



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Katie Dodd
Acting Head of Profession for Statistics
DWP
By email

Ed Humpherson
Office for Statistics Regulation
(by email)

15 July 2026

Dear Ed,

Department for Work and Pensions, Benefits Statistics Consultation

I am writing to inform you of the outcome of our recent [Benefits Statistics Consultation](#) on the frequency and ongoing value of a range of DWP Official Statistics. In the interests of transparency, we have set out below the rationale for these decisions and how they align with user need and the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The purpose of the consultation was to explore the possibility of reducing the frequency of certain routine Official Statistics. This was to ensure our outputs remained relevant, efficient, and aligned with evolving user needs and digital capabilities. The proposals also responded to pressures, where balancing business-as-usual delivery with development work had become increasingly challenging.

The consultation ran from 17 February 2026 to 12 May 2026 and sought views on the following DWP Official Statistics:

- [DWP Benefit Statistics](#), including Benefit Combinations (Accredited Official Statistics)
- [National Insurance Numbers \(NINo\) Allocated to non-UK overseas nationals statistics](#) (Accredited Official Statistics)
- [Housing Benefit \(HB\) Debt recovery statistics](#) (Accredited Official Statistics)
- [Housing Benefit \(HB\) Speed of Processing statistics](#) (Official Statistics)
- [Universal Credit](#) (Official Statistics)

We received responses from a range of users, including internal stakeholders, local authorities, members of the public, charities, and professional bodies.

Some respondents, particularly local authorities and analysts, highlighted the value of higher-frequency releases for operational monitoring and in-year analysis. We recognise that reducing publication frequency may lessen the timeliness of Official Statistics for these users. However, these needs are more appropriately met through timely administrative data held within the Department, or alternative sources such as management information and other Official Statistics. The underlying data will continue to be collected and available internally. Based on the consultation feedback, our assessment is that a reduced-frequency model continues to meet user needs while improving coherence, clarity and long-term sustainability.

Benefit Statistics, Benefit Combinations, Universal Credit and NINo Statistics

Consultation feedback did not identify any key requirements that would prevent a reduction in frequency of the Benefit Statistics, Benefit Combinations, Universal Credit or NINo Official Statistics. As a result:

- Benefit Statistics, Benefit Combinations and NINo Allocations statistics will move to an annual release, based on the financial year, with publication in mid-September each year;
- Universal Credit Official Statistics change from monthly to quarterly publication. Implemented in May 2026.

To note, the next publication, scheduled for September 2026, of DWP Benefits Statistics and Benefit Combinations Statistics, will be published under the new name of The Annual DWP Benefits Statistics Compendium. This will be the first release under the new annual model, covering data to March 2026.

National Insurance Numbers (NINo) Allocated to non-UK overseas nationals statistics

The NINo statistics will be published annually in September each year on the same date as wider DWP statistics and will cover data for the full financial year to the end of the previous March. The new release schedule will bring greater coherence with the annual reporting for DWP benefit statistics. This will improve coherence with DWP benefit statistics and help distinguish the publication from the wider suite of migration statistics, reducing the risk of misinterpretation.

Aligning the NINo statistics release dates and financial year reporting periods with other DWP benefit statistics will result in an additional three-month lag. Given no feedback was received on timing dependencies and considering the benefits of coherence with other annual statistical releases, it was decided that the value of coherence outweighed that of lag.

We have engaged with key users and stakeholders across government, including ONS, Home Office and HMRC, as well as the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. No concerns or dependencies were identified. We have also worked closely with ONS to ensure that existing data flows supporting their long-term international migration estimates will continue unaffected.

Finally, we have consulted in depth with the DWP NINo operational team regarding the changes. The team already have a separate monthly data source for MI which they use for operational purposes, therefore are not reliant on our published data. The only comments related to the handling of PQs and FOIs. We assured them that the changes would not affect the way PQ's and FOIs are answered on this topic. We therefore did not identify any requirement or objection from the public, wider migration statistics producers or other government departments regarding the change in frequency and release date.

HB Speed of Processing and HB Debt Recovery statistics

The consultation sought views on the continued public and internal value of the HB Speed of Processing and HB Debt Recovery statistics ahead of consulting on the

frequency. While some operational and monitoring uses were identified, these are more appropriately met through internal management information rather than published Official Statistics. We will therefore cease these Official Statistics, with final publications scheduled for 29 July 2026 and 2 September 2026, respectively. HB caseload statistics will continue to be delivered within the DWP Benefits Statistics release.

Additional changes

In addition to changes outlined in the consultation, we are also renaming the UC WCA statistics to UC Health statistics and making a minor adjustment to the quarterly publication dates of UC Health and Employment Support Allowance Work Capability Allowance statistics, moving the date back three working days, to align them with the scheduled release dates for Personal Independent Payment accredited Official Statistics. This will meet a user need to improve overall coherence across health-related outputs.

Conclusion

We have assessed these decisions against the Code of Practice for Statistics, and consider that they best balance long-term sustainability, improved quality, coherence, and continued alignment with user needs. We will continue to monitor user need for these statistics through routine engagement, feedback channels and the Statistical Work Programme. If new or unmet needs emerge, we will keep these decisions under review.

We will publish a summary of responses and our decision on GOV.UK on 19 June 2026 and will clearly communicate the change to users ahead of implementation, including clear information on new publication schedules and any changes to content. We will also communicate directly with key stakeholders identified through the consultation. To support users who rely on higher-frequency data, we will provide advance notice of changes and clear information on revised timetables and reference periods. Previously published statistics and underlying Stat-Xplore datasets will remain available to support continuity of analysis.

We would welcome any further feedback and would be happy to discuss any aspect of these changes.

Yours sincerely,



Katie Dodd

Acting Head of Profession for Statistics

DWP