

COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS - POLICIES & STATEMENTS

NISRA Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency | Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann um Staitisticí agus Taighde

Department of Justice | An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt | Männystrie O tha Laa

Updated November 2026

Context

- Analytical Services Group (ASG) is the statistics and research team on loan to the Department of Justice (DoJ). They are responsible for collecting, compiling, processing, analysing, interpreting, and disseminating a wide range of statistics covering courts, experiences/perceptions of crime, prisons, prosecutions and convictions, reoffending, victims/witnesses and youth justice.

- A catalogue of all ASG's statistical publications, identifying those that have been designated as 'Accredited Official Statistics', can be found on our publication schedule.

- Our statistics are produced in accordance with underlying principles set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics. This document brings together ASG's practice and policy statements setting out how our statistics comply with these principles. It contains ten policies/statements in total. These have been numbered one to ten for ease of use and relate to the principles as detailed below -

Trustworthiness

Building confidence in the people and organisations that produce statistics and data

1) Show integrity;

2) Lead responsibly;

3) Be transparent;

4) Manage data responsibly.

Quality

Data and methods that produce assured statistics

5) Prioritise quality;

6) Be rigorous;

7) Be open about Quality.

Value

Statistics that support society's needs for information

8) Be relevant;

9) Be clear;

10) Be accessible.

1 & 2) Show Integrity and Lead Responsibility (1 of 1)

We are committed to producing, managing and disseminating statistics for the general good, in an impartial manner that is free of political or personal interests. We adhere to high professional standards and undertake continuous development, including mandatory training on the Code. When required, we report concerns under the Code to the National Statistician and the Office for Statistics Regulation.

Our Commitment

We aim to deliver a high-quality service but we recognise that sometimes things can go wrong. When this happens, we will do our best to put matters right quickly. We will listen to your complaint and

- Treat it seriously, and in confidence;
- Investigate it thoroughly and fairly;
- Resolve it promptly, and informally whenever possible;
- Wherever possible find a remedy; and
- Learn from complaints to improve our services.

1 & 2) Show Integrity and Lead Responsibility (2 of 2)

What To Do If You Have A Formal Complaint

You can complain in writing, by e-mail or by telephone. Please provide as much relevant information as possible so that we can deal with your case promptly.

To: Analytical Services Group, Financial Services Division

Department of Justice

Level 3, Block B

Castle Buildings

Stormont Estate

Belfast, BT4 3SG.

Tel: 028 9052 0181

Email: statistics.research@justice-ni.gov.uk

An acknowledgement of all complaints will be issued within 3 working days of receipt, giving the name of the member of staff dealing with it. We aim to issue a full response to your complaint within 10 working days of receiving it. If we cannot, we will tell you why and let you know when you can expect to get a full reply. It will help us deal with your complaint if you can provide as much background information as possible.

3) Be Transparent (1 of 2)

Release of Statistics

- An annual publication schedule will be provided on the DoJ statistics website, with the month of publication included for the year and the exact date specified at least four weeks in advance of publication where possible. Publications will also be pre-announced on the gov.uk release calendar as early as possible with the exact date specified at least four weeks in advance of publication where possible.
- Changes to pre-announced release dates or times must be agreed by the Chief Statistician. Any changes will be announced and an explanation of the reason for the change provided.
- Statistics will be released to all users at 9.30am on a weekday.
- A maximum of 24 hours pre-release access will be granted to eligible individuals specified in the DoJ Pre-release Access document. A statement of compliance setting out the principles, criteria and conditions under which DoJ permits pre-release access to specific outputs is available on the DoJ website.
- Statistical outputs will always be released separately from and before any political statement or comment.

3) Be Transparent (2 of 2)

Revision Process

We are committed to being open and transparent with users about the need, nature and extent of revisions; how and when to expect them; and the processes by which they will be communicated and published. Our policy, regardless of whether the responsibility for the need for revision lies with ASG or others is -

- If the revision is minor, or insignificant, i.e. inconsequential and hardly noticeable, we will insert the necessary changes without alerting anyone. Alternatively, we may accumulate minor corrections and make an update at the time of next scheduled publication to avoid making too many frequent minor changes.
- If the revision is major and unplanned it will be made as soon as possible and an appropriate notification will be placed on our website detailing why the corrections were necessary. All electronic versions of affected publication, table, etc. will be replaced as soon as possible with the amended versions. Known users will be notified by email.
- If major changes to source administrative systems are pre-planned or if changes to statistical methods are intended, we will, where possible, consult with users on the changes and their implications.

4) Manage Data Responsibly (1 of 4)

We are committed to maintaining the trust and co-operation of respondents to our surveys and individuals who own and manage the administrative data sources that we use. This statement sets out the steps that we take to protect the security and confidentiality of the data we receive, store, process and disseminate to ensure that none of the statistics we produce are likely to identify an individual or organisation, or any private information relating to them unless specifically agreed with them. The statement also sets out how we comply with – 1) the relevant legislation, including the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679; and 2) the T6-Data Governance section of the Code of Practice, which states that: "Organisations should look after people's information securely and manage data in ways that are consistent with relevant legislation and service the public good."

Arrangements for Maintaining Confidentiality of Statistical Data

DoJ has its own security policies for governance and information. In general –

i) Physical security

- Data on DoJ systems comply with the security standards required of all criminal justice bodies.
- ASG is located within secure DoJ sites with access restricted using logged entacard access procedures. Offices within these sites comply with DoJ data protection requirements and operate a 'clear desk' policy with all restricted or confidential documents stored in appropriately secure cabinets.

ii) Technical security

- Access to the various DoJ IT systems is via personal laptops, accessed through docking stations located within secure DoJ sites or via home wifi.
- All laptops are encrypted with unique bit locker codes. They have no disk/CD Rom access although they can be connected to mobile devices and memory sticks.
- All staff also have their own unique password which only allows them access to the systems that they have been authorised to use and in relation to which they have received appropriate training.

4) Manage Data Responsibly (2 of 4)

iii) Organisational security

- The oversight roles and responsibilities DoJ has in place to deliver an effective governance regime are outlined in the Information Security Policy and include the responsibilities of the Permanent Secretary, Senior Information Risk Owner, Departmental Security Officer, Information Technology Security Officer, Security Manager, Chief Information Officer and staff responsibilities.

iv) Personnel security

- All staff who work with data about individuals receive appropriate security checks.
- All staff have received training relating to the principles behind, and their obligations under, GDPR and the Data Protection Act.
- Statisticians within ASG are seconded from the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) and have been made aware of the contents of the National Statistician's Guidance on 'Confidentiality of Official Statistics'.

v) Statistical disclosure control

- When reporting figures or tabular results derived from datasets that could potentially result in the identification of an individual or private information about them, disclosure control methods will be adopted as appropriate.
- Three types of disclosure risk will be assessed:

  Identity: If a person or people can be identified (by either the persons themselves or someone else), then there is an identity disclosure risk.

  Attribute: If confidential information about a person or group of people is revealed and can be attributed to the person, or each person in the group, then there is an attribute disclosure risk.

  Residual: If outputs from the same source, or different sources/databases, can be combined to reveal information about a person or group of persons, then there is a residual disclosure risk.

4) Manage Data Responsibly (3 of 4)

- For each statistical and data release, the risk of disclosure will be assessed in respect of the following:
  - ✓ level of aggregation of the data;
  - ✓ number of tables produced from each dataset;
  - ✓ likelihood of an identification attempt;
  - ✓ size of the population; and
  - ✓ consequences of disclosure.
- To minimise the risk of disclosure and maximise the utility of the statistics in statistical releases, we will use an appropriate combination of statistical disclosure control methodologies including table design, rounding, primary suppression, and secondary suppression.
- Each statistical publication will provide details of any statistical disclosure control method if used.
- Decisions on the type and extent of disclosure control to be applied will be taken by the statistician responsible for the relevant work area.
- These methods are adopted and applied in line with best practice guidance from Government Statistical Service (GSS) with separate guidance provided for administrative and survey data.

4) Manage Data Responsibly (4 of 4)

Sharing Data with a Third Party

- Written confidentiality protection arrangements, in the form of an information sharing agreement, covering the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the Code of Practice for Official Statistics will be put in place prior to sharing confidential information with a third party.
- Information agreements will be approved by the DoJ Information Security Branch before confidential data is shared.
- Transfer of confidential data (only when a data sharing agreement is in place) will take place under the guidance and authorisation of the DoJ Information Security Branch to ensure transfer is secure.

Requests for Information

- We will deal with all requests for information in a timely manner, treating all requests fairly and without prejudice taking into account the public interest and the Data Protection Act (1998) and Freedom of Information Act (2000). Guidance on the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts can be found on the Information Commissioner's website.
- Requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act may be made through the central Freedom of Information team at:

  foi@justice-ni.gov.uk

  or

  FOI Team, Information Services Division

  Block 2, Knockview Buildings

  Stormont Estate

  Belfast

  BT4 3SL.
- A copy of the Department's Notification to the Information Commissioner can be found on the Information Commissioner's website under "Register of Data Controllers".

5) Prioritise Quality (1 of 8)

We are committed to providing sufficient information on quality to allow users to decide whether data meets their needs. This will be achieved by –

Suitable data sources

When compiling statistics we will consider the use of administrative data systems before seeking to collect information directly. We will select sources that are appropriate for the intended use and publish information on the quality of the administrative sources used. We will aim to have constructive relationships with data owners to ensure we fully understand the methods of collection, definitions and quality. More detail is provided in our Be Relevant Policy at policy 8.

Applying scientific methods

Scientific principles are applied to the production of statistics and reports are accompanied by statements providing information on methods and factors giving rise to bias.

Promoting comparability

Comparability within the UK is achieved whenever possible through the adoption of common standards, concepts, sampling methods, questions, definitions, statistical units and classifications. Where differences do exist these are identified and explained.

Ensuring continuity

When changes are made to methods or coverage, users are informed and, whenever possible, back series calculated and published to minimise breaks in data and maintain continuity.

5) Prioritise Quality (2 of 8)

The following table describes the key indicators regularly evaluated to ensure user requirements are met.

Dimensions of Quality

Dimensions of Quality	Key Components for Assessment/Consideration	Users of DoJ statistics should expect that:
1) Relevance The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs in both coverage and content.	• Who are the users of the statistics; • What are their needs; and • How well does the output meet these needs?	• They will be appropriately consulted about quality principles and strategy in line with the Be Relevant Policy.

5) Prioritise Quality (3 of 8)

Dimensions of Quality	Key Components for Assessment/Consideration	Users of DoJ statistics should expect that:
2) Accuracy and reliability The proximity between an estimate and the unknown true value. For survey data: the closeness between an estimated result and the (unknown) true value. For administrative databases: how well the information is recorded and transmitted.	For survey data, accuracy can be split into sampling error and non-sampling error, where non-sampling error includes: • coverage error; • non-response error; • measurement error; • processing error; and • model assumption error. For administrative databases - • completeness; • timeliness of recording and transmission; • accuracy of recording of data items; • correct use of coding; and • correct interpretation.	Statistical publications will: • contain a full description of data quality issues relating to the release, and any impact that has on analysis of changes over time; • be compiled such that comparisons between different groups will be transparent to both lay and expert audiences; • be fully compliant with the published Revisions Policy; • where applicable, include full information on sampling variability, confidence intervals, response rates and other relevant criteria to allow users to make informed judgements on the quality of survey data; • include details of how administrative data is collected in order to allow users to understand its strengths and limitations.

5) Prioritise Quality (4 of 8)

Dimensions of Quality	Key Components for Assessment/Consideration	Users of DoJ statistics should expect that:
3) Timeliness and punctuality Timeliness refers to the time gap between publication and the reference period. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates.	• Production time; • Frequency of release; and • Punctuality of release.	Statistical publications will: • comply with the Code of Practice on pre-announced dates of publication; and • be published as soon as possible after the relevant time-period

5) Prioritise Quality (5 of 8)

Dimensions of Quality	Key Components for Assessment/Consideration	Users of DoJ statistics should expect that:
4) Accessibility and clarity Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.	• Needs of expert and non expert users; • Consistency of standard in relation to revisions, rounding, data suppression and spreadsheet type; • Assistance to locate information; • Clarity; and • Dissemination.	• All publications will use plain English where possible.

5) Prioritise Quality (6 of 8)

Dimensions of Quality	Key Components	Users of DoJ statistics should expect that:
5) Coherence and comparability Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but refer to the same topic, are similar. Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.	• Comparability over time; • Special domains e.g. sub-national, national, international; and • Domain or sub-population e.g. crime/offence type, ethnicity.	• Harmonised concepts and definitions will be used in statistical publications wherever they are available; • Any statistical publication which does not use harmonised definitions will clearly explain why the harmonised definition has not been used and any plans to move it to a harmonised basis; and • As standard practice, related statistical publications will be released on the same day in order to aid user understanding unless: ✓ this would mean significant delay to one set of published figures in order to present the coherent set of releases; and/or ✓ user engagement suggests that separate releases on separate days would be preferable.

5) Prioritise Quality (7 of 8)

Dimensions of Quality	Key Components	Users of DoJ statistics should expect that:
6) Assessment of user needs and perceptions The process for finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products.	• Understanding users and uses; and • Obtaining user views.	• There will be regular consultation to understand both their needs and the impact of developments and changes to methodologies; • Open and easy-to-use routes to supply us with their views, queries and opinions will be available; and • Regular feedback will be sought to gauge satisfaction.
7) Trade-offs between output and quality components The extent to which different aspects of quality are balanced against each other.	• Descriptions of trade-offs that have been analysed; • Basis decision made; and • Statements concerning trade-offs that should have been analysed but have not been.	• They will be fully informed where trade-offs are required.

5) Prioritise Quality (8 of 8)

Dimensions of Quality	Key Components	Users of DoJ statistics should expect that:
8) Performance, cost and respondent burden The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.	• Operational costs; and • Respondent burden.	• Respondent burden will be kept to a minimum.
9) Confidentiality, transparency and security The procedures and policy used to ensure sound confidentiality, security and transparent practices.	• Procedures on confidentiality and security.	• Appropriate confidentiality and security procedures are documented and followed to ensure that confidentiality of statistical data is maintained.

6) Be rigorous (1 of 11)

When compiling statistics, we select data sources that are appropriate for their intended use and work closely with data owners to understand collection methods, definitions and data quality. The following table outlines the administrative/management data sources currently used by ASG to produce Official Statistics and Accredited Official Statistics.

Administrative/Management Data Sources Used by ASG

Name/Title of Administrative Data Source	Main administrative purpose of this source/system	Geospatial Coverage	Title(s) of all Statistical Products derived from this Source
1) Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism (DSM1) – an interconnected information system which draws on data from the Police Service of NI, NI Courts and Tribunals Service and the Public Prosecution Service	Day to day information exchange between the organisations and the generation and maintenance of the NI Criminal History Database.	Northern Ireland	• Court Prosecutions, Convictions and Out of Court Disposals • Case Processing Time • First Time Entrants to the Criminal Justice System • Reoffending • Youth Engagement Statistics
2) Prisoner Record Information System Management (PRISM) – NI Prison Service case management system	PRISM is a live recording system used by NIPS for day to day case management purposes including listing prisoner status/privileges and to regulate discharge dates/record sentence lengths.	Northern Ireland	• NI Prison Population • Reoffending

6) Be rigorous (2 of 11)

Name/Title of Administrative Data Source	Main administrative purpose of this source/system	Geospatial Coverage	Title(s) of all Statistical Products derived from this Source
3) Youth Justice Agency (YJA) case management systems	Comprises 4 live administrative databases which are used for the day to day management of custodial and community cases by YJA	Northern Ireland	• Reoffending • YJA Workload Statistics
4) Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)	Live operating system used in each court tier to process every part of court business from receipt of payments through to the production of final orders made.	Northern Ireland	• Courts Quarterly Statistics • Judicial Statistics • Mortgage Press Release
5) Office of Care and Protection Patients System	Recording system used by the Office of Care & Protection to detail the administrative work relating to a person registered as a patient and whose financial affairs are subjected to the courts control.	Northern Ireland	• Courts Quarterly Statistics • Judicial Statistics

6) Be rigorous (3 of 11)

Name/Title of Administrative Data Source	Main administrative purpose of this source/system	Geospatial Coverage	Title(s) of all Statistical Products derived from this Source
6) Judgment Enforcement Management System (JEMS)	Recording system used by the Enforcements of Judgments Office to detail the administrative work relating to the enforcement of court orders.	Northern Ireland	• Judicial Statistics
7) Coroners – Courts internally designed Excel spreadsheet	Designed to capture business volumes information at the count level, and individual level information in relation to sittings and inquests.	Northern Ireland	• Judicial Statistics
8) Social Security Commissioners - Courts internally designed Excel spreadsheet	Designed to capture business volumes information at the count level, and individual level information in relation to sittings and inquests.	Northern Ireland	• Judicial Statistics

6) Be rigorous (4 of 11)

Name/Title of Administrative Data Source	Main administrative purpose of this source/system	Geospatial Coverage	Title(s) of all Statistical Products derived from this Source
9) Pensions Appeal Tribunal - Courts internally designed Excel spreadsheet	Designed to capture business volumes information at the count level, and individual level information in relation to sittings and inquests.	Northern Ireland	• Judicial Statistics

6) Be rigorous (5 of 11)

The following table describes change management, access, auditing quality and security arrangements for the administrative/management sources which ASG currently use to produce their Official Statistics and Accredited Official Statistics.

Governance Arrangements for Administrative/Management Data Sources Used by ASG

Name/Title of Administrative Data Source	Change Management	Access Arrangements	Auditing Quality	Security
1) Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism (DSM1)	ASG staff liaise directly with the Causeway management in DoJ	ASG accesses relevant data via periodic data extracts, the specification of which is agreed with, and subsequently produced by, the Causeway management team in DOJ. Extracts are provided at offence level and are validated and analysed by statisticians.	When downloads are taken from Causeway, the following validation steps are completed: (i) Checking data consistency (over time and between variables) and reliability; (ii) Analysis of trends; (iii) Checking values fall within acceptable ranges; (iv) Assurance from subject matter experts; (v) Cross-referencing for consistency with data held on Criminal Record Viewer (CRV) and the Courts management information system (ICOS); and, (vi) Cross referencing with data held by YJA.	Data are extracted from Causeway by a member of Causeway management team and passed to ASG via a secure network link. Once received by ASG, files are held on secure drives only accessible by relevant ASG staff. Files are not transmitted outside ASG.

6) Be rigorous (6 of 11)

Name/Title of Administrative Data Source	Change Management	Access Arrangements	Auditing Quality	Security
2) Prisoner Record Information System Management (PRISM)	ASG staff liaise directly with the database management team in Northern Ireland Prison Service	ASG has been granted live read access to the PRISM system and also to relevant sections of the PRISM extractor programme – Business Objects. This enables statisticians to extract and download bespoke frozen file segments on command from the PRISM database.	When downloads are taken from PRISM, the following validation steps are completed: (i) Checking data consistency (over time and between variables) and reliability; (ii) Analysis of trends; (iii) Checking values fall within acceptable ranges; (iv) Assurance from subject matter experts; (v) Cross-referencing for consistency with data held and produced by Prison Service Headquarters.	Data are extracted from PRISM via a secure password protected and encrypted link. Files are held on secure drives only accessible by relevant branch staff. Files are not transmitted outside the branch.

6) Be rigorous (7 of 11)

Name/Title of Administrative Data Source	Change Management	Access Arrangements	Auditing Quality	Security
3) YJA case management systems	ASG staff liaise directly with the database management team in YJA	ASG has been granted live access to the YJA case management systems. This enables statisticians to extract or download bespoke data extracts via SQL syntax (or through a crystal report) from the case management database.	When downloads are taken from YJA case management, the following validation steps are completed: (i) Checking data consistency (over time and between variables) and reliability; (ii) Analysis of trends; (iii) Checking values fall within acceptable ranges; (iv) Assurance from subject matter experts; (v) Cross-referencing for consistency with data held and produced by YJA staff.	Data are extracted from the YJA case management system which can only be accessed via a personal username and password. A record of the latest user who made the changes to a record is completed. Extracted files are held on secure servers which only ASG's YJA statistical team (and IT maintenance) can access. If data is required to be transmitted outside the branch this is only done when a data sharing agreement is in place.

6) Be rigorous (8 of 11)

Name/Title of Administrative Data Source	Change Management	Access Arrangements	Auditing Quality	Security
4) Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS)	ASG staff liaise directly with the ICOS management team in Courts	ASG has direct access to a portal which enables them to export relevant information from ICOS on a weekly basis	When downloads are taken from ICOS, the following validation steps are completed: (i) Checking data consistency (over time and between variables) and reliability; (ii) Analysis of trends; (iii) Checking values fall within acceptable ranges; (iv) Assurance from subject matter experts.	Text files are downloaded onto a secure facility only accessible by relevant branch staff. Files are not transmitted outside the branch.

6) Be rigorous (9 of 11)

Name/Title of Administrative Data Source	Change Management	Access Arrangements	Auditing Quality	Security
5) Office of Care and Protection Patients System (OCP)	ASG staff liaise directly with the OCP manager in Courts	ASG request the data on a quarterly basis from the OCP. The data contained within the return are counts of individual records, prepared by the OCP manager.	Internal checks are undertaken on a regular basis by line managers within the OCP Office. ASG staff then check the data that are provided from these systems to ensure that they are robust. However, ASG statisticians do recognise that the information is input manually and there is potential for errors to occur.	Summary spreadsheet data saved onto a secure facility only accessible by relevant branch staff. Files are not transmitted outside the branch.

6) Be rigorous (10 of 11)

Name/Title of Administrative Data Source	Change Management	Access Arrangements	Auditing Quality	Security
6) Judgment Enforcement Management System (JEMS)	ASG staff liaise directly with the Enforcement of Judgements Office (EJO) in NICTS	ASG request the data on a quarterly basis from the EJO. The data contained within the return are counts of individual records, prepared by EJO staff.	Internal checks are undertaken on a regular basis by line managers within the EJO office. Checks are also built within the system to ensure data quality levels remain high. ASG staff then also check the data that are provided from these systems to ensure that they are robust. However, ASG statisticians do recognise that the information is input manually and there is potential for errors to occur.	Summary spreadsheet data saved onto a secure facility only accessible by relevant branch staff. Files are not transmitted outside the branch.

6) Be rigorous (11 of 11)

Name/Title of Administrative Data Source	Change Management	Access Arrangements	Auditing Quality	Security
7) – 9) Coroners, Social Security Commissioners and Pensions Appeal Tribunals	ASG staff liaise directly with staff in the Coroners, Social Security Commissioners and Pensions Appeal Tribunals offices	ASG request the data on a monthly basis from the offices. The data contained within the return are counts of individual records, prepared by Coroners, Social Security Commissioners and Pensions Appeal Tribunals staff.	The data provided by these offices is checked internally by the office manager before being returned to ASG. ASG staff then also check the data that are provided from these systems to ensure that they are robust. Any unusual trends are queried, and any additional notes of explanations for peaks or troughs are included within the reports. However, ASG statisticians do recognise that the information is input manually and there is potential for errors to occur.	Summary spreadsheet data saved onto a secure facility only accessible by relevant branch staff. Files are not transmitted outside the branch.

7) Be open about quality (1 of 3)

Performing quality assurance checks

We will ensure that administrative data sources are monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure continued quality, through investigation of the quality assurance processes carried out by data suppliers, managing processes for provision of data and providing clear explanations for the strengths and limitations of data.

Statistical products are regularly evaluated to ensure key indicators (see the Dimensions of Quality table on the following pages) including relevance, timeliness, coherence and accessibility meet user requirements.

Background quality reports are available for all of our Official and Accredited Official statistics publications.

Continuous improvement

All statistics are subject to regular review, including consultation with users, to ensure outputs remain fit for purpose. When necessary, steps are taken to address weakness in design, production and dissemination and to fill information gaps in existing provision.

Revisions

Where scheduled or unscheduled revisions are required, we act promptly to correct or revise the statistic.

7) Be open about quality (2 of 3)

Reasons for Revisions

When working with large administrative databases that change on a regular basis, revisions to statistical data may be required because of –

1) Errors or weaknesses in procedures or systems, or in source material;
2) Receipt of updated information which alters our understanding of previous periods (e.g. late recording on an administrative IT system used for operational purposes); and
3) Changes in how source administrative systems collect information or changes in the statistical methodology used to improve accuracy and measurement.

Revision Process

We are committed to being open and transparent with users about the need, nature and extent of revisions; how and when to expect them; and the processes by which they will be communicated and published. Our policy, regardless of whether the responsibility for the need for revision lies with ASG or others is -

- If the revision is minor, or insignificant, i.e. inconsequential and hardly noticeable, we will insert the necessary changes without alerting anyone. Alternatively, we may accumulate minor corrections and make an update at the time of next scheduled publication to avoid making too many frequent minor changes.
- If the revision is major and unplanned it will be made as soon as possible and an appropriate notification will be placed on our website detailing why the corrections were necessary. All electronic versions of affected publication, table, etc. will be replaced as soon as possible with the amended versions. Known users will be notified by email.
- If major changes to source administrative systems are pre-planned or if changes to statistical methods are intended, we will, where possible, consult with users on the changes and their implications.

7) Be open about quality (3 of 3)

Other Considerations

- Some statistical outputs are more subject to revisions than others, for example our in-year statistics are provisional and subject to revision/change whereas our complete financial/annual year statistics are not subject to planned revision. Where required, ASG will make it clear which figures are provisional and subject to a scheduled pattern of revision.
- In addition to the measures put in place by ASG, the Head of Profession will provide the National Statistician with an annual report which includes information on number of required revisions to our publications, the reasons for these and a time-series of revisions due to errors in our statistical processes and procedures so we can monitor the quality of our outputs.

8) Be relevant (1 of 2)

Our commitment is to provide a high level of service to all our customers by producing timely, relevant and accessible statistics that support public understanding and informed decision making. We engage with users and stakeholders to understand their needs and seek feedback on their statistical releases to ensure they remain relevant, accessible and fit for purpose.

User Engagement

Knowing our users

Key users of our statistics include Ministers and policy makers within DoJ and other government departments, political representatives, including Members of the Assembly and the Assembly Justice Committee, local government, academics, expert external special interest and pressure groups, media and commentators and members of the public.

We recognise that these customers will have different needs, ranging from quick and easy access to the latest statistics, to involvement in steering the statistical work programme. However, our engagement policy is set out to ensure that on key developments to our statistics, there are transparent and clear processes encouraging views from both internal and external customers.

8) Be relevant (2 of 2)

Maximising engagement

We will aim to maximise user engagement by -

- Providing easy and equal access to statistics through publication on the statistics page of the DoJ website;
- Providing contact details on all statistical releases and on the statistics section of the DoJ website;
- Inviting feedback from users on all publications and providing contact details (statistics.research@justice-ni.gov.uk) should they wish to do so;
- Issuing the requested publications to mailing list participants as soon as they are published and inviting comments or suggestions from users;
- Providing a link to enable customers to provide feedback, on all the statistical publication pages of the DoJ website;
- Conducting a customer satisfaction survey every two years to obtain feedback from users at individual output level;
- Consulting, both formally and informally as required, with internal and external customers on significant developments and changes to (i) the content of our releases; (ii) the method of dissemination of our releases; (iii) the methodology used in the derivation and production of our statistics, and (iv) how we publish our statistics (for example, the merger of more than one release into a single release on the same day, or the demerger of one release to more than one release on different days). When formal, consultations will be announced through the statistics pages of the DoJ website and will normally be open for 8 weeks, though this period may be amended, depending on the nature of the consultation;
- Responding to consultation responses, providing a summary of the outcomes and way forward as appropriate and publishing the response on the statistics pages of the DoJ website;
- Having representation in the relevant strategic and operational working groups within the organisation;
- Investigating and documenting the needs of users of official statistics, the use made of existing statistics and the types of decision they inform; and
- Balancing the needs of customers with the cost and burden on suppliers.

9) Be Clear (1 of 2)

We aim to present our statistics clearly and impartially so as not to mislead. We explain and contextualise key findings, while being transparent about the strengths, limitations and any uncertainty.

Commitment to Users

Our commitment to our customers is to -

- Publish our statistics on the time and date pre-announced;
- Publish all statistics in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and DoJ's Statistical Policies and Procedures;
- Issue confirmation of receipt for information requests within five working days with the aim of providing a full response within twenty working days of the date on which the correspondence is received. The response will either be an answer to the issue raised, or a holding reply stating that provision of the information may take longer than the initial 20 day period along with a date by which ASG intend to provide a full response, or a date by which ASG will be in contact with a progress update;
- Be transparent when we are unable to meet any of the commitments above;

9) Be Clear (2 of 2)

- Give open and easy-to-use routes to allow customers to supply us with their views and opinions;
- Respond quickly and accurately to questions and enquiries;
- Consult with customers on developments and changes to our statistical methodologies, publications or publication processes; and
- Respond to complaints in a timely manner (our complaints procedure can be found at policy 1).

Commitment to Data Suppliers

- We will minimise the burden on data providers by efficient use of the administrative systems and efficient processes for the production of our statistics.
- We will ensure confidentiality and compliance with data protection as detailed in policy 4.
- We will utilise administrative data where possible to minimise additional data provision for statistical purposes.

10) Be Accessible (1 of 1)

We aim to maximise the use of our statistics by ensuring accessibility to the information in the most efficient and equitable manner. We also actively promote accessibility and usage by –

- Publishing as much information as possible to meet identified user needs, subject to quality, legislative and practical limitations and making routinely produced statistics available free of charge on the DoJ website.
- Orderly publication of statistics in line with publication schedule (see 3 – Be transparent);
- Publishing information in a range of formats including Excel and Open Document Spreadsheet to maximise access and promote reuse;
- Using user friendly methods of presenting information including commentary, tables and charts;
- Using a range of dissemination methods including web publication, email distribution lists, social media and DoJ intranet;
- Populating data websites with disaggregated datasets where possible, such as the NISRA Data Portal;
- Publishing supporting documentation such as user guides and background quality reports alongside the statistics to promote understanding and appropriate usage;
- Responding to requests for additional information as fully as possible and applying no charges for the production of bespoke information; and
- Providing users with confirmation of receipt for information requests within five working days with the aim of providing a full response within 20 working days of the date on which the correspondence is received. The response will either be an answer to the issue raised, or a holding reply stating that provision of the information may take longer than the initial 20 day period along with a date by which ASG intend to provide a full response, or a date by which ASG will be in contact with a progress update.