



Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency

Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann
um Staitisticí agus Taighde

Lead Statistician

Garbhan McKeivitt

Survey Control Unit

Statistical Support Branch NISRA

Colby House, Stranmillis Court

Belfast, BT9 5RR



028 9038 8459



Garbhan.McKeivitt@nisra.gov.uk

Published: 30th July 2020

Frequency: Annual

Coverage: Northern Ireland

Theme: Government

Burden to Households & Individuals of Completing Statistical Surveys issued by Northern Ireland Departments, 2018/19

Statistics Bulletin

Summary of Key Findings

- There were 154 surveys or parts of surveys¹, issued to households and individuals by Northern Ireland Government Departments and their Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) in 2018/19 and 300,500 responses were received.
- The estimated total burden to NI households and individuals in 2018/19 was 59,714 hours, or 2,488 days. The Department of Education (DE) was the department responsible for the highest proportion of this burden (26%) and face-to-face methods² accounted for the highest proportion of burden by data collection method (36%).
- In 2018/19, the average time taken to complete a survey, or part of a survey, was 11.9 minutes³. However, there was a wide variance in completion times across surveys, with the shortest survey taking on average less than half a minute to complete, and the longest survey taking on average just over five and a quarter hours per respondent⁴.
- There were two surveys in 2018/19 with an estimated compliance burden of over 6,000 hours⁵. These surveys were responsible for 21% of the total compliance burden. They were the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* and the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) – Pupils*, both conducted by DE.

¹ When several NI Government Departments share a single survey vehicle, such as the NI Omnibus Survey, or the Continuous Household Survey, each module (or part of the survey) is counted separately. This means that these surveys, and the respondents to these surveys, will be counted more than once. The compliance burden however is based on the module and is estimated by apportioning the total compliance burden for the survey.

² Surveys have been categorised as face-to-face, paper, telephone, online/email/TDE or mixed methods. Telephone Data Entry (TDE) is a data collection method where data are entered using the telephone keypad

³ The average time taken to complete a survey has been calculated as the total compliance burden divided by the total number of responses.

⁴ The longest survey (*National Diet and Nutrition Survey*) includes participation in a face-to-face interview and completion of a paper diary.

⁵ Both these surveys included a 1½-2 hour test as well as a questionnaire. The estimation of the respondent burden includes the time taken to complete both components.

Content:

1. Background
2. Definitions
3. Compliance Burden to Households & Individuals
4. Official Statistics & Other Surveys
5. Statutory & Voluntary Surveys
6. Data Collection Methods
7. Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes
8. Between Year Comparisons
9. Measures to Reduce Compliance Burden
10. Uses of Surveys

Appendices

- A. Methodology, Quality, Use of Publication
- B. Uses of Continuous Household Survey
- C. List of PfG Outcomes
- D. Departmental Abbreviations
- E. Further Information

1. Background

This 2018/19 report is the fourth in an annual series detailing the burden to households and individuals of completing Government Statistical Surveys in Northern Ireland; the first report covered both 2015/16 and 2014/15. This report complements the more established annual report on the Cost to Business of complying with NI Government Statistical surveys⁶.

The [Code of Practice for Statistics](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/)⁷ has a statutory basis⁸ and 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:

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.

It is on this basis that NISRA produces an annual report detailing the burden placed on households and individuals as a result of completing statistical surveys issued by Northern Ireland Departments.

This report includes information on the number of surveys, or parts of surveys, issued by NI Departments (including their Arm's Length Bodies) in the financial year ending 31st March 2019, and the time spent by households and individuals in complying with these regular and ad-hoc Government surveys. Department's names have been abbreviated as shown in Appendix C.

The application of the survey control methodology was reviewed prior to the 2016/17 data collection and improved guidance 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 provided in Appendix A3.

⁶ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/ni-statistical-surveys-assessment-burden>

⁷ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>

⁸ Statistics and Registration Service Act (2007) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/18/contents>

Useful Links:

- [Previous publications in this series](#)
- [Cost to Business publications](#)
- [Code of Practice for Statistics](#)
- [NISRA publications and datasets](#)
- [Downloadable data](#)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), no longer produces a report or comparable data for England and Wales, although some Government Departments publish information for their own department.

2. Definitions

In this report a survey refers to a single survey, or part of a survey, carried out by or on behalf of a NI Government Department. When a survey is shared by a number of Departments, each part of the survey will be treated as a separate survey. This means a single survey vehicle could be counted multiple times.

The number of responses is based on the achieved sample for the survey, or part of the survey. When a survey is shared by more than one Department, each single respondent will be counted as a response to each part of the survey. Thus when responses are aggregated across Departments, some respondents will be counted multiple times.

The compliance burden due to a survey is defined as the **time spent** by the household or individual in responding to the survey, or part of the survey⁹.

In this report, surveys that contribute to National or official statistics are referred to as 'official statistics' surveys, and surveys that do not contribute to National or official statistics are referred to as 'other statistics' surveys.

The average time to complete a survey has been calculated as the total compliance burden for the group of surveys (or parts of surveys) divided by the total number of responses for the group of surveys (or parts of surveys).

⁹ While the survey and respondents to the survey, will be counted more than once, the compliance burden is calculated based on the module and is estimated by apportioning the total compliance burden for the survey.

3. Compliance Burden to Households and Individuals

In 2018/19, there were 154 surveys, or parts of surveys¹⁰, issued to households and individuals by Northern Ireland Government Departments. The total estimated compliance burden was 59,714 hours or 2,488 days.

In this report, a survey refers to a single survey or part of a survey carried out by or on behalf of a NI Government Department. A single survey vehicle shared by a number of different Government Departments will be counted multiple times.

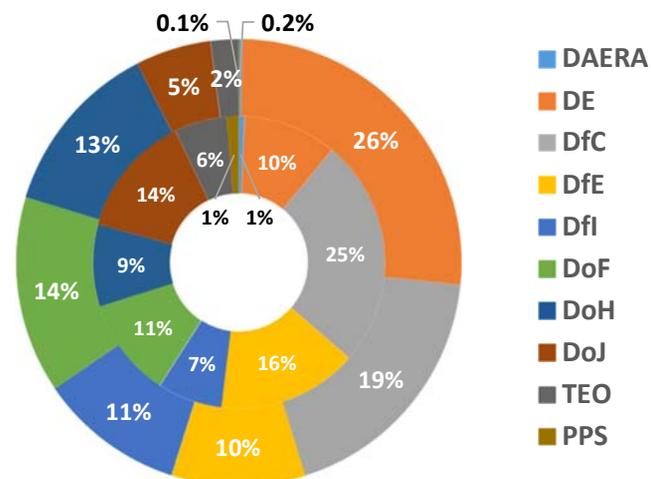
A quarter of all surveys of households and individuals were conducted by DfC, followed by DfE (16%) and DoJ (14%). The remaining departments were each responsible for around one tenth or fewer of the surveys to households and individuals. PPS and DAERA carried out the fewest surveys, just 2 and 1 respectively.

Over a quarter (26%) of the compliance burden can be attributed to DE surveys, while just under one fifth can be attributed to DfC surveys (19%). DoF surveys contributed 14%; DoH contributed 13%; DfI contributed 11%; and DfE surveys contributed 10% of the total compliance burden.

Table 1: Number and Burden (Hours) for Surveys by Department¹¹

Department	Number of Surveys ¹²	Percentage of Surveys	Compliance Burden (hours)	Percentage of Burden
DAERA	1	0.6%	147	0.2%
DE	16	10.4%	15,738	26.4%
DfC	39	25.3%	11,102	18.6%
DfE	24	15.6%	5,792	9.7%
DfI	11	7.1%	6,310	10.6%
DoF	17	11.0%	8,526	14.3%
DoH	14	9.1%	7,606	12.7%
DoJ	21	13.6%	3,278	5.5%
TEO	9	5.8%	1,172	2.0%
PPS	2	1.3%	44	0.1%
Total	154	100.0%	59,714	100.0%

Figure 1: Percentage of Surveys (Inner) & Percentage of Burden (Outer) by Department



¹⁰ When several NI Government Departments share a single survey vehicle, such as the NI Omnibus Survey or the Continuous Household Survey, each module (or part of the survey) is counted separately. This means that these surveys, and respondents to these surveys, will be counted more than once. The compliance burden however, is based on the module and is estimated by apportioning the total compliance burden for the survey.

¹¹ Information on the surveys carried out by each Department is available in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

¹² This includes 9 modules in a single run of the NI Omnibus; 8 in the Continuous Household Survey; 7 in the NI Life & Times survey; 5 in the Young Life & Times and 2 in the Kids' Life & Times. Each of these modules is counted separately.

While DE accounted for only 10% of the surveys conducted, these surveys contributed 26% of the total compliance burden. In contrast, DoJ accounted for 14% of the surveys and contributed 5% of the total compliance burden.

A relatively small number of surveys were responsible for a disproportionate amount of the overall compliance burden to households and individuals. Figure 2 groups surveys by their compliance burden. The blue bars show the percentage of surveys in each category and the orange bars show the percentage of the overall compliance burden due to those surveys.

Figure 2 illustrates that although only 18% of surveys had a total survey burden of over 500 hours, these surveys were responsible for 82% of the total burden. In contrast, 43% of surveys had a burden of 49 hours or fewer, and contributed only 2% of the total burden to households and individuals.

In 2018/19, two surveys had an estimated compliance burden of over 6,000 hours. Both these surveys included a 1¼-2 hour test as well as a 30-45 minute questionnaire, and the estimated burden took account of both components. These DE surveys were: *Programme for International Assessment (PISA)* and *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) – Pupils*. Together these surveys were responsible for 21% of the total compliance burden.

Figure 2: Number of Surveys by Compliance Burden, and Contribution to Overall Compliance Burden

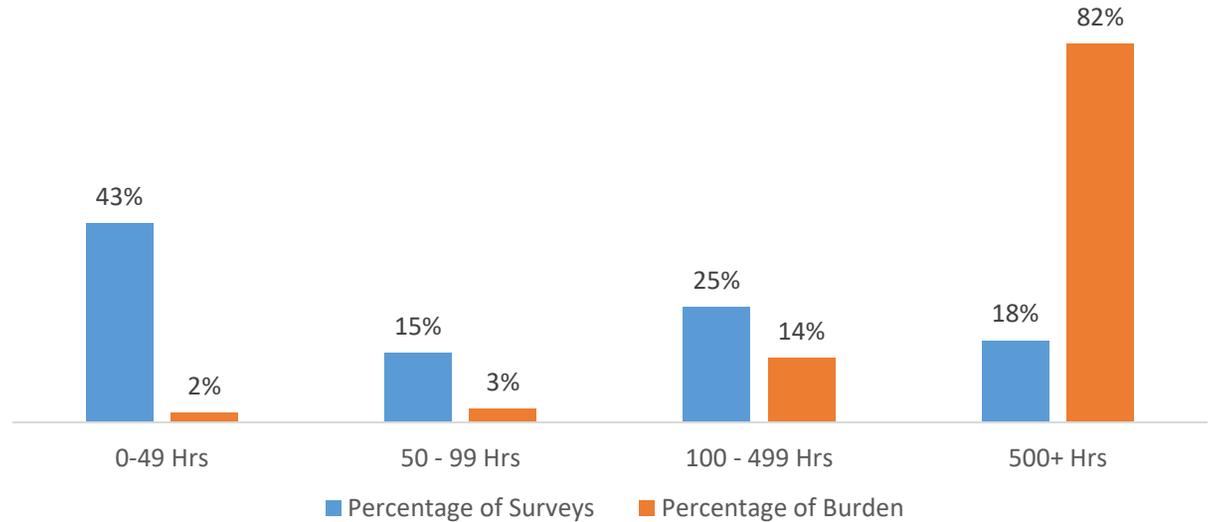
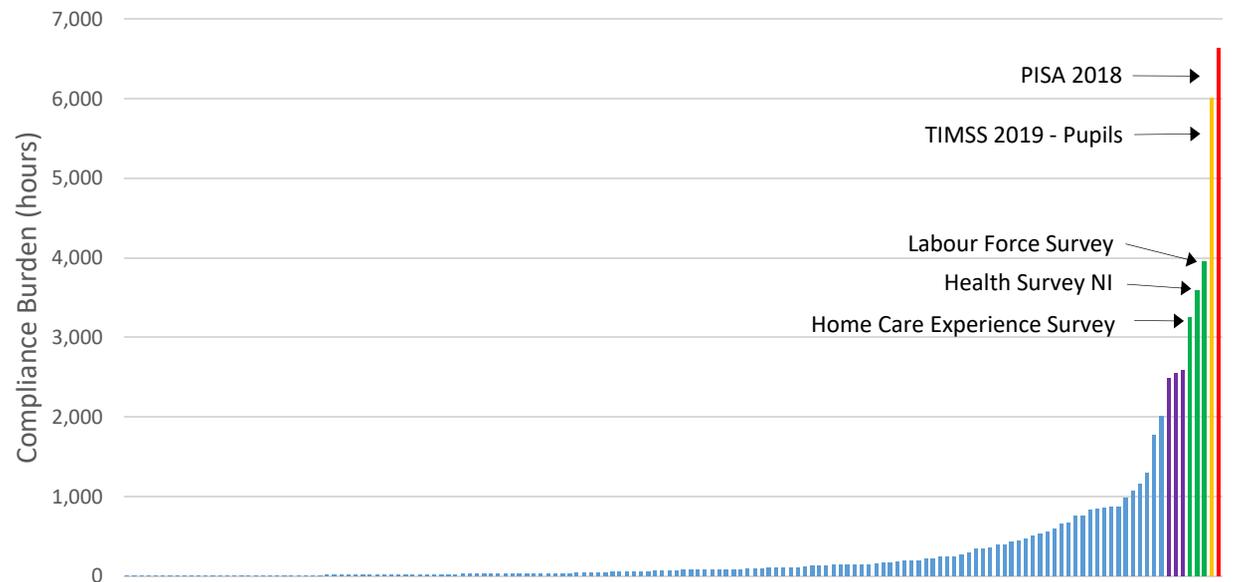


Figure 3: Distribution of Surveys by Total Compliance Burden



A further three surveys had an estimated compliance burden of between 3,000 and 4,000 hours. Together, these three surveys accounted for 18% of the total compliance burden. These surveys were: *Labour Force Survey* (DoF); *Health Survey Northern Ireland* (DoH) and *Home Care Experience Survey* (DoH).

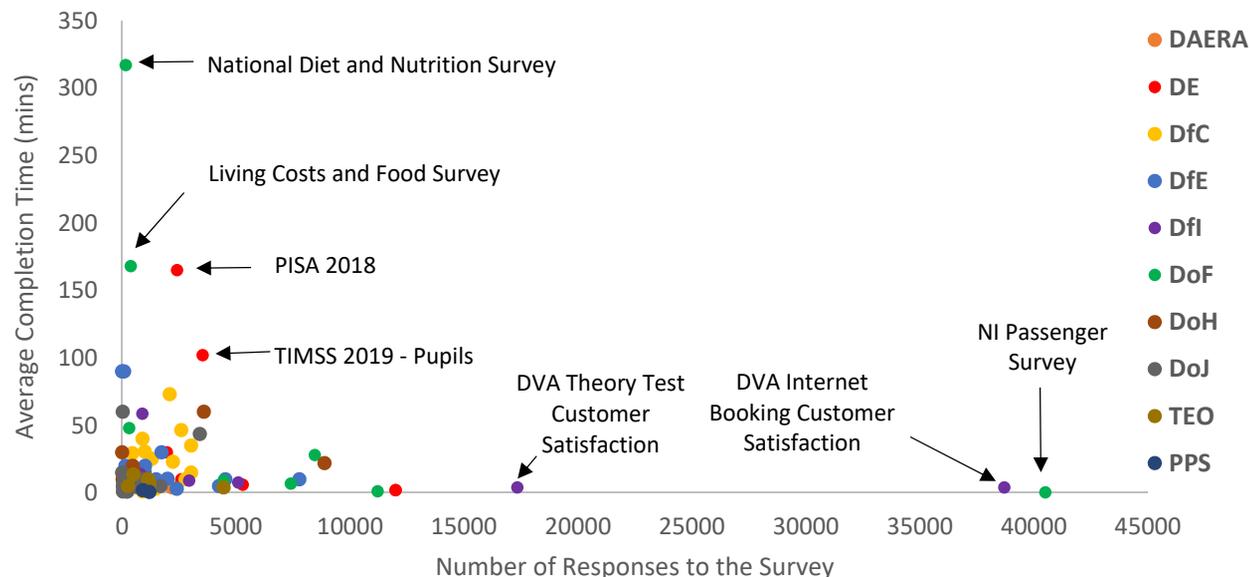
In addition, there were three surveys which had an estimated compliance burden of around 2,500 hours. These were: *DVA Booking Service – Internet Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey* (DfI); *Family Resources Survey Northern Ireland* (DfC); and *Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey* (DoJ). These surveys accounted for a further 13% of the total compliance burden.

Of the eight surveys with a compliance burden of around 2,500 hours or greater, five contributed to official statistics. These five surveys accounted for 62% of the total burden due to official statistics, while the other three surveys contributed 45% of the burden due to other statistics¹³.

The total burden due to each survey will depend on both the number of households or individuals responding and the time taken to complete the survey, or part of the survey. Figure 4 shows the relationship between these two factors.

There were three outliers in terms of a high

Figure 4: Average Completion Time¹⁴ by Number of Responses to the Survey¹³



number of responses with low average completion times. The *NI Passenger Survey* (DoF) had 40,512 responses and an average completion time of 24 seconds. The *DVA Booking Service – Internet Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey* (DfI) had 38,711 responses and took on average 4 minutes to complete, as did the *DVA Theory Test Customer Satisfaction Survey* (DfI) which received 17,339 responses.

In contrast, the *National Diet and Nutrition Survey* (DoF) obtained 161 responses but had an average completion time of 317 minutes. Likewise, the *Living Costs & Food Survey* (DoF) obtained 384 responses and had an average completion time of 165 minutes. Both these surveys used face-to-face interviews but also required participants to keep a paper diary. The estimated completion time took account of both components. In addition, the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018* (DE) survey ran this year, which obtained 2,413 responses¹⁵ and took on average 165 minutes to complete. The *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) – Pupils* (DE) survey took on average 102 minutes to complete and had 3,536 responses.

¹³ Further information on the compliance burden for individual surveys can be found in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

¹⁴ The average completion time has been calculated as the total compliance burden divided by the number of responses.

¹⁵ The number of responses to this survey may differ slightly from the number of responses used in the International dataset.

Table 2 shows the average completion time ‘per response’ by NI Government Department, alongside the total number of responses and total compliance burden.

Overall the average completion time ‘per response’ was 11.9 minutes, however there was a wide variance in completion times across surveys, with the shortest survey taking on average less than half a minute to complete (the *Northern Ireland Passenger Survey*) and the longest survey (the *National Diet and Nutrition Survey*) taking on average just over five and a quarter hours (317 minutes) per respondent¹⁶.

The average completion time ‘per response’ was highest for DoH at just under 26 minutes, followed by DfC at just under 24 minutes, and DE at just under 22 minutes.

For DoH, the high average completion time ‘per response’ is a result of the *Health Survey NI* and the *Home Care Experience Survey* which both had a high number of responses (3,592 and 8,887 respectively) and high completion times (60 minutes and 22 minutes respectively).

DfC carried out three large surveys which had high completion times; these were the *Family Resources Survey* (70 minutes; 2,099 responses),

Table 2: Average Completion Time¹⁷, Number of Responses¹⁸ and Burden by Department

Department	Number of Surveys	Average Time to Complete Surveys (mins)	Number of Responses	Compliance Burden (hours)
DAERA	1	4.0	2,198	147
DE	16	21.7	43,503	15,738
DfC	39	23.8	27,965	11,102
DfE	24	10.3	33,722	5,792
DfI	11	5.4	70,063	6,310
DoF	17	6.5	79,238	8,526
DoH	14	25.9	17,613	7,606
DoJ	21	16.4	12,005	3,278
TEO	9	5.8	12,049	1,172
PPS	2	1.2	2,118	44
Total	154	11.9	300,474	59,714

Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey (45 minutes; 2,600 responses) and *Customer satisfaction survey of Department for Communities (DfC) WI Group Customers* (35 minutes; 3,034 responses).

The high average completion time ‘per response’ for DE is due to the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018* and *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) – Pupils* surveys.

TEO conducted 9 surveys, with an average completion time of just under 6 minutes. The *Social Investment Fund* module in the NI Omnibus took the shortest time to complete (2 minutes), and the *Public Opinion Survey on Equality in Northern Ireland* took the longest time (13 minutes).

PPS commissioned a module in the *NI Omnibus* survey and in the *NI Life and Times Survey* resulting in an average completion time of just over 1 minute. DAERA commissioned one module in the *Continuous Household Survey*, with an average completion time of 4 minutes.

DoF conducted both the shortest (*Northern Ireland Passenger Survey*; 0.4 minutes) and the longest

¹⁶ Further information on the compliance burden for individual surveys can be found in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

¹⁷ The average completion time has been calculated as the total compliance burden divided by the number of responses.

¹⁸ When several NI Government Departments share a single survey vehicle, such as the NI Omnibus Survey, or the Continuous Household Survey, each module (or part of the survey) is counted separately. This means that these surveys, and the respondents to these surveys, will be counted more than once. The compliance burden however is based on the module and is estimated by apportioning the total compliance burden for the survey.

survey (*National Diet and Nutrition Survey*; 317 minutes). The relatively low average completion time ‘per response’ for DoF is due to the size of the *Northern Ireland Passenger Survey*, which accounts just over half (51%) of all the responses received by DoF.

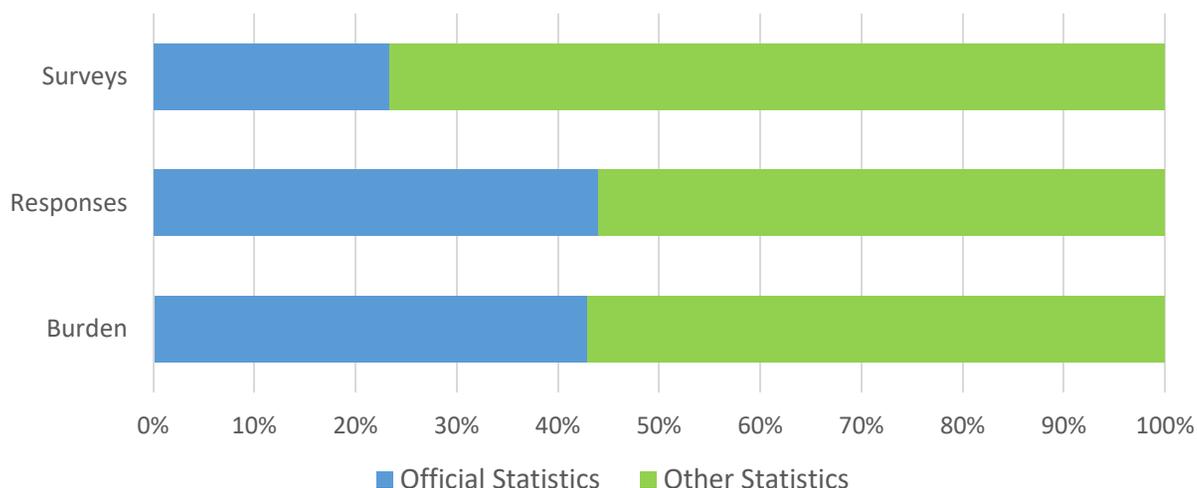
4. Official Statistics & Other Surveys

In 2018/19, just under a quarter (23%) of surveys of households and individuals contributed towards official statistics (see Figure 5). Some of the surveys which did not contribute to official statistics contributed to policy monitoring, evaluation of a scheme or service, service improvement and customer satisfaction. Surveys which contributed to official statistics made up 44% of all survey responses and 43% of the total compliance burden.

DoF conducted the highest number of surveys which contributed to official statistics (13). These accounted for 58% of the responses and 33% of the compliance burden due to official statistics surveys (Table 3). DoH conducted two surveys which accounted for 27% of the compliance burden due to official statistic surveys. In addition, DfC surveys accounted for 12% of the burden due to official statistics surveys, while four DoJ surveys contributed 10% of the burden.

DfC conducted the highest number (37) of

Figure 5: Percentage of Surveys, Responses and Compliance Burden by whether Surveys Contribute to Official Statistics



surveys which did not contribute to official statistics. These accounted for 24% of the compliance burden due to other statistics. Despite conducting fewer surveys (15), DE contributed 46% of the total compliance burden due to other statistics. DfI carried out 8 surveys which contributed 14% of the burden due to other statistics, but two fifths of the responses (39%).

Of the 8,526 hours of total compliance burden attributable to DoF, 98% of this was due to official statistics surveys. Similarly 90% of the 7,606 hours from DoH, 86% of the 1,172 hours from TEO and 82% of the 3,278 hours from DoJ stemmed from surveys which contributed to official statistics. The one survey conducted by DAERA and the two surveys conducted by PPS contributed to official statistics; 147 hours and 44 hours respectively¹⁹.

In contrast, of the 15,738 hours of compliance burden due to DE, 99.8% of this compliance burden was as a result of surveys which do not contribute to official statistics. 78% of the 6,310 hours due to DfI and 73% of the 11,102 hours due to DfC resulted from surveys which did not contribute to official statistics. The burden was more evenly split between official statistics and other statistics in DfE, where 35% of the compliance burden was as a result of official statistics surveys.

¹⁹ Further information on the compliance burden for individual surveys can be found in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

Table 3 also shows that within each department, average completion times ‘per response’²⁰ tend to be higher for surveys which contribute to official statistics.

Table 3: Compliance Burden by Official Statistics and Other Statistics, by NI Department²⁰

Department	Official Statistics							Other Statistics						
	Number of Surveys		Number of Responses		Compliance Burden		Average Time to Complete Survey	Number of Surveys		Number of Responses		Compliance Burden		Average Time to Complete Survey
	N	%	N	%	Hours	%	Minutes	N	%	N	%	Hours	%	Minutes
DAERA	1	2.8%	2,198	1.7%	147	0.6%	4.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DE	1	2.8%	729	0.6%	36	0.1%	3.0	15	12.7%	42,774	25.4%	15,701	46.1%	22.0
DfC	2	5.6%	4,893	3.7%	3,019	11.8%	37.0	37	31.4%	23,072	13.7%	8,082	23.7%	21.0
DfE	2	5.6%	12,324	9.3%	2,054	8.0%	10.0	22	18.6%	21,398	12.7%	3,738	11.0%	10.5
DfI	3	8.3%	4,437	3.4%	1,411	5.5%	19.1	8	6.8%	65,626	39.0%	4,900	14.4%	4.5
DoF	13	36.1%	76,878	58.1%	8,382	32.7%	6.5	4	3.4%	2,360	1.4%	144	0.4%	3.7
DoH	2	5.6%	12,479	9.4%	6,851	26.7%	32.9	12	10.2%	5,134	3.1%	755	2.2%	8.8
DoJ	4	11.1%	5,882	4.4%	2,674	10.4%	27.3	17	14.4%	6,123	3.6%	604	1.8%	5.9
TEO	6	16.7%	10,367	7.8%	1,007	3.9%	5.8	3	2.5%	1,682	1.0%	165	0.5%	5.9
PPS	2	5.6%	2,118	1.6%	44	0.2%	1.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	36	100.0%	132,305	100.0%	25,625	100.0%	11.6	118	100.0%	168,169	100.0%	34,089	100.0%	12.2

5. Statutory & Voluntary Surveys

All statistical surveys of households and individuals carried out by NI Government Departments in 2018/19 were voluntary surveys²¹.

The use of voluntary surveys for official statistics reflects the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) which states that:

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

²⁰ The average completion time has been calculated as the total compliance burden divided by the number of responses.

²¹ Although completion of the survey was voluntary, there may have been a regulatory requirement for the Department to carry out such a survey.

6. Data Collection Methods

Face-to-face surveys (including face-to-face plus a diary) remained the most popular method of data collection, comprising 45% of surveys, 42% of all responses and 36% of the total compliance burden. This is consistent with 2017/18²².

Electronic data collection (online/email/TDE²³) was the next most popular approach, making up a fifth (20%) of all surveys, 27% of responses and 25% of compliance burden. This is an increase from 15% of surveys in 2017/18²².

Mixed methods accounted for 15% of surveys, 14% of compliance burden and 13% of responses. These surveys primarily used a paper questionnaire with online/email data collection (10 surveys), followed by face-to-face and telephone interviews (4 surveys). The remaining surveys used online and face-to-face data collection (3 surveys); telephone and paper questionnaires (3 surveys); online and telephone (2 surveys) and paper and face-to-face interviews (1 survey)²⁴.

Paper based surveys made up 14% of surveys, 14% of responses and 19% of the burden. Finally, telephone based surveys were the least popular

Figure 6: Percentage of Total Surveys, Responses and Compliance Burden by Method of Collection^{23,24}

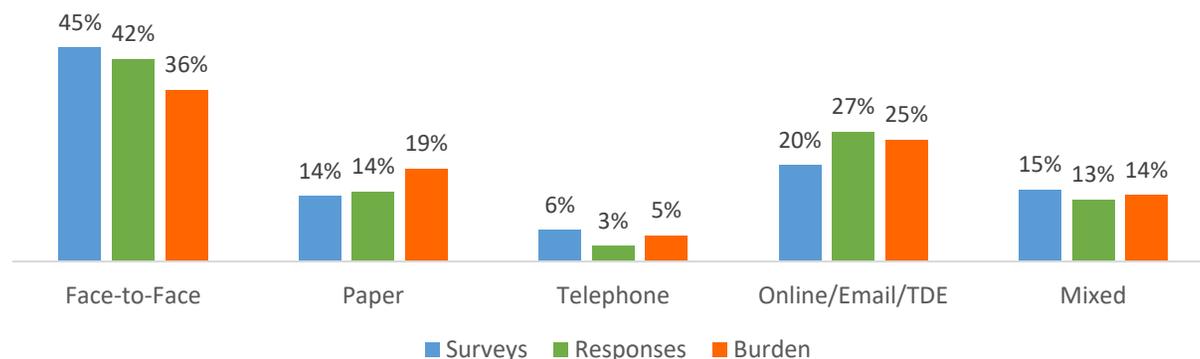


Table 4: Issued Sample Size, Achieved Sample Size, Response Rate and Survey Average Completion Time by Data Collection Method

Method	Number of Surveys	Issued sample size (average)	Achieved sample size (average)	Response Rate (average) ²⁵	Survey Average Completion Time (average) [mins] ²⁶
Face-to-Face	69	2,896	1,844	70%	22.1
Paper	21	3,868	2,073	59%	12.7
Telephone	10	2,669	950	54%	24.7
Online/Email/TDE ²³	31	35,442	2,627	47%	14.6
Mixed	23	6,893	1,685	39%	8.6
Total	154	10,162	1,951	58%	17.4

²² In 2017/18, the percentages were Face-to-face (46% surveys, 38% responses, 43% burden); Paper (11% surveys, 13% responses, 8% burden); Telephone (9% surveys, 3% responses, 4% burden); Online/Email/TDE (15% surveys, 27% responses, 14% burden); Mixed (19% surveys, 19% responses, 30% burden). These percentages differ from published figures as TDE is now grouped with other electronic methods (Online/Email) rather than Telephone interviews, and the figures have also been adjusted for the DoJ correction (see footnote 33 to Table 6, page 14).

²³ Telephone Data Entry (TDE) is a data collection method where the requested data are entered using the telephone keypad.

²⁴ Further information on individual surveys can be found in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

²⁵ Response rate (average) has been calculated as the average of the response rates for all surveys using that method, meaning each survey has equal weight.

²⁶ Survey average completion time (average) has been calculated as the average of the 'average completion time' for all surveys using that method, meaning each survey has equal weight.

approach, making up 6% of surveys, 3% of responses and 5% of the compliance burden.

Electronic (online/email/TDE) surveys tended to be used for the largest surveys. This was followed by mixed methods, paper, face-to-face and finally, telephone surveys (see Table 4).

Face-to-face surveys had the highest average response rate (70%) which was 11 percentage points higher than the next most effective data collection method (paper questionnaires).

Telephone surveys tended to be the longest, on average, with an average survey completion time of 24.7 minutes; followed by face-to-face surveys with an average completion time of 22.1 minutes.

Mixed-method surveys had the lowest average survey completion time at just 8.6 minutes, followed by paper based surveys with an average survey completion time of 12.7 minutes and online/email/TDE with an average survey completion time of 14.6 minutes.

Table 5 below shows how different NI Government Departments used the various data collection methods to conduct surveys.

DfC conducts the most surveys of households and individuals overall and almost three-fifths (59%) were conducted using face-to-face surveys. The remaining surveys were relatively evenly split between online/email/TDE (15%), paper (13%) and telephone (13%).

Table 5: Collection Methods for Surveys by Department: Number of Surveys and Compliance Burden (hours)

Dept	Face-to-Face		Paper		Telephone		Online/Email/TDE		Mixed/Multiple	
	N	Burden	N	Burden	N	Burden	N	Burden	N	Burden
DAERA	1	147	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DE	1	36	4	7,795	-	-	6	6,724	5	1,183
DfC	23	6,116	5	303	5	2,022	6	2,660	-	-
DfE	9	1,314	1	4	2	878	9	1,400	3	2,196
DfI	5	2,154	1	51	1	187	3	3,837	1	82
DoF	13	4,470	1	5	1	32	-	-	2	4,020
DoH	3	3,688	1	3,259	-	-	6	419	4	240
DoJ	7	2,837	7	139	-	-	1	141	6	161
TEO	5	653	1	22	1	113	-	-	2	384
PPS	2	44	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	69	21,460	21	11,576	10	3,231	31	15,181	23	8,266

DoF used face-to-face methods for over three quarters (76%) of its surveys. TEO carried out nine surveys of which five (56%) employed face-to-face surveys. Face-to-face interviews were also employed in both surveys run by PPS, and the sole survey conducted by DAERA.

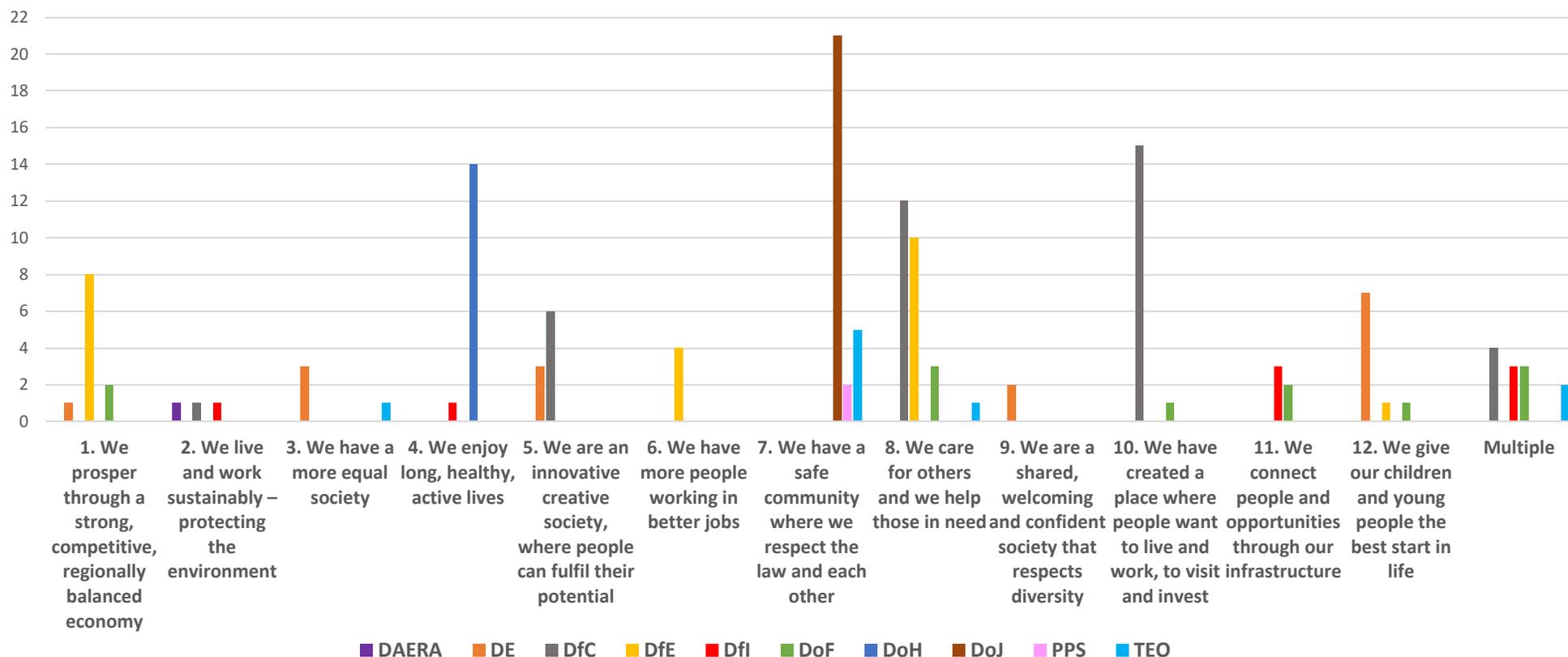
Online/email/TDE surveys were the second most widely used method of data collection with 38% of DE surveys, 38% of DfE surveys and 43% of DoH surveys employing online/email/TDE methods.

DfE carried out nearly one third of the online/email/TDE surveys (9), followed by DE, DfC and DoH which each carried out 6 online/email/TDE surveys. DfC carried out 5 of the 10 telephone surveys while DoJ carried out 7 of the 21 paper surveys, followed by DfC (5) and DE (4).

7. Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes

In 2016, the Northern Ireland Executive released a draft Programme for Government (PfG) which laid out the ambition the Executive had for society in Northern Ireland. The draft PfG was consulted on and refined during 2016/17, and forms the basis for the [2018/19 Outcomes Delivery Plan](#)²⁷, published in June 2018. This comprises 12 strategic outcomes outlined by the Executive to represent the society we wish to have (see Appendix C). These 12 outcomes are supported by 49 indicators, which are accompanied by measures (derived from statistics) which show how the Northern Ireland Government and wider public sector are performing in relation to the outcomes, providing a basis to monitor progress and take appropriate action.

Figure 7: Programme for Government Outcomes for Surveys carried out by each NI Government Department²⁸



²⁷ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-government>

²⁸ Information on individual surveys is available in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

In 2018/19, for the first time, data suppliers were asked to identify to which PfG outcome each survey carried out by their department or ALB contributed. Surveys which only contribute to UK statistics are excluded from the analysis shown in Figure 7, as are a small number of surveys where a linked PfG outcome could not be identified²⁹. Figure 7 shows that surveys of NI households and individuals, carried out in 2018/19, contributed to all 12 of the PfG outcomes, with 12 surveys recorded as contributing to more than one outcome³⁰.

For some departments, all surveys carried out by the department contributed to one specific outcome. For example, DoH conducted 14 surveys, all of which contributed to *Outcome 4: We enjoy long, healthy, active lives*. Similarly all surveys conducted by DoJ (21) and PPS (2) contributed to *Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other*. Furthermore, over half of the surveys conducted by TEO contributed to this outcome.

There were 28 surveys which contributed to *Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other* (carried out by DoJ, PPS & TEO) and 26 surveys which contributed to *Outcome 8: We care for others and we help those in need* (carried out by DfC, DfE, DoF & TEO). 16 surveys contributed to *Outcome 10: We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest* (15 carried out by DfC, and one by DoF), while 15 surveys contributed to *Outcome 4: We enjoy long, healthy, active lives* (14 carried out by DoH, and one by DfI)

Of the 10 surveys which did not contribute to any PfG outcome, four were UK surveys. These were the *International Passenger Survey* (DoF), *Living Costs and Food Survey* (DoF), *National Diet and Nutrition Survey* (DoF) and *Survey on Living Conditions* (DoF). The remaining surveys were customer satisfaction surveys (DfI & DfE) and public awareness surveys (DfC & DoF).

8. Between Year Comparisons

Due to the biennial, triennial or quinquennial nature of several surveys³¹, as well as the large number of ad-hoc and programme-specific surveys, the number of surveys and resultant compliance burden fluctuates from one year to the next. Additionally, NISRA statisticians are continually working towards improving the efficiency of the statistical process and thus minimising the burden on survey respondents, in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

There is a discontinuity in the series between 2015/16 and 2016/17, indicated by the black line in Table 6. Prior to the 2016/17 data collection exercise, a review was conducted of the guidance provided to data suppliers to provide greater clarity around the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of surveys. As a result of this review, a number of additional surveys have been included in departmental returns from 2016/17, specifically surveys carried out by Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) and some surveys which were omitted previously due to being considered part of the operational management of a public service. Examples are participant evaluation surveys, customer surveys and surveys which have a secondary operational purpose³².

²⁹ Information on individual surveys is available in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

³⁰ Surveys carried out by DfC, DfI, DoF and TEO contributed to more than one PfG outcome. Information on these individual surveys is available in the downloadable data.

³¹ There were five biennial, two triennial, two quadrennial surveys and one quinquennial survey, or parts of surveys, carried out in 2018/19.

³² Further details are provided in Appendix A3.

Table 6: Changes between 2014/15 and 2018/19

Dept	Number of Surveys					Number of Responses					Compliance Burden (Hrs)				
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
DAERA	2	1	1	1	1	2,549	2,495	2,532	2,204	2,198	153	125	295	184	147
DE	6	6	24	14	16	7,562	19,023	31,477	44,055	43,503	933	4,881	8,816	2,738	15,738
DfC	29	26	40	45	39	13,865	18,365	33,984	20,048	27,965	4,785	4,545	10,707	7,194	11,102
DfE	9	9	16	12	24	14,077	6,519	13,112	9,110	33,722	3,156	1,331	2,021	1,512	5,792
Dfi	15	12	13	11	11	70,513	16,096	81,540	70,070	70,063	5,665	2,097	7,944	6,035	6,310
DoF	12	8	18	16	17	66,859	64,675	74,603	72,802	79,238	7,074	6,549	8,494	10,227	8,526
DoH	4	4	3	9	14	15,963	5,343	11,262	14,620	17,613	7,470	3,916	5,939	5,336	7,606
DoJ ³³	16	27	31	15	21	18,645	14,018	9,354	9,629	12,005	3,693	3,473	2,400	2,576	3,278
TEO	8	8	10	10	9	12,116	10,067	18,801	13,661	12,049	1,374	1,902	1,686	1,677	1,172
PPS	1	-	2	1	2	1,114	-	1,863	911	2,118	106	-	346	30	44
Total³³	102	101	158	134	154	223,263	156,601	278,528	257,110	300,474	34,409	28,819	48,647	37,509	59,714

DAERA

DAERA ran one survey in 2018/19, a module within the *Continuous Household Survey*, which was also run in the previous four years. Despite a similar number of responses to last year, this module contributed 37 fewer hours of compliance burden due to a reduced completion time, taking one minute less to complete per response in 2018/19 than in 2017/18.

DE

The number of surveys carried out by DE increased from 14 in 2017/18, to 16 in 2018/19. Despite there being a similar number of responses in both years, the estimated compliance burden increased by 13,000 hours from 2,738 hours to 15,738 hours. This follows a decrease from 8,816 hours in 2016/17. The primary reason for the large year-to-year variation in compliance burden is the inclusion of surveys run on a multiennial basis which have large sample sizes and high completion times.

³³ There was an error in the number of responses and compliance burden reported for DoJ in 2017/18, which has been corrected in Table 6. The number of responses to the PSNI *Victim Satisfaction Survey* was incorrectly reported as 8,000 instead of 2,269, inflating the compliance burden for this survey and also for DoJ. This survey was recorded as contributing 1,333 hours of compliance burden, when it actually contributed 378 hours. Although, historic compliance burden estimates are not normally revised (due to the impracticality of incorporating all subsequent improvements) the 2017/18 figures for DoJ have been amended due to the scale of the error and the impact on the overall time series for DoJ. The overall totals for 2017/18 have also been adjusted.

In 2018/19, the triennial *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018* survey and the two quadrennial *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)* surveys accounted for 87% (13,630 hours) of the burden due to surveys carried out by DE. Both these survey exercises included a 1½-2 hour pupil test as well as a 30-45 minute pupil questionnaire³⁴, and the estimated burden took account of both components. The accompanying *TIMSS – Parents* survey consisted of a 30 minute questionnaire. Due to the coverage of these surveys they have a large number of responses, over 2,400 for the *PISA* survey, around 3,500 for the *TIMSS – Pupils* survey and just under 2,000 for the *TIMSS – Parents* survey. These international large-scale assessments (ILSAs) of educational attainment³⁵ are important as they enable policy makers and researchers to compare the performance of the country's education system with others across the world and provide a robust evidence base for research and policy development.

DE ran modules on Shared Education and Pupil Wellbeing in both the *Young Life and Times Survey* and the *Kids Life and Times Survey*. These four biennial modules contributed a combined 1,128 hours of compliance burden, which represents 7% of the total compliance burden attributed to DE.

The Education Authority (EA) and Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) run a varying number of surveys each year, often small one-off surveys. In 2018/19, these surveys contributed just 6% of the total burden attributed to DE (943 hours). This was mostly due to the two '*Getting Ready to Learn*' surveys, carried out by the Education Authority which together had a burden of 800 hours (and 24,000 responses).

DfC

DfC conducted six fewer surveys than in 2017/18, however there has been an increase of over 7,900 responses and an increase of over 3,900 hours of compliance burden. The year-to-year variation in the number of responses and compliance burden can be largely attributed to the number of ad-hoc surveys. In 2018/19, 30 of the 39 surveys carried out by DfC were ad-hoc surveys, and the ad-hoc surveys in 2018/19 tended to be larger than those carried out in 2017/18.

15 of the ad-hoc surveys were pre- and post- revitalisation project surveys to gauge perception of a particular area. These surveys contributed 1,626 responses and just 245 hours (2%) of the DfC compliance burden. Ad-hoc surveys were also carried out by the NI Housing Executive (NIHE), National Museums NI (NMNI), and Libraries NI. The largest ad-hoc surveys were the *Customer satisfaction survey of Department for Communities (DfC) WI Group Customers* which contributed 1,770 hours, the *DfC Customer Survey* which contributed 759 hours and the *PIP Applicant Experience Survey* which contributed 600 hours. Combined, these three surveys accounted for 28% of the total compliance burden for DfC.

The *Family Resources Survey*, which is an annual survey, contributed the greatest number of compliance burden hours (2,554) and accounted for 23% of the total DfC compliance burden. This is a result of a large number of responses (2,099) and a long completion time of 70 minutes. The *Continuous Tenant Omnibus*

³⁴ *PISA* consists of a 2 hour test and a 45 minute questionnaire, while *TIMSS – Pupils* consists of a test (with an average completion time of 72 minutes) and a 30 minute questionnaire

³⁵ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/international-research>

Survey, conducted by NIHE, was also a large contributor of compliance burden, contributing 2,015 hours and accounting for approximately 18% of the total DfC compliance burden. The quinquennial *Public Attitudes Survey*, also conducted by NIHE, was responsible for 509 hours of compliance burden.

DfE

In 2018/19, there were 24 surveys carried out by DfE - 12 more than in 2017/18 and 8 more than in 2016/17 - which has led to large increases in both the number of responses and compliance burden hours. Of the surveys carried out in 2018/19, 14 were ad-hoc (compared to 5 in 2017/18), 2 were new annual surveys and 3 had not been included previously.

There were ten surveys conducted by The Consumer Council in 2018/19, eight of which were new ad-hoc surveys and one was a new annual survey. These new surveys contributed 1,344 hours of compliance burden, accounting for 23% of the total DfE burden. The other new annual survey, carried out by DfE, was the *Graduate Outcomes Survey* which had 4,542 responses and contributed 757 hours of compliance burden.

In addition, the *National Student Survey*, *Survey of FE College Leavers* and the *Client Satisfaction Survey* were included for the first time in 2018/19. Together these surveys contributed 1,772 hours (31%) of the total DfE compliance burden. The *National Student Survey* is the largest survey carried out by DfE and accounts for 7,782 responses and 22% of the DfE compliance burden.

The *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor*, carried out by Invest NI, had a compliance burden of 869 hours. In 2018/19, Tourism NI carried out three surveys: *Evaluation of International Events*, *Evaluation of Tourism NI Promotional Campaigns* and *Visitor Attitude Survey* which had a combined burden of 551 hours.

DfI

DfI conducted the same number of surveys in 2018/19 as in the previous year, which has resulted in a similar numbers of responses, and a similar number of compliance hours, increasing by 4.6%. The DfI section of the *Continuous Household Survey* saw an increase of 790 responses compared to the previous year, however the median completion time was reduced by 5 minutes, which ultimately led to a 62 hour reduction in compliance burden.

The *Enterprise Customer Satisfaction Monitoring* and *Public Transport Monitoring* surveys, conducted by Translink, were included for the first time in 2018/19. These two surveys contributed 757 hours (12%) of the total DfI compliance burden.

The three DVA customer satisfaction surveys (*DVA Booking Service - Internet Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey*; *DVA Booking Service - Test Centre and Call Centre Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey* and *DVA Theory Test Customer Satisfaction Survey*) experienced a drop in response rates, but still collectively accounted for 60% (3,787 hours) of the total compliance burden attributed to DfI, 392 hours less than in 2017/18.

DoF

DoF conducted a similar number of surveys to the previous two years; one more than in 2017/18, one fewer than in 2016/17. Despite there being over 6,400 more responses, there were 1,700 hours fewer in compliance burden. The overall increase in responses is due to the inclusion of the *International Passenger Survey* (a UK survey carried out at NI air and sea ports) which had not previously been included. This short survey had over 11,200 responses (14% of the DoF total), however with low median completion times, the survey contributed just 220 hours of compliance burden. The reduction in compliance burden is primarily due to the decrease in the core questions in the *Continuous Household Survey* and variation in the burden due to the Census preparatory surveys. The resulting decrease is partially offset by the increase in the compliance burden for the *Labour Force Survey*.

There were five one-off surveys carried out by DoF in 2018/19, three by the Census Office and two by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), which contributed a combined 201 hours of compliance burden, accounting for 2% of the total DoF compliance burden.

The *Labour Force Survey*, carried out by Economic Labour Market Statistics (ELMS), was the largest contributor of burden in DoF, contributing 3,946 hours of compliance burden and accounting for 46% of the total DoF compliance burden. There was a 39% increase in the issued sample for the *Labour Force Survey* between 2017/18 and 2018/19³⁶, resulting in 2,128 more responses and an increase of 24% (773 hours) in the compliance burden for this survey. The increase in the sample size was introduced to increase the accuracy of estimates and to support geographical breakdowns.

The *Living Costs and Food Survey* was responsible for 1,075 hours of the DoF burden (13%), primarily due to its high median completion time of 165 minutes which comprised a face-to-face interview and completion of a paper diary. The *National Diet and Nutrition Survey*, which is a similar survey, was responsible for 851 hours of burden. The other large contributor of compliance burden was the Tourism (TSSSB) section of the *Continuous Household Survey* which accounted for 839 hours of compliance burden.

The *Northern Ireland Passenger Survey* (TSSSB) contributed over half the responses (40,512) due to DoF surveys, however only contributed 270 hours of compliance burden as a result of a low completion time, of just under half a minute.

Census Office ran three preparatory surveys in 2018/19, one more than in the previous year, however these were much smaller surveys, contributing a total of 119 hours of compliance burden, compared to 1,704 hours in 2017/18.

The Central Survey Unit (CSU) core questions of the *Continuous Household Survey* were reduced in 2018/19, removing any unnecessary or unused questions. As a result, the median completion time for these questions decreased from 25 minutes to 9 minutes, leading to a 63% reduction in compliance burden (from 1,818 hours in 2017/18 to 669 hours in 2018/19).

³⁶ The issued sample increased from 11,272 to 15,623, and the number of responses increased from 6,328 to 8,456.

DoH

DoH ran five more surveys in 2018/19 than in 17/18, and eleven more than in 16/17. There has been an increase of 2,993 responses (a 20% increase) and an increase of 2,270 compliance hours (43%).

The *Health Survey Northern Ireland* and *Home Care Experience Survey* together accounted for 90% (6,851 hours) of the total compliance burden attributed to DoH. Both these surveys have large samples (3,592 and 8,887 respectively) and high median completion times of 60 minutes and 22 minutes respectively. The *Home Care Experience Survey* is an irregular survey, but the *Inpatient Experience Survey*, conducted in 2017/18, was a similar, albeit shorter survey that did not run in 2018/19. These three surveys were used to produce official statistics.

Nine of the fourteen surveys conducted by DoH were carried out by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) and together these surveys accounted for 8% of the total DoH compliance burden. Of the nine surveys, five were ad-hoc surveys with the remaining four being regular surveys. The monthly *Registrant Survey* returned by NISCC in 2017/18 has now been amalgamated within the *Customer Satisfaction Survey*.

DoJ

In 2018/19 DoJ conducted 21 surveys: 6 more than in 2017/18, but 10 fewer than in 2016/17. This year-to-year variation in DoJ surveys is due mostly to programme evaluation surveys, carried out by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI). In 2016/17, PBNI carried out five surveys linked to the 'Reset' programme and seven linked to the 'Enhanced Combination Order'. In 2018/19, four of the surveys carried out by PBNI were linked to the 'Aspire' programme. The remaining survey was the *Survey of PBNI Service Users*. PBNI surveys contributed 178 hours (5%) of the total DoJ compliance burden in 2018/19.

The *Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey*, previously known as the *Northern Ireland Crime Survey*, was the largest contributor of compliance burden, accounting for 76% (2,485 hours) of the total compliance burden in DoJ. Following a consultation, the sample size for this survey more than doubled. In order to offset some of the increase in burden, the length of the survey was reduced (by 11 minutes) and specific modules are now carried out on a biennial basis. Overall this resulted in an increase of 1,837 responses (to 3,419 responses) and an increase of 84% (1,131 hours) in the compliance burden.

The Youth Justice Agency (YJA), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), Northern Ireland Policing Board and Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI) also conducted surveys of households and individuals in 2018/19.

TEO

TEO conducted one fewer survey in 2018/19 than in the two previous financial years, which resulted in a decrease in the number of survey responses. There was also a 30% reduction in the estimated compliance burden.

The decrease in the number of responses was due to the number of modules commissioned by TEO in the *NI Omnibus* decreasing from three in 2017/18 to one in 2018/19 (resulting in 1843 fewer responses and 184 hours less burden). The annual *Public Opinion Survey on Equality in Northern Ireland (ECNI)* which had 500 responses and a compliance burden of 113 hours, was included for the first time in 2018/19.

Aside from the decrease in the number of surveys, the main reason for the decrease in the estimated compliance burden due to TEO was more accurate estimation of the median completion times for the three modules of the *Northern Ireland Life & Times Surveys – Respect; Community Relations; and Ethnic Minorities*. These three modules contributed a combined 325 hours of compliance burden, compared to 582 in the previous year. In addition, there was an estimated 139 hour reduction in compliance burden due to the TEO section of the *Continuous Household Survey*, as a result of the median completion time reducing from 6 minutes to 4 minutes.

PPS

Two runs of the same survey (*Perceptions of the Public Prosecution Service*) were conducted, one in the now discontinued *NI Omnibus* survey, and one in the *NI Life and Times Survey*. These two surveys contributed a combined 44 hours of compliance burden. The inclusion of both runs of this annual survey in the 2018/19 compliance burden data reflects the difference in the timing of the two survey vehicles.

9. Measures to Reduce Compliance Burden

A few of the specific initiatives employed by NI Government Departments in 2018/19 to reduce respondent burden include:

Department	Name of Survey	Steps taken to reduce compliance burden
DE	DE Questions in QUB 2018/19 Young Life and Times Survey - Shared Education	The questionnaire was reviewed and refined.
DE (CCEA) ³⁷	Feedback on Development of a CCEA Student Timetable Application	All questionnaires are designed and programmed by professional researchers to produce valid questions and minimise the time to complete. Online surveys reduce time and burden, cost is minimal.
	GCSE Grading Communication Survey (January 2019)	
	Let us know what you think of our website...	
DfC	DfC Customer Survey	Any claimants that had been sampled in any other DfC related surveys in the previous 12 months (e.g. welfare reform surveys) were excluded. A mailshot exercise was also completed before the fieldwork commenced, advising claimants that they had been selected to take part in the survey and providing them with the option of opting out. Those that did opt out were removed before the sample was transferred to the consultants.
DfE	Interviews with pupils from schools taking part in the Essential Skills Programme	To minimise disruption to teaching time and maximise pupil feedback, pupils were allowed to complete an online survey instead of participating in a focus group.
DoF (CSU)	International Passenger Survey	Moved from paper to tablet, April 2018
	Continuous Household Survey	Reduced the number of core questions, removing any unnecessary or unused questions.
DoF (SSB)	Public Awareness of and Trust in Official Statistics	Reduced number of questions compared to previous run.
DoJ	Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey	Some modules in the Safe Community Survey (previously the Crime Survey) are now biennial to reduce the burden for the survey.
TEO	NI Life & Times Survey: Community Relations	Questions are checked annually to ensure continued need.
	NI Life & Times Survey: Minority Ethnic Groups	
	NI Life & Times Survey: Respect half module	
	Young Life & Times Survey: Good Relations module	
	Young Life & Times Survey: Minority Ethnic Groups	
Cross Department	Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey	Number of questions on the Omnibus survey was reduced to reduce the burden for the survey.

³⁷ CCEA (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment); CSU (Central Survey Unit); SSB (Statistical Support Branch).

10. Uses of Surveys

The data collected through government surveys of Northern Ireland households and individuals are used for a range of purposes including the

- production and development of official statistics (see Figure 5 & Table 3)
- development, monitoring and evaluation of government policy
- design, monitoring, refinement and evaluation of programmes
- improvement and refinement of government services.

Some examples of how data collected in surveys carried out in 2018/19 were used are included below:

Northern Ireland Passenger Survey (NIPS)

The Northern Ireland Passenger Survey (NIPS) collects data on the value and volume of overnight trips by visitors to Northern Ireland (NI) who enter through NI air and sea ports. These data are combined with data from other surveys³⁸ to produce the [Northern Ireland Annual Tourism Statistics](#)³⁹ and [Northern Ireland Quarterly Tourism Statistics](#)⁴⁰ publications. These publications are used by Tourism NI to monitor tourism in Northern Ireland. They are also used by policy makers in government, the tourism industry and the public. In particular, the data contribute to [PFG Indicator 30 - Total spend by external visitors](#)⁴¹ which monitors progress against *Outcome 10 - We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest* (see Appendix C).

More detailed data on 'external visitors' to NI are published annually in the [External Overnight Trips to Northern Ireland](#)⁴² publication. This combines data from NIPS, a survey of ports in the Republic of Ireland (carried out by Failte Ireland) and information on trips taken by ROI residents obtained from the *Household Travel Survey* (which is carried out by Central Statistics Office, Ireland). Data from NIPS also feed into the [Local Government District Tourism Statistics](#)⁴³ which local councils find very useful, as well as contributing to the quarterly [Northern Ireland Air Passenger Flow statistics](#)⁴⁴.

Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Another survey which contributes to official statistics and also the development and monitoring of policy is the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The [Labour Force Survey](#)⁴⁵ is a quarterly survey which asks people in Northern Ireland about employment, unemployment and economic activity. It also covers a wide range of

³⁸ Further information on the surveys used in the production of tourism statistics can found in the [Tourism statistics guide to surveys](#).

³⁹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/annual-tourism-statistics-publications>

⁴⁰ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/quarterly-tourism-statistics-publications>

⁴¹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/pfg-2016-21-measurement-annex-total-spend-by-external-visitors>

⁴² <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/external-overnight-trips-northern-ireland-publications>

⁴³ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/tourism/local-government-district-tourism-statistics>

⁴⁴ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/tourism/northern-ireland-air-passenger-flow-statistics>

⁴⁵ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/find-your-survey/labour-force-survey>

related topics such as income, qualifications, training and disability. Everyone aged 16 and over in the household is interviewed about a range of questions, and the interviewer will contact the household for five occasions every three months (either in person or by phone) to find out if anyone's circumstances have changed. A new sample of around 1,300 households is added every quarter.

Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch (ELMS) use data from the LFS to produce a [range of National Statistics publications](#)⁴⁶, including the [Monthly Labour Market Report \(and accompanying tables\)](#), [Quarterly Labour Force Survey Tables](#), [Work Quality Tables](#), [Labour Force Survey Annual Report](#), [Labour Force Survey Tables for Local Government Districts](#) and various topic reports such as [Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland 2018](#). The monthly Labour Market Report (LMR) and accompanying tables include statistics for Northern Ireland on employment, unemployment and economic inactivity (seasonally adjusted and unadjusted); labour market status by age; reasons for inactivity; employment categories; hours of work; and international comparisons. Quarterly tables provide additional breakdowns including employment by industry section and occupation group, and information on graduates, education and training, disability and the labour market, Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) and working and workless households. The Work Quality Tables provide information on under employment, over employment, permanent employment, temporary employment and job satisfaction

Key users of Northern Ireland labour market statistics include government departments, in particular the Department for the Economy (DfE), which uses the statistics to design and monitor the impact of economic and labour market policy. Other government departments such as The Executive Office (TEO), the Department of Finance (DoF) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), as well as bodies such as Invest NI and Belfast City Council, regularly require specific ad hoc labour market analysis in order to monitor policies, for example, equality and employment. In addition, significant 'non-governmental' users of labour market statistics (including the media, banks, academics, private consultants and the general public) use the data primarily for reporting or researching the performance of the economy in general. Labour market statistics attract widespread media coverage, with a number of broadcasters publishing articles on the labour market on a monthly basis, generally on the day of publication of the LMR.

Analytical Services Division in DfE uses the Labour Force Survey data, as well as [other statistics produced by ELMS](#)⁴⁷ to provide briefing and analysis on the local economy to a wide range of stakeholders. This includes a [monthly economic update](#)⁴⁸ and a more detailed [economic commentary](#)⁴⁹ produced three times per year, which are published on the DfE website and disseminated to the Minister for the Economy and senior departmental officials as well as a wide range of interested parties. These outputs provide an overview of the state of the Northern Ireland economy, in context with the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Social Inclusion Branch in DfE use the NEETs figures from the LFS to monitor the extent to which 16-24 year olds are not in education, employment and learning. This provides them with the information required to evaluate whether DfE policies are working.

⁴⁶ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/labour-force-survey>

⁴⁷ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/nisra-economic-and-labour-market-statistics-elms/economic-overview>

⁴⁸ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/monthly-economic-update>

⁴⁹ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/economic-commentary>

As part of the [2018/19 Outcomes Delivery Plan](#)⁵⁰, DfC, together with DfE and Invest NI, have implemented the shared ‘Local Works!’ agenda, working with Councils to deliver better labour market outcomes. Key results from the Labour Force Survey have been used to help in achieving a shared understanding of labour market challenges.

The LFS contributes directly to 7 [PFG indicators](#)⁵¹ which are used to monitor 6 [Outcomes](#) in the 2018/19 Outcomes Delivery Plan. These are:

- [14 - Proportion of the workforce in employment qualified to level 1 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above, and level 4 and above](#) (Outcome 6)
- [16 - Seasonally adjusted employment rate \(16-64\)](#) (Outcome 6)
- [17 - Economic inactivity rate excluding students](#) (Outcome 3 & 6)
- [32 - Employment rate of 16-64 year olds by deprivation quintile](#) (Outcome 3)
- [33 - % people working part time who would like to work more hours](#) (Outcome 6)
- [34 - Employment rate by council area](#) (Outcome 1, 3 & 6)
- [42 - Average life satisfaction score of people with disabilities](#) (Outcome 8 & 9)

Data from the LFS also feed into the [Economic Overview dashboard](#)⁵² produced by ELMS.

In addition, results from the Labour Force Survey feed into [UK figures on Employment and the Labour market](#)⁵³ (produced by the Office for National Statistics) and are compared to [other European countries](#)⁵⁴.

Continuous Household Survey (CHS)

The [Continuous Household Survey](#)⁵⁵ is another large survey, in which sets of questions are commissioned by different government departments. The burden associated with each set of questions is recorded against the commissioning department. In 2018/19, questions were commissioned by DAERA, DE, DfC, DfI, DoF and TEO. These questions were used to produce several official statistics publications and contributed directly to 3 [PFG indicators](#)⁵¹ which were used to monitor 3 [Outcomes](#):

- [27 - % engaging in arts/ cultural activities](#) (Outcome 5)
- [28 – Confidence \(as measured by self-efficacy\)](#) (Outcome 5 & 9)
- [49 - Confidence of the population aged 60 years or older \(as measured by self-efficacy\)](#) (Outcome 8)

⁵⁰ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-government>

⁵¹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/programme-government/programme-government-population-indicators>

⁵² <https://files.nisra.gov.uk/Economy/EconomicOverview.html>

⁵³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/>

⁵⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Main_Page

⁵⁵ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/find-your-survey/continuous-household-survey>

Data from the CHS are also used to assess progress against strategies such as the [Sport Matters Strategy](#)⁵⁶ and [Children and Young People's strategy 2019-2029](#)⁵⁷ and inform the development, monitoring and evaluation of policy. A detailed case study looking at how data from the CHS are used within NI government departments is included in Appendix B.

Use of the CHS extends beyond NI government departments, as anonymised data from the CHS are made available to researchers through the [UK Data Archive](#)⁵⁸, managed by the ESRC. The UK Data Archive is a valuable resource and is used by researchers, students and teachers from all sectors, including academia, central and local government, charities and foundations, independent research centres, think tanks, and business consultants and the commercial sector.

UK Surveys

Data from a number of the surveys carried out by NISRA's Central Survey Unit are not used directly by NI Government Departments but rather feed into UK statistics. Collecting responses from NI households and individuals, ensures that the UK statistics produced and the data available from these surveys are representative, and often allows comparison between Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK. These surveys include the [International Passenger Survey](#)⁵⁹, [Living Costs and Food Survey](#)⁶⁰, [National Diet and Nutrition Survey](#)⁶¹ and [Survey on Living Conditions](#)⁶².

Living Costs and Food Survey (LCF)

The Living Costs and Food Survey (LCF) is a UK wide survey which collects information on spending patterns and the cost of living that reflect household budgets, as well as information on food consumption. Data on household expenditure from the LCF is used in key economic measures such as the [consumer prices index](#)⁶³ and [GDP figures](#)⁶⁴. It is also used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to produce the annual [UK Family Spending report](#)⁶⁵ (and accompanying [regional tables](#)⁶⁵).

In addition, the LCF is a valuable source of information on food consumption and nutrition and is used by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to produce the [UK Family Food Statistics](#)⁶⁶ publication (and the accompanying [regional data](#)⁶⁷).

⁵⁶ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/sport-matters-strategy>

⁵⁷ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/children-and-young-people#:~:text=Children%20and%20Young%20People%E2%80%99s%20Strategy%20-%202019-2029.%20On,the%20achievements%20of%20the%20current%20ten%20year%20strategy>

⁵⁸ <https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/series/series?id=200008#!/abstract>

⁵⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforhouseholdsandindividuals/householdandindividualsurveys/internationalpassengersurvey>

⁶⁰ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/find-your-survey/northern-ireland-living-costs-and-food-survey>

⁶¹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/find-your-survey/national-diet-and-nutrition-survey>

⁶² <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/find-your-survey/survey-living-conditions>

⁶³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices>

⁶⁴ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp>

⁶⁵ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/expenditure/bulletins/familyspendingintheuk/april2018tomarch2019>

⁶⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-food-statistics>

⁶⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/family-food-datasets>

Survey on Living Conditions (SLC)

The Survey on Living Conditions (SLC) is conducted throughout Europe to meet a European Union requirement for longitudinal statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). The survey collects information on household resources, living conditions, labour, education, pensions and health. [Living Condition statistics](#)⁶⁸ for the UK and other European countries are published on the Eurostat website, which allows researchers and policy makers to make comparisons between European countries and regions.

Data from SLC helps the UK government understand how different sections of society are managing, so that it can plan for the future, assess the effects of policy changes and measure the state of the economy. The UK Government and European Union also use these statistics to monitor and inform policies aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion.

SEUPB Program Evaluation Surveys

Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) carried out two Program Evaluation surveys in 2018/19. Data from these surveys were used to inform and monitor the out-workings of current policy and funding decisions; and to input to future policy and funding decision making. One of the surveys related to Shared Education and the other survey related to Sustainable Transport⁶⁹.

DVA Customer Satisfaction Surveys

DVA carries out a number of customer satisfaction surveys: *DVA Booking Service - Internet Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey*; *DVA Booking Service - Test Centre and Call Centre Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey*; and *DVA Theory Test Customer Satisfaction Survey*. These short surveys enable DVA to ask customers for feedback after delivering a service and DVA then uses this feedback to help improve the service going forward. As a result, these surveys help government and DVA as a public body to plan and deliver better front-line public services.

DfC Customer Insight Surveys

DfC introduced two new customer insight surveys in 2018/19: an ad-hoc *Customer satisfaction survey of Department for Communities (DfC) Work & Inclusion Group Customers* and a monthly *Customer Exit Survey*. Data from the *Customer satisfaction survey* were used to establish a baseline and inform future improvements. In particular, the survey focused on customer satisfaction with 1) The ease of access to DfC's services; 2) DfC's ability to make correct decisions; 3) How DfC keeps its customers informed; and 4) DfC's treatment of its customers. Data from this survey identified weaknesses and areas in need of improvement and formed the basis for improvement plans.

⁶⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Living_conditions

⁶⁹ SEUPB carried out two surveys related to Shared Education in 2018/19, one of which was classified as a business survey as it surveyed teachers in schools.

The *Customer Exit Survey* assesses customer satisfaction with the service provided by DfC Business Areas (DCS, DS, ESA, IS, JSA, Pensions, PIP and SFund). The resulting data provides each Business Area with a tangible and real time measurement on the service they are providing. This insight provided a better understanding of how the customer felt about the service provided, and helped to identify weaknesses and strengths in the customer approach. Each business area benefited by hearing directly from the customer, their experience and emotions when they engage with our people.

Further information on the purpose of all surveys is available in the [downloadable data](#) which accompanies this bulletin.

Appendix A: Methodology, Quality and Use of Publication

A1. Rationale for publication

The [Code of Practice for Statistics](#)⁷⁰ 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 businesses due to surveys conducted by government departments and their arm's length bodies (ALBs) has been monitored within Northern Ireland since the 1980s. As of the 1st April 2014, surveys to households and individuals were included within the scope of Survey Control and this information is now published alongside the [Survey Burden on Business information](#)⁷¹.

A2. Methodology

Data Collection

Data were requested from Survey Control Liaison Officers (SCLOs) in each of the Northern Ireland departments, as well as from officials in Arm's Length Bodies (ALBS). Respondents were provided with guidance notes and asked to provide details on Government Statistical Surveys of households and/or

⁷⁰ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/the-code/>

⁷¹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/ni-statistical-surveys-assessment-burden>

individuals which their department/ organisation had commissioned or carried out in 2018/19. When surveys are shared by more than one Department, Arm's Length Body, or NISRA branch within DoF, the relevant survey is included in each return and the respondent burden for the survey is proportionately split across the Departments/ ALBs/ branches.

Surveys are included under the commissioning department(s)/ ALB(s) which may not be the same as the department or branch which carried out the survey. Any surveys carried out by NI departments/ ALBs, on behalf of GB departments/ ALBs, where the data are only collected to facilitate the production of UK statistics (and not used by any NI government department) are included under the department or branch carrying out the survey.

Coverage

All statistical surveys to households and/or individuals carried out by, or on behalf of, Northern Ireland Government Departments (including Arm's Length Bodies) are included, as well as statistical surveys carried out by NI Departments (or ALBs) on behalf of GB Government Departments (or ALBs) where the data are used directly by the NI Department (or ALB) or feed into UK statistics.

Definition of 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: completion of a questionnaire; telephone data entry; face-to-face interview; online, etc.

Surveys that contribute to official statistics and those that do not are both in the scope of survey control.

The following are examples of statistical surveys **covered** by these controls:

- Surveys designed to obtain aggregated data;
- Surveys where responses are solicited by means of a direct approach to potential respondents;
- Surveys carried out for departmental sponsors by consultants or private organisations;
- Customer satisfaction surveys designed to identify overall success of a product or service.

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.

Respondent Burden

For surveys of households and individuals, respondent burden is calculated on the basis of the time taken for each respondent to complete the survey (or part of the survey). Where a household or individual is re-contacted as part of the validation or quality assurance procedures, the burden due to the re-contact is also included. The time taken to complete the survey includes any time taken to establish eligibility (e.g. time spent by the interviewer on the doorstep determining household eligibility). Total compliance burden will also include time taken to establish non-eligibility for respondents or households that are subsequently deemed out of scope. Only those responding to the survey are included; non-response is assumed to have zero burden.

If actual survey completion times (and re-contact times) are available then these are used. Otherwise estimated median completion times (and estimated median re-contact times) are used. These estimated median times may be based on information from the survey, paradata, historical data (within the last 5 years), a pilot survey, reviews or survey manager expertise.

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

If estimated median re-contact times are not available then the median time taken to complete the full survey may be used on the assumption that a respondent may need to review their entire response.

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

Response Burden (mins) = No. of responses x Median completion time (mins)

Recontact Burden (mins) = No. recontacted x Median re-contact time (mins)

Compliance Burden is calculated in minutes but has been changed to hours (or days) in this report.

The calculation of compliance 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 compliance burden may be estimated separately for each questionnaire/interview type and then summed for an overall compliance 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.

Shared Surveys

For those surveys which are commissioned by several branches within DoF/ Departments/ ALBs, each part of the survey is treated as a separate survey. The compliance burden for each part of the survey (or module) is estimated by apportioning the total compliance 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 survey vehicles and respondents will appear more than once when the 'number of surveys' and 'number of responses' is summed across branches / Departments / ALBs. For this reason, the number of responses is not a good proxy for the number of respondents (or households and individuals responding to NI Government Statistical Surveys). In addition, some households and individuals may respond to more than one NI Government Statistical Survey. As the compliance burden has been apportioned based on the time taken to answer each part of the survey, there is no 'double counting' of compliance burden.

The use of an existing survey vehicle (such as the *NI Omnibus Survey*, 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.

Average completion time (or average burden per response)

This has been calculated as the total compliance burden (for the group of surveys or parts of surveys) divided by the total number of responses (for the group of surveys or parts of surveys). This may differ from the median completion time for the survey.

Official Statistics and Other Statistics surveys

Surveys that contribute to National or official statistics are referred to as 'official statistics' surveys, and surveys that do not contribute to National or official statistics are referred to as 'other statistics' surveys.

Statutory and Voluntary surveys

Where the status of a survey is statutory there is a legal obligation on the respondents to provide the information that will be collected.

Data collection method

The data collection method is recorded for each survey. 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. In 2016/17, this was replaced with a drop-down menu (Paper questionnaire; Paper diary⁷²; Telephone interview; Face-to-face interview; Email data collection; Online questionnaire/ data collection; Online/electronic diary⁷²; 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.

Rounding

Please note that figures for compliance burden (hours) have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures for average completion time (minutes) have been rounded to one decimal place, and percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number or one decimal place. Thus figures may not add exactly to totals due to rounding.

A3. Review of Methodology & Discontinuity (between 2016/17 and earlier years)

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.

Reason for discontinuity

Prior to the 2016/17 data collection exercise, a review was conducted of the guidance provided to Survey Control Liaison Officers (SCLOs) to provide greater clarity around the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of surveys. Any areas of ambiguity were also clarified and mandatory training was provided to all SCLOs. As a result of this review, a number of surveys that were not included in previous years have been included in departmental returns from 2016/17, specifically surveys carried out by Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) and some surveys which were omitted due to being considered part of the

⁷² This option was first introduced in 2017/18. As paper diaries usually accompany face-to-face interviews, these have been grouped with face-to-face interviews in the analysis. This maintains consistency with what was done in 2016/17 and earlier years. Online/electronic diaries have been grouped with online questionnaire/data collection.

operational management of a public service. Examples are participant evaluation surveys, customer surveys and surveys which have a secondary operational purpose.

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 was most notable for DE and DfC who provided returns for Arm's Length Bodies that had not previously been included, and for DfE where a number of surveys were included that previously would have been considered to be part of the operational management of a public service.

Other improvements

There have been some other improvements to the methods used by individual branches to calculate compliance burden (e.g. more accurate allocation of burden to departments for split surveys, use/non-use of strata and improved estimation of medians). In addition, actual completion times (rather than estimated completion times based on the median) are used where these are available.

A4. Main uses of these statistics

These statistics are used by NI Government Departments, by the Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC), by Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), by the media and by the general public. Information can be used to investigate the burden on households and individuals resulting from Government Statistical Surveys, to monitor changes over time, to respond to MLA questions, and to provide briefing to Ministers.

A5. Data quality

Data are derived from returns provided by other government departments and ALBs. Although the compliance burden is an estimate, the quality of the underlying data has improved greatly since the pre-2016/17 review, and is now considered to be reasonable. 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 modes of data collection and/or type of business.
- 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 compliance costs; 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.

The quality assurance checks carried out by Survey Control Unit 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.

A6. User Engagement

User engagement is on-going between the publication of one report and the production of the next. Following the pre-2016/17 review of the guidance and methodology a specific programme of engagement was carried out. This has resulted in some minor changes to the publication.

We would welcome your feedback, on what you use the report for, any tables/charts or commentary you find particularly helpful and any additional analysis you would like to see. Feedback can be provided by emailing Garbhan.McKevitt@nisra.gov.uk

Appendix B: Case Study – Uses of the Continuous Household Survey (CHS)

The Continuous Household Survey (CHS) is a survey of households which has been running since 1983. It is designed to provide an ongoing snapshot of social and economic conditions in Northern Ireland. The survey is run on a continuous basis to ensure that the information gathered is up-to-date and reflects everyday life and conditions in Northern Ireland today, enabling the Government to identify community needs and problems, and aid decision making. The CHS is carried out on behalf of various NI Government departments, and provides information relating to, but not limited to, tourism, the environment, demography, leisure, health and housing. The following sections provide examples of how various NI Government departments use data from the CHS.

DAERA

The DAERA environmental statistics team commissions several environmental questions within the CHS which are used to measure public opinion and sustainability of lifestyle in relation to the environment. The results from these questions are published in the annual [Environmental Statistics Report \(ESR\)](#)⁷³ which provides annual updates of key environmental indicators, as well as data related to the level of public concern for the environment and what actions the public take for environmental reasons. Obtaining these data through the CHS ensures that the most up to date information is readily available for policy makers, environmental interest groups, academics and the public. These data inform policy development and are used for input into and monitoring of a number of strategies and policies. There is growing public interest in the environment topic area with the publication widely accessed on the DAERA website.

The CHS also allows the environmental results to be [disaggregated to district council level and published on NINIS](#)⁷⁴. This information is used by statisticians and other analysts within district councils to inform their area plans and to compare against other councils.

DAERA also uses information obtained from the CHS to provide [urban/rural disaggregation data](#)⁷⁵ including household size, household tenure, educational attainment, health, car access, internet access, religion, caring responsibilities, smoking and drinking habits etc. This information is extremely useful for policy makers within DAERA and other departments.

Data from the question on fishing activity are used to profile the type of person participating in the hobby. This information forms part of the [Digest of statistics for salmon and inland fisheries in the DAERA jurisdiction](#)⁷⁶ publication.

⁷³ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-environmental-statistics-report>

⁷⁴ <https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Theme.aspx?themeNumber=38&themeName=Agriculture%20and%20Environment>

⁷⁵ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/continuous-household-survey>

⁷⁶ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/angling-and-inland-waterway-statistics>

DfC

Among other policy areas, DfC is the lead department for arts and creativity, museums, libraries, public records, sports, heritage and volunteering. The CHS includes key questions relating to these areas, a number of which are of particular relevance in informing cultural and arts activities as defined in the draft Programme for Government (or [2018/19 Outcomes Delivery Plan](#)⁷⁷). In addition, data obtained from the CHS are used across DfC to inform the development, monitoring and evaluation of policy, for example, assessing key targets from the [Sport Matters Strategy](#)⁷⁸ and [Public Library Standards](#)⁷⁹.

The CHS provides data for a number of official statistics reports including the [Engagement in culture, arts and sport by adults in Northern Ireland](#)⁸⁰ report which provides information on the participation, engagement and attendance of NI residents in cultural and arts activities, libraries, museums and sports, and contributes to [PfG Indicator 27 - % engaging in arts/ cultural activities](#)⁸¹. The CHS also provides data for the [Experience of volunteering by adults in Northern Ireland](#)⁸² bulletin which presents analysis on volunteering including participation, time spent, types of voluntary work, experience of volunteering and factors that might encourage volunteering. Furthermore, DfC publishes the [Wellbeing and engagement in culture, arts and sport by adults in Northern Ireland](#)⁸³, which highlights a (non-causal) link between engagement in cultural activities and personal wellbeing and general health (using the estimates of self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction, published by TEO).

DfC is also the lead department for Historic Environment, and responsible for the recording, conservation and protection of built heritage in Northern Ireland and publishes the [Experience of heritage by adults in Northern Ireland](#)⁸⁴, using findings obtained by the CHS⁸⁵.

DE

DE commissioned questions in the CHS on Play and Leisure which were asked of all households with children aged 0 to 18. A separate question on awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was asked of all respondents. The findings from these questions will contribute to the monitoring of the Executive's [Children and Young People's strategy 2019-2029](#)⁸⁶ and the development of future Children and Young People's Strategy Delivery Plans. The aim of this strategy is "to work together to improve the well-being of all children and young people in Northern

⁷⁷ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-government>

⁷⁸ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/sport-matters-strategy>

⁷⁹ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/delivering-tomorrows-libraries-public-library-standards-2014-2019>

⁸⁰ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/culture-and-heritage-statistics#toc-0>

⁸¹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/pfg-2016-21-measurement-annex-engaging-artscultural-activities>

⁸² <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/voluntary-and-community-statistics>

⁸³ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/culture-and-heritage-statistics#toc-4>

⁸⁴ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/culture-and-heritage-statistics#toc-2>

⁸⁵ Other official statistics reports include 'Experience of culture and the arts in Northern Ireland', 'Experience of sport in Northern Ireland' and 'Experience of Irish and Ulster-Scots culture and heritage in Northern Ireland'.

⁸⁶ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/children-and-young-people#:~:text=Children%20and%20Young%20People%E2%80%99s%20Strategy%20-%202019-2029.%20On,the%20achievements%20of%20the%20current%20ten%20year%20strategy>

Ireland - delivering positive long lasting outcomes”. Within this strategy, one of the eight characteristics of well-being is defined as ‘the enjoyment of play and leisure’⁸⁷.

Information about play from the CHS is also used to inform government policy and strategy on play. It has informed the [EITP Play Matters](#)⁸⁸ project and will be used to inform the Play Matters Strategic Plan which is currently under development.

The information on awareness of the UNCRC will help to inform future actions to raise the profile of children’s rights and promote awareness and understanding of the UNCRC among schools, public sector organisations, parents and carers. It will also be used for Northern Ireland’s input to the UK’s Periodic Review Report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (due to be submitted in February 2022).

These data are also useful to organisations and stakeholders other than government departments, for example PlayBoard NI, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People and local councils (in respect of local play facilities).

Dfi

Dfi commissions a number of modules in the CHS including questions on ‘road safety’, ‘travel to school’, ‘public transport journey planning’ and ‘walking, cycling and public transport’. Using the data collected from the CHS, Dfi recently published a report on [Road Safety Issues in Northern Ireland 2018/19](#)⁸⁹ which measured the attitudes, awareness and behaviour of respondents in relation to specific road safety issues, namely speed limits, speeding and mobile phone usage while driving. This report feeds into Dfi and its Road Safety Partners’ aim of promoting improved road safety and better regulation of the transport sector. In addition, figures from the report were referenced in a [press release by the Dfi minister in relation to the decision to impose stricter penalties for drivers using their mobile phone](#)⁹⁰.

The results from the ‘Walking, cycling and public transport’, ‘Travel to school’ and ‘Public transport journey planning’ modules are used to assist the Department in focussing its policies on addressing the key issues that prevent people from taking up active travel and to encourage more people to use public transport; to monitor the overall effect of the initiatives that are aimed at increasing the proportion of children who actively travel to school; and to assist providers in identifying improvements to passenger information and access to public transport services. Through these activities, the Department makes a key contribution to progress on the [NICS Outcomes Delivery Plan](#)⁹¹ outcomes, in particular; *Outcome 2 – We live and work sustainably, protecting the environment*; *Outcome 4 – We enjoy long healthy active lives* and *Outcome 11 – We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure*.

⁸⁷ The strategy is aligned with the (draft) Programme for Government, particularly Outcome 12 “We give our children and young people the best start in life”, and the Children’s Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015. It sets the strategic framework for all government departments in relation to improving the well-being of children and young people and sets out eight high level outcomes that we want for them.

⁸⁸ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/play-matters>

⁸⁹ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/road-safety-issues-northern-ireland-201819>

⁹⁰ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/news/mallon-signals-green-light-tougher-driving-penalties-mobile-phone-use>

⁹¹ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-government>

DoF – TSSSB

TSSSB use data from the CHS to measure the value and volume of overnight trips taken by NI residents within Northern Ireland, and also the number of overnight trips taken outside of NI. These statistics are published annually in the [Northern Ireland Domestic Tourism](#)⁹² publication.

Quarterly data on overnight trips taken within Northern Ireland are also published in the [Quarterly tourism statistics publications](#)⁹³. One of the biggest customers of these statistics is Tourism NI who use the statistics to measure the demand of tourism in NI and how they are performing in attracting NI residents to take overnight trips within Northern Ireland (“staycations”). The CHS is a particularly helpful resource as the data from the survey can be collected on a monthly basis, allowing quarterly publications.

The CHS data are also available at smaller geographical breakdowns which is useful for local councils. These data are published annually in the [Local government district tourism statistics](#)⁹⁴ and are also available on a [designated interactive site](#)⁹⁵.

TEO

TEO have published the [Self Efficacy, Locus of Control & Life Satisfaction in Northern Ireland](#)⁹⁶ report using data obtained from the CHS, where questions on self-efficacy, life satisfaction and locus of control have been included since 2014/15. The report provides a breakdown of self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction among a range of demographic sections including: gender, age, employment status, health, marital status, deprivation quintiles, disability and government district. Self-efficacy is a person’s beliefs about their capability to produce results or effects, and is used to measure two indicators in the draft Programme for Government ([2018/19 Outcomes Delivery Plan](#)⁹⁷). The first is [Indicator 28 – Confidence \(as measured by self-efficacy\)](#)⁹⁸ which measures progress towards two outcomes: *Outcome 5 - We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential;* and *Outcome 9 - We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity.* The second is [Indicator 49 - Confidence of the population aged 60 years or older \(as measured by self-efficacy\)](#) which measures progress towards another two outcomes: *Outcome 4 - We enjoy long, healthy, active lives* and *Outcome 8 - We care for others and we help those in need.*

This published report also has wider application across the civil service, as it includes section 75 breakdowns which allows the data to be used as evidence for a diverse range of policy areas including older people, engaged communities and good relations. The data are also used by several community programmes under the PfG, including Urban Villages and the Social Investment Fund, to allow them to evaluate programme intakes against NI averages.

⁹² <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/tourism/domestic-tourism-northern-ireland-residents>

⁹³ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/quarterly-tourism-statistics-publications>

⁹⁴ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/tourism/local-government-district-tourism-statistics>

⁹⁵ <https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/InteractiveMaps/People%20and%20Places/People/TourismLGD/LGD2016/LGD11Tourism2016.html>

⁹⁶ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/self-efficacy-locus-control-and-life-satisfaction-northern-ireland>

⁹⁷ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-government>

⁹⁸ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/pfg-2016-21-measurement-annex-confidence-measured-by-self-efficacy>

TEO also published [Our Population: Perceptions of the Outcomes Framework](#)⁹⁹ based on responses to the CHS. This report aimed to ascertain public opinion on Northern Ireland's current position in relation to each of the draft Programme for Government Outcomes¹⁰⁰ and was complementary to the [formal tracking of the indicators](#)⁹⁷. A supplementary bulletin broke the findings down by section 75 groups to assess discrepancies between these groups. These data, collected through the CHS, provided PfG Outcome teams across government with greater insight into how the ongoing work was viewed and could be used to inform programmes and actions.

DoF - CSU

Central Survey Unit also publish [CHS Results tables](#) based on some of the core questions contained within the CHS. These tables provide regular and timely data for researchers and analysts. These tables include household composition, household type and tenure, individual demographics e.g. religion and sexual identity, internet / broadband access, and car ownership. Data are available for every year from 2008-09 to the previous year, as well as for 1983, 1991-92 and 2001-02.

In addition, anonymised data from the CHS are made available to researchers through the [UK Data Archive](#)¹⁰¹, managed by the ESRC. The UK Data Archive is a valuable resource and is used by researchers, students and teachers from all sectors, including academia, central and local government, charities and foundations, independent research centres, think tanks, and business consultants and the commercial sector.

⁹⁹ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/our-population-perceptions-outcomes-framework>

¹⁰⁰ A full list of PfG outcomes is included in Appendix C.

¹⁰¹ <https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/series/series?id=200008#!/abstract>

Appendix C: Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes

The draft Programme for Government (PfG) and [2018/19 Outcomes Delivery Plan](#)¹⁰² comprises 12 strategic outcomes outlined by the Executive to represent the society we wish to have. These 12 outcomes are supported by 49 population indicators, which are accompanied by measures (derived from statistics) which monitor performance in relation to the outcomes. The outcomes are listed below:

1. We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy
2. We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment
3. We have a more equal society
4. We enjoy long, healthy, active lives
5. We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential
6. We have more people working in better jobs
7. We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other
8. We care for others and we help those in need
9. We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity
10. We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest
11. We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure
12. We give our children and young people the best start in life

Detailed descriptions of each of these strategic outcomes can be found in the [2018/19 Outcomes Delivery Plan](#), including why each of the outcomes matters; what the issues are and how these will be addressed; the relevant indicators for that outcome; and the proposed actions (for 2018/19) along with the rationale and associated benefits. An [Outcomes Viewer](#)¹⁰³ is also available which visually displays performance against each of the outcomes.

Details of the 49 population indicators and the measures (derived from the statistics) that are used to monitor performance against these indicators are available in the [Measurement Annexes](#)¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰² <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-government>

¹⁰³ <https://infogram.com/1p2xqrzq6gilgwc0nxnjyd3n1rtr1k3nre7>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/programme-government/programme-government-population-indicators>

Appendix D: Departments and their Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Department
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DE	Department of Education
DfC	Department for Communities
DfE	Department for the Economy
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
DoF	Department of Finance
DoH	Department of Health
DoJ	Department of Justice
TEO	The Executive Office
PPS	Public Prosecution Service

Appendix E: Further Information

Downloadable data

The data used in this report can be downloaded from the 'NI Statistical Surveys - Burden to Households and Individuals 2018-19' page, which can be accessed from <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/ni-statistical-surveys-assessment-burden>

Information is provided for each individual survey, including the name, purpose of the survey, frequency, statutory/voluntary status, official statistics status, data collection methods (primary, secondary etc.), issued sample, achieved sample, compliance burden, burden per response, department and ALB/branch. The survey contact and a link to the published statistics (or survey) is also included. This allows more detailed analysis to be carried out for individual surveys and/or additional information sought.

Other linked publications

Previous publications in this series, and the equivalent publications for the Cost to Business of Completing Statistical Surveys can be accessed at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/ni-statistical-surveys-assessment-burden>

For further details regarding this publication contact:

Garbhan McKeivitt
Survey Control Unit
NISRA Statistical Support Branch
Colby House
Stranmillis Court
Belfast
BT9 5RR
Tel: 028 9038 8459
Email: Garbhan.McKeivitt@nisra.gov.uk