Background Quality Report – Burden to Households and Individuals of Completing Statistical Surveys issued by Northern Ireland Departments

This report provides information on the quality of the data used to produce the official statistics: Burden to Households and Individuals of Completing Statistical Surveys issued by Northern Ireland Departments. It informs users about the quality of the information upon which they may be drawing conclusions and making decisions.

The report is structured around the five quality dimensions for statistical outputs (from the European Statistics Code of Practice, PDF (458 KB)). The UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics requires that:

Q3.3 *The quality of the statistics and data, including their accuracy and reliability, coherence and comparability, and timeliness and punctuality, should be monitored and reported regularly.*

Introduction

The annual 'Burden to Households and Individuals of Completing Statistical Surveys issued by Northern Ireland Departments' report, produced by Survey Control Unit (SCU) within Statistical Support Branch (SSB), Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) details the burden to households and individuals of complying with government statistical surveys in Northern Ireland.

The report provides information on the number of surveys, or parts of surveys, carried out by each government department (including arm's length bodies), estimated time burden on households or individuals and number of responses. Findings are presented for surveys which contribute to official statistics and those which don't. The report also considers the average time to complete a survey, including a comparison of completion time by number of responses; number of surveys and burden grouped by average completion time; and the average time to complete a survey by department.

A further analysis by data collection method is included, presenting the number of surveys, average issued sample, average achieved sample, average response rate and average completion time, for each data collection method. A breakdown of the methods used by each department is also included. Since 2018/19, information on the number of surveys contributing to each Programme for Government (PfG) outcome has been provided.

The report also examines change over time. A detailed explanation of the annual change in the burden, number of surveys and number of responses is presented for each government department. Information on the measures being taken to reduce the burden, and examples of how these surveys are used both within government and to produce official statistics are included within the report.

The burden on households and individuals due to government statistical surveys in Northern Ireland has been monitored since 2014/15. These official statistics complement the longer running official statistics on the cost to business of complying with Northern Ireland government statistical surveys.

Each year, data are requested from each Northern Ireland department, as well as from officials in arm's length bodies (ALBs). Each NISRA branch has a Survey Control Liaison Officer (SCLO) who co-ordinates the response for their department, ALB or for their branch within the Department of Finance (DoF). The departmental SCLO liaises with any ALBs that do not have a NISRA branch.

Information is provided on all statistical surveys commissioned, or carried out, by the department (including ALBs) within the financial year. General information is returned for the survey (name, purpose, frequency, data collection methods) as well as specific information on the number of responses, median completion time for the survey (or part of the survey), number of re-contacts and median re-contact completion time. SCLOs are provided with detailed guidance notes and training, enabling them to determine what government surveys should be included and how to calculate or estimate the various metrics.

Key definitions

Respondent Burden

The burden due to a survey is defined as the time spent by the household or individual responding to the survey, or part of the survey. This includes any time taken establishing eligibility and any re-contact time due to validation or quality assurance queries. Only those responding to the survey are included; non-response is assumed to place no burden on respondents. The time spent establishing non-eligibility for those households and individuals subsequently deemed out of scope is also included.

Statistical Survey

A statistical survey is any structured inquiry designed to obtain aggregated data (which may be qualitative or quantitative) where the individual or corporate identities of the respondents are in themselves of little significance.

This includes both regular and ad hoc surveys; both voluntary and statutory surveys that may be required to determine, evaluate or monitor policy and/or action, provide social or economic indicators or measure customer satisfaction. Statistical surveys conducted by, or on behalf of, non-departmental public bodies are also covered. Arm’s length bodies are included under their parent departments.

Statistical surveys in scope are not limited to those conducted by statistics branches and include all modes of data collection. Surveys that contribute to official statistics and those that do not are both in the scope of survey control.

The following are examples of surveys **excluded** from survey control:

- Surveys where there is no direct approach made and where respondents clearly select themselves (e.g. web sites, readership surveys, some types of consultation exercises where there is an invitation to comment);
- Where information is required as an integral part of the operational management of a public service. Such returns will often be regulated under specific departmental controls;
- Surveys relating to the contractual obligations of potential respondents to the department or agency concerned;
- Surveys to respondents in central government and its agencies.

Where part of a survey falls outside scope, the part of the survey within scope has been included where possible.

Shared Surveys

Surveys are included under the commissioning department or ALB which may not be the same as the department or branch which carried out the survey. For those surveys which are commissioned by several Departments, ALBs or branches within DoF, each part of the survey is treated as a separate survey. The respondent burden for each part of the survey (or module) is estimated by apportioning the total respondent burden for the survey. The number of responses is the same as for the complete survey (unless the questions were only asked of a subgroup of respondents).

This approach allows the burden for individual Departments, ALBs (or branches) to be calculated, but means that some surveys and respondents will appear more than once when the 'number of surveys' and 'number of responses' is summed across Departments. For this reason, the number of responses is not a good proxy for the number of respondents (or households and individuals responding to government statistical surveys). In addition, some households and individuals may respond to more than one government survey. As the respondent burden has been apportioned based on the time taken to answer each part of the survey, there is no 'double counting' of respondent burden.

The use of an existing survey vehicle (such as the *Continuous Household Survey* or one of the *Life & Times Surveys*) is an effective way of reducing respondent burden as the overall contextual questions don't need to be repeated for each module, and the initial stages/ survey introductions only need to be carried out once.

Detailed definitions of all terms used in the reports and additional information on the survey burden methodology can be found in the Appendix to the publication. This also includes information on the rationale for the publication, data quality (including any discontinuities in the time series), the main uses of the statistics and user engagement.

These official statistics are used by Northern Ireland government departments and the public to monitor the burden on households and individuals due to government surveys. The Code of Practice for Statistics states that

V5.5 Statistics producers should be transparent in their approach to monitoring and reducing the burden on those providing their information.

Annual reports from 2014/15 are available on the NI Statistical Surveys – Assessment of burden on businesses, households and individuals page of the NISRA website.

Relevance

The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs in both coverage and content.

The collection of data by government departments and their arm's length bodies (ALBs) causes a burden on data suppliers. It is important to keep this burden to a minimum and hence the practice of survey control has been developed and practiced within Northern Ireland since the 1980s. Initially survey control only included surveys to businesses but from 2014/15 the scope was extended to include surveys to households and individuals.

The Code of Practice for Statistics recognises the importance of monitoring and reducing respondent burden, balanced with the need to produce official statistics that are fundamental to good government and provide a good evidence base to inform public policy. It emphasises the importance of **transparency**, ensuring respondent **burden is proportionate to benefits** and making **use of existing data** before undertaking a new data collection:

V5.5 Statistics producers should be transparent in their approach to monitoring and reducing the burden on those providing their information, and on those involved in collecting, recording and supplying data. The burden imposed should be proportionate to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.

V5.3 The suitability of existing data, including administrative, open and privately-held data, should be assessed before undertaking a new data collection.

V5.1 Opportunities for data sharing, data linkage, cross-analysis of sources, and the reuse of data should be taken wherever feasible. Recognised standards, classifications, definitions, and methods should be applied to data wherever possible.

V5.6 Statistics producers should analyse the impact of new data requirements or extending existing collections on those involved in the collection, recording and supply of data, against the potential value of the statistics in serving the public good.

V5.4 Voluntary participation in statistical data collection should be sought, rather than using statutory powers, wherever possible.

The burden to households and individuals due to government statistical surveys is also of interest to the Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC) who monitor the cost to business of complying with government statistical surveys. This report provides them with a complete picture of the burden on Northern Ireland society due to government statistical surveys.

Information on the Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes to which surveys contribute was added to the report in 2018/19, in response to feedback from NISRA's Agency Board. This provides additional context for users.

Statistics from these publications have previously been used to respond to MLA questions; and to provide briefing for the Minister of Finance. The publication and accompanying data have also been used by NISRA branches to investigate the burden on households and individuals, to estimate the respondent burden associated with new surveys and to assess the impact of alternative methods of data collection on the burden resulting from their surveys.

The statistical product includes a publication, open data version of the tables and charts (with the underlying data) and downloadable dataset in open data format. This allows users to carry out additional analysis on subgroups of interest. As well as the information used in the analysis, links and contact details are provided for each individual survey. The dataset also includes additional information on the purpose of the survey, branch or ALB carrying out the survey, frequency of the survey, issued and achieved sample, median completion time and median re-contact time and priority of the data collection methods.

With regard to coverage, the publication and accompanying dataset include all statistical surveys of households and individuals carried out by, or commissioned NI departments or their ALBs, not just those relating to official statistics. This provides a comprehensive picture of the burden imposed on households and individuals. In addition, surveys of NI households and individuals carried out by GB departments, on behalf to NI Departments, to produce UK statistics or where the data are used directly by NI departments are included.

A separate publication is produced for surveys to businesses Cost to Business of Completing Statistical Surveys issued by Northern Ireland Departments and is published alongside this publication.

Accuracy and Reliability

The proximity between an estimate and the unknown true value.

Data collection

Data are requested from Survey Control Liaison Officers (SCLOs) in Northern Ireland departments, as well as from arm's length bodies (ALBs). Each NISRA branch has a SCLO who coordinates the response for their department, ALB or branch (in DoF). The departmental SCLO liaises with any ALBs that do not have a NISRA branch.

SCLOs are provided with detailed guidance notes and annual training, enabling them to determine what government surveys are in scope and how to calculate or estimate the various metrics. Each year the guidance is updated to address any issues which have arisen the previous year. Frequently Asked Questions are included to answer common queries. SCLOs are actively encouraged to contact Survey Control Unit (SCU) if they are unsure whether to include a survey or what to return in a particular cell.

Each year, SCLOs are asked to provide details of all government statistical surveys carried out by, or on behalf of, their department, ALB or branch in the preceding financial year. Information is also collected on new surveys introduced or proposed after the end of the financial year and surveys which were discontinued or not run in the year. A template is provided which includes detailed guidance on what surveys to include and what should be recorded under each variable. Where possible, values are selected from drop-down menus, limiting the scope for error and pre-coding responses. Validation checks are built into the template.

SCLOs are expected to carry out quality assurances checks before submitting their return. This includes answering the following questions:

- Are any surveys from the previous year missing? Should these be included?
- Are any biennial, triennial, quadrennial, quinquennial or decennial surveys missing?
- Are any 'new surveys' notified in the previous year's return missing? Should these be included?
- Have all the Department's ALBs been covered? What about any surveys carried out by non-NISRA branches?
- Is there any information missing or incomplete?
- If you have taken steps to reduce burden, have you explained what these steps were?
- Are any of the data inconsistent with previous years? (e.g. completion times/ sample sizes/ recontact numbers)
- Have all the relevant worksheets been fully completed?

Explanations should be included within the return, where appropriate.

Calculation of respondent burden

Where an actual or estimated completion time is not available for each respondent, an overall completion time for the survey is estimated using the median time to complete the survey. The median time to complete the survey is estimated based on: information from the survey, paradata, historical data (within the last five years), a pilot survey, reviews or survey manager expertise. Only those completing the survey are included; nonresponse is assumed to place no burden on respondents. Any time spent establishing eligibility for households and individuals that are subsequently deemed out of scope is included.

The total respondent burden will include all questionnaire or interview types. If different questionnaires or interviews are used (and these vary in terms of completion time), then the respondent burden may be estimated separately for each questionnaire/interview type and then summed for an overall burden. Similarly, if there are different groups of respondents with different completion times (e.g. main and proxy respondents) then the calculations for each subgroup may be carried out separately and summed.

Validation procedures may require a re-contact with the household or individual. The burden due to re-contact is also calculated. If actual or estimated re-contact times are not available then the median time taken to complete the full questionnaire may be substituted on the assumption that a respondent may need to review the entire questionnaire.

The calculation of compliance burden requires the following:

- Number of responses to the survey (including full/partial and invalid)
- Number of respondents re-contacted (if applicable)
- (Actual or) Median time to complete the survey (or part thereof)
- (Actual or) Median re-contact time for validation purposes

The Compliance Burden is a simple **addition** of Response Burden, and where applicable, Re-contact Burden:

Response Burden = No. of responses x Median completion time

Re-contact Burden = No. re-contacted x Median re-contact time

If a survey is carried out on behalf of a number of government departments, ALBs or branches within DoF, then each part of the survey is treated as a separate survey. The respondent burden for each part of the survey (or module) is estimated by apportioning the total time taken to respond to the survey. The number of responses is the same as for the complete survey (unless the questions were only asked of a subgroup of respondents).

This approach allows the burden for individual Departments, ALBs (or branches) to be calculated, but means that some surveys and respondents will appear more than once when the 'number of surveys' and 'number of responses' is summed across Departments. For this reason, the number of responses is not a good proxy for the number of respondents (or households and individuals responding to government statistical surveys). In addition, some households and individuals may respond to more than one government survey.

As the respondent burden has been apportioned based on the time taken to answer each part of the survey (or module), there is no 'double counting' of respondent burden.

Data processing

The quality assurance checks carried out by SCU focus on ensuring that the data returned are complete and internally consistent for the current year, and also consistent with returns from previous years. Where data are missing or there are large changes or inconsistencies, explanations are sought from the data supplier, and if necessary the data are re-supplied.

Discontinuities in the time series

Improved coverage

The application of the survey control methodology was reviewed prior to the 2016/17 data collection and improved guidance was produced. This has resulted in a discontinuity in the time series as some surveys, and types of surveys, which were excluded prior to 2016/17 are now included; specifically surveys carried out by Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs), and some participant evaluation surveys, customer surveys and surveys which have a secondary operational purpose.

Due to these coverage changes, from 2016/17 there is an increase in the total number of surveys, forms and compliance costs.

Assessment of impact

For 2016/17, including those surveys and types of surveys that were not included in previous years potentially increased the number of surveys by 40, the number of forms by around 27,000 and the overall compliance burden by around 7,000 hours. The impact is most notable for DE and DfC who provided returns for Arm's Length Bodies that had not previously been included, and for DfE where several surveys were included that previously would had been considered part of the operational management of a public service.

Error in 2017/18 report

There was an error in the number of responses and respondent burden reported for DoJ in 2017/18. The number of responses to the PSNI Victim Satisfaction Survey was incorrectly reported as 8,000 instead of 2,269, resulting in a respondent burden of 1,333 hours instead of 378 (which inflated the total respondent burden for DoJ by 955 hours or 37%).

Although, historic compliance burden estimates are not normally revised in subsequent reports (due to the impracticality of incorporating all subsequent improvements), due to the scale of the error and the impact on the overall time series for DoJ, the 2017/18 figures for DoJ along with the overall totals have been corrected in the time series analysis in subsequent reports. The 2017/18 report has not been amended.

Improvements and limitations

Although the compliance cost is an estimate, the quality of the underlying data has improved greatly since the pre-2016/17 review, and is now considered to be of a good standard. These improvements include:

- Improved coverage of non-NISRA branches within Departments; and improved coverage of ALBs.
- Better application of the criteria to determine whether surveys should be included or excluded from the return.
- Better estimation of median completion times, re-contacts and median re-contact times.
- More use of separate calculations for different subgroups where the compliance costs vary across different types of data collection and/or respondent category.
- Improved quality assurance, with the introduction of local quality assurance by SCLOs.

There have also been improvements in the coherence and comparability of the returned data, both within and between departments, due to improved and expanded SCLO guidance, annual training for SCLOs and an improved data collection workbook, including standardised options for e.g. data collection methods; automatic calculation of respondent burden; built-in guidance and basic validation checks. These changes will result in improved comparability over time.

The data collection process means that individual SCLOs are the key decision makers in terms of including or excluding surveys from the returns. While there is communication between

SCLOs and NISRA Survey Control Unit to clarify any queries, there is the potential for individual interpretations of the inclusion and exclusion criteria to lead to small inconsistencies in individual returns.

Consistent methodology

The methodology used by NISRA has been aligned with the survey burden methodology recommended by the Government Statistical Service (GSS). This means that respondent burden for surveys of households and individuals carried out by, or on behalf of, government departments in Northern Ireland can be compared with respondent burden for surveys of households and individuals carried out by GB departments where the GB department follows the recommended GSS methodology and deals with surveys shared across departments in a similar way.

Timeliness and Punctuality

Timeliness refers to the time gap between publication and the reference period. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates.

The 'Burden to Households and Individuals of Completing Statistical Surveys issued by Northern Ireland Departments' report is normally published 15 months after the end of the reference year.

The delay in recent years has been primarily due to quality assurance and resourcing issues, along with late receipt of source data. The 2016/17 report was delayed due to the review of the methodology which took place between September and December 2017. Due to the small size of the branch, there is a knock-on impact from one year to the next. Moving forward, the plan is to publish within 12 months of the end of the reference period. The primary constraints on improving timeliness further are anticipated to be the availability of source data and time taken to resolve quality assurance queries.

Publication dates are pre-announced at least four weeks in advance in the official statistics publication calendar on GOV.UK and also on the 'NI Statistical Surveys – Assessment of burden on businesses, households and individuals' page on the NISRA website.

The 2015/16 report was delayed by four weeks (to 3 August) and the 2017/18 report by two weeks (to 28 June) due to quality assurance issues. The 2018/19 report was delayed by two months (to 30 July) due to resourcing issues as resources were diverted to higher priority COVID-19 official statistics support.

Accessibility and Clarity

Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.

The release can be accessed from the 'NI Statistical Surveys – Assessment of burden on businesses, households and individuals' page on the NISRA website, which is the same page as previous releases. It can also be accessed through the official statistics publication calendar on gov.uk.

The release date is pre-announced on gov.uk and on the NISRA website page. Key users and SCLOs are advised of the release date in advance of publication.

On the day of release, posts are issued from NISRA's main social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) outlining some key findings from the publication, and linking to the report and the data. Key users and SCLOs are made aware of the release and provided with a link to access the report and share further with potential users.

The statistical product includes a publication, an open data version of the tables and charts (including the underlying data) and a downloadable dataset in open data format. All outputs are available to download free of charge.

This publication is published in PDF format and is compliant with the AA standard under the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1](). The report includes detailed commentary alongside relevant tables and charts. All tables and charts have appropriate titles and labels, and explanatory footnotes where required. Key definitions and relevant caveats are included throughout the text to improve clarity and understanding. Footnotes provide additional contextual information and clarification.

Methodology and quality information, including definitions of key terms and information on the discontinuity in the time series (with an assessment of impact) is provided in Appendix A. Information on the rationale for the publication, main uses and user engagement is also included. Appendix C contains further information on the Programme for Government (PfG) outcomes. Appendix E provides information on, and links to, the downloadable data and other relevant publications.

The contact details for the responsible statistician are included within the publication.

The publication is accompanied by an ODS (Open Document Spreadsheet) version of the tables and charts included in the publication (and the data used in the charts). These adhere to accessibility guidelines.

Survey level data is also available to download in ODS (Open Document Spreadsheet) format. This allows users to carry out additional analysis on subgroups or topics of interest and extract the data for individual surveys. The downloadable data includes the department, branch/ALB, name of the survey, purpose, frequency, statutory/voluntary status, official statistics status, relevant PfG outcome, data collection methods (primary, secondary etc.), issued sample, achieved sample, median completion time, median re-contact time, number of re-contacts, respondent compliance burden and burden per response (or average completion time). A link to the published statistics (or survey) and contact for the survey is also included. To aid comparability over time the variable names are kept consistent with previous years.

Coherence and Comparability

Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but refer to the same topic, are similar. Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.

There are no alternative sources of information on the burden to households and individuals due to complying with government statistical surveys conducted in Northern Ireland.

The methodology used to calculate respondent burden has remained the same since these official statistics were first produced in 2014/15. The same methodology is used to calculate the 'time burden' to business of complying with government statistical surveys, which is then converted into an estimated financial burden (or compliance cost).

The application of the survey control methodology was reviewed prior to the 2016/17 data collection and improved guidance was produced. This has resulted in a discontinuity in the time series as some surveys, and types of surveys, which were excluded prior to 2016/17 are now included; specifically surveys carried out by Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs), and some participant evaluation surveys, customer surveys and surveys which have a secondary operational purpose. Further details are included in the [Accuracy and Reliability section of this report](#) (including an assessment of the impact of the changes).

As a result of this review, there have been improvements in the coherence and comparability of the returned data, both within and between departments. This is due to improved and expanded SCLO guidance, annual training for SCLOs and an improved data collection workbook (including standardised options; built-in guidance and basic validation checks). These changes have resulted in improved comparability over time and between departments.

Prior to 2016/17 SCLOs were asked to write-in the data collection method(s) used for each survey. This meant that there was substantial variation in the descriptions used and it was not always easy to identify the primary data collection method and group the methods used. In 2016/17, this was replaced with a drop-down menu (Paper questionnaire; Paper diary[1]; Telephone interview; Face-to-face interview; Email data collection; Online questionnaire/ data collection; Online/electronic diary[1]; Telephone data entry; and Digital Voice Recognition Survey). SCLOs are asked to identify the primary, secondary, tertiary, etc. method of data collection. As a result, groupings and analysis from 2016/17 onwards will be more accurate than in previous years.

The analysis contained within the publication has remained fairly constant since 2014/15, allowing comparisons to be made over time. A breakdown by Programme for Government (PfG) Outcome was added to the report in 2018/19.

Comparable data for government departments in England and Wales, was published by ONS in the On-line List of Government Statistical Surveys (OLGSS) up to 2016/17. The ONS no longer produces data or a comparable report for England and Wales, although some Government Departments publish information for their own department.

The methodology used by NISRA has been aligned with the [survey burden methodology recommended by the Government Statistical Service](#) (GSS). This means that respondent burden for surveys of households and individuals carried out by, or on behalf of, government departments in Northern Ireland can be compared with respondent burden for surveys of households and individuals carried out by GB departments where the GB department follows the recommended GSS methodology and deals with surveys shared across departments in a similar way.

Trade-offs between Output Quality Components

Trade-offs are the extent to which different aspects of quality are balanced against each other.

The main trade-off is 'timeliness and punctuality' against 'accuracy and reliability' (which also impacts 'coherence and comparability').

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[1] These options were first introduced in 2017/18. As paper diaries usually accompany face-to-face interviews, these have been grouped with face-to-face interviews. This maintains consistency with what was done in 2016/17 and earlier years. Online/electronic diaries have been grouped with online questionnaire/data collection.

The value of the report is the ability to compare respondent burden over time and between departments, ALBs and branches. This allows statistics producers and government to monitor the burden on households and individuals over time and identify areas where this can be reduced. It also allows those commissioning or carrying out government surveys to compare the impact of changes in methodology and different approaches and sample sizes. In order to do so it is important to have reasonably accurate and reliable data. As a consequence, the focus is on the 'accuracy and reliability' and 'comparability and coherence' aspects of quality at the expense of 'timeliness and punctuality'.

The report is currently published in June, almost 15 months after the end of the reference year – although the 2019/20 report was delayed to July due to COVID-19 pressures and the 2019/20 report was delayed to August to allow data suppliers additional time to collate the data taking account of COVID-19 and the challenges of remote working. Moving forward, the plan is to publish within 12 months of the end of the reference period. The main constraints on improving timeliness further are likely to be the availability of source data and time taken to resolve quality assurance queries.

The nature of the data collection exercise means that returns are received from around 30 separate SCLOs, many of which coordinate returns for up to a dozen (or more) ALBs and divisions within their departments. While there is communication between SCLOs and SCU to clarify any queries, and comprehensive guidance and training available, there can be a lack of consistency in the returns submitted. This may reflect different levels of knowledge (among SCLOs and data suppliers), different interpretations of the guidance and also restrictions on the time available for the collation and quality assurance of the information. As a result, while the quality of the returns has improved greatly in recent years, substantial time is still required for quality assurance.

This report is also published on the same day as the cost to business report. For the cost to business report, there is also a time lag between the reference date and the availability of compliance burden data from ONS (which is not available until the beginning of quarter three of the financial year). While this time lag doesn't currently impact the timeliness, it could be a constraint moving forward.

Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

The processes for finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products.

User engagement is carried out regularly with NISRA's Agency Board and the Statistics and Advisory Committee (SAC). SCLOs are also encouraged to share the report with their departments/ organisations.

An invitation to provide feedback is included on the Survey Burden page of the NISRA website, and also in the report, with users invited to provide feedback on what they use the reports for, any tables/charts or commentary they find particularly helpful and any additional analysis they would like to see.

Contact details for the responsible statistician are included on the first page of the report.

Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.

There is a respondent burden placed upon NISRA and NICS colleagues, as well as colleagues in ALBs, who as SCLOs, complete the pro-forma. There is an additional burden on SCLOs, as well as those responsible for individual Government statistical surveys, as the focus on accuracy and reliability requires a considerable amount of contact and correspondence to verify the accuracy and reliability of the data. SCLOs act as a point of contact between the statisticians producing the report and the officials who manage surveys, relaying queries and resolutions back and forth, and representing their department, so there is burden placed upon them.

Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

The procedures and policy used to ensure sound confidentiality, security and transparent practices.

All data and related correspondence are held within SSB's secure record management system (CM), with restricted access and subject to approved record retention protocols.

For the survey contact details, respondents are asked to provide a generic contact for the survey such as the customer contact for the branch, department or body running the survey and are also advised that these will be shared publically. Prior to publication, any email addresses for those departments with security restrictions are checked to ensure that personal emails have not been supplied in error.

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