

Scotland really does need its own VAT and tax data if G...

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The FT [featured an article on Thursday](#) that I thought relevant to [my recent debate on the quality of Scottish economic data](#). The [Telegraph then came in](#) with another spin on the issue.

What both noted was that the Office for National Statistics has now realised that their survey basis for calculating GDP can be quite misleading on occasion and that VAT and PAYE based data might be considerably more useful. I was, of course, making this same point when suggesting that the absence of any dedicated VAT and other tax data for Scotland was a severe impediment to its effective self management if its own economy in the contributions I made to debate.

There were those (oddly, and I think perversely) of mainly Unionist persuasion who seemed to take issue with me on this, claiming that I should be quite happy with the use of what I think to be poor quality apportioned UK data for the purposes of Scottish economic management. Respectfully, I now suggest my points have been made by the ONS for me. Not only is survey data not as good as VAT and tax data but we also know as a matter of fact that reliable VAT and PAYE data is not available for Scotland, meaning it will have to make do with second rate information. That is, until it takes matters into its own hands, of course, whether a devolved or independent state.