

DAERA STATISTICS CHARTER 2026



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depairtment o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) produces a wide range of official statistics and data relating to agriculture, food, environmental protection, climate change, animal health and welfare, fisheries, rural affairs and associated policy areas.

These statistics provide evidence to support decision-making, public accountability, research, innovation and public understanding. They help inform government policy, support businesses and stakeholders, contribute to public debate and enable citizens to better understand the social, economic and environmental issues affecting Northern Ireland.

DAERA is committed to producing statistics and data that serve the public good. We do this by ensuring that our statistics are trustworthy, high quality and valuable. We apply the principles and practices set out in the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Statistics throughout the statistical lifecycle, from the collection and acquisition of data through to analysis, publication and user engagement.

This Charter sets out our commitments to users, data suppliers, stakeholders and the wider public. It explains how we will apply the principles of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value, and describes the standards users can expect from us.

A catalogue of DAERA statistical outputs, including Accredited Official Statistics, Official Statistics and Official Statistics in Development, is available through the [Research and statistics - GOV.UK](#) and the [DAERA statistical webpages](#).

Version 5.0

Updated 18/08/2026

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Our Commitment

We will produce, manage and disseminate statistics independently, impartially and objectively in support of the public good.

Trustworthiness depends on the integrity of our people, the strength of our governance arrangements and the transparency of our decisions and processes. We will ensure that our statistics are produced free from political interference and in accordance with professional standards and ethical principles. We will be open about our methods, quality assurance arrangements, sources of data, strengths and limitations of outputs, and the decisions that affect statistical publications.

Independence and Leadership

The DAERA Head of Profession for Statistics has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and for maintaining professional standards across statistical activities.

The Head of Profession retains responsibility for:

- statistical methods, standards and quality assurance;
- the content and presentation of statistical outputs;
- timing of statistical releases;
- decisions relating to revisions and corrections;
- ensuring compliance with professional and ethical standards;
- promoting continuous improvement in statistical production; and
- the evidence, data and analysis used to inform public statements and decisions, wherever appropriate.

We will apply the principles of intelligent transparency by making supporting data, statistics and analysis available in a way that enables public understanding and scrutiny.

Statistical decisions will be taken on professional grounds and will not be influenced by political, departmental or personal interests.

Statistical releases will be published separately from ministerial statements, policy announcements and press commentary.

Integrity and Impartiality

All staff involved in the production of statistics are expected to act with honesty, integrity and objectivity.

Staff must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and comply with relevant Northern Ireland Civil Service and departmental policies. Statistical analysis will be undertaken using professional judgement and evidence-based approaches.

Transparency

We will be transparent about:

- how statistics are produced;
- the methods and data sources used;
- quality assurance arrangements;
- revisions and corrections;
- limitations and uncertainty within data;
- stakeholder engagement activities; and
- planned developments and improvements.

Where significant changes to methods, classifications or data sources occur, we will explain the reasons for change and the impact on users.

User Engagement

We recognise that meaningful engagement with users is fundamental to producing statistics that meet society's needs.

We will:

- engage with current and potential users;
- seek feedback on existing outputs;
- consult on major developments and changes;
- maintain user forums and engagement opportunities where appropriate;
- consider feedback when setting priorities; and
- communicate how user feedback has influenced our statistical outputs.

We will ensure engagement activities are inclusive and seek input from a broad range of users and stakeholders.

Release Practices

We will announce publication dates in advance through the [Research and statistics - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/research-and-statistics).

We will publish statistics in an orderly and transparent manner, ensuring equal access for all users at the point of release.

Release dates will only be changed in exceptional circumstances and, where necessary, an explanation will be provided.

Data Ethics and Governance

We will use data responsibly, ethically and lawfully throughout the statistical lifecycle.

When acquiring, linking, sharing or analysing data, we will:

- safeguard confidentiality;
- ensure compliance with legislation and government standards;
- assess ethical considerations;
- use data proportionately;
- seek to maximise public benefit; and
- minimise risks to privacy and confidentiality.

We will maintain robust governance arrangements to support the responsible use of administrative, survey and linked datasets.

Professional Capability

We will ensure that staff have the skills, expertise and resources necessary to produce high-quality statistics and data.

Training and professional development will support:

- statistical methods and analysis;
- quality management;
- communication and user engagement;
- information security;
- data protection; and
- emerging analytical techniques.

We will promote a culture of learning, innovation and continuous improvement.

Timing of releases

Release dates for DAERA Accredited Official Statistics and Official Statistics outputs are pre-announced via the [GOV.UK Release Calendar](#) Statistical Press Releases (containing preliminary and summary results) are normally issued through the DAERA Press Office at 9.30am on the day of publication when they are also posted on the DAERA website.

Pre-release access to statistics

Pre-release access to statistics is limited to specified DAERA outputs. Details of the publications and those given pre-release access are published on the [DAERA website](#).

A statement of compliance sets out the principles, criteria and conditions under which DAERA permits pre-release access to specific outputs. It includes a list of DAERA posts for which pre-release access is permitted and the outputs to which access is granted. See [Statement of Compliance with the Pre-release to Official Statistics Order \(NI\) 2009](#).

Training and guiding staff

DAERA statistics are prepared by staff trained in the production, management and dissemination of statistics. All staff are required to undertake training on information assurance and the safe handling of data. Key procedures are documented and are regularly reviewed and updated. Staff training needs are reviewed bi-annually.

Data access

Statistical staff, where required, are granted controlled and limited access to the administrative systems for the specific projects that they are responsible for. The information extracted contains only the relevant data and statistical staff have no authority to directly alter any data contained within the systems. They can, however, inform the administrative system managers of any errors they uncover, to aid in the overall system maintenance.

Data governance

We will comply with all relevant legislation relating to the collection and management of data. We will seek to continually develop our procedures to protect personal data. A detailed statement on [Data Governance - Confidentiality and Security](#) is provided.

FOIA and EIR considerations

Statistics being compiled by DAERA prior to the published release date cannot be made available under the FOIA or the EIR as they are still in development.

Revisions and Errors

A detailed statement on [Revisions and Errors](#) is provided.

Audit

Accredited Official Statistics produced by DAERA are subject to periodic assessment, to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice. These assessments are conducted by the Office for Statistics Regulation, the regulatory arm of the UK Statistics Authority. It is an independent body operating at arm's length from government.

All aspects of the work undertaken by those involved in the production of statistics in DAERA are subject to internal audit.

QUALITY

Our Commitment

We will produce statistics that are fit for purpose, based on appropriate data, sound methods and proportionate quality assurance.

We will provide users with sufficient information about quality to help them understand the strengths, limitations and appropriate uses of our statistics.

Quality considerations will be embedded throughout the statistical lifecycle.

Data Sources

We will select data sources that are suitable for their intended purposes.

Where appropriate, we will make use of administrative and emerging data sources to reduce burden on individuals and businesses while maintaining quality and public confidence.

For each major data source, we will seek to understand:

- coverage;
- accuracy;
- coherence;
- timeliness;
- relevance;
- strengths;
- limitations; and
- risks.

We will work collaboratively with data suppliers to improve data quality over time.

Methods and Standards

We will apply statistically robust and transparent methods that are appropriate to the intended use of outputs.

We will:

- use recognised statistical standards;
- document methodologies;
- ensure methods are reviewed regularly;
- apply professional judgement appropriately; and
- explain significant methodological changes.

Where changes affect comparability over time, we will provide guidance to users and, where feasible, publish comparable time series.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance will be proportionate to the risks posed by each stage of production.

We will implement quality assurance processes covering:

- data collection and acquisition;
- processing and validation;
- analysis and interpretation;
- publication and dissemination; and
- revisions and corrections.

Quality assurance arrangements will reflect the importance of statistics to users and the potential consequences of errors.

Communicating Quality and Uncertainty

We recognise that all statistics contain strengths, limitations and, in some cases, uncertainty.

We will communicate:

- levels of uncertainty;
- methodological limitations;
- assumptions;
- caveats;
- sources of bias; and
- factors affecting interpretation.

This will help users make informed decisions about the suitability of statistics for their needs.

Continuous Improvement

We will regularly review our statistical outputs to ensure they remain relevant, robust and fit for purpose.

Reviews will consider:

- user needs;
- changing policy requirements;
- advancements in methods and technology;
- data quality; and
- opportunities to improve efficiency and value.

Where improvements are identified, we will implement them transparently and communicate changes clearly.

VALUE

Our Commitment

We will ensure our statistics provide value by meeting user needs, supporting understanding and decision-making, and contributing to the public good.

Value is achieved when statistics are relevant, accessible, insightful and used effectively.

Understanding User Needs

We will seek to understand:

- who uses our statistics;
- how they use them;
- what additional information they require; and
- how outputs can be improved.

We will engage proactively with government, industry, academia, research organisations, representative bodies, the media and the public.

Accessibility and Inclusion

We will make statistics as accessible as possible to all users.

Our outputs will:

- comply with current accessibility standards;
- use clear language;
- provide accessible formats where appropriate;
- support users with differing needs; and
- be easy to locate through clear signposting and navigation.

We will continue to improve the accessibility and usability of our statistical products.

Clarity and Insight

We will help users understand statistics by providing appropriate context, analysis and explanation.

Where relevant we will explain:

- trends;
- drivers of change;
- relationships between datasets;
- uncertainty;
- limitations; and
- implications for interpretation.

We will strive to present information in ways that are clear, balanced and understandable.

Innovation and Improvement

We will pursue opportunities to improve statistical production and dissemination through innovation.

This may include:

- new data sources;
- data linkage;
- enhanced analytical methods;
- improved visualisation;
- digital dissemination tools; and
- modern statistical technologies.

Innovation will be undertaken responsibly and in ways that maintain public confidence.

Efficiency and Proportionality

We will make efficient use of resources and seek to minimise burden on data suppliers.

We will:

- maximise the use of existing data;
- reduce duplication;
- collaborate with other organisations where appropriate;
- streamline data collection processes; and
- ensure effort is proportionate to user needs and public benefit.

Statistical Leadership and Key Contacts

Our Commitment

Strong statistical leadership is essential to ensuring that official statistics are trustworthy, high quality and provide value to users.

The Head of Profession for Statistics provides professional leadership for statistical activities within DAERA and is responsible for promoting compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics, maintaining professional standards and supporting continuous improvement across all statistical work.

The Head of Profession has responsibility for:

- ensuring the integrity and professional independence of statistical activities;
- setting statistical standards and promoting good practice;
- overseeing the quality of statistical outputs;
- supporting innovation and capability development;
- ensuring appropriate governance arrangements are in place; and
- acting as the principal source of professional statistical advice within the Department.

Operational responsibility for individual statistical outputs may be delegated to appropriately qualified statisticians and analysts, who are accountable for the quality, relevance and accessibility of the statistics they produce.

Statistical Contacts

Every statistical publication will clearly identify a named contact who can:

- answer queries relating to the statistics;
- provide clarification on methods and quality;
- receive feedback from users;
- facilitate access to supporting information where appropriate; and
- direct users to related statistical outputs and resources.

We will maintain up-to-date contact details for all major statistical areas and ensure users can easily identify the most appropriate point of contact for their enquiry.

Head of Profession (HoP)

Mark McLean,

DAERA Acting Chief Agricultural Economist. Tel: 028 90524342

Email: mark.mclean@daera-ni.gov.uk

The HoP, in consultation with the Chief Executive of NISRA, has final responsibility for the content, format and timing of all Accredited Official Statistics releases. In particular, the HoP is responsible for:

- a) Setting the policy framework for release of Accredited Official Statistics by Data Managers (see below);
- b) Deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures;
- c) Deciding on the content and timing of statistical releases;
- d) Advising Ministers on statistical issues;
- e) Monitoring compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics and the DAERA Statistics Charter.

Data Managers

Statistics and Analytical Services

Senior Principal Statistician & Data Manager –

Joanne Kelly Tel: 028 9052 3415

Email: joanne.kelly@daera-ni.gov.uk

Economic and Evaluation Branch

Data Manager – Dr Paul Keatley Tel:

028 9052 4063

Email: paul.keatley@daera-ni.gov.uk

Key contacts:

Food, Farm and Agricultural Statistics

Danielle Clarke

Email: danielle.clarke@daera-ni.gov.uk

Dr Paul Keatley

Email: paul.keatley@daera-ni.gov.uk

Climate Change Statistics

Hugh McNickle

Email: hugh.mcnicke@daera-ni.gov.uk

Helen Irwin

Email: helen.irwin@daera-ni.gov.uk

Environment Statistics

Conor McCormack

Email: conor.mccormack@daera-ni.gov.uk

Rural Statistics

Des Muldoon

Email: des.muldoon@daera-ni.gov.uk

Social Science and Behavioural Insights

Sally Pattison

Email: sally.pattison@daera-ni.gov.uk

Web focus

In order to promote widespread access, we use online as our main channel for the dissemination of statistics. This means all our products are made available at the DAERA website or via links from the [Research and statistics - GOV.UK](#). Everything published on the internet can be downloaded free of charge. When a print format is also used, outputs will often be published in electronic format before they become available in print.

A number of hard copy publications are available free of charge whilst others are charged for in line with the policy on Customer Service. Request for printed agricultural statistics publications can be made directly to Policy, Economics and Statistics Division: Tel (028) 90524594.

Format of releases

The DAERA Head of Profession maintains responsibility for the content, format and timing of all statistical outputs.

Releases are normally in the form of a short summary of the key numbers, intended primarily to help the media in reporting the results. In many cases a release providing 'headline' or key statistics, is followed by a more detailed statistical bulletin or report.

Statistical releases are issued separately from any policy statement or comment about the figures by a Minister.

Typically, annual publications retain core, standard tabulations, but content may vary to reflect needs of users and to allow proper presentation and analysis of new or particularly interesting results.

Customer Service

Our Commitment

We are committed to delivering a professional, responsive and user-focused statistical service.

We recognise that users, data suppliers and stakeholders are critical partners in the production and use of statistics. We will work collaboratively with them to ensure our statistical outputs remain relevant, accessible and trustworthy.

Service to Data Suppliers

We recognise the importance of those who provide information used in the production of statistics.

We will:

- minimise unnecessary reporting burdens;
- maximise the use of existing administrative information where appropriate;
- clearly explain why information is required;
- provide support and guidance when collecting information;
- treat information securely and confidentially; and
- seek opportunities to streamline data collection processes

Service to Users

We will seek to ensure that our statistics meet the needs of the widest possible range of users.

We will:

- provide accessible, clear and timely statistical outputs;
- encourage feedback and suggestions for improvement;
- support users in understanding and interpreting statistical information;
- provide explanations of methods, quality and limitations where appropriate; and
- continually review whether our outputs remain relevant and useful.

Responding to Enquiries

We aim to provide a timely and helpful response to all enquiries.

Users can expect us to:

- be courteous, professional and approachable;
- acknowledge correspondence promptly;
- provide accurate and relevant information wherever possible;
- explain when a full response will take longer to prepare; and
- keep users informed of progress where enquiries are complex.

Requests for Additional Analysis

We will seek to meet reasonable requests for additional statistical information, analysis or tabulations where:

- the information can be provided lawfully;
- confidentiality can be protected;
- outputs meet quality standards; and
- resources are available.

Where requests cannot be met, we will explain the reasons clearly and, where possible, suggest alternative sources of information.

Charges

Routine statistical enquiries will normally be provided free of charge.

Charges may be applied where requests require substantial additional analytical work or resources. Any such charges will be applied transparently and in accordance with departmental policy and relevant legislation.

Data Governance, Confidentiality and Security

Our Commitment

Public trust depends upon the responsible, ethical and secure handling of information.

We are committed to protecting confidential information, safeguarding personal data and ensuring that data are used appropriately to deliver public value. Statistical information will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation, government security standards and recognised professional practice.

Protecting Confidential Information

We will ensure that statistics are published in ways that protect the confidentiality of individuals, businesses and organisations.

We will:

- apply appropriate statistical disclosure controls;
- assess disclosure risks prior to publication;
- minimise the risk of identifying individuals or organisations;
- comply with legal requirements relating to confidentiality and data protection; and
- regularly review disclosure control methods and guidance.

Information Security

We will maintain robust physical, technical and organisational controls to protect information throughout its lifecycle.

Access to statistical data will be granted only where necessary and proportionate, and only to appropriately authorised personnel. Security controls will be designed to prevent unauthorised access, disclosure, alteration or loss of information.

Ethical Use of Data

The use of data will be guided by principles of necessity, proportionality, transparency and public benefit.

When using administrative, survey or linked data we will:

- assess ethical considerations;
- evaluate risks and benefits;
- ensure the use of data is justified and proportionate;

- maintain transparency wherever possible; and
- seek to maximise public value while protecting privacy.

Data Sharing and Research Access

We support the responsible use of data for research and statistical purposes where there is a clear public benefit and appropriate safeguards are in place.

Requests for access to data will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to legal, ethical, confidentiality and security requirements. Any approved access arrangements will be governed by formal Data Sharing Agreements and appropriate controls.

Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Requests

We will handle requests for information openly and fairly.

All requests will be considered in accordance with applicable legislation, balancing openness and transparency with legal obligations relating to confidentiality, personal data and commercial sensitivity.

Revisions and Errors

Our Commitment

Revisions are a normal part of the statistical process and can arise from the receipt of new information, methodological improvements or quality enhancements.

We are committed to managing revisions and corrections openly and transparently so that users can understand their causes, impact and implications.

Planned Revisions

Some statistical outputs may be revised according to a published schedule.

Where revisions are anticipated, we will:

- explain why revisions are necessary;
- identify provisional estimates clearly;
- communicate revision timetables;
- provide revised figures promptly; and
- explain the impact of revisions on previously published information.

Methodological Changes

When significant changes to methods, classifications, definitions or sources are planned, we will:

- communicate proposed changes in advance where appropriate;
- explain the rationale for change;
- assess impacts on quality and comparability;
- seek user input where appropriate; and
- publish supporting methodological information.

Where feasible, historic data will be revised or reconstructed to maintain consistent time series and support meaningful comparisons over time.

Correcting Errors

Despite robust quality assurance procedures, errors may occasionally occur.

Where an error is identified we will:

1. assess its nature and impact;
2. determine the appropriate corrective action;
3. correct published material as quickly as practicable;

4. communicate clearly what has changed; and
5. explain the implications for users.

The scale of the response will be proportionate to the significance of the error and its impact on users.

Learning and Improvement

We will learn from revisions, corrections and quality issues to improve future statistical production.

Where appropriate, we will review processes, systems and controls and implement improvements designed to reduce the likelihood of similar issues occurring in the future.

Complaints Procedure

Our Commitment

We aim to provide high-quality statistical services and welcome feedback from users.

Complaints provide an important opportunity to understand user concerns, improve services and strengthen public confidence in our statistics. We are committed to handling complaints fairly, promptly and consistently.

What Can Be Complained About?

Complaints may relate to:

- the quality of our statistical services;
- accessibility of our outputs;
- the conduct of staff;
- compliance with this Charter;
- application of the Code of Practice for Statistics; or
- any other aspect of our statistical activities.

How Complaints Will Be Handled

We will:

- acknowledge complaints promptly;
- treat complaints seriously and respectfully;
- investigate complaints fairly and impartially;
- keep complainants informed of progress;
- provide clear explanations of findings; and
- identify lessons and improvements where appropriate.

Where an issue can be resolved quickly and informally, we will seek to do so.

Escalation

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied following an initial investigation, arrangements will be available for review at a more senior level within DAERA.

Information on escalation routes, including external review mechanisms where applicable, will be made available to complainants as part of the response process.

Learning from Feedback

We value complaints, compliments and suggestions as sources of learning.

Feedback received through complaints will be used to:

- identify recurring issues;
- improve services and processes;
- inform staff development; and
- strengthen compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Formal Complaint

You can complain in writing, by e-mail, by telephone or in person (by appointment) providing as much relevant information as possible so that we can deal with your case promptly:

In writing:

Statistics and Analytical Services

Clare House

303 Airport Road

Belfast

BT3 9ED

By email:

joanne.kelly@daera-ni.gov.uk

An acknowledgement of all complaints will be issued within 3 working days of receipt, giving the name of the member of staff dealing with it. We aim to issue a full response to your complaint within 10 working days of receiving it. If we cannot, we will tell you why and let you know when you can expect to get a full reply

If you are not satisfied with the initial response you receive, or the way in which your complaint has been handled by the DAERA Statistical Complaints Officer, you can ask for your complaint to be referred to the Director of Policy and Economics:

In writing:

DAERA Director of Policy, Economics and Statistics

303 Airport Road

Belfast

BT3 9ED

By email:

mark.mclean@daera-ni.gov.uk

As a final resort, if you remain dissatisfied after completing the internal complaints procedure, you may be able to refer your complaint to the relevant Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will normally expect internal complaints process to have been exhausted before considering the complaint. The Ombudsman will then decide whether the complaint falls within their remit and whether further investigation is required.

DAERA is committed to producing statistics and data that serve the public good. Through the principles of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value, we will continue to provide reliable, transparent and accessible statistics that support better understanding, informed decision-making and public accountability. We will continually review and improve our statistical products, practices and engagement activities to ensure they meet the evolving needs of society and maintain public confidence in official statistics.

For further information:

Statistics and Analytical Services

Clare House

303 Airport Road

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BT3 9ED

Tel: 028 90523415

Email: joanne.kelly@daera-ni.gov.uk

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