

Business Surveys FAQs

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1. NISRA and statistics

Who are we and what do we do?

NISRA is an Agency of the Department of Finance. NISRA is the principal source of official statistics and social research on Northern Ireland. These statistics and research inform public policy and associated debate in the wider society.

What happens to the information?

The results are widely used by government, the private sector and others to inform economic decision making and the information collected is invaluable in tracking the performance of the Northern Ireland economy.

Can I provide estimates?

We would like the form to be completed with the correct figures and returned when the figures are available. However, if that is not possible, careful estimates on the form are acceptable.

How was I selected?

If a company is on PAYE or the VAT registers they can be selected. Companies are selected randomly however some companies are selected more often due to either their size or the type of business they work in.

Why was I selected?

Representative samples are selected from the directory of all businesses to achieve results of suitable quality while minimising the burden on business.

Where a survey is necessary, efficient sampling procedures are adopted and in practice, this means that a greater share of the burden tends to fall on larger firms. However, information provided by smaller businesses is also necessary to provide a truly representative picture of the economy.

Is this survey compulsory?

Yes. You are legally required to complete this form under the [Statistics of Trade and Employment \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1988](#). However, we will accept estimated figures if it's not possible for you to provide actual figures. Participation in our surveys ensures that we have a robust measure of the economy, which will help inform government policies and support businesses.

2. Completing the form

Is this a genuine survey?

Yes, we send all of our business surveys from the email address dofsurveys@equiniti.com. We have recently changed how we collect our survey data, from a pdf based eForm to an internet based webform. This is to make the form more user friendly. We hope you like the new format.

What is the return address?

Please re-send to:

*NISRA Department of Finance
Economic and Labour Market Statistics
PO Box 2096
LIVINGSTONE EH54 0HH*

Alternatively use the appropriate email in the contact us section above.

3. Electronic form queries

What is the difference between this new format and what I got before?

The main differences are the way you access, and what the form looks like. The form you would have received before would have been an attachment to an email, which you could complete as a pdf document and submit at the end. This new webform will be seen as a weblink/URL, and in order to keep your data secure, there will be a number of pieces of information that you will need to access your form: the survey you are completing, your reference number, your document ID, and your email address. All of this information will be included in your survey email.

The form will also look slightly different, and it will be accessible from more devices (for example, mobiles, tablets and Macs). The survey will also be easier to navigate, where it routes to the questions you need to complete, so you do not see questions that are not applicable. This will be based on your answers to the previous questions. You will also be able to save your progress at any stage and come back to the form to complete later. Your data can still be saved at the end in pdf format to your desktop. We hope you like our new format.

I don't know what my document ID/reference number/survey is

The survey, document ID, your reference number, and your email address (all of this information) can be found in the email you will have received, which included the link to your survey site. The email will have been sent from dofsurveys@equiniti.com if that helps you find it in your inbox.

I have tried logging in and it wouldn't let me, now I am locked out

This is a security measure we have so that nobody else could access your data. You will need to enter the exact correct details in order to access your form. You will likely be timed out for around 5 minutes, and after it will let you try to access the form again, but if you enter incorrect login details again it will lock you out again, and likely for a longer period of time. I apologise for any inconvenience caused, but the security of your data is very important to us. It may be worthwhile copying and pasting from your survey email to ensure that no unintentional typos occur.

I have not received the forms

This can sometimes happen depending on the settings of your email account. Please check your junk mail folder, where the survey should have been sent from dofsurveys@equiniti.com.

If there are any issues get in touch with us using the email address listed in the contact us section above and we can send out a replacement form.

When I input financial data, it changes my answer to a £0/a different value

This is the webform trying to help you by rounding the value to the nearest £000 (thousand pound). This removes the need to round the values yourself and will be the case throughout our survey form for financial data.

It will not let me go to the next page

There may be errors on the form. Error messages would appear at the top of the page/window in a red box and would tell you exactly the reason why you would not be able to progress.

4. Data protection

Who will see the reports?

The data are collated and published as a National Statistic. This means that the collection, analysis and publication of the data are governed by a Code of Practice. The publication is made available to all on the NISRA website.

We operate under a very strict disclosure policy and no individual business will be identifiable from the published results.

Will people be able to see my financial figures?

No, all data is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Will people be able to see my company's data?

No. The information you give us will be used to produce statistical analyses. Your personal details are not released and are held in in line with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We have a series of measures in place to ensure your business cannot be identified.

5. Complaints

Can I submit a complaint?

If you would like to make a complaint, you can email economicstats@nisra.gov.uk.