

Northern Ireland IOP Q4 2016 – Correction

(re-published 13th April 2017)

Background information

1. How and why did this error occur?

The error occurred during the production process when incorrect deflators were applied.

The methodology remains correct but the error was not detected by our usual quality assurance (QA) processes. NISRA is reviewing its QA processes to minimise the risk of such errors occurring in future.

2. Does this correction impact the back series?

The error only affects the Quarter 4 2016 publication. Although the correction affects all Quarter 4 data in this publication it did not impact on the overall direction of the trend of the NI Production sector.

3. What are the main differences between the originally published figures and the corrected figures?

The originally published figures reported quarterly increases for the NI production sector as a whole and the individual broad sectors. The corrected figures also record growth in the Production and its component sectors only this is not as marked as first indicated.

The IOP quarterly rise was initially reported as 5.4%, which was the highest quarterly growth rate in recent decades. The corrected quarterly rise is 3.9%, which is now the highest growth rate since Quarter 3 2013. The majority of the broad sectors are still reporting quarterly increases, but these increases are lower than originally reported, with the electricity and gas sector showing the most marked revision of the broad sectors (now 2.2% compared to the original value of 5.6%). Manufacturing, which represents 81% of the IOP index, is reporting a lower increase of 3.1% (initially 4.3%).

When compared to the same period one year earlier, originally published figures reported increases for the NI production sector as a whole and the individual broad sectors. The majority of these indices are still showing an increase, with the increases lower than originally reported. The most marked revision on this measure was in the manufacturing sector, where a rise of 1.0% was initially reported and

corrected figures are reporting a fall of 0.4% over the year. Electricity and Gas is reporting an increase of 3.9%, compared to the initial increase of 7.6%.

Mining and Quarrying, representing only 2.3% of the index, is the exception and it is reporting a higher quarterly increase.

4. What actions have been taken following this discovery?

The release was withdrawn from our website on the afternoon of the 10th April as soon as the error was detected and additional checks carried out to confirm the nature and extent of the problem. The Bulletin was replaced at that time with an announcement that an error had been found and a revised publication date of 13th April provided.

As required by the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, stakeholders, including a number of media commentators, were informed that the Bulletin had been withdrawn and that corrected results were to be released on the 13th April.

Users were also informed that NISRA would review its processes to minimise the risk of such errors occurring in the future and to further strengthen quality assurance procedures.

5. What processes are being put in place to ensure this does not happen again?

The error was detected because NISRA was in the process of introducing a new results processing system. When fully implemented the new system will reduce our use of spreadsheet based systems and the likelihood of such errors occurring in the future.

6. When will corrected manufacturing sub sector tables be available?

These will be available by Friday 28th April.