

S+PA
Workforce
Observatory

CIMSPA Statement of Compliance: UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics



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About the Sport and Physical Activity Workforce Observatory

The workforce observatory is the gateway to shaping the future of the sport and physical activity sector; through data-driven insights, bridging theory and practice, and fostering meaningful collaboration between academia and the sector.

The observatory provides access to the latest real-world data and cutting-edge research into the UK sport and physical activity workforce; helping to develop curriculums; future-proof organisations; inform policy development; support workforce management, development, and planning; and foster new research collaborations and interdisciplinary studies.

[Find out more about the observatory here.](#)

Published by:

This document was published on behalf of the Sport and Physical Activity Workforce Observatory by:

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity
Incorporated by Royal Charter
Charity registration number 1144545

Publication date: July 2025

Introduction

CIMSPA (The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity) is the professional development body for the UK's S&PA (sport and physical activity) sector workforce.

Powered by CIMSPA, the S+PA Workforce Observatory aims to transform and empower the UK sport and physical activity sector by providing robust data-driven insights and actionable recommendations for strategic workforce planning and workforce development.

Whilst the S+PA Workforce Observatory does not produce official statistics, we do draw upon public and third-party data, insights and guidance specific to the sport and physical activity sector and workforce. As such, we are committed to upholding the highest possible standards and facilitating best practice when it comes to research methodologies, access to, analysis of and the dissemination of data in a safe and responsible way. Here we present our Statement of Compliance for the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a product of the people, systems and processes within organisations that enable and support the production of statistics and data.

Trustworthiness is essential for the S+PA Workforce Observatory to inform and influence strategic workforce planning across sport and physical activity. We will achieve this by ensuring:

1. Data access is governed by the SAFE Principles and TRE frameworks aligning with the [SATRE standards](#) linked to the DARE UK Phase 1 driver projects funded by UKRI. This ensures that only accredited individuals are granted access, based on their role and project approval status.
2. To ensure responsible data handling, data access is only provided to qualified researchers operating in a professional capacity as defined by their role and responsibilities.
3. Data sources are vetted for credibility and staff involved in data collection are trained in data protection and quality assurance.
4. Data is stored and maintained securely using encrypted systems and access-controlled environments. We implement regular back-ups, integrity checks, and continuous monitoring to prevent unauthorised access, data loss, or corruption, thereby ensuring reliability and long-term resilience of our data infrastructure.
5. We maintain a culture of responsible data stewardship through ongoing training, feedback loops, and performance monitoring.

6. The principle of least privilege is applied, and all access is logged and monitored. This approach guarantees data is accessed in a secure, transparent, and auditable manner, upholding public trust.
7. We manage data throughout its lifecycle in accordance with clear retention and disposal schedules. Data is only retained for as long as necessary, in line with legal, regulatory, and ethical obligations, and securely deleted when no longer required.
8. Robust data management protocols are in place, including clear documentation of data provenance, version control processes, and audit trails. These measures support transparency, accountability, and the reproducibility of outputs.
9. An Advisory Board underpins the S+PA Workforce Observatory with strong representation from both industry and academia. The Board is responsible for approving all significant frameworks and strategic outputs.
10. The governance model is underpinned by a comprehensive Data Governance Framework, with oversight from a cross-functional Data Governance Committee. This includes representation from different departments, and external experts.
11. Regular reviews, audits, and updates are conducted ensuring policies remain fit for purpose.
12. Ethical and legal compliance is embedded throughout, ensuring best practice, accountability, and trust aligning with the UK Government's data ethics framework.
13. All outputs undergo disclosure control checks before being released from the TRE to ensure they are safe, anonymised, non-disclosive and compliant with GDPR and data ethics standards. This includes periodic data releases.
14. We ensure that information is released in an orderly, impartial, and objective manner. Outputs are published according to pre-planned release schedules, and no users are given preferential access. This supports transparency and public confidence in the neutrality of our work.

Quality

Quality means that statistics fit their intended uses, are based on appropriate data and methods, and are not materially misleading.

Rigorous standards, policies and frameworks are in place to ensure only data of the highest quality is available within CIMSPA's workforce outputs and the S+PA Workforce Observatory. These include:

1. Responsible data collection; including both curation and cleaning by applying rigorous standards for accuracy, transparency, informed consent and to avoid misinterpretation. Data is collected from a range of sources that help provide a comprehensive picture of the workforce including both quantitative and qualitative information. Sources include national data sets (e.g. ONS, Sport England, HESA) as well as alternative forms of robust intelligence from sector partners.
2. All data is harmonised with a centralised taxonomy, including government and international frameworks, facilitating meaningful analysis across different datasets and time periods.
3. All data collected aligns with clearly defined strategic or project objectives and is proportionate to purpose, in compliance with GDPR and ethical guidelines.
4. Data is securely collated and structured using consistent formats and metadata standards; Data Catalogue Vocabulary (DCAT) and DCAT-AP for international benchmarking to ensure accuracy and comparability across datasets. Taxonomies and standards will be shared sector-wide to raise awareness, understanding and the compliance of additional and future data sets.
5. We operate a robust quality management process throughout the data lifecycle. This includes data validation at point of entry, continuous monitoring for anomalies, peer-review of analytical outputs, and routine reviews of data capture methodologies.
6. Our analysis is conducted within the Trusted Research Environment (TRE), where accredited researchers can use documented methods and auditable tools. This controlled environment ensures data is used only for approved purposes, delivering high-value insights while protecting data integrity.
7. The use of our data is reviewed and approved ensuring that data is communicated and applied appropriately. This allows us to monitor and report on the use and quality of our statistics.
8. The methodologies and limitations of our data sources are clearly stated where required to ensure transparency and consistency of use.
9. The methods and analytical approaches are clearly documented and, where appropriate, made available to enable peer review, replication and sector-wide learning.

Value

Value means that the statistics and data are useful, easy to access, remain relevant, and support understanding of important issues.

Both CIMSPA and the S+PA Workforce Observatory are committed to delivering high quality value through the data and insights provided. This is achieved by:

1. A commitment to continuous improvement ensuring that data practices evolve in response to emerging risks, opportunities, and sector needs - maximising the long-term quality and value of data for the workforce and the wider public.
2. Reports, dashboards and all outputs are made accessible and suitable to the intended audiences with effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to drive continual improvement.
3. Key findings and insights are disseminated in ways that are clear, useful, and aligned with our public benefit remit.
4. A comprehensive engagement strategy connecting users to the data, stimulating collaboration, innovation and inspiring more granular research tackling industry challenges.
5. A clear researcher pathway being established within CIMSPA's membership structure to professionally recognise, support and develop all research and insight professionals entering and working in sport and physical activity.
6. The establishment and growth of a researcher community to help drive collaboration, learning, innovation, and encourage further sharing of insights.
7. Outputs are also reviewed for methodological transparency, enabling reproducibility across academic and applied contexts.

Conclusion

In committing to the principles of the Code of Practice for Statistics, CIMSPA and the S+PA Workforce Observatory aim to set a benchmark for excellence in data integrity, governance, and impact within the sport and physical activity sector. By embedding trustworthiness, quality, and value throughout our data practices, we not only support effective workforce planning and development, but also contribute to a more evidence-informed, inclusive, and future-ready sector.

We will continue to monitor our application of the Code, identifying opportunities for further alignment and development. Priority areas for future development include improving the consistency of taxonomies across sector partners, expanding data access infrastructure, and developing stronger feedback loops with users to improve the usefulness and relevance of our outputs.

We believe that by continuously raising the standard of data use in our sector, we can better serve the public good, empower organisations and professionals, and build a stronger, more resilient workforce for the future.

Glossary

DARE UK	Data and Analytics Research Environments UK
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
ONS	Office for National Statistics
SAFE principles	The Five Safes framework is a set of principles which enable data services to provide safe research access to data.
TRE	Trusted research environment(s)
UKRI	UK Research and Innovation

S+PA Workforce Observatory

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– through data-driven insights, bridging theory and practice, and fostering
meaningful collaboration between academia and the sector.