

Annual Survey of Goods and Services (ASGS) FAQs

Contents

ONS and statistics	1
General survey information	2
Selection for ONS surveys	3
Completing your survey	3
Do I need to complete the survey?	4
Purpose of this survey	6

ONS and statistics

1. What is the Office for National Statistics (ONS)?

ONS is the executive office of the UK Statistics Authority. It is the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics and the recognised national statistical institute of the UK. Familiar economic statistics produced by ONS are the Retail Sales Index (RSI), Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the UK Balance of Payments (BoP). It also provides a wide variety of social statistics including crime, migration and demography, as well as conducting the ten-yearly population census for England and Wales.

The data collected from this survey is imperative for HM Government, HM Treasury, financial institutions such as the Bank of England and other external forecasters. It helps to monitor the economy and informs policy-making decisions.

2. How is the data used?

The information supplied is used within the Services Producer Price Indices (SPPI), a key economic indicator used by the Bank of England during their monetary policy making process, as well as the National Accounts in their calculation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

General survey information

3. Who are IFF Research?

IFF research are an independent Market research company who have been commissioned by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) to stage the ASGS. IFF research operate under the strict guidelines of the Market Research Society's code of conduct. If you would like to confirm IFF's authority to host this survey, please contact the ONS survey team on ASGS@ons.gov.uk. Alternatively, you may contact the ASGS support team at IFF Research. Please quote your access code as shown on your invitation letter when contacting the ASGS support team.

Hours: Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

Email: ONSsurveys@iffresearch.com

Telephone: 0800 804 8046

4. How can I confirm that this is a genuine ONS survey?

IFF Research are an independent market research company who are hosting the ASGS on behalf of ONS. For more information about the survey, please visit: www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforbusinesses/businesssurveys/annualsurveyofgoodsandservice/sasgs or contact the ONS survey team on ASGS@ons.gov.uk. Alternatively, you may contact the ASGS support team at IFF Research.

5. Why is my data important?

The results of ONS surveys are analysed and used to inform decisions made locally, nationally and internationally. In fact, your participation could influence decisions that affect every aspect of your business and industry.

6. How do I change contact name or address information for my business?

To change information relating to contact names and the address of your business, you must access the online portal using the weblink and access code on the survey invitation letter you should have received via post. Once registered, follow the link to portal and select the 'amend business contact details' button on the homepage. From here you will be able to change this information.

7. Why have I received a reminder when I have already completed the survey?

It is likely that you completed the survey after the reminder letter left our mailing house. If you have completed the online survey, please accept our apologies and disregard the information in the reminder letter you received.

8. Can I give ONS feedback on the design of its questionnaires?

Yes. We appreciate the time you take to complete our questionnaires. If there is anything which you find confusing or difficult we would like to know. There is a section at the end of the questionnaire where you can let us know your thoughts.

Selection for ONS surveys

9. How was my business selected?

Your business was selected from a UK business directory derived from administrative sources, including Value Added Tax (VAT) and Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) registrations, and updated from data gathered from ONS business surveys. Selection depends on many different factors, including the number of people you employ, how many other businesses operate in your industry sector, and the size of those businesses.

10. How have IFF Research got my personal details?

IFF Research were provided with your personal details by ONS via a secure transfer platform. Your data will be treated in strict confidence in line with the provisions of section 39 of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007 and the National Statistics Code of Practice. It is an offence for the ONS or a third party to disclose any details relating to a business or individual.

Completing your survey

11. Do I have to complete the survey online?

Yes. The Annual Survey of Goods and Services (ASGS) is being hosted online-only. It is designed to be easy to complete, but if you have any issues or queries about completing the survey, please get in touch with ASGS support team at IFF Research.

12. How long will the questionnaire take me to complete?

The length of time it will take to complete the survey will vary depending on the number services you provide, and how easily accessible information about the business's turnover is to you during the survey. It will be quicker to complete should you have all information to hand.

13. What is my unique access code?

Your unique access code is shown in the green box on your survey invitation letter:

Website: www.ASGS-ONS.co.uk

Access code: b100000abc

14. I have lost or destroyed my survey invitation letter?

If you no longer have your survey invitation letter, please contact the ASGS support team at IFF Research either by telephone on 0800 804 8046 or by emailing ONSsurveys@iffresearch.com.

15. I am experiencing technical issues with the survey

If you are experience any technical issues when accessing or completing the survey, please contact the ASGS support team at IFF Research.

16. What if I don't have any data to report?

Even if your business did not generate any turnover between 1st January 2020 and 31 December 2020 please register via the portal and enter this information. Reporting a genuine zero return is as valid as any other figure as we are measuring business trends.

17. Will my data be kept confidential?

Yes. Your data will be treated in strict confidence in line with the provisions of section 39 of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007 and the National Statistics Code of Practice. It is an offence for the ONS to disclose any details relating to a business or individual. Your businesses data will never be identifiable in the statistics we produce.

18. My business is in administration/receivership - do I still need to complete the questionnaire?

Ideally yes. Businesses in administration/receivership can still trade. If you are unable to supply the information it would be helpful if you could inform us of the name and address of the Administrator/Receiver.

19. We are a local authority - should we be receiving these surveys?

No. If you have been selected please contact the ASGS support team at IFF Research either by telephone on 0800 804 8046 or by emailing ONSsurveys@iffresearch.com.

20. Can I provide estimates?

Yes. We allow estimates to lessen the burden placed on businesses. An informed estimate from you is acceptable, if you are unable to provide exact figures from your business accounting system.

Do I need to complete the survey?

21. Do I have to complete this survey?

Yes. The survey is conducted under the Statistics of Trade Act 1947 or under article 5 of the Statistics of Trade and Employment Order 1988 (Northern Ireland), so by law, your business is required to provide the information requested.

22. What authority does ONS have to conduct its business surveys?

Most ONS business surveys are conducted under Section 1 of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947 or under article 5 of the Statistics of Trade and Employment Order 1988 (Northern Ireland), so your business is required by law to provide the information requested.

23. Is there an appeal process?

No. There is no appeal process, nor can you be exempt from selection for ONS business surveys. However, if you think that there are circumstances that we need to be aware of, please contact the ASGS support team at IFF Research as soon as possible either by telephone on 0800 804 8046 or by emailing ONSsurveys@iffresearch.com.

24. What will happen if I do not complete the questionnaire?

Failure to comply could lead to prosecution at a Magistrates Court with a fine up to a maximum of £2,500 (last up dated by section 17 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991). If this happens you will still need to complete the questionnaire.

25. Will I get paid for completing an ONS business survey?

No. As your business is legally obliged to complete this survey when selected, ONS cannot pay a business for complying with a legal duty.

Purpose of this survey

The ASGS is an annual survey used to measure turnover generated by UK businesses. In particular, turnover broken down into the different services from which it is generated. The information supplied will be used within the National Accounts in their calculation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and within the Servicer Producer Prices Index (SPPI), which are both key economic indicators.

Definitions and coverage

- **Turnover** consists of sales to any individual, business entity or other parts of your organisation.
- Please exclude from all turnover figures provided:
 - VAT
 - Capital receipts from disposal of assets
 - Interest and dividends
 - Grants and subsidies
- Include information for the UK business named on the front of the questionnaire
- Exclude overseas branches, subsidiaries and agencies
- The United Kingdom consists of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but excludes the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man
- For **Financial services** businesses: **turnover** consists of sales to or income from any individual, business entity or other parts of your organisation.
- For **Insurance services** businesses: **turnover** should include
 - Gross Written premiums
 - Fees and commissions earned

Information required

This questionnaire is divided into eight sections, which cover:

- Reporting period
- Total turnover
- Service specific turnover
- Turnover generated from other services
- Service turnover breakdown
- Turnover from production
- Turnover from online sales
- Comments and contact details

Basis for completion

- This questionnaire should be completed according to the services your business supplies, and not just according to the nature of your business.
- Complete this questionnaire on an accruals accounting basis (invoices raised), rather than a cash accounting basis.

How to complete the questionnaire

- All figures should be for the same reporting period. This should be the period 1st January to 31st December 2020, although other date ranges will be accepted if you are not able to provide figures for this period. You will be asked to confirm the period that you are reporting for at the start of the survey.
- Report all figures accurate to the nearest pound (sterling) where possible.
- If precise figures are not available, then informed estimates based on your knowledge of the business are acceptable.
- A pre-selected number of common services for each industry have been included in the questionnaire for initial selection; if your business provides additional services not included in this pre-selected list, there will be an opportunity to include these later in the survey via a look-up facility.
- Read through the “includes” and “excludes” guidance notes (where provided) for each service before reporting a turnover value, as certain elements may need to be reported against a different service.
- Services are defined using the internationally recognised Classification of Products by Activity (CPA).
- If you are unsure where to classify a certain service, use your best judgement to find an appropriate section; if you are still not comfortable making the choice and require more information then please contact the dedicated ASGS team at IFF Research using the contact details at the top of this page.