



The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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What are the Indices of Deprivation?

1. What is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)?

The Index of Multiple Deprivation, commonly known as the IMD, is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England. It is the most widely used of the Indices of Deprivation (described in question 2).

The Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks every small area in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area).

These small areas are Lower-layer Super Output Areas, described at question 10.

You can find out more about how the Index of Multiple Deprivation can be used in our **Guidance note**.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. The domains are combined using the following weights:

- Income Deprivation (22.5%)
- Employment Deprivation (22.5%)
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation (13.5%)
- Health Deprivation and Disability (13.5%)
- Crime (9.3%)
- Barriers to Housing and Services (9.3%)
- Living Environment Deprivation (9.3%)

The weights were derived from consideration of the academic literature on poverty and deprivation, as well as the levels of robustness of the indicators. A fuller account is given in section 3.7 and Appendix G of the **Technical Report**.

All of these documents are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

The annex to the **Guidance note** contains a full list of the data files and supporting documents available for the Indices of Deprivation 2015.

2. What are the Indices of Deprivation?

The Indices of Deprivation 2015 provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for small areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) across England, based on seven different domains of deprivation:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation

Each of these domains is based on a basket of indicators. As far as is possible, each indicator is based on data from the most recent time point available; in practice most indicators in the Indices of Deprivation 2015 relate to the tax year 2012/13.

Combining information from the seven domains produces an overall relative measure of deprivation, the Index of Multiple Deprivation. In addition, there are seven domain-level indices, and two supplementary indices: the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index and the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index.

A range of summary measures are available for higher-level geographies including local authority districts and upper tier local authorities, local enterprise partnerships,

and clinical commissioning groups. These are based on the geographic boundaries for these areas at the time of publication.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation, domain indices and the supplementary indices, together with the higher area summaries, are collectively referred to as the Indices of Deprivation.

Accessing data, documents and tools

3. What data and documents have been published? Where do I start?

Data: A number of files are available at **neighbourhood** (Lower-layer Super Output Area) level. The first of these contains the Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks and deciles, and is sufficient for the purposes of most users. Other files are available for users with more specific requirements.

A range of summary measures are available for **higher-level geographies:** local authority districts and upper tier local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, and clinical commissioning groups.

Supporting documents include a Guidance note, Infographic, Statistical Release, Research Report and Technical Report, in addition to these Frequently Asked Questions.

The **Guidance note** is a useful starting point. It explains how the Index of Multiple Deprivation can be used, and contains an annex to help you navigate the published data files and documents.

All of the data files and supporting documents are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

4. Where can I access the raw data?

As described in question 3, the data is published in series of spreadsheets available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

In addition to this, much of the data is available to download on the Department's **OpenDataCommunities** website, at the following links:

- Neighbourhood-level data:
<http://opendatacommunities.org/data/societal-wellbeing/imd/indices>
- Local authority district level data:
<http://opendatacommunities.org/data/societal-wellbeing/imd/indicesbyla>

Data for neighbourhoods and local authority districts, which meets the needs of many users, is available on the Office for National Statistics **Neighbourhood Statistics** website: <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>

We acknowledge that many of our users would find it useful to have the data available on **nomis**. We have explored this with Office for National Statistics (ONS), the owners of nomis, but it is not possible at this time. ONS will investigate the possibility of the data being housed on nomis in future.

5. What tools are available to help me use the data?

Mapping tools can help users visualise relative deprivation among neighbourhoods. The department has produced two examples to demonstrate how the data can be presented visually:

- the **Indices of Deprivation 2015 explorer** <http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html> shows the relative deprivation of neighbourhoods for selected areas, by searching a place name or postcode. The explorer includes a dashboard which provides a brief summary of how relatively deprived a selected neighbourhood is.

Although the data are not produced for wards, the map shows ward and local authority boundaries, so users can see the deprivation ranks of the neighbourhoods within these areas.

This explorer also lists all neighbourhoods within a given local authority, gives their deprivation ranks, and allows you to select these neighbourhoods.

- a second **interactive map** accessible at <http://arcg.is/1MVUKEI> can be used for observing the Indices of Deprivation 2015 data.

Tools have also been provided for users wanting to obtain deprivation data for a list of **postcodes** - these are described under question 9.

You can also see a visual representation of how deprived your neighbourhood is via the 'neighbourhood summary' function on the Office for National Statistics'

Neighbourhood Statistics website:

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>

We encourage others to develop tools, visualisations and apps from the Linked Data on OpenDataCommunities.

6. Where can I access previous versions of the Indices of Deprivation?

Previous versions of the Indices of Deprivation (2000, 2004, 2007 and 2010) are available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation>

Using the neighbourhood level data

7. How can I look up deprivation data for my area, and does it fall among the 20% most deprived areas in England?

The Indices of Deprivation 2015 measures deprivation in small areas across England. These small areas are called Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) and are a standard way of dividing up the country – see question 10 for more information. For ease of communication, LSOAs are sometimes referred to as ‘neighbourhoods’.

It is possible to use the data in the published spreadsheets, but many users who want to know about specific places will find it easier to use interactive mapping tools to look up the relative level of deprivation in their area. One such tool is the **Indices of Deprivation 2015 explorer** (see question 5):

<http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html>

You can enter a postcode or place name to see on a map the neighbourhood that the postcode or place lies in, and its deprivation rank. You can use this information to describe the relative level of deprivation in an area. For example:

Neighbourhood X is ranked 5,000 out of 32,844 neighbourhoods in England, where 1 is the most deprived.

It is common to describe how relatively deprived a neighbourhood is by saying whether it falls among the most deprived 10 per cent, 20 per cent or 30 per cent of small areas in England. To help with this, deprivation ‘deciles’ (defined in question 8) allow you to describe an area as, for example, *being amongst the 20 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.*

If you are not using the explorer and its dashboard, you can also calculate this yourself as follows (with the same example of a neighbourhood ranked 5,000).

$$5,000/32,844 = 0.15 \text{ or } 15\% \text{ most deprived in England}$$

Hence this area lies within the 20% most deprived areas in England. The same methodology can be used to calculate whether an area is within the 1%, 10%, 25% most deprived in England, and so on.

Although the data are not produced for wards, the Indices of Deprivation 2015 explorer shows **ward and local authority boundaries**, so users can see the deprivation ranks of the neighbourhoods within these areas:

<http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html>

If you would prefer to look up deprivation using the published data files, these are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

File 1 contains the Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks and deciles for all small areas in England and is sufficient for the purposes of most users.

8. How can I present the data? What are ranks and deciles?

The Indices of Deprivation ranks every neighbourhood in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area).

There is not a definitive way to present the data. It is common to describe how relatively deprived a neighbourhood is by saying whether it falls among the most deprived 10 per cent, 20 per cent or 30 per cent of small areas in England (although there is no definitive cut-off above which an area is described as 'deprived').

To help with this, deprivation 'deciles' are published alongside ranks. Deciles are calculated by ranking the 32,844 neighbourhoods in England from most deprived to least deprived and dividing them into 10 equal groups. These range from the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods nationally to the least deprived 10% of neighbourhoods nationally, as shown in the table below:

Decile	Decile description	Ranks
1	10% most deprived	1 to 3,284
2	10% to 20%	3,285 to 6,568
3	20% to 30%	6,569 to 9,853
4	30% to 40%	9,854 to 13,137
5	40% to 50%	13,138 to 16,422
6	50% to 60%	16,423 to 19,706
7	60% to 70%	19,707 to 22,990
8	70% to 80%	22,991 to 26,275
9	80% to 90%	26,276 to 29,559
10	10% least deprived	29,560 to 32,844

You can apply different cut points to the ranks to identify, for example, the 1% or 5% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally:

Neighbourhoods falling in the 1% most deprived nationally would be those ranked 1-328. The calculation is $32,844/100$, because there are 32,844 small areas that need to be split into percentiles (100 equal groups).

Neighbourhoods falling in the 5% most deprived nationally would be those ranked 1-1,642. The calculation is $32,844/20$, because there are 32,844 small areas that need to be split into groups containing 5% of neighbourhoods (this is 20 equal groups, since $100/5=20$).

9. How can I get deprivation data for a bulk of neighbourhoods or postcodes?

If you have a list of postcodes that you would like deprivation data for, you can use this tool: <http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org>

You can upload a list of up to 10,000 postcodes. The output file lists the postcodes entered, the Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA) that each postcode falls within, and the deprivation data for that LSOA.

The deprivation data consists of: deciles, ranks and, where appropriate, scores¹, for the Index of Multiple Deprivation, the seven domain indices and the Income Deprivation Affecting Children and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Indices. Most users will only need to use the Index of Multiple Deprivation decile and/or rank column.

If you would like to download a list of postcodes and deprivation data for all neighbourhoods within a specific local authority district or county, you can use this tool: <http://imd-by-geo.opendatacommunities.org> and select a local authority or county. The output file lists all the postcodes within the selected area, the Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA) that each postcode falls within, and the deprivation data for those LSOAs.

The following deprivation data are available for selection: deciles, ranks and, where appropriate, scores², for the Index of Multiple Deprivation, the seven domain indices and the Income Deprivation Affecting Children and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Indices. Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles or ranks will be sufficient for many users.

If you would like to see a list of all postcodes in England, the neighbourhoods they lie in and the deprivation data for those neighbourhoods, then you will need to create your own file:

¹ Scores are appropriate for the Income Deprivation Domain and its supplementary indices for children (IDACI) and older people (IDAOP), and the Employment Deprivation Domain. For these indices, the scores are meaningful and relate to a proportion of the relevant population experiencing that type of deprivation. This is explained further in question 19.

² Ibid.

- The Office for National Statistics regularly publish the National Statistics Postcode Lookup³ on the Open Geography Portal <https://geoportal.statistics.gov.uk/geoportal/catalog/main/home.page> that show which postcodes fall within each LSOA in England.
- The Department for Communities and Local Government publishes deprivation data at LSOA level here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015> File 1 contains the Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks and deciles for all small areas in England and is sufficient for the purposes of most users.
- You can join the two files using the LSOA column.
- Please be warned that this will create a very large file; it is therefore recommended that the two specially designed tools described above are used where possible.

10. What is a Lower-layer Super Output Area/neighbourhood/small area?

Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are small areas designed to be of a similar population size, with an average of approximately 1,500 residents or 650 households. There are 32,844 Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England. They were produced by the Office for National Statistics for the reporting of small area statistics and are a standard way of dividing up the country. For ease of communication, LSOAs are sometimes referred to as 'neighbourhoods' or 'small areas' in Indices of Deprivation 2015 documentation.

They do not have descriptive place names (in the way that local wards do), but are named in a format beginning with the name of the local authority district followed by a 4 character code eg City of London 001A.

You can find out more about LSOAs on the Office for National Statistics website: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/census/super-output-areas--soas-/index.html>

11. How do I find out which LSOAs have changed boundary since the 2010 Indices?

Following the 2011 Census, the geography of Lower-layer Super Output Areas was revised, and the number of areas has increased from 32,482 (as used in the 2010, 2007 and 2004 Indices of Deprivation) to 32,844 (used in the 2015 Indices of Deprivation).

³ For further information see <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/products/postcode-directories/-nspp-/index.html>

The boundaries of the vast majority (96 per cent) of these 32,844 areas are unchanged since the Indices of Deprivation 2010, 2007 and 2004. But elsewhere, some neighbourhoods have been combined or split and some new neighbourhoods have been created; this is to account for significant population change occurring in these areas between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. This means that 31,672 areas have the same boundaries as in previous versions of the Indices.

You can find out more about changes to LSOA boundaries on the Office for National Statistics website <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/census/super-output-areas--soas-/index.html>

To identify a full list of LSOAs that have changed boundaries, see file 'Changes to Output Areas and Super Output Areas in England and Wales, 2001 to 2011' under 'downloads' on the right of the webpage.

To quickly find out if an *individual* LSOA boundary has changed, you can use the Office for National Statistics' Neighbourhood Statistics website <http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk> - enter a postcode (e.g. SE1 8XX) in the 'Neighbourhood Summary' box and click 'search'. The website alerts you if the LSOA boundary has changed.

Indices for higher or other geographies

12. What deprivation data is published for different geographies?

Summary measures have been published by the Department of Communities and Local Government for the following higher-level geographies:

- **Local Authority District** Summaries (File 10)
- **Upper-tier Local Authority** Summaries (File 11)
- **Local Enterprise Partnership** Summaries (File 12)
- **Clinical Commissioning Group** Summaries (File 13)

Each file includes a range of summary measures of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015, the domains and the two supplementary indices (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index).

You can find out what measures are available and how they were calculated in section 3.8 of the Technical Report. Advice on how to interpret these measures is provided in section 3.3 of the Research Report, with an example of how the set of measures compares for two areas.

It is important to remember that the higher-area measures are *summaries*. The Indices of Deprivation are designed primarily to be *small-area* or neighbourhood measures of relative deprivation; the Lower-layer Super Output Area level data provides more detail than is available through the summaries.

In response to demand from users, we have produced some guidance on **how to aggregate the neighbourhood level data to different geographies** – please see Appendix A to the Research Report.

The data files and reports are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

13. Which of the summary measures for higher level geographies e.g. local authorities should I use?

The summary measures have been carefully designed to help users understand deprivation patterns for a set of higher-level areas. The measures identify the overall intensity of deprivation, how deprivation is distributed across the larger area, and the overall volume, or ‘scale’, of deprivation. These measures are described in section 3.8 of the Technical Report and advice on their interpretation is provided in section 3.3 of the Research Report, with an example of how the set of measures compares for two areas.

Because patterns of deprivation across larger areas can be complex, there is no single summary measure that is the ‘best’ measure. Rather, each of the summary measures that are published highlight different aspects of deprivation, and each leads to a different ranking of areas. Comparison of the different measures is needed to give a fuller description of deprivation for larger areas.

The Statistical Release focuses mainly on the summary statistic relating to the proportion of neighbourhoods in each local authority that are among the 10 per cent most deprived nationally, but also considers the ‘extent measure’. There is some analysis using the wider range of summary measures presented in sections 4.4 and 5.3, of the Research Report (and Appendix D presents these statistics for Local Enterprise Partnerships and Clinical Commissioning Groups).

These reports are available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

It is important to remember that the higher-area measures are *summaries*. The Indices of Deprivation are designed primarily to be *small-area* or neighbourhood measures of relative deprivation; the Lower-layer Super Output Area level data provides more detail than is available through the summaries.

14. Why don’t you publish data for wards?

The department does not publish ward level figures as an additional output. Lower-layer Super Output Areas are a more suitable small area geography than wards for measuring relative deprivation. Wards are much larger than Lower-layer Super Output Areas, vary greatly in size and are prone to regular boundary changes, making them unsuitable as a unit of analysis or for identifying pockets of deprivation.

In contrast Lower-layer Super Output Areas are smaller, of roughly even population size and, in the majority of instances, their boundaries are stable between Censuses.

The department's view is that it would be unhelpful to have two small area measures of deprivation released in parallel, as this would lead to confusion and could be potentially misleading.

You can look at how deprivation levels vary between neighbourhoods within wards using the Indices of Deprivation explorer mapping tool, by applying ward boundaries to the map. Please see question 5 for more details.

For further advice on different geographies, please see question 12.

15. How can I create my own Indices for different geographies?

In response to demand from users, we have produced some guidance on **how to aggregate the neighbourhood level data to different geographies** – please see Appendix A to the Research Report, available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

16. Is there a UK wide index of multiple deprivation?

There is not a UK wide Index of Multiple Deprivation. Each country in the UK produces its own version of the Index of Multiple Deprivation using similar methodologies. However differences in the indicators used, the time periods covered and the sizes of their small areas mean that it is not possible to make direct comparisons between these indices.

The Office for National Statistics provides some guidance on how to make some comparisons across the four countries' indices:

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Info.do?page=analysisandguidance/analysisarticles/indices-of-deprivation.htm>

Interpreting the data

17. What can the Indices be used for and what are its limitations?

The **infographic** illustrates how the Index of Multiple Deprivation is comprised and some do's and don'ts concerning its use.

The **Guidance note** aids interpretation of the Index of Multiple Deprivation including some caveats on its use, and expands on the points in the infographic. This note also outlines the range of data and reports available for the Indices of Deprivation.

These documents are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

18. Can I use the Indices to compare over time?

When exploring changes in deprivation between the Indices of Deprivation 2015 and previous versions of the indices, users should be aware that changes can only be described in relative terms, for example, the extent to which an area has changed rank or decile of deprivation. They cannot be used to identify real change in deprivation over time.

The Guidance note covers this point and you can find out more in Section 3.4 of the Research Report. Both documents are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

19. What do the deprivation scores mean and what can they be used for?

The ranks and deciles published for the neighbourhood-level Indices of Deprivation are based on scores: the larger the score, the more deprived the area.

In the case of the **Income and Employment deprivation domains and the supplementary children and older people indices**, the scores are meaningful and relate to a proportion of the relevant population experiencing that type of deprivation. So, for example, if a Lower-layer Super Output Area has a score of 0.38 in the Income Deprivation Domain, this means that 38 per cent of the population is income deprived in that area. This means that in addition to the ranks which show relative deprivation, the scores for these domains can be used to compare areas on an absolute scale.

The scores for the **Index of Multiple Deprivation and the remaining five domains** are less easy to interpret, as they do not relate straightforwardly to the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation. It is recommended that ranks and deciles, but not scores, are used in the case of the Index of Multiple Deprivation and these domains.

You can find out more in Section 3.2 of the Research Report available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

20. Where can I find out more about how the Indices are constructed?

The Indices of Deprivation 2015 have been constructed for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) by Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI).

A summary of the methodology and data sources used in the Indices of Deprivation 2015 is available in Chapter 2 of the Research Report.

Chapter 3 of the Technical Report describes the methodology in detail.

Chapter 4 of Technical Report describes the component indicators in the Indices of Deprivation 2015 including the data sources used, and explains how the indicators were combined to create each domain.

Chapter 5 of the Technical Report describes the design principles and quality assurance carried out to ensure reliability of the data outputs.

You can find these reports here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

21. How are the Indices of Deprivation 2015 different to the Indices of Deprivation 2010?

The Indices of Deprivation 2015 have been produced using the same approach, structure and methodology used to create the previous Indices of Deprivation 2010 (and the 2007 and 2004 versions).

A modest number of changes to indicators have been implemented since the Indices of Deprivation 2010. Notably, these changes include broadening the indicator on housing affordability to include the private rental sector in addition to the owner-occupied sector and producing the indicator at LSOA level (not district wide), and two new indicators on:

- claimants of Carer's Allowance
- English language proficiency

There have also been changes to a minority of LSOA boundaries (see question 11).

You can see a full description of changes since the Indices of Deprivation 2010 in Appendix C of the Technical Report, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

Other specialist questions

22. How can I create my own bespoke deprivation index using different domain weights to the IMD?

Please see Appendix B to the Research Report, available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

Getting and keeping in touch

23. How do I register for email alerts about the Indices?

To register for e-mails alerts about the Indices, please e-mail indices.deprivation@communities.gsi.gov.uk with 'subscribe' in the subject heading.

24. How do I get in touch if I have a query about the Indices?

Please email indices.deprivation@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Queries will receive an automatic acknowledgement stating that the query has been received. We will endeavour to respond to queries within 20 working days. We will aim to respond more quickly than this where possible but this is dependent on the volume of queries received by the department.

25. When will the next Indices of Deprivation be published?

The Indices of Deprivation are typically updated every 3 to 4 years, but the dates of publication for future Indices have not yet been scheduled.

Users will be kept informed of future updates and how they can contribute their views. This information will be posted on the Indices of Deprivation webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation> and in email alerts to registered users.

To register for e-mails alerts about the Indices, please e-mail indices.deprivation@communities.gsi.gov.uk with 'subscribe' in the subject heading.