



Index of Multiple Deprivation

10 November 2025

Published 30 October 2025



▼ Menu



[Home](#) > [Society and culture](#) > [Community and society](#) > [English indices of deprivation 2025](#)



[Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government](#)

Accredited official statistics

English indices of deprivation 2025: statistical release

Published 30 October 2025

Rural Report



The Government has published the statistical release detailing the English Indices of Deprivation 2025.

Alongside this, a new report, the **English indices of deprivation 2025 : Rural Report** has also been published which documents how rural deprivation was considered in the new indices and sets out recommendations for further development.

Guidance

English indices of deprivation 2025: rural report

Report outlining how rural deprivation has been explicitly considered in the development of the indices of deprivation (IoD25).

From: [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#)

Published 30 October 2025

Why it could change policy – the upside



Official status + timing. The Indices of Deprivation (IOD) are the government's official deprivation measure — that gives the rural report a direct pathway into funding reviews, local government settlement calculations, and departmental needs assessments if ministers choose to use it.

Rural-specific framing. The report explicitly examines how deprivation manifests in rural settings (remoteness, small pockets, access barriers) and offers targeted recommendations — that in a limited way, helps overcome the long-standing problem of “masked” rural need in higher-level statistics

Better tools for local actors. Third-party teams (OCSI, Polimapper, local dashboards) have already produced explorers and maps for IOD 2025 which makes it easier for councils, CCGs / ICSs, and charities to argue for changes. Tools lower the transaction cost of using the data.

Why it may not change policy – the downside



The IOD is relative. For an area to be identified as more deprived, doesn't automatically change any budgets or allocations, unless central funding formulas or departmental allocations explicitly adopt the new indices (or unless a funding review uses them). In short: simply publishing the data doesn't allocate any funding to these areas!

Rural population sparsity and masking. Rural LSOAs are often less populous and fewer in number in the top deprivation deciles (the documents note that only 1.3% of rural LSOAs are in the 10% most deprived), so headline figures can understate pockets of severe need and make it politically easy to deprioritise. That's exactly what the rural report warns about.

Why it may not change policy – the downside



Methodological trade-offs and weightings. Domain choices and weightings (income, employment, housing & services, etc.) can counteract rural specific problems such as transport access, broadband, seasonal employment, or dispersed homelessness unless those are explicitly captured and weighted. Policy change requires those features to be reflected in allocation models.

Political and fiscal constraints. Even perfect evidence can be ignored if political priorities or tight public finances push funds elsewhere. News coverage already shows debates over how changes to indices shift funding across regions — the political context matters.

Combination of domains



The seven domains are combined to form the overall composite IMD.
The greater the weight of a particular domain, the more it is taken into account in the overall IMD.

Domain	Weight
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 services	9.3%
Living environment deprivation	9.3%

Challenges and critiques - positive



Issue	IMD 2025 Response
The issue of digital connectivity is acknowledged as a particular challenge in many rural areas for several reasons. With the closure of physical service access points, there may be a greater reliance upon digital services for certain activities including shopping, banking, and other tasks such as claiming social welfare support	A new indicator on average broadband speed has been incorporated into the Wider Barriers sub-domain of the IoD 2025 to measure digital connectivity.
The IoD 2019 measured geographical barriers to services with four indicators that were constructed using information on road distances to four key services. However, it has been suggested in the literature that road distance may not be the most appropriate means of measurement in rural areas given that it fails to adequately capture important factors such as car availability and the costs of both transport and service use	This sub-domain has been fundamentally overhauled for the IoD 2025 and is now based entirely on the recently constructed Department for Transport (DfT) Connectivity Tool. It captures geographical barriers to a wider range of services with greater sophistication.

Challenges and critiques -negative



Issue	IMD 2025 Response
The issue of benefit take-up, or rather non take-up...argued that there is a common culture of independence and self-reliance pervading rural communities, and a stigma surrounding reliance upon government support. These factors have been shown to result in a reduced uptake of welfare support...thereby potentially underestimating the true level of deprivation in some rural areas.	We acknowledge there are many reasons why people may not claim the out-of-work benefits to which they might be eligible, and that the potential for take-up may be lower within certain communities. However, any attempts to adjust administrative data-based statistics for differences in take-up would require a number of generalised assumptions to be adopted, which would be impossible to empirically validate and so this cannot be implemented at this time.
The rural premium refers to the way in which people's expenditure on goods and services can be higher in rural areas due to reduced service availability and accessibility, less choice, and higher transport costs. Rural residents may encounter a higher cost of living (including food, fuel, and childcare costs), and this 'rural premium' can serve to further compound income deprivation.	Although there is evidence from the literature that rural households face additional costs, there is little information available in national administrative microdata (e.g. DWP benefits data and HMRC tax data) to reflect this within the IoD.

Effective use of the updated indices



- 7.3.1 Public bodies, local authorities, and delivery partners are encouraged to use the revised Indices as a strategic tool for evidence-based planning and resource allocation. Some examples of how the Indices can be effectively used to tackle rural deprivation are as follows:
- Combine the Indices with local intelligence. The Indices provide a consistent national framework, but rural deprivation is frequently characterised by small, dispersed populations and locally specific challenges. Combining Indices data with local knowledge, additional local-level information, and community insights, will improve interpretation and action.
 - Target resources effectively. Authorities can use the updated measures to identify pockets of deprivation that may be masked by broader affluence within rural districts, ensuring that local funding and interventions reach those most in need.
 - Integrate into strategic policy frameworks. The Indices can inform local development plans, rural proofing exercises, transport and infrastructure strategies, and equality impact assessments.
 - Embed the Indices in rural-proofing and equality assessments. By integrating the data into policy development and impact assessments, decision makers can better account for the distinct ways deprivation manifests in rural settings.
 - Monitor outcomes and service equity. The Indices form one part of the evidence base available for assessing whether public investment is reducing inequalities between rural and urban communities, and for evaluating the accessibility and effectiveness of local services.
- 7.3.2 By utilising the Indices in ways such as these, local and national decision makers can develop evidence informed policies to tackle rural deprivation.

Changes affecting the funding formula



- **Changes to housing costs have been taken into account in the 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).**
- In the income domain, an income threshold has been set at 70% of After Housing Costs (AHC), compared to 60% of Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the 2019 IMD. AHC takes account of housing costs and housing benefit. The change benefits London where housing costs are highest, and where housing benefit is likely to cover a lower share of housing costs.
- The technical paper indicates that researchers have wanted to move to using AHC in the past but there was insufficient data to do so. Nevertheless, the change in methodology has a significant impact on the IMD, and could impact the distribution of local government funding.

Changes to rankings



A higher ranking equals higher assessed deprivation, and potentially increased funding.

- Outer London, average ranking on the overall IMD index has increased by 6 places, and on the income domain by 21 places.
- Metropolitan authorities average ranking has fallen by 3 places on the overall index and by 8 places on the income domain – but there have been some large individual reductions (e.g. Leeds' overall ranking - fallen by 21 places, and St Helens' income ranking has fallen by 25 places).
- Inner London, those boroughs with the highest housing costs have seen very significant increases in ranking (Westminster, Tower Hamlets, Camden), whilst others have much lower rankings.
- County areas have seen the least change, with only Durham and Northumberland seeing substantially lower rankings (in the income domain, largely driven by lower housing costs).

What do the changes in ranking mean?



Given the changes to the IMD, is it a different system than 2019 IMD?

Should the weighting of the IMD in the funding formula be reviewed?

Is that something that MHCLG is considering?

For local authorities, it makes it even more difficult to predict the impact of updating the IMD data.