



Voluntary Application of the Code of Practice for Statistics

Introduction

HM Courts & Tribunal Service (HMCTS) is responsible for the administration of the criminal, civil and family courts in England and Wales, tribunals in England, and non-devolved tribunals in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We are run jointly by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals, and are led by our independent Board to run an efficient and effective courts and tribunals system that enables the rule of law to be upheld and provides access to justice for all.

HMCTS is an executive agency, sponsored by the [Ministry of Justice](#) (MOJ). MOJ publishes official statistics relating to the operation of the criminal and civil justice systems, including courts and tribunals. See [statistics at MOJ](#). The official statistics provide a comprehensive view of a range of statistics related to court systems, including HMCTS performance, putting the figures in context and analysing the key aspects. Users are advised to use the official statistics for most purposes.

There are some users that need more frequent and timely measures of the operation of the court and tribunal system. To meet these requirements, each month HMCTS publishes a subset of the high-level measures that HMCTS use internally to understand and manage performance. These published figures are fully consistent with the management information used internally but can differ from the official statistics due to definitional and timing issues as well as the quality assurance processes applied to official statistics.

Although the published management information are not official statistics we have chosen to voluntarily apply the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#), the statutory code for official statistics produced by government bodies in the UK. This helps build public confidence in government statistics and data as the public can be confident that three pillars of the code have been considered and applied. These three pillars are:

- Trustworthiness - confidence in the people and organisations that produce statistics and data;
- Quality - data and methods that produce assured statistics; and
- Value - statistics that support society's needs for information.

The following explains how we have applied the pillars of the code in a proportionate way.

Trustworthiness:

Trustworthiness is a product of the people, systems and processes within organisations that enable and support the production of statistics and analysis. It comes from the organisation that produces statistics and data being well led, well managed and open, and the people who work there being impartial and skilled in what they do.

- The published management information is a subset of the information used internally within HMCTS to inform decision making on various operational practices. It is used for resourcing and financial forecasting. The judiciary, ministers and other MoJ departments see and make decisions informed by these figures.
- HMCTS has an analytical function responsible for data, management information, performance reporting, modelling and forecasting. This function is led and managed by government analysts from the analytical professions including Statisticians, Operational Researchers, Economists, Social Researchers, Science and Engineering and Digital, Data and Technology. The data management, quality assurance and production processes that leads to management information reports are led by senior statisticians.

- There is a nominated senior statistician that is accountable for this regular publication of HMCTS management information. They work closely with the MOJ's Chief Statistician and the Office for Statistical Regulation to ensure that the code of practice for statistics is followed within HMCTS.
- The management information is disseminated internally in HMCTS via reports, dashboard and analysis through the various governance boards of HMCTS and MOJ, including the HMCTS board, which provides check and challenge on the figures produced. The [HMCTS Framework Document](#) outlines the governance processes within HMCTS.
- HMCTS protects its data and has a [Personal Information Charter](#) which outlines how we treat personal data and our overall privacy policy and particulars for each service.

Quality

Quality means that statistics meet their intended uses, are based on appropriate data and methods, and are not materially misleading. Quality requires skilled professional judgement about collecting, preparing, analysing and publishing statistics and data in ways that meet the needs of people who want to use the statistics.

- The production of the management information is based upon best data and analytical principles to ensure it accurately reflects the performance of HMCTS. This information is then disseminated via reports, dashboard and analysis through the various governance boards of HMCTS and MOJ, which helps quality assure outputs and identify any potential anomalies that may require further examination.
- The management information produced by HMCTS forms the basis of the official statistics published by MOJ. We work closely with MOJ statisticians to understand how the data we provide is utilised and to understand the definitions and processes they follow in producing their official statistics. The management information and official statistics are closely aligned in both, although there are some differences arising from the different needs of our users: HMCTS to understand the full impact of all cases coming through HMCTS; MOJ to ensure they have a coherent and understandable picture of justice overall.
- The data and MI production, and the reporting and analysis teams are both led by senior statisticians. Both teams are a mix of experienced practitioners and professional analysts. The sources of data used are the best available for the management information required, there are data quality-assurance and output assurance processes to ensure the figures are accurate. Professional data management and processing techniques are utilised to ensure robust production processes and continual improvement.

Value

Value means that the statistics and data are useful, easy to access, remain relevant, and support understanding of important issues. Value includes improving existing statistics and creating new ones through discussion and collaboration with stakeholders, and being responsible and efficient in the collection, sharing and use of statistical information.

- As HMCTS services are reformed there is increased interest in the overall performance of HMCTS and the impact of the Reform programme. HMCTS receive PQs and FOIs each month asking for the most up-to-date information on performance. Publishing the management information will allow us to share the latest information, being used within HMCTS to drive performance, to be shared with the public. MOJ official statistics are only produced quarterly and can be up to six months behind the latest management information.
- As well as better meeting the public demand for more timely information on HMCTS services, the published figures can also be used by senior staff, ministers and wider stakeholders in their communications with the public, parliamentary committees and other members of parliament, helping to overcome any perception that MOJ are withholding information.
- Publishing timelier MI aligns with HMCTS' strategic direction and the public commitments made by senior officials and ministers to increase availability of data to wider stakeholders, industry, researchers and the third sector.
- Receipts, disposals and outstanding cases indicate the workload in each jurisdiction and are important measures for evaluating the progress and efficiency improvements of HMCTS' Reform programme. Similarly, timeliness metrics are useful for understanding how long cases take to go through the court and tribunal systems and whether Reform is having a positive impact for citizens using our services.
- Having the latest management information published in a controlled and orderly way in accordance with the three pillars of the code of practice for statistics decreases the risk of inappropriate release of information in an uncontrolled way.