

Statement on Confidentiality



February 2014

Ofqual/14/5388

Contents

Introduction.....	2
How we define private information.....	2
How we ensure confidentiality	3

Last updated: January 2014

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Next review will take place by: January 2015

Introduction

We do our best to ensure that the official statistics we publish do not reveal the identity of any individuals or organisations, or any private information about them. Private information that we collect as part of producing official statistics is confidential and we use it for statistical purposes only. We follow the guidance issued by the Government Statistical Service / Government Research Service about this.

How we define private information

Private information is information that:

- relates to an identifiable legal or natural person;
- is not in the public domain or common knowledge; and
- would cause them damage, harm or distress if the information were made public.

A 'legal person' is a company or other organisation that has legal rights and duties. A 'natural person' is a member of the public. Where we use the term 'individual' in our publications it means both legal and natural persons, both living and dead.

Information that is lawfully in the public domain and readily available to the public does not automatically become confidential when it is used to produce a statistic.

How we ensure confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality, we will:

- keep confidential information secure and only allow trained staff who have signed a declaration covering their obligations under the Data Protection Act to use it;
- explain how we will protect confidentiality to our survey and census participants;
- ensure that our arrangements to protect confidentiality are sufficient to protect the privacy of individuals and organisations, but not so restrictive that they reduce the usefulness of our statistics;
- request authorisation from the National Statistician before we make any exceptions to our confidentiality arrangements – we would want to make such exceptions if the law required them or if we thought they were in the public interest and we will publish details of any authorisations given by the National Statistician;
- share confidential statistical data with other organisations for statistical purposes only – we will require these organisations to sign an agreement describing what purposes the data will be used for and how the organisation will protect any confidential information within the data, and we will also keep detailed records of how and when we have transferred data to the other organisation;
- use rounding of numbers wherever it is needed to make sure that our data does not reveal the identity of an individual, or any private information about them – we also use rounding to make our published data clearer.

We wish to make our publications widely accessible. Please contact us if you have any specific accessibility requirements.

First published by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation in 2014

© Crown copyright 2014

You may re-use this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the [Open Government Licence](#). To view this licence, visit [The National Archives](#); or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU; or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is also available on our website at www.ofqual.gov.uk

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation	
Spring Place	2nd Floor
Coventry Business Park	Glendinning House
Herald Avenue	6 Murray Street
Coventry CV5 6UB	Belfast BT1 6DN

Telephone 0300 303 3344

Textphone 0300 303 3345

Helpline 0300 303 3346