

Public Consultations 2006/07

Would you like to take part?

The Office for National Statistics' UK Centre for the Measurement of Government Activity (UKCeMGA) is soon to embark on a widespread consultation programme, covering key areas in the measurement of performance in our public services.

UKCeMGA is an integral part of ONS. It was established by the National Statistician to develop and take forward the challenges set out in the Atkinson Review of *Measurement of Government Output and Productivity for the National Accounts* (published January 2005), and to make relevant information available about public service performance.

You may be aware that we have already produced extensive analyses of key public services' productivity in the form of a series of "Productivity Articles". So far, two articles have been published on health, and articles have also been published on education, adult social care and social security administration. These services represent public expenditure in excess of £150billion a year.

However, measuring the performance of public services is not straightforward, and UKCeMGA has been working in partnership with the research community, with other national statistics institutes and with other government departments to improve and refine the methodologies that are used. We now believe that, for some of these services, we have reached a stage where it would be of great benefit to carry out a wide ranging consultation with the external expert community – both analysts and practitioners – in order to help determine how further development work should proceed.

UKCeMGA is therefore holding a series of consultation seminars throughout **Autumn and Winter 2006/07**. We will be holding **three consultation exercises** within the overall programme, each of which will be on a different topic:

1. **Establishing the Principles** - this first consultation is about two of the most complex and far-reaching methodological questions common to the measurement of all public services. The consultation will take place in two parts:
 - i. **Adjusting output for quality change** - to discuss the principles that should underpin the measurement of quality change in the public services. (Principle B of the Atkinson Report)
 - ii. **The value of public services in a growing economy** - to discuss the economic foundations for recognising economic growth in the measurement of output of public services. (Principle C in the Atkinson Report)
2. **Measuring the Output of the Education Service** - how to improve our current methods for measuring education.
3. **Measuring the Output of the Health Service** - how to improve our current methods for measuring health.

Why is measuring the performance of our public services important?

The public services account for over a fifth of the economy, larger than the whole of manufacturing. So accurately measuring their output matters even on a macroeconomic scale. But, furthermore, these measures are important because accountability for the performance of public services is a matter of widespread public interest. They are thus important to:

- taxpayers
- service providers
- and to users of these services.

Reliable information about their performance is therefore, essential.

How can you get involved?

For the above reasons, we would like to achieve maximum value from these consultations. If you are interested in taking part we would be grateful if you could contact us by **Friday 18 August** and let us know your details, which consultation exercise(s) you are interested in, and which of the following options you would prefer:

1. I would like to attend a seminar in London to participate in the consultation;
2. I am a member of a group who would be interested in a visit from you to discuss the topic further;
3. I would be interested in receiving the formal consultation document (but not attend the seminar);
4. I would like to know more information first before deciding.

If there is sufficient demand we may run an additional information session prior to the main event itself to give those attending an opportunity to clarify their understanding of the topic. If you think this would be of interest, please indicate your preference in your reply.

You can reply by e-mail to UKCeMGA@ons.gsi.gov.uk, or by telephone on **020 7533 6038**, or in writing to:

UKCeMGA – Consultations
D1/07
ONS
1 Drummond Gate
London SW1V 2QQ

If you know of anyone who may wish to contribute we would be grateful if you could let us have their details or forward this information to them.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your time.