

## Supplementary Note

### WDC Policy briefing No. 6, Commuting to Work: Rural Dwellers, Urban Jobs

#### Coverage

The data analysed in this WDC policy briefing is national data covering the whole country and will include commuting patterns to the more urban areas in the East and South of the country. Given the distribution of the working population, the results are likely to be skewed to reflect the greater numbers working in the East and to a lesser extent the South.

The WDC Western Region, (counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway, Clare) is a predominantly rural region with 64.9% of its population living in rural areas (outside of towns with a population of 1,500 or more) compared to 38% nationally<sup>1</sup>. Though the data are likely to be skewed by the commuting patterns to the more urban areas in the East and South, the case studies for Galway and Sligo illustrate the pattern of commuting to these significant centres within the Western Region.

#### Definitions– Rural, Urban, Gateway

In choosing a definition, the purpose of the analysis is an important consideration. The focus of this research is rural dwellers and the extent and nature of rural commuting to urban centres. It is therefore important to capture as much commuting from rural areas as possible. On this basis, the definition of rural using the CSO definition of settlement size with a population less than 1,500 and open countryside are classified as rural<sup>2</sup>. This definition classifies more centres as urban and in the context of commuting, this is particularly important for parts of the country which have many smaller urban centres but lack a large urban centre, a feature of the West and North West in particular. These smaller urban centres often play a more significant role than their size suggests<sup>3</sup>.

Of course, rural areas differ and in the context of this policy briefing, a key difference is between those which are rural but proximate to urban centres and those rural areas that are remote rural, for example many parts of the west coast. These differences are evident in the commuting distances and journey times and the extent to which particularly remote areas are beyond the sphere of influence of gateways and towns.

In providing a quantitative measure of rural commuting, definitions and thresholds of rural and urban are required. The gateways, urban (towns) and rural areas are shown in Map 1 of the briefing and the following definitions are used.

**Gateways** are defined as the legally defined boundaries plus all electoral divisions (EDs) which adjoin the boundaries of the nine National Spatial Strategy gateways. This is more extensive than the

---

<sup>1</sup> CSO, Census of Population 2011, Population classified by Area, Table 3.

<sup>2</sup> There are a range of definitions of rural, ranging from the broadest; capturing all areas outside of the five main cities<sup>2</sup> to narrower versions such as the OECD definition which classifies rural as areas with a population density of less than 150+ per sq km.

<sup>3</sup> In contrast the OECD definition would categorise what are considered urban centres (albeit small ones) in rural regions as rural e.g Donegal town and many small towns in counties Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo. e.g. Ballinrobe, Ballaghderreen, Ballyhaunis, Tubbercurry and Castlereagh.

normal gateway definition (of town plus environs) and will capture employment centres located on the outskirts of gateways<sup>4</sup>. Residents within these EDs are classified as urban dwellers.

**Rural** is defined using the CSO classification based on settlement size where settlements with a population of less than 1,500 and open countryside are defined as rural<sup>5</sup>.

**Towns** are those population centres of 1,500 and above and excluding the nine NSS gateways. The gateways, urban (towns) and rural areas are shown in Map 1.

The definition of commuting used here refers to any mode of transport.

## **Methodology**

The data analysis is based on the Census of Population 2011, Place of Work, School or College Census of Anonymised Records (POWSCAR).

## **Where do workers live?**

In 2011, there were 1.7 million workers of which 35.5% are categorised as rural dwellers. Workers living in urban areas comprise 64.5% of the total (1,141,262)<sup>6</sup>.

Of this urban population, 1.7% (29,227) reside in rural EDs within gateways as defined for this research where gateways and hubs constitute the legally defined boundaries of the urban centres in question plus all EDs that that adjoin these boundaries. For those rural dwellers originally classified as rural but located within the gateway these are reclassified as urban dwellers. The same reclassification occurs for place of work which if located in rural EDs within the definition of gateways is recoded to gateway places of work.

## **Where do rural dwellers work?**

Of the 629,382 workers living in rural areas, over a third (37% - 232,587) worked in rural areas. However the most significant employment destination for rural dwellers is urban areas accounting for 43.5% (273,503). The remainder are classified as mobile workers (10.4% = 65,515) or not stated (9.2% = 57,777) both of which are proportionately more prevalent in the rural residential population compared to those living in urban areas<sup>7</sup>.

While over a third of all workers are living in rural areas, just over a fifth (21.3%) of all jobs are located in rural areas, indicating that commuting is a factor in the employment of rural dwellers.

## **Place of work**

Workers with 'no fixed place of work' (including blanks and mobile place of work) have been excluded which removes 295,428 workers from the analysis leaving a population of 1.475 million workers. Those working from home are categorised according to their place of residence; either

---

<sup>4</sup> Larger employers and foreign direct investment often locate adjacent to urban centres rather than within city centres as they often seek large greenfield sites but with access to various utilities such as water, energy, and telecommunications infrastructure as well as space and access to a large labour supply.

<sup>5</sup> In choosing a definition of rural, the purpose of the analysis is an important consideration. As the focus is on rural dwellers and the extent and nature of commuting to urban centres, it is important to capture as much commuting as possible.

<sup>6</sup> Of this urban population, 1.7% (29,227) reside in rural EDs within gateways as defined for this research.

<sup>7</sup> Among the urban resident population 7.8% (89,474) were categorised as blank and 7.2% (82,662) as mobile workers.

rural, urban or gateway. This has a greater impact on the numbers working in rural areas, reflecting the greater proportion working 'from home' in the agricultural sector.

After removing blanks and mobiles and re-assigning those who work at or mainly from home to their place of residence, the total number of workplace destinations examined is 1,475,216 of which the proportion working in rural areas (rural jobs) accounts for 21.3% (314,213) of the total. Urban jobs (both gateway and towns) account for 78.7% of all jobs of which 55.2% (814,612) are in gateways, and 23.5% (346,391) are employed in the towns. Students who work part time are not included in the analysis.

### Urban dwellers

The following tables provide additional data comparing rural dwellers working in gateways with urban dwellers working in gateways. This is supplementary information referred to in page 6, footnote 13 of WDC Policy Briefing No.6.

**Table 1 Socio-economic Group of Rural Dwellers and Urban Dwellers working in Gateways**

|       |               | Rural Dwellers - Gateway Jobs |                  | Urban Dwellers - Gateway Jobs |                  |
|-------|---------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
|       |               | Rural Dwellers                | % Rural Dwellers | Urban Dwellers                | % Urban Dwellers |
| A     | Emp and Man   | 21363                         | 17.8             | 132844                        | 19.1             |
| B     | Higher Prof   | 12980                         | 10.8             | 77466                         | 11.1             |
| C     | Lower Prof    | 25897                         | 21.6             | 123770                        | 17.8             |
| D     | Non-manual    | 33379                         | 27.9             | 215397                        | 31.0             |
| E     | Man skilled   | 9617                          | 8.0              | 40266                         | 5.8              |
| F     | Semi-skilled  | 10893                         | 9.1              | 58348                         | 8.4              |
| G     | Unskilled     | 2063                          | 1.7              | 20601                         | 3.0              |
| H     | Own account   | 1398                          | 1.2              | 13621                         | 2.0              |
| I     | Farmers       | 538                           | 0.4              | 1792                          | 0.3              |
| J     | Agri          | 140                           | 0.1              | 782                           | 0.1              |
| Z     | Other/Unknown | 1488                          | 1.2              | 9969                          | 1.4              |
| Total |               | 119756                        | 100.0            | 694856                        | 100.0            |

**Table 2 Education levels of Rural Dwellers and Urban Dwellers working in Gateways**

|                          |  | Rural Dwellers - Gateway Jobs |                  | Urban Dwellers - Gateway Jobs |                  |
|--------------------------|--|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
|                          |  | Rural Dwellers                | % Rural Dwellers | Urban Dwellers                | % Urban Dwellers |
| 2nd or Lower (NFQ 1-6)   |  | 65587                         | 54.8             | 369003                        | 53.1             |
| 3rd or Higher (NFQ 7-10) |  | 52888                         | 44.2             | 315507                        | 45.4             |
| Not stated               |  | 1281                          | 1.1              | 10346                         | 1.5              |
| Total                    |  | 119756                        | 100              | 694856                        | 100              |

### Industry and Socio-economic Group Classifications

| <b>Industry</b>  | <b>Socio-economic group</b>                 |
|--|---|
| 1=Agriculture, forestry and fishing  | A=Employers and managers                    |
| 2=Manufacturing, mining and quarrying, Electricity, Gas, Water supply and Waste Management                           | B=Higher professional                       |
|  | C=Lower professional                        |
| 3=Construction   | D=Non-manual                                |
| 4=Wholesale, Retail Trade, Transportation and Storage, Accommodation and Food Service Activities                     | E=Manual skilled                            |
|  | F=Semi-skilled                              |
| 5=Information and Communication, Financial, Real Estate, Professional, administration and support service activities | G=Unskilled                                 |
|  | H=Own account workers                       |
| 6=Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security  | I=Farmers                                   |
| 7=Education, Human Health and Social Work Activities   | J=Agricultural workers                      |
| 8=Other Service Activities   | Z=All others gainfully occupied and unknown |

Ends.