

Ed Humpherson  
Office for Statistics Regulation  
Sent via e-mail.

16 March 2026

## Change in designation for *Poverty and income inequality in Scotland* publication

Dear Ed

I am writing to request that the designation of the [Poverty and income inequality in Scotland](#) publication, due for release 26 March 2026, be changed from accredited official statistics to official statistics in development.

As you will be aware, this output uses data from the Family Resources Survey, which is carried out by the Department for Work and Pensions with a funding contribution from Scottish Government.

DWP are undertaking a major and long-awaited programme of methodological development, which enhances the use of administrative data through benefit and earnings linkage. These improvements will represent a positive step forward and align with wider best practice in improving the quality, coherence and completeness of income-based poverty statistics, as well as reducing the burden on respondents and interviewers.

Three substantial components are being implemented in stages, as described in the release strategies for the [FRS](#) and [HBAI](#):

- Benefit linkage: replacing survey reported benefit receipt with administrative records to reduce historical underreporting. This will apply in part to the upcoming release.
- Revised grossing regime: updating grossing based on the most recent Census-based household projections and introducing new control totals. This is planned for future releases.
- Earnings linkage: replacing survey reported earnings with administrative earnings data to address potential misreporting.

While these developments represent essential modernisation, the scale and ongoing nature of the changes introduce a degree of uncertainty which is particularly noticeable for estimates below the UK level, including for Scotland. A temporary suspension of accreditation would acknowledge that the current statistics represent a transitional stage, enable clearer guidance to users on what is changing and why, and transparently signal uncertainty in the estimates and any trend comparisons, with figures subject to revision as the development work continues.

This proposed approach is in line with that of the Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Department for Communities, who produce similar reports for their respective jurisdictions. A temporary suspension of the accreditation in Scotland will therefore ensure a clear and coherent approach for users of poverty estimates.

For the above reasons and to maintain transparency and uphold standards, I request that this output be temporarily reclassified as official statistics in development, starting with the publication on 26 March 2026. In order to support users, we will continue to work with DWP on the communication of poverty estimates for Scotland to ensure they are used appropriately while the suspension of accreditation is in place. We will, as usual, keep users and yourselves informed of any further developments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alastair McAlpine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alastair McAlpine  
Chief Statistician