



Statement on Confidentiality



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Last updated: April 2015

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Next review will take place by: April 2016

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.

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