

My role as Rural Advocate is to put the case for rural people to the highest levels of government - linking village halls with Whitehall. I aim to make sure that rural people's needs and experiences are properly heard and understood. To do this, it is important that I hear directly from those who live and work in rural England, and from the organisations that support them. My job is an independent, non political appointment made by the Prime Minister, and one that gives me direct access to government Ministers and departments.

I combine my role as Rural Advocate with being Chairman of the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), the government's statutory advisor, watchdog and advocate for rural communities. The CRC provides well-informed, independent advice to government and ensures that policies reflect the real needs and circumstances of people living and working in rural England. The CRC has a particular focus on tackling disadvantage.

Keeping in touch

To contact me, please:

E-mail:

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Write to:

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I can't promise to respond to every issue shared with me, but I will use the views and experiences you raise to inform my visits and to focus my listening.

Thank you for taking the time to contribute your views.

Dr Stuart Burgess

Rural Advocate and Chairman CRC



Dr Stuart Burgess
Rural Advocate
for England

Commission for
Rural Communities
Tackling rural disadvantage

Rural Advocate work

As Rural Advocate, it is essential that I hear first hand about the diverse realities of living and working in rural England. What are people satisfied with and what concerns them? What action is needed, and by whom, to address these concerns? What helps and hinders people in their daily lives and future plans?

Every month I meet with individuals, businesses and organisations throughout rural England, and listen carefully to their needs, aspirations and experiences. My visits take me across the whole of England - from small and remote hamlets, to bustling market towns.

The main purpose of my visits is to listen. People raise many topics with me, including affordable housing, healthcare, employment and training opportunities, transport links, climate change and the changing nature of their community. Sometimes I explore specific topics, such as the future of rural post offices, or the challenges of hill farming.

I also meet with people and organisations that are responsible for delivering services, developing policy or deciding on budget allocations - all of which have a direct impact on people and organisations living and working in rural areas.

My visits provide me with a wealth of different experiences and views. I use these, together with further research, analysis and policy advice, to inform government about the issues that matter most to rural communities; their strengths and successes, and where action is needed to help them deal with some of the challenges they face.



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Some of my visits are recorded on film and by photography to help powerfully convey the issues people raise with me. Where you wish to do so, I welcome your participation in these activities.

Working with the Commission for Rural Communities

I combine my role as Rural Advocate with Chairman of the CRC. This allows me to bring together the information I get from meeting people and businesses with CRC's expert research and information, examples of good practice from England and further afield, and policy advice. This strengthens my messages and advice to government.

Communicating what I hear

You can find out further details about my work as Rural Advocate, including information on my visits to rural communities, on the CRC's website:

www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/ruraladvocate

After each visit has taken place, I produce a report, summarising the main messages I have heard. The views and information in this report will always be anonymous, unless you have specifically asked to be named. You can find copies of my reports on the CRC's website. Alternatively, paper copies can be sent to you, on request.

On the website, you will also be able to find out what action I am taking to make sure that your views and experiences are understood and recognised, together with information about other research and analysis work by the CRC.