

# **LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS REVISIONS POLICY**

Last updated: September 2011

This revisions policy has been developed to comply with the National Statistics revisions protocol:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/revisions/protocol-on-revisions.pdf>

and in the light of the compliance statement:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/revisions/ons-compliance-statement/statement-of-compliance.doc>

The general policies set out in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) compliance statement apply to the outputs covered by this policy and need to be read in conjunction with it.

## **Background**

Because of the costs to those who complete statistical returns, the majority of labour market statistics are estimates of what they are measuring, rather than being complete counts. Reliance on surveys to collect information with which to produce statistics means that events and socio-economic trends cannot be measured in their entirety, but are instead based on incomplete information which is adjusted to take account of biases which arise in survey taking, and other available information, such as the emergence of new seasonal patterns.

Over time, as more information becomes available, estimates can be revised to improve quality and accuracy, which will provide a better picture of that being measured. Users require data that are timely and can be accessed as close to the event which the data measures as possible, and data of good quality, where the picture painted of that event is most accurate. A policy of accepting revisions enables the ONS to provide users with data close to the event, but also improve the accuracy of that data as other information becomes available. Revisions are therefore a standard practice when producing official statistics.

## **Outputs covered**

This policy describes how both planned and unplanned revisions will be published. This policy covers the monthly national and regional Labour Market Statistical Bulletins, the corresponding datasets and the annual Statistical Bulletin on Working and Workless Households.

## **Communications**

It is vital that we communicate effectively with our users when dealing with revisions to our data. We must ensure that users are aware of the pattern of regular revisions to our data, their usual timespan and likely magnitude. Users should also be confident we will introduce unplanned revisions in a structured and transparent way.

ONS publishes, as part of this policy, our planned cycle of revisions. This is available to all users of our data. Each Labour Market Statistical Bulletin contains details of all significant revisions in that particular release, both planned and unplanned. Further, each Statistical Bulletin should announce, at least one month in advance wherever possible, details of forthcoming revisions. ONS also publishes articles explaining developments that have led to revisions in our data.

## **The cycle of planned revisions**

The following table describes the months in which each of the datasets are normally revised, the usual period of revisions, and the reasons why the data need to be revised. If in the course of these regular revisions it is necessary to revise data for a longer time period, this information will be included in the accompanying notes.

<u>Dataset (and frequency of publication)</u>	<u>Frequency and date of revision</u>	<u>Period covered</u>	<u>Reasons</u>
<u>Claimant count (Monthly)</u> NSA series.  SA series.  Rates.  Proportions.	Not revised.  Monthly.  Annually in April.  Annually (usually in April).  Annually in October in line with population revisions.	Not revised.  Previous month.  Previous three years.  Usually the previous three years.  Usually the previous three years.	Not revised.  Standard seasonal adjustment procedure.  Seasonal adjustment review.  Revisions to workforce jobs + CC denominators for national and regional rates.  Revised population denominators for sub-regional data.
<u>Vacancy survey (Monthly)</u>	Annually in April.  Monthly.	Back to the start of the series in 2001.  Previous three months and 12 months ago.	Later data and seasonal adjustment review.  Later data and standard seasonal adjustment procedure.
<u>Average Weekly Earnings (Monthly)</u>	Annually in October. Monthly. Monthly.	Latest three to five years. Previous month. Previous two months and 12-14 months previously.	Seasonal adjustment review.  Late data. Updated seasonal factors.
<u>Labour force survey (Monthly)</u>	Annually	Usually previous three years.	Seasonal adjustment review and new population estimates.
<u>Jobs densities (Published monthly but updated annually)</u>	Twice a year.	Previous year.	New employment and population data.
<u>Workforce jobs (Quarterly)</u>	Annually .  Quarterly.	Usually previous 13 quarters.  Previous quarter.	Benchmarking to latest BRES results. Seasonal adjustment review. Inclusion of revised LFS data. Late data.
<u>Labour disputes (Monthly)</u>	Annually in February. Monthly.	Previous calendar year. Previous month.	Late data. Late data.
<u>Productivity and Unit Wage Costs (Quarterly)</u>	Dependent on revisions to underlying data sources; National accounts, workforce jobs, AWE, LFS.	Variable.	Revisions to source data. Seasonal adjustment review.
<u>Working and Workless Households (Annually in September)</u>	Annually in September.	Not usually revised.	

As can be seen from the above table, many series are subject to revision when data from other sources are revised. For example, changes to population estimates will affect many LFS, Claimant Count and Jobs Density figures.

## **Unplanned revisions**

From time to time revisions need to be made outside of this timetable. Examples of such revisions include improvements to methodology, revisions to data that feed into labour market datasets and the discovery of incorrect data through our quality assurance procedures. Each of these revisions will be examined to see if the effects are significant in terms of the degree of change or whether the changes affect the story the data portray.

If revisions arising through improvements to methodology or changes to administrative data are found to be insignificant, they will be introduced in the next planned set of revisions according to the timetable above. However, if these revisions are thought to affect economic analysis or are sufficiently large, they will be introduced more quickly. All such revisions will be pre-announced at least one month in advance of their introduction in the national and/or regional Labour Market Statistical Bulletins.

If incorrect data are discovered after publication, these too will be examined for their impact. Where the changes are significant, a corrigendum will be issued as soon as is practicable, whilst minor corrections will be included in the next planned release. In all cases a full explanation will be included in the release.

## **Analyses of revisions**

ONS analyse the effect revisions have had on key series to see if there are any biases in the data. These analyses serve to improve the way in which labour market data are gathered and processed and summary tables are published in each Labour Market Statistical Bulletin. Spreadsheets giving revisions triangles (real time database) for key labour market indicators published in the UK Labour Market Statistical Bulletin are available on the website as data tables associated with the monthly national Labour Market statistics release.

Similar spreadsheets giving revisions triangles for regional labour market indicators are available as data tables associated with the monthly regional labour market statistics release.