

Corrections and Revisions Policy for Official Statistics



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Last updated: April 2015

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Next review will take place by: April 2016

Policy statement

We aim to minimise revisions to our statistical publications but sometimes changes are unavoidable. These changes come in two forms:

1. **Corrections** – these are unplanned and occur when errors in either the data or the methodology are found after release of the publication.
2. **Revisions** – these are generally, but not always, planned, and are the result either of improvements in methods or of additional data.

We will list any corrections or revisions on our website.

This policy follows the best practice set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice: www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html

Corrections

We have robust procedures in place to minimise errors and regularly review them. However errors do sometimes occur.

When errors occur we are open and transparent about the need for any corrections. We assess the extent to which the error could affect interpretation of the publication and take appropriate action:

- **Small errors with minimal impact:** correct the corresponding statistical release page (the web page that the publication is found on) and place a link on it to a note that explains the nature of the changes made.
- **Larger errors:** repopulate the web page with the correct figures – where that page has summary information – and create a link to a web page that explains the error.

Revisions

Methodological changes

If changes of the following type are to occur, we will, where possible, notify users in advance on our website and consult with them via user groups:

- Major changes to collection systems
- Changes in statistical methodology, definitions or categories.

We strive to maintain a consistent time-series and will consider all of the available options that would enable us to do that (including any revisions to previously published time-series).

Planned data updates

We plan some of our publications to be released in two stages: the first based on provisional data and the second on revised or final data. In these cases, the first release will set out how and when the revised or final statistics will be published.

Communication of revisions

The statistical release page for each product will have a link to the revisions policy for that publication. The link will contain:

- a note that identifies any revisions made to that product and the significance of those changes;
- any indication of the status of the figures – this would indicate whether they are usually subject to revision and in what way;
- a link to a page explaining the impact of any revision if it would result in reinterpretation of economic or social developments.

Outputs no longer subject to revision

If we decide that any outputs will no longer be subject to revision, we will list them in our revisions policy.

General issues

Paper versions of publications

Unless the changes are substantial or significant we will not attempt to recall or reissue any paper versions of any publication that contains the affected statistics or text if it has already been distributed. We will ensure that when we issue further paper copies they include any corrections that have been made to the electronic versions.

If the error is substantial or significant, we will, where practicable, notify the recipients of paper versions by telephone or email, and point them to the revised version available on the internet. If the release or publication has a long shelf life, we will consider reissuing a revised paper version.

Pre-release conditions applied to changes

Some individuals receive statistical publications before they are published on our website. Where a change is needed it may be subject to the same pre-release conditions as new statistics.

We will consult the Data and Statistics Manager (Head of Profession for Statistics) before we publish any change that would have a major economic or political impact.

Timeliness of changes

Timeliness is a measure of the gap between the date when the data was collected and the date when the final report was published. We try to minimise this gap and publish all reports at the earliest opportunity. We will balance the need for timeliness against the need to avoid frequent changes.

Keeping a history of changes

We keep electronic records of all previous versions of statistics where possible, which are available to users upon request where practicable. To avoid confusion, we only keep the most up-to-date report on our website.

Analysis of changes

We monitor the changes that we make in order to improve our statistical production process and the quality of our statistics, and to identify any systematic bias. If we find any such bias, we will notify our users.

Reporting of changes

The annual report from the Data and Statistics Manager to the National Statistician provides information on:

- how many corrections/unplanned revisions we made to our publications and the reasons for these;
- how many corrections/unplanned revisions were due to errors in our statistical processes and procedures.

Quality assurance reviews

When we review the quality assurance process for any statistical product, we also review the revisions policy for that product.

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

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