Background Quality Report
Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report

1. Introduction

Overview
The Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] was first produced in July 2008 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 Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] is an Official Statistic rather than a National Statistic.

The Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] was initially produced in response to multiple ministerial requests for ad hoc information and mirrors a report which is already produced for Naval staff. Regular meetings are held with naval personnel on the make-up and content of the report for meaningfulness and accuracy, the most recent major review being in 2010. Two tables showing average length of Service on promotion were withdrawn in September 2010, and three graphs showing outflows over the coming 12 months were removed in December 2010. The only other amendments made have been when Specialisation changes in Naval Service have occurred.

Methodology and Production
The Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] shows summary strengths and flows of the Royal Naval Service as at the first day of each month. Full time reserve service personnel are included in five 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.

The latest situation data is extracted from the MySQL database and combined with separate information on liability in order to create a series of comma-separated data files required for the various tables. These are fed into an Access database, which holds additional information for all naval personnel. The published tables are produced in MS Excel and using queries of the Access database to populate them. Powerpoint and Adobe Acrobat Professional are then used to pull through the final version of the tables to the report. All of these tables are then checked for accuracy. When this has been done amendments are made to the Excel tables. PowerPoint and Adobe Acrobat Professional are then run again. The file is finally 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 Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] is an Official Statistic and is produced and published in line with the UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics[2]. The publication date is pre-announced on the UK National Statistics Publication Hub[3]. Pre-release classified access is given to Directors of Naval Personnel Strategy Planning. The Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] is published on www.dasa.mod.uk.

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

2. Relevance

The Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] reports strengths and flows of the Royal Naval Service for a range of detailed breakdowns, including rank, branch and specialism; it compares strengths and liability at a detailed level and presents this information in tables and graphs; it also examines length of service by rank and the numbers due to leave the service over the following year. This detailed information meets the requirements of all of the known users of the product.

Product	Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report
What it measures	It shows summary strengths and flows of the Royal Naval Service (including Branch and Specialisation).
Frequency	Monthly.
Periods available	Each month from July 2008 onwards.

3. Accuracy

Data Sources

The main data source used for compiling the Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[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 Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[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 Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1].

4. Timeliness and Punctuality

The time lapse between the reference date of the Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] and the date of publication is approximately 21 days. It takes at least 12 days for the data to become available and then a further 9 days to produce the Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1]. There is then a delay of around three weeks as it cannot be published until the Tri-Service data has been released via the Monthly Manning Report[4].

The following table summarises the timeliness quality measures for the last three publications.

Situation Date	1st December 2010	1st January 2011	1st February 2011
Data availability	16th December 2010	21st January 2011	15th February 2011
Publication	20th January 2011	10th February 2011	3rd March 2011

All publication deadlines have been met since the implementation of JPA (i.e. for all Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] publications from July 2008 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 Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] publications dating back to July 2008 are available from the 'All Other Publications' section of the DASA's website[5], 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 "Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report" on the internet.

The publication contains notes detailing the main categories and definitions used in the tables, and to expand the abbreviated titles of the Navy specialisations. Graphics are used to represent some time series and distributions by Length of Service. Detailed analysis and commentary on the data is not provided in the publication.

6. Coherence and Comparability

The Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[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

The Directorate of Naval Personnel Strategy is the key user of the Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] providing their personnel with a detailed picture of the Naval Service in order for them to plan and measure performance of different policies. The Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] is also used to inform public and parliamentary debate; copies of the Personnel Situation Report are placed in the House of Commons Library.

Ongoing feedback processes have been carried out during the life of the Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] and changes have been made to the product in relation to feedback received. This has been carried out since 2009. Feedback is very positive and changes are made in month to reflect current changes.

8. Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

Cost effectiveness has been improved by automating the production of the Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] further and linking it to MS Access. The Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] is only published electronically to the web for customers to view and print their own hard copies if required.

There burden on data providers in producing the Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] is fairly minimal. Extracts from JPA would be required by DASA irrespective of whether the Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[1] was produced or not. Additional data such as the liability and information from training schools are produced for management purposes and so the extra burden of providing it to DASA is minimal.

9. Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

Security
All staff involved in the production process have signed the Official Secrets Act and undertaken training in relation to the Data Protection Act to ensure 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. The access of raw data via JPA and SQL databases is password protected.

Confidentiality
Some of the data collected and stored for the Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[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 Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report[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	Royal Naval Monthly Personnel Situation Report publications	http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php?pub=RN-SITREP
2	UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics	http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf
3	UK National Statistics Publication Hub	http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html
4	Monthly Manning Report	http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php?pub=MMR
5	DASA website	www.dasa.mod.uk

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