



**Understanding
Herefordshire**
People and places

South and West Herefordshire Neighbourhood Profile Summary

Herefordshire Council Evidence and Insight Team
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DRAFT

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1. Introduction

About the neighbourhood profiles

This profile aims to provide key insights into those living under the South and West Herefordshire Primary Care Network (PCN) area. By highlighting key differences between localities and neighbourhoods within the area on a variety of topics such as population, health and wellbeing, mortality and the wider determinants of health, areas with high concentrations of deprivation and poorer outcomes can be identified. This can then inform effective commissioning and place-based, targeted planning.

A rate that is relatively high or low in a local context may not have the same interpretation when compared elsewhere in the country. To remain focused on highlighting key differences across the PCN area, a statement about every dataset analysed is not provided.

Links to data sources used to create this neighbourhood profile are located throughout the document and key sources are provided in the appendix. For a full list of sources that have informed these key findings and further explanatory notes, please see the glossary of information.

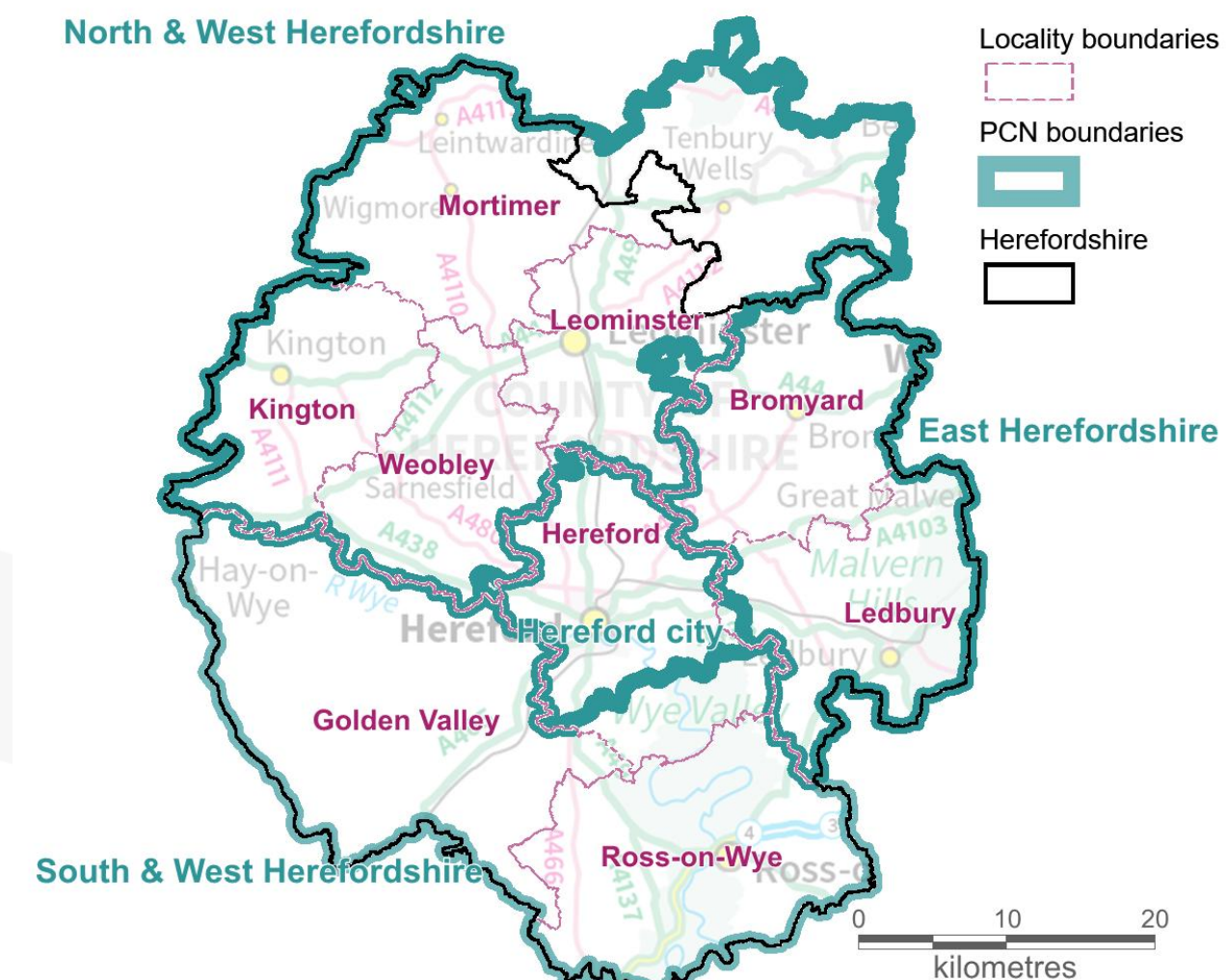
How have we defined a neighbourhood?

‘Neighbourhoods’ can be defined in different ways i.e. PCN, a Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) or ward. In this profile, a ‘neighbourhood’ refers to localities within a PCN. This includes capturing data on the residents who live in each PCN area and the patients who are registered with the General Practitioners (GPs) in the PCN.

Both are captured because the data between the two can differ. For example, most health statistics are based on patients who are registered with a GP surgery in the county, which may differ or not relate to their ‘usual residence’, where people are counted at their family home.

The boundaries used in this neighbourhood profile may differ to those used elsewhere. The South and West PCN boundary is represented below, complete with the localities situated within this area.

Figure 1: Boundary map of Herefordshire showing PCN and locality boundaries



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2. South and West Herefordshire PCN Area: overview

The South and West Herefordshire PCN area encompasses the two distinct localities of Ross (town and rural) and the rural locality of Golden Valley. As a result, the area combines one of Herefordshire's best-connected locations with some of its least accessible communities.

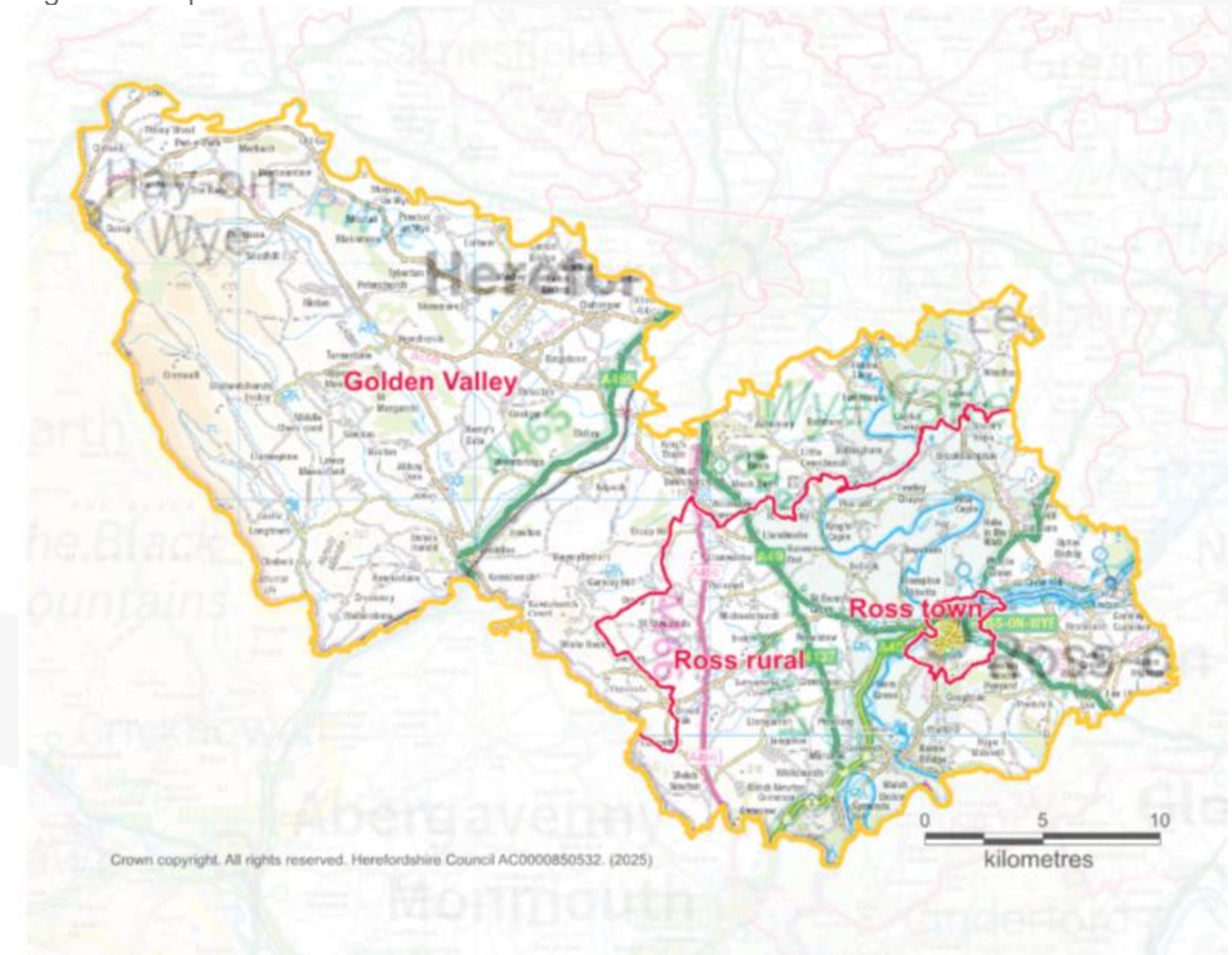
Six GP practices make up the South and West Herefordshire PCN: Alton Street Surgery, Fownhope Medical Centre, Golden Valley Practice, Much Birch Surgery, Pendeen Surgery and The Surgery Kingstone.

There were 41,700 residents in 2024 and a total of 43,900 patients were registered across the six GP practices as of April 2025, although not all will live in the area (and some residents will be registered with other GPs). The PCN area is home to 21% of the county's population.

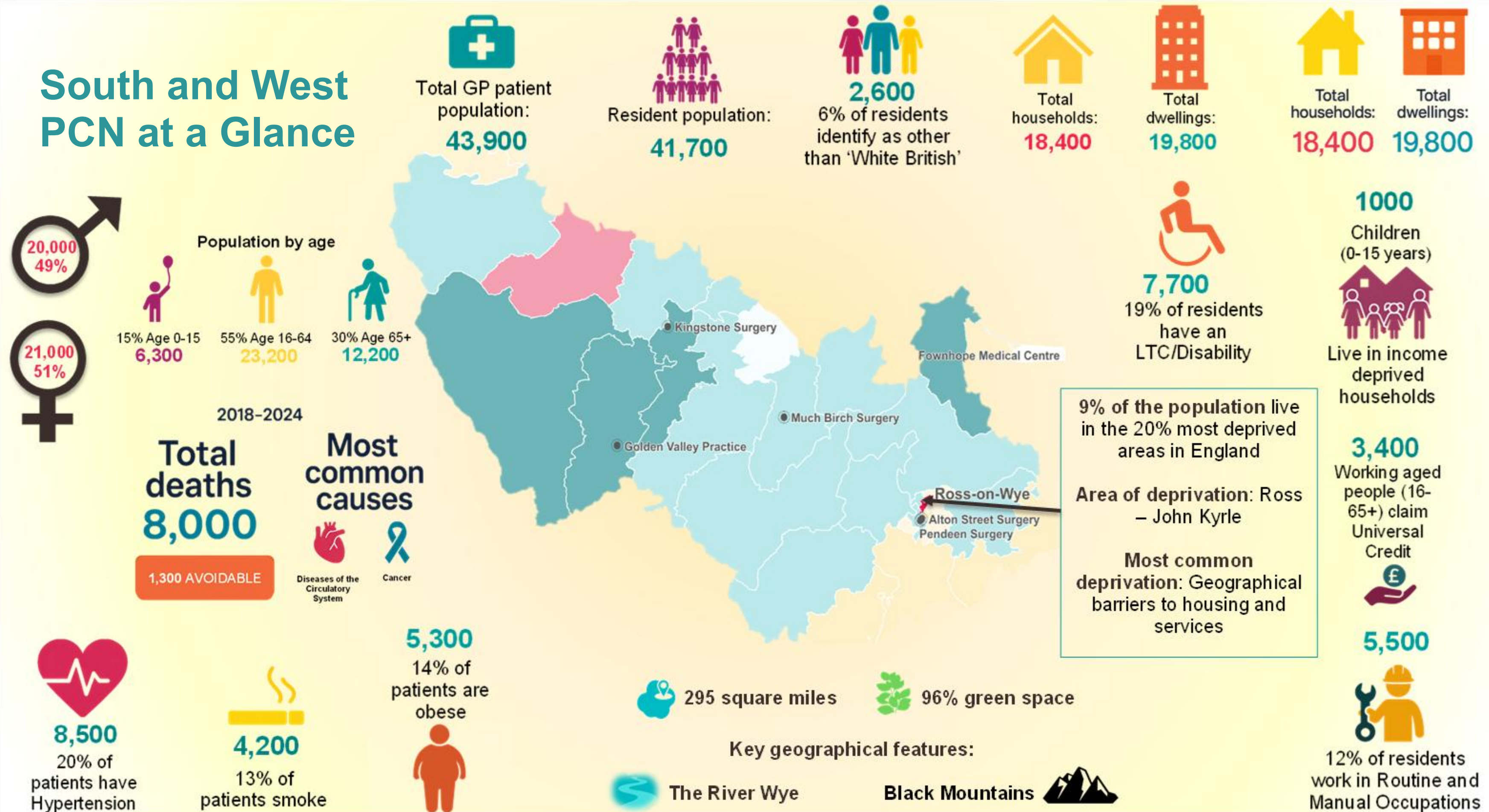
With 11,400 residents, Ross-on-Wye is Herefordshire's second largest market town, and local services are concentrated here. Located at the intersection of the M50 and A40, it is the only part of Herefordshire with direct access to the motorway network and acts as a key service hub for much of the surrounding area.

South and West Herefordshire's landscape is characterised by high moorlands in the Black Mountains to the west, which move into intensively farmed land and pastures as you travel south and east into the Golden Valley locality. Unlike Ross-on-Wye and its surrounding hinterland, Golden Valley is physically distinct and characterised by dispersed villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings linked primarily by a network of minor roads. Moving further East towards Ross-on-Wye, the landscape changes to narrow and meandering floodplains and undulating farmlands, stopping at the Forest of Dean, south of Ross-on-Wye, where the South and West Herefordshire Boundary ends. South and West contains one of Herefordshire's two areas of outstanding natural beauty which much of the Ross-on-Wye locality falls within. The river Wye also runs through the northern boundary of the Golden Valley locality, before leaving the county south of Ross-on-Wye town. The River Wye is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Figure 2: Map of South and West Herefordshire and the localities within it



South and West PCN at a Glance



Understanding South and West: insights for decision-makers

The South & West neighbourhood profile contains a wide range of information on the area's population, health and wellbeing, wider determinants of health and community characteristics. The insights below summarise the most important themes emerging from the profile. They are intended to help readers understand the story of the area and identify the factors most likely to influence future population wellbeing and demand for services.

1. One area, three realities: a well-connected market town, its rural hinterland and some of the county's most remote places

Home to 43,200 residents in 2024, South and West Herefordshire is the most geographically diverse of the county's four PCN areas. It contains one of the best-connected places and some of its least accessible communities. More than two-thirds of residents (68%) live in sparsely populated rural areas.

Sitting at the intersection of the M50 and A40, Ross-on-Wye is the only part of Herefordshire with direct access to the motorway network. As the county's second largest market town (11,400 residents), it is the principal service hub for much of the area, particularly its rural hinterland.

In contrast, and not directly connected to Ross by an A road, the Golden Valley locality is physically distinct. Extending some 20-25 miles westwards to the Black Mountains on the Welsh border, it is characterised by dispersed villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings reliant on a network of minor roads.

These differences in geography and connectivity are a defining feature of the area and help shape residents' experiences of everyday life.

2. A growing population with changing need

South & West experienced the fastest population growth of any Herefordshire PCN over the last decade, with much of this associated with housing development in and around Ross-on-Wye. Future growth is expected to continue, with almost a third of the county's outstanding housing commitments located within the area. Notably, around half of these future commitments are within the Golden Valley locality.

At the same time, the area's population profile has become older, with residents aged 65 and over accounting for most of the increase over the last decade. Together, these trends are likely to influence future demand for housing, health and care services.

3. Different forms of inequality: urban deprivation in Ross contrasts with access barriers for rural communities

Ross-on-Wye contains the area's most concentrated pockets of socioeconomic deprivation, particularly Ross—John Kyrle, where poorer outcomes are seen across health, employment, education, skills and crime.

In contrast, many of the more dispersed rural communities experience some of the highest levels of deprivation in Herefordshire relating to access to housing and services.

A different pattern is seen in larger villages such as Kingstone and Clehonger, which have younger population profiles and higher levels of need among children and families than are typically seen elsewhere in the PCN.

Together, these contrasting patterns highlight that need presents in different ways across South & West and is not always captured by overall measures of deprivation.

4. Housing stands out as a significant challenge

Despite high levels of home ownership, South & West has some of the poorest housing condition indicators in Herefordshire. The area has the county's highest levels of overall housing hazards, with excess cold representing a particular concern, alongside joint-highest levels of falls hazards.

Housing challenges affect both urban and rural communities. However, lower access to mains gas, greater reliance on oil heating, higher levels of fuel poverty and relatively high deprivation related to indoor living environments are particularly evident in some rural parts of the area, especially Golden Valley.

5. Good overall health outcomes and variations in health need

South & West performs well across a range of health indicators, with lower smoking prevalence, lower obesity levels and lower rates of avoidable mortality than Herefordshire overall. Life expectancy is generally comparable with, or better than, county averages.

However, these positive outcomes are not experienced equally across the area. Ross—John Kyrle – South & West's most deprived area - experiences some of the greatest health inequalities, with higher rates of emergency hospital admissions and disability-related benefit claims. It is the only area in South & West ranked amongst the 20% most deprived nationally for health and disability.

Long-term conditions are common amongst PCN patients and diagnosed prevalence of several important conditions, including diabetes, hypertension and heart failure, has increased in recent years. Together with demographic change, this is likely to influence future demand for health and care services.

6. Strong social connections and environmental assets are important local strengths

South & West benefits from strong social connections and community cohesion. Overall satisfaction with the area as a place to live is high. Residents are significantly more likely than the county overall to volunteer, have regular contact with family, friends and neighbours, feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together and to feel safe in their local area.

These social strengths sit alongside an exceptional natural environment, including the Wye Valley National Landscape and Black Mountains, which are defining features of the area. However, many of these environmental assets face increasing pressures from climate change and ecological decline, particularly within the River Wye catchment.

At the same time, some residents experience digital exclusion. Parts of the Golden Valley are the most at risk in Herefordshire in relation to broadband connectivity. In contrast, higher risks in parts of Ross town are associated more closely with demographic and socioeconomic factors.

Areas of deprivation

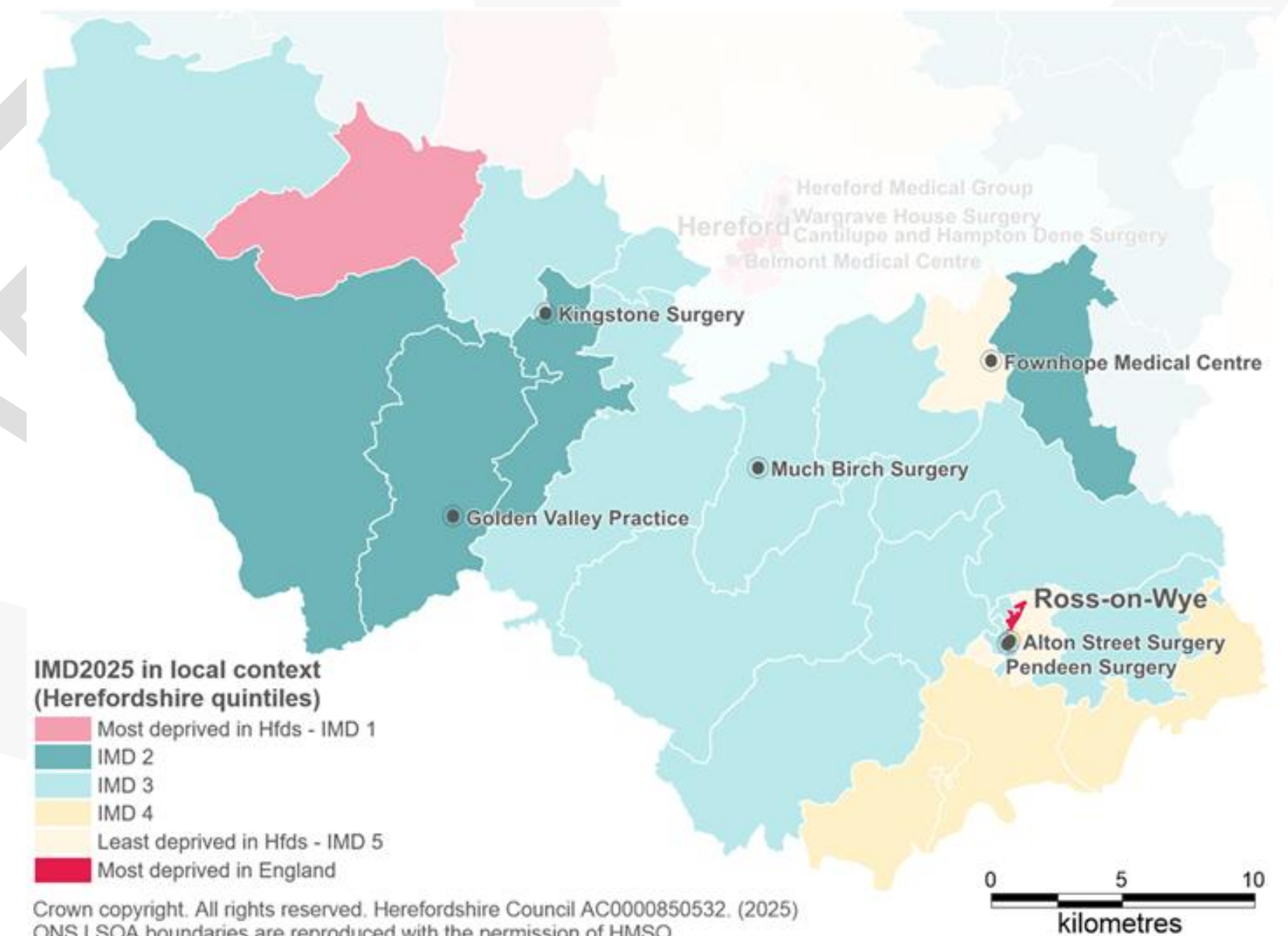
Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in health outcomes caused by the differing conditions in which people grow, live, work and age. One important driver is living in areas of deprivation. The Indices of Deprivation measure small areas across seven domains - income, employment, education, health, crime, housing and services, and the living environment - to create the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Overall, Herefordshire experiences average levels of multiple deprivation, but pockets persist, mainly in the city and market towns. This includes Ross - John Kyrle which falls within the 20% most deprived in England in the [2025 IMD](#) and within the 10% most deprived locally, sitting as the 8th most deprived area in Herefordshire.

Individual types of deprivation are covered in relevant sections of this profile, but to summarise:

- Urban areas tend to be more deprived on the people-based measures of deprivation. In South & West, Ross - John Kyrle falls within the 10% most deprived in the county for income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, and crime.
- Rural areas tend to be more likely to experience place-based deprivation; **five LSOAs** in this PCN area are amongst the 10% most deprived in Herefordshire for geographical barriers to housing and services (Black Mountains, Welsh Corner and Garwaywood) and indoor living environment (Black Mountains, Loughpool and Greater Walford).
- Arthur's Stone and Hole in the Wall fall in the 20% most deprived for geographical barriers to housing and services, whilst Garwaywood, Hole in the Wall, Symonds Yat, Dulas Brook and Arthur's stone fall in the 20% most deprived for indoor living environment.

Figure 3: Map of overall local deprivation in 2025 across South and West Herefordshire



Deprivation scores for GP practices are included in OHID's [National General Practice Profiles on Fingertips](#).

Focus on area of deprivation: Ross - John Kyrle

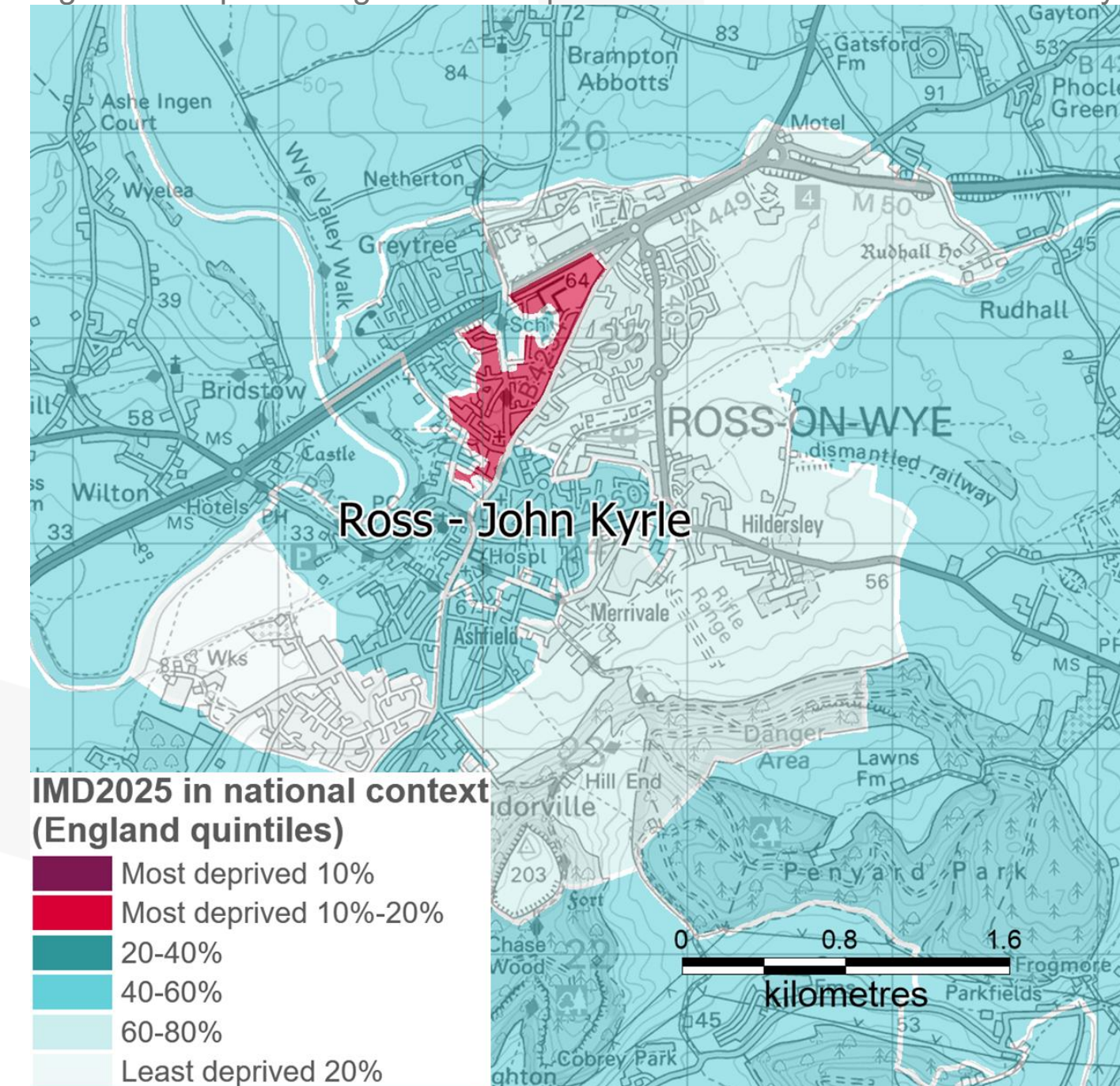
One LSOA in South and West is amongst the nine areas of Herefordshire which fall within the 20% most deprived in England. Ross – John Kyrle is persistently amongst the most deprived areas of the county, being the 8th most deprived area in the 2025 IMD.

The John Kyrle area shows higher levels of deprivation in people-based measures, but lower levels of deprivation in relation to housing access, services, and the living environment. **Around a third** of 1,500 residents across this neighbourhood experience income deprivation; 48% of children under 15 and 22% of older people live in an income deprived household. Most residents are registered at either Pendeen Surgery or Alton Street Surgery.

Other observations include:

- The only LSOA in South and West to be amongst the 10% most deprived on children and young people's education and and adult skills and qualifications
- High emergency hospital admissions for all-cause and respiratory admissions
- Higher rates of under 5's receiving free school meals
- Higher rates of social renting
- Higher proportions of residents in elementary occupations
- Higher rates of unemployment
- High rates of residents claiming Universal credit, housing benefits, and Personal Independence Payments
- High risk for deprivation-related digital exclusion.

Figure 4: Map showing national deprivation levels across Ross - John Kyrle



Data source: [Indices of deprivation 2025](#)