

User Engagement Strategy: Population Estimates and Projections for Northern Ireland



Introduction

The [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#) requires all producers of Official Statistics to engage effectively with users of statistics to promote trust and maximise public value. It also states that producers should investigate and document the needs of users of Official Statistics, the use made of existing statistics and the types of decision they inform. The Code requires producers of official statistics to adopt systematic statistical planning arrangements and to publish transparent guidance on their policy for meeting user needs, through engagement with users.

The Population Statistics Section within Demography and Methodology Branch (DMB), NISRA, provides accurate, timely, user friendly and easily accessible National Statistics. This document describes the commitment of the Population Statistics Section to provide a high level of service to users of population projections and estimates. Through this strategy the Population Statistics Section will seek to ensure we meet the requirements of Principle 1 (Meeting user needs) and Protocol 1 (User engagement) in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Population Statistics Section has also considered the recommendations in the Monitoring Report 7 – [Strengthening User Engagement](#) published by the UK Statistics Authority.

Our Commitment

DMB will publish timely, relevant, high quality population statistics in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Our commitment to the users of our statistics is:

- To publish our statistics in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics;
- To publish our statistics on the pre-announced time and date (as per GOV.uk);
- To publish statistics which are fit for purpose alongside supporting quality information;
- To encourage users to supply us with their views and opinions;
- To respond quickly and accurately to questions and enquiries from our users;
- To consult with users on our statistical work plan;
- To investigate and document the needs of users, the use made of our statistics and the decisions they inform;
- To take into account the needs of users in planning, producing and publishing our statistics;
- To consult with users on major developments and changes to our statistical methodologies, publications or publication processes;
- To comply with the Population Statistics Revisions Policy;
- To respond in a timely manner to any complaints from users; and
- To be transparent when we are unable to meet any of these commitments.

Our users

Our users are mainly from the following groups:

- Ministers and policy makers within Government (for example those involved in health and education);
- Statisticians in Northern Ireland and the Office for National Statistics.
- Local Government;
- Researchers and academics;
- Community and voluntary sector;
- Private sector;
- Political representatives;
- Media and commentators; and
- Members of the public.

Maintaining contact with our users

We recognise that our customers will have different communication needs:

- Some users simply want quick and easy access to the latest statistics – for some users this means access to statistical tables and/or data visualisations only while for other users a detailed statistical bulletin is required;
- For some users, their requirement is to be informed of the publication of the latest statistics and developments to them;
- Other users wish to be fully consulted on developments in our statistics either in terms of methodology, publication or use; and
- Finally some users wish to be fully involved in steering the statistical work programme and ensuring their needs are met by the programme of work.

We have set out to ensure that there are transparent and clear processes allowing for views from all users. We maintain contact with users in a number of ways:

- Users can be kept up-to-date by joining our population email distribution list (email: dmb.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk) and by subscribing to the [NINIS E-zine](#) which provides updates on statistics and interactive content added to the NINIS website;
- Users can attend our user engagement event which will be held at least biennially;
- Contact telephone numbers and the responsible statistician are provided on each statistical release;
- Media enquiries should be directed to the Departmental Press Office;
- Users can also complete the [2015/16 Customer Survey](#) which seeks feedback on their experiences of the statistical service they receive, data quality, and the format and timing of outputs;
- NISRA carries out an annual customer satisfaction survey on behalf of all branches;
- We will act on feedback from both surveys and the results of each will be available on the [NISRA website](#).

Access to statistics and related metadata – routine publications

Routinely produced statistics are available free of charge on the NISRA website. In accordance with the Code of Practice we will publish a timetable of statistical releases for

twelve months ahead and the exact date at least four weeks prior to the release date. All statistics are published at 9.30am on the scheduled weekday unless otherwise announced. Our statistics will be published in a timely manner and in line with the [DFP Pre-Release Compliance Statement](#). Users can access the published information in a number of ways:

- Users can access our statistical bulletins (PDF format) or tables in excel through the [Demography](#) pages of the NISRA website;
- Users can access information on methodologies, quality or comparisons with the UK on the NISRA website;
- Users can access statistics in csv format, interactive maps and population pyramids on the [NINIS](#) website.

Statistical requests

Where users require statistics that are not available from the regular statistical releases, enquiries can be addressed by contacting customer services:

Customer Services (Demography and Census)
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
McAuley House
2-14 Castle Street
Belfast
BT1 1SA

Tel: 028 90348160

Fax: 028 90348161

Email: census.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk

Users can expect to receive a reply within 10 working days, commencing from the date when correspondence is received. The response will either be an answer to the issue the user has raised, or a notification that the correspondence is being dealt with, but noting that the reply may take longer than the initial 10 day period.

Annual statistical work plan

The Population Statistics Section, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, will consult with users on our statistical work plan for the financial year ahead. A user engagement event will be held at least every two years to discuss with a broad range of users, the proposed statistical work plans and the needs of all users; this will ensure transparent priority setting and our obligation to serve the public good. The final work plan agreed by the Senior Statistician will then balance the needs of users with the cost and burden on producers of statistics. The work plan will also aim to co-ordinate publication arrangements with producers of statistics in other countries when releasing statistics which relate to a common theme.

Any changes to the timing of a pre-announced release (a release date that has been published on the GOV.uk) will be explained to users and the reason for the changes will be entered on the Release Calendar at the same time as the new date.

Consultation on statistical developments

We will consult on all major planned changes that affect our statistics or publications including, for example, future changes to methodology or dissemination that are likely to significantly affect the use of the statistics. This consultation may be in the form of a web based consultation, user engagement event, via email to known users, through the Demographic Statistics Advisory Group or ad hoc meetings with key users. The Population Statistics Section will exploit different methods of consultation depending on the importance of the issue and the likely impact on users. The main user groups with whom we currently engage are listed in Annex 1.

Following consultations, we will publish any actions or outcomes together with explanations for them and the rationale for the decisions on the way forward. This information may be published on the website, within the relevant statistical bulletin or as part of supporting documentation.

Corrections and Revisions

In published statistics, corrections to errors will be made at the earliest opportunity. Errors which are likely to impact on the uses of statistics will be corrected within the statistical bulletin and/or statistical table. A note will be added to the report/table metadata to highlight that an error was identified and subsequently corrected. We will state the reason for the error and the impact of the correction. All users who were notified about the release of the statistics will be informed about the correction. Only the corrected data will be available on the website.

The Population Statistics Revision Policy for outputs that are subject to scheduled revisions can be accessed via the [NISRA website](#).

Complaints

If for any reason the user feels that the service they receive from the Population Statistics Section has fallen below the standards they expect then please contact us so we can investigate. Complaints should be addressed initially to the Principal Statistician responsible (see Annex 2). The NISRA procedure for handling complaints is available on the [NISRA website](#). Where the nature of the complaint relates to information provided under the Freedom of Information Act, NISRA will review and respond in line with the internal review process set out under the Freedom of Information Act.

Consultation on User Engagement Strategy

We welcome feedback from users on our User Engagement Strategy. Please send any comments to dmb.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk

This User Engagement Strategy will be discussed at the user engagement event planned for early 2016; following this the User Engagement Strategy will be amended as required and an updated version will be published on the NISRA website.

NISRA

December 2015

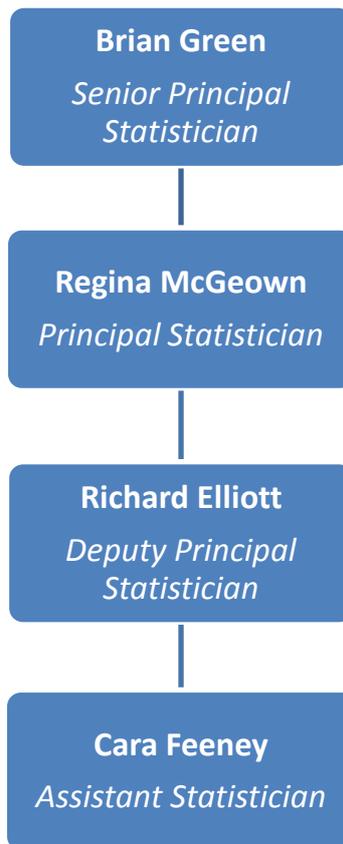
Annex 1 Existing User Engagement Approaches

The main user groups with whom we currently engage are:

- Demographic Statistics Advisory Group – formerly Census Advisory Group, made up from interested users and specialist advisors drawn from central and local government, health authorities and the commercial and academic sectors as well as representatives from specialist agencies, charities and voluntary organisations : <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/census/2011/background/census-advisory-group.html>
- Neighbourhood Statistics User Group – Local Government statisticians, Assembly representatives.
- Subject matter user groups – such as meetings with Department of Education and Department of Health (DHSSPS) colleagues and those interested in Housing Statistics.
- Four countries working groups – meetings with Office for National Statistics, National Records Scotland and Welsh Government.
- User distribution list – email communication to known users.
- The Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC) – a statutory public body whose role is to advise Northern Ireland departments on all matters relating to the collection and disclosure of statistical information: <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/aboutus/default.asp.htm>
- The Northern Ireland Statistics Coordinating Group (SCG) – considers and makes recommendations regarding the need for, and provision of, statistics for economic and social policy in Northern Ireland.

Note SAC and SCG are both high level groups and are not attended directly by the Population Statistics team, but they have access to them via senior management within NISRA.

Annex 2 Population Statistics Section Organisation Chart



Contact Details:

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