



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Data and Analytics Directorate
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Mary Gregory
Deputy Director for Regulation
Office for Statistics Regulation
4th June 2018

Dear Mary

DWP Fraud and Error in the Benefit System Statistics – update on actions

The Office for Statistics Regulation wrote to Stephen Balchin, DWP's then Chief Statistician, on 20th December last year with the findings from the review of DWP's Fraud and Error in the Benefit System Statistics. You made some suggested improvements and asked to be kept abreast of changes that we make to the publication. Please see below the changes and improvements that we have implemented in the national statistics for 2017/18 preliminary estimates¹ released on 17th May, 2018.

- *Ensure that impartial language is used throughout.*

The statement 'Universal Credit is a new benefit that reduces poverty by making work pay.' has been removed from this this publication and our other statistical publications that cover Universal Credit.

- *The background information provided on Universal Credit should be clearer.*

As the Universal Credit caseload is now more widely available to all claimant types, we have removed all comparisons with Jobseeker's Allowance as it is no longer a meaningful comparator. This change was highlighted in the publication released on 30th November 2017¹ and again in the release on 17th May 2018².

- *The explanation provided on statistical significance on page 2 of the report could also be clearer.*

We have amended the wording to make it clearer for our users.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fraud-and-error-in-the-benefit-system-financial-year-2016-to-2017-estimates>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fraud-and-error-in-the-benefit-system-financial-year-201718-preliminary-estimates>

- *The report would also benefit from providing definitions more clearly.*

We have moved the definitions of fraud, claimant error and official error to page 2 of the publication as suggested.

- *The statistical report also links to a range of other background documents. We welcome your ongoing review of the statistics and associated documents, to help make it easier for users to find the key information they need.*

We are continuing to review and update all of the background documentation.

- *The uses and users document demonstrates a good understanding of the uses made of the statistics within DWP and other government departments, but less so for users outside government.*

We plan to hold a wide ranging consultation exercise on the fraud and error national statistics in summer 2018. This was highlighted to users in the most recent publication. This will seek the views of all of our users both internal and external on a number of matters, including a proposal to switch to annual reporting, proposed changes to the methodology and processing to align them across all benefits plus user views on which benefits we should measure in the future and how often.

Yours Sincerely

Tom Davies
DWP Acting Head of Profession for Statistics