

Andrew Dilnot  
Chair  
UK Statistics Authority  
1 Drummond Gate  
London  
SW1V 2QQ

19 May 2014

Dear Mr Dilnot

I wrote to the Department of Communities and Local Government on 3 May 2014 (email copied below) to ask for average band D council tax rates by region. Having received no reply, I followed up with a phone call today (19 May 2014) in which I was told that, due to ministerial decision, the department no longer produces any statistics by region.

My understanding is that according to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, the relevant Head of Profession has sole responsibility for deciding on such matters. Having investigated the matter further, it appears that Eric Pickles MP made a statement to the House of Commons in September 2012 in which a number of political reasons were given for this decision, which would constitute a clear breach of the Integrity principle in the Code of Practice.

If ministers wish to reduce expenditure on the production of official statistics, they can provide the Head of Profession for the department with a reduced budget but, according to the Code of Practice, it should be the Head of Profession's decision which statistical products to amend or curtail.

Furthermore, in his reply of 25 April 2013 to your letter to Eric Pickles of 23 April 2013, Brandon Lewis MP did not address any of the substantive points that you had made regarding potential breaches of the Code of Practice in relation to promoting comparability within the UK and promoting accessibility of official statistics. Of particular concern is the absence in Mr Lewis's letter of any acknowledgement of the needs of users, which is supposed to be a key principle of the Code of Practice.

Please could you consider this letter a formal complaint about the breaches of the Code of Practice by the department and please could you let me know how you plan to address the issue.

Many thanks for your help



Ashwin Kumar

**Appendix: Email from Ashwin Kumar to the Department for Communities and Local Government**

**From:** Ashwin Kumar [Ashwin.Kumar@liverpooleconomics.com]  
**Sent:** 03 May 2014 12:56  
**To:** 'br.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk'  
**Subject:** Average Band D Council Tax by region

Hi there

I'm trying to get hold of the average Band D Council Tax by region for 2013/14 and 2014/15 but, in contrast to previous years (e.g. 2012/13: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6654/2141660.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6654/2141660.pdf)), the statistical releases for 2013/14 ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/230925/Council Tax Statistical Release August 2013 FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/230925/Council_Tax_Statistical_Release_August_2013_FINAL.pdf)) and 2014/15 ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/295969/Council Tax Stats Release March 2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/295969/Council_Tax_Stats_Release_March_2014.pdf)) don't appear to have this information. Is it possible for you to direct me to a document/spreadsheet that contains this information or email it to me.

Many thanks for your help

Ashwin Kumar

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