Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Affairs

Review of Equality Evidence
in Rural Scotland

social research

REVIEW OF EQUALITY EVIDENCE IN RURAL SCOTLAND

Rural Science and Analysis Unit
Scottish Government

Scottish Government Social Research
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**The views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and
do not necessarily represent those of Scottish Ministers.**

Table of Contents

1   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   This review focuses on 6 protected characteristics of age, disability, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation and considers how presence of these protected characteristics may impact on access to, and satisfaction with, service provision in rural Scotland. It collates statistics and key findings from the literature in order to improve understanding of the profile of equality groups in rural areas of Scotland as well as to provide an overview of the various equality issues and their impact on a range of policy issues including: employment, health, housing, transport, poverty, education and discrimination.

1.2   The review does not consider the 3 protected characteristics of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity due to a lack of statistical data and relevant literature in rural Scotland.

1.3   The review does not consider environmental policy areas such as access to and use of the outdoors, or varying influences of people with protected characteristics on land use decision making. These policy areas are acknowledged as important and further work will be developed in 2015 to review them relative to specific protected characteristics.

1.4   Although the review was undertaken in 2014 it is apparent that contemporary research is relatively scarce and as a result some of the literature referenced in the review is quite dated. While such evidence can provide useful insights, there are obvious limitations with this data, particularly around its relevance to the current policy context. Similarly, although some additional statistical analysis was commissioned, sample numbers were often too small to provide any meaningful analysis in a rural-urban context. This is particularly the case for the characteristics of race, religion and sexual orientation.

1.5   The review identified that the rural population is older than the urban population. Just under a quarter (24%) of the population in remote rural areas is aged 65 years and over, compared with 19% in accessible rural areas and 17% in the rest of Scotland[1]. According to the latest census figures there are 6 council areas (all rural) in which one fifth of the population are aged 65 and over: Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, Eilean Siar, South Ayrshire, Scottish Borders and Perth and Kinross and in some areas the growth in older populations has been substantial; Orkney's population aged 65 and over increased by almost a third and Shetland's by almost a quarter between 2001 and 2011.

1.6   Similarly, there are less younger people in rural areas than urban with out-migration of young people being identified in the review as a particular problem. Around 18% of the population living in remote rural areas and 20%

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[1] http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/special-area-population-estimates/population-estimates-by-urban-rural-classification

of those living in accessible rural areas are aged 16-34, compared with 26% for the rest of Scotland[2].

1.7   According to the Scottish Household Survey, overall there is a lower proportion of adults with a long term limiting illness or disability living in rural areas compared to urban areas. In 2012, 21% of the rural population reported having a disability or long term limiting illness compared with 26% in urban areas. This lower proportion is despite the fact that there is a higher proportion of older people living in rural areas and that the prevalence of disability and long term limiting illness increases with age.

1.8   However, data from the Census in 2011 also shows that levels of disability are rising in many of the smaller and more rural councils. Further it shows that a higher percentage of the population in remote small towns reported having a disability or long term limiting illness compared with remote rural areas or urban areas (32%, 22% or 26% respectively, Scottish Household Survey 2012).

1.9   There were more women than men in Scotland in 2011 (51.5% compared to 48.5%) and this is the case for all council areas except the Shetland Islands (Census, 2011).

1.10   Whilst the largest concentrations of ethnic minorities are found in the cities, every council area of Scotland has seen an increase in the proportion of their population who were born outside of the UK between 2001 and 2011, including in rural areas. According to latest census figures all council areas except for Eilean Siar and Orkney Islands now have more than 1% of their population from a minority ethnic group.

1.11   There has been a decrease in stated religious affiliation in both urban and rural areas since 2001. According to the Census, there was an 11 percentage point fall between 2001 and 2011 in the proportion of people reporting they had a religion. This decrease occurred in every council area, though some of the more rural council areas experienced the largest falls, for instance, in Angus there was a decrease of 14 percentage points.

1.12   There is no sexual orientation question in the Census, resulting in a lack of any baseline data in respect of the lesbian, gay, bisexual population in Scotland. However, for the first time in 2011 the Scottish Household Survey included a question on the sexual orientation of respondents. According to this survey data, there are slightly less people identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual in rural areas compared to urban areas (0.5% and 1.2% respectively). However, it is important to note that the surveys may underestimate the lesbian, gay and bisexual population due to under-reporting.

1.13   The experience of policy areas in relation to protected characteristics is complex and dependent on the type of service discussed. For example young

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[2] http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/special-area-population-estimates/population-estimates-by-urban-rural-classification

people and disabled people without a car and older people who no longer drive can all identify with similar issues around access and convenience of public transport but may have totally different perspectives on health care, employment or housing needs.

1.14   Given the dispersed nature of the population it is not surprising that transport was identified in the evidence review as a concern in rural areas. The issue can be particularly severe for those who do not drive (younger people, older people, those with a disability, lower income or vulnerable people) in cases where public transport is not physically accessible, convenient nor affordable. There is evident good practice developing around community bus networks, lift sharing and more accessible ferries and terminals in certain areas.

1.15   The literature also identifies that many areas of rural Scotland appear to have a lack of available housing particularly for newly forming households (the young or less well-off in-migrants), for older people who require adaptations to allow them to live in their own home, or more specialist provision for older and/or disabled people. Recent years have seen new approaches to housing supply in rural Scotland but, as in other parts of Scotland, challenges remain.

1.16   Generally employment rates are higher in rural Scotland than urban Scotland and this is mirrored in the employment rates of people with protected characteristics: Disabled people, younger people (16-34), older people are more likely to have employment in rural areas than urban. However there are still differences, for example disabled people are still less likely to be employed in rural areas than non-disabled people. Similar evidence is not available for race and religion in rural Scotland although some qualitative studies do refer to the potential under-employment in terms of skills of people from different ethnic groups.

1.17   Statistics suggest that fewer school leavers in remote rural areas go on to further education or training but a higher proportion gain employment.

1.18   The review found that people in rural areas tended to be more positive about their experiences of primary care services however there were still issues related to access to some types of care services (including out of hours care) and access to medicines. This was a mixture of a perceived lack of locally available services and poor public transport networks to enable travel to services. There was also some evidence that mental health services were less available in rural Scotland and that due to closer knit communities it was sometimes more difficult for people to make use of those services that were provided.

2   INTRODUCTION

Background

2.1   The main aim of the report is to provide a profile of equality groups in rural areas, give an overview of the various equality issues and their impact on a range of policy issues in rural Scotland and to highlight key messages from the relevant research in this area.

2.2   This report identifies key facts, relevant research and evidence gaps for the 6 protected characteristics: age, disability, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation across a range of policy areas including: employment, health, housing, transport, poverty, education, and discrimination in rural Scotland. The review does not consider the protected characteristics of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity due to a lack of statistical data and relevant literature.

2.3   This review does not consider environmental policy areas such as access and use of the outdoors and influences on land use decision making[3].

2.4   Specifically, the report:

- Establishes baseline research on the 6 protected characteristics in a rural context.
- Identifies employment, education, health, housing policy related research findings
- Identifies gaps in the evidence available
- Provides a general backdrop for Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) for rural policies and equality budgeting

Methodology

2.5   An initial search was conducted for relevant journal articles using a number of search engines including Kande, Idox and Google Scholar and using a comprehensive list of pre-determined search terms. This yielded a limited number of journal articles. A search was then conducted on the SG website to identify any relevant research publications in this area. A full bibliography is included for readers interested in researching further detail. In addition, the Equalities Evidence Finder[4] was a valuable source of information for key facts in relation to the 6 protected characteristics and in identifying key publications across a number of policy areas.

2.6   Information is included in the report from a number of datasets including: Census 2001 and 2011; Scottish Household Survey; Scottish Health Survey; Annual Population Survey and Labour Force Survey. In addition, primary

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[3] New work examining these aspects will be developed and published in 2015
[4] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/DataGrid

analysis was conducted on some of the datasets, i.e. the Scottish Household Survey, and the Scottish Health Survey.

Limitations of the research

2.7   Contemporary research is scarce and as a result some of the literature referenced in the review is quite dated. While such evidence can provide useful insights, there are obvious limitations with this data, particularly around its relevance to the current policy context. Where possible the most up to date information is included in the review to ensure the evidence presented is as relevant to the current policy context as possible. In addition, priority is given to research carried out and documents published after 2000.

2.8   Sample numbers are often too small to provide any meaningful analysis in a rural-urban context. This is particularly the case for the protected characteristics of race, religion and sexual orientation. No questions on sexual orientation are included in the Census so baseline figures for this population group are based on estimates.

2.9   Due to a lack of evidence and timing of the review only 6 of the 9 protected characteristics have been discussed: gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity are not considered. However, lack of data also impacts on the depth of consideration of the included characteristics with a limited range of evidence found particularly for religion and sexual orientation.

2.10   As a general rule only information specifically related to rural Scotland is included in the report. Where comparisons are deemed to be useful, Scotland wide information is included. It is outwith the scope of the review to include any EU or other international studies. However, some relevant UK based studies are referenced in the bibliography.

Structure of the report

2.11   This paper begins by presenting the key facts available in relation to each of the protected equality characteristics; age, disability, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation in a rural Scotland context.

2.12   The rural key facts in relation to the policy areas of employment, health, housing, transport, education, poverty, and discrimination are discussed for protected equality groups. Whether or not these policy issues are discussed in relation to a particular equality group depends on the literature available and on the relevance of the policy area on the particular protected characteristic being discussed.

2.13   Table 1 below outlines which policy issues are discussed in relation to which protected characteristic in this paper.

Table 1: Policy issues discussed by protected characteristic

	Older people	Young People	Disability	Race	Religion	Sex	Sexual orientation
Profile	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Employment		√	√	√		√	
Health	√	√	√			√	
Housing	√	√	√	√			
Transport	√	√	√			√	
Poverty			√	√		√	
Education		√		√			
Discrimination				√			√

3   RURAL KEY FACTS FOR PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

3.1   The following section outlines the key facts available in relation to age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sex and sexual orientation in a rural Scottish context.

Age

3.2   Rural areas in Scotland have a much higher proportion of the population aged 65 years and over and have a lower proportion of the population in the 16-34 age group.

3.3   Just under a quarter of the population in remote rural areas is aged 65 years and over, compared with 19% in accessible rural areas and 17% in the rest of Scotland (Fig 1).

3.4   In addition, rural areas in Scotland have a much higher proportion of the population aged 45 years and over. Over half (54%) of the remote rural population belong to this age cohort. The comparable figures in accessible rural areas and the rest of Scotland are 50% and 44% respectively. The high numbers in this age cohort in rural Scotland has important implications for the future aging of the population there.

Fig 1: Age Distribution of Population by Geographic Area, 2013[5]
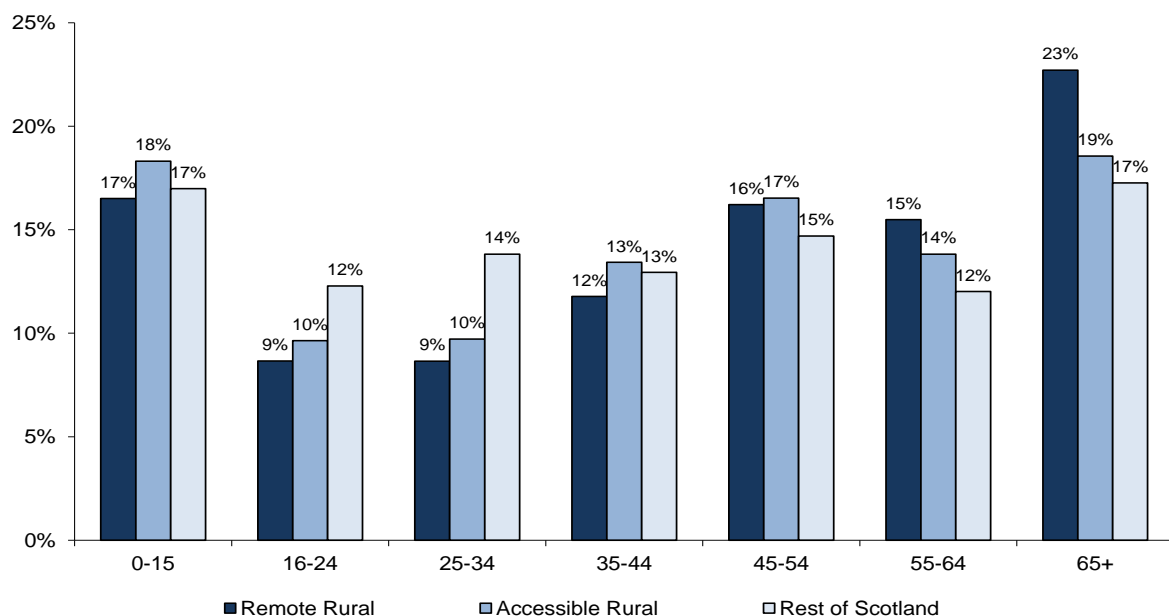
3.5   According to the latest census figures there are 6 council areas in which one fifth of the population are aged 65 and over: Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and

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[5] http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/special-area-population-estimates/population-estimates-by-urban-rural-classification

Galloway, Eilean Siar, South Ayrshire, Scottish Borders and Perth and Kinross. Between 2001 and 2011 Orkney's population aged 65 and over increased by almost a third and Shetland's by almost a quarter.

3.6   In contrast and despite average levels of children (0-16) living in rural Scotland, the number of young people (aged 16-34) is substantially lower than in urban Scotland. Around 18% of the population in remote rural areas and 20% of accessible rural areas are aged 16-34 compared with 26% for the rest of Scotland[6] .

3.7   A recent article by Atterton and Brodie (2014) showed that migration of young people in rural Scotland was complex and that any policy response would similarly need to be tailored to circumstances. They identified 4 types of youth migration patterns (positive net migration of young people aged 26-30); high population churn in and out amongst all young people; low population churn and negative net-migration of younger young people (aged 18 to 21) (in Skerratt et al, 2014).
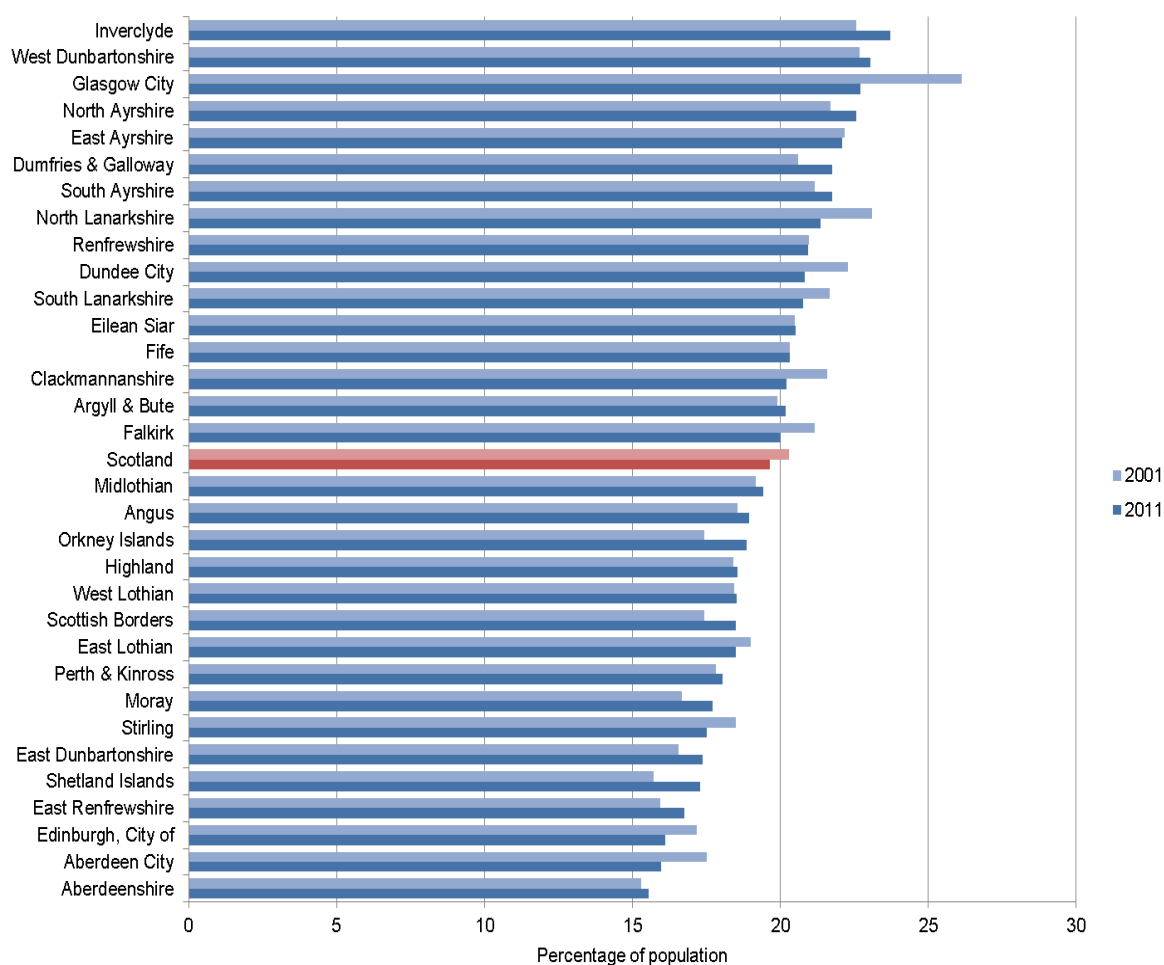
Disability

3.8   Levels of disability are lower overall in rural areas compared to urban areas, although higher rates are observed in remote small towns.

3.9   According to the Scottish Household Survey, overall there is a lower proportion of adults with a long term limiting illness or disability living in rural areas compared to urban areas. In 2012, 21% of the rural population reported having a disability or long term limiting illness compared with 26% in urban areas. This lower proportion is despite the fact that there is a higher proportion of older people living in rural areas and that the prevalence of disability and long term limiting illness increases with age.

3.10   However, a substantially higher percentage of the population in remote small towns reported having a disability or long term limiting illness compared with remote rural areas (32% and 22% respectively, Scottish Household Survey 2012).

3.11   Levels of disability in rural Scotland vary according to local authority area. According to the latest Census figures (Fig 2) the lowest prevalence of long-term activity-limiting health problems or disability was recorded in Aberdeenshire at 16%, while Eilean Siar was above average at 21%[7].

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[6] http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/special-area-population-estimates/population-estimates-by-urban-rural-classification
[7] http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/documents/censusresults/release2a/StatsBulletin2A.pdf

Fig 2 Long-term activity-limiting health problem or disability by council area, Scotland, 2001 and 2011 (Census, 2001 and 2011)

3.12   Many of the smaller and more rural councils often with ageing populations also recorded increasing levels of disability between 2001 and 2011, for example Shetland (17%) and Orkney (19%), Dumfries and Galloway (22%) (Census 2011).

Ethnicity (Race)

3.13   As this review considers sociological issues including behaviour and culture the term ethnicity has tended to be used instead of the term race.

3.14   While the largest concentrations of ethnic minorities are found in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen city and Dundee city, there are people from minority ethnic groups dispersed throughout Scotland including rural areas (Fig 3).

Fig 3 Minority ethnic groups by council area, Scotland, 2011
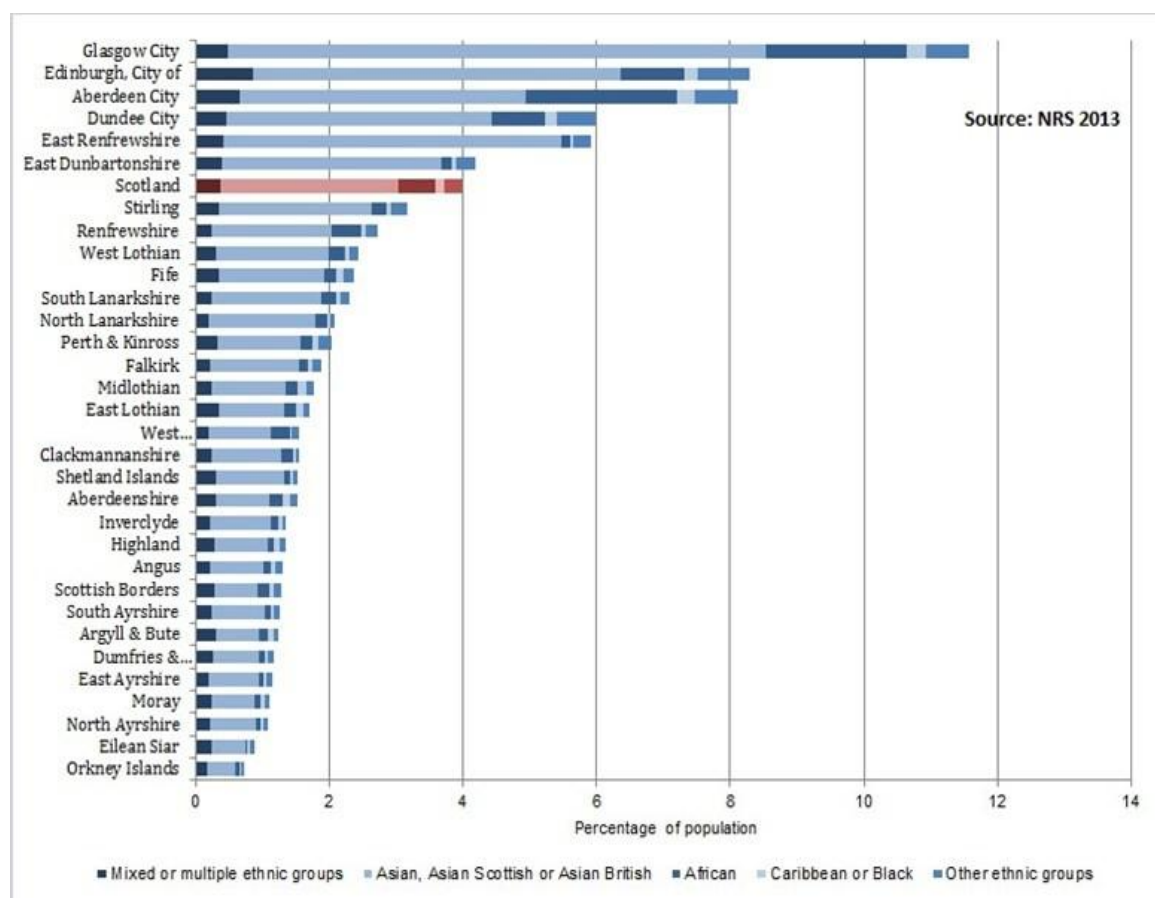
3.15 The size of the minority ethnic population doubled from 2% to 4% (just over 200,000) of the total population of Scotland between 2001 and 2011. While the largest increases have occurred in the four cities listed above, every council area of Scotland has seen an increase in this time period in the proportion of their population who were born outside of the UK. According to latest census figures all council areas except for Eilean Siar and Orkney Islands have more than 1% of their population from a minority ethnic group[8].

Religion

3.16 There has been a decrease in stated religious affiliation in both urban and rural areas since 2001 (Table 2).

3.17 According to the Census[9], there was an 11 percentage point fall between 2001 and 2011 in the proportion of people reporting they had a religion. This decrease occurred in every council area, though some of the more rural council areas experienced the largest falls, for instance, in Angus there was a decrease of 14 percentage points.

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[8] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/DataGrid/Ethnicity/EthPopMig
[9] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/10/8378/5

3.18 The proportion of the Scottish population who recorded their religion as Church of Scotland fell by a fifth since 2001. Only one council, Eilean Siar experienced an increase (5%) in the proportion of people identifying as Church of Scotland.

Table 2: Religion of Respondents in Urban and Rural Scotland (Scottish Household Survey, 2011)

Adults			Data year						All
			2011						
			6 fold Urban / rural (as in 1999 SHS Ann. Rep.)						
			Large urban areas	Other urban areas	Accessible small towns	Remote small towns	Accessible rural	Remote rural	
None			39	45	45	41	45	39	**42**
Church of Scotland			28	33	36	38	38	40	**32**
Roman Catholic			21	15	11	9	8	6	**16**
Other Christian			8	6	7	11	8	13	**8**
Muslim			3	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Buddhist			0	0	.	0	0	0	**0**
Sikh			0	0	.	.	.	.	**0**
Jewish			0	.	.	.	.	0	**0**
Hindu			1	0	.	0	.	.	**0**
Another religion			1	1	1	1	1	2	**1**
Base	*N*		*4520*	*3940*	*1110*	*720*	*1380*	*1220*	***12890***

Sex (Gender)

3.19 There were more women than men in Scotland in 2011 (51.5% compared to 48.5%).

3.20 According to latest Census figures, this is the case for all council areas except the Shetland Islands[10].

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[10] 49.2% female compared with 50.8% male.

Sexual Orientation

3.21   There is no sexual orientation question in the Census, resulting in a lack of any baseline data in respect of the lesbian, gay and bisexual population in Scotland.

3.22   However, for the first time in 2011 the Scottish Household Survey included a question on the sexual orientation of respondents. According to this survey data, 98% of adults in Scotland identified themselves as heterosexual or straight, whilst just under 1% identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Statistics published by the Integrated Household Survey show that the number of people who self- identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual in Scotland was 1.5%, the same number as in the UK as a whole. However, it is important to note that the surveys may underestimate the lesbian, gay and bisexual population due to under-reporting. In 2008, a report published by the Scottish Government (2008a) estimated that lesbian, gay and bisexual people made up around 5% of the Scottish population.

3.23   According to the survey there are slightly less people identifying as gay lesbian or bisexual in rural areas compared to urban areas (0.5% and 1.2% respectively)**.**

4   SUMMARY REVIEW OF POLICY EVIDENCE RELATED TO EQUALITY ISSUES

4.1   This section outlines the key facts in relation to employment, health, housing, transport, education, poverty and discrimination in a rural Scotland context and discusses the key equality implications of each topic.

Rural Employment

4.2   Primary sector industries employ more people in rural Scotland. Agriculture, forestry and fishing account for 15% of workers in remote rural areas compared to 10% in accessible rural areas and less than 1% in the rest of Scotland. However, in all areas in Scotland the tertiary sector is the most significant in terms of employment.

4.3   All indicators of economic activity are highest in rural Scotland. The economic activity rate (people employed or looking for work), employment rate (the number of people employed as a percentage of the total population of working age) and the rate of working age population that is either employed, in education or training are all higher in rural areas than in the rest of Scotland.

4.4   Similarly, unemployment rates (that is the number of people unemployed as a percentage of all those who are economically active, of all ages) are lower in rural Scotland than in the rest of Scotland. Some of the lowest unemployment levels are recorded in Shetland Islands, Orkney Islands and Aberdeenshire (3%).

4.5   According to results from Census 2011 most council areas saw an increase in the level of unemployment since 2001, though some, in particular rural ones, saw a *decrease*. The largest relative decreases in unemployment were observed in Eilean Siar and Orkney Islands.

4.6   According to latest Census figures, rural areas also recorded some of the longest working hours. Orkney Islands was the council area with the highest proportion of employed people aged 16 to 74 who worked 60 hours or more in a typical week. Orkney Islands has the highest proportion of people employed in Agriculture Forestry and Fishery which might be one of the reasons for this. Other rural council areas recording 60+ hours included Moray, Aberdeenshire, Eilean Siar, Argyll and Bute and Highland.

4.7   While in general employment is higher in rural areas, there is qualitative evidence to suggest that in some areas, particularly remote rural ones, there is a lack of choice in occupations and many are forced to travel long distances to work. Lack of suitable rural employment has been identified in the literature as one of the drivers of out-migration from rural areas (Jamieson and Groves, 2008).

Rural Employment – Disability

4.8   In general the employment rate for people with a disability is lower than amongst the general population; however some areas with the highest rates of employment amongst people with a disability are relatively rural areas.

4.9   The employment rate for people aged 16-64 with a disability in Scotland is 45.6%. The employment rates of people with a disability vary considerably across local authority areas. Some areas with the highest rates of employment amongst people with a disability are relatively rural areas such as Shetland Islands, Aberdeenshire, and the Highlands[11]. However, there is considerable variation in rural local authorities (for instance from 45% in Western Isles to 71% in Orkney).

4.10 There is qualitative evidence, albeit dated, to suggest that businesses in some rural areas do not feel fully equipped to employ people with disabilities. In evidence presented to the Equal Opportunities Committee Inquiry in 2005 rural disability interest groups argued that while small local businesses in some rural areas can be flexible when employing disabled people, in other rural areas, small businesses felt that they did not have the resources (human and capital) to employ people with disabilities (Scottish Government, 2008b).

Rural Employment – Ethnicity

4.11 There are small baseline numbers of ethnic minorities in Scotland and specifically in rural areas. This means that only broad statistical trends in economic activity for ethnic minority and white populations for the whole of Scotland are possible.

4.12 In addition, there have been a small number of qualitative studies undertaken which document the experiences of migrant workers in rural Scotland. These studies reveal evidence of vulnerability amongst the migrant workers with interviewees reporting breaches of health and safety, low pay, long and irregular hours of work, loss of accommodation where this was tied to work and lack of training opportunities (de Lima, 2006).

4.13 The research also revealed that migrants face substantial barriers in accessing services, particularly affordable accommodation and a lack of English language provision. The experience of isolation was also revealed to be a particular problem experienced by some of the migrants interviewed (Jentsch et al, 2007).

4.14 While evidence of vulnerability exists de Lima argues (2006) that the relationship cannot be over simplified to one of exploiter-exploited, as in many cases migrant workers were making shrewd decisions based on their circumstances. According to De Lima and Wright (2009), in general, research on rural labour migration tends to focus on economic drivers but other drivers

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[11] Corresponding with general high employment rates in these council areas.

are evident such as the experience of a new culture, the opportunity to meet new people and improve English skills, as well as quality of life issues.

4.15 A report carried out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission on human trafficking in Scotland has revealed that trafficking occurs throughout Scotland and dispels the myth that it is a problem confined to urban areas. Indeed, the research revealed evidence of forced labour in rural areas, such as Skye (2011).

Rural Employment – Young People

4.16 In recent years those in the 16-24 age group have seen a decrease in employment levels. Some rural local authorities recorded high youth employment rates, though this varies considerably by local authority area.

4.17 From 2012 to 2013 all age groups in Scotland have seen a small increase in their employment rate, *except* for the 16-24 age group, which saw a decrease over this period, from 53.2% to 52.6%. The highest employment rate observed for this age cohorts are in rural local authorities; Orkney Islands (73%) and Aberdeenshire (65%) along with Aberdeen City (72%)[12]. However, employment rates vary considerably between local authority areas.

4.18 Research conducted by Cartmel and Furlong (2000) suggested that while long term youth unemployment may appear less common in rural than in urban areas, low skilled and insecure employment and demand for qualified workers also tended to be lower in rural areas, meaning employment tended not to offer a suitable career path for young people. In addition research conducted by Pavis et al (2000) revealed that for young people in rural communities with a bad reputation, trying to secure employment could be difficult.

4.19 Lack of employment opportunities is acknowledged in the literature as a strong contributing factor influencing the migration of young people from rural areas (Jamieson and Groves, 2008). This was affirmed in SRUC's discussion of youth migration patterns in 2014 (Skerratt, 2014 page 29)

Rural Employment – Gender

4.20 Some of the highest employment rates recorded for both men and women in 2013 were in rural areas in Scotland. The areas with the highest male employment rates were Aberdeenshire, Shetland Islands and Moray (86.9%, 85.7% and 82.6% respectively). The areas with the lowest male employment rates were Dundee City, North Ayrshire and Glasgow City (63.1%, 63.4% and 64.8% respectively)[13].

4.21 The areas with the highest female employment rates were Shetland Islands, Orkney Islands, and East Dunbartonshire (80.5%, 79.4% and 76.0% respectively). The areas with the lowest female employment rates were North

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[12] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/05/4201/3
[13] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/05/4201/3

Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire and Dundee City (57.2%, 58.4% and 59.7% respectively)[14].

4.22   The literature suggests that barriers for women include lack of affordable childcare and traditional values leading to gender stereotyping. There is also evidence to suggest that women's contribution to the economy in rural areas may be particularly undervalued.

- For example, the persistence of gender stereotyping in rural areas can sometimes result in career advice for women which focuses on 'traditional' jobs (SG, 2009). This can result in the concentration of women in caring and service professions and in lower grade jobs in rural areas (SWC, 2012).

- Research undertaken on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation revealed that a combination of limited affordable childcare, cultural attitudes towards motherhood and geographical isolation led many young mothers to withdraw from paid employment in the two rural areas in Scotland examined (Pavis et al, 2000). The research also identified limited affordable childcare as a barrier to employment. This chimes with research findings published by the SWC (2012).

- The limited available evidence on employment and gender in a rural context suggests that women's contribution to the economy in rural areas may be particularly undervalued due to some of their work being underpaid or unpaid as helper spouses to farmers, hoteliers etc (Scottish Executive, 2001).

Rural Health

4.23   The key facts of rural health in Scotland are discussed followed by an examination of health policy in relation to the following equality characteristics: disability; older people; younger people and gender.

4.24   The life expectancy of people born in rural Scotland is higher than in the rest of Scotland. For males the life expectancy in remote rural and accessible rural areas is around 78 years, nearly 3 years more than the rest of Scotland. For females, the life expectancy in rural areas is around 82 years, nearly 2 years more than in the rest of Scotland (Scottish Government, 2012a).

4.25   However, there is evidence to suggest that accessing health services in rural areas can be problematic and that overall, there is a lower level of use of health services in rural areas for both acute and primary care services. The rates of emergency admissions to hospital are lower in rural Scotland, however, this may be due to an increased difficulty in accessing hospitals (Scottish Government, 2012a) and specialist health services (SCVO, 2008). Hence, while there is a lower use of health services in rural areas, the

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[14] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/05/4201/3

available evidence is not clear if this is to do with lower levels of need or other issues (Commission for Rural Communities, 2006).

4.26   Additional work by Scottish Government on the effect of different factors on experiences of primary care patients found that people in rural areas tended to be more positive about their experiences of primary care services especially around accessing GP services[15]. However there were some areas where people from remote areas were less positive. These included being able to obtain medicines, experience of out of hours health care (particularly in accessible rural areas) and in remote areas patients highlighted problems in having no permanent GP. Overall

• There were better experiences for those living in remote rural areas and less positive experiences for those who live in accessible small towns.

• For the other areas (accessible rural, remote small towns and other urban areas) people had similarly positive experiences to those in large urban areas.

• Accessing GP services was the main area where those living in remote rural areas had more positive experiences, and those in accessible small towns had less positive experiences.

• However people living in remote areas, accessible small towns and other urban areas found it slightly more difficult to get their medicines.

• People living in accessible rural areas, accessible and remote small towns tended to be less positive about their overall 'out of hours' (evenings, weekends) care than those in urban areas.

Rural Health – Disability

4.27   Individuals with a disability in rural areas are more likely to assess their health as good compared to those in urban areas. A rural-urban analysis of the Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) 2008-2011[16] reveals that those with a limiting long-term illness residing in rural areas are more likely to assess their general health as good or very good compared to their urban counterparts (46.5% compared to 36.9%[17]). In addition, those with a limiting long-term illness in rural areas have a higher WEMWBS score[18] than those in urban areas (47.5 and 45.3 respectively[19]).

4.28   Evidence suggests that for individuals experiencing mental health difficulties, accessing services in rural areas can be particularly problematic. Issues such

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[15] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/03/2822/9
[16] Data from the SHeS was combined for 4 consecutive years from 2008-2011 in order to allow more in-depth analysis of smaller populations which would not be possible for individual survey years (Scottish Government, 2012a).
[17] Internal Scottish Government analysis.
[18] The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) is a scale of 14 positively worded items, with five response categories, for assessing a population´s mental wellbeing. Scores can range between 14 and 70 with a higher score indicating greater mental wellbeing.
[19] Internal Scottish Government analysis.

as anonymity in small rural communities and the perceived stigma around mental health issues may affect the recognition, treatment and maintenance of mental health problems for people in rural areas (Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group 2001). In addition, providing mental health services to remote and rural locations may be challenging and the lack of counselling services in many rural areas, particularly the Highlands and Islands has been highlighted in the literature (Bondi, 2009).

4.29   There is evidence to suggest that the level of deaths from suicide is higher in rural areas than in urban areas (Commission for Rural Communities, 2006; Cosh, 2008).

Rural Health – Older People

4.30   Scotland's population is ageing and this demographic trend is expected to put significant pressures on healthcare facilities.

4.31   This is particularly relevant for rural Scotland because as noted previously, some rural LAs are projected to experience large increases in their population of older people. Estimates suggest that overall primary care expenditure in Scotland on those aged 65+ could increase by 70% by 2033 and that the amount on free personal care could increase by 200% by 2033 unless costs or eligibility are reduced (Skerret et al, 2012).

4.32   As noted above, in rural Scotland accessing most health services, particularly specialist services, involves patients travelling considerable distances. This is particularly difficult for elderly patients (Ekos, 2009).

4.33   However, older people in rural areas are more likely to assess their health as very good or good compared to the same age group residing in urban areas. According to combined data from the Scottish Health Survey 2008-2011, those aged between 65-74 and those aged 75+ residing in rural areas were more likely to assess their health as very good or good compared to the same age group residing in urban areas.

4.34   Those aged 65-74 in rural areas also scored higher on the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) than those in urban areas (52.5 and 50.7 respectively[20]). A similar trend can be observed with the over 75s where those in rural areas reported higher levels of positive mental well-being compared to those in urban areas (mean WEMWBS scores of 49.9 and 48.8 respectively[21]).

Rural Health – Young People

4.35   Survey results show no differences in self assessed general health between young people in urban and rural areas although young people in rural areas recorded higher levels of positive mental wellbeing than their urban counterparts.

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[20] Internal Scottish Government analysis.
[21] Internal Scottish Government analysis.

4.36   According to the Scottish Health Survey almost 90% of 16-24 year olds reported being in good or very good health, with no differences observed between rural and urban respondents. However, those aged 16-24 residing in rural areas recorded a mean WEMWBS score of 51.3 compared to 50.2 for those in urban areas[22].

4.37   The literature documents a lack of service provision for drug and alcohol misuse in rural areas. This may have a greater impact on younger people, particularly in relation to drug misuse (De Lima, 2008).

4.38   There is also qualitative evidence to suggest that sexual health issues are sometimes approached in a more conservative way in rural Scotland with a lack of anonymity making accessing sexual health services problematic and this is especially difficult for young people who wish to access contraception (Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group, 2001).

Rural Health - Gender

4.39   Both males and females in rural Scotland have a higher life expectancy than those in urban Scotland, with women in rural areas having the highest life expectancy overall.

4.40   Males and females in rural areas are more likely to assess their general health as good or very good compared with males and females in urban areas. They are also more likely to display greater levels of positive mental wellbeing compared to their urban counterparts.

4.41   According to results from the Scottish Health Survey for 2008-2011, a higher proportion of men in rural areas were likely to assess their general health as good or very good when compared with men in urban areas (79.7% compared to 75.7%). Similarly, a higher proportion of women in rural areas were likely to assess their general health as good or very good when compared with women in urban areas (80.2% compared to 73.6%)[23].

4.42   Males in rural areas had a mean WEMWBS score of 51.0 compared to 49.9 for men in urban areas. Females in rural areas recorded a mean WEMWBS score of 50.9 compared to 49.4[24] for females in urban areas.

4.43   There is some evidence to suggest that the centralisation of healthcare facilities in some rural areas in recent years has impacted more on women than men, because women they tend to be the main users of healthcare amenities (SWC, 2012).

4.44   Concern has also been expressed that women suffering post natal depression or domestic violence and other abuse may struggle to access the support in a safe and confidential way in a rural environment (SE, 2001).

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[22] Internal Scottish Government analysis.
[23] Internal Scottish Government analysis
[24] Internal Scottish Government analysis

4.45   Likewise, inconsistent mental health services in rural areas may have important implications for males. Research shows that young men have higher rates of suicide[25] and drugs, alcohol, and violence-related deaths than women (MacPherson and Bond, 2009; Boyle et al, 2005). In addition, evidence shows that certain parts of rural Scotland record higher than average male suicide rates[26].

Rural Housing

4.46   The key facts of rural housing in Scotland are discussed, followed by an examination of housing policy in relation to the equality characteristics of disability; ethnicity; older people; and younger people.

4.47   In general, individuals in rural Scotland are more likely to reside in houses or bungalows compared with those in urban Scotland. Over 96% of properties in remote rural Scotland are houses or bungalows, more than half of which are detached. The profile is similar in accessible rural areas, with a slightly higher prevalence of flats and terraced houses, in contrast to the rest of Scotland where flats account for 39% of the housing stock, with the remaining 61% being split relatively evenly between detached, semi-detached and terraced houses (Scottish Government, 2012f).

4.48   Individuals are also more likely to be home owners. Compared with the rest of Scotland a higher proportion of people in rural Scotland own their own homes (71% and 72% respectively in remote and accessible rural areas, compared with 62% in the rest of Scotland) and a smaller proportion rent from Local Authorities/Scottish Homes or housing associations/co-operatives (14% and 13% respectively in remote and accessible rural areas, compared with 25% in the rest of Scotland). The rate of private renting is similar across all three areas (Scottish Government, 2012f).

4.49   House prices are generally more expensive in rural areas although it is location specific. The highest average house price in Scotland, based on actual house sales, was in accessible rural areas, around £44,000 higher than in remote rural areas and approximately £54,000 higher than in the rest of Scotland (Scottish Government, 2012f).

4.50   Second home ownership in rural areas affects availability and affordability for local people residing there. A higher than normal prevalence of second home ownership, in remote rural areas in particular, can have an effect on residents' abilities to access housing (Scottish Government, 2009). In particular, supply

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[25] http://www.chooselife.net/Evidence/statisticssuicideinscotland.aspx
[26] Social and Public Health Sciences Unit showed that "*the highest rates of suicide in 1995-99 were seen in remote rural areas. The risk of male suicide was higher in remote rural areas relative to urban areas and there was a lower risk of female suicide in accessible rural areas than in other types of area. The method of suicide varied across ruralities for both males and females*".
http://www.sphsu.mrc.ac.uk/research-programmes/mh/hsco/urbrural.html

of affordable housing in the private rented market is difficult to access in rural Scotland (Scottish Government, 2009).

Rural Housing - Disability

4.51 Qualitative research suggests that the supply of adapted accessible homes for disabled people is poor in rural areas. In addition, it is reported that disabled people may have to apply and pay for adaptations from their own income (Scottish Government, 2010).

Rural Housing – Ethnicity

4.52 While scarcity of suitable and affordable housing impacts many people in rural Scotland, these issues can be exacerbated for some ethnic minorities.

4.53 According to a report published by the Poverty Alliance and the JRF (2011) the cost of private renting in the Highlands and Islands is considerable higher than elsewhere in Scotland. This is of particular disadvantage to ethnic minorities, as these are disproportionately found in the private rented sector (Netto, 2011).

4.54 According to de Lima (2008), two of the main issues that ethnic minorities in rural areas experience in relation to housing are a lack of knowledge and access to appropriate information and advice; and a lack of understanding and skills among some housing providers with regard to the needs of minority ethnic households.

4.55 A study on migrant workers in rural Scotland revealed that the acquisition of housing was seen as problematic for many migrant workers due to low supply and the high cost (de Lima and Wright, 2009). In addition, the scarcity of affordable housing in rural areas can create tension in the community. Results from qualitative research revealed that there was a strong perception among migrant workers that local landlords were reluctant to rent to them (Jentsch et al, 2007).

Rural Housing – Older People

4.56 As people age their housing needs change. However, the availability of adapted or sheltered housing is scarce in rural areas (Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group, 2001), creating particular difficulties for the elderly.

4.57 Research has shown the importance that older people place on living independently in their own homes for as long as possible (Farmer, 2010). While this can be problematic for many elderly people, these difficulties are particularly challenging in rural areas (Scottish Executive, 2003). The long distances mean that it is difficult for service providers to deliver home care and other personal care services that allow older people to live independently (Scottish Government, 2010).

4.58 For some elderly people in rural Scotland who do want to enter sheltered housing or care homes, these tend to be located in central areas (Bevan and Croucher, 2008). This means that older people from rural areas are often

forced to leave their familiar environment, contributing to their reluctance to move into more appropriate housing (Scottish Government, 2010).

Rural Housing – Young People

4.59   Research has identified a shortage of suitable housing for young people in rural areas due to lack of availability and cost of appropriate housing, poor condition of some of the housing stock, and shortage of social housing (Excluded Young People Strategy Action Team, 1999 cited in de Lima, 2008; SCVO 2008).

4.60   According to the Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group (2001) most local authorities and housing associations prioritise social housing for families, which may limit the availability of housing for young, single people and young couples.

4.61   Evidence suggests that the lack of affordable housing in rural areas can mean that some young people have no option but to move to urban centres. It has been documented as one of the driving forces in the outward-migration of young people from rural areas (SCVO, 2008; Jamieson and Groves, 2008).

Rural Transport

4.62   The key facts of rural transport in Scotland are discussed, followed by an examination of transport policy in relation to the equality characteristics of disability; older people; younger people and gender.

4.63   Transport issues have been identified as problematic for rural residents throughout Scotland (Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group, 2001). Distances to travel, high fuel costs and lack of access to public transport are all common complaints.

4.64   In terms of travel and access to services, more people in rural areas are outwith easy access to key services (e.g. shops and cash machines) compared to the rest of Scotland and fewer people are in close proximity to public transport facilities. This is compounded by fuel costs, with 64% of the residents of accessible rural Scotland in 2011 reporting to spend over £100 a month on fuel for cars, compared to 48% in the rest of Scotland.

4.65   Recent statistics reveal that few people in rural areas feel they have good access to public transport facilities: just over half of residents in remote rural areas (55%) and 63% in accessible rural areas stated that they had access to good public transport facilities, compared with 91% in the rest of Scotland. In addition, 12% of remote rural and 8% of accessible rural respondents reported that they did not have access to a bus service (Scottish Government, 2012f).

4.66   This is reinforced by recent customer feedback of 600 cardholders of the over 60 and disabled concessionary bus pass scheme. The 2014 survey findings showed that as a result of having the card, rural cardholders made fewer

journeys by car - in accessible rural areas, 43% stated that they would have previously made their journeys by car and in remote rural areas 45%. However they also noted a number of issues:

- Respondents in rural areas and remote small towns were more likely to state that there was no bus service where they live as their reason for not using their cards.
- Some respondents based in a rural area reported there was an issue with the frequency of the buses, and also the timing of the last bus which determined when and how often they could travel.
- These factors are probably linked to the finding that those in rural areas were more likely to use the bus pass to travel longer distances (usually more than 25 miles) but less likely to use it often when compared to urban cardholders.

4.67   However, progress has been made in rural transport provision, particularly since the late 1990s. One of the main areas of improvements since this time has been to ferry provision, where a range of new vessels with much improved access have been introduced (which is particularly relevant to island dwellers). In addition, there have been access improvements in relation to air travel with new airport terminals at Stornoway and Kirkwall, which directly impact on the inhabitants in these parts of rural Scotland.

Rural Transport - Disability

4.68   In evidence presented to the Equal Opportunities Committee Inquiry, rural disability interests identified some of the barriers that impacted on their quality of life. Specifically in relation to transport, lack of easily accessible and affordable public transport was identified as a significant barrier to accessing employment, leisure and services in general, thus serving to reinforce the social isolation experienced by disabled people in rural areas. Furthermore, accessibility issues in relation to ferries and airports were identified by those living on the islands (cited in Scottish Government, 2008b).

4.69   Research carried out by the Scottish Executive in 2004 found that there were still areas of Scotland where there was little public transport that could be used by disabled people. In particular, rail passengers in rural areas expressed frustration with the fact that trains could be diverted without warning to inaccessible platforms. The affordability of transport, in particular taxis was mentioned by respondents in rural and urban areas. For disabled inhabitants of the islands, the costs of flights and ferries was identified as being problematic.

4.70   The Scottish Government's user consultation for the National Transport Strategy 2006 reported separately on the views of passengers with physical and learning disabilities, though this was in general, rather than in a rural context (although still relevant). Some of the issues identified by respondents were the need for improved staff training on public transport and concern over personal safety when travelling on public transport, as many felt in a potentially vulnerable position.

4.71   It has been suggested that people with intellectual disabilities are disproportionately affected by the difficulties associated with rural transport and travel. They are less likely to be able to use public transport on their own and much less likely to be able to drive than the general population.

4.72   However, the progress noted above since the late 1990s will have impacted positively on disabled people. For example, improvements to ferry provision and airports will impact positively on disabled people. In addition, a number of rural Local Authorities have been involved in an ongoing programme of upgrading buses to make them compliant with legislative standards and accessible for disabled people (Scottish Government, 2008b).

4.73   More recently Transport Scotland's Ferries Plan included an Equalities Impact Assessment which reported findings from a household survey of island residents about their use of ferry services and has information on disability and young people's ferry use (Transport Scotland, 2013).

4.74   Disabled adults in rural areas are more likely to drive than their urban counterparts. In general in Scotland, disabled adults and those who have a long-term illness are less likely to hold a full driver's licence, compared to those without a disability or long-term illness. However, disabled adults in rural areas are more likely than their urban counterparts to hold a full driver's licence (61% and 47% respectively), reflecting the higher reliance on car use in rural Scotland.

Rural Transport – Older People

4.75   Transportation and access to medical facilities, shops and social activities are of particular importance to older people (Philip, 2003). According to research conducted by the SCVO (2008), inadequate transport facilities often mean that older people are unable to socialise with friends or enjoy social and educational facilities. Often, older people suffer major difficulties in attending health appointments due to inadequate transport provision.

4.76   This corresponds with qualitative research undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Government which found that lack of income and poor transport arrangements mean that many people (particularly elderly) spend their days at home. This increases fuel usage and costs as well as isolation and loneliness (Scottish Government, 2012e).

4.77   It has been argued that in recent years some rural areas have been exposed to the centralisation of public and voluntary services (EKOS,2009). This service decline affects some groups more than others, such as the elderly or those with no access to a car. Car ownership can become difficult or impossible for older people as lower incomes and in many cases physical frailty makes the upkeep and use of a car impractical (Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group, 2001).

4.78   As noted in paragraph 4.66 many of the rural elderly do not benefit fully from the free travel package for people over 60. This is due to an infrequent or non-

existent bus service. In addition, community transport services are not included in the package (EKOS, 2009).

Rural Transport – Young People

4.79   Evidence suggests that for some young people residing in rural areas (in particular remote rural areas), lack of transport can seriously impact on access to employment opportunities (Pavis et al, 2008).

4.80   According to the Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group (2001), accessing training and employment opportunities can be particularly difficult for young people, who may not be old enough to drive, or, even if they are, may not be able to afford driving lessons or private transport, and thus have to rely on public transport to access work opportunities. In some rural areas public transport is often only a limited service which may not be available at the times when work is available and/or doesn't serve all locations.

4.81   Where transport is available the cost involved for young people particularly those on minimum wages means that paid employment is not always financially viable (SCVO, 2008). In addition, there can sometimes be wariness on the part of employers of employing young people who have to make long or complex journeys (Cartmel and Furlong, 2008).

4.82   The literature also suggests that the lack of public transport available in rural areas can make accessing leisure facilities and sporting activities difficult for young people, resulting in social isolation for some (Pavis et al, 2008).

Rural Transport - Gender

4.83   While the inadequate transport facilities in some rural areas affects both men and women there is evidence to suggest that it can be particularly isolating for some women, for instance young mothers (Pavis et al, 2000) and single female pensioners.

4.84   Research carried out in Aberdeenshire examined women's mobility opportunities, their travel behaviour and their access to important activities. The research concluded that while there had been considerable progress made in relation to their access to transport, women's travel patterns and their participation in activities derive from gender roles that remain traditional (Noack, 2011).

4.85   Men are more likely than women to hold a driving licence in rural Scotland (82% and 70% respectively), though women in rural Scotland are more likely to hold a driving licence than their urban counterparts (70% and 55% respectively), reflecting greater reliance on this mode of transport in rural Scotland more generally.

Rural Poverty

4.86   The key facts of rural poverty in Scotland are discussed, followed by an examination of poverty policy in relation to the equality characteristics of disability; ethnicity; and gender.

4.87   In rural areas poverty often coexists alongside affluence, which means that to a large extent in these areas poverty is hidden. This dispersal of disadvantage coupled with a culture of independence and self-reliance prevalent in rural areas means poverty in rural areas can often go undetected. It also means that Scottish Indicator of Multiple Deprivation[27] has some limitations in identifying deprivation in rural areas (also see Skerratt, 2014 for further review of SIMD in rural areas).

4.88   The socio-economic conditions particular to rural Scotland exacerbate the problem of 'hidden poverty' in these areas. High labour market activity rates, higher than average self- employment and low unemployment contrasts with the low activity rates and high unemployment rates in certain parts of urban Scotland.

4.89   Although employment rates compare favourably with urban areas, the literature suggests that low pay, limited range of employment opportunities, seasonal employment, job insecurity and the historically low take-up of welfare benefits in rural areas each can depress household income.

Rural Poverty - Disability

4.90   Data shows that individuals who live with a disabled adult in their family are more likely to be in relative poverty (before housing costs) than those who do not (The Family Resources Survey, 2011). Households comprising of disabled adults are more likely to be unemployed, and as such are at a greater risk of poverty. When in employment, disabled people are likely to be earning lower incomes.

4.91   Disabled people also face extra costs related to managing their impairment (Tibble, 2005). These issues are exacerbated by the cost of living in rural areas[28].

4.92   There is evidence to suggest that the application process can be difficult for some disabled people and that inconsistencies in awarding of benefits can be observed (Disability Agenda Scotland, 2003). There is also anecdotal evidence that benefit take up rates are lower in rural areas due to stigma and lack of awareness (Rural Poverty and Inclusion Working Group, 2001)

4.93   This means there is a possibility some disabled people in rural areas may not be accessing the benefits that they are entitled to. The importance of this lies in the fact that evidence shows that benefits are likely to lift disabled people out of poverty (Aldridge et al, 2012).

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[27] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD
[28] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-19643303

4.94 According to a report on the resilience of equality groups, disabled people (along with the low skilled and young unemployed) suffered a more substantive 'set back' in the recession, and carry fewer 'protective factors' into the future in order to reclaim ground (Scottish Government, 2011a).

Rural Poverty - Ethnicity

4.95 All minority ethnic groups in Scotland appear disadvantaged on one or more poverty indicators.

4.96 Recent research undertaken on behalf of the JRF, reviews existing literature relating to poverty and ethnicity published in Scotland since 2001 (Netto et al, 2011). The study revealed that qualitative research is essential for examining the relationship between poverty and ethnicity in Scotland, because of the small numbers of people involved in many areas (particularly relevant to rural areas) and the distinctive experiences of these dispersed diverse groups (Netto et al, 2011).

4.97 A recent study was conducted to examine the reasons for the differences in low income and poverty among people from various ethnic backgrounds in the Scottish regions of Fife and the Highlands. The study explored participants' experiences of poverty, their coping strategies and potential solutions. One of the findings from the study revealed that participants in the remote rural areas of the Highlands felt that the government needed targeted policies to address the challenges specific to ethnic minorities in rural areas, such as limited employment, low wages and high food and fuel prices (de Lima et al, 2011).

Rural Poverty – Gender

4.98 The available evidence on rural poverty suggests that rural women are one of the groups most at risk of poverty.

4.99 Single pensioner and lone parent households are two household groupings that have a high risk of poverty (Scottish Executive, 2001; Scottish Government, 2009) and both of these groups are predominately female.

Rural Education

4.100 There is limited information about equality issues related to rural education apart from with young people. Statistics suggests that fewer school leavers in remote rural areas go on to further education or training but a higher proportion gain employment.

Rural Education – Young People

4.101 There is evidence to suggest that many school leavers feel they have no choice but to leave rural areas in order to continue on to higher education (Pavis et, al, 2000; Jamieson and Groves, 2008). Research conducted on behalf of the JRF (Pavis et al, 2000) revealed that the fact that many young people in rural areas have to leave their home and community to attend

university places increased financial and emotional burden on these young people, due to lack of social supports and social networks. While the establishment of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) has enhanced the opportunity for young people to attend university without leaving their local area in this part of rural Scotland, whether or not this had a radical effect on outward migration depends largely on the availability of subsequent suitable employment opportunities (Jamieson and Groves, 2008).

Rural Discrimination

4.102 This issue will be discussed in relation to sexual orientation and race.

Discrimination - Sexual Orientation

4.103 No reliable data is available on the numbers of individuals identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual in Scotland as there is no question in the census on sexual orientation. However since 2011 the Scottish Household Survey has included a question on the sexual orientation of respondents. There has also been a number of small scale studies conducted on the Scottish lesbian, gay and bisexual community and these seem to suggest that the experience of being lesbian, gay or bisexual in rural areas is significantly more difficult than in an urban setting.

4.104 A Stonewall study conducted on behalf of the EHRC (2009), investigating lesbian, gay and bisexual migration patterns, revealed that three quarters of lesbian, gay, bisexual people living in rural areas felt they had to leave their hometown before they could 'come out'. Also, when asked if they thought it was difficult to be 'out' in a rural area, 87% thought it was either very or quite difficult to be out in a rural area.

4.105 These findings chime with results from discussions which the National Centre for Social Research held with a variety of lesbian, gay and bisexual organisations in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness, at the end of 2001 (Mclean and O'Connor, 2003). These findings revealed that the experience of lesbian, gay and bisexual people outside the central belt is thought to be both different and significantly more difficult for a number of reasons, including greater visibility, greater perceived homophobia, and the power of the church within rural areas.

4.106 Research conducted by Beyond Barriers in 2003 revealed that respondents in rural areas and aged between 25 and 49 were less likely to feel part of the lesbian, gay and bisexual community than respondents from urban areas[29].

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[29] The research consisted of a Scotland wide survey, where 60% of the respondents were from urban areas, and 40% came from rural areas. For the purposes of the study, only cities were classified as urban areas.

Discrimination - Ethnicity

4.107 The literature suggests that it has been a long and difficult process for rural agencies and communities to acknowledge and begin to address racism and racial discrimination. The main barriers outlined include: the small numbers and the dispersed nature of minority ethnic households, the lack of commitment or reluctance of agencies to take forward initiatives, and insufficient allocation of resources to address the issue (de Lima, 2005, 2006).

4.108 However, since devolution and with new equality duties there appears to have been a more proactive approach to race equality issues with a number of initiatives established, many of which have incorporated a rural dimension.

4.109 Whilst underreporting of racist incidents occurs in both urban and rural areas, the literature suggests that this problem is amplified in rural areas due to the size and the dispersed nature of the minority ethnic populations. Fear of reprisals due to lack of anonymity is also a barrier to overcome in rural areas. Lack of capacity building support for minority ethnic groups to develop confidence to access the criminal justice system is also identified as a factor of underreporting (Scottish Government 2012d).

5   REVIEW CONCLUSIONS

5.1   This review has identified the key data sources and literature available to consider the different challenges and opportunities for people living in rural Scotland. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that Scottish public authorities have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Although the story for many households in rural Scotland is one of a good quality of life, there are pockets of poverty and vulnerability due to income, disadvantage, stigmatism and isolation. Population is dispersed over great distances meaning that service provision is often difficult and expensive and innovative solutions are required to ensure equality of opportunity. This review focused on the 6 protected characteristics of age, disability, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation.

Summary Key Findings

5.2   The key findings are summarised below:

Protected Characteristics

5.3   Rural Scotland is home to 17% of the population of Scotland and 94% of the land mass. On the whole the rural population is older than the urban population with out-migration of young people being a particular problem. Rural areas also tend to have less diversity than urban areas in terms of race and religion. It is also thought that there are less lesbian or gay people in rural Scotland but there is little robust data. Disability is related to age – as people get older their propensity for disability rises. Despite ageing populations, disability tends to be lower in rural Scotland with residents (disabled or not) saying that their health is generally better than urban counterparts.

Transport

5.4   Given the dispersed nature of the population it is not surprising that transport is of concern in rural areas. There is a high reliance on the car to access key services which can be expensive. However the issue is particularly severe for those who do not drive (younger people, older people, those with a disability, lower income or vulnerable people) with public transport often not physically accessible nor affordable. Older people have concessionary bus passes but the public bus services are often not frequent enough to be useful. There is evident good practice developing around community bus networks[30], lift sharing and more accessible ferries and terminals in certain areas.

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[30] http://www.ctauk.org/in-your-area/scotland.aspx

Housing

5.5   Many areas of rural Scotland have a lack of available housing. The review suggests this is a particular problem for newly forming households (the young or less well-off in-migrants), for older people who require adaptations to allow them to live in their own home, or more specialist provision for older and/or disabled people. Recent years have seen new approaches to housing supply in rural Scotland but, as in other parts of Scotland, challenges remain.

Employment

5.6   Generally employment rates are higher in rural Scotland than urban Scotland and this is mirrored in the employment rates of equality groups with disabled people, youth employment, older people more likely to have employment in rural areas than urban. However there are still differences between groups with disabled people less likely to be employed than non-disabled people. Similar evidence is not available for race and religion in rural Scotland although some qualitative studies do refer to the potential under-employment in terms of skills of people from different racial groups. It must also be noted that there are parts of rural Scotland where employment is as low as parts of urban Scotland and in those areas employment rates amongst equality groups are also lower.

Education

5.7   Access to skills and training and further education were generally felt to be more challenging in rural Scotland than the rest of Scotland.

Health

5.8   Health expectations are generally better in rural than urban Scotland. The review found that satisfaction with primary care services was higher in rural areas but there were issues with access to care services such as specialist care, out of hours care and obtaining medicines. This was a mixture of a perceived lack of locally available services and poor public transport networks to enable travel to services.

Mental Health and Stigma

5.9   There was some evidence that mental health services were less available in rural Scotland and that due to closer knit communities it was sometimes more difficult for people to make use of those services that were provided. A similar pattern was found in terms of a lack of availability of drug awareness, counselling, sex education services, but also the fear of a stigma associated with using them. Evidence on discrimination was lacking although some qualitative evidence does show specific cases where sexual orientation, race or religion was problematic and the review, although much of the literature is dated, suggests that an equality infrastructure (strategy, awareness raising and service plans) was not as widely available as expected in all services. Isolation of some people in dispersed communities was seen as an issue especially if people were not mobile.

Lack of Evidence

5.10   The review used the best available evidence but it was evident that there were a number of constraints:

- Rural data was not available as standard from the main Surveys. Analysis could only be undertaken by requesting specific analysis.

- Sample numbers were often too small to allow any output for rural rather than urban Scotland, let alone the more useful rural/urban classification. They also prevented sub-group analysis.

- Little contemporary literature was available for rural Scotland so much of the review refers to dated literature and/or Scotland-wide or urban Scotland findings. These findings can provide interesting insights but the data limitations should be noted.

- Census data has helped to fill some evidence gaps on disability, race and religion but questions on sexual orientation were not included on the Census and baseline data remains scarce.

- Policies on housing, health, education and transport can have significant impacts on rural population. This review should be helpful in identifying specific equality issues to consider.

- Additional work considering the equality issues around environmental policy and access to the outdoors were not included. This is an important dimension and work will be carried out during 2015.

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