

Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Welsh Labour Market Statistics

*(produced by the Welsh Assembly
Government)*

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About the UK Statistics Authority

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The Authority's overall objective is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. It is also required to promote and safeguard the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and good practice in relation to official statistics.

The Statistics Authority has two main functions:

1. oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – the executive office of the Authority;
2. independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK.

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ASSESSMENT AND DESIGNATION

Under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*, the UK Statistics Authority has a statutory function to assess sets of statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, with a view to determining whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated, or to retain their designation, as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics are deemed to be compliant with the Code of Practice. Whilst the Code is wide-ranging, designation may be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are well explained.

Designation also signifies that, subject to any caveats in this report, the Statistics Authority judges that the statistics are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Assessment reports will not normally comment further, for example on the validity of the statistics as a social or economic measure; though reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Designation as National Statistics will sometimes be granted in cases where some changes still need to be made to meet fully the requirements of the Code, on condition that steps are taken by the producer body, within a stated timeframe, to address the weaknesses. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the Code.

Designation is granted on the basis of the information provided to the Statistics Authority, primarily by the organisation that produces the statistics. The information includes a range of factual evidence and also assurances by the producer organisation. The views of users are also sought. Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, the Assessment report may be withdrawn and revised as necessary.

Once designated as National Statistics, it is a statutory requirement on the producer organisation to ensure that the set of statistics continues to be produced, managed and disseminated in compliance with the Code of Practice.

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1 Summary of findings

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is one of a series of reports prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*¹. The report covers Labour Market Statistics, produced by the Welsh Assembly Government – eight statistical products in total (see para 2.1 for full detail). The main publication is the monthly Key Economic Statistics bulletin, which brings together the headline economic and labour market statistics for Wales. The Assembly Government also publishes topic-specific releases, for instance covering economic inactivity, workplace employment by industry, and average hours worked.

1.1.2 This report was prepared by the Authority's Assessment team, and approved by the Board of the Statistics Authority on the advice of the Head of Assessment.

1.2 Decision concerning designation as National Statistics

1.2.1 The Statistics Authority confirms that the statistics on the labour market detailed in paragraph 2.1 are designated as National Statistics, subject to the Assembly Government implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority: Requirements 1 to 9 by September 2010 and Requirement 10 by May 2010.

1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

1.3.1 The Assembly Government has arrangements for user engagement at an organisational level and carries out regular user consultations on the labour market outputs – most recently in autumn 2009². The Assembly Government is developing a framework for recording and monitoring user engagement. The importance of meeting users' needs is recognised in their Statistical Plan.

1.3.2 The Labour Market Statistics produced by the Assembly Government are derived from ONS sources. This minimises both the costs to the producer and the burden on respondents. Statisticians from the Assembly Government attend the Office for National Statistics' Labour Market Topic Group which helps to steer the direction of future developments of the source data. A recent internal Assembly Government initiative means that labour market statisticians now have the opportunity to brief the media directly on their outputs; this is a positive development.

1.3.3 The assessment team considers that the commentary in the labour market releases is clear and neutral commentary, but feels that their presentation and format could be improved in some respects. For example, some charts are presented without scales or with misleading scales; the outputs do not contain sufficient links to the source data produced by ONS, or enough information

¹ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf

² <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/statistics/09economicstats/?lang=en&status=closed>

about quality. There is little information about the regular revisions to the data, and the name and contact details of the responsible statistician were missing from some releases.

1.4 Detailed recommendations

- 1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that the Assembly Government could strengthen its compliance with the Code. Those which the Assessment team considers essential to enable designation as National Statistics are listed in section 1.5. Other suggestions, which would improve the statistics and the service provided to users but which are not formally required for their designation, are listed at annex 1.

1.5 Requirements for designation as National Statistics

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Requirement 1 | Explore with users ways to achieve more regular engagement on labour market statistics, for example through a user forum (para 3.5). |
| Requirement 2 | Confirm that whenever changes affect the published data, they will be pre-announced to users to avoid confusion or uncertainty (para 3.7). |
| Requirement 3 | Publish a clear policy for scheduled revisions to labour market statistics (para 3.8). |
| Requirement 4 | Provide clear links to ONS source information, including methods, metadata and quality information (para 3.14). |
| Requirement 5 | Report annually the estimated costs of responding to statistical surveys (para 3.24). |
| Requirement 6 | Review the presentation of the labour market releases and improve the published explanations about the policy or operational context of each output (para 3.30). |
| Requirement 7 | Review the use of the terms <i>First Release</i> and <i>Statistical Bulletin</i> when publishing statistical releases, to ensure clarity for users (para 3.34). |
| Requirement 8 | Publish the name and contact details of the responsible statistician in all statistical reports (para 3.37). |
| Requirement 9 | Publish lists of those people given pre-release access to each release (para 3.38). |
| Requirement 10 | Review the draft Statement of Administrative Sources, by May 2010, to ensure its completeness (para 3.39). |

2 Subject of the assessment

2.1 The outputs included in the assessment of the Labour Market Statistics produced by the Assembly Government are:

- Annual Population Survey³ (APS): headline figures are released quarterly and the data are the basis of many of the topic specific outputs listed below. The sample size allows analysis at a local authority level. Data are published, on the day of release, on the StatsWales⁴ website, allowing users to produce outputs and analysis to suit their specific needs.
- *Key Economic Statistics*⁵: this is the Assembly Government's primary labour market publication. It is published monthly and brings together all the headline economic and labour market statistics for Wales.
- *Economic Inactivity in Wales*⁶: this was first published in 2001 and is published every two years. It was developed to help those developing Government policy and researchers to understand why economic inactivity is higher in Wales than in the UK.
- *Statistics on Commuting in Wales*⁷: produced annually since 2002, this release shows commuting patterns by local authority, and into and out of Wales.
- *Workplace Employment by Industry in Wales*⁸: published annually since 2005 this bulletin provides estimates of employment by industry.
- *Statistics on Average Hours Worked in Wales*⁹: this release was produced for the first time in 2007, in response to perceptions that people were working longer hours. It is published annually and shows breakdowns by occupation, paid and unpaid overtime and proportions of people working flexitime.
- *Household Statistics from the Annual Population Survey*¹⁰: these were first published in January 2009, drawing on the household level APS datasets released by ONS in November 2008. This bulletin provides data on worklessness at the local authority level.
- *Employment in the Public Sector in Wales*¹¹: this was produced in April 2009 in response to growing demand for information on employment in the public sector in Wales.

2.2 The Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) is out of scope of this assessment. Part 1 of the ABI collects employment data at a business level (Part 2 collects financial data). This is a primary source of employment data, but the survey is in the process of being replaced by a new Business Register and Employment

³ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/econ2009/hdw200909246/?lang=en>

⁴ <http://statswales.wales.gov.uk/index.htm>

⁵ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/economy2010/0217/?lang=en>

⁶ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/econ2008/hdw20081124/?lang=en>

⁷ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/econ2009/hdw20091210/?lang=en>

⁸ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/econ2009/hdw200907302/?lang=en>

⁹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/econ2009/hdw20091105/?lang=en>

¹⁰ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/econ2009/hdw200904291/?lang=en>

¹¹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/econ2009/hdw200904291/?lang=en>

Survey, which will be assessed later in 2010.

- 2.3 Wales labour market outputs are derived from data which are collected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The main vehicle ONS use to collect labour market data is the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The APS is based on the LFS, but the APS includes additional data that is collected by boosting the LFS sample in different regions. This provides a more detailed dataset, allowing analysis at lower geographical levels. The Assembly Government pays ONS £900,000 per annum to boost the sample of the APS in Wales by approximately 20,000 households annually.
- 2.4 The Assembly Government's stated aim is to make the labour market data available in a range of media which meet the needs of users both within and outside the Assembly Government, and to present as comprehensive a picture as possible of the labour market in Wales. The statistics are used widely within the Assembly Government to monitor policies, for internal performance indicators and European Funding reports. They have also been used to monitor the impact of the recession. One long-term goal set out in the Government policy document *One Wales: A progressive agenda for the government of Wales*¹² – to achieve an employment rate of 80% - is monitored using these statistics. In addition, labour market data are used for resource allocation; to assist workforce planning; for regional profiling; to identify areas of deprivation; and to monitor the impact of EU structural funds. Outside the Assembly Government the data are used by local authorities for their economic development plans and by academics for research. Economists are likely to use the data for forecasting of employment.

¹² <http://wales.gov.uk/about/programmeforgovernment/strategy/publications/onewales/?lang=en>

3 Assessment findings

Principle 1: Meeting user needs

The production, management and dissemination of official statistics should meet the requirements of informed decision-making by government, public services, business, researchers and the public.

- 3.1 The Assembly Government consults users of Welsh labour market statistics every three years. The most recent consultation was in autumn 2009. It was advertised on the Assembly Government's website and the statisticians notified users of the statistics, inviting their input. Responses were received from a variety of users within and outside the Assembly Government. Users said that the labour market statistics are important to their work, and that they would like more detailed analysis to be made available. The Assembly Government told us that the full report on the consultation will be published in March 2010.
- 3.2 A Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee (WSLC), with representatives from public sector organisations in Wales, meets four times a year to discuss statistical issues.
- 3.3 The Assembly Government's Statistical Work Plan 2009-10¹³ recognises that meeting users' needs is an important part of the statistical planning process. The plan is a 'living document' and is subject to formal consultation every three years. The Assembly Government Statistical Directorate Annual Report 2008-09¹⁴ highlights the ways in which users have influenced the development of various outputs. For example, the Assembly Government has published some outputs earlier to meet users' requirements.
- 3.4 Assembly Government statisticians told us that they are in the initial phases of developing a user engagement framework, which will record correspondence with users, especially those outside the Assembly Government, and the outcomes. The aim is to identify best practice for engaging with users and enable identification of common requests and themes across all statistical outputs to feed into the statistical planning process. However, there is currently no formal engagement with users of the labour market data outside the three-yearly consultation programme. This means that between consultations the outputs evolve with little input from users and Assembly Government statisticians may not be aware of the full range of user needs.
- 3.5 As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Assembly Government should explore with users ways to achieve more regular engagement on labour market statistics, for example through a user forum¹⁵ (Requirement 1).

¹³ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/statsplan0910/?lang=en>

¹⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/annual0809/?lang=en>

¹⁵ In relation to Principle 1 Practice 1 of the Code of Practice.

Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity

Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, should be managed impartially and objectively.

- 3.6 The labour market statistics are presented impartially and objectively, and accompanied by useful, neutral commentary.
- 3.7 The Assembly Government pre-announces changes to methods (although most changes reflect developments by ONS). For example, the forthcoming change to the Standard Industrial Classification will be detailed in an article before the publication of the first outputs based upon the new classification. Assembly Government statisticians told us that less significant changes are not pre-announced but are noted in publications and on the StatsWales website. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Assembly Government should confirm that whenever changes affect the published data, they will be pre-announced to users to avoid confusion or uncertainty¹⁶ (Requirement 2).
- 3.8 There is no specific revisions policy for the Welsh labour market statistics. Revisions are dictated by changes to the source data made by ONS. Some of these revisions are scheduled; for example, updating provisional data to final. There are other ad hoc revisions, for example to reflect improvements or corrections to data. In such cases the Assembly Government alerts users beforehand, provided there is sufficient advance notice from ONS. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Assembly Government should publish a clear policy for scheduled revisions to labour market statistics¹⁷ (Requirement 3). This should include notifications of significant forthcoming developments, such as the change to the Standard Industrial Classification.
- 3.9 The Assembly Government has internal guidance on dealing with errors in publications: if significant errors were identified in a statistical release it would be withdrawn, regular users notified by email and a notice added to the headline on the relevant web page. There have been no major errors in the labour market statistics warranting implementation of this procedure. The Assembly Government has informed us that the central guidelines for resolving errors and managing other revisions will be published on their website in the coming months.
- 3.10 Supplementary analyses of labour market statistics are provided free of charge. The Assembly Government has a pricing structure for substantial internal requests, to allow internal transfer of funds.

¹⁶ In relation to Principle 2 Practice 4 of the Code of Practice

¹⁷ In relation to Principle 2 Practice 6 of the Code of Practice

Principle 3: Integrity

At all stages in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics, the public interest should prevail over organisational, political or personal interests.

- 3.11 No incidents of political pressure or abuse of trust were reported to or identified by the Assessment team in the course of this assessment.
- 3.12 The Assembly Government has guidance detailing staff responsibilities and the authority of the Head of Profession in relation to statistical matters. Additional guidance on the use of statistics is also provided to non-statistical staff.
- 3.13 Labour market statisticians have recently started to increase their engagement with the media, including briefing them directly on issues related to the releases. A recent briefing of BBC journalists was held to help ensure the differences between administrative data (Claimant Count) and survey data (LFS) were interpreted correctly. The Assembly Government informed us that this practice is being encouraged for major statistical outputs as it provides an opportunity to clarify the interpretation of data. This is a positive development, promoting a culture within which statistical experts can comment publicly on statistical issues.

Principle 4: Sound methods and assured quality

Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality should be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices.

- 3.14 The Welsh labour market statistics are produced using data from ONS sources such as the LFS, APS and ABI. The Assembly Government provides a brief overview of these sources on the economic and labour market pages of their website and occasionally in the Key Quality Information sections of releases. Links to the ONS website point only to the homepage rather than the specific data source, methods or quality information, such as that provided in the Labour Market Statistics: Wales, Statistical Bulletin¹⁸ produced by ONS. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Assembly Government should provide clear links to ONS source information, including methods, metadata and quality information¹⁹ (Requirement 4). The Assembly Government has informed us that a document of economic and labour market sources, similar to a user guide, is being developed.
- 3.15 The Labour Market Statistics: Wales, Statistical Bulletin provides estimates of sampling variability for APS data. The Assembly Government statisticians told us that they are developing guidance on extending the methodology that ONS uses, so that Assembly Government statisticians can produce quality measures for other releases based on APS data. These will be useful for users assessing the quality of the Assembly Government's topic specific releases such as Statistics on Average Hours Worked in Wales²⁰. This release notes that 'Wales figures can be volatile, in part due to smaller sample sizes', which makes the availability of information about quality all the more important.
- 3.16 Assembly Government statisticians are granted early access to APS data for quality assurance purposes, following internal quality guidance procedures. The Assembly Government reports any errors to ONS. The Assembly Government statisticians occasionally ask ONS to quality assure the outputs that they produce.
- 3.17 The Eurostat initiative *Development of a Self Assessment Programme* (DESAP) has been piloted as a quality management tool in the Assembly Government. Assembly Government statisticians told us that this will form the basis of a statistical quality management framework, to be rolled out across the organisation. As part of this initiative, outputs will be reviewed and the resulting recommendations will be included in the Statistics Plan.
- 3.18 Time series data are provided on the StatsWales website. Back data often start in 1999, reflecting devolution, but some series go back further.
- 3.19 ONS is responsible for the methods and quality of the LFS and the APS. For details of the assessment of the LFS and APS against principle 4 of the Code,

¹⁸ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lmswales1109.pdf>

¹⁹ In relation to Principle 4 Practices 1 and 2 of the Code of Practice

²⁰ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2009/091105sb652009en.pdf?lang=en>

please refer to the assessment of ONS' Labour Market Statistics in Assessment Report 34²¹.

²¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

Principle 5: Confidentiality

Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only.

- 3.20 The Assembly Government has assured us that it takes all necessary steps to protect the confidentiality of the data it collects. This includes disclosure assessments for all outputs and Service Level Agreements with ONS, setting out responsibilities for maintaining confidentiality.
- 3.21 Staff responsibilities for maintaining confidentiality are part of the terms and conditions of employment. The Assembly Government statisticians told us that they are also planning to introduce declarations of confidentiality in official statistics for staff to sign, as suggested in the National Statistician's guidance on the Code of Practice²².
- 3.22 The Assembly Government was required to publish arrangements for confidentiality protection in Assessment Report 15 *Statistics on Children Looked After by Local Authorities in Wales*²³ and this requirement was completed in March 2010 through publication of a revised confidentiality statement.

²² <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/guidance/index.html>

²³ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

Principle 6: Proportionate burden

The cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.

- 3.23 There is little direct burden on respondents from the labour market outputs, as most data are sourced from the ONS. However, the boost to the APS funded by the Assembly Government represents an increased burden on Welsh households. Assembly Government statisticians attend ONS's Labour Market Topic Group and work with ONS to minimise the respondent burden.
- 3.24 At an organisational level, the Assembly Government submits a report to ONS of the estimated costs of responding to statistical surveys. The Assembly Government does not publish this information, or link to any information published by ONS about the burden of the APS boost. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Assembly Government should report annually the estimated costs of responding to statistical surveys²⁴ (Requirement 5).
- 3.25 Assembly Government statisticians informed us that they aim to meet any requests for new labour market data by using existing data sources wherever possible, in order to minimise costs to the Assembly Government and burden on respondents.

²⁴ In relation to Principle 6 Practice 1 of the Code of Practice

Principle 7: Resources

The resources made available for statistical activities should be sufficient to meet the requirements of this Code and should be used efficiently and effectively.

- 3.26 The production of labour market statistics outputs appears to be adequately resourced to produce data at the current level of quality. The Assembly Government pays ONS £900,000 for a boost to the Welsh APS sample which enables analysis at more detailed geographies than can be produced using the Labour Force Survey.
- 3.27 The Assembly Government has an overall Statistics Plan, and separate plans for individual business areas, for internal management purposes. User requirements and their impact on the work plan are clearly acknowledged.
- 3.28 The majority of labour market outputs are produced from existing data sources and any requests for new data would be produced from these sources wherever possible. Users expressed interest in increasing the frequency of the *Economic Inactivity in Wales Statistical Bulletin*, which is currently produced once every two years. Assembly Government statisticians told us that the underlying trends tend not to change very quickly, and that as this bulletin is time-consuming to produce its publication every other year provides the capacity to do other analysis (such as that on the impact of the recession in Wales, and youth unemployment). However, the Assembly Government statisticians told us that it would be possible to produce a reduced bulletin in the intervening years. We suggest that the Assembly Government consider more regular reporting on economic inactivity.

Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility

Official statistics, accompanied by full and frank commentary, should be readily accessible to all users.

- 3.29 The labour market releases contain clear, neutral commentary; however there is room for improvement, both in terms of presentation and format. Some tables are confusing, mixing up classifications or time periods. Scales on charts can be misleading, or even missing as in the *Economic Inactivity in Wales Statistical Bulletin*. This bulletin also contains examples of charts showing time series of data going back to 1984, which makes analysis of recent trends difficult. The users who contacted us regarding this assessment expressed confusion about when to use ONS outputs and when to use Assembly Government outputs.
- 3.30 As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Assembly Government should review the presentation of the labour market releases and improve the published explanations about the policy or operational context of each output²⁵ (Requirement 6). This will help users understand which is the best source to meet different needs.
- 3.31 As noted under Principle 4, there is some information on quality and methods given in each labour market output in the Key Quality Information section, as well as an overview of sources on the introductory web pages. These sections are often quite brief, and do not provide links to additional documentation. The Assembly Government is developing additional measures of the quality of APS data, which will go some way to addressing these shortcomings as should the Requirement noted in paragraph 3.14.
- 3.32 The StatsWales website provides access to data, enabling reuse by users. Results from the Assembly Government's recent user consultation suggests that there are still improvements to be made, as users found the process of identifying and extracting the appropriate data confusing. Assembly Government statisticians told us that they are working on further improvements to the website.
- 3.33 The Assembly Government website has pages that highlight the dissemination of outputs including 'Due out soon', 'Latest additions' and 'Headlines, releases and bulletins'. The Assembly Government also run a 'Hotshots' training programme that helps internal users to find and use statistics appropriately. The Assembly Government is considering offering the training more widely.
- 3.34 The Assembly Government publishes its statistical releases under two titles: *First Release* and *Statistical Bulletin*. The significance of these differing titles is unexplained. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Assembly Government should review its use of the terms *First Release* and *Statistical Bulletin* when publishing statistical releases, to ensure clarity for users²⁶ (Requirement 7).

²⁵ In relation to Principle 8 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice

²⁶ In relation to Principle 8 Practice 4 of the Code of Practice.

Protocol 1: User engagement

Effective user engagement is fundamental both to trust in statistics and securing maximum public value. This Protocol draws together the relevant practices set out elsewhere in the Code and expands on the requirements in relation to consultation.

3.35 The requirements for this Protocol are covered elsewhere in this report.

Protocol 2: Release practices

Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation.

- 3.36 The timing of the Assembly Government releases depends upon when the statisticians receive the source data from ONS. The Assembly Government is able to release the labour market outputs covered in this assessment at 9.30am because it has pre-release access to the data. The Assembly Government does not have pre-release access to the ONS ABI data, so it publishes a headline release as soon as it is feasible, usually at 10.30am. The ABI is out of scope of this assessment because it is being replaced by a new Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), which will be assessed later in 2010. Assembly Government statisticians told us that they intend to explore with ONS the possibility of obtaining pre-release to the BRES data, to enable all headline estimates to be published at 9.30am, as required by the Code.
- 3.37 Each labour market release includes a generic email address and telephone number. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Assembly Government should publish the name and contact details of the responsible statistician in all statistical reports²⁷ (Requirement 8).
- 3.38 The Assembly Government complies with the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2009 and a generic list of post holders with pre-release access²⁸ is provided on their website. However, as part of the designation as National Statistics, the Assembly Government should publish lists of those people given pre-release access to each release²⁹ (Requirement 9).

²⁷ In relation to Protocol 2 Practice 6 of the Code of Practice

²⁸ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/pre-release/?lang=en>

²⁹ In relation to Protocol 2 Practice 7 of the Code of Practice

Protocol 3: The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes

Administrative sources should be fully exploited for statistical purposes, subject to adherence to appropriate safeguards.

- 3.39 The Assembly Government was required in Assessment Report 15 *Statistics on Children Looked After by Local Authorities in Wales* to publish a Statement of Administrative Sources by February 2010. A draft was provided as part of the written evidence for this assessment. At the time of writing, the draft was still being discussed with the Assembly Government statisticians, to ensure its completeness, and the Requirement is still outstanding. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Assembly Government should review the draft Statement of Administrative Sources, by May 2010, to ensure its completeness³⁰ (Requirement 10).
- 3.40 The Assembly Government has recently established a project to bring together different sources of information within WAG, to try to ensure that information is collected once and re-used many times. The Assembly Government statisticians told us that this *Single Set of Knowledge project* is in its infancy but will range from sickness absence data to data that underpin strategic performance indicators.

³⁰ In relation to Protocol 3 Practice 5 of the Code of Practice

Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to the Assembly Government, in the interest of the public good. These are not formally required for designation, but the Assessment team considers that their implementation will improve public confidence in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

Suggestion 1

Consider more regular reporting on economic inactivity (para 3.28).

Annex 2: Summary of assessment process and users' views

A2.1 This assessment was conducted from October 2009 to February 2010.

A2.2 The Assessment team – Jacob Wilcock and Rachel Beardsmore - agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with representatives of the Assembly Government in October. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 27 November. The Assessment team subsequently met with the Assembly Government during January to review compliance with the Code, taking account of the written evidence provided and other relevant sources of evidence.

Summary of users contacted, and issues raised

A2.3 Part of the assessment process involves our consideration of the views of users. We approach some known and potential users of the set of statistics, and we invite comments via an open note on the Authority's website. This process is not a statistical survey, but it enables us to gain some insights about the extent to which the statistics meet users' needs and the extent to which users feel that the producers of those statistics engage with them. We are aware that responses from users may not be representative of wider views, and we take account of this in the way that we prepare assessment reports.

A2.4 The Assessment team received 7 responses from the user consultation. The respondents were grouped as follows:

Internal Assembly Government	4
Local government	2
Other	1

A2.5 These users were generally positive about the provision of labour market statistics. They highlighted the importance of the data to their work. The most common request was for more detailed local area data. Other areas of improvement or concern include that the range of sources (including ONS outputs) can make it difficult to know which source best meets a need, and that the StatsWales website can be difficult to use.

A2.6 It is possible that the timing of the Assembly Government's own user consultation on the labour market statistics, which closed at the same time as the call for input to this assessment, affected the response we received from users. The Assembly Government received 69 responses to its consultation.

Key documents/links provided

Written Evidence for Assessment document

List of assessment reports published to date³¹

1. Statistics from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System
National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse
2. Recorded Crime in Scotland
Scottish Government
3. Statistics on Enrolments at Schools and in Funded Pre-School Education in Northern Ireland
Department of Education, Northern Ireland
4. Road Casualty Statistics
Department for Transport
5. UK Energy Sector Indicators
Department of Energy and Climate Change
6. Statistics on Road Freight
Department for Transport
7. Prison Population Projections
Ministry of Justice
8. Migration Statistics
Office for National Statistics
9. Statistics on International Development and the ODA:GNI Ratio
Department for International Development
10. The Scottish Health Survey
Scottish Government
11. Scottish House Condition Survey
Scottish Government
12. Scottish Crime and Justice Survey
Scottish Government
13. Statistics on Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England
Department for Children, Schools and Families
14. Statistics on Children Looked After by Local Authorities in Scotland
Scottish Government
15. Statistics on Children Looked After by Local Authorities in Wales
Welsh Assembly Government
16. Statistics on Children Looked After by Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland
17. Wealth in Great Britain
Office for National Statistics
18. Statistics on the National Child Measurement Programme
NHS Information Centre
19. Average Weekly Earnings
Office for National Statistics
20. Energy Statistics
Department of Energy and Climate Change
21. 18 Weeks Referral to Treatment Statistics
Department of Health
22. Agriculture in the UK and selected crop and livestock statistics
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

³¹ Published reports are available at: <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

23. Child Benefit Statistics
Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
24. Producer Price Indices
Office for National Statistics
25. Services Producer Price Indices
Office for National Statistics
26. Scottish Household Survey outputs
Scottish Government
27. Scottish Labour Market Statistics
Scottish Government
28. Special Assessment of the 2011 Censuses in the UK: Phase 1
Office for National Statistics, the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
29. Labour Market Statistics for Northern Ireland
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Northern Ireland
30. Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics
Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
31. Emissions Statistics
Department of Energy and Climate Change
32. Council Tax Levels set by Local Authorities
Department for Communities and Local Government
33. Welsh Labour Market Statistics
Welsh Assembly Government
34. UK Labour Market Statistics
Office for National Statistics

