

# Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

## Statistics on Transport in Northern Ireland

*(produced by the Department for Regional  
Development, Northern Ireland)*

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### **About the UK Statistics Authority**

The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament. It was established on 1 April 2008 by the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.

The Authority's overall objective is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. It is also required to promote and safeguard the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and good practice in relation to official statistics.

The Statistics Authority has two main functions:

1. oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – the executive office of the Authority;
2. independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK.

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# **Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics**

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## ASSESSMENT AND DESIGNATION

The *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* gives the UK Statistics Authority a statutory power to assess sets of statistics against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*.

Assessment will determine whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics comply with the *Code of Practice*. The *Code* is wide-ranging. Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Designation as National Statistics should not be interpreted to mean that the statistics are always correct. For example, whilst the *Code* requires statistics to be produced to a level of accuracy that meets users' needs, it also recognises that errors can occur – in which case it requires them to be corrected and publicised.

Assessment Reports will not normally comment further on a set of statistics, for example on their validity as social or economic measures. However, Reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Assessment Reports typically provide an overview of any noteworthy features of the methods used to produce the statistics, and will highlight substantial concerns about quality. Assessment Reports also describe aspects of the ways in which the producer addresses the 'sound methods and assured quality' principle of the *Code*, but do not themselves constitute a review of the methods used to produce the statistics. However the *Code* requires producers to "seek to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews".

The Authority may grant designation on condition that the producer body takes steps, within a stated timeframe, to fully meet the *Code's* requirements. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the *Code*.

The Authority grants designation on the basis of three main sources of information:

- i. factual evidence and assurances by senior statisticians in the producer body;
- ii. the views of users who we contact, or who contact us, and;
- iii. our own review activity.

Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, it may withdraw the Assessment Report and revise it as necessary.

It is a statutory requirement on the producer body to ensure that it continues to produce the set of statistics designated as National Statistics in compliance with the *Code of Practice*.

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# 1 Summary of findings

## 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is one of a series of reports<sup>1</sup> prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*<sup>2</sup>. The Act requires all statistics currently designated as National Statistics to be assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics<sup>3</sup>. The report covers the following National Statistics compendium publications produced by the Department for Regional Development (DRD), Northern Ireland:

- *Northern Ireland Transport Statistics*<sup>4</sup>; and
- *Northern Ireland Road and Rail Transport Statistics*<sup>5</sup>.

1.1.2 The Act also allows Ministers or the National Statistician to request an assessment of other official statistics in order for them to gain National Statistics status. This report also covers the following publication in response to such a request:

- *Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI)*<sup>6</sup>.

1.1.3 This report was prepared by the Authority's Assessment team, and approved by the Board of the Statistics Authority on the advice of the Head of Assessment.

1.1.4 Assessments of compendium publications against the Code of Practice relate to the processes involved in preparing the publication, rather than in producing the statistics that are included. Those sets of statistics will normally be subject to separate assessment. Designation of a compendium publication as National Statistics therefore means that the producer body has, for example: identified and met user needs in terms of the content of the publication; considered the appropriateness of each series for inclusion; and written appropriate commentary.

## 1.2 Decision concerning designation as National Statistics

1.2.1 The Statistics Authority judges that the statistics covered by this report are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest, subject to any points for action in this report. The Statistics Authority confirms that the statistics published in:

- *Northern Ireland Transport Statistics* and *Northern Ireland Road and Rail Transport Statistics* are designated as National Statistics, subject to DRD implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority by January 2011;

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga\\_20070018\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.drndni.gov.uk/ni\\_transport\\_statistics\\_2009-10.pdf](http://www.drndni.gov.uk/ni_transport_statistics_2009-10.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.drndni.gov.uk/index/statistics/stats-catagories/stats-catagories-travel\\_survey.htm](http://www.drndni.gov.uk/index/statistics/stats-catagories/stats-catagories-travel_survey.htm)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.drndni.gov.uk/index/statistics/stats-catagories/stats-catagories-travel\\_survey.htm](http://www.drndni.gov.uk/index/statistics/stats-catagories/stats-catagories-travel_survey.htm)

and has determined that:

- *Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI)* can be designated as a new National Statistics product, subject to DRD implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority by January 2011.

### **1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses**

- 1.3.1 DRD recognises the importance of effective user engagement and recently established a Transport Statistics User Group (TSUG) of users mainly drawn from within DRD. There has been little engagement with non-government users to date, but DRD recently carried out a survey of users to investigate their requirements, and are expanding the membership of this user group to include non-government representatives. There is little evidence that user needs have influenced the timetables, priorities or presentation of the statistics.
- 1.3.2 The DRD transport statistics covered by this assessment are comparable with those from the rest of UK, and DRD recently established a North-South User Group with representatives from the Republic of Ireland to discuss how best to meet transport statistics users' needs across the whole of Ireland.
- 1.3.3 The statistical publications contain useful executive summaries and highlight the main points for each of the chapters. DRD's transport datasets are not currently available to users wishing to carry out further analysis and re-use. However, DRD plans to deposit a new database for Travel Survey Northern Ireland (TSNI) data with the UK Data Archive which should help to address this issue.

### **1.4 Detailed recommendations**

- 1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that the DRD could strengthen its compliance with the Code. Those which the Assessment team considers essential to enable designation as National Statistics are listed in section 1.5. Other suggestions, which would improve the statistics and the service provided to users but which are not formally required for their designation, are listed at annex 1.

## 1.5 Requirements for designation as National Statistics

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Requirement 1</b> | Develop statistical planning arrangements, with clear priorities, which take account of users' needs (para 3.3).  |
| <b>Requirement 2</b> | Review the timetable for publishing statistical reports to take account of users' needs (para 3.4).   |
| <b>Requirement 3</b> | Announce changes to classifications in the compendium publications in advance of the release of the changed statistics (para 3.6).  |
| <b>Requirement 4</b> | Inform users of the impact on the statistics of any changes to methods or coverage, producing consistent historical data where possible (para 3.13).  |
| <b>Requirement 5</b> | Publish more detailed plans to collect data on road casualties in the TSNi with a view to using these to estimate any under-counting of the road casualties reported to the police (para 3.15). |
| <b>Requirement 6</b> | Make the statistics covered in this report available in formats that allow analysis and re-use, and provide appropriate guidance and supporting documentation (para 3.28).                      |

## 2 Subject of the assessment

2.1 The three publications covered by this Assessment cover various aspects of travel and transport in Northern Ireland:

- *Northern Ireland Transport Statistics* is an annual compendium publication which provides detailed statistics on many transport topics including vehicle registrations, driver and vehicle testing, road safety, road freight, the road network, and public transport statistics including air and ferry passengers. It was first published in 1989, and was modelled on corresponding transport publications in the other UK administrations.
- *Northern Ireland Road and Rail Transport Statistics* is a quarterly compendium publication which provides more timely information than the annual *Transport Statistics* publication. It contains a subset of the information that appears in the annual compendium, including vehicle registrations, driver and vehicle testing, public transport, and petrol and diesel deliveries. DRD publishes the reports around three months after the quarter to which it refers.
- *Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI)* is an annual publication which provides information about how and why people travel in Northern Ireland. The first survey was carried out in 1999 and the first report from the survey was published in 2003. It is a continuous survey but only achieves a sample size of around 950 individuals each year, so each publication contains data from the three previous calendar years to ensure that the analysis is robust. A larger sample size would increase the burden and the cost of the survey. The survey provides information which is not covered by other DRD transport publications, including the average number of journeys per person, average distance travelled, mode of travel, and purpose of journey.

2.2 The transport statistics detailed above are used for a variety of purposes, including:

- informing and monitoring transport strategies and policies – for example, the number of private vehicles per 1,000 adults of driving age is used to monitor changes in travel behaviour, and the number of electric and alternative fuel cars is used to monitor sustainable transport policies;
- economic modelling and academic research – for example, the number of new car registrations as an indicator of economic conditions;
- input into models for estimating projections of transport emissions to help inform research into climate change;
- monitoring progress against Northern Ireland Regional Transportation Strategy<sup>7</sup> targets to increase the average number of walking journeys per person and average distance walked per year;
- assessing the impact of public transport reforms, including differing effects on urban and rural communities;

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.drni.gov.uk/index/transport\\_planning.htm](http://www.drni.gov.uk/index/transport_planning.htm)

- informing the equality impact assessment of the various DRD transport strategies – for example, TSNi data were used to measure the proportion of private or public transport journeys by gender, age, disability and religion;
- promoting sustainable methods of travel to work or school;
- providing background material for Northern Ireland Assembly briefing papers on transport; and
- informing the wider public on Northern Ireland transport activity and trends.

2.3 DRD told the Assessment team that it currently costs around £9,000 a year to prepare and publish the compendium publications. The annual cost of running the TSNi and publishing the report is around £164,000.

### 3 Assessment findings

#### Principle 1: Meeting user needs

**The production, management and dissemination of official statistics should meet the requirements of informed decision-making by government, public services, business, researchers and the public.**

- 3.1 In 2009 DRD established the Transport Statistics User Group (TSUG) to discuss users' data requirements. With the exception of one member from the Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland all group members are from DRD. The group, which met for the first time in January 2010, recognised the need to have external (non-central government) representatives on the group. DRD has recently taken steps to expand the membership of the user group to include non-government representatives. DRD has also established a TSUG subgroup to review its *Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI)* to better meet users' needs. The subgroup held its first meeting in June 2010.
- 3.2 The *TSNI* publication and the most recent *Transport Statistics* compendium publication both contain some information about the uses of the statistics in a section including user information and guidance on the statistics.
- 3.3 At the time of this assessment, DRD was reviewing the content, timeliness and format of both the compendium publications. In early 2010, DRD carried out a survey of transport statistics users – for example, people who subscribe to DRD's transport publications – to review their data requirements and preferred format for presenting the statistics. The survey also sought users' views on a proposal to produce the quarterly *Road and Rail* publication more frequently but with fewer tables and a greater focus on trends. DRD published the results of the survey<sup>8</sup> in August 2010. DRD plans to use the TSUG discussions and the results of the user survey to develop a prioritised programme for its transport statistics. The Assessment team suggests that DRD publish a plan on how they intend to follow-up on the feedback received in the survey. In addition, as part of the designation as National Statistics, DRD should develop statistical planning arrangements, with clear priorities, which take account of users' needs<sup>9</sup> (Requirement 1).
- 3.4 DRD changed the timing and format of its *TSNI* publication in response to previously identified user needs (see para 3.12). Users' needs have so far not influenced the timing of the compendium publications, but DRD plans to use the results of the user survey to inform the timing of future publications. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DRD should review the timetable for publishing statistical reports to take account of users' needs<sup>10</sup> (Requirement 2).

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.drdni.gov.uk/tsug\\_readership\\_survey\\_report-2.pdf](http://www.drdni.gov.uk/tsug_readership_survey_report-2.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> In relation to Principle 1 Practice 3 of the Code of Practice.

<sup>10</sup> In relation to Principle 1 Practice 4 of the Code of Practice.

## Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity

**Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, should be managed impartially and objectively.**

- 3.5 DRD publishes the transport statistics publications covered by this Assessment according to a published timetable and makes the statistics available free of charge on its website. DRD presents the statistics impartially and objectively.
- 3.6 DRD includes changes to classifications in its compendium publications – for example, the introduction of a new vehicle taxation class was noted in the relevant table. As a part of designation as National Statistics, DRD should also announce changes to classifications in advance of the release of the changed statistics<sup>11</sup> (Requirement 3).
- 3.7 DRD corrected an error in its 2006-08 *TSNI* publication and added a footnote to indicate that the figures had been corrected and validated. We suggest that DRD should highlight any errors and subsequent revisions to the transport statistics covered by this Assessment on its website to alert users to the changes.

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<sup>11</sup> In relation to Principle 2 Practice 4 of the Code of Practice.

### **Principle 3: Integrity**

**At all stages in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics, the public interest should prevail over organisational, political or personal interests.**

- 3.8 No incidents of political pressure, abuses of trust or complaints relating to professional integrity, quality or standards were reported to or identified by the Assessment team.

## Principle 4: Sound methods and assured quality

**Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality should be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices.**

- 3.9 DRD lists the sources of the administrative data it uses to compile the compendium publications. Some tables in these publications comprise survey data from other organisations, and DRD includes links to these organisations' websites in the publications.
- 3.10 DRD included a user information section in the 2009-10 annual *Transport Statistics* publication, covering issues such as data collection, timeliness and quality of the various statistics. The quarterly *Road and Rail* publication also contained such a section which contained details of the quality of the data and guidance for users to help them to interpret the data.
- 3.11 DRD publishes a *TSNI Technical Report*<sup>12</sup> which contains details of the survey methodology and data input methods. It also contains information about the comparability of the TSNI sample with Northern Ireland mid-year population estimates. DRD publishes 95 per cent confidence intervals for key data and information about how to use and interpret the confidence intervals.
- 3.12 In 2009 DRD's Roads Service Agency led a review of TSNI. The Review Group also comprised DRD statisticians and experts from the Central Survey Unit (CSU) of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). The review identified a user need for earlier publication of the data, which led to DRD introducing a headline figure report three months in advance of the full *TSNI* publication. DRD plans to review the compendium publications following consideration of the current user survey and discussions among TSUG members.
- 3.13 DRD has noted changes to classifications in its publications, but there is no information about the impact of the changes on the figures. As a part of designation as National Statistics, DRD should inform users of the impact on the statistics of any changes to methods or coverage, producing consistent historical data where possible<sup>13</sup> (Requirement 4). The Assessment team recognises that, for the compendium publications, DRD may only be able to inform users of the impact of such changes retrospectively after receiving the required data from suppliers.
- 3.14 The annual bulletin contains various tables with GB figures for comparison with Northern Ireland figures. TSNI is based on the GB National Travel Survey, therefore the results are comparable. DRD is looking to improve the comparability of its transport statistics with those from the Republic of Ireland, and recently established a North-South User Group to discuss how best to meet transport users' needs across the whole of Ireland.

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.drdni.gov.uk/tsni\\_technical\\_report\\_2006-2008.pdf](http://www.drdni.gov.uk/tsni_technical_report_2006-2008.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> In relation to Principle 4 Practice 7 of the Code of Practice.

- 3.15 The annual *Transport Statistics* publication includes statistics on road safety, taken from figures published<sup>14</sup> by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). DRD has added some information in the user section of the publication about the quality issues underlying the road safety figures, as identified in the Authority's assessment of the Department for Transport's (DfT) road casualty statistics<sup>15</sup>. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DRD should publish more detailed plans to collect data on road casualties in the TSNI with a view to using these to estimate any under-counting of the road casualties reported to the police<sup>16</sup> (Requirement 5).
- 3.16 The compendium publications pull together a range of data from a wide variety of sources, such as the Driver and Vehicle Agency, Northern Ireland and the public transport delivery company *Translink*. DRD explains the distinction between National Statistics and non-National Statistics data in the publications.

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<sup>14</sup> [http://www.psnipolice.uk/index/updates/updates\\_statistics/updates\\_road\\_traffic\\_statistics.htm](http://www.psnipolice.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_road_traffic_statistics.htm)

<sup>15</sup> There is a degree of under-reporting of road accident casualties in the STATS19 system, as explained in Assessment report 4, paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5, see <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

<sup>16</sup> In relation to Principle 4 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice.

## Principle 5: Confidentiality

**Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only.**

- 3.17 The compendium publications contain data collected by other organisations for their own purposes. None of these data are confidential or disclosive. CSU sends letters to participants in the TSNi before they are interviewed, and interviewers give participants a leaflet explaining the purpose of the TSNi. Both the letter and the leaflet state that all information provided by participants is treated in confidence, and that the results will not be used in any way which can identify participants or their addresses.
- 3.18 In response to TSNi users' ad hoc requests for further analyses, DRD will only agree to the request if the sample size is large enough to maintain confidentiality.
- 3.19 DRD has published its arrangements for confidentiality protection<sup>17</sup>. The standard terms and conditions for all Northern Ireland statisticians include confidentiality arrangements, and NISRA is currently consulting its HR department about the need for a further confidentiality declaration in addition to these terms and conditions.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.drdni.gov.uk/ns\\_statement.doc](http://www.drdni.gov.uk/ns_statement.doc)

## **Principle 6: Proportionate burden**

**The cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.**

3.20 The data used to produce the statistics presented in the quarterly and annual bulletins are collected by other organisations for their own purposes. The burden on data suppliers is therefore likely to be low, but as part of the next data collection DRD plans to gather information from suppliers on the time taken to provide data to DRD.

## Principle 7: Resources

**The resources made available for statistical activities should be sufficient to meet the requirements of this Code and should be used efficiently and effectively.**

- 3.21 Each year DRD plans its resources for a range of statistical activities including planned projects, dealing with ad hoc requests, engaging with user groups and development activities. It also develops a business plan following discussion with policy colleagues. We suggest that DRD extend its discussions to include non-government users of statistics before developing its annual business plan and resource allocations.
- 3.22 DRD uses a project management system to monitor projects, and outcomes are reported to their Finance Division and NISRA for inclusion in their annual reports. At a more detailed level, DRD staff use a time-recording system which records the time they spend on specific activities.
- 3.23 A team of five statisticians (four full-time equivalents, FTE) manage the DRD transport statistics with 3 (2.25 FTE) managing the publications which were the subject of this assessment. Recruitment of DRD statistical staff is competency-based, and statisticians' learning and competency frameworks are developed centrally by NISRA. All DRD statistical staff have personal development plans.

## Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility

**Official statistics, accompanied by full and frank commentary, should be readily accessible to all users.**

- 3.24 The *TSNI* publication is well laid out and easily accessible for users. In 2010 DRD is publishing two *TSNI* publications for the first time. The first report, released in June, was a headline report containing the main figures. A second report, to be published in December 2010, will contain more detailed statistics. This approach will allow DRD to release the main statistics earlier than it used to which will help the production of the monitoring report for the Northern Ireland Regional Transportation Strategy. The user information section which DRD included in the headline report (and will include in the December report) provides an opportunity to highlight the limitations and appropriate uses of the data. DRD will use the results of its user survey and the views of the *TSNI* subgroup to develop the content of the new reports.
- 3.25 Both the compendium publications have useful executive summaries at the start of the reports. The *Transport Statistics* publication has recently been changed and now contains some brief contextual information in each chapter.
- 3.26 DRD emails users to notify them when statistical reports are published, and sends printed copies if requested. DRD has various ways of publicising its releases, including its website, the National Statistics Publication Hub, press releases, an information updates service and initiatives arising from NISRA's Marketing Strategy.
- 3.27 Users may contact DRD to access these transport statistics in different formats, and spreadsheets containing the data tables are available on request. *TSNI* statistics are mainly presented in tables, plus some graphs, with the main points highlighted. For ad hoc queries, DRD agrees the format of outputs with users.
- 3.28 The structure of the *TSNI* database used by DRD is complex and difficult to analyse. DRD plans to change the database structure and deposit the data in the UK Data Archive<sup>18</sup>. This will allow users to access primary survey data for secondary analysis. DRD currently releases its transport statistics only in PDF. Releasing some tables in Excel would enable analysis and re-use. As a part of designation as National Statistics, DRD should make the statistics covered in this report available in formats that allow analysis and re-use, and provide appropriate guidance and supporting documentation<sup>19</sup> (Requirement 6).

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk>

<sup>19</sup> In relation to Principle 8 Practice 6 of the Code of Practice.

## **Protocol 1: User engagement**

**Effective user engagement is fundamental both to trust in statistics and securing maximum public value. This Protocol draws together the relevant practices set out elsewhere in the Code and expands on the requirements in relation to consultation.**

3.29 The requirements for this Protocol are covered elsewhere in this report.

## Protocol 2: Release practices

**Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation.**

- 3.30 DRD has clear internal timetables for its transport statistics publications, and it publishes them on the Publication Hub.
- 3.31 There have been no delays in the production or publication of DRD's transport statistics. Final responsibility for the timing of releases rests with DRD's senior statistician.
- 3.32 DRD publishes a pre-release access list on its website. When the list is updated the new list is date-stamped and the old list is archived to maintain a record of changes. NISRA staff are bound by the Pre-release Access (PRA) to Official Statistics Order (Northern Ireland) 2009<sup>20</sup> and DRD has published a compliance statement<sup>21</sup> on its website. Specific guidance has been developed for staff on how to implement PRA rules, and DRD has developed a set of pre-release and publication procedures which all staff must adhere to when publishing statistics.

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<sup>20</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/sr/sr2009/nisr\\_20090071\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/sr/sr2009/nisr_20090071_en_1)

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.drdni.gov.uk/updated\\_drd\\_pre-release\\_access\\_compliance\\_statement\\_-\\_internet\\_version.doc](http://www.drdni.gov.uk/updated_drd_pre-release_access_compliance_statement_-_internet_version.doc)

### **Protocol 3: The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes**

**Administrative sources should be fully exploited for statistical purposes, subject to adherence to appropriate safeguards.**

- 3.33 The user information sections in the publications contain a data quality assessment section which evaluates the administrative sources used in the publication.
- 3.34 DRD has also published a departmental Statement of Administrative Sources<sup>22</sup> which includes access arrangements, arrangements for auditing data quality, and security information.

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<sup>22</sup> [http://www.drdni.gov.uk/ns\\_statement.doc](http://www.drdni.gov.uk/ns_statement.doc)

## **Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement**

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to the transport statistics produced by DRD, in the interest of the public good. These are not formally required for designation, but the Assessment team considers that their implementation will improve public confidence in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

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|---------------------|---|
| <b>Suggestion 1</b> | Publish a plan on how they intend to follow-up on the feedback received in the survey (para 3.3).   |
| <b>Suggestion 2</b> | Highlight any errors and subsequent revisions to the transport statistics covered by this Assessment on DRD's website to alert users to the changes (para 3.7). |
| <b>Suggestion 3</b> | Extend discussions to include non-government users of statistics before developing the annual business plan and resource allocations (para 3.21).               |

## Annex 2: Summary of assessment process and users' views

A2.1 This assessment was conducted from April to July 2010.

A2.2 The Assessment team – Phil Grigor and Cathy Kruger – agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with DRD representatives in May 2010. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 1 June. The Assessment team subsequently met DRD during June to review compliance with the Code of Practice, taking account of the written evidence provided and other relevant sources of evidence.

### Summary of users contacted, and issues raised

A2.3 Part of the assessment process involves our consideration of the views of users. We approach some known and potential users of the set of statistics, and we invite comments via an open note on the Authority's website. This process is not a statistical survey, but it enables us to gain some insights about the extent to which the statistics meet users' needs and the extent to which users feel that the producers of those statistics engage with them. We are aware that responses from users may not be representative of wider views, and we take account of this in the way that we prepare assessment reports.

A2.4 The Assessment team received 18 responses from the consultation with users and suppliers. The respondents were grouped as follows:

DRD	7
Other government department	2
Interest group	1
Police	1
Data suppliers	7

A2.5 The users who responded were satisfied with the level of engagement with producers and the way in which the statistics meet their needs. The statistics are primarily used to monitor targets and inform policy in areas ranging from regional planning, sustainable transport and emissions. More widely, they are also used to identify trends in transport choice, journey patterns and to provide background information about public transport issues. Several users noted that the annual *Transport Statistics* publication was comprehensive and timely.

A2.6 A few users expressed the need for more breakdowns of the data by sex and age, further geographical breakdowns and better accessibility of the data. Others noted the importance of comparisons with GB and transport statistics in Ireland. Some suppliers who responded expressed an interest in knowing more about the uses of the data they provided and where the statistics were published.

### Key documents/links provided

Written Evidence for Assessment document



