



Research and analysis

Statement on revisions for official statistics

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1. Introduction

Practice T3.9 of the [UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Statistics](#) states:

“ Scheduled revisions or unscheduled corrections to the statistics and data should be released as soon as practicable. The changes should be handled transparently in line with a published policy.”

In accordance with the practices of the code, this statement details Ofsted’s policy on revisions and our commitment to explain these alongside our statistics.

2. When and why we make revisions

A revision is defined as any change to official statistics in the public domain.

Ofsted aims to avoid the need for revisions to statistical publications unless they are absolutely necessary or planned, such as in the case of provisional statistics.

Processes are in place to minimise the number and scale of any revisions.

We publish revisions to our statistical publications:

- if we receive subsequent information or data that changes our understanding of previous periods (for example, when inspection grades are published after provisional statistics for the reporting period have been released)
- to correct data if there are errors

3. Planned revisions

Most of our publications planning includes a first release based on provisional data, followed by a second release based on revised or final data.

These are planned revisions and occur as part of the normal release practice. The timing of our statistical publications is designed to minimise the need for significant revisions because of changes to the information held.

The same rationale and processes apply to all releases where planned revisions are made. However, information can change due to unforeseen circumstances, and subsequent revisions may be needed. In these instances, we inform users of the upcoming revision via GOV.UK.

The following official statistics publications are subject to planned revisions:

- childcare providers and inspections (3 releases annually)
- state-funded schools inspections and outcomes (3 releases annually)
- non-association independent schools inspections and outcomes (annual release)
- initial teacher education inspections and outcomes (annual release)
- further education and skills inspections and outcomes (biannual release)
- children's social care in England (annual release)
- local authority and children's homes in England inspections and outcomes (annual release)

The reasons for and impact of changes between provisional and revised statistics will be explained in the subsequent statistics release. Valid reasons for changes include:

- updating figures to include the outcomes of those inspections carried out during the period, but where the inspection report had not been published at the time of compiling the provisional statistics
- correcting any figure that was wrong due to typographical or similar error
- correcting any figure that was wrong due to errors in the compilation of the statistics

4. Changes in source systems or methodology

If we plan major changes to the data, or propose changes in statistical methodology, definitions or categories, we will consult with users where possible.

We normally announce methodological changes and improvements in advance, as they may result in revisions to published data. We will provide explanations with revised data, where possible, to avoid breaks in the published time series.

5. Errors

Occasionally, errors may occur in our statistical processes. We do everything we can, including constant review of our processes, to minimise these errors. If an error is detected, the chief statistician will consider:

- the importance of the statistics, for example, whether it is a headline figure or a figure that is being used in significant ways
- the size of the mistake, particularly relative to any stated levels of accuracy
- the recipients of the mistake
- the consequences of the mistake – whether it alters the main message of the statistics or any likely use

We will amend minor errors straight away or correct them in the next statistical release, depending on the type of error. If errors are considered to be major, Ofsted will issue a statement on GOV.UK and contact known users via policy colleagues and mailing lists.

6. Handling of revisions

Our policy on handling revisions to statistical publications is to be open and transparent with users about:

- the need for revisions
- how and when to expect standard, scheduled revisions
- the processes for communicating and publishing other revisions

The official statistics outputs, which are subject to scheduled revisions, will contain a link to this policy.

We announce revisions through provisional statistics releases on GOV.UK. We will explain the impact of revisions when we release the final data.

In some cases, scheduled revisions will affect numbers that have been provided in Freedom of Information requests, official correspondence or parliamentary questions. These will not be revised.

We will announce in advance the date for the release of revised figures or our intention to change the methodology. We will publish revised figures on the pre-announced date and these will follow the same principles as the original information.

Jason Bradbury
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Ofsted
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