

Taking Part Quality Indicators

Taking Part releases are published in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics (2018), as produced by the [UK Statistics Authority \(UKSA\)](#). This provides guidance on the statistical quality that is expected, and states that we should inform users about the quality of our statistics. The following document outlines how statistics from the Taking Part Survey match up to the six dimensions of quality defined by the European Statistical System (ESS). These are; relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, comparability and coherence.

1. Relevance

a) Do we know who uses our statistics?

b) What are their needs?

c) How well do our outputs meet their needs?

- We hold a detailed list of people and organisations that we know use the survey, and regularly update this.
- Our user event and user survey have given us insights into the needs of these users. Many of these needs have been documented in our user survey summary factsheet, which can be found on our website.
- Our user survey and event suggest that our outputs currently meet user needs fairly well. However, suggestions have been made for improvement. We aim to evaluate these suggestions and, where appropriate, implement them for future waves of the survey.
- The Taking Part user list also acts as a mailing list to keep users informed of any changes to the survey, and latest news.

2. Accuracy

a) How close are the values we estimate to the true values?

- Confidence intervals and sample sizes are published in our statistical releases, and details of response rates, design factors and weighting strategies can be found in our technical reports.
- The survey uses a random probability sample methodology, using the Postcode Address File (PAF) as a sampling frame. It is representative at a National and Government Office Region (GOR) level. The sample size is kept as high as possible within funding constraints, to maximise the accuracy of our estimates and keep confidence intervals as small as possible.
- We receive monthly fieldwork reports from our fieldwork team, allowing us to monitor any changes in response rates, non-contact and other such measures, and take action where necessary.
- All our figures are checked by at least two different people, to ensure they pass stringent quality assurance procedures.
- We apply population weights when analysing the data. This accounts for any non-coverage of the sample, and can also reduce variance and non-response bias in our estimates, thus increasing their accuracy.
- Procedures are adopted to maximise response rates in the field, such as making at least 6 visits to each address that is selected for the survey.
- New questions and methodology are thoroughly cognitively tested and piloted to ensure that our estimates are accurately reflecting what we want them to.

3. Timeliness and Punctuality

a) How close is the date of publication to the time period that the data refer to?

b) How much do the actual and planned dates of publication differ?

- Annual data is published as soon as possible after the period that it refers to. For our 2018/19 release in September 2019 the publication referred to the period April 2018–March 2019, meaning a lag of approximately 6 months.
- Publications rarely deviate from their original planned release date. We know in advance when data will be provided to us by our fieldwork team, and plan the release date accordingly.
- We announce the month of publications 12 months in advance, and the exact date of publication 4 weeks in advance.
- All datasets, technical reports, questionnaires and other supporting documentation are available for all years of the survey. We will endeavour to ensure that they are published within two weeks of being finalised, apart from the datasets and change documentation, which usually take 6 weeks due to checks undertaken by the UK data archive.

4. Accessibility and Clarity

a) How easily can users access the data?

b) Is the data available in an easily accessible format?

c) Is there sufficient supporting information?

d) Are there sufficient illustrations and metadata and are they of high quality?

- Statistical releases are made available in both Word/Excel and PDF formats on our website. They are also made available via the National Statistics Publication Hub.
- We present data in a wide range of ways in these releases, regularly using tables, charts and maps to illustrate data.
- We also provide worksheets containing the main statistics from the survey.
- Every dataset from the survey is made available to users via the UK Data Archive website in SPSS format. Links to this are provided on our website.
- However, we are mindful that many of our users will not be familiar with SPSS or may not have this software. We are exploring ways to improve accessibility and usability of our online tool to allow even novice users to analyse Taking Part data themselves quickly and easily.
- Detailed supporting information is provided with the raw data on the UK Data Archive. This shows sample sizes, how data should/should not be used, and survey methodology.
- We provide detailed technical reports about the survey methodology on our website. The statistical releases themselves contain large numbers of charts and illustrations, with detailed commentary included to explain the data.

5. Comparability

a) Is data comparable over time?

b) Is data comparable over space?

- Until 2017/18, core questions were kept as consistent as possible since the survey began in 2005, so that a comparable time series is available for many topics for this time period. In 2017/18 some changes were introduced to some core questions to enable respondents to find relevant response options with more ease, improving the accuracy of the measure. Any change in survey methodology is carefully considered to assess its impact on the time series.
- The data is comparable across the 9 Government Office regions in the UK. The survey is not representative at local authority level.
- Where possible Taking Part uses harmonised question sets and definitions that are consistent with ONS surveys. This makes our data on common areas such as demographics (e.g. ethnicity) comparable with a wide range of other government surveys.

6. Coherence

a) Is other data from different sources/methods similar?

b) Is data released at the same time as other relevant data?

- We work closely with the owners of related publications (e.g. Sport England's Active Lives Survey) to coordinate publication dates to aid user understanding in this area.
- Both the Active Lives Survey and DCMS's Community Life Survey have some overlap with Taking Part (such as sports participation and volunteering and charitable giving data) and they sometimes produces different results. This is largely due to differences in methodology and question wording between the different surveys. We clearly signpost within our publications which is the primary source of information.
- More work needs to be done to assess how comparable Taking Part is with its counterparts in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and other European countries.