

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS (PAMS) COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

Local Authority (LA) level relative poverty estimates - Improving the income data in the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) through imputation

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This note provides a short update on the Scottish Household Survey income imputation project currently being carried out by the Scottish Government (SG) income and poverty statistics team in Communities Analytical Services (CASD).

Background

The SHS is a sample survey which collects information about a range of topics from households across Scotland, including household income. Until now however, the SHS has been of limited use for the study of income and poverty across Scotland as it does not record complete household information for all household types. This work attempted to overcome this issue by combining SHS data with data from the Family Resources Survey, a UK wide survey of household incomes run by the Department for Work and Pensions. Readers interested in the methodology should go to Annex A for more details.

Project aims

The main aim of the project is to produce SHS datasets with an imputed variable for complete household income. The main advantage of this variable would be that the SHS sample size allows users to carry out LA-level analysis, something which is not possible with the other official surveys which estimate household income in Scotland. Desirable consequences of this work would be equalised income and relative poverty estimates which were available at LA level.

What work has been carried out?

Following on from a feasibility study by MORI which proposed this approach a consultant from the Office for National Statistics worked with Scottish Government (SG) statisticians to carry out the implementation of this work on the SG systems and datasets. This has been completed and LA-level poverty estimates have been produced for Scotland. CASD are currently drafting a report which presents these figures and guidance for using them.

What are the next steps?

Over the summer CASD plan to publish this report and make the data available to external analysts. Following on from this will be work to promote the figures among external users including LA analysts. It is likely that CASD will apply to have the new relative poverty indicator produced by the project added to the IS recommended list of SOA indicators.

Contacts

CASD analysts would welcome any comments or suggestions on this project, particularly on ways to most effectively make the new data useful and usable to colleagues in local authorities. If you have any comments, please contact the Income and Poverty Statistics Team.

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