

Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Welsh Short-term Output Indicators

*(produced by the Welsh Assembly
Government)*

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About the UK Statistics Authority

The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament. It was established on 1 April 2008 by the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.

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

The *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* gives the UK Statistics Authority a statutory power to assess sets of statistics against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*.

Assessment will determine whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics comply with the *Code of Practice*. The *Code* is wide-ranging. Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Designation as National Statistics should not be interpreted to mean that the statistics are always correct. For example, whilst the *Code* requires statistics to be produced to a level of accuracy that meets users' needs, it also recognises that errors can occur – in which case it requires them to be corrected and publicised.

Assessment Reports will not normally comment further on a set of statistics, for example on their validity as social or economic measures. However, Reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Assessment Reports typically provide an overview of any noteworthy features of the methods used to produce the statistics, and will highlight substantial concerns about quality. Assessment Reports also describe aspects of the ways in which the producer addresses the 'sound methods and assured quality' principle of the *Code*, but do not themselves constitute a review of the methods used to produce the statistics. However the *Code* requires producers to "seek to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews".

The Authority may grant designation on condition that the producer body takes steps, within a stated timeframe, to fully meet the *Code's* requirements. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the *Code*.

The Authority grants designation on the basis of three main sources of information:

- i. factual evidence and assurances by senior statisticians in the producer body;
- ii. the views of users who we contact, or who contact us, and;
- iii. our own review activity.

Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, it may withdraw the Assessment Report and revise it as necessary.

It is a statutory requirement on the producer body to ensure that it continues to produce the set of statistics designated as National Statistics 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 reports¹ prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*². The Act requires all statistics currently designated as National Statistics to be assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics³. The report covers the *Index of Production for Wales and the Index of Construction for Wales*⁴ (*IoPC*) and the *Welsh Index of Market Services*⁵ (*IoMS*), produced by the Welsh Assembly Government.

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 judges that the statistics covered by this report are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest, subject to any points for action in this report. The Statistics Authority confirms that the statistics published in the *IoPC* and the *IoMS* are designated as National Statistics, subject to the Welsh Assembly Government implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority by March 2011.

1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

1.3.1 The Assessment team considers that the presentation of the statistics in the releases is clear, and that there is some good commentary and contextual information. However, there is room for improvement, to help users interpret the data – for example, by analysing trends and providing more information on methods and quality.

1.3.2 The Welsh Assembly Government has good arrangements for user engagement, including a formal user consultation every three years and a six-monthly newsletter. However, there is little evidence that user needs were considered during the development of the *IoPC* and the *IoMS*. It is not clear whether the Welsh Assembly Government have considered the costs of the current outputs in conjunction with the level of user interest and the quality of the data.

1.3.3 The data series are volatile and there are no measures of data quality to help users interpret the data.

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

² http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf

³ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/economy2010/100729/?lang=en>

⁵ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/economy2010/100810/?lang=en>

1.4 Detailed recommendations

- 1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that the Welsh 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	Publish a revisions policy for the <i>IoMS</i> , review the existing policy for the <i>IoPC</i> and provide a statement explaining the nature and extent of revisions at the time the revised statistics are released (para 3.4).
Requirement 2	Publish details of the methods, including explanations of why particular choices were made (para 3.8).
Requirement 3	Improve documentation on data quality, including estimates of the main sources of bias and other errors (para 3.9).
Requirement 4	Report annually the estimated costs of responding to statistical surveys (para 3.14).
Requirement 5	Review the user need for these outputs, taking account of the data quality, costs, and other priorities (para 3.18).
Requirement 6	Improve the commentary and analysis in the publications (para 3.19).
Requirement 7	Provide links to ONS's Statement of Administrative Sources, if the sources used in the production of these outputs are documented there, or document the sources itself (para 3.25).

2 Subject of the assessment

2.1 This assessment covers two quarterly releases that present short-term output indicators. Both releases cover data for Wales and the headline measures are presented alongside corresponding figures for the UK (produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)):

- *The Index of Production for Wales and the Index of Construction for Wales (IoPC).*

This release shows the quarterly movements in the output of industries in the production and construction sectors within Wales. The Index of Production covers manufacturing, mining and quarrying, and electricity, gas and water. It accounts for about a fifth of the Welsh economy. The headline measures are supported by analysis which shows how different sub-sectors are contributing to the overall picture.

- *Welsh Index of Market Services (IoMS)*

This release shows quarterly movements in the output of the service sector in Wales. The index covers distribution, hotels and restaurants, transport, finance, business services and other services. The service sector accounts for just under half of the Welsh economy. The release includes analysis of each of these sub-sectors and shows how they are contributing to the movement in the combined Index of Market Services.

2.2 An Index of Production and Construction for Wales has been published quarterly since 1964. ONS has carried out most of the data collection since 1998. In 2000, at the request of the then National Assembly for Wales, ONS undertook a review⁶ of the economic statistics it provided for Wales. This review recommended that a quarterly Index of Services be produced and suggested some developments to the Index of Production. Following a user consultation exercise⁷ in 2003, ONS was commissioned to develop a suite of short-term output indices for Wales including indices of distribution, hotels and restaurants, transport, finance and business services. These were introduced over the next few years, initially as experimental statistics⁸. The individual service indices were subsequently combined into a single Index of Market Services. More recently, an Index of Other Services has been compiled for Wales to encompass those market service industries not previously included. This completes the coverage of the *IoMS* and was included for the first time in the statistics for the third quarter of 2009, published in February 2010. In 2007, following a review of methods⁹ undertaken by ONS, revised methodology was adopted for the indices of production, construction and distribution, to ensure they follow international best practice.

⁶ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/reference/economicfromons/?lang=en>

⁷ <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/statistics/economicphase2/?lang=en&status=closed>

⁸ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=173>

⁹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/reference/reviewproduct/?lang=en>

- 2.3 Most of the data underpinning the indices are collected by ONS, through its Monthly Business Survey¹⁰ (MBS). The MBS is a UK-wide survey collecting turnover data. ONS assesses the data collected for Wales to determine whether a Welsh top-up survey is needed, to ensure sufficient data quality. The Welsh Assembly Government also collects some additional data about industries in Wales that are poorly covered by the MBS – for example, the manufacture of steel and refined petroleum. The Welsh Assembly Government passes these data to ONS, which produces the indices and supplies them to the Welsh Assembly Government for publication.
- 2.4 The main purpose of the indices is to provide a measure of short-term movements in the Welsh economy. Businesses and other organisations can use them to inform their economic planning. The indices are used by organisations which comment on the Welsh economy and in compiling economic forecasts for Wales. Within the Welsh Assembly Government the main use of the indices is contextual. There are no targets associated with the indices. The Welsh Assembly Government has recently re-focussed its economic policy onto six sub-sectors of the economy¹¹, but the published outputs are not produced to a sufficient level of detail to monitor these sub-sectors.
- 2.5 The Welsh Assembly Government carried out a survey¹² of users of its economy and labour market statistics in 2009. Almost half of the respondents stated that these data were very or quite important to them. However, these outputs were also the product group with the highest proportion (almost two in five) saying they did not use them.
- 2.6 The Welsh Assembly Government pays ONS £33,000 a year to produce data for the *IoPC* and £197,000 for the *IoMS* data. The associated staffing costs within the Welsh Assembly Government are around £15,000 a year.
- 2.7 Comparable statistics are produced by the Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly, and ONS publish UK-level series.

¹⁰ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about/surveys/a-z-of-surveys/monthly-business-survey--production-and-services-/index.html>

¹¹ Creative industries; ICT ; Energy and Environment; Advanced material and manufacturing; Life Sciences; Financial and Professional services

¹² <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/consultation/100330economicen.pdf>

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 Welsh Assembly Government has a good range of methods for engaging with users of its economic and labour market statistics. It formally consults users every three years to investigate and document their needs and experiences and has recently introduced a six-monthly *Economic and Labour Market Statistics Newsletter*¹³. This newsletter aims to keep users informed about recent and forthcoming developments and publications and enable user feedback. The Welsh Assembly Government statisticians maintain a record of all user engagement, including requests and feedback. The statisticians told us that they are considering holding an annual user event, although this is dependent on available resources.
- 3.2 Many of these examples of good practice are recent developments. These series have a long history and form part of the regular advice to the relevant Minister with responsibility for the Welsh economy. However, there is little evidence that user needs drove the development of the indices and it is not clear whether the costs of producing the current outputs are a fair reflection of their use. The Welsh Assembly Government's most recent consultation of users of its economy and labour market statistics found that the indices of production and construction were among the outputs with the fewest users. None of the indices provide data at a sufficiently detailed level to monitor the Welsh Assembly Government's economic policy, which has recently shifted to focus on six sub-sectors of the economy. The statisticians told us that they engage closely with their colleagues working on economic policy. The statisticians also told us they will be investigating the feasibility of producing the detailed data needed to monitor economic policy, but this may require extra resources and re-prioritisation of work. In this case, the statisticians told us that they would consult users before introducing changes. Issues around value for money are addressed further under Principle 7.

¹³ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/economy/newsletter/1/>

Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity

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

- 3.3 The short-term output indicators are presented impartially and objectively and accompanied by useful, neutral commentary. Changes to the methods used in the production of these outputs have been announced in advance.
- 3.4 The statistics are frequently revised, due to a number of factors including seasonal adjustment, updated weights and the availability of improved sources. There is an organisational revisions policy¹⁴ and a separate product-specific revisions policy¹⁵ covering the *IoPC*. However, there are no links between the two policies and no link from the *IoPC* release only links to the organisational revisions policy. The information presented is not complete – there is insufficient information about planned seasonal adjustment revisions and little information about the nature and extent of the revisions when they are released. There is no revisions policy for the *IoMS*. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should publish a revisions policy for the *IoMS*, review the existing policy for the *IoPC* and provide a statement explaining the nature and extent of revisions at the time the revised statistics are released¹⁶ (Requirement 1).
- 3.5 Where there have been errors in the releases they have been handled appropriately, as set out in the organisational revisions policy.

¹⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/compliance/revisions/?lang=en>

¹⁵ <http://wales.gov.uk/cisd/publications/statreference/revisionproduct/e.pdf?lang=en>

¹⁶ 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.

- 3.6 No incidents of political pressure or abuse of trust were reported to or identified by the Assessment team in the course of this assessment.
- 3.7 In Assessment Report 33 (see footnote 1) it was noted that the Welsh Assembly Government was improving direct engagement (including face-to-face briefings) between statisticians and the media. We highlighted this as a positive development, promoting a culture within which statistical experts can comment publicly on statistical issues. However, the user response to this assessment suggests that this good practice has not yet been extended across the Welsh Assembly Government. One user in the media requested more direct engagement with statisticians, rather than communicating with statisticians via the Welsh Assembly Government's press office. Direct engagement between statisticians and the media helps to ensure the media fully understand the statistics. We suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government facilitate direct engagement between its statisticians and the media.

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.

- 3.8 The short-term output indices are produced by ONS, largely based on data collected through the MBS. Little information is provided in the *IOPC* and the *IoMS* releases to explain the methods and there are no clear links to information about methods for the MBS, as published by ONS. The only available information is in the 2007 methodology review, which led to significant changes to the methods. The statisticians told us that they are producing a Summary Quality Report (SQR) for each output, and provided a draft as part of the evidence for assessment. The SQR will include details of methods and links to other relevant information published by ONS. At the time of writing, these had not been published. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should publish details of the methods, including explanations of why particular choices were made¹⁷ (Requirement 2).
- 3.9 The releases discuss the volatility of the statistics and the implications for users, while the SQR will include information on sample sizes and regionality (the extent to which the statistics are based on data from businesses operating wholly in Wales). The statisticians told us that they are also in the process of producing tables of average revisions. However, they told us that there are concerns about the data quality for some smaller sectors of the economy covered in these indices, for which it is difficult to collect robust data. It is also not clear how accurately data from businesses operating across the UK are apportioned between the different countries. There is little information on these issues, and no estimate of the overall effect on data quality. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should improve documentation on data quality, including estimates of the main sources of bias and other errors¹⁸ (Requirement 3). In particular, we suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government investigate whether numerical estimates of data accuracy could be produced. This would provide reassurance that the data are of sufficient quality to meet user needs.
- 3.10 There is a good working relationship between the statisticians in the Welsh Assembly Government and ONS, who meet formally as a Programme Board. The Programme Board has overseen the development of the statistics, reviewing progress and discussing methodological issues.
- 3.11 The indices for Wales are produced by ONS on the same systems used to produce the UK indices, so the outputs for Wales, England and UK as a whole are comparable. The releases include UK data, while the SQR discusses the availability of equivalent statistics for Scotland and Northern Ireland, but does not include links to the data. We suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government provide links to short-term output indices for other countries.

¹⁷ In relation to Principle 4 Practice 1 of the Code of Practice.

¹⁸ In relation to Principle 4 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice.

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.

- 3.12 Most of the data used in the short-term output indices are collected by ONS. The Welsh Assembly Government do collect some data, which are then supplied to ONS to feed into the production process, before ONS return complete datasets to the Welsh Assembly Government for publication. The Welsh Assembly Government and ONS have Data Access Agreements that cover this exchange of data.
- 3.13 The Welsh Assembly Government has assured us that it takes all necessary steps to protect the confidentiality of the data it collects and holds. This includes using a secure online data transfer system; storing data in a secure shared area and using password protection. Suppliers of data are informed how the confidentiality of their data is protected.

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.

3.14 The Welsh Assembly Government pays ONS to top up the data collected through the MBS, in order to collect sufficiently detailed data for publication. The Welsh Assembly Government told us that where possible, ONS uses administrative sources. The Welsh Assembly Government collects some additional data that feed into the publications. The data collected by the Welsh Assembly Government are supplied on a voluntary basis. Welsh Assembly Government statisticians estimate the burden of their own data collection and combine this with burden data supplied by ONS, to calculate the total cost burden on data suppliers. This information is not currently published – an issue that was raised as a Requirement in Assessment Report 33 (*Welsh Labour Market Statistics*). The Welsh Assembly Government has told us that it intends to publish a single document containing cost data for all of its surveys. This is still outstanding. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should report annually the estimated costs of responding to statistical surveys¹⁹ (Requirement 4).

¹⁹ 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.

- 3.15 The Welsh Assembly Government has a programme budget for improving economic statistics, which has been in place since 2001. This pays for improvements to key economic data sources, including the production of the short-term output indicators. The statisticians told us that they review the allocation of the budget at the end of each year, although there has not been a formal cost benefit review of the short-term output indicators. The Welsh Assembly Government also operates a detailed time recording system, so there is a good awareness of the time spent producing each output.
- 3.16 The Welsh Assembly Government currently pays ONS £33,000 a year to produce the *IoPC* data and £197,000 for the *IoMS* data. The associated staffing costs within the Welsh Assembly Government are approximately £15,000 a year.
- 3.17 The Welsh Assembly Government publishes a statistical work plan²⁰, which recognises that meeting user needs is an important part of the statistical planning process. This plan is subject to formal consultation every three years.
- 3.18 The Welsh Assembly Government has processes in place to monitor and review the cost of producing the short-term output indicators. However, as set out under Principle 1, it is not clear whether these costs have been considered in conjunction with the level of user interest, particularly given the quality concerns outlined under Principle 4. The statisticians indicated that this would be a topic for discussion at the user event being planned for this financial year. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should review the user need for these outputs, taking account of the data quality, costs, and other priorities²¹ (Requirement 5). The user event would provide the ideal forum to engage users in this discussion.

²⁰ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/statsplan1011/?lang=en>

²¹ In relation to Principle 7 Practices 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice.

Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility

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

- 3.19 The Assessment team considers that the presentation of the statistics in the releases is clear, and that there is some good commentary and contextual information to aid interpretation. However, there is room for improvement. For example, there are no links between the two publications, some technical terms are not fully explained, and in some places there is a lack of commentary to explain trends in the data. In particular, it would be useful to provide commentary exploring the difference between the indices for Wales and those for the UK (which are also presented in the release). As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should improve the commentary and analysis in the publications²² (Requirement 6).
- 3.20 The Welsh Assembly Government makes data tables available through its StatsWales²³ website, which enables users to produce bespoke tables. The Welsh Assembly Government told us that it has improved its website, in response to user feedback: updating descriptions and introducing Wales-level reports to help users navigate around the site. However, there is room for improvement – for example, in the presentation of some of the charts that are produced. The accessibility of the Welsh Assembly Government’s own website could also be improved. For example, while it is easy to navigate to current releases, it is very difficult to find historic editions. We suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government improve accessibility of its websites, in particular to improve navigation around the statistics, and improve the presentation of the charts produced by the StatsWales website.

²² In relation to Principle 8 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice.

²³ http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx?CS_referer=&CS_ChosenLang=en

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.

3.21 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.

- 3.22 The short-term output indices are accessible from the National Statistics Publication Hub. The release of the *IoPC* for Quarter 1 2010 was delayed by one month due to data supply problems. The reason for the delay was explained²⁴ on the Welsh Assembly Government's website and the new date of release was announced.
- 3.23 The indices for Wales are currently published 2 to 3 months after the UK equivalents. *IoMS* is published five weeks later than *IoPC*. The timetable for the release of these outputs is constrained by the availability of the underlying data and the resources within ONS where the data are collected and processed. The statisticians told us that the data production processes are likely to be improved in autumn 2011 when the move to the new Standard Industrial Classification takes place. This should enable *IoMS* to be released more quickly following *IoPC*.
- 3.24 Nineteen people outside the statistical production team are granted pre-release access to these statistics²⁵. All these individuals work in the Welsh Assembly Government. The statisticians told us that they regularly review the list to ensure that it is kept to a minimum and that they are satisfied that the inclusion of all those on the list is justified.

²⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/economy2010/1006241/?lang=en>

²⁵ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/prerelease>

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.

3.25 ONS uses administrative data sources to provide additional data for Wales, to supplement the data collected through the MBS. These sources are specific to the Welsh indices but are not included in the Welsh Assembly Government's Statement of Administrative Sources. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should provide links to ONS's Statement of Administrative Sources, if the sources used in the production of these outputs are documented there, or document the sources itself²⁶ (Requirement 7).

²⁶ 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 Welsh Assembly Government's short-term output indicators, 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 | Facilitate direct engagement between the statisticians and the media (para 3.7). |
| Suggestion 2 | Investigate whether numerical estimates of data accuracy could be produced (para 3.9). |
| Suggestion 3 | Provide links to short-term output indices for other countries (para 3.11). |
| Suggestion 4 | Improve accessibility of its websites, in particular to improve navigation around the statistics, and improve the presentation of the charts produced by the StatsWales website (para 3.20). |

Annex 2: Summary of assessment process and users' views

- A2.1 This assessment was conducted from July to September 2010.
- A2.2 The Assessment team – Jacob Wilcock and Kim Reimann – agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with representatives of the Welsh Assembly Government in July. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 2 September. The Assessment team subsequently met the Welsh Assembly Government during September to review compliance with the Code of Practice, 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 6 responses to the user consultation. The respondents were grouped as follows:

Government Departments	1
Other public bodies	2
Academia	1
Media	1
Other	1

A2.5 Three of the users who responded were satisfied with the available short-term output indices. They use the statistics to monitor economic activity in Wales and to compare with statistics for the UK. Other users wanted to see more detailed data (either geographically or by industry) or commented on difficulties using the StatsWales website and identifying the best available data source. All users were satisfied with the level of user engagement by the statisticians.

Key documents/links provided

Written Evidence for Assessment document

