

# Deprivation measures of those who write to MEPs and Councillors through WriteToThem.com

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## 1 Introduction

As part of the 2006 WriteToThem.com statistics<sup>1</sup>, we looked at who in England writes to their MP by deprivation of the area, to respond to the comment “only rich people use your internet service”. That suggestion was clearly dismissed, as usage across levels of deprivation was either higher in more deprived areas (at Ward level) or flat (at Super Output Area (SOA) level<sup>2</sup>).

While MPs are by far the most high profile of our letter recipients, we also let you write to your MEPs and Councillors. We can therefore rerun the same process on this data as we did for the MPs above (for the method, see the original note; the only difference was we did SOA level only). As previously all this data is anonymous and belongs to mySociety.

All these figures should be taken as relative to the 20% average value if deprivation was irrelevant (as it effectively is for MPs). All the percentages sum up to 100% across the five quintiles.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.writetothem.com/stats/2006/>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.writetothem.com/stats/2006/zeitgeist#deprivation>

## 2 MEPs

Members of the European Parliament represent you (roughly) regionally in Europe, and the number of MEPs that serve your region depends on the region in which you live. As a result, unlike your MP, you don't have a single MEP who represents your area - they all represent you.

However, while that denotes who MEPs receive letters from, you can send the same letter to all of your MEPs - they all represent you equally. As a result, as well as looking at the letters MEPs receive, we can also look at the unique letters that are sent or written:

Table 1: MEPs - letters received

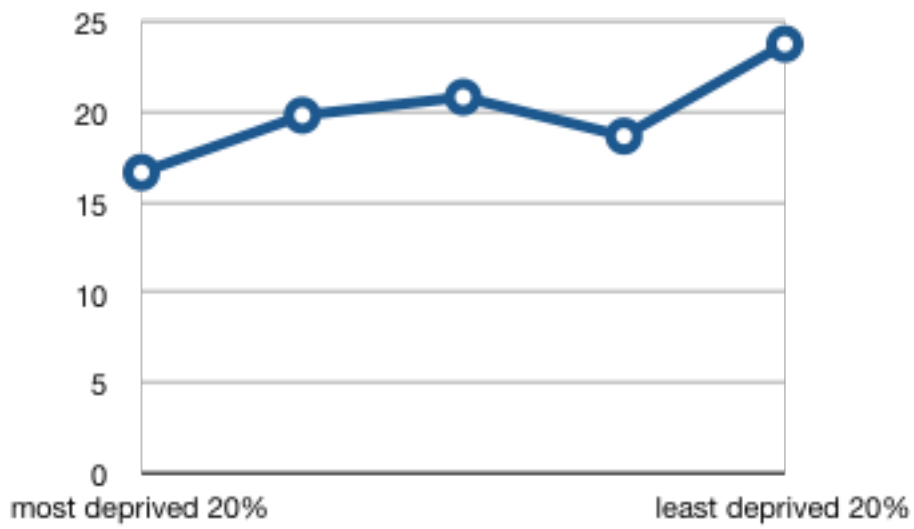
Most Deprived	16.71%
	19.87%
about average	20.88%
	18.72 %
Least Deprived	23.82%

Table 2: MEPs - letters sent

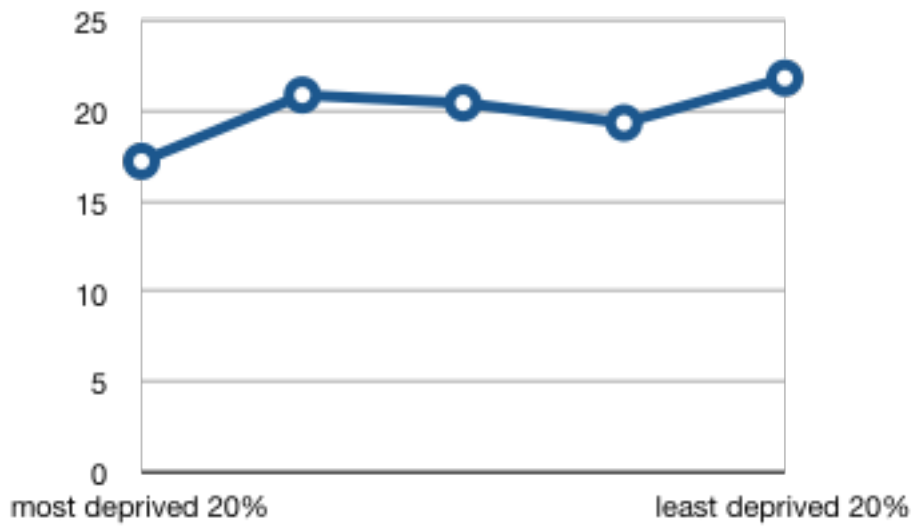
Most Deprived	17.27%
	20.94%
about average	20.58%
	19.42%
Least Deprived	21.88%

People who live in more deprived areas not only contact their MEPs less than the those from the least deprived areas, but those from the less deprived areas are more likely to send their letters to all their MEPs rather than just one. In 2006, we WriteToThem sent 8870 letters to MEPs (2991 unique letters) from 2520 unique postcodes (2140 unique postcodes were in England to be matched on).

**MEPs - letters received**



**MEPs - letters sent**

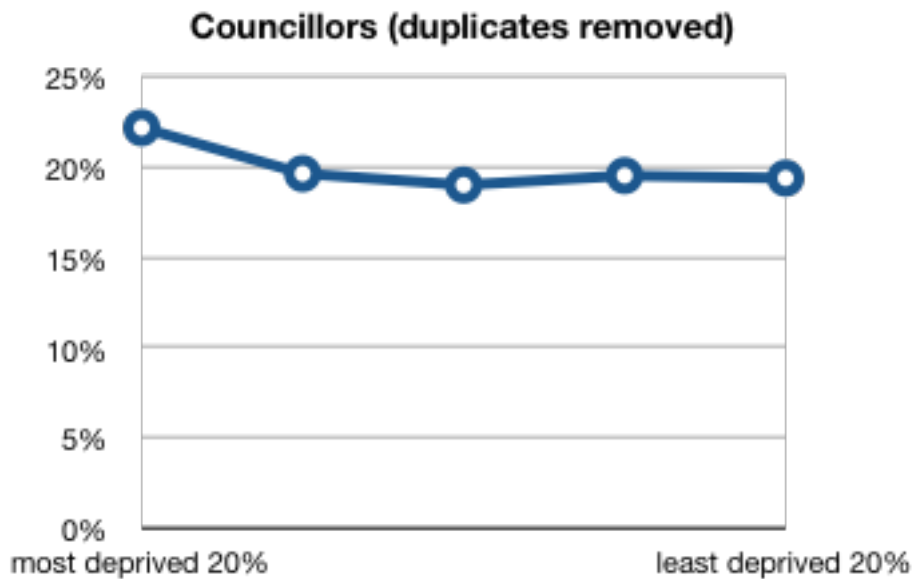


### 3 Councillors

There are a lot of councillors and they get a lot of mail, especially when you consider that they're volunteers without a personal staff. These results should also be taken with care at a local level, as some councils will have been unavailable for varying periods of time from around elections, until we could confirm details of councillors afterwards. In 2006, we WriteToThem sent 12899 letters to councillors from 9184 unique postcodes (7885 unique postcodes were in England to be matched on).

Table 3: Councillors

Most Deprived	22.72%
	19.79%
about average	18.90%
	19.57%
Least Deprived	19.03%



While you can write to multiple councillors, the way WriteToThem works means that we mostly only record that as a single letter as the vast majority are sent via the council's "Democratic Services" department. This is different to MEP letters which are sent direct to their offices. As we can't tell the difference, we've discounted the entries where it is likely that the record was an identical copy of a letter going to another councillor, rather than a different letter.

## 4 Summary

While deprivation makes negligible difference to the use people make of WriteToThem to write to MPs, deprived areas write to councillors more, whereas MEPs get much more mail from less deprived areas. Overlaying the graphs for all these types of data (MEPs are twice, once with the duplicate copies to all MEPs, once including them):

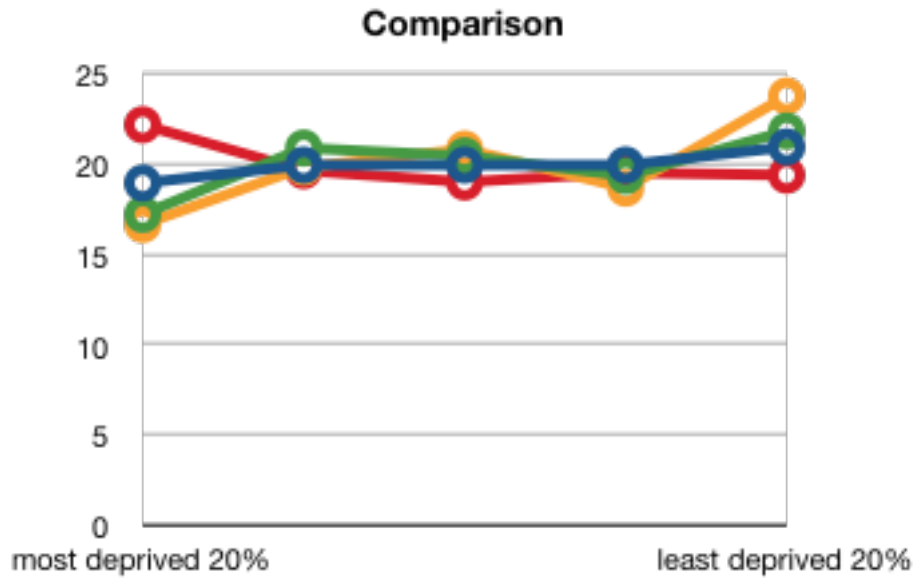


Figure 1: Blue is MPs, Red is councillors, yellow is MEPs letters received, Green is MEPs letters sent.

In the biggest difference we found in this data, MEPs are nearly 50% more likely to receive letters through WriteToThem from their most deprived constituents (16.7%) as they are from their least deprived constituents (23.8%).