

Northern Ireland Construction Output Statistics Revisions Policy

This policy is issued in accordance with the requirements of Principle 2 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and sets out how both planned and unplanned revisions relating to construction output will be published in the quarterly Northern Ireland Construction Bulletin.

Background

In an attempt to limit the costs to those who complete statistical returns, the majority of economic 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 good quality data that are timely and can be accessed as close to the event which the data measures as possible. A policy of accepting revisions enables statisticians 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.

Scope

This policy describes how both planned and unplanned revisions will be published and covers each release of the Northern Ireland Construction Bulletin.

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 time-span and likely magnitude. Users should also be confident we will introduce unplanned revisions in a structured and transparent way. The Northern Ireland Construction Bulletin contain details of all significant revisions in that particular release, both planned and unplanned. If there are none, there will be a statement to that effect.

The cycle of planned revisions

Construction output data is revised quarterly in the Northern Ireland Construction Bulletin. This is to take account of late returns, revised data from firms, changes to grossing factors, quarterly updates to deflators and updates to seasonal adjustment. The following table describes the quarterly revisions which take place to the construction output series.

Frequency and date of revision	Period covered	Reasons
Quarterly	Variable – data can be revised back up to the last four quarters	Late returns; Revised data from firms; Changes to grossing factors;
Quarterly	Variable – full quarterly series	Seasonal adjustment
Quarterly	Variable – full quarterly series	Revisions to Deflators

Construction output is also subject to other planned regular revisions, for example, when rebasing to a new base year (i.e. 2005=100). All such revisions will be pre-announced at least one month in advance of their release.

Unplanned revisions

From time to time revisions may need to be made outside of this timetable. Examples of such revisions include improvements to methodology and the discovery of incorrect data through our quality assurance procedures.

If revisions arising through improvements to methodology 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 sufficiently large, they will be introduced more quickly. All such revisions will be pre-announced at least one month in advance of their releases.

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.