Quality Statement for the Department for Work and Pensions
Abstract of Statistics

January 2018
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Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is committed to producing accurate, timely, and high quality official statistics publications that take into account user needs and which are produced and disseminated in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority’s (UKSA) Code of Practice. The quality of statistics found in the Department for Work and Pensions’ Abstract of Statistics, are assessed according to the European standard for quality reporting, which contains nine quality dimensions which are: relevance; accuracy; accessibility and clarity; timeliness and punctuality; coherence and comparability; output quality trade-offs; user needs and perceptions; performance, cost and respondent burden; and confidentiality, transparency and security. This document aims to address each of the above standards in as much detail as possible.

Note: This document should be read in conjunction with the “Department for Work and Pensions Policy Statement on Quality Guidelines”, which can be found here:

Relevance

The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content.

The Abstract consists of publicly available data on benefit uprating and inflation measures published by DWP and Office for National Statistics (ONS) and brings them together in one reference source. DWP collate this information and apply calculations to provide a full view of benefit uprating the value of benefits compared to prices and earnings.

Alongside the Publication, there are a number of Excel tables which enable the user to see time series of earnings and prices indices in one place and how they are applied to benefit uprating.

The Abstract is an annual publication containing updates for each tax year.

Access to the National Statistics are via:

- Publication – with background information and tables showing the latest benefit uprating methodology going back to the start of each benefit.
- Excel tables – these tables provide the user with access to the underlying indices and benefit rates for further analysis.

The Publication contains background information which notifies users of changes made in the source publications. It will also describe the detail of the issues, changes and revisions which form part of the latest release. In particular, this will include changes to the figures to complement any changes to DWP benefit uprating policy. The latest Publication and accompanying tables can be found here:


For further information regarding uses and users see the Uses and Users link at:

Accuracy

For administrative databases, accuracy is how well the information is recorded and transmitted.

The numbers included within the Abstract are taken from publications produced by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Office for National Statistics (ONS). All the data within the Abstract is a collation of information publicly available from other sources.

Retrospective changes

It is a standard procedure for ONS to revise published inflation indices once more information is available to them. As the Abstract uses the most recently available information at the time of publication, this will occasionally result in a revision of the previous year’s release. For more information on the revisions policy of ONS please see the following guidance:


Source Data

The Abstract is produced from publicly available data published by DWP and ONS. DWP collate this information and apply calculations to provide a full view of benefit uprating and inflation measures.

All figures from ONS are available at this location:

http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html

All figures from DWP are available at this location:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance begins as soon as the data has been collated in the Excel spreadsheet and had formulas applied. The figures are gathered from their published sources and added to the spreadsheet, the initial quality focus is on checking the correct figures have been used and the formulas have been applied accurately. Subsequent assurance examines the information provided in the Word document, ensuring the Excel tables have been copied across correctly and that background information and supporting footnotes are accurate and up to date.

Further information on the methods and processes we follow for each release can be found in the Methodology link from: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-abstract-of-statistics-policies-and-statements
Rounding/Disclosure control

The accuracy of statistics may be slightly affected by rounding, this will not impact on the usefulness of the statistics.

The data does not contain any personal records so there is no disclosure control applied.

Revisions Policy

If an error should occur, we thoroughly investigate how it occurred and strengthen our processes where necessary. Any erroneous statistics are removed and revised as soon as possible. Great care is taken to ensure all users are informed and are fully aware of the error and any implications. For further information see the DWP Policy Statement on Revisions:

Timeliness and Punctuality

Timeliness relates to the time elapsed from the period to which the statistics relate to the date of release of the statistics. Punctuality relates to the elapsed time between the planned and actual (published) time and date of release.

Timeliness

The Abstract brings together all of the relevant information and figures on earnings and prices indices and benefit rates since the measures began. It can only be completed once all other products associated with the Abstract have been published by DWP and the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

For information on retrospective changes, see accuracy for further details.

Punctuality

DWP pre-announce the month of release of the Abstract on the Office of National Statistics (ONS) publication hub at least 1 month in advance. Every care is taken to ensure that the Abstract is released on schedule and where this deadline can’t be met there are procedures for ensuring all users are aware of this and informed as soon as possible. The delay of publication is a rare event.

A mailing list exists as a first line of informing users of any issues. If you would like to receive occasional e-mails from DWP to directly inform you of any issues with the Abstract, please email stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk giving details of the DWP publications you use.
Accessibility and Clarity

Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also relating to the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.

Accessibility

The Abstract is available in PDF format. You can download Portable Document Format (PDF) documents using Adobe Reader, which is available for download free of charge (http://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/).

All underlying data used in the Abstract is available from their published sources within DWP or ONS.

The underlying tables used in production are available and can either be viewed or downloaded as an Excel file from the publication website: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/abstract-of-statistics-for-benefits-national-insurance-contributions-and-indices-of-prices-and-earnings

If you don’t have Microsoft Excel installed and you wish to view Excel files you can download Microsoft’s Excel viewer free of charge here: http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/en/details.aspx?familyid=1CD6ACF9-CE06-4E1C-8DCF-F33F669DBC3A&displaylang=en.

Clarity

The Abstract aims to give users a detailed overview of benefit uprating and inflation indices. To this end, the Abstract combines benefit uprating data with price and earnings indices, giving worked examples where appropriate.

The Abstract contains links to the landing pages for all the relevant price and earnings indices. This enables users to get easy access to relevant metadata.
Coherence and Comparability

Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain. Coherence relates to the degree to which data derived from different sources or methods but which refer to the same phenomenon are similar.

Comparability

All tables show the value of the benefit payment at constant prices. This is provided for a full time series, starting at the date of introduction of the benefit.

Coherence

Not applicable
Output quality trade-offs

The process of ensuring proper analysis of the trade-offs between the different aspects of quality forms part of any periodic review of existing or new statistics, whilst always explaining any compromises to quality in full.

As the Abstract is a combination of other published National Statistics series, there are no quality trade-offs as part of the production of the Abstract itself. However, users should see the landing pages (available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/abstract-of-statistics-for-benefits-national-insurance-contributions-and-indices-of-prices-and-earnings) of the price and earnings indices to understand the trade-offs made in the production of those series.
User needs and perceptions

The processes of finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products.

DWP are always glad to hear the comments and view of customers on the Abstract. DWP already use a number of routes to seek user views.

For example:

- New statistics are developed in conjunction with groups of stakeholders to help understand and quality assure output
- Monitor the usage of the DWP website and Tabulation Tool
- Monitor ad hoc analysis requests

Further information on known uses, valid uses and areas of unmet need (and how we address these) is available in the Uses and Users link from: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-abstract-of-statistics-policies-and-statements

An ongoing questionnaire, enabling DWP to target future consultations at interested users; shaping the future direction of statistics development to address user needs; and helping ensure value for money, whilst giving users a structured way of expressing their views is available from:


Ad hoc comments are also welcome. Please provide such comments to:

stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

For all other enquiries please contact the appropriate person using the list at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/about/statistics
Performance, cost and respondent burden
The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.

The Abstract is produced from publicly available data published by DWP and ONS. DWP collate this information and apply calculations to provide a full view of benefit uprating and inflation measures, therefore the only costs applied are staff costs.

The following staff costs can be applied directly to the production of the statistics and yearly publication. These full time equivalents include a mixture of junior and more senior staff. The total DWP cost for production of these statistics is 0.1 staff (full time equivalent):

- Data preparation and table production
- Routine maintenance, quality assurance and publication

There is also a small amount of IT expenditure on web hosting and data storage.
Confidentiality, transparency and security

The degree to which the statistical product meets Government and Departmental standards regarding security and confidentiality, whilst also ensuring transparent monitoring and reporting of the statistical quality of its statistical releases and outputs.

Confidentiality and security

Within DWP, access to unpublished National Statistics is strictly monitored. The standard DWP data security and confidentiality policies have been applied. More information can be found at:


However, the source data contained within the Abstract is published and in the public domain prior to the Abstract being published, so the security associated with this publication is minimised.

Transparency

DWP aims to avoid the need for unplanned revisions to publications unless they are absolutely necessary, and have systems and processes in place to minimise the number of unplanned revisions that need to be made. The Department has a detailed revisions policy which explains how we will make revisions and inform users of our statistics when they occur, giving us confidence that all types of revision will be handled in a transparent manner. The revision policy can be found at: