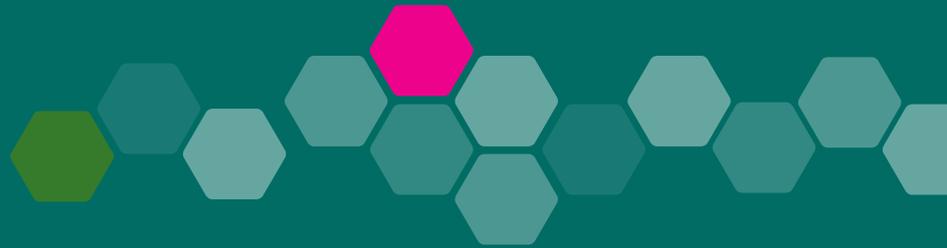


Scottish Islands Typology Overview (2024)



AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND MARINE

Scottish Islands Typology Overview (2024)



Easdale

February 2024

Highlights

Why was the research needed?

The lack of data about Scotland's islands was recognised in the [National Islands Plan](#) (Scottish Government, 2019) and a number of measures have been taken to tackle this in recent years. Data which gives us a better understanding of Scotland's islands can help measure progress against the strategic objectives of the National Islands Plan. It can also be used more widely in policy development, including to inform [Island Communities Impact Assessments](#) which are a statutory requirement under Chapter 7 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. Measures to obtain more island-level data have involved repurposing existing data sets using the [Scottish Island Regions \(2023\) geography](#) as well as collecting primary data in the [Scottish Islands Survey](#). However, there remain gaps in our understanding about some key aspects affecting daily life in the islands and key similarities and differences between islands. The research presented here addresses these gaps by collating information on local amenities and ferry services in the islands and using this and existing population data to create a new way of categorising Scotland's islands. The resulting Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) offers a new way to consider the differences and similarities between Scotland's islands which could provide a useful alternative framework for those working with and for island communities.

What did we do?

Using [Gow's Typology of Scotland's Islands](#) (Gow et al., 2023) as a model, data about key local amenities and ferry connectivity was collated for each of the islands in the [Scottish Island Regions \(2023\) geography](#). This was combined with population data from the 1981 and 2011 censuses to create a picture of the capacity available on each island. Islands were then compared to each other to identify similarities and differences and grouped into ten classes based on these factors. This analysis was used to produce the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024). The ten island types are summarised in this report. The underlying data on population, local amenities, and ferry access has also been made available.

What did we learn?

Scotland is home to a diverse range of islands which have varying levels of access to people, goods and services. This is affected by what is available in the island and by the ferry connections the island has access to. Islands within the same region or local authority area can be very different from each other in this regard and there is value in understanding the differences between islands in close proximity and the connections that can be made between similar islands which are geographically distant from each other.

Next steps

The Scottish Government will continue to develop island-level data sources and use these to monitor progress against the National Islands Plan's strategic objectives and to contribute to policy making.

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Executive summary



Rothesay, Bute

This report provides an overview of the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (SIT) 2024 which offers a new way to compare Scotland’s islands to each other using data on population, local amenities, and ferry connections to mainland Scotland. The development of the Scottish Islands Typology (2024) responds to the commitment set out in the [National Islands Plan](#) to “review the availability, usefulness of, and the wider barriers to, island level data both at an individual island level, groups of islands and consider the creation of a ‘Scottish islands’ data level in order to better understand the challenges faced by island communities”.

The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) uses factors which have a direct impact on daily life in Scotland islands in order to identify differences and similarities between islands. In doing so it complements existing location-based categorisations, such as local authority areas and the Scottish Island Regions (2023) geography, in order to highlight differences between islands in close proximity to each other and similarities between islands which are geographically distant. The resulting ten categories identified in the typology provide a useful framework for those seeking to understand the diversity of Scotland’s islands in a research and policy context.

Within the typology, population has been used to identify the potential human capacity available in an island and the potential market size, which may affect the willingness or ability of those based elsewhere to provide goods and services to an island. An assessment of basic amenities in the islands has been used as an indicator of island residents’ ability to fulfil some of the basic needs of daily life without relying on ferry travel, while scheduled ferry

connections to mainland Scotland have been used to indicate the access island residents have to goods and services located elsewhere.

The resulting Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) covers 161 islands which are permanently surrounded on all sides by the sea (ignoring artificial structures such as bridges) including all of the islands covered by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. It highlights that Scotland is home to a diverse range of islands which have varying levels of access to people, goods and services, and that islands within the same region or local authority area can be very different from each other in this regard. As such it provides a useful framework for considering how policy might be effectively implemented in island areas and might be of specific use to those conducting [Island Communities Impact Assessments](#) (ICIAs). For example, it can help identify islands which may struggle with approaches which focus on building skills within a community due to capacity issues or identify islands which might face additional barriers in relying on external providers due to the access provided by ferry connections to mainland Scotland.

This document also provides an overview of how islands compare to each other in terms of the individual factors of population, local amenities, and ferry connections.

The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) is part of a suite of resources published by the Scottish Government to support those working with, in, and for Scotland's islands, including the [Scottish Islands Data Dashboard](#) (2023) and the [Scottish Island Regions \(2023\) geography](#).

1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) and provides context for the work that has been carried out to create it. This includes information about the Scottish islands, the policy context of this work, and how this work fits with other efforts to improve island-level data to meet the commitment set out in the 2019 National Islands Plan.

The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) proposes a new way of classifying Scotland's islands which uses data on populations, local amenities, and ferry services to understand the similarities and differences between the nation's islands. In doing so it helps to address a commitment in the [National Islands Plan](#) (Scottish Government, 2019) for better data about islands to help inform action and policy.

This report summarises the island types defined under the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology 2024 and goes on to provide a breakdown of islands based on the individual factors of population, local amenities, and ferry connections.



Scalloway, Shetland

The high-level typology detailed in Chapter 4 of this report outlines ten island types based on similarities and differences in terms of population, local amenities, and ferry access to mainland Scotland. It is intended to support those wishing to understand the diversity of Scotland's islands for a variety of purposes. This might include, for example, providing a context for the evaluation of Island Communities Impact Assessments and examining options for replicability of projects across the islands.

1.1 Scotland's islands

Scotland's islands are home to a diverse range of communities, businesses, and resources which contribute to the rich tapestry of national life. The islands have many unique characteristics and qualities which are valued by those who live there as well as by visitors and investors from mainland Scotland and beyond. However, this uniqueness also presents the islands with some specific challenges such as low populations and distance from main population centres. In addition, the majority of island communities rely on

ferries to transport both people, goods, and those providing services to and from the island. Island residents may rely on ferries to access schooling, medical appointments, work, or grocery stores, for example, and also to bring in supplies and professional services from elsewhere.

These challenges mean that life on an island can be very different from life in mainland Scotland and this has often led to islanders feeling that they are on the periphery of public policy. In particular, island communities have previously stated that they feel that decisions which directly affected them were taken by people who were completely detached from the reality of life away from mainland Scotland (Scottish Government, 2019). It is in this context that the Scottish Government has taken active steps, via the [Islands \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#) and the [National Islands Plan](#) (2019), to address the challenges faced by island communities and build sustainable island futures for our islands for local and national benefit.

1.2 Policy context

The first [National Plan for Scotland's Islands](#) (also known as the National Islands Plan) was published in 2019 as a provision of the [Islands \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#). The Act sets out the Scottish Government's objective of ensuring that there is a sustained focus across government and the public sector to meet the needs of islanders – now and in the future, with the aim of improving outcomes for communities. The Act received Royal Assent on 6 July 2018, the first Commencement Regulations were laid on 20 September 2018, and the Act came into force on 4 October 2018. The Act is an historic piece of place-based legislation that carries the promise of improving island governance and policy in Scotland and includes a duty on Scottish Ministers to prepare a National Islands Plan.

The National Islands Plan addressed the requirement in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 to, “set out the main objectives and strategy of the Scottish Ministers in relation to improving outcomes for island communities that result from, or are contributed to by, the carrying out of functions of a public nature”. In preparing the plan, Scottish Ministers were required to consider the distinctive geographical, natural heritage and cultural characteristics (including the linguistic heritage) of each of the areas inhabited by island communities. The initial five-year plan is currently under review, as required by the Act, and the Scottish Government is working with local authorities, island communities and relevant sectors and partners to ensure this process is as thorough and effective as possible. The review will provide vital feedback from those most impacted by the National Islands Plan.

1.3 Improving data about islands

The National Islands Plan sets out 13 strategic objectives which support the Scottish Government in improving outcomes for island communities. These objectives include increasing the availability of data about islands to help

identify and assess the specific challenges faced by communities and to better understand how to target support to meet their diverse needs.

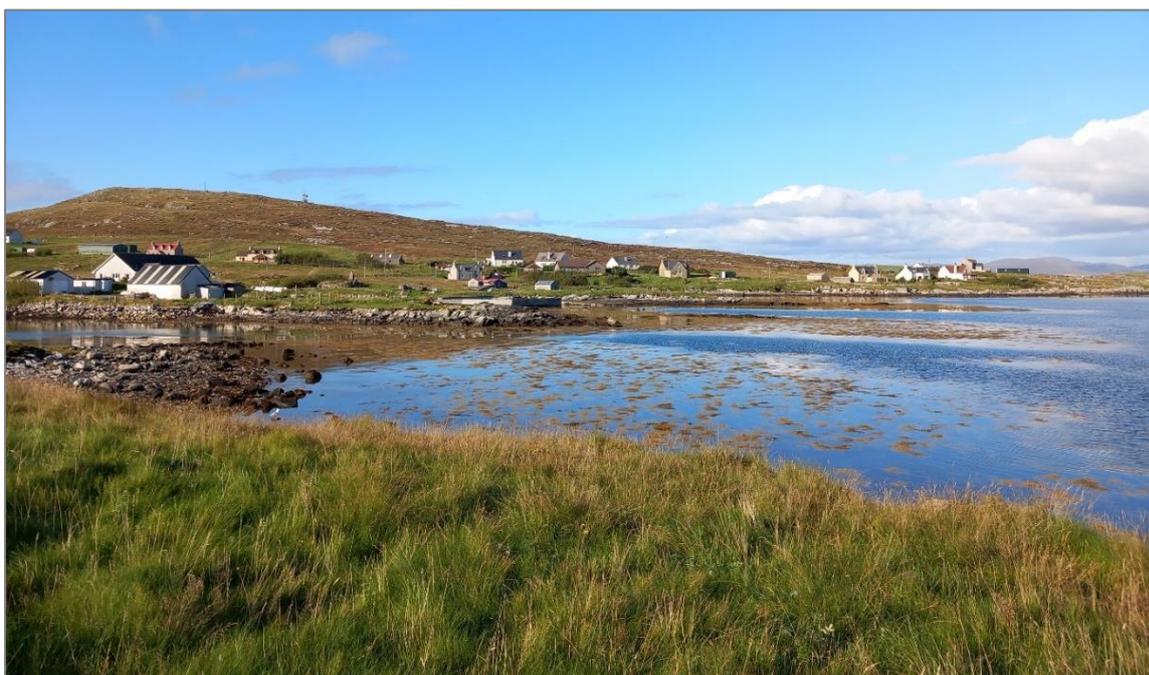
Work has already been undertaken to support this commitment, including the release of the [Scottish Island Regions \(2023\) geography](#) which helps reflect some of the nuance between islands within local authority areas. This has facilitated new island-level evidence sources, including:

- the [National Records of Scotland Scottish Island Regions dashboard](#),
- [household estimates outlining occupied and vacant dwellings](#) in Scottish Island Regions, and
- the [Sub-Scotland Economic Statistics database](#).

In addition, from 2024 routine releases of house price data by Registers of Scotland will include information covering the Scottish Islands Regions. These sources were used in the development of the [Scottish Islands Data Dashboard](#) which provides a compilation of Scottish Islands evidence, in conjunction with other sources.

Primary data collection also took place in 2020 (see [National Islands Plan Survey: final report](#), Scottish Government, 2021) with analysis of a second round of the Scottish Islands Survey (2023) currently underway and due to report later in 2024.

The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) detailed in this report further contributes to the drive to improve data about islands by providing a way to compare islands to each other based on key factors which affect daily life: population, access to amenities and services on-island, and the wider access offered by ferry connections.



Berneray, K. Gow

1.5 Other useful resources

[Scottish Islands Data Dashboard \(2023\)](#)

[Scottish Islands: data overview 2023](#)

[Scottish Island Regions 2023: overview](#)

[Scottish Island Regions 2023: best-fitting data zones](#)

[Population Estimates of Scottish Island Regions \(2011 Data Zone based\)](#)

[Small area population estimates for Scotland, 2021 \(interactive map\)](#)

[Scottish Island Regions Geographic Information Systems files](#)

[National Records of Scotland Scottish Island Regions Population dashboard](#)

[Household and Dwelling Estimates of Scottish Island Regions](#)

[Sub-Scotland Economic Statistics Database](#)

[National Islands Plan Survey: final report](#)

[The National Islands Plan: Plana Nàiseanta nan Eilean](#)

2 Purpose of the typology

This chapter sets out the purpose of the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024), highlighting that it uses population, local services and amenities, and the access to mainland Scotland provided by ferries or fixed link connections to identify similarities and differences between islands to help researchers and policy makers understand the diversity of Scotland's islands.

The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology is intended to complement existing data available for the Scottish islands including the [Scottish Island Regions \(2023\) geography](#) and the [Scottish Islands Data Dashboard](#). It provides a way of classifying islands which does not rely on geographical location or local authority areas. Instead, it is based on some of the key factors which affect daily life in the islands: population, access to amenities and services in each island, and ferry connections. This allows us to compare islands to each other to understand the differences between islands located in close proximity to each other, and the links between islands which are geographically distant. The resulting island types provide additional context for researchers and policy makers who may wish to use them in order to better understand factors which affect island life.

In particular the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) is intended to provide a resource for Scottish Government policy teams carrying out [Island Communities Impact Assessments \(ICIAs\)](#) as part of policy development. It can also assist in understanding how best to target support in specific islands.

The typology supports these areas of work by identifying some of the key differences and similarities between Scotland's islands which might affect approaches to working with individual communities. It should be noted that there is no suggestion that separate ICIAs should be carried out for each island type identified, however the typology does provide a potential framework which might allow policy makers to evaluate whether any assessment has taken into account the differences between islands in terms of population, local amenities, and ferry connections.



Blackwaterfoot,
Arran

3 Methodology

This chapter briefly outlines the way that the typology was compiled, including which islands were included, and how population, access to local amenities and services, and ferry connections were measured. The chapter also provides information on and what the chosen dimensions might indicate about life in different island communities.

The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) uses the methodology developed for [Gow's Typology of Scotland's Islands](#) (Gow et al. 2023) to examine factors of capacity and reliance in the islands. Gow's Typology has been extended to develop the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) with the latter including all islands listed within the Scottish Island Regions geography. The islands included are listed in Appendix 1.

The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) examines:

- population levels in islands and population change over time;
- the availability of specific amenities and services in each island;
- access to services, amenities, suppliers, and markets beyond an island's borders via scheduled ferry routes.

This chapter provides an overview of how scores were calculated and applied. More information is available in the [Technical Note on Gow's Typology of Scotland's Islands](#).

3.1 Islands included in the typology

The [Scotland's Census 2011: Inhabited Islands Report](#) (Scottish Government, 2015) identified 93 inhabited islands in Scotland. This included 88 islands located in open seas and sea lochs, as well five islands located in bodies of freshwater.¹ It is also noted that the Inhabited Islands Report does not list Walls in Orkney as an island in its own right. Instead data for Walls is included under Hoy as the two islands are linked by a bridge. This is inconsistent with the way other islands with fixed links to each other are treated, for example Canna and Sanday or Housay and Bruray, which are each recognised as islands in their own right regardless of fixed links.

The [Islands \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#) specifically covers inhabited islands which are "(a) surrounded on all sides by the sea (ignoring artificial structures such as bridges), and (b) above water at high tide." Using the Inhabited Islands Report (Scottish Government 2015) as a starting point, but excluding islands in fresh water and recognising Walls as an island in its own right, means that the Act covers 89 inhabited islands according to 2011 census data.

¹ Inchfad (Loch Lomond), Inchmurrin (Loch Lomond), Inchtavannach (Loch Lomond); Innis Chonan (Loch Awe); Moncreiffe Island (River Tay).

When Scottish Island Regions (2023) geography was developed it included these 89, though Walls was again classed under Hoy. In addition it covered 72 islands which were recorded as previously inhabited in order to allow the geography to be used to examine both historical and future data. The Scottish Island Regions (2023) geography therefore recognises 160 islands. In order to be consistent with the way other islands in the typology are treated, the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) recognises Hoy and Walls as distinct islands, meaning that the typology covers 161 islands.

Appendix 2 provides a list of all islands included in the typology with details of the local authority, Scottish Island Regions (2023) geography class, and Scottish Government Scottish Island Typology (2024) class for each island.

3.2 Measuring capacity and reliance in the islands

Three factors were selected to assess some of the similarities and differences between islands which affect daily life: population, access to amenities and services on-island, and ferry connections.

Population levels were used as an indicator of the human capital available in each island, including an indication of the number of people potentially available to deliver services and fulfil key volunteer roles. In addition, population levels also indicate the potential market size within an island, which may affect the willingness or ability of those based elsewhere to provide goods and services to the island. Population change over time indicates the stability of this factor and was measured over 30 years, using census data from 1981 and 2011.



Children playing on the beach, Islay

The availability of local amenities and services was used as an indicator of island residents' ability to fulfil some of the basic needs of daily life without leaving the island. This included access to schooling, GP practices and hospitals, grocery stores, and fuel outlets. As well as reflecting key aspects of daily life these areas were selected because their availability is highly variable across the islands. Information on the availability of these services was collated in November 2022 for [Gow's Typology of Scotland's Islands](#) with additional updating in November 2023. This information was used to create a rating to indicate the availability of amenities and services on each island compared to other islands in the typology.



Fresh produce on sale in Bixter, Shetland, K. Gow

Scheduled ferry services between islands and mainland Scotland were used as an indicator of the access island residents have to goods and services located elsewhere. This includes access for suppliers travelling to the islands (e.g., wholesalers supplying island shops or renewable energy installers), and for island residents accessing goods and services located elsewhere (e.g., medical specialists). While some islands are also served by scheduled flight connections to mainland Scotland², ferries offer the most universal method of transport between mainland Scotland and the islands and therefore provided a consistent basis for analysis. They are also the most flexible form of transport in terms of the range of goods and equipment which can be carried given that

² Direct, scheduled flight connections to mainland Scotland are available from Islay, Colonsay, Tiree, Coll, Barra, Benbecula, Lewis and Harris, Mainland Shetland, and Mainland Orkney. Service levels across these routes varies.

basic goods and materials such as fuel, groceries and building supplies are not routinely transported via air.

Timetabled ferry services from and to some islands vary between summer and winter and the 2023/24 timetables were used to indicate the minimum service levels island residents can rely on throughout the year³. To reflect the variability of ferry provision across the islands this factor was measured using the following dimensions:

- average crossing times from the island;
- the average number of sailings from the island on a daily basis;
- the location of the mainland port which the ferry arrives at; and
- the number of ferries an island resident must take to reach the mainland.

Some islands have multiple ferry routes to mainland Scotland. This was taken into account using the methodology used to develop [Gow's Typology of Scotland's Islands](#).

The average crossing time acts as an indicator of the effort required to reach mainland Scotland and the average number of daily sailings acts as an indicator of the potential availability of ferries as a travel option. Ferries from Scotland's islands arrive in a variety of destinations, ranging from city centres to areas classed as *Remote Rural* under the Scottish Government's [Urban Rural 6-fold classification](#). To reflect this variety, island ferry routes were given a score based on a sliding scale which uses the Scottish Government's Urban Rural 6-fold classification as a basis to reflect the likely access to goods and services that the mainland port location provides.

Ferry access to the Scottish mainland can require travel via a second or a third island. Where this is required, islands are affected by double or triple insularity respectively, and this affects access to goods and services based in mainland Scotland in a number of ways including in terms of time, cost, and logistical complexity. To reflect this, all islands were given a score based on a sliding scale ranging to indicate their insularity status.

Access to people, amenities and ferry routes was based on what island residents can access via road. This means that, within the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024), islands which are connected to each other via permanent fixed links or tidal access points are grouped together and their populations, amenities and ferry connections considered as one. For example, the *Mainland Orkney & connected isles* grouping includes the islands of Mainland Orkney, Burray, Lamb Holm, and South Ronaldsay, which are connected to each other by road through a series of causeways, known locally as barriers. While there is highly likely to be differences between areas within island groupings, the same might also be said about different

³ Timetables for services operating between islands and mainland Scotland provided by CalMac Ferries, North Link Ferries, Pentland Ferries, and Argyll and Bute Council were used.

areas of larger islands – for example between Bowmore and Portnahaven in Islay.

Once data on all these areas were collated, the results were analysed to identify similarities and differences between Scotland's islands and to create categories which reflect factors which influence daily life in the Scottish islands.



Ferry crossing the Sound of Mull

4 The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology

This chapter sets out the ten island types identified by the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024). It provides details of the characteristics of each island type and a list of islands included in each category, with additional information noting any nuance within the category in relation to the areas considered.

The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) recognises ten island categories based on factors of capacity and reliance:

- Connected Independent Islands
- Independent Hub Islands
- Independent Outer Isles
- Reliant Inner Isles
- Reliant Outer Isles
- Semi-Reliant Isles
- Outpost Islands
- Mainland-Connected Islands
- Unserviced Islands
- Previously Inhabited Islands

It should be noted that these descriptive titles are not intended to be hierarchical. They simply reflect the way that factors of capacity and reliance may influence island life. The names of the categories are largely based on work carried out on Gow's Typology of Scotland's Islands, in consultation with islanders, and deliberately avoid urban-centric terms such as remote and accessible. Consultation with islanders on the typology included presenting category names in a session run by the Scottish Islands Federation and a workshop with islanders in early 2023. The feedback from these sessions indicated broad approval for category names, with a recognition from islanders that we all rely on systems and services which may be beyond our control, and that reliance on ferries in particular is a key part of island life.

In addition, it is important to note that the framework used to develop this typology is based on [Gow's Typology of Scotland's Islands](#) which compares islands to each other rather than to other geographical areas such as rural or urban areas of the Scottish mainland. As such the results and descriptions for each island type were created to provide an overview of islands in comparison to each other, rather than to non-island areas. Given this, scoring highly for a particular factor does not necessarily mean that there are no challenges in this area, it is simply an indication of how an island is positioned relative to other islands in the typology.

Table 1 provides a summary of population, local amenities, and access to ferry connections in each of the ten island types within the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology. While this provides a general picture there remains some variation within island types which are explored more in the remainder of this chapter.

Table 1: Summary table indicating main indicators of island type

	Population	On-island amenities	Ferry connections
Connected Independent Islands	Higher than average populations which are mainly growing.	Highest levels of access to local amenities.	High levels of access to mainland Scotland.
Independent Hub Island	Higher than average populations which are mainly declining.	Highest levels of access to local amenities.	Mid to low levels of access to mainland Scotland.
Independent Outer Isles	Mid-range populations levels (significant variation) which are mainly declining.	High levels of access to local amenities.	Low levels of access to mainland Scotland.
Reliant Inner Isles	Mid to low population levels with population growth.	Low levels of access to local amenities.	High levels of access to mainland Scotland.
Semi-Reliant Isles	Mid-range populations levels (significant variation) which are mainly declining.	Mid-range access to local amenities.	Mid-range levels of access to mainland Scotland.
Reliant Outer Isles	Low population levels with a variety of growth and decline ¹ .	Low levels of access to local amenities.	Mid to low levels of access to mainland Scotland.
Outpost Islands	Very low population levels with a variety of growth and decline ¹ .	Lowest levels of access to local amenities.	Lowest levels of access to mainland Scotland.
Mainland-Connected Islands	Higher than average, growing populations.	High levels of access to amenities via road (on or off island).	No ferry access required to reach mainland Scotland.
Unserviced islands	Lowest population levels – typically a single household.	No public amenities.	None, though some islands connected to the mainland by private fixed links.
Previously Inhabited Islands	No inhabitants.	No public amenities.	None.

Notes

¹ The low population levels in these islands means that the movement of a small number of people to or from the island can result in significant population change. A variety of population growth and decline is therefore to be expected in these categories.

4.1 Connected Independent Islands

Connected Independent Islands had high population levels, a good range of local amenities, and high levels of access to mainland Scotland via ferry services relative to the other islands in the typology.

Islands / island groupings in this category have good levels of access to amenities and services both on and off the island relative to other islands in the typology, along with higher than average and, for the most part, growing populations. This category includes larger islands and island groupings where there may be substantial differences in access to amenities between the main population centres and outlying areas.

The islands included within the **Connected Independent Islands** category are:

- Arran
- Bute
- Great Cumbrae
- Mainland Orkney & connected isles⁴
- Mull

While Great Cumbrae's amenities score was significantly lower than other island groupings, it scored above average when compared with the other islands considered in the typology. It also benefits from a fast and frequent ferry crossing to the town of Largs on the Scottish mainland, where a wide range of amenities and services are available. Great Cumbrae was therefore deemed to have a high level of access to amenities for the purpose of this typology.

While ferry access for the *Mainland Orkney & connected isles* grouping is substantially lower than others in this class the islands benefit from above-average provision in this area and are served by three different ferry routes to mainland Scotland. The variety and frequency of these routes offers additional resilience in terms of ferry access.⁵

While Mull scored highly across all categories considered, it should be noted that access to education varies across the island. While high school pupils across the majority of Mull access schooling in Tobermory on a daily basis via road, travel times mean that those in some areas opt to leave home for high school, boarding weekly at the hostel at Oban High School⁶.

⁴ Comprising Burray, Lamb Holm, Mainland Orkney, and South Ronaldsay

⁵ Mainland Orkney & Connected Isles also benefits from having direct flights to mainland Scotland, however these are not routinely used for the movement of freight such as groceries, fuel, and building materials.

⁶ [Oban High School / Àrd-sgoil an Òbain: Glenruitten Hostel](#)

4.2 Independent Hub Islands

Independent Hub Islands are characterised by high populations and good levels of on-island amenities and services relative to other islands in the typology. However, these islands received substantially lower scores for their ferry connections with mainland Scotland than Connected Independent Islands.

The islands / island groupings in this category are home to some of the largest island populations in Scotland. However, all except the *Mainland Shetland & connected isles* grouping have seen population decline since 1981⁷. These islands are also characterised by having high levels of access to local amenities and services on-island compared to other islands in the typology. However, they face some challenges in relation to ferry access to mainland Scotland which may affect their ability to access goods and services located off-island. This is despite all islands in this class having direct ferry connections to mainland Scotland⁸. These transport challenges vary but include ferry crossing length and frequency, and the location of the mainland port serving the island. This category includes larger islands and island groupings where there may be substantial differences in access to amenities between the main population centres and outlying areas.

The islands included in the **Independent Hub Islands** category are:

- Islay
- Lewis, Harris & connected isles⁹
- Mainland Shetland & connected isles¹⁰
- Uist & connected isles¹¹



Tarbert, Harris

⁷ See accompanying [Excel data sheet](#).

⁸ While it is noted that all of the islands in this category also have direct flights to mainland Scotland, the provision of these varies and flights are not routinely used for the movement of freight such as groceries, fuel and building materials.

⁹ Comprising Great Bernera, Lewis and Harris, Scalpay,

¹⁰ Comprising East Burra, Mainland Shetland, Muckle Roe, Trondra, and West Burra

¹¹ Comprising Baleshare, Benbecula, Berneray, Eriskay, Flodaigh, Grimsay (N), Grimsay (S), North Uist, and South Uist.

4.3 Independent Outer Isles

Independent Outer Islands are characterised by relatively low levels of ferry access to mainland Scotland but generally good access to amenities and services on-islands relative to other islands in the typology, or easy access to amenities on a neighbouring island. These islands have mid to low population levels which are mainly declining.

Islands / island groupings in this category have relatively good access to amenities on-island but relatively low levels of ferry access to mainland Scotland. The only island / island groupings in this category to have a direct ferry connection to mainland Scotland are *Barra & Vatersay* and Tiree¹². These islands both had less than one crossing per day to mainland Scotland in winter 2023/4 and average crossing times in the range of four to five hours. Ferry connections for all other islands in this category require travel via at least one other island.

The population of these islands varies significantly but nearly all islands / island groupings in this class have seen population decline over 30 years. The only islands in this category to have seen population increase are Bressay and Whalsay which saw increases of 10.2% and 2.9% respectively. This category includes larger islands and island groupings where there may be substantial differences in access to amenities between the main population centres and outlying areas.

The islands included in **Independent Outer Isles** category are:

- Barra and Vatersay
- Bressay
- Jura
- Tiree
- Unst
- Whalsay
- Yell

Although Bressay scores poorly for amenities, the frequency, crossing time and arrival point for ferries between Bressay and Lerwick arguably provides islanders with access to the high levels of amenities available in Lerwick. Bressay was therefore included in this class.

¹² While *Barra & Vatersay* and Tiree also have airports offering direct flights to mainland Scotland, the provision of these varies and flights are not routinely used for the movement of freight such as groceries, fuel and building materials.

4.4 Reliant Inner Isles

Reliant Inner Isles are characterised by a lack of amenities and services on-island but relatively good ferry connections to mainland Scotland compared with other islands in the typology. These islands have mid to low populations which are growing or stable.

Islands / island groupings in this class have relatively few amenities on-island but good ferry connections to mainland Scotland, providing relatively good access to goods and services based elsewhere. This class of islands includes those with direct ferry connections to the Scottish mainland and those who are connected by ferry to another larger island with additional amenities. For those islands in this class with direct ferry connections to mainland Scotland, the highest average crossing time was 25 minutes.

Reliant Inner Isles have mid to low populations, relative to the other islands in the typology, though all have seen stable or increasing populations since 1981.

The islands included in the **Reliant Inner Isles** category are:

- Easdale
- Iona
- Kerrera
- Lismore
- Luing
- Raasay
- Ulva & Gometra

While high school pupils in Easdale, Kerrera, Lismore and Gometra can access schooling on a daily basis via ferry, travel times mean that pupils can choose to board weekly at the hostel at Oban High School¹³.

Kerrera and Ulva have substantially lower scoring in the category of population than the other islands within this class. However, both have been the subject of repopulation efforts over recent years.



Iona

¹³ [Oban High School / Àrd-sgoil an Òbain: Glenruitten Hostel](#)

4.5 Semi-Reliant Islands

Semi-Reliant Islands are characterised by mid-level populations and mid-range access to local amenities and ferry connection to mainland Scotland compared to other islands in the typology. This indicates that they have some ability to function on daily basis without access to amenities and services in the wider world but face some level of challenge accessing amenities off-island due to their ferry connections.

Islands / island groupings in this category have mid-level population levels relative to other islands in the typology, though there is significant variation within the category. The majority of islands in the category have seen population decline or stability. Gigha and Rousay were the only islands showing increases, but these were marginal, accounting for just ten people in Gigha and seven people in Rousay. These factors may impact on the islands' capacity to provide amenities and services at a local level and / or the willingness of those in the outside world to serve these islands.

All but one of the islands in this class is located in the Orkney Islands Council local authority area. Gigha is the only island outwith Orkney and also the only island which has a direct connection to the Scottish mainland, however the mainland port for this route is located in a *Remote Rural*¹⁴ area outwith a settlement. The islands in this category located in Orkney connect to the Scottish mainland via Mainland Orkney and the crossing time and frequency of inter-island ferries serving these islands is variable.

Islands in this category have mid-range access to on-island amenities compared with other islands in the typology and experience some challenges in accessing amenities off-island due to their ferry connections.

The islands included in the **Semi-Reliant Islands** category are:

- Gigha
- Hoy & Walls
- Papa Westray
- Rousay
- Sanday (Orkney)
- Shapinsay
- Stronsay
- Westray

¹⁴ Scottish Government's [Urban Rural 6-fold classification](#)

4.6 Reliant Outer Isles

Reliant Outer Isles are characterised by the low availability of amenities and services on-island and medium to poor scores for ferry connections relative to other islands in the typology. All islands in this class had less than 200 inhabitants in 2011, however the majority had seen population increases since 1981.

The small populations and mid to low access to mainland Scotland via ferry means that islands / island groupings in this category are likely to rely heavily on the outside world for the provision of services and goods but do so in the context of transport challenges. These islands are a mix of those with direct ferry connections to the Scottish mainland and those who connect to the Scottish mainland via other islands.¹⁵ Those with direct connections to the Scottish mainland have an average crossing frequency of less than one ferry per day and all have average crossing times in excess of two hours. For those islands without direct connections to mainland Scotland, the crossing time and frequency of inter-island ferries is highly variable.

While the majority of islands in this category have seen population increases since 1981, North Ronaldsay and Flotta have experienced population decline. However, any population change for islands in this class must be seen in the context of low population levels which means that the movement of even a small number of people can have a large impact on both statistical reporting and community life.

The islands included in the **Reliant Outer Isles** category are:

- Coll
- Colonsay & Oronsay
- Eday
- Egilsay
- Eigg
- Flotta
- Graemsay
- Muck
- North Ronaldsay
- Rum
- Wyre

¹⁵ Although the small airports in Coll and Colonsay do offer direct flights to mainland Scotland, the capacity and frequency of these services is limited and flights are not routinely used for the movement of freight such as groceries, fuel and building materials.

4.7 Outpost Islands

Outpost Islands are characterised by very low populations. Other than Unserviced Islands, which are typically home to a single household, Outpost Islands have the lowest levels of provision for local amenities and ferry connections of all inhabited islands in the typology.

Islands / island groupings in this category some of the lowest population levels within the typology with Skerries' population of 74 being the largest in this class. Only Unserviced Islands, which are typically home to a single household, have lower population levels. This is highly likely to affect on-island capacity to provide amenities and the willingness and / or ability of those in the outside world to serve these islands. This is reflected in the fact that these islands have the lowest levels of access to on-island amenities compared to other islands in the typology.

These islands also have the lowest levels of access to mainland Scotland via ferry compared to other islands in the typology. *Canna & Sanday* is the only island / island grouping in this class to have a direct mainland ferry link, however it has the lowest number of average ferry crossings per day with just 0.3 scheduled crossings per day in the winter of 2023/4 and an average crossing time of just under three hours. Five of the islands in this category are outlying islands in the Shetland Islands Council area which connect to the Scottish mainland via Mainland Shetland. Journeys from and to Fetlar require travel via Yell and Mainland Shetland to reach mainland Scotland. The crossing time and frequency of inter-island ferries serving islands in this category is variable.

The islands included in the **Outpost Islands** category are:

- Canna & Sanday
- Fair Isle
- Fetlar
- Foula
- Papa Stour
- Skerries¹⁶



Fair Isle, K. Gow

¹⁶ Comprising Housay and Bruray.

4.8 Mainland-Connected Islands

Mainland Connected Islands have permanent fixed links to mainland Scotland via public roads meaning that, alongside the amenities and services they have access to on-island, they can also access amenities and services in mainland Scotland with relative ease compared to other islands in the typology. These islands have higher than average, growing population levels.

Islands in this category are accessible from mainland Scotland via a bridge. This means that, alongside the amenities and services they have access to on-island, they can also access schooling, GPs and hospitals, grocery stores and vehicle fuel outlets based in mainland Scotland via road. These islands are therefore characterised by their lack of reliance on ferry services to access amenities and services elsewhere.

Although Skye has a higher level of on-island amenities than Seil, those living in outlying areas of Skye must travel further to access key local amenities than those based in Seil, which is around 16 miles by road from the *Very Remote Rural Town*¹⁷ of Oban. While the population of the two islands in this class is substantially different, both islands have higher than average populations and have seen a significant increase in population since 1981.

The islands included in the **Mainland-Connected Islands** category are:

- Seil
- Skye



Kyleakin with the Skye Bridge

¹⁷ Scottish Government's [Urban Rural 6-fold classification](#)

4.9 Unserviced Islands

Unserviced Islands are small islands with low populations, no public amenities, and no scheduled ferry services, though some have access to the mainland via private causeways or bridges. These islands have the lowest populations of all islands in the typology and are typically home to just one household.

This class includes islands which are predominantly owned or managed for private interests, including as private residences, businesses, or intentional communities. As such, they have very low populations, typically made up of a single household, and no public amenities or scheduled ferry services.

The island of Erraid had four households in 2011 but is predominantly owned and managed by the Findhorn Foundation as an intentional community. Holy Isle reported zero households but 31 residents in 2011. This is likely to be due to the fact that the island is home to a religious community.

The islands included in the **Unserviced Islands** category are:

- Auskerry
- Eilean dà Mhèinn
- Eilean Shona
- Eilean Tioram / Dry Island
- Erraid
- Gairsay
- Holm of Grimbister
- Holy Island
- Inner Holm
- Isle of Danna
- Isle of Ewe
- Rona / Ronaigh (Skye)
- Scalpay (Skye)
- Shuna (Luing)
- Soay
- Tanera More / Tannara Mòr
- Vaila

4.10 Previously Inhabited islands

Previously Inhabited Islands were once populated but now have no inhabitants, no on-island amenities, and no ferry services. This class has been included in the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology to allow the typology to be directly mapped against the existing Scottish Island Regions (2023) geography, which includes previously inhabited islands. The full list of the 71 islands included in this category is available in Appendix 1.

5 Exploring individual factors: population, local amenities, and ferry connections

This chapter provides information on how Scotland's islands might be grouped in terms of the individual dimensions of population, access to local services and amenities, and connections to mainland Scotland via ferries and fixed links. This may be of particular use to those whose work focuses on these specific areas.

Alongside the categories set out in Chapter 4, there is value in using the underlying data from the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) to group islands using the individual factors of population, local amenities, and ferry access. This chapter provides an overview of islands in eight of the ten categories included in the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) from each of these perspectives. Unserviced Islands and Previously Inhabited Islands have not been included due to their lack of amenities and ferry services, and low or absent populations.

5.1 Population



Burwick, South Ronaldsay

Population levels in the islands included in this chapter vary from seven people to over 21,000 with an average (median) population of 192 (Scottish Government, 2015). Population levels can affect human capacity in an island including, for example, the number of people available to deliver services or volunteer in key roles (e.g., emergency service cover or on the boards of community organisations). The number of people living in an island may also

affect the willingness or ability for businesses and organisations based elsewhere to provide goods and services to an island. Islands with small populations may be unattractive to private sector suppliers because the potential market for their goods and services is too small to make doing business there profitable. Small populations can pose similar problems for public sector organisations who might find it difficult to recruit the staff they require locally to deliver statutory services and may experience higher costs per head of delivering services given the restricted market size (Skerratt, 2010).

Thinking about population size can help inform approaches to delivering policy and services in some areas. For example, in islands with larger populations, approaches which involve training local people or engaging with volunteers may be more fruitful than in smaller islands where there may not be enough people with the time and inclination to engage with an initiative.

The rest of this chapter provides a breakdown of islands into four broad categories based on their population levels at the 2011 census.



Voe, Shetland

Islands / island groupings with **very high population levels** have populations higher than 90% of the islands covered in this chapter. The population of these islands varies significantly according to 2011 census data. The islands in this category are:

- Lewis, Harris & connected isles (population 21,574)
- Mainland Shetland & connected isles (population 19,882)
- Mainland Orkney & connected isles (population 18,480)
- Skye (population 10,008)

Islands / island groupings with **mid to high population levels** have populations which are higher than at least 60% of the islands covered in this chapter, but lower than 10% of the islands covered by this chapter. The population of these islands varies significantly. The islands in this category are:

- Bute (population 6,498)
- Uist & connected isles (population 4,846)
- Arran (population 4,629)
- Islay (population 3,228)
- Mull (population 2,800)
- Great Cumbrae (population 1,376)
- Barra & Vatersay (population 1,264)
- Whalsay (population 1,061)
- Yell (population 966)
- Tiree (population 653)
- Unst (population 632)
- Westray (population 588)
- Seil (population 551)
- Sanday (Orkney) (population 494)
- Hoy & Walls (population 419)
- Bressay (population 368)

Islands with **mid to low population levels** have populations lower than 40% of the islands covered in this chapter, but higher than at least 40% of the islands covered in this chapter. The populations of these islands range from 160 (Eday) to 349 (Stronsay). The islands in this category are:

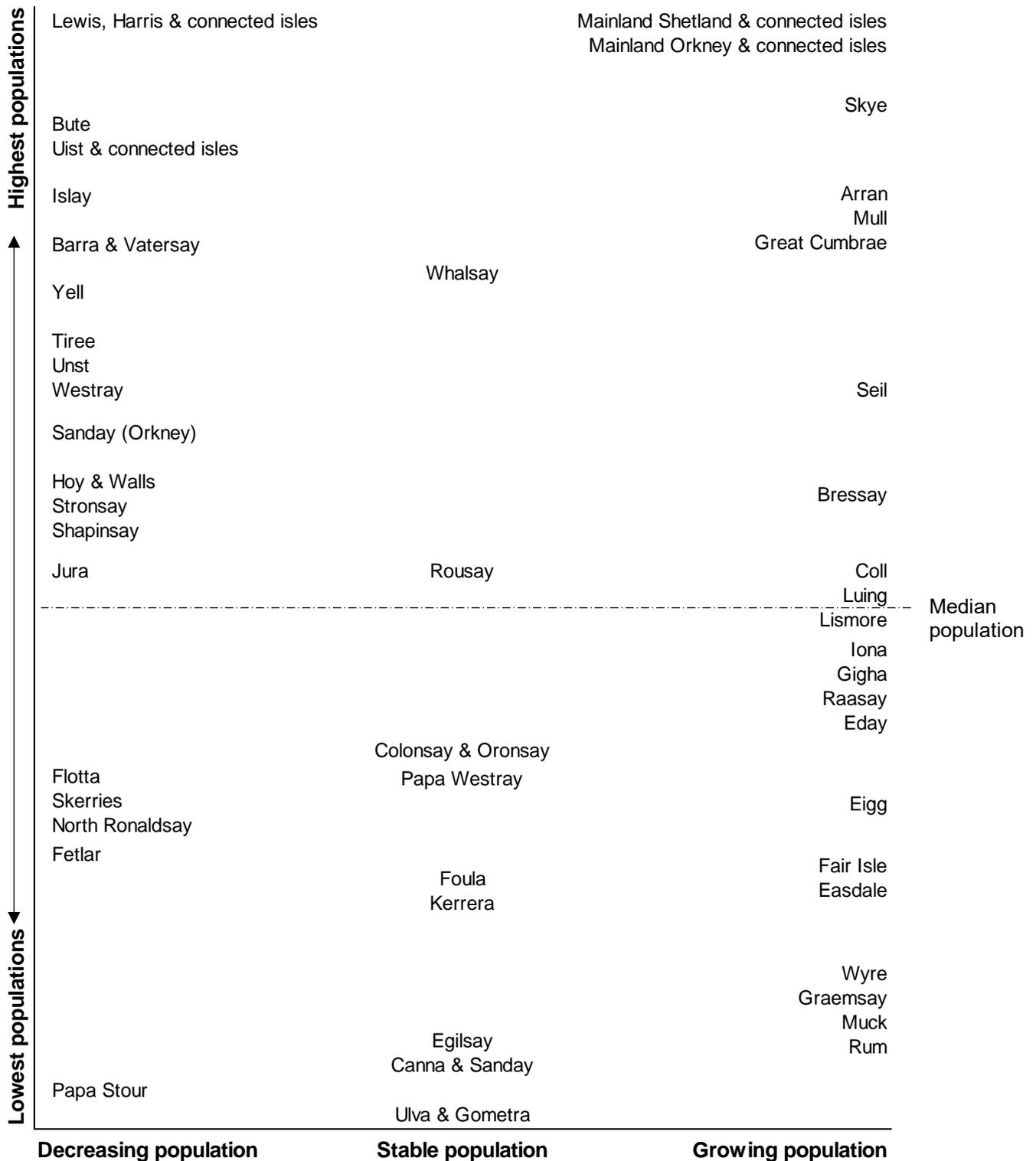
- Stronsay (population 349)
- Shapinsay (population 307)
- Rousay (population 216)
- Jura (population 196)
- Luing (population 195)
- Coll (population 195)
- Lismore (population 192)
- Iona (population 177)
- Gigha (population 163)
- Raasay (population 161)
- Eday (population 160)

Islands / island groupings with very **low population levels** had populations lower than 70% of islands covered in this chapter. All had fewer than 100 inhabitants according to 2011 census data, apart from *Colonsay & Oronsay* which had 132 inhabitants. The island grouping with the lowest population in this category was *Ulva & Gometra* with 13 people between the two islands. The islands in this category are:

- Colonsay & Oronsay (population 132)
- Papa Westray (population 90)
- Eigg (population 83)
- Flotta (population 80)
- Skerries (Housay & Brurray) (population 74)
- North Ronaldsay (population 72)
- Fair Isle (population 68)
- Fetlar (population 61)
- Easdale (population 59)
- Foula (population 38)
- Kerrera (population 34)
- Wyre (population 29)
- Graemsay (population 28)
- Muck (population 27)
- Egilsay (population 26)
- Rum (population 22)
- Canna & Sanday (population 21)
- Papa Stour (population 15)
- Ulva & Gometra (population 13)

Figure 1 illustrates the population levels of the islands included in this chapter while also indicating if and how population change affected an island between 1981 and 2011. This diagram only provides a high-level overview of population change in the islands. For example, it does not include any information about difference in population change in different areas of larger islands or within island groupings. Populations have been considered stable if population change is between +3.5% or -3.5% or, in islands with very small populations, if the difference between the populations in 1981 and 2011 is fewer than 5 people.

Figure 1: Relative populations and population change (1981-2011) for selected Scottish islands



Note: A full list of island population sizes and rates of population decline or growth is available in the accompanying [Excel data sheet](#).

Sources: (1) [Scotland's Census 2011: Inhabited islands report appendix tables](#) (National Records of Scotland, 2015) for 2011 population levels. 2) Scotland's Census 2001 Statistics for Inhabited Islands ([General Register Office for Scotland](#), 2003) for 1981 population levels.

5.1.1 Island population in context

Data from the 2022 census began to be released in late 2023 but, at the time of writing, no data was available for individual Scottish islands or areas defined by the Scottish Island Regions (2023) geography. However, data already released from the census shows that, in 2022, the population of Scotland was estimated to be 5,436,600. Population breakdowns for local authority areas have also been released, meaning we can assess population change in island-only local authority areas¹⁸. In these three local authority areas Na h-Eileanan Siar and Shetland saw a population decreases since 2011 (down 5.5% and 1.2% respectively) while the population of Orkney has grown by 3% over the same period.¹⁹

Although more detailed information from the 2022 census is not yet available, it is possible to apply the Scottish Island Regions geography to the National Records of Scotland's [Small Area Population Estimates](#) to provide a guide as to population levels in different island areas. This reveals a highly variable picture of population change both between local authority areas and within local authority areas between 2001 and 2021 (see Figure 2). Whilst the overall population of Scotland's islands has grown over the last 20 years, there is considerable variation between island regions and some islands have a declining population.

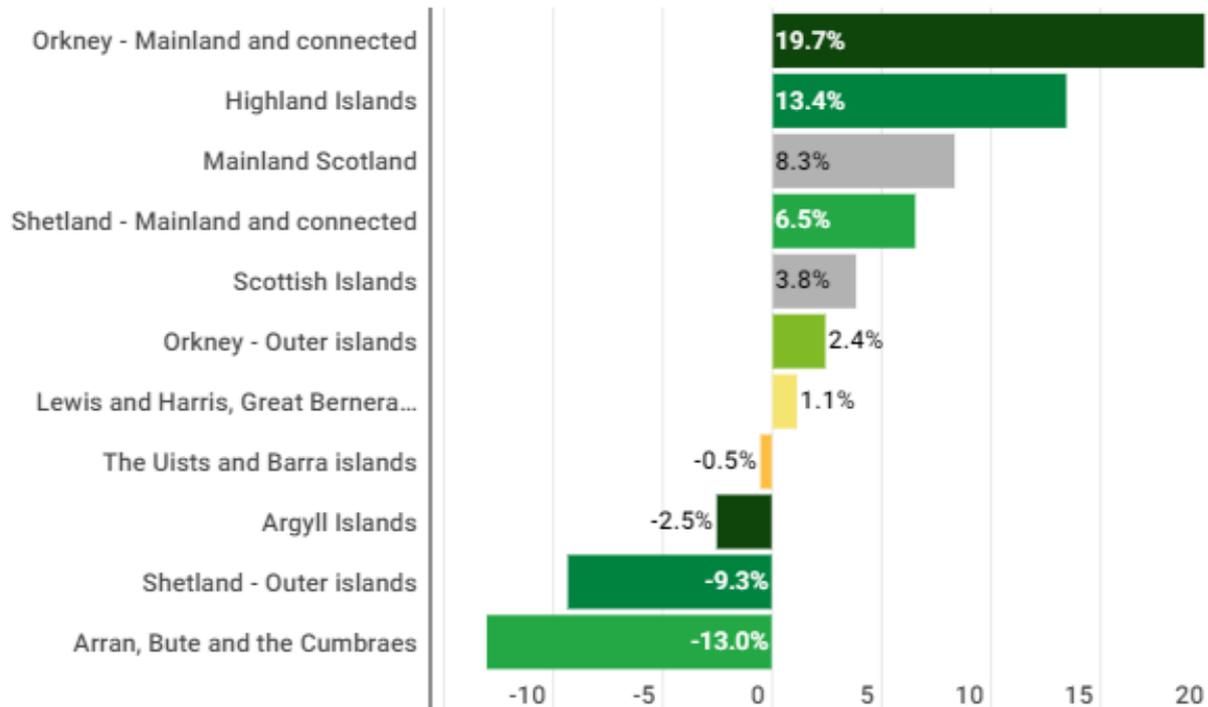


People walking along a road in Orkney

¹⁸ Population figures released from the 2022 census for Argyll and Bute Council, Highland Council, and North Ayrshire Council do not distinguish between islands and mainland areas of these local authorities at the time of writing.

¹⁹ [Scotland's Census 2022 - Rounded population estimates](#)

Figure 2: Percentage population change in Scottish Island Regions and Mainland Scotland, 2001 – 2021



Source: [National Records of Scotland](#)

Population growth has been strongest in Orkney Mainland and Connected Islands and the Highland Islands regions of the Scottish Island Regions geography. These areas have seen a population growth of 19.7% and 13.4% respectively. However, population in Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes and the Shetland Outer Isles has declined by 13% and 9.3% respectively. In addition, even where overall island population has grown, this growth is not spread equally across age groups. All island areas within the Scottish Island Regions geography that are estimated to have seen population growth have seen substantial increases in those age over 65, but a decrease in the 5-15 and 25-44 age groups²⁰. This points to a loss of working age populations in the islands which is estimated to be disproportionately higher than the total percentage loss of population.

Across Scotland, the projected percentage change in population by age grouping shows that the population will age in every area to 2043. The highest percentage reduction in the number of children and the working age people is expected to be in islands and remote rural areas (-23% and -15%

²⁰ Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay; Orkney Outer Islands; and Shetland Mainland and Connected Islands have also seen population decline in the 15-25 age group.

respectively).²¹ The overall projected percentage change in population is most extreme in island and remote rural local authority areas, where an approximate drop of 19,000 people represents a -12% change between 2018 and 2043. In contrast, the population of large cities is projected to increase by 7%, or 109,000 people.²²

5.2 Local Amenities

Access to amenities and services varies widely across Scotland's inhabited islands. For example, residents on some islands must leave the island to visit a GP whereas those on other islands have multiple GP practices as well as on-island access to a hospital offering a range of additional medical services²³. The provision of grocery stores ranges from islands with several stores, including a national chain, to those with one small community store, or no grocery store at all. Pupils in some islands are able to complete all of their education to the age of 18 by travelling daily to school by road, whereas others might have to leave their islands daily or even board away from home to access secondary education.

To understand the diversity of daily life in Scotland's islands access to the following services and amenities was mapped for each island:

- GPs and hospitals;
- schooling;
- grocery stores;

²¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/equality-fairer-scotland-budget-statement-2024-2025/pages/17/>

²² Figures based on [Subnational Population Projections](#) from the National Records of Scotland using the [RESAS classification for local authorities](#).

²³ For more information on the range of cover in this area on each island see accompanying [data sheet](#).

- vehicle fuel.



Small Isles
Primary
School,
Jura, K.
Gow

This chapter uses the data gathered for [Gow's Typology of Scotland's Islands](#) and updated for the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) to create three groupings indicating only the level of amenities and services available in each island. Once again it is important to note that these categories compare islands to each other. This means that when terms such as 'high' or 'low' are used this indicates the availability of amenities and services in relation to other islands in the typology and do not indicate how islands compare to other areas such as mainland rural or urban areas.

By using access to local amenities and services as a way to distinguish between places the islands included in this chapter can be grouped into three broad categories.

Islands with high levels of access to amenities and services have access, via road, to education to the age of 18²⁴, GPs and hospital services, a range of grocery stores (including at least one national chain), and at least one vehicle fuel outlet. The islands in this category are:

- Arran
- Barra & Vatersay
- Bute
- Islay
- Lewis, Harris & connected isles
- Mainland Orkney & connected isles
- Mainland Shetland & connected isles

²⁴ Due to travel times to the high school in Tobermory, pupils from outlying areas may choose to board weekly in Oban on the Scottish mainland to access schooling.

- Mull
- Seil
- Skye
- Uist

Islands with mid-range levels of access to amenities and services include those who have a range of basic amenities and services available on-island, or who have fast and frequent ferry connections which allow them to access these elsewhere with relative ease. These islands have access by road to at least one grocery store. Most of these islands have on-island access to a GP practice, though a GP may not necessarily be permanently resident on the island. Those islands without a GP practice generally have fast, frequent ferry services which facilitate access to GP services elsewhere. Pupils on these islands can access all compulsory education daily by road or ferry, though some may choose to board away from home for high school due to travel time. The islands in this category are:

- Bressay
- Gigha
- Great Cumbrae
- Hoy & Walls
- Jura
- Kerrera
- Lismore
- Luing
- Papa Westray
- Raasay
- Rousay
- Sanday (Orkney)
- Shapinsay
- Stronsay
- Tiree
- Unst
- Westray
- Whalsay
- Yell

Islands with low levels of access to amenities or services include those with the lowest level of on-island amenities and services of the islands considered. Only two islands in this class have a resident GP, with five islands served by visiting GPs and thirteen having no on-island access to a GP. Separately, in thirteen of the islands in this class, pupils must board away from home to complete high school education. Those on the remaining seven islands must travel daily by ferry to access high school education, with pupils on some of these islands given the option to board away from home to due to travel times. Islands in this class which do have grocery stores or fuel on-island are served by single, independent outlets. The islands in this category are:

- Canna & Sanday
- Coll
- Colonsay & Oronsay
- Easdale
- Eday
- Egilsay
- Eigg
- Fair Isle
- Fetlar
- Flotta
- Foula
- Graemsay
- Iona
- Muck
- North Ronaldsay
- Papa Stour
- Rum
- Skerries
- Ulva & Gometra
- Wyre

5.3 Ferry connectivity



Ferry to Bressay, Shetland

Ferry connections are key to daily life in islands which do not have fixed links to mainland Scotland. Ferries are used by island residents to travel for a range of reasons including work, schooling, leisure, and medical appointments. Ferries are also used to transport goods and tradespeople to and from the islands.

Although ferries are a common part of life in Scotland's islands, ferry services vary significantly. At one end of the scale, some islands are served by multiple routes to mainland Scotland with frequent departures throughout the day. At the other end of the scale, some islands are served by a single ferry route with less than one crossing per day. Crossing times to mainland Scotland also vary from between 5 minutes and 14.5 hours. In addition, the mainland destination port for ferries can vary between a city centre and a *Remote Rural*²⁵ area outwith a settlement. Of the 73 islands / island groupings included in this chapter²⁶, 28 did not have access to direct ferry connections to mainland Scotland in the winter of 2023/24, meaning that passengers were required to travel via up to two other islands in order to reach the Scottish mainland.

These factors affect the time, cost, and logistical complexity of travel from and to different islands. This influences how easy or difficult it is for islanders to access services and amenities elsewhere, and how easy or difficult it is for those in the wider world to provide goods and services to islands.

²⁵ Scottish Government's [Urban Rural 6-fold classification](#)

²⁶ This chapter excludes *Unserviced Islands* and *Previously Inhabited Islands*, as defined by the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024).

This chapter covers islands which do not have fixed links (e.g., a bridge) to mainland Scotland. This means that, as well as excluding *Previously Inhabited Islands* and *Unserviced Islands*, this chapter also excludes *Mainland-Connected Islands*. By using ferry services to distinguish between the remaining 71 islands in the typology, the islands can be grouped into four broad categories.

Islands with **high levels of access** to mainland Scotland via ferry all have more than five direct ferry connections to the Scottish mainland per day. Seven of the islands in this class are served by at least one ferry route which arrives on the Scottish mainland in an urban area or an accessible rural area with good transport links. Routes serving the remaining three islands all have a relatively high number of crossings per day and are within a 35-minute drive of an urban area. All islands are served by at least one ferry route with an average crossing time of less than one hour, apart from *Mainland Orkney & connected isles* where the shortest crossing time to mainland Scotland is 70 minutes. Arran, Bute, Lismore, *Mainland Orkney & connected isles*, and Mull are served by multiple routes which provides additional resilience, for example when one route is affected by adverse sailing conditions or technical failure. The islands in this category are:

- Arran
- Bute
- Easdale
- Gigha
- Great Cumbrae
- Kerrera
- Lismore
- Luing
- Mainland Orkney & connected isles
- Mull

Islands with **mid-range levels of access** to mainland Scotland via ferry all have at least one direct ferry connection to mainland Scotland, with the exception of Bressay which has high levels of connectivity to Mainland Shetland where onward services can be accessed. Islands in this class are served either by services arriving in a *Remote Small Town*²⁷ which have higher than average crossing times (ranging between 2.5 hours and just under 5 hours), or services which arrive on mainland Scotland in *Remote Rural*²⁸ areas where access to services and onward transport is likely to be limited. The only exception to this is *Mainland Shetland & connected isles* which is served by a route arriving in Aberdeen city centre, but which has the highest average crossing time of all ferry routes serving Scottish islands at just over 12.5 hours. The islands in this category are:

²⁷ Scottish Government's [Urban Rural 6-fold classification](#)

²⁸ Scottish Government's [Urban Rural 6-fold classification](#)

- Barra and Vatersay
- Bressay
- Coll
- Colonsay & Oronsay
- Eigg
- Islay
- Lewis, Harris & connected isles
- Mainland Shetland & connected isles
- Muck
- Raasay
- Rum
- Tiree
- Uist & connected isles.

All islands with **low levels of access** to mainland Scotland via ferry are affected by double insularity, meaning that journeys from and to the island must travel via one other island to reach the Scottish mainland. This has implications for transporting people and goods from and to these islands in terms of time, cost and logistical complexity. There is considerable variability within this class in terms of the frequency and crossing time for ferries connecting these islands to the islands which provide them with access to onward travel to mainland Scotland. There is also considerable variability in the frequency and crossing time for ferries providing onward connections to mainland Scotland. The islands in this category are:

- Eday
- Egilsay
- Flotta
- Graemsay
- Hoy & Walls
- Iona
- Jura
- Papa Westray
- Rousay
- Sanday (Orkney)
- Shapinsay
- Stronsay
- Ulva & Gometra
- Westray
- Whalsay
- Wyre
- Yell



Jura to Islay Ferry

Islands with **very low levels of access** to mainland Scotland via ferry are all affected by specific factors which have implications for ferry travel. Fetlar and Unst are affected by triple insularity, meaning that journeys from and to these islands must travel via two other islands to reach mainland Scotland. Also in the Shetland islands, Fair Isle, Foula, Papa Stour and Skerries are affected by double insularity and are served by inter-island ferries with infrequent services and / or lengthy crossing times. Once in Mainland Shetland those travelling from these islands then face an average ferry crossing time of just over 12.5 hours to reach mainland Scotland. North Ronaldsay in Orkney is also affected by double insularity and the winter 2023/4 timetable for inter-island ferries between North Ronaldsay and Mainland Orkney includes only one crossing a week. While Canna & Sanday has a direct ferry connection to mainland Scotland, it has the fewest crossing per week of all islands with mainland ferry connections, with fewer than 0.5 crossing per day on average in the winter 2023/4 timetable, and an average crossing time of 2 hours and 50 minutes. The islands in this category are:

- Canna & Sanday
- Fair Isle
- Fetlar
- Foula
- North Ronaldsay
- Papa Stour
- Skerries
- Unst

6 Conclusion

The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) illustrates the diverse nature of Scotland's islands and provides a new classification system which policy makers may wish to use when considering the impact of their work on island communities. The development of this typology supports the commitment in the [National Islands Plan](#) (Scottish Government, 2019) to improve available data about islands to help inform action and policy to support the needs of islands.

The typology identifies ten island types, based on comparisons of population, local amenities, and access to mainland Scotland via ferry:

- Connected Independent Islands
- Independent Hub Islands
- Independent Outer Isles
- Reliant Inner Isles
- Reliant Outer Isles
- Semi-Reliant Isles
- Outpost Islands
- Mainland-Connected Islands
- Unserviced Islands
- Previously Inhabited Islands

These categories are not intended to act as a hierarchy. Instead the categories and accompanying descriptors provide context to those wishing to consider the differing needs and opportunities in this diverse range of islands, for example when considering policy development and implementation. Specifically, the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology can be used by those conducting [Island Communities Impact Assessments](#) (ICIAs). For example, the typology could be used to support the design of a community consultation approach. It could also be used to assess whether any consultation exercise has gathered feedback from a diverse range of islands and what additional factors might need to be considered where information might be missing.

More widely the typology can provide a useful framework for considering how policy might be effectively implemented in island areas. For example, it can help identify islands which may struggle with approaches which focus on building skills within a community due to capacity issues or identify islands which might face additional barriers in relying on external providers due to the access provided by ferry connections to mainland Scotland.

The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) is part of a suite of resources published by the Scottish Government to support those working with, in, and for Scotland's islands. Information on wider resources is available

in Chapter 1.4 of this report, with the [Scottish Islands Data Dashboard \(2023\)](#) providing a valuable overview of a range of existing data in the island context. The [Excel data sheet](#) published alongside this report also provides an additional resource for researchers.

Scotland's islands are home to living communities which change and evolve over time. The Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) uses a framework which allows updating and leaves room for additional factors which affect island life to be considered. For example, including additional data on transport, demographic make-up, or community owned assets could allow this baseline typology to be used for specific purposes to illustrate and understand the diverse nature of Scotland's islands.



Eriskay

Appendix 1 – Islands included in the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology by island type

All 160 islands included in the [Scottish Island Regions \(2023\) geography](#) have been included in the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024). However, the island of Walls, which is connected to the island of Hoy by a bridge, was not listed within the Scottish Island Regions (2023) geography, with the landmass of Walls instead incorporated within Hoy. This is inconsistent with the way other islands with fixed links to each other are treated, for example Canna and Sanday or Housay and Bruray. For consistency, Hoy and Walls are therefore listed as separate islands within the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) meaning that the typology covers 161 islands.

The final list of 161 islands includes previously inhabited islands but does not include islands located in freshwater (for example Loch Lomond). Neither uninhabited islands or freshwater islands are covered by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. However, previously inhabited islands have been included both within the Scottish Island Regions Geography and this typology to allow their use to be extended to both historical and future records.

It should be noted that islands which are connected to each other with permanent fixed links (i.e., bridges or causeways) or via tidal access points are grouped together for the purpose of the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology but are listed separately within the Scottish Island Regions geography. The islands within each grouping are either explicitly stated in the name of the grouping (e.g., *Barra & Vatersay*) or are listed in brackets following the name of the island grouping.

Table 2: Islands included within the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024) by island type

Island Type	Islands / Island Groupings
Connected Independent Islands (8 islands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arran • Bute • Great Cumbrae • Mainland Orkney & connected isles (Burray, Lamb Holm, Mainland Orkney, South Ronaldsay) • Mull
Independent Hub Islands (18 islands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islay • Lewis, Harris & connected isles (Great Bernera, Lewis and Harris, Scalpay) • Mainland Shetland & connected isles (East Burra, Mainland Shetland, Muckle Roe, Trondra, West Burra)

Island Type	Islands / Island Groupings
Independent Outer Isles (8 islands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uist & connected isles (Baleshare, Benbecula, Berneray, Eriskay, Flodaigh, Grimsay (N), Grimsay (S), North Uist, South Uist) <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barra & Vatersay • Bressay • Jura • Tiree • Unst • Whalsay • Yell
Reliant Inner Isles (8 islands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easdale • Iona • Kerrera • Lismore • Luing • Raasay • Ulva & Gometra
Semi-Reliant Isles (9 islands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gigha • Hoy & Walls • Papa Westray • Rousay • Sanday (Orkney) • Shapinsay • Stronsay • Westray
Reliant Outer Isles (12 islands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coll • Colonsay & Oronsay • Eday • Egilsay • Eigg • Flotta • Graemsay • Muck • North Ronaldsay • Rùm • Wyre
Outpost Islands (8 islands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canna & Sanday • Fair Isle • Fetlar • Foula • Papa Stour • Skerries (Housay, Bruray)
Mainland-Connected Islands (2 islands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seil • Skye
Unserviced Islands (17 islands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auskerry • Eilean dà Mhèinn • Eilean Shona

Island Type	Islands / Island Groupings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eilean Tioram / Dry Island • Erraid • Gairsay • Holm of Grimbister • Holy Island • Inner Holm • Isle of Danna • Isle of Ewe • Rona / Ronaigh (Skye) • Scalpay (Skye) • Shuna (Luing) • Soay • Tanera More / Tannara Mòr • Vaila
<p>Previously Inhabited Islands (71 islands)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berneray (Vatersay) • Boreray • Boreray (St Kilda) • Calve Island • Cara Island • Carna • Cava • Cnoc na h-Airigh • Cnoc nan Uibhean • Copinsay • Dubh Artach • Eilean a' Ghiorr • Eilean an Stalcaire • Eilean Ban • Eilean Buidhe • Eilean Donnan • Eilean Dubh • Eilean Fladday • Eilean Horrisdale • Eilean Leathann • Eilean Leireabhagh • Eilean Loain • Eilean Mhidhinis • Eilean Mór (Flannan Isles) • Eilean Musdale • Eilean na Cille • Eilean na h-Airigh • Ensay • Eriska • Fara • Fraoch-eilean • Goat Island • Grunay • Helliarr Holm • Inch Kenneth • Inchmarnock

Island Type	Islands / Island Groupings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Island Davaar • Island of Stroma • Isle Martin • Isle of Noss • Kisimul Castle • Lingeigh • Little Colonsay • Little Cumbrae Island • Lunga (Luing) • Mingulay • Muckle Flugga • Muckle Skerry (Pentland Skerries) • Orasaigh • Ornsay • Orsay • Pabay • Pabbay • Papa Stronsay • Pladda • Ronay • Rubha Fiola • Rubha nan Gall • Sanda Island • Scarba • Scarp • Shivinish • Shuna Island (Lismore) • Skerryvore • St Kilda or Hirta • Sule Skerry • Sunamul • Swona • Taransay • Texa • Torsa
<p>Total islands included in Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024)</p>	<p>161</p>

Appendix 2 – Comparison of island classifications

Table 3: Islands by local authority, Scottish Island Regions geography class, and Scottish Government Scottish Island Typology (2024) class

Islands	Local Authority	Scottish Island Regions class	Scottish Islands Typology 2024 class
Arran	North Ayrshire Council	Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes	Connected Independent Islands
Auskerry	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Unserviced Islands
Baleshare	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Independent Hub Islands
Barra	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Independent Outer Isles
Benbecula	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Independent Hub Islands
Berneray (Vatersay)	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Berneray (North Uist)	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Independent Hub Islands
Boreray	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Boreray (St Kilda)	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay	Previously Inhabited Islands
Bressay	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Independent Outer Isles
Bruray	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Outpost Islands
Burray	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney - Mainland and connected	Connected Independent Islands
Bute	Argyll and Bute Council	Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes	Connected Independent Islands

Islands	Local Authority	Scottish Island Regions class	Scottish Islands Typology 2024 class
Calve Islands	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Canna	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Outpost Islands
Cara Islands	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Carna	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Cava	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Previously Inhabited Islands
Cnoc na h-Airigh	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Cnoc nan Uibhean	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Coll	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Reliant Outer Isles
Colonsay	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Reliant Outer Isles
Copinsay	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Previously Inhabited Islands
Dubh Artach	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Easdale	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Reliant Inner Isles
East Burra	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland - Mainland and connected	Independent Hub Islands
Eday	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Reliant Outer Isles
Egilsay	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Reliant Outer Isles

Islands	Local Authority	Scottish Island Regions class	Scottish Islands Typology 2024 class
Eigg	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Reliant Outer Isles
Eilean a' Ghiorr	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean an Stalcaire / Castle Stalker	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean Ban	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean Buidhe	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean dà Mhèinn	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Unserviced Islands
Eilean Donnan	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean Dubh	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean Fladday	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean Horrisdale	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean Leathann	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean Leireabhagh	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean Loain	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean Mhidhinis	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean Mór (Flannan Isles)	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay	Previously Inhabited Islands

Islands	Local Authority	Scottish Island Regions class	Scottish Islands Typology 2024 class
Eilean Musdile	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean na Cille	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean na h-Airigh	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eilean Shona	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Unserviced Islands
Eilean Tioram / Dry Islands	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Unserviced Islands
Ensay	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay	Previously Inhabited Islands
Eriksay	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Independent Hub Islands
Eriska	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Erraid	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Unserviced Islands
Fair Isle	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Outpost Islands
Fara	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Previously Inhabited Islands
Fetlar	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Outpost Islands
Flodaigh	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Independent Hub Islands
Flotta	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Reliant Outer Isles
Foula	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Outpost Islands

Islands	Local Authority	Scottish Island Regions class	Scottish Islands Typology 2024 class
Fraoch-eilean	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Gairsay	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Unserviced Islands
Gigha	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Semi-Reliant Islands
Goat Islands	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay	Previously Inhabited Islands
Gometra	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Reliant Inner Isles
Graemsay	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Reliant Outer Isles
Great Bernera	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay	Independent Hub Islands
Great Cumbrae	North Ayrshire Council	Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes	Connected Independent Islands
Grimsay (North)	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Independent Hub Islands
Grimsay (South)	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Independent Hub Islands
Grunay	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Previously Inhabited Islands
Helliar Holm	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Previously Inhabited Islands
Holm of Grimbister	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Unserviced Islands
Holy Islands	North Ayrshire	Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes	Unserviced Islands
Housay	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Outpost Islands

Islands	Local Authority	Scottish Island Regions class	Scottish Islands Typology 2024 class
Hoy ^a	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Semi-Reliant Islands
Inch Kenneth	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Inchmarnock	Argyll and Bute Council	Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes	Previously Inhabited Islands
Inner Holm	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Unserviced Islands
Iona	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Reliant Inner Isles
Islands Davaar	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Islands of Stroma	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Islay	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Independent Hub Islands
Isle Martin	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Isle of Danna	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Unserviced Islands
Isle of Ewe	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Unserviced Islands
Isle of Noss	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Previously Inhabited Islands
Jura	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Independent Outer Isles
Kerrera	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Reliant Inner Isles
Kisimul Castle	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands

Islands	Local Authority	Scottish Island Regions class	Scottish Islands Typology 2024 class
Lamb Holm	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney - Mainland and connected	Connected Independent Islands
Lewis and Harris	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay	Independent Hub Islands
Lingeigh	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Lismore	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Reliant Inner Isles
Little Colonsay	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Little Cumbrae	North Ayrshire	Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes	Previously Inhabited Islands
Luing	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Reliant Inner Isles
Lunga (Luing)	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Mainland of Orkney	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney - Mainland and connected	Connected Independent Islands
Mainland of Shetland	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland - Mainland and connected	Independent Hub Islands
Mingulay	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Muck	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Reliant Outer Isles
Muckle Flugga	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Previously Inhabited Islands
Muckle Roe	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland - Mainland and connected	Independent Hub Islands
Muckle Skerry (Pentland Skerries)	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Previously Inhabited Islands

Islands	Local Authority	Scottish Island Regions class	Scottish Islands Typology 2024 class
Mull	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Connected Independent Islands
North Ronaldsay	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Reliant Outer Isles
North Uist	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Independent Hub Islands
Orasaigh	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Ornsay	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Oronsay	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Reliant Outer Isles
Orsay	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Pabay	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Pabbay	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay	Previously Inhabited Islands
Papa Stour	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Outpost Islands
Papa Stronsay	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Previously Inhabited Islands
Papa Westray	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Semi-Reliant Islands
Pladda	North Ayrshire	Arran, Bute and the Cumbraes	Previously Inhabited Islands
Raasay	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Reliant Inner Isles
Rona / Ronaigh (Skye)	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Unserviced Islands

Islands	Local Authority	Scottish Island Regions class	Scottish Islands Typology 2024 class
Ronay	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Rousay	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Semi-Reliant Islands
Rubha Fiola	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Rubha nan Gall	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Rum	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Reliant Outer Isles
Sanda Islands	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Sanday (Canna)	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Outpost Islands
Sanday (Orkney)	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Semi-Reliant Islands
Scalpay (Harris)	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay	Independent Hub Islands
Scalpay (Skye)	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Unserviced Islands
Scarba	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Scarp	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay	Previously Inhabited Islands
Seil	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Mainland-Connected Islands
Shapinsay	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Semi-Reliant Islands
Shivinish	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Shuna (Luìng)	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Unserviced Islands

Islands	Local Authority	Scottish Island Regions class	Scottish Islands Typology 2024 class
Shuna Islands (Lismore)	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Skerryvore	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Skye	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Mainland-Connected Islands
Soay	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Unserviced Islands
South Ronaldsay	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney - Mainland and connected	Connected Independent Islands
South Uist	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Independent Hub Islands
St Kilda or Hirta	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay	Previously Inhabited Islands
Stronsay	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Semi-Reliant Islands
Sule Skerry	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Previously Inhabited Islands
Sunamul	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Swona	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Previously Inhabited Islands
Tanera More / Tannara Mòr	Highland Council	Highlands Islands	Unserviced Islands
Taransay	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Lewis and Harris, Great Bernera and Scalpay	Previously Inhabited Islands
Texa	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Tiree	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Independent Outer Isles

Islands	Local Authority	Scottish Island Regions class	Scottish Islands Typology 2024 class
Torsa	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Previously Inhabited Islands
Trondra	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland - Mainland and connected	Independent Hub Islands
Ulva	Argyll and Bute Council	Argyll Islands	Reliant Inner Isles
Unst	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Independent Outer Isles
Vaila	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Unserviced Islands
Vatersay	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	The Uists and Barra Islands	Independent Outer Isles
Walls ^a	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Semi-Reliant Islands
West Burra	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland - Mainland and connected	Independent Hub Islands
Westray	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Semi-Reliant Islands
Whalsay	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Independent Outer Isles
Wyre	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Outer Isles	Reliant Outer Isles
Yell	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Outer Isles	Independent Outer Isles

^a The islands of Hoy and Walls are connected via a bridge and are listed under 'Hoy' in the Scottish Island Regions (2023) geography. Similarly connected islands are listed separately under the Scottish Island Regions (2023) geography e.g., Canna and Sanday or Housay and Bruray. For consistency Hoy and Walls are recognised as separate islands for the Scottish Government Scottish Islands Typology (2024).

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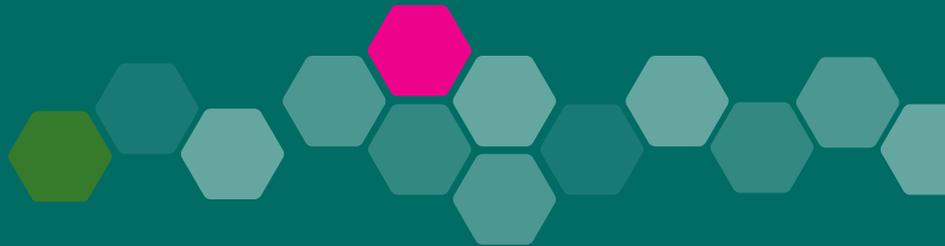
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