

Review of Personnel Statistics for the NICS

Background

In light of the financial challenge facing public services in Northern Ireland, NISRA has been developing strategies to tailor our outputs and activities to align with available resources while continuing to produce high quality statistics.

As part of the wider effort to operate within these financial constraints, the Workforce Statistics & Analysis (WSA, formerly NISRA Human Resource Consultancy Services), has reviewed the content and format of a number of publications in 2023. This included the annual [Personnel Statistics for the NICS](#) report.

A formal consultation with users opened on Monday 4 September 2023 and closed on Sunday 1 October 2023. Notice of the consultation was placed on Departmental Intranets, the NISRA website, Twitter and Facebook feeds. In addition, an email was sent to those on the Personnel in the NICS report user mailing list. Users were invited to complete our online [questionnaire](#) to provide feedback on :

- their usage of the report and particular sections within it, including reasons for use, the element used (written report or tables) and frequency of use;
- how the report meets their needs; and
- the impact of proposed changes to the report – specifically proposals to suspend or scale back the written report.

Summary of Responses

Users

We received thirteen responses to the consultation, twelve of which were from internal NICS users and one from the wider public sector.

The reasons for use were identified as:

- To facilitate research (7)
- Policy making/monitoring (5)
- Personal interest (5)
- To aid decision making on resource allocation (3)
- Statutory/Legislative requirement (2)
- Responding to information requests (2)
- Responding to information requests (1)

Elements Used

Eleven users responded that they used the written report, and nine used the Excel tables. Each section of the report was used often or occasionally by at least eleven users.

Meeting Needs

When asked to what extent the current annual Personnel Statistics for the NICS met their needs, all users (13) reported fully. When asked about each section of the output, most users (at least 10) reported the corresponding section fully or mostly met their needs.

Proposals

Ten users indicated that the impact of stopping the written report would be high or medium, while three said it would be low. Similarly, when asked about the impact of scaling back the written report, eight users indicated high or medium impact and five a low impact.

Five respondents indicated that they used the report for statutory/policy making requirements. As four of these users provided contact details, follow-up online meetings explored the option of scaling back the Personnel in the NICS Report. As

this did not meet the Equality Commission NI requirements, it was not considered a feasible option.

Three users provided written comments on the proposed changes and how the report could better meet their needs including:

- The usefulness of commentary to provide context and background;
- Further diversity information additional to sex, which is currently available in the NISRA [Equality Statistics in the NICS](#) report;
- Further detailed occupational analysis. Financial constraints mean that it is not possible to provide more detailed information. WSA will review the output on an ongoing basis and provide additional information if there is a clear demand and resources permit.

Proposed Action

Workforce Statistics & Analysis is grateful to all the users who took time to provide detailed responses to the consultation. The collective feedback paints a positive picture of the importance which users derive from this particular output. We have decided to continue with publication of the Personnel Statistics in the NICS report in the same format and aim to streamline production process with the application of a Reproducible Analytical Pipeline (RAP) approach, using R code to create an HTML output in the next year.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this update, please contact:

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