Background Quality Report
Naval Service Pocket Brief

1. Introduction

Overview

The Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] was first produced in July 2003 as a publication to show summary strengths and flows of the Royal Naval Service. Due to concerns over the quality of data taken from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system, all data post April 2008 are currently provisional. The intended customers are Naval officers who may require the content and format to be changed. For this reason the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] is an Official Statistic rather than a National Statistic.

The Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] was initially produced as a 'one off' special edition in 2003 and it was only produced on a regular, quarterly, basis from April 2005 to meet the needs of both Naval staff and the general public. More detailed information are available in other publications including the Naval Service Monthly Situation Report[2]. There have been two user consultations held in 2005 and 2009 where feedback was sought as to the usefulness of the tables and graphs. The feedback was very positive, and the only change made to the publication was the removal of civilian data from table 8.

Methodology and Production

The Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] shows summary strengths and flows of the Royal Naval Service as at the first day of the quarter (1st January, 1st April, 1st July and 1st October). Full time reserve service personnel and mobilised reservists are included in two of the tables.

A monthly extract, as at the first of each month, is taken from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system on the sixth calendar day of each month. The lag helps to minimise the impact of late reporting. The data undergoes a series of automatic validation checks and edits to ensure its basic quality. The extract is then stored on a MySQL database as part of a time-series of extracts maintained by DASA. A series of validation checks and corrections are made using expert knowledge and data obtained from other sources within the Department.

SQL code is used to create strength and flow pivot tables within Microsoft Excel for every member of the Naval Service for the situation date being published. The published tables are created by combining the data in these pivot tables with additional information provided by Fleet. This includes liability information in table 2, the table which feeds the graph depicting females in panel 7, the table which feeds the graph showing the age distribution in panel 14 and tri-service ethnicity information in table 16.

All of these tables are then checked and then an update is carried out in Microsoft Publisher to pull through the final version of the tables. When this has been checked again the file is secured in Adobe Acrobat Professional. A cover note is also created at this stage which highlights main figures in the publication and the forthcoming due dates.

The Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] is an Official Statistic and is produced and published in line with the UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics[3]. The publication date is pre-announced on the UK National Statistics Publication Hub[4]. No pre-release access is given. The Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] is published on DASA's external webpage (www.dasa.mod.uk[5]).

Contact details

Peter Shute, the Head of DASA Navy, is responsible for these statistics. His contact details are:

DASA (Navy)   Tel: **02392 547426**
Ministry of Defence
Building 33, Whale Island   E-mail: peter.shute@dasa.mod.uk
Portsmouth, PO2 8ER   Web site: www.dasa.mod.uk

We welcome feedback on this Background Quality Report or any of the statistics mentioned.

2. Relevance

The Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] reports summary strengths and flows of the Royal Naval Service. This meets the requirements of all of the known users of the product (see Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions quality dimension for further details). Customers requiring greater detail are served by other publications, such as the Naval Service Monthly Situation Report[6].

Product	Naval Service Pocket Brief
What it measures	Summary strengths and flows of the Royal Naval Service.
Frequency	Quarterly.
Periods available	July 2003, April 2005, July 2005 and April 2006 onwards.

3. Accuracy

Data Sources

The main data source used for compiling the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] output is the database of monthly DASA extracts from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system. These extracts capture all personnel in the Armed Forces although the quality of the information held on each person is variable. Key information required for managing individuals is recorded and updated centrally, other information is left to the individual to complete through a self-service tool. There is also a reasonable amount of late reporting which can adversely impact the statistics, particularly if exits and changes of individuals from untrained to trained are reported late. Obtaining the extract on the sixth calendar day and then calculating the strength at the first of the month overcomes much of the impact of late reporting.

DASA cleanse and correct around 120 Naval records within each monthly extract to ensure the quality of the key fields (service, branch, rank and exit category) is sufficient for DASA's main National and Official Statistics.

Average number of records edited	120 out of around 35,000 naval personnel records

All tables published from JPA since April 2007 data have been marked as provisional due to ongoing validation of these data. The introduction of this new administrative system caused data input errors so DASA are working to release a cleansed dataset when they have removed errors.

Outputs

All the figures published in the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] have been rounded the nearest 10 with numbers ending in 5 being rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias. Rounded figures are less precise, but not less accurate. Less precision improves the clarity of the outputs and provides an appropriate indication of the underlying accuracy. In most cases, the extra detail provided by unrounded figures is not needed, and may obscure the main features of the data. Rounding is DASA's preferred method of disclosure control in published statistics as it preserves anonymity of data subjects when there are small numbers. There have been no revisions to editions of the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1].

4. Timeliness and Punctuality

The time lapse between the reference date of the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] and the date of publication is approximately six weeks. It takes at least two weeks for the data to become available and then a further two weeks to produce the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1]. There is then a delay of around two weeks as it cannot be published until the Tri-Service data has been released via the Quarterly Manning Report[7] on the previously agreed publication date.

The table below summarises the key timeliness quality measures for the last four quarters of the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] publication:

Situation Date	1st April 2010	1st July 2010	1st October 2010	1st January 2011
Data availability	20th April 2010	19th July 2010	15th October 2010	21st January 2011

Publication	28th May 2010	27th August 2010	10th November 2010	10th February 2011

All publication deadlines have been met since the implementation of JPA (i.e. for all Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] publications from October 2006 onwards). However issues with data quality have meant that the availability of data has sometimes been delayed, though this has never affected the punctuality of publication.

5. Accessibility and Clarity

All Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] publications dating back to July 2003 are available from the 'All Other Publications' section of the DASA's website, and are available as pdfs. They are also available through the UK National Statistics Publication Hub[4] dating back to 1st October 2007 or by searching for "naval service pocket brief" on the internet.

The publication contains notes explaining the main categories and definitions used. Graphics are used to present time series and distributions by length of service. Detailed analysis and commentary is not provided in the publication.

6. Coherence and Comparability

The Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] is always fully coherent in terms of the total number of serving regular personnel (in each service and for officers/other ranks) with the other Naval and Tri-Service Publications produced by DASA, as any inconsistencies are identified and rectified before publication. It is also broadly comparable over time as there have not been any significant changes in definitions or groupings.

7. Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

Key users of the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] include the Directorate of Naval Personnel Strategy and Naval Training establishments. They use the publication to provide their personnel/trainees with a current snapshot of the Naval Service. The Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] is also used to inform public and parliamentary debate.

Two feedback processes have been carried out during the life of the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] and changes have been made to the product in relation to feedback received. These were carried out in 2005 and 2009. The feedback was very positive from both processes and the only significant change is the removal of civilian personnel from table 8.

8. Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

Cost effectiveness has been improved by automating the production of the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] further and linking it to Microsoft Publisher. Many hard copies used to be produced and sent out but now the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] is only published electronically to the web for customers to view and print their own hard copies if required.

There is no extra burden on data providers by producing the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1]. Extracts from JPA would be required by DASA irrespective of whether the Naval Service Pocket Brief[1] was produced or not. The cleansing of the data, carried out by DASA Navy, is required for other Navy and Tri-Service outputs.

9. Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

Security
All staff involved in the production process have signed the Data Protection Act, and all MoD, Civil Service and data protection regulations are adhered to. All data is stored, accessed and analysed using the MoD's restricted network and IT systems, and the access of raw data via JPA and SQL databases is password protected. Permission is required to gain a password and have access to the specific SQL code used to run the process.

Confidentiality
Some of the data collected and stored for the [Naval Service Pocket Brief](1)[1] is restricted and contains service numbers. All published outputs provide rounded totals of individuals shown by strengths and flows ensuring disclosure is not feasible. DASA's rounding policy has been used for all [Naval Service Pocket Brief](1)[1] outputs, ensuring consistency in harmonised statistical disclosure control. Access to unrounded data would only be provided upon the creation and approval of a data access agreement.

Transparency
The production process is considered to be transparent. This quality report informs users of the method, production process and quality of the output. Any significant errors identified after publication would result in revisions in the next publication along with explanations as to the cause of the revisions.

10. References

	Reference	Website Location
1	Naval Service Pocket Brief publications	http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php?pub=RN-PB
2	Naval Service Monthly Situation Report	http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php?pub=RN-SITREP
3	UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics	http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf
4	UK National Statistics Publication Hub	http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html
5	DASA website	www.dasa.mod.uk
6	Naval Service Monthly Situation Report	http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php?pub=RN-SITREP
7	Quarterly Manning Report	http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php?pub=QMR

Last updated: April 2011