

# HRCs CUSTOMER SURVEY



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## Executive Summary

An online customer survey was undertaken in February 2018 to gather feedback on the six official statistical publications produced by the Human Resource Consultancy Services (HRCS) branch of the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) – Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions, Employment in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Pay Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Personnel Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service and Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. This report provides an overview of the key findings from this survey.

### 1) Satisfaction with Publications

All of the respondents using the Employment, Equality or Recruitment reports and at least 90% of those who used the Pay, Personnel or Sickness Absence reports said that they were satisfied with the publication at an overall level; remaining respondents were neutral. Views on the level of satisfaction with content, presentation, commentary, timeliness, format, data quality and ease of finding information were also sought for each report; satisfaction levels were 83% and above for all these aspects in all six reports. A very small number of those using the Pay (one respondent) and Sickness Absence (one or two respondents) reports expressed dissatisfaction with some of the eight aspects. Suggestions for improvements were made for three of the six publications. These will be acted upon where possible.

The table below highlights the combined levels of satisfaction for all 6 HRCS statistical outputs from the 2018 Customer Survey. Satisfaction levels for the various aspects of the reports ranged from 90% to 97% with the overall level of satisfaction with the reports being 95%.

Aspect of report (all 6 HRCS reports combined)	Level of satisfaction
Content	97%
Presentation of data	96%
Commentary	94%
Timeliness	90%
Format of Reports	92%
Ease of finding the statistics on the NISRA website	91%
Overall data quality	95%
Frequency of publication	92%
Overall satisfaction	95%

# 1

## Executive Summary

### 2) Users and Uses

Just under one third of customers (57 out of 181) responded to the survey. Almost all (93%) respondents worked for the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). Just under half said they used more than one of the six publications. The most common reasons for use were policy making/monitoring, performance monitoring and to aid decisions on resource allocation.

### 3) Meeting Customer Need

Almost all of the respondents said that the statistics they used in each of the six reports fully or mostly met their needs. A small number of users of the Personnel, Sickness Absence and Pay reports said that their needs were partly met. Suggestions of how needs could be better met were given for five of the six publications and will be acted upon where possible.

### 4) Satisfaction with the service provided by HRCS Staff

Almost all (98%) respondents said that they were satisfied with the overall service provided by HRCS staff. Figures were the same for the politeness/courtesy, knowledge, timeliness of response and professionalism of staff.

# Executive Summary

## 5) Publication Summary



### 1. Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions

Used by 25% (14) of respondents. Main reasons for using were policy making/monitoring, performance monitoring and to aid decisions on resource allocation. Overall satisfaction with publication was 100%. All respondents said that the statistics they used fully or mostly met their needs.



### 2. Employment in the NICS

Used by 33% (19) of respondents. Main reasons for using policy making/monitoring, to aid decisions on resource allocation and media related/public interest. Overall satisfaction with publication was 100%. All respondents said that the statistics they used fully or mostly met their needs.



### 3. Equality Statistics for the NICS

Used by 30% (17) of respondents. Main reasons for using policy making/monitoring, performance monitoring and to aid decisions on resource allocation. Overall satisfaction with publication was 100% - one comment regarding difficulty locating on the NISRA website was made. All respondents said that the statistics they used fully or mostly met their needs.



### 4. Pay Statistics for the NICS

Used by 26% (15) of respondents. Main reasons for using policy making/monitoring, to aid decisions on resource allocation and media related/public interest. Overall satisfaction with publication was 93% - suggestions regarding comparative information and timeliness were made. 93% of respondents said that the statistics they used fully or mostly met their needs.



### 5. Personnel Statistics for the NICS

Used by 42% (24) of respondents. Main reasons for using policy making/monitoring, performance monitoring and to aid decisions on resource allocation. Overall satisfaction with publication was 92%. 96% of respondents said that the statistics they used fully or mostly met their needs.



### 6. Sickness Absence in the NICS

Used by 51% (29) of respondents. Main reasons for using policy making/monitoring, performance monitoring and to aid decisions on resource allocation. Overall satisfaction with publication was 90% - suggestions regarding frequency, timeliness and change of format were made. 93% of respondents said that the statistics they used fully or mostly met their needs.

## 2 | Context

### 2.1 Human Resource Consultancy Services

Human Resource Consultancy Services (HRCS) is one of a number of Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) branches within the Department of Finance in the NI Civil Service (NICS). Consisting of 13 statisticians working in compliance with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics, HRCS produces the following official statistical publications –

- Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions;
- Employment in the Northern Ireland Civil Service;
- Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service;
- Pay Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service;
- Personnel Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service;
- Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Each is published annually with the exception of the Employment report which is produced on a quarterly basis.

### 2.2 The Customer Survey

HRCS conducts an annual customer survey to review branch publications by gathering feedback on the statistics produced, how well they meet user needs and whether there are any suggested improvements. A link to the 2018 online survey was issued by email to 181 customers on 26<sup>th</sup> February. The survey remained open for two weeks, closing on 12<sup>th</sup> March. A reminder email was issued one week prior to closure to maximise participation.

While the majority of the work of the branch is undertaken for key users within NICS HR, a range of other users of the statistics both within the NICS, the wider public sector and also members of the general public were also invited to submit a response. This report provides an overview of all the responses provided.

# 3 Users and Uses of the Statistics

## About this chapter

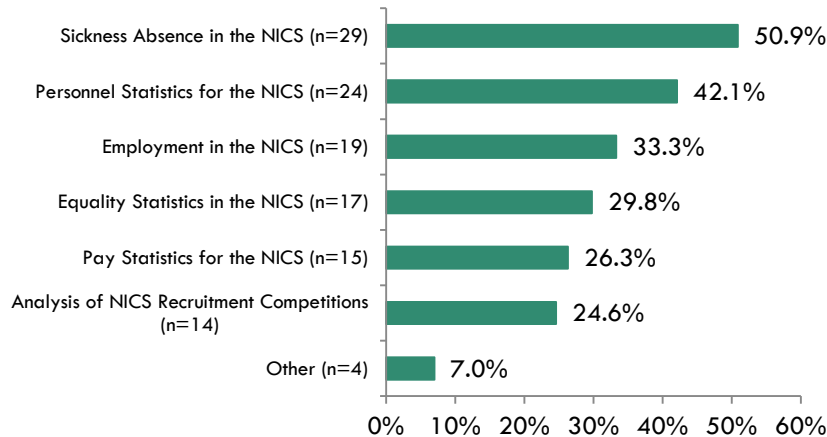
A total of 57 service users completed the questionnaire resulting in a response rate of 31%. The vast majority (93%) of respondents worked for the NICS; remaining responses came from other non-NICS public sector employees and individuals from the Trade Union/Voluntary Sector or academia. This chapter provides an overview of the scale of and reasons for use of HRCS publications.

### 3.1 Use by publication type

Chart one shows that the proportion of respondents using each publication ranged from just under 25% for the ‘Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions’ report to almost 51% for that on ‘Sickness Absence in the NICS’. Just under half of respondents said they used more than one publication (Table 1).

A small number of respondents (4) said that they used ‘Other’ HRCS publications. When asked to specify, respondents said they used HR ‘management information’, ‘overtime reports’, ‘equality statistics for a named department’ and ‘resourcing requirements for general service grades and subsequent related ad hoc queries’.

**Chart 1 – Proportion of respondents reporting use of HRCS publications**



**Table 1 – Number of respondents by number of publications used**

Number of publications	Number of respondents	%
1	29 <sup>1</sup>	50.9
2	8	14.0
3	11 <sup>2</sup>	19.3
4	3	5.3
5	4	7.0
6	2	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes 3 respondents who reported using ‘Other’ HRCS publications.

<sup>2</sup>Includes 1 respondent who reported using ‘Other’ HRCS publications.

# 3 Users and Uses of the Statistics

## 3.2 Reasons for use

**Table 2 – Main reasons for using the statistics**

Reason for using the statistics	Overall <sup>1</sup> (n=57)	Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions (n=14)	Employment in the NICS (n=19)	Equality Statistics in the NICS (n=17)	Pay Statistics for the NICS (n=15)	Personnel Statistics for the NICS (n=24)	Sickness Absence in the NICS (n=29)
Policy making/policy monitoring	68.4%	85.7%	73.7%	94.1%	93.3%	75.0%	51.7%
Performance monitoring	54.4%	50.0%	21.1%	29.4%	13.3%	33.3%	79.3%
To aid decisions on resource allocation	22.8%	42.9%	31.6%	23.5%	20.0%	25.0%	13.8%
Personal interest	15.8%	28.6%	26.3%	11.8%	6.7%	16.7%	6.9%
Media related/informing public/public interest	14.0%	0%	31.6%	5.9%	26.7%	12.5%	6.9%
Other (see table 3 for further details)	10.5%	0%	5.3%	0%	6.7%	4.2%	10.3%
To facilitate academic research	3.5%	7.1%	5.3%	5.9%	6.7%	4.2%	3.4%
To inform public marketing campaigns	3.5%	7.1%	0%	11.8%	0%	0%	0%

In general, the most frequently stated reasons for using all six publications were policy making/monitoring, performance monitoring and to aid decisions on resource allocation (Table 2). A small number of respondents (6) said that they used the statistics for ‘other’ reasons. These are documented in table 3.

<sup>1</sup> Respondents selecting a reason for use for more than one publication (e.g. personal interest for Equality, Pay and Absence reports) are counted only once in the overall figure.

**Table 3 – ‘Other’ reported reasons for using the statistics**

HRCS Publication	Other uses
Employment in the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Referral for FOI’.</li> </ul>
Pay Statistics for the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Comparison against Departmental calculated statistics’.</li> </ul>
Personnel Statistics for the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Referral for FOI’.</li> </ul>
Sickness Absence in the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘For purpose of monitoring sickness absence’.</li> <li>• ‘To provide reports to individual G5 commands’.</li> <li>• ‘Working within the management attendance environment’.</li> </ul>



# 4 Satisfaction with the Publications

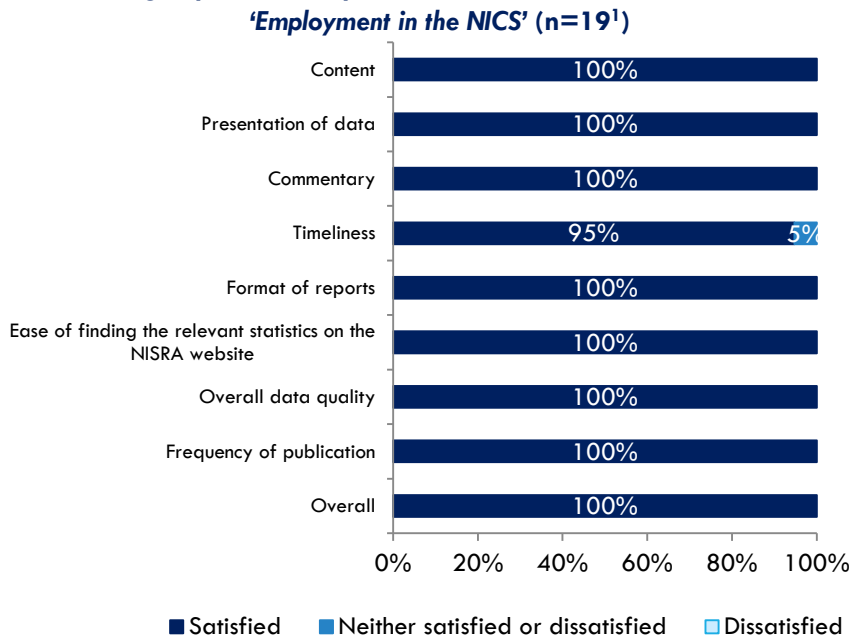
## About this chapter

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with nine aspects relating to the publications that they used. They were also asked for suggested improvements. This chapter provides an overview of the views expressed in relation to these two questions. Note that throughout the body of the report Satisfied refers to 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' responses and Dissatisfied refers to 'Dissatisfied' or 'Very Dissatisfied' responses. A more detailed breakdown can be found in Appendix 1. Planned actions in response to all applicable customer comments are documented in Appendix 2.

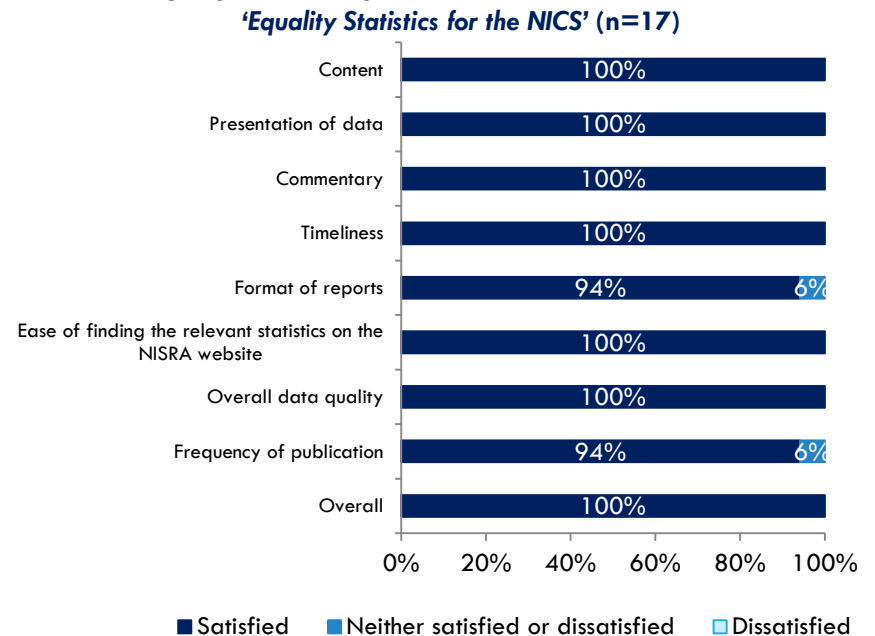
### 4.1 Satisfaction with various aspects of each publication

All respondents using the Employment and Equality publications said they were satisfied with almost all aspects of each of these reports (Charts 2 & 3). A small minority said they had no opinion on the timeliness of the Employment report or the format or frequency of the Equality report. No-one expressed dissatisfaction with any aspect of either of the publications. When invited to suggest improvements one respondent in relation to the equality report said – *'It took me a while to find them but well presented and put together once I located them'*.

**Chart 2 – How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication –**



**Chart 3 – How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication –**



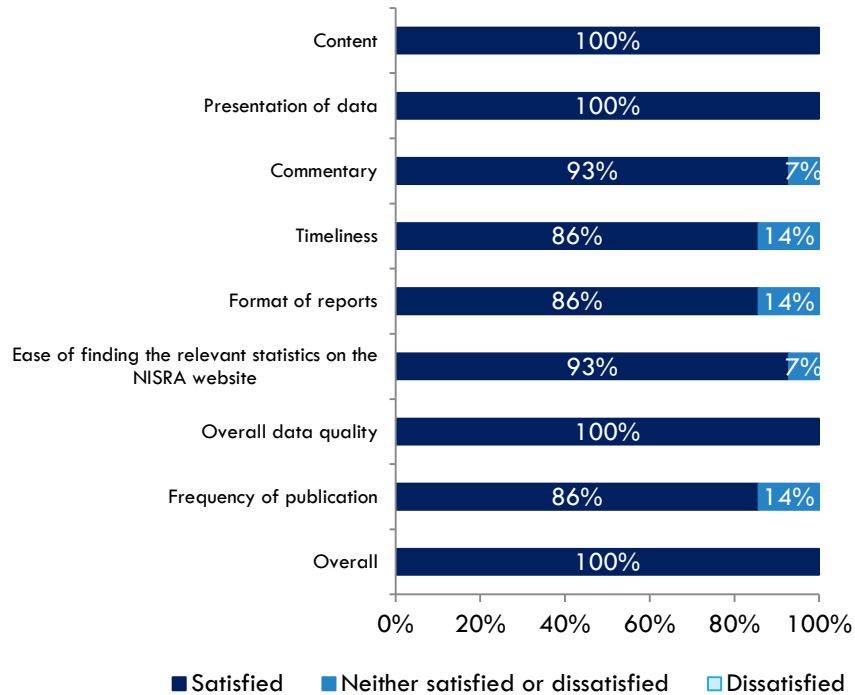
<sup>1</sup>n=19 for all categories with the exception of Ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website where n=18.

# 4 Satisfaction with the Publications

The vast majority of respondents using the Recruitment and Personnel reports said that they were satisfied with all aspects of these two publications (Charts 4 & 5). While a small minority had no opinion on the various aspects surveyed, no-one expressed dissatisfaction and there were no suggested improvements for either report.

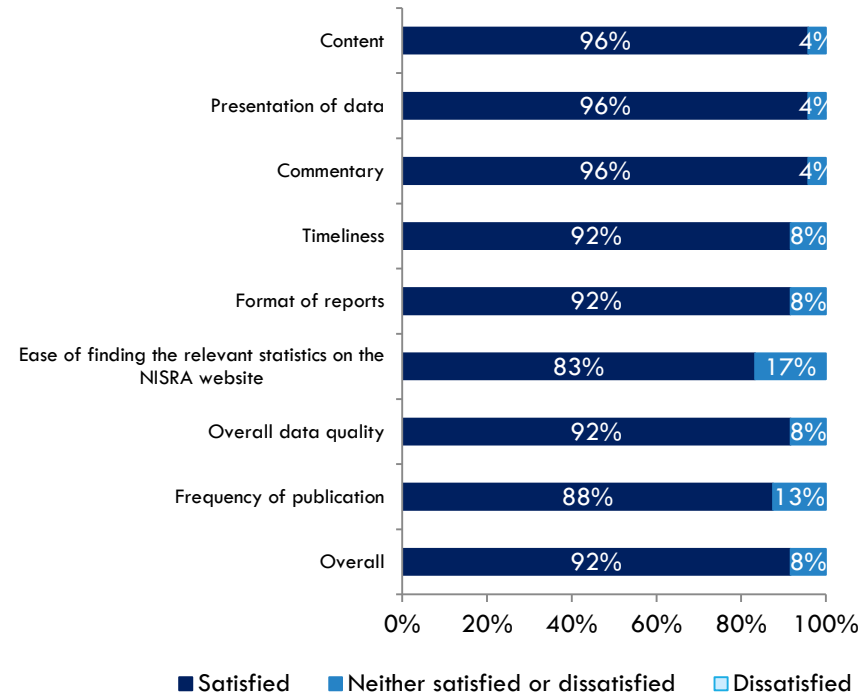
**Chart 4 – How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication –**

**‘Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions’ (n=14)**



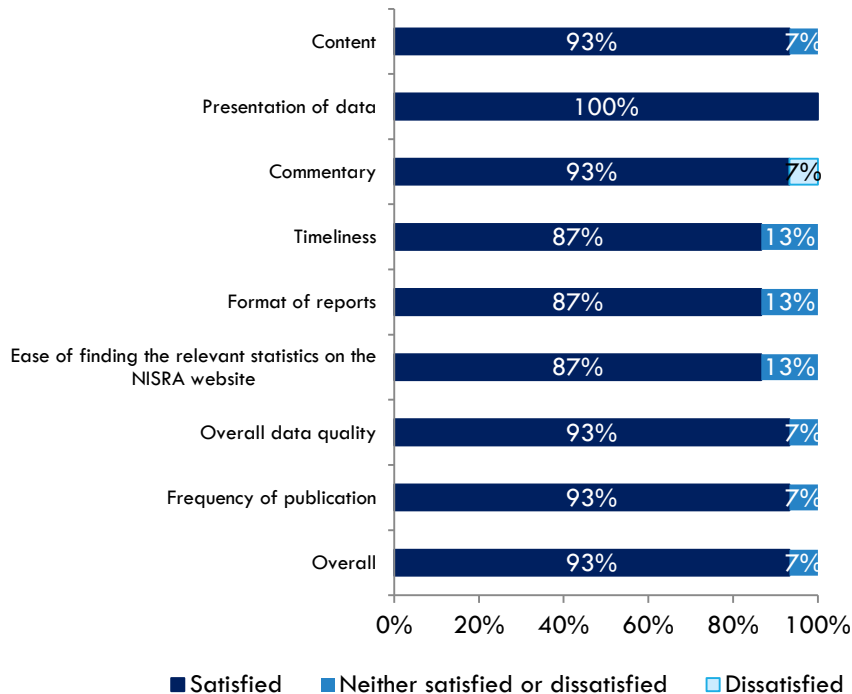
**Chart 5 – How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication –**

**‘Personnel Statistics for the NICS’ (n=24)**



# 4 | Satisfaction with the Publications

**Chart 6 – How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication – ‘Pay Statistics for the NICS’ (n=15)**



The vast majority of respondents using the Pay publication said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with all aspects (Chart 6). Again a small minority had no opinion on seven of the nine aspects surveyed; one respondent expressed dissatisfaction with the commentary. This was addressed further when they were invited to suggest improvements -

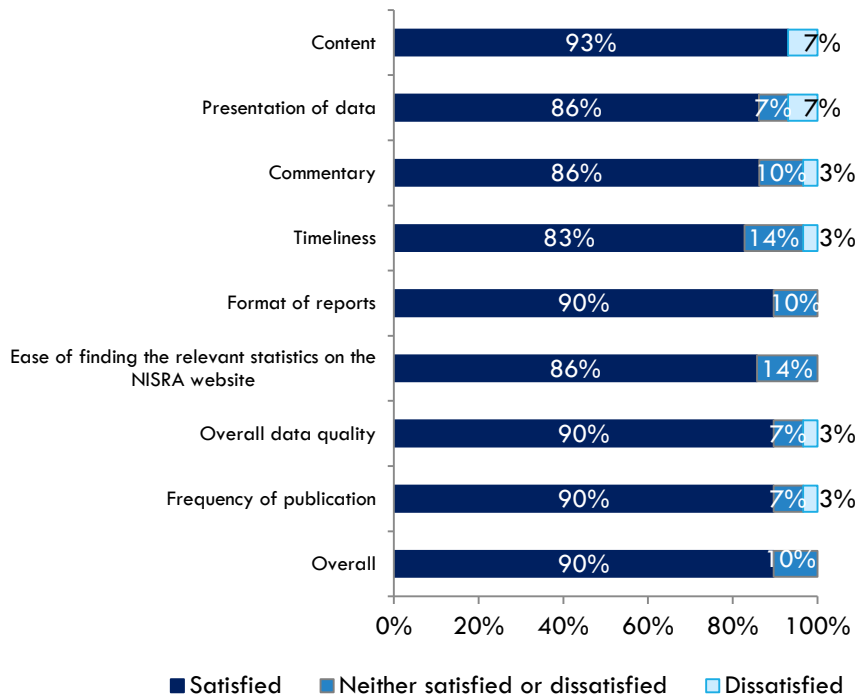
- *‘It would be useful to understand better (e.g. by including a commentary) how the comparator departments in GB are chosen - is it random or ease of access to data or because the make-up of the staff is similar to that in the NICS? Currently it does not provide a very convincing comparison because no explanation (from memory) is provided. Each year the statistics are routinely misinterpreted by media - I wonder if analysis of media mistakes could help make the commentary/presentation of data less open to misinterpretation?’*

An additional suggestion was put forward by a second respondent -

- *‘It would be helpful if the stats could be published earlier in the year. The summary commentary, whilst factual, often appears to select facts which present NICS in a poor light and the reality is that media pick these up verbatim and use them as "sound bites" A more balanced selection of the facts showing a broader range of analysis would be appreciated’.*

# 4 | Satisfaction with the Publications

**Chart 7 – How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication – ‘Sickness Absence in the NICS’ (n=29<sup>1</sup>)**



Again the vast majority of respondents using the Sickness Absence report said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with all aspects (Chart 7). A small minority had no opinion on eight of the nine aspects surveyed. There was some dissatisfaction expressed by one or two respondents in relation to six of the surveyed aspects. A number of suggestions/comments were made in response to the question inviting suggested improvements -

- *‘Figures are invariably skewed by a minority of long term sickness absentees, also by prison staff. Data does not take into account need for a more positive approach to the problems’.*
- *‘I know you can only produce the information as is, the problem is that some managers do not update the system accurately or timely’.*
- *‘It would be great to have more frequent, NICS-wide absence stats for staff to view’.*
- *‘It would be helpful if it could be produced slightly earlier in the year’.*
- *‘Prior to July 2017, tables in the detailed organisational breakdown of sickness absence stats were colour coded. This made it easier to identify by Grade 7 & 5 commands, etc. Without colour coding it has become more difficult to breakdown and overall just more difficult to read/follow’.*

<sup>1</sup>n=29 for all categories with the exception of Ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website where n=28.

# 4 | Satisfaction with the Publications

**Chart 8 – How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication – ‘Overall for all publications combined’ (n=118<sup>1</sup>)**

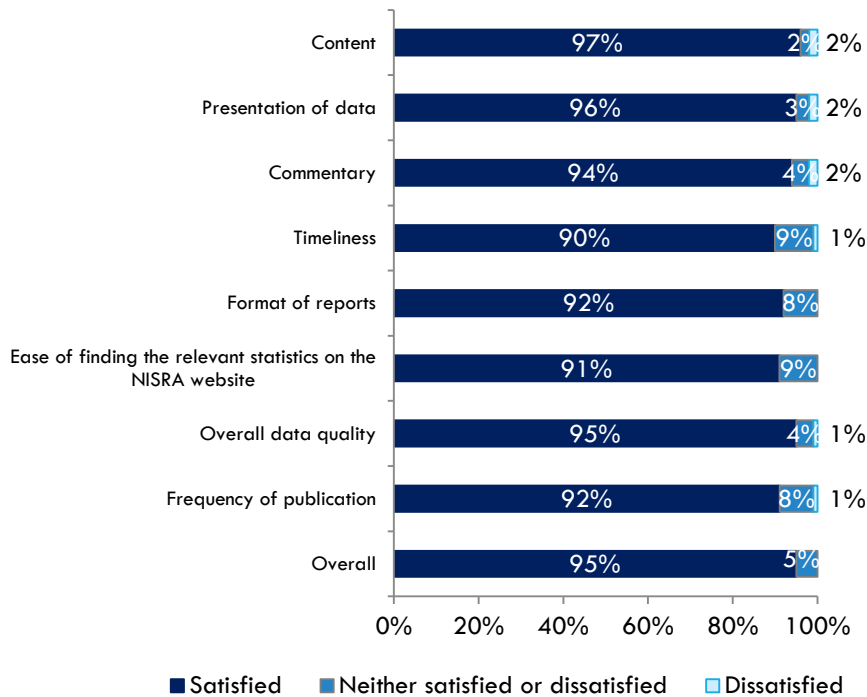


Chart 8 highlights the levels of satisfaction for all 6 HRCS statistical outputs combined from the 2018 Customer Survey. Satisfaction levels for the various aspects ranged from 90% for Timeliness to 97% for Content. The overall level of satisfaction with the reports was 95%.



<sup>1</sup>n=118 for all categories with the exception of Ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website where n=116.

# 5 Meeting Customer Need

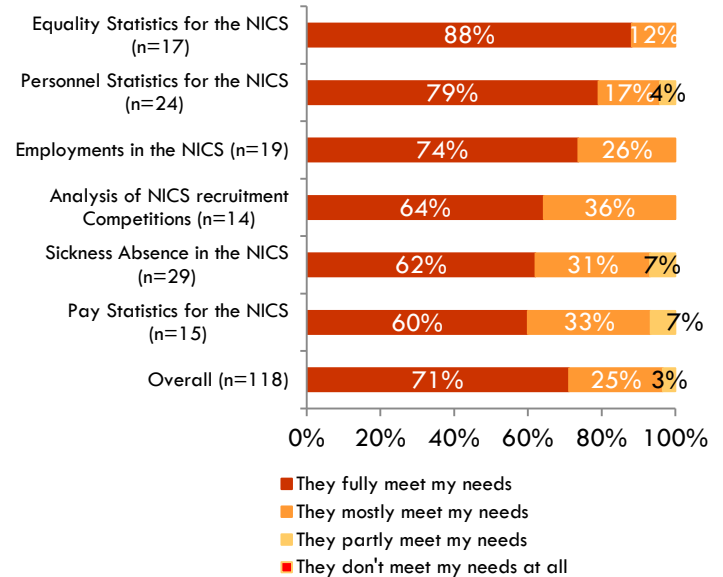
## About this chapter

Respondents were asked to rate the extent that the statistics they used met their needs and how the statistics could better meet their needs. This chapter provides an overview of the views expressed in relation to these two questions.

## 5.1 Meeting needs

Almost all of the respondents said that the statistics they used fully or mostly met their needs (Chart 9). A small number of users of the Personnel, Sickness Absence and Pay reports said that their needs were partly met. Suggestions for how needs could be better met were given for five of the six publications; these are documented in table 4 below.

**Chart 9 – Please rate how the statistics meet your needs**



**Table 4 – How could these statistics better meet your needs?**

HRCS Publication	Suggestion for better meeting needs
Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘Lack of comment on "significance" of results from small samples may lead to unwarranted conclusions being drawn’.</li> </ul>
Employment in the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘Further breakdown by Department would be helpful’.</li> </ul>
Pay Statistics for the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘They could provide an explanation of the rationale behind choice of comparator departments in GB. I also wonder if any consideration of comparison with ROI civil service rates has been considered - this might not be practical as grades tend to be a bit different in ROI’.</li> </ul>
Personnel Statistics for the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘Further breakdown by Department would be helpful’.</li> <li>‘Historic data would be useful for comparative purposes’.</li> </ul>
Sickness Absence in the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘If I had more staff I would want to see how it relates to those individuals rather than the Global NICS outturn’.</li> <li>‘More detailed comparison statistics between main business areas within departments’.</li> <li>‘There are aspects which are not broken down to agency level’.</li> </ul>

# 6 | Satisfaction with the Service Provided by HRCS Staff

## About this chapter

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with staff in HRCS. They were also asked for any other suggestions of how the statistics/service could better meet customer need. This chapter provides an overview of the views expressed in relation to these two questions.

### 6.1 Satisfaction with various aspects

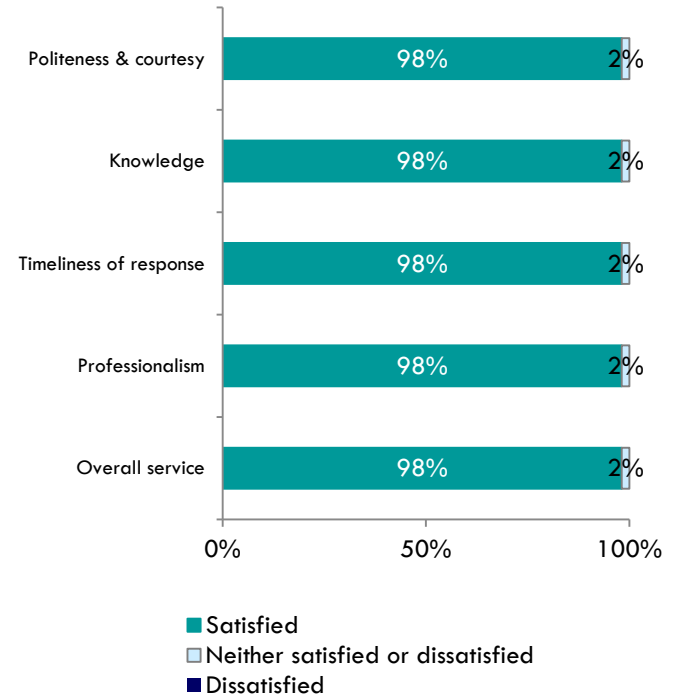
Almost all respondents said that they were satisfied with each of the aspects surveyed (Chart 10). A small minority said they had no opinion. No-one expressed any dissatisfaction.

A small number of comments were made relating to how statistics/services could be improved to meet customer need -

- 'Addition of historical data for comparative purposes'.
- 'Prior to July 2017, tables in the detailed organisational breakdown of sickness absence stats were colour coded. This made it easier to identify by Grade 7 & 5 commands, etc. Without colour coding it has become more difficult to breakdown and overall just more difficult to read / follow'.
- 'A first class service from a first class team'.
- '[Named staff member] is in particular a completely dedicated member of the team who goes out of their way to deliver an excellent service, very often with challenging deadlines'.
- 'No - I always find the service to be very helpfully delivered'.

Like all the comments in this report planned actions are documented in Appendix 2.

**Chart 10 – How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with staff in HRCS in terms of:**



## Appendix 1 – Breakdown of Results Looking at Satisfaction with Publications

**How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication – ‘Employment in the NICS’ (n=19<sup>1</sup>)**

Aspect	Number					%				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Content	8	11	0	0	0	42.1%	57.9%	0%	0%	0%
Presentation of data	8	11	0	0	0	42.1%	57.9%	0%	0%	0%
Commentary	8	11	0	0	0	42.1%	57.9%	0%	0%	0%
Timeliness	8	10	1	0	0	42.1%	52.6%	5.3%	0%	0%
Format of reports	8	11	0	0	0	42.1%	57.9%	0%	0%	0%
Ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website	7	11	0	0	0	38.9%	61.1%	0%	0%	0%
Overall data quality	9	10	0	0	0	47.4%	52.6%	0%	0%	0%
Frequency of publication	8	11	0	0	0	42.1%	57.9%	0%	0%	0%
Overall	8	11	0	0	0	42.1%	57.9%	0%	0%	0%

<sup>1</sup>n=19 for all categories with the exception of ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website where n=18.



## Appendix 1 – Breakdown of Results Looking at Satisfaction with Publications

**How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication –  
'Equality Statistics for the NICS' (n=17)**

Aspect	Number					%				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Content	7	10	0	0	0	41.2%	58.8%	0%	0%	0%
Presentation of data	7	10	0	0	0	41.2%	58.8%	0%	0%	0%
Commentary	7	10	0	0	0	41.2%	58.8%	0%	0%	0%
Timeliness	6	11	0	0	0	35.3%	64.7%	0%	0%	0%
Format of reports	7	9	1	0	0	41.2%	52.9%	5.9%	0%	0%
Ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website	5	12	0	0	0	29.4%	70.6%	0%	0%	0%
Overall data quality	7	10	0	0	0	41.2%	58.8%	0%	0%	0%
Frequency of publication	4	12	1	0	0	23.5%	70.6%	5.9%	0%	0%
Overall	6	11	0	0	0	35.3%	64.7%	0%	0%	0%

## Appendix 1 – Breakdown of Results Looking at Satisfaction with Publications

**How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication –  
‘Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions’ (n=14)**

Aspect	Number					%				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Content	5	9	0	0	0	35.7%	64.3%	0%	0%	0%
Presentation of data	4	10	0	0	0	28.6%	71.4%	0%	0%	0%
Commentary	3	10	1	0	0	21.4%	71.4%	7.1%	0%	0%
Timeliness	4	8	2	0	0	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%	0%	0%
Format of reports	4	8	2	0	0	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%	0%	0%
Ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website	4	9	1	0	0	28.6%	64.3%	7.1%	0%	0%
Overall data quality	5	9	0	0	0	35.7%	64.3%	0%	0%	0%
Frequency of publication	5	7	2	0	0	35.7%	50.0%	14.3%	0%	0%
Overall	3	11	0	0	0	21.4%	78.6%	0%	0%	0%

## Appendix 1 – Breakdown of Results Looking at Satisfaction with Publications

**How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication –  
'Personnel Statistics for the NICS' (n=24)**

Aspect	Number					%				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Content	15	8	1	0	0	62.5%	33.3%	4.2%	0%	0%
Presentation of data	15	8	1	0	0	62.5%	33.3%	4.2%	0%	0%
Commentary	14	9	1	0	0	58.3%	37.5%	4.2%	0%	0%
Timeliness	12	10	2	0	0	50.0%	41.7%	8.3%	0%	0%
Format of reports	12	10	2	0	0	50.0%	41.7%	8.3%	0%	0%
Ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website	12	8	4	0	0	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	0%	0%
Overall data quality	14	8	2	0	0	58.3%	33.3%	8.3%	0%	0%
Frequency of publication	14	7	3	0	0	58.3%	29.2%	12.5%	0%	0%
Overall	13	9	2	0	0	54.2%	37.5%	8.3%	0%	0%

## Appendix 1 – Breakdown of Results Looking at Satisfaction with Publications

**How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication –  
'Pay Statistics for the NICS' (n=15)**

Aspect	Number					%				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Content	8	6	1	0	0	53.3%	40.0%	6.7%	0%	0%
Presentation of data	9	6	0	0	0	60.0%	40.0%	0%	0%	0%
Commentary	8	6	0	1	0	53.3%	40.0%	0%	6.7%	0%
Timeliness	8	5	2	0	0	53.3%	33.3%	13.3%	0%	0%
Format of reports	9	4	2	0	0	60.0%	26.7%	13.3%	0%	0%
Ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website	9	4	2	0	0	60.0%	26.7%	13.3%	0%	0%
Overall data quality	10	4	1	0	0	66.7%	26.7%	6.7%	0%	0%
Frequency of publication	10	4	1	0	0	66.7%	26.7%	6.7%	0%	0%
Overall	8	6	1	0	0	53.3%	40.0%	6.7%	0%	0%

## Appendix 1 – Breakdown of Results Looking at Satisfaction with Publications

**How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication – ‘Sickness Absence in the NICS’ (n=29<sup>1</sup>)**

Aspect	Number					%				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Content	13	14	0	2	0	44.8%	48.3%	0%	6.9%	0%
Presentation of data	11	14	2	1	1	37.9%	48.3%	6.9%	3.4%	3.4%
Commentary	8	17	3	1	0	27.6%	58.6%	10.3%	3.4%	0%
Timeliness	7	17	4	1	0	24.1%	58.6%	13.8%	3.4%	0%
Format of reports	8	18	3	0	0	27.6%	62.1%	10.3%	0%	0%
Ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website	9	15	4	0	0	32.1%	53.6%	14.3%	0%	0%
Overall data quality	11	15	2	1	0	37.9%	51.7%	6.9%	3.4%	0%
Frequency of publication	10	16	2	1	0	34.5%	55.2%	6.9%	3.4%	0%
Overall	11	15	3	0	0	37.9%	51.7%	10.3%	0%	0%

<sup>1</sup>n=29 for all categories with the exception of ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website where n=28.

## Appendix 1 – Breakdown of Results Looking at Satisfaction with Publications

**How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the publication – ‘Overall for all publications combined’ (n=118<sup>1</sup>)**

Aspect	Number					%				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Content	56	58	2	2	0	47.5%	49.2%	1.7%	1.7%	0%
Presentation of data	54	59	3	1	1	45.8%	50.0%	2.5%	0.8%	0.8%
Commentary	48	63	5	2	0	40.7%	53.4%	4.2%	1.7%	0%
Timeliness	45	61	11	1	0	38.1%	51.7%	9.3%	0.8%	0%
Format of reports	48	60	10	0	0	40.7%	50.8%	8.5%	0%	0%
Ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website	46	59	11	0	0	39.7%	50.9%	9.5%	0%	0%
Overall data quality	56	56	5	1	0	47.5%	47.5%	4.2%	0.8%	0%
Frequency of publication	51	57	9	1	0	43.2%	48.3%	7.6%	0.8%	0%
Overall	49	63	6	0	0	41.5%	53.4%	5.1%	0%	0%

<sup>1</sup>n=118 for all categories with the exception of ease of finding the relevant statistics on the NISRA website where n=116.

## Appendix 2 – HRCS Response to Suggested Improvements

This section provides an overview of planned actions relating to all customer comments/suggestions.

Publication	Customer Comment/Suggestion	HRCS Response
Analysis of NICS Recruitment Competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>'Lack of comment on "significance" of results from small samples may lead to unwarranted conclusions being drawn'.</i></li> </ul>	<p>This is a difficult point to address, as the normal rules of 'statistical significance' do not apply when comparing 'actual' and 'expected' aggregated results for competitions. Tests of statistical significance could only be applied to individual competitions. NISRA supplies data regularly on key stages of recruitment competitions to NICS HR who inform the Civil Service Commissioners, but these reports do not currently provide information on the statistical significance of the results. Furthermore, a statistically significant finding may not be of any practical importance. The commentary as currently employed takes care to only draw attention to aspects which are worthy of mention, typically when the under-representation is 5 people or more and the size of under-representation for an equality group is 10% lower than would be expected.</p>
Employment in the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>'Further breakdown by Department would be helpful'.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The publication already provides breakdowns of headcount, fte, permanent/temporary by Department and Gender and headcount by Department and Analogous Grade for permanent staff. It isn't clear what other breakdowns would be appropriate, without veering into equality aspects which are catered for at an NICS level in the Equality Statistics publication. Perhaps departmental full-time/part-time proportions would be useful. There is no clear evidence though from staff-in-post queries what additional inclusions would be useful. The only possibilities for inclusion I can think of are home location, work location, SOC, length of service and occupational group.</p>
Equality Statistics for the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>'It took me a while to find them but well presented and put together once I located them'.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Individuals with a likely interest in Equality statistics, currently receive an email containing a link to the online publication on the morning that the report is released. HRCS will review whether additional individuals need to be informed.</p>

## Appendix 2 – HRCS Response to Suggested Improvements

Publication	Customer Comment/Suggestion	HRCS Response
<p>Pay Statistics for the NICS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘It would be useful to understand better (e.g. by including a commentary) how the comparator departments in GB are chosen - is it random or ease of access to data or because the make-up of the staff is similar to that in the NICS? Currently it does not provide a very convincing comparison because no explanation (from memory) is provided. Each year the statistics are routinely misinterpreted by media - I wonder if analysis of media mistakes could help make the commentary/presentation of data less open to misinterpretation?’</i></li> <li>• <i>‘It would be helpful if the stats could be published earlier in the year. The summary commentary, whilst factual, often appears to select facts which present NICS in a poor light and the reality is that media pick these up verbatim and use them as "sound bites" A more balanced selection of the facts showing a broader range of analysis would be appreciated’.</i></li> <li>• <i>‘They could provide an explanation of the rationale behind choice of comparator departments in GB. I also wonder if any consideration of comparison with ROI civil service rates has been considered - this might not be practical as grades tend to be a bit different in ROI’.</i></li> </ul>	<p>HRCS will undertake to expand the notes and commentary to better explain how comparative information, particularly with regards to comparator Departments in GB, is chosen, presented and interpreted. HRCS will review the commentary in the Pay Statistics bulletin, to determine if this could potentially result in any misinterpretation or misunderstanding. HRCS is committed to improving the quality of our outputs in line with best practice and customer requirements.</p> <p>The publication date of the annual Pay Statistics bulletin is scheduled to coincide with publication of the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). That Survey is the only source of information that allows HRCS to compare NICS pay with pay in the wider public sector (i.e. not just the NICS) and also the private sector in Northern Ireland. It would be possible to publish the Pay Statistics bulletin earlier in the year, but we would have to exclude ASHE data comparison in order to do that. HRCS will explore options for earlier publication. As stated above, HRCS will review the commentary in the Pay Statistics bulletin, to determine if this could potentially result in any misinterpretation or misunderstanding.</p> <p>Please see comments at the top of the page in relation to the comparator departments in GB. With regard to comparisons with RoI, HRCS have investigated this and can confirm that data are not available in a form which would enable us to make valid and meaningful comparisons between NICS and the Civil Service in the RoI. Some information is available from the Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS) which is carried out annually by the RoI Central Statistics Office. HRCS will investigate whether this Survey could provide timely and valid comparisons between the NI and RoI public sectors generally (as per the ASHE data mentioned previously) for inclusion in future publications.</p>



## Appendix 2 – HRCS Response to Suggested Improvements

Publication	Customer Comment/Suggestion	HRCS Response
Personnel Statistics for the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘Further breakdown by Department would be helpful’.</i></li> <li>• <i>‘Historic data would be useful for comparative purposes’.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The FTE number of staff by department is currently provided in the report. HRCS will review what other departmental breakdowns are appropriate and provide where possible.</p> <p>Information relating to staff numbers both overall and in terms of part-time and casual workers is provided in the report for the last three years. HRCS will review what historic data is available and provide where possible.</p>
Sickness Absence in the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘Figures are invariably skewed by a minority of long term sickness absentees, also by prison staff. Data does not take into account need for a more positive approach to the problems’.</i></li> <li>• <i>‘I know you can only produce the information as is, the problem is that some managers do not update the system accurately or timely’.</i></li> <li>• <i>‘It would be great to have more frequent, NICS-wide absence stats for staff to view’.</i></li> </ul>	<p>This comment relates to the NICS policy on sickness absence and its implementation by management and therefore falls outside the remit of the statistical report which impartially reports the data in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics.</p> <p>These issues are noted in the <i>Accuracy and Reliability</i> section of Appendix 1 of the publication and reflect some of the limitations of statistics derived from administrative IT systems. Data downloads are extracted five weeks after the end of each financial year in order to reduce the impact of delays in updating the system. In relation to the accuracy of the information, managers and staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities but there is no independent means of verification.</p> <p>Regular NICS-wide absence statistics are provided as internal management information to NICS HR. HRCS will investigate with NICS HR the possibility of providing more frequent NICS-wide headline figures to a wider audience.</p>

## Appendix 2 – HRCS Response to Suggested Improvements

Publication	Customer Comment/Suggestion	HRCS Response
Sickness Absence in the NICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'It would be helpful if it could be produced slightly earlier in the year'.</i></li> <li>• <i>'Prior to July 2017, tables in the detailed organisational breakdown of sickness absence stats were colour coded. This made it easier to identify by Grade 7 &amp; 5 commands, etc. Without colour coding it has become more difficult to breakdown and overall just more difficult to read/follow'.</i></li> <li>• <i>'If I had more staff I would want to see how it relates to those individuals rather than the Global NICS outturn'.</i></li> <li>• <i>'More detailed comparison statistics between main business areas within departments'.</i></li> <li>• <i>'There are aspects which are not broken down to agency level'.</i></li> </ul>	<p>We will continue to review our processes with a view to finding further efficiencies in addition to those which have already enabled us to publish consistently in September for the last few years. There is only a small team available to work on this report which can only be prepared around the production of our monthly internal management reports.</p> <p>This comment relates to our internal monthly sickness absence reports rather than the annual publication. We will, however, reinstate the colour coding for the specific report mentioned.</p> <p>Providing such a level of detail in the annual publication would dramatically increase its size and complexity. However, internal monthly sickness absence reports are available to NICS HR which already provide this level of disaggregation.</p> <p>This comment probably relates to our internal monthly sickness absence reports rather than the annual publication. It is our intention to review the content of these internal reports with NICS HR and this issue will be raised with them then. Providing such a level of detail in the annual publication would dramatically increase its size and complexity and would not be feasible.</p> <p>This comment relates to our internal monthly sickness absence reports rather than the annual publication. It is our intention to review the content of these internal reports with NICS HR and this issue will be raised with them during that process.</p>