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Geographical identifiers in *Understanding Society*

Version 1

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Non-Technical Summary

Understanding Society opens a range of new opportunities for local area research. These arise because geographical identifiers are being made available at different geographical levels which enable researchers to merge a wealth of data on area characteristics to individual's responses. Many of these are freely available for download from the internet. This paper provides a brief introduction to UK geography, gives an overview of the geo-codes available for use with *Understanding Society* and provides documentation of the available variables.

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Abstract

A range of geographical identifiers are being made available for *Understanding Society* which allow researchers to merge external data at different geographical levels to individual's responses. Examples of geographical identifiers at higher level include country and Government Office Region; at medium level Local Authority Districts and Travel to Work Areas; at lower level Lower Layer Super Output Areas. This paper provides a brief introduction to UK geography, gives an overview of the geo-codes available for use with *Understanding Society* and provides documentation of the variables.

Keywords: *Geographical identifiers; Data linkage; Understanding Society*

JEL Classifications: C81, Y20

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Geographical identifiers in *Understanding Society*

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1. Introduction

Understanding Society opens a range of new opportunities for local area research. These arise because geographical identifiers are being made available at different geographical levels which enable researchers to merge a wealth of data on area characteristics to individual's responses. Many of these are freely available for download from the internet. Moreover, the large sample size of *Understanding Society* will increase the number of individuals observed in the different geographies of the UK compared to other surveys.

Geographical identifiers for *Understanding Society* are created by matching postcodes of *Understanding Society* households to the National Statistics Postcode Directory (NSPD). The NSPD relates current and terminated postcodes to a range of current geographies (as at February 2011) and some historical ones. The method used for this is mostly by assigning a grid reference (a location to the nearest metre) to each postcode and evaluating this position against the boundaries of the geography in question (see NSPD 2011 for more details).

The availability of geographical identifiers in *Understanding Society* depends on their spatial scale and on the location of the site of access. Indicators at larger scale such as country of residence are distributed with the general release of *Understanding Society*. Geographical identifiers at medium-level scale are available to UK and non-UK users applying for a Special License, whereas lower-level identifiers are only available to UK users holding a Special License. Finally, the grid reference of postcodes is available through Secure Data Access. For more information on the access conditions visit <http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/usocTitles.asp>.

This paper provides a brief introduction to UK geographies which is aimed mainly at non-UK users. It then gives an overview of the geo-codes available for use with *Understanding Society*, followed by a documentation of the variables.

2. UK geography¹

There are several types of geographies in the UK with sometimes overlapping boundaries. They comprise administrative, electoral, statistical and other geographies. *Administrative geographies* are hierarchies of areas relating to national government and the different tiers of local government. The highest levels of administrative geographies are the four constituent countries of the UK – England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Great Britain is strictly speaking just the largest island in the British Isles, but 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. The

¹ This section relies heavily on the Office of National Statistics beginner's guide to UK Geography, see <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/index.html>

Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are not part of the UK and are not included in the Understanding Society sample.

England is further divided into Government Office Regions. Government Offices for the Regions were established across England in 1994. Reflecting a number of government departments they aim to work in partnership with local people and organisations in order to maximise prosperity and the quality of life within their area. They are built up of complete counties/unitary authorities so although they are subject to change they always reflect administrative boundaries as at the end of the previous year. In 1996 the Government Office Regions also became the primary classification for the presentation of regional statistics.

The structure of the lower layers of government is different in each of the countries. In England, for historical reasons there is a diverse lower government structure comprising Non-metropolitan Districts, Unitary Authorities, London Boroughs and Metropolitan Districts (see section 3 on Local Authority Districts). Wales has Unitary Authorities, whereas Scotland's tier of local government is called Council Areas. District Councils form the local government in Northern Ireland. Finally, electoral wards/divisions can be seen as administrative geographies as they are the spatial units used to elect local government councillors in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Electoral geography in the UK is complex due to the different electoral systems and different areas used to elect members to different levels of administration. In the late 1990's all four countries in the UK created their own parliaments and electoral systems, the London Assembly for England, the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Parliament, and the Northern Ireland Assembly. Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies span the whole of the UK. They are the areas used to elect Members of Parliament to the House of Commons, the primary legislative chamber of the UK. Finally, electoral wards/divisions are the key building block of UK electoral geography, being the spatial units used to elect local government councillors in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Statistical geographies are geographies that are mainly used for reasons of statistical reporting, or that were created merely for the reason of facilitating statistical reporting. Government Office Regions, for example, are used to present regional statistics. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are not subdivided into GORs but are listed with them as regions in UK-wide statistical comparisons. Further statistical geographies in the UK comprise Census Area Statistics wards which are used for 2001 Census outputs. Unlike actual electoral wards/divisions they are required to meet certain minimum size thresholds in order to prevent disclosure of Census data. Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a new geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics. Within England and Wales a Lower Layer (minimum population 1000) and a Middle Layer (minimum population 5000) were introduced. Unlike electoral wards, these SOA layers are of consistent size across the country and won't be subjected to regular boundary change. In Northern Ireland there is a single layer of SOAs with minimum population 1300. The Scottish equivalents of SOAs are 'data zones' (minimum population 500) and the 'intermediate geography' (minimum population 2500). At the lower level, Output Areas (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 (EDs), although EDs are still used for census data collection.

Apart from the geographies that are used for government administration, elections and for the presentation of area statistics there are a diverse number of *other geographies* in the UK for which statistics are produced. In the area of health, for example, the organisation of the National Health Service includes a lower tier in all of the countries of the UK, as well as an upper tier in some countries. Moreover, there are bodies responsible for local education administration. Another example is Travel to Work Areas which were created for use in labour market analysis and comprise areas in which of the resident economically active population, at least 75 per cent work in the area, and also, that of everyone working in the area, at least 75 per cent live in the area. The *other geographies* listed below also include two widely used area classifications, Output Area Classifications and the Urban-rural Indicators.

3. Overview of available geo-codes and documentation

The table gives an overview of all the geo-codes and classifications available for *Understanding Society*, the access conditions and the geographical coverage (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), as well as the study number needed to order the data. Documentation of geo-codes and classifications in alphabetical order is provided on the pages following the table.

Table: Overview of available geo-codes for Understanding Society

geography	Variable name	description	Access condition	Coverage	<i>Understanding Society</i> study number
1. Administrative geographies					
Country	country	Top-level administrative geography: England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland	General release	E,W,S,NI	6614
Government Office Regions	gor	primary classification for the presentation of regional statistics	General release	E,W,S,NI	6614
Local Authority District	lad	Local government tier	Special license	E,W,S,NI	6666
2. Electoral geographies					
Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies	pcon	Areas used to elect Members of Parliament (MPs) to the House of Commons	Special license	E,W,S,NI	6668
3. Statistical geographies					
Government Office Regions	gor	primary classification for the presentation of regional statistics	General release	E,W,S,NI	6614
Census Area Statistics Wards	casward	Statistical wards created for 2001 Census outputs	Special license (UK only)	E,W,S,NI	6669
Lower Layer Super Output Area / Super Output Areas / Data Zones	lsoa/soani/dzone	Geographies designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics	Special license (UK only)	E,W,S,NI	6670
4. Other geographies / classifications					
Local Education Authorities/Education and Library Boards	lea	LEA: Bodies responsible for the local administration of state sector education services in England and Wales (prior to 1 April 2009). ELB: local education administration in Northern Ireland	Special license	E,W,S,NI	6671
Strategic Health Authority	sha	Upper tier of National Health Service organisation, if any	Special license	E,S	6672
Primary Care Organisations	pct	Lower tier of National Health Service organisation	Special license	E,W,S,NI	6673

Grid Reference	easting northing osgrdind	Description of postcode location to nearest metre	Secure data access (UK only)	E,W,S,NI	6676
Output Area Codes	oac	Classification of Output Areas according to key characteristics common to the population in that grouping	Special license	E,W,S,NI	6674
Travel to Work Areas	ttwa	Areas in which the bulk of the resident population also work	Special license	E,W,S,NI	6675
Urban-rural indicator	Urindew/urindsc/urindni	Urban and rural classification of Output Areas	General release	E,W,S,NI	6614

Census Area Statistics Ward (CASWARD)

These are wards that are used for the reporting of Census statistics. In England and Wales they differ from the usual wards in that eighteen wards whose count of population and households fell below the threshold for the non-disclosive release of Census data were combined with seven 'receiving wards' to form acceptably sized areas for Census output and permit publication of data. The sub-threshold wards are not separately identified and postcodes in these 'statistical' wards have been assigned to their 'receiving' ward. The resulting set of wards is known as CAS wards.

Scotland also has CAS wards but these are created from best-fit Output Area (OA) aggregations to 2001 electoral wards. There are 1222 Scottish CAS wards, with a minimum size of 50 residents and 20 households.

In Northern Ireland 2001 Census outputs use the 582 electoral wards in existence at Census Day. The electoral wards exceeded the 100 residents / 40 households threshold.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	Comments
Census Area Statistics (CAS) ward	00AAFA-47UGGM 00NAMA-00PTPL 01C01-32C31 99C99 95AA01-95ZZ51 'missing'	England Wales Scotland Scottish postcode with no CAS ward assigned Northern Ireland no information available.

Source: Adapted from National Statistics Postcode Directory: 2011 User Guide v3. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of OPSI.

Useful web link: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/administrative/england/electoral-wards-divisions/statistical-wards--cas-wards-and-st-wards/index.html> (accessed 27.10.2011)

Country (country)

This is the code for each of the four constituent countries of the United Kingdom.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Codes	Comments
Country	1 2 3 4 'missing'	England Wales Scotland Northern Ireland no information available

Source: Adapted from National Statistics Postcode Directory: 2011 User Guide v3. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of OPSI.

Government Office Region (GOR)

The nine GORs are the primary statistical subdivisions of England and also the areas in which the Government Offices for the Regions fulfil their role. Each GOR covers a number of local authorities. Pseudo codes are included for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	Comments
Government Office Region	1-9 10 11 12 'missing'	England Wales (pseudo) Scotland (pseudo) Northern Ireland (pseudo) no information available

Source: Adapted from National Statistics Postcode Directory: 2011 User Guide v3. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of OPSI.

Grid reference (Easting, Northing, Osgrdind)

Neither Ireland nor Great Britain use latitude or longitude in describing geographic locations. The British National Grid is the common referencing format for all geographic data in Great Britain. Any location can be described in terms of its distance in metres 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 - eg 271384, 096572 indicates a point 271km, 384m east and 96km, 572m north of the origin.

The Irish Grid is independent of the coordinate system used in Great Britain. Northern Ireland, along with the Irish Republic, is covered by the Irish National Grid. It uses a point in Lough Ree as origin. Coordinates in the dataset are given in the format of eastings and northings relative to the origin.

Postcode grid references are given in 1 metre resolution and the majority are derived from the Ordnance Survey product ADDRESS-POINT that contains grid references for each address to 0.1 metre resolution. Newly introduced postcodes will initially have a grid reference that has been imputed by ONS Geography and will then be replaced by improved ADDRESS-POINT grid references which use data supplied by Ordnance Survey's field surveyors. The grid references provided for Northern Ireland postcodes are derived from the OSNI product 'Pointer' and use the Irish National Grid system.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	Comments
National grid reference - Easting	6 character numeric grid reference (max) or 'missing'	The Ordnance Survey postcode grid reference Easting to 1 metre resolution. Grid references for postcodes in Northern Ireland relate to the Irish Grid system.
National grid reference - Northing	7 character numeric grid reference (max) or 'missing' (max)	The Ordnance Survey postcode grid reference Northing to 1 metre resolution. Grid references for postcodes in Northern Ireland relate to the Irish Grid system.
Grid reference positional quality indicator (osgrdind)	1-6, 8-9	Shows the status of the assigned grid reference: 1 = within the building of the matched address closest to the postcode mean 2 = as for status value 1, except by visual inspection of Landline maps (Scotland only) 3 = approximate to within 50 metres 4 = postcode unit mean (mean of matched addresses with the same postcode, but not snapped to a building) 5 = imputed by ONS, by reference to surrounding postcode grid references 6 = postcode sector mean, (mainly PO Boxes) 8 = postcode terminated prior to Gridlink® initiative, last known ONS postcode grid reference 9 = no grid references available.

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Local Authority Districts (non-metropolitan districts, unitary authorities, London Boroughs, metropolitan districts, Scottish council areas, Northern Irish district council areas)

Local authority (LA) is a generic term for any level of local government in the UK. Local Authority Districts comprise a number of different geographies which evolved historically according to the local government structure that existed for the different parts of England and the other countries of the UK. They are:

- 1) Non-metropolitan Districts (LAD) that form the lower tier of the two-tier local government structure found in many parts of England. They are subdivisions of the non-metropolitan (shire) counties;
- 2) Unitary Authorities (UA) in England and Wales that are areas with single tiers of local government;
- 3) London Boroughs (LB) which are the local government areas within Greater London. 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;
- 4) Metropolitan Districts (MD) which are subdivisions of the 6 metropolitan county areas of England. Since the abolition of the metropolitan county councils in 1986 the metropolitan district councils have been unitary administrations;
- 5) Council Areas (CA) which were established across the whole of Scotland in 1996. Their respective councils form the single tier of local government in Scotland;
- 6) District Council Areas (DCA) which were established across the whole of Northern Ireland in 1996. Their respective councils form the single tier of local government in Northern Ireland.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	Comments
Local Authority District	E06000001-56 E07000001-239 E08000001-36 E09000001-33 W06000001-24 S12000001-44 95A-95Z 'missing'	England (UA) England (LAD) England (MD) England (LB) Wales Scotland Northern Ireland no information available

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Local Education Authorities (LEAs) /Education and Library Boards (ELB)

LEAs are the bodies responsible for the local administration of state sector education services in England and Wales. Each LEA coincides with either a county, unitary authority, metropolitan district or London borough, and LEA boundaries are adjusted annually to correspond with any changes to the boundaries of these areas.

In Northern Ireland local education administration is the responsibility of five Education and Library Boards (Belfast, North Eastern, South Eastern, Southern, Western), which each cover one or more complete district council areas.

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

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	Comments
Local Education Authority / Education and Library Board	201-938 660-681; QA-RJ 951-955 'missing'	England (code range contains gaps) Wales Scotland (district code) Northern Ireland no information available.

Source: Adapted from National Statistics Postcode Directory: 2011 User Guide v3. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of OPSI.

Useful web link:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/prodcom/annual--pra27-to-pra33500-/pra28510-product-sales-and-trade--treatment-and-coating-of-metals/local-education-authorities.html> (accessed 27.10.2011)

Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA), Scottish Data Zones (DZONE), Super Output Areas (SOANI)

SOAs exist in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; the Scottish equivalents are called data zones. They are geographic hierarchies designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics. Unlike electoral wards, the SOA/DZONES are of consistent size across the country and will not be subjected to frequent boundary change.

England and Wales: The Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) have been designed with a minimum population figure of 1000 and a mean population figure of 1500 and each consists of a grouping of Output Areas, typically five. There are 34,378 L SOAs in England and Wales.

Scotland: Data zones are the core Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics geography. There are 6505 data zones, each containing between 500 and 1000 household residents.

Northern Ireland: In Northern Ireland there is a single layer of Super Output Areas. There are 890 Northern Irish SOAs (based on Output Areas) of size 1300-2800 residents. SOAs were built by merging the smaller Output Areas (OAs), attempting to optimise the similarity of population size and taking account, as far as possible, of patterns of tenure and household type.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	Comments
Lower Layer Super Output Area	E01000001- E01032482 W01000001- W01001896 S99999999 N99999999 'missing'	Lower Layer SOA in England Lower Layer SOA in Wales Scotland (pseudo) Northern Ireland (pseudo) no information available
Scottish datazone	S01000001- S01006505 E99999999 W99999999 N99999999 'missing'	Data zone in Scotland England (pseudo) Wales (pseudo) Northern Ireland (pseudo) no information available
Super Output Area	95AA01S1 – 95ZZ16S2 99ZZ99Z9 'missing'	SOA in Northern Ireland postcode in England/Wales/Scotland (pseudo) no information available

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Output Area Classification (OAC)

The 2001 Area Classification of output areas is used to group together geographic areas according to key characteristics common to the population in that grouping. These groupings are called clusters, and are derived using 2001 population census data. The largest cluster is the supergroup, of which there are seven. Each supergroup is further split into groups (21 in total) and further into subgroups (52 in total). The classification was originally produced with lower case characters which have been converted to upper case for consistency purposes on the National Statistics Postcode Directory.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	Comments
Output Area Classification	1A1 – 7B2 'missing'	OA classification in UK no information available

Source: Adapted from National Statistics Postcode Directory: 2011 User Guide v3. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of OPSI.

More information is available at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/census-2001/news-archive/2004-2006/uk-census-based-classification-of-output-areas/index.html> (accessed 27.10.2011)

The OAC user group website is: <http://www.areaclassification.org.uk/>

Primary Care Organisations (PCOs), Local Health Boards (LHBs), Community Health Partnerships (CHPs) and Local Commissioning Groups (LCGs)

These are the lower level of National Health Service organisation. The Primary Care geography in England was reorganised significantly on 1st October 2006. When PCOs were statutorily defined, they were done so in terms of whole local authority districts and/or electoral wards (in most instances) that existed at the time. There are now 148 Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and four Care Trusts.

The 22 Local Health Boards in Wales (from 1 April 2003) merged to form seven LHBs on 1 October 2009.

Community Health Partnerships (CHPs) were established by the NHS Boards in Scotland as key building blocks in the modernisation of the NHS joint services. Managed jointly by local authorities and health boards, CHPs nest within Council Area boundaries but may cross Health Board boundaries. There are 40 CHPs covering the whole of Scotland.

Five Local Commissioning Groups (LCGs) were introduced in Northern Ireland on 1 April 2009.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	Comments
Primary Care Trust /	E16000001-150	PCT, England
Local Health Board /	W11000023-29	LHB, Wales
Care Trust /	E17000001-6	Care Trust/Care Trust Plus, England
Care Trust Plus /	S03000001-42	CHP, Scotland
Community Health	ZC001-ZC0005	LCG, Northern Ireland
Partnership / Local	'missing'	no information available
Commissioning		
Group		

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Useful web link: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/health/index.html> (accessed 27.10.2011)

Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs), Health Boards (HBs) and Health & Social Care Board

These are the upper level of National Health Service organisation. Health areas were reorganised in 2002 and 2006 (England), 2003 (Wales), 2006 (Scotland) and 2009 (NI). On 1 July 2006 the number of Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) in England reduced from 28 to 10. The boundaries of the new SHAs are coterminous with Government Office Regions (GORs), with the exception of the South East GOR which comprises two SHAs (which are constituted from groups of local authorities). SHAs continue to report to the Department of Health.

The current structure of health administration in Wales came into effect on 1 October 2009. There is no upper tier of NHS organisation, as the lower tier -Local Health Boards (LHBs) – report to the NHS Wales Department of the National Assembly through 3 Regional Offices, which are not distinguished in the code.

Scotland has 14 Health Boards (HBs) which report directly to the Scottish Executive. In 2006 Scotland introduced a second tier of health administration with the creation of Community Health Partnerships which report to the Scottish Health Boards.

In Northern Ireland the Health & Social Care Board effective from 1st April 2009 replaced the 4 previous Health & Social Services Boards.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	Comments
Strategic health authority/ health board/ health authority/ health & social care board	E18000001-10 W99999999 S08000001-14 ZB001 'missing'	SHA, England pseudo code, Wales HB, Scotland health and social care board in NI no information available.

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Useful web link: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/health/index.html> (accessed 27.10.2011)

Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs)

Travel to Work Areas are used in labour market analysis and reflect reasonably self-contained zones in which the bulk of the resident population also work. The previous areas were built from 1991 electoral wards and the 243 current TTWAs were defined in 2007 using 2001 Census information on home and work addresses. They are based on Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England and Wales, data zones in Scotland, and Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	Comments
TTWAs	E30000001-158 W22000001-20 S22000001-46 K01000001-8 007-209 'missing'	England Wales Scotland cross-border Northern Ireland no information available.

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Useful web link: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/other/travel-to-work-areas/index.html> (accessed 27.11.2011)

Urban-Rural Indicator (URINDEW, URINDSC, URINDNI)

England & Wales: The rural and urban classification of postcodes for England and Wales is based on the National Statistics Rural and Urban Classification of Output Areas released on 21 July 2004; the product of joint work between the Countryside Agency, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; National Assembly for Wales and Office for National Statistics.

Postcodes on the NSPD have been assigned to the urban or rural category of the Output Area into which each falls. Output Areas are treated as 'urban' if the majority of the population of an Output Area lives within settlements with a population of 10,000 or more. The remaining 'rural' Output Areas are grouped into three other broad morphological types based on the predominant settlement component – i.e. whether the population density for the output area shows characteristics that are predominantly town and fringe, predominantly village or predominantly dispersed (the latter includes hamlets and isolated dwellings). The classification also categorises Output Areas based on context – i.e. whether the wider surrounding area of a given output area is sparsely populated or less sparsely populated.

Scotland: The urban/rural classification in Scotland is consistent with the Scottish Executive's core definition of rurality which defines settlements of 3,000 or less people to be rural. It also classifies areas as remote based on drive times from settlements of 10,000 or more people.

Northern Ireland: In Northern Ireland, an eight band categorisation of settlements was introduced in February 2005. These categories range from Band A (Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area) to Band H (Small village, hamlet and open countryside) with bands A – E being classed as 'urban' and bands F – H being classed as 'rural'. The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland Planning Service statutory settlement development limits have been used as the geographical delineation of settlements.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	Comments
Urban/Rural Indicator (England & Wales)	1	- Urban \geq 10k – sparse: COA falls within Urban settlements with a population of 10,000 or more and the wider surrounding area is sparsely populated
	2	- Town and Fringe – sparse: COA falls within the Small Town and Fringe areas category and the wider surrounding area is sparsely populated
	3	- Village – sparse: COA falls within the Village category and the wider surrounding area is sparsely populated
	4	- Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling – sparse: COA falls within the Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling category and the wider surrounding area is sparsely populated

	5	- Urban \geq 10k – less sparse: COA falls within Urban settlements with a population of 10,000 or more and the wider surrounding area is less sparsely populated
	6	- Town and Fringe – less sparse: COA falls within the Small Town and Fringe areas category and the wider surrounding area is less sparsely populated
	7	- Village – less sparse: COA falls within the Village category and the wider surrounding area is less sparsely populated
	8	- Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling – less sparse: COA falls within the Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling category and the wider surrounding area is less sparsely populated
	9	- postcode in Scotland/Northern Ireland (pseudo)
	'missing'	- no information available
Urban/Rural Indicator (Scotland)	1	- Large Urban Area: Settlement of over 125,000 people
	2	- Other Urban Area: Settlement of 10,000 to 125,000 people
	3	- Accessible Small Town: Settlement of 3,000 to 10,000 people, within 30 minutes drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more
	4	- Remote Small Town: Settlement of 3,000 to 10,000 people, with a drive time of 30 to 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
	5	- Very Remote Small Town: Settlement of 3,000 to 10,000 people, with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
	6	- Accessible Rural: Settlement of less than 3,000 people, within 30 minutes drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more
	7	- Remote Rural: Settlement of less than 3,000 people, with a drive time of 30 to 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
	8	- Very Remote Rural: Settlement of less than 3,000 people, with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more
	9	- postcode in England/Wales/Northern Ireland (pseudo)
	'missing'	- no information available
Urban/Rural Indicator (Northern Ireland)	A – E (Urban)	A = Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area B = Derry Urban Area C = Large Town: 18,000 and under 75,000 people D = Medium Town: 10,000 and under 18,000 people E = Small Town: 4,500 and under 10,000 people
	F – H (Rural)	F = Intermediate Settlement: 2,250 and under 4,500 people; G = Village: 1,000 and under 2,250 people H = Small Village, Hamlet or Open Countryside: less than 1,000 people
	Z	postcode in England/Wales/Scotland (pseudo)
	'missing'	no information available

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Useful web link: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/products/area-classifications/rural-urban-definition-and-la/index.html> (accessed 27.10.2011)

Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies

England, Wales, and Northern Ireland

Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies boundaries are based on the 5th Periodical Parliamentary Review that was promulgated in July 2007 (defined in terms of wards as at 12th April 2005). Subsequently, an amending order in July 2008, which affected the Welsh Westminster constituency boundaries, and a further amendment order (operative 18th March 2009) realigning the boundaries for Daventry, South Northamptonshire, Somerton & Frome and Wells, have also been applied. The new boundaries came into effect at the May 2010 General Election. No further changes are envisaged until 2014/2015.

Scotland

The Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Act 2004, passed by the UK Parliament in July 2004, came into effect upon the dissolution of the last UK Parliament and breaks the linkage between UK Parliament constituencies and Scottish Parliament constituencies. This has enabled the Westminster Government to reduce the number of Scottish constituencies in the UK parliament in line with recommendations made by the Boundary Commission for Scotland following its the Fifth Periodical Review of Constituencies (December 2004).

The Parliamentary Constituencies (Scotland) Order 2005 details the reduction of the number of constituencies for the UK Parliament from 72 to 59 Scottish seats. The changes bring the size of Scottish constituencies more into line with the size of English seats. English constituencies currently contain nearly 70,000 voters on average, compared to the Scottish average of 53,500.

Details of the code ranges:

Data description	Range of codes	comments
Westminster Parliamentary Constituency	E14000530-1062 W07000041-80 S14000001-59 N06000001-18 'missing'	England Wales Scotland Northern Ireland no information available

Source: Adapted from National Statistics Postcode Directory: 2011 User Guide v1. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of OPSI.

Useful web link: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/electoral/westminster-parliamentary-constituencies/index.html> (accessed 27.10.2011)