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Hyper-local Need Briefing

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Purpose of briefing

This briefing will provide a summary of the Hyper-local Need Index (HLNM) and what it shows us about West Sussex.

Background

What is the Hyper-local Need measure?

The Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI)[1], in collaboration with the Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods (ICON)[2] developed a 'Hyper-local Need Index (HLNM)' which assesses socio-economic challenges across small areas in England.

The HLMM was published in February 2025 and consists of five dimensions, based on the national missions set by the Labour government (see Table 1).

Scores for each of the five dimensions were combined to form an overall measure of hyper local need for each area, with higher scores indicating a higher level of need. The aim of the HLMM is to use these scores identify areas with the highest need to deliver the government missions.

Table 1 Labour government mission objectives

Objective	Aim
Kickstart economic growth	Drive economic growth to the highest sustained level in the G7 (group of the world's seven largest 'advanced' economies), supporting good jobs, unlocking investment and improving living standards.
Make Britain a clean energy superpower	Deliver clean power (electrical energy generated from low carbon sources) by 2030 and accelerating to net zero (no longer adding to the total amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere).
Take back our streets	Support delivery of 13,000 more neighbourhood police and police community support officers by 2029, halving serious violent crime and raising confidence in police and criminal justice system.
Break down barriers to opportunity	Improvements in childcare, schools, further education and lifelong learning.
Build an NHS fit for the future	Ending hospital backlogs to meet the NHS standard of 92% of patients in England waiting no longer than 18 weeks for elective treatment.

Sources: BBC News (2024), House of Commons Library (2025), Institute for Government (2024), The Health Foundation (2025) Prime Minister's Office (2025)

[1] Research and consultancy firm who were commissioned by ICON to develop the Hyper-local Need measure.

[2] Commission examines the role of neighbourhoods in people's lives and aims to address challenges faced by the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods nationally (ICON, 2025).

How was the measure developed?

Which geography was used for this measure?

The HLMN measure was produced at lower super output area level (LSOAs; average population of approximately 1,500 people), to provide a detailed analysis of small areas (ONS, 2022).

LSOAs were chosen due to their similar structure and population size (allowing for comparisons across areas), and stability overtime compared to other geographies (as LSOA boundaries are reviewed and updated based on data collected during the latest census; National Centre for Research Methods, 2022).

Good to know

Despite LSOAs having a similar structure and population size (which allow for comparisons across areas), the physical size of the boundaries can vary considerably. For example, more rural LSOAs are likely to cover larger areas compared to LSOAs in more urban, densely populated areas.

How were the indicators selected?

For each dimension, an evidence review was conducted to explore relevant data for each of the five Labour mission objectives. Indicators were selected based on factors such as their geographical coverage (national) and level of granularity (to ensure comparison across neighbourhoods), latest update, robustness and relevance. Indicators without published data for 2021 LSOAs were then converted to this level of geography through look-up tables.

Indicators were subsequently weighted and standardised to form sub-dimension and dimension scores.

How do we interpret scores?

For each dimension, an LSOA was assigned a score (with higher scores indicative of higher needs) and ranked from the highest (1) to the lowest (33,754) level of need for each dimension. Scores are out of 100, with a higher score indicative of higher levels of need for that government mission.

Each of the five-dimension scores were standardised, weighted (to reflect policy priorities) and combined to form an overall measure of hyper-local need for each area (OCSI, 2025). Small areas were then ranked from highest (1) to lowest (33,754) based on their scores on the overall measure of hyper-local need.

Caveats

This measure of hyper local need is a ‘proof of concept’ created exclusively from open data sources with indicators selected based on their relevance to the five Labour mission objectives (see Table 1). Therefore, this measure should not be directly compared against other multi-dimensional measures such as the government’s Indices of Deprivation, which measures relative deprivation (how deprived one area is compared to another) in England (OCSI, 2025).

Findings for West Sussex

This briefing will provide a summary of the overall measure of hyper-local need and a breakdown of each dimension, sub-dimension, selected indicators, and caveats associated with the data sources used.

Scores for small areas in England were split into 5 equal groups (quintiles), which allow for comparisons between areas (DHSC, 2024). Quintile 1 represents the highest level of need and Quintile 5 represents the lowest level of need.

The dataset was then filtered for small areas (LSOAs) within West Sussex. Small areas shown in dark blue represent areas of West Sussex that fall among the 20% of areas in England with the highest level of need.

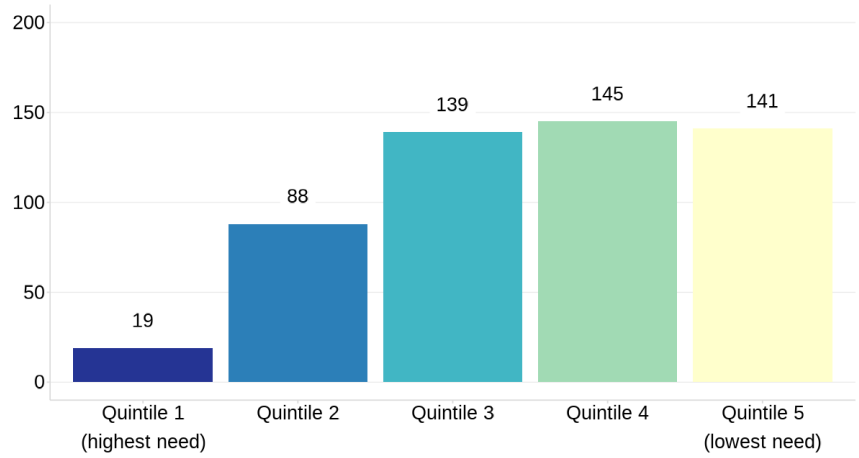
Alongside the findings reported below, an interactive map is also available.

Overall measure of Hyper-local Need

In West Sussex, 19 LSOAs (3.6%) fell into Quintile 1, which represents the 20% of areas in England with the greater barriers to delivering progress on the five government missions.

Across West Sussex, most small areas in this quintile were located within Arun (*n* = 17), with 1 LSOA in Crawley and 1 in Worthing.

Figure 2 Distribution of LSOAs in West Sussex per quintile; overall measure of hyper-local need



Source: ICON and OCSI (2024) Hyper-local Need measure

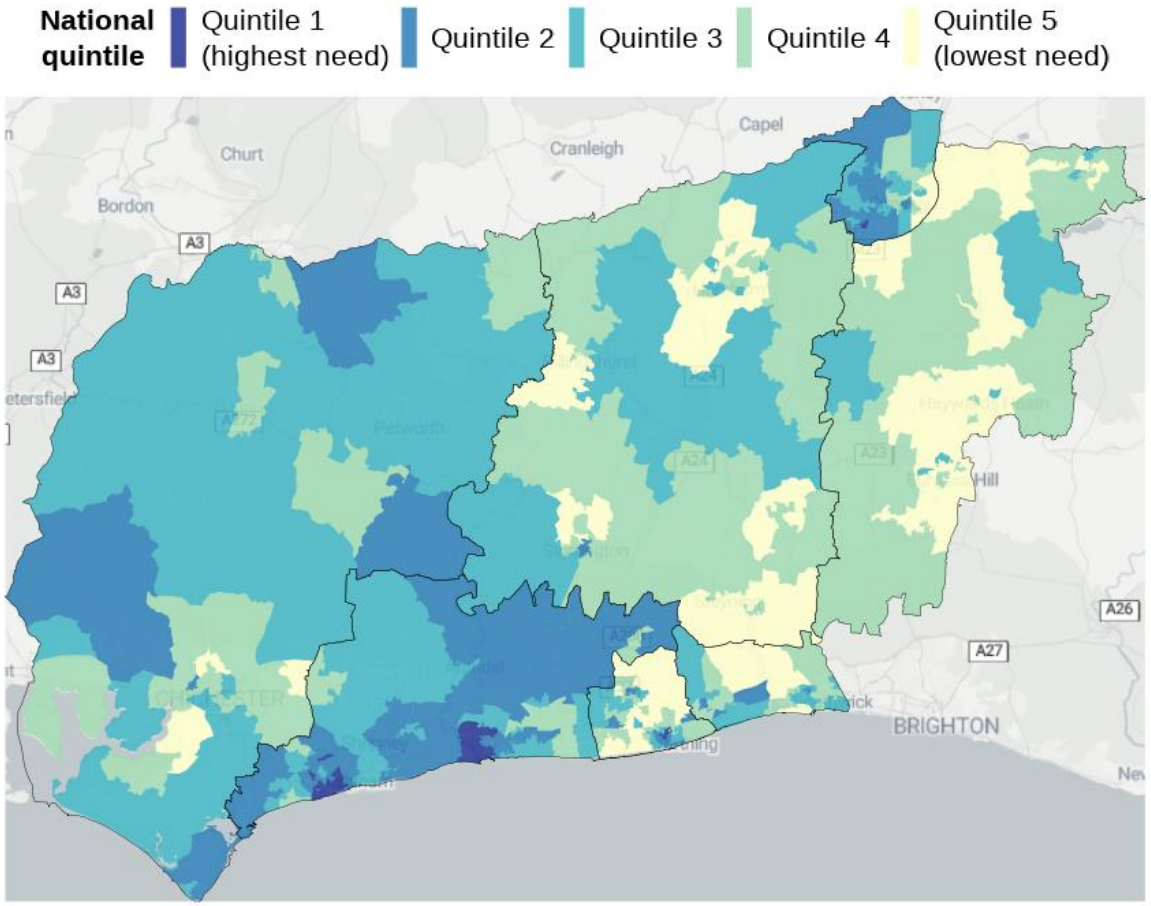
The overall hyper-local need measure score across LSOAs in West Sussex is presented in figure 3.

Identifying areas of need

This overall measure of hyper local need could indicate that particular small areas in West Sussex, predominantly within Arun, may face greater challenges in delivering the government's new missions overall. This will take into account the combined impact of tackling economic growth, ensuring accessibility to clean energy, lowering crime, increasing education opportunities and reducing health pressures on the NHS.

Figure 3: Overall hyper-local need score across small areas within West Sussex (2021 Lower Super Output Areas); 2025

Notes. Scores for overall level of hyper-local needs were split into five groups (or quintiles) nationally. Small areas shown in dark blue represent areas of West Sussex that fall among the 20% of areas in England with the highest level of hyper-local need.



Kickstarting economic growth

This dimension focuses on sustainable economic growth and productivity and consists of three sub-dimensions: employment and worklessness in the loc al economy, quality of jobs and economic productivity and local infrastructure.

What indicators are included?

Employment and worklessness

The proportion of people receiving Universal Credit who are not working but seeking employment, planning or preparing for work in the future or not expected to work at present. Alongside data on Universal Credit, additional indicators provide data on the proportion of people claiming incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance, income support, carers allowance and job seekers allowance.

Quality of jobs

The number of jobs per working age population, measuring economic activity through Gross Value Added (GVA) per head and percentage change of GVA from 2012-22, availability of jobs in 'high growth' industries (e.g., advanced manufacturing and defence) and proportion of people in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations based on the UK Census. Household income and qualification levels were also included as indicators.

Caveats

The 'household income' indicator measures income from tax contributions and benefits data from the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) from 2015/16. Despite this being over a decade old, which was acknowledged in the accompanying technical report, this data was considered more reliable than using modelled estimates from smaller surveys.

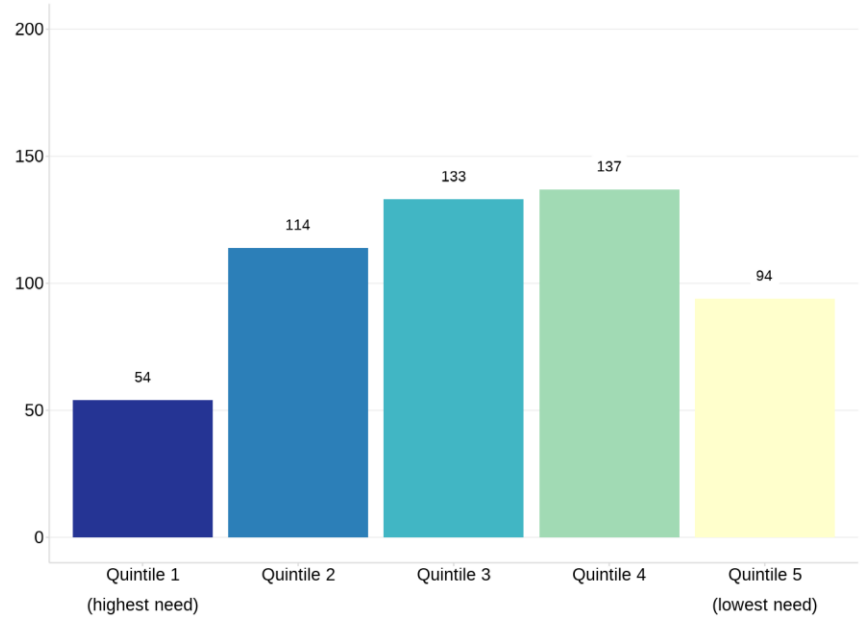
Infrastructure

Broadband download speed, access to digital infrastructure via the Digital Propensity Index (2021)' score, which measures how confident households are at using government online resources e.g., completing UK Census online (ONS, 2023), and number of jobs accessible by car and public transport within 15, 30, 60 and 90 minutes. Further information on the Digital Propensity Index is provided in Appendix A.

Findings

In West Sussex, 54 LSOAs (10.2%) fell into Quintile 1, which represents the highest level of need for sustainable economic growth and productivity nationally. Most small areas within this quintile were in Arun (n = 40),10 in Chichester and 1 each in Adur, Crawley, Horsham and Worthing.

Figure 4 Distribution of LSOAs in West Sussex per quintile; kickstart economic growth dimension



Source: ICON (2024) Hyper-local Need measure

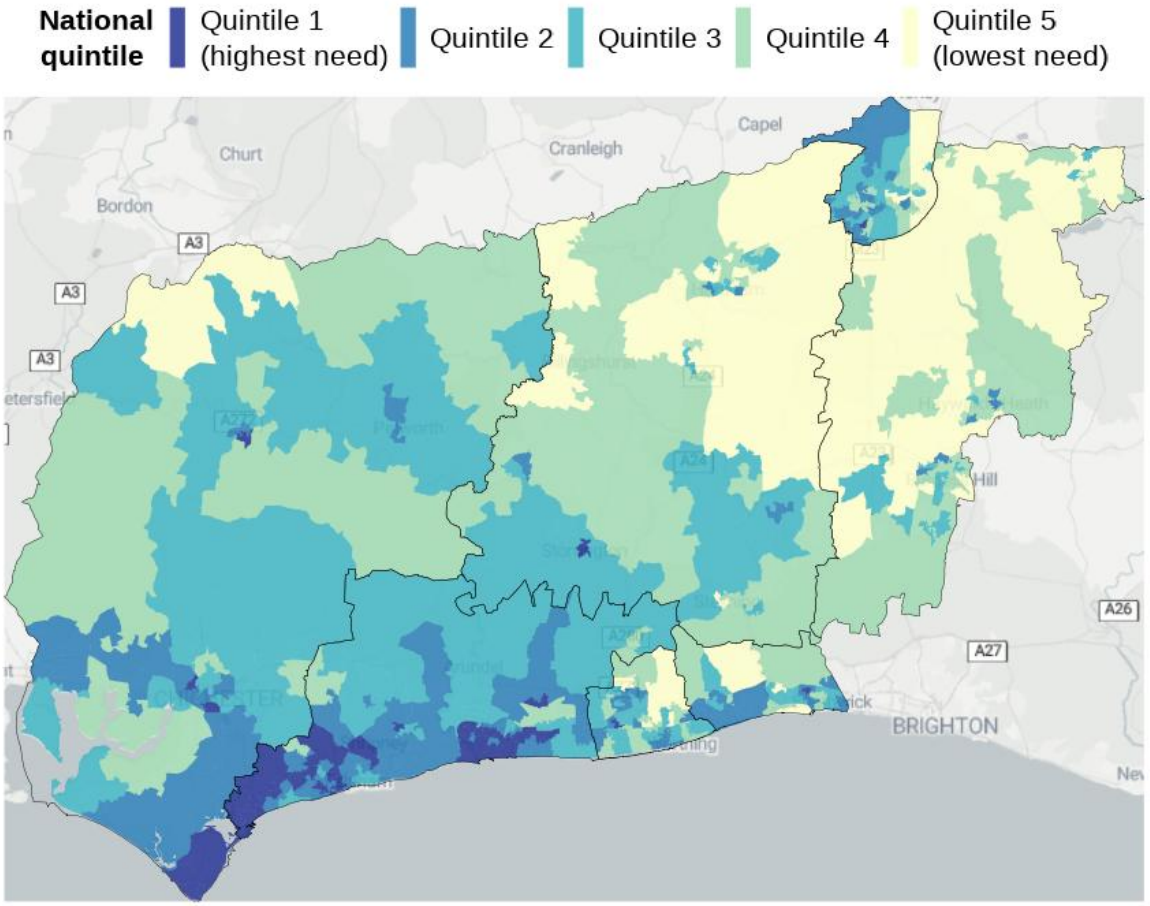
Scores for the kickstart economic growth dimension are plotted for LSOAs in West Sussex in Figure 5. Small areas shown in dark blue are among the 20% of areas with the highest need for sustainable economic growth and productivity nationally.

Identifying areas of need

This could indicate that economic growth is a greater challenge for areas predominantly within Arun and Chichester. These areas may need greater support around kickstarting economic growth e.g., increasing availability and accessibility of jobs and educational opportunities.

Figure 5: Kickstart economic growth dimension scores across small areas within West Sussex (2021 Lower Super Output Areas); 2025

Notes. Scores for economic needs were split into five groups (or quintiles) nationally. Small areas shown in dark blue represent areas of West Sussex that fall among the 20% of areas in England with the highest level of economic need.



Make Britain a clean energy superpower

This dimension measures progress towards meeting emissions reduction targets and identifies areas in need of energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy solutions.

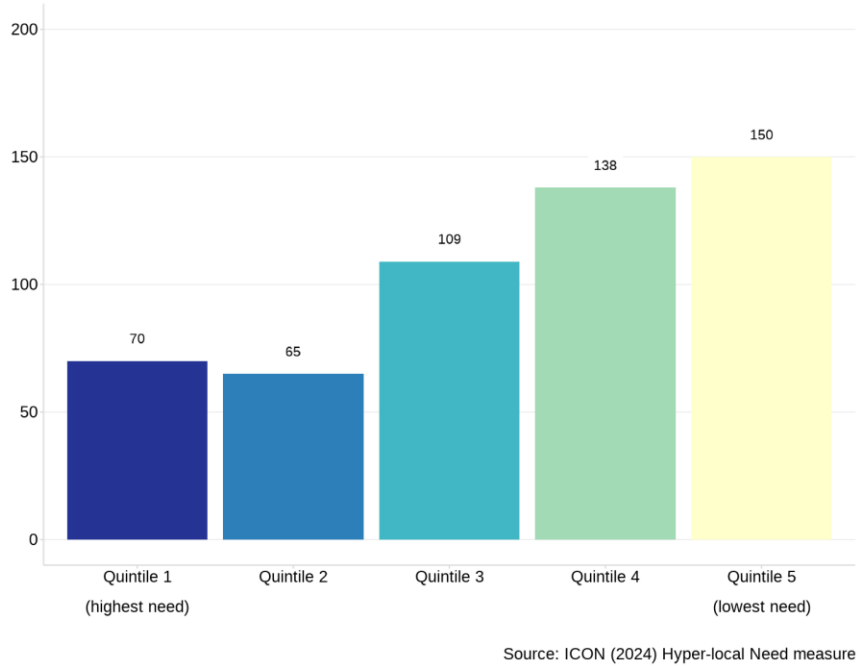
What data is included within this dimension?

Total carbon footprint per person, based on a place-based carbon calculator, number of households in fuel poverty and dwellings with low energy efficiency, as indicated by an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) in the F-G rating band. Further information on EPC certificates and the recent changes to ratings is provided in Appendix A.

Findings

This dimension had the highest number of small areas within West Sussex which fell into Quintile 1. 70 LSOAs in West Sussex (13.2%) fell into Quintile 1, which represents the highest level of need for affordable, clean and secure energy nationally.

Figure 6 Distribution of LSOAs in West Sussex per quintile; clean energy superpower dimension



Source: ICON (2024) Hyper-local Need measure

Scores for the clean energy superpower dimension are plotted for LSOAs in West Sussex in Figure 6. Small areas shown in dark blue are among the 20% of areas with the highest need for affordable, clean and secure energy nationally.

Good to know

When interpreting Figure 7, it is important to remember that the physical size of LSOAs can vary considerably. For example, more rural LSOAs are likely to cover larger areas compared to LSOAs in more urban, densely populated areas.

26 out of the 70 small areas (37.1%) were in Chichester, and 24 (34.3%) were in Horsham.

Scores for the clean energy superpower dimension range from 0 to 100 with a higher score indicating a greater level of need for this dimension. Four LSOAs in Chichester and one LSOA in Horsham had a dimension score of over 90 out of 100.

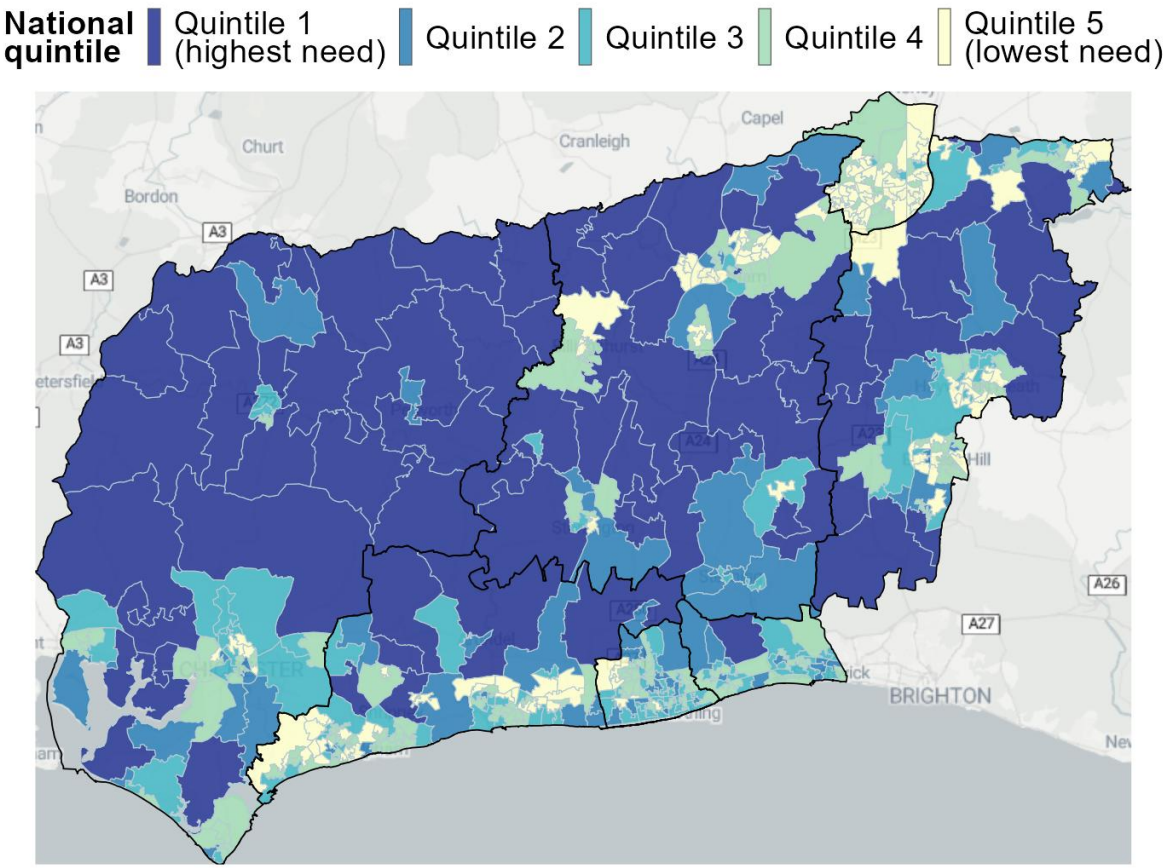
The remainder of LSOAs within quintile 1 were in Mid Sussex (13), Arun (6) and Adur (1). Crawley and Worthing did not have any LSOAs in quintile 1 for this dimension.

Identifying areas of need

This could indicate that areas, particularly within Chichester and Horsham, may need greater support in achieving this mission objective, with a particular focus around developing clean energy, including improving energy efficiency in homes, tackling fuel poverty and implementing measures to support affordable warmth.

Figure 7: Make Britain a clean energy superpower dimension scores across small areas within West Sussex (2021 Lower Super Output Areas); 2025

Notes. Scores for the clean energy superpower dimension were split into five groups (or quintiles) nationally. Small areas shown in dark blue represent areas of West Sussex that fall among the 20% of areas in England with the highest level of need for this dimension. LSOA size can vary considerably e.g., more rural LSOAs are likely to cover larger areas compared to LSOAs in more urban, densely populated areas.



Take back our streets

This dimension focuses on the level of crime deprivation, which considers the risk of personal and material victimisation from violence, burglary, theft and criminal damage.

What data is included within this dimension?

This data is based on the Indices of Deprivation (IoD) 2019 crime domain which aims to measure crime rates for violence, burglary, theft and criminal damage across small areas (Penney, 2019).

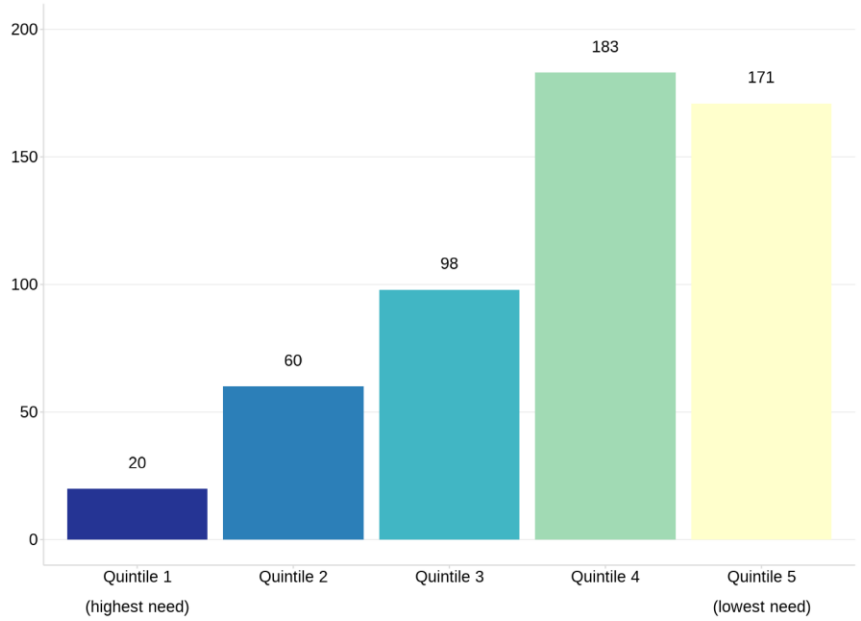
Caveats

The most recent IoD was published in 2019 with the next update due later this year. The indicators used in the crime domain were based on recoded crime data for 2016/17 and 2017/18 from the National Police Chiefs Council and Home Office, which is nearly a decade old (McLennan, et al., 2019).

Findings

In West Sussex, 20 LSOAs (3.8%) fell into Quintile 1, which represents the highest level of need for safer communities and crime reduction nationally.

Figure 8 Distribution of LSOAs in West Sussex per quintile; make Britain a clean energy superpower dimension



Source: ICON (2024) Hyper-local Need measure

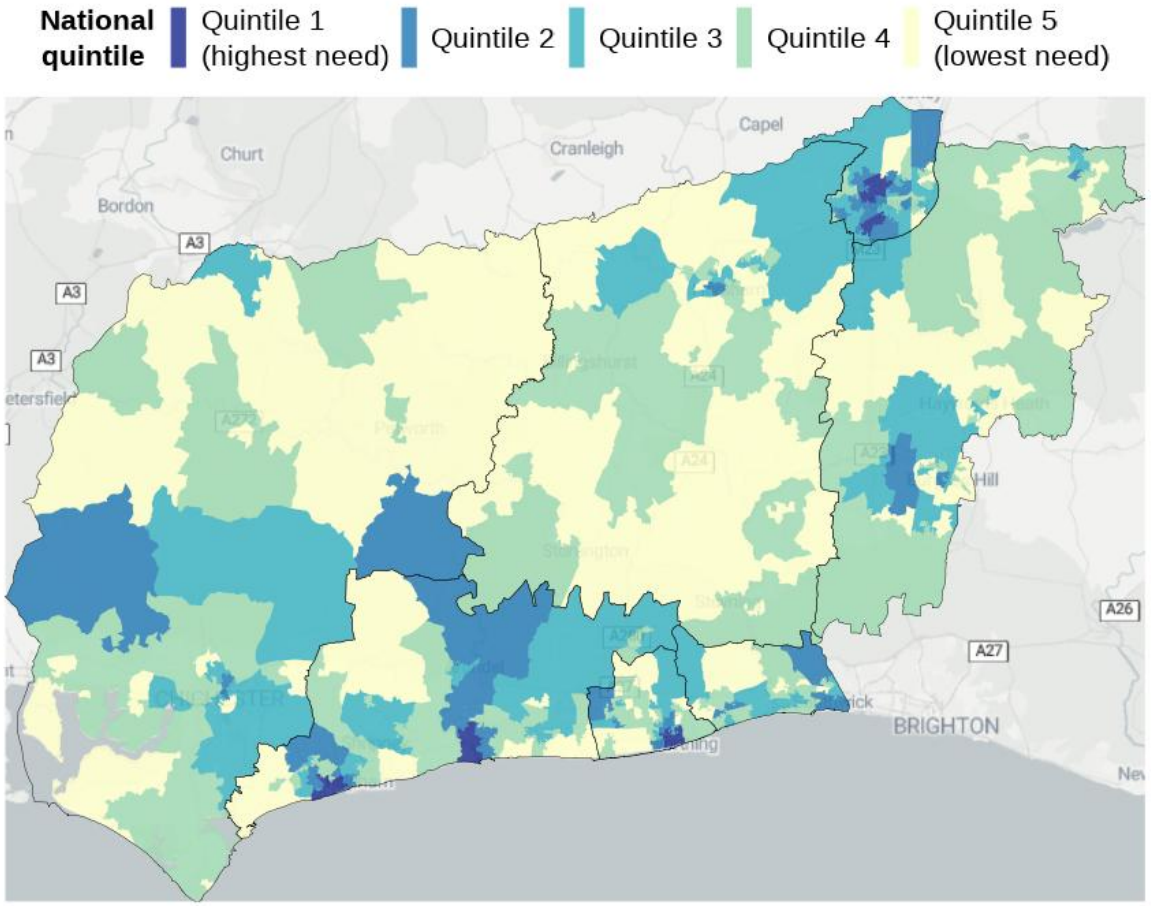
Scores for the take back our streets dimension are plotted for LSOAs in West Sussex in Figure 8. Small areas shown in dark blue are among the 20% of areas with the highest need for safer communities and crime reduction nationally. Most small areas within this quintile were in Arun (*n* = 9). The remainder of LSOAs within quintile were in Crawley (7) and Worthing (1).

Adur, Chichester, Horsham, Mid Sussex did not have any LSOAs in quintile 1 for this dimension.

This could indicate that areas within Arun and Crawley have higher levels of crime deprivation compared to other areas within West Sussex.

Figure 9: Take back our streets dimension scores across small areas within West Sussex (2021 Lower Super Output Areas); 2025

Notes. Scores for the take back our streets dimension were split into five groups (or quintiles) nationally. Small areas shown in dark blue represent areas of West Sussex that fall among the 20% of areas in England with the highest level of need for this dimension.



Break down barriers to opportunity

This dimension focuses on access to early years learning, educational opportunities and quality of education settings. This dimension consists of two sub-dimensions: child education and education opportunities.

What indicators are included?

Child education

Accessibility of childcare and early education (the ratio of childcare places to number of children aged 7 and under), proportion of children aged 0–19-year-olds living in relative low income before housing costs and measure of educational attainment within a local area, based on the IoD 2019 Children and Young People sub-domain.

Caveats

The most recent IoD was published in 2019 with the next update due later this year. The indicators used in the children and Young People sub-domain were based on data from the academic years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17, nearly a decade old (McLennan, et al., 2019).

Education opportunities

Percentage of Key Stage 2 pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, percentage of Key Stage 4 pupils achieving grades 5 or above in England and maths GCSEs, how much a student has progressed between the end of primary school and the end of secondary school (referred to as 'progress 8 scores') and the proportion of schools considered to be "Good" or "Outstanding" based on their most recent Ofsted inspection.

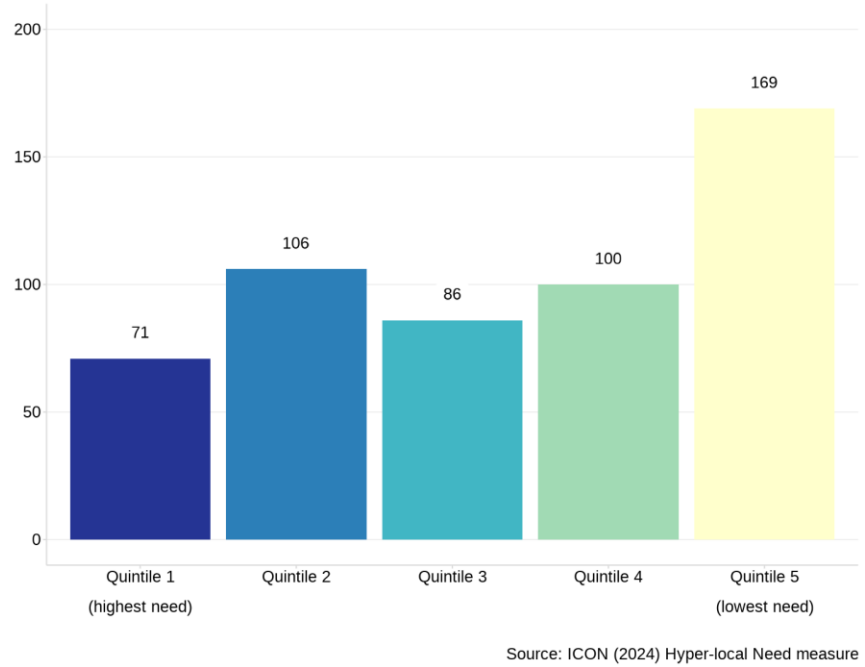
Caveats

Progress 8 scores provide a summary of the average progress or improvement in educational attainment at the end of secondary school, controlling for attainment at the end of primary school (Burgess & Thomson, 2020; Prior et al., 2021). However, in their review of Progress 8, Prior et al (2021) acknowledged that the measure could introduce bias due to the lack of sufficient context for variation in pupil backgrounds across schools e.g., socio-economic backgrounds, free school meal eligibility etc.

Findings

In West Sussex, 71 LSOAs (13.3%) fell into Quintile 1, which represents the highest level of need for better opportunities in education and skills nationally.

Figure 10 Distribution of LSOAs in West Sussex per quintile; break down barriers to opportunity dimension



Scores for the break down barriers to opportunity dimension are plotted for LSOAs in West Sussex in Figure 10. Small areas shown in dark blue are among the 20% of areas with the highest need for better opportunities in education and skills nationally. Most small areas within this quintile were in Arun (*n* = 39) and Crawley (32).

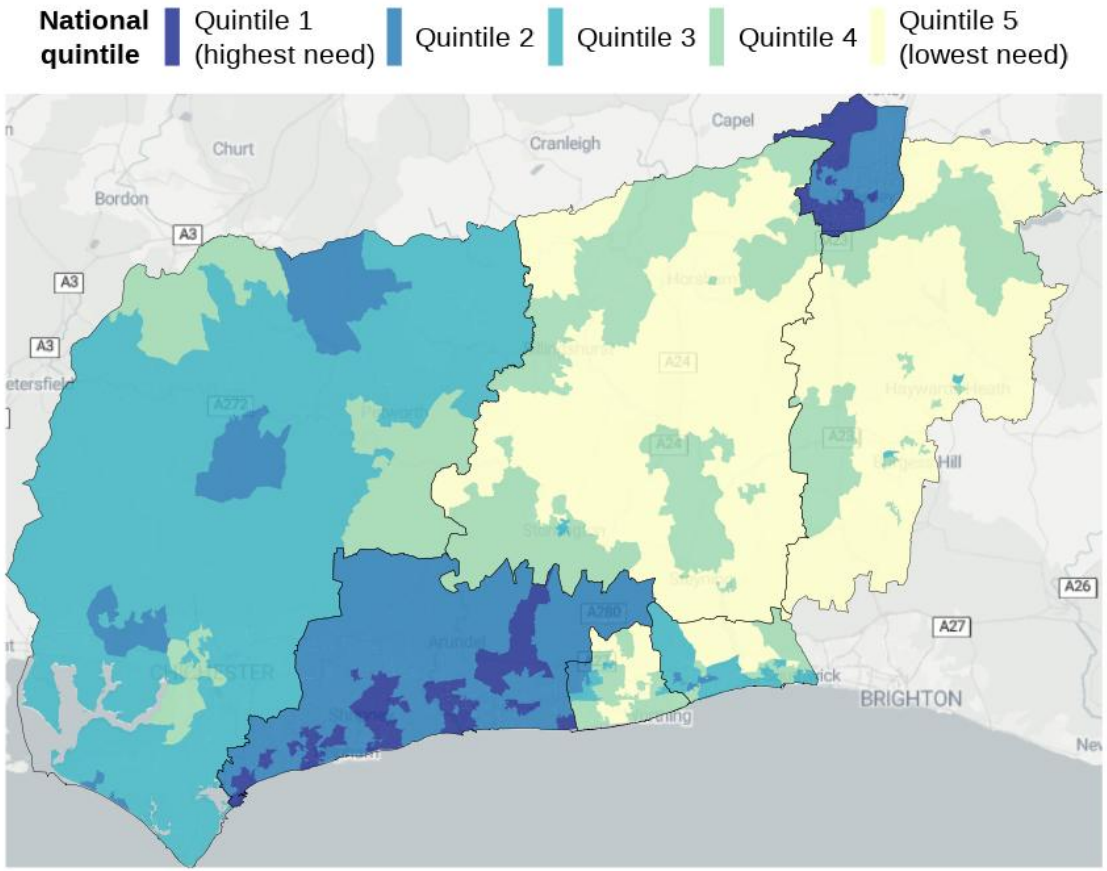
Adur, Chichester, Horsham, Mid Sussex and Worthing did not have any LSOAs in quintile 1 for this dimension.

Identifying areas of need

This could indicate that areas within Adur and Crawley may be facing barriers relating to access to early years learning, educational opportunities and quality of education settings.

Figure 11: Break down barriers to opportunity dimension scores across small areas within West Sussex (2021 Lower Super Output Areas); 2025

Notes. Scores for the break down barriers to opportunity dimension were split into five groups (or quintiles) nationally. Small areas shown in dark blue represent areas of West Sussex that fall among the 20% of areas in England with the highest level of need for this dimension.



NHS fit for future

This dimension focuses on disability and social care needs, supported required to help people live longer, alongside the accessibility and availability of key health services. This dimension consists of four sub-dimensions: disability and social care, general health, access and mortality.

Disability and social care

Proportion of people who are disabled and receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA), working aged people receiving Personal Independence Payment (PIP), residents with a limiting long-term illness and people aged 65+ who have social care needs and receiving Attendance Allowance (AA).

General health

Proportion of people who reported their health as bad or very bad in the 2021 Census.

Caveats

The 2021 Census provided a snapshot of the UK population as of the 21st March 2021 (Barton, 2022), which was during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the potential impact of contextual factors such as the pandemic on people's perceptions of their general health and subsequent responses (GMCA Research Team, 2023).

Access

Accessibility of key health services is measured by travel times to nearest GPs by public transport or walking, provided by the Department for Transport. The availability of GP appointments per 1,000 patients per practice is measured by data from NHS England and calculated by the number of patients registered at the practice by number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) GPs.

Caveats

NHS England (n.d.) have acknowledged potential outliers in the number of GPs per 1,000 patients per practice data due to factors such as organisational changes and GPs working collaboratively across multiple practices. In addition, there is no 'recommended' number of GPs per 1,000 patients per practice, which makes it difficult to draw comparisons across areas.

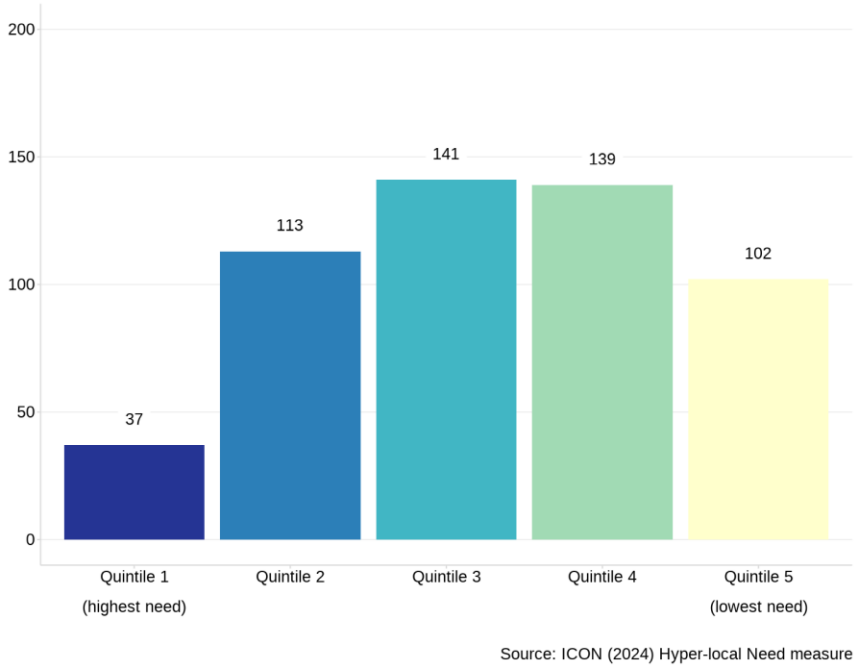
Mortality

Life expectancy at birth by gender and age standardised estimates of deaths from all causes, which allow comparisons amongst populations.

Findings

In West Sussex, 37 LSOAs (7%) fell into Quintile 1, which represents the highest level of need for improved healthcare access and outcomes nationally.

Figure 12 Distribution of LSOAs in West Sussex per quintile; NHS fit for future dimension



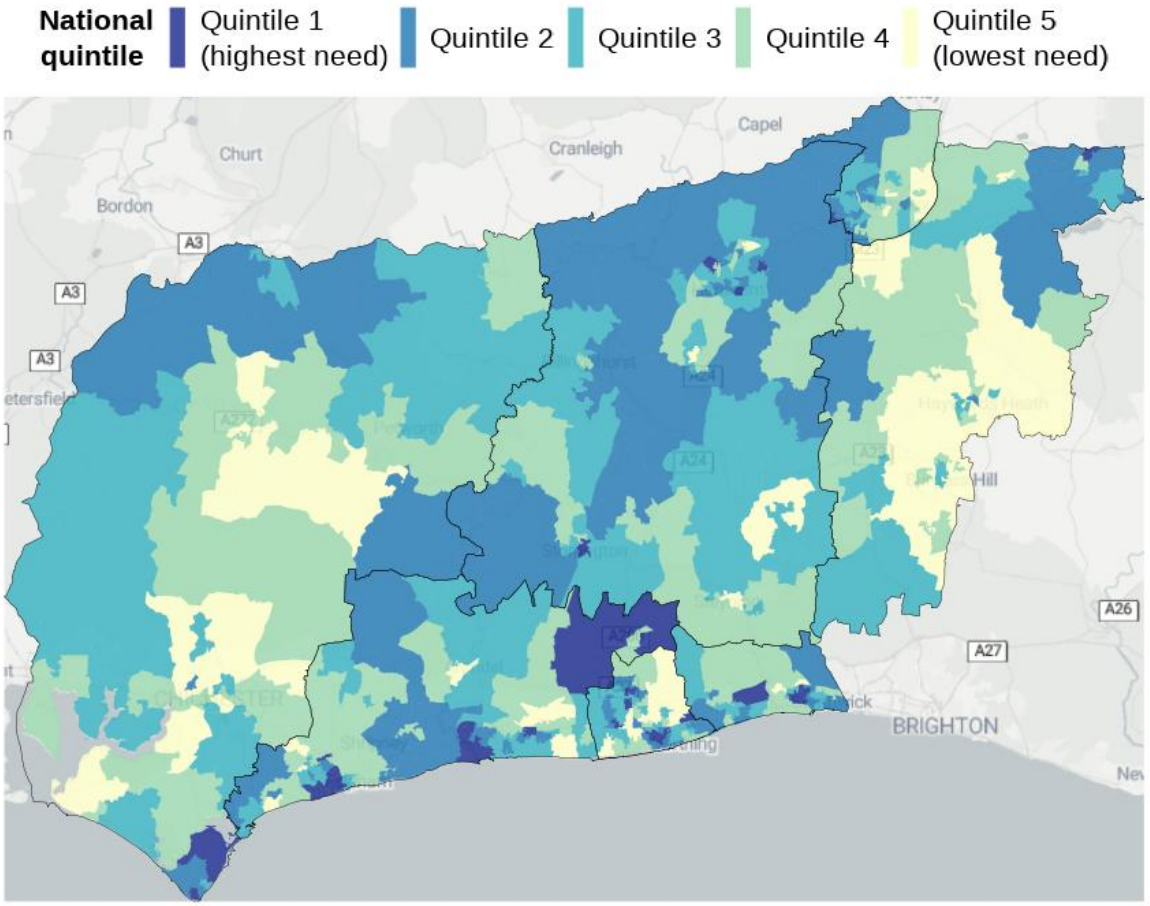
Scores for the ‘NHS fit for the future’ are plotted for LSOAs in West Sussex in Figure 12. Small areas shown in dark blue are among the 20% of areas with the highest need for improved healthcare access and outcomes nationally. There was variation in the number of LSOAs included within quintile 1 across the county. The majority featured in Arun (*n* = 17).

Identifying areas of need

This could indicate that areas within Arun could have higher disability and social care needs, alongside lack of access to supporting services, which could impact the delivery of this mission objective.

Figure 13: Build an NHS fit for the future dimension scores across small areas within West Sussex (2021 Lower Super Output Areas); 2025

Notes. Scores for the build an NHS fit for the future dimension were split into five groups (or quintiles) nationally. Small areas shown in dark blue represent areas of West Sussex that fall among the 20% of areas in England with the highest level of need for this dimension.



Discussion

The aim of this briefing was to provide a summary of the Hyper-local Need Index (HLNM), the dimensions included in this measure which range from economic growth to access to educational opportunities, and what it shows us about West Sussex.

The HLMN provides neighbourhood-level insights which allow local authorities to identify areas which face barriers or require support to achieve the government missions. For example, identifying areas in Arun and Crawley which may face higher disability and social care needs, alongside lack of access to supporting services.

Despite the benefits of this measure (and subsequent analysis for West Sussex), there are further avenues which could be explored. For example, this briefing does not consider potential differences amongst coastal vs non-coastal areas or urban vs rural areas across the county. As West Sussex has unique characteristics such as a diverse coastline and larger rural areas compared to other local authorities, further analysis would be recommended.

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Appendix A

Additional contextual information

Kickstarting economic growth

The Digital Propensity Index was calculated from the Census 2021, the first 'digital-first' Census which encouraged participants to respond online rather than paper if they could do so (Fraser, 2021). This index is a modelled prediction which focuses on the proportion of households who completed the Census online, rather than their knowledge and skills in relation to the use of digital technology (Suffolk County Council Public Health & Communities, 2024). In addition, digital inclusion is an area of priority for the Labour government - in February 2025, the Secretary of State for Department for Science, Innovation and Technology presented a 'Digital Inclusion Action Plan', which documents the Government's approach to tackling digital exclusion. This may lead to new measures of digital inclusion, building from this index, ahead of the next Census in 2031.

Make Britain a clean energy superpower

There are data quality issues associated with the accuracy and consistency of EPC data (Jenkins et al., 2017), which rates the energy performance of homes from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient), based on their Standard Assessment Procedure Score (SAP). The SAP score is calculated from information such as the buildings wall type and insulation (Few, et al., 2023).

As of December 2024, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) have proposed to reform the 'Energy Performance of Buildings' regime, which includes how EPCs are conducted (National Housing Federation, 2025). This would include raising the minimum EPC requirement for rental properties and reducing the validity period of certificates (GOV.UK, 2025), with the aim of increasing trust in the accuracy and reliability of data (GOV.UK, 2024).