

Forestry Commission 2014 Annual Report on Statistical Surveys

Introduction

1. This report provides information on the statistical surveys run or commissioned by the Forestry Commission (including surveys run in association with Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Forest Service) in 2013-14, sets out the programme of surveys proposed for 2014-15, and presents outline plans for the following two years.
2. From 1 April 2013, Natural Resources Wales took over the functions previously carried out by the Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and Forestry Commission Wales. Unlike previous reports, the surveys listed here exclude Wales-only surveys to be run or commissioned by Natural Resources Wales as these are now covered under Welsh Government reporting.
3. The report covers regular and ad hoc statistical surveys of businesses and local authorities and provides a summary of the estimated administrative burden costs to businesses and local authorities throughout the United Kingdom of these surveys. For the first time, this report also provides summary information on surveys of households and individuals (see Annex).
4. The administrative burden cost is the estimated cost of the staff time required to fill in the survey questionnaires. The methodology and hourly rates used for calculating these administrative burden costs are consistent with the approach used across all UK Government Departments. The Survey Control Unit within the Office for National Statistics (ONS) produce annual reports summarising the administrative burden costs across Government Departments and are available from the ONS website at <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/government-statistical-surveys/annual-report-on-government-statistical-surveys/index.html>

Administrative Burden Cost - Summary

5. For surveys of businesses and local authorities in 2013-14, the total administrative burden cost across the UK was around £5,500 (Table 1). This comprised costs of around £2,500 for businesses in England, £600 for businesses in Wales, £2,300 for businesses in Scotland and £200 for businesses in Northern Ireland. This was slightly higher than the level planned (a total of £5,400).

6. Plans for surveys to run in 2014-15 have an estimated administrative burden cost of £10,100 across the UK. Outline plans have an estimated administrative burden cost of £5,200 in 2015-16 and in 2016-17.

Table 1: Administrative burden cost summary

Year	£ thousand				
	UK	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
2010-11	3.7	1.8	0.7	1.0	0.1
2011-12	11.7	5.6	2.8	3.2	0.1
2011-12 revised	5.4	2.6	1.9	0.8	0.1
2012-13	4.7	2.5	0.4	1.6	0.2
2013-14	5.5	2.5	0.6	2.3	0.2
2014-15 forecast	10.1	2.3	0.6	7.1	0.2
2015-16 forecast	5.2	2.2	0.6	2.2	0.2
2016-17 forecast	5.2	2.2	0.6	2.2	0.2

Note:

1. Figures have been independently rounded to the nearest £100 in the tables, so constituent parts may not sum to totals.

Regular surveys of businesses and local authorities

7. The Forestry Commission regularly carries out seven voluntary surveys of businesses in the UK. These are undertaken on an annual basis and comprise:

- Four surveys of the UK timber industry (sawmill survey, survey of round fencing manufacturers, private sector softwood removals survey and survey of UK pellet and briquette production). Results from the surveys are published in *Forestry Statistics* and other National Statistics and Official Statistics releases, and are also used in compiling UK statistical returns for international organisations.
- A survey of forest nurseries, used to provide information on improved stock in the Official Statistics release "*Nursery Survey*".
- A survey of woodland owners in Great Britain, as part of the National Forest Inventory (NFI), to obtain background information on selected sample squares. The survey also covers local authorities that own woodland. Results from this survey will be used in NFI Official Statistics reports.
- A survey of woodfuel users in Scotland is used to estimate the extent of woodfuel use in Scotland, with results published in the Official Statistics reports on "*Woodfuel Demand and Usage in Scotland*".

8. Administrative burden costs for regular surveys were around £5,200 for UK businesses and local authorities in 2013-14 (Table 2). This is expected to remain unchanged over the next 3 years.

Table 2: Administrative burden cost: regular surveys

	£ thousand				
	UK	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
2010-11	1.2	0.4	0.1	0.7	0.0
2011-12	7.5	3.4	0.9	3.1	0.1
2011-12 revised	1.2	0.4	0.1	0.6	0.1
2012-13	3.6	1.5	0.4	1.6	0.2
2013-14	5.2	2.2	0.6	2.2	0.2
2014-15 forecast	5.2	2.2	0.6	2.2	0.2
2015-16 forecast	5.2	2.2	0.6	2.2	0.2
2016-17 forecast	5.2	2.2	0.6	2.2	0.2

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Ad hoc surveys of businesses and local authorities

9. The number of ad hoc surveys and their total burden vary from year to year, depending on the requirements for research related to policy development and monitoring. One ad hoc survey was run in 2013-14, with an administrative response burden of around £300 (Table 3):

- A wood packaging survey was run across the UK to evaluate the quantity of timber used in the manufacture and repair of wood pallets. Results from the survey will be reported in *“Wood packaging Study 2013”* and will also contribute to *“Timber Utilisation Statistics 2013”*. Results from the survey do not contribute to Official Statistics.

10. The wood packaging survey is expected to re-run in 2014-15 with a reduced sample size, resulting in a decrease in the estimated administrative burden cost. In addition, FC Scotland are running a survey of businesses as part of an economic study of forestry in Scotland in 2014-15. Estimated administrative response burdens for the ad hoc surveys of businesses and local authorities identified to date are expected to total around £4,900 in 2014-15. There are currently no plans for ad hoc surveys of businesses and local authorities in 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Table 3: Administrative burden cost: ad hoc surveys

	£ thousand				
	UK	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
2010-11	2.3	1.4	0.6	0.3	0.0
2011-12	4.2	2.2	1.8	0.1	0.0
2011-12 revised	4.2	2.2	1.8	0.1	0.0
2012-13	1.1	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2013-14	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
2014-15 forecast	4.9	0.0	0.0	4.8	0.0
2015-16 forecast	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2016-17 forecast	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

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Sheila Ward
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 January 2015

Annex – Surveys of households and individuals

The Forestry Commission also runs or commissions statistical surveys of households and individuals.

Some surveys are run in collaboration with others, with the Forestry Commission providing a contribution towards the costs. These include regular surveys such as the Monitor of Engagement with the Environment in England (led by Natural England) and Scotland's People and Nature Survey (led by Scottish Natural Heritage and replacing the Scottish Recreation Survey).

The main regular survey of individuals run or commissioned by the Forestry Commission is the Public Opinion of Forestry survey. Separate surveys have been run across the UK, in Scotland and in Wales every 2 years and in Northern Ireland every 2-4 years.

As for surveys of businesses and local authorities, the number of ad hoc surveys of households and individuals can vary from year to year, depending on research requirements.

Surveys of Households and Individuals in 2013-14

A Public Opinion of Forestry survey in Northern Ireland was commissioned by the Forestry Commission on behalf of the Forest Service. The survey covered a total of 1,000 respondents in Northern Ireland.

An ad hoc survey of public attitudes towards management and tree health was also run during 2013-14, with a total of 2,000 respondents across the UK.

Future plans for surveys of Households and Individuals

Public Opinion of Forestry surveys across the UK, in Scotland (and in Wales) are expected to continue to run on a biennial basis, with the next surveys due to run in early 2015.

Plans for ad hoc surveys of individuals are expected to include a survey in England to be undertaken as part of the monitoring and evaluation of the Active Forest programme. This is likely to begin in 2014-15.