

Reporting Reliability in User Requested Data

Theme: Labour Market

March 2020

Measures of sampling variability are provided alongside headline estimates from the Labour Force Survey in the monthly Labour Market Report. (see here for more information on [estimating and reporting uncertainty](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/Labour%20Force%20Survey%20-%20Estimating%20and%20reporting%20uncertainty.pdf)).

Due to the large number of estimates produced from the Labour Force Survey as ad-hoc requests and in supplementary tables it is not possible to provide a measure of sampling variability for each. Following a [review](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/methodologies/measuringandreportingreliabilityoflabourforcesurveyandannualpopulationsurveyestimates) of ONS quality criteria for publishing estimates from the Labour Force Survey, NISRA has updated their policy for ad-hoc queries in line with ONS such that:

* Any LFS output with a person count of less than three should not be published and will be suppressed under disclosure threshold rules. Secondary disclosure rules will also apply.
* On the quarterly datasets, any output with a person count of three or more should be published and a shading measure to denote quality precision (on counts of more than three and less than or equal to 25).
* On the annual datasets any output with a person count of three or more should be published and a shading measure to denote quality precision (on counts of more than three and less than or equal to 25).

The following notes will be provided in ad-hoc requests to highlight the lower quality of estimates based on small numbers of respondents.

**Shaded estimates**

Shaded estimates are based on a small sample size. This may result in less precise estimates, which should be used with caution.

**Unshaded estimates**

Unshaded estimates are based on a larger sample size. This is likely to result in estimates of higher precision, although they will still be subject to some sampling variability.

This is a change from previous policy where quarterly LFS data were suppressed below a grossed threshold of 8,000 individuals, and annual data were suppressed below a grossed threshold of 6,000 individuals.

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