



Department  
for Education

# **Statistical notice**

**Statistical Policy Statement on Revisions**

**June 2017**

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## Summary

Principle 2 Practice 4 of the code of practice for official statistics requires producers of official statistics to announce changes to methods or classifications well in advance of the release of the changes statistics

Principle 2 practice 6 of the code of practice for official statistics requires producers of official statistics to publish a revisions policy for those outputs that are subject to scheduled revisions

Principle 2 practice 7 of the code of practice for official statistics requires producers of official statistics to correct errors discovered in statistical reports, and alert stakeholders promptly.

The code is at

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

## Expiry or review date

This guidance will be reviewed before December 2018.

## Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

Users of published statistics.

## Revisions

1. The Department for Education aims to avoid the need for revisions to statistical publications unless they are absolutely necessary, or planned in the case of provisional statistics which are subsequently revised. The department also puts systems and processes in place to minimise the number and scale of any revisions.
2. There are three main reasons for revisions to the department's statistical publications
  - **Methodology changes:** Planned changes in how information is collected from administrative systems, or changes in statistical methodology to improve accuracy and measurement, or changes in definitions of categories;
  - **Data changes:** Receipt of subsequent (later) information or data; this can be planned e.g. receipt of more accurate information or data for the current period following more detailed validation of the source data; or unplanned e/g/ late receipt of information or data from a data provider or administrative system, following discovery of an error or otherwise;
  - **Errors:** Errors in the department's statistical systems and processes.

## Methodology changes

3. Where major changes to collection systems are planned or where we propose changes in statistical methodology, definitions or categories, we will, where possible, consult users on the changes. We will always consider options for maintaining a consistent time series, for example, revising previously published time series.

## Data Changes

4. Some of our publications are planned on the basis that there will be a first release based on provisional data, followed by a second release based on revised or final data. In these cases, the statistical publication based on provisional data will set out how and when the revised or final statistics will be published. Further information on why and how this happens is included at Annex A.
5. Information held can change following the derivation and release of the relevant official statistics for unplanned reasons. The timing of each statistical publication is designed to minimise the risk for the need for significant revisions because of changes to the information held.

## Errors

6. Whilst we have robust procedures in place to minimise errors in statistical systems and processes and regularly review our procedures to minimise the risk of errors, we recognise that errors may occur occasionally. Where such errors do occur, we will assess the significance of the error on the interpretation of the statistics in a statistical publication and determine an appropriate response in terms of publishing revisions and alerting users.
7. An error assessed as having a large impact will be corrected as soon as possible. A large impact is defined one which is likely to change a users interpretation of the data or trends that data shows.
8. Major corrections will be listed on the page history of the gov.uk webpage.
9. An error assessed as having a minor impact will be corrected in the next release of data, if it is practical and cost effective to do so. A minor impact is defined as one which is not likely to affect users interpretation of the data.
10. Users will be notified of minor corrections in next release of data.

## Handling of revisions

11. Our policy in handling revisions to statistical publications is to be open and transparent with users about
  - The need for revisions;
  - How and when to expect revisions are part of our standard publication processes;
  - The process by which other revisions will be communicated and published.
12. Communications of revisions to an external audience will primarily be through pages on gov.uk. Major planned changes to collection systems or statistical methodology

will be announced in advance. Where changes are unplanned, users will be notified of the need for change and the planned release date for revisions through gov.uk.

## **Additional tables**

13. We aim to publish statistics as soon as possible after data is made available to us and make every effort to publish all the statistical tables for each release together. However, in response to the needs of readers, for some releases we may decide to publish key tables early, and then later add tables that provide a more detailed breakdown of the data. Underlying data is included in this category.

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