

[Press release: New poverty statistics developed to help government target support](#)

The new analysis will be based on the work undertaken by the Social Metrics Commission which was presented in their report [‘A New Measure of Poverty’](#) last year.

DWP will publish experimental statistics in 2020 that will take the current Social Metrics Commission measure as a starting point and assess whether and how this can be developed and improved further to increase the value of these statistics to the public. This assessment will include the wider measurement framework presented by the Social Metrics Commission covering the depth, persistence and lived experience of poverty.

DWP will publish these experimental statistics in the second half of 2020 after and in addition to the government’s annual official [Households Below Average Income \(HBAI\)](#) publication. The HBAI figures are based on households’ incomes and will continue to be the main measure of poverty in the UK whilst these experimental statistics are developed.

Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance Will Quince said:

Tackling poverty is a priority for this government. We welcome the work the Social Metrics Commission has done to find new ways to understand the lives and experiences of those who are in poverty.

Employment is at record levels and income inequality and absolute poverty are still lower than in 2010, but nonetheless we know some families need more support. That is why we continue to spend £95 billion a year on working age benefits, and we are looking at what more can be done to help families improve their life chances.

Our HBAI figures are National Statistics based on incomes and give us a strong statistically robust picture of the levels of poverty in the UK. However, the Social Metrics Commission makes a compelling case for why we should also look at poverty more broadly to give a more detailed picture of who is poor, their experience of poverty and their future chances of remaining in, or entering, poverty. We look forward to exploring the merits of developing a new measure with them and other experts in this field. In the long run this could help us target support more effectively.

Social Metrics Commission Chair Philippa Stroud said:

I am delighted that the government is taking poverty measurement

seriously. Without effective measures of poverty, we cannot hope to reduce the number of people who experience it or improve the lives of people who live in poverty.

The Social Metrics Commission has worked hard over the last 3 years to build a broad coalition of support and develop metrics that we believe represent a significant step forward in our ability to measure and understand poverty in the UK.

We now look forward to working with DWP as it takes this process forward and ensuring that the UK has a measure of poverty that can be used to improve policy making.

The department will work with the Social Metrics Commission and other experts, including other government departments, to develop the new statistics.

The [Social Metrics Commission](#) is an independent commission dedicated to helping policy makers and the public understand and take action on poverty.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5126

Follow DWP on: