

Review of the LFS and APS Reweighting Policy

Summary

This paper explains the agreed approach to carry out the LFS and APS reweighting project biennially post 2019.

Historic LFS and APS Reweighting policy

Historically the ONS agreed that it would carry out a full re-weighting exercise of LFS and APS every year, resulting in revised estimates of LFS and APS micro data and published UK aggregates. This policy was agreed on the basis that it would provide users with a more definite and transparent timetable and would remove the need for any 'ad hoc interim reweighting adjustments' to be made to Labour Market published aggregates, resulting in these becoming inconsistent with published microdata.

Reviewed LFS and APS Reweighting policy

At the 2018 LFS and APS Steering Group concerns were raised regarding the resource required to carry out annual reweighting of the LFS and APS, and the limited impact these exercises were having to Labour Market aggregates and underlying microdata. As a result, a decision was made to move to a biennial reweighting timetable for the LFS and APS.

For the 'in between years' the intent is not to reweight. However, the latest population and projection estimates are reviewed to see if there were any sudden changes in underlying population estimates. If this review identifies that changes would have a significant impact on survey estimates, then an additional reweighting exercise could be triggered.

Improvements on the application of the underlying source population data have also been made. This will ensure that the most appropriate population data available is utilised, optimising the impact and quality of the published aggregates and microdata.

The Sub-National Population Projection data (released biennially in May) and the latest available Mid-Year Estimates (released every June) will now be used as the trigger to start the reweighting process. This replaces previously using the National Projection data (released biennially in October). Historically this meant reweighted LFS estimates were only published around a month before the new Mid-Year Estimates were released, making them almost immediately out of date.

2018 Reweighting exercise

The release of the 2018 reweighted LFS and APS published aggregates and microdata is now complete, providing revised Labour Market estimates and LFS and APS microdata back to mid-2011. These incorporated the 2017 Mid-Year population estimates published in June 2018; the 2016 based Sub-National Population Projections (2014 for Wales) published in May 2018; and the revised mid-year population estimates back to mid-2012 published in March 2018. As LFS estimates are created by interpolating monthly population estimates between mid-year points this also meant that LFS population estimates back to mid-2011 were also revised.

2019 and 2020 Reweighting exercise

Following the new reweighting policy described above, ONS has reviewed the latest population estimates made available during 2019 and have decided not to carry out a 2019 LFS and APS reweighting exercise.

Therefore, the next reweighting exercise will take place in 2020. These will incorporate the 2019 Sub-National Population Projection data (published in May 2020) and 2019 Mid-Year Estimates (published in June 2020). It is expected that reweighted Labour Market aggregates and microdata will be published towards the end of 2020/early 2021.