



Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency

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Burden to Households & Individuals of Completing Statistical Surveys issued by Northern Ireland Departments, 2019/20

Statistics Bulletin

Summary of Key Findings

- There were 154 surveys or parts of surveys¹, issued to households and individuals by Northern Ireland Government Departments and their Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) in 2019/20 and 331,500 responses were received.
- The estimated total burden to NI households and individuals in 2019/20 was 54,395 hours, or 2,266 days. This represents a reduction of 5,319 hours or 222 days compared to 2018/19. The Department of Finance (DoF) was the department responsible for the highest proportion of this burden (26%) and face-to-face methods² accounted for the highest proportion of burden by data collection method (40%).
- In 2019/20, the average time taken to complete a survey, or part of a survey, was 9.8 minutes³ which compares to 11.9 minutes in 2018/19. However, there was a wide variance in completion times across surveys, with the shortest survey taking on average less than a minute to complete, and the longest survey taking on average just under three hours per respondent⁴.
- There were three surveys in 2019/20 with an estimated compliance burden of over 3,000 hours. These surveys were responsible for approximately one fifth (21%) of the total compliance burden. They were the *Labour Force Survey*, the *Health Survey Northern Ireland* and the *2019 Census Rehearsal*⁵.

¹ When several NI Government Departments share a single survey vehicle, such as the *Continuous Household Survey* or the *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey*, each part of the survey is counted separately. This means that these surveys, and the respondents to these surveys, will be counted more than once. The compliance burden however is based on the time spent responding to the part of the survey and is estimated by apportioning the total compliance burden for the survey.

² Surveys have been categorised as face-to-face, paper, telephone, electronic (online/email/TDE/DVR) or mixed methods. Telephone Data Entry (TDE) and Digital Voice Recognition (DVR) are included under electronic methods. TDE is a data collection method where data are entered using the telephone keypad.

³ The average time taken to complete a survey has been calculated as the total compliance burden divided by the total number of responses.

⁴ The longest survey (*National Diet and Nutrition Survey*) includes participation in a face-to-face interview and completion of an online diet tool.

⁵ The *Continuous Household Survey (CHS)* and *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (YPBAS)* are also large surveys but each part (or share) of these surveys is counted separately. The total compliance burden due to the CHS was 3,800 hours and the total compliance burden due to YPBAS was 5,600 hours.

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1. Background

This 2019/20 report is the fifth in an annual series detailing the burden to households and individuals of completing Government Statistical Surveys in Northern Ireland; the first report covered both 2015/16 and 2014/15. This report complements the more established annual report on the Cost to Business of complying with NI Government Statistical surveys⁶.

The [Code of Practice for Statistics](#)⁷ has a statutory basis⁸ and recognises the importance of monitoring and reducing respondent burden, balanced with the need to produce official statistics that are fundamental to good government and provide a good evidence base to inform public policy:

V5.5 Statistics producers should be transparent in their approach to monitoring and reducing the burden on those providing their information, and on those involved in collecting, recording and supplying data. The burden imposed should be proportionate to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.

It is on this basis that NISRA produces an annual report detailing the burden placed on households and individuals as a result of completing statistical surveys issued by Northern Ireland Departments.

This report includes information on the number of surveys, or parts of surveys, issued by NI Departments (including their Arm's Length Bodies) in the financial year ending 31st March 2020, and the time spent by households and individuals in complying with these regular and ad-hoc Government surveys. Department's names have been abbreviated as shown in Appendix D.

The application of the survey control methodology was reviewed prior to the 2016/17 data collection and improved guidance produced. This has resulted in a discontinuity in the time series as some surveys, and types of surveys, which were excluded prior to 2016/17 are now included; specifically surveys carried out by Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs), and some participant evaluation surveys, customer surveys and surveys which have a secondary operational purpose. Further details are provided in Appendix A3.

⁶ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/ni-statistical-surveys-assessment-burden>

⁷ <https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/the-code/>

⁸ Statistics and Registration Service Act (2007) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/18/contents>

Useful Links:

- [Previous publications in this series](#)
- [Cost to Business publications](#)
- [Code of Practice for Statistics](#)
- [NISRA publications and datasets](#)

- [Downloadable data](#)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) no longer produces a report or comparable data for England and Wales, although some Government Departments publish information for their own department.

2. Definitions

In this report a survey refers to a single survey, or part of a survey, carried out by or on behalf of a NI Government Department. When a survey is shared by a number of Departments, each part of the survey will be treated as a separate survey. This means a single survey vehicle could be counted multiple times.

The number of responses is based on the achieved sample for the survey, or part of the survey. When a survey is shared by more than one Department, each single respondent will be counted as a response to each part of the survey. Thus when responses are aggregated across Departments, some respondents will be counted multiple times.

The compliance burden due to a survey is defined as the **time spent** by the household or individual in responding to the survey, or part of the survey⁹.

In this report, surveys that contribute to National or official statistics are referred to as 'official statistics' surveys, and surveys that do not contribute to National or official statistics are referred to as 'other statistics' surveys.

The average time to complete a survey has been calculated as the total compliance burden for the group of surveys (or parts of surveys) divided by the total number of responses for the group of surveys (or parts of surveys).

⁹ While the survey and respondents to the survey, will be counted more than once, the compliance burden is calculated based on the relevant part of the survey and is estimated by apportioning the total compliance burden for the survey.

3. Compliance Burden to Households and Individuals

In 2019/20, there were 154 surveys, or parts of surveys¹⁰, issued to households and individuals by Northern Ireland Government Departments. The total estimated compliance burden was 54,395 hours or 2,266 days.

In this report, a survey refers to a single survey or part of a survey carried out by or on behalf of a NI Government Department. A single survey vehicle shared by a number of different Government Departments will be counted multiple times.

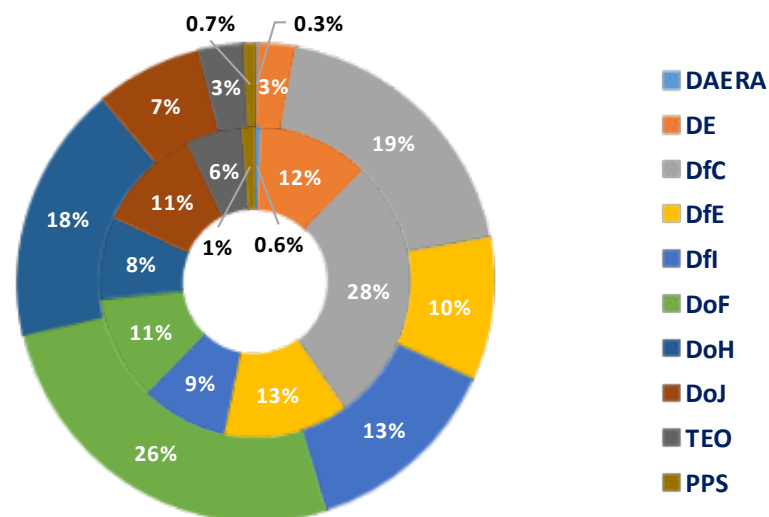
Over a quarter of all surveys of households and individuals were conducted by DfC (28%), followed by DfE (13%) and DE (12%). DoF and DoJ were each responsible for 11% of surveys to households and individuals. As in the previous year, PPS and DAERA carried out the fewest surveys, just 2 and 1 respectively.

Over a quarter (26%) of the compliance burden can be attributed to DoF surveys, while just under one fifth can be attributed to DfC surveys (19%). DoH surveys contributed 18%; DfI contributed 13%; DfE contributed 10%; while DoJ surveys contributed 7% of the total compliance burden.

Table 1: Number and Burden (Hours) for Surveys by Department¹¹

Department	Number of Surveys ¹²	Percentage of Surveys	Compliance Burden (hours)	Percentage of Burden
DAERA	1	0.6%	153	0.3%
DE	18	11.7%	1,398	2.6%
DfC	43	27.9%	10,507	19.3%
DfE	20	13.0%	5,246	9.6%
DfI	14	9.1%	7,301	13.4%
DoF	17	11.0%	14,254	26.2%
DoH	13	8.4%	9,528	17.5%
DoJ	17	11.0%	3,935	7.2%
TEO	9	5.8%	1,670	3.0%
PPS	2	1.3%	404	0.7%
Total	154	100%	54,395	100%

Figure 1: Percentage of Surveys (Inner) & Percentage of Burden (Outer) by Department



¹⁰ When several NI Government Departments share a single survey vehicle, such as the *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey* or the *Continuous Household Survey*, each part of the survey is counted separately. This means that these surveys, and respondents to these surveys, will be counted more than once. The compliance burden however, is based on the time spent responding to the part of the survey and is estimated by apportioning the total compliance burden for the survey.

¹¹ Information on the surveys carried out by each Department is available in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

¹² This includes 10 modules in a single run of the Continuous Household Survey; 8 in the NI Life & Times Survey; 7 in the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey and 4 in the Young Life & Times Survey. Each of these modules is counted separately.

While DoF accounted for 11% of the surveys conducted, these surveys contributed 26% of the total compliance burden. In contrast, DE accounted for 12% of the surveys and contributed 3% of the total compliance burden.

A relatively small number of surveys were responsible for a disproportionate amount of the overall compliance burden to households and individuals. Figure 2 groups surveys by their compliance burden. The blue bars (first bar in each group) show the percentage of surveys in each category and the orange bars show the percentage of the overall compliance burden due to those surveys.

Figure 2 illustrates that although only 16% of surveys had a total survey burden of over 500 hours, these surveys were responsible for 79% of the total burden. In contrast, 46% of surveys had a burden of 49 hours or fewer, and contributed only 2% of the total burden to households and individuals.

In 2019/20, three surveys contributed over 3,000 hours of compliance burden, as a result of large numbers of respondents, and relatively long completion times¹³. The *Labour Force Survey* (DoF), took on average 28 minutes to complete, had 10,709 respondents, and contributed 4,998 hours of compliance burden.

Figure 2: Number of Surveys by Compliance Burden, and Contribution to Overall Compliance Burden

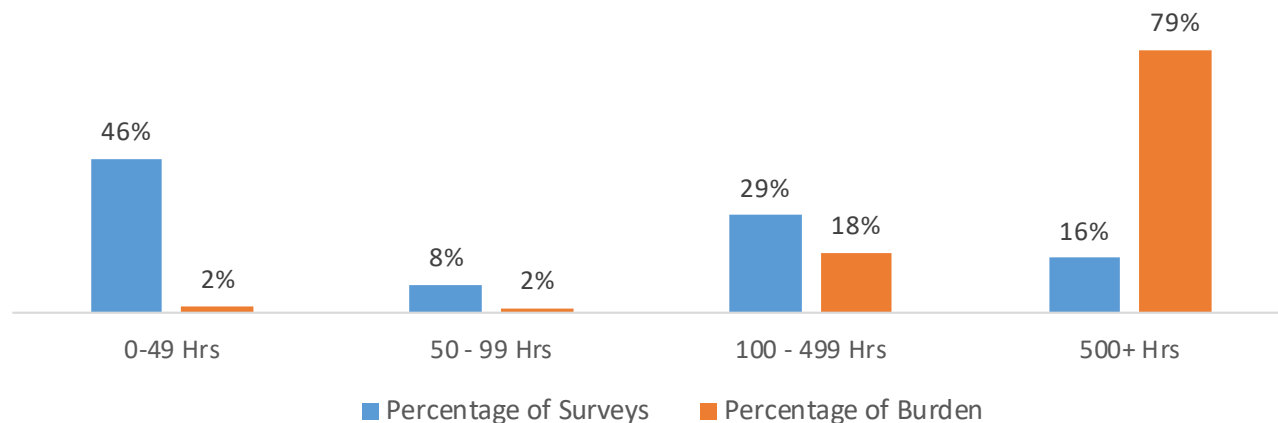
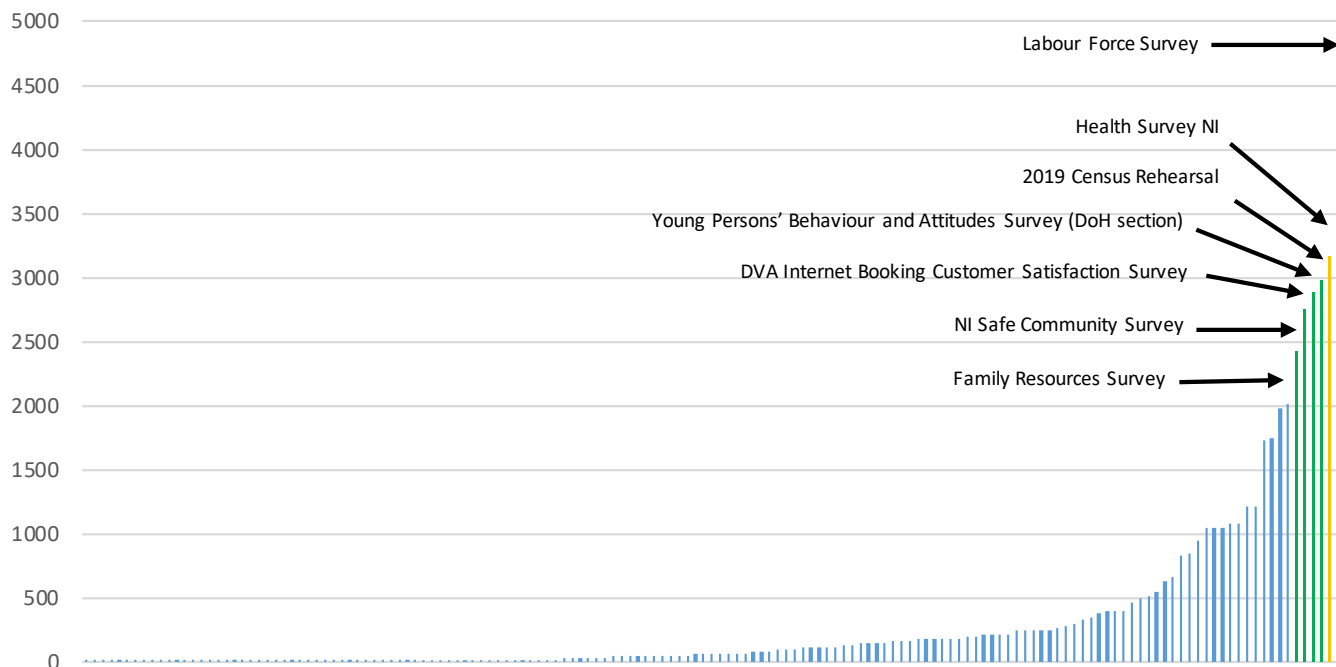


Figure 3: Distribution of Surveys by Total Compliance Burden



¹³ The *Continuous Household Survey (CHS)* and *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (YPBAS)* are also large surveys but each part (or share) of these surveys is counted separately in the analysis. The total compliance burden due to the CHS was 3,800 hours and the total compliance burden due to YPBAS was 5,600 hours.

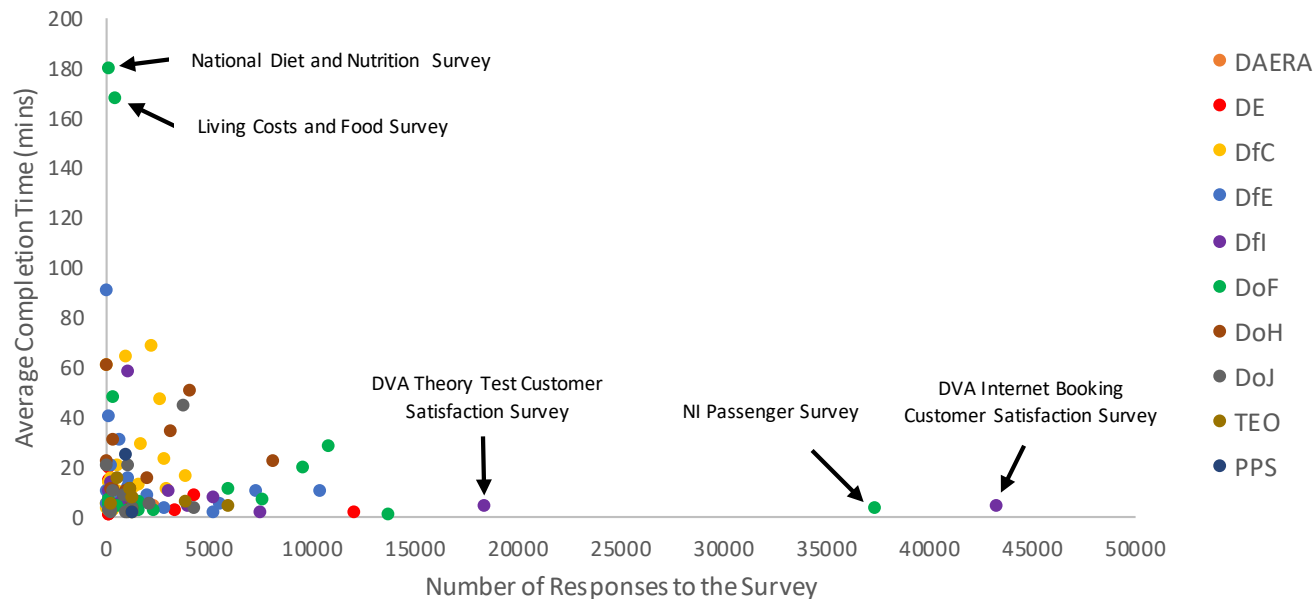
The *Health Survey NI* (DoH) was responsible for 3,404 hours of compliance burden, surveying 4,085 respondents, with an average completion time of 50 minutes. The *2019 Census Rehearsal* contributed 3,167 hours of burden, with 9,500 responses, and had an average completion time of 20 minutes. Together, these three surveys accounted for 21% of the total compliance burden for 2019/20.

In addition, there were four surveys which had an estimated burden of between 2,400 and 3,000 hours. These were the *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitude Survey* (DoH part); *DVA Booking Service – Internet Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey* (DfI); *NI Safe Community Survey* (DoJ) and the *Family Resources Survey NI* (DfC).

Of the seven surveys with a compliance burden greater than 2,400 hours, six contributed to official statistics. These surveys accounted for 56% of the total burden due to official statistics, while the other survey, the *DVA Booking Service – Internet Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey*, contributed 15% of the burden due to other statistics¹⁴.

The total burden due to each survey will depend on both the number of households or individuals responding and the time taken to complete the

Figure 4: Average Completion Time¹⁵ by Number of Responses to the Survey¹⁴



survey, or part of the survey. Figure 4 shows the relationship between these two factors.

There were three outliers in terms of surveys with a high number of responses with low average completion times. The *DVA Booking Service – Internet Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey* (DfI) had 43,242 responses and took on average 4 minutes to complete, as did the *DVA Theory Test Customer Satisfaction Survey* (DfI) which received 18,296 responses. The *NI Passenger Survey* (DoF) had 37,259 responses and an average completion time of just over 3 minutes.¹⁶

In contrast, the *National Diet and Nutrition Survey* (DoF) obtained 85 responses but had an average completion time of 179 minutes. Likewise, the *Living Costs & Food Survey* (DoF) obtained 371 responses and had an average completion time of 168 minutes. Both surveys used face-to-face interviews but also required participants to keep a diary¹⁷. The estimated completion time took account of both components.

¹⁴ Further information on the compliance burden for individual surveys can be found in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

¹⁵ The average completion time has been calculated as the total compliance burden divided by the number of responses.

¹⁶ Completion times for the NI Passenger Survey were revised upwards in 2019/20, resulting in an increase in the average completion time from 24 seconds, to just over 3 minutes. An examination of interviewer recorded completion times (for the shortest interviews; the majority) indicated that the previous estimate was an underestimate.

¹⁷ While the Living Costs and Food survey used a paper diary, in 2019/20 National Diet and Nutrition Survey replaced a paper diary with an online diet tool.

Table 2 shows the average completion time ‘per response’ by NI Government Department, alongside the total number of responses and total compliance burden.

Overall the average completion time ‘per response’ was 9.8 minutes, however there was a wide variance in completion times across surveys, with the shortest survey taking just under a minute to complete (the *International Passenger Survey*) and the longest survey (the *National Diet and Nutrition Survey*) taking on average just under three hours (179 minutes) per respondent¹⁸.

The average completion time ‘per response’ was highest for DoH at 25.4 minutes, followed by DfC at 24.6 minutes.

For DoH, the high average completion time ‘per response’ is a result of the *Health Survey NI* and the *Youth Wellbeing Study NI* which both had a high number of responses (4,085 and 3,074 respectively) and high completion times (50 minutes and 34 minutes respectively).

DfC carried out five large surveys which had high completion times; these were the *Family Resources Survey* (68 minutes; 2,140 responses), the *Sports Club Survey 2019* (64 minutes; 978

Table 2: Average Completion Time¹⁹, Number of Responses²⁰ and Burden by Department

Department	Number of Surveys	Average Time to Complete Surveys (mins)	Number of Responses	Compliance Burden (hours)
DAERA	1	4.0	2,289	153
DE	18	3.8	22,081	1,398
DfC	43	24.6	25,655	10,507
DfE	20	7.8	40,104	5,246
DfI	14	4.9	88,508	7,301
DoF	17	9.3	92,224	14,254
DoH	13	25.4	22,539	9,528
DoJ	17	12.1	19,535	3,935
TEO	9	6.1	16,379	1,670
PPS	2	11.2	2,161	404
Total	154	9.8	331,475	54,395

responses), the *Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey* (47 minutes; 2,600 responses), the *Private Landlords Survey* (29 minutes, 1,719 responses) and the *Customer Exit Survey* (23 minutes; 2,826 responses).

DE had a low average completion time ‘per response’ of 3.8 minutes. This reflects the large *Getting Ready to Learn – Parental Baseline Survey* (with 12,000 responses) which had an average completion time of just 2 minutes. Of the other large surveys carried out by DE, two had an average completion time of 3 minutes (the *Continuous Household Survey (DE Section)*, 1,096 responses and *T:BUC Camps Baseline 2019-20* survey, 3,265 responses), with the third (the *Young Persons’ Behaviour & Attitudes Survey 2019 (DE section)*, 4,226 responses) having an average completion time of 9 minutes.

DoF conducted both the shortest (*International Passenger Survey*; 0.8 minutes) and the longest survey (*National Diet and Nutrition Survey*; 179 minutes). The average completion time per response for DoF was 9.3 minutes, which is in part due to the size of the *International Passenger Survey*, which accounts for 15% of all the responses received by DoF, but only 1.3% of the DoF compliance burden.

¹⁸ Further information on the compliance burden for individual surveys can be found in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

¹⁹ The average completion time has been calculated as the total compliance burden divided by the number of responses.

²⁰ When several NI Government Departments share a single survey vehicle, such as the *Continuous Household Survey* or the *Young Persons’ Behaviour and Attitudes Survey*, each part of the survey is counted separately. This means that these surveys, and the respondents to these surveys, will be counted more than once. The compliance burden however is based on the time spent responding to the part of the survey and is estimated by apportioning the total compliance burden for the survey.

4. Official Statistics & Other Surveys

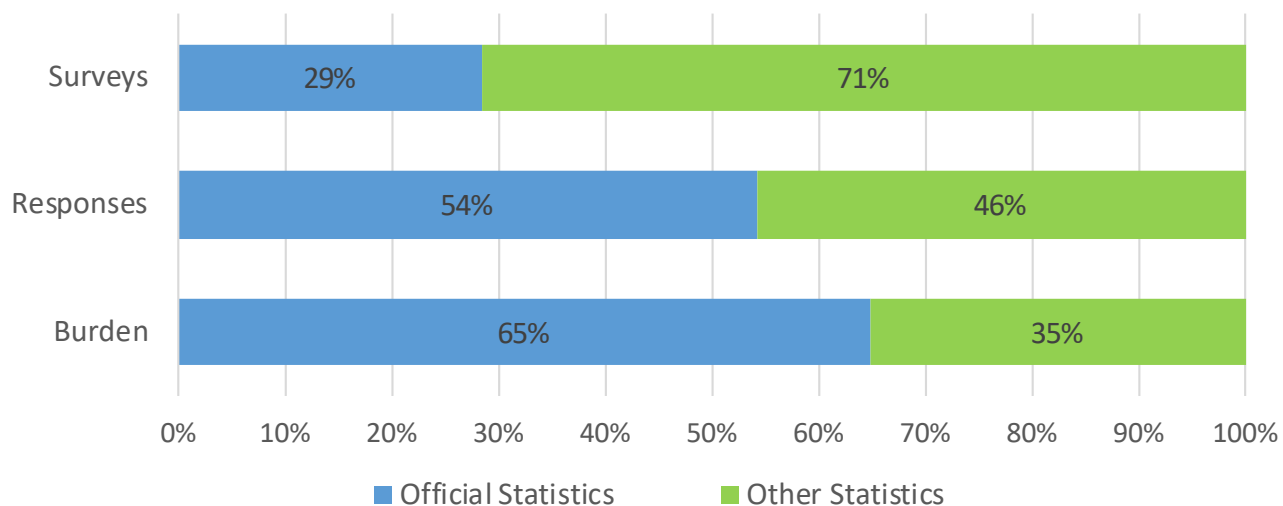
In 2019/20, under three tenths (29%) of surveys of households and individuals contributed towards official statistics (see Figure 5). Some of the surveys which did not contribute to official statistics contributed to policy monitoring, evaluation of a scheme or service, service improvement and customer satisfaction. Surveys contributing to official statistics made up over half of all survey responses (54%) and almost two thirds of the total compliance burden (65%).

DoF conducted the highest number of surveys which contributed to official statistics (14). These accounted for half of the responses (50%) and two fifths of the compliance burden (40%) due to official statistics surveys (Table 3).

The three DoH official statistics surveys accounted for nearly a fifth (19%) of the burden due to official statistics, while the three official statistics surveys carried out by DfC accounted for over a tenth (11%) of the burden. In addition, the five DoJ surveys and four DfE surveys each accounted for around 9% of the burden due to official statistics surveys.

DfC conducted the highest number of surveys (40) which did not contribute to official statistics. These accounted for just over a third (34%) of the compliance burden due to other statistics.

Figure 5: Percentage of Surveys, Responses and Compliance Burden by whether Surveys Contribute to Official Statistics



Despite conducting fewer surveys (11; 10%), DfI surveys contributed just under three tenths (29%) of the compliance burden due to other statistics and accounted for over half of the responses (53%). DoH carried out 10 other statistics surveys which accounted for 16% of the burden due to other statistics.

Of the 14,254 hours of total compliance burden attributable to DoF, 99% of this was due to official statistics surveys. Similarly 91% of the 1,670 hours from TEO, 78% of the 3,935 hours from DoJ and 69% of the 9,528 hours from DoH stemmed from surveys contributing to official statistics. The two surveys conducted by PPS and the single survey conducted by DAERA contributed to official statistics; 404 hours and 153 hours respectively²¹.

In contrast, of the 7,301 hours of compliance burden due to DfI, 77% of this compliance burden was due to surveys which did not contribute to official statistics. Similarly 62% of the 10,507 hours attributed to DfC resulted from surveys which did not contribute to official statistics. The burden was more evenly split between official statistics and other statistics in DE, where 49% of the compliance burden was as a result of official statistics surveys.

²¹ Further information on the compliance burden for individual surveys can be found in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

Table 3: Compliance Burden by Official Statistics and Other Statistics, by NI Department

Department	Official Statistics							Other Statistics						
	Number of Surveys		Number of Responses		Compliance Burden		Average Time to Complete Survey	Number of Surveys		Number of Responses		Compliance Burden		Average Time to Complete Survey
	N	%	N	%	Hours	%	Minutes	N	%	N	%	Hours	%	Minutes
DAERA	1	2.3%	2,289	1.3%	153	0.4%	4.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DE	2	4.5%	5,322	3.0%	689	1.9%	7.8	16	14.5%	16,759	11.1%	709	3.7%	2.5
DfC	3	6.8%	8,989	5.0%	4,005	11.3%	26.7	40	36.4%	16,666	11.0%	6,502	34.1%	23.4
DfE	4	9.1%	24,278	13.5%	3,141	8.9%	7.8	16	14.5%	15,826	10.4%	2,106	11.0%	8.0
DfI	3	6.8%	7,833	4.4%	1,696	4.8%	13.0	11	10.0%	80,675	53.2%	5,604	29.4%	4.2
DoF	14	31.8%	90,220	50.1%	14,067	39.8%	9.4	3	2.7%	2,004	1.3%	187	1.0%	5.6
DoH	3	6.8%	12,553	7.0%	6,556	18.6%	31.3	10	9.1%	9,986	6.6%	2,973	15.6%	17.9
DoJ	5	11.4%	10,611	5.9%	3,083	8.7%	17.4	12	10.9%	8,924	5.9%	852	4.5%	5.7
TEO	7	15.9%	15,683	8.7%	1,525	4.3%	5.8	2	1.8%	696	0.5%	145	0.8%	12.5
PPS	2	4.5%	2,161	1.2%	404	1.1%	11.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	44	100.0%	179,939	100.0%	35,318	100.0%	11.8	110	100.0%	151,536	100.0%	19,077	100.0%	7.6

Table 3 also shows that average completion times ‘per response’²² tend to be higher for surveys which contribute to official statistics.

5. Statutory & Voluntary Surveys

All statistical surveys of households and individuals carried out by NI Government Departments in 2019/20 were voluntary surveys²³.

The use of voluntary surveys for official statistics reflects the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) which states that:

V5.4 Voluntary participation in statistical data collection should be sought, rather than using statutory powers, wherever possible.

²² The average completion time has been calculated as the total compliance burden divided by the number of responses.

²³ Although completion of the survey was voluntary, there may have been a regulatory requirement for the Department to carry out such a survey.

6. Data Collection Methods

Face-to-face surveys (including face-to-face plus a paper diary) remained the most popular method of data collection, comprising 36% of surveys, 39% of all responses and 40% of the total compliance burden. This is similar to 2018/19²⁴.

Electronic data collection (online/email/TDE/DVR²⁵) was the next most popular approach, making up 27% of all surveys, 37% of responses and 25% of compliance burden. This is an increase from 20% of surveys in 2018/19.

There were 26 surveys (17%) using a mixed methods survey design, accounting for 31% of compliance burden and 17% of responses. An online questionnaire/email data collection was the primary method in 11 of them, and a secondary or tertiary method in 7 surveys. Six surveys used face-to-face interviews as the primary method, with nine in total using face-to-face methods. Five surveys used paper questionnaires as the primary method, and seven used them as a secondary method. The remaining four surveys had a telephone interview as their primary method, with in total 15 surveys using a telephone interview as one of their methods.²⁶

Figure 6: Percentage of Total Surveys, Responses and Compliance Burden by Method of Collection^{25,26}

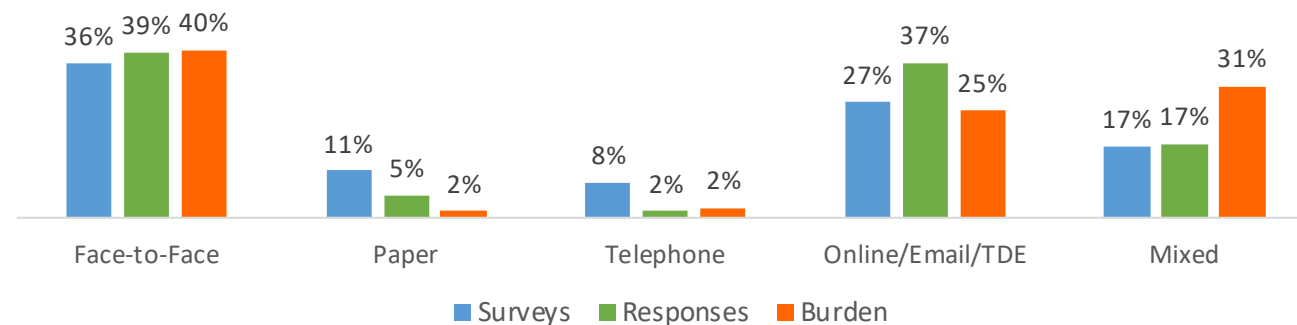


Table 4: Issued Sample Size, Achieved Sample Size, Response Rate and Survey Average Completion Time by Data Collection Method

Method	Number of Surveys	Issued sample size (average)	Achieved sample size (average)	Response Rate (average) ²⁷	Survey Average Completion Time (average) [mins] ²⁸
Face-to-Face	56	3,362	2,307	78%	17.3
Paper	17	2,537	1,035	56%	5.8
Telephone	13	2,002	398	44%	12.6
Online/Email/TDE/DVR ²⁵	42	32,198	2,983	48%	8.4
Mixed	26	7,849	2,230	41%	23.6
Total	154	11,778	2,152	59%	14.3

²⁴ In 2018/19, the percentages were Face-to-face (45% surveys, 42% responses, 36% burden); Paper (14% surveys, 14% responses, 19% burden); Telephone (6% surveys, 3% responses, 5% burden); Online/Email/TDE (20% surveys, 27% responses, 25% burden); Mixed (15% surveys, 13% responses, 14% burden).

²⁵ DVR stands for Digital Voice Recognition and TDE stands for Telephone Data Entry. TDE is a data collection method where the requested data are entered using the telephone keypad.

²⁶ Further information on individual surveys can be found in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

²⁷ Response rate (average) has been calculated as the average of the response rates for all surveys using that method, meaning each survey has equal weight.

²⁸ Survey average completion time (average) has been calculated as the average of the 'average completion time' for all surveys using that method, meaning each survey has equal weight.

Telephone based surveys were the least popular approach, making up 8% of surveys, 2% of responses and 2% of the compliance burden. Paper based surveys made up 11% of surveys, 5% of responses and 2% of the burden.

Electronic methods (online/email/TDE) surveys tended to be used for the largest surveys. This was followed by mixed methods, face-to-face, paper and finally, telephone surveys (see Table 4).

Face-to-face surveys had the highest average response rate (78%) which was 22 percentage points higher than the next most effective data collection method (paper questionnaires).

Mixed-method surveys tended to be the longest, with an average survey completion time of 23.6 minutes; followed by face-to-face surveys with an average completion time of 17.3 minutes. Paper surveys had the lowest average survey completion time at 5.8 minutes. Electronic surveys (online/email/TDE/DVR) had an average completion time of 8.4 minutes, while telephone based surveys took 12.6 minutes on average to complete.

Table 5 shows how different NI Government Departments used the various data collection methods to conduct surveys.

DfC conducted the most surveys of households and individuals overall, and just under half (47%) were face-to-face surveys, while 26% used

Table 5: Collection Methods for Surveys by Department: Number of Surveys and Compliance Burden (hours)

Dept	Face-to-Face		Paper		Telephone		Online/Email/TDE/DVR		Mixed/Multiple	
	N	Burden	N	Burden	N	Burden	N	Burden	N	Burden
DAERA	1	153	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DE	1	55	2	405	1	2	13	772	1	163
DfC	20	3,756	5	182	4	85	11	3,177	3	3,307
DfE	5	687	4	101	1	294	6	1,063	4	3,102
DfI	4	2,194	1	48	2	167	5	4,779	2	111
DoF	11	5,798	1	1	1	29	-	-	4	8,425
DoH	4	5,223	-	-	1	175	3	3,196	5	934
DoJ	5	2,973	3	78	1	3	3	391	5	490
TEO	4	721	1	16	1	128	1	389	2	415
PPS	1	21	-	-	1	383	-	-	-	-
Total	56	21,580	17	833	13	1,267	42	13,768	26	16,948

electronic methods. Paper based surveys accounted for 12%, while telephone based surveys accounted for 9% of DfC surveys. Finally, 7% were mixed methods surveys.

DoF used face-to-face methods for nearly two-thirds (65%) of its surveys, and mixed-methods for just under a quarter of its surveys (24%). TEO carried out nine surveys of which four (44%) were face-to-face surveys. Face-to-face interviews were also employed in one of the two surveys run by PPS, and the single survey conducted by DAERA.

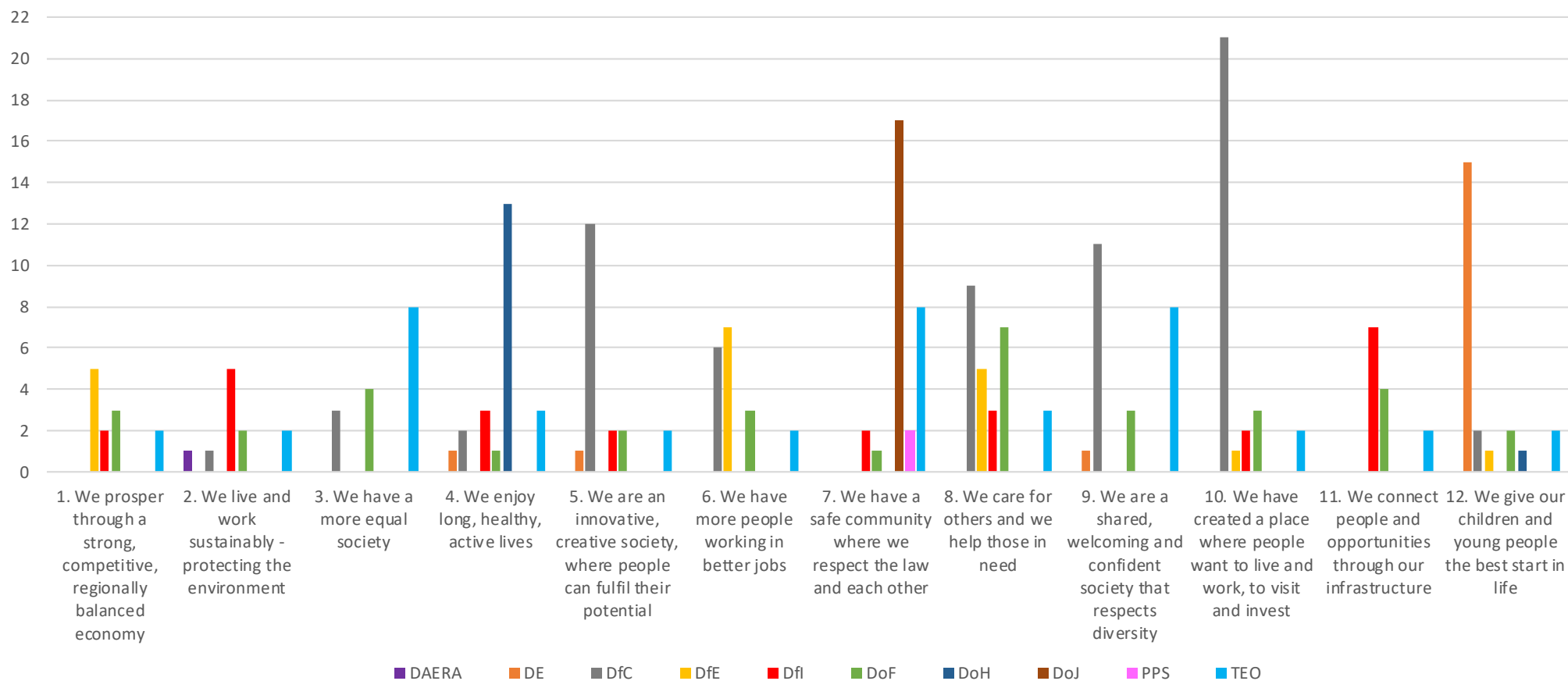
Online/email/TDE/DVR surveys were the second most widely used method of data collection with 72% of DE surveys, 36% of DfI surveys and 30% of DfE surveys employing electronic methods.

DE carried out 31% of all online/email/TDE/DVR surveys (13), followed by DfC with 11 surveys using electronic methods of data collection (26%). DfC conducted 4 of the 13 telephone based surveys, and 5 of the 17 paper based surveys; DfE carried out 4 of the 17 paper surveys. Finally, both DoH and DoJ conducted 5 of the 26 surveys with a mixed/multiple methods approach.

7. 2016-21 Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes

In 2016, the Northern Ireland Executive released a draft Programme for Government (PfG) which laid out the ambition the Executive had for society in Northern Ireland. The draft PfG was consulted on and refined during 2016/17, and formed the basis for the [2018/19 Outcomes Delivery Plan](#)²⁹ and [Outcomes Delivery Plan \(December 2019\)](#)³⁰. The draft 2016-21 PfG comprised 12 strategic outcomes outlined by the Executive to represent the society we wish to have. These 12 outcomes were supported by 49 indicators, which showed how the Northern Ireland Government and wider public sector were performing in relation to the outcomes, providing a basis to monitor progress and take appropriate action. Details of the 12 outcomes and 49 indicators are provided in Appendix C.

Figure 7: Programme for Government Outcomes for Surveys carried out by each NI Government Department³¹



²⁹ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/outcomes-delivery-plan-201819>.

³⁰ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/outcomes-delivery-plan-december-2019>.

³¹ Information on individual surveys is available in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

In 2019/20, data suppliers were asked to identify to which PfG outcome each survey carried out by their department or ALB contributed. 114 surveys contributed to one PfG outcome, with 29 surveys recorded as contributing to more than one outcome³². Surveys which contributed to multiple outcomes are recorded against each of these outcomes. The *Continuous Household Survey (TEO)*, *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitude Survey – TEO*, and *Continuous Household Survey (CSU Core questions)* (DoF) contributed to all 12 PfG outcomes. Surveys which only contribute to UK statistics are excluded from the analysis, as are seven surveys where a linked PfG outcome could not be identified³³.

For some departments, all surveys carried out by the department contributed to one specific outcome. For example, DoH conducted 13 surveys, all of which contributed to *Outcome 4: We enjoy long, healthy, active lives*, including one which also contributed to *Outcome 12: We give our children and young people the best start in life*. Similarly, all surveys conducted by DoJ (17) and PPS (2) contributed to *Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other*. 15 of the 18 surveys conducted by DE contributed to *Outcome 12: We give our children and young people the best start in life*.

In total, 30 surveys or parts of surveys contributed to *Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other*, the highest of the 12 outcomes. Most of these surveys were carried out by DoJ (17). Likewise, 29 surveys, or parts of surveys, contributed to *Outcome 10: We have a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity*. These surveys were predominantly carried out by DfC, which ran 21 of the 29 surveys. While there were a similar number of surveys (27) which contributed to *Outcome 8: We care for others and we help those in need*, these were more evenly spread across departments.

Of the 11 surveys which did not contribute to any PfG Outcome, four were UK surveys. These were the *International Passenger Survey* (DoF), *Living Costs and Food Survey* (DoF), *National Diet and Nutrition Survey* (DoF) and *Survey on Living Conditions* (DoF). The remaining surveys were customer satisfaction surveys (DfI), the *DfE part* of the *Continuous Household Survey* which asked about heating oil and gift card usage, and the *Public Awareness of and Trust in Official Statistics* survey (DoF).

³² Of the 29 surveys that contributed to more than one PfG Outcome, there were 12 DfC surveys, 8 TEO surveys, 4 DoF surveys, 4 DfI surveys, and 1 DoH survey. Further information on individual surveys is available in the downloadable data (see Appendix E).

³³ This included 5 DfI surveys, 1 DoF survey and 1 DfE survey. Information on individual surveys is available in the [downloadable data](#) (see Appendix E).

8. Between Year Comparisons

Due to the biennial, triennial or quinquennial nature of several surveys³⁴, as well as the large number of ad-hoc and programme-specific surveys, the number of surveys and resultant compliance burden fluctuates from one year to the next. Additionally, NISRA statisticians are continually working towards improving the efficiency of the statistical process and thus minimising the burden on survey respondents, in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

There is a discontinuity in the series between 2015/16 and 2016/17, indicated by the dashed line in Table 6. Prior to the 2016/17 data collection exercise, a review was conducted of the guidance provided to data suppliers to provide greater clarity around the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of surveys. As a result, a number of additional surveys have been included in departmental returns from 2016/17, specifically surveys carried out by Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) and some surveys omitted previously due to being considered part of the operational management of a public service. Examples are participant evaluation surveys, customer surveys and surveys which have a secondary operational purpose³⁵.

Table 6: Changes between 2015/16 and 2019/20

Dept	Number of Surveys					Number of Responses					Compliance Burden (Hrs)				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
DAERA	1	1	1	1	1	2,495	2,532	2,204	2,198	2,289	125	295	184	147	153
DE	6	24	14	16	18	19,023	31,477	44,055	43,503	22,081	4,881	8,816	2,738	15,738	1,398
DfC	26	40	45	39	43	18,365	33,984	20,048	27,965	25,655	4,545	10,707	7,194	11,102	10,507
DfE	9	16	12	24	20	6,519	13,112	9,110	33,722	40,104	1,331	2,021	1,512	5,792	5,246
DfI	12	13	11	11	14	16,096	81,540	70,070	70,063	88,508	2,097	7,944	6,035	6,310	7,301
DoF	8	18	16	17	17	64,675	74,603	72,802	79,238	92,224	6,549	8,494	10,227	8,526	14,254
DoH	4	3	9	14	13	5,343	11,262	14,620	17,613	22,539	3,916	5,939	5,336	7,606	9,528
DoJ ³⁶	27	31	15	21	17	14,018	9,354	9,629	12,005	19,535	3,473	2,400	2,576	3,278	3,935
TEO	8	10	10	9	9	10,067	18,801	13,661	12,049	16,379	1,902	1,686	1,677	1,172	1,670
PPS	-	2	1	2	2	-	1,863	911	2,118	2,161	-	346	30	44	404
Total³⁶	101	158	134	154	154	156,601	278,528	257,110	300,474	331,475	28,819	48,647	37,509	59,714	54,395

³⁴ There were two biennial, eight triennial and two quinquennial surveys, or parts of surveys, carried out in 2019/20.

³⁵ Further details are provided in Appendix A3.

³⁶ The 2017/18 number of responses and compliance burden for DoJ (and the overall totals for 2017/18) have been amended since the 2017/18 report was published. While historic estimates are not normally revised, this revision was made in 2018/19 due to the scale of the error and the impact on the overall time series for DoJ. Further details are included in Appendix A4.

DAERA

DAERA ran one survey in 2019/20, a module within the *Continuous Household Survey*, which was also run in the previous four years. The increase of 6 hours in compliance burden was solely due to an improvement in the response rate and an increase of 91 responses.

DE

Despite DE carrying two more surveys than in 2018/19, there was a 49% reduction in the number of responses (a decrease of 21,422), and a 91% reduction in the compliance burden (a decrease of 14,340 hours). While DE accounted for 26% of the compliance burden in 2018/19, this proportion has reduced to 3% in 2019/20 (1,398 hours).

The primary reason for the large decrease in compliance burden was that three large surveys took place in 2018/19 but not in 2019/20. The triennial *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018* survey, and two quadrennial pupil and parents' *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)* surveys contributed a combined 13,630 hours of burden in 2018/19 (87% of the DE total), which was not present in 2019/20. Similarly, DE did not commission any biennial modules in the *Young Life and Times* or *Kids Life and Times* surveys in 2019/20. These modules contributed a combined 1,128 hours of compliance burden in 2018/19.

The largest contributor of burden in 2019/20 was the DE section of the *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey*, which contributed 634 hours of compliance burden, accounting for 45% of the total burden attributed to DE. The *Getting Ready to Learn* baseline survey was the second largest survey conducted by DE in 2019/20, with 12,000 responses, contributing 400 hours of burden (29%). The follow-up survey did not take place in 2019/20.

There were many small surveys carried out by DE in 2019/20, with twelve of the eighteen surveys carried out by DE contributing 10 hours or fewer of compliance burden. Five of these surveys were ad-hoc surveys carried out by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

DfC

DfC conducted 43 surveys in 2019/20, four more than in 2018/19. Despite an increase in the number of surveys carried out, there was a decrease of 2,310 responses, and a decrease in compliance burden of 595 hours. As in previous years, DfC has conducted a large number of ad-hoc surveys, with 29 surveys in 2019/20 being ad-hoc, including 25 which were run on a one-off basis. Of these surveys, 13 were pre- and post-revitalisation project surveys to gauge perception of a particular area in Northern Ireland. These surveys returned 1,348 responses and were responsible for 225 hours of compliance burden, accounting for 2% of the total burden in DfC.

The majority of the ad-hoc surveys carried out by DfC were relatively small in terms of their compliance burden, with 23 of the 29 surveys contributing less than 20 hours of compliance burden. However, there were two large ad-hoc surveys in 2019/20. The *Sports Club Survey 2019* contributed 1,040 hours of compliance burden, which represents 10% of the DfC total. In addition, the *Private Landlords Survey* which took just under 30 minutes to complete, achieved 1719 responses and contributed 831 hours of compliance burden.

The two largest DfC surveys however, in terms of compliance burden, were regular surveys. As in the previous year, the *Family Resources Survey Northern Ireland* was the largest survey conducted by DfC, contributing 2,425 hours and accounting for 23% of the DfC total. The *Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey*, conducted by the NI Housing Executive, contributed 2,015 hours and represented 19% of the DfC total.

Other large contributors of burden included the *DfC Customer Exit Survey* (1,083 hours; 10%), the DfC section of the *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey* (1,038 hours, 10%) which is run on a triennial basis, and the DfC module in the *Continuous Household Survey* (542 hours; 5%).

DfE

In 2019/20, there were 20 surveys carried out by DfE, four fewer than the previous year. There was also a decrease of 545 hours in the compliance burden attributed to DfE, representing a 9% decrease. In contrast, there was an increase of 6,382 responses.

The *Graduate Outcomes Survey* in 2019/20 resulted in 1,725 hours of burden, accounting for a third of the burden attributed to DfE. The large increase in the burden (from 757 hours in 2018/19) was due to an increase of 5,808 in the number of responses. This increase can be explained by the extension of the survey in 2019/20 to include Higher Education (HE) students in Further Education (FE) colleges (a 66% increase in the sample, compared to 2018/19) and a targeted effort to improve response rates (which improved from 38% in 2018/19 to 53% in 2019/20). The *National Student Survey* was the second largest survey in terms of burden, contributing 1,214 hours of compliance burden (23%). The *Survey of FE College Leavers* contributed 455 hours of burden (9%).

DfE commissioned modules in two shared surveys in 2019/20, which also helps to explain the increase in responses. These were the DfE modules in the *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey* (1,429 responses) and the *Continuous Household Survey* (5,217 responses). Despite these surveys accounting for 17% of the DfE responses in 2019/20, due to relatively short median completion times, they were only responsible for 4% of the total DfE burden.

The Consumer Council carried out four ad-hoc surveys and one regular survey in 2019/20, contributing 672 hours of burden, compared with eight ad-hoc surveys and two regular surveys in 2018/19, which contributed 1,594 hours of burden.

Dfi

Dfi conducted 14 surveys in 2019/20, an increase of 3 surveys compared to the previous year. There has been an increase of 18,445 responses (26%) and a 990 hour increase in the compliance burden, increasing by 16%.

There were two new surveys commissioned by Dfi in 2019/20. These were the *NI Concessionary Fares Scheme Survey*, which had 2,060 responses and contributed 172 hours of burden, and the *Homeowner Flood Protection Grant Scheme Satisfaction Survey*, which was a small survey responsible for 11 hours of burden.

The *Northern Ireland Consumer Satisfaction Survey SIM Survey Fieldwork* survey, commissioned by Northern Ireland Water changed contract in 2019/20, resulting in a decrease in the median completion times (from 14 to 2 minutes) and an increase in the number of responses (from 800 to 7,574). There was a 57% increase in the compliance burden (from 187 hours to 292 hours).

The *DVA Booking Service – Internet Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey* (43,242 response; 2,883 hours) and the *Theory Test Customer Satisfaction Survey* (18,296 responses; 1,220 hours) conducted by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) are the largest contributors of burden in DfI. Combined with the remaining customer satisfaction survey conducted by DVA, the *DVA Booking Service - Test Centre and Call Centre Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey*, these three surveys accounted for 70% of the total responses to DfI surveys and 4,151 hours of compliance burden (57%). This is an increase of 5,460 responses and 364 hours burden compared to 2018/19.

Other large contributors of burden in DfI include; *Travel Survey Northern Ireland* (943 hours, 13% of the total DfI compliance burden) *Public Transport Monitoring* (655 hours, 9%); the DfI module of the *Continuous Household Survey* (494 hours, 7%); and the DfI module of the *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitude Survey* (259 hours; 4%).

DoF

DoF conducted the same number of surveys in 2019/20 as in the previous year. Despite the number of surveys not changing, there was a large increase in the number of responses (12,986; a rise of 16%) and a large increase in compliance burden (5,728 hours; a rise of 67%). This was mostly due to the *2019 Census Rehearsal* and the increase in sample size for the *Labour Force Survey*.

NISRA Census Office carried out four surveys related to testing and preparation for the 2021 Census in 2019/20. While three of these surveys were small, contributing a combined 59 hours of compliance burden, the *2019 Census Rehearsal* was one of the largest DoF surveys, contributing 3,167 hours of burden (22%) and 9,500 responses (10%).

Accounting for 35% of the total burden attributed to DoF, the *Labour Force Survey* was the largest survey conducted in 2019/20, contributing just under 5,000 hours of compliance burden. Due to the implementation of the LFS sample boost during 2018/19, there was an increase of 2,253 responses in 2019/20³⁷. This sample boost, which was introduced to increase the accuracy of the estimates and support geographical breakdowns, has resulted in an additional 1,051 hours of compliance burden in 2019/20.

The estimated burden for the *Northern Ireland Passenger Survey* has increased since 2018/19. This is due to improved estimation of median completion times based on interviewer recorded completion times, and the burden being calculated separately for each interview type. In particular, the median completion time for the shortest interviews (the majority) has increased from an estimated 24s to 2.5 minutes³⁸. This improved estimation has resulted in the burden for

³⁷ 2019/20 was the first complete run of the 'boosted sample'.

³⁸ The overall median completion time has increased from 24 seconds to 3.2 minutes

the *Northern Ireland Passenger Survey* increasing from 270 hours to 1,983 hours in 2019/20. This represents 14% of the survey burden attributable to DoF in 2019/20.

Due to a range of changes to the *National Diet and Nutrition Survey*, there was a substantial decrease in the compliance burden, which fell from 851 hours in 2018/19, to 254 hours in the current year. In 2019/20, the paper-based diary was replaced with an online diet tool, which also removed the need for a mid-week diary check-up. In addition, no nurse visits took place in 2019/20 as the nurse stage was not included in this survey iteration. The survey previously took over 5 hours to complete, but in light of these changes, it took respondents on average 3 hours to complete in 2019/20.

DoH

At 13 surveys, DoH ran one less survey than in 2018/19. There was an increase of 4,926 responses (a 28% increase) and 1,922 compliance hours (25%). Eight of the 13 surveys were ad-hoc/infrequent surveys, comprising three one-off surveys, three irregular surveys, one triennial survey and one quinquennial survey.

As in the previous year, the *Health Survey Northern Ireland* was the largest survey conducted by DoH. This survey, which had 4,085 respondents, employed a face-to-face interview (which included a self-completion questionnaire) and had a median completion time of 50 minutes. This survey contributed 3,404 hours of compliance burden, representing 36% of the burden attributed to DoH.

The *DoH part* of the triennial *Young Persons' Behaviour & Attitudes Survey 2019* was the second largest survey carried out by DoH in 2019/20. This survey had 8,118 responses and contributed 2,977 hours of burden (31% of the DoH total). The *DoH part* took 22 minutes to complete, and was asked of all respondents³⁹.

The *Youth Wellbeing Study NI* is an ad-hoc, one-off survey carried out by DoH in 2019/20. This was the third largest survey conducted by DoH, which had 3,074 responses and took 34 minutes to complete. This resulted in a compliance burden of 1,742 hours, which accounted for 18% of the DoH total burden. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) carried out seven surveys in 2019/20, the largest of which was another ad-hoc survey; the *Technology for Social Care Services* survey, which incurred 505 hours of compliance burden (5%).

DoJ

In 2019/20, DoJ conducted 17 surveys: 4 fewer than in 2018/19. The Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) typically conducts a number of small surveys usually related to evaluations of different programmes; however due to staffing changes/pressures, the PBNI did not run any surveys in 2019/20 which explains the reduction in the number of surveys carried out by DoJ. However, despite this reduction in the number of surveys, there were increases of 7,530 responses and 657 hours of compliance burden.

Of the compliance burden attributed to DoJ, 70% resulted from the *Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey* (formerly known as the *Northern Ireland Crime Survey*). This survey contributed 2,749 hours of compliance burden in 2019/20, an increase of 264 hours compared to 2018/19. This increase in burden is

³⁹ This survey had a split sample. DoH was the only department which asked questions of all respondents.

primarily due to an improved response rate, resulting in 291 more responses. There was also an increase (from 736 to 2,672) in the number of responses to the six continuous Youth Justice Agency surveys due to improved coverage and more regular monitoring of surveys being completed. These are short surveys (with median completion times of 1 and 2 minutes) so the increase had very little impact on the overall burden.

The *Public Attitudes to Peace Walls* survey ran in 2019/20. This irregular survey which previously ran in 2015/16, contributed 1,022 responses and 341 hours of compliance burden. Finally, DoJ commissioned the *Personal Safety* module in the triennial *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey*, which accounted for 5% of the total DoJ burden (211 hours) and 22% of the responses (4,226) in 2019/20.

TEO

TEO conducted the same number of surveys (9) as in 2018/19. While 8 of these surveys ran in both years, the *Social Investment Fund (NI Omnibus)* survey (917 responses; 31 hours burden) only ran in 2018/19 and the triennial *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey* (3,892 responses; 389 hours burden) only ran in 2019/20. This explains the majority of the increase of 4,330 responses and 498 hours of compliance burden for 2019/20.

In general, the TEO surveys remained relatively consistent in terms of the burden they contributed. There were small increases (between 5 and 16 hours) of compliance burden in five surveys: the two *Minority Ethnic Groups* and *Good Relations* modules in the *NI Life and Times* and in the *Young Life and Times* survey, and the *Public Opinion Survey on Equality in Northern Ireland*. In contrast there were minor decreases in burden for the *Respect* module in the *NI Life and Times* survey (a decrease of 17 hours) and the *VSS Individual Needs Programme* (6 hours).

There was a more substantial increase in burden for the TEO module in the *Continuous Household Survey (CHS)*, which rose by 97 hours due to an improved response rate and an additional 1,458 responses, making it the largest contributor of burden for TEO in 2019/20, at 395 hours (24%). At 389 hours of compliance burden, the TEO module in the *Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes (YPBAS)* survey, was the second largest contributor of burden.

PPS

PPS ran two surveys in 2019/20, the same number as in the previous year. In 2018/19, the *Public Perceptions of the Public Prosecution Service* module ran twice due to the *NI Life and Times* survey taking place less than twelve months after the last run of the *NI Omnibus*. In 2019/20, PPS commissioned the *Public Perceptions of the Public Prosecution Service* module which had a burden of 21 hours, and the triennial *NI Victims and Witnesses Survey (NIVAWS)* which contributed 383 hours of burden, accounting for 95% of the compliance burden for PPS.

9. Measures to Reduce Compliance Burden

A few of the specific initiatives employed by NI Government Departments in 2019/20 to reduce respondent burden include:

Department	Name of Survey	Steps taken to reduce compliance burden
DE	Continuous Household Survey (DE Section)	The DE questions were reviewed and refined.
	Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey - DE	
DfC	Continuous Household Survey (DfC Section)	Reduction in questions; review of questions.
	Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey - DfC	Reduction in questions; review of questions.
	Move to UC research - DfC UC Programme Team	Use of DWP data was considered - however due to UC operational and policy differences between GB & NI it was critical that data was gathered directly from NI citizens to inform the design of Move to UC in NI
	Move to UC research - Cognisense	
Disability Event Evaluation	Survey was targeted solely on those who participated guaranteeing lowest possible compliance burden	
DfC (NIHE)⁴⁰	Irish Traveller Accommodation Survey	The survey is reviewed annually by a Project Advisory Group to ensure burden on respondents is minimal, within the parameters of the survey.
	Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey	
	Affordable Warmth Customer Satisfaction Survey	The survey form is reviewed annually to ensure relevance and that burden is minimised.

⁴⁰ NIHE (Northern Ireland Housing Executive)

Department	Name of Survey	Steps taken to reduce compliance burden
DoF	National Diet and Nutrition Survey	The paper based diary was replaced with an online diet tool, which also removed the need for mid-week diary check-ups.
DoF (DSS) ⁴¹	Continuous Household Survey (CHS) – Individual Internet Access and Usage	Fewer questions in the CHS module, having previously been included in the Northern Ireland Omnibus.
DoF (SEUPB) ⁴²	Special EU Programmes Body Perception and Awareness Survey	Questions added to an existing face-to-face survey to reduce burden
DoH	Health Survey Northern Ireland	Ongoing review of the questionnaire
DoJ	Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey	Some modules in the Safe Community Survey (previously the Crime Survey) are now biennial to reduce the burden for the survey.
TEO	NI Life & Times Survey: Good relations module	Questions are checked annually to ensure continued need
	NI Life & Times Survey: Minority ethnic groups module	
	NI Life & Times Survey: Respect half module	
	Young Life & Times Survey: Good relations module	
	Young Life & Times Survey: Minority ethnic groups module	
TEO - VSS ⁴³	VSS Individual Needs Programme Qualitative Survey	Previous samples were excluded from the survey selection

⁴¹ DSS (Digital Shared Services)

⁴² SEUPB (Special European Union Programmes Body)

⁴³ VSS (Victims and Survivors Service)

10. Uses of Surveys

The data collected through government surveys of Northern Ireland households and individuals are used for a range of purposes including the

- production and development of official statistics (see Figure 5 & Table 3)
- development, monitoring and evaluation of government policy
- design, monitoring, refinement and evaluation of programmes
- improvement and refinement of government services.

Some examples of how data collected in surveys carried out in 2019/20 were used are included below:

Northern Ireland Passenger Survey (NIPS)

The Northern Ireland Passenger Survey (NIPS) collects data on the value and volume of overnight trips by visitors to Northern Ireland (NI) who enter through NI air and sea ports. These data are combined with data from other surveys⁴⁴ to produce the [Northern Ireland Annual Tourism Statistics](#)⁴⁵ and [Northern Ireland Quarterly Tourism Statistics](#)⁴⁶ publications. These publications are used by Tourism NI to monitor tourism in Northern Ireland. They are also used by policy makers in government, the tourism industry and the public. In particular, the data contribute to [PfG Indicator 30 - Total spend by external visitors](#)⁴⁷ which monitors progress against *Outcome 10 - We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest* (see Appendix C).

More detailed data on 'external visitors' to NI are published annually in the [External Overnight Trips to Northern Ireland](#)⁴⁸ publication. This combines data from NIPS, a survey of ports in the Republic of Ireland (carried out by Failte Ireland) and information on trips taken by ROI residents obtained from the *Household Travel Survey* (which is carried out by Central Statistics Office, Ireland). Data from NIPS also feed into the [Local Government District Tourism Statistics](#)⁴⁹ which local councils find very useful, as well as contributing to the quarterly [Northern Ireland Air Passenger Flow statistics](#)⁵⁰.

Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Another survey which contributes to official statistics and also the development and monitoring of policy is the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The [Labour Force Survey](#)⁵¹ is a quarterly survey which asks people in Northern Ireland about employment, unemployment and economic inactivity. It also covers a wide range

⁴⁴ Further information on the surveys used in the production of tourism statistics can be found in the [Tourism statistics guide to surveys](#).

⁴⁵ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/annual-tourism-statistics-publications>

⁴⁶ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/quarterly-tourism-statistics-publications>

⁴⁷ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/pfg-2016-21-measurement-annex-total-spend-by-external-visitors>

⁴⁸ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/external-overnight-trips-northern-ireland-publications>

⁴⁹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/tourism/local-government-district-tourism-statistics>

⁵⁰ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/tourism/northern-ireland-air-passenger-flow-statistics>

⁵¹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/find-your-survey/labour-force-survey>

of related topics such as income, qualifications, training and disability. Everyone aged 16 and over in the household is interviewed about a range of questions, and the interviewer will contact the household for five occasions every three months (either in person or by phone) to find out if anyone's circumstances have changed. A new sample of around 1,300 households is added every quarter.

Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch (ELMS) use data from the LFS to produce a [range of National Statistics publications](#)⁵², including the [Monthly Labour Market Report \(and accompanying tables\)](#), [Quarterly Labour Force Survey Tables](#), [Work Quality Tables](#), [Labour Force Survey Annual Report](#), [Labour Force Survey Tables for Local Government Districts](#) and various topic reports such as [Self-employment in Northern Ireland 2019](#). The monthly Labour Market Report (LMR) and accompanying tables include statistics for Northern Ireland on employment, unemployment and economic inactivity (seasonally adjusted and unadjusted); labour market status by age; reasons for inactivity; employment categories; hours of work; and international comparisons. Quarterly tables provide additional breakdowns including employment by industry section and occupation group, and information on graduates, education and training, disability and the labour market, Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) and working and workless households. The Work Quality Tables provide information on under employment, over employment, permanent employment, temporary employment and job satisfaction

Key users of Northern Ireland labour market statistics include government departments, in particular the Department for the Economy (DfE), which uses the statistics to design and monitor the impact of economic and labour market policy. Other government departments such as The Executive Office (TEO), the Department of Finance (DoF) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), as well as bodies such as Invest NI and Belfast City Council, regularly require specific ad hoc labour market analysis in order to monitor policies, for example, equality and employment. In addition, significant 'non-governmental' users of labour market statistics (including the media, banks, academics, private consultants and the general public) use the data primarily for reporting or researching the performance of the economy in general. Labour market statistics attract widespread media coverage, with a number of broadcasters publishing articles on the labour market on a monthly basis, generally on the day of publication of the LMR.

Analytical Services Division in DfE uses the Labour Force Survey data, as well as [other statistics produced by ELMS](#)⁵³ to provide briefing and analysis on the local economy to a wide range of stakeholders. This includes a [monthly economic update](#)⁵⁴ and a more detailed [economic commentary](#)⁵⁵ produced three times per year, which are published on the DfE website and disseminated to the Minister for the Economy and senior departmental officials as well as a wide range of interested parties. These outputs provide an overview of the state of the Northern Ireland economy, in context with the UK and Republic of Ireland.

During the pandemic, the LFS provided government officials with readily available and detailed information on the composition of Northern Ireland workforce which allowed them to assess the impact of various restrictions, including the initial lockdown, and evaluate different amendments to the restrictions and support options. Further details can be found in Appendix B: *A case study - Use of the Labour Force Survey – to assess the impact of COVID-19 and inform decision-making*.

⁵² <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/labour-force-survey>

⁵³ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/nisra-economic-and-labour-market-statistics-elms/economic-overview>

⁵⁴ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/monthly-economic-update>

⁵⁵ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/economic-commentary>

LFS data also contributed directly to seven of the 2016-21 PFG indicators which were used to monitor six outcomes in the [Outcomes Delivery Plan \(December 2019\)](#). These were:

- [14 - Proportion of the workforce in employment qualified to level 1 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above, and level 4 and above](#) (Outcome 6)
- [16 - Seasonally adjusted employment rate \(16-64\)](#) (Outcome 6)
- [17 - Economic inactivity rate excluding students](#) (Outcome 3 & 6)
- [32 - Employment rate of 16-64 year olds by deprivation quintile](#) (Outcome 3)
- [33 - % people working part time who would like to work more hours](#) (Outcome 6)
- [34 - Employment rate by council area](#) (Outcome 1, 3 & 6)
- [42 - Average life satisfaction score of people with disabilities](#) (Outcome 8 & 9)

Data from the LFS also feeds into the [Economic Overview dashboard](#)⁵⁶ produced by ELMS.

In addition, results from the Labour Force Survey feed into [UK figures on Employment and the Labour market](#)⁵⁷ (produced by the Office for National Statistics).

Continuous Household Survey (CHS)

The [Continuous Household Survey](#)⁵⁸ is another large survey which has been running since 1983, in which sets of questions are commissioned by different government departments. The burden associated with each set of questions is recorded against the commissioning department. In 2019/20, questions were commissioned by DAERA, DE, DfC, DfE, DfI, DoF and TEO. These questions were used to produce several official statistics publications and contributed directly to three of the 2016-21 PFG indicators which were used to monitor three [outcomes](#):

- [27 - % engaging in arts/ cultural activities](#) (Outcome 5)
- [28 - Confidence \(as measured by self-efficacy\)](#) (Outcome 5 & 9)
- [49 - Confidence of the population aged 60 years or older \(as measured by self-efficacy\)](#) (Outcome 8)

DAERA

The results from the environmental questions, commissioned by DAERA, are published in the annual [Environmental Statistics Report \(ESR\)](#)⁵⁹ which provides annual updates of key environmental indicators, as well as data related to the level of public concern for the environment and what actions the public take for environmental reasons. Obtaining these data from the CHS ensures that the most up to date information is readily available for policy makers, environmental interest groups, academics and the public. These data inform policy development and are used for input into and monitoring of a number of strategies and

⁵⁶ <https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/economy-and-labour-market/economic-overview.html>

⁵⁷ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/find-your-survey/continuous-household-survey>

⁵⁹ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-environmental-statistics-report>

policies. The CHS allows the results to be [disaggregated to district council level and published on NINIS](#)⁶⁰, which means that district councils can use the information to inform their area plans and to compare against other councils.

DAERA also uses the information obtained from the CHS to provide [urban/rural disaggregation data](#)⁶¹ including household size, household tenure, educational attainment, health, car access, internet access, religion, caring responsibilities, smoking and drinking habits etc. These data are extremely useful for policy makers within DAERA and other departments.

DE

Questions on Play and Leisure, commissioned by DE, are asked of all households with children aged 0 to 18. A separate question on awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is asked of all respondents. The findings from these questions will contribute to the monitoring of the Executive's [Children and Young People's strategy 2020-2030](#)⁶² and the development of Children and Young People's Strategy Delivery Plans.

Information about play from the CHS has informed government policy and strategy on play, including the [EITP Play Matters](#)⁶³ project and will be used to inform the Play Matters Strategic Plan which is currently under development. These data are also useful to organisations and stakeholders other than government departments, for example PlayBoard NI, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People and local councils (in respect of local play facilities).

DfC

DfC is the lead department for arts and creativity, museums, libraries, public records, sports, heritage and volunteering. The CHS includes key questions relating to these areas, a number of which are of particular relevance in informing cultural and arts activities as defined in the draft 2016-21 Programme for Government (or the [Outcomes Delivery Plan \(December 2019\)](#)⁶⁴). In addition, data obtained from the CHS are used across DfC to inform the development, monitoring and evaluation of policy, for example, assessing key targets from the [Sport Matters Strategy](#)⁶⁵ and [Public Library Standards](#)⁶⁶.

The CHS provides data for a number of official statistics reports⁶⁷ including [Engagement in culture, arts and sport by adults in Northern Ireland](#)⁶⁸, [Experience of volunteering by adults in Northern Ireland](#)⁶⁹, [Wellbeing and engagement in culture, arts and sport by adults in Northern Ireland](#)²⁶, [Knowledge and use of Irish and Ulster-Scots in Northern Ireland](#)²⁶ and [Experience of heritage by adults in Northern Ireland](#)²⁶.

⁶⁰ <https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Theme.aspx?themeNumber=38&themeName=Agriculture%20and%20Environment>

⁶¹ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/continuous-household-survey>

⁶² <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/children-and-young-people>

⁶³ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/play-matters>

⁶⁴ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-government>

⁶⁵ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/sport-matters-strategy>

⁶⁶ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/museums-and-libraries/libraries>

⁶⁷ Other official statistics reports include 'Experience of culture and the arts in Northern Ireland' and 'Experience of sport in Northern Ireland' (<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/sport-museums-and-libraries-statistics>)

⁶⁸ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/culture-and-heritage-statistics>

⁶⁹ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/voluntary-and-community-statistics>

Dfi

Dfi commissions a number of modules in the CHS including questions on ‘road safety’, ‘travel to school’, ‘public transport journey planning’ and ‘walking, cycling and public transport’ and in 2019/20, the CHS also included a module on ‘electric vehicles’. The data from the CHS are used to assist the Department in focussing its policies on addressing the key issues that prevent people from taking up active travel and to encourage more people to use public transport; to monitor the overall effect of the initiatives aimed at increasing the proportion of children who actively travel to school; and to assist providers in identifying improvements to passenger information and access to public transport services. Data collected from the CHS also contributes to a number of research reports including the recently published [Attitudes toward electric vehicles in Northern Ireland](#)⁷⁰ and the annual [Road Safety Issues in Northern Ireland](#)⁷¹ report which measured the attitudes, awareness and behaviour of respondents in relation to specific road safety issues, namely speed limits, speeding and mobile phone usage while driving.

DoF (TSSSB)

Data from the CHS are also used by Tourism Statistics and Staff Surveys branch (in NISRA) to measure the value and volume of overnight trips taken by NI residents within Northern Ireland, and the number of overnight trips taken outside of NI, and air passenger flow by NI residents. The statistics on overnight trips are published annually in the [Northern Ireland Domestic Tourism](#)⁷² publication. Quarterly information on overnight trips taken within Northern Ireland is also published in the [Quarterly tourism statistics publications](#)⁷³. One of the biggest customers of these statistics is Tourism NI who use the statistics to measure the demand of tourism in NI and how they are performing in attracting NI residents to take overnight trips within Northern Ireland (“staycations”). The CHS data are also available at smaller geographical breakdowns in the annual [Local government district tourism statistics](#)⁷⁴ and on a [designated interactive site](#)⁷⁵ which is useful for local councils. Statistics on air passenger flow by NI residents are published annually in the [Northern Ireland Air Passenger Flow Statistics](#)⁷⁶ in tabular format.

TEO

TEO uses data from the CHS in the [Self Efficacy, Locus of Control & Life Satisfaction in Northern Ireland](#)⁷⁷ report. This report provides a breakdown of self-efficacy, locus of control and life satisfaction among a range of demographic sections including gender, age, employment status, health, marital status, deprivation quintiles, disability and government district. Self-efficacy is a person’s beliefs about their capability to produce results or effects, and is used to measure two indicators in the draft 2016-21 Programme for Government ([Indicator 28 – Confidence \(as measured by self-efficacy\)](#)⁷⁸ & [Indicator 49 – Confidence of the population aged 60 years or older \(as measured by self efficacy\)](#)⁷⁹). The report also has wider application across the civil service, as it includes Section 75

⁷⁰ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/electric-cars-research>

⁷¹ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/road-safety-issues-northern-ireland>

⁷² <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/tourism/domestic-tourism-northern-ireland-residents>

⁷³ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/quarterly-tourism-statistics-publications>

⁷⁴ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/tourism/local-government-district-tourism-statistics>

⁷⁵ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/InteractiveMaps/People%20and%20Places/People/TourismLGD/LGD2016/LGD11Tourism2016.html>

⁷⁶ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/tourism/northern-ireland-air-passenger-flow-statistics>

⁷⁷ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/self-efficacy-locus-control-and-life-satisfaction-northern-ireland>

⁷⁸ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/pfg-2016-21-measurement-annex-confidence-measured-by-self-efficacy>

⁷⁹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/pfg-2016-21-measurement-annex-confidence-population-aged-60-years-or-older-measured-by>

breakdowns which allows the data to be used as evidence for a diverse range of policy areas including older people, engaged communities and good relations. The data have been used by several community programmes, including Urban Villages and the Social Investment Fund, to allow them to evaluate programme intakes against NI averages.

DoF (CSU)

Core information from the CHS is also published annually in [CHS Results tables](#)⁸⁰. These tables (published by NISRA's Central Survey Unit) provide regular and timely data for researchers and analysts and include household composition, household type and tenure, individual demographics e.g. religion and sexual identity, internet / broadband access, and car ownership. Data are available for every year from 2008-09 to the previous year, as well as for 1983, 1991-92 and 2001-02.

In addition, anonymised data from the CHS are made available to researchers through the [UK Data Archive](#)⁸¹, managed by the ESRC. The UK Data Archive is a valuable resource and is used by researchers, students and teachers from all sectors, including academia, central and local government, charities and foundations, independent research centres, think tanks, and business consultants and the commercial sector.

UK Surveys

Data from a number of the surveys carried out by NISRA's Central Survey Unit are not used directly by NI Government Departments but rather feed into UK statistics. Collecting responses from NI households and individuals, ensures that the UK statistics produced and the data available from these surveys are representative, and often allows comparison between Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK. These surveys include the [International Passenger Survey](#)⁸², [Living Costs and Food Survey](#)⁸³, [National Diet and Nutrition Survey](#)⁸⁴ and [Survey on Living Conditions](#)⁸⁵.

Living Costs and Food Survey (LCF)

The Living Costs and Food Survey (LCF) is a UK wide survey which collects information on spending patterns and the cost of living that reflect household budgets, as well as information on food consumption. Data on household expenditure from the LCF is used in key economic measures such as the [consumer prices index](#)⁸⁶ and [GDP figures](#)⁸⁷. It is also used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to produce the annual [UK Family Spending report](#)⁸⁸ (and accompanying [regional tables](#)⁸⁸).

⁸⁰ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/chs-results>

⁸¹ <https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/series/series?id=200008#!/abstract>

⁸² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforhouseholdsandindividuals/householdandindividualsurveys/internationalpassengersurvey>

⁸³ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/find-your-survey/northern-ireland-living-costs-and-food-survey>

⁸⁴ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/find-your-survey/national-diet-and-nutrition-survey>

⁸⁵ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforhouseholdsandindividuals/householdandindividualsurveys/surveyonlivingconditions>

⁸⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices>

⁸⁷ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp>

⁸⁸ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/expenditure/bulletins/familyspendingintheuk/previousReleases>

In addition, the LCF is a valuable source of information on food consumption and nutrition and is used by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to produce the [UK Family Food Statistics](#)⁸⁹ publication (and the accompanying [regional data](#)⁹⁰).

Survey on Living Conditions (SLC)

The Survey on Living Conditions (SLC) collects information on household resources, housing, labour, education, pensions and health. Data from SLC helps the UK government understand how different sections of society are managing, so that it can plan for the future, assess the effects of policy changes and measure the state of the economy. The UK Government use these statistics to monitor and inform policies aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion.

DVA Customer Satisfaction Surveys

DVA carries out a number of customer satisfaction surveys: *DVA Booking Service - Internet Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey*; *DVA Booking Service - Test Centre and Call Centre Booking Customer Satisfaction Survey*; and *DVA Theory Test Customer Satisfaction Survey*. These short surveys enable DVA to ask customers for feedback after delivering a service and DVA then uses this feedback to help improve the service going forward. As a result, these surveys help government and DVA as a public body to plan and deliver better front-line public services.

DfC Customer Insight Surveys

DfC carries out a monthly *Customer Exit Survey* which assesses customer satisfaction with the service provided by DfC Business Areas (DCS, DS, ESA, IS, JSA, Pensions, PIP, SFund, Debt Management, UC). The survey provides each Business Area with a tangible and real time measurement on the service they are providing, and helps to identify weaknesses and strengths in the customer approach. Each business area benefits by hearing directly from the customer, their experience and emotions when they engage with their people. The survey was introduced in 2018/19 and extended to include a further two business areas (Debt Management and UC) in 2019/20.

Further information on the purpose of all surveys is available in the [downloadable data](#)⁹¹ which accompany this bulletin.

⁸⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-food-statistics>

⁹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/family-food-datasets>

⁹¹ See Appendix E for further details.

Appendix A: Methodology, Quality and Use of Publication

A1. Rationale for publication

The [Code of Practice for Statistics](#)⁹² recognises the importance of monitoring and reducing respondent burden, balanced with the need to produce official statistics that are fundamental to good government and provide a good evidence base to inform public policy. It emphasises the importance of **transparency**, ensuring respondent **burden** is **proportionate to benefits** and making **use of existing data** before undertaking a new data collection:

V5.5 Statistics producers should be transparent in their approach to monitoring and reducing the burden on those providing their information, and on those involved in collecting, recording and supplying data. The burden imposed should be proportionate to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.

V5.3 The suitability of existing data, including administrative, open and privately-held data, should be assessed before undertaking a new data collection.

V5.1 Opportunities for data sharing, data linkage, cross-analysis of sources, and the reuse of data should be taken wherever feasible. Recognised standards, classifications, definitions, and methods should be applied to data wherever possible.

V5.6 Statistics producers should analyse the impact of new data requirements or extending existing collections on those involved in the collection, recording and supply of data, against the potential value of the statistics in serving the public good.

V5.4 Voluntary participation in statistical data collection should be sought, rather than using statutory powers, wherever possible.

The burden to businesses due to surveys conducted by government departments and their arm's length bodies (ALBs) has been monitored within Northern Ireland since the 1980s. As of the 1st April 2014, surveys to households and individuals were included within the scope of Survey Control and this information is now published on an annual basis alongside the [Survey Burden on Business information](#)⁹³.

A2. Methodology

Data Collection

Data were requested from Survey Control Liaison Officers (SCLOs) in each of the Northern Ireland departments, as well as from officials in Arm's Length Bodies (ALBS). Respondents were provided with guidance notes and asked to provide details on Government Statistical Surveys of households and/or

⁹² <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/the-code/>

⁹³ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/ni-statistical-surveys-assessment-burden>

individuals which their department/ organisation had commissioned or carried out in 2019/20. When surveys are shared by more than one Department, Arm's Length Body, or NISRA branch within DoF, the relevant survey is included in each return and the respondent burden for the survey is proportionately split across the Departments/ ALBs/ branches.

Surveys are included under the commissioning department(s)/ ALB(s) which may not be the same as the department or branch which carried out the survey. Any surveys carried out by NI departments/ ALBs, on behalf of GB departments/ ALBs, where the data are only collected to facilitate the production of UK statistics (and not used by any NI government department) are included under the department or branch carrying out the survey.

Coverage

All statistical surveys to households and/or individuals carried out by, or on behalf of, Northern Ireland Government Departments (including Arm's Length Bodies) are included, as well as statistical surveys carried out by NI Departments (or ALBs) on behalf of GB Government Departments (or ALBs) where the data are used directly by the NI Department (or ALB) or feed into UK statistics.

Definition of Statistical Survey

A statistical survey is any structured inquiry designed to obtain aggregated data (which may be qualitative or quantitative) where the individual or corporate identities of the respondents are in themselves of little significance.

This includes both regular and ad hoc surveys; both voluntary and statutory surveys that may be required to determine, evaluate or monitor policy and/or action, provide social or economic indicators or measure customer satisfaction. Statistical surveys conducted by, or on behalf of, non-departmental public bodies are also covered. Arm's length bodies are included under their parent departments.

Statistical surveys in scope are not limited to those conducted by statistics branches and include all modes of data collection: completion of a questionnaire; telephone data entry; face-to-face interview; online/email data collection etc.

Surveys that contribute to official statistics and those that do not are both in the scope of survey control.

The following are examples of statistical surveys **covered** by these controls:

- Surveys designed to obtain aggregated data;
- Surveys where responses are solicited by means of a direct approach to potential respondents;
- Surveys carried out for departmental sponsors by consultants or private organisations;
- Customer satisfaction surveys designed to identify overall success of a product or service.

The following are examples of surveys **excluded** from survey control:

- Surveys where there is no direct approach made and where respondents clearly select themselves (e.g. web sites, readership surveys, some types of consultation exercises where there is an invitation to comment);
- Where information is required as an integral part of the operational management of a public service. Such returns will often be regulated under specific departmental controls;
- Surveys relating to the contractual obligations of potential respondents to the department or agency concerned;
- Surveys to respondents in central government and its agencies.

Where part of a survey falls outside scope, the part of the survey within scope has been included where possible.

Respondent Burden

For surveys of households and individuals, respondent burden is calculated on the basis of the time taken for each respondent to complete the survey (or part of the survey). Where a household or individual is re-contacted as part of the validation or quality assurance procedures, the burden due to the re-contact is also included. The time taken to complete the survey includes any time taken to establish eligibility (e.g. time spent by the interviewer on the doorstep determining household eligibility). Total compliance burden will also include time taken to establish non-eligibility for respondents or households that are subsequently deemed out of scope. Only those responding to the survey are included; non-response is assumed to have zero burden.

If actual survey completion times (and re-contact times) are available then these are used. Otherwise estimated median completion times (and estimated median re-contact times) are used. These estimated median times may be based on information from the survey, paradata, historical data (within the last 5 years), a pilot survey, reviews or survey manager expertise.

The calculation of compliance burden requires the following:

- Number of responses to the survey (including full/partial and invalid)
- Number of respondents re-contacted (if applicable)
- (Actual or) Median time to complete the survey (or part thereof)
- (Actual or) Median re-contact time for validation purposes

If estimated median re-contact times are not available then the median time taken to complete the full survey may be used on the assumption that a respondent may need to review their entire response.

The Compliance Burden (mins) is a simple **addition** of Response Burden (mins) and where applicable Re-contact Burden (mins)

Response Burden (mins) = No. of responses x Median completion time (mins)

Recontact Burden (mins) = No. recontacted x Median re-contact time (mins)

Compliance Burden is calculated in minutes but has been changed to hours (or days) in this report.

The calculation of compliance burden will include all questionnaire or interview types. If different questionnaires or interviews are used (and these vary in terms of completion time), then the compliance burden may be estimated separately for each questionnaire/interview type and then summed for an overall compliance burden. Similarly, if there are different groups of respondents with different completion times (e.g. main and proxy respondents) then the calculations for each subgroup may be carried out separately and summed.

Shared Surveys

For those surveys which are commissioned by several branches within DoF/ Departments/ ALBs, each part of the survey is treated as a separate survey. The compliance burden for each part of the survey (or module) is estimated by apportioning the total compliance burden for the survey. The number of responses is the same as for the complete survey (unless the questions were only asked of a subgroup of respondents).

This approach allows the burden for individual Departments, ALBs (or branches) to be calculated, but means that some survey vehicles and respondents will appear more than once when the 'number of surveys' and 'number of responses' is summed across branches / Departments / ALBs. For this reason, the number of responses is not a good proxy for the number of respondents (or households and individuals responding to NI Government Statistical Surveys). In addition, some households and individuals may respond to more than one NI Government Statistical Survey. As the compliance burden has been apportioned based on the time taken to answer each part of the survey, there is no 'double counting' of compliance burden.

The use of an existing survey vehicle (such as the *Continuous Household Survey* or one of the *Life & Times Surveys*) is an effective way of reducing respondent burden as the overall contextual questions don't need to be repeated for each module, and the initial stages/survey introductions only need to be carried out once.

Average completion time (or average burden per response)

This has been calculated as the total compliance burden (for the group of surveys or parts of surveys) divided by the total number of responses (for the group of surveys or parts of surveys). This may differ from the median completion time for the survey.

Official Statistics and Other Statistics surveys

Surveys that contribute to National or official statistics are referred to as ‘official statistics’ surveys, and surveys that do not contribute to National or official statistics are referred to as ‘other statistics’ surveys.

Statutory and Voluntary surveys

Where the status of a survey is statutory there is a legal obligation on the respondents to provide the information that will be collected.

Data collection method

The data collection method is recorded for each survey. Prior to 2016/17 SCLOs were asked to write-in the data collection method(s) used for each survey. This meant that there was substantial variation in the descriptions used and it was not always easy to identify the primary data collection method. In 2016/17, this was replaced with a drop-down menu (Paper questionnaire; Paper diary⁹⁴; Telephone interview; Face-to-face interview; Email data collection; Online questionnaire/ data collection; Online/electronic diary⁹⁴; Telephone data entry; and Digital Voice Recognition Survey). SCLOs are asked to identify the primary, secondary, tertiary, etc. method of data collection. As a result, groupings and analysis from 2016/17 onwards will be more accurate than in previous years.

Rounding

Please note that figures for compliance burden (hours) have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures for average completion time (minutes) have been rounded to one decimal place, and percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number or one decimal place. Thus figures may not add exactly to totals due to rounding.

A3. Review of Methodology & Discontinuity (between 2016/17 and earlier years)

The application of the survey control methodology was reviewed prior to the 2016/17 data collection and improved guidance was produced. This has resulted in a discontinuity in the time series as some surveys, and types of surveys, which were excluded prior to 2016/17 are now included.

Reason for discontinuity

Prior to the 2016/17 data collection exercise, a review was conducted of the guidance provided to Survey Control Liaison Officers (SCLOs) to provide greater clarity around the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of surveys. Any areas of ambiguity were also clarified and mandatory training was provided to all SCLOs. As a result of this review, a number of surveys that were not included in previous years have been included in departmental returns from 2016/17, specifically surveys carried out by Arm’s Length Bodies (ALBs) and some surveys which were omitted due to being considered part of the

⁹⁴ This option was first introduced in 2017/18. As paper diaries usually accompany face-to-face interviews, these have been grouped with face-to-face interviews in the analysis. This maintains consistency with what was done in 2016/17 and earlier years. Online/electronic diaries have been grouped with online questionnaire/data collection.

operational management of a public service. Examples are participant evaluation surveys, customer surveys and surveys which have a secondary operational purpose.

Assessment of impact

For 2016/17, including those surveys and types of surveys that were not included in previous years potentially increased the number of surveys by 40, the number of forms by around 27,000 and the overall compliance burden by around 7,000 hours. The impact was most notable for DE and DfC who provided returns for Arm's Length Bodies that had not previously been included, and for DfE where a number of surveys were included that previously would have been considered to be part of the operational management of a public service.

Other improvements

There have been some other improvements to the methods used by individual branches to calculate compliance burden (e.g. more accurate allocation of burden to departments for split surveys, use/non-use of strata and improved estimation of medians). In addition, actual completion times (rather than estimated completion times based on the median) are used where these are available.

A4. Amendment to 2017/18 data (DoJ and overall totals)

There was an error in the number of responses and compliance burden reported for DoJ in 2017/18, which also affects the overall totals for 2017/18. Although, historic estimates are not normally revised (due to the impracticality of incorporating all subsequent improvements) the 2017/18 figures for DoJ were amended in 2018/19 due to the scale of the error and the impact on the overall time series for DoJ. The amended DoJ figures and 2017/18 totals are used in this report, when comparing the burden across years (Section 8; Table 6).

The number of responses to the PSNI Victim Satisfaction Survey in 2017/18 was incorrectly reported as 8,000 instead of 2,269, inflating the compliance burden for this survey and also for DoJ. This survey was recorded in 2017/18 as contributing 1,333 hours of compliance burden, when it actually contributed 378 hours. The error came to light during the quality assurance of the 2018/19 data, when the figures were compared with the previous year.

A5. Main uses of these statistics

These statistics are used by NI Government Departments, by the Statistics Advisory Committee (SAC), by Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), by the media and by the general public. Information can be used to investigate the burden on households and individuals resulting from Government Statistical Surveys, to monitor changes over time, to respond to MLA questions, and to provide briefing to Ministers.

A6. Data quality

Data are derived from returns provided by other government departments and ALBs. Although the compliance burden is an estimate, the quality of the underlying data has improved greatly since the pre-2016/17 review, and is now considered to be of a good standard. These improvements include:

- Improved coverage of non-NISRA branches within Departments; and improved coverage of ALBs.
- Better application of the criteria to determine whether surveys should be included or excluded from the return.
- Better estimation of median completion times, re-contacts and median re-contact times.
- More use of separate calculations for different subgroups where the compliance costs vary across different modes of data collection and/or type of business.
- Improved quality assurance, with the introduction of local quality assurance by SCLOs.

There have also been improvements in the coherence and comparability of the returned data, both within and between departments, due to improved and expanded SCLO guidance, annual training for SCLOs and an improved data collection workbook, including standardised options for e.g. data collection methods; automatic calculation of compliance costs; built-in guidance and basic validation checks. These changes will result in improved comparability over time.

The data collection process means that individual SCLOs are the key decision makers in terms of including or excluding surveys from the returns. While there is communication between SCLOs and NISRA Survey Control Unit to clarify any queries, there is the potential for individual interpretations of the inclusion and exclusion criteria to lead to small inconsistencies in individual returns.

The quality assurance checks carried out by Survey Control Unit focus on ensuring that the data returned are complete and internally consistent for the current year, and also consistent with returns from previous years. Where data are missing or there are large changes or inconsistencies explanations are sought from the data supplier, and if necessary the data are re-supplied.

Further information on the quality of the data used to produce these official statistics can be found in the [Background Quality Report – Burden to Households and Individuals of Completing Statistical Surveys issued by Northern Ireland Departments](#)⁹⁵.

⁹⁵ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/background-quality-report-burden-households-and-individuals-completing-statistical>

A7. User Engagement

User engagement is on-going between the publication of one report and the production of the next. Following the pre-2016/17 review of the guidance and methodology a specific programme of engagement was carried out. This has resulted in some minor changes to the publication.

We would welcome your feedback, on what you use the report for, any tables/charts or commentary you find particularly helpful and any additional analysis you would like to see. Feedback can be provided by emailing Garbhan.McKevitt@nisra.gov.uk

Appendix B: Case Study – Use of the Labour Force Survey – to assess the impact of COVID-19 and inform decision-making

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a study of the employment circumstances of the population. This quarterly survey interviews everyone aged 16 and over in the household, and collects information about employment, unemployment and economic inactivity, as well as a wide range of related topics such as income, qualifications, training and disability. The interviewer will re-contact the household after 3, 6, 9 & 12 months (either in person or by phone) to find out if anyone's circumstances have changed. A new sample of around 1,300 households is added each quarter.

LFS data are used to produce a range of National Statistics publications as well as bespoke analysis to support policy development (see section 10). The Northern Ireland data also feed into UK statistics and analysis. Due to the size of the survey, estimates from the LFS can be broken down by different characteristics such as age band, occupation, industry and geography.

At the start of the pandemic, the LFS data provided government officials in the Department for the Economy with a readily available and detailed source of information on the Northern Ireland workforce allowing them to assess the impact of the initial lockdown, evaluate the effect of different changes to the restrictions, and compare various support options. Data collected during 2019/20 provided detailed baselines on occupation and industry, age and gender, and employee and self-employment compositions of the NI labour market. These data were instrumental in developing the scope and scale of NI COVID-19 recovery programmes.

Economic and Labour Market Statistics (ELMS) has produced a range of [COVID related analysis](#)⁹⁶ using LFS data, including a topic report on [Self-Employment prior to the pandemic](#)⁹⁷, [Usual method of travel to work tables by occupation and industry](#)⁹⁸, and a [short paper on hours worked in 2019 \(compared to during 2020\)](#)⁹⁹. This is in addition to the regular LFS outputs, including the monthly [Labour Market Report](#)¹⁰⁰ which tracked the impact of the pandemic, and the restrictions and support in place on a monthly basis.

The Office for National Statistics has also used LFS data to produce UK-wide analysis, including specific information for Northern Ireland. This included a report on [Coronavirus and homeworking in the UK, April 2020](#)¹⁰¹, [Information on Key workers](#)¹⁰² and the data on the [Employment share for older workers \(60+\) by occupation, industry and region](#)¹⁰³.

⁹⁶ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/covid-19-related-analysis>

⁹⁷ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/self-employment-northern-ireland-2019>

⁹⁸ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/covid-19-related-analysis/#toc-4>

⁹⁹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/employment-and-hours-worked>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/labour-market-report-historical>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/covid-19-related-analysis/#toc-3>

¹⁰² <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/covid-19-related-analysis/#toc-7>

¹⁰³ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/covid-19-related-analysis/#toc-9>

Analytical Services Division within the Department for the Economy (DfE) has analysed LFS data alongside other economic indicators to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and on the labour market. This has enabled the production of a wide range of [COVID-19 related research](#)¹⁰⁴, including a report on the economic impact of coronavirus '[Coronavirus and the NI Economy \(June 2020 assessment\)](#)' (see Annex J)¹⁰⁵, a [presentation](#)¹⁰⁶ and paper on '[Rebuilding a stronger economy – the medium term recovery](#)' (June 2020)¹⁰⁷ and more recent '[Research on Short and Long Term Impact of Covid-19](#)' (March 2021)¹⁰⁸.

Internally within DfE, data from the LFS combined with other data sources has enabled the production of a regular monitoring dashboard, that has helped the Department to understand the impacts of COVID and the restrictions as they have evolved over the past 16 months. Information and analysis from this dashboard has been used to brief the Minister for the Economy as well as Ministers in the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and more recently the NI Executive on the recovery as restrictions have been relaxed and many businesses have been able to reopen.

LFS data and other data sources have also been used to underpin the various support packages that the Department for the Economy has established in response to the pandemic, for example, the [£10k and £25k business support grants schemes](#)¹⁰⁹, the [microbusiness Hardship Fund](#)¹¹⁰ and the [Newly Self-Employed Support Scheme](#)¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/covid-19-analysis>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/coronavirus-and-ni-economy>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/rebuilding-a-stronger-economy-slideshow.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/rebuilding-stronger-economy-medium-term-recovery>

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/research-short-and-long-term-impact-covid-19>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/news/covid-19-business-support-grant-schemes>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/news/ps40million-ni-micro-business-hardship-fund-opens-applications-today>

¹¹¹ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/news/dodds-announces-new-support-scheme-newly-self-employed>

Appendix C: 2016-21 Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes

The 2016-21 draft Programme for Government (PfG) comprised 12 strategic outcomes outlined by the Executive to represent the society we wish to have. These 12 outcomes were supported by 49 population indicators, which were accompanied by measures (derived from statistics) which monitored performance in relation to the outcomes¹¹². The table below lists the 12 outcomes and the indicators used to monitor performance against each outcome.

Detailed descriptions of each of these strategic outcomes can be found in the [Outcomes Delivery Plan \(December 2019\)](#)¹¹³, including why each of the outcomes matters; what the issues were and how these would be addressed; the relevant indicators for that outcome (with a link to the data sources); and the proposed actions along with the rationale and associated benefits.

OUTCOMES	INDICATORS
<p>1</p> <p>We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sector NI Composite Economic Index • External sales • Rate of innovation activity • Employment rate by council area • % change in energy security of supply margin
<p>2</p> <p>We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % all journeys which are made by walking/cycling/public transport • Greenhouse gas emissions • % household waste that is reused, recycled or composted • Annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration at monitored urban roadside locations • Levels of soluble reactive phosphorus in our rivers and levels of Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen in our marine waters • Biodiversity (% of protected area under favourable management)
<p>3</p> <p>We have a more equal society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap between highest and lowest deprivation quintile in healthy life expectancy at birth • Gap between % non-FSME school leavers and % FSME school leavers achieving at Level 2 or above including English & Maths • % population living in absolute and relative poverty • Employment rate of 16-64 year olds by deprivation quintile • Economic inactivity rate excluding students • Employment rate by council area

¹¹² Detailed Measurement Annexes provided details of each measure, how they were calculated and the data sources used.

¹¹³ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/outcomes-delivery-plan-december-2019>. This replaced the 2018/19 Outcomes Delivery Plan (<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/outcomes-delivery-plan-201819>)

<p>4</p> <p>We enjoy long, healthy, active lives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy life expectancy at birth • Preventable mortality • % population with GHQ12 scores ≥ 4 (signifying possible mental health problem) • Satisfaction with health and social care • Gap between highest and lowest deprivation quintile in healthy life expectancy at birth • Confidence of the population aged 60 years or older (as measured by self-efficacy)
<p>5</p> <p>We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of innovation activity • Proportion of premises with access to broadband services at speeds at or above 30Mbps • % engaging in arts/cultural activities • Confidence (as measured by self-efficacy) • % school leavers achieving at least level 2 or above including English and Maths
<p>6</p> <p>We have more people working in better jobs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic inactivity rate excluding students • Proportion of the workforce in employment qualified to level 1 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above, and level 4 and above • Seasonally adjusted employment rate (16-64) • A Better Jobs Index • % people working part time who would like to work more hours • Employment rate by council area • Proportion of local graduates from local institutions in professional or management occupations or in further study six months after graduation
<p>7</p> <p>We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence rate (% of the population who were victims of any NI Crime Survey crime) • A Respect Index • % the population who believe their cultural identity is respected by society • Average time taken to complete criminal cases • Reoffending rate
<p>8</p> <p>We care for others and we help those in need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % population with GHQ12 scores ≥ 4 (signifying possible mental health problem) • Number of adults receiving social care services at home or self directed support for social care as a % of the total number of adults needing care • % population living in absolute and relative poverty • Average life satisfaction score of people with disabilities • Number of households in housing stress • Confidence of the population aged 60 years or older (as measured by self-efficacy)

<p>9</p> <p>We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Respect Index • % who think all leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres in their areas are “shared and open” to both Protestants and Catholics • % of the population who believe their cultural identity is respected by society • Average life satisfaction score of people with disabilities • Confidence (as measured by self-efficacy)
<p>10</p> <p>We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence rate (% of the population who were victims of any NI Crime Survey crime) • Total spend by external visitors • % of the population who believe their cultural identity is respected by society • Nation Brands Index • A Better Jobs Index
<p>11</p> <p>We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average journey time on key economic corridors • Proportion of premises with access to broadband services at speeds at or above 30Mbps • Usage of online channels to access public services • % of all journeys which are made by walking/cycling/public transport • Overall Performance Assessment (NI Water) • Gap between the number of houses we need, and the number of houses we have
<p>12</p> <p>We give our children and young people the best start in life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % babies born at low birth weight • % children at appropriate stage of development in their immediate pre-school year • % schools found to be good or better • Gap between % non-FSME school leavers and % FSME school leavers achieving at Level 2 or above including English and Maths • % school leavers achieving at Level 2 or above including English and Maths • % care leavers who, aged 19, were in education, training or employment

Appendix D: Departments and their Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Department
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DE	Department of Education
DfC	Department for Communities
DfE	Department for the Economy
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
DoF	Department of Finance
DoH	Department of Health
DoJ	Department of Justice
TEO	The Executive Office
PPS	Public Prosecution Service

Appendix E: Further Information

Downloadable data

The data used in this report can be downloaded from the 'NI Statistical Surveys - Burden to Households and Individuals 2019-20' page, which can be accessed from <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/ni-statistical-surveys-assessment-burden>

Information is provided for each individual survey, including the name, purpose of the survey, frequency, statutory/voluntary status, official statistics status, data collection methods (primary, secondary etc.), issued sample, achieved sample, compliance burden, burden per response, department and ALB/branch. Where available, the survey contact and a link to the published statistics (or survey) is also included. This allows more detailed analysis to be carried out for individual surveys and/or additional information sought.

Tables and charts

The tables and charts in this report, including the data used in the charts, can be downloaded from the 'NI Statistical Surveys - Burden to Households and Individuals 2019-20' page, which can be accessed from <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/ni-statistical-surveys-assessment-burden>

Other linked publications

Previous publications in this series, and the equivalent publications for the Cost to Business of Completing Statistical Surveys can accessed at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/government/ni-statistical-surveys-assessment-burden>

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