

Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

Introduction

The Department of Education (DE) Statistical Analysis Team (SAT) is responsible for collecting, compiling, processing, analysing, interpreting, and disseminating a wide range of statistics covering school enrolments, attendance, performance, suspensions and expulsions and workforce. All statistics produced by SAT are designated as Official Statistics and some are designated as Accredited Official Statistics, which means that they are produced in line with the principles included within the Code of Practice for Statistics (the Code). SAT also publishes Official Statistics in Development which may not fully meet the standards of the Code. Methods to comply fully with the Code are being developed.

DE's Research and Evaluation Team (RET) is responsible for commissioning and undertaking educational research and while these outputs are not classified as Official Statistics RET voluntarily adopts the Code as it pertains to research and is practical and appropriate to do so.

Our statistical and research practices are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code that all producers of Official Statistics should adhere to. You are welcome to contact us directly (Statistics@education-ni.gov.uk) with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the [OSR website](#).

This document outlines the ways in which we work under the three core principles of the Code, which are Trustworthiness, Quality and Value. Each of these principles contain a number of individual standards, which form the sub-section titles below.

Trustworthiness

Show integrity

Within DE's Statistical Analysis Team (SAT), the production of Official Statistics is taken seriously, and leadership promotes and protects a culture of honesty and integrity throughout our work.

Staff working on the production and quality assurance of statistics are appropriately insulated from political pressures that either could, or could appear to, influence the production or presentation of statistical publications.

SAT is focused on improving our understanding of user needs and identifying ways to better meet those needs (see [Public involvement and engagement strategy](#) for more information).

When reporting statistics, we focus on objectivity and transparency. For more information, see [Release practice for official statistics](#) and [Corrections and revisions policy for official statistics](#).

Lead responsibly

SAT has a Senior Principal Statistician who is responsible for promoting and overseeing the production of Official Statistics in line with the Code, challenging any potential misuse of statistics and data. This post reports to senior colleagues within DE on operational matters, but also directly to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency Chief Executive for matters relating to the production of statistics. Communication is also maintained between the Senior Principal Statistician and the OSR.

Our statistics production staff work with a number of good practice principles and frameworks in mind, as outlined in our [Quality management approach](#). These help ensure that our skills and processes are robust, resilient and high quality. Layers of accountability also help ensure the same.

Be transparent

All DE's Official Statistics are publicly preannounced on [Statistical publications schedule | Department of Education](#) and on [GOV.UK](#). Statistics are scheduled for release as soon as is practical after the data being made available to us and they are published on our website at 9:30am. All our releases contain contact information, should users wish to contact us. See our [Release practice policy for official statistics](#) for more information.

Corrections and revisions are handled according to our [Corrections and revisions policy for official statistics](#), including that they should be published as promptly as possible.

Prior to public release, access to Official Statistics is strictly restricted to those directly involved in the production or quality assurance of the statistics; 24-hour pre-release is also made available to eligible recipients (further information is available in our [Pre release statement of compliance](#)).

Manage data responsibly

We transparently publish our policies and procedures for Official Statistics on our website, making clear our data sources and commitments to handling data securely.

In particular, as described in our [Confidentiality and data management policy](#), we take various appropriate measures to protect data security and the confidentiality of data subjects.

Quality

Prioritise quality

As described in our [Statement on administrative data sources](#), most of the data used to produce our Official Statistics come from administrative systems.

Given that this data is collected for administrative purposes, not necessarily with statistical reporting in mind, our statistics production staff focus on understanding the nature of the data (including its potential caveats, limitations and sources of uncertainty) and carrying out a number of validation and quality assurance activities, in line with our [Quality management approach](#). We continually review the strength of our processes to identify areas for improvement.

We maintain an open dialogue with data providers, both on an ad-hoc basis and through data forum meetings, to gain and maintain an understanding of the data they supply, to ensure they have a firm understanding of our data requirements, and to address any potential or realised data quality issues. See our [Statement on administrative data sources](#) for more information.

We aim to be as transparent as possible in our statistical releases regarding the quality of the data being used, including any limitations and potential or actual sources of uncertainty, and the likely impact these might have on the figures reported, as noted in our [Release practice policy for official statistics](#).

Be rigorous

As described in our [Quality management approach](#), we work with a number of good practice frameworks in mind to ensure that our methods are reproducible and high-quality. We work closely with our data suppliers to ensure quality at source, as explained in our [Statement on administrative data sources](#).

We work with user needs in mind and seek to improve our understanding of our users and their needs as described in our [Public involvement and engagement strategy](#), making changes to statistical releases to better align with those needs wherever practical and appropriate to do so.

Before initiating any new data collections, we consult with our data suppliers to assess the proportionality of the request. How we work with our data suppliers is described further in our [y](#).

Be open about quality

We will be transparent on data sources as well as any known caveats or limitations associated with our data and analytical methods. Where complex methods have been applied, an explanation will be given. These practices are noted in our [Release practice policy for official statistics](#).

Previous publications are kept available for historical trends and where methods have changed that might interrupt this time series, these will be clearly explained. As noted in our [Public involvement and engagement strategy](#), we will consult with users before making major changes to methodology or presentation, wherever possible.

Where errors occur, or data is missing or late, we will be up-front and transparent about these, aiming to publish corrections or revisions as soon as possible. See our [Corrections and revisions policy for official statistics](#) for more information.

We may at times publish statistics as 'Official Statistics in Development', to recognise where we are developing new methodologies or exploring new data sources (or both). Where we do so, we will include statements on the nature of those developments, including plans for the future (as per the [Office for Statistics Regulation guidance on producing official statistics in development](#)).

Value

Be relevant

As described in our Public involvement and engagement strategy, we seek to improve our understanding of our users and their needs, so that we can improve the relevance of our statistics wherever practical and appropriate to do so. Feedback from users is encouraged as part of every release.

We publish releases in a manner that aims to engage with the greatest possible number of relevant users. See our [Release practice policy for official statistics](#) for more detail.

Statistics production staff are encouraged to develop themselves and explore opportunities for innovation, to improve production processes and published products in a way that stays high quality and relevant over time.

Be clear

During production of all our statistics, attention is given to the clarity and accessibility of text, tables and charts, according to relevant accessibility guidelines (such as those provided by the [Government Analysis Function](#)), enabling access to as wide a range of potential users as a possible. See our [Release practice policy for official statistics](#) for more information.

As per our [Public involvement and engagement strategy](#), we will give advance notice of any major changes to releases, giving users the opportunity to comment on proposals before they are implemented.

Be accessible

Our statistics are published openly to all via [Statistics and research | Department of Education](#) and [GOV.UK](#).

As described above, we aim to produce statistics that are clear and accessible to as wide a range of relevant users as possible. All our statistics are accompanied by an explanation of trends and necessary background information, including links to related reports.

As per our [Release practice policy for official statistics](#), we continue to make past publications available on our website (all of which can be accessed via [Statistics and research | Department of Education](#)), unless there have been good reasons to withdraw them.

As part of our statistics releases, we publish aggregated data tables to allow for re-use. We publish datasets [NISRA Data Portal | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#) and [Open DataNI](#).

We also grant access to some granular data to accredited researchers through the [Education Outcomes Linkage \(EOL\) 2018/19 - 2021/2022 | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#).

Last updated: May 2026