



Department  
for Education

# Statistical Notice

**Statement of Administrative Sources**

**June 2017**

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## Summary

Protocol 3 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires all producers of Official Statistics to publish a Statement of Administrative Sources. The Code is at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

## Expiry or review date

This guidance will be reviewed before December 2018.

## Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for:

Users of published statistics.

## Use of administrative sources for statistical purposes

Official statistics published by the department for education (the department) are based on two main sources:

- data extracted from the administrative and management systems of local authorities, schools and other organisations, and
- data collected from statistical surveys.

By using data which is already available within administrative and management systems, rather than collecting data afresh, we are able to limit the overall burden placed on data providers, and also avoid the costs of mounting dedicated data collection exercises. In addition, the data we extract from such systems often has the advantage of being timelier than data from statistical surveys and, when compared with data from surveys, can also deliver data with a greater breadth and depth of coverage.

The UK Statistics Authority actively encourages public bodies to exploit administrative and management sources for statistical purposes. However the authority recognises that the statistical advantages of such arrangements can only be fully realised if statisticians have appropriate access to such systems; if statistical purposes are reflected in the design, management, and development of such systems; and if adequate safeguards are put in place to ensure the professional integrity of any official statistics derived from them.

The authority's main requirements are set out in the third protocol attached to their *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. Amongst other things, this protocol requires all producers of official statistics to publish, in consultation with the national statistician, a 'statement of administrative sources' which lists:

- the administrative systems they currently use to produce official statistics;
- information about other administrative sources that are not currently used for statistical purposes but which have the potential to be so used;
- the arrangements they have put in place to provide statistical staff with appropriate access to such sources; to take account of changes to such systems; to audit the quality of the administrative data used for statistical purposes; and to ensure the security of the resultant statistical processes.

## Statement of administrative sources

### Schools and local authorities

The administrative sources which the Department for Education (the department) currently uses to produce national statistics are described at annex A. The department's arrangements for the use of statistics and data extracted from local authority (LA) and school administrative and management systems are as follows:

LAs are required to provide information to the department. The department consults LAs and software suppliers about data requirements. The department's star chamber scrutiny board scrutinises specific proposals for new data requirements and changes to existing data requirements and their impact on data collection exercises and burdens on LAs and schools. This ensures that full account is taken of the implications for official statistics when changes to administrative systems are contemplated.

The department's data group manages the collection, analysis and dissemination of the data and provides appropriate access to statistical staff throughout the department and to statistical staff outside the department.

The arrangements for improving and assuring the quality of the data provided by LAs and schools include the routine validation (consistency, credibility checks etc.) of data. In addition, procedures for validation of data are reviewed and improved on a regular basis. The department restricts access to the data prior to publication to ensure they are used for statistical or operational purposes. Policy access to statistics derived from the data is restricted to the 24 hour pre-release access period. Where there is an operational need to use information derived from the data prior to release of the relevant official statistics, this is restricted by conditions of use that conform to the national statistician's guidance on the use of administrative or management information. These arrangements ensure the security of the statistical processes.

LAs and schools can use their own statistics and data for their own purposes.

## Further education and higher education

The administrative sources which the Department for Education (the department) currently uses to produce national statistics are described at annex A. The department's arrangements for the use of statistics and data extracted from further and higher education providers as well as employers are as follows:

Institutions are required to provide information to ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency). ESFA consults software suppliers about data requirements. This ensures that full account is taken of the implications for official statistics when changes to administrative systems are contemplated.

ESFA manage the collection of data, whilst DfE Data Group manage analysis and dissemination of the data.

The arrangements for improving and assuring the quality of the data provided by institutions and employers include the routine validation (consistency, credibility checks etc.) of data. Data validation procedures are reviewed and improved on a regular basis.

The department restricts access to the data prior to publication to ensure they are used for statistical or operational purposes. In order to manage the apprenticeship programme there is an operational need to use information derived from ILR data prior to release of the relevant official statistics. This access is restricted by conditions of use that conform to the national statistician's guidance on the use of administrative or management information. A list of staff with access to pre release management information for operational use is kept to manage access. These arrangements ensure the security of the statistical processes. Where there is no operational need, policy access to statistics derived from the data is restricted to the 24 hour pre-release access period.

Further education providers use their own statistics and data for their own purposes. The student loans company uses their own statistics for their own purposes and also publish an annual statistics summary of their loan book.

### **Mike Jones**

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## Annex A

Description of administrative sources

Please see separate spreadsheet.



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