

DFP OFFICIAL STATISTICS EXPERT USER GROUP MEETING – LABOUR MARKET

17th June 2015 at 10.30am, Conference Room A, Netherleigh

ATTENDEES:

Alan McClelland	ASU	Eugene Curran	DEL
Ziping Wu	AFBI	Neil Gibson	Economic Policy Centre
Maureen O'Reilly	Consultant	Jordan Buchanan	Economic Policy Centre
Lynda Kennedy	DEL	David Marshall	NISRA
Philip McDonagh	Consultant	James Gillan	ELMS
Julieann Kieran	DETI	Cathryn Blair	ELMS
Patricia McDowell	DARD	Oonagh Neenan	ELMS
Paul Flynn	OFMDFM	Jonathan Harvey	ELMS
Claire Shortt	Belfast City Council	Kathryn Kavanagh	ELMS
Esmond Birnie	PWC	Andrew Mawhinney	ELMS
Shane Murphy	DETI	Victoria Maier	ELMS
Barbara Love	NI Assembly	Iain Bryson	CSU

MINUTES

1. Introduction and overview of Labour Market Statistics

Cathryn Blair welcomed everyone to the event and explained that the main purpose of the meeting was to update users on developments since the previous user group meeting and to obtain feedback on recent and proposed developments, in order to improve the service we provide. Cathryn delivered a presentation summarising the agenda, the latest labour market statistics for June and the range of labour market publications produced by Economic and Labour Market Statistics (ELMS).

2. User group consultation outcomes and resulting developments

Oonagh Neenan summarised the results of the user consultation meeting and follow up survey which were conducted in May 2014. The presentation also outlined the actions taken by ELMS to address the issues raised, particularly in terms of usage, quality and accessibility of labour market statistics. Users provided feedback in the following areas:

Labour Market Report (LMR)

Users were very positive in relation to the revised LMR and felt that generally it was more user friendly and well presented. Some minor suggestions included:

- Make the report date more prominent by adding it to the title
- Improve the infographic by: rescaling the sectors in the employment section, add the change over quarter for QES jobs, add claimant count rate.

Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS)

Feedback regarding NINIS indicated that it is widely used among attendees and considered to be a very useful resource, particularly the interactive content.

Suggestions for improvement were to:

- ensure as much data as possible is on NINIS, even if it cannot be disaggregated by geography
- have all the data in one place
- add rural unemployment data
- ensure all tables have NI totals
- include key definitional and methodological notes in the interactive content to avoid misinterpretation

- provide confidence intervals for data where possible
- investigate extending the available variables beyond age and gender, for example to employment size band and industry
- improve the accessibility of business statistics.

3. Workforce jobs

Cathryn Blair updated users on initial work into the differences between workforce jobs and the LFS measure of jobs, following recent user feedback on the issue. Users emphasised the importance of this work. A number of analyses were suggested including focussing on full-time employees only, assessing the distribution of hours worked and investigating the definitions and calculation of self-employed used in each measure. In addition users suggested that the analysis should focus on two points in time, namely 2007 and the current period, and recommend which series to use.

4. Special topic papers

Andrew Mawhinney summarised the first in a series of topic papers to be produced, namely underemployment and overemployment in Northern Ireland and briefly outlined plans for future papers. Users suggested the following may be useful:

- information on graduate underemployment
- NEETs, youth unemployment and Parliamentary Constituency breakdowns as topic papers
- ELMS to liaise with Assembly researchers (RAISE) to establish topical issues
- a list of topic papers and their publication date.

A short discussion of the other LFS publications followed however no strong views were offered on the continuation of the LFS Quarterly Supplement or the frequency of the LMR.

5. Pooled Household Survey

Iain Bryson provided an update on progress in relation to the Pooled Household Survey, outlining the benefits in terms of increased sample size and accuracy of estimates, which was demonstrated using preliminary results. Users enquired if a back series was available and Iain confirmed that the Pooled Household Survey starts from 2010/11. Users discussed the possibility of benchmarking the monthly LFS figures and Pooled Survey results.

6. IDBR Facts and Figures publication

Jonathan Harvey explained the Inter Departmental Business Register and associated outputs which include a publication (updated twice each year), tables and interactive content on NINIS. Jonathan outlined plans to move to one reduced publication in January but retain all data tables and interactive content. There were no objections from users to this proposal, with one confirming that the tables are very useful but the publication is less so. Users were encouraged to return the printed out consultation form included in their packs or to complete the survey online: <https://www.research.net/r/DTQX6SJ>

7. Any other business

No other specific items of business were identified and users were thanked for their valuable contribution to the meeting prior to closing.