

Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Annual Statistics on Hours and Earnings in Northern Ireland

*(produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research
Agency)*

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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 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*.

Contents

Section 1: Summary of findings

Section 2: Subject of the assessment

Section 3: Assessment findings

Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

Annex 2: Compliance with standards for Statistical Releases

Annex 3: Summary of the assessment process and user views

1 Summary of findings

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This is one of a series of reports¹ prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*². The Act requires all statistics currently designated as National Statistics to be assessed against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*³. The report covers the set of statistics reported in *Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings*⁴ (NIASHE) produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).
- 1.1.2 This report is shorter than normal. In particular, section 3 adopts an ‘exception reporting’ approach - it includes text only to support the Requirements made to strengthen compliance with the *Code* and Suggestions made to improve confidence in the production, management and dissemination of these statistics. This abbreviated style of report reflects the Head of Assessment’s consideration of aspects of risk and materiality⁵. The Assessment team nonetheless assessed compliance with all parts of the *Code of Practice* and has commented on all those in respect of which some remedial action is recommended.
- 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.

1.2 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 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (NIASHE)* are designated as National Statistics, subject to NISRA implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority by January 2012.

1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

- 1.3.1 Response rates to the NIASHE are high, with a 96 per cent response rate in 2010. NISRA has used innovative collection techniques to ensure high response rates whilst minimising the burden on the suppliers of data. NISRA is proactive in its user engagement, and users reported that they were happy with the level of service provided and the responses to their enquiries.

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

² http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf

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

⁴ <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-hours-and-earnings.htm>

⁵ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/guidance-about-assessment/criteria-for-deciding-upon-the-format-of-an-assessment-report.pdf>

1.3.2 The statistical release provides useful coverage of the statistics but lacks information about uses. The releases also lack information about the methods adopted; the main sources of bias and other errors with the statistics; and about other sources of earnings statistics and the coherence between those statistics.

1.4 Detailed recommendations

1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that NISRA 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

Requirement 1	Investigate and document the needs of users and the use made of these statistics, and publish information about users' experiences of <i>NIASHE</i> (para 3.2).
Requirement 2	Publish details of the methods adopted, including explanations of why particular choices were made (para 3.3).
Requirement 3	Provide more information about the main sources of bias and other errors associated with these statistics (para 3.4).
Requirement 4	Inform businesses how their confidentiality will be protected (para 3.5).
Requirement 5	Investigate the options for allowing all businesses to provide survey returns electronically (para 3.6).
Requirement 6	Provide information about the quality and reliability of statistics in relation to the range of potential uses (para 3.8).
Requirement 7	Improve the commentary and analysis in <i>NIASHE</i> to aid user interpretation and include commentary to accompany the pensions statistics tables (para 3.9).
Requirement 8	Ensure that access to <i>NIASHE</i> is made as straightforward as possible by providing easy-to-use entry points on the NISRA website (para 3.11).

Requirement 9

Maximise the exchange and re-use of data, to avoid duplicating requests for information (para 3.13).

2 Subject of the assessment

- 2.1 The *Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (NIASHE)* is part of a UK-wide survey that provides a range of information on hourly, weekly and annual earnings by gender, work pattern, industry and occupation and includes comparisons of public and private sector pay. Information is also produced on pensions, including the number of jobs by type of scheme.
- 2.2 Northern Ireland data are collected by NISRA and GB data by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). ONS is responsible for publishing information for the UK and GB. NISRA publishes Northern Ireland totals and sub-national data. Statistics for Northern Ireland and the UK are published simultaneously. Participation in the survey is statutory under the *Statistics of Trade Act 1947*⁶ for GB, and the *Statistics of Trade and Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 1988*⁷ for Northern Ireland. NISRA relies on ONS for sample selection, processing and production of ASHE statistics from NISRA survey returns.
- 2.3 The responsibility for producing *NIASHE* transferred from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) to NISRA in April 2011. This transfer mirrored the position in GB⁸, where most business surveys and labour market data collection and statistical production have been transferred from departments with policy responsibilities to ONS. DETI has published information about this transfer⁹ on its website.
- 2.4 *NIASHE* presents earnings information that relates to gross pay before tax, national insurance or other deductions, and excludes payments in kind. *NIASHE* also includes the release of statistics on pensions, published in January each year, ten months after the reference period. Information is provided by pension type for occupation, age, and industry for Northern Ireland.
- 2.5 The most recent *NIASHE* presents detailed data for the previous three years with a high-level time series presented from 1997 to 2010. Tables are published alongside the release, which provide detailed information for different geographies, including parliamentary constituencies. Data are presented on a workplace and residence basis¹⁰. Tables are provided for individual years, with provisional results for the latest year and final results for previous years.
- 2.6 The sample for *NIASHE* is obtained from PAYE¹¹ (Pay As You Earn) systems, which are administered by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). Around 1 per cent of all employees in Northern Ireland (about 7,000 employees) are

⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/10-11/39/contents>

⁷ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1988/595/contents/made>

⁸ In GB, the 1989 Transfer of Functions (Economic Statistics) Order transferred operational responsibility for collecting business statistics from the Business Statistics Office in the Department of Trade and Industry to the Central Statistics Office, now the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The purpose was to achieve greater centralisation of economic statistics

⁹ <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-hours-and-earnings.htm>

¹⁰ Workplace basis allocates all hours and earnings information to the location of the employer, based on the employer's post code. Residence basis allocates hours and earnings information to the employee's home address, based on post code

¹¹ <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/payee/intro/basics.htm>

sampled. Respondents are selected according to the last two digits of their National Insurance number¹², and information is collected directly from the employer. The same last two digits are used each year, creating a longitudinal dataset for analysis – assuming the person remains employed. Someone who is in more than one PAYE scheme may appear more than once in the sample.

2.7 The outputs from the survey are put to a range of uses, including:

- Statistics are used by the Low Pay Commission¹³ to monitor the effect of the National Minimum Wage, and to set its level;
- by the public and private sector for pay review purposes;
- by the public sector for labour market policy assessment; and
- by Eurostat¹⁴ for comparisons between European Union Member States on earnings and labour costs in the European Union¹⁵.

2.8 NISRA told us that the production of these statistics costs around £107,400 per year, which consists of the data collection, validation and publication of the statistics.

¹² The allocation of National Insurance numbers is random; effectively making the sample a random selection.

¹³ The Low Pay Commission advises the Government on the implementation of the National Minimum Wage. <http://www.lowpay.gov.uk/>

¹⁴ <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>

¹⁵ Data are provided to Eurostat under European Union Council Regulation (EC) No 530/1999, http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/situation_in_europe/c10937_en.htm

3 Assessment findings

- 3.1 DETI was previously responsible for *NIASHE* and engaged with users through the Economic and Labour Market Statistics User Group¹⁶ (ELMSUG), which discusses a wide range of labour market and economic statistics produced by DETI. The most recent papers and minutes of meetings are published on DETI's website¹⁷. We suggest that NISRA explain to users how the transfer of responsibilities to NISRA will change user engagement and publish the relevant historical papers and minutes of the ELMSUG.
- 3.2 NISRA captures users' views on *NIASHE* via an online feedback form. NISRA has acted on user feedback by publishing survey results by skill level¹⁸ from 2010. NISRA has not published information about users' experiences of its statistics, neither has NISRA documented the needs of users or the use made of the statistics. As part of the designation as National Statistics, NISRA should investigate and document the needs of users and the use made of these statistics, and publish information about users' experiences of *NIASHE*¹⁹ (Requirement 1). In meeting this Requirement, we suggest that NISRA refer to the generic classes of use put forward in the Authority's Monitoring Brief: *The Use Made of Official Statistics*²⁰, when documenting use.
- 3.3 Methods used in the production of statistics from the survey have changed several times over the survey's history. Previously called the New Earnings Survey it changed to ASHE in 2004, when supplementary information began to be collected in order to improve coverage²¹, and methods used to produce survey estimates were changed. In 2007, further changes were made to the sample design to improve the quality of the results²². A summary of these changes is included in *NIASHE* but more could be done to link to documentation which describes these changes in more detail, particularly, documentation produced by ONS. As part of the designation as National Statistics, NISRA should publish details of the methods adopted, including explanations of why particular choices were made²³ (Requirement 2).
- 3.4 Data are provided for employees in PAYE schemes relating to a given reference date, usually in April each year. Data are also collected about bonuses and overtime payments; bonuses relate to those paid in the week of the reference date. Some limitations of the ASHE statistics are explored in *NIASHE* but more information is required to understand these limitations. For example, it is unclear whether bias is introduced through excluding bonus payments, or whether this is accounted for within the survey. The survey was designed to collect information about those in employment and excludes

¹⁶ <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-national-statistics/user-consultation-and-information.htm>

¹⁷ <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-national-statistics/user-consultation-and-information.htm>

¹⁸ http://www.detini.gov.uk/ashe_2010_by_skill_level.xls

¹⁹ In relation to Principle 1, Practices 2 and 5 of the *Code of Practice*

²⁰ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring-brief-6-2010---the-use-made-of-official-statistics.pdf>

²¹ <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-985X.2007.00475.x/full>

²² Cotterell, B. (2007) *Optimal sample size reduction for the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings*. Survey Methodology Bulletin No. 61

²³ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 1 of the *Code of Practice*

earnings derived from business ownership, such as dividends, and income from self-employment. Information about this area of earnings is required to provide a comprehensive picture of earnings within the UK. NISRA does not provide information about this, or links to where it can be found. Some limitations are explored in the *NIASHE*, but more information is required to understand these. As part of the designation as National Statistics, NISRA should provide more information about the main sources of bias and other errors associated with these statistics²⁴ (Requirement 3). In meeting this Requirement, we suggest that NISRA assess the impact of excluding bonuses from weekly pay estimates and provide links to information on income and hours worked by business owners and the self-employed.

- 3.5 NISRA assures employers responding to the survey that information provided will remain confidential. However, it is not made clear what actions NISRA takes to ensure this. As part of the designation as National Statistics, NISRA should inform businesses how their confidentiality will be protected²⁵ (Requirement 4).
- 3.6 NISRA benefits from the work undertaken by ONS to reduce the burden on businesses through the introduction of electronic, rather than paper, data collection. Some large employers are able to respond electronically to ONS with information on all employees included in the ASHE sample. NISRA has taken some additional steps to minimise the burden on businesses; NISRA statisticians are willing to accept administrative data from employers and work with large organisations to help develop systems which could streamline data provision. For example, NISRA statisticians worked with the Education and Library Boards in NI to ensure that their new payroll system could provide information. The Assessment team considers this an example of good practice, but feel there is more that can be done. As part of the designation as National Statistics, NISRA should investigate the options for allowing all businesses to provide survey returns electronically²⁶ (Requirement 5).
- 3.7 NISRA told us that it has robust quality assurance procedures for the production of estimates from the survey; however these are not published. We suggest that NISRA provide more information to users about how it quality assures these statistics.
- 3.8 NISRA provides measures of quality of the survey estimates, based on the coefficient of variation²⁷ of the estimates, within the detailed tables published alongside the releases. However, these measures do not provide any context or guidance about the quality and reliability of the statistics in relation to potential uses. Furthermore, the use of these coefficients may be confusing for users who are more accustomed to using confidence intervals. Some coefficients, along with other information about quality are included within the release but the information is not comprehensive. As part of the designation as National Statistics, NISRA should provide information about the quality and reliability of statistics in relation to the range of potential uses²⁸ (Requirement

²⁴ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*

²⁵ In relation to Principle 5, Practice 3 of the *Code of Practice*

²⁶ In relation to Principle 6, Practice 1 of the *Code of Practice*

²⁷ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Glossary:Coefficient_of_variation

²⁸ In relation to Principle 8, Practice 1 of the *Code of Practice*

- 6). In meeting this Requirement, we suggest that NISRA include an explanation of coefficient of variation and the relationship with confidence intervals.
- 3.9 NISRA provides some factual commentary within *NIASHE*, which comprises bulleted summaries for the accompanying tables and charts. Contextual information about reasons for changes and the potential impact of factors such as the economy and changes to the labour market are absent. NISRA does not provide commentary on the pensions statistics, which are provided as supplementary tables on its website. As part of the designation as National Statistics, NISRA should improve the commentary and analysis in *NIASHE* to aid user interpretation, and include commentary to accompany the pensions statistics tables²⁹ (Requirement 7). We suggest that in meeting this requirement NISRA should consider the points detailed in Annex 2.
- 3.10 Some other official statistics provide information about earnings, and measure other aspects of earnings that ASHE statistics do not cover. For example, ONS publishes statistics about the gross earnings of people in households in the UK from the Labour Force Survey³⁰ (LFS). Other earnings information is provided in *Survey of Personal Incomes*³¹ (SPI) produced by HMRC³². *NIASHE* does not provide information about these sources of earnings data, how they compare and what differences they show. The absence of information on alternate sources of earnings data is shared with the ONS ASHE release³³. We suggest that NISRA work with the other producers of official earnings statistics to compile a guide to earnings statistics, including information about their use.
- 3.11 ASHE statistics are currently published on DETI's website due to technical restrictions that do not allow NISRA to place the statistics on its own website. NISRA told us that it will not be possible to transfer the publication of *NIASHE* to its website in time for the next release, November 2011. We consider that this could cause some confusion for users. As part of the designation as National Statistics, NISRA should ensure that access to *NIASHE* is made as straightforward as possible by providing easy-to-use entry points on the NISRA website.³⁴ (Requirement 8). In meeting this Requirement, NISRA should, in the meantime, provide clear links to *NIASHE* from its website.
- 3.12 *NI ASHE* pre-release access was previously part of the corporate DETI pre-release access list³⁵ covering all of DETI's outputs. 12 individuals, including Ministers and Information Officers, have access to *NIASHE* statistics up to 24 hours before release. NISRA told us that the pre-release access list will be reviewed prior to the November release and will be updated to reflect the transfer of *NIASHE* to NISRA
- 3.13 NISRA told us that ONS is in the early stages of a project exploring the possibility of collecting more data from administrative sources. ONS is investigating the collection of earnings data directly from employer payrolls as these hold the majority of variables required for ASHE. HMRC is also exploring

²⁹ In relation to Principle 8, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*

³⁰ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/surveys/list-of-surveys/survey.html?survey=%27Labour+Force+Survey%27>

³¹ http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/inc-distribution-note.pdf

³² <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk>

³³ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/ashe/annual-survey-of-hours-and-earnings/2010-results/index.html>

³⁴ In relation to Principle 8, Practice 4 of the *Code of Practice*

³⁵ http://www.detini.gov.uk/publication___pre-release_access_list-13.pdf

the collection of PAYE data – national insurance and income tax – from employers³⁶ when or before payments are made. These developments have the potential to allow more data to be provided through administrative systems, streamlining data provision and affording efficiencies. NISRA told us that it is monitoring the development of the project to identify findings that are of relevance to *NIASHE*. As part of the designation as National Statistics, NISRA should maximise the exchange and re-use of data, to avoid duplicating requests for information³⁷ (Requirement 9). We suggest NISRA liaise with ONS and HMRC to ensure that the exchange and re-use of data is maximised.

³⁶ <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/rtd/index.htm>

³⁷ In relation to Protocol 3, Practice 3 of the *Code of Practice*

Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to NISRA's Earnings and Hours statistics, 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.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Suggestion 1 | Explain to users how the transfer of responsibilities to NISRA will change user engagement and publish the relevant historical papers and minutes of the Economic and Labour Market Statistics User Group (para 3.1). |
| Suggestion 2 | Refer to the generic classes of use put forward in the Authority's Monitoring Brief: <i>The Use Made of Official Statistics</i> , when documenting use (para 3.2). |
| Suggestion 3 | Assess the impact of excluding bonuses from weekly pay estimates and provide links to information about income and hours worked by business owners and the self-employed (para 3.4). |
| Suggestion 4 | Provide more information to users about how NISRA quality assures these statistics (para 3.7). |
| Suggestion 5 | Consider the points detailed in Annex 2, in seeking to improve the statistical releases (para 3.9). |
| Suggestion 6 | Include an explanation of coefficient of variation when providing information about the quality and reliability of statistics in relation to the range of potential uses (para 3.8). |
| Suggestion 7 | Work with the other producers of official earnings statistics to compile a guide to earnings statistics, including information about their use (para 3.10). |
| Suggestion 8 | Liaise with ONS and HMRC to ensure that the exchange and re-use of data is maximised (para 3.13). |

Annex 2: Compliance with the Standards for Statistical Releases

A2.1 In October 2010, the Statistics Authority issued a statement on *Standards for Statistical Releases*³⁸. Whilst this is not part of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, the Authority regards it as advice that will promote both understanding and observation of the *Code*. In relation to the statistical releases associated with these ASHE statistics, this annex comments on compliance with the statement on standards.

A2.2 In implementing any Requirements of this report (at paragraph 1.5) which relate to the content of statistical releases, we encourage the producer body to apply the standards as fully as possible.

Appropriate identification of the statistics being released

A2.3 The title of the *NIASHE* release is the same as the survey's name. This can be confusing for users of the statistics and we suggest a title which provides a clear indication of the statistics released is used. The title of the release includes the period to which the statistics relate and its geographical coverage. *NIASHE* uses the appropriate headings and logos for a National Statistics product. The release clearly identifies the producer organisation, and includes the name and contact details of the responsible statistician.

Include commentary that is helpful to the non-expert and presents the main messages in plain English

A2.4 *NIASHE* provides a summary that identifies the main messages at the start of the release. The language used is mostly straightforward, with some explanation of technical terms within the main text but could be improved by using less technical language and jargon. The release presents some useful commentary by making suitable comparisons between areas of the country and over time, using appropriate graphs and tables. The release does not include supporting explanations of why these statistics are important, to whom, and for what they are likely to be used.

Use language that is impartial, objective and professionally sound

A2.5 The text used in the releases is impartial and evidence based. The descriptions of proportions, changes and trends in the releases are appropriate. However, the release does not provide enough information about the quality of the statistics used to make these statements.

³⁸ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/standards-for-statistical-releases.html>

Include information about the context and likely uses

A2.6 The releases provide little information on the policy and operational context of these statistics; including whether the statistics are used to monitor government targets and what they show in the context of those targets. The releases would benefit from more comprehensive information on the reliability of the statistics by including greater information on the coefficient of variation for estimates within the commentary and graphics. It would be appropriate to comment on the range of uses to which people are likely to put the statistics.

Include, or link to, appropriate metadata

A2.7 The release does not include information about the sources and the methods used to compile these statistics. *NIASHE* presents some statistics for the UK in some tables and charts. The release could be improved by including, or linking to, a section that describes the methods and information on any changes to definitions. *NIASHE* indicates at the start that the most recent data is provisional, but the presentation of this could be improved in the charts and tables.

Annex 3: Summary of assessment process and users' views

A3.1 This assessment was conducted from April to September 2011.

A3.2 The Assessment team – Gary Wainman and David Duncan-Fraser – agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with representatives of the NISRA in April. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 20 May. The Assessment team subsequently met the NISRA on 29 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

A3.3 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.

A3.4 The Assessment team received 2 responses from the user consultation. The respondents were grouped as follows:

Northern Ireland government department	1
Private sector consultancy	1

A3.5 Users reported that they used the statistics to understand the differences between pay for different occupations and genders. Users were pleased with the availability of detailed data for Northern Ireland but, found the release could be improved by providing more accessible analysis. Users reported they would like an extended time series, and more context and interpretation of the data to be included within the release. Users also told us that they were happy with their engagement with the producer team.

Key documents/links provided

Written Evidence for Assessment document

