

Code of Practice for Official Statistics: HMRC policy on Revisions

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires all producers of Official Statistics to publish transparent guidance on the policy for revisions. The Code of Practice was published in January 2009 and can be found at:

www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html

HMRC aims to avoid the need for unscheduled revisions to publications unless they are absolutely necessary and put systems and processes in place to minimise the number of revisions.

Types of revisions

Scheduled revisions

Planned revisions take place on receipt of subsequent information that is expected. For example, when figures are originally published as “provisional” and then updated to “final.”

Administrative systems and some data collections can receive updated information following their original publication. This means that some information relating to a period already published is subsequently inputted.

These revisions are scheduled revisions and any outputs that are subject to scheduled revisions will include an explanation of how these are dealt with.

Non- scheduled revisions

Receipt of subsequent information

This type of revision refers to the receipt of data following publication, when no further publication was originally planned

This type of revision can arise from events such as where information given by data suppliers missed the original publication deadline or when a data supplier gives notification that they have submitted incorrect information. In these cases, a judgement will normally be made by the Head of Profession for Statistics as to whether the change is significant enough to publish a “revised” statistical release. As these revisions are not regular occurrences, they are considered to be non-scheduled.

Errors in statistical systems and processes

Occasionally, errors will occur in our statistical processes. Precautions are taken to minimise these errors and we continually review our processes and procedures to minimise this risk. These are considered to be non-scheduled revisions and as above, a decision on whether to republish the figures is made on a case by case basis by the Head of Profession for Statistics.

Changes in source systems or statistical methodology

Where major changes to source administrative systems are pre-planned and for changes in statistical methods we will, where possible, consult with users on the changes and treat these as a change of methodology.

Handling of revisions

Our policy in handling revisions is to be transparent with users about:

- the need for revisions
- how and when to expect revisions as part of our standard processes
- the processes by which other revisions will be communicated and published.

To meet these commitments, all of our statistical publications will:

- explain the specific revisions policy for that where a revision is scheduled;
- ensure that the need for major revisions for any series are pre-announced on the website
- detail how users will be informed of the need for revisions
- give explanations as to the nature and extent of revisions that were necessary.

Annual Report to the National Statistician

In addition, the annual report from the Head of Profession to the National Statistician will provide information on how many publications required amendments as a result of non-scheduled revisions and explain the reasons for these.

Sean Whellams
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