

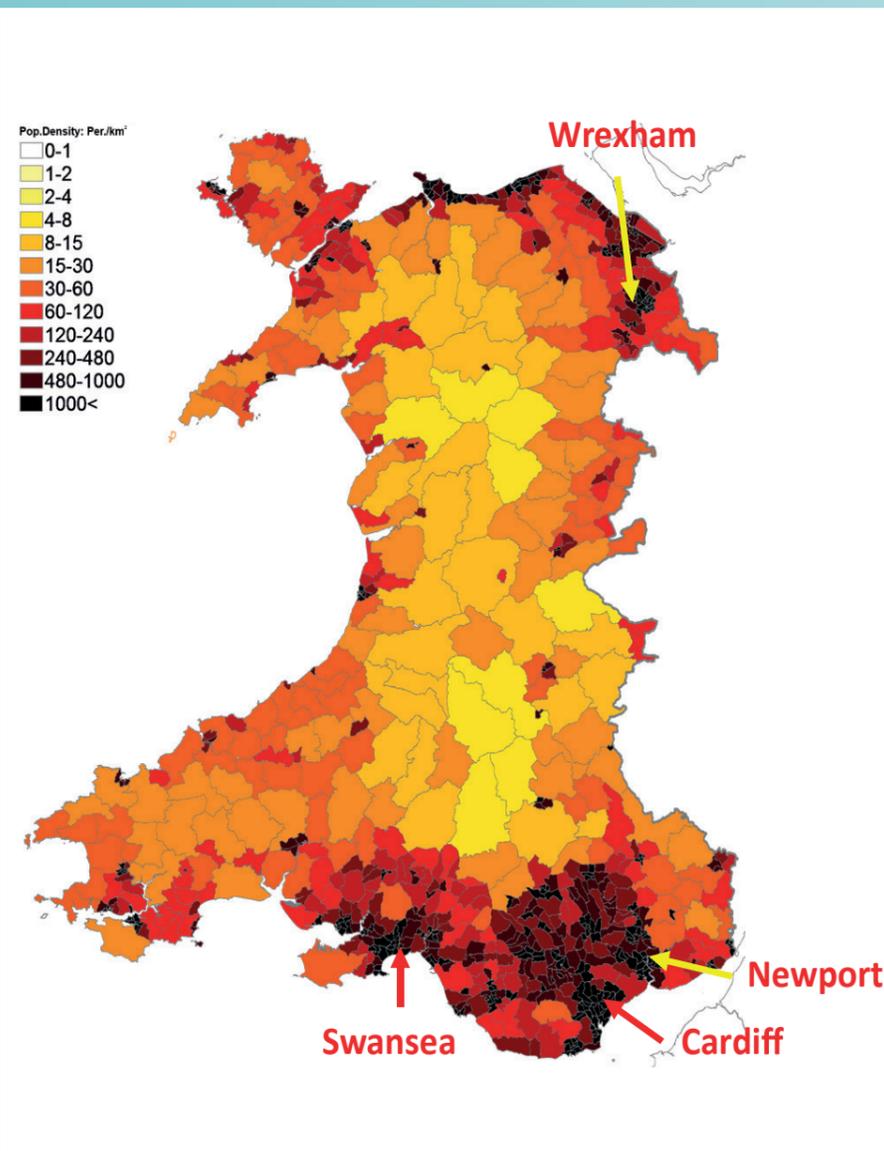
2.1.1 How are urban and rural areas in Wales linked?

Where do people live in Wales?

Population distribution is where people live, and describes the way in which people are spread out. Wales has a population of 3.17 million people. Different areas in Wales have different **population densities**. This is a calculation of how many people live within a specific place. It is worked out using the following calculation:

$$\text{Population density (person/km}^2\text{)} = \text{Population} \div \text{Area (km}^2\text{)}$$

Population density is usually shown by a **choropleth map** like the one below:



North east Wales has a cluster of **densely populated** areas e.g. **Wrexham**, due to this area's close proximity to the English/Welsh border.

Central and mid Wales are **sparsely populated**, meaning there is a **low population density** e.g. **Powys**.

Major cities in **South and South East Wales** are the most **densely populated** areas. This means there is a **high concentration** of people in these areas. They include, **Swansea, Newport** and Wales' capital city, **Cardiff**.

The urban-rural continuum

The term **rural** refers to an area of countryside with a **low population density** with characteristics such as wide open areas or woodland. It is difficult to find a clear distinction from where **urban** settlements and urban land use end, and where rural settlements and rural land use begin. The **rural-urban continuum** is the gradual transition between urban and rural areas. Places are increasing in rurality as they move away from the CBD.



Urban: a high population density. Area includes many services and retail e.g., cities.



Urban fringe: on the outskirts of urban areas. Land use includes housing, retail parks, airports.



Suburban: residential area with some services. Links to towns and cities. Residents will commute to work.



Accessible rural: low population density. Commuter villages. Some houses and buildings.



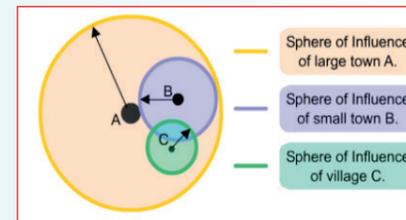
Isolated rural: sparsely populated, isolated areas with many open spaces and farmland.

Rural elements increase as you move away from urban areas

Sphere of influence in relation to retailing and urban services

The term **sphere of influence** is the area for which the settlement provides goods and services. This is influenced by two main factors:

- **Threshold population:** the minimum number of people required to maintain a particular service.
- **Range of a service:** the maximum distance people are willing to travel for a particular service.



Larger settlements have a larger sphere of influence

The **size** of the sphere of influence depends on several factors:
Settlement infrastructure and transport links: the better they are, the more people can reach the settlement.
Distance from cities: the further the settlement is from the city, the smaller the sphere of influence.
Settlement size: larger settlements will have a larger sphere of influence than smaller settlements with lower population densities.

