

Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI)

Revisions Policy

This Statement is issued in accordance with the requirements set out under Principle 2 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and sets out PBNI Statistics & Research Branch's intention to be open and transparent about any revisions it makes to Official Statistics and to ensure that users of statistics produced by PBNI Statistics & Research Branch have easy access to comprehensive information about those revisions

Revisions to statistical data can be required for a variety of reasons, especially when working with large administrative databases that are constantly changing on a daily basis. Any such revisions are usually minor in nature with minimal implications for the interpretation of the data. PBNI Statistics & Research Branch endeavours to produce the best figures it can, in light of the available information and resources. However, improvements and consequential revisions can result, as the Branch continually strives to improve the methods and sources.

Some statistical outputs are more subject to revisions than others, for example our quarterly caseload statistics are provisional and subject to revision/change whereas our complete financial year statistics are not subject to planned revision. Where required, PBNI Statistics & Research Branch will make it clear which official statistics are provisional and subject to a scheduled pattern of revision.

Our methods will be kept under review to minimise the scale of revisions. In general, our quarterly caseload statistics are provisional and will be superseded by the next update of the same statistic as we progress through the financial year reporting period (e.g. when the Quarter 2 statistics are produced – the revised figures for Quarter 1 will also be included). The publication of the finalised statistics at the end of the financial year therefore contain the complete official statistics for the year in question and for the various intervening periods that provisional statistics may have been provided for.

Errors

Many of the revisions made by PBNI Statistics & Research Branch are a normal and inevitable feature of statistical life and users are able to absorb and plan for those revisions accordingly. They reflect the conflicting demands of having to provide timely information which is also accurate, reliable and meaningful. However, occasionally figures may need to be corrected as a result of errors or weaknesses in procedures or systems or in source material. Regardless of whether the responsibility is the PBNI's Statistics & Research Branch or others, we will follow the procedures described below.

Announcement of impending corrections

PBNI Statistics & Research Branch will be open and transparent about the need for any unscheduled corrections. Once the need for a correction that warrants customer notification is ascertained, PBNI Statistics & Research Branch will announce its intention to issue corrections and the planned date of issue on the PBNI website.

Dissemination of corrections

Decisions relating to the dissemination of unscheduled corrections will be made by the senior statistician within the PBNI. In general terms:

Web versions of releases/publications/tables/articles/etc

As soon as possible after PBNI Statistics & Research Branch ascertain that a correction is necessary and warranted, it will amend all current electronic versions of any release, publication, table, article, etc which contains the affected statistics or text, and re-populate the website as soon as possible with those amended versions. If the correction is minor, or insignificant, in the sense of being inconsequential and hardly noticeable, PBNI Statistics & Research Branch will insert the necessary changes without alerting anyone. Alternatively, the Branch may accumulate minor corrections and make an update at the time of the next scheduled web publication to avoid making too many frequent but minor changes.

Any major revisions/corrections to web versions of statistical outputs will be made as soon as possible and an appropriate notification will be placed on the website to ensure that users are aware of the revision.

Paper versions of releases/publications/tables

Unless there are compelling reasons, PBNI Statistics & Research Branch will not attempt to recall/re-issue any paper versions of any release, publication or table etc. that contains the affected statistics or text if it has already been distributed. PBNI Statistics & Research Branch will ensure that when further paper copies are issued, they will include any corrections that have been incorporated in the electronic versions.

However, if the error is substantial or significant, PBNI Statistics & Research Branch will, where practicable, notify the recipients of paper versions by telephone or e-mail, and point them to the revised version available on the web. If the release or publication has a long shelf-life, the Branch will consider re-issuing a revised paper version.