

Background Quality Report

Lone Pensioner Allowance & Disabled Persons Allowance Quality Report

Introduction

Context for the quality report.

This report covers the Lone Pensioner Allowance (LPA) and Disabled Persons Allowance (DPA) Annual Publication and provides information on the quality of the data used to produce the publication. This will allow users to be informed about the quality of the information upon which they may be drawing conclusions and making decisions.

The report is based on the nine quality dimensions of the European Statistical System.

[The ESS handbook for quality reports - 2014 edition - Products Manuals and Guidelines - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)

Department Responsible: Department of Finance (DoF)

Release Date: Annually every June

Web link to main publication:

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/lone-pensioner-allowance-and-disabled-persons-allowance-statistics>

Relevance

The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs in both coverage and content.

The Lone Pensioner Allowance and Disabled Persons Allowance Annual Publication measures a wide range of data in relation to both of these application based rate reliefs, including Number of Awards, Local District Council Breakdowns and Net totals of relief awarded. The publication includes the data from the 2010/11 Rating year through to the current Rating year to provide context on the current year's figures.

'The Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977, Section 30A – rate relief in respect of dwellings'

Lone Pensioner Allowance (LPA) is an application based rate relief, which provides a rates discount to people who pay rates on their home. To be eligible, a ratepayer must be over 70 years old, live alone and have rates to pay. The benefit is not means tested and recipients can receive a reduction of 20% of their rates bill.

'The Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977, Section 31A – rate rebates for hereditaments with special facilities for persons with a disability'

Disabled Persons Allowance (DPA) is an application based rate relief, which provides a rates discount to people who pay rates on their home. To be eligible, a ratepayer must occupy a property which has been suitably adapted, or has additional features to accommodate a disabled person's needs. The benefit is not means tested and recipients can receive a reduction of 25% of their rates bill.

The annual statistics are utilised for internal uptake monitoring, planning outreach activities and for financial planning.

Accuracy and Reliability

The proximity between an estimate and the unknown true value.

The information published in the LPA & DPA Publications is based on the data collected and stored by LPS. LPS follows strict guidance on the processes and procedures used to collect, review and input data onto the ABBACUS system. There is a multi-tiered approach to the validation of the data and the quality assessment of the data which is regularly reviewed by the Senior Management Team within LPS.

There is a very low data quality concern attached to the LPA & DPA statistics given that the raw data is collected by trained LPS staff and governed by processes and procedures in terms of the oversight and QA of the data entry into the LPS Assessment Billing Benefit and Collecting Update System (ABBACUS), thus allowing for errors to be identified and corrected before the data is used to produce the publication.

Surveys are not used as part of the production of the statistics so there are no potential survey errors to consider.

The data for the publication is published on the Department of Finance website on an annual basis. Further detail is provided in each of the areas below to justify this assessment.

Processing errors:

Processing errors happen when mistakes occur in the implementation of the administrative and statistical methods used to produce the results. Revisions as a result of human error are identified as such in the revisions section of the statistics report.

Measurement errors:

Information provided on the LPA/DPA application forms may be incorrect or missing. There are a range of error checks that LPS carry out to identify where information is incorrect or needs further checks carried out.

Provision of revised data:

Any significant revisions to the published data will be highlighted in the report.

Timeliness and Punctuality

Timeliness refers to the time gap between publication and the reference period. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates.

The LPA and DPA publication is published around 10 weeks after the end of the rating year. LPS Statistics Branch will put out an announcement on gov.uk a minimum of 4 weeks before the official publication date.

In the unlikely event of a change to the pre-announced release schedule, public attention would be drawn to the change and the reasons for the change explained fully at the same time, as set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Accessibility and Clarity

Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.

The LPA & DPA spreadsheet publication contains tables, graphs and text which conform to the standards set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics. The publication is accompanied by a Quality Assessment of Administrative Data (QAAD) report and a Background Quality Report which provide information on the scope of the statistics and details of the data collection and validation process.

All LPA/DPA spreadsheets and related quality reports conform to the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018

The LPA & DPA statistics are also available on Open Data NI.

Any queries can be sent to the responsible statistician at lps.statisticsbranch@finance-ni.gov.uk

Coherence and Comparability

Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but refer to the same topic, are similar. Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.

As responsibility for the collection of rates in Northern Ireland lies solely with LPS; there are no comparable datasets published in Northern Ireland.

LPA & DPA are both allowances which are written into legislation within Northern Ireland. There are no like for like allowances in the rest of the UK which the data could be compared against.

In 2014, all Local Government Districts (LGD) in Northern Ireland were redefined. This had a minimal impact on the LPA & DPA statistics as the ABBACUS system was used to assign all

properties with a new LGD. The LPA & DPA statistics were then adjusted to use the new LGDs in place of the previous ones.

Trade-offs between Output Quality Components

Trade-offs are the extent to which different aspects of quality are balanced against each other.

There have been no trade-offs of quality within the LPA & DPA publications.

Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

The processes for finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products.

The LPA & DPA publication is a low profile publication so external user engagement on this statistical time series has to be considered a low priority given staff resource constraints. Internal users were consulted in developing this statistical output to make it relevant to their needs and any issues raised during the annual production process would be considered for improvements to the statistics.

Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.

The process for producing the LPA & DPA statistics is carried out by LPS Statistics Branch and, now that the development work is complete, would take around 5 person days work by an Assistant Statistician to produce. However, given the time needed to liaise with data suppliers over any data quality issues, to review the accompanying metadata and prepare updated web pages the end to end production time is around one month. The cost of production is therefore £1,500.00.

Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

The procedures and policy used to ensure sound confidentiality, security and transparent practices.

The published statistics are non-disclosive in that no personal data is published or disclosed as the statistics are reported at a high level.

All data used in the production of the statistics is kept on a secure server which is only accessible to LPS Statistics Branch and a small number of LPS administrative staff from the Application Based Rate Relief team.

Staff are trained annually and regularly reminded of the protocols of keeping data stored securely and confidentially.