



# THE CORNWALL WE KNOW

MAY 2025 SNAPSHOT

**This document sets out the evidence base that will help shape the Council’s business plan for 2026-30.** It focuses on identifying the challenges and opportunities, as well as the long-term drivers and trends, that will influence and shape Cornwall for years to come.

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# SUMMARY

This document sets out our evidence base that will help shape the Council's priorities and business plan for 2026-30. It identifies the long-term drivers and trends, looking at how they have changed over the past five years and how they are set to shape Cornwall's future for years to come.

## CORNWALL'S ECONOMY IS GROWING AT A FASTER ANNUAL RATE THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE, BUT OUR PRODUCTIVITY STILL LAGS SIGNIFICANTLY BEHIND.

The reasons are multi-faceted, linked to an over-reliance on sectors with low productivity, such as tourism, retail and health and care; high levels of part-time and self-employment; skills challenges within our labour force; an absence of large private sector employers; an ageing population and our rural geography (which means that Cornwall does not benefit from high concentrations of businesses, customers or workers).

Lower productivity matters because it leads to fewer jobs, lower wages and less profit for businesses; and this is reflected in outcomes for Cornwall's residents.

The chief concern five years ago was job losses, with increasing unemployment resulting from the Covid lockdowns. Since then, Cornwall has recovered to have better employment rates than the UK average, (although there are significant variations across Cornwall with persistent hot spots of unemployment). However, despite recent real wage growth, full-time earnings remain below the national average and the number of people earning below the Real Living Wage has increased.

Harnessing the potential of our natural assets, cultural heritage, and community resilience is essential to attracting investment. The potential for innovative and sustainable development in higher-value sectors – including advanced manufacturing, marine industries and renewable energy – is significant and growing, and will both increase growth within Cornwall and contribute to UK-wide goals.

....despite recent real wage growth, full-time earnings remain below the national average and the number of people earning below the Real Living Wage has increased.

## CORNWALL'S POPULATION CONTINUES TO GROW AND HAS AN OLDER AGE PROFILE THAN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY.

People are now living for longer with multiple long-term conditions and need for long-term care. This results in increases in the demand for, and the costs of, health and social care. In addition, whilst Cornwall has similar levels of economic inactivity to the UK when considering the working

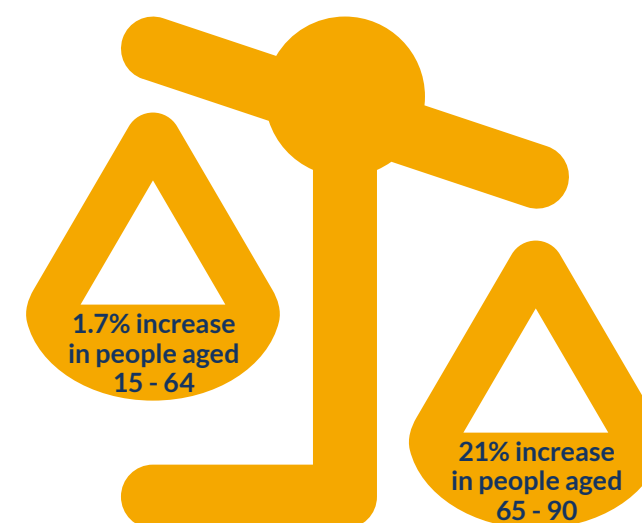
age population as a whole, it also has a comparatively higher proportion of people who are economically inactive due to long-term sickness – an increase to 1 in 5 in 2021 from 1 in 10 in 2011.

As the population of older individuals and those with long-term illnesses in Cornwall rises, and the number of younger people declines, an imbalance emerges. Cornwall increasingly has more people relying on public services than people of sufficient working age to grow our economy and provide the funds for the services we rely

upon. The combination of an ageing population, a proportionally changing workforce, and increasing dependency on public services could put serious strain on Cornwall's economy and infrastructure.

A decreasing younger adult population, coupled with a persistent lower proportion of high-level qualifications compared to the UK average, means investment in education and skills for young people is more critical than ever to retaining wealth within the local economy.

### Population change (%) by age group in Cornwall, 2011 to 2021 (Census)



### Cornwall Council's estimated total revenue and expenditure (£ per head)





## FIVE YEARS ON FROM THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, ALL THE EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT THE INEQUALITIES EXPOSED THEN PERSIST TODAY.

The pandemic, far from being a great leveller, threw the major disparities that exist in the health and wealth of our communities into stark relief. These inequalities continue to shape daily life and have been compounded by the inflationary leaps in the cost-of-living.

Better health is central to human happiness and well-being. It also makes an important contribution to economic progress, as healthy populations live longer, are more productive, and save more. Healthy life expectancy, which measures the years lived in good health, has been declining in Cornwall, reflecting the national trend, with clear gaps between the most and least deprived areas.



The impact of the pandemic exacerbated food insecurity, debt and housing risk, and these remain daily challenges for many. Housing in particular has become an even greater challenge and remains a high priority for residents. The supply of new housing – particularly social and affordable housing – is not keeping up with demand. There has been a huge increase in those on the waiting list for housing with an increase in households coming to the authority already homeless rather than threatened with homelessness. The needs of people approaching as homeless have become more complex in recent years, with a range of support needs. Housing insecurity increased as a result of the pandemic, particularly for first time buyers and those renting privately, and these remain key concerns.

These same factors – housing, deprivation and health outcomes – are interrelated with crime and safety issues. Overall, Cornwall remains one of the safest areas in the UK, despite rising crime rates that mirror national trends. However, there are some significant concerns around violence, domestic abuse, drug-related crime, and exploitation. Reported levels of anti-social behaviour spiked during the pandemic but saw year-on-year reductions in the following years. This trend has recently changed course and reported incidents are increasing. Drug-related harms, homelessness, and mental health needs are

widespread, requiring targeted support and intervention.

Inequalities are evidenced in education too and affect children throughout their school life. Despite positive educational outcomes in early years and key stage 2, there are significant attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs. Nearly a third of children in Cornwall live in poverty. The region also struggles with low social mobility and difficulty in recruiting a skilled workforce, with a lower proportion of high-level qualifications compared to the UK average.

Access to good transport impacts on how well we live, and transport inequality creates barriers to employment, education, healthcare, and other essential services. The rural nature and sparsely distributed communities of Cornwall leads to long commuting distances, heavy reliance on cars and increasing traffic congestion around the major centres of education and work. These remain significant barriers for residents. A significant portion of the population does not have access to a private vehicle. Cornwall is one of the few places in the country to have enjoyed steady growth in bus use in recent years, following investment and effective partnership working, offering the prospect of further improvements in accessible and sustainable mobility.

## CORNWALL MAINTAINS A UNIQUE CULTURAL IDENTITY, WITH STRONG APPRECIATION OF ITS HERITAGE AND LANGUAGE.

The 2021 Census saw the highest number of people yet expressing their national identity, ethnicity or main language as Cornish, highlighting a growing recognition and pride in Cornish heritage.

2024 marked the tenth anniversary of Cornish being awarded National Minority status under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This means that the rights and freedoms of the Cornish to express and develop their identity and culture are to be upheld at the highest level, in the same way as the UK's other Celtic people, the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish. The last four years have seen important developments such as the Cornish Language (Kernewek) included in the 2024 Media Act – the first inclusion of Cornish in a major piece of UK legislation – and closer ties developed with our Celtic partners through the new Celtic Forum and with Wales through the Cornwall-Wales Collaboration Agreement.

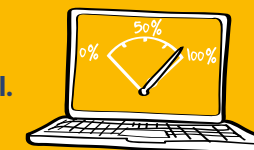
However, more needs to be done to ensure Cornish people can fully participate in social and economic life including nurturing Cornish culture and language and addressing economic inequalities and barriers to full participation,

The 2021 Census showed that those identifying as Cornish tend to be older and report different life outcomes compared to the overall population of England and Wales, likely due to differences in age, access to work, and housing. If able to fully realise the opportunities afforded by their national minority status, the Cornish will be better placed to protect and promote their distinctiveness, remove obstacles to cultural understanding, drive-up community well-being, secure social change and generate economic success.

**The 2021 Census highlighted a growing recognition and pride in Cornish heritage.**



Find the latest intelligence about Cornwall on the Cornwall We Know pages: <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/the-cornwall-we-know>



# UNDERSTANDING OUR DEMOGRAPHY

Cornwall's population increased by **7.1%** from around 532,300 in 2011 to 570,300 in 2021 – higher than the 6.6% increase for England.

More recent population estimates put the figure at **593,903**

By 2030, Cornwall's population is projected to reach around **617,766**

Cornwall's population is **51% female** and **49% male**

The median age in Cornwall is **47.6 years**

**56%** of Cornwall's population are working age (18-64 years) lower than the England figure of **61%**

**15%** are aged 0-15 years compared to **18%** in England

**26%** of Cornwall population are aged over 65, for England it is **19%** By 2030 that is forecast to be **28%**

By 2030 **14%** of the population is forecast to be aged 0-15 years

**120,870** people across Cornwall reported having a disability or long-term health condition

## CORNWALL

Cornwall is currently home to approximately 593,903 people and remains one of the least densely populated areas of the UK, with a population density of just 166.7 people per square kilometre.

Cornwall's population remains older than the national profile, and that trend is expected to continue. Population projections suggest that the proportion of those aged 65+ years in Cornwall will make up 28% of the population by 2030. This is attributed to longer life expectancy and inward migration of 60-69-year-olds looking to retire here. Cornwall's Old Age Dependency Ratio (OADR) – the number of people at State Pension age (SPA) and over for every 1,000 people aged between 16 years and the SPA – is 418 per 1,000 working age adults. That is nearly 50% higher than that of England (286 per 1,000).<sup>1</sup>

However, in contrast to previous years, in-migration to Cornwall is now primarily by those of working age, suggesting economic and lifestyle factors are key drivers, along with the ability to work remotely. People are relocating to Cornwall to improve their quality of life, benefiting from

Cornwall's high life satisfaction scores and relatively low crime rates. Nonetheless, younger adults continue to leave Cornwall at a higher rate than other age groups, reflecting a long-standing trend of 15-29-year-olds leaving Cornwall for education and/or early careers.<sup>2</sup>

Cornwall has a higher proportion of people with a disability or long-term health condition than in the

South West and England and Wales. In Cornwall, whilst the proportions have remained relatively consistent, an additional 1,836 people identified as having bad/very bad health in 2021 compared to 2011. This is an increase of 5.5%.<sup>3</sup> The main disabling condition for those under 16 is learning difficulties, for those of working age it is psychiatric disorders, and for over 65s it is arthritis and dementia.<sup>4</sup>



**Population projections suggest that the proportion of those aged 65+ years in Cornwall will make up 28% of the population by 2030.**



The most recent Census, conducted in March 2021, gave us a richer picture of the people and households in Cornwall.

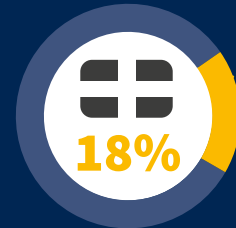
Ethnic diversity in Cornwall remains low compared to the South West and England as a whole but is increasing.

**96.8%** of the population identified as **White**.

**3.2%** identified as being from a **Black, Asian, mixed or multiple** or other ethnic background. This compares to 1.8% in 2011.

**0.18%**  of people (approximately 1000 residents) identified as **Gypsy, Roma or Traveller**.

**98.5%** of residents aged 3 or over had **English** listed as their first language.<sup>9</sup>



of Cornwall's residents stated **Cornish** as their national identity in the 2021 Census compared to 14% in the 2011 Census.

In total, **117,350** (103,230 in Cornwall) people said **their national identity was Cornish** in the 2021 Census, nearly 34,000 more than in 2011 (using the "write in" option on the Census form).



For the first time in its 220 year history, the 2021 census asked people about **their sexual orientation and gender identity**.

**3%** of the population in Cornwall identify as **lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (non heterosexual) sexual orientation**. Similar to the England figure of 3.2%.



**0.35%** said that the gender they identified with was **not the same as their sex registered at birth**, compared to 0.54% in England and Wales.<sup>5</sup>



Cornwall has a **greater proportion of unpaid carers** compared to the national and South West regional averages.



**1 in 10** of the population said they provided unpaid care in 2021 whilst across England and Wales it was 1 in 11.



**Christianity** remains the largest religion in Cornwall though numbers are declining – 2021 was the first time in a Census that under half of the population of Cornwall described themselves as Christian, a **14%** decrease from 2011.



"No religion" was the most common response at **46%**, up from **30%** in 2011 and higher than the English and Welsh average of **37%**.



A significant number of people identify as **Pagan**, which is one of the most prominent responses outside of the main religion or no religion categories provided.

Whilst very small numbers overall (under 2% of the population), there were some notable increases in other religions within Cornwall. Residents who identified as **Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Other** and **Buddhist** respondents all increased by over 20% on previous Census figures.

More detail can be found here: [Census 2021 - Cornwall Council](#)



Cornwall has the **seventh highest percentage of UK armed forces veterans** when compared to other upper tier local authorities in England and Wales, and the thirteenth highest number of all local authorities.

In 2021, **6.3%** of usual residents aged 16 years and over in Cornwall reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces – **nearly double the UK average (3.8%)**.

In terms of location, **regular armed forces veterans are clustered around military base locations** – RNAS Culdrose (Helston), HMS Raleigh (Torpoint) and RAF St Mawgan (Newquay) plus Liskeard and Callington, being within commuting distance of HMNB Devonport.



## CORNWALL RETAINS A DISTINCT CULTURAL IDENTITY, WITH STRONG RECOGNITION OF ITS HERITAGE AND LANGUAGE.

In the 2021 Census, 117,350 people in England and Wales said their national identity was Cornish, nearly 34,000 more than in 2011 (using the “write in” option on the Census form).

103,230 (18.1%) Cornwall's residents stated that Cornish was their national identity compared to 13.8% in the 2011 Census. Those who identified as Cornish had an older age profile and reported different life outcomes to the overall population of England and Wales – which may reflect differences in age, access to work and housing.

These differences were more noticeable for those in Cornwall who

identified as Cornish. Those who identified as Cornish were also more likely to work in skilled trades than people who did not identify as Cornish. 16.7% of people in Cornwall who identified as Cornish reported having no qualifications, compared with 4.9% of people outside Cornwall who identified as Cornish.

The Cornish language remains a significant cultural marker, with an estimated 400-500 advanced speakers and between 2,000 and 5,000 people able to speak some basic Cornish.<sup>6</sup> Through online learning programmes, community initiatives and apps, Kernewek is being taught to more than 4,000 pupils in over 20 schools across Cornwall.

# UNDERSTANDING OUR ECONOMY

**Cornwall is ready to play a pivotal role in the UK's future economic growth, enhancing access to opportunities as the nation transitions to a low-carbon economy. With energy and food security becoming increasingly vital, Cornwall's unique assets position it as a potential key player in this evolving landscape.**

**However, economic growth and productivity lag behind that of the UK, resulting from an over-reliance on sectors with low productivity, high levels of part-time and self-employment, and skills challenges – coupled with an ageing population.**



# MAY 2025 SNAPSHOT

From 1998 to 2022, Cornwall's economy grew by

**68%** significantly outpacing the **42%** growth in comparable regions and the **49%** growth of the UK overall. This meant that by 2022, Cornwall's economy was valued at **£13.9 billion**, which is £2.1 billion larger than if it had followed the growth trends of other similar areas.

Skills levels in Cornwall lag behind the national level with only

**36.4%** possessing a higher education qualification compared to **43.2%** in England.



Cornwall's low-income economy is greatly influenced by its business make-up – low paying sectors, sole proprietors and partnerships, micro-businesses, part-time time workers and the dominant 'wholesale, retail and motors' sector. **Gross weekly median wages are around 88% of the England average.**

**36%** of Cornwall's workforce are in part-time roles, 6% above the England average.

Cornwall's self-employment rate is **7%** higher than the national average. This is even higher in rural areas.

The number of businesses in Cornwall is rising, but at a slower rate than the UK average (a 10.4% increase in the number of enterprises, compared to 11.3% in the UK). **Cornwall has one of the highest enterprise survival rates, however existing firms struggle to grow in comparison with those in the rest of the UK.**

In 2022, GDP per head in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (CloS) was

**74%**

of the UK average (up from 70% in 2020). By comparison, London was 171% of the UK average and Devon was 79% of the UK average.

**30.4%**

of economically inactive people aged 16-64 are out of the labour market due to long-term illness, compared to **28.2%** in the UK.

Cornwall's economy is growing at a faster annual rate than the national average, but productivity is still significantly behind the average for the UK.

Lower productivity matters because it indicates a less healthy and strong economy during a given time period, suggesting fewer jobs, lower wages and less profit for businesses. In Cornwall, the causes of lower productivity are an over-reliance on sectors with low productivity (such as tourism and retail), high levels of part-time and self-employment, skills challenges within the labour force coupled with an ageing population, and an absence of large private sector employers. In addition, our rural geography means that we do not benefit from high concentrations of businesses, customers or workers (known as an agglomeration effect) which enable other parts of the UK to take advantage of economies of scale.

In 2024, jobs related to the visitor economy made up approximately 20% of employment in Cornwall.

DESPITE THESE CHALLENGES, CORNWALL'S VISITOR ECONOMY REMAINS A VITAL AND RESILIENT PART OF THE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE.

Cornwall consistently ranks as a top three UK travel destination, generating substantial employment and business opportunities. Visitor economy made up approximately 20% of employment compared to 2020 where employment was 19%. GVA for the wider visitor economy made up 15% of the local economy in 2024 compared to 12.4% in 2020. It is estimated that Cornwall receives 4 million overnight visitors annually,<sup>7</sup> but recent visitor data showed a reduction of 12% in 2023 (the latest datapoint) compared to 2019, with sector representatives also reporting a challenging environment regarding visitor numbers in 2024. Preliminary reports from the sector do suggest strong numbers in February half term 2025.

THE LARGEST EMPLOYMENT SECTORS IN CORNWALL ARE ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD (16%) AND RETAIL AND MOTORS (15%) – RELATED TO OUR RELIANCE ON THE VISITOR ECONOMY – AND OTHER LOWER PAID SECTORS SUCH AS HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK.

This stands in contrast to the high proportion of professional, scientific, and financial sector employment in the UK as a whole.

All this means that, whilst Cornwall continues to have better employment rates than the UK average, full-time earnings remain lower than the UK average. There are significant variations within Cornwall: the data also shows consistently higher proportions of unemployment claimants in Newquay than in any other part of Cornwall, followed by Penzance, Liskeard and Redruth.

A greater proportion of women are in lower paid roles in comparison to men, and twice as many women as men work fewer than 30 hours a week, all contributing to a 'gender pay gap'.<sup>8</sup>



Around **86%** of businesses within Cornwall are micro-businesses (with less than 9 staff)



	Cornwall 2020	UK 2020	Cornwall 2024	UK 2024
Median Wage (hourly) <sup>9</sup>	£12.59	£15.15	£16.58	£18.72

A significant percentage of employees in Cornwall are earning below the Real Living Wage (RLW). After significant falls in those paid below the RLW rate in Cornwall over a number of years, the 2023 figures show a rise from 13% to 18%. These rises in the RLW were the result of rapid inflation and meant a higher amount of income was required to meet a 'true cost-of-living'. But wages in Cornwall have not kept pace for many, hence the increase in the numbers paid below the RLW.

Cornwall continues to have better employment rates than the UK average. Cornwall has lower proportions of people claiming unemployment related benefits (claimant count) than England. However, it has very similar levels of Universal Credit enrolment to the England average. This leads to the conclusion that Cornwall has a greater proportion of those on Universal Credit for income related need whilst in employment than England, reflecting the low wage economy.

**ECONOMIC INACTIVITY IS NONETHELESS A CONCERN.** In particular, 7% of 16-17-year-olds in Cornwall are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). This is both higher than the England figure of 5.4%, and an increase from 2020 when the 16-17-year-old NEET rate in Cornwall was 6.2%. Cornwall has similar levels of economic inactivity as the UK when considering the working age population as a whole (16-64 age group), but has a comparatively higher proportion of people who are economically inactive due to long-term sickness. In Cornwall, as of Jan- Dec 2024, 30.4% of economically inactive people aged 16-64 were out of the labour market due to long-term illness, compared to 28.2% in the UK. This estimate equates to around 20,700 individuals, 6.2% of all 16-64-year-olds in Cornwall.

	Cornwall 2020	UK 2020	Cornwall 2024	UK 2024
Economic Activity (16+) <sup>10</sup>	59.1%	63.5%	56.8%	63.1%

**In Cornwall in 2024 the median hourly wage was £17.28 for male full-time and £15.60 for female-full time workers, creating a gender pay gap of £1.68 per hour. This is higher than the gender pay gap in 2020, which was £0.97 per hour.**

**CORNWALL HAS A LOWER PROPORTION OF HIGH-LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS COMPARED TO THE UK AVERAGE.** Only 36.4% of people in Cornwall have a higher education qualification compared to 43.2% in England. More people have NVQ1+ skills level, but again this lags behind the national average and has an impact on business growth. Businesses in Cornwall report challenges with skills shortages. Manufacturing and engineering, which contribute 11% to the local economy, are particularly vulnerable, with 60% of businesses in this sector anticipating an imminent skills shortage.

**CORNWALL FACES SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES IN DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY,** especially in rural and deprived areas. Once a leader in broadband rollout, it now ranks in the bottom 10% of UK constituencies for speed and coverage. While most residents are online, many still face barriers due to geography, infrastructure gaps, and affordability. In some places, such as Looe and Lansallos, only 37% of premises offer broadband under £30/month. Only 2% of users in Cornwall use social broadband tariffs, despite widespread eligibility. Mobile coverage is patchy, with several “not spots” across Cornwall. And although 85% have basic digital skills, around 75,000 residents—mainly older adults, the unemployed, and those with health issues—lack essential skills. Additionally, 22% rely on others to complete digital tasks.

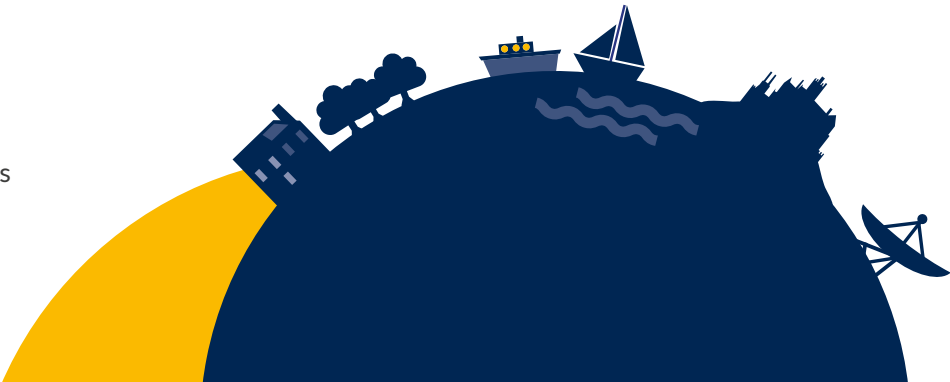
**CORNWALL'S NATURAL ASSETS, CULTURAL HERITAGE AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER VALUE SECTORS** – both to increase growth within Cornwall and contribute to UK-wide goals. The Cornwall Good Growth Plan sets out an ambitious vision for Cornwall's economy with clear opportunities and priority investments linked to distinctive and core sector opportunities.<sup>11</sup>

Priorities include:

- Cornwall's mineral resources can play a vital role in the UK's clean energy and advanced manufacturing sectors, reducing reliance on unstable global supply chains.
- Uniquely positioned to drive the UK's net zero ambitions, Cornwall has significant assets in floating offshore wind, geothermal, and biomethane energy.
- Investments in Cornwall Airport Newquay, Spaceport Cornwall and Goonhilly Earth Station strengthen Cornwall's position in a globally competitive space and data economy.
- There is strong growth potential in Cornwall's marine industry, with capabilities in boat and ship repair and maintenance, clean energy systems, and maritime manufacturing aligning with strategic UK industrial priorities.
- Cornwall plays a crucial role in national food security, with potential to boost local processing and supply chain efficiencies in the agri-food sector.

Being a rural economy with a strong tradition of cooperation and partnership, key strengths of the local economy are the overlap, linkages and collaboration between sectors. Sectors share skills and the labour pool, as well as providing up- and down-stream supply chains for each other – and there is scope to develop these links further in terms of co-location, joint skills initiatives and unlocking circular economy potential. Cornwall's distinctive sectors are supported by supply chains from across the rest of the economy, with manufacturing and digital businesses being particularly important contributors or enablers.

When we also consider Cornwall's long history of pioneering breakthroughs – from the high-pressure steam engine to current deep geothermal energy projects – Cornwall is clearly uniquely placed to play a leading role in reshaping the UK's economy over the next 10 years.



# UNDERSTANDING DEPRIVATION

Deprivation remains a persistent issue. While Cornwall as a whole is not considered deprived, there are significant pockets of deprivation that have remained unchanged for years.

Many of those experiencing deprivation are in work, due in part to low paid work, the high cost-of-living (particularly housing) and low levels of benefits allocation. Deprivation has an impact on health and wellbeing, life expectancy, crime and safety and the wider economy.



## MAY 2025 SNAPSHOT

Low wages and high levels of sickness and disability are some of the main causes of deprivation in Cornwall, exacerbated by rurality, fuel poverty and housing affordability.



30% of children are estimated to be living in poverty in Cornwall.

In 2024, on average there were around

53,000

people claiming Universal Credit in Cornwall, compared to approximately 37,000 on average in 2020. This is an increase of approximately 16,000.

The number of food parcels distributed in Cornwall by the Trussell Trust increased by

60% between 2021 and 2025. Over the same

period, food parcel distribution by the Trussell Trust increased by 13% in England and 18% in the South West.



15%

of households in Cornwall are estimated to be in fuel poverty and struggle to afford to heat their homes, compared with 13% across England.

In 2019 the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranked Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly 83rd for deprivation out of 317 English local authorities.<sup>12</sup> Around 70,000 people (12.4% of the population) live in the 20% most deprived areas in England. These figures show that although Cornwall as a whole is not particularly deprived, there are wide variations between geographic areas, where affluence sits alongside some of the most disadvantaged areas.

Whilst these figures were released five years ago, they do show that there are consistent hotspots within Cornwall where residents live with a number of issues including worklessness and poverty, with 16 of the 17 neighbourhoods in the 2019 'top 10% most deprived' ranking also appearing in the 2015 top 10%.

The 2019 IMD rankings highlight that the majority of Cornwall's most deprived neighbourhoods are deprived due to income and employment. The IMD definition of 'low income' includes people who are out-of-work as well as those who are in work but who have low earnings. 'Employment deprivation' measures the proportion of the working age population in an area that are involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including people who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.



**Note: The Index of Multiple Deprivation is the most widely used index of deprivation. It is based on uses a large basket of indicators across broader themes, which are combined and weighted to produce an overall measure of multiple deprivation experienced by people living in an area. The most recent release was in 2019. The update of the indices has been delayed until later in 2025.**

**FOOD INSECURITY WAS A MAJOR CONCERN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC AND DURING AND REMAINS A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE.** The latest figures from the Trussell Trust show that the number of food parcels distributed in Cornwall increased by 60% between 2021 and 2025. Over the same period, food parcel distribution by the Trussell Trust increased 13% in England and 18% across the South West.<sup>13</sup>

Deprivation in Cornwall is largely linked to low wages and high levels of sickness and disability (as outlined in the previous chapter). In addition, rural deprivation remains a hidden challenge, as national measures often fail to capture the realities of dispersed rural populations. Cornwall's rurality also means people have to travel greater distances to access essential services and facilities. Fuel poverty is a factor, affecting 40,322 households in Cornwall, 15% of all households.<sup>14</sup>

Factors contributing to fuel poverty include higher energy prices and a high number of older, less energy-efficient homes. Housing affordability is a significant issue in Cornwall, as disparities between house prices and earnings limit affordability and drive younger workers out of the region (see Our Housing chapter).

**A quarter of children in Cornwall are eligible for free school meals.**



**The Trussell Trust handed out 35,500 food parcels in Cornwall from 25 distribution centres in 2024-25, with 35% of those going to children.**



Whilst the geographies of deprivation may be small, the impact is wide-ranging. 30% of children in Cornwall are living in poverty, in 2024 up from 16% in 2020.<sup>15</sup> A quarter of children are eligible for free school meals (24%), similar to the proportion in 2021 (23%) after a 400% increase that year).

Both health inequalities and community safety issues are linked to deprivation. Between 2018 and 2020, the difference in life expectancy at birth between the least and most deprived areas of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly was 7.0 years for males and 5.3 years for females. Drug-related deaths are at record levels, both locally and nationally. Whilst local treatment is effective, factors such as a lack of suitable housing and employment opportunities are increasingly having an impact on positive outcomes.



# UNDERSTANDING HOUSING

**Housing consistently features in the top three priorities for residents in our annual surveys, in particular the need for more affordable housing. Housing insecurity increased as a result of the pandemic, and that trend has unfortunately continued for many in Cornwall.**

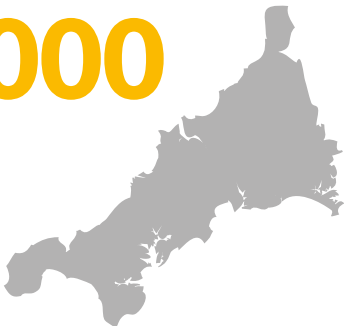
**Whilst the number of houses built in Cornwall is higher than in most other areas of the country, low wages plus increasing rents and prices means that the supply of social and affordable housing cannot keep pace with demand.**



MAY 2025 SNAPSHOT

Cornwall's settlement pattern is scattered, with **few large towns and around**

**32%**  
of the population living in settlements of fewer than **3,000** people.



**42%** of households in Cornwall own their homes outright, higher than the average for England and Wales of 33%.

25% own their own home with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership, lower than 30% for England as a whole.

 In April 2025, there were **890** households in temporary and emergency accommodation.

**Increases in house prices and rents are outstripping wage growth in Cornwall**, leading to higher demand for social and affordable housing.

**A third of people rent their home in Cornwall** – 12% living in social rented accommodation and 20% in private rented accommodation.

**Private sector monthly rents increased on average by 9% over the last year.**



**Cornwall's housing stock is older compared to the England average** which means challenges in terms of maintenance, insulation, and compliance with contemporary building standards.

**28%** of homes in Cornwall do not meet the Decent Homes Standard, compared to 16% in England.

**Cornwall has an estimated 13,000 second homes and 20,000 short-term rentals.** The South West had the highest concentration of holiday homes at 7.5 for every 1,000 homes.

**There were 23,715 households registered with Cornwall Homechoice Social and Affordable housing register** (April 2025), up from 8,460 households in 2020 – a massive 180% increase. Demand is currently outstripping supply.

**Estimates of rough sleepers indicate that there are an average of**

**70**  rough sleepers a month in Cornwall, with seasonal fluctuations.

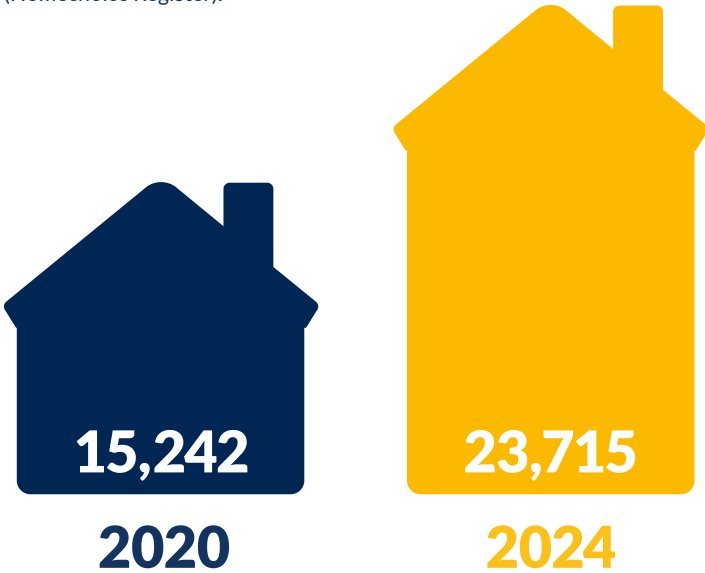
Cornwall has one of the highest rates of new affordable homes delivery in the country but demand far exceeds supply.

There are approximately 33,000 social and affordable homes in Cornwall. However, 23,715 households were registered with Cornwall Homechoice Social and Affordable housing register in April 2025. There are approximately 1,200 lettings through Homechoice each year.

A third (approximately 10,300) of social and affordable homes in Cornwall are owned by Cornwall Council and managed by Cornwall Housing Ltd. The remaining two thirds are owned and managed by housing associations. There are over 40 housing associations operating in Cornwall, with the main ones being Coastline, Livewest and Ocean Housing.

In 2023-24, 772 affordable homes were completed, including temporary and resettlement accommodation, an increase on the 722 completed the previous year. The Government has increased housing targets, which presents both challenges and opportunities. A Housing Growth Plan has been agreed and shared with Homes England to form the basis of a multi-year programmatic approach to increasing housing numbers.<sup>16</sup>

**Demand for Social and Affordable Housing**  
(Homechoice Register).



**Affordable' housing is a contentious term. What is considered affordable varies greatly between households and changes over time. The use of an average can be overly simple at Cornwall level with "affordability" varying greatly based on location, household composition, eligibility for benefits, and individual circumstances. Rising living costs, energy prices, and interest rates add to these challenges (34% of households across the country reporting that they struggle to afford rent or mortgage payments).**

**A FIFTH OF HOUSEHOLDS IN CORNWALL LIVE IN PRIVATE RENTED HOUSING, WITH AVERAGE RENTS AT £948 PER MONTH.**

This is an increase of 9% from the same period last year alone (£872).<sup>17</sup> Since the pandemic, rents have been increasing, affecting affordability in the sector. In May 2024, 40% of households in the private rented sector were receiving benefits to help with housing costs (housing benefit or the housing entitlement element of Universal Credit).

**THE AFFORDABILITY OF HOME OWNERSHIP IN CORNWALL PRESENTS A COMPLEX AND VARIED PICTURE.**

The average house price in Cornwall is £299,125, close to the England and Wales average of £304,959. However, the cost relative to earnings is higher in Cornwall, with houses costing 8.8 times the average earnings compared to 7.7 times in England.<sup>18</sup> Whilst house prices have risen in line with the national trend, Cornwall's wages have not increased at the same rate and remain lower than the national and South West average. This disparity highlights the challenges faced by residents in affording homes given the lower wage levels in Cornwall.

**Houses in Cornwall cost 8.8 times the average earnings compared to 7.7 in England.**

Cornwall has a higher proportion of households living in caravans and other mobile or temporary structures compared to other local authorities, with 3,886 households recorded in the 2021 Census. This equates to 1.6% of all households (similar to 2011) and is the second highest proportion of upper tier authorities in the UK. There are higher concentrations of households living in caravans or other mobile or temporary structures in mid Cornwall (China Clay area), St Columb Major and St Mawgan.

In line with the trend seen across England, homelessness in Cornwall has been increasing since 2019. Cornwall Housing Options Service are seeing an increase in households coming to

the authority already homeless rather than threatened with homelessness. The needs of people approaching as homeless have become more complex in recent years, having a range of support needs (such as mental health, disability, young people and care leavers, domestic abuse, and prison leavers). The main reason for households becoming homeless is because their friends and family can no longer accommodate them, followed by households becoming homeless from the private rented sector.

It is difficult to achieve an accurate figure for rough sleeping due to the transient nature of people in this category. 'Hidden homelessness' such as sofa surfing (where homeless people have a series of temporary accommodation provided by friends and family) is also difficult to quantify. Local estimates of rough sleepers indicate that there are an average of 70 rough sleepers a month in Cornwall, with seasonal fluctuations.<sup>19</sup>

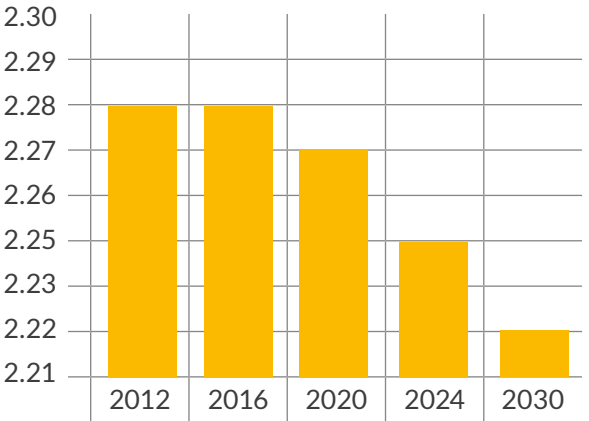
**AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING IS A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER IN CORNWALL.**

House prices in Cornwall have been increasing while wages remain below the national average. This trend poses significant challenges for first-time buyers in accessing affordable housing, with housing costs consuming a larger proportion of household income. Additionally, affordability in coastal and rural areas is further exacerbated by the high prevalence of holiday lets and second homes.

Cornwall's coastal and rural areas are popular locations for second homes and short-term rentals, with an estimated 13,000 second homes and 20,000 short-term rentals.<sup>20</sup> Some areas in Cornwall have over half of their housing stock being used as second homes or short-term lets.

In 2023, in an effort to tackle this, Cornwall Council approved the introduction of a Council Tax premium for second homes from April 2025 (following the introduction of necessary legislation). It is anticipated that the increased costs of keeping properties empty or charging additional amounts for second homes will prompt some owners to put their properties on the sale or rental market, thus increasing the supply. The premium came into effect on 1 April 2025.

Cornwall average household size



**THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS IN CORNWALL IS PROJECTED TO CONTINUE TO RISE, REACHING 284,000 BY 2030,**

with a continuation of the trend towards smaller average household size (decreasing from 2.28 persons in 2012 to 2.22 in 2030). As the population grows, but the number of people per household decreases, demand for a wider range of accessible and appropriate housing options for a modern society will inevitably increase.

**CORNWALL'S HOUSING STOCK IS OLDER COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IN ENGLAND.**

Older housing stock often leads to variations in condition, and traditional construction types present challenges in terms of maintenance, insulation,

and compliance with contemporary building standards. The most recent figures available for Cornwall (2020-21) put the proportion of non-Decent Homes Standard dwellings at 28%, well above the England figure of 16%. The English Housing Survey 2023-24 identifies those in the private rented sector as most likely to live in poor-quality homes.

Damp and mould are prevalent issues in Cornwall, with estimates suggesting that over 4% (12,000) of homes in Cornwall are affected by damp and mould.<sup>21</sup> The combination of Cornwall's coastal climate, which increases humidity, and an ageing housing stock contributes significantly to these conditions. In 2023, 30% of homes had low EPC ratings (D or lower), leading to higher energy costs.



# UNDERSTANDING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The UK went into lockdown in March 2020 – five years on, action is still needed to address the health inequality gaps exposed by the pandemic. Without collective action, gaps will widen further with many of our population dying early or living longer in poor health.

The persistence of low life expectancy in some of our most deprived areas means that despite fragmented efforts, there is still much to do to tackle inequalities in health across Cornwall.



## MAY 2025 SNAPSHOT

Between 2018 and 2020, the **difference in life expectancy at birth** between the least and most deprived areas of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly was

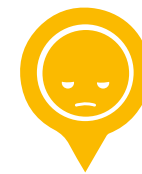
**7.0 years for males and 5.3 years for females.**

The **top three causes** of the gaps in life expectancy across Cornwall are:

- **circulatory diseases**
- **external causes** (land transport accidents, accidental poisoning, suicide and injury of undetermined intent)
- **respiratory disease.**



**Suicide rates in Cornwall** are amongst the highest in England. **16.1** between 2021-23, compared to the England average of **10.7** in the same period.



Women in Cornwall are more likely to spend more of their lives

**in poor health**

– **25.8 yrs** compared to **21.2 years** across England.

**63% of adults**

in Cornwall were classified as **overweight or obese** in 2023, in line with the England average of 64% but still a significant health issue.

**22.7% of adults**

are deemed to be **physically inactive** (2022-23) across Cornwall, similar to England at **22.6%**.

**31.4% of Year 6 children**

in Cornwall were classified as **overweight or obese** in 2023-24 – **below the national average of 35.8%**.



**Over 1 in 5** people in Cornwall report having a disability or long-term health condition.

**Mental health**

is a growing issue, both here and nationally. There has been

**a 65% increase** in people **in contact with mental health services** between 2021 and 2025 in Cornwall.

In 2023

**12.7% of adults in Cornwall aged 18+ smoked.**

Overall, **the proportion of people smoking across Cornwall is declining**, albeit at a slower rate than England. The fall in smoking rates is due to a combination of smokers quitting and a growth in the population of people who have never smoked.

The impacts of Covid on health and wellbeing were not felt uniformly. The pandemic revealed, and in some cases exacerbated, pervasive inequalities that may threaten the fabric of society, with particularly negative health outcomes for those already disadvantaged across our communities.

The social and economic effects of the pandemic continue to shape daily life and have been compounded by the inflationary leaps in the cost-of-living. The cost-of-living crisis is a health crisis.<sup>22</sup> Rising gas, electricity and food prices have disproportionately affected those who live in the most deprived areas or have low/fixed incomes across our communities. Whilst we all strive to live longer and in better health, we know that the opportunities for this are not equal. We do not all have the same opportunities to live healthy lives.

**When we don't have things we need like financial security, warm homes, access to education, transport, safe green spaces and healthy food, it impacts on how well we live, how we achieve our aspirations and crucially, how long we live. These things are often referred to as the 'wider determinants of health', and they are all essential building blocks of our health.**<sup>23</sup>



**RIGHT NOW, IN PARTS OF CORNWALL, SOME PEOPLE ARE DYING YEARS EARLIER THAN THEY SHOULD.**

Differences in how long we live, or the age at which we get preventable diseases or health condition are largely avoidable. Despite the progress that has been made over the decades, the benefits of this have not been felt equally across the population. The result being that some groups or individuals are continuing to spend more of their lives in poor health and dying sooner than others.

Poor health is not inevitable. There is much we can do to address the things that make people sick. By improving the things that underpin our health, we can achieve a healthier future for everyone. However, whether it is life expectancy or healthy life expectancy, over the last 10 years Cornwall has not closed the gap with the rest of England. In fact, the gaps are getting wider.

The Marmot Review 10 Years On,<sup>24</sup> published in 2020, highlighted that for the first time in over a century, life expectancy in England did not increase. This stagnation is mirrored in Cornwall, where life expectancy has remained flat over the past decade. Specifically, there has been no growth in life expectancy for men and a slight decline of 0.1 years for women.

The last two periods (2020-2022 and 2021-2023) show a local drop in life expectancy, at odds with trends nationally and across the South West region. This suggests Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (CloS) may be slower to return to pre-pandemic life expectancy rates for both men and women.

Life expectancy is an important indicator of overall population health, and also of inequalities in health,

with clear gaps in life expectancy between different geographic areas. For example, if you travel just 7 miles from Shortlanesend near Truro to Perranporth, life expectancy for women falls by 9 years, from 88 to 79. In 2014-16, the gap in life expectancy for CloS was 4.7 years for females and 5.9 years for males. In 2020-21, this gap in life expectancy increased to 5.1 years for females and decreased to 5.6 years for males.

**The following shows the areas with the lowest life expectancy:**

Male (2016-20)		Female (2016-20)	
73.6	Penzance Quay	78.8	Perranporth and Goonhavern
76.3	St Austell North and Carclaze	79.4	Camborne West
76.5	Pool and Illogan Highway	79.5	Camborne East

**Areas with the highest life expectancy are:**

Male (2016-20)		Female (2016-20)	
83.8	Mevagissey and Polgooth	87.5	Shortlanesend, Chasewater and Carnon Downs
83.3	Trebetherick and Whitecross	87.4	St Breward, Tredethy and Lanivet
82.8	Truro East	87.0	Trebetherick and Whitecross

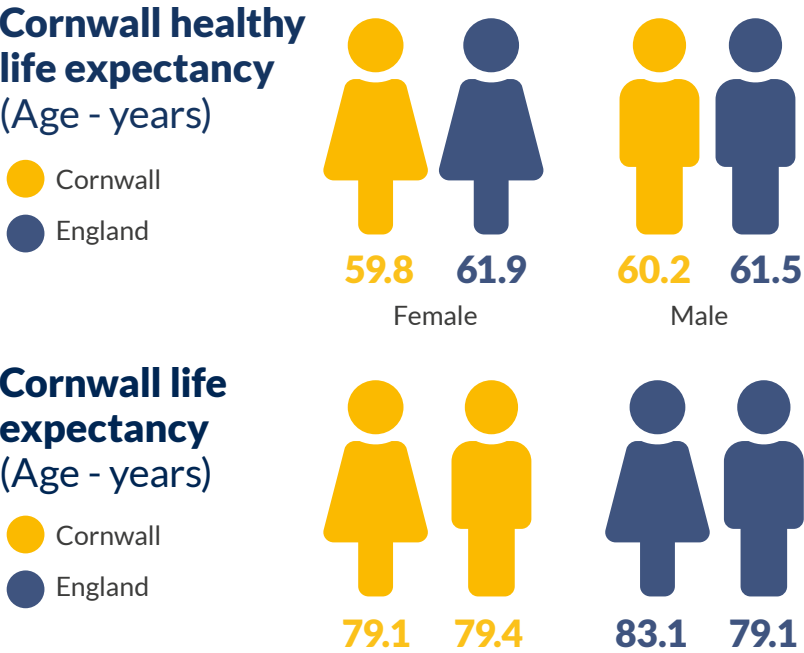


AS WELL AS ASSESSING LENGTH OF LIFE, QUALITY OF LIFE IS IMPORTANT TOO. THIS IS MEASURED BY ASSESSING HEALTHY LIFE EXPECTANCY.

This is the length of time people live in a self-assessed state of good or very good health. In England, healthy life expectancy has been falling since 2016-18 and across Cornwall there has been a deeper decline in healthy life expectancy over this period.

People are now living for more years with multiple long-term conditions and need for long-term care. This results in increases in the demand for, and the costs of, health and social care. As the national pensionable age rises, the impact of falling healthy life expectancies will be felt in workplaces across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Declining health among working-age people is a growing risk to both livelihoods and economic prosperity.

For 2021-23 healthy life expectancy for men was 60.2 years compared to the England rate of 61.5 years, a difference of 1.3 years. The latest data shows a healthy life expectancy for women of 59.8 years compared to the England rate of 61.9 years – a difference between Cornwall and England of 2.1 years.



Source: Health state life expectancy at birth and at age 65 years by local areas, UK, ONS December 2019

Across CloS the main cause driving the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas in 2020-21 was circulatory diseases, with a 0.83 year reduction in life expectancy for females and a 1.38 year reduction for males. Other causes of the gaps in life expectancy across CloS were circulatory diseases, external causes (land transport accidents, accidental poisoning, suicide and injury of undetermined intent) and respiratory

disease. All remain a significant challenge in tackling health inequalities and there are notable gender variations in contributory causes to the life expectancy gap.

THE LEADING UNDERLYING CAUSES OF DEATH ACROSS CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY ARE CANCER, CIRCULATORY DISEASES, RESPIRATORY DISEASES – ACCOUNTING FOR AROUND 63% OF ALL DEATHS.

Many of these deaths are considered preventable. In seeking to reduce preventable mortality, there are key areas where Cornwall is worse than the national average and which are therefore areas of focus. These key areas include accidents (the mortality rate from accidental falls is the worst in the South West and third highest rate of all Unitary Authorities in England), infectious and parasitic diseases (including 59% of deaths over this period related to sepsis), suicide, deaths from drug misuse, and cardiovascular disease.

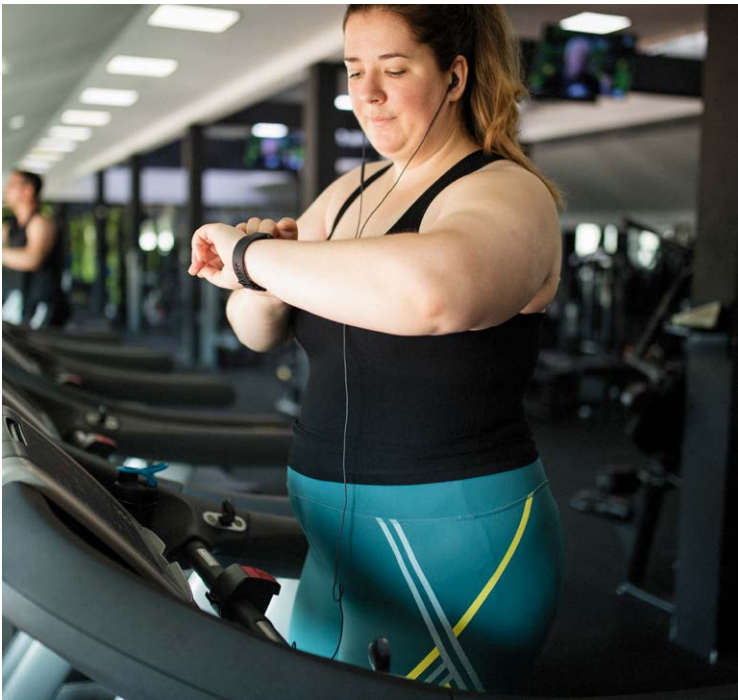
Alongside the wider determinants of health, there are eight commonly agreed risk factors that – through targeted intervention and support – can help reduce preventable deaths and improve life expectancy/healthy life expectancy across Cornwall. These include tobacco use, high body mass index/obesity, dietary risks/low fruit and vegetable intake, high blood glucose, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high alcohol use, and physical inactivity.<sup>25</sup>

TAKING ACTION ON SOCIAL CAUSES OF ILL HEALTH SUCH AS LOW INCOME, HOMELESSNESS, POOR HOUSING AND UNEMPLOYMENT OR UNDEREMPLOYMENT WILL HAVE BENEFITS FOR INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH POOR HEALTH.

These risk factors include smoking, high blood pressure, obesity, poor diet, low physical activity and substance misuse.

In adults, being overweight or being obese is associated with life-limiting conditions, such as Type 2 diabetes,

cardiovascular disease, and some cancers. Figures for Cornwall show that our position is similar to the England average – however, there is an upward trend in the number of people estimated to be living with obesity both nationally and locally. Insufficient physical activity increases the risk of non-communicable diseases, poor physical and cognitive function, weight gain, and mental ill-health. The gains made during the pandemic have reversed and Cornwall now has a greater proportion of inactive adults than we have seen previously, taking our rate above the England average for the first time.



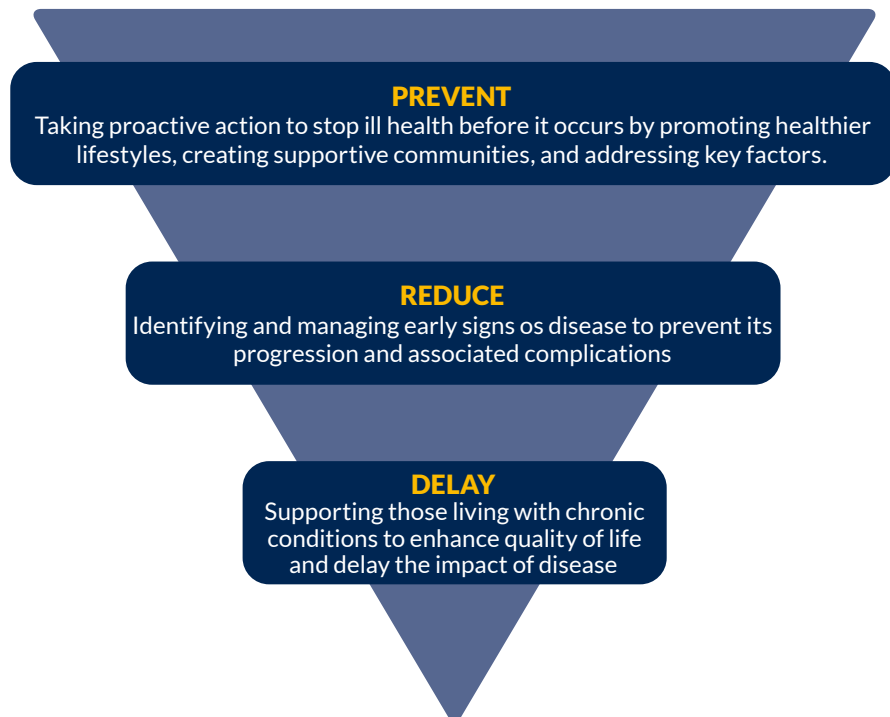


**INEQUALITY IS NOT INEVITABLE, THERE IS EVIDENCE ON WHAT CAN BE DONE. THESE ARE COMPLEX PROBLEMS REQUIRING COORDINATED ACTION ACROSS PARTNERS.**

While these differences in health outcomes have always been present, the Covid pandemic and cost-of-living crisis have shone a spotlight on these differences. Tackling inequalities and population health improvement is a task that extends beyond the NHS.

Adopting a ‘health in all policies’ approach to improvement – prevent, reduce, delay (see diagram below) – means that population health is a shared objective for the whole public, private, community and voluntary sector. In line with the Darzi aim of moving from treatment to prevention,<sup>26</sup> it is essential to target help at all life stages—from preconception through to old age—while also addressing the broader determinants of health, such as housing and transport.

**Prevention is about helping people stay healthy, happy and independent for as long as possible. This means reducing the chances of problems arising in the first place and, when they do, supporting people to manage them as effectively as possible. Prevention is as important at seventy years old as it is at age seven.<sup>27</sup>**



# UNDERSTANDING CRIME AND SAFETY

**Cornwall has faced significant challenges over the past five years, from the lasting impacts of the pandemic to the worst cost-of-living crisis in decades. We have seen increased demand for both practical and specialist support services, including for mental health; drug and alcohol dependency; domestic abuse and sexual violence; and trauma recovery.**

**Having dropped during the pandemic, crime levels have since risen above pre-pandemic figures, with the most significant increases in violent offences, domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking and harassment. Anti-social behaviour, street drinking, and visible drug use have also become more prominent concerns for residents, affecting feelings of safety and public confidence in the police and the Council.**



# MAY 2025 SNAPSHOT

Compared with national rates, **Cornwall has relatively low, though increasing, levels of crime.** Violence, domestic abuse, drug-related crime, and exploitation are key concerns due to the high risk of harm to communities.

The underlying factors of poor health – **poverty, vulnerability, previous experience of crime, unemployment and low levels of education** – also increase the risk of crime.

**Around 17%** more crimes and **a third more anti-social behaviour incidents** are reported to police in the summer months in Cornwall, when tourist numbers swell the population and people are more active in their communities.

**55% of all recorded crime in Cornwall took place in an urban area.** The highest rates were recorded in Truro, Camborne and Bodmin.

Based on findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, we can estimate that **23,500 people (aged 16-74) experienced domestic abuse** in Cornwall in 2023-24.



**Sexual offences reported to the police in Cornwall** have increased by **43%** over the last two years.

**48 Modern Slavery crimes** and **250 Child Sexual Exploitation crimes** were reported to the police in 2023.

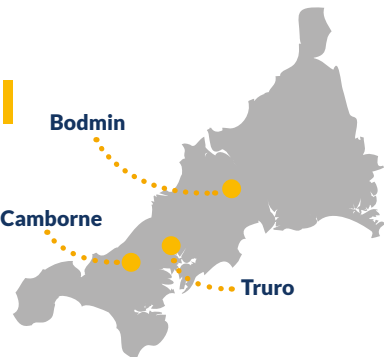
**Alcohol and drug misuse** continue to be a significant issue: **3,521 people** supported by the Council's **community treatment services.**

An estimated **2,562 people** dependent on **heroin and crack cocaine**; of whom 55% are in treatment.

An estimated **6,968** dependent drinkers; of whom 28% are in treatment.

**990 children** were identified as **having experienced/at risk of exploitation.**

Of these, **325 children** were referred for safeguarding and disruption interventions.



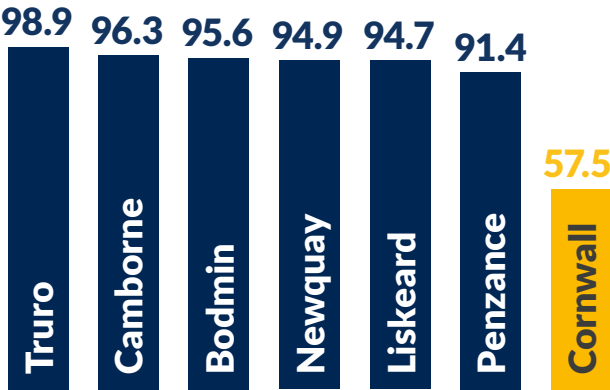
Cornwall remains one of the safest areas in the UK, despite crime rates having risen in recent years, largely mirroring national trends.

In the past year, 33,083 crimes were reported to Devon and Cornwall police, equating to a rate of 57.5 crimes per 1,000 residents, 11% lower than the national average for similar areas. Compared with the same period in 2023, crime numbers increased by 13%. Violence, domestic abuse, drug-related crime, and exploitation are key concerns due to the high risk of harm to communities.

Over 55% of recorded crime occurs in our town centres. The top six towns account for 35% of all recorded crime.

Reports of anti-social behaviour to the police reached 7,536, a rise of 4% compared with the previous year. Reported levels of anti-social behaviour spiked during the pandemic but saw year-on-year reductions in the following years. This trend has recently changed course and reported incidents are increasing. 61% of incidents took place in town centre areas, where the rate of reported anti-social behaviour is twice as high as rural areas. Common issues cited by residents include street drinking and drug use, and intimidating behaviour in town centres. In the 2024 Have Your Say Survey, residents told us

## Crimes per 1,000 population: Top 5 towns



All statistics quoted in this chapter are from [Safer Cornwall Partnership Plan](#), which was published in April 2025. All police data relates to the 12-month period to September 2024.

that their quality of life is affected by rising anti-social behaviour and other issues in their local area. They feel less safe and fear of crime has increased. Many individuals involved in anti-social behaviour have multiple vulnerabilities and complex needs, requiring intensive multi-agency support.

**IT IS ESTIMATED THAT ONE IN THREE WOMEN IN CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY WILL BE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE DURING THEIR LIFETIME.**

Since March 2020, 23 deaths in Cornwall have been formally recorded as domestic abuse related. In the 12-month period to September 2024,

11,134 domestic abuse incidents were reported to the police, an increase of 6% compared with the previous year, with 63% recorded as crimes. Incidents of domestic abuse are still under-reported, so it is important that reporting continues to increase.

The number of sexual offences reported to the police in Cornwall has increased by 43% over the last two years with 1,835 reported in the 12-month period to September 2024. This equates to more than 35 a week. 6,827 people were supported by the Council's commissioned domestic abuse and sexual violence service in the last year. This figure represents 30% of the estimated 23,500 people experiencing domestic abuse in a year.

49% of those reported sexual offences involved child victims. Locally we have seen child-on-child offences and adults reporting child abuse contributing to the rise in police recorded sexual offences.

**An estimated 3,800 children in Cornwall live in households where an adult has multiple vulnerabilities (domestic abuse, mental ill health, drug/alcohol dependency). Adverse Childhood Experiences have long-term impacts on children's future outcomes.**

**THE NUMBER OF HATE CRIMES REPORTED TO THE POLICE IS LOW BUT COMMUNITIES TELL US THAT HATE SPEECH AND ABUSE HAS INCREASED PARTICULARLY RACISM, HOMOPHOBIA AND ANTI-TRANS BEHAVIOURS.**

This is strongly felt in the online space, fuelled by misinformation and targeting by antagonists from outside Cornwall, and frequently outside the UK. In the 12-month period to January 2025, 487 hate crimes were reported to the police, an 8% increase compared with the same period last year. Of these, 42% related to race/ethnicity, 21% sexual orientation, 21% disability and 8% transgender. In the 2024 Have Your Say Survey, 18% of residents reported seeing or experiencing a hate incident.

The UK faces a continuing and evolving threat from terrorism and extremism. In the South West, the greatest risks relate to Right Wing Extremism, Self-Initiated Terrorism<sup>28</sup> and the online space. A range of existing structures and programmes (e.g. helplines, mentoring programmes) are already in place to support people

exhibiting many of these vulnerabilities and it is critical that we build on and make the most of these. Whilst the potential for harm is catastrophic, early identification and support through Channel is highly effective locally, with a 100% success rate.<sup>29</sup>

Exponents of violent extremism very often target individuals who for a range of reasons are vulnerable to their messages. These vulnerabilities include: peer pressure, the absence of positive mentors and role models, a crisis of identity, links to criminality including other forms of violence, exposure to traumatic events (here or overseas), changing circumstances (e.g., dislocation to a new environment, including migration and asylum) and a sense of isolation from a community.

Most recently the rise in Right Wing Extremism is a significant issue for the safe placement of refugees and asylum seekers, and for our growing population of international workers and their families. This has been present and escalating over the last few years, but it became especially heightened in summer 2024 with the riots.

**WHILST RURAL AREAS SEE LESS CRIME THAN URBAN AREAS, THE SAME ISSUES – DOMESTIC ABUSE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, DRUG AND ALCOHOL DEPENDENCY AND EXPLOITATION – CAUSE THE MOST HARM, ALBEIT ON A SMALLER SCALE.**

Around a third of Cornwall's population live in rural areas. There are particular challenges in tackling crimes that are unique to rural areas, such as poaching, farm theft and livestock rustling. A recent police profile on Rural Affairs Crime highlighted the heavy toll on farmers of livestock injured or killed by dogs.<sup>30</sup> There is also evidence of Organised Crime Group involvement in rural areas, including organised thefts of quad bikes and the trade in illegal market heritage items. Due to poor

data and under-reporting, the overall extent of rural crime is likely to be far greater than police data suggests.

Rates of domestic abuse are estimated to be more under-reported in rural areas due to the nature of these communities. There are added barriers to seeking help, such as being more isolated and away from services, and fewer opportunities to tell someone safely. Increased stigma and shame, fear of exposure and potential repercussions also reduce reporting.





## THERE IS A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRUGS, CRIME, HEALTH OUTCOMES, TRAUMA AND DEPRIVATION.

The latest estimates of problem drug use in Cornwall are below national levels, whereas alcohol dependency is estimated to be higher. Use of crack cocaine and heroin are major drivers of drug-related harms, alongside the evolution of harmful synthetic drugs and high strength benzodiazepines.

Drug-related deaths are at record levels, both locally and nationally. Cocaine deaths have outnumbered opiate deaths since 2020. Synthetic drugs are the biggest concern, however, due to the high risk of overdose. Engagement in treatment is the main protective factor in preventing harm and reducing deaths.

Our local treatment system is effective with high levels of engagement and evidenced progress in treatment. However, continued high numbers of service-users, combined with external factors such as a lack of suitable housing and employment opportunities, are increasingly impacting on positive outcomes. More work needs to be done to ensure that professionals screen and refer for support as early as possible, using validated tools. The number of people coming out of prison and straight into treatment is increasing but is still too low.

In Cornwall, 32% of people at risk/ experiencing homelessness have a mental health need. Other issues affecting people in this group include physical ill health and disability (22%), domestic abuse (13%), a history of offending (13%), alcohol (10%) and drugs (9%).

Services in Cornwall report that the system is struggling to meet the needs of very high-risk individuals. Some of our most vulnerable people are not able to access critical services, such as housing and mental health support, due to high-risk behaviours that present a risk to themselves and others (such as drug use, drinking and violence). This can often lead to their needs and behaviours escalating, especially if they are rough sleeping. Safer Cornwall are particularly worried about the exploitation and abuse of young women in this position.

Sexual exploitation is a common feature in drug-related exploitation. Advocacy is essential for those in crisis, who very often cannot reach out to find support on their own. Flexibility and adaptability of approach is needed to engage and retain the most vulnerable, including out-of-hours provision, outreach and wrap-around support.

## THE HAVE YOUR SAY SURVEY 2024 FOUND THAT ONLY 19% OF RESPONDENTS FELT THE COUNCIL AND POLICE WERE EFFECTIVELY TACKLING CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) IN THEIR AREA.

However, in the most recent Resident's Survey (2024), when the identical question was asked, 46% felt positively overall, with 9% strongly agreeing. This implies that priming – where residents are first asked about their experiences with crime and ASB before evaluating the effectiveness of the police and the Council – may bias their perceptions, leading to significantly lower satisfaction ratings compared with a more general survey that is not crime-focused.

# UNDERSTANDING EDUCATION

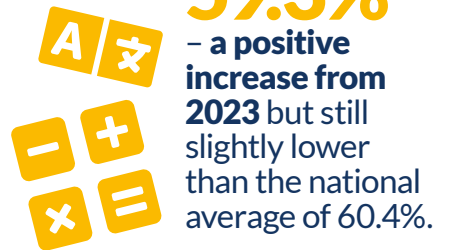
**There continues to be much to do to get education back on track following a hugely disruptive pandemic and its aftermath, a cost-of-living crisis and a decade dominated by funding cuts. This has left a damaging legacy and has had a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable families.**

**Despite some positive educational outcomes, such as above-average performance in early years and phonics, there remain significant attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities.**



MAY 2025 SNAPSHOT

The percentage of pupils in Cornwall **meeting the expected standard at Key Stage 2** in reading, writing and maths combined is



Persistent absence (missing more than 10% of sessions) in Cornish primary schools has increased from

**8% in 2021 to 15% in 2024.**

For secondary schools, the increase is from

**14% in 2021 to 32% in 2024**

(25% in England).

**87% of pupils** in Cornwall attended primary schools rated **Good** and **Outstanding** by Ofsted.



**81% of pupils** in Cornwall attended secondary schools rated **Good** and **Outstanding** by Ofsted.

In the academic year 2022-23, young people finishing Year 11 (aged 16) in Cornwall scored their **Career Readiness at 68%** (compared to 66% across England) and **Essential Skills as 69%** (identical to the England average of 69%).

**71%** of 19-21-year-olds in Cornwall who have left care **are in education, employment or training** – higher than the England average of 55%.



In Cornwall requests for **Education and Health and Care Plans** were

**1,173 in 2023**, higher than the England average of **915** and the South West average of **927**.



Against a backdrop of significant national challenge in both education and in health, including high rates of teachers quitting the profession amid a competitive wider labour market, and falling birth rates leading to falling rolls and school closures, there are increasing pressures on the education system.

Two of the most pressing issues facing England’s education system are particularly acute in Cornwall. Absence from education affects children’s academic performance, social development, health outcomes and safety, ultimately harming their future prospects. Persistent absence (missing more than 10% of sessions) has risen significantly; in England, persistent absence increased from 12% in 2020-21 to 20% in 2023-24. In Cornwall, it rose from 11% to 23% during the same period.

The demand for education, health and care plans (EHCP), for those with more complex special educational needs and disabilities, has risen nationally by around 50% in just five years. Funding has not caught up with the level of need and is based (in part) on historic data.<sup>31</sup> Cornwall has over 4,200 EHCPs currently and is receiving an average of 45 requests for EHCP needs assessments every week. This is almost five times the number of assessments requested in the whole of 2021, when 449 assessments were received.<sup>32</sup>

This national and local growing demand for EHCP needs assessments and specialist special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision

creates pressures in terms of staffing, funding, expertise and availability of physical space. Cornwall’s rural nature can make access to specialist services and schools challenging for some families and puts pressure on the home-to-school transport service.

Also reflecting the national trend, schools in Cornwall have seen huge rises in poor mental health presentation. This has had an impact on workload, demand, waiting lists and some of our initiatives such as ChatHealth.<sup>33</sup> ChatHealth has been an invaluable service in enabling our children and young people – as well as parents and carers – to access support or be quickly signposted to resources.



RESEARCH SHOWS THAT BY THE AGE OF 30, PEOPLE WITH THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF EDUCATION ARE EXPECTED TO LIVE FOUR YEARS LONGER THAN PEOPLE WITH THE LOWEST LEVELS OF EDUCATION.

Children’s earliest experiences define their outcomes in childhood and into adult life. Those who fall behind before school often struggle to catch up.

In Cornwall, the outcomes at Early Years and Foundation Stage are currently above the national average except for those with SEND support or EHCPs. The Year 1 phonics performance has been above the national average for the last three years, and in 2024, all pupil groups outperformed their peers nationally, with the exception of pupils with an EHCP. By the end of Year 2 in 2024, 91.4% of pupils in Cornwall had achieved the standard in phonics, compared to 89.0% of pupils nationally.

At Key Stage 2 the percentage of pupils in Cornwall meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined is 59.3%. This represents a positive increase from 2023 but is still slightly lower than the national average of 60.4%, a figure attributable to slightly poorer outcomes in maths which remains a focus.

91.4% of pupils in Cornwall had passed the phonics check at the end of year 2, compared to 89.0% of pupils nationally.

At GCSE level, only 39.7% of students attained grades 5 or above in English and Mathematics, highlighting a challenge in core subject attainment. Post-16 education shows a more positive trend, with 92.4% of students achieving at least two A Levels in the same academic year.

Key Stage 2 2023-24 reading, writing and maths		
	% All pupils	% Disadvantaged pupils
Cornwall	59%	42%
England	60%	43%

GCSE English and Maths 9-5 Results		
	% All pupils	% Disadvantaged pupils
Cornwall	40%	21%
England	46%	24%

DISADVANTAGE AFFECTS CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THEIR SCHOOL LIFE AND BEYOND, AND SO IT IS CRITICAL TO PROVIDE EARLY SUPPORT.

In Cornwall, 30% of children live in poverty (taking into account housing). Research from the University of Exeter published in 2022 showed that the South West has the worst educational outcomes for disadvantaged young people in the country, and low social mobility compared with other areas.<sup>34</sup>

The attainment gap in schools is biggest for children who get free school meals (the best available proxy measure of economic disadvantage) or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Evidence shows that the gap grows wider at every following stage of education – 43% of disadvantaged pupils meet the expected standards in reading, writing and maths, but achievement of 9-5 grades at GCSE falls to 21%.

ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS 2021, AROUND 13% OF CORNWALL’S ADULT POPULATION (AGED 16-64 YEARS) HAVE NO QUALIFICATIONS, an increase from previous estimates of 7%. Just over 30% have achieved an NVQ4 (or equivalent) or above, below the England and Wales average figure of 33.8%. Difficulty in recruiting, particularly recruiting a workforce with the correct skills, is a common issue faced by local businesses. Increasing and retaining the pool of young people within Cornwall is an important way to close the gap between skill supply and employer demand.





# UNDERSTANDING OUR TRANSPORT

Cornwall has historically been heavily dependent on private vehicles, reflecting its widespread rural nature. Many residents rely on cars for their daily commutes, and over half of Cornwall’s workforce drives to work. However, a significant portion of the population do not have access to a private vehicle, creating a particular challenge in rural areas.

This transport inequality creates barriers to employment, education, healthcare, and other essential services. Public transport in Cornwall has faced long-standing challenges, yet recent improvements offer the prospect of more accessible and sustainable mobility.



## MAY 2025 SNAPSHOT

Cars remain an expensive necessity rather than a luxury. **60% of Cornish residents** in employment travel to work by car.



**Overall satisfaction with bus services** in Cornwall is **86%** – higher than the **83% satisfaction** recorded in England as a whole.



There were **421,020 vehicles** registered in Cornwall in 2023, of which **1.45% were electric vehicles (EV)**. This proportion is lower than the UK average which is 3.5%.

**6.87 million journeys** started or ended at a **Cornish station** between April 2023-March 2024 – the best year on record. This is an **6.8% increase** since pre-Covid – bucking the national trend with most regions not yet seeing a return to pre-Covid levels.



In 2023-24, **12.9 million passenger journeys were made on Cornwall’s bus network.**

This is the **highest level of patronage recorded** on the network and represents a 12% increase since 2019.

Cornwall is in **the top 20%** of local authorities for EV: **total charging devices, rapid charging devices and devices per 100,000** of its population.



**10% of adults cycled** at least once a week (England is 10%). This compares to **9%** in 2020.



**Increased traffic congestion around Cornwall’s larger towns** is exacerbated by large visitor numbers during the summer months.

Daily traffic volumes are **24% higher in August** than average volumes throughout the year, and **53% more than in January** which is the quietest month.

Per year an average of **twenty people** lose their life in road traffic collisions on Cornwall’s roads.



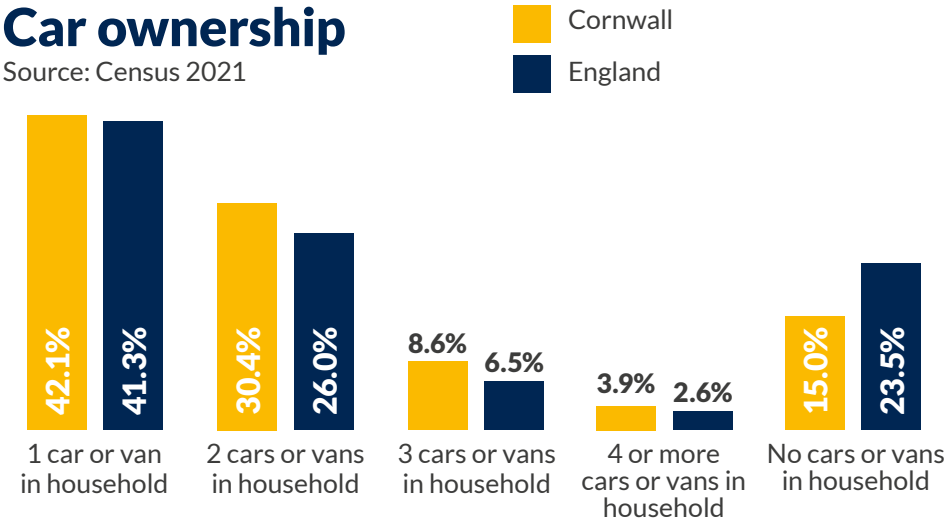
Cornwall has one of the longest road networks in the UK, with over four thousand miles of minor roads that require ongoing investment. Poor road conditions and traffic bottlenecks contribute to longer journey times, increased fuel consumption, and economic inefficiencies.

Travel to work data collected in the Census 2021 indicated that 60% of workers in Cornwall used the car or van to work, a higher proportion than in the South West (53%) and in England and Wales (49%). Car ownership levels rose slightly between 2011 and 2021 – from 17% having no car in the household in 2011 to 15% in 2021, whereas car ownership in England fell over the same period (26% to 24%).

It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that “potholes, roadworks and road maintenance” remains at the top of Cornwall residents’ list of things the Council should improve in the most recent Residents’ Survey. 38% are satisfied with road maintenance, a drop from 51% since last year, but still above the national figure of 30%.<sup>35</sup> A 2024 survey put public satisfaction with the condition of road surfaces in Cornwall at 25%, 5% below the average across all local authorities surveyed.<sup>36</sup>

### Car ownership

Source: Census 2021



Cornwall also experiences pronounced seasonal traffic fluctuations, with road congestion peaking during the summer months as tourism surges. In August, traffic volumes rise by over 50% compared to January, putting immense strain on Cornwall’s road network. This seasonal congestion contributes to longer travel times and increased frustration among both residents and visitors. Many towns, particularly those along the coast, struggle with overcrowded roads during peak tourism seasons, which in turn affects local economies, emergency response times, and public transport reliability.

Sadly, each year, an average of twenty people lose their life in road traffic collisions on Cornwall’s roads. Road traffic collisions destroy lives, families and communities. The public cost of a fatal or serious collision is significant: £2.7 million per fatal collision and over

£300,000 per serious collision, placing a substantial demand on resources across a range of agencies. No amount of road casualties is acceptable, and Cornwall Council has set ambitious road casualty reduction targets to halve both fatal and serious injuries by 2030.

Cornwall was one of the first rural areas to reduce speed limits from 30mph to 20mph on residential roads and in built-up areas. It will make roads safer, healthier and greener for everyone. After a successful pilot in Camelford, Falmouth and Penryn

during 2022, rollout across Cornwall was approved. Roads are considered on a case-by-case basis where the existing limit is 30mph, with the intention to reduce to 20mph. Urban areas with high pedestrian and cyclist movements will be prioritised. This

could include areas around schools, shops, markets and playgrounds. For some roads, it may be appropriate to keep 30mph or deliver a more focused 20mph section.<sup>37</sup>

Cornwall has...  
**439 miles** of ‘A’ roads  
**4,208 miles** of minor roads





## BUSES ARE VITAL TO THE LIFE OF CORNWALL AND ITS RESIDENTS.

Cornwall is one of the few places in the country to have enjoyed steady growth in bus use in recent years. In 2023-24, 12.9 million passenger journeys were made on Cornwall's bus network. This is the highest level of patronage recorded on the network and represents a 12% increase since 2019.

This positive trend belies the fact that delivering a comprehensive public transport network in Cornwall is challenging due to its rural nature and dispersed population. The delivery of a comprehensive public transport network is challenging for both commercial operators and Cornwall Council, which provides

significant support for bus services to provide a good standard of access and connectivity. Factors such as long journey times and challenging connectivity means the bus has not compared favourably as a viable alternative to private car use. This is reflected in travel to work data collected as part of the Census 2021. In Cornwall, just 1.3% used the bus, lower than 2.8% for the South West as a whole and 4.3% for England and Wales. For Cornwall this rises to 1.9% for all public transport, much lower than 3.4% for the South West as a whole and 7.9% for England and Wales. Whilst overall lower figures likely reflect the fact that 2021 Census data was collected during the final stages of lockdown, the stark comparison with the rest of the country is clear.

However, buses are crucial for those without cars, especially older and younger people, and can help reduce reliance on private vehicles. Improved bus services can support less advantaged social groups, strengthen communities, sustain town centres, reduce social isolation, and play a vital role in addressing the climate emergency.

The gains in bus usage have been the result of Cornwall Council's investment in an eight-year contract for the delivery of Local Bus Services. This is complemented by the Bus Fares Pilot project and Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), all supported by an Enhanced Partnership between transport operators and Cornwall Council. Funding is principally used to support our rural bus services, improvements to bus priority at key junctions, local waiting facilities, real time information and improved pedestrian access to bus stops.

## CORNWALL HAS 128KM OF MAINLINE RAIL AND FIVE BRANCH LINES, WITH 36 STATIONS SERVING THE MAJORITY OF CORNWALL'S MAIN SETTLEMENTS.

However, Cornwall's railway network remains underutilised when compared to the national average. Limited rail coverage in rural areas and high costs of travel still pose significant barriers to widespread adoption. North Cornwall is least well served by rail with Bodmin Parkway acting as a hub for a large area.

Census 2021 figures showed a fall in the proportion of Cornwall residents aged 16 to 74 who are in employment using the train to get to work – 0.5% compared to 1.1% in 2011. This could partly reflect the fact that 2021 Census data was collected during the final stages of lockdown, but also that that 32% of Cornwall's population live

in small settlements that are unlikely to be served by a train station. Years of above-inflation price rises have also led to some rail travel becoming comparatively more expensive, which may be a significant issue in Cornwall where annual earnings fall below the national average.

Despite this, the number of rail passenger journeys have been increasing, with journeys starting or ending at Cornish stations nearly 7% better than pre-Covid levels – bucking the national trend with most regions not yet seeing a return to pre-Covid levels. Again, recent investment has supported this growth, including mainline signalling improvements, park and ride improvements at St Erth, the rollout of Pay-As-You-Go tap on, tap off ticketing (being rolled out across Cornwall), and improved integration with bus services and the Mid Cornwall Metro project, due to be operating later this year.

## INCREASING WALKING AND CYCLING BENEFITS THE LOCAL ECONOMY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO CORNWALL.

Data from 2023 shows that 38% of adults in Cornwall walk at least five times a week (England is 32%), up from 32.5% in 2020. More walk for leisure (28.5% walked at least five times a week for leisure) than for travel purposes (11%). 10% of adults cycled at least once a week, a figure that has moved little since 2020 (9%) but reflects the England average (10%).

## CORNWALL AIRPORT NEWQUAY (CAN) SERVED 440,000 PASSENGERS IN 2023-24 AND PROVIDES AN APPROXIMATELY £100 MILLION GVA CONTRIBUTION TO THE CORNISH ECONOMY ANNUALLY.

CAN is a vital piece of Cornwall's regional transport and economic infrastructure. As well as providing business and leisure services to the people of Cornwall, it supports the equivalent of 1,123 FTE jobs in the Cornish labour market (868 direct, 40 indirect and 215 induced).<sup>38</sup> CAN also provides strategic operational capability for the Ministry of Defence.

CAN is owned by Cornwall Council and operated by Cornwall Airport Limited (CAL), a Private Limited





Company wholly owned by Corserv Ltd whose ultimate owner is the Council. The geographical location (with major cities 5-8 hours away) and infrastructure constraints means that the airport is likely to require some form of subsidy to remain operational. However, the Council is committed to keeping it operational at the minimum cost to the residents of Cornwall. A Public Service Obligation (PSO) is in place that guarantees regular flights between Cornwall Airport Newquay and London; an air link which is vital for the continued economic development of Cornwall. The current PSO is in place until November 2025 and a procurement process is being undertaken to secure a new four year service, and associated funding from the Department for Transport, to continue after this date.

### THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF CORNWALL'S TRANSPORT SECTOR IS ANOTHER MAJOR AREA OF CONCERN, WITH ROAD TRANSPORT ACCOUNTING FOR NEARLY A QUARTER OF CORNWALL'S TOTAL CARBON EMISSIONS IN 2021.<sup>39</sup>

The decarbonisation of road transport in Cornwall is expected to be driven primarily by electrification.<sup>40</sup> Cornwall Council produced its first Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Strategy in 2024.<sup>41</sup> This sets out the direction of travel for the expansion of EV infrastructure in Cornwall in the coming years, up to 2030. EV uptake is slower in Cornwall than nationally. By 2050 it is expected that almost all vehicles will be electric, in line with government legislation and

policy. Cornwall will need to expand its provision of EV charge points to support this growth.

However, switching to electric vehicles alone will not meet national carbon-neutral targets. Actions will need to be taken to avoid some journeys altogether (e.g. through home working, digital services); shift some journeys to public transport, walking and cycling; and improve some journeys to be more efficient and use cleaner fuels. Net zero pathways show that transport emissions in Cornwall need to be reduced by 99% by 2050 to meet the UK's legally binding targets. If Cornwall continues to follow current transport trends (taking into account an assumed transition to electric vehicles) forecasts show transport emissions will only reduce by 48% by 2050.



# UNDERSTANDING OUR ENVIRONMENT

**Cornwall Council is nationally recognised as a leader for its work in responding to the challenges presented by the climate and ecological emergencies. However, as the Council works with residents, businesses and communities to develop responses, we are all increasingly witnessing the impact of a changing climate. In parallel to this, global events have exposed our vulnerability to energy security meaning the drivers for transforming our energy system have never been greater.**

**Whilst challenging, Cornwall's natural capital and rich history of innovation creates a significant opportunity to deliver local and national ambitions for growth and clean energy.**



MAY 2025 SNAPSHOT



houses in Cornwall are currently at risk from flooding or being impacted by coastal change – sea levels around Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are rising.



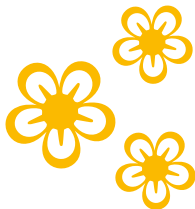
We continue to prioritise our focus on supporting our most vulnerable residents living in fuel-poor housing. This builds on the Warm Homes Programmes, where



homes have received energy efficiency measures over the last 5 years.



of our residents spend every day outside in green and natural space in their free time, and another 24% more than twice a week. (Cornwall Council's 2024 Residents' Survey).



Carbon emissions in Cornwall have fallen by over



since 2008. Transport and agriculture are the 2 largest sources of emissions in Cornwall.



Around



tonnes of food waste has been collected for recycling since the new household collection service was introduced. The amount of recycling overall has gone up from 40% to 55%.



The nationally renowned community planting programme Forest for Cornwall which commenced in 2019

has surpassed 1.6 million trees planted by residents, business, communities and landowners.

Cornwall Council became one of the first local authorities to declare a climate emergency in January 2019, an ecological emergency in November 2021.

The first ever Cornwall State of Nature Report was published that same year (in collaboration with Cornwall Wildlife Trust and the University of Exeter).

Cornwall Council was also the first local authority in the country to publish a bespoke [Climate Change Risk Assessment](#) report in 2022, which informs residents and businesses about the risks and opportunities presented by climate change to Cornwall, as well as informing the work of policy-makers, such as those working to develop the Cornwall Adaptation Strategy. The Risk Assessment recognises, as is increasingly being witnessed, the extent and impact of climate change across Cornwall over the next 100 years. It identifies coastal erosion, sea level rise, an escalating risk of intense flash flooding, severe storms and disruptions to communities and businesses due to climate change.

These impacts are expected to increase and accelerate in the future, therefore planning for them is essential if we hope to help make our communities and businesses resilient and adaptive to a changing climate.

This will require increased awareness of climate impacts and practical solutions to increase resilience and plan for change. Public opinion on the need to act fast on climate change remains strong. This is evidenced by a survey of Cornish residents which saw 73% of respondents say they believed that addressing climate change warrants a high level of urgency.<sup>42</sup> The majority of respondents agreed that they are already feeling the effects of climate change. A 2024 survey carried out as part of the engagement for the CloS Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) received over 3,700 responses, 82% of which were concerned about climate change. With this in mind, the Council's Carbon-Neutral Action Plan will be refreshed in 2025.

WILDLIFE IN CORNWALL IS IN DECLINE IN LINE WITH WIDER TRENDS AND WITH KEY SPECIES CLOSE TO LOCAL EXTINCTION.

The State of Nature report found that nature is largely in decline in Cornwall, with 12% of species of principal importance threatened with local extinction or complete loss in Cornwall.<sup>43</sup> According to the report, nearly half of terrestrial mammals and three-fifths of butterflies are now found in fewer places compared to 30 years ago.

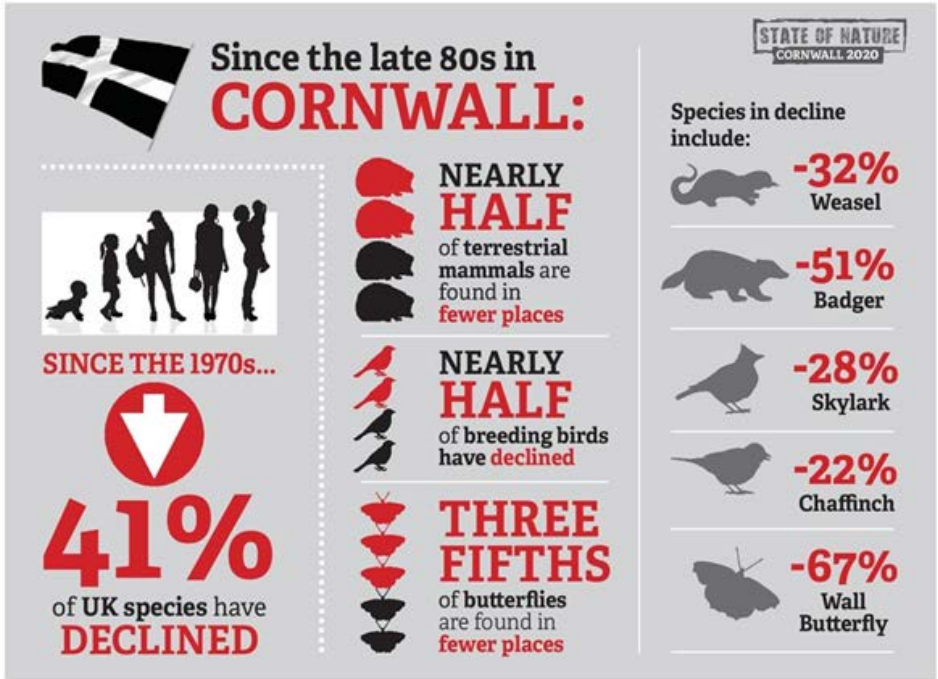
Cornwall's wildlife trends broadly mirror national trends, with habitat fragmentation and loss affecting



species abundance (number of species) and distribution (where they are found). The 'richest' sites for wildlife are too limited in number, size and quality, and are disconnected from each other. These include West Penwith, the Lizard, parts of the north and south coast, China Clay Area around St Austell, Bodmin Moor, the area around Bude, and northern Cornwall and the Rame Peninsula. Almost 8% of Cornwall's land area is urban or used for transport, although this is less than the UK average and does include gardens and small urban green spaces.



Nearly 75% of Cornwall's land area is managed for agricultural use. In recognition of the importance of farming in Cornwall's economy, and the vital role farmers and landowners have in managing landscapes, the Council worked closely with the sector to shape the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).<sup>44</sup> This aligns to ambitions to support farmers to deliver for nature through the transition towards sustainable land management practices that contribute to nature recovery while remaining viable businesses, producing quality food for the country.



It is clear that our residents associate a healthy and accessible environment with their quality of life. However, 95% of residents who responded to the LNRS survey in 2024 said that they are concerned about the state of nature. By enhancing the quality and productivity of our surroundings, we can build a stronger foundation for economic growth and make Cornwall a great place to be. For example, poor air quality can negatively impact health by increasing the risks of mortality and morbidity. In Cornwall there are currently eight Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) where air pollution is higher than the national targets. The primary contributing factor for poor air quality in these areas is an excess of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) caused by vehicle emissions. However, due to cleaner vehicles and the implementation of the Clean Air for Cornwall Strategy 2020-25 air quality is improving and the Council is due to revoke five AQMAs this year.

According to Cornwall Council's 2024 Residents' Survey, 40% of our residents spend every day outside in green and natural space in their free time (an increase from 36% in 2023). Cornwall Council play an important role in managing our environment; satisfaction with parks and open spaces is at 74% (a decrease from 78% last year, but similar to the 73% satisfaction in 2020).

**OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, THE COUNCIL HAS ROLLED OUT A NEW WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE ACROSS CORNWALL.**

The service includes a new weekly food waste collection and fortnightly rubbish and recycling collections. Since the introduction of the food waste collection service, around 8,000 tonnes of food waste has been collected for recycling. The amount of recycling collected has gone up from 40% to 55%.

**Air quality has improved in Cornwall over recent decades with cleaner vehicles on our roads and the implementation of the Clean Air for Cornwall Strategy. However, it remains the biggest environmental risk to public health, with children, the elderly and the already vulnerable most affected.**

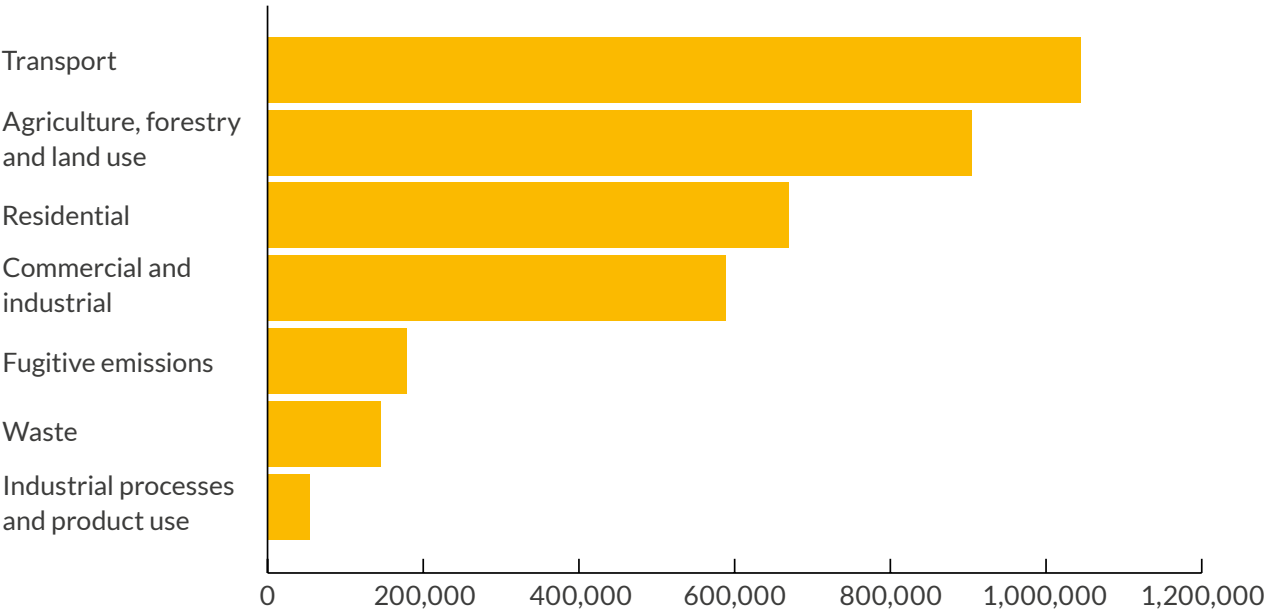




**THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF CORNWALL (ALL EMISSIONS FROM ALL SECTORS) WAS 3.6 MILLION TONNES CO<sub>2</sub>e (2021 DATA YEAR, AS DATA IS ALWAYS PUBLISHED IN ARREARS).**

This is almost six times more than the annual greenhouse gas emissions required to achieve net zero by the legally binding 2050 national targets. Therefore, Cornwall is not on target to meet the ambitions of the 2019 climate emergency declaration to strive to become carbon-neutral by 2030.

**Cornwall Greenhouse Gases inventory 2021:**



To reverse this position, Cornwall needs to reduce its reliance on a fossil fuel-based energy system. To this end, the Council led the development of the CloS Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)<sup>45</sup> as an evidence-based pathway to a net zero energy system for Cornwall. The LAEP considers how to decarbonise

all aspects of the energy economy including electricity, heat and transport. It illustrates where interventions will be required to deliver local and national growth as well as net zero ambitions. Cornwall currently meets 37% of its electricity demand through renewable sources. This is supported

by the Council’s renewable energy portfolio, including the Ventonleague wind turbine, producing enough electricity for over 1,400 homes, and a 5MW solar farm generating enough electricity for 1,000 homes. Cornwall is developing its potential to harness geothermal energy, a sustainable

power source that will help reduce reliance on fossil fuels. The Council is also supporting Bennamann's pioneering biomethane technology, which produces biofuel. This technology has led to the deployment of biofuel vehicles in the Cormac fleet and the upcoming installation of one of the UK’s first biomethane vehicle fuelling stations. The Cornwall Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) Accelerator project, led by Celtic Sea Power, aims to advance floating offshore wind technology in the Celtic Sea, boosting Cornwall's renewable energy capabilities and supporting economic growth.

The Council is in the final stages of a three-year programme to replace all of Cornwall’s 50,000 streetlights with energy efficient LED lights. These lights will require 50% less energy and reduce running costs by £1.2 million per year.

**IN 2023-24 CORNWALL COUNCIL EMITTED 9,345 TONNES OF CARBON DIOXIDE EQUIVALENT (tCO<sub>2</sub>e).**

This represents a 29.5% drop in emissions compared to 2018-19, but no reduction from the previous reporting year. This puts Cornwall Council around 8.9% behind its emissions reductions targets.<sup>46</sup>

Council business travel remains below its pre-pandemic level but has since risen sharply (30% year-on-year). Emissions from electricity usage

have continued to fall due to the LED streetlighting upgrades; increased renewable generation at places such as Kresen Kernow; improvements in digital infrastructure; and the effects of the broader Future Estates Programme. Natural gas and oil consumption for heating have both fallen compared to last year, reversing a long-standing trend due to a mild winter and various properties being closed as part of the Future Estates Programme. The first 47 electric vehicles have been introduced to the Council’s fleet with plans to replace a further 99 over the next two years.

The 230kW solar canopy at New County Hall has been operational since November 2024 and is the largest solar canopy in Cornwall, generating enough electricity for a third of New County Hall’s electricity demand.

**The first 47 electric vehicles have been introduced to the Council’s fleet with plans to replace a further 99 over the next two years.**



# Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/subnationalpopulationprojectionsforengland/latest> Subnational ageing tool - Office for National Statistics; Equality Matters dashboard – Cornwall Council
- 2 [Internal migration in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)
- 3 [Census 2021 - Cornwall Council](#)
- 4 [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2026 - Cornwall Council](#)
- 5 [Census 2021 - Cornwall Council; Census 2021 gender identity estimates for England and Wales, additional guidance on uncertainty and appropriate use - Office for National Statistics](#)
- 6 [Census 2021 - Cornwall Council; Cornish identity, England and Wales: Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics](#)
- 7 [Visitor Economy in Cornwall - Cornwall Opportunities](#)
- 8 Information on the Council's gender pay gap can be found here: [Gender Pay Gap Reporting - Cornwall Council](#)
- 9 [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings \(ASHE\) - Office for National Statistics](#)
- 10 Annual Population Survey (2020 yearly average and 2024 yearly average), [NOMIS](#)
- 11 [Good Growth Plan - Cornwall Council; Evidence Report 1 Cornwall Good Growth Plan - Cornwall Council](#)
- 12 In 2015 Cornwall's ranking was 68th. However, IMD should not be used for comparison over time as it is a relative index and measures have changed between IMD periods. See p18 in [English Indices of Deprivation 2019 FAQs - MHCLG](#)
- 13 [End of year regional breakdown, 2024 – The Trussell Trust](#)
- 14 [Sub-regional fuel poverty data 2024 \(2022 data\) - Department for Energy Security and Net Zero](#)
- 15 Children in low-income families' local measure: 2022/23, Children aged under 16 living in relative low income families, HMRC, DWP [Background information and methodology: Children in low income families: local area statistics - GOV.UK](#)
- 16 [Quarter 4 2024/25 Performance Reporting \(Thriving Sustainable Cornwall\) – Cornwall Council](#)
- 17 [Private rent and house prices UK, 2025 - Office for National Statistics](#)
- 18 [Housing affordability in England and Wales: 2024 - Office for National Statistics](#)
- 19 [Rough Sleeping Data Framework Dashboard - Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government](#)
- 20 [Housing intelligence - Cornwall Council](#)
- 21 [English Housing Survey 2022 to 2023: headline report - GOV.UK](#)
- 22 [How is the cost of living crisis affecting public health? 2023 - Economic Observatory](#)
- 23 What builds good health? An introduction to the building blocks of health, Health Foundation July 2024
- 24 [Marmot Review 10 Years On - Institute of Health Equity](#)
- 25 Global Burden of Disease, 2021, Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation

- 26 [Independent investigation of the NHS in England, Lord Darzi's report on the state of the National Health Service in England, 2024 - Department of Health and Social Care](#)
- 27 [Prevention is better than cure, 2018 - Department of Health and Social Care](#)
- 28 'Self-Initiated Terrorism' describes a person who threatens or mobilises violence without material support or personal direction from a terrorist organisation (but who still may be influenced or encouraged by the rhetoric or ideology of a terrorist group or groups). This is a growing national threat and a priority to address.
- 29 'Channel' is a multi-agency panel of professionals who assess cases where there is evidence of radicalisation and decide on a tailored package of support. This can include mentoring, theological guidance, education, and careers assistance to those assessed as being at risk of radicalisation and requiring support. For more detail contact the [Safer Cornwall Partnership](#).
- 30 Devon and Cornwall Police Rural Crime Profile (2024)
- 31 [UK 2040: Options | Nesta](#)
- 32 Education and Community Health service – Cornwall Council
- 33 ChatHealth is a risk-managed messaging helpline platform, providing a way for service users to easily and anonymously get in touch with a healthcare professional.
- 34 [Social Mobility in the South West - University of Exeter](#)
- 35 [Residents' Survey - Cornwall Council](#)
- 36 [2024 Survey Results - National Highways and Transport Network](#)
- 37 [20mph speed limits - Cornwall Council](#)
- 38 A **direct job** is employment created to fulfil the demand for a product or service. An **indirect job** is a job that exists to produce the goods and services needed by the workers with direct jobs, including both the things workers need direct to do their job as well as jobs produced because of the worker's needs (e.g., uniforms). Employment created by the additional personal spending (e.g., eating at a restaurant) by both direct and indirect workers is classified as an **induced job**.
- 39 [The Carbon Neutral Challenge - Cornwall Council](#)
- 40 [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Area Energy Plan - Cornwall Council](#)
- 41 [Electric Vehicle Charging - Cornwall Council](#)
- 42 Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations - Bath University 2023
- 43 [State of nature - Cornwall Council](#)
- 44 [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy - Cornwall Council](#)
- 45 [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Area Energy Plan - Cornwall Council](#)
- 46 [Emissions Inventory Report 2023-24 - Cornwall Council](#)

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