



Department
for Education

Statistical notice

Statistical policy statement on revisions

February 2019

Revisions

This statistical notice has been produced to help users of official statistics understand the reasons for scheduled revisions to official statistics and the procedure for correcting errors in official statistics in line with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

The Department for Education aims to avoid the need for revisions to official statistics unless they are absolutely necessary. The department has systems in place and robust quality assurance processes to minimise the number and scale of any unscheduled corrections.

Code of Practice for Statistics

T3.9 Scheduled revisions or unscheduled corrections to the statistics and data should be released as soon as practicable. The changes should be handled transparently in line with a published policy.

Q2.5 Producers of statistics and data should provide users with advance notice about changes to methods, explaining why the changes are being made. A consistent time series should be produced, with back series provided where possible. Users should be made aware of the nature and extent of the change.

Q3.4 Scheduled revisions, or unscheduled corrections that result from errors, should be explained alongside the statistics, being clear on the scale, nature, cause and impact.

Scheduled revisions

Scheduled revisions to official statistics may happen because of changes to methods or data.

Methods changes

Planned changes in statistical methodology to improve accuracy of official statistics may lead to revisions to historical data to provide a consistent time series. Changes to methods include, but are not limited to, changes to data collection systems, administrative data sources, definitions and classifications.

Where major changes to methods are proposed we will, where possible, consult on the changes and announce them in advance. The scale, nature and impact of these changes will be explained alongside the statistics.

Data changes

Official statistics may be published as provisional to provide an early indication of the trend, and subsequently updated when more data becomes available. This can happen when statistics use data from operational systems and not all respondents have completed the relevant information when the snapshot is taken for the official statistics publication. The historical provisional data is replaced with more accurate revised data based on a more complete response in the next publication.

Provisional data will be clearly labelled in the publication and accompanying tables. An explanation of the limitations of the provisional data, and when the final revised statistics will be published, will be included in the publication.

Unscheduled corrections

Unscheduled corrections may be a result of unexpected changes to source data or errors in statistical processing.

Whilst there are robust procedures in place to minimise errors in our statistics systems and processes, we recognise that errors may happen occasionally. When an error is found, we will assess the impact of the error on the interpretation of the statistics and determine the appropriate response in terms of correcting the error and alerting users.

Major errors which, when corrected, would change the interpretation of data or trends that it shows will be corrected as soon as possible. The reason for the correction and its impact will be clearly shown in the publication and known users will be notified directly where this is deemed necessary.

Minor errors, which do not change the interpretation of the data or trends, will be corrected with the next publication of the data, if it is practical and cost effective to do so. Users will be notified of minor errors in the next publication.

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