

Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Statistics on National Insurance Number Allocations to Adult Overseas Nationals Entering the UK

*(produced by the Department for Work and
Pensions)*

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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 *National Insurance Number Allocations to Adult Overseas Nationals Entering the UK*⁴ produced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

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 *National Insurance Number Allocations to Adult Overseas Nationals Entering the UK Analytical Report* are designated as National Statistics, subject to DWP implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5: Requirements 1 – 4 and 7 by May 2011 and Requirements 5, 6 and 8 by August 2011.

1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

1.3.1 The statistics provide a measure of in-migration for adult overseas nationals entering the UK and registering for a National Insurance Number (NINo). The statistics form part of a suite of data overseen by the cross-government Migration Statistics Improvement Programme (MSIP)⁵. This programme has good user consultation and involvement in the development of migration statistics⁶. However, there is no evidence of external user consultation by DWP about the presentation of the statistics, their quality or methods of data collection. Although reviews within DWP made recommendations about the processing and quality assurance of the data underpinning these statistics, the Assessment team saw no evidence of progress to implement these recommendations.

1.3.2 The statistics are published in an analytical report which is easily accessed on DWP's website and through the National Statistics Publication Hub. It presents the statistics impartially and objectively and clearly explains the limitations of

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://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/niall/index.php?page=nino_allocation

⁵ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/methodology-and-quality/imps/index.html>

⁶ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-8---migration-statistics--27-july-2009.pdf>

the statistics. However, the standard of writing and presentation of statistics in the analytical report could be improved; graphs have unreadable labels and the formatting of the tables is inconsistent. The report is supported by summary tables⁷, which are updated quarterly, and a tabulation tool⁸, which allows users to access more detailed statistics and create their own tabulations.

1.3.3 The timetable for future updates of quarterly data is easy to find but no future timetable for the analytical report is published. Quarterly data are also published in the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report*⁹ which provides good comparative and contextual data; however, DWP's signposting to this report is insufficient.

1.4 Detailed recommendations

1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that DWP 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	Take steps to develop a greater understanding of the use made of the statistics, publish relevant information and assumptions and use them to better support the use of the statistics (para 3.4).
Requirement 2	Publish information about the data collection methods including an explanation of why these methods are used (para 3.9).
Requirement 3	Publish an action plan to improve the quality assurance of these statistics and report progress against the plan (para 3.10).
Requirement 4	Provide a clear link to the <i>Migrations Statistics Quarterly Report</i> on the DWP website with a brief overview of its contents (3.20).
Requirement 5	Review and improve the presentation of the National Insurance Number allocations data and associated commentary in the annual analytical report (para 3.23).
Requirement 6	Report on options for condensing the production of the statistics, including liaising with data providers

⁷ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/tabtools/nino_alloc_summ_tables_aug10.xls

⁸ http://83.244.183.180/mgw/live/mw/tabtool_mw.html

⁹ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15230>

for more timely and efficient data provision (para 3.25).

Requirement 7

Include the publication date of the annual analytical report on the forward timetable (para 3.27).

Requirement 8

Provide name and contact details of the responsible statistician in the analytical report (3.28).

2 Subject of the assessment

- 2.1 All overseas nationals who wish to work or claim benefits or tax credits in the UK must be allocated a National Insurance Number by Jobcentre Plus. The National Insurance Number (NINo) is then registered on the National Insurance Recording & Pay as You Earn System (NPS) with HMRC; the individual's nationality is also registered. It is from the NPS that the NINo allocations statistics are derived. The quarterly statistics on NINo allocations give an indication of trends in work-related immigration in advance of ONS's Long-term International Migration figures. They are a leading indicator of immigration/emigration trends for EU citizens to local authorities.
- 2.2 An analytical report is published annually by DWP and data are available quarterly through DWP's tabulation tool and summary tables. The quarterly statistics are promoted through a cross-government statistical press release and are also included in ONS's *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report*.
- 2.3 The statistics show the number of people registering for a NINo in order to work or to claim benefits or tax credits in the UK. They do not include other people who come to the UK and, being flow data, they do not show the number of foreign nationals working or claiming benefit at a given point in time, nor do they distinguish between long and short term migration.
- 2.4 As part of the MSIP, DWP began publishing improved statistics on *National Insurance Number Allocations to Adult Overseas Nationals Entering the UK* (NINo allocations). The improvements made to the methodology mean that the new figures are not subject to future revision and more accurately reflect a migrant's location at the point they register for a NINo.
- 2.5 Statistics on NINo allocations are available in ONS's online local area migration indicators suite¹⁰ which combines these statistics with other population statistics to enable comparisons between different areas and with migration data taken from different sources.
- 2.6 The statistics on NINo allocations contribute to the overall picture on immigration. Publication of these statistics fulfils part of the commitments that DWP made to ONS to support improvements to population and migration statistics. The statistics are used to support the development of the National Insurance Number allocation process and to answer Parliamentary Questions. DWP were unable to provide a detailed breakdown of the marginal costs of producing these statistics but the annual costs, from provision of datasets to publication, hosting the tabulation tool and associated briefing, are estimated at £150,000.
- 2.7 Other statistics which quantify foreign nationals from A8[†] countries registering for work in the UK are derived from the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS)

¹⁰ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=15239&Pos=&ColRank=1&Rank=272>

[†] The A8 are the eight central and eastern European countries that joined the EU on 1 May 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The A8 does not include the other two countries that joined on that date: Cyprus and Malta.

produced by the Home Office¹¹. Although not identical, there are similarities with the NINo allocations statistics. DWP has conducted regular internal reviews of its production and quality assurance processes for the NINo allocation statistics which have identified areas for improvement – in particular, the need to produce a comparative analysis between these statistics and those from the WRS.

¹¹ <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/hosb1510snr.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 NINo team is part of the Migration Reporting Working Group. This group meets every quarter with the aim of supporting the cross-government reporting of migration statistics. The group has representatives from the Home Office, Department for Communities and Local Government, Office for National Statistics and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, but has no members from outside government.
- 3.2 The Improving Migration and Population Statistics (IMPS)¹² team within ONS coordinates work within the MSIP. Some working groups exist within the MSIP, one of which is the Access and Development of Alternative Sources working group. DWP is represented on this group which looks at the various ways to improve migration and population statistics using administrative data sources. The group also includes representatives of other government departments and the devolved administrations but there are no members from outside government.
- 3.3 DWP has published a Customer Service and Engagement Strategy¹³. The NINo team has good links with users of these statistics in DWP and in other government departments and meets them on a regular basis to discuss their needs. When queries or requests for statistical information are made, these are passed directly to producers in the relevant teams, or the statistical information is made available through user engagement groups within DWP.
- 3.4 Engagement with other, non-government, users is passive and takes place through the statistical pages of DWP's website. DWP was unable to provide evidence that it had investigated and documented these users' needs. Users who contacted us in response to this Assessment expressed a need for more detailed statistics, including different geographies and further analyses of the numbers of overseas nationals claiming benefits. As part of the designation as National Statistics DWP should take steps to develop a greater understanding of the use made of the statistics, publish relevant information and assumptions and use them to better support the use of the statistics¹⁴ (Requirement 1). Further, we suggest that DWP refers to the generic classes of use put forward in the Monitoring Brief: The Use Made of Official Statistics¹⁵.

¹² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/methodology-and-quality/imps/index.html>

¹³ http://campaigns.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/Customr_Service_and_Engagement_Strategy_final.pdf

¹⁴ In relation to Principle 1, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*.

¹⁵ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring-brief-6-2010---the-use-made-of-official-statistics.pdf>

Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity

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

- 3.5 The analytical report is available free-of-charge in PDF format on DWP's website and the quarterly data are available in summary Excel tables and via DWP's tabulation tool. DWP provides additional analysis free-of-charge.
- 3.6 The quarterly data are not revised as they are based on information (collected on the date of registration) which does not change. DWP told the Assessment team that quality assurance processes are in place to ensure that errors are identified. These processes include holding quarterly meetings with HMRC to discuss operational issues affecting the statistics and checks against other sources of data.

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.

- 3.7 In DWP, analysts are embedded within policy areas and are responsible for providing comment and advice in relation to these statistics. No incidents of political pressures, abuse of trust or complaints relating to professional integrity, quality or standards were reported to or identified by the Assessment team.

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 Some information about the quality of the statistics is available in the analytical report, including the limitations of the data in relation to uses and potential uses. The tabulation tool also provides background information, links to other resources and other metadata for these data, such as different definitions used. It is not clear from the web page that this information is available or where to find it. We suggest that DWP provide clearer access to this information on its website so that users can readily access it.
- 3.9 Information about the data collection methods was published in previous annual analytical reports; however, this has been removed from DWP's website. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DWP should publish information about the data collection methods including an explanation of why these methods are used¹⁶ (Requirement 2).
- 3.10 Improved NINo allocations statistics have been published since 2008. Previously the statistics were compiled using date of arrival, which was subject to revision. The date of registration is now used, so data are no longer subject to revision. A recent internal review by DWP identified weaknesses in the quality assurance of the raw data provided by HMRC and in the recording of quality assurance checks. For example, there were no checks by the statistics team to ensure that the HMRC data had been extracted completely and accurately. The review provides an action plan for the statistics team to implement; however, the statistics team did not provide a progress update. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DWP should publish its action plan to improve the quality assurance of these statistics and report progress against the plan¹⁷ (Requirement 3).
- 3.11 DWP statisticians informed us that the individual registrations are input into HMRC's system manually from paper forms sent in by Jobcentre Plus. A pilot project did consider the electronic transfer of information from DWP's Customer Information System to HMRC's NPS. DWP recognise this would be more efficient than the current system; however, the pilot has been discontinued in light of spending review discussions.
- 3.12 The NINo allocations statistics are similar to those from the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS), published by the Home Office. Citizens of A8 countries must register with the WRS in order to take up employment in the UK as well as register for a National Insurance number, so the data should be comparable. Some comparisons with WRS data have been made by DWP as an internal benchmarking exercise but the results were inconclusive. The internal review recommended a full comparison of datasets for the same time series in order to provide users with an understanding of their comparability and coherence with

¹⁶ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 1 of the *Code of Practice*.

¹⁷ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*.

the WRS statistics. A comparison is published in the *Migration Statistics Quarterly Review* Figure 7.1 with supplementary user definitions.

- 3.13 The analytical report 2009/10 is the only annual report currently available on DWP's website. Data tables for earlier years are available via the tabulation tool although we think that users may find the commentary in the annual reports useful. The Assessment team suggests that DWP add a link to the previous reports to the relevant website page.

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.

- 3.14 Data are transferred securely from HMRC administrative systems to DWP. The data are encrypted at an early stage in the process to ensure that individual information is protected. The data are transferred to ONS in person on a CD-ROM disc. The Assessment team suggest that DWP investigate the options for moving to electronic transfer of the data to ONS to minimise the risk of losing discs, and to reduce costs.
- 3.15 DWP has published a confidentiality statement¹⁸ on its website. DWP told the Assessment team that NINo registrants are informed of the use made of their data at the point of registering.

¹⁸ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/Confidentiality_Statement_final.pdf

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.

- 3.16 The statistics on NINo allocations are produced from an HMRC administrative system (NPS) in which National Insurance Numbers are registered for tax and National Insurance contribution purposes. The additional burden arising from the statistical uses to which the data are put is minimal. HMRC has an approval process for data extractions that involves checks to ensure that the correct dataset is extracted and that there is a valid requirement for it. The statistics are key leading indicators of migration and are a good example of how administrative data can be used to enhance survey data; for example, the Long-term International Migration Estimates¹⁹ produced by ONS from the International Passenger Survey.
- 3.17 DWP is proactive in exploiting administrative data for statistical purposes. DWP statisticians told us that they share quality of address information with HMRC for operational insight. However, the Assessment team found little evidence of how DWP works with HMRC specifically to improve the potential of the NINo allocations statistics.

¹⁹ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=507>

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.

- 3.18 DWP's statistical planning takes place within individual teams. DWP has informed the Assessment team that it is in the process of developing an overarching business plan that pulls together all team-level business plans.
- 3.19 DWP has a competency framework for statistical posts. This assists DWP in ensuring that appropriately skilled people are employed in the production of the statistics.

Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility

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

- 3.20 DWP's website provides straightforward access to the quarterly summary tables, the tabulation tool and the annual analytical report. There is no information on DWP's website about ONS's *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report*, which is the main vehicle for the release of quarterly data, providing commentary and context with other migration data. It can only be accessed through the tabulation tool. As part of the designation as National Statistics DWP should provide a clear link on its website to ONS's *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report* with a brief overview of its contents²⁰ (Requirement 4).
- 3.21 The summary tables and tabulation tool provide users with the means to analyse and reuse the data. Users who contacted us in response to this Assessment were satisfied with these dissemination tools. Some users requested more geographies to be made available through the tabulation tool and data to be available to download in different formats. In 2008 DWP carried out a consultation regarding the replacement of the tabulation tool with an improved version. DWP informed the Assessment team that the procurement process for the development of the new tool was initiated but that resource pressures forced DWP to stop the process. The Assessment team suggests that DWP investigate the options for improving the functionality of the tabulation tool.
- 3.22 The ONS uses the NINo allocations data in its local area migration indicators suite which provides an easy-to-use tool for comparing different migration statistics at a variety of geographies. We suggest that DWP provide a link to this suite on the NINo allocations web page so that users can exploit the full potential of the data.
- 3.23 The annual analytical report provides information about the limitations of the data, a summary of headline figures and further analysis; for example, time series data and breakdowns by age and sex. However, there is little contextual information in the report, and there is no explanation of the various uses of the data or other reasons why these statistics are published. The quality of the writing and the presentation of data need improving. The report contains graphs with illegible labels and references to other statistics without explanations of how they are comparable. Furthermore, the presentation of the tables lacks attention to detail; for example, rows are misaligned and formatting is inconsistent. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DWP should review and improve the presentation of the NINo allocations data and associated commentary in the annual analytical report²¹ (Requirement 5). We suggest that DWP includes longer time series to present a more complete picture of the trends.

²⁰ In relation to Principle 8, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*.

²¹ In relation to Principle 8, Practice 2 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.

3.24 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.

- 3.25 The time lag between DWP receiving the data from HMRC and publication is around five months. As the various stages of processing carried out by DWP takes around 8 weeks, the release of these statistics is significantly delayed. This is due in part to coordinating the release with the cross-government release timetable. DWP assured the Assessment team that work has been carried out to investigate the options for reducing this time lag, although this work has not been published. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DWP should report on options for condensing the production of the statistics, including liaising with data providers for more timely and efficient data provision²² (Requirement 6).
- 3.26 The pre-release access list for NINo allocations statistics is published on DWP's website²³. There are fourteen recipients with pre-release access to the NINo allocations statistics.
- 3.27 The NINo allocations data and analytical report are available through the National Statistics Publication Hub and are clearly accessible on DWP's website. DWP has a forward timetable of releases on its website²⁴ which provides users with the future publication dates of the quarterly release of data. The next publication date is also provided on the NINo allocations web page. However, the publication date of the analytical report is not identified anywhere on DWP's website or the Publication Hub. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DWP should add the publication date of the analytical report to the forward timetable²⁵ (Requirement 7).
- 3.28 The name and email address of the responsible statistician are available on the forward timetable but they are not included in the analytical report, the NINo allocations web page or in the tabulation tool metadata. As part of the designation as National Statistics the name and contact details of the responsible statistician should be provided on the annual analytical report²⁶ (Requirement 8).

²² In relation to Protocol 2, Practice 1 of the *Code of Practice*.

²³ http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/prs_listx.php?benefit=migrant&file=migrant_list.txt

²⁴ <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=schedule>

²⁵ In relation to Protocol 2, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*.

²⁶ In relation to Protocol 2, Practice 6 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.

- 3.29 DWP makes extensive use of the data it holds within administrative systems for the production of official statistics. In 2009, ONS published an interim report²⁷ which looked at the potential use of DWP administrative data to improve population and migration statistics. As a result of this work, the NINo scan has been actively used by ONS in their methodological improvements underpinning improvements to local authority migration and ultimately population estimates. This is available on ONS's website and the Assessment team suggest that a link be included to this from the NINo web page.
- 3.30 DWP has a published Statement of Administrative Sources²⁸ which covers all administrative sources used for statistical purposes.

²⁷ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/methodology-and-quality/imps/mig-stats-improve-prog/working-groups/access-and-development-of-alternative-sources/index.html>

²⁸ http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/DWP_Statement_of_Administrative_Sources_final.pdf

Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to DWP's *National Insurance Number Allocations to Adult Overseas Nationals Entering the UK*, 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 | As part of documenting the use of these statistics (see Requirement 1), refer to the types of use put forward in the Monitoring Brief: <i>The Use Made of Official Statistics</i> ²⁹ (para 3.4). |
| Suggestion 2 | Provide clearer access to background data, metadata and links to other resources (para 3.8). |
| Suggestion 3 | Add a link to the previous reports to the relevant website page (para 3.13). |
| Suggestion 4 | Investigate the options for moving to electronic transfer of data to ONS (para 3.14). |
| Suggestion 5 | Investigate the options for improving the functionality of the tabulation tool (para 3.21). |
| Suggestion 6 | Include a link to the ONS local area migration indicators suite on the NINo allocations landing page (para 3.22). |
| Suggestion 7 | Include longer time series to present a more complete picture of the trends (para 3.23). |
| Suggestion 8 | Include a link to the ONS paper on DWP administrative sources from the NINo landing page (para 3.29). |

²⁹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring-brief-6-2010---the-use-made-of-official-statistics.pdf>

Annex 2: Summary of assessment process and users' views

A2.1 This assessment was conducted from September to November 2010.

A2.2 The Assessment team – Rachel Beardsmore and Catherine Barham – agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with representatives of DWP in September 2010. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 30 September 2010. The Assessment team subsequently met DWP during October 2010 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 from the user consultation. The respondents were grouped as follows:

Central government	4
Devolved administrations	1
Other	1

A2.5 The users who responded to the consultation were content with the quality and availability of the statistics and they found DWP staff to be helpful and knowledgeable when contacted. Some concerns were raised about the timeliness of the data (five month time lag) and the inflexibility of the tabulation tool.

Key documents/links provided

Written Evidence for Assessment document

