

Article

Economic statistics sector classification – classification update and forward work plan: February 2023

The forward work plan sets out the units and transactions that we expect to assess and classify in the coming 12 to 18 months.

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1 . Introduction

Our economic statistics are produced in accordance with international rules and guidance. Central to this are the rules set out in the [United Nations System of National Accounts \(SNA\) 2008](#), the [European System of Accounts \(ESA\) 2010](#) and the accompanying [Manual on Government Deficit and Debt \(MGDD\) 2019](#). These include rules on classifying statistical units (organisations or bodies) and the transactions they engage in. A summary of these, and our approach to their application, can be found on our [Economic statistics classifications web page](#).

Our [Forward work plan \(XLS, 120.8KB\)](#) sets out the organisations and transactions that we expect to assess and classify in the next 12 to 18 months. Please note that classification priorities can change quickly, and the expected dates of completion are only indicative at the time of publication. There is high demand for classification assessments, and we progress many active cases at the same time, with new cases often arising. These include confidential assessments of government and devolved administration policy proposals, as explained in our [classification process](#).

We do not announce or discuss such policy proposal assessments, to give policymakers the space to develop policy. When a policy is implemented, we will publish a classification decision. You can read our [Public sector classification guide \(XLS, 3.1MB\)](#) for more information.

Therefore, the forward work plan does not cover all cases that will arise over the next 12 to 18 months; cases that are likely to have a smaller statistical and policy impact will be assessed as resources allow. The cases scheduled in this article have been prioritised because of the impact they will have on important statistics and their importance to public policy.

2 . Forward work plan

There is one addition to the forward work plan this month, which is the Energy Bills Discount Scheme. The Energy Market Financing Scheme has been removed from the forward work plan, as the scheme closed on 27 January 2023, with no applications.

3 . Classification update

Health Education and Improvement Wales

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) was established on 1 October 2018, bringing together three entities:

- the Wales Deanery
- NHS Wales' Workforce Education and Development Services (WEDS)
- the Wales Centre for Pharmacy Professional Education (WCPPE)

HEIW is a Special Health Authority (SHA) within NHS Wales. It has a leading role in the education, training, development, and shaping of the healthcare workforce in Wales, to ensure high-quality care for the people of Wales.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has assessed the classification status of HEIW and has concluded that it is an institutional unit, which is subject to public sector control. HEIW is subject to public sector control for reasons including that [The Health Education and Improvement Wales Regulations 2017](#) enable the Welsh Ministers to directly appoint all of HEIW's non-officer members, who in turn appoint HEIW's officer members. Further, the 2017 Regulations enable the Welsh Ministers to terminate the appointment of non-officer members in certain circumstances.

The assessment also concluded that HEIW is a non-market producer, as it is majority funded by the Welsh Government. Therefore, HEIW has been classified to the central government subsector (S.1311) with effect from 1 October 2018, which is the date the body was established. The three predecessor entities – the Wales Deanery, WEDS and WCPPE – did not meet the criteria for recognition as institutional units. They had not been separately classified to a sector of the economy and had been consolidated with either Cardiff University (for WCPPE and the Wales Deanery) or NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (for WEDS).

Northern Ireland Energy Bills Support Scheme

The ONS has completed an assessment of the Northern Ireland Energy Bills Support Scheme (NI EBSS). The scheme provides energy bill support to all households in Northern Ireland with a domestic meter and electricity contract. Eligible households will receive a single non-repayable payment of £600, regardless of how they heat their homes. This includes £400 under the NI EBSS and £200 provided by the UK government under the Alternative Fuel Payment scheme.

In accordance with international statistical guidance, the assessment considered that the NI EBSS is not included within the remit of an established general social policy. The background of the creation of the scheme is also not linked to low-income considerations or the provision of goods to individual beneficiaries, for example. The NI EBSS was therefore not considered to be a social benefit or transfer in kind. The assessment acknowledged that the NI EBSS is a fixed amount per household and is entirely unrelated to the quantity or price of the energy provided to any given customer. Energy companies are acting as an agent for the government to supply the NI EBSS payments to eligible customers. The NI EBSS was therefore not considered to be a subsidy from government to energy suppliers. A capital transfer was also considered, but the assessment concluded that the NI EBSS was designed to assist households with the large increase in energy bills, rather than increasing their wealth.

The assessment concluded that the intention of this scheme is to benefit households, to increase their income, and to help them meet their energy payments. Therefore, the scheme payments are classified as an "Other miscellaneous current transfer" from the central government subsector (S.1311) to the households sector (S.14), and recorded when they are due, beginning in January 2023. This is consistent with the guidance in the [United Nations System of National Accounts \(SNA\) 2008](#), section 8.110, and the [European System of Accounts \(ESA\) 2010](#), section 4.138 (h), "as a current transfer from government to households in their capacity as consumers, if not recorded as social benefits".

4 . Cite this article

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