

	<h1>Quality Statement for the Department for Work and Pensions Statistical Summary</h1>

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**DWP** Department for  
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# Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is committed to producing accurate, timely, high quality official statistics publications that take into account user needs and which are produced and disseminated in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority's (UKSA) Code of Practice. The quality of statistics found in the Department for Work and Pensions Statistical Summary is assessed according to the European standard for quality reporting, which contains nine quality dimensions which are: relevance; accuracy; accessibility and clarity; timeliness and punctuality; coherence and comparability; output quality trade-offs; user needs and perceptions; performance, cost and respondent burden; and confidentiality, transparency and security. This document aims to address each of the above standards in as much detail as possible.

The DWP Statistical Summary includes National Statistics on the Child Support Agency (CSA) existing statutory child maintenance schemes. From December 2008 onwards these are produced by the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (CMEC) in conjunction with the DWP Information Directorate. They appear first in the CSA Statistical Summary, published on the CMEC website (<http://www.childmaintenance.org/en/publications/statistics.html>) on a quarterly basis (in April, July, October and January). As CMEC takes responsibility for the production and publication of these statistics they have also taken responsibility for ensuring they are committed to producing accurate, timely, high quality official statistics publications that take into account user needs and which are produced and disseminated in accordance with the UKSA's Code of Practice. Due to this and for the purpose of this document, the DWP Statistical Summary should be taken to exclude CSA statistics.

**Note:** This document should be read in conjunction with the "Department for Work and Pensions Policy Statement on Quality Guidelines", which can be found here: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=policy>.

# Relevance

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

The DWP Statistical Summary brings together key National Statistics on DWP administered benefits, some employment programmes and JSA (Jobseeker's Allowance) sanctions and vacancies. To provide a more complete picture of DWP responsibility, statistics on Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (administered by Local Authorities) and the CSA are also included.

The Summary is published monthly, containing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit National Statistics together with official statistics giving early estimates of inactive benefit claimant counts, plus a link to the latest report on Flexible New Deal. Each quarter (in May, August, November and February), a larger document also contains the detail of DWP administered benefits, some employment programmes, JSA sanctions, vacancies and CSA.

For the purpose of this document, the DWP Statistical Summary should be taken to exclude CSA statistics (see [introduction](#) for further details).

Alongside the Statistical Summary, there are a large number of tables which enable the user to delve in to the detail. These are provided to the user as:

- The DWP Tabulation Tool - for DWP administered benefits and Employment Programmes the Tabulation Tool provides the user with an interactive tool to select one of thousands of possible tabulations. A similar Tabulation Tool, derived from 5% sample data, is also available. Whenever possible, 100% data should be used in preference to 5% estimates, as these are both more accurate and form DWP's headline statistics. Some statistics remain outside the scope of the Tabulation Tool but will continue to be available via the internet as pre-defined summary tables.
- To widen accessibility and understanding of context, DWP also publish statistics via Nomis (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/Default.asp>). This provides easy access for users of other labour market statistics.
- Separate detailed tables on Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and Claimant counts on out of work benefits (as a "one-click" on the Working Age Client Group Tabulation Tool);
- Separate official statistics regarding Flexible New Deal;
- Tables broken down by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)
- Other tables and background information via links on the Tabulation Tool pages (e.g. links to long time series spreadsheets; descriptions of the benefit.)

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The "Notes" section of the latest Statistical Summary notifies users of changes planned in future publications. It also describes the detail of the issues, changes and revisions which form part of this Statistical Summary. The latest Statistical Summary and accompanying tables can be found here:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=statistical\\_summaries](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=statistical_summaries)

For further information regarding Users and Users see the following:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/uses\\_and\\_users.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/uses_and_users.pdf)

# Accuracy

For survey data, accuracy is the proximity between an estimate derived from the survey data and the unknown true value. For administrative databases, accuracy is how well the information is recorded and transmitted.

The numbers included within the Statistical Summary and associated documents are calculated from databases derived from DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) administrative systems and Local Authority owned Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit systems. These extracts are well established and further information on where each statistic is sourced from can be found here:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/Statement\\_of\\_Administrative\\_Sources\\_final.xls](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/Statement_of_Administrative_Sources_final.xls)

## Sampling and Non-Sampling Error

All the datasets mentioned in this document are based on a complete 100% extract from the relevant administrative systems, except the detailed 5% samples. Numbers derived from these 5% sample datasets are subject to sampling error and are actually estimates of the true population value. By chance, an estimate of the population value, obtained from the 5% sample data, may be slightly lower or slightly higher than the true population value. To minimise the impact of this, when a figure from the 5% samples is quoted in the Statistical Summary, the proportions derived are applied to the overall 100% total for the benefit. The basic principle in combining the two is that the claimant count should be obtained from the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) data

([http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/longitudinal\\_study/index.php?page=ic\\_longitudinal\\_study](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/longitudinal_study/index.php?page=ic_longitudinal_study)) . To this, percentages taken from the 5% sample data are applied.

To ensure the sources remain broadly comparable, comparisons are carried out each quarter to ensure that the differences between the two series remain consistent. Although these comparisons aren't published they could be provided upon request. It is advised that you should use the WPLS data first and only rely on the sample data if the information you need is not available on the WPLS. These datasets are subject to a degree of non-sampling error, with the largest of these being retrospection.

DWP constantly strive to increase accuracy of the statistics we produce, with a great example of this being the changes that switched many of the regular DWP benefit publications to the 100% administrative data source. DWP had previously used 5% sample data. Advantages of switching from 5% sample data to 100% administrative data were improvements to the accuracy of benefit claimant count estimates and, because it is free of sampling error, expansion of the capability to produce statistics for small areas. The most innovative feature of the WPLS was its unprecedented

capacity to link claims over time between working age benefits, employment schemes (e.g. New Deals) and employment.

The main source of non-sampling error is retrospection, which is discussed in detail below:

## Retrospection

In some circumstances, claims for benefit can be backdated or applied to the administrative computer system late. In order to capture the vast majority of such claims, DWP wait a set amount of time after the extract date from said administrative system before beginning the publication process. The level of retrospection is different for each statistical product in the DWP Statistical Summary; however, the same principles are applied. To determine the amount of retrospection used we look at providing an acceptable trade-off between quality and timeliness. The published numbers capture the vast majority of these retrospective entries to the computer systems.

When data is subject to retrospection, it is collected not only at the reference date but also during further extracts which occur during a following set amount of time, permitting late information to be added to the database (with respect to the reference date) retrospectively. Benefit claimant count statistics sourced from 100% administrative data are published quarterly around 5½ months after the period to which they relate, with about 4 months of this due to retrospection and the rest due to processing time.

The 100% total claimant count therefore represents the live claimant count at a date more accurately, and is especially useful for benefits such as Incapacity Benefit and Disability Living Allowance where claims are often complicated and may take a long time to process. Retrospection was discussed at some length in the 2004 consultation documents and users were content with the quality/timeliness of publication trade off suggested

([http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/stats\\_consultation/modstats.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/stats_consultation/modstats.pdf)). However, to combat some of this weakness (and in line with the 2004 consultation), DWP have started releasing Early Estimates (designated as Official Statistics) to produce headline numbers just 1½ months after the period to which they relate:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=early\\_ests](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=early_ests)

During each quarter, only information for that quarter is released, and the back series remains 'frozen'. Hence once the data for a particular quarter is released it will no longer be updated and will remain 'frozen', unless an error is found and then it will be subject to our strict revision policies. Unlike claimant count statistics sourced from 100% administrative data, Employment Programme and Jobseeker's Allowance sanction and disallowance decisions Statistics are fully retrospective, and at each release, the full time series is revised.

## Source Data

Difficulties exist in the ability of the WPLS data to identify flows claims of short duration. These short duration cases affect the numbers starting a new claim (on-flow) or ending a benefit claim (off-flow) with reference to a certain time period. Flows are currently reported for Bereavement Benefit/Widows Benefit (6 weekly scan), Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disability Allowance (6 weekly scan), Income Support (weekly scan), Pension Credit (weekly scan), State Pension (6 weekly scan) and Employment and Support Allowance (2 weekly scan). Claims which both start and end between two consecutive extract dates will not be detected. Previously for the 5% sample data, because there is a 3 month gap between extracts, some claims with a duration from one day up to almost 3 months were missed and so the use of WPLS data offers much improvement in this respect.

HB/CTB claimant count statistics are sourced from the Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE), which consists of returns of individual records level data from Local Authorities supplied by several data suppliers. Due to the nature of SHBE if a Local Authority does not submit data on time it will be recorded as missing from that particular SHBE extract. It may also be the case that the Local Authority submits data that shows an infeasible claimant count figure. To avoid publishing incorrect claimant count figures we use a process of substitution; if a Local Authorities data is missing or looks dubious for the current month, that data is deleted and replaced with data from the previous month until the Local Authority is notified and the problem is rectified.

## Quality Assurance

Quality assurance begins as soon as the extracts are received and continues right through to publication. The initial quality focus is on the volume of cases in each file. Subsequent assurance examines individual fields in detail to ensure that any unexpected changes are understood and represent genuine changes.

Before any Statistical series is released it will undergo strict testing and quality assurance before it is handed over for live running. Only once we're happy that what is being presented is accurate will the series be considered for publication.

Further information on the methods and processes we follow for each release can be found in [http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/statistical\\_summary\\_methodology.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/statistical_summary_methodology.pdf)

## Rounding/Disclosure control

The accuracy of statistics may be slightly effected by rounding and/or disclosure control. Even when data (either administrative or sample) do not contain NINO, name and address it may still be possible to identify someone. Say, for example, a data table showed disability type, by ethnicity, within small geographic areas. Some of the cells in the table may only have one person in. It is possible in such cases for personal and sensitive information to be deduced. This is data disclosure and in DWP steps are taken ensure that it doesn't happen.

As an additional protective measure, details of the disclosure control methodology are not published. Details of where rounding is applied can be found in the metadata/footnotes of any statistics. For further information see the DWP Confidentiality Statement:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/Confidentiality\\_Statement\\_final.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/Confidentiality_Statement_final.pdf)

## Fraud and Error

Accuracy of Statistics produced for the DWP Statistical Summary may be affected by Fraud and Error in the benefit system, where Fraud and Error can be attributed to one of the following:

- Fraud - Where the basic conditions for receipt of benefit, or the rate of benefit in payment, are not being met, the customer can reasonably be expected to be aware of the effect on entitlement; and benefit stops or reduces as a result of the review.
- Customer Error - The customer has provided inaccurate or incomplete information, or failed to report a change in their circumstances, but there is no fraudulent intent on the customer's part.
- Official Error - Benefit has been paid incorrectly due to inaction, delay or a mistaken assessment by the DWP, a Local Authority or Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

The Statistics produced for Fraud and Error provide the Department with an estimate of what percentage of benefit expenditure is lost to fraud and error (i.e. both customer error and official/office error) each year. Total expenditure for all DWP and LA administered benefits was £148bn in 2009/10, of which 2.2% (£3.3bn) was attributed to Fraud and Error. This is broken down by benefit type, and then for IS, JSA, PC and HB; a breakdown of the main causes of error by the different types of error is also provided. For example, £65m was lost last year through fraud committed by lone parents who were living with a partner and hence wouldn't be entitled to benefit, £77m to JSA claimants who were already in work, £51m to PC claimants that were living abroad. Nearly £400m was lost through official error for JSA, IS and PC combined.

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Although not all Customer Error leads to incorrect payment, it can still affect the reliability of our statistics. Customer error such as a delay in notifying DWP of a new address may affect any geography breakdowns we produce. Failure to notify the Department of a new address affects some benefits more than others, with a prime example being State Pension (SP). A recipient may not realise that they need to contact DWP to update their address and so we report them against their old address, meaning the accuracy of our geography variables is decreased.

So, in principle, the figures we produce include cases that are being paid incorrectly or cases that aren't entitled due to Fraud, Customer Error or Official Error. Therefore, with regards to count of benefit claimants, Fraud and Error statistics show that we are over-estimating the number of people who should be on the benefit and there is some inaccuracy in what benefit and premiums they should be on. Individual breakdowns reliability may be affected by Customer Error as we can only report what is only on the benefit systems at present. For further information on Fraud and Error and up to date estimates see:

[http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd2/index.php?page=fraud\\_error](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd2/index.php?page=fraud_error)

Although the Department are making some overpayments due to Fraud and Error we are, however, aware that some people who are eligible for these benefits aren't claiming. For further information see Income-related benefits: estimates of take-ups:

<http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=irb>.

## Revisions Policy

Although DWP do perform extensive quality assurance on raw data and statistical tables prior to publication, occasionally an error slips through. In the rare case when an error occurs, we thoroughly investigate how it occurred and strengthen our processes where necessary. Any erroneous statistics are removed and revised as soon as possible. Great care is taken to ensure all users are informed and are fully aware of the error and any implications. For further information see the DWP Policy Statement on Revisions:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/DWP\\_Revisions\\_Policy\\_final.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/DWP_Revisions_Policy_final.pdf)

# Timeliness and Punctuality

Timeliness relates to the time elapsed from the period to which the statistics relate to the date of release of the statistics. Punctuality relates to the elapsed time between the planned and actual (published) time and date of release.

## Timeliness

In some circumstances, claims for benefit can be backdated or applied to the administrative computer system late. In order to capture the vast majority of such claims, DWP wait for four months after the extract date before beginning the publication process. This provides an acceptable trade-off between quality and timeliness. The level of retrospection is different for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and the employment programmes. However, the same principle is applied. The published numbers capture the vast majority of these retrospective entries to the computer systems.

Retrospection was discussed at some length in the 2004 consultation documents and users were content with the quality/timeliness of publication trade off suggested ([http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/stats\\_consultation/modstats.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/stats_consultation/modstats.pdf)). However, to combat some of this weakness (and in line with the 2004 consultation), DWP have started releasing Early Estimates (designated as Official Statistics) to produce headline numbers just 1½ months after the period to which they relate: [http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=early\\_ests](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=early_ests)

For further information on retrospection see [accuracy](#) for further details.

## Punctuality

DWP pre-announce the date of release of the Statistical Summary on the publication hub at least 12 months in advance. Every care is taken to ensure that the Statistical Summary is published on schedule and where this deadline can't be met; there are procedures for ensuring all users are aware of this and informed as soon as possible. Due to unforeseen technical problems the DWP Quarterly Statistical Summary, due for release on 16th February 2011, was delayed until 16th March 2011. In place of the delayed DWP February statistical release we went ahead and published our usual monthly release. This contained early estimates for inactive benefits; Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit statistics; and a link to the Delivery Directorate Performance Report (containing Flexible New Deal statistics). The delay was pre-announced in the 19th January 2011 release ([http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/stats\\_summary/stats\\_summary\\_jan2011.pdf](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/stats_summary/stats_summary_jan2011.pdf), page 1) and on the publication hub around the same time so that users were aware of the delay well in advance. The delay of publication is a rare event and apart from

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this occasion there have been no recent instances where the Summary was not published on the pre-announced date from the publication hub.

A mailing list exists as a first line of informing users of any issues. If you would like to receive occasional e-mails from DWP to directly inform you of any issues with the Summary, please email [general.statistics@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:general.statistics@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) giving details of the DWP publications you use.

# Accessibility and Clarity

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

## Accessibility

The DWP Statistical Summary is available in PDF format. You can download Portable Document Format (PDF) documents using Adobe Reader, which is available for download free of charge (<http://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/>).

For data protection reasons the underlying datasets are not available outside DWP. However, the Tabulation Tool provides a huge amount of flexibility for users in terms of statistical output and is available using a standard web browser (designed using Internet Explorer 6). There is also a version of the Tabulation Tool which is more accessible to screen readers by not using JavaScript, accessible by clicking the “Accessible Tabulation Tool (Non-JavaScript)” link on the relevant Tabulation Tool front page. The Tabulation Tool (and the website pages for other products) contains metadata for the relevant benefit/ programme, which consists of background information, a basic explanation of each breakdown and notes on any important breaks in series. In some cases additional tables are available and can either be viewed/ downloaded as Excel files or as zipped files. As the size of some Excel files exceed 9MB it is advisable to download the zipped versions where possible. If you don't have Microsoft Excel installed and you wish to view Excel files you can download Microsoft's Excel viewer free of charge here:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/en/details.aspx?familyid=1CD6ACF9-CE06-4E1C-8DCF-F33F669DBC3A&displaylang=en>.

DWP also publish statistics via Nomis (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>). This provides easy access for users of other labour market statistics. Nomis also provide a RESTful API (<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/api/v01>) which users can use to perform a variety of structural discovery and data download requests. There is support for SDMX (presented as either XML or JSON), RSS feeds, CSV, JSON data downloads, Microsoft Excel downloads and a custom JavaScript class.

Some limited statistics are also released via the Office for National Statistics Neighbourhood Statistics Service. Alongside this, the NeSS Data service enables machine to machine data requests to access over 450 geographically referenced datasets. See:

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Info.do?page=nde.htm>

Outside DWP, the flexible tabulations offered by the Tabulation Tool, the alternative tools (i.e. Nomis and Neighbourhood Stats Service) and via the small area

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spreadsheet downloads, offer maximum opportunity for reuse within the bounds of cost and risk of disclosure.

Within DWP, the datasets used to create the National Statistics are released to analysts across the Department at the same time as the Summary. The datasets are only accessible to analysts who have business case approval (gained by submitting a business case for access to where the datasets are stored and demonstrating that you have a valid business reason for doing so). This enables substantial re-use of the underlying data for Parliamentary Questions (PQs), Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and internal analysis.

## Clarity

The DWP Statistical Summary aims to give users a structured overview of the benefit and employment programme National and Official Statistics published by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Statistics are grouped by component area of DWP and, for each statistic; relevant data is displayed in graphical/ tabular format, along with relevant statistical commentary and links for users to access more detailed information relating to the component area. At the start of the DWP Statistical Summary release there are helpful Key Messages included, enabling the user to quickly identify any significant changes during the month/ quarter. All Statistics presented in the DWP Statistical Summary are subject to a Statistical Summary Style Guide, ensuring all Statistics are presented in a clear and consistent manner. The "Notes" section of the DWP Statistical Summary notifies users of any changes planned in future publications. It also describes the detail of the issues, changes and revisions which form part of this Statistical Summary. The latest Statistical Summary and accompanying tables can be found here:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=statistical\\_summaries](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=statistical_summaries)

# Coherence and Comparability

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

The DWP Statistical Summary aims to give users a structured overview of the benefit and employment programme National and Official Statistics published by DWP. Statistics are grouped by component area and where they aren't comparable over time this is clearly stated.

Historic versions of the DWP Statistical Summary are archived and are available via [http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=stats\\_summary](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=stats_summary)

DWP have a change control process where major changes to the administrative systems are impacted against the statistical databases. As a result, any required changes are made to the statistical systems before publication. For the computer systems used for the Summary, Information Directorate (IFD) staff have strong links to officials in the part of the Department that are responsible for maintaining/updating the IT systems. Officials are formally involved in the change control process that relates to these systems to ensure that, as far as possible, statistical needs are taken into account in any decision-making around changes in the data collected or its format. At the very least, statistical staff are aware of forthcoming changes and are in a position to understand the consequences for the statistics based upon them. Similarly, statistical officials are consulted about the data content of new systems when they are produced. See the Statement of Administrative Sources (<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=policy>) for more details on the complete change control process.

For the Local Authority owned systems, DWP specify the data items that should be supplied in the extract. It is the responsibility of each Local Authority to ensure that any of their system changes are impacted against the scan. From the DWP side, the extracts received from Authorities are examined to ensure that the fields contain the correct data.

Where breaks in the statistical series are unavoidable, customers are informed via the Statistical Summary "Notes" pages and footnotes on any relevant tables. In the next section you will see several of the larger comparability issues we are currently aware of:

## Comparing WPLS data with 5% sample data

The statistics derived from the 5% sample extracts from the DWP benefit systems are broadly comparable with the 100% extracts. The differences are understood and published on each 100% Tabulation Tool page in the “Useful Resources and Sites” under “Differences between WPLS and 5% sample data”. Similar comparisons are carried out each quarter to ensure that the differences between the two series remain consistent. Although these comparisons aren’t published they could be provided upon request.

If users require more detailed breakdowns specific to one benefit (for example type of JSA in payment) they need to rely on the 5% sample data which has more detail but less comprehensive coverage. We advise users to use the WPLS data first and only rely on the sample data if the information needed is not available on the WPLS. DWP recommends that, where the detail is only available on the 5% sample data, the proportions derived should be applied to the overall 100% total for the benefit. The basic principle in combining the two, is that the claimant count should be obtained from the WPLS data. To this, percentages taken from the 5% sample data are applied. For further information on all the breakdowns available in the WPLS and 5% sample data see the Guide to Sources document here:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/tabtools/guidance.pdf>

## Comparability due to Equalisation of State Pension Age

The main implication is simply to be aware that part of the increases/decreases in our statistics will be driven by Equalisation of State Pension (ESPA) changes rather than a real change in benefit receipt. Where time series comparability is vital we recommend restricting analysis to under 60s for working-age groups, or over 65s for pension-age benefits. Further details and a list of statistical products impact by ESPA can be found here:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/espa.pdf>

## Comparability with JSA ONS claimant count

A broadly comparable Jobseeker’s Allowance series is also published by the Office for National Statistics as the Claimant Count. The preferred source of numbers for Jobseeker’s Allowance is the ONS claimant count figure as these are more up to date and contain clerical cases. However, we use the DWP JSA figures so that they are consistent with the other benefits used to produce DWP National Statistics, and permit a wider set of breakdowns. The ONS figures are available via the Nomis (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/Default.asp>) and ONS (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/>) websites. For further information on the differences between these counts see the following: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/tabtools/differences.pdf>

## Comparability with Northern Ireland Statistics

The statistics in this Summary cover Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) only. Comparable benefit statistics for Northern Ireland can be found at: [http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_and\\_research/benefit\\_publications.htm](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats_and_research/benefit_publications.htm) and [http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_and\\_research/geographical\\_data\\_on\\_ss\\_benefits.htm](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats_and_research/geographical_data_on_ss_benefits.htm) for geographical breakdowns.

Currently, the Northern Ireland statistics use extracts from the benefit systems very similar to those used to create the 5% sample numbers for Great Britain (although the Northern Ireland sample size is usually greater than 5%). The directly equivalent GB numbers can be found at: <http://83.244.183.180/5pc/tabtool.html>. However, Northern Ireland statistics are shortly due to move to extracts from the benefit systems very similar to those used to create the WPLS/100% sample numbers (<http://83.244.183.180/100pc/tabtool.html>) for Great Britain. However, Northern Ireland statistics will ignore the effect of retrospection.

Comparisons between the Great Britain 5% samples and 100% samples, plus the effect of retrospection can be seen in documents entitled “Differences between WPLS and 5% sample data” in the “Useful Resources and Sites” section of each single benefit 100% sample Tabtool (e.g. [http://83.244.183.180/100pc/is/tabtool\\_is.html](http://83.244.183.180/100pc/is/tabtool_is.html))

Housing Benefit is a social security benefit paid by the Housing Executive. It helps people on a low income pay their rent and rates. In Northern Ireland, rates are paid instead of Council Tax. Limited Housing Benefit numbers are available in the summary bulletin at:

[http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/publications/summary\\_statistics\\_bulletin.htm](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/publications/summary_statistics_bulletin.htm).

For people who own their own property and need help with rates only, Land and Property Services (LPS) provide rates relief payments. Statistics on those receiving rates relief only are not available.

Employment Programmes are different in Northern Ireland. Hence, statistics are not directly comparable. However, numbers on the various schemes are available from: <http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/statsandresearch/training-and-employment-stats.htm>.

Vacancy statistics for Northern Ireland are available at <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-vacancy-stats.htm>

and at

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/statsandresearch/labour-market-information-stats/vacancies.htm>

Statistics on Jobcentre Plus Sanctions and Child Maintenance are not currently published for Northern Ireland.

## Quality Statement for the Department for Work and Pensions Statistical Summary

As the rules of the benefit system are complex and largely restricted to claimants within the United Kingdom, customers' comparisons tend to be focused on sub-national breakdowns. However, DWP do liaise with colleagues in Northern Ireland. The methodologies used within Northern Irish benefit publications are largely based on those within DWP publications.

Whilst the DWP Tabulation Tool is the primary vehicle for publication of detailed numbers, these data are also available on Nomis:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/select/getdatasetbytheme.asp?theme=35>.

Similarly, small area data from these same data sets is available via the Neighbourhood Statistics Service:

[http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/datasetList.do?\\$ph=60&updateRequired=true&step=1&CurrentTreeIndex=-1&Expand6=1#6](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/datasetList.do?$ph=60&updateRequired=true&step=1&CurrentTreeIndex=-1&Expand6=1#6).

Neighbourhood Statistics are also available via the DWP internet site:

<http://83.244.183.180/NESS/page1.htm>

Providing numbers at standard geographical breakdowns encourages comparability.

# Output quality trade-offs

The process of ensuring proper analysis of the trade-offs between the different aspects of quality forms part of any periodic review of existing or new statistics, whilst always explaining any compromises to quality in full.

As mentioned in the Timeliness and punctuality section above, in some circumstances, claims for benefit can be backdated or applied to the administrative computer system late. DWP wait for four months to enable the statistics to capture nearly all of these claims. However, to wait longer for the remainder would make the delay unacceptable. Indeed, DWP have introduced a series of Official Statistics early estimates for claimants of “inactive” benefits. These are released just six weeks after the count date. These operate the trade-off in the other direction. The accuracy is lower and there are no breakdowns available, but the statistics are available very quickly.

# User needs and perceptions

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

DWP are always glad to hear the comments and view of customers on the DWP Statistical Summary. DWP already use a number of routes to seek user views.

For example:

- National Statistics consultations are run for large proposed changes
- DWP publish experimental statistics for new series, whilst seeking user views to inform a full National Statistics release
- Hold six monthly meetings with a selection of users
- New statistics are developed in conjunction with groups of stakeholders to help understand and quality assure output
- Monitor the usage of the DWP website and Tabulation Tool
- Monitor ad hoc analysis requests

Further information on known uses, valid uses and areas of unmet need (and how we address these) is available at:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/uses\\_and\\_users.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/uses_and_users.pdf)

An ongoing questionnaire, enabling DWP to target future consultations at interested users; shaping the future direction of statistics development to address user needs; and helping ensure value for money, whilst giving users a structured way of expressing their views is available at:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/statistical\\_summary\\_questionnaire.doc](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/statistical_summary_questionnaire.doc)

Ad hoc comments are also welcome. Please provide such comments to:

[stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

For all other enquiries please contact the appropriate person using the list at:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=contacts>

# Performance, cost and respondent burden

The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.

The DWP benefit and employment programme statistics are produced from administrative data which are collected by DWP for administrative purposes, for example, calculating and paying benefit. Extracts are taken from those administrative systems to help in the detection of fraud, to provide management information and to give a reliable source for National Statistics and analysis. Hence, net additional cost of the data collection for the Statistical Summary should be considered negligible.

However, the following staff costs can be applied directly to the production of the statistics and monthly publication. These full time equivalents include a mixture of junior and more senior staff. The total DWP cost for production of these statistics is twelve staff (full time equivalent):

- Data preparation and table production: three people, full time equivalent
- Routine maintenance, quality assurance and publication: three people, full time equivalent
- Development of new National Statistics for the Statistical Summary: six people, full time equivalent

There is also a small amount of IT expenditure on web hosting and data storage.

Data regarding Local Authority administered Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit is collected from Local Authority administrative systems. DWP have recently introduced a monthly single Housing Benefit extract from those systems to minimise Local Authority burden. This extract replaced a large number of separate Local Authority returns.

# Confidentiality, transparency and security

The degree to which the statistical product meets Government and Departmental standards regarding security and confidentiality, whilst also ensuring transparent monitoring and reporting of the statistical quality of its statistical releases and outputs.

## Confidentiality and security

Within DWP, access to the underlying datasets is controlled by a system of passwords and strict business need access control. The standard DWP data security and confidentiality policies have been applied. More information can be found at:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/Confidentiality\\_Statement\\_final.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/Confidentiality_Statement_final.pdf)

Within DWP, the datasets used to create the National Statistics are released to analysts (with a valid business case) across the Department at the same time as the Summary. This enables substantial re-use of the underlying data for Parliamentary Questions (PQs), Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and internal analysis.

## Transparency

DWP aims to avoid the need for revisions to publications unless they are absolutely necessary, and have systems and processes in place to minimise the number of revisions that need to be made. The Department has a detailed revisions policy which explains how we will make revisions and inform users of our statistics when they occur, giving us confidence that all types of revision will be handled in a transparent manner. The revision policy can be found at:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/DWP\\_Revisions\\_Policy\\_final.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/policy/DWP_Revisions_Policy_final.pdf)