

BACKGROUND QUALITY REPORT

NORTHERN IRELAND TRANSPORT STATISTICS
2018 - 2019





Dimension	Assessment by the author
Introduction	Context for the quality report.
	<p>Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch (ASRB), a Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) branch within the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) is responsible for the compilation and publication of the ‘Northern Ireland Transport Statistics’ report.</p> <p>The first annual NI Transport Statistics publication was produced in the 1990s. It brought together in one publication a variety of useful transport information published by a number of different sources and was modelled on corresponding transport publications in the UK.</p> <p>Historically, the publication has included information on vehicle registrations, driver and vehicle testing, the road network, freight, road safety, public transport, air transport, transport and disability (since 2013-14) and other transport statistics. However, following a user consultation at the start of 2018, which proposed complete withdrawal of the publication, it was reduced to include information on the road network, public transport and accessible transport only. For further information on the user consultation see the DfI website.</p> <p>Each year, to inform this publication ASRB collate administrative data from within DfI and from Translink. After validating the data, ASRB produce and publish the report around the end of September/October. Reports are published on the DfI website. A Quality Assurance of Administrative Data (QAAD) report is currently being produced.</p> <p>Information about the background to the publication, the quality of the data contained in it and definitions of terms are included in the report.</p>
Relevance	The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs in both coverage and content.
	<p>The content of the publication has changed over time and currently contains information on the road network, public transport and accessible transport. It has been continuously adapted over the years to</p>

	<p>keep it relevant, for example, the addition and removal of data tables and the inclusion of statistics on the recently introduced Belfast Rapid Transit - Glider vehicles.</p> <p>In line with the ASRB User Engagement Strategy, statisticians ensure that this publication remains relevant through user engagement meetings with key users. For example, additional tables were included on concessionary fares and blue badges following requests from the key policy customer.</p> <p>ASRB also carried out a user consultation at the start of 2018 to seek the views of users on the complete withdrawal of the publication. This resulted in the publication being retained but six (out of nine) chapters, for which an ongoing need was not identified, being discontinued. The outcome of the user consultation has been published alongside the publication series on the DfI website.</p> <p>Each time the publication is released, a customer satisfaction survey, which includes a question on whether the publication meets customers' needs, is also issued to users to collect their feedback.</p> <p>In this way the needs of users are continuously monitored, and if appropriate and practical, acted upon. These actions help to shape the content of the publication.</p> <p>The publication has been used by a wide variety of users for a range of purposes. DfI uses the information to inform policy, set objectives and monitor performance in relation to transport in Northern Ireland. For example, key customers in DfI report that the Public Transport section (chapter 2) and the Transport and Disability section (chapter 3) have been used to show progress against Outcomes 8, 9 and 11 of the draft Programme for Government.</p> <p>The publication may also be used by private companies and academics to study trends or for research purposes.</p>
<p>Accuracy and Reliability</p>	<p>The proximity between an estimate and the unknown true value.</p> <p>Data providers are given adequate time to provide the relevant data. Both administrative data and survey data are supplied. Data are derived from administrative systems which have full coverage and incorporate validation checks. Each provider interrogates the relevant administrative data system to populate a pre-defined MS Excel table(s)</p>

	<p>with aggregate data for onward transmission to statisticians in ASRB. Aggregate data are also sourced from the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) which is considered representative of the NI population. Again, these data are supplied in pre-defined MS Excel tables to ASRB. A Background Quality Report on the TSNI reports has been produced.</p> <p>For all data received, variance/ logic checks are employed by statisticians as an integral part of the production process with any large discrepancies between current and previous year queried with the data provider. As part of their quality assurance processes, statisticians also analyse trends and check that values fall within acceptable ranges.</p> <p>Previous data are revised if necessary and appropriate. All revisions are conducted in line with ASRB’s Revisions and Errors Policy.</p>
<p>Timeliness and Punctuality</p>	<p>Timeliness refers to the time gap between publication and the reference period. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates.</p> <p>The majority of figures presented in the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics report relate to either the financial year, the position at the end of the financial year or the position at 1st April. Travel survey data presented in Chapter 3 relate to the latest three calendar year period.</p> <p>The production process begins in the summer with the issue of individual data requests for each series of statistics to the relevant sources. Collection and validation of the data follows and then the data are formatted and the report published around the end of September/October.</p> <p>Historically there has been a lag of six months between the end of the financial year and the publication date.</p> <p>Advance notice of ASRB publication dates is available in the upcoming statistical releases calendar on the DfI website. Publication dates are also pre-announced on GOV.UK. To date, all editions of the publication have been released on time. In the event of a change to a pre-announced release date, the delay would be announced and explained on both the DfI website and GOV.UK and the new publication date specified. If necessary, updates would be given regularly.</p>

<p>Accessibility and Clarity</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The publication series is available to download free of charge in PDF format on the Dfi website.</p> <p>The statistical tables are also available to download in MS Excel format and ODS (Open Document Spreadsheet) format, from the webpage. Relevant tables are also made available on the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) website; these data can be exported to CSV (Comma Separated vaues) format. If requested, ASRB can provide hard copies or other suitable media.</p> <p>The publication is accessible through the UK Official and National Statistics Publication Hub.</p> <p>User Information is included in the publication to help users to understand and make the best possible use of the data. In addition, where necessary, explanatory footnotes are included in the tables.</p> <p>ASRB worked with Dfi’s Graphic Design Unit to enhance presentation of the information in the statistical report and to ensure the needs of those with visual impairments were considered.</p> <p>The publication contains contact details of the responsible statistician who can be contacted for further information.</p>
<p>Coherence and Comparability</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>ASRB supply data providers with pre-defined MS Excel tables to complete. This aims to ensure consistent recording, coverage and timeframes with previous year’s figures.</p> <p>Comparisons can be made over time and data are published back to 1999-2000. However, it should be noted that some data tables have been added or discontinued over time so not all data are available for the complete period 1999-2000 to current year.</p>

	The latest data are always compared with previous years' data, where appropriate, and any significant changes are thoroughly checked and validated.
Trade-offs between Output Quality Components	Trade-offs are the extent to which different aspects of quality are balanced against each other.
	None.
Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions	The processes for finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products.
	In line with the ASRB User Engagement Strategy , the content of the publication is informed by an understanding of customers' information needs.
	Each year, in advance of the production process beginning, ASRB carry out a review of the content of the publication to ensure the statistics are relevant to DfI policy. Feedback enables ASRB to ascertain if there is a need for any additional information to be included in the forthcoming publication to support the strategies or policies of DfI or if any information included in the previous edition of the publication is no longer required.
	ASRB also carried out a user consultation at the start of 2018 to seek the views of both internal and external users and their needs. This resulted in six (out of nine) chapters, for which an ongoing need was not identified, being discontinued.
	ASRB maintain a mailing list of users who are notified by email each time a report is published. This mailing list was refreshed prior to the 2018-19 report being published to ensure it is up-to-date. The email that is issued to users also asks them to let ASRB know if they no longer wish to receive this notification.
There is an ongoing ASRB customer satisfaction survey which includes a question on whether ASRB publications (including NI Transport Statistics reports) meet customers' needs. The link to the survey is issued every time users are notified that a report has been published or an ad-hoc query is answered. Results are collated on a quarterly basis.	
The data presented in the publication help to meet the needs of both internal and external users. User needs are prioritised, taking account	

	of resources available and the feasibility of any additional needs identified.
Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden	The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.
	<p>In the production of this publication, ASRB endeavour to operate efficiently by placing the minimum load necessary on data providers.</p> <p>ASRB issue pre-defined MS Excel tables for ease of completion for each series of statistics to the relevant sources. All of the information is returned via email by the data providers. There is ongoing communication with data providers to ensure timely receipt of data.</p> <p>On receipt of the information, statisticians validate data and prepare for publication. This may involve further liaison with data providers. Once data are verified, statisticians prepare for publication within a short timeframe.</p>
Confidentiality, Transparency and Security	The procedures and policy used to ensure sound confidentiality, security and transparent practices.
	<p>All of the information required for this publication is provided in pre-defined MS Excel tables which collect aggregate data.</p> <p>Personal information is not collected and statistical disclosure control methods do not need to be applied to the data.</p> <p>The data are held on a secure and accredited network drive that is only accessible to ASRB staff or within DfI's secure record management system (HPRM), also with restricted access.</p> <p>ASRB's Data Governance and Confidentiality Statement is available on the DfI website.</p>

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information relating to the quality of 'Northern Ireland Transport Statistics', please contact ASRB@nisra.gov.uk.

Last updated: October 2019.
