



NHS Postcode Directory User Guide

Edition: **May 2026**
Editor: **ONS Geography**
Office for National Statistics

May 2026

A National Statistics Publication

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1. Introduction

The NHS Postcode Directory (NHSPD) relates both current and terminated postcodes in the United Kingdom to a range of current statutory administrative, electoral, health and other area geographies. It also links postcodes to pre-2002 health areas, 1991 Census enumeration districts (for England and Wales) and both 2001 Census and 2011 Census Output Areas and Super Output Areas. It helps support the production of area-based statistics from postcoded data. The NHSPD is produced by ONS Geography, who provide geographic support to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and geographic services used by other organisations. We issue the NHSPD quarterly.

This User Guide contains information about the NHSPD including:

- directory content;
- data currency;
- latest news, including area changes;
- the methodology for assigning areas to postcodes;
- data format;
- summary statistics; and
- data quality and limitations.

The NHSPD reflects current and terminated postcodes using information supplied on a monthly basis by Royal Mail. The NHSPD relates postcodes (as at the third Friday of the month prior to each release) to administrative and electoral areas as at the preceding May and also to the latest known health areas. The area assignments for postcodes in Scotland are to the latest electoral wards and Council Areas. The area assignments for postcodes in Northern Ireland are to the latest electoral wards and District Council Areas.

The NHSPD uses the Government Statistical Service (GSS) standard 9-character codes for administrative and electoral areas and the ODS codes for health areas. Lookup files linking these codes to statutory area names are included with the NHSPD. You are encouraged to adopt the ONS standard names and codes where possible, as these are the recognised standard for National Statistics.

The Gridlink[®] methodology used to create the NHSPD, based on 1-metre grid references and digital administrative and electoral area boundaries, was introduced in November 2000. Further information on the Gridlink[®] initiative is provided in [Section 9](#).

The record specification at [Annex A](#) includes complete details of all available fields.

2. News

2.1 Changes to Geographies

This release of the NHSPD includes SICBL, ICB and Cancer Alliance changes as at 1 April 2026.

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Note: We do not have the capability to deal with detailed postcode queries relating to Scotland and Northern Ireland but can pass them on to the appropriate government departments.

4. Postcode Counts and Currency

The NHSPD contains postcodes within the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. They are current to the 3rd Friday of the previous month and include both live and terminated postcodes.

[Table 1](#) shows the split between large and small users by country, and the change in the numbers of postcodes since the previous quarter.

[Table 2](#) shows the numbers of postcodes, postcode sectors and postcode districts by postcode area.

[Table 3](#) shows the numbers of postcodes assigned grid references by positional quality indicator, country and user type.

[Table 4](#) shows the numbers of terminated postcodes.

5. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why are some postcodes not assigned to administrative and electoral areas?

- This mainly applies to new postcodes, which are assigned grid references by ONS Geography using imputation techniques – see Sections [9](#) and [10](#). In some cases the imputation procedure cannot assign a grid reference and, because the Gridlink[®] processing system assigns postcodes to administrative and electoral areas using grid references with digital administrative and electoral area boundaries, codes for the administrative and electoral areas cannot be derived. In time, the addresses in the new postcodes are surveyed by Ordnance Survey (OS), who then assign accurate grid references.

Why are some postcodes assigned to the wrong administrative and electoral areas?

- There are two reasons:
 1. **Imputation:** Some postcodes are assigned to administrative and electoral areas using an imputed grid reference. Imputation is not an exact science and can cause postcodes to be wrongly assigned until more accurate information becomes available.
 2. **Straddling:** As the postal and administrative/electoral geographies do not map directly onto one another, postcodes often cross boundaries. Postcodes are always assigned to single administrative and electoral areas based upon a single grid reference (which is the mean of all the addresses in the postcode, snapped to the address closest to the mean). This will inevitably lead to apparent wrong assignments, where addresses in a postcode fall in two administrative/electoral areas (see [Section 10](#)).

Why don't postcode areas follow administrative and electoral area boundaries?

- Postcode areas are defined and used by Royal Mail for the purpose of efficient mail delivery and have no relationship with administrative and electoral areas. Royal Mail requires a relatively stable geography to deliver its services, which the administrative and electoral area geography cannot provide.

Why do some postcodes appear to move around?

- There are three main reasons:

1. **Update:** As the grid reference allocation is updated from imputed to surveyed (see Section 6), so the allocation of one or more geographies may also change.
2. **Drift:** With demolition and new-build, the addresses that constitute a postcode may change. If this happens the centroid grid reference will also change, and the geography allocations will be updated accordingly.
3. **Re-use:** Royal Mail endeavour to never re-use a postcode, but under some circumstances a postcode may be terminated and then brought back into use in a different location. If this happens, the grid reference and geography allocations will change accordingly.

6. Postcode Format

The NHSPD contains fixed length 7- and 8-character postcode formats, and the variable length e-Gif (e-Government Interoperability Framework) standard postcode format. The latter allows for a single space between the two (outward and inward) parts of the postcode (see [Annex A](#)).

7. Gridlink®

The postcode is a key piece of data that can provide a geo-spatial reference for many uses beyond the delivery of mail. In order to make full use of its potential, and to deliver improved consistency, a consortium of organisations was formed in 1999 to allow the specialist resources of each member to be pooled. The Gridlink® Consortium consists of Royal Mail Group plc, OS (GB), National Records of Scotland (NRS), Northern Ireland Land and Property Services (LPS) and ONS.

It was recognised that a core set of data within each Consortium member's postcode products needed to be consistent and branded. The branding name is 'Gridlink®' and the core data are:

- All current (i.e. 'live') UK unit postcodes (but ONS maintains postcodes terminated and not subsequently re-used by Royal Mail).
- Grid references to 1 metre resolution.
- Positional quality indicators for grid references.
- UK country codes.
- Electoral ward codes.
- Administrative local authority district codes.
- Administrative unitary authority codes.
- Administrative county codes.
- Health regional area codes.
- Health authority codes.

Each of the Gridlink® Consortium members produces their postcode products based upon the core data. A diagram showing the Gridlink® data and other geography allocation methods is included at [Annex E](#).

8. Grid References

Postcode grid references in the NHSPD consist of both a 4-digit Easting and 5-digit Northing 100 metre grid reference and a 5-digit Easting and 6-digit Northing 1 metre grid reference. In the case of the 100 metre grid references, they are plotted to the South West corner of the 100 metre squares.

The majority of postcode grid references are derived from OS MasterMap®. Newly introduced postcodes will initially have a grid reference that has been imputed by ONS Geography. In due course these will be replaced by improved OS MasterMap® grid references which use data supplied by OS field surveyors.

Each grid reference is given a Positional Quality Indicator (PQI) to denote the accuracy of the grid reference, as follows:

- 1 within the building of the matched address closest to the postcode mean,

- 2 as for 1 above, except by visual inspection of Landline maps (Scotland only),
- 3 approximate to within 50 metres,
- 4 postcode unit mean (mean of matched addresses with the same postcode, but not snapped to an address),
- 5 imputed by ONS, by reference to surrounding postcode grid references,
- 6 postcode sector mean (mainly PO Boxes),
- 8 terminated postcode, last known ONS grid reference used,
- 9 no co-ordinates available.

The grid references provided for Northern Ireland postcodes are derived from the LPS product 'Pointer®' and use the Irish National Grid system that covers all of Ireland and is independent of the British National Grid.

No grid references are provided for postcodes in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

9. Assignment of Postcodes to Geographies on the NHSPD

Administrative and electoral areas

As part of the Gridlink® initiative, postcodes in Great Britain are assigned to administrative and electoral areas by OS (GB) using a 'point-in-polygon' methodology that matches grid references for postcodes (derived from OS MasterMap® – see previous section) against their Boundary-Line™ product. The draft version of Boundary-Line™ is produced in May and contains all administrative and electoral area boundary changes to that month, and is used for the May version of the NHSPD. Any errors, omissions or inconsistencies in this draft version are corrected by OS for the final release in October, which is then included in the November NHSPD. A similar process is used by LPS in Northern Ireland, which enables us to produce a UK postcode directory.

Health areas and administrative and electoral areas

Changes to administrative and electoral area boundaries are not automatically applied to health areas so the two boundary sets have ceased to be co-terminous, but the impact on postcode assignments has been minimised through use of digital health area boundaries either defined in terms of co-terminous administrative and electoral areas or built from 2011 Census Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA).

Similarly, in Scotland, administrative and electoral boundary changes do not routinely affect health boundaries although health area boundaries may later be altered to align with changed administrative and electoral area boundaries.

As changes to administrative and electoral boundaries in Northern Ireland usually change about every 10 years boundary co-terminosity is more stable than elsewhere in the UK.

Other geographies held on the NHSPD

Organisation Data Service (ODS) allocate identifiers for top-tier local authority organisations in England and Wales, in the field 'ODSLAUA'. The value held in this field will not necessarily correspond to the value held in the field 'OSLAUA'. Where ODSLUA holds the value for a county council organisation, OSLAUA will hold the value for the geography of one of its constituent local authority districts.

Other area assignments are based on point-in-polygon techniques and the appropriate digital boundaries.

10. PO Boxes and Non-geographic Postcodes

Non-geographic postcodes can either be special postcodes assigned to some large users of the postal service or PO Boxes that lie within a (pseudo) postcode district that does not form a discrete part of a post town. These will all have been assigned a grid reference, usually the local Royal Mail sorting office, and the majority have a PQI of 1 but some were assigned a PQI of 6 (see [Section 8](#)).

11. Terminated Postcodes

Postcodes are terminated by Royal Mail for various reasons but most commonly it is due to the demolition/re-development of buildings or to postcode reorganisations (see [next section](#)).

Terminated postcodes are occasionally re-used by Royal Mail but not usually before an elapsed period of two or three years. In such circumstances, all terminated postcodes and their grid references are retained on the ONSPD and a 'termination' date is added which provides a clear indication of a postcode's status.

Areal data assigned to terminated postcodes are updated prior to each release of the NHSPD, so the directory contains *current* information linked to each record.

If, and when, a postcode is subsequently re-used by Royal Mail the old grid reference and termination date are removed, thus deleting all reference to the former existence of the postcode from the ONSPD. The new location of the postcode will initially have a grid reference imputed by ONS Geography, which will eventually be replaced by an improved one derived from OS AddressBase®.

As the Gridlink® system processes only 'live' postcodes it is not possible to assign Gridlink® quality grid references to postcodes terminated prior to November 2000. Grid references for these postcodes have been copied from the old 'Traditional' postcode directory and have been given a single PQI (value 8).

The numbers of terminated postcodes included in each issue of the NHSPD are shown in [Table 4](#).

12. Postcode Reorganisations

Royal Mail occasionally conduct postcode reorganisations in order to create more postcodes in areas where the number of postcodes that can be created under the current structure is exhausted. For example, SO3 was reorganised some years ago into SO31 and SO32 to cater for current demands, and the reorganisation additionally allows SO33-SO39 postcodes to be assigned at a later date.

Royal Mail issue lists of postcode reorganisations in their 'Update' series, details of which can be found at their website.

13. Former Strategic Health Authorities (SHA), Health Boards and Health & Social Care Board

The maintenance of health area codes is the responsibility of the ODS in England, and ONS on behalf of NHS Scotland and Health Solutions Wales. These areas were reorganised in England in 2002, in Wales in 2003 and in Scotland in 2006. The SHAs in England were further reorganised by the NHS on 1 July 2006 to reduce the number from 28 to 10 before being abolished on 31 March 2013. In Northern Ireland the health & social care board effective from 1 April 2009 replaced the four previous health & social services boards. Details of the various code ranges are given at Annex A, and information regarding the latest changes can be found in [Section 2](#). The following health authority codes apply to Channel Islands and the Isle of Man:

YAC – Isle of Man

YAD – Jersey

YAE – Guernsey (incl. Sark and Herm)

YAF – Alderney

14. **Pseudo Country Postcodes**

ONS maintains a set of pseudo country postcodes relating to the UK and overseas countries for use within the NHS. These are used for providing a postcode value where the UK postcode structure does not apply or where within the UK a postcode is unable to be provided. A full list of the pseudo country postcodes is provided in the documentation accompanying the NHSPD.

The NHSPD pseudo postcode file holds information at 'sub-country' level, with one pseudo postcode per country. It also contains regions, islands etc that form part of a country (and therefore share the same pseudo postcode - Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands sharing the same pseudo postcode as Scotland, for example).

The pseudo country postcodes are included on all versions of the NHSPD and are assigned pseudo ICB and SICBL codes of 'Q99' and 'X98' respectively. No other areal data is held for these postcodes.

15. **Former Primary Care Organisations (PCO), Local Health Boards (LHB), Community Health Partnerships (CHP) and Local Commissioning Groups (LCG)**

Postcodes on the NHSPD have been assigned PCO codes (England), LHB codes (Wales), CHP codes (Scotland), LCG codes (NI) or Primary Healthcare Directorate code (Isle of Man). Postcodes in the Channel Islands (for which there are no equivalent areas) have been assigned a pseudo code.

The primary care geography in England was reorganised significantly on 1 October 2006. When PCOs were statutorily defined, they were done so in terms of whole local authority districts and/or electoral wards (in most instances) that existed at the time. There were 146 Primary Care Trusts (PCT) and five Care Trusts in place when they were abolished on 31 March 2013.

The 22 LHBs in Wales (from 1 April 2003) merged to form seven LHBs on 1 October 2009.

CHPs were established by the NHS Boards in Scotland as key building blocks in the modernisation of the NHS joint services. Managed jointly by local authorities and health boards, CHPs nested within council area boundaries but some crossed health board boundaries. In April 2012, the 36 CHPs became 34, covering the whole of Scotland. CHPs were terminated on 31 March 2015.

Five LCGs were introduced in Northern Ireland on 1 April 2009.

A single Primary Healthcare Directorate was introduced in the Isle of Man in 2008 to support the rollout of NHS systems.

16. **2001 Census Output Areas (OA)**

Postcodes were originally assigned to 2001 Census OAs by one of two methods.

Method 1:

A postcode to OA lookup was compiled incorporating those 1.52 million postcodes existing at the date of the 2001 Census (29 April) used to create OAs. The design of the OAs was constrained by those electoral ward boundaries promulgated in Statutory Instruments by the end of December 2002. Consequently, some postcodes were split by the electoral ward boundaries. In these instances, the split postcodes were assigned to a single OA based on where the majority of the population was located. This differed from the methodology used to assign postcodes to electoral wards and administrative areas, which use the grid reference of the address closest to the postcode mean and digital boundaries.

Assigning postcodes to OAs using a population-weighted methodology and the best-fitting OAs to electoral wards can result in different postcode:electoral ward assignments when compared to a direct address-weighted point-in-polygon assignment (i.e. Gridlink®). This is because there may be more people in one part of a split postcode which results in the whole postcode being assigned to a

particular OA yet, in some circumstances, there may be more addresses in the other part of the split which results in the postcode being assigned to a different OA.

Within the 1.52 million postcodes, some 267,354 large user postcodes, mainly large employer PO Box postcodes, were reviewed for the purpose of producing Census statistics because their grid references were linked to the local Royal Mail sorting office rather than their physical location. The large user postcodes included in the review were assigned to the appropriate OAs based on their geographical location but their Gridlink® grid references were not changed. Consequently, the use of point-in-polygon methodology to assign these postcodes to OAs produced different OA assignments to those included on the lookup.

Method 2:

The remaining 0.54 million postcodes in England and Wales, which comprise both new postcodes since April 2001 and postcodes terminated prior to that date, were assigned to an OA using a set of digital OA boundaries and their Gridlink® grid references.

Over time, the use of the original methodologies to assign OAs to postcodes caused inaccuracies for some allocations. From August 2006, the common point-in-polygon methodology used in 'Method 2', above, was introduced to allocate all postcodes to OAs, bringing this geography in line with the majority on the NHSPD.

16.1 Postcode Assigned to both English and Scottish 2001 Census OAs

National Records of Scotland (NRS) maintains a separate Scottish postcode directory called the Postcode Index. One postcode (TD15 1UY) assigned to a Scottish OA in the Postcode Index (because a part of it falls in Scotland) is assigned to an English OA in the ONSPD (because the part of it falling in England comprises a larger population). Consequently, the assignments for this postcode will differ between the NHSPD and the Postcode Index.

17. 2001 Census Super Output Areas (SOA) and Scottish Data and Intermediate Zones (DZ & IZ)

SOAs exist in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; the Scottish equivalents are DZs and IZs (originally called Intermediate Geographies – IG).

England and Wales

The Lower Layer SOAs (LSOA) have been designed with a mean population figure of 1500 and each consists of a grouping of OAs, typically five. There are 34,378 LSOAs, with an absolute minimum population size of 1,000.

The Middle Layer SOAs (MSOA) have a mean population figure of 7,200 (minimum 5,000) and consist of a grouping of LSOAs. MSOAs are constrained by the 2003 local authority boundaries used for 2001 Census outputs.

Scotland

DZs are the core Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics geography. There are 6,505 DZs, each containing between 500 and 1,000 household residents.

IZs are the geography that sits above DZs, and they have a minimum population of 2,500 - 6,000, which are of a size between the LSOAs and MSOAs in England and Wales. There are 1,235 IZs.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland SOAs were released in 2005. There is one layer of SOA, with a population size between 1,300 and 2,800, similar in size to the LSOAs in England and Wales.

18. Former Pan SHAs

Three pan SHAs replaced the 5 'IT Clusters' from 1 April 2007 and IT Clusters replaced directorates of health and social care from July 2003 to 31 March 2007. Each pan SHA consisted of a group of strategic health authorities, and they are included in the 'HRO' field. They were abolished on 31 March 2013 and replaced by NHS commissioning regions (NHSCR). The NHSCRs became NHS England (Regions) (NHS ER) in May 2017 ([see below](#)).

19. Regions (Former Government Office Regions - GOR)

The nine GORs were abolished on 1 April 2011 and are now known as 'regions' for statistical purposes. They were the primary statistical subdivisions of England and also the areas in which the Government Offices for the Regions fulfilled their role. Each region covered a number of local authorities.

20. Westminster Parliamentary ConstituenciesEngland and Wales

Parliamentary constituencies relate to those defined by the Parliamentary Constituencies (England) Order 2007, the Parliamentary Constituencies (England) (Amendment) Order 2008 and the Parliamentary Constituencies (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2008, and which came into effect at the May 2010 General Election. No further changes are envisaged until 2020.

Scotland

The Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Act 2004, passed by the UK parliament in July 2004, came into effect upon the dissolution of the last UK parliament and breaks the linkage between UK parliamentary constituencies and Scottish parliamentary constituencies. This Act has enabled the Westminster Government to reduce the number of Scottish constituencies in the UK parliament in line with recommendations made by the Boundary Commission for Scotland following its Fifth Periodical Review of Constituencies (December 2004).

The Parliamentary Constituencies (Scotland) Order 2005 details the reduction of the number of constituencies for the UK parliament from 72 to 59 Scottish seats. The changes bring the size of Scottish constituencies more into line with the size of English seats. English constituencies currently contain nearly 70,000 voters on average, compared to the Scottish average of 53,500.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland the commission's Fifth Periodical Report on Parliamentary Constituencies outlined changes to and the composition of constituencies in 2010. In practice the new parliamentary constituencies are not very different to their predecessors. As before there are 18 constituencies, all retaining the same name. In the main, the boundary amendment process has involved the re-assigning of existing electoral wards from one constituency into a neighbouring constituency. The only exception concerns Derryagh ward within Lisburn City local government district which previously resided entirely within Lagan Valley county constituency. It has now been split into two separate wards - Derryagh (North) and Derryagh (South), the former now included in Belfast West borough constituency, the latter remaining where it was.

Details of the code ranges are included in the Record Specification at [Annex A](#).

21. Former Cancer Networks

Cancer Networks were the organisational model for delivering improvements in cancer services. Initially 34 Cancer Networks were developed to bring together networks of cancer care that included health service providers and commissioners through all levels in the health service including Strategic Health Authorities, acute and primary care and the voluntary sector.

Following a number of local reorganisations there were 28 Cancer Networks in England before they were abolished on 31 March 2013, being replaced by Strategic Clinical Networks (SCN). Wales had two similar organisations, which were retained. The resident population of each Cancer Network ranged from 690,000 to 3 million people.

The 'CANNET' field identifies the postcodes included in each former Cancer Network and each is defined in terms of whole LSOAs as agreed by consultation with DH Cancer Action Team and directors of the cancer networks. Details of the code ranges are included in the Record Specification at [Annex A](#).

22. Cancer Registries

There are currently nine regional cancer registries in England with resident populations of between 2.7 and 11.6 million people and 3 national registries - one for each of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Cancer registries collect and quality assure detailed population-based data on cancer incidence and survival to provide a time series database. Information is collated from various sources including hospitals, cancer centres, treatment centres, hospices, private hospitals, cancer screening programmes, other cancer registers, general practices, nursing homes and death certificates. Cancer registries in England are also required to collect the cancer registration items for the National Cancer Dataset.

The 'CANREG' field identifies the postcodes included in each cancer registry and each is assigned in terms of whole LSOAs. Details of the code ranges are included in the Record Specification at [Annex A](#).

23. Sub ICB Locations (SICBL) – formerly Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG)

CCGs were groups of GPs responsible for designing local health services in England by commissioning or buying health and care services, and all GP practices had to belong to a CCG. They came into effect on 1 April 2013 and were built from 2011 LSOAs. In July 2022 they were renamed to Sub ICB (Integrated Care Board) Locations as part of the STP/ICB changes (see also Section 35).

24. NHS England (Regions) (NHSE)

NHSEs (formerly NHS Commissioning Regions - NHS CR) are sub-divisions of the NHS commissioning board. There are four NHS ERs in England, and they were renamed from NHS CRs in May 2017. The NHS CRs were formed on 1 April 2013, replacing pan SHAs, and are responsible for providing clinical and professional leadership at sub-national level. They are also responsible for the co-ordination of planning, operational management and emergency preparedness at sub-national level and undertaking direct commissioning functions and processes.

25. Former NHS England (Region, Local Offices) (NHSRLO)

NHSRLOs (formerly NHS Regions (Geography) - NHS RG, formerly NHS Area Teams – NHS AT) were sub-divisions of the NHS commissioning board. There were 25 NHS ATs in England which were formed on 1 April 2013, becoming 13 NHS RGs on 1 April 2015 and increasing to 14 NHS RGs on 1 April 2016 before becoming RLOs in May 2017. In April 2018, they were reorganised with the NHSE split and were abolished in April 2020. They were responsible for commissioning primary care services and also managing local partnerships and stakeholder relationships.

26. Strategic Clinical Networks (SCN)

SCNs were formed on 1 April 2013. There are 13 SCNs on the NHSPD (which includes two London areas), covering England, with former Cancer Networks covering Wales and the Isle of Man.

27. 2011 Census Output Areas (OA)

2001 Census OAs were built from clusters of adjacent unit postcodes but as they reflected the characteristics of the actual census data they could not be generated until after data processing. They were designed to have similar population sizes and be as socially homogenous as possible (based on tenure of household and accommodation type) - note though that homogeneity was not used as a factor in Scotland. Urban/rural mixes were avoided where possible (i.e. OAs preferably consisted entirely of urban postcodes or entirely of rural postcodes). They had approximately regular shapes and tended to be constrained by obvious boundaries such as major roads. The OAs were required to have a specified minimum size to ensure the confidentiality of data.

England and Wales

In England and Wales OAs were maintained after the 2011 Census so that they could be adjusted where the populations had changed significantly. Where an OA had breached its upper threshold of 625 population or 250 households it was split down to create a number of smaller OAs. Where an OA had breached its lower threshold of 100 population or 40 households it was merged with an adjacent OA to create a geography that was within threshold.

OAs created as part of the 2011 Census maintenance are based on postcodes as at Census Day 2011 while the unmaintained OAs will still reflect the postcodes as at Census Day 2001. The minimum OA size is 40 resident households and 100 resident persons, but the recommended size was rather larger at 125 households. These size thresholds meant that unusually small wards and parishes were incorporated into larger OAs. In total there are 181,408 OAs in England (171,372) and Wales (10,036).

National Statistics policy is that estimates published for any geographical area are aggregations of whole OAs (the lowest geographical level for which census estimates are produced). This policy ensures that estimates can be released for any area that contains at least one OA, in that it will contain the minimum population to ensure confidentiality. Eighteen wards have a very small population and have been assigned to a 'parent' OA (see [Annex B](#) for details).

In 2003, OAs fitted within the boundaries of 2003 statistical wards (and parishes) but this relationship had not been maintained for 2011 due to the high levels of administrative geography boundary change. In 2003 postcodes that straddled an electoral ward/division (or parish) boundary were split between two or more OAs. This scenario is now more prevalent as the postcodes have changed during the intercensal period without this being reflected within the OA hierarchy.

Scotland

OAs for the 2011 Census were created as groups of postcodes nesting as well as possible into the following geographies, in descending order of preference (when not all postcodes in the OA belong to a single combination of these area types):

- Council Area
- The 2010 Locality dataset

The main aim governing this order of geographies was to give continuity with the 2001 OAs while ensuring, as far as possible, that 2011 OAs fitted into the appropriate locality (urban area) which are seen as an increasingly important statistical area. Where possible, postcodes which were excluded from the 2010 Locality dataset, but subsequently met the population density criteria for inclusion in a locality, were included in an OA in the locality or grouped to form a new urban OA.

The majority of 2011 OAs are of similar size to those used in 2001 to allow as much comparison as possible with the 2001 Census data. Where a 2001 OA dropped below the 2011 minimum thresholds for confidentiality (50 persons and 20 households) e.g. because of housing demolitions, it was merged with a neighbouring 2001 OA. In addition, 2001 OAs that increased in size, particularly those that exceeded the 2011 recommended maximum threshold (approximately 78 households), were split where possible into two or more OAs.

Northern Ireland

Updated 2011 Census OAs are called Small Areas and are re-coded to 9-character format. There are 4,537 small areas in Northern Ireland.

28. 2011 Census Super Output Areas (SOA) and Scottish Data and Intermediate Zones (DZ & IZ)

SOAs exist in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; the Scottish equivalents are DZs and IZs.

England and Wales

The Lower Layer SOAs (LSOA) were designed with a mean population figure of 1,500 and each consists of a grouping of OAs, typically five. There are 34,753 LSOAs, with an absolute minimum population size of 1,000.

The Middle Layer SOAs (MSOA) have a mean population figure of 7,200 (minimum 5,000) and consist of a grouping of LSOAs. MSOAs are constrained by the 2003 local authority boundaries used for 2001 Census outputs.

The LSOAs and MSOAs have been maintained as part of the 2011 Census OA maintenance. As with OAs, they have been split or merged where they have breached predefined population and household thresholds.

Scotland

DZs are groups of OAs which have populations of between 500 and 1,000 household residents. Redrawn as a result of detailed population information from the 2011 Census, they have been available since November 2014.

IZs are the geography that sits above DZs and they have a minimum population of 2,500 - 6,000, which are of a size between the LSOAs and MSOAs in England and Wales. There are 1,279 IZs.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland SOAs were released in 2005. There is one layer of SOA, with a population size between 1,300 and 2,800, similar in size to the LSOAs in England and Wales.

29. Cancer Alliances (CAL)

CALs lead the local delivery of the Independent Cancer Taskforce's ambitions for improving services, care and outcomes for everyone with cancer..

30. Integrated Care Boards (ICB) – formerly Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STP)

There were 42 STPs covering all of England, where local NHS organisations and councils had drawn up proposals to improve health and care in the areas they serve. STP also stood for 'sustainability and transformation plan' - plans drawn up in each of these areas setting out ways to improve NHS services and population health in England. They replaced NHSRLOs as the higher level health geography in April 2020 and were themselves replaced by ICBs in July 2022.

31. Specialised Mental Health Provider Collaboratives (SMHPC)

SMHPCs include specialised mental health care, learning disability and autism services. They are built from groups of CCGs and cover all of England, and they currently deliver:

- Child and Young Person Mental Health Services (CYPMHS – TIER 4)

- Adult Low and Medium Secure Services
- Adult Eating Disorder Services

32. Names and Codes

The names of all administrative and health areas are the standard names adopted for use throughout National Statistics. The names are those used in Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments to publish changes to the administrative and health geographies.

The NHSPD uses the Government Statistical Service (GSS) standard 9-character codes for administrative, electoral and health areas. You are encouraged to adopt these standard names and codes, as they are the recognised standard for National Statistics. Full names and codes listings are supplied with the NHSPD.

33. Directory Specifications

[Annex A](#) lists the specification for the records on the NHSPD, giving the length and description of each field, the range of possible codes and any qualifying comments. It also provides further general information on each field, such as source, currency and extent of data.

34. Use of the NHSPD

The NHSPD (except Northern Ireland data) may be used freely within the NHS under the terms detailed in the 'Postcode products' section on our [Licences](#) web page. However, users should note that following agreement with Land and Property Services (LPS) Northern Ireland, Open Government Licensing terms do not apply to NI postcodes; separate licensing terms and conditions now apply in the form of an LPS End User licence or contact LPS direct for commercial use.

35. Limitations/Data Quality

No warranty is given by ONS as to the accuracy or comprehensiveness of the data contained on the NHSPD. We will take reasonable steps to correct any identified errors and, if appropriate, will re-issue the NHSPD.

Two types of errors may occur in the NHSPD - omissions and inaccuracies. With such a large file it is inevitable that some information will be missing. With monthly postcode updating procedures the likelihood of missing postcodes is small. The very latest postcodes (i.e. those introduced between the latest monthly postcode update and the issue of the NHSPD) will not be included, but any other missing postcodes are likely to have been absent from the Royal Mail data file which forms the basis of the monthly input into the NHSPD. Missing postcodes should therefore be reported to ONS Geography Customer Services for forwarding to Royal Mail.

As previously stated, inaccuracies also originate from two sources – straddling and wrong assignments (imputation).

You should also note that the use of the NHSPD to allocate individual addresses to geographies might be imprecise because of the effects of straddling and wrong assignments.

If you identify any errors and/or omissions, you should notify [ONS Geography Customer Services](#) and, with the assistance of the appropriate Gridlink Consortium member organisation, we will endeavour to:

- investigate all reports of suspected errors and/or omissions to areal references; and
- inform you of the outcome within 5 working days if we can resolve the query ourselves.

Corrections and identified omissions to the data content of the NHSPD are included on the subsequent NHSPD release.

[Incompatibility with certain spreadsheet packages](#)

Due to the large number of records on the NHSPD, the full file is incompatible with certain standard spreadsheet packages. You should read and understand the help notes of your particular software package before attempting to load the NHSPD data.

Table 1

**Numbers of Postcodes by User Type
(and the Changes Since the Previous Release)**

Country	Large users			Small users			Total		
	FEB 2026	MAY 2026	Change	FEB 2026	MAY 2026	Change	FEB 2026	MAY 2026	Change
England	657,671	658,242	+571	1,616,906	1,618,822	+1,916	2,274,577	2,277,064	+2,487
Wales	28,326	28,362	+36	113,644	113,722	+78	141,970	142,084	+114
Scotland	42,968	43,017	+49	187,746	187,907	+161	230,714	230,924	+210
Great Britain	728,965	729,621	+656	1,918,296	1,920,451	+2,155	2,647,261	2,650,072	+2,811
Northern Ireland	9,751	9,764	+13	53,428	53,476	+48	63,179	63,240	+61
United Kingdom	738,716	739,385	+669	1,971,724	1,973,927	+2,203	2,710,440	2,713,312	+2,872
Guernsey	881	880	-1	2,503	2,504	+1	3,384	3,384	0
Jersey	1,168	1,168	0	2,502	2,506	+4	3,670	3,674	+4
Channel Islands	2,049	2,048	-1	5,005	5,010	+5	7,054	7,058	+4
Isle of Man	1,644	1,644	0	4,458	4,463	+5	6,102	6,107	+5
All	742,409	743,077	+668	1,981,187	1,983,400	+2,213	2,723,596	2,726,477	+2,881

NB. The above figures include 'live' and terminated postcodes.

Table 2

Numbers of Postcodes, Postcode Sectors and Postcode Districts

Postcode Area	Post code Area Code	Postcode Districts	Post code Sectors	Postcodes		
				Live	Terminated	Total
Aberdeen	AB	40	180	17,403	21,960	39,363
St Albans	AL	10	39	7,789	3,715	11,504
Birmingham	B	79	268	41,835	21,043	62,878
Bath	BA	19	81	15,518	5,104	20,622
Blackburn	BB	15	79	13,586	5,831	19,417
Bradford	BD	27	112	17,313	6,681	23,994
Bournemouth	BH	26	103	15,259	7,502	22,761
Bolton	BL	12	53	10,400	3,778	14,178
Brighton	BN	38	146	22,497	13,536	36,033
Bromley	BR	9	39	6,779	4,019	10,798
Bristol	BS	47	206	27,418	19,306	46,724
Belfast	BT	82	281	50,116	13,124	63,240
Carlisle	CA	30	85	12,874	3,759	16,633
Cambridge	CB	16	87	11,227	8,573	19,800
Cardiff	CF	46	205	23,402	19,759	43,161
Chester	CH	38	214	19,083	5,755	24,838
Chelmsford	CM	28	105	18,628	9,912	28,540
Colchester	CO	16	76	13,759	5,012	18,771
Croydon	CR	11	66	8,005	7,157	15,162
Canterbury	CT	22	83	15,351	5,202	20,553
Coventry	CV	24	113	21,246	8,153	29,399
Crewe	CW	13	52	9,858	4,688	14,546
Dartford	DA	18	59	9,213	4,152	13,365
Dundee	DD	11	52	9,121	2,451	11,572
Derby	DE	25	130	17,955	12,990	30,945
Dumfries	DG	15	43	6,908	949	7,857
Durham	DH	12	47	9,172	2,631	11,803
Darlington	DL	18	68	13,531	3,582	17,113
Doncaster	DN	33	119	22,307	6,389	28,696
Dorchester	DT	11	39	7,938	2,199	10,137
Dudley	DY	14	59	11,093	3,675	14,768
London E	E	23	110	17,032	12,774	29,806
London EC	EC	30	140	3,569	9,081	12,650
Edinburgh	EH	58	170	25,398	8,406	33,804
Enfield	EN	12	48	8,559	4,845	13,404
Exeter	EX	33	132	22,896	6,695	29,591
Falkirk	FK	21	49	7,785	2,034	9,819
Blackpool	FY	9	42	7,392	2,969	10,361
Glasgow	G	57	243	32,433	15,392	47,825
Gloucester	GL	27	120	21,626	8,035	29,661
Guildford	GU	40	146	22,608	14,131	36,739

Postcode Area	Post code Area Code	Postcode Districts	Post code Sectors	Postcodes		
				Live	Terminated	Total
Harrow	HA	10	58	10,267	7,693	17,960
Huddersfield	HD	9	43	7,199	3,720	10,919
Harrogate	HG	5	25	4,517	1,971	6,488
Hemel Hempstead	HP	24	81	14,106	8,362	22,468
Hereford	HR	9	33	6,551	1,604	8,155
Hebrides	HS	9	11	980	138	1,118
Hull	HU	21	70	11,359	4,418	15,777
Halifax	HX	7	32	5,709	1,844	7,553
Ilford	IG	11	35	6,103	4,256	10,359
Ipswich	IP	34	121	21,928	6,051	27,979
Inverness	IV	53	85	7,573	3,504	11,077
Kilmarnock	KA	30	88	11,786	2,714	14,500
Kingston upon Thames	KT	24	92	14,282	8,674	22,956
Kirkwall	KW	16	22	1,853	279	2,132
Kirkcaldy	KY	17	76	10,319	3,183	13,502
Liverpool	L	66	582	20,849	23,301	44,150
Lancaster	LA	23	66	11,946	3,063	15,009
Llandrindod Wells	LD	8	16	2,219	485	2,704
Leicester	LE	28	153	23,325	12,504	35,829
Llandudno	LL	67	150	20,321	4,448	24,769
Lincoln	LN	13	53	9,566	2,825	12,391
Leeds	LS	33	151	22,182	10,774	32,956
Luton	LU	8	37	6,464	4,376	10,840
Manchester	M	48	302	32,403	27,765	60,168
Medway	ME	21	84	17,205	6,072	23,277
Milton Keynes	MK	29	117	16,210	7,617	23,827
Motherwell	ML	12	55	9,871	2,227	12,098
London N	N	25	113	17,673	12,821	30,494
Newcastle upon Tyne	NE	67	231	33,816	12,582	46,398
Nottingham	NG	32	173	29,819	8,942	38,761
Northampton	NN	20	102	17,126	9,008	26,134
Newport	NP	26	143	13,881	17,023	30,904
Norwich	NR	36	115	24,271	4,979	29,250
London NW	NW	13	85	14,254	12,308	26,562
Oldham	OL	17	70	13,207	4,824	18,031
Oxford	OX	28	146	20,494	15,674	36,168
Paisley	PA	78	117	9,504	3,712	13,216
Peterborough	PE	39	169	27,719	12,805	40,524
Perth	PH	43	62	6,230	1,390	7,620
Plymouth	PL	36	99	17,867	5,380	23,247
Portsmouth	PO	35	133	24,497	9,322	33,819
Preston	PR	13	83	13,727	7,108	20,835
Reading	RG	35	184	23,801	22,900	46,701
Redhill	RH	21	91	16,358	8,685	25,043
Romford	RM	21	71	10,002	5,767	15,769
Sheffield	S	56	250	34,494	16,257	50,751

Postcode Area	Post code Area Code	Postcode Districts	Post code Sectors	Postcodes		
				Live	Terminated	Total
Swansea	SA	53	153	23,286	6,541	29,827
London SE	SE	30	130	20,963	14,854	35,817
Stevenage	SG	19	65	12,172	5,345	17,517
Stockport	SK	19	113	16,681	8,961	25,642
Slough	SL	12	58	10,675	6,301	16,976
Sutton	SM	7	29	4,326	2,519	6,845
Swindon	SN	24	115	14,677	7,449	22,126
Southampton	SO	31	182	18,604	22,271	40,875
Salisbury	SP	11	47	8,748	2,899	11,647
Sunderland	SR	11	44	6,874	2,227	9,101
Southend-on-Sea	SS	19	81	11,979	5,665	17,644
Stoke-on-Trent	ST	22	90	17,863	5,221	23,084
London SW	SW	29	141	20,103	17,430	37,533
Shrewsbury	SY	26	87	14,632	3,022	17,654
Taunton	TA	24	67	12,106	3,184	15,290
Galashiels	TD	15	36	4,540	812	5,352
Telford	TF	13	44	7,225	2,376	9,601
Tonbridge	TN	40	129	23,172	10,507	33,679
Torquay	TQ	14	50	10,117	3,380	13,497
Truro	TR	28	68	12,543	3,425	15,968
Cleveland	TS	30	103	17,864	5,577	23,441
Twickenham	TW	21	82	11,118	9,561	20,679
Southall	UB	12	41	7,215	4,606	11,821
London W	W	35	217	18,537	22,114	40,651
Warrington	WA	18	97	18,334	7,930	26,264
London WC	WC	15	46	2,544	4,990	7,534
Watford	WD	14	70	7,416	8,789	16,205
Wakefield	WF	18	75	14,739	4,088	18,827
Wigan	WN	8	35	7,300	2,121	9,421
Worcester	WR	17	50	9,016	3,948	12,964
Walsall	WS	15	68	10,294	4,927	15,221
Wolverhampton	WV	18	62	10,645	3,877	14,522
York	YO	37	161	19,276	16,030	35,306
Shetland	ZE	3	4	658	103	761
United Kingdom	121	3,099	12,404	1,797,957	915,354	2,713,311
Guernsey	GY	10	16	3,298	86	3,384
Isle of Man	IM	11	53	4,591	1,516	6,107
Jersey	JE	5	29	3,215	459	3,674
Channel Islands/ Isle of Man	3	26	98	11,104	2,061	13,165
Total	124	3,125	12,502	1,809,061	917,415	2,726,476

NB. The postcode directory also contains the former National Girobank (now Santander UK plc) postcode GIR 0AA, giving a total of **2,726,477** unit postcodes.

Table 3

Numbers of Postcodes With A Grid Reference

PQI	England				Wales				Scotland			
	Large user		Small user		Large user		Small user		Large user		Small user	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	420,388	63.9%	1,563,021	96.6%	16,073	56.7%	95,238	83.7%	24,975	58.1%	170,169	90.6%
2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	522	0.3%
3	793	0.1%	2,287	0.1%	23	0.1%	109	0.1%	68	0.2%	473	0.3%
4	38	0.0%	99	0.0%	2	0.0%	15	0.0%	6	0.0%	5	0.0%
5	40,279	6.1%	5,344	0.3%	1,623	5.7%	239	0.2%	2,440	5.7%	562	0.3%
6	64,562	9.8%	147	0.0%	2,203	7.8%	7	0.0%	4,142	9.6%	14	0.0%
8	125,283	19.0%	47,762	3.0%	7,783	27.4%	18,112	15.9%	10,925	25.4%	16,154	8.6%
9	6,899	1.0%	162	0.0%	655	2.3%	2	0.0%	461	1.1%	8	0.0%
Blank	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	658,242	100%	1,618,822	100%	28,362	100%	113,722	100%	43,017	100%	187,907	100%

PQI	Great Britain				Northern Ireland				United Kingdom			
	Large user		Small user		Large user		Small user		Large user		Small user	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	461,436	63.2%	1,828,428	95.2%	1,374	14.1%	48,812	91.3%	462,810	62.6%	1,877,240	95.1%
2	0	0.0%	522	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	522	0.0%
3	884	0.1%	2,869	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	884	0.1%	2,869	0.1%
4	46	0.0%	119	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	46	0.0%	119	0.0%
5	44,342	6.1%	6,145	0.3%	3,353	34.3%	1,304	2.4%	47,695	6.5%	7,449	0.4%
6	70,907	9.7%	168	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	70,907	9.6%	168	0.0%
8	143,991	19.7%	82,028	4.3%	2,675	27.4%	2,838	5.3%	146,666	19.8%	84,866	4.3%
9	8,015	1.1%	172	0.0%	2,362	24.2%	522	1.0%	10,377	1.4%	694	0.0%
Blank	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	729,621	100%	1,920,451	100%	9,764	100%	53,476	100%	739,385	100%	1,973,927	100%

Table 3 (cont'd)

Numbers of Postcodes With A Grid Reference (cont'd)

PQI	Channel Islands				Isle of Man				All			
	Large user		Small user		Large user		Small user		Large user		Small user	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	n/a		n/a		n/a		n/a		462,810	62.3%	1,877,240	94.6%
2	n/a		n/a		n/a		n/a		0	0.0%	522	0.0%
3	n/a		n/a		n/a		n/a		884	0.1%	2,869	0.1%
4	n/a		n/a		n/a		n/a		46	0.0%	119	0.0%
5	n/a		n/a		n/a		n/a		47,695	6.4%	7,449	0.4%
6	n/a		n/a		n/a		n/a		70,907	9.5%	168	0.0%
8	n/a		n/a		n/a		n/a		146,666	19.7%	84,866	4.3%
9	2,048	100.0%	5,010	100.0%	1,644	100.0%	4,463	100.0%	14,069	1.9%	10,167	0.5%
Blank	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	2,048	100%	5,010	100%	1,644	100%	4,463	100%	743,077	100%	1,983,400	100%

Table 4**Numbers of Terminated Postcodes**

Country	Number
England	783,130
Wales	49,899
Scotland	69,201
Great Britain	902,230
Northern Ireland	13,124
United Kingdom	915,354
Channel Islands	545
Isle of Man	1,516
All	917,415

Annex A

NHSPD Record Specification

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
1	8	Unit postcode – 8 character version	AB1ΔΔ0AA-ZE99Δ9ZZ (maximum range) ZZ99Δ1AA-ZZ99Δ9ZZ	2, 3 or 4-character outward code - left aligned; 3-character inward code - right aligned; 5th character always blank and 3rd and 4th characters may be blank (Δ); Pseudo country postcode as used by the NHS.	PCD2
2	8	Unit postcode - variable length (e-Gif) version	AB1Δ0AAΔ-ZE99Δ9ZZ (maximum range) ZZ99Δ1AA-ZZ99Δ9ZZ	2, 3 or 4-character outward code; Single space (Δ); 3-character inward code; Pseudo country postcode as used by the NHS.	PCDS
3	6	Date of introduction	YYYYMM (year and month)	The most recent occurrence of the postcode's date of introduction.	DOINTR
4	6	Date of termination	YYYYMM (year and month) or null	If present, the most recent occurrence of the postcode's date of termination, otherwise: null = 'live' postcode	DOTERM
5	4	National grid reference - Easting	numeric or null	The OS postcode grid reference Easting to 100 metre resolution; blank for postcodes in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Grid references for postcodes in Northern Ireland relate to the Irish Grid system.	OSEAST100M
6	5	National grid reference - Northing	numeric or null	The OS postcode grid reference Northing to 100 metre resolution; blank for postcodes in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Grid references for postcodes in Northern Ireland relate to the Irish Grid system.	OSNRTH100M

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
7	9	County	E10, pseudo or null	<p>The county to which the postcode has been assigned. Pseudo codes are included for English UAs, Wales, Scotland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will be blank for postcodes in England with no grid reference.</p> <p>E10000003 - E10000034 = England; E99999999 (pseudo) = England (UA); W99999999 (pseudo) = Wales; S99999999 (pseudo) = Scotland; N99999999 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	OSCTY
8	5	Local Authority Organisation	000-999*, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z*, pseudo or null (*max. range)	<p>ODS-allocated identifiers for top-tier Local Authority organisations in England and Wales to which the postcode has been assigned. Pseudo codes are included for Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will be blank for postcodes in England or Wales with no grid reference.</p> <p>000-999, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = England/Wales (County, UA, MD, LB); S92 (pseudo) = Scotland; N92 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; L93 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M83 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	ODSLAUA

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
9	9	Local authority district (LAD): unitary authority (UA)/non-metropolitan district (NMD)/metropolitan district (MD)/London borough (LB)/council area (CA)/district council area (DCA)	E06, E07, E08, E09, W06, S12, N09, pseudo or null	<p>The LAD to which the postcode has been assigned. Pseudo codes are included for Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference.</p> <p>E06000001 - E06000066 = England (UA); E07000008 - E07000246 = England (NMD); E08000001 - E08000039 = England (MD); E09000001 - E09000033 = England (LB); W06000001 - W06000024 = Wales (UA); S12000005 - S12000050 = Scotland (CA); N09000001 - N09000011 = Northern Ireland (DCA); L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	OSLAUA
10	9	(Electoral) ward/division	E05, W05, S13, N08, pseudo or null	<p>The administrative/electoral area to which the postcode has been assigned. Pseudo codes are included for Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference.</p> <p>E05000932 - E05016261 = England; W05001039 - W05001800 = Wales; S13002516 - S13003156 = Scotland; N08000101 - N08001140 = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	OSWARD
11	1	Postcode user type	0 or 1	<p>Shows whether the postcode is a small or large user.</p> <p>0 = small user; 1 = large user</p>	USERTYPE

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
12	1	Grid reference positional quality indicator	1-6, 8-9	Shows the status of the assigned grid reference. 1 = within the building of the matched address closest to the postcode mean; 2 = as for status value 1, except by visual inspection of Landline maps (Scotland only); 3 = approximate to within 50 metres; 4 = postcode unit mean (mean of matched addresses with the same postcode, but not snapped to a building); 5 = imputed by ONS, by reference to surrounding postcode grid references; 6 = postcode sector mean, (mainly PO Boxes); 8 = postcode terminated prior to Gridlink® initiative, last known ONS postcode grid reference ¹ ; 9 = no grid reference available	OSGRDIND
13	9	Country	E92, W92, S92, N92, L93, M83 or null	The code for the appropriate country (i.e. one of the four constituent countries of the UK or Crown dependencies - the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man) to which each postcode is assigned. E92000001 = England; W92000004 = Wales; S92000003 = Scotland; N92000002 = Northern Ireland; L93000001 = Channel Islands; M83000003 = Isle of Man; null = no information available	CTRY

¹ Postcodes with an '8' code are those that were terminated prior to the Gridlink® initiative which became operational in November 2000. The grid references are those assigned by ONS for postcodes in England and Wales and those assigned by the General Register Office for Scotland and the Department for Economic Development in Northern Ireland for their respective postcodes. Postcodes terminated since November 2000 retain the same positional quality indicators as they had prior to their termination.

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
14	5	Former Strategic Health Authority (SHA)/ Local Health Board (LHB)/ Health Board (HB)/ Health Authority (HA)/ Health & Social Care Board (HSCB)	Q30-Q39, 7A1-7A7, SA9-SZ9, YAC-YAF, ZB1, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z*, or null (*max. range)	The health area code for the postcode. SHAs were abolished in England in 2013 but the codes remain as a 'frozen' geography. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. Q30-Q39 = England (former SHA); 7A1-7A7, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = Wales (LHB); SA9-SZ9 = Scotland (HB); ZB1 = Northern Ireland (HSCB); YAD-YAF = Channel Islands (HA); YAC = Isle of Man (HA); null = no information available	OSHLTHAU
15	9	Region (former GOR)	E12, pseudo or null	The region code for each postcode. Pseudo codes are included for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Island and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes in England with no grid reference. E12000001 - E12000009 = England; W99999999 (pseudo) = Wales; S99999999 (pseudo) = Scotland; N99999999 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available	RGN
16	3	Pre-2002 Health Authority	QA2-QEY* (maximum range), QW1-QW5, SA9-SZ9, YAC-YAF, ZE0-ZW0, or null * the last character may be numeric	The Health Authority existing prior to the reorganisation of health areas (England in 2002, Wales in 2003). The field will be blank for postcodes in England or Wales with no grid reference. QA2 - QEY = England (HA); QW1 - QW5 = Wales (HA); SA9 - SZ9 = Scotland (HB); ZE0 - ZW0 = Northern Ireland (HSSB); YAD - YAF = Channel Islands (HA); YAC = Isle of Man (HA); null = no information available	OLDHA

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
17	5	NHS England (Region) (NHSER)	Y56-Y63, A0A0A- Z9Z9Z*, pseudo or null (*max. range)	The NHSER code for the postcode. Pseudo codes are included for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will be blank for postcodes in England with no grid reference. Y56-Y63, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = England; W92 (pseudo) = Wales; S92 (pseudo) = Scotland; N92 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; L93 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M83 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available	NHSER
18	5	Sub ICB Location (LOC)/ Local Health Board (LHB)/ Community Health Partnership (CHP)/ Local Commissioning Group (LCG)/ Primary Healthcare Directorate (PHD)	00A-99Z*, 7A1-7A7, 001-043, ZC1- ZC5, YK1, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z*, pseudo or null (*max. range)	The code for the Sub ICB Locations in England, LHBs in Wales, CHPs in Scotland, LCG in Northern Ireland and PHD in the Isle of Man; there are no equivalent areas in the Channel Islands (for which a pseudo code is included). The field will be blank for postcodes in England or Wales with no grid reference. 00A-99Z, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = England (Sub ICB Location); 7A1-7A7, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = Wales (LHB); 001-043 = Scotland (CHP); ZC1-ZC5 = Northern Ireland (LCG); YK1 = Isle of Man (PHD); X98 (pseudo) = Channel Islands (and also in conjunction with pseudo country postcode); null = no information available	SICBL
19	8		null	Content removed	PSED
20	6		null	Content removed	CENED
21	1		null	Content removed	EDIND
22	6		null	Content removed	WARD98

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
23	10	2001 Census Output Area (OA)	E00, W00, S00, 95AA010001- 95ZZ519999, pseudo or null	<p>The 2001 Census OAs were built from unit postcodes and constrained to 2003 'statistical' wards, and they formed the building bricks for defining higher level geographies. Pseudo codes are included for Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference.</p> <p>E00000001 - E00165665 = England; W00000001 - W00009769 = Wales; S00000001 - S00042604 = Scotland; 95AA010001 - 95ZZ519999 = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	OA01
24	3	NHS England (Region, Local Office) (NHSRLO)	Q71-Q88, pseudo or null	<p>The former NHSRLO (formerly NHS Region Geography, formerly Area Team) code for the postcode. Pseudo codes are included for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will be blank for postcodes in England with no grid reference.</p> <p>Q71-Q88 = England; W92 (pseudo) = Wales; S92 (pseudo) = Scotland; N92 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; L93 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M83 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	NHSRLO
25	3	Former Pan SHA	Y51-Y53, pseudo or null	<p>The former Pan SHA responsible for the associated strategic health authority for each postcode in England. Pseudo codes are included for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will be blank for postcodes in England with no grid reference.</p> <p>Y51-Y53 = England; W00 (pseudo) = Wales; S00 (pseudo) = Scotland; Z00 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; X00 (pseudo) = Channel Islands/Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	HRO

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
26	9	2001 Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA)/ Super Output Area (SOA)/ Data Zone (DZ)	E01, W01, S01, 95AA01S1– 95ZZ16S2, pseudo or null	The 2001 Census LSOA code for England and Wales, SOA code for Northern Ireland and DZ code for Scotland. Pseudo codes are included for Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. E01000001- E01032482 = England; W01000001- W01001896 = Wales; S01000001- S01006505 = Scotland; 95AA01S1 - 95ZZ16S2 = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available	LSOA01
27	1		null	Content removed	UR01IND
28	9		null	Content removed	MSOA01
29	3	Former Cancer Network	N01-N98, pseudo or null	The former Cancer Network that each postcode falls within. They were closed in March 2013 and replaced by Strategic Clinical Networks. A pseudo code is included for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Channel Islands. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. N01-N98 = England/Wales/Isle of Man; Z99 (pseudo) = Scotland/Northern Ireland/Channel Islands; null = no information available	CANNET
30	5	Strategic Clinical Network (NHS SCN)	N01-N98, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z*, pseudo or null (*max. range)	The NHS SCN that each postcode falls within. Introduced in April 2013 by NHS England, former Cancer Network codes are included for Wales and Isle of Man. A pseudo code is included for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Channel Islands. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. N44-N61, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = England (SCN); N95-N96 = Wales (former Cancer Network); N50 = Isle of Man (SCN); Z99 (pseudo) = Scotland/Northern Ireland/Channel Islands; null = no information available	SCN

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
31	3	'First wave' Strategic Health Authority (SHA)/ Health Board (HB)/ Health Authority (HA)/ Health & Social Services Board (HSSB)	Q01-Q28 (maximum range), Q99 (pseudo), SA9-SZ9, ZE0-ZW0, YAC-YAF or null	The health area code for the postcode prior to the NHS reorganisation on 1 July 2006. A pseudo code is included for Wales. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. Q01-Q28 = England (SHA); Q99 (pseudo) = Wales; SA9 - SZ9 = Scotland (HB); ZE0 - ZW0 = Northern Ireland (HSSB); YAD - YAF = Channel Islands (HA); YAC = Isle of Man (HA); null = no information available	OSHAPREV
32	3	'First wave' Primary Care Trust (PCT)/ Local Health Board (LHB)/ Care Trust (CT)	5AA-5ZZ*, 6A1-6C4*, TAC, TAG, TAK, TAL, X98 (pseudo), or null *maximum range	The pre-October 2006 code for the primary care areas in England and Wales; primary care areas do not exist in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands or Isle of Man, to which a pseudo code has been assigned. The field will be blank for postcodes in England or Wales with no grid reference. 5AA - 5ZZ = England (PCT); TAC - TAL = England (CT); 6A1 - 6C4 = Wales (LHB); X98 (pseudo) = Scotland/NI/Channel Is/IoM; null = no information available	OLDPCT
33	3	'Old' IT Cluster (ITC)	Y41-Y45, W00, pseudo or null	The pre-Pan SHA ITC responsible for the associated SHA for each postcode in England. ITCs were used from 1 July 2003 to 31 March 2007. Pseudo codes are included for Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. Y41-Y45 = England (ITC); W00 = Health Solutions Wales; S00 (pseudo) = Scotland; Z00 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; X00 (pseudo) = Channel Islands/Isle of Man; null = no information available	OLDHRO

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
34	9	Westminster parliamentary constituency	E14, W07, S14, N06, pseudo or null	The Westminster parliamentary constituency code for each postcode. Pseudo codes are included for Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. E14001063 – E14001605 = England; W07000081 – W07000112 = Wales; S14000021 – S14000111 = Scotland; N05000001 – N05000018 = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available	PCON
35	5	Cancer registry	Y0201-Y1701, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z*, pseudo or null (*max. range)	The cancer registry that each postcode falls within. A pseudo code is included for Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. Y0201-Y1701, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = England/Wales; Z9999 (pseudo) = Scotland/Northern Ireland/Channel Islands/Isle of Man; null = no information available	CANREG
36	5	'Second wave' Primary Care Trust (PCT)/ Care Trust/ Care Trust Plus (CT)/ Local Health Board (LHB)/ Community Health Partnership (CHP)/ Local Commissioning Group (LCG)/ Primary Healthcare Directorate (PHD)	5AA-5ZZ*, 7A1-7A7*, TAC-TAN*, 001-043*, ZC1- ZC5, YK1, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z*, pseudo or null (*max. range)	The code for the PCT/CT areas (England), LHBs (Wales), CHPs (Scotland), LCG (Northern Ireland) or PHD (Isle of Man) prior to the abolition of PCTs in 2013 and CHPs in 2015; there are no equivalent areas in the Channel Islands (for which a pseudo code is included). The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. 5AA-5ZZ = England (PCT); TAC-TAN = England (CT); 7A1-7A7, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = Wales (LHB); 001-043 = Scotland (CHP); ZC1-ZC5 = Northern Ireland (LCG); YK1 = Isle of Man (PHD); X98 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; null = no information available	PCT

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
37	6	National grid reference - Easting	numeric or null	The OS grid reference Easting to 1 metre resolution; blank for postcodes in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Grid references for postcodes in Northern Ireland relate to the Irish National Grid.	OSEAST1M
38	7	National grid reference - Northing	numeric or null	The OS grid reference Northing to 1 metre resolution; blank for postcodes in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Grid references for postcodes in Northern Ireland relate to the Irish National Grid.	OSNRTH1M
39	9	2011 Census Output Area (OA)/ Small Area (SA)	E00, W00, S00, N00, pseudo or null	The 2011 Census OAs in GB and SAs in Northern Ireland were based on 2001 Census OAs, and they form the building bricks for defining higher level geographies. Pseudo codes are included for Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. E00000001 - E00176774 = England; W00000001 - W00010265 = Wales; S00088956 - S00135306 = Scotland; N00000001 - N00004537 = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available	OA11
40	9	2011 Census Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA)/ Super Output Area (SOA)/ Data Zone (DZ)	E01, W01, S01, 95AA01S1 – 95ZZ16S2, pseudo or null	The 2011 Census LSOA (England and Wales), SOA (Northern Ireland) and DZ (Scotland) code. Pseudo codes are included for Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. E01000001- E01033768 = England; W01000001- W01001958 = Wales; S01006506 - S01013481 = Scotland; 95AA01S1 – 95ZZ16S2 = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available	LSOA11

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
41	9	2011 Census Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA)/ Intermediate Zone (IZ)	E02, W02, S02, pseudo or null	<p>The 2011 Census MSAO code for England and Wales and IZ code for Scotland. Pseudo codes are included for Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference.</p> <p>E02000001- E02006934 = England; W02000001- W02000423 = Wales; S02001236 - S02002514 = Scotland; N99999999 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	MSOA11
42	9	Cancer Alliance (CAL)	E56, pseudo or null	<p>The Cancer Alliance code for each postcode. Pseudo codes are included for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference.</p> <p>E56000005 – E56000038 = England; W99999999 (pseudo) = Wales; S99999999 (pseudo) = Scotland; N99999999 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	CALNCV
43	5	Integrated Care Board (ICB)	QAA-QZZ*, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z*, pseudo or null (*max. range)	<p>The ICB code for each postcode. Pseudo codes are included for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference.</p> <p>QAA – QZZ, A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = England; W92 (pseudo) = Wales; S92 (pseudo) = Scotland; N92 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; L93 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M83 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	ICB

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
44	5	SMHPC (Adult Eating Disorder services)	A0A0A-Z9Z9Z*, pseudo or null (*max. range)	The SMHPC (AED) code for each postcode. Pseudo codes are included for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = England; W92 (pseudo) = Wales; S92 (pseudo) = Scotland; N92 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; L93 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M83 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available	SMHPC_AED
45	5	SMHPC (Adult Low and Medium Secure services)	A0A0A-Z9Z9Z*, pseudo or null (*max. range)	The SMHPC (AS) code for each postcode. Pseudo codes are included for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = England; W92 (pseudo) = Wales; S92 (pseudo) = Scotland; N92 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; L93 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M83 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available	SMHPC_AS
46	5	SMHPC (Child and Young Persons Mental Health Services)	A0A0A-Z9Z9Z*, pseudo or null (*max. range)	The SMHPC (CYPMHS Tier 4) code for each postcode. Pseudo codes are included for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference. A0A0A-Z9Z9Z = England; W92 (pseudo) = Wales; S92 (pseudo) = Scotland; N92 (pseudo) = Northern Ireland; L93 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M83 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available	SMHPC_CT4

Field no.	Length	Data description	Range of codes/ Entity code	Comments	Field name
47	9	2021 Census Output Area (OA)/ Data Zone (DZ)	E00, W00, S00, N20, pseudo or null	<p>The 2021 Census OAs in England, Wales and Scotland were based on 2011 Census OAs, and they form the building bricks for defining higher level geographies. DZs are included for NI and pseudo codes are included for Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for postcodes with no grid reference.</p> <p>E00000001 – E00190594 = England; W00000001 – W00010697 = Wales; S00135307 – S00181669 = Scotland; N20000001 – N20003780 = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	OA21
48	9	2021 Census Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA)/Super Data Zone (SDZ)	E01, W01, S01, N21, pseudo or null	<p>The 2021 Census LSOA codes in England, Wales and Scotland. SDZs are included for NI and pseudo codes are included for Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for Scottish postcodes, and those with no grid reference.</p> <p>E01000001 – E01035762 = England; W01000003 – W01002040 = Wales; S01013482 – S01020873 = Scotland; N21000001 – N21000850 = Northern Ireland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	LSOA21
49	9	2021 Census Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA)	E02, W02, S02, pseudo or null	<p>The 2021 Census MSOA code for England, Wales and Scotland. Pseudo codes are included for Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The field will otherwise be blank for Scottish and NI postcodes, and those with no grid reference.</p> <p>E02000001 – E02007116 = England; W02000001 – W02000428 = Wales; S02002515 – S02003848 = Scotland; L99999999 (pseudo) = Channel Islands; M99999999 (pseudo) = Isle of Man; null = no information available</p>	MSOA21

Annex B

2011 Census Very Small Population Wards and Their Assigned OA

Very Small Population Ward code	Very Small Population Ward name	Assigned OA
City of London		
E05009298	Cheap	E00000007
E05009299	Coleman Street	E00000019
E05009290	Bassishaw	E00000021
E05009293	Bread Street	E00000024
E05009297	Castle Baynard	E00000024
E05009289	Aldgate	E00000035
E05009291	Billingsgate	E00000035
E05009294	Bridge	E00000035
E05009306	Langbourn	E00000035
E05009295	Broad Street	E00166755
E05009296	Candlewick	E00166755
E05009301	Cornhill	E00166755
E05009307	Lime Street	E00166755
E05009300	Cordwainer	E00166757
E05009303	Dowgate	E00166757
E05009311	Vintry	E00166757
E05009312	Walbrook	E00166757
Isles of Scilly		
E05011090	Bryher	E00096400