

DECC report on surveys of businesses and local authorities - 2012/13

Introduction

All survey activities in the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) are monitored by the Survey Control Unit (SCU) in the department. Burdens imposed by surveys on respondents are measured in terms of compliance costs. In 2012/13 DECC imposed an estimated total burden of £131,000 on our data respondents, down 5 per cent on 2011/12.

The SCU in DECC is responsible for compiling and reporting on the compliance costs of all its business and local authority surveys to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which are then published in the annual Government Statistical Service (GSS) report available at www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/all-releases.html?definition=tcm%3A77-210555. The SCU at ONS is responsible for implementing survey controls driven by the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for statistics (www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/survey-control/index.html) and for auditing DECC survey control procedures.

This article presents an overview of the survey activities in DECC and their compliance costs.

Survey control in DECC

Survey control is applied to all statistical surveys, conducted by or on behalf of the department. Survey control is the mechanism for the department to oversee the burden its surveys imposed on respondents. It also aims to promote good survey practice, prevents poor quality or unnecessary surveys, and minimise the burden on respondents to DECC's statistical surveys.

DECC is committed to minimising the burden its surveys place on respondents. When a new survey is proposed, DECC assesses its need at the outset by seeking to understand

- How the information collected will be used;
- What the compliance costs will be;
- How the survey will contribute towards achieving DECC priorities, and
- Whether there are alternative ways to obtain the data.

DECC maintains an inventory of all its statistical surveys, ensures that these are systematically reviewed, and annually assesses the compliance costs of running the surveys.

Data collection

Energy statistics are based on regular surveys of companies as follows:

Coal : From the Coal Authority, Iron and Steel Statistics Bureau (ISSB) and electricity generators' returns, major coal companies and the two major distributors and from the major and smaller coal companies.

Upstream oil and gas: From individual companies under the Downstream Oil Reporting System (DORS) and Petroleum Production Reporting System (PPRS).

Downstream oil and gas : From National Grid and pipeline operators, gas suppliers and Major Power Producers for electricity generation.

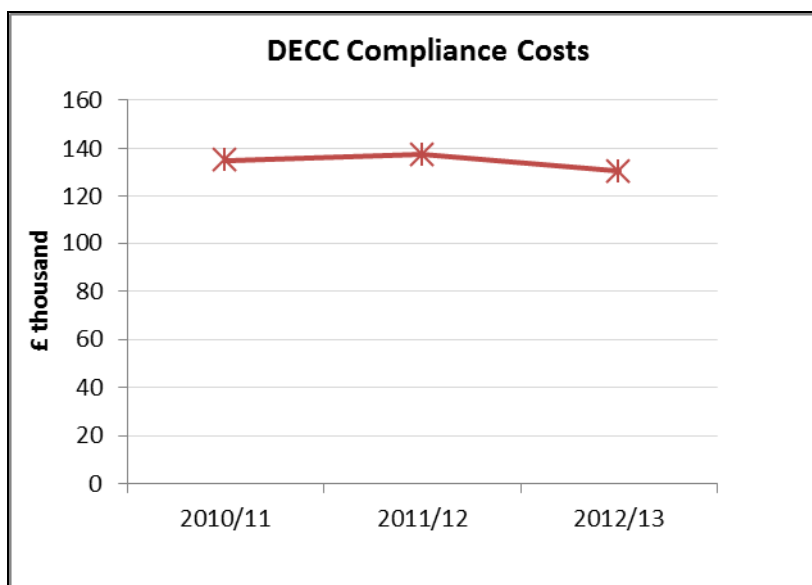
Electricity (including renewables): From inquiries to companies covering generating capacity, fuel use, generation, sales and distribution of electricity and licensed suppliers, ISSB, autogenerators or autoproducers from ONS and small surveys for specific renewable technologies.

Prices : From energy suppliers and manufacturing industries via the ONS.

Compliance costs

Compliance costs are a measure of the cost to respondents for complying with government statistical surveys. It is calculated using the product of the number of forms received, average completion time and the average hourly rates of the person compiling the return. The average hourly rates are based on the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

Chart 1



In 2012/13, DECC conducted a total of 32 statistical surveys, 25 of which were regular contributing to official statistics (see table 1). The remaining were ad-hoc surveys conducted to provide evidence for policy development, the compliance costs of which fell by 26 per cent. Total compliance costs in 2012/13, based on the 2012 ASHE rates, were £131,000, down 5 per cent on the previous year (see Chart 1 and table 2).

Burdens across government are published by ONS every year at:

www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/all-releases.html?definition=tcm%3A77-210555. In 2011/12, the latest year for which comparable data are available, DECC's compliance costs of businesses and local authorities accounted for less than 0.5 per cent of the total across all government surveys. It is anticipated that a similar proportion will be achieved in 2012/13.

Table 1- List of regular surveys, frequency of data collection and compliance costs in 2012/13.

Surveys	Frequency	Compliance cost (£)
Downstream Oil Reporting System	Monthly	23,770
Liquified Petroleum Gas Deliveries	Quarterly	100
Hypermarket Petrol and DERV	Monthly	140
Oil Stocking	Monthly	570
Coal Producers	Monthly	260
Coal Producers	Quarterly	230
Coal Producers	Yearly	50
Generators, distributors and suppliers of electricity	Monthly	26,150
Generators, distributors and suppliers of electricity	Yearly	2,010
Gas suppliers	Quarterly	2,210
Gas suppliers	Yearly	610
Electricity Generators Inquiry.	Quarterly	4,880
Renewable Energy Statistics	Yearly	110
DECC Oil and Natural Gas Survey	Half-year	5,810
New Price Transparency Survey: Non-domestic	Quarterly	1,980
Generators Inquiry	Quarterly	2,030
Quarterly Fuels Inquiry*	Quarterly	33,470
Domestic Fuels Inquiry	Quarterly	2,110
Annual petroleum products prices inquiry	Yearly	60
Crude Oil imports	Monthly	420
Prices paid by final consumers petroleum products	Monthly	360
Weekly oil product prices	Weekly	1,160
Producer Price Index	Monthly	4,290
Social Programme reporting (Company Fuel Poverty Initiatives)	Yearly	210
New Price Transparency Survey : Domestic	Quarterly	930

Table 2- Achieved sample sizes and compliance costs

	2011/12		2012/13		% change	
	Number of questionnaires returned	Compliance costs (£)	Number of questionnaires returned	Compliance costs (£)	Sample size	Compliance costs
Regular surveys	6,483	114,920	6,414	113,918	-1%	-1%
Ad-hoc surveys	3,270	22,572	3,554	16,644	9%	-26%
Total	9,753	137,492	9,968	130,562	2%	-5%

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