

## GLA Economics response to HM Treasury Public Spending Statistics (PSS) and Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA) National Statistics user consultation

### 3. Accessing public spending statistics

Can you provide some background on your interest or use of Public Spending statistics

GLA Economics has an interest in the distribution of public spending across the country. This supports analysis on the levelling up agenda, and has been used in its [Transport expenditure in London](#) publication to understand the contribution of public spending to economic development. Public spending statistics are also supporting analysis of the distribution of spending on cultural services, and being combined with local authority spending data.

1. Do you primarily refer to the PESA command paper, or the PSS National Statistics releases? \*

- PESA command paper
- PSS National Statistics releases
- Both
- Neither

2. Do you understand the distinction between the PESA command paper and PSS National Statistics releases? \*

- Yes
- No
- I have a limited understanding

Comments:

It would be helpful to have some documentation on the relationship between these statistics and other related publications. For example, analysis of cultural services has made use of DCMS and Arts Council England Annual Reports, local authority spending reports, and HM Treasury spending tables. It is valuable to be able to bring this range of data together in one consistent data source of PESA. HM Treasury has been very helpful in advising how the sources connect, and that differences largely relate to the timings of data extraction from the underlying databases. It has also usefully explained the differences between local authority and public expenditure definitions of cultural services, and how to use them together.

**3. Do you ever use or refer to the outturn updates published each quarter? \***

Yes

✓  No

**4. Do you find the quarterly outturn updates in PSS useful? \***

Extremely useful

Very useful

Somewhat useful

Not so useful

✓  Not at all useful

**5. Do you use any other releases related to PESA or the PSS publications? \***

✓  Public Sector Finances (PSF)

✓  Country and Regional Analysis (CRA)

OSCAR transparency release

Supply Estimates

Common Core Tables

Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)

I don't use any other releases

Other (please specify):

Comments:

The Country and Regional Analysis is the main publication of interest as it is the one which has London specific data.

The ONS Country and Regional Public Sector Finances publication is also a key data source as it brings together tax receipts with spending to provide the net public spending position on a country and regional basis.

**6. To what extent do you think PESA complements the other sources you use? Which publications of government spending data do you find most useful?**

The CRA and ONS CRPSF are the publications used most regularly as they have London data and allow national comparisons.

## 6. Use of data

**7. Do you consider the PESA and/or PSS National Statistics fit for your purposes? \***

Yes, for the most recent year of data

**8. What improvements do you think could be made to PSS and/or PESA?**

It would be welcome to be able to construct consistent time series of data, ideally for more than five years. To do this it would be valuable to have more comprehensive documentation.

Data for a specific year can vary significantly from release to release of the CRA. It is not entirely clear what is happening.

Some of this is methodological changes to the coverage of public finances – there is now documentation on these changes which is helpful, but some indication of their magnitude would be welcome. It would also be good to have a log of such changes over time.

There may be changes in apportionment methodology across regions. There is now a helpful spreadsheet on the current approach, but it would not be easy to track changes.

There also appear to be quite large changes in numbers over time which do not appear to be for these reasons, and which seem to be down to updating of the data. There is clearly a trade off between delays in reporting, and comprehensiveness. The current timing of publication is fine, but it would be useful to understand a little better in quantified terms the impact of changes between publications.

**9. In PESA, which tables or chapters do you refer to most frequently? \***

- Chapter 1 (Departmental budgets)
- Chapter 2 (Economic category breakdowns)
- Chapter 3 (Changes in departmental budgets)
- Chapter 4 (Total Expenditure on Services (TES) breakdowns)
- Chapter 5 (Public sector expenditure by function, sub-function and economic category)
- Chapter 6 (Central government own expenditure)
- Chapter 7 (Local government financing and expenditure)
- Chapter 8 (Public corporations)
- Chapter 9 and 10 (Country and Regional Analysis Tables)
- Annexes/other tables
- I don't refer to any particular set of tables

Comments:

The CRA table listing individual expenditure items is what is used most frequently, as this provides the granularity of data needed to meet requirements.

**10. Is there any text, graph, or visual information that you refer to within the PESA and PSS publications?**

No – the ONS CRPSF publication is the main source for high level findings as net spending is a more relevant measure than total spending.

**11. Would it be useful to provide underlying data at the same time as the release of the July PSS (akin to the [CRA](#) database)?**

For reference, the CRA database is an excel which publishes all of the underlying data used to populate the main release tables.

It is available in a raw data format and a pivot table, where users can filter the data and drill down on specific attributes:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
2	Department Name	(All)						
3	Organisation Name	(All)						
4	CRA Segment Code	(All)						
5	CRA Segment Name	(All)						
6	COFOG Level 0	(All)						
7	HMT Function	(All)						
8	COFOG Level 1	(All)						
9	HMT Subfunction	(All)						
10	CAP or CUR	(All)						
11	Allocated by HMT or DEPT	(All)						
12	Country	(All)						
13								
14			Values					
15	ID/non-ID	NUTS Region	Sum of 2016-17	Sum of 2017-18	Sum of 2018-19	Sum of 2019-20	Sum of 2020-21	
16	ID	SCOTLAND	57,374,618	58,627,451	60,805,187	63,286,927	81,124,221	
17		WALES	31,377,794	32,398,224	33,386,785	34,480,586	45,078,381	
18		NORTHERN IRELAND	20,473,746	20,765,585	21,695,202	22,726,276	29,109,226	
19		ENGLAND_North East	25,562,459	25,721,959	26,616,576	27,543,490	36,137,684	
20		ENGLAND_North West	68,348,049	70,996,832	72,298,332	75,251,697	100,624,354	
21		ENGLAND_Yorkshire and the Humber	48,106,151	48,500,401	49,975,453	51,724,604	69,838,852	
22		ENGLAND_East Midlands	39,116,138	39,765,579	41,253,002	43,112,090	58,937,441	
23		ENGLAND_West Midlands	51,461,944	52,288,128	54,805,218	57,000,064	76,558,186	
24		ENGLAND_East	49,701,929	51,534,073	53,942,036	56,472,356	78,254,112	
25		ENGLAND_London	88,611,766	90,934,541	92,888,844	97,855,497	139,452,070	
26		ENGLAND_South East	73,471,929	75,331,435	78,972,594	81,749,326	113,394,658	
27		ENGLAND_South West	46,954,959	47,924,459	49,801,100	52,057,842	71,347,440	
28		OUTSIDE UK	25,458,199	26,410,180	29,980,202	28,250,413	26,106,765	
29	ID Total		<b>626,019,681</b>	<b>641,198,847</b>	<b>666,420,531</b>	<b>691,511,168</b>	<b>925,963,390</b>	
30	Non-ID	NON-REGIONAL	101,347,635	107,177,620	104,250,288	105,366,907	100,336,088	
31	Non-ID Total		<b>101,347,635</b>	<b>107,177,620</b>	<b>104,250,288</b>	<b>105,366,907</b>	<b>100,336,088</b>	
32	Grand Total		<b>727,367,316</b>	<b>748,376,467</b>	<b>770,670,819</b>	<b>796,878,075</b>	<b>1,026,299,478</b>	
33							*	

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

Comments:

The PSS is not an important data source for our purposes.

12. Are there any other breakdowns of the data you would find useful, or would this be best served by publication of the granular data?

Publication of the granular data is most helpful as requirements can be very specific

## 7. Presentation

13. In 2020 the PSS release was converted from a Portable Document Format (pdf) publication to a [HTML publication](#). What format do you prefer? \*

pdf

HTML

I don't have a preference

Comments:

The focus is on the data tables in the CRA

Are there any particular new visualisations or presentations of the data that you would find particularly useful?

No

14. How clear do you find the methodology used in PESA, PSS, and the explanatory guidance published? \*

Extremely clear

Very clear

Somewhat clear

Not so clear

Not at all clear

Comments:

The explanatory guidance has been vastly improved. Answers to previous questions provide some suggestions on possible further improvements.

**15. Do have any suggestions on areas that we should focus on to improve the commentary in PESA publications?**

The answer to Q8 provides suggestions.

## 8. Your details

**16. Are you responding on behalf of an organisation, or as an individual? \***

- Organisation
- Individual
- Prefer not to say

**17. What is your organisation? \***

Greater London Authority