



Companies House

Companies House statistics user consultation response

November 2014

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Alternative format versions of this report are available on request from: statistics@companieshouse.gov.uk.

Companies House is an Executive Agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

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1. Companies House statistics user consultation response

Companies House publishes a range of statistics. Statistics are released on a monthly and annual basis relating to a range of topics including Incorporations and the stock of Corporate Bodies in the UK. Companies House is currently reviewing their statistics and this user consultation will form a key part of that review.

The Companies House consultation on its statistics was issued on the 9 May 2014 and closed on the 11 August 2014. The consultation sought views from Users of the statistics to help Companies House better understand their diverse needs. A total of 11 responses were received; this document summarises the responses and explains Companies House's response to the consultation. We thank all respondents for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

2. Analysis of responses

The consultation received a total of 11 responses from a range of organisations from both the public and private sectors. Central Government and individuals representing a school, college or university were the joint highest respondents with three from each organisation. Five of the eleven respondents were researchers or analysts and the remaining two respondents were students.

The Annual report is the most used of Companies Houses' statistics with 7 of 11 respondents using the statistics. The next most used were Yearly Company Register Activities (6 of 11 respondents) and, Monthly Company Register Statistics – now part of Incorporated Companies in the UK – with 5 of 11 respondents reporting using the statistics. Three respondents used the Companies House smartphone application and 2 respondents used each of the remaining statistics.

The most frequently used statistics are those contained in the Annual report and Companies House smartphone application, with users accessing information on a daily and weekly basis. Public Targets and the Yearly Company Register Activities, were used daily, and monthly or quarterly.

Companies House statistics are most often used as background information and within research. Other uses include for monitoring trends and decision making. Monthly Register Statistics release contains statistics applicable to a number of uses, including reports, monitoring trends, evaluating performance and background information. Statistics released as part of the Public targets release were the only statistics used for policy development; and, those in Yearly Company register activities release the only used for modelling and forecasting.

When asked about the impact of discontinuing Companies House statistics, with the exception of public targets, at least one respondent reported that discontinuing statistics would have a major impact on them. Respondents reported that discontinuing Public targets would have no impact.

When asked whether sufficient information is provided about how the statistics can be used, respondents were satisfied with the information provided for the Companies House smartphone application; Annual Report; and, Late Filing Penalties. Respondents felt that Late Filing Penalties Statistics for LLP and Yearly Company Register Activities did not have sufficient information.

Respondents identified a range of other sources of information about businesses in the UK, including Official Statistics from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and The Insolvency Service and statistics from other sources, such as business groups and providers of proprietary information.

The majority of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with Companies House statistics. One respondent reported being dissatisfied with their experience of the web pages from which the statistics are released and another very dissatisfied with the timeliness of the publication. However, when asked about adherence to planned

publication dates the majority of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied.

When asked what information could not be found in Companies House statistics, respondents requested: more information on the financial service sector; more company accounts data being freely available; to understand how many companies are actively trading; and, to understand the links between statistics on businesses published by the ONS from the Interdepartmental Business Register. When asked about how the current statistics could be improved to better meet respondents' needs one replied that accessibility could be improved and another that they would like new developments. The remainder, 60%, did not require improvements.

When asked for additional comments, a respondent praised the service offered, the intuitive and easy to navigate website and reliable and robust content. Another requested changes to the presentation of information in one of Companies House's bulk data product.

3. Companies House response to the consultation

Companies House's immediate response to the consultation is:

- Companies House is reviewing the portfolio of statistics it releases, including the scope, content and timing. This consultation will inform any decisions made on changes to these statistics. We will keep users informed of any decisions via the Statistics section on the Companies House website.
- Companies House is completing a programme of work which will provide more information about its statistics. This should help to remove the issues over the level of information available about the statistics. Recent changes have improved the level of information about the statistics, for example, the introduction of the Incorporated Companies in the UK release. Other releases are likely to follow a similar style. As part of this work Companies House will look to make clear the links with ONS' Interdepartmental Business Register and will look at the feasibility of providing information on trading businesses.
- Companies House have recently begun publishing release dates for monthly publications via [the statistics release calendar on .GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements?utf8=%E2%9C%93&organisations%5B%5D=companies-house).¹ This is designed to provide users with better information about when statistics will be published.
- Companies House will review the process used to create the statistical releases to determine whether it will be possible to: release statistics in delimited text files; change the format of the SPRL data; provide greater information about directors and Industry groups; and, bring release dates forward while maintaining the same quality of the statistics.
- A user commented about the availability of Company Accounts data. Companies House releases an unsupported, [free data product](#)² that provides company accounts data in XBRL format. Accounts data is available for electronically filed accounts, which currently stands at around 60 per cent of filed accounts.

1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements?utf8=%E2%9C%93&organisations%5B%5D=companies-house>

2 download.companieshouse.gov.uk/en_accountsdata.html

4. Summary of responses

This section provides a summary of the responses to each of the survey questions.



1. What sector or organisation do you represent?

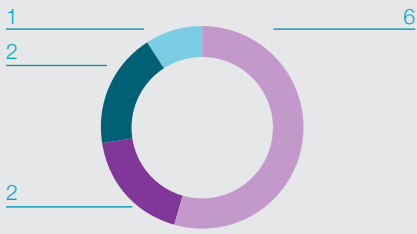
- School, college or university
- Health
- Central government
- Legal representative
- Financial
- Individuals
- Other

2. In this organisation, which of these describe your role?

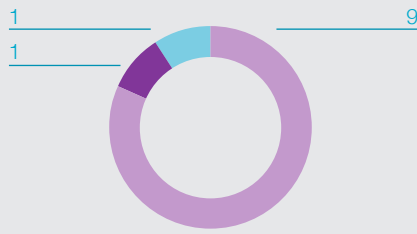
- Analyst
- Student
- Researcher
- Other
- Teacher or lecturer

3. Which of the following statistics have you accessed (from Companies House website) in the past year and how regularly on average? (tick all that apply)

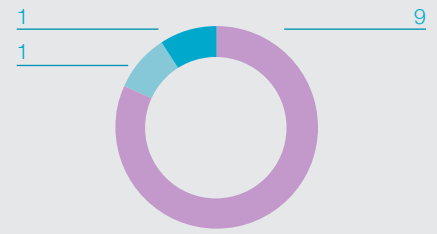
Responses: 11



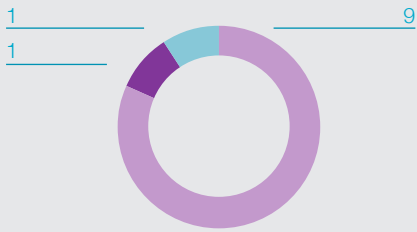
Monthly Company Register Statistics



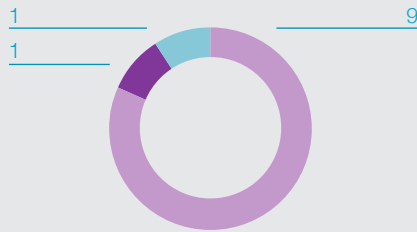
Monthly Workload statistics



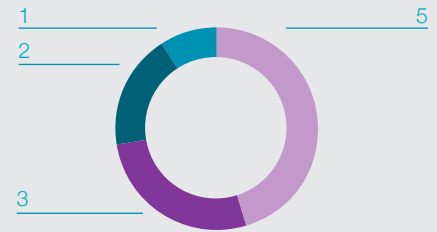
Public targets



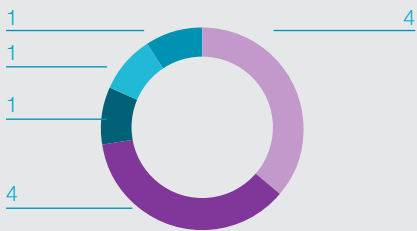
Late Filing Penalties Statistics



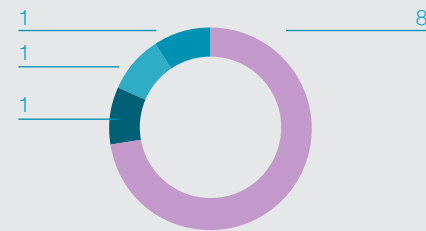
Late Filing Penalties Statistics for LLP



Yearly Company Register Activities



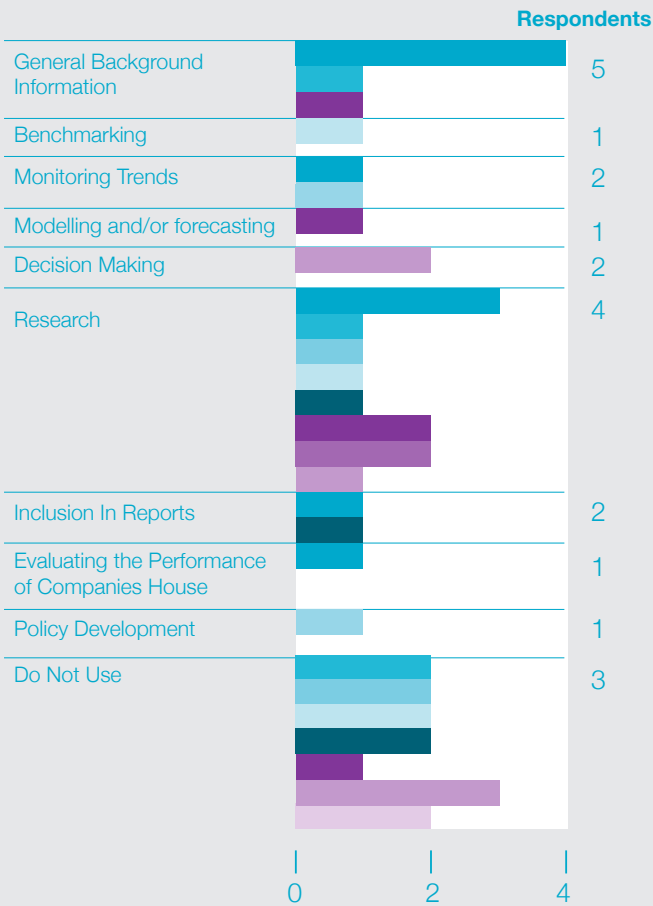
Annual Report



Companies House Smartphone Application



4. What do you use the statistics for (tick all that apply)



5. Why have you never used the statistics (tick all that apply)

Responses: 2



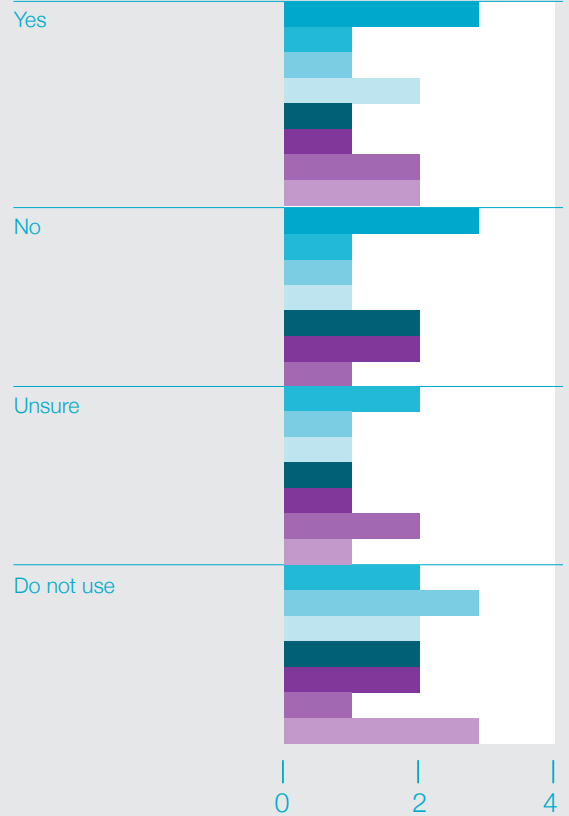
6. What would be the impact of discontinuing the following statistics? (answer for the statistics that you use)

Responses: 6



7. Is there sufficient information about how the statistics can be used?

Responses: 6



8. What other sources of information about businesses in the UK do you or have you used?

Narrative response only

Total number of responses: 11

Official statistics, including:

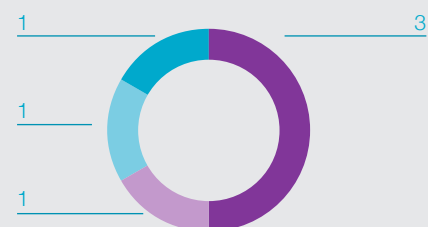
- The Office for National Statistics' (ONS): Interdepartmental Business Register; Annual Business Survey; Business Register and Employment Survey; Business Demography.
- Insolvency Service's Insolvency statistics.
- The Department for Business Innovation and Skills' Business Demography.
- Business microdata from ONS' Virtual Microdata laboratory.

Other statistics and information, including those produced by:

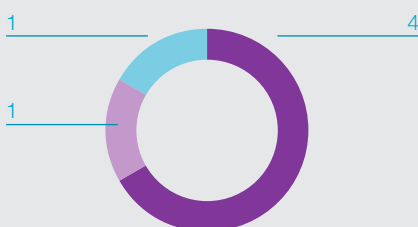
- Experian, including its Risk Disk.
- British Bankers Association.
- Banks.
- Financial Conduct Authority.
- Federation of Small Business.
- Confederation of British Industry.
- Business microdata from Bureau van Dijk's FAME.
- Newspapers
- Internal surveys.

9. In relation to the statistics you use how satisfied are you with the following:

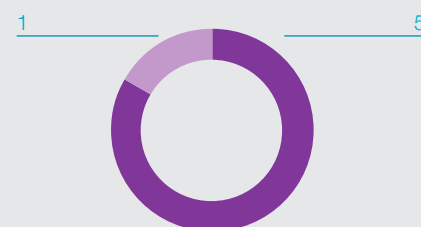
Responses: 6



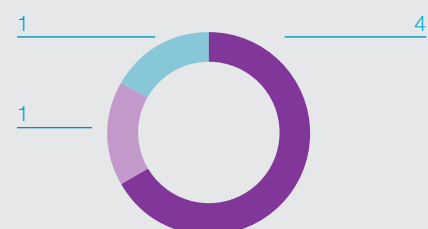
Timeliness of the Publication



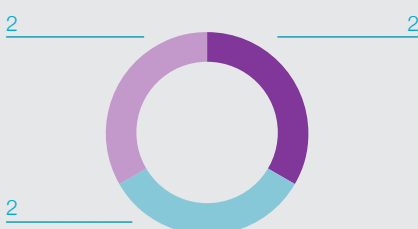
Ease of access/clarity (charts & accompanying advice)



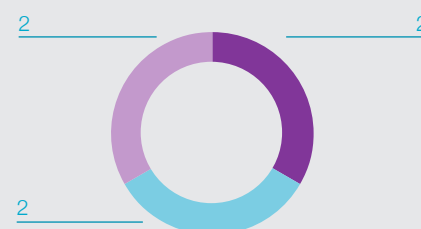
Relevance to your needs



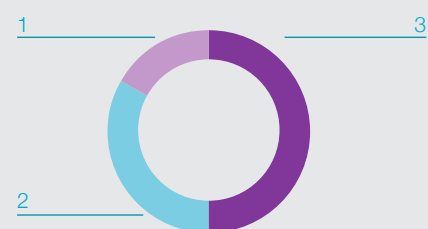
Accuracy of the estimates



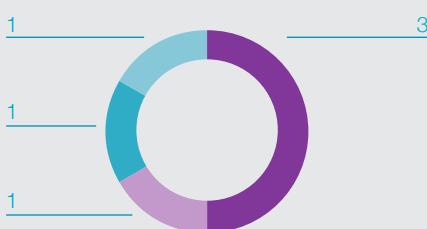
Comparability over time and between sources



Metadata (additional information about the data items for example user guide)



Adherence to planned publication dates



Your experience of the web pages from which the statistics are released



10. If you have any further comments, or would like to draw our attention to other issues with the data, please detail below?

Narrative response only

Total number of responses: 2

- A user would like development of the Smartphone Application to provide more information on Companies and Directors.
- The remaining response was 'n/a'

11. What statistical information can you NOT find in the current statistics that you would like to?

Narrative response only

Total number of responses: 6

- The ability to search by Directors.
- Information on the financial services sector in the same detail as other industry groups
- Information on Revenues.
- Links to the actions taken against companies.
- A User would like to see:
 - More of the company account data directly available in bulk from Companies House.
 - Greater clarity on what CH data represents.
 - Information on whether a company is actively trading or not.
 - Clearer links between ONS' Inter Departmental Business Register and Companies House data.



12. What format would you like the statistics available in? (tick all that apply)

- Portable Document Format (PDF)
- Microsoft Excel (xls)
- Delimited text file (eg CST, TSV etc)



13. How could we improve the current statistics to better meet your needs? (tick all that apply)

- No improvements required
- New developments
- Improve accessibility

If you selected any of the above, please provide comments:
Easy to navigate, well-structured and presented.

14. Do you have any additional comments? Please detail them below.

Narrative response only

Total number of responses: 4

Overall a great service. Website is intuitive, robust and easy to navigate. The functionality is very good. Content is reliable and robust.

We are beginning to use the bulk SPRL data and would like to see it more in the format of the companies house on line service e.g. in Company Number order not in date birthed and in one file.

Other responses did not provide an answer to this question.

5. Help with queries

If you need any further information on this consultation please contact:

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