

28 January 2022

The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) comments on the ONS release of CPI for different household groups

Stian Westlake, Chief Executive of the Royal Statistical Society, said: “Today’s release of CPI data for different household groups by the ONS is a useful and welcome interim step but is not the long term answer . Apart from the hugely important question of whether inflation is hitting poorer households more than rich ones, Jack Monroe has done a great service in reminding everyone that a key point of consumer price indices is to measure inflation as actually experienced by households. While these changes will go some way to better capture household costs, the issue remains that CPI was never intended for this precise purpose.

“The Household Cost Indices (HCIs), currently being developed by the ONS and due for release in May, are designed to reflect household experience. They include items such as mortgage and other interest payments, student loan repayments and unlike most consumer price indices including CPI, are not skewed towards higher spending, richer households. Much more attention needs to be paid to and resources devoted to, their development as they can provide the long term answer to what Jack Monroe and others are rightly asking for.”

Notes to editors:

ONS release:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/cpiconsistentinflationrateestimatesforukhouseholdgroups/2005to2021>