



Public Health in Pastures New – Rurality, Health and Wellbeing in Devon

Dr Virginia Pearson

Joint Executive Director of Public Health

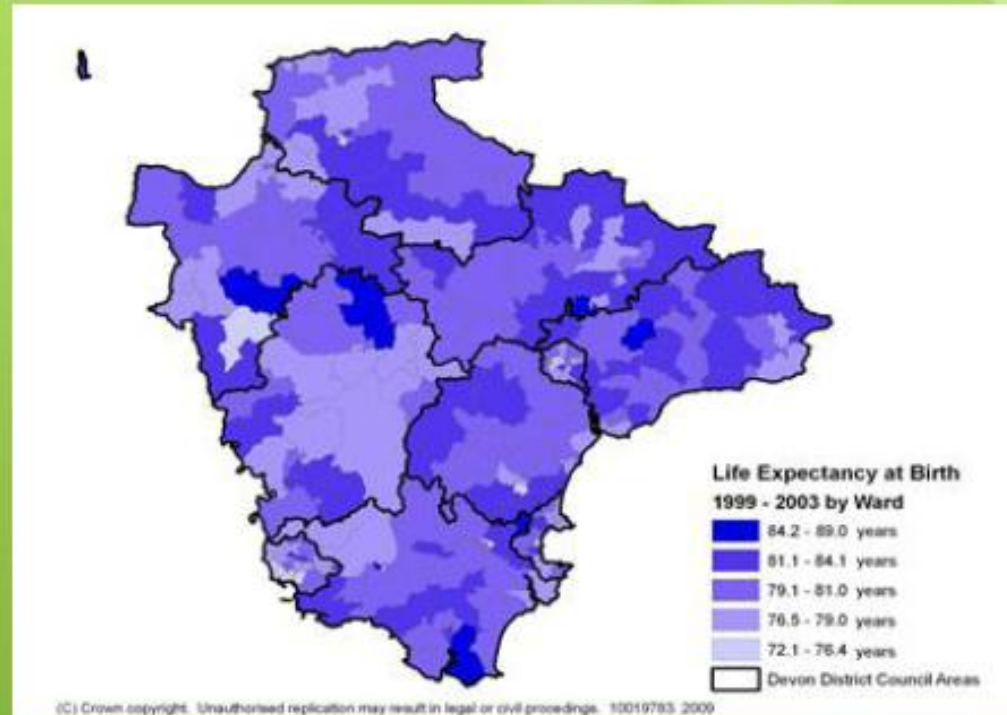
NHS Devon and Devon County Council

Rural living – a positive experience but challenges in achieving the best of health



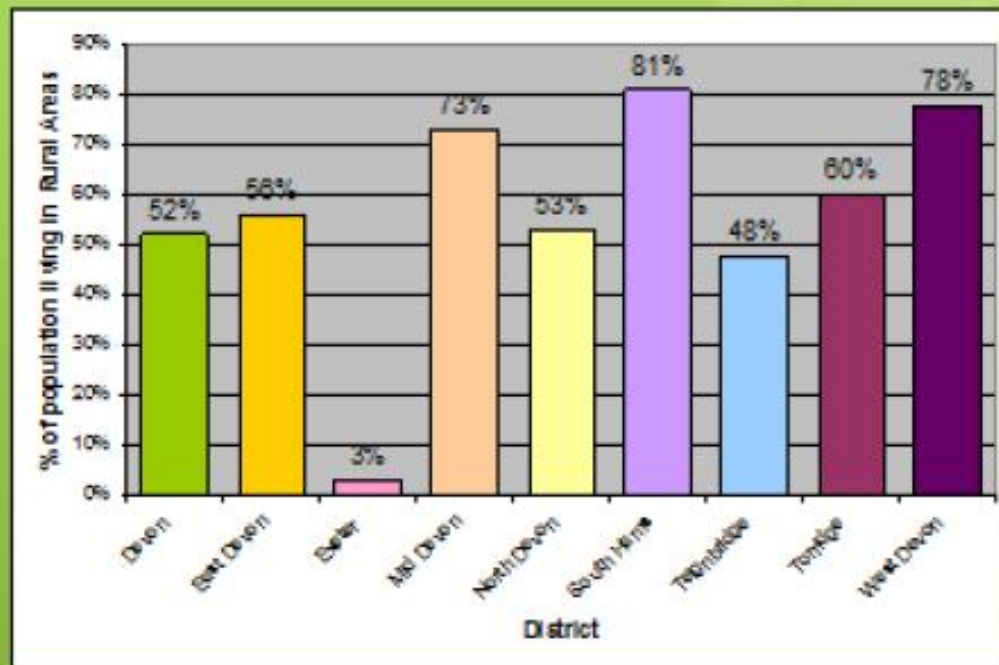
Devon's profile

- Devon is the third largest county in England
- It is also the seventh most sparsely populated county, with a few large settlements and a dispersed rural population, covering Dartmoor National Park and part of Exmoor National Park
- Over 90% of its land area is defined as "rural" (settlements <10,000)
- Of 750,105 people living in Devon (excluding Plymouth and Torbay), 52% live in rural areas
- The figure for Devon (52%) is significantly higher than the regional (34%) and national (19%) rural averages
- Two-tier with eight district councils
- South Hams, West Devon, Mid Devon and Torridge have the highest proportions of the population living in rural areas



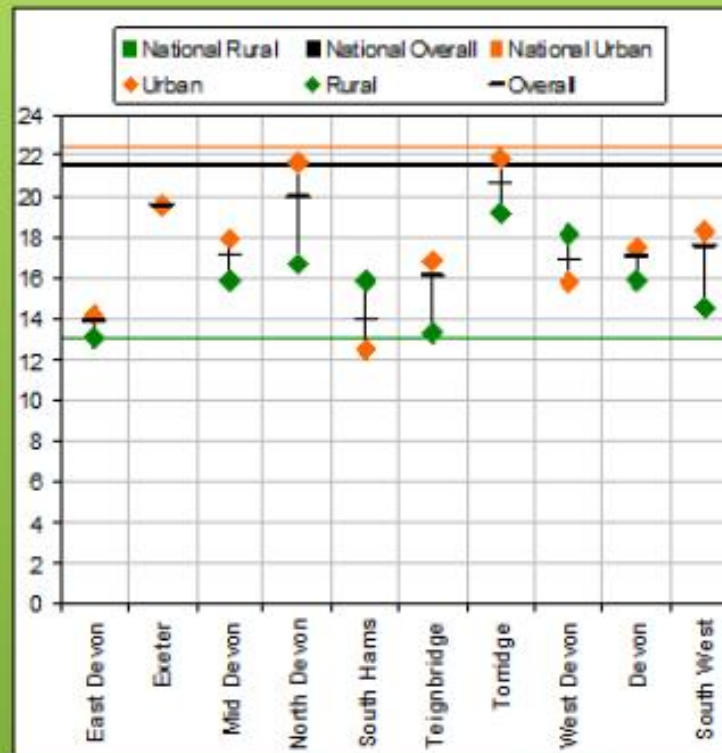
Most people in Devon live in rural areas

Proportion of Devon's population living in Rural Areas per District ("rural" classified as those outside settlements with a population of >10,000)

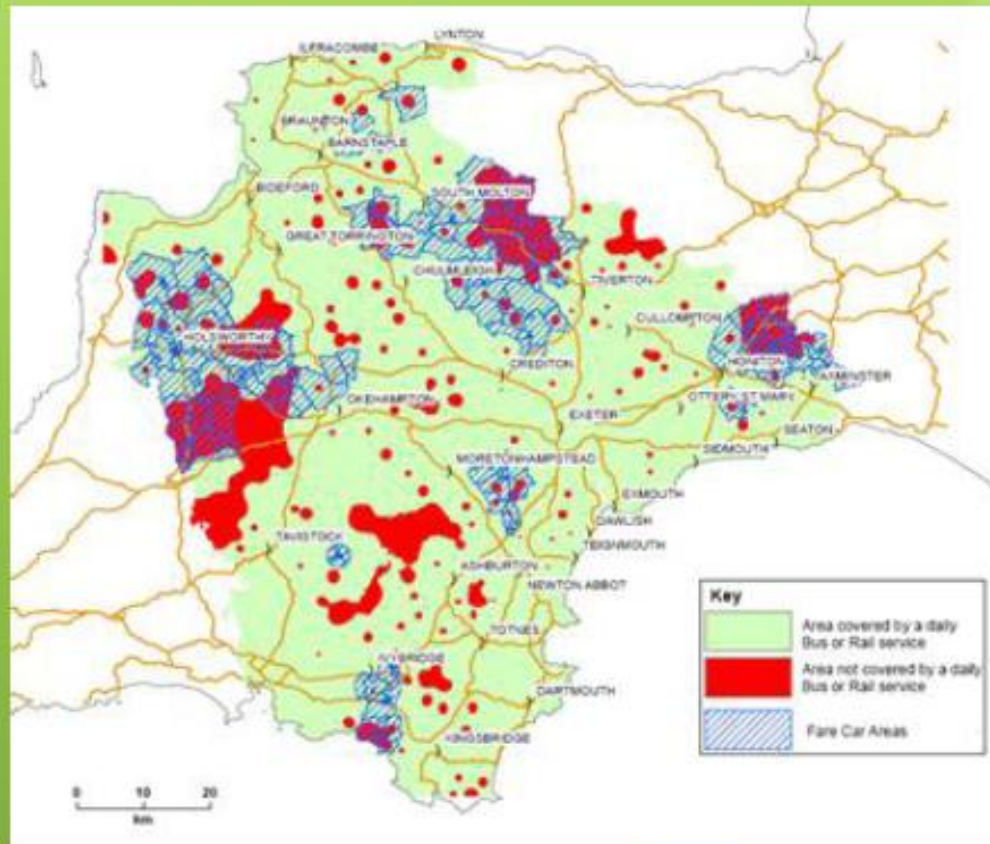


Deep rural deprivation

Index of Multiple Deprivation scores by Local Authority District, Urban and Rural Scores, 2010



Population of Devon without access to a town centre by daily public, community or voluntary transport services



The challenges faced by many people living in our rural areas include:

- deprivation (including pockets of hidden deprivation);
- an increasingly ageing population;
- small, sparsely distributed populations;
- changing population patterns, including outward migration of young people;
- social isolation and social exclusion;
- lack of affordable housing and fuel poverty;
- poor infrastructure, access issues and a lack of some health and related services;
- a shrinking skilled workforce;
- specific health needs associated with some population subgroups

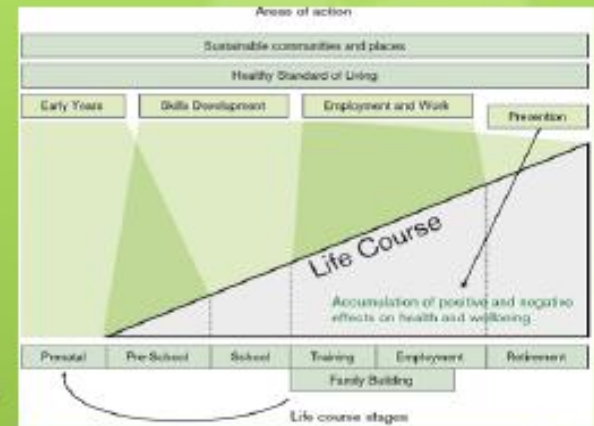
Strategies for improving health and wellbeing

Innovative service delivery

Securing funding and encouraging rural health research

Partnership working

Building the rural workforce



Partnership working

- Community transport through single points of access
- Children's Centres network
- Dementia services and memory cafes

Innovative service delivery

- Rural support networks such as the Blackdown Support Group, and West Devon connect - outreach surgeries
- Mobile units for rural areas (drug services)
- Virtual wards / Hospital at Home

Building the rural workforce

- Westbank Healthy Living partnership
- Social enterprise development
- Volunteering and user engagement
- Snow wardens

Securing funding and rural health research

- Local research e.g. Neighbourhood Healthwatch
- Carer strategy
- Affordable housing
- Superfast Broadband

Public Health in the Local Authority



Opportunities provided by the move of Public Health to Local Authorities

- Alignment of Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy to local needs, based on Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Focus on root causes of better health
- Closer relationship with local authorities where there is a direct impact on determinants of health
- Challenge to all commissioners on access and equality
- Evidence-based policy and commissioning
- Social marketing and behavioural science methodologies
- Better local engagement through elected members
- Helping local communities to help themselves

www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk