# **Datasets on deprivation from the UK Data Service - Alle Bloom**

## Transcript

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IoEA1k9fTEw

Hi everyone, I’m Alle Bloom from the UK Data Service User Support and Training Team based at the University of Manchester, and today I’m going to talk to you about some of the datasets available from the UK Data Service that can be used to explore various aspects of deprivation.

So just a quick rundown of this presentation. So I’m going to start by giving a quick summary of what the UK Data Service is, then I’m going to give an overview of some of the key datasets for this topic, highlight where you can find some case studies on how this data has been used and then demonstrate how you can find and get access to this data.

So starting off, what is the UK Data Service? Well, we are a comprehensive resource funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and we provide access to the largest collection of social, economic and population data in the UK. And basically what this means is that data providers deposit their data with us and then we make this available to users to access for secondary data analysis. As well as this the training team which I’m a part of provides support, training and guidance to help researchers find, access and use this data.

So who’s it for? We like to say it’s for everyone, so whether you’re an academic researcher or a student, you work for a charity or an independent think-tank or you’re even an independent researcher, the UK Data Service data is for you.

And our data comes from many different sources, such as official agencies such as the Office for National Statistics, research institutions, public records and historical sources.

And we hold data of many different types, mostly survey data, both cross-sectional and longitudinal, aggregate data, international data, some census data and also qualitative and mixed methods data as well.

So moving onto the theme of today’s webinar. Starting off, I want to say that deprivation can be defined in many different ways, depending on what a researcher is interested in. So I’m going to lean away from giving a concrete definition today and instead highlight some datasets that might be useful for exploring deprivation and have questions on things like poverty or economic situations, labour, housing and food. And I’m going to go into a bit more detail about these datasets now.

So the first of these is the Households Below Average Income dataset and this dataset provides information on living standards in the UK based on household income measures for the financial year. The data for these come from the Family Resources Survey and it’s used to explore the number and percentage of people living in low income houses in the UK. And this data is also currently being used by the Department for Work and Pensions to develop a new measure of poverty.

Next up is the Family Resources Survey. So this survey has been run continuously since 1992 and uses a large representative sample of households in the UK, although it is worth noting that prior to 2002 the sample was Great Britain only. The focus of this data is income and the different sources of this but information is also collected on things like expenditure on rent, mortgages and bills. As well as this the survey also collects personal characteristics at both an adult family and household level, and these include things like education, caring, childcare responsibilities and disability. And also relevant for the topic of today it has measures of material deprivation, food security and, new for 2021 and 2022, information on food bank usage.

Next up is the National Diet and Nutrition Survey, also known as the NDNS. This survey has been run continuously since 2008 and it’s designed to assess the diet and nutrition and nutritional status of the general population. The data for this survey comes from two sources, both individual food diary data and a face to face interview. This face to face interview collects more detailed information on food and habits in general, so things like smoking and drinking, physical activity and there’s even some physical measurements recorded in there as well. It also covers household food security, occupation and education information, food bank usage, information on income, wages, bills and whether the household receives any benefits support and also information on health disability and general health as well.

[00:04:48] Staying on kind of the topic of food, we move onto the Living Costs and Food Survey. This is a UK-wide survey that collects information on expenditure and food consumption and data is collected through the use of, firstly, a household questionnaire. This is answered by a household reference person who answers on behalf of the whole household. Then an income questionnaire which collects key personal level variables, so this is us at an individual level. And then expenditure diaries where each individual aged 16 years and over in the household is asked to keep records of their expenditure for two weeks. This survey is conducted every year and it’s a key source of information for social and economic measures, for example, measuring household spending patterns and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs also use it to gather detailed information on food consumption.

And here are some more of the topics covered in this questionnaire. I’ve put them here in a bit more detail because they’re quite extensive. So we have information on household characteristics, relationships between those in the household, accommodation, demographic information, information on employment, education, again that mortgage and bills information, electricity and gas payments, which is obviously relevant with the current cost of living and rising energy prices, whether the household is in receipt of Healthy Start vouchers or free school meals, any non-food purchases and also the impact of COVID-19 on various aspects of spending. And then the individual questionnaire is much more income-focused so you have information on employment, where the income comes from, whether it’s different types of jobs, and then things like how much tax is being paid, student loan repayments and then things like benefits and pension.

If you’re interested in attitudes to deprivation and poverty you might be interested in the British Social Attitudes Survey. In particular I want to highlight this teaching dataset that we’ve put together based on this. So the British Social Attitudes Survey began in 1983 and it aimed to measure continuity and change in attitudes to social issues. It uses a representative sample and it covers political, social and moral issues. And the teaching dataset, like I say, was originally created from the BSA dataset but the aspect of it that makes it a teaching dataset is that it contains a reduced number of variables and also more simplified documentation which makes it more suitable for teaching or those just getting to grips with survey data. Additionally, I want to flag that this data is open so that means it can be downloaded and used by anyone at all without the need to register, so you can download it straight from the website, and I’ll go into a bit more information about registration and access later on. And this dataset is themed to focus on attitudes towards welfare and poverty and it also includes political views, political identification and demographic variables as well. And if you are interested in the full dataset rather than just the teaching one these variables are included in the full 2019 BSA dataset which is again accessible through the UK Data Service.

If you are interested in deprivation from a housing perspective the English Housing Survey may be useful. So this survey collects information on people’s housing circumstances, the conditions and also – again, relating to that energy topic – the energy efficiency of houses in England. As well as this it interestingly collects information on how people feel about their housing, their neighbourhoods, also household characteristics and, again, measures of income. As well as this there is also a physical survey which measures the actual conditions of the house as well.

So those are examples of some particular studies but as well as studies that relate to relevant topics many surveys also contain general measures of deprivation such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. And some surveys that contain these measures of deprivation include the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the Millennium Cohort Study, the Active Lives Survey, the Health Survey for England and the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles. And I haven’t gone into these studies in complete detail on each slide because there only tends to be one or maybe two deprivation variables included within them but this means that they can be really useful if you’re wanting to research deprivation alongside these other topics, so looking at the impact of health on deprivation or deprivation on health. So, for example, the Active Lives Survey looks at the amount of exercise that people do and the Millennium Cohort Study follows individuals over the life course, so you could also look at that aspect as well.

[00:09:52] And if you are interested in more about these different measures our Impact Director, Neil Dymond-Green, has written a blogpost all about this, you can find it on our Data Impact blog. Also talks a bit about the difference in measuring deprivation, poverty and how we can kind of understand that. So do have a look at that if that would be interesting to you. It’s referenced in the resources.

If you are interested in further examples of how these data have been used the Impact section of our website which I just mentioned contains blogs and case studies of how these data have been used. In particular relevant to this topic we have sections on poverty and also housing and homelessness.

So that’s the idea of some of the datasets that you can access. I’m now going to quickly cover how you can find these datasets on our website, how you can search for them, and then also how you can go about accessing these.

So the first place you can search for data on the website is our catalogue search tool. So this search tool allows you to search the 7,300+ datasets that are available from the UK Data Service. You can enter relevant search terms into the search file or, if you know the name of a particular dataset, maybe one of the ones I’ve mentioned today, you can type this in, or you can also search by study number if you wanted to go back and check the same dataset. You can also use the filters down the left-hand side to further refine your search so we’ve got topics that you can select, a data type. So, for example, if you were looking for particular teaching data you could search it under there and access, so particularly open data, and also country, so if you wanted the data to be from a particular international location, for example.

Next up are our browse data pages. So these pages allow you to browse by theme, so we have topics such as COVID-19, economics, labour, food, health, housing, poverty. You can also browse by datatype so if you’re particularly interested in UK surveys or maybe longitudinal data or census data you can search for those. There’s also a section that links to particular teaching datasets or you can search in general looking for things like geographical data or online analysis tools and there is also a link there to search for open data as well.

You can also search for particular variables within datasets in our variable and question bank. So, for example, if we type in ‘deprivation’ we can see which datasets contain variables on this topic. Just a note on the variable and question bank, though, it doesn’t contain all of the datasets we currently hold so it’s worth searching the catalogue as well just to make sure that you’re covering all the information there.

If you’re interested in qualitative data we also have our quali bank. This is a really interesting tool that allows you to search within different qualitative resources for key terms. So, for example, if you wanted to know if someone had mentioned the word ‘poverty’ within an interview transcript or perhaps within an essay that they’d written or part of a longer answer in a questionnaire, you can type this in and it will search within the resources that we hold. Then you can just click at the bottom to access this collection from the data catalogue and it’ll go through the process of you being able to access that data.

Finally, we have the Hasat(?) thesaurus. This search tool contains key social science terms and related concepts. So, for example, here we can see that deprivation has been categorised under social disadvantage. You can narrow this down into a more focused concept like homelessness or poverty or relative deprivation or you can look at related concepts, or if you want to conduct a search for this term in the catalogue if you just click next to the key word search section on the screen there it will take you to a search for social disadvantage in the catalogue.

Now, just a quick point on the different access levels for our data. So I’m going to run through these just to give you a bit of an idea of the different levels and the different requirements at those levels. So first of all we have controlled data. This is also called secure access data and is one of the most restricted types of data. This can only be accessed through a safe room, through the secure lab. There is some remote access but it does depend on location and set-up, etc, or through our safe pods which are specific safe rooms set up at various universities and libraries. We then have safeguarded data. This is end user licence data which requires you to register with us and agree to the end user licence agreement to be able to access it. And also coming under this we have special licence data. This usually means that there’s an additional form that you need to sign or agree to use the data in a particular way and then the data owner will approve your access. There is also re-share data. So this is data which is self-deposited, so, for example, by people depositing their thesis or anyone who’s had their research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, and these access controls can vary because they’re set by the data owner. So access (inaudible 00:15:17) can help with that if you’re interested in looking at that data too. And finally we have open data which I mentioned earlier can be accessed by anyone at all without the need to register.

[00:15:30] Finally, most of the data in our collection can be accessed free of charge, like I said. There is potentially a charge for some commercial uses but the information will be there, depending on what dataset you’re accessing, but to access some data, like I said, you will need to register, You can do this by either logging in through your institutional login, so, for example, if you are part of a UK university, a further education college, a government department or you work for a local authority, you can log in, go through your usual portal, usually open (inaudible 00:16:04), and you’ll be able to sign in and access the data. If you don’t have one of these institutional logins, that’s perfectly fine, you can request a UK Data Archive username. And this might be relevant if you are, for example, an international researcher, you work for a charity or think-tank, you’re wanting to access data for a school, you’re from a commercial organisation or you’re a personal researcher.

So thank you all very much for listening, I hope that overview of deprivation datasets is useful and please do let me know if you have any questions.

National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM)  
Social Sciences  
Murray Building (Bldg 58)  
University of Southampton  
Southampton SO17 1BJ  
United Kingdom

**Web** www.ncrm.ac.uk   
**Email** info@ncrm.ac.uk  
**Tel** +44 23 8059 4539  
**Twitter** @NCRMUK