
Deputy Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Professor Sir Roger Jowell CBE

Professor Paul Boyle
Chief Executive, Economic and Social Research Council
Polaris House
North Star Avenue
Swindon
SN2 1UJ

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Dear Paul

UK-WIDE INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION

The UK Statistics Authority recently published a Monitoring Brief on 'The demand for, and feasibility of, a UK-wide index of multiple deprivation'. This looks at the issues involved in producing such an index and builds on earlier assessment reports of the official deprivation indices for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These made some suggestions to address the needs of users who have an interest in comparing areas across the four administrations of the UK.

My purpose in bringing this Brief to your attention is to raise with you the possibility that the Economic and Social Research Council might consider championing the development of deprivation indices, based on official statistics that are comparable across the UK. Our report concludes that most of the interest in such indices is currently within the academic sector and that it would be difficult to justify recommending that this be given priority as a government-led initiative at this time.

In view of the various technical challenges and the nature of the demand, the Authority does not currently see a sufficiently strong case for the development of a UK-wide index by government, but considers that some further steps should nonetheless be taken. In particular, the producer bodies should consider:

- working with the Office for National Statistics to extend existing guidance about how statistics on deprivation for each country can be used to meet the needs of those users with a UK interest;
- providing access to guidance and metadata on existing sources of data available across the UK, which might be used as indicators of multiple deprivation; and,
- consulting users about the demand for more comparable statistical information on multiple deprivation.

Yours sincerely



Professor Sir Roger Jowell CBE