

QUARTERLY EMPLOYMENT SURVEY - REVISIONS POLICY

This revisions policy, which describes how both planned and unplanned revisions will be published in the first release of the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) statistical bulletins, has been developed to comply with the National Statistics revisions protocol:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/consultations/general_consultations/downloads/Protocol_on_Revisions_Con sn_Draft.pdf

Background

Because of the costs to those who complete statistical returns, the Quarterly Employment Survey can only provide estimates of employee jobs, rather than being able to provide 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 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 Quarterly Employment Survey.

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.

A revision triangle will be published alongside the Quarterly Employment Survey Supplement first release which will contain details of all significant revisions in that particular release, both planned and unplanned and, if there are none, a statement to that effect.

The cycle of planned revisions

The following table describes the quarters in which employee jobs estimates 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>Data set (and frequency of publication)</u>	<u>Frequency and date of revision</u>	<u>Period(s) covered</u>	<u>Reasons</u>
Employee jobs (Quarterly) NSA	Quarterly Biennially (March) – (Next revisions due March 2011) Biennially (June) – (Next revisions due June 2011)	Variable – Each quarter back to last published NI Census of Employment benchmark period. All Inter-Censal quarters. Variable - Back to last published NI Census of Employment benchmark period.	Inclusion of late data. Inclusion of revised more accurate data. Reconciliation of returns between different surveys. Benchmarking to latest NI Census of Employment results. Rebasing of QES sample.
SA	Quarterly.	Each quarter	Standard seasonal adjustment procedure.

NB. QES estimates of Employee jobs will be fixed once the benchmarking to the NI Census of Employment takes place in March every 2 years. No further revisions will therefore take place to estimates before the benchmarking period.

Unplanned revisions

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

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 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.

Analyses of revisions

“Revisions Triangles” providing an analysis of the extent of all revisions to QES estimates and their significance are available on the QES page of the DETINI Statistics Branch website.