

Background Quality Report: Publication Name: Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service

Dimension	Assessment by the Author
Relevance	<p><i>The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs in both coverage and content.</i></p> <p>Covers composition of Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) permanent staff at 1 January by gender, community background, age-group, ethnicity and disability. Some comparisons with the NICS's workforce composition five and ten years ago also given. The report includes analysis of leavers for the most recent calendar year, and of success in recruitment competitions.</p> <p>Unmet needs are promotion data – not yet available from the new promotion service – and data on the employment status of applicants.</p> <p>Ethnicity data are missing for 10.5% of staff, and disability data are missing for an estimated 11% of staff.</p>

<p>Accuracy</p>	<p><i>The proximity between an estimate and the unknown true value.</i></p> <p>Coverage of staff is 100%, but two equality categories are affected by missing data: ethnicity and disability.</p> <p>Ethnicity data are missing for 10.5% of staff. Of staff for whom ethnicity is available, 0.2% were from ethnic minorities. Potentially, therefore, the true proportion of ethnic minority staff could be as high as 10.7% (on the most extreme scenario where all missing data related to minority ethnic staff). However, even if ethnic minority staff were as much as eight times as likely to have their ethnicity unrecorded as white staff, the true proportion of ethnic minority staff would still be less than 1%.</p> <p>Disability data are missing for an estimated 10.8% of staff. Some 5.3% of all staff were recorded as disabled. Potentially, therefore, the true proportion of disabled staff could be as high as 16.1% (on the most extreme scenario where all missing data related to disabled staff). If disabled staff were as much as two times as likely to have their information unrecorded as non-disabled staff, the true proportion of disabled staff would be less than 7%.</p>
<p>Timeliness and Punctuality</p>	<p><i>Timeliness refers to the time gap between publication and the reference period. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates.</i></p> <p>Report relates to 1 January, and published by end May.</p> <p>The one report published so far was delayed by several weeks. A link from the publication hub to the NISRA website gave the reason for the delay.</p>

<p>Accessibility and Clarity</p>	<p><i>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting 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.</i></p> <p>The report is available on the NISRA website, and there are plans to place additional, more detailed, statistics on the website. The report contains contact details for further information.</p> <p>Numerous footnotes and annexes cover a range of explanatory information, including data quality (sources/discontinuities/missing data), age adjustment, the derivation of the contextual statistics relating to the labour market, and the limitations of comparisons between the composition of the NICS and the labour market.</p> <p>Stakeholder consultation on an illustrative draft of the report was generally very positive in respect of clarity and accessibility.</p>
<p>Coherence and Comparability</p>	<p><i>Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but refer to the same topic, are similar. Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.</i></p> <p>Counts of staff depend on the reference date, whether the figure is a headcount or full-time equivalent, whether staff are permanent or casual, whether those on a career break are included, and whether secondees are included.</p> <p>There are two alternative sources of information on the equality composition of the NICS: the Quarterly Employment Survey Supplement (gender), and the annual Monitoring Report published by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (community background). The Quarterly Employment Survey differs from our report in that it has a reference date of 1 December, includes casual staff, excludes staff on career breaks, and the NICS figures did not include staff working in the NIO. The annual Monitoring Report differs from our report in that it includes casual staff, and excludes staff on career breaks; moreover, the latest published Monitoring Report relates to data two years older than in our report.</p> <p>There have been various reductions in the NICS over the past decade as a result of the transfer of functions (and the associated staff) to new bodies outside the NICS. These discontinuities are listed in Annex 1 of the report.</p>

<p>Trade-offs between Output Quality Components</p>	<p><i>Trade-offs are the extent to which different aspects of quality are balanced against each other.</i></p> <p>We decided to trade off Coherence with the Equality Commission’s Monitoring Report and Comparability over time by choosing a coverage of staff that was consistent with the statistics previously published by the NICS over many years.</p>
<p>Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions</p>	<p><i>The processes for finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products.</i></p> <p>This is a new publication. The Foreword invites feedback.</p> <p>When it was being developed, we conducted a consultation with key stakeholders – NICS Corporate HR, the Equality Commission, Civil Service Commissioners, Departments, the trade union NIPSA, and the Statistics Advisory Committee. The consultation letter offered a meeting, and several of the bodies consulted took up this offer. Responses to the illustrative draft in the consultation were very favourable; specific suggestions were taken on board where feasible.</p> <p>Specific uses identified are the measurement of the effectiveness of NICS equality policies, identifying possible areas for further action; and contextual data, for other employers, on applicant pools.</p>
<p>Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden</p>	<p><i>The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.</i></p> <p>The annual operational cost (staff time) of producing the report is approximately £6,500.</p> <p>There is no respondent burden, since the data are held on an administrative system, and data on new recruits are collected as part of the job application process.</p>
<p>Confidentiality, Transparency and Security</p>	<p><i>The procedures and policy used to ensure sound confidentiality, security and transparent practices.</i></p> <p>Suppression is applied where the number of cases in a cell is less than 10; this is described in table footnotes. If appropriate, cells are merged.</p> <p>Data are held on a network that is only accessible to the few statisticians who need access. Printouts containing individual records or small cell sizes are locked away, and shredded as soon as possible.</p>