Report on the Triennial Review of the Consumer Prices Index and Retail Prices Index
Central Collection of Prices

Spring 2012
A National Statistics publication

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The Government Statistical Service

The Government Statistical Service (GSS) is a network of professional statisticians and their staff operating both within the Office for National Statistics and across more than 30 other government departments and agencies.

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The need to review surveys is a requirement of the Prime Minister’s Instructions for controlling government statistical surveys. These instructions underline the need to review all regular surveys of business and local authorities with an emphasis especially on: the need for the information (evaluating the reason for conducting the survey); the conduct of the survey; costs; respondents’ views; users’ views; and options for change.

There are two types of review, depending on the frequency of the survey. Surveys that are conducted on a monthly or quarterly basis are subject to review every three years (triennial review) and surveys that are conducted less frequently than quarterly, e.g. annual inquiries, are subject to review every five years (quinquennial review).

The Quality, Methods and Harmonisation Tool (QMHT) provides a template for analysis of respondent and user information and a method of self-evaluation by the area conducting the survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>1.</strong> Name of the survey or output being evaluated</th>
<th>Consumer Prices Inquiry and Retail Prices Inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Date when review was begun</td>
<td>18th August 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Name of the person completing this</td>
<td>Recommended level is Grade 7 or experienced SEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If filled in by other grade state name of person completing it and the grade 7 who signed it off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Darren Morgan, Phil Gooding and Tracey Hughes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Which department/organisation do you work for?</td>
<td>Office for National Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.</strong> Your contact details</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:cpi@ons.gsi.gov.uk">cpi@ons.gsi.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone: 01633 456900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.</strong> If this survey/output is produced jointly with another department or organisation please state which other department(s)/organisation(s) this is</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>When did the survey being reviewed commence?</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Is the survey statutory or voluntary?</td>
<td>Statutory (Please state under which law/ act the survey is statutory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>What is the periodicity of the survey?</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ad hoc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other (Please specify below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Biannual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Please give a summary of the information that the survey collects.</td>
<td>The prices of individual products or services provided by retailers and service providers are collected. These are used to measure the change in the general level of prices charged for goods and services bought for the purpose of household consumption in the UK. Frequency of price collection varies, and is dependant on the item and when prices are known or expected to change e.g. social subscriptions which are collected in January and March.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>What is the target population of the survey?</td>
<td>Utility companies, health insurance providers, universities, motor manufacturers, transport and catering providers, dairy food companies, boat builders and roadside recovery services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>What is the sample size of the survey?</td>
<td>141 data suppliers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Which sampling frame is used for the survey?

- Interdepartmental Business Register (IDBR)
- Pay As You Earn (PAYE)
- Postcode Address File
- Electoral Register
- Experian
- Reference list
- Another survey's sample (please specify)
- Other (please specify)

Bespoke, dependant on the sources of information for specific items. Probability proportional to size (PPS) and simple random sample (SRS) are used within the sampling framework.

14. What are the anticipated and achieved response rates for the latest period for the survey?

Anticipated: 100%
Achieved: 100%

15. Who are the users of the survey?

In this review it should be recognized that the survey covered by this review is only an input into the construction of the CPI/RPI. Therefore the CPI/RPI team are the only users of the raw pricing data collected by this survey. The data are an important input in the the CPI/RPI, which is used by a far broader user base such as the Bank of England, Her Majesty's Treasury, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Eurostat, Ministry of Defence, Department for Energy and Climate Change, Academia, City analysts and the general public.

16. What are the key publications that the survey contributes to?


17. What is the cost to business of the survey?

(This information is the same as question 57 in the Burden and Respondents section of this tab)

£2,998.62

18. What is the cost to government of the survey?

The cost to government for the CPI/RPI Central Data Collection survey only, in 2010/11 is estimated to be £200,000.
### Background and progress since the last review

This section gives some background to the survey and states the progress made in improving the survey since the last review.

#### 19 Brief history of the survey

The format of this survey has been used since the advent of RPI and CPI, and has evolved over the years in particular with the inception of the internet.

The first official index of Consumer Prices was introduced in 1914. This index was designed as an aid towards protecting ordinary workers from price rises associated with the First World War. This continued throughout the 1920’s and 1930’s until an interim RPI was introduced in 1947. Following the implementation of further improvements (particularly with securing more up-to-date spending patterns) the RPI became “official” in 1947. Since 1947, the RPI has continued to measure prices every month and with improvements being implemented throughout this time, to ensure the index is kept up-to-date.

The CPI has a much shorter history than the RPI. It was first published in the UK in February 1997 as the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP). HICPs were developed across the European Union for the purpose of assessing whether prospective members of the European Monetary Union would pass the inflation convergence criteria and act as a measure of inflation. In December 2003 the HICP was renamed to the CPI and became the basis for the Government’s target for inflation that the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is required to achieve. From April 2011 the CPI is also being used for the indexation of benefits, tax credits and public service pensions. The uprating is based on the 12-month change in the September CPI. Internationally, the CPI is known as the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP).

#### 20 What was the date of the last survey review?

Mini Triennial Review held November 2009.

#### 21 What were the recommendations from the last review?

There were no specific recommendations for this survey in the last review, there were though the following general recommendations for CPI/RPI as a whole.

1. Documentation of CPI and RPI methodology should be made available.
2. Inclusion of owner-occupier housing costs in the CPI.
3. It would be useful if the data series in the tables within the Statistical bulletin were labelled with the 4-letter codes (CZBH etc) which uniquely identify each particular series. These should then be hyperlinked to the corresponding individual data series on the website for ease of access.
4. It would be useful if the more important explanatory material in the “Briefing note” could be included in the “Statistical Bulletin”.

#### 22 Have all the recommendations been implemented?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Documentation regarding CPI and RPI methodology currently exists on the National Statistics website. The Consumer Price Index Technical Manual has comprehensive and detailed descriptions of all aspects of the statistical methodology used in the production of the CPI and RPI. Any changes in methodology are implemented following public consultations, for which relevant papers are published on the National Statistics website.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In-progress. It is envisaged that the inclusion of owner-occupier housing costs in the CPI will take place in 2013.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Partially done. Tables 1 - 4 of the Statistical bulletin, with the exclusion of table 3 contain 4-letter identifiers. Following the introduction of the new National Statistics website, CPI/RPI tables are now contained in one downloadable excel file of detailed reference tables, the vast majority of which contain the relevant 4-letter identifiers. No hyperlink is available from these datasets, however long runs of data are also available via the time series data facility.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Done. The Statistical bulletin has undergone a re-write process in the past year, providing more high level information on the differing Consumer price indices produced and is used by those who need an easy and quick update and understanding of the latest CPI and RPI data. A more detailed “Briefing note” is also available and is used by those customers who prefer more detailed data and briefing on the specific components within the CPI and RPI.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. The Mortgage Interest Payments (MIPs) component in the RPI was previously based on the Standard Variable Rate (SVR) of interest from the main bank and building society providers using data supplied by the Bank Of England. The evolving mortgage market was showing an increase in the take up of alternative mortgage types including fixed rate, discount and tracker mortgages which are not covered in the SVR measure. As a result, an alternative measure of interest, the Average Effective Rate (AER) has been developed jointly by the Bank of England and ONS. This is more representative of mortgage lending. It includes various mortgage rates weighted together based on market share and for the RPI, these rates are weighted by the relevant stock of mortgages each January. The final MIPs series then reflects both new and existing mortgages and will be able to follow the evolution of the mortgage market in future years.

2. The measurement method for seasonal items changed to an improved imputation based approach from a "carrying the index forward" method. The improved method was first used in the construction of the January 2011 CPI and RPI, which was published on the 15th February 2011. This introduction followed a public consultation and advice from users.

Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) are calculated in each Member State of the European Union, according to rules specified in a series of European regulations developed by Eurostat in conjunction with the EU Member States. HICPs are used to compare inflation rates across the European Union. Since January 1999, the HICP has also been used by the European Central Bank (ECB) as the measure of price stability across the euro area. Each country also has it's own domestic measure of inflation. Every country conducts a "central" price collection survey similar to one run by the UK.

The survey conducted in the UK is very similar to that used in other countries. The UK CPI is constructed and compiled using an HICP Regulation Framework, using a common reference base and classification and providing a common coverage of consumer goods and services. Both CPI and RPI comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

There is very little to learn in regard to this survey, as the approach is well known internationally. In terms of the CPI/RPI generally, methodology and compilation practices are discussed at various international fora, these include:-

1. An established EU forum (HICP Working Group) meets twice a year, to discuss and agree best practice and the possible implementation of improved methods. The fundamental principle of the HICP is that the methods and approaches taken are consistent across the EU so that the HICPs provide comparable measures of inflation across Europe.

2. The Ottawa Group was set up in 1994 under the auspices of the United Nations Statistical Commission. It provides a forum for specialists and practitioners who work for, or are advisors to, national statistical agencies or international organisations to exchange their experiences and thoughts on crucial problems of measuring price change. The UK are active participants in both groups.

3. The Netherlands are considered world leaders on the use of scanner data. The UK are currently considering the scope of using such data, the Netherlands have already agreed to provide support and advice where appropriate.
This section investigates the uses of the survey and user views.

27. **What is the objective for the survey that justifies its existence?**

Please tick all that apply:
- making key national or local government decisions
- monitoring national or local government issues
- delivery of public services
- satisfying EU regulations
- European decision-making or monitoring requirements
- another purpose (Please specify below)

28. **Are you able to justify the periodicity of the survey?**

- Yes, we have confirmed recently that users/sponsors have a specific need for data at this periodicity
- Not really, but the reasons we collect the data this frequently are given below (Please specify below)
- No
- Don’t know

29. **Are you able to justify the presence of every question asked?**

- Yes, users have a specific need for every question asked
- Yes, but some data are needed purely to verify other data
- Yes, but some questions are there only to improve questionnaire focus and flow
- No, and have no current plans to address this
- Don’t know
- No, but are aware some data may not be needed (Please specify below which questions are)

30. **Where do you hold the information on justification for questions?**

- In a database or registered file
- Somewhere other than a database or registered file
- Nowhere

The survey is conducted in order to construct the CPI and RPI. The survey in particular is used to construct indices for items such as taxi fares and university accommodation fees. The survey is conducted where it is possible and easier to collect the information from a central source rather than individual respondents, for example - retailers who have a national pricing policies, where the price is the same regardless of location in the UK e.g. internet purchases. All these measures of course reduce the respondent burden. The CPI and RPI themselves are covered by the following legislation:-

The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 (section 21) state that the RPI must be compiled, maintained and published every month.

HICP legislation sets out the requirements that the CPI must adhere to.
### Question 31
Have other existing sources of similar information, including administrative or management data, been examined to ensure that the survey is still required?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes - in the last five years</td>
<td>(Please give approximate date below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but not in the last five years</td>
<td>(Please say below if you have any plans to do this)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a continuous review of the optimum data source to use to meet the needs of the survey, the increased use of the internet as a data source is one reflection of this review process.

### Question 32
If other sources have been considered what were they and why were they unsuitable?

Internet data sources have to be examined to ensure they are dependable and secure, not all pass these criteria.

### Question 33
What do each of the users of the survey need the data for?

#### Comment on all user groups

**Government users**

The CPI/RPI team are the sole users of the raw data collected by the survey, which are used to construct the CPI/RPI indices. The indices are used by government and non-government organisations. The indices are used in many ways by central government, business and society in general. These uses include the indexation of index linked gilds, tax allowances, wages, state benefits, public service pensions and maintenance contracts. Europe uses the HICP to assess entry criteria for the Economic Monetary Union and has been used by the European Central Bank since January 1999, as the basis for monitoring price inflation within the Monetary Union area.

**Private sector users**

Private sector uses of the CPI and RPI are wide ranging and many are linked to price escalation clauses in contractual arrangements and in wage bargaining and the indexation of private sector pension schemes.
How many users from each main user group did you approach for this review?

The CPI/RPI team are the only users of the raw data collected by the survey, however the number of users of the overall CPI/RPI data, were as follows - government users 14, non-government users 17.

How many responses did you receive to the user questionnaire for this review?

The number of responses received from the users of the overall CPI/RPI data were as follows - Government users 1, Non-government users 6.

When invited to comment on the survey, what points did your users make?

The comments below are in regard to the overall CPI/RPI data.

"The service that I currently receive is superb, and I would like to thank the team for this. One email per month may not seem like a great deal, but it is really is critical to my business."

"The new ONS website is a nightmare to find data on now. The stats bulletin is hardly useful at all, no time trends or comparisons. At least put a link to the reference tables on the main page."

"Index needs to be mindful of market promotions that can distort the true % being reported monthly. As there are times when the wholesale market bears no resemblance to CPI/RPI figure reported nationally."

"It used to be easier for me to see the data I wanted when it was simply presented as tables RP13, CPI12, and RP04 as once I knew where those tables were located on the web site I could copy the hyperlink and use that each month to jump to the right web page with the table I needed albeit RP13 had to be e-mailed out each month. Under the new system, I got lost as to where these tables were located. Also, these tables had a neat simple format - annual change first, followed by each of the months - this seems to have gone now making life more difficult."

The number of responses received from the users of the overall CPI/RPI data were as follows - Government users 1, Non-government users 6.

Specifically, what were the users’ main points on the acceptability of the survey’s quality when considered against the European Statistical System (ESS) dimensions of output quality?

Accuracy: 4.5
Relevance: 4.3
Timeliness: 4.0
Comparability: 3.7
Accessibility: 3.6
38 What are the minimum acceptable coefficients of variation (CVs)?
    If these vary by domains please state range
    It is not possible to calculate coefficients since no formal sampling frame for the survey exists.

39 Are the achieved CVs close to the minimum acceptable level specified?
    Yes, for all or most domains
    No, typically larger than required
    No, typically smaller than required
    None calculated

40 What steps could be taken outside of this review to improve understanding of users' needs or reduce burden on respondents by reducing requirements?
    1. Consumer Price Advisory Committee meets five times a year. This is a group of experts set up by the UK Statistics Authority to advise them on improvements to the CPI and RPI. Consideration is given by this group to user needs and how best to meet the required statistical targets.
    2. Following an assessment of the CPI and RPI Inquiry by the UK Statistics Authority, two articles have been released “Improving the timeliness of the CPI and RPI Publication” and “Users and uses of Consumer Price Indices”, which both highlight measures to improve access for all users of CPI and RPI data, the set up of a CPI user group and invites further feedback from data users.
    3. Inflation Tripartite meetings, which include the Bank of England, HM Treasury and statisticians from the CPI team, is a platform to update and discuss data needs with high level users.

41 What recommendations could be made based on the comments of users?
    There were no specific comments relating to the Central Collection survey which requires any changes to methods in the collection of the pricing data required.
Sample Design
This section investigates the sample design of the survey in more detail focusing on the impact of the design on respondents.

42 Please summarise the main characteristics of the sample design.

The sample design varies by product according to the availability of a sampling frame. Generally either probability proportional to size sampling (PPS) or simple random sampling is used for selection.

43 Are you aware of errors in the sampling frame? Please tick all that apply

- Yes, in the coverage
- Yes, commonly occurring errors in unit details
- Yes, other errors
- No

Errors in coverage do occur, where sampling frames for some items are not comprehensive enough or as up to date as required.

44 What steps have you taken to minimise the burden on small businesses specifically?

- Survey holidays applied to businesses in line with customary rules
- Reduced sampling fractions for small businesses
- Use of estimation in place of sampling
- Other (Please specify)
- No feasible steps taken

Samples are updated on a regular basis, the internet is the CPI team’s main source of market data. The CPI team currently has minimum contact with data suppliers of all sizes and is constantly seeking to deplete the number of data suppliers needed to be burdened with e-mails or telephone calls.

45 What steps have you taken to minimise the burden on individual respondents more generally while ensuring users’ needs will be met?

- Clear quality requirements established up front
- Appropriate use made of results
- Rotation of respondents
- Use of efficient sample design
- Other (Please specify)
- No feasible steps taken

Greater use made of internet sources and regular updating of samples.
When did you last review the sample allocation?

The sample allocation is reviewed on annual basis each January/February.

What recommendations could be made for changes to the sample design to improve quality or reduce burden on respondents?

The purchase of specific market data to assist with sampling would greatly improve the quality of the survey and would arguably be more efficient than dependency on internet sources and good will from pricing data suppliers.

Data collection

This section investigates in more detail how the data is collected and validated on the survey

What is/are the mode(s) of data collection for the survey?

- Paper self-completion questionnaire
- Computer-assisted self-completion interviews
- Computer-assisted personal interviewing
- Paper-based personal interviewing
- Computer-assisted telephone interviewing
- Electronic collection (e.g. web, email or spreadsheet)
- Telephone Data Entry
- Other

(Please specify below)

Has the questionnaire been reviewed by someone with specialist knowledge in questionnaire design in the last three years?

- Yes
- No, but we review the questionnaire ourselves at least every five years
- Not to our knowledge

(Please give details below of the last expert review)

There is no written questionnaire for this survey. Price collectors following a specific script when collecting data from suppliers via phone and e-mail, which was reviewed in October 2011.
At which stage does validation of data items occur?

- At point of entry
- Within ten calendar days
- Longer than ten days
- No validation takes place (please give reasons why not)

What proportion of respondents are re-contacted to check data items?

- None
- Less than 5%
- Between 5% and 10%
- Between 11% and 20%
- Over 20%
- Comment if you wish

How do the systems you use minimise the burden on individual respondents due to validation of data?

- Use of checks to identify large changes (e.g., validation gates)
- Automatic edits made for common adjustable errors
- Only re-contact on errors that have the largest impact on quality (selective editing)
- Imputation of missing or suspect data items
- Provided respondents with opportunity to explain unusual values during survey
- Use of a system to share information on changes to businesses
- Other (please specify)
- No feasible steps taken (please state why)

Please state how these systems have reduced burden:

As respondents are contacted on a one to one basis, any changes in pricing data can be identified and qualified at point of data entry, thereby reducing the burden on customers.

What recommendations could be made for changes to the data collection and validation methods to improve quality or reduce burden on respondents?

1. The data suppliers currently contacted are happy with the mode of data collection.
2. With the introduction of the new CPI computer system the point of entry validation will be reinforced.
**Burden and respondents**

This section investigates respondents' views and how the cost to respondents is justified by the needs of users.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>54</strong></th>
<th>What was the selected sample size for the respondent survey for this review?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please also state what proportion of the main sample was selected for the respondent survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total of 79 businesses and local governments were contacted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>55</strong></th>
<th>What was the response rate for the respondent survey for this review?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>56</strong></th>
<th>When invited to comment on the survey, what points did your respondents make?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondents did not raise any issues in regard to their involvement in the Central Collection survey element of the CPI/RPI inquiry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>57</strong></th>
<th>Based on replies from respondents, what have you estimated the cost to respondents to be?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(This information is the same as question 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please provide a breakdown showing how this cost was calculated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£2,998.62 per annum. This is the average cost to those businesses and local government organisations contacted by e-mail, fax or letter. The figure takes into account the amount of responses to the survey by business and local government for the latest month, the median time to supply the data required, multiplied by the estimated hourly rate based on the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>58</strong></th>
<th>Did you assume actual response when calculating respondents' costs?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, only actual respondents costs/time assumed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No, assumed 100% response rate but with lower cost/time for non-respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No, assumed 100% response rate with no differentiation between respondents' and non-respondents' costs/time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Did you find that the benefits justified the cost to respondents?

Yes: (Please give an outline of the benefits justifying the cost, in the 'Yes' set of boxes below)

No: (Please explain, in the single 'No' box below, why you are going ahead with collecting the extra information)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of user</th>
<th>Justification of the cost to respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Government users        | The survey incurs minimal costs to the respondents. No complaints have been received, as the suppliers recognise the importance of the data and its use.  
                          | CPI  
                          | The CPI is the main UK domestic measure of consumer price inflation for macroeconomic purposes. It forms the basis for the Government’s target for inflation that the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is required to achieve.  
                          | From April 2011 the CPI is also being used for the indexation of benefits, tax credits and public service pensions. Internationally, the CPI is known as the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP). HICPs are calculated in each Member State of the European Union, according to rules specified in a series of European regulations developed by Eurostat in conjunction with the EU Member States. HICPs are used to compare inflation rates across the European Union. Since January 1999, the HICP has also been used by the European Central Bank (ECB) as the measure of price stability across the euro area.  
                          | The CPI is required to be produced each month in line with European HICP legislation.  
                          | RPI  
                          | The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 legislation requires the Statistics Authority to compile and maintain the RPI and publish it every month. |
| Respondent users        | Business can and do utilise the CPI and RPI in situations such as wage bargaining, private contract negotiation and price monitoring in specific areas. |
| Other users - please specify | The CPI and RPI data are used by a full spectrum of society ranging from academics and researchers to landlords and school children. |

No:

Do you have a policy on the procedures for dealing with day-to-day complaints from both suppliers and users of information?

Yes - for complaints from suppliers

Yes - for complaints from users

No:

What are the main causes of complaints and what action have you taken to make improvements in response to these complaints?

No complaints have been received from data suppliers, regarding collection of data via the Central Collection survey, probably due to the minimal burden placed on suppliers and the survey being voluntary. We strive to find suppliers happy to provide data, therefore avoiding any complaints. The main cause of complaints came from data users, the accessibility to low level CPI and RPI data. This has been addressed with the introduction of the new ONS website, where such data are now provided.
What recommendations could be made based on the comments of respondents?

There were no adverse comments made regarding the collection of data for the enquiry, therefore no specific recommendations can be made.

Recommendations

Each of the previous sections concluded with a description of potential improvements to the survey. This section draws together those potential changes to make recommendations arising from this review along with an action plan for implementing them. Those changes that are more ambitious or cannot be implemented at this time are also described.

Based on the information supplied above, list the recommendations for aspects of the survey that need further improvement or investigation and your action plan for doing this work prior to the next review.

The comments received during the review, suggests that the method of collection of data via the Central Collection survey element of the CPI/RPI inquiry is satisfactory and as such there are no recommendations, however we do intend to provide further evidence for the justification of the survey, via a questions database.
Please list any improvements to the survey that are not possible at this time including the barriers to implementation.

Not applicable.
Independent assessment sheet for triennial/quinquennial reviews evaluated using the Quality, Methods and Harmonisation Tool (QMHT).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of survey:</th>
<th>Consumer Prices and Retail Inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Independent Observer:</td>
<td>Dr James J Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>21st March 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Were you provided with the review sample allocation at the start of the review process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Are you satisfied that the review sample is representative of the main survey sample?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Were you notified of any issues regarding the response rate for this review?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Are you satisfied that a thorough investigation into alternative sources of data has been carried out and that all questions asked by the survey are necessary? QMHT Questions: 29, 31, 32, 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Are you satisfied that all the proposals from the last review have been acted on, or that an adequate explanation has been given for any that have not been? QMHT Questions: 21, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Are you satisfied that there has been sufficient research into the potential overlap of the survey with those conducted in other National Statistical Institutes? QMHT Questions: 24, 25, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Are you satisfied that the users’ requirements have been considered and the returned user information appropriately analysed? QMHT Questions: 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Are you satisfied that the returned respondent information was</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
appropriately analysed?
QMHT Questions; 56, 57, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65

vi Are you satisfied that the reference to Osmotherly is an accurate reflection of this survey’s practices?
QMHT Question: 44
Yes
This Inquiry follows a different structure.

vii Are you satisfied that the comments on respondent complaints have been considered?
QMHT Questions; 61, 62
Yes

Section 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you have any general comments about the conduct of the Review?</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any general comments about the conduct of the Review?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Given that ‘A’ very good, ‘B’ good, and ‘C’ satisfactory, how would you grade this review? See below for definitions.</th>
<th>Grade Awarded: A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall mark</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| A = Very good | • Complies fully with ‘Best Practice’.  
| | • All recommendations have been promptly acted upon where possible |
| B = Good      | • Complies with ‘Best Practice’.  
| | • Most recommendations have been acted upon where possible but some remain |
| C = Satisfactory | • Complies with ‘Best Practice’.  
| | • Several recommendations remain |