

Policy Statement on Revisions

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Statistical Notice

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Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service – Policy Statement on Revisions

Principle 2 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires all producers of Official Statistics to publish transparent guidance on our policy for revisions. The Code of Practice is at www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk and was published in January 2009.

The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service aims to avoid the need for revisions to publications unless they are absolutely necessary and put systems and processes in place to minimise the number of revisions.

Within the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service's statistical publications there can be three main reasons for statistics to be revised:

- changes in how either source administrative systems collect information or a change in statistical methodology to improve accuracy and measurement;
- receipt of subsequent information which alters our understanding of previous periods (for example – late recording on one of the administrative IT systems used operationally);
- errors in our statistical systems and processes.

Changes in source systems or statistical methodology

Where major changes to source administrative systems are pre-planned and for changes in statistical methods we will, where possible, consult with users on the changes and treat these as a change of methodology. We will consult on how best to record in the future and the options for maintaining a consistent time-series – including any revisions of previously held data.

Receipt of subsequent information

All administrative systems by their nature can update information previously held, by nature of the business process meaning that some information relating to a period already published is subsequently inputted.

The timing of each publication is designed to minimise the risk of the need for significant revisions for this reason. However, each Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service publication will set out how the data held within this series will be revised in these circumstances.

Errors in statistical systems and processes

Occasionally, errors will occur in our statistical processes. We do everything we can to minimise these errors and continually review our processes and procedures to minimise this risk.

Handling of revisions

Our policy in handling revisions is to be transparent with users about:

- the need for revisions;
- how and when to expect revisions as part of our standard processes;
- the processes by which other revisions will be communicated and published.

To meet these commitments, all of our statistical publications will:

- ensure that the need for major revisions for any series are pre-announced on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service website;
- include a detailed revisions policy within every release;
- detail how users will be informed of the need for revisions;
- give detailed and full explanations as to why the revisions were necessary.

Revisions will take the form of a Statistical Notice which will be titled appropriately and will document the reasons for changes and the key changes made. Users will be made aware of the revisions via e-mail as per 'Customer Service and Engagement Statement'.

Examples of such revisions include improvements to methodology, revisions to data and the discovery of incorrect data through our quality assurance and validation procedures. Each of these revisions will be examined to see if the effects are significant in terms of the degree of change or whether the changes affect the story the data portray.

If revisions arising through improvements to methodology or changes to administrative data are found to be insignificant, they will be introduced in the next planned set of publications and the information changes and the corresponding reasons for these changes will be published in a Statistical Notice as above.

If incorrect data are discovered after publication, these too will be examined for their impact. Where the changes are significant, an amended version will be issued as soon as is practicable. Minor corrections will be included in the next planned release of the publication. In all cases, a full explanation for the revisions and the reasons why these occurred will be included in the publication.

In addition, the annual report from the Head of Profession to the National Statistician will:

- provide information on how many revisions were required to our publications and the reasons for these;
- publish a time-series of revisions due to errors in our statistical processes and procedures so we can monitor the quality of our outputs.

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