



Ministry of
JUSTICE

Statistical notice

Ministry of Justice quality strategy,
principles and processes

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Statistical notice – Ministry of Justice quality strategy, principles and processes

Principles

Statistical quality in the Ministry of Justice is defined as meeting users' needs with particular reference to the relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, comparability and coherence of the statistics collected, analysed and reported.

Four principles underpin the delivery of statistical quality in the Ministry of Justice:

1. Users are identified and dealt with in a spirit of consultation and responsiveness, and their needs prioritised and met within available resources
2. Suppliers are respected and dealt with ethically, legally and effectively
3. Methodologies, processes and practices are documented to the correct level of detail for their purpose, kept up to date and made available where appropriate
4. Statistical processes and outputs are monitored and measured against standards with a view to their maintenance and improvement

The definition and key components of statistical quality in the Ministry of Justice are contained in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Dimensions of quality in statistics

Definition	Key components
Relevance	
The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content.	Any assessment of relevance needs to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• who are the users of the statistics;• what are their needs; and• how well does the output meet these needs?
Accuracy	
For survey data: the closeness between an estimated result and the (unknown) true value.	Accuracy can be split into sampling error and non-sampling error, where non-sampling error includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• coverage error;• non-response error;• measurement error;

Definition	Key components
<p>For administrative databases: how well the information is recorded and transmitted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • processing error; and • model assumption error. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completeness • Timeliness of recording and transmission • Accuracy of recording of data items • Correct use of coding; and • Correct interpretation
<p>Timeliness and Punctuality</p>	
<p>Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer. Punctuality refers to the time lag between the actual and planned dates of publication.</p>	<p>An assessment of timeliness and punctuality should consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • production time; • frequency of release; and • punctuality of release
<p>Accessibility and Clarity</p>	
<p>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data. It also relates to the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information.</p> <p>Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice</p>	<p>Specific areas where accessibility and clarity may be addressed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • needs of expert and non expert users; • consistency of standard in relation to revisions, rounding, data suppression and spreadsheet type; • assistance to locate information; • clarity; and • dissemination
<p>Comparability</p>	
<p>The degree to which data can be compared over time and domain</p>	<p>Comparability should be addressed in terms of comparability over:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time; • spatial domains e.g. sub-national, national, international; and • domain or sub-population e.g. crime/offence type, ethnicity

Definition	Key components
<p>Coherence</p> <p>The degree to which data derived from different sources or methods but which refer to the same phenomenon are similar</p>	<p>Coherence should be addressed in terms of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data produced at different frequencies; • other statistics in the same domain; • sources and outputs; • coverage of different databases; and • definitions and coding used for different databases

Procedures to deliver quality

To put these principles and their key components into practice, reference should be made to the Ministry of Justice procedural documents identified in Table 2 below which overlap with and reinforce particular aspects of delivering statistical quality in the Ministry of Justice.

Table 2: Delivering quality statistics in the Ministry of Justice

Definition	Users of Ministry of Justice statistics should expect that:
<p>Relevance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they will be appropriately consulted about quality principles and strategy in line with the Ministry of Justice User Engagement Strategy
<p>Accuracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all Statistical publications will contain a full description of data quality issues relating to the release; and any impact that has on analysis of changes over time; or comparisons between different groups will be transparent to a lay and expert audience; • all Statistical publications will be fully compliant with the published Revisions Policy • all publications will have specific details as to how they are applying the Revisions Policy • Survey data will be presented with full information on sampling

Definition**Users of Ministry of Justice statistics should expect that:**

variability; confidence intervals; response rates and other relevant criteria to allow users to make informed judgements on quality

- Administrative data will be published with details of how it is collected to allow users to understand its strengths and limitations

Timeliness and Punctuality

- all publications will comply with the Code of Practice on pre-announcement dates of publications;
- we will publish Statistical releases as soon as possible after the relevant time-period;
- Statistical publications will be produced in line with our User Engagement and Customer Service Strategies

Accessibility and Clarity

- Statistical publications will be published in line with the Ministry of Justice Accessibility policy for Internet publications
- All publications will use Plain English wherever possible

Comparability

- We will use harmonised concepts and definitions in statistical publications wherever they are available
- Any statistical publication which does not use harmonised definitions will clearly explain why the harmonised definition has not been used and any plans to move it onto a harmonised basis.

Coherence

- As standard practice, we will release related statistical publications on the same day in order to aid user understanding unless:

Definition**Users of Ministry of Justice statistics should expect that:**

- This would mean significant delay to one set of published figures in order to present the coherent set of releases
- User Engagement suggests that separate releases on separate days would be preferable
- where related measures are published across several publications we will make it clear to users where the related information can be found
- By April 2010 we will have released a simple User Guide to help users navigate our Statistics Publications
- Longer-term developments on coherence will be fully consulted with Users in line with our User Engagement Strategy

Iain Bell
Chief Statistician
Ministry of Justice
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