

Defra group Statistics Quality Statement

Why is quality important

- **Establishes Trust and Confidence** - in the knowledge that statistics are produced to a high standard
- **Provides Robust Evidence** - underpins and enhances decision making.

Definition

- The definition of quality for Official Statistics agreed by the Government Statistical Service (GSS) is “fitness for purpose”.
- Statistical quality 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.

Scope

Covers all statistics produced across the Defra group.

Defra group is the combination of a number of statistics producing organisations:

- Core Department;
- Forestry Commission (non-Ministerial Department);
- Executive agencies - Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Centre for Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), Rural Payments Agency (RPA), Veterinary medicines Directorate (VMD);
- Executive non-departmental public bodies - Environment Agency (EA), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Natural England (NE).

Who has responsibility?

- We all have responsibility for the quality of our statistics, their quality assurance and continuous improvement.
- Lead statisticians have responsibility for Quality Management, Peer Review and reporting to the Defra group Head of Profession for Statistics on Quality issues.
- Expert advice can also be sought from our Quality and Publication Champions and GSS Good Practice Team.

How do we achieve this?

Our primary aim is to improve and sustain a mutually beneficial partnership between the users and producers of our statistics, which is based on open and continuous dialogue / consultation [User Engagement Strategy for Defra Statistics](#)

Key principles underpin the delivery of statistical quality:

- Users are identified and dealt with in a spirit of consultation and responsiveness and their needs prioritised and met within the available resources.
- Methodologies, processes and practices are documented to the correct level of detail for their purpose, kept up to date and made publicly available where appropriate.
- Statistical processes and outputs are monitored and measured against quality standards with a view to their maintenance and improvement.
- High standards applied to dissemination / clarity covering the quality of the output and also the means by which the statistics reach the audience.
- Suppliers, including third party suppliers of information are respected and dealt with ethically, legally and effectively.

Process Quality applied to the raw statistical data

Information obtained at each process stage can be analysed and problems addressed, leading to a process of ongoing improvement.

<i>Process quality used</i>	<i>What's this about</i>
<i>Efficiency</i>	<i>Producing the desired outcome in a cost effective way, taking into account performance cost and where relevant respondent burden.</i>
<i>Effective</i>	<i>A process that is successful in delivering the desired outcome to meet user / business needs.</i>
<i>Transparent</i>	<i>A process that is open, visible and clearly understood and must include procedures to ensure confidentiality and security.</i>
<i>Flexible</i>	<i>A process that can readily adapt to changing priorities and demands.</i>
<i>Integration</i>	<i>Is about processes that complement each other.</i>

Output Quality

Relates to the quality of the final output and it's "fitness for purpose" and covers five key areas.

Output quality used	What's this about
Relevance	<i>The degree to which the statistical outputs meet user needs for both coverage and content.</i>
Accuracy and Reliability	<i>The closeness between an estimated result and the (unknown) true value. For all data sources: how well the information is recorded and transmitted.</i>
Timeliness and Punctuality	<i>Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between the publication and the period to which the data refers. Punctuality refers to the time between the actual and planned dates of publication.</i>
Accessibility and Clarity	<i>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata.</i>
Coherence and Comparability	<i>Coherence is the degree to which data derived from different sources refer to the same phenomenon. Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.</i>

How are we doing?

- **Feedback** - we actively encourage and respond constructively to all feedback received from our users e.g. complaints via the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) and conduct periodic internal reviews.
- **Quality Assurance Tools** - used to ensure the methodology is robust, text clearly presented and outputs disseminated to a high standard.
- **Continuous Internal Quality/ Peer Reviews** - ongoing commitment to enhance the quality of our outputs and to ensure they keep pace with priorities and changing needs.

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Defra group Head of Profession Statistics