with the local government elections.

As of May 2021, the UK has 8,694 electoral wards/divisions.

2.3.6.1 County Electoral Divisions

Apart from the special cases of the Isles of Scilly and the Greater London Authority (GLA), the English county councils are the only type of local authority in the UK which does not use standard electoral wards/divisions for electing councillors. Instead they use their own larger units, which are confusingly also termed electoral divisions.

These county electoral divisions must be confined within LAD boundaries, but need not be based on whole electoral wards. Like electoral wards/divisions, county electoral divisions are defined by the [Local Government Boundary Commission for England](#) (LGBCE). For more information, including names and codes, please see the [Open Geography portal](#).

2.3.6.2 Statistical Wards

In 2003, a National Statistics policy was introduced to minimise the statistical impact of frequent electoral ward boundary changes, particularly in England. Under this policy any changes to English or Welsh electoral ward boundaries promulgated (laid down in statute) by the end of a calendar year, were implemented for statistical purposes on 1 April of the following year, irrespective of the year the actual change came into operation. The wards resulting from this policy were known as 'statistical wards'. So, for example, 2003 statistical wards were those that were promulgated by 31 December 2002. In general they reflected actual electoral wards as at May 2003, but for 28 local authority districts (LAD) they also included boundary changes that were not operational until June 2004. Therefore, for any given year statistical wards in some LADs were different to the statutory electoral wards because of the varying time lags between the promulgation and operation dates of boundary changes.

In 2006, a change to the policy was agreed by the National Statistics Geography Group (NSGG). The 1 April implementation date is retained, but it now relates to those administrative and electoral areas that are statutorily operative on 31 December of the previous calendar year (that is, statutory electoral wards). The last set of statistical wards was produced in 2005.

[Names and codes of statistical wards](#)

2.3.6.3 Census Area Statistics (CAS) Wards

CAS wards were created for 2001 Census outputs, including those available on the Neighbourhood Statistics website. In England and Wales they were identical to the 2003 statistical wards, except that 25 of the smallest (sub-threshold) wards were merged into seven 'receiving' wards to avoid the confidentiality risks of releasing data for very small areas. This happened to those wards with fewer than 100 residents or 40 households (as at the 2001 Census). There were a total of 8,850 CAS wards in England and Wales, 18 fewer than the total number of 2003 statistical wards.

Scotland also had CAS wards but these were created from best-fit 2001 Census Output Area (OA) aggregations to 2001 electoral wards. There were 1,222 Scottish CAS wards, with a minimum size of 50 residents and 20 households. Please note also that Scottish Census outputs used different ward codes to the ONS standard.

In Northern Ireland 2001 Census outputs used the 582 electoral wards in existence at Census Day. There was no requirement to introduce specific CAS wards, as all electoral wards exceeded the 100 residents/40 households threshold.

[Names and codes of CAS wards \(UK\)](#)

2.3.6.4 Standard Table (ST) Wards

ST wards were those for which the 2001 Census Standard Tables were available. They were a further subset of the statistical wards such that those with fewer than 1,000 residents or 400 households were merged. This was required to ensure the confidentiality of data in the Standard Tables.

In England and Wales a total of 113 of the 2003 statistical wards were involved in mergers to create the ST ward set. Of the smallest (sub-threshold) wards, 81 were merged into 45 receiving wards, of which 13 were sub-threshold in their own right. There were a total of 8,800 ST wards in England and Wales, 68 fewer than the total number of 2003 statistical wards.

Scotland's 1,176 ST wards had the same minimum-size thresholds but did not always correspond exactly with Scottish CAS ward boundaries – the [NRS website](#) provides more explanation.

In Northern Ireland it was decided that ward-level statistics would also be released for the nine sub-threshold wards on the basis that the risk of disclosure would not be increased by doing so. Accordingly there are no ST wards in Northern Ireland.

[Names and codes of ST wards \(E&W\)](#)

Note about Names of CAS and ST Wards

When two or more wards were merged to create CAS or ST wards in England and Wales, the name given to the new (enlarged) ward was that of the largest of its constituent wards (in terms of population). For example, Cwm-y-Glo statistical ward (Gwynedd) was merged with the larger Bethel statistical ward to create the Bethel ST ward. You must therefore be aware of which ward set you are using – in this case Bethel ST ward covers a much larger area and population than Bethel statistical ward.

2.3.7 Parishes and Communities

The smallest type of administrative area in England is the civil parish (commonly called parish); the equivalent unit in Wales is the community. Scotland also has communities but their councils are generally a channel of opinion to other authorities rather than an administration in their own right. Northern Ireland does not have any similar units.

2.3.7.1 English Parishes

English parishes are a very old form of spatial unit which originally represented areas of both civil and ecclesiastical administration. They used to be significant local government areas but now have

very limited functions. Modern parish councils (which may choose to call themselves a town council) can provide facilities such as village halls, war memorials, cemeteries, leisure facilities and playgrounds. They have duties such as maintenance of public footpaths and may also spend money on cultural projects, community transport initiatives and crime-prevention equipment. In addition they must be notified of all planning applications and consulted on the making of certain by-laws. However, not all parishes have a council – if there are fewer than 200 parishioners, or if the parishioners do not want one, decisions can instead be taken at parish meetings. The geography is further complicated by the fact that several smaller parishes may come together to elect a joint council. Parishes are confined within local authority district boundaries but are not contiguous with electoral wards. In some smaller urban areas, successor parishes have been created, but this is not universal. Consequently some areas of the country have parishes and others don't, making them an unsatisfactory unit for producing National Statistics.

Many parishes are a similar size to wards, but some can contain several wards, and ward boundaries need not be followed. As at 1 April 2021 there were 10,474 parishes in England.

2.3.7.2 English Non-civil Parish Areas

Non-civil parish areas (NCP) refer to the area in a local authority not comprised of parishes, i.e. unparished areas.

2.3.7.3 Welsh Communities

The Welsh equivalents of parishes are communities, which fit into and change with UAs. Their councils have similar powers to English parish councils and may also choose to call themselves town councils. Unlike parishes in England, communities cover the whole of Wales, and this gives them greater potential as a statistical unit. There are 877 communities in Wales, over 730 of which currently have a council. Prior to 1974 Wales also had parishes, but these were technically abolished when communities were introduced, despite the new communities initially being aligned to the old parish boundaries.

2.3.7.4 Scottish Communities

All of Scotland has had communities delineated, which fit into and change with council areas. However, community councils (CC) are not statutory and only exist if volunteers are willing to run them. In consequence there are approximately 1,200 such councils, which can represent either single delineated communities or groups of them. There are also nearly 200 communities, mostly in the larger cities, which have no council.

The principal role of CCs is to act as a channel for the views of local communities. They have a legal right to be notified of and respond to planning applications and can be involved in a range of activities, mostly related to local infrastructure and community events (e.g. playgrounds, bus shelters, village halls, footpaths, flower beds, Christmas celebrations). Not all CCs participate, however, and those that do have to rely on voluntary work and fund-raising; many receive council area funding for running costs only. CCs can however obtain grants for specific schemes.

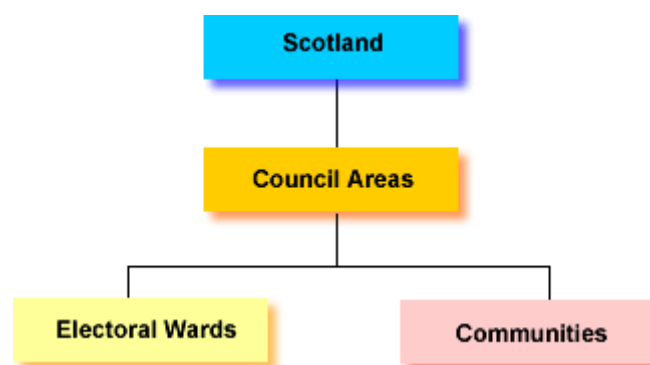
In fact, although some are supportive, many council areas tend to disregard their CCs and do not consider them to be a tier of government, even though they legally can have that role. It is only in Na h-Eileanan Siar (formerly known as Eilean Siar / Western Isles), Orkney and especially in Shetland that CCs are viewed as an important tier in the administrative structure and have a correspondingly larger budget. Scotland's network of parishes was abolished for administrative purposes in 1930, when CCs

were initiated. Unlike in Wales, these new CCs were not necessarily based on old parish areas. As indicated, CCs fit inside council area boundaries, whereas the old parish geography no longer corresponds with any modern administrative pattern.

We do not hold a list of Scottish communities.

2.4 Scotland

Scotland is subject to the administration of both the UK Government in Westminster and the Scottish Government in Edinburgh. The UK Government has responsibility for issues such as constitutional matters, foreign policy and defence, whereas the remit of the Scottish Government includes matters such as health, education and law. Scotland is divided into 32 council areas, which in turn are subdivided into electoral wards and communities.



2.4.1 Council Areas

Council areas are the upper tier of Scottish administrative geography. The 1994 Local Government (Scotland) Act led to the abolition of the existing structure of nine regions and 53 districts, although the three island councils remained. Since April 1996, Scotland has been divided into 32 council areas, whose councils are unitary administrations with responsibility for all areas of local government. Council areas are built from electoral wards and are also divided into communities.

2.4.2 Electoral Wards

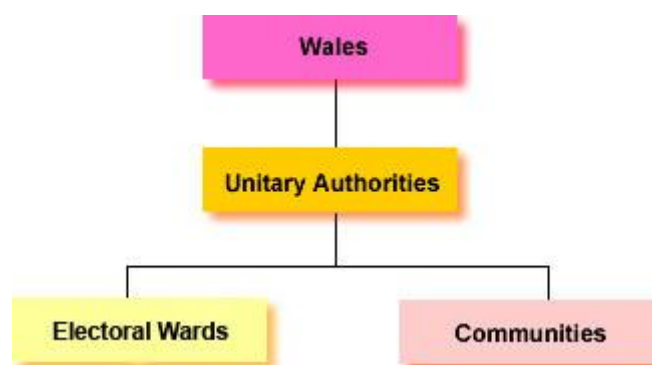
[See 2.3.6 Electoral Wards/Divisions](#)

2.4.3 Communities

[See 2.3.7 Parishes and Communities](#)

2.5 Wales

Wales is subject to the administration of both the UK Government in Westminster and also the National Assembly for Wales in Cardiff. The UK Government retains responsibility for non-devolved topics, but the National Assembly has powers to make legislation in devolved topics such as health, education, agriculture, local government, environment, and culture. Wales is subdivided into 22 unitary authorities (UA), which in turn are divided into electoral wards and communities.



2.5.1 Unitary Authorities (UA)

Following the 1994 Local Government (Wales) Act, the 8 counties and 37 districts of Wales were replaced in April 1996 by 22 UAs with responsibilities for all aspects of local government. Eight of the UAs (Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Torfaen, Wrexham and Rhondda Cynon Taf) have county borough status (reflecting their existence as large population centres), whilst the other 14 have county status (reflecting at least some aspect of rurality). These definitions do not, however, affect authority structures. UAs are built from electoral wards. They are also divided into communities.

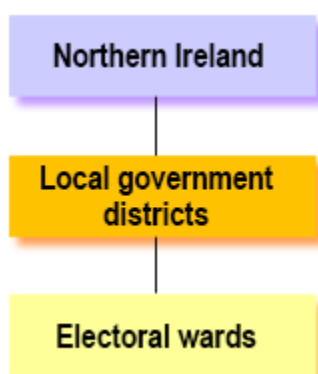
2.5.2 Electoral Wards

[See 2.3.6 Electoral Wards/Divisions](#)

2.5.3 Communities

[See 2.3.7 Parishes and Communities](#)

2.6 Northern Ireland



Northern Ireland is subject to the administration of both the UK Government in Westminster and the Northern Ireland Executive in Belfast. The UK Government retains responsibility for a number of issues, such as international relations, policing, and justice. The Northern Ireland Executive, however, has powers in a number of areas, such as health, education, industry, agriculture, environment, and culture. Northern Ireland is divided into 11 local government districts (LGD) – formerly district council areas (DCA). Each LGD is subdivided into electoral wards.

2.6.1 Local Government Districts (LGD)

At the last reorganisation in April 2015, Northern Ireland's 26 single-tier district council areas (DCA) were replaced by 11 LGDs. The LGDs are unitary administrations responsible for all areas of local government, but their remit is more limited than that of LADs in the rest of the UK. The six historic counties (Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone) are still referred to generally but do not constitute a level of administration. LGDs are built from electoral wards.

2.6.2 Electoral Wards

[See 2.3.6 Electoral Wards/Divisions](#)

3. Census Geography

The UK Census is undertaken every 10 years, with the most recent being on 21 March 2021. The main geographies directly associated with the Census are Output Areas (OA) – the base unit for Census data releases – and Super Output Areas (SOA). These are being updated based on 2021 Census information and will eventually replace the 2011 Census geographies where necessary.

3.1 The UK Censuses

The Censuses collect population and other statistics essential to those who have to plan and allocate resources. Major customers include departments of national and local government, and providers of services such as health and education. Although the Census occurs simultaneously in all parts of the UK, the responsible body in England and Wales is the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#), in Scotland the [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#) and in Northern Ireland the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(NISRA\)](#). Census data can be produced for most geographies by best-fitting from OA to the required output geography current on 31 December 2011.

Further Information and Census Geography Products

- [England – Information on the Census](#)

We offer a range of 2011 Census geography products for England and Wales on the [Open Geography portal](#) including:

- Digital boundaries and centroids, for OAs and SOAs, which you can use in your own geographical information systems to carry out spatial analysis or web mapping.
- Lookup tables showing OA aggregation to higher geographies and comparison between 2001 and 2011 statistical geographies.
- Reference (outline) PDF maps showing the areas used to present Census statistics.

For information regarding the Census products for Scotland and Northern Ireland, please refer to the relevant organisation:

- [Scotland – Information on the Census](#)
- [Census in Northern Ireland](#)

3.2 Built-up Areas (BUA) and Built-up Area Sub-divisions (BUASD)

BUAs and BUASDs were created as part of the 2011 Census outputs. This data provides information on the villages, towns and cities where people live, and allows comparisons between people living in built-up areas and those living elsewhere. Census data for these areas (previously called urban areas) has been produced every 10 years since 1981. A new methodology to capture the areas was used in the 2011 version, but it still follows the rules used in previous versions so that results are broadly comparable. BUAs are defined as land with a minimum area of 20 hectares (200,000 square metres), while settlements within 200 metres of each other are linked. The BUAs and BUASDs are available as boundary sets, name and codes and lookup files, which can be downloaded from the [Open Geography portal](#), along with the [BUA User Guide](#).

You will need to be aware that there are areas included in the boundary datasets but not in the Census tables. These BUAs and BUASDs have been identified as areas that have not been allocated a population. In most cases, this is because they do not have any residential buildings – for example, industrial estates, airports, theme parks, etc. The names and codes of these areas have been included in documentation that accompanies the files.

3.3 Enumeration Districts (ED)

EDs were used for data collection for the 2001 Census and for both data collection and outputs for the 1991 Census. There was no requirement to produce a set of 2011 EDs as households in England and Wales received their 2011 Census questionnaire through the post and returned them by post or online. Only communal establishments (for example, care homes) and special groups (such as travellers) had their Census questionnaires hand-delivered. Individuals within communal establishments also had the option of completing their questionnaire online following the same process as that used by households.

3.3.1 2011 EDs

There were no official EDs created for the 2011 Census. Households in England and Wales received their census questionnaire through the post and returned them by post or online. Only communal establishments (for example, care homes), and special groups (such as travellers) had their census questionnaires hand-delivered. Individuals within communal establishments also had the option of completing their questionnaire online following the same process as that used by households.

3.3.2 2001 EDs

EDs were used for data collection for the 2001 Census. England and Wales had 116,895 EDs, the majority of which were different from their 1991 equivalents, with an average size close to 200 households (450 people). Scotland had 6,987 EDs with an average size of 328 households (730 people). Northern Ireland had 2,591 EDs with an average size of 260 households (650 people). In addition, there were special enumeration districts (SED) for communal establishments with the capacity to house over 100 people. SEDs included prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, halls of residence, large hotels and military bases. EDs sometimes straddled 2001 administrative boundaries and were deemed unsuitable for data output and were used for data collection only. Output Areas (OA) were introduced for data output.

3.3.3 1991 EDs

1991 EDs were used for both data collection and output. Their size and shape was primarily determined by the requirements of data collection, but they fitted the administrative boundaries current at the time.

3.4 Output Areas (OA)

OAs have been used for data collection and output of Census data since the 2001 Census. OAs were created for Census data, specifically for the output of census estimates. The OA is the lowest geographical level at which census estimates are provided. They were introduced in Scotland at the 1981 Census and in all the countries of the UK at the 2001 Census.

3.4.1 2001 OAs

2001 Census OAs were built from clusters of adjacent unit postcodes but as they reflected the characteristics of the actual census data, they could not be generated until after data processing. They were designed to have similar population sizes and be as socially homogenous as possible based on tenure of household and dwelling type (homogeneity was not used as a factor in Scotland). Urban/rural mixes were avoided where possible; OAs preferably consisted entirely of urban postcodes or entirely of rural postcodes. They had approximately regular shapes and tended to be constrained by obvious boundaries such as major roads. OAs were required to have a specified minimum size to ensure the confidentiality of data.

In England and Wales, 2001 Census OAs were based on postcodes as at Census Day and fit within the boundaries of 2003 statistical wards and parishes. If a postcode straddled an electoral ward/division or parish boundary, it was split between two or more OAs. The minimum OA size was 40 resident households and 100 resident people, but the recommended size was rather larger at 125 households. These size thresholds meant that unusually small wards and parishes were incorporated into larger OAs. There were 165,665 OAs in England and 9,769 OAs in Wales.

OAs for Northern Ireland had the same minimum size, as for England and Wales, but were based on postcodes as at January 2000. The OAs fit within the 2001 electoral ward boundaries. There were 5,022 OAs in Northern Ireland.

In Scotland, OAs were based on postcodes as at December 2000 and related to 2001 wards. However, the OAs did not necessarily fit inside ward boundaries where confidentiality issues made it more appropriate to straddle boundaries. The minimum OA size was 20 resident households and 50 resident people, but the target size was 50 households. There were 42,604 OAs in Scotland.

3.4.2 2011 OAs

England and Wales:

Maintaining stability as far as possible was key for the 2011 Census. Some modification of the previous OAs and Super Output Areas (SOA) was necessary where a significant need had occurred since 2001 (see ['Modification of OAs'](#) below). The total number of 2011 OAs was 171,372 for England and 10,036 for Wales. This means that 2.6% of the 2001 OAs were changed as a result of the 2011 Census. Significant points of interest for the 2011 Census were that OAs and SOAs aligned to local authority district (LAD) boundaries, including those that changed between 2003 and 2011, and also at the border between Scotland and England. 161 OAs and SOAs were modified because they were

considered unsuitable for reporting statistics. The average population in an OA increased from 297 in 2001 to 309 in 2011. Boundaries are available clipped to the coastline, for mapping, as well as to extent of the realm, for geographic information systems and analysis. All OAs have unique 9-character codes, in line with all statistical geographies.

Boundaries are freely available under the terms of the [Open Government Licence](#).

Scotland:

2011 OAs for Scotland were released in September 2013 and there are 46,351 of them.

Northern Ireland:

In Northern Ireland, the 2001 OAs were merged to produce new 2011 'small areas' that fit within SOAs. There are 4,537 small areas.

3.4.3 Modification of OAs in England and Wales

Changes in OA and SOA boundaries for the 2011 Census took place when:

- significant population change had occurred since the 2001 Census
- LAD boundaries had changed between 2003 and 2011
- OA boundaries had been realigned to the England/Scotland border, as should have happened for 2001
- areas were independently assessed as lacking social homogeneity when they were created for 2001

Redesigned OAs and SOAs:

- do not align to ward and parish boundaries that changed after 2003
- do not necessarily align to real-world features
- contain more than 100 persons and 40 households, even if they contain one or more communal establishments

A number of geography reference data products are available from the [Open Geography portal](#). These include:

- digital boundaries of the modified OAs, LSOAs, MSOAs and Workplace Zones (WZ)
- lookups between the 2001 and 2011 OAs, where they have changed
- lookups between OAs, postcodes and a number of census output geographies

3.4.3.1 Thresholds used in Modification (England and Wales)

We ran a process to automatically modify those OAs and SOAs whose 2011 Census populations had significantly grown or declined since 2001. If OAs breached a specified upper population threshold (their populations became too large), they were split into two or more OAs using postcodes as building blocks.

Splits were applied where:

- an OA population exceeded 625 people or 250 households
- an LSOA population exceeded 3,000 people or 1,200 households

- an MSOA population exceeded 15,000 people or 6,000 households

There may be exceptions where an area that was above the population threshold could not be split. Where splits occur, building blocks of postcodes were used to create two or more new OAs (constrained to the boundary of the original OAs from which they were created). The use of postcode building blocks is consistent with the methodology applied in 2001, and enabled production of postcode to OA lookups. Where OAs or SOAs breached a specified lower population threshold (their population became too small and is therefore potentially disclosive), they were merged with an adjacent OA or SOA.

Merges were applied where:

- an OA population fell below 100 people or 40 households
- an LSOA population fell below 1,000 people or 400 households
- an MSOA population fell below 5,000 people or 2,000 households

Using splits and merges of the existing OA and SOA hierarchy, rather than a total redesign, allows better linkage and comparison between statistical outputs for the 2001 Census and 2011 Census.

3.5 Statistical Wards, CAS Wards and ST Wards

3.5.1 Statistical Wards

[See 2.3.6.2 Statistical Wards](#)

3.5.2 Census Area Statistics (CAS) Wards

[See 2.3.6.3 Census Area Statistics \(CAS\) Wards](#)

3.5.3 Standard Table (ST) Wards

[See 2.3.6.4 Standard Table \(ST\) Wards](#)

3.6 Super Output Areas (SOA)

SOAs were designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics and are built up from groups of OAs. Statistics for Lower Layer SOAs (LSOA) and Middle Layer SOAs (MSOA) were originally released in 2004 for England and Wales. Scotland also released statistics for Data Zones (DZ) - the equivalent to LSOAs - in 2004 and Intermediate Geographies (IG) – the equivalent to MSOAs - in 2005. Northern Ireland introduced LSOAs in 2005 but do not have MSOAs.

3.6.1 2011 SOAs

Maintaining stability as far as possible was key for the 2011 Census. LSOAs and MSOAs that were created following the 2001 Census continue to exist unless a significant population change occurred between 2001 and 2011, and household minimum and maximum thresholds were breached. Simplistically, where populations became too big, the LSOAs/MSOAs were split into two or more areas; where populations became too small, the LSOAs/MSOAs were merged with an adjacent one. Responses to the Output Geography Consultation from December 2009 to March 2010 were also considered in the redesign of OAs and SOAs. Consequently, the total changes across the OA hierarchy were no more than 5% overall.

Population and household minimum and maximum thresholds for SOAs in England and Wales:

Geography	Minimum population	Maximum population	Minimum number of households	Maximum number of households
LSOA	1,000	3,000	400	1,200
MSOA	5,000	15,000	2,000	6,000

The total of 2011 LSOAs and MSOAs for the UK:

Geography	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
LSOA	32,844	1,909	6,976	890
MSOA	6,791	410	1,279	N/A

DZs and IGs in Scotland were reviewed following the 2011 Census and minor changes were implemented, similar to those in England and Wales.

You can download this information, along with the names and codes, from the [Open Geography portal](#); the boundaries are available from [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#) or [Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics](#).

SOAs in Northern Ireland have had minimal changes in three areas, but the total number of SOAs has not changed since the 2001 Census. Further details of Northern Ireland SOAs can be found on the [NISRA](#) website.

SOAs align to local authority district (LAD) boundaries including those that changed between 2003 and 2011, and also align at the border between Scotland and England. The boundaries are available clipped to the coastline, for mapping, as well as to the extent of the realm, for geographic information systems and analysis. All SOAs have unique 9-character codes, in line with all statistical geographies.

As part of the 2011 Census OA hierarchy, there are 94 Upper Layer SOAs (USOA) in Wales but none in England.

Boundaries remain freely available under the [Open Government Licensing](#) terms.

3.6.2 2001 SOAs

The total of 2001 LSOAs and MSOAs for the UK:

Geography	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
LSOA	32,482	1,896	6,505*	890
MSOA	6,781	413	1,235**	N/A

* Data Zone (DZ)

** Intermediate Geography (IG)

2001 SOAs were initially introduced for use on the now-defunct Neighbourhood Statistics website, but later became the standard units for presenting local statistical information across National

Statistics. Local statistics were produced at electoral ward/division level before OAs and SOAs were introduced. This had drawbacks because electoral wards/divisions vary greatly in size, from fewer than 100 residents to more than 30,000. This was not ideal for nationwide comparisons, and also meant that some data could not be released for smaller wards due to disclosure issues and the need to protect the confidentiality of individuals.

DZs and IGs in Scotland were smaller in population size than their LSOA and MSOA counterparts in England and Wales. DZs had a minimum population of 500 and IGs had a minimum population of 2,500.

In Northern Ireland, LSOAs had a population threshold of between 1,300 and 2,800.

Further Information and Census Geography Products

We offer a range of 2011 Census geography products for England and Wales including:

- digital boundaries and centroids, for OAs and SOAs, which users can use in their own geographical information systems to carry out spatial analysis or web mapping
- lookup tables showing OA aggregation to higher geographies and comparison between 2001 and 2011 statistical geographies
- reference (outline) PDF maps showing the areas used to present census statistics

For further information, please contact [ONS Geography Customer Services](#).

For information regarding the census products for Scotland and Northern Ireland, please refer to the relevant organisation:

- [NISRA](#)
- [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\): Census Products](#)

3.7 Workplace Zones (WZ)

WZs are an output geography for England and Wales that has been produced using workplace data from the 2011 Census. It was extended to Scotland and Northern Ireland in late 2015. They are designed to supplement the Output Area (OA) and Super Output Area (LSOA and MSOA) geographies that were introduced with the 2001 Census. OAs were originally created for the analysis of population statistics using residential population and household data. As a result, they are of limited use for workplace statistics as there is no consistency in the number of workers or businesses contained within an OA. OAs are designed to contain consistent numbers of persons, based on where they live, WZs are designed to contain consistent numbers of workers, based on where people work. This means that WZs are more suitable for disseminating workplace-based statistics and outputs. WZs have been created by splitting and merging the 2011 OAs to produce a workplace geography that contains consistent numbers of workers. The WZs align to the existing OA hierarchy. They have been constrained to MSOA boundaries to provide consistency between the OA and WZ geographies, and to allow comparison of the 2001 and 2011 Census workplace outputs at the MSOA level. There are 50,868 WZs in England and 2,710 in Wales.

More information on their purpose, origin, development and production can be found in the document '[Workplace Zones: A new geography for workplace statistics](#)', which is available on the [Open Geography portal](#) along with boundaries and lookup files.

The research on creating algorithms for the creation of the WZs was carried out by the University of Southampton, in collaboration with ONS.

For further information on Scottish WZs, please contact [NRS Geography Customer Services](#).

3.8 Census Merged Areas

Some 2011 Census areas were merged for disclosure reasons.

3.8.1 Census Merged Counties and Local Authority Districts (LAD)

Due to the number of variables included, some 2011 Census tables were disclosive at LAD level if the LAD had a relatively small population. The two affected LADs were Isles of Scilly Unitary Authority (UA) and the City of London. To prevent disclosure these were amalgamated with Cornwall UA and the London borough of Westminster respectively. As these Census tables also included county/UA information and Isles of Scilly appeared in both the LAD and county/UA layers, it was necessary to amalgamate it with Cornwall at the county/UA level as well.

3.8.2 Census Merged Wards

Census merged wards are a frozen geography created specifically for 2011 Census Detailed Characteristics (DC) tables. DC tables have a higher minimum population threshold than other tables as the more detailed information carries an increased risk of identifying persons or households using the lower population threshold applied to other tables. If the Census estimate for a ward falls below 1,000 persons or 400 households, the ward is merged with a neighbouring ward, or wards, until the aggregated Census estimate for the merged wards is above both the minimum person (1,000) and household (400) threshold.

3.9 Travel to Work Areas (TTWA)

For those involved in labour market analysis and planning, it is useful to be able to use data for labour market areas. To meet this need, labour market areas are defined to reflect areas where the bulk of the resident population also work within the same area.

Defining these areas requires the analysis of commuting patterns; we have worked with Newcastle University to apply a complex allocation process in order to define a set of travel to work areas (TTWA) for the whole of the UK. The current criteria for defining TTWAs is that generally at least 75% of an area's resident workforce work in the area and at least 75% of the people who work in the area also live in the area. The area must also have a working population of at least 3,500. However, for areas with a working population in excess of 25,000, self-containment rates as low as 66.7% are accepted. TTWA boundaries are non-overlapping, are contiguous and cover the whole of the UK. TTWAs do cross national boundaries, although no account is taken of commuting between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The resulting pattern is that although the definitive minimum working population in a TTWA is 3,500, many areas are much larger – indeed, the whole of London and the surrounding area forms one TTWA.

3.9.1 2011 TTWAs

The 228 areas forming the 2011 TTWAs, covering the whole of the UK, were defined in 2015 using 2011 Census commuting flow data, indicating home and workplace address. The TTWAs are based on aggregations of Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) in England and Wales, Data Zones (DZ)

in Scotland, and Super Output Areas (SOA) in Northern Ireland and in some cases span country borders. There are six cross-border TTWAs, 149 in England, 18 in Wales, 45 in Scotland and 10 in Northern Ireland.

Further Information

Please note that following the release of the 2011 TTWAs on 19 August 2015, a small number of TTWA geography codes have been revised. All the published documentation has been updated where applicable to reflect these changes.

[Travel to Work Areas Guidance and Information](#)

[Map of 2011 Travel to Work Areas](#)

[Article outlining the changes between the 2001 and 2011 TTWAs](#)

2011 TTWA boundaries for use in GIS, names and codes and lookup files are available to download from the [Open Geography portal](#).

3.9.2 2001 TTWAs

The 243 2001 TTWAs (8 cross-border, 158 in England, 20 in Wales, 46 in Scotland and 11 in Northern Ireland) were defined in 2007 using 2001 Census commuting flow data, indicating home and workplace address. The TTWAs are based on aggregations of LSOAs in England and Wales, DZs in Scotland, and SOAs in Northern Ireland, and in some cases span country borders.

Further Information

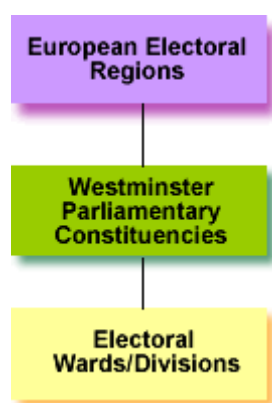
[Map of 2001 Travel to Work Areas](#)

[Travel to Work Areas Guidance and Information](#)

2001 TTWA boundaries for use in GIS, names and codes and lookup files are available to download from the [Open Geography portal](#).

4. Electoral Geography

Electoral geography in the UK is complex due to the different electoral systems and different areas used to elect members to various levels of administration. The hierarchy of electoral wards/divisions, Westminster parliamentary constituencies and European Electoral Regions (EER) is the only electoral structure that covers the whole of the UK.



4.1 European Electoral Regions (EER)

EERs are used to elect Members of the European Parliament (MEP) to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Prior to 1999, the UK operated a 'first-past-the-post' system based on groupings of Westminster constituencies (excepting Northern Ireland, which already had a proportional system). In the 1999 election, a proportional representation system of multi-member electoral regions was introduced to the rest of the UK. It was used in 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019. The number of MEPs in each region varies with population size, resulting in the following national distribution:

Country	Number of EERs	Number of MEPs (2019 election)
England ¹	9	60
Scotland	1	6
Wales	1	4
Northern Ireland	1	3
United Kingdom Total	12	73

Notes:

1. England's electoral regions are based on the boundaries of the regions (former government office regions (GOR)) at the start of the year of an election.

4.2 Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies

Westminster parliamentary constituencies are the areas used to elect Members of Parliament (MP) to the House of Commons - the primary legislative chamber of the UK, located in Westminster, London. At the last General Election, there were 650 constituencies. The number of MPs in each constituent country of the UK is: 533 in England, 59 in Scotland, 40 in Wales and 18 in Northern Ireland.

4.2.1 Boundary Changes and Geographic Constitution

Constituency boundaries are determined by the Boundary Commissions (one each for [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#)). The commissions are required to undertake a general review every 8 to 12 years to ensure electoral equality – that is, that the sizes of the electorates in each constituency are as similar as possible (currently about 70,000 electors, typically reflecting a total population of 90,000). General reviews normally lead to large-scale changes, but the commissions may also carry out localised interim reviews. These can occur at any time, but usually only lead to minor changes. Constituencies are generally based on whole or part local authority districts (LAD) unless there is a strong case to straddle boundaries – each case is decided on its merits; constituencies may not, however, split electoral wards/divisions.

Although constituencies are defined to reflect wards at the time of review, the changes are not implemented until the subsequent general election. Accordingly the constituencies used in the 1997 general election were mostly based on the April 1994 ward boundaries used for the fourth general review. However, a small number of constituencies used April 1995 boundaries, and some were affected by subsequent interim reviews. The 1997 constituencies were used again in 2001, except for some mostly minor boundary changes in London and south-east England resulting from interim reviews. In 2005, the boundaries were retained, with the exception of the Scottish Westminster parliamentary constituencies. These were reduced in number from 72 to 59.

The fifth general review was completed in 2007. It led to major change in England and Wales; the majority of constituency boundaries used at the May 2005 general election were changed. The Westminster parliamentary constituencies boundaries are based on the fifth Periodical Parliamentary Review that was promulgated in July 2007 (defined in terms of wards as at 12 April 2005). An amending order in July 2008 affected the Welsh Westminster parliamentary constituency boundaries and a further amendment order (operative 18 March 2009) realigning the boundaries for Daventry, South Northamptonshire, Somerton and Frome and Wells has also been applied. There were no changes for the May 2015 and June 2017 general elections.

In Northern Ireland, the Commission's Fifth Periodical Report on Parliamentary Constituencies outlined changes to and the composition of constituencies. In practice, the new parliamentary constituencies are not very different to their predecessors. As before, there are 18 constituencies, all retaining the same name. In the main, the boundary amendment process has involved the reassigning of existing electoral wards from one constituency into a neighbouring constituency. The only exception concerns Derryagh ward within Lisburn City Local Government District (LGD), which previously resided entirely within Lagan Valley county constituency. It has now been split into 2 separate wards – Derryagh (North) and Derryagh (South), the former is now included in Belfast West borough constituency, the latter remaining where it was.

4.2.2 County and Borough Constituencies

Sometimes constituencies are referred to as either borough (burgh in Scotland) or county constituencies. Borough constituencies are predominantly urban whereas county constituencies are partly or mostly rural. Definitions are allocated by the Boundary Commissions and affect candidates' election expenses and also who can be the constituency's returning officer. If used, the designation is suffixed to the constituency name and is generally abbreviated: 'BC' for borough constituency, 'CC' for county constituency.

Further Information

You can download several products including names and codes, lookups, boundaries and maps from the [Open Geography portal](#).

[Find your MP](#)

4.3 Devolved Parliaments

Referendums held in 1997 led to the creation of devolved administrations for Scotland and Wales, and in 1998 for London. These administrations had been established by 2000. Also in 1998, the Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement referendum led to the creation of a new Northern Ireland Assembly. All four administrations have their own parliaments and electoral systems as described below. Some of them use the same constituencies as the UK (Westminster) Parliament whilst others

use their own. Please note that we do not maintain constituency listings specific to the devolved parliaments.

4.3.1 Scottish Parliament

The Scottish Parliament, founded in 1999 and sitting in Edinburgh, has a total of 129 MSPs (Members of the Scottish Parliament). Of these MSPs, 73 are elected directly from single-member constituencies. The remaining 56 are elected via a proportional system using 8 electoral regions that coincide with the 8 pre-1999 European Parliament seats. The Scottish Parliament appoints a First Minister, who in turn appoints other ministers to form the devolved government known as the Scottish Government. The Government is accountable to the Parliament.

[Members of Scottish Parliament](#)

4.3.2 National Assembly for Wales

This was also founded in 1999 and sits in Cardiff with a total of 60 AMs (Assembly Members). Of these, 40 AMs are elected directly from single-member constituencies. The remaining 20 are elected via a proportional system using five electoral regions that coincide with the five pre-1999 European Parliament seats (as with the Scottish system). The National Assembly for Wales appoints a Presiding Officer, who in turn appoints other Assembly ministers to form the Assembly Cabinet. The Cabinet is the main decision-making body of the Assembly and is accountable to it. Changes were made to the boundaries of the Assembly constituencies and electoral regions in January 2012.

[National Assembly for Wales Constituencies](#)

4.3.3 Northern Ireland Assembly

From 1921 to 1972, Northern Ireland had its own Parliament, but as a result of the Troubles, direct rule from Westminster was implemented in 1972. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement re-established the principle of home rule, with a new 108-member Assembly that was elected via a proportional system in each of the existing 18 Westminster constituencies. After an initial delay caused by disputes over the appointment of ministers, the Assembly first sat in 1999, in Stormont Castle, Belfast. Assembly members are known as MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly) and the government of Northern Ireland is known as the Northern Ireland Executive. The Assembly appoints the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Each political party in Northern Ireland is allocated a number of government departments, reflecting the size of that party's representation in the Assembly, and the respective Executive ministers are selected by that party. The Executive is accountable to the whole Assembly.

[Northern Ireland Assembly Constituencies](#)

4.3.4 London Assembly

Prior to its abolition in 1986, the administrative area of Greater London was controlled by the Greater London Council (GLC). Thereafter, the 32 boroughs and the City of London Corporation became single-tier administrations. However, in 1998 a referendum revealed a large majority in favour of recreating a single authority to deal with London-wide issues. Consequently the new Greater London Authority (GLA) was established in 2000. The elected components of the GLA are the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. The Mayor is elected directly, and London Assembly elections occur at the same time. The Assembly has 25 members, 14 of whom are elected directly from

constituencies formed from groupings of either two or three London boroughs, and 11 of whom are elected using a city-wide proportional system. The Assembly works together with the Mayor and also has the role of regulating and scrutinising the Mayor's decisions.

[London Assembly Members](#)

4.4 Regional Government

In 2004 legislation was passed to allow referenda on regional government in the English Government Office Regions (GOR) – now regions. On 4 November 2004, a referendum was held in the north east, which produced a major 'no' vote. In consequence, the plans for referenda elsewhere were dropped.

4.5 Local Authorities and Smaller Units

Councillors in UK districts and unitary administrations are elected to represent the same electoral wards/divisions that are used to constitute Westminster parliamentary constituencies. County councillors, however, represent larger 'county electoral divisions', which are not necessarily based on the electoral wards used at district level. Parish, town or community councils may also use their own small-scale electoral areas; however we do not maintain information on these.

5. Health Geography

The organisation of the NHS is different in each of the four countries of the UK.

5.1 English Health Geography

Health structure after 1 April 2020

On 1 April 2020 CCG mergers took place that reduced the number of CCGs to 135.

April 2015 – 1 April 2020

On 1 April 2015 the 25 NHS area teams (NHSAT) merged and were renamed to form 13 regions (geography) (NHSRG). On 1 April 2016 the number of NHSRGs increased to 14 and in May 2017 they were renamed to NHS England (Region, Local Offices) (NHSRLO). NHSRLOs were closed as of April 2020. Also in May 2017, the NHS commissioning regions (NHSCR) were renamed to NHS England (Regions) (NHSE). Cancer Alliances and National Cancer Vanguard (CALNCV), between them covering all of England were also introduced from 2015, with the 3 NCVs subsequently being merged into the CALs. In 2016, Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STP) also covering all of England were introduced.

April 2013 – 1 April 2015

On 1 April 2013, a new structure of health geographies in England came into force. The new structure consisted of clinical commissioning groups (CCG), NHSATs and NHSCRs.

- There were four NHSCRs in England.
- There were 25 NHSATs in England, responsible for GP and dental services, pharmacy services and certain aspects of optical services. Ten of the teams lead on specialised commissioning across England and a smaller number of NHSATs carry out the direct commissioning of prison and military health.

- The 209 CCGs are NHS organisations set up by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to organise the delivery of NHS services in England. They are clinically led groups that include all of the general practice groups in their geographical area. The aim of this is to give GPs and other clinicians the power to influence commissioning decisions for their patients. CCGs are overseen by NHS England (including its regional offices and area teams). These structures manage primary care commissioning, including holding the NHS contracts for GP practices. CCGs have boundaries that are coterminous with those of Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA).

This structure replaced the strategic health authorities (SHA) and primary care organisations (PCO) that were in operation between July 2006 and April 2013.

July 2006 – March 2013

Health administration in England was significantly restructured in 2006. On 1 July 2006 the number of SHAs was reduced from 28 to 10. The boundaries of the new SHAs were coterminous with regions (former GORs), with the exception of the South East region, which comprises two SHAs that were constituted from groups of local authority districts (LAD). SHAs reported to the Department of Health. On 1 October 2006 the number of PCOs was reduced from 303 to 152. The PCOs were made up of 148 primary care trusts (PCT) and 4 care trusts (CT). CTs had similar duties to PCTs, except that the former had responsibilities for social care as well as health care. The majority of the new PCOs were defined in terms of LADs.

Of the 152 PCOs:

- 130 comprised of one or more whole LADs.
- 16 comprised of one or more whole LADs plus whole wards.
- 3 comprised of only whole wards within a single LAD.
- 2 comprised of one or more whole LADs and part wards (that is, whole parishes).
- 1 comprised of whole and part wards (that is, whole parishes) within a single LAD.

As at 15 April 2011 there were 146 PCTs and five CTs in England, after Solihull CT reverted to a PCT. There were also minimal changes on 1 April 2010, when two PCTs were merged into one and another PCT converted to a CT. PCOs reported to the SHAs.

July 2003 – June 2006

As at 1 July 2003, there were 28 SHAs, which were constituted by groups of LADs and managed the performance of the PCOs. As at 1 October 2005 there were 303 PCOs, including 299 PCTs and four CTs based on the PCT model (this meant that they fulfilled all PCT functions and also delivered the health services usually provided by local authorities). The PCOs were (mostly) aligned with the administrative boundaries existing at the time of the last major health reorganisation on 1 May 2002.

April 2002 – June 2003

During this period the directorates of health and social care (DHSC) formed an additional top layer to the structure. There were four DHSCs, each covering 1 or more GORs. DHSCs were part of the Department of Health rather than the NHS.

April 1999 – March 2002

A major reorganisation of English health geography occurred on 1 April 2002. Before this there were eight health regional offices (HRO), which were part of the Department of Health, divided into approximately 100 health authorities (HA), which in turn were split into PCOs. When PCOs were first established in 1999, there were 481 primary care groups (PCG). However, by 2002, a significant number had converted to PCTs. The numbers of both HAs and PCOs varied slightly through this period.

Further Information

You can download several products including names and codes, lookups, boundaries and maps from the [Open Geography portal](#)

5.2 Welsh Health Geography**The structure after 1 October 2009**

The current structure of health administration in Wales came into effect on 1 October 2009. A total of 22 local health boards (LHB) merged to form seven, with each LHB covering one or more Welsh unitary authority (UA). These LHBs report to the three regional offices within the NHS Wales Department of the National Assembly. LHB names and codes, and health area maps are available from the [Open Geography portal](#), although ONS does not hold names and codes for the regional offices.

April 2003 – 1 October 2009

On 1 April 2003 there were 22 LHBs, one in each of the Welsh UAs. These LHBs reported to three new regional offices (North Wales, Mid and West Wales, and South East Wales) within the NHS Wales Department of the National Assembly.

The structure prior to 1 April 2003

Before 1 April 2003 Wales had five health authorities (HA), which reported to the NHS Wales Department of the National Assembly. The HAs were divided into a total of 22 local health groups (LHG), one in each of the Welsh UAs.

5.3 Scottish Health Geography

Scotland has 14 health boards (HB), which form the upper tier of the Scottish health care system and report directly to the Scottish Government. The 34 community health partnerships (CHP) formed the lower tier of the Scottish health administration until they were abolished on 31 March 2015. The HBs were introduced in 1974 and are constituted by groups of the local government districts that existed in Scotland between 1975 and 1996. There were originally 15 HBs. However, in April 2006 the Argyll & Clyde HB was abolished and the area was absorbed by two existing HBs. In 2006 Scotland introduced a second tier of health administration with the creation of 41 CHPs. Working with local communities and other statutory and voluntary sector providers, CHPs played a key role in improving health and reducing inequalities. They reported to the Scottish HBs. In April 2007, two Edinburgh CHPs were merged, thereby reducing the total number of CHPs from 41 to 40. From March 2011 there was a reduction again in CHP numbers, with five Glasgow CHPs merging to form one CHP. In April 2012, there was another reduction in the number of CHPs from 36 to 34. CHPs were abolished

on 31 March 2015 and were replaced on 1 April 2016 by 31 health and social care partnerships, known as Integration Authorities (IA).

Further Information

You can download several products including names and codes, lookups, boundaries and maps from the [Open Geography portal](#).

5.4 Northern Ireland Health Geography

The structure after 1 April 2009

The current structure of health administration in Northern Ireland came into effect on 1 April 2009. A single health and social care board (HSCB) replaced the four former health and social services boards (HSSB). The board focuses on commissioning, resource management, performance management and improvement. It identifies and meets the needs of the local population through its five local commissioning groups (LCG). LCGs are sub-committees of the HSCB. HSCB and LCG names and codes files, along with health area maps are available on the [Open Geography portal](#), but please note that we do not hold names and codes for the health and social care trusts (HSCT).

The structure prior to 1 April 2009

Northern Ireland had four HSSBs, which reported to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) of the Northern Ireland Executive. HSSBs were introduced in 1973 and were constituted from groups of local government districts (LGD). The HSSBs were named Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western. In 2002 the HSSBs were subdivided into a total of 15 local health and social care groups (LHSCG), responsible for the planning and delivery of primary and community care in Northern Ireland. Each LHSCG covered one or more LGD, with the exceptions of the Belfast and Strabane LGDs, which were each split between two LHSCGs.

6. Postal Geography

Royal Mail maintains a UK-wide system of postcodes to identify postal delivery areas. Most people know their postcode, so we are able to use this as a geographic reference when collecting data. This reference can then be related to any geographic unit used for statistical production, such as a local authority district (LAD) or electoral ward.

6.1 Postcode Structure

Postcodes are alphanumeric references comprising an outward code of 2–4 characters and an inward code of three characters. For example:

Outward Code	Inward Code
PO15	5RR

The postcode is structured hierarchically, supporting four levels of geographic unit:

Example	Geographic Unit	Number in UK*
PO	Postcode Area	124

PO15	Postcode District	3,118
PO15 5	Postcode Sector	12,446
PO15 5RR	Unit Postcode	Approximately 1.77 million (live)**

*Includes the Channel Islands and Isle of Man

**As at May 2021, these 1.77 million postcodes comprise approximately 1.67 million small user and 0.1 million large user postcodes (see below), including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

6.2 Unit Postcodes

Unit postcodes are the base unit of postal geography and fall into two types:

- Large user postcodes: allocated to single addresses receiving at least 500 mail items per day (e.g. business addresses).
- Small user postcodes: collections of (usually) adjacent addresses. A single small user postcode may contain up to 100 addresses, but 15 is a more typical number.

Note: it is possible for large buildings with many separate delivery points (for example, a tower block) to have more than one unit postcode within the building.

6.3 Using Postcodes as a Geographic Reference

Postcodes form a compact geographic reference that the public and businesses are familiar with. However, linking postal geographies to other geographic units is not always straightforward, as:

- Postcode boundaries do not align with other geographic boundaries. If a unit postcode straddles a ward (or other) boundary, you have to decide which ward to allocate the data to. Our postcode directories take the grid reference of the postcode centroid and match this up to digital boundaries. However, some addresses (and therefore data) will still inevitably be allocated to the 'other' area.
- Postcode boundaries are subject to continuous change due to new addresses, single addresses acquiring 'large user' status as mail volume increases, and the need to restrict the number of addresses per unit to less than 100. Areas can also be recoded and postcodes can be re-used in a different place after just two years. Continuous monitoring is therefore required to avoid data misallocation.

6.4 Information on Postcode Recoding

Details of these larger reorganisations are provided in the Royal Mail's 'postcode update' series. The most recent postcode updates, together with summary information on major postcode changes since 1990, are available on the [Royal Mail website](#).

Further Information

You can download a range of postcode products and lookups from the [Open Geography portal](#).

7. Eurostat Geography

Eurostat is a Directorate-General of the European Commission and its main responsibilities are to provide statistical information for the European Union (EU) and to promote the harmonisation of

statistical methods across its member states. The Eurostat geographies are designed to be consistent across the EU for comparison purposes.

7.1 Former Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) and Local Administrative Units (LAU) and International Territorial Levels (ITL)

Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, a new UK-managed international statistical geography - ITL (International Territorial Levels) - was introduced on 1st January 2021, replacing the former NUTS classification. They align with international standards, enabling comparability both over time and internationally. To ensure continued alignment, the ITLs have been established to mirror the NUTS system. They also follow a similar review timetable – every three years. Lookups between ITLs and NUTS will be maintained and published until 2023. Details of the ITLs and how they will be managed will be published on the [ONS website](#).

7.1.1 Relationship of ITLs to UK Administrative Geographies

The ITL area classification in the UK comprises current national administrative and electoral areas, except in Scotland where some ITL areas comprise whole and/or part Local Enterprise Regions.

7.1.2 Listings of Subdivisions of ITL and LAU Areas

Please see [Annex C](#) for listings of the ITL 2, 3 and LAU 1 subdivisions of the ITL 1 areas in the UK.

Further Information

You can download several products including names and codes, lookups, boundaries and maps from the [Open Geography portal](#).

8. Address-level Geography

Each property in Great Britain is assigned a Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN). The UPRN is the unique identifier for every spatial address in Great Britain. It provides a comprehensive, complete, consistent identifier throughout a property's life cycle – from planning permission through to demolition. Most people know their address, so we are able to use this as a geographic reference when collecting data. This reference can then be related to any geographic unit used for statistical production, such as a local authority district or electoral ward.

8.1 UPRN Structure

The UPRN is numeric and can be up to 12 digits. As of June 2021, there are 39.6 million GB UPRNs.

8.2 Using Addresses as a Geographic Reference

The UPRN provides a fixed, non-moving point for the life of a property which makes geography allocations stable and unchanging (subject to boundary changes).

Further Information

You can download a range of address products and lookups from the [Open Geography portal](#).

9. Other Geographies

There are a number of other area units for which statistics are produced and for which we keep listings of names and codes.

9.1 Local Education Authorities (LEA) and Education Authorities (EA)

Prior to 1 April 2009, LEAs were the bodies responsible for the local administration of state sector education services in England and Wales. In those parts of England that still had counties, there was a single LEA for each county, for example Cumbria LEA and Devon LEA. Otherwise there was one LEA in each unitary authority (UA), metropolitan district or London borough. The Isles of Scilly also had their own LEA. The statutory duties of LEAs are now undertaken by the director of children's services within each local authority district (LAD). The director's responsibilities also include Children's Social Services (CSS).

The Children Act 2004 required every London borough, metropolitan district, top-tier local authority (county) or UA in England to appoint a director of children's services. Additionally the Education and Inspections Act 2006 includes a clause that allows for the future renaming of LEAs as local authorities in all legislation, removing the anomaly of one LAD being known as a LAD, an LEA and a children's services authority. Following on from this legislation, during the last round of local government restructuring the then-current Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) reviewed the alignment of LEA and CSS codes. The outcome of the review was that CSS codes were replaced by LEA codes (with effect from 1 April 2009). Although LEAs no longer exist, the coding structure has been retained by the DCSF, which became the Department for Education (DfE) on 12 May 2010. For more information, please [contact DfE](#) directly.

In Scotland education administration is the responsibility of local government (i.e. the councils in each council area).

In Northern Ireland, local education is the responsibility of a single Education Authority (EA) that, on 1 April 2015, replaced the five education and library boards (Belfast, North Eastern, South Eastern, Southern and Western) with five regional offices covering the same areas - one or more complete local government districts.

Further Information

[Department for Education](#)

9.2 National Parks

National parks are designated to conserve the natural beauty and cultural heritage of areas of outstanding landscape value and also to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities. Although they are also subject to the usual structure of local government, each one has its own National Park Authority (NPA) with responsibility for conservation, planning, recreation management and fostering the social and economic wellbeing of local communities.

The Broads is not a designated national park but is included in our products and statistics because it is widely considered to be part of the national parks family. The Broads has its own special authority, the Broads Authority, which is similar to the NPAs but with extra powers in relation to navigation.

There are currently 13 national parks in England and Wales, including the Broads. A total of 10 were designated in the 1950s following the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; the Broads was created in 1989; and the New Forest in 2005. The South Downs National Park became fully operational in April 2011, which also included becoming a statutory Planning and Access Authority.

In Scotland the National Parks (Scotland) Act was passed in July 2000. The first Scottish national park, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, was established in July 2002, and Cairngorms National Park was established in March 2003.

National parks cover approximately 10% of the total land area of England and Wales: 9% of England and 20% of Wales. The two Scottish National Parks cover 7% of the land area of Scotland. They attract around 100 million visitors a year.

Northern Ireland has no national parks at present.

Further Information

[National Parks](#)

[Campaign for National Parks](#)

[Natural England](#)

You can download a wide range of maps, including National Parks from the [Open Geography portal](#).

9.3 Training and Enterprise Councils (TEC), Local Enterprise Companies (LEC) and Enterprise Regions (ER)

TECs, which existed across England and Wales, were government-funded bodies that aimed to foster local economic growth and development and to encourage investment. They helped businesses set up, grow and evolve; provided training and support for the unemployed; and funded vocational qualifications. They also tried to co-ordinate educational provision to the future needs of local industry.

In April 2001, however, the 72 English and four Welsh TECs were disbanded. A large part of their remit was transferred to Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSC) in England and to the regional offices of Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) in Wales (see below). In April 2007 the ELWa regions were replaced by the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) (see below). On 31 March 2010 the LLSCs were abolished in England.

In Scotland, the equivalent of TECs were LECs, but these were abolished in September 2007 and replaced with ERs. These are government-funded bodies that aim to foster local economic growth and development in Scotland.

No similar bodies exist in Northern Ireland.

9.4 Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSC), Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) and Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS)

In April 2001, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was responsible for funding and planning post-16 education and training in England; the equivalent bodies in Wales being the ELWa regions. These organisations were established as a replacement for the Training and Enterprise Councils (TEC) (although they also took on other responsibilities), and their aim was to increase the standards and range of learning opportunities for businesses, communities and individuals. The LSC had 47 local offices (LLSCs); the ELWa regions had four regional offices. LLSCs were based on local authority district (LAD) boundaries. In practice this resulted in a variety of constitutions, including single counties; county/unitary authority groupings; and groupings of unitary authorities, metropolitan districts or London boroughs. The ELWa regions had the same boundaries as the former TECs; they matched the National Assembly economic regions (NAER).

In April 2007 the Department for children, education, lifelong learning and skills (DCELLS) replaced the ELWa regions. On 31 March 2010 the LLSCs were abolished in England.

9.5 Registration Districts

Registration districts are the areas for which records of births, deaths and marriages are kept. As of 31 December 2020, there are 151 registration districts in England and 22 in Wales.

Further Information

[The General Register Office \(GRO\)](#) for England and Wales

You can download registration district names and codes and boundaries from the [Open Geography portal](#).

9.6 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP)

LEPs are voluntary partnerships between local authorities and businesses in England set up in 2011 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within the local area. They carry out some of the functions previously carried out by the regional development agencies which were abolished in March 2012.

Further Information

[Local Enterprise Partnerships website](#)

[Department for Business, Energy & industrial Strategy](#)

[Guide to Presenting Statistics - LEPs](#)

Annex A**Useful Downloads and Links**

- [Open Geography portal](#)
- [ONS Geography Customer Services](#)
- [GSS Geography Policy](#)
- [Open Government Licence](#)
- [Boundary Commission for England](#)
- [Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland](#)
- [Boundary Commission for Scotland](#)
- [Boundary Commission for Wales](#)
- [Code History Database \(CHD\)](#)
- [Department for Business, Energy & industrial Strategy](#)
- [Department for Education: contact us](#)
- [England - Information on the Census](#)
- [General Register Office \(GRO\)](#)
- [Guides to Presenting Statistics](#)
- [Local Enterprise Partnerships website](#)
- [Local Government Boundary Commission for England](#)
- [Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales](#)
- [Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland](#)
- [Local Government Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland](#)
- [London Assembly Members](#)
- [Members of Scottish Parliament](#)
- [National Assembly for Wales Constituencies](#)
- [National Parks](#)
 - [Campaign for National Parks](#)
- [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#)
- [Natural England](#)
- [NISRA](#)
- [Northern Ireland Assembly Constituencies](#)
- [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)
- [Royal Mail](#)
- [Scotland: Information on Scotland's Census](#)
- [Travel to Work Areas Guidance and Information](#)
 - [Article outlining the changes between the 2001 and 2011 TTWAs](#)
 - [Map of 2001 Travel to Work Areas](#)
 - [Map of 2011 Travel to Work Areas](#)
- [Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies: Map](#)
 - [Find Your MP](#)

A Glossary of Terms

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

The geography glossary is a collection of over 180 terms relating to:

- different types of geographic area
- geographic products
- geographic information systems (GIS) and mapping
- organisations and initiatives involved with geographic information

Many of the entries also contain links to further information on our website's geography pages or to relevant external websites.

To navigate the glossary, simply click on the appropriate letter from the A–Z at the top of each section.

We hope you find this resource useful; if you have any queries or feedback, or if you can think of any terms we should be including, please feel free to [contact us](#).

Glossary A

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

ACORN Neighbourhood Classification

ACORN stands for 'A Classification of Residential Neighbourhoods' and is a geodemographic classification system that uses census and other data to classify postcodes into neighbourhood categories. The classification system has been developed by the marketing-data firm CACI.

Further information about [ACORN](#)

All Fields Postcode Directory (AFPD)

Our AFPD was replaced by the National Statistics Postcode Directory (NSPD) in March 2006, which was itself superseded by the ONSPD (ONS Postcode Directory) in February 2011. The ONSPD lists all postcodes in the UK and assigns them to a range of administrative, health, electoral and other geographies. It is a key product for anyone needing to relate postcodes to statutory areas.

[Full product information](#)

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

A total of 46 AONBs have been established in the UK to conserve and enhance the landscape in areas that have distinctive character and natural beauty but that have not been designated as national parks.

Further information on the [AONBs](#)

Area Team (NHS)

See [NHS Area Team](#)

Assisted Area

Assisted Areas are those areas of Great Britain where regional aid may be granted under European Community law. Assisted areas are categorised into three levels ('a' areas, sparsely populated 'c' areas and other 'c' areas) depending on the form of aid that may be given.

Further information on [Assisted Areas](#)

The Association for Geographic Information (AGI)

The AGI is a non-commercial organisation representing users and vendors of Geographic Information (GI) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). It aims to encourage the use of GI and GIS in both public and private sectors. As well as its annual conference and trade exhibition, The AGI does this by producing various publications and by arranging meetings and seminars across the country. It also plays a key role in developing and implementing GI standards and is involved in many important UK geographic initiatives. Further information on the [AGI](#)

Glossary B

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

BEIS (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy)

See [Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#)

Borough

The term 'borough' occurs in several contexts. Many English districts are described as 'boroughs'; there are also county boroughs in Wales, borough constituencies and the London boroughs. The unifying factor is that 'borough' always refers to an area that is substantially urbanised.

Boundary Commission for England (BCE)

The BCE is responsible for reviewing English parliamentary constituency boundaries.

Further information on the [BCE](#)

Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland

The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland is responsible for reviewing Northern Irish parliamentary constituency boundaries.

Further information on the [Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland](#)

Boundary Commission for Scotland

The Boundary Commission for Scotland is responsible for reviewing Scottish parliamentary constituency boundaries.

Further information on the [Boundary Commission for Scotland](#)

Boundary Commission for Wales

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales is responsible for reviewing Welsh parliamentary constituency boundaries.

Further information on the [Boundary Commission for Wales](#)

Boundary File

A boundary file is a polygon representation of a specific geography. For example, it may consist of administrative boundaries such as local authority districts (LAD) or electoral wards. Boundary files are available at different resolutions and coverage.

Further information on [boundary files](#)

Boundary-Line

Boundary-Line™ is an Ordnance Survey (OS) product containing digital boundaries for administrative and electoral areas.

Further information on [Boundary-Line™](#)

British Isles

The British Isles are the islands of North-Western Europe comprising all of the UK, the Irish Republic, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

British National Grid

The British National Grid is a common referencing format for all geographic data in Great Britain. The result is that any location can be described in terms of its distance from the origin (0, 0), which lies to the west of the Scilly Isles. Grid references are always presented in terms of eastings (distance east from the origin) and northings (distance north from the origin). Within a Geographic Information System (GIS), British National Grid references are usually stored at 1-metre resolution. For example, 271384, 096572 indicates a point 271km, 384m east and 96km, 572m north of the origin. Please note: British National Grid references are not used in Northern Ireland, which, along with Eire (the Irish Republic), is covered by the Irish National Grid.

See also [Irish National Grid](#)

Buffering

'Buffering' is a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) term describing the creation of a zone of specified width around any feature, such as a zone of 1km radius around a GP practice.

Built-up Area (BUA)

BUAs and built-up area sub-divisions (BUASD) were created as part of the 2011 Census outputs. They provide information on the villages, towns and cities where people live, and allow comparisons between people living in built-up areas and those living elsewhere. Census data for these areas (previously called urban areas) has been produced every ten years since 1981.

Further information on [built-up areas](#)

See also [urban areas](#)

Built-up Area Sub-division (BUASD)

BUASDs fit within built-up areas (BUA) and were created as part of the 2011 Census outputs.

They provide information on the villages, towns and cities where people live, and allow comparisons between people living in built-up areas and those living elsewhere.

Further information on [built-up area sub-divisions](#)

Glossary C

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Cancer Alliance

Cancer Alliances bring together key partners at a sub-regional level, including commissioners, providers and patients, covering all of England. These 21 Alliances drive and support improvement and integrate care pathways.

Cancer Network

Cancer Networks were the organisational model for delivering improvements in cancer services. They were developed to bring together networks of cancer care from health service providers and commissioners through all levels in the health service including strategic health authorities, acute and primary care and the voluntary sector. Cancer Networks in England were abolished on 31 March 2013, being replaced by NHS Strategic Clinical Networks (SCN). Wales has two similar organisations, which were retained.

See also [SCN](#)

Further information about [SCNs](#)

Cancer Registry

There are currently nine regional cancer registries in England and three national registries - one for each of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Cancer registries collect and quality assure detailed population-based data on cancer incidence and survival to provide a time series database. Information is collated from various sources including hospitals, cancer centres, treatment centres and hospices.

Further information on [cancer registration](#)

Care Trust (CT)

CTs were a form of statutory health body in England established to provide integrated services. For the purposes of this glossary, we are only interested in those CTs that were based on the primary care trust (PCT) model and which, like PCTs, reported to the strategic health authorities (SHA). As of April 2011, there were five such CTs, with the rest of the country being covered by PCTs. However, whereas PCTs had a health remit only, CTs also delivered the health services usually provided by local authorities. CTs (and PCTs) were replaced by clinical commissioning groups (CCG) from April 2013.

Further information on [English health geographies](#)

Census Area Statistics (CAS) Ward

CAS wards were used for 2001 Census outputs. Unlike actual electoral wards/divisions they were required to meet certain minimum size thresholds in order to prevent disclosure of Census data.

Further information on [CAS wards](#)

Census Enumeration District (ED)

Census EDs are used across the UK for the purposes of census data collection. They were formerly also the base unit of census output, but Output Areas (OA) were introduced for this purpose in 1991 (Scotland) and 2001 (rest of the UK).

Further information on the [UK Census and Census geographies](#)

Census Merged County / LAD

Some 2011 Census tables, due to the number of variables included, were disclosive at local authority district (LAD) level if the LAD had a relatively small population. The two affected LADs were Isles of Scilly unitary authority (UA) and the City of London. To prevent disclosure these were amalgamated with Cornwall UA and the London borough of Westminster respectively. As these Census tables also included county/UA information and Isles of Scilly appeared in both the LAD and county/UA layers, it was necessary to amalgamate it with Cornwall at the county/UA level as well.

Further information on the [UK Census and Census geographies](#)

Census Merged Ward

Census merged wards are a frozen geography created specifically for 2011 Census Detailed Characteristics (DC) tables. DC tables have a higher minimum population threshold than other tables as the more detailed information carries an increased risk of identifying persons or households using the lower population threshold applied to other tables. If the Census estimate for a ward falls below 1,000 persons or 400 households, the ward is merged with a neighbouring ward, or wards, until the aggregated Census estimate for the merged wards is above both the minimum person (1,000) and household (400) threshold.

Further information on the [UK Census and Census geographies](#)

Choropleth Map

Choropleth maps compare the characteristics of different areas by means of shading; areas with similar characteristics are shaded the same colour.

City

There is no single definition of a city. A settlement can be granted 'city status' by the Monarch under Royal Prerogative, acting on the advice of Ministers. This most often occurs to commemorate important Royal anniversaries or prestigious occasions, such as the Millennium. In a few instances, places have held city status for time immemorial, for example Norwich and Winchester. Cities can vary considerably in size, both geographically and in terms of population.

See also [Major Towns and Cities](#)

City of London

The City of London is a local authority district (LAD) in central London but is unique in that it is administered by the Corporation of London, rather than by a standard district council. It is, however, considered as a London borough for many statistical purposes.

Further information on [London and the London Boroughs](#)

Civil Parish

See [parish](#)

Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

CCGs are groups of GPs that are responsible for designing local health services in England by commissioning or buying health and care services, and all GP practices have to belong to a CCG. They came into effect on 1 April 2013 and are built from 2011 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA).

Further information on [English health geographies](#)

Code History Database (CHD)

The CHD provides details of the 9-character codes that were introduced as part of the GSS Coding and Naming Policy on 1 January 2011. This includes look-ups between the 9-character codes and the old-style codes, as well as individual name and code listings, their hierarchical relationships and archived geographies.

[Download the CHD](#)

Combined Authority (CAUTH)

CAUTHs were introduced under in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 to enable councils to integrate economic development and transport functions across a functional economic area. CAUTHs operate as public bodies with their own legal personality. They can impose a levy on constituent authorities and borrow for transport purposes.

Further information about [CAUTHs](#)

Commissioning Region (NHSCR)

See [NHS Commissioning Region](#)

Community

'Community' is a very general term referring to the people living in a locality or to the locality itself. In Wales and Scotland, however, specific communities have been defined:

- Welsh communities are sub-divisions of unitary authorities, and their councils are the most local level of government in Wales. They are the equivalent of (civil) parishes in England but, unlike English parishes, communities cover the whole of Wales.
- Scottish communities are subdivisions of council areas, but community councils have a limited role and are not generally regarded as a tier of local government. Communities cover the whole of Scotland. We do not supply the names and codes for the Scottish communities.

Further information on [parishes and communities](#)

Community Health Partnership (CHP)

CHPs were introduced in 2006 as a second tier of health administration in Scotland. They played a key role in improving health and reducing inequalities, working with local communities and other statutory and voluntary sector providers. They reported to the Scottish Health Boards and were terminated on 31 March 2015 and replaced by Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCP).

Further information on [HSCPs](#)

Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships were renamed to CSPs in March 2010 as a result of the Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods Strategy. CSPs bring agencies and communities together to tackle crime within communities. Traditionally each local authority district (LAD) had its own CSP; however, due to economies of scale, there have been several mergers in recent years.

Further information on [Community Safety Partnerships](#)

Constituency

Constituencies are used to elect members to legislatures. The different constituencies in the UK include:

- London Assembly constituencies
- Northern Ireland Assembly constituencies
- Scottish parliamentary constituencies
- Welsh Assembly constituencies
- Westminster parliamentary constituencies

For further information, see the sections on [devolved parliaments](#) and [Westminster Parliamentary constituencies](#)

Council Area

Council areas were established across the whole of Scotland in 1996. These councils form the single tier of local government in Scotland.

Further information on [Scottish administrative geography](#)

Country

In the context of the UK, each of the four main subdivisions (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) is referred to as a country.

County

Counties were formerly administrative units across the whole of the UK. Due to various administrative restructurings, however, the only administrative areas still referred to as 'counties' are the non-metropolitan (shire) counties of England. The English metropolitan counties, although no longer administrative units, are also used for statistical purposes.

Further information on [non-metropolitan \(shire\) counties](#) and [metropolitan counties](#)

County Electoral Division

County electoral divisions are the areas used to elect members to county councils in England. They should not be confused with the unitary authority electoral divisions found in the Isle of Wight and six of the unitary authorities created as part of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in 2009.

Glossary D

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Data Zone (DZ)

DZs are a geographic unit used for small-area reporting in Scotland. They are built from Output Areas (OA) and are subdivisions of the Intermediate Zones (IZ). Each DZ contains at least 500 residents. As with their Super Output Area (SOA) counterparts in the rest of the UK, DZs are intended to be a stable geography.

Further information on [DZs](#)

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

BEIS replaced the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) in July 2016. They are responsible for business; industrial strategy; science, research and innovation; energy and clean growth; and climate change.

Further information on [BEIS](#)

Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS)

DCELLS replaced the Education and Learning Wales regions (ELWa) in April 2007. The department aims to improve children's services, education and training provision to secure better outcomes for learners, businesses and employers. It helps empower children, young people and adults through education and training to enjoy a better quality of life.

Further information on [DCELLS](#)

Digital Boundary

Digital boundaries are electronic (as opposed to paper) records of geographic boundaries. Digital boundary sets can be used in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to create maps or to facilitate data analysis.

Further information on [digital boundaries](#)

Digital National Framework (DNF)

The DNF is a nationally consistent geographic referencing system for Great Britain. All geographic features that have been surveyed and captured by Ordnance Survey (OS) are included, such as buildings, roads, fields, rivers, woods, etc. Each feature in the DNF has a unique topographic identifier (TOID), to which any data item can be referenced.

Further information on the [DNF](#)

Directorate of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

The four DHSCs that covered one or more regions (former Government Office Regions (GOR)), provided a top layer to the health structure between April 2002 and June 2003. They were part of the Department of Health (DH) rather than the NHS.

Further information on [English health geographies](#)

Disclosure

Disclosure in statistical terms refers to the release of data that could be traced to a particular individual. As it is critical that data supplied in confidence remains so, disclosure control is fundamental to National Statistics outputs. This explains, for example, why Output Areas (OA) must have a certain minimum size.

District

Districts are local administrative units and have at various times been used in all four countries of the UK. The only current references to districts however, are found in metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts in England and in local government districts (LGD) in Northern Ireland.

Further information on [metropolitan districts](#), [non-metropolitan \(local authority\) districts \(LAD\)](#) and [local government districts \(LGD\)](#)

District Council Area

See [Local Government District \(LGD\)](#)

District Electoral Area (DEA)

There are 12 DEAs covering all of Northern Ireland. They consist of groups of wards within each local government district (LGD) for the purpose of local government elections in each of those districts. We do not hold details of DEAs.

District Health Authority (DHA)

DHAs were the lower tier of NHS administration in England between 1982 and 1996. In 1996 they were replaced by health authorities (HA).

Further information on [English health geographies](#)

Division

See [electoral ward/electoral division](#)

and also [county electoral division](#)

Glossary E

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) Region

ELWa regions were responsible for funding and planning post-16 education and training in Wales. ELWa had four regional offices, corresponding with the National Assembly Economic Regions (NAER). In April 2007 the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) replaced the ELWa regions.

Further information on [DCELLS](#)

Education and Library Board (ELB)

ELBs were responsible for the local administration of state education services in Northern Ireland. There were five ELBs, each covering one or more complete local government districts (LGD). ELBs were replaced on 1 April 2015 by a single Education Authority (EA).

Electoral Division

See electoral ward / electoral division (below).

Electoral Region

Electoral regions are large areas from which multiple members are elected to legislatures on a proportional basis. The electoral regions in the UK include European electoral regions (EER) – see EER, below.

Electoral Ward / Electoral Division

Electoral wards/divisions are the base unit of UK administrative geography: all higher administrative units are built from them. They are also used as a base unit for other geographies, such as parliamentary constituencies. Electoral wards are found across Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and most of England, whereas the equivalents in the Isle of Wight and six of the unitary authorities (UA) created in 2009 are known as electoral divisions.

Further information on [electoral wards/divisions](#)

Enterprise Region (ER)

ERs are government-funded bodies that aim to foster local economic growth and development in Scotland. There are six ERs and these cover the whole of Scotland. ERs replaced Local Enterprise Companies (LEC) in September 2007.

Further information on [enterprise regions](#)

Enumeration District (ED)

See [Census ED](#)

Environment Agency Area

The Environment Agency is the leading public body for protecting the environment in England and Wales. It is divided into 17 areas (16 in England, 1 in Wales). Prior to 1 April 2014, it was divided into seven regions.

Further information on [Environment Agency areas](#)

Environment Agency Region

The Environment Agency is the leading public body for protecting the environment in England and Wales. Prior to 1 April 2014, it was divided into seven regions (six in England, one in Wales) that were defined by a combination of administrative and physical geography. Each region was subdivided into two, three or four Area Offices, of which there were 22 in total.

Further information on [Environment Agency regions](#)

European Electoral Region (EER)

EERs are used to elect members to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. There are 12 EERs in the UK, one in each of the nine regions (former GORs) in England, and one in each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Area

The ERDF is provided by the European Union and is co-ordinated in England by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). It is considered to be an area-based initiative (ABI) and aims to promote economic development and regeneration in deprived regions.

Further information on the [European Regional Development Fund](#)

European Structural Fund Area

Structural and investment funds are the European Union's (EU) means of supporting social and economic restructuring across a region.

Further information on [European Structural and Investment Funds](#)

European Office for Statistics (Eurostat)

Eurostat is the statistical office of the European Union (EU). Its task is to provide the EU with statistics at European level that enable comparisons between countries and regions. Eurostat was established in 1953 to meet the requirements of the Coal and Steel Community. Over the years its remit has broadened and when the European Community was founded in 1958 it became a Directorate-General (DG) of the European Commission. A key role is to supply the Commission and other European Institutions with data and statistics so they can define, implement and analyse Community policies.

Further information on [Eurostat](#)

Glossary F

A B C D E **F** G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA)

In England and Wales, each Fire and Rescue Service (see below) is distinct from and governed by an FRA.

In both Scotland and Northern Ireland there is a single Fire and Rescue Service.

Fire and Rescue Service (FRS)

In England there is a single FRS in each of the former metropolitan counties and in Greater London. There is also one in each of the non-metropolitan counties that existed before the local government reorganisations (LGR) of the mid-1990s and 2009. In Wales there are three FRSs (North, Mid and West, and South), each covering a number of unitary authorities (UA).

In both Scotland and Northern Ireland there is a single FRS.

Further information on the UK [Fire and Rescue Service](#)

Foreshore

The foreshore is the area of land between the Mean High Water Mark (MHWM) and the Mean Low Water Mark (MLWM) which is removed from extent of the realm boundaries to produce clipped to the coastline boundaries.

Glossary G

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Gazetteer of the Old and New Geographies of the United Kingdom

Our Gazetteer of the Old and New Geographies of the United Kingdom is a comprehensive and illustrated guide to the changes resulting from the local government reorganisation (LGR) in the 1990s.

Further information about the [Gazetteer](#)

General Register Office for Scotland (GROS)

On 1 April 2011, GROS merged with the National Archives of Scotland to become the National Records of Scotland (NRS). This organisation is responsible for the registration of births, marriages, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland, as well as the Scottish Censuses.

Further information about [NRS](#)

Geocoding

Geocoding is the process of converting address or postcode data into geographic coordinates (e.g. easting and northing), which you can use to place markers on a map.

Geo-Enabling

The term 'geo-enabling' comes from a hybrid of 'geographic' or 'geospatial' and 'enablement'. Similar to the terms 'web-enabled' or 'GPS-enabled', 'geo-enable' suggests the application of location or geospatial information as part of business processes.

Geographic Coverage

With regard to boundary files, this describes the area covered e.g. England, England and Wales, GB, UK etc.

Geographic Extent

With regard to boundary files, there may be variations in the coverage of the boundaries. Boundary sets can be prepared to "extent of the realm" and "clipped to the coastline". Extent of the realm boundary sets typically extend to Mean Low Water, although they can extend to islands off the coast. Clipped to the coastline boundary sets, derived from the extent of realm boundaries, show boundaries to Mean High Water. Usually prepared for visualisation of data such boundaries more closely represent map users expectations of how a coastal boundary should look. Whereas extent of the realm boundaries adjacent to an inlet or estuary may join at a point midway across the water, clipped to coastline boundaries permit the more precise identification of the waterside.

Further information on [geographic extent](#)

Geographic Information System (GIS)

GIS is a computer-based system for managing, analysing and presenting geographically referenced data.

Geographic Referencing

Most data events can be referenced to a known location, and this means that most statistics can be output using a geographic classification. Geographic referencing (or "geo-referencing") involves referencing events to a specific and fixed point, usually a grid reference.

Geo-Referencing

See Geographic Referencing, above.

Government Office Region (GOR)

After the Comprehensive Spending Review, it was confirmed that the GORs would close at 31 March 2011, shifting focus away from regions to local areas. From 1 April 2011, the areas covered by the GORs are referred to as 'regions' for statistical purposes only.

Further information on the [regions](#)

Great Britain (GB)

Strictly speaking, Great Britain is just the largest island in the British Isles. However, it is generally taken to refer to the whole of England, Scotland and Wales, including offshore islands. It does not include Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.

Greater London

Greater London is a collective term for the area covered by the 32 London boroughs and the City of London. It is also the area subject to the Greater London Authority (GLA) – see below. It is often considered as a county for statistical purposes but does not have legal status as such.

Further information on [Greater London](#)

Greater London Authority (GLA)

The GLA is the body responsible for strategic citywide government for London and consists of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. The remit of the GLA covers the Greater London area.

Greater London Authority (GLA) Assembly Constituency

The above constituencies, also termed 'London Assembly constituencies' (LAC), were created in May 2000. There are currently 14 LACs, each consisting of groupings of either two or three London boroughs. They are used to elect members to the London Assembly, which is part of the GLA.

Gridlink®

'Gridlink®' is the brand name for the 'Joint Venture on Postcode Location' and its outputs. The Joint Venture involves a coordinated, cross-organisational approach to the creation of postcode location products, such as our postcode directories. The Gridlink® Consortium consists of Royal Mail Group plc, OS (GB), National Records of Scotland (NRS), Northern Ireland Land and Property Services (LPS) and ONS.

Grid Reference

See [British National Grid](#)

Guides to Presenting Statistics

We create and maintain a series of guides that set out the recommended standard presentation of statistics for a range of geographies at regional and sub-regional levels in the UK. The general principle is that whenever entities are presented in groupings (for example, wards within local authority district) the order of presentation at each level of the grouping hierarchy is alphabetical, regions are broadly north/south and countries are: England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland.

You can download the guides from the [Open Geography portal](#).

Glossary H

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Health and Social Care Board (HSCB)

A single HSCB replaced the former four Health and Social Services Boards (HSSB) in Northern Ireland on 1 April 2009. It focuses on commissioning, resource management, performance management and improvement. It identifies and meets the needs of the local population through its five local commissioning groups (LCG).

Further information on [Northern Ireland health geography](#)

Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT)

HSCTs are sub-committees of the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) in Northern Ireland and are the same as local commissioning groups (LCG), although the codes are different. The HSCTs provide health and social services at the primary care level. Please note that we don't hold names and codes for the HSCTs.

Further information on [Northern Ireland health geography](#)

Health and Social Services Board (HSSB)

A total of four HSSBs were responsible for local health and social services in Northern Ireland. They reported to the Northern Ireland Executive and were built from groups of district council areas (DCA). On 1 April 2009 a single HSCB replaced the former HSSBs.

Further information on [Northern Ireland health geography](#)

Health Authority (HA)

HAs were the intermediate level of health administration in England prior to the NHS restructuring in April 2002. There were 95 HAs at the time of abolition, and they reported to the eight NHS regional offices. They generally covered groups of one or more complete local authority districts (LAD), but there were cases where LADs were split.

In addition there were five HAs in Wales, reporting to the National Assembly. The HAs were built from groups of unitary authorities (UA), each of which had its own local health group (LHG). These HAs and LHGs were abolished when the Welsh NHS was restructured in April 2003.

Further information on [English](#) and [Welsh](#) health geographies

Health Board (HB)

The HBs are responsible for local health care in Scotland. They report to the Scottish Executive and are based on groups of the local government districts that existed before the introduction of council areas in 1996. This means that although most HBs cover one or more complete council areas, there are cases where council areas are split. In April 2006 the Argyll & Clyde HB was abolished and the area was absorbed by two existing HBs (the Greater Glasgow and Clyde HB and Highland HB).

Further information on [Scottish health geography](#)

Hierarchical Representation of UK Statistical Geographies

The Hierarchical Representation of UK Statistical Geographies shows all UK statistical geographies within their geography groups and geographical areas.

It is available to download from the [Open Geography portal](#)

Glossary I

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Imputation

Imputation is the process of using an algorithm to estimate an unknown value. Our postcode directories contain imputed grid references for those postcodes that are yet to have a definitive grid reference supplied by Ordnance Survey (OS).

Index of Place Names (IPN)

Our IPN relates over 70,000 named places in England and Wales to their respective local government areas and other geographies. Grid references are also provided for entries with legally-defined boundaries. The product from 2010 onwards includes the new 9-character codes, in line with the GSS Coding and Naming Policy.

Further information on the [IPN](#) and download it from the [Open Geography portal](#).

Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (INSPIRE)

INSPIRE is an initiative of the European Commission to develop the availability of spatial information for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of EU policies. INSPIRE encompasses a wide range of subject matter, including technical standards and protocols, organisational issues, and data policy. It will coordinate the creation and maintenance of geographic information for a wide range of themes, of which environmental information is the first.

Further information on [INSPIRE](#)

Inner London

Inner London refers to that part of Greater London which falls within the boundaries of the former London County, which existed from 1889 to 1965. The Inner London area includes the City of London and 13 of the London boroughs.

Intermediate Geography (IG)

See Intermediate Zone, below.

Intermediate Zone (IZ)

The IZ is a geography used for small-area reporting in Scotland. IZs were called intermediate geographies (IG) until the 2011 Census. They are built from clusters of Data Zones (DZ) and fit within council area boundaries. Each IZ contains at least 2,500 residents. As with the Super Output Area (SOA) geographies in the rest of the UK, the IZs are intended to be a stable geography.

Further information on the [IZs](#)

International Territorial Levels (ITL)

Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, a UK-managed international statistical geography - ITL (International Territorial Levels) - was introduced on 1st January 2021, replacing the former NUTS classification. They align with international standards, enabling comparability both over time and internationally. To ensure continued alignment, the ITLs have been established to mirror the NUTS system. They will also follow a similar review timetable – every three years. Lookups between ITLs and NUTS will be maintained and published until 2023. Details of the ITLs and how they are managed are published on the [ONS website](#).

Further information on [ITLs](#)

Further information on [NUTS](#)

Intra-governmental Group on Geographic Information (IGGI)

IGGI is a group of representatives from around 80 different government bodies with an interest in geographic information (GI). The IGGI's aim is to promote the effective use of government GI; benefitting member organisations by enabling them to operate more efficiently and better fulfil their duties as GI providers.

Further information on the [IGGI](#)

Irish National Grid

The Irish National Grid is a common referencing format for geographic data in Ireland. It covers both Northern Ireland and Eire (the Irish Republic). The result is that any location in Ireland can be described in terms of its distance from the origin (0, 0), which lies off the southwest coast.

IT Cluster

IT clusters were a level of geography within in the National Health Service (NHS) prior to April 2007, when they were replaced by pan-strategic health authorities (pan SHA). They consisted of groups of strategic health authorities (SHA) working together to implement the NHS's technology and information systems.

Further information on [English health geographies](#)

Glossary J

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Glossary K

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Glossary L

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Land and Property Services (LPS)

LPS in Northern Ireland has incorporated Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (OSNI) into its organisation and produces mapping for Northern Ireland with the OSNI branding.

Further information on the [LPS](#)

Learning Partnership

Learning Partnerships were set up across England in 1999 to promote lifelong learning opportunities and maximise the contribution of learning to local regeneration. The Learning Partnerships each cover one or more local education authorities (LEA), with the exception of the Essex, Lancashire and Nottinghamshire LEAs, which have each been divided into two Learning Partnerships.

Line

In terms of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a line is a feature whose general shape is defined by a set of coordinates in sequence, for example, a street or river.

Line-in-Polygon

Line-in-polygon is an overlay operation used in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). It is used to determine whether a given line crosses or lies inside a given polygon (area). For example, it could be used to determine whether a major road crosses a particular electoral ward.

Linked Data

Linked data describes the recommended best practice for exposing, sharing, and connecting pieces of data, information, and knowledge on the Semantic Web using URIs and RDF. The Semantic Web is an extension of the Web through standards by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). The standards promote common data formats and exchange protocols on the web.

Further information on [linked data](#)

Local Administrative Unit (LAU)

LAU level 1 and level 2 are the European Union statistical units that replaced the former Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) levels 4 and 5 areas on 11 July 2003.

Further information on [NUTS and LAUs](#)

Local Authority (LA)

LA is a generic term for any level of local government in the UK. In geographic terms, LAs include English counties, non-metropolitan districts, metropolitan districts, unitary authorities (UA) and London boroughs; Welsh UAs; Scottish council areas and Northern Ireland local government districts (LGD).

Local Authority District (LAD)

LAD is a generic term used to cover non-metropolitan districts, metropolitan districts, unitary authorities (UA) and London boroughs in England; Welsh UAs; Scottish council areas and Northern Ireland local government districts.

Further information on [London boroughs, metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts, council areas, local government districts and UAs](#)

Local Commissioning Group (LCG)

LCGs were initially sub-committees of the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) in Northern Ireland. They are coterminous with the five Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT) that provide health and social services at the primary care level. The two share the same names, but the codes are different.

Further information on [Northern Ireland health geographies](#)

Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (LDBCW)

The LDBCW is responsible for reviewing the local government boundaries and electoral arrangements in Wales.

Further information on the [LDBCW](#)

Local Education Authority (LEA)

Prior to 1 April 2009, LEAs were the bodies responsible for the local administration of state-sector education services in England and Wales. In those parts of England that still had counties, there was one LEA for each county - for example Cumbria LEA and Devon LEA. Otherwise there was one LEA in each unitary authority (UA), metropolitan district or London borough. The Isles of Scilly also had their own LEA. The statutory duties of LEAs are now undertaken by the director of children's services, whose responsibilities also include Children's Social Services (CSS). The Children Act 2004 required every London borough, metropolitan district, top-tier local authority (county) or UA in England to appoint a director of children's services. Additionally the Education and Inspections Act 2006 includes a clause that allows for the future renaming of LEAs as local authorities in all legislation, removing the anomaly of one local authority being known as an LEA and a children's services authority.

Local Enterprise Company (LEC)

LECs were government-funded bodies that aimed to foster local economic growth and development in Scotland. There were 22 LECs that covered the whole of Scotland. They were abolished in September 2007 and replaced with [enterprise regions \(ER\)](#).

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

LEPs in England are partnerships between local authorities and businesses. They decide what the priorities should be for investment in roads, buildings and facilities in the area. LEPs were given the chance to apply to have an enterprise zone and 24 were awarded. These zones can take advantage of tax incentives and simplified local planning regulations.

Further information on [LEPs](#)

Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)

The LGBCE was established on 1 April 2010 and replaced the Boundary Committee for England (BCE). It is responsible for conducting reviews of the structure of local government, the external boundaries of local authorities and the local authority electoral arrangements in England.

Further information on the [LGBCE](#)

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (LGBCS)

The LGBCS is responsible for reviewing the local government boundaries and electoral arrangements in Scotland.

Further information on the [LGBCS](#)

Local Government Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland (LGBC-NI)

The LGBC-NI is responsible for reviewing local government boundaries and electoral arrangements in Northern Ireland.

Further information on the [LGBC-NI](#)

Local Government District (LGD)

In Northern Ireland, a total of 26 LGDs were established in 1996. This number was reduced to 11 from 1 April 2015. These districts form the single tier of local government in Northern Ireland. Local government districts were formerly known as district council areas (DCA).

Further information [LGDs](#)

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

This is the collective term describing the extensive changes to local government structure that occurred in England, Scotland and Wales between 1995 and 1998. In 2009 there was another LGR in England, which abolished 7 non-metropolitan counties and created 10 new unitary authorities (UA). In 2010, 2 new UAs that were to be created in 2011 (Exeter and Norwich) were revoked by parliament.

Further information on [LGR and other recent local government changes in the UK](#)

Local Health Board (LHB)

The LHBs in Wales were reorganised on 1 October 2009 - the existing 22 LHBs were merged into seven. Each one covers one or more unitary authority (UA). They are responsible for local health administration in Wales and were originally established as part of the restructuring of NHS Wales in April 2003. Each LHB reports to the appropriate Regional Office of the NHS Wales Department of the National Assembly.

Further information on [Welsh health geographies](#)

Local Health Group (LHG)

LHGs were responsible for local health administration in Wales prior to their replacement by local health boards (LHB) in April 2003. There was one LHG in each of the 22 unitary authorities (UA); the LHGs reported to health authorities (HA).

Further information on [Welsh health geographies](#)

Local Health and Social Care Group (LHSCG)

The 15 LHSCGs in Northern Ireland were abolished on 30 September 2006. They were responsible for the planning and delivery of primary and community care in Northern Ireland and reported to the health and social services boards (HSSB).

Further information on [Northern Ireland health geographies](#)

Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG)

The LLPG is a land and property database maintained by a local authority.

See also [National Land and Property Gazetteer](#)

Local Learning and Skills Council (LLSC)

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was abolished on 31 March 2010. It was responsible for funding and planning post-16 education and training in England. The LSC had 47 local offices (LLSCs). LLSC areas had a variety of local-authority-based constitutions and covered the whole of England.

Local Resilience Forum (LRF)

LRFs are formed in each police area of the UK by key emergency responders and specific supporting agencies, as a requirement of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Further information on [LRFs](#)

Locality

Localities are intended to be representative of the towns and cities in Scotland.

Further information on [localities](#)

London Assembly Constituency (LAC)

See [Greater London Authority \(GLA\) Assembly constituencies](#)

London Borough

The London boroughs are the local government areas within Greater London. The borough councils are unitary administrations with a status similar to metropolitan districts, but are also affected by any policies implemented by the Greater London Authority (GLA). There are 32 London boroughs, but the

City of London (which has a different legal status) is often considered as a borough for statistical purposes. The London boroughs and the City of London together cover the whole Greater London area.

Further information on [Greater London and the London boroughs](#)

Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA)

See [Super Output Area \(SOA\)](#)

Glossary M

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Major Towns and Cities

The 'major towns and cities' statistical geography was created based on population size and the extent of the built environment. It contains 112 towns and cities in England and Wales, where the residential and/or workday population was greater than 75,000 people at the 2011 Census. It has been constructed using the existing Built-up Area boundary set produced by Ordnance Survey (OS) in 2013 in conjunction with ONS. Boundaries are available to download from the [Open Geography portal](#).

Map Projection

A wide range of map projections have been developed in an attempt to portray the curved surface of the Earth on a flat piece of paper. This cannot be done accurately, so any map will contain some distortion, but different projections have different advantages. For example, some of them portray relative distances accurately, whereas others display relative areas better. Note that the distortion will be greater the larger the area of the Earth's surface that is portrayed.

Map Scale

Map scale refers to the extent to which reality is reduced to display it on a map – for example, a scale of 1:25,000 means that 1 centimetre on the map represents 25,000 cm (250 metres) on the ground. Large-scale maps (for example 1:1,250 or 1:2,500) show a small area of the Earth's surface in a lot of detail. Small-scale maps (for example, 1:1,000,000) show large areas in very little detail.

MasterMap

OS MasterMap is Ordnance Survey's intelligent digital map of Great Britain. It contains a wide range of different layers of mapping data and is designed for use with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and database systems. OS MasterMap is the branded product of the Digital National Framework (DNF).

Further information about [OS MasterMap](#)

Metropolitan County

The six metropolitan counties were administrative areas in England from 1974 to 1986, forming the upper tier of a two-tier local government structure. They were subdivided into metropolitan districts. When the metropolitan county councils were abolished in 1986, the district councils became unitary administrations. The metropolitan county areas are still used for statistical purposes.

Further information on [metropolitan counties and districts](#)

Metropolitan District

The 36 metropolitan districts are subdivisions of the six metropolitan county areas of England. Since the abolition of the metropolitan county councils in 1986, the metropolitan district councils have been unitary administrations.

Further information on [metropolitan counties and districts](#)

Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA)

See [Super Output Area \(SOA\)](#)

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

MHCLG was founded in 2018 and is the successor to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). It sets policy on supporting local government; communities and neighbourhoods; regeneration; housing; planning, building and the environment; and fire. There are also corresponding departments in the Welsh Assembly, Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive.

Further information on the [MHCLG](#)

Glossary N

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Names and Codes

The descriptive term for data files (usually in both CSV and XLSX formats) containing 9-character GSS codes for each of the geographies supported by us, and the associated names. These files are available to download from the [Open Geography portal](#), both in their own right and as supporting files for other ONSG products (e.g. postcode products).

National Assembly Economic Region (NAER)

The NAERs in Wales (North Wales, Mid Wales, South West Wales and South East Wales) are made up of groups of whole unitary authorities (UA) with the exception of the Gwynedd UA, which is split into pre-reorganisation (1996) boundaries.

National Assembly for Wales Constituency (NAWC)

NAWCs are used to elect members to the National Assembly for Wales (NAW). The NAWCs were reorganised in May 2007 and were, briefly, no longer identical to the Westminster parliamentary constituencies in Wales; they realigned with them at the 2010 general election.

National Assembly for Wales Electoral Region (NAWER)

NAWERs are used for the proportional component of the elections to the National Assembly for Wales (NAW). The NAWERs are made up of groups of NAW constituencies. The NAWERs were reorganised in May 2007.

National Assembly Regional Committee Area (NARCA)

NARCAs were abolished following the Government of Wales Act 2006. Prior to this, the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) had five regional committees to advise on regional affairs. NARCAs used to share the same boundaries as the four NAERs. However, in April 2005 the NAW decided that the boundaries would share the same boundaries as the five NAWERs, which themselves are made up of groups of NAW constituencies.

National Land & Property Gazetteer (NLPG)

The NLPG is a national database and is one of the sources of GB address data. The NLPG is an aggregation of the Local Land and Property Gazetteers (LLPG) produced by local authorities. Please note: On the 31 October 2014, formal notice of withdrawal was issued for this product.

Further information on [NLPG](#)

National Park

National parks are designed to conserve the natural beauty and cultural heritage of areas of outstanding landscape value and to promote public understanding and enjoyment of these areas. They exist in England, Scotland and Wales, and their boundaries are not constrained by any other geography.

Further information on [national parks](#)

National Records of Scotland (NRS)

From 1 April 2011 the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) officially became the NRS when it merged with the National Archives of Scotland. The organisation is still responsible for the registration of births, marriages, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland, as well as the Scottish Censuses.

Further information about [NRS](#)

National Statistics UPRN Lookup (NSUL)

The NSUL relates the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) for each GB address to a range of current statutory administrative, electoral, health and other statistical geographies via 'best-fit' allocation from 2011 Census Output Areas (OA). The NSUL is issued every six weeks and you can download it from the [Open Geography portal](#).

Further information on the [address products](#)

National Statistics Postcode Directory (NSPD)

Our NSPD replaced the All Fields Postcode Directory (AFPD) in March 2006 and was itself succeeded by the ONS Postcode Directory (ONSPD) in February 2011. The NSPD listed all postcodes in the UK and assigned them to a range of administrative, health, electoral and other geographies. It was a key product for anyone that needed to relate postcodes to statutory areas, as is the ONSPD.

Further information on the [postcode products](#)

National Statistics Postcode Lookup (NSPL)

The NSPL was first released in February 2011. It relates both current and terminated postcodes to a range of statutory administrative, electoral, health and other geographies in the UK. The relationship between the postcodes and geographies is created via a best-fit allocation from Output Areas (OA). The NSPL is issued quarterly and you can download it from the [Open Geography portal](#).

Further information on the [NSPL](#)

Neighbourhood Statistics

Neighbourhood Statistics was our online service providing socio-economic statistics (including 2001 Census data) for small areas. The primary rationale was to provide detailed data to support the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, which involved all levels of authority working together to tackle problems such as deprivation, crime and community breakdown. As of May 2017, Neighbourhood Statistics is no longer available.

NHS

NHS is the acronym for the UK's National Health Service and is often used in preference to the full name. The NHS is a public-sector organisation providing a wide range of health services and infrastructure across the whole country.

Further information about the [NHS](#)

NHS Area Team (NHSAT)

Please see NHS England (Region and Local Office), below.

NHS Commissioning Region (NHSCR)

Please see NHS England (Region), below.

NHS England (Region) (NHSE)

NHSEs (formerly NHS Commissioning Regions - NHSCR) are sub-divisions of the NHS commissioning board. There are seven NHSEs in England and they were renamed from NHSCRs in May 2017. The NHSCRs were formed on 1 April 2013, replacing pan SHAs, and are responsible for providing clinical and professional leadership at sub-national level. They are also responsible for the co-ordination of planning, operational management and emergency preparedness at sub-national level and undertaking direct commissioning functions and processes.

Further information about [NHSEs](#)

NHS England (Region and Local Office) (NHSRLO)

NHSRLOs (formerly NHS Regions (Geography) - NHSRG, formerly NHS Area Teams – NHSAT) were sub-divisions of the NHS commissioning board. There were 25 NHSATs in England which were formed on 1 April 2013, becoming 13 NHSRGs on 1 April 2015 and increasing to 14 NHSRGs on 1 April 2016 before becoming RLOs in May 2017. In April 2018, they were reorganised with the NHSE split and were abolished in April 2020. They were responsible for commissioning primary care services and also managing local partnerships and stakeholder relationships.

NHS Postcode Directory (NHSPD)

The NHSPD is produced by us for the NHS and is a specially tailored dataset based on the [ONS Postcode Directory \(ONSPD\)](#). The NHSPD is issued quarterly and you can download it from the [Open Geography portal](#).

NHS Regional Office

A total of 3 regional offices were introduced in April 2003 as subdivisions of the NHS Wales Department of the National Assembly. The regional offices were responsible for managing the performance of the local health boards (LHB), one of which was found in each Welsh unitary authority (UA).

NHS regional offices were also the top level of the NHS in England prior to April 2002, when they were replaced by four directorates of health and social care (DHSC). The regional offices covered groups of health authorities (HA) and did not fit into the region (former GOR) structure.

Further information about [English](#) and [Welsh](#) health geographies

NHS Region (Geography) (NHSRG)

Please see NHS England (Region and Local Office), above.

NHS Strategic Clinical Network (SCN)

SCNs were formed on 1 April 2013. The SCNs cover England, with former Cancer Networks covering Wales and the Isle of Man.

Further information about [SCNs](#)

Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)

NUTS is a European hierarchical system for the classification of spatial units. It provides a breakdown of the European Union's territory for the purposes of producing comparable regional statistics. There were originally five different NUTS levels. From 11 July 2003, NUTS levels 4 and 5 became local administrative units (LAU) 1 and 2 respectively. The remaining NUTS levels (1–3) are fixed for several years, but the LAUs are not. NUTS and LAUs are generally based on different levels of administrative geography.

Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, a new UK-managed international statistical geography - ITL (International Territorial Levels) - was introduced on 1st January 2021, replacing the former NUTS classification. They align with international standards, enabling comparability both over time and internationally. To ensure continued alignment, the ITLs have been established to mirror the NUTS system.

Further information on [ITLs](#)

Non-civil Parished Area (NCP)

NCP areas describe the area in a local authority which is not covered by parishes, i.e. unparished areas.

Further information about [NCPs](#)

Non-metropolitan (Shire) County

The 25 non-metropolitan (shire) counties form the upper tier of the two-tier local government structure found in many parts of England. The lower tier of the structure is the non-metropolitan districts.

Further information about [non-metropolitan counties](#)

Non-metropolitan (Local Authority) District

The 188 non-metropolitan districts (also known as local authority districts (LAD)) form the lower tier of the two-tier local government structure found in many parts of England. They are subdivisions of the 25 non-metropolitan (shire) counties.

Further information about [non-metropolitan districts](#)

Northern Ireland Assembly Constituency

The 18 Northern Ireland Assembly constituencies are used to elect members to the Northern Ireland Assembly. The constituencies are identical to the 18 Westminster parliamentary constituencies in Northern Ireland.

Glossary O

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

ONS UPRN Directory (ONSUD)

The ONSUD relates the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) for each GB address to a range of current statutory administrative, electoral, health and other geographies using the UPRN grid reference and 'point-in-polygon' methodology. The ONSUD is issued every six weeks and you can download it from the [Open Geography portal](#).

ONS Geography

We are the geographic support service of the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

[Contact us](#)

ONS Postcode Directory (ONSPD)

The ONSPD replaced the National Statistics Postcode Directory (NSPD) from February 2011. It relates both current and terminated postcodes to a wide range of current statutory administrative, electoral, health and other geographies, as well as to some abolished and frozen geographies in the UK. The ONSPD is released quarterly and you can download it from the [Open Geography portal](#).

Ordnance Survey (OS)

OS is the national mapping agency for Great Britain.

Further information about [OS](#)

Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (OSNI)

The Land & Property Services (LPS) in Northern Ireland has incorporated OSNI into its organisation and produces mapping with the OSNI branding.

Further information about the [LPS](#)

Organisational Data Service (ODS)

ODS supplies the codes for health geographies and organisation sites, such as hospitals and GP practices, in the UK. It provides codes that are distributed to the wider NHS and loaded onto its IT systems, which in turn means that locations can be identified quickly and correctly.

Further information about the [ODS](#)

OS MasterMap

See [MasterMap](#)

Outer London

Outer London refers to the part of Greater London falling outside the boundaries of the former London county, which existed from 1889 to 1965. The Outer London area includes 19 of the London boroughs.

Further information on [London boroughs](#)

Output Area (OA)

OAs are used across the UK as the base unit of census output. They were introduced in Scotland in 1991 and the rest of the UK in 2001. They superseded Census enumeration districts (ED), although EDs are still used for census data collection.

Further information on the [UK Census and census geographies](#)

Glossary P

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Pan Strategic Health Authority (Pan SHA)

Pan SHAs were based on the NHS's National Programme for IT (NPfIT). There were three NPfITs in England, each made up of an individual strategic health authority (SHA) (in the case of London) or groups of whole SHAs. Pan SHAs were not legal entities but were confederations of SHAs. They replaced IT clusters as a health geography in April 2007 and were abolished on 31 March 2013. Pan SHAs were replaced by NHS Commissioning Regions (NHSCR).

Further information on [NHSCRs](#)

Parish

Parishes are subdivisions of local authorities in many parts of England, and their councils are the most local level of government. Unlike electoral wards/divisions, however, parishes are not found in all parts of England. The Welsh and Scottish equivalents are communities. Note that the full term for administrative parishes is "civil parish", to distinguish them from the ecclesiastical parishes that are found in all parts of the UK.

Further information about [parishes](#) and [non-civil parished areas \(NCP\)](#)

Parliamentary Constituency

See [constituency](#)

PO Box

If individuals or organisations prefer for their mail to be delivered to a non-identifiable postal address, they may opt to set up a PO Box. PO Box addresses do not have a specific geographic location; instead the mail is sent to a local delivery office, from where it can be forwarded to the real address or collected by the addressee.

Point

In terms of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a point is a feature that can be defined by a single (x,y) co-ordinate pair.

Point-in-Polygon (PIP)

PIP is an overlay operation used in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). It is used to determine whether a given point lies inside a given polygon (area). For example, it might be used to establish whether a particular postcode (identified by a grid reference) falls within a particular electoral ward.

Police Force Area

There are 43 police force areas (PFA) in England and Wales, each covering one or more complete local authority. Scotland and Northern Ireland are each covered by a single police force.

Further information about [PFAs](#)

Polygon

In terms of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a polygon is a feature defined by a series of sequential co-ordinates that join up to make a closed shape. Examples of polygons include buildings, tracts of water and any geographic units (electoral wards, districts, health authorities etc).

Polygon-in-Polygon

Polygon-in-polygon is an overlay operation used in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). It is used to determine whether a given polygon lies inside (or overlaps) another polygon. For example, it might be used to establish which OAs fall within a particular electoral ward.

Postcode

Postcodes are assigned by Royal Mail to identify postal delivery areas across the UK. They are also a key means of providing locational references for statistical data.

Further information on [postcodes](#), including postcode structure, large and small user postcodes, and the use of postcodes for referencing data.

Postcode: Non-geographic

Non-geographic postcodes can either be special postcodes assigned to some large users of the postal service or PO Boxes that lie within a (pseudo) postcode district that does not form a discrete part of a postcode area.

Postcode: Terminated

Terminated postcodes are postcodes that are no longer used for mail delivery. The most frequent reasons for terminations are postcode reorganisations or the demolition/redevelopment of buildings. Terminated postcodes are occasionally re-used by Royal Mail but not before an elapsed period of two years. Terminated postcodes are retained in our postcode directories until or unless they are re-used.

Postcode Address File (PAF®)

PAF® is a database of all UK addresses and postcodes. It is produced by Royal Mail and is continuously updated.

Further information about [PAF®](#)

Presentation Order Guidance

See [Guide to Presenting Statistics](#)

Primary Care Group (PCG)

PCGs were a local unit of health administration in England between 1999 and 2002, although by the end of this period many of them had converted to primary care trusts (PCT). Until the reorganisation

of English health geography on 1 April 2002, PCGs/PCTs reported to health authorities (HA). Unfortunately they were defined in different ways in different parts of the country, thus providing a very inconsistent geography.

Further information about [English health geographies](#)

Primary Care Organisation (PCO)

PCOs were a generic term including English primary care trusts (PCT) and care trusts (CT) based on the PCT model, as well as the Welsh local health boards (LHB). It previously incorporated the former English primary care groups (PCG) and the Welsh local health groups (LHG). PCOs were abolished on 31 March 2013 and replaced by clinical commissioning groups (CCG).

Further information about [English health geographies](#)

Primary Care Trust (PCT)

PCTs were a local unit of health administration in England. After the reorganisation of English health geography on 1 April 2002, PCTs reported to the strategic health authorities (SHA). Further restructuring of health administration in 2006 reduced the number of PCTs significantly. The majority of them were defined in terms of local authority districts (LAD), but there were some exceptions. Although most of England fell within a PCT, some areas had care trusts (CT) instead. PCTs did exist before 1 April 2002 and, together with primary care groups (PCG), reported to health authorities (HA). PCTs were abolished on 31 March 2013 and replaced by clinical commissioning groups (CCG).

Further information about [English health geographies](#)

Prison Service Area

Prison service areas cover England and Wales. There are 10 in England and one in Wales. The English prison service areas correspond with the regions (former GORs), with the exception of the South East Region, which has been split into two prison service areas.

Further information about [prison service areas](#)

Proportional Symbol Map

Proportional symbol maps display data by using symbols that vary in size in proportion to the data values.

Public Health England Centre (PHEC)

PHE was established on 1 April 2013 to bring together public health specialists from more than 70 organisations into a single public health service. They have centres across four regions and they are the front door for most of PHE's local services across health improvement, healthcare public health and health protection.

Further information about [PHE](#)

Public Health England Region (PHEREG)

PHE was established on 1 April 2013 to bring together public health specialists from more than 70 organisations into a single public health service. They have four regions (North of England, South of England, Midlands and East of England, and London). They work closely with public health professionals in the rest of the UK, and internationally.

Further information about [PHE](#)

Public Sector Geospatial Agreement (PSGA)

The PSGA (formerly the public sector mapping agreement – PSMA) is a partnership between the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Ordnance Survey (OS). It gives public sector organisations in England and Wales access to a selection of high quality digital map products from OS.

Further information about the [PSGA](#)

Glossary Q

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P **Q** R S T U V W X Y Z

Glossary R

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Region

In geography terms, 'region' is frequently used to describe any of the nine regions (former Government Office Regions (GOR)) of England.

Further information about [regions](#)

Region (Geography) (NHS)

See [NHS Region \(Geography\) \(NHSRG\)](#)

Region (Scottish Local Government)

A total of nine local government regions existed in Scotland between 1975 and 1996, which were each split into a number of districts, thus forming a two-tier local government structure. During this period Scotland also had three single-tier island authorities (Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands and Western Isles). On 1 April 1996 the existing Scottish administrative structure was abolished and replaced by unitary council areas.

Further information on [Scottish administrative geographies](#)

Regional Development Agency (RDA)

The nine RDAs in England were responsible for promoting sustainable economic development and economic and social regeneration within their regions. The areas covered by the RDAs coincided with the regions (former GORs). RDAs closed at the end of March 2012.

Regional Health Authority (RHA)

RHAs were the upper tier of NHS administration in England between the 1970s and 1996, when they were replaced by NHS regional offices.

Further information on [English health geographies](#)

Regional Office (NHS)

See [NHS Regional Office](#)

Registration District

Registration districts are the areas in England and Wales used for recording births, marriages and deaths and responsibility for them is held by the relevant county council, unitary authority (UA), metropolitan district, or London borough.

Further information about [registration districts](#)

Royal Mail

Royal Mail Group is a part-publicly owned and part-government owned company. The company is responsible for the main UK postal service.

Further information about [Royal Mail](#)

Rural Area

There is no single definition of a rural area, as there are many different approaches to classifying what is 'rural' (or 'non-urban'). These include approaches based on population, population density, land use and socio-economic characteristics, all of which have different advantages and disadvantages depending on the purpose of the classification. However, 2011 rural-urban area classification is now available as a National Statistics standard. This classifies Output Areas (OA) and wards as either urban or rural depending on whether the bulk of their population falls in a settlement of greater than 10,000 residents. It also offers sub-classifications of urban and rural areas, based on population density.

Further information about [area classifications](#)

Glossary S

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Scottish Parliamentary Constituency

Scottish parliamentary constituencies are used to elect members to the Scottish Parliament. They do not align with Westminster parliamentary constituencies.

Scottish Parliamentary Electoral Region

Scottish parliamentary electoral regions are used for the proportional component of the elections to the Scottish Parliament. They are made up of groups of Scottish parliamentary constituencies.

Settlement

Built-up areas of Scotland, where the population is 500 or more, are defined as 'settlements'.

Further information on [settlements](#)

Shire County

See [non-metropolitan \(shire\) county](#)

Small Area

In Northern Ireland, Small Areas are the equivalent to 2011 Census Output Areas (OA) and are used as the base unit of census output.

Further information on the [UK Census and census geographies](#)

Standard Area Measurements (SAM)

SAM is a definitive list of measurements for administrative and electoral areas in the UK. The measurements provided are defined by topographic boundaries (coastline and inland water) where available.

Further information about [SAM](#)

Standard Statistical Region (SSR)

The eight SSRs were the primary statistical subdivisions of England before the Government Office Regions (GOR) were adopted for this purpose in 1996. They are now rarely used.

Further information on [SSRs](#)

Standard Table Ward (ST)

ST wards are those for which the 2001 Census Standard Tables are available. They are a subset of the Census Area Statistics (CAS) wards, with the smaller CAS wards merged to prevent data disclosure.

Further information on [ST wards](#)

Statistical Ward

Statistical wards are a variation on electoral wards/divisions; they were introduced across National Statistics in order to minimise the statistical impact of frequent electoral ward/division boundary changes. The policy was amended in 2006, and statistical wards are no longer produced.

Further information on [statistical wards](#)

Statutory Ward

"Statutory ward" is another term used to describe the standard electoral wards/divisions that are defined by Statutory Instrument (SI) and used for local government elections across the UK. There are a number of other types of ward (statistical ward, CAS ward and ST ward), but these are used for statistical purposes only and are not statutory.

Further information on [statutory wards](#)

Straddling

Straddling refers to the phenomenon of postcodes overlapping administrative (or other geographic) boundaries. This is due to the fact that postcodes are defined for mail delivery only and take no account of other geographies. However, postcodes are frequently used for referencing data so straddling can create problems when we want to relate postcode-referenced data to any of these other geographies (e.g. electoral wards).

Strategic Clinical Network (SCN)

See [NHS Strategic Clinical Network \(SCN\)](#)

Strategic Health Authority (SHA)

The 10 SHAs in England were created in July 2006, following restructuring of the 28 SHAs originally established in April 2002. Their boundaries were coterminous with regions (former GORs), with the exception of the South East Region, which comprised two SHAs (which were constituted from groups of local authority districts). SHAs were responsible for managing the performance of their respective primary care organisations (PCOs). They were abolished on 31 March 2013.

Further information on [English health geographies](#)

Super Output Area (SOA)

SOAs are a geography hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small-area statistics. In England and Wales Lower Layer SOAs (LSOA) with a minimum population of 1,000 and Middle Layer SOAs (MSOA) with a minimum population of 5,000 were introduced in 2004. Unlike electoral wards, LSOAs and MSOAs are of consistent size across the country and won't be subject to regular boundary change. A decision was made not to create an Upper Layer in England, while in Wales an Upper Layer (USOA) was created. In Northern Ireland there is a single layer of SOAs, with a minimum population of 1,300. The Scottish equivalents of SOAs are Data Zones (DZ) with a minimum population of 500 and Intermediate Zones (IZ) with a minimum population of 2,500.

Further information on [SOAs](#)

Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP)

In March 2016 NHS England organised the geographical division of England into STPs with populations between 300,000 and 3 million. These areas were locally agreed between NHS Trusts, local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG). A leader was appointed for each area, to be responsible for the implementation of the plans agreed by the component organisations. They work across organisational boundaries to help build a consensus for transformation and the practical steps to deliver it.

Further information on [English health geographies](#)

Glossary T

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Thematic Map

Thematic maps use graphical styles (e.g. colours or fill patterns) to display information relating to a specific statistical theme - (e.g. birth rates) by district. Thematic maps are mostly choropleth maps or proportional symbol maps.

Town

There is no single definition of a town. According to the Ordnance Survey, a town is a centre of business and population with an area in excess of 2.5 square kilometres. Some places may be smaller but were historically considered towns, for example market or former county towns.

See also [Major Towns and Cities](#)

Towns and Cities

See [Major Towns and Cities](#)

Topographic Identifier (TOID)

TOIDs are the 16-digit numbers that uniquely identify every feature in the Digital National Framework (DNF) and the associated OS MasterMap product. TOIDs are a stable geographic reference because they are assigned to a feature throughout its life and are not reassigned when a feature disappears.

Further information about OS [MasterMap](#)

Training and Enterprise Council (TEC)

TECs were government-funded bodies that aimed to foster local economic growth and development. They existed across England and Wales but were replaced in 2001 by the Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) in England and by the regional offices of Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) in Wales. In April 2007 the ELWa regions were replaced by the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS).

Further information on [TECs](#)

Travel to Work Area (TTWA)

TTWAs are used in labour market analysis and reflect reasonably self-contained zones in which people both live and work. The current TTWAs were constructed using 2011 Census data, and are formed from aggregations of Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) in England and Wales, data zones (DZ) in Scotland and Super Output Areas (SOA) in Northern Ireland.

Further information about [TTWAs](#)

Glossary U

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Unique Delivery Point Reference Number (UDPRN)

The UDPRN uniquely identifies each postal address on the Royal Mail PAF® database. A UDPRN is assigned to each delivery point to give a specific designation to a delivery address. The UDPRN is assigned to the delivery point until that delivery point is deleted. At that point the UDPRN is also deleted from PAF, assuring that each number remains uniquely correlated to a delivery point.

Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)

UPRNs are the unique GB geographic identifiers used in the [National Land and Property Gazetteer \(NLPG\)](#), the [National Statistics UPRN Lookup \(NSUL\)](#) and the [ONS UPRN Directory \(ONSUD\)](#).

Unitary Administration

The term 'unitary administration' is used in this context to describe all local authority districts (LAD) that form a single tier of local government (i.e. all UK local authority districts except for English counties and non-metropolitan districts). The term therefore covers unitary authorities (UA), metropolitan districts and London boroughs in England; UAs in Wales; council areas in Scotland; and local government districts (LGD) in Northern Ireland. Note though that the term is not in common use and that it is a generic term, rather than one that reflects a specific geographic type.

Unitary Authority (UA)

UAs are areas with a single tier of local government (as opposed to the two-tier county: district structure). In practice the term is only applied to the UAs established across the whole of Wales in 1996 and to the UAs established in parts of England between 1995 and 2009. However London boroughs and metropolitan districts in England, council areas in Scotland and local government districts (LGD) in Northern Ireland are all served by single-tier (unitary) administrations.

Further information about [unitary authorities](#)

United Kingdom (UK)

The UK is the nation state consisting of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Urban Area

There is no single definition of an urban area as there are many different approaches to classifying what is "urban". These include approaches based on population, population density and land use, all of which have different advantages and disadvantages depending on the purpose of the classification. However, the 2011 rural-urban area classification is available as a National Statistics standard. This classifies Output Areas (OA) and wards as either urban or rural depending on whether the bulk of their population falls in a settlement of greater than 10,000 residents. It also offers sub-classifications of urban and rural areas, based on population density.

Further information about the [rural-urban classification](#)

Glossary V

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U **V W X Y Z**

Glossary W

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V **W** X Y Z

Ward

Electoral wards/divisions are the base unit of UK administrative geography: all higher administrative units are built from them. They are also used as a base unit for other geographies, such as parliamentary constituencies. Electoral wards are found across Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and most of England, whereas the equivalents in the Isle of Wight and six of the unitary authorities (UA) created in 2009 are known as electoral divisions.

Further information on [electoral wards/divisions](#)

Ward History Database (WHD)

Our WHD provided details of changes to electoral wards/divisions in England between 1991 and 2010. The WHD was replaced in 2010 by the Code History Database (CHD) and is no longer available.

Further information about the [CHD](#)

Welsh Assembly Constituency

See [National Assembly for Wales Constituency \(NAWC\)](#)

Welsh Assembly Electoral Region

See [National Assembly for Wales Electoral Region \(NAWER\)](#)

Westminster Parliamentary Constituency

Westminster parliamentary constituencies are used to elect members to the UK Parliament in Westminster. There are currently 650 such constituencies covering the UK. Constituencies may straddle local authority district (LAD) boundaries but are always based on whole electoral wards/divisions at the time of definition.

Further information about the [Westminster parliamentary constituencies](#)

Workplace Zone (WZ)

WZs are a UK output geography that has been produced using workplace data from the 2011 Census. WZs are designed to contain consistent numbers of workers, based on where people work, meaning that they are suitable for disseminating workplace-based statistics and outputs. They have been created by splitting and merging the 2011 OAs to produce a workplace geography that contains consistent numbers of workers.

Further information about [WZs](#)

Glossary X

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Glossary Y

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X **Y Z**

Glossary Z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Annex C**ITL Hierarchical Breakdown**

The listings below show the breakdown into ITL 2 and 3 and LAU (local administrative units) 1 areas for each of the ITL 1 areas in the UK.

North East (England)[back to ITL](#)

ITL 2 areas within North East (England):	
Tees Valley and Durham Northumberland and Tyne and Wear	
These ITL 2 areas are divided into the following ITL 3 areas:	
Tees Valley and Durham	Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees South Teesside Darlington Durham CC
Northumberland and Tyne and Wear	Northumberland Tyneside Sunderland
These seven ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees	Hartlepool Stockton-on-Tees
South Teesside	Middlesbrough Redcar and Cleveland
Darlington	Darlington
Durham CC	County Durham
Northumberland	Northumberland
Tyneside	Gateshead Newcastle upon Tyne North Tyneside South Tyneside
Sunderland	Sunderland

North West (England)[back to ITL](#)

ITL 2 areas in North West (England):	
Cumbria Cheshire Greater Manchester Lancashire Merseyside	
These ITL 2 areas are divided into the following ITL 3 areas:	

Cumbria	West Cumbria East Cumbria
Cheshire	Warrington Cheshire East Cheshire West and Chester
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester South East Greater Manchester South West Greater Manchester North East Greater Manchester North West Manchester
Lancashire	Blackburn with Darwen Blackpool Chorley and West Lancashire East Lancashire Mid Lancashire Lancaster and Wyre
Merseyside	East Merseyside Liverpool Sefton Wirral
These ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
West Cumbria	Allerdale Barrow-in-Furness Copeland
East Cumbria	Carlisle Eden South Lakeland
Warrington	Warrington
Cheshire East	Cheshire East
Cheshire West and Chester	Cheshire West and Chester
Greater Manchester South East	Stockport Tameside
Greater Manchester South West	Salford Trafford
Greater Manchester North East	Rochdale Oldham Bury
Greater Manchester North West	Bolton Wigan
Manchester	Manchester
Blackburn with Darwen	Blackburn with Darwen
Blackpool	Blackpool

Chorley and West Lancashire	Chorley West Lancashire
East Lancashire	Burnley Hyndburn Pendle Rossendale
Mid Lancashire	Fylde Preston Ribble Valley South Ribble
Lancaster and Wyre	Lancaster Wyre
East Merseyside	Knowsley St. Helens Halton
Liverpool	Liverpool
Sefton	Sefton
Wirral	Wirral

Yorkshire and The Humber[back to ITL](#)

ITL 2 areas in Yorkshire and The Humber:	
East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire North Yorkshire South Yorkshire West Yorkshire	
These ITL 2 areas are subdivided into the following ITL 3 areas:	
East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	Kingston upon Hull, City of East Riding of Yorkshire North and North East Lincolnshire
North Yorkshire	York North Yorkshire CC
South Yorkshire	Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Sheffield
West Yorkshire	Bradford Leeds Calderdale and Kirklees Wakefield
These ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
Kingston upon Hull, City of	Kingston upon Hull, City of
East Riding of Yorkshire	East Riding of Yorkshire
North and North East Lincolnshire	North and North East Lincolnshire

York	York
North Yorkshire CC	Craven Hambleton Harrogate Richmondshire Ryedale Scarborough Selby
Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham	Barnsley Doncaster Rotherham
Sheffield	Sheffield
Bradford	Bradford
Leeds	Leeds
Calderdale and Kirklees	Calderdale Kirklees
Wakefield	Wakefield

East Midlands (England)[back to ITL](#)

ITL 2 areas within East Midlands (England):	
Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire Lincolnshire	
These ITL 2 areas are divided into the following ITL 3 areas:	
Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	Derby East Derbyshire South and West Derbyshire Nottingham North Nottinghamshire South Nottinghamshire
Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire	Leicester Leicestershire CC and Rutland West Northamptonshire North Northamptonshire
Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire CC
These ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
Derby	Derby
East Derbyshire	Bolsover Chesterfield North East Derbyshire
South and West Derbyshire	Amber Valley

	Derbyshire Dales Erewash High Peak South Derbyshire
Nottingham	Nottingham
North Nottinghamshire	Ashfield Bassetlaw Mansfield Newark and Sherwood
South Nottinghamshire	Broxtowe Gedling Rushcliffe
Leicester	Leicester
Leicestershire CC and Rutland	Blaby Charnwood Harborough Hinckley and Bosworth Melton North West Leicestershire Oadby and Wigston Rutland
West Northamptonshire	Daventry Northampton South Northamptonshire
North Northamptonshire	Corby East Northamptonshire Kettering Wellingborough
Lincolnshire CC	Boston East Lindsey Lincoln North Kesteven South Holland South Kesteven West Lindsey

West Midlands (England)[back to ITL](#)

ITL 2 areas in West Midlands (England):	
Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire Shropshire and Staffordshire West Midlands	
These ITL 2 areas are divided into the following ITL 3 areas:	
Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire	Herefordshire, County of Worcestershire CC

	Warwickshire CC
Shropshire and Staffordshire	Telford and Wrekin Shropshire Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire CC
West Midlands	Birmingham Solihull Coventry Dudley Walsall Sandwell Wolverhampton
These ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
Herefordshire, County of	Herefordshire, County of
Worcestershire CC	Bromsgrove Malvern Hills Redditch Worcester Wychavon Wyre Forest
Warwickshire CC	North Warwickshire Nuneaton and Bedworth Rugby Stratford-on-Avon Warwick
Telford and Wrekin	Telford and Wrekin
Shropshire	Shropshire
Stoke-on-Trent	Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire CC	Cannock Chase East Staffordshire Lichfield Newcastle-under-Lyme South Staffordshire Stafford Staffordshire Moorlands Tamworth
Birmingham	Birmingham
Solihull	Solihull
Coventry	Coventry
Sandwell	Sandwell
Walsall	Walsall
Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton

Dudley	Dudley
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East of England[back to ITL](#)

ITL 2 areas within East of England:	
East Anglia Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Essex	
These ITL 2 areas are divided into the following ITL 3 areas:	
East Anglia	Peterborough Cambridgeshire CC Suffolk CC Norwich and East Norfolk North and West Norfolk Breckland and South Norfolk
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	Luton Hertfordshire CC Bedford Central Bedfordshire
Essex	Southend-on-Sea Thurrock Essex Haven Gateway West Essex Heart of Essex Essex Thames Gateway
These ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
Peterborough	Peterborough
Cambridgeshire CC	Cambridge East Cambridgeshire Fenland Huntingdonshire South Cambridgeshire
Breckland and South Norfolk	Breckland South Norfolk
Norwich and East Norfolk	Broadland Norwich Great Yarmouth
North and West Norfolk	North Norfolk King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Suffolk CC	Babergh Ipswich Mid Suffolk East Suffolk West Suffolk

Luton	Luton
Bedford	Bedford
Central Bedfordshire	Central Bedfordshire
Hertfordshire CC	Broxbourne Dacorum East Hertfordshire Hertsmere North Hertfordshire St Albans Stevenage Three Rivers Watford Welwyn Hatfield
Southend-on-Sea	Southend-on-Sea
Thurrock	Thurrock
Essex Thames Gateway	Basildon Castle Point Rochford
Essex Haven Gateway	Braintree Colchester Tendring
Heart of Essex	Brentwood Chelmsford Maldon
West Essex	Epping Forest Harlow Uttlesford

London

[back to ITL](#)

ITL 2 areas within London:	
Inner London – West Inner London – East Outer London – East and North East Outer London – South Outer London – West and North West	
These ITL 2 areas are divided into the following ITL 3 areas:	
Inner London - West	Camden and City of London Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham Wandsworth Westminster
Inner London - East	Haringey and Islington Hackney and Newham Lambeth

	Lewisham and Southwark Tower Hamlets
Outer London – East and North East	Barking & Dagenham and Havering Bexley and Greenwich Enfield Redbridge and Waltham Forest
Outer London – South	Bromley Croydon Merton, Kingston upon Thames and Sutton
Outer London – West and North West	Barnet Brent Ealing Harrow and Hillingdon Hounslow and Richmond upon Thames
These ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
Haringey and Islington	Islington Haringey
Hackney and Newham	Hackney Newham
Lambeth	Lambeth
Lewisham and Southwark	Lewisham Southwark
Tower Hamlets	Tower Hamlets
Camden and City of London	Camden City of London
Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham	Hammersmith and Fulham Kensington and Chelsea
Wandsworth	Wandsworth
Westminster	Westminster
Barking & Dagenham and Havering	Barking and Dagenham Havering
Bexley and Greenwich	Bexley Greenwich
Enfield	Enfield
Redbridge and Waltham Forest	Redbridge Waltham Forest
Bromley	Bromley
Croydon	Croydon
Merton, Kingston upon Thames and Sutton	Kingston upon Thames Merton Sutton
Barnet	Barnet
Brent	Brent
Ealing	Ealing
Harrow and Hillingdon	Harrow Hillingdon

Hounslow and Richmond upon Thames	Hounslow Richmond upon Thames
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South East (England)[back to ITL](#)

ITL 2 areas in South East (England):	
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Surrey, East and West Sussex Hampshire and Isle of Wight Kent	
These ITL 2 areas are divided into the following ITL 3 areas:	
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire	Berkshire Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire CC
Surrey, East and West Sussex	Brighton and Hove East Sussex CC West Surrey East Surrey West Sussex (South West) West Sussex (North East)
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	Portsmouth Southampton Isle of Wight Central Hampshire South Hampshire North Hampshire
Kent	Kent Thames Gateway Mid Kent West Kent East Kent Medway
These ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
Berkshire	Bracknell Forest Reading Slough West Berkshire Windsor and Maidenhead Wokingham
Milton Keynes	Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire	Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire CC	Cherwell Oxford South Oxfordshire Vale of White Horse

	West Oxfordshire
Brighton and Hove	Brighton and Hove
East Surrey	Epsom and Ewell Mole Valley Reigate and Banstead Tandridge
East Sussex CC	Eastbourne Hastings Lewes Rother Wealden
West Surrey	Elmbridge Guildford Runnymede Spelthorne Surrey Heath Waverley Woking
West Sussex (North East)	Crawley Horsham Mid Sussex
West Sussex (South West)	Adur Arun Chichester Worthing
Portsmouth	Portsmouth
Southampton	Southampton
Central Hampshire	East Hampshire New Forest Test Valley Winchester
North Hampshire	Basingstoke and Deane Hart Rushmoor
South Hampshire	Eastleigh Fareham Gosport Havant
Isle of Wight	Isle of Wight
Medway	Medway
East Kent	Canterbury Dover Folkstone and Hythe Thanet

Mid Kent	Ashford Maidstone
West Kent	Sevenoaks Tonbridge and Malling Tunbridge Wells
Kent Thames Gateway	Dartford Gravesham Swale

South West (England)[back to ITL](#)

ITL 2 areas in South West (England):	
Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bath/Bristol area Dorset and Somerset Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Devon	
These ITL 2 areas are divided into the following ITL 3 areas:	
Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bath/Bristol area	Bristol, City of Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Gloucestershire CC Swindon Wiltshire
Dorset and Somerset	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Dorset Somerset CC
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly
Devon	Plymouth Torbay Devon CC
These ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
Bristol, City of	Bristol, City of
Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire	Bath and North East Somerset North Somerset South Gloucestershire
Gloucestershire CC	Cheltenham Cotswold Forest of Dean Gloucester Stroud Tewkesbury
Swindon	Swindon
Wiltshire	Wiltshire

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole
Dorset	Dorset
Somerset CC	Mendip Sedgemoor South Somerset Somerset West and Taunton
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	Cornwall Isles of Scilly
Plymouth	Plymouth
Torbay	Torbay
Devon CC	East Devon Exeter Mid Devon North Devon South Hams Teignbridge Torridge West Devon

Scotland[back to ITL](#)

ITL 2 areas in Scotland:	
North Eastern Scotland Highlands and Islands Eastern Scotland West Central Scotland Southern Scotland	
These ITL 2 areas are divided into the following ITL 3 areas:	
North Eastern Scotland	Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire
Highlands and Islands	Caithness and Sutherland, and Ross and Cromarty Inverness and Nairn, Moray, and Badenoch and Strathspey Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh, Arran and Cumbrae, and Argyll and Bute Na h-Eileanan Siar Orkney Islands Shetland Islands
Eastern Scotland	Angus and Dundee City Clackmannanshire and Fife East Lothian and Midlothian City of Edinburgh Falkirk Perth and Kinross, and Stirling West Lothian

West Central Scotland	East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire, and Helensburgh and Lomond North Lanarkshire Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, and Renfrewshire Glasgow City
Southern Scotland	East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire mainland South Lanarkshire Scottish Borders South Ayrshire Dumfries and Galloway
These ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
Angus and Dundee City	Angus Dundee City
Caithness and Sutherland, and Ross and Cromarty	Caithness and Sutherland Ross and Cromarty
City of Edinburgh	City of Edinburgh
Clackmannanshire and Fife	Clackmannanshire Fife
Dumfries and Galloway	Dumfries and Galloway
East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire Mainland	East Ayrshire North Ayrshire mainland
East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire, and Helensburgh and Lomond	East Dunbartonshire Helensburgh and Lomond West Dunbartonshire
East Lothian and Midlothian	East Lothian Midlothian
Na h-Eileanan Siar	Na h-Eileanan Siar
Falkirk	Falkirk
Glasgow City	Glasgow City
Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, and Renfrewshire	East Renfrewshire Inverclyde Renfrewshire
Inverness and Nairn, Moray, and Badenoch and Strathspey	Badenoch and Strathspey Inverness and Nairn North East Moray West Moray
South Ayrshire	South Ayrshire
South Lanarkshire	South Lanarkshire
Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire	Aberdeen City Aberdeenshire

Scottish Borders	Scottish Borders
West Lothian	West Lothian
Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh, Arran and Cumbrae, and Argyll and Bute	Arran and Cumbrae Argyll and Bute Islands Argyll and Bute Mainland Lochaber Skye and Lochalsh
North Lanarkshire	North Lanarkshire
Orkney Islands	Orkney Islands
Shetland Islands	Shetland Islands
Perth and Kinross, and Sterling	Perth and Kinross Sterling

Wales[back to ITL](#)

ITL 2 areas in Wales:	
East Wales West Wales and The Valleys	
These ITL 2 areas are divided into the following ITL 3 areas:	
West Wales and the Valleys	Isle of Anglesey Gwynedd Conwy and Denbighshire South West Wales Central Valleys Gwent Valleys Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot Swansea
East Wales	Monmouthshire and Newport Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Flintshire and Wrexham Powys
These ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
Isle of Anglesey	Isle of Anglesey
Gwynedd	Gwynedd
Conwy and Denbighshire	Conwy Denbighshire
South West Wales	Carmarthenshire Ceredigion Pembrokeshire
Central Valleys	Merthyr Tydfil Rhondda Cynon Taf
Gwent Valleys	Blaenau Gwent

	Caerphilly Torfaen
Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot	Bridgend Neath Port Talbot
Swansea	Swansea
Monmouthshire and Newport	Monmouthshire Newport
Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	Cardiff Vale of Glamorgan
Flintshire and Wrexham	Flintshire Wrexham
Powys	Powys

Northern Ireland[back to ITL](#)

As well as being an ITLS 1 area, Northern Ireland also has the status of an ITL 2 area. Thereafter, it is divided into the following ITL 3 areas:	
Belfast Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Newry, Mourne and Down Ards and North Down Derry City and Strabane Mid Ulster Causeway Coast and Glens Antrim and Newtownabbey Lisburn and Castlereagh Mid and East Antrim Fermanagh and Omagh	
These ITL 3 areas are divided into the following LAU 1 areas:	
Belfast	Belfast
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon
Newry, Mourne and Down	Newry, Mourne and Down
Ards and North Down	Ards and North Down
Derry City and Strabane	Derry City and Strabane
Mid Ulster	Mid Ulster
Causeway Coast and Glens	Causeway Coast and Glens
Antrim and Newtownabbey	Antrim and Newtownabbey
Lisburn and Castlereagh	Lisburn and Castlereagh
Mid and East Antrim	Mid and East Antrim
Fermanagh and Omagh	Fermanagh and Omagh

