

News

Have the cutbacks in statistical budgets undermined the statistical base?

This is the title of a session at the Royal Statistical Society's conference early in September 2012. RadStats has been asked to contribute to the session, after the UK Statistics Authority and the National Statistician have made their own assessments. The invitation is partly a result of items on the Radical Statistics blog (<http://radstats.wordpress.com/reducedstatistics/>).

We have 20 minutes at the conference but would like to gather sufficient evidence to also produce written summaries that can have a more lasting impact. After an email appeal, seven of us are working to these ends, with help from a student at Manchester University, Tom Clarke. We have constituted ourselves as a RadStats subgroup. We are examining financial statistics reported by government departments, supporting a survey of local authority researchers on how the cuts have affected research outputs, staffing and budgets, and gathering evidence to summarise the impacts on statistics of education, health and housing.

Any assessment of the impact of the cuts is hampered because 'the statistical base' is not a category retrievable consistently from financial and staff reporting. Research, data collection and data analysis are mixed up with development of administrative systems and policy management. We hope that the resources of the UKSA and the National Statistician will be best placed to make an assessment of the size of the cuts. A RadStats contribution may be more able to highlight impacts on sensitive political issues, to explore the impact on statistics of shifts from public to private provision of services, to highlight changes in quality of statistical and research services, to give some historical (and therefore hopeful) perspective, and to explore how decisions on cutbacks have been made.

At the time of writing we are gathering ideas and evidence. If you have information to contribute to the Reduced Statistics group, please contact reducedstatistics@radstats.org.uk.

Ludi Simpson

Advance Notice Radstats Annual Conference and AGM

Saturday 23rd February 2013

9am-5pm (approx)

in York (close to rail station)

Inequality, Statistics, and York

For current details see www.tinyurl.com/RadStats2013

Contact John Bibby with suggestions for speakers or for further information: johnbibbyjohnbibby@gmail.com

Additional Activities

Activities are also being planned for Friday and Saturday evenings, and for Sunday daytime. These may include a "York Alternative Music Festival" on the Saturday evening. So please plan to stay over if you can.

Accommodation

There is good budget accommodation available nearby in a marvellous converted Georgian house. We may also be able to arrange overnights with families.

Please email John Bibby (see above) for details.

Transport

Trains to York from London take under 2 hours and can cost under £10 (each way) if booked in advance. There are direct trains to York from most major cities.