



Department
for Education

Statistical notice

Statement of administrative sources

March 2014

Statistical Policy Statement on Administrative sources

This Statistical Policy Statement is available in electronic format through the [Department's Gov.uk website](#).

Protocol 3 of [The Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#) requires all producers of Official Statistics to publish a Statement of Administrative Sources. Following recent concerns about the risks of using administrative data, the National Statistician has also issued some [interim guidance](#).

Document version history and review details

Version number	Date	Details
1	March 2010	First edition
2	November 2010	Data sources listed for official statistics; Metadata added for some sources; Reflect change from Department of Children, Schools and Families to Department for Education; Minor text changes; Sources amended for School Workforce data; Removed discontinued publications
3	June 2011	Metadata added for LA pupil data, school capacity, and looked after children. Update Head of Profession.
4	March 2014	Deletion of references to the Research and Statistics Gateway and addition of references to gov.uk; Change of web link to Code of Practice for Official Statistics; Reflect change from Data Services Group (DSG) to Education Data Division (EDD); Update of all sources in Excel worksheet and addition of new sources.

This statistical policy will be reviewed annually in March each year. Interim revisions will be made for substantive changes.

Use of administrative sources for statistical purposes

Official statistics published by the Department for Education (the Department) are based on two main sources:

- data extracted from the administrative and management systems of schools, Local Authorities, and other organisations including awarding bodies, and
- data collected from statistical surveys/censuses.

By using data which is already available within administrative and management systems, rather than collecting data afresh, we are able to limit the overall burden placed on data providers, and also avoid the costs of mounting dedicated data collection exercises. In addition, the data we extract from such systems often has the advantage of being timelier than data from statistical surveys and, when compared with data from surveys, can also deliver data with a greater breadth and depth of coverage.

The UK Statistics Authority actively encourages public bodies to exploit administrative and management sources for statistical purposes. However the Authority recognises that the statistical advantages of such arrangements can only be fully realised if statisticians have appropriate access to such systems; if statistical purposes are reflected in the design, management, and development of such systems; and if adequate safeguards are put in place to ensure the professional integrity of any official statistics derived from them. It is essential that methodology be transparent to meet user need.

The Authority's main requirements are set out in the third Protocol attached to their *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. Amongst other things, this Protocol requires all producers of official statistics to publish, in consultation with the National Statistician, a 'Statement of Administrative Sources' which lists:

- the administrative systems they currently use to produce official statistics;
- information about other administrative sources that are not currently used for statistical purposes but which have the potential to be so used;
- the arrangements they have put in place to provide statistical staff with appropriate access to such sources; to take account of changes to such systems; to audit the quality of the administrative data used for statistical purposes; and to ensure the security of the resultant statistical processes.

Statement of administrative sources

The administrative sources which the Department for Education (the Department) currently uses to produce National Statistics are described at Annex A. The Department's arrangements for the use of statistics and data extracted from Local Authority (LA) and school administrative and management systems are as follows:

- Schools and LAs are required to provide information to the Department. The Department consults LAs and school software suppliers about data requirements through various groups. The Department's Star Chamber Scrutiny Board scrutinises specific proposals for new data requirements and changes to existing data requirements and their impact on data collection exercises and burdens on LAs and schools. This ensures that full account is taken of the implications for official statistics when changes to administrative systems are contemplated.
- The Department's Education Data Division (EDD) manages the collection of the data and provides appropriate access to analytical staff throughout the Department. EDD also manage the sharing of data with users outside the Department, once they have gone through a rigorous applications process.
- The Department uses a lot of the administrative data collected for accountability, so there are a number of in-built checks and balances in the systems for quality assuring the data – for example, schools checking exercises and LA moderation of teacher assessment data. The arrangements for improving and assuring the quality of the data provided by LAs and schools include the routine validation (consistency, credibility checks etc.) of data. In addition, procedures for validation of data are reviewed and improved on a regular basis. The National Audit Office carried out a review of the data systems underpinning the Department's Public Service Agreement targets in 2012 and the Department has been taking forward the relevant recommendations.
- The Department's analysts restrict access to the data to ensure they are used for statistical purposes. Policy access to statistics derived from the data is restricted to the 24 hour pre-release access period. Where there is an operational need to use information derived from the data prior to release of the relevant official statistics, this is restricted by conditions of use that conform to the National Statistician's Guidance on the Use of Administrative or Management Information. These arrangements ensure the security of the statistical processes.

LAs and schools can use their own statistics and data for their own purposes.

This information meets the requirements of Protocol 3 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Revisions to the Statement

The Department published an interim Statement covering only those administrative sources used to produce National Statistics in March 2010. The revised statement published in November 2010 covered all administrative sources used to produce both official statistics and National Statistics that were current at September 2010; and provided metadata or other background information for many of the sources.

In 2010, the Department commissioned a Data and Statistics Strategy and reviewed its data sources, including all current administrative sources and those needed in future. The finalised list of data sources and associated metadata was published in April 2011.

In 2014, the Department reviewed its data sources again and added new sources, not previously included in this statement.

In future, the Statement will be reviewed annually.

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Annex A

Description of Administrative Sources

Please see separate spreadsheet.



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for Education

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