

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## Minutes

Thursday 29 November 2018  
Boardroom, Newport

### **Present**

#### **UK Statistics Authority**

Sir David Norgrove (Chair)  
Professor Sir Adrian Smith (Deputy Chair)  
Mr Iain Bell  
Professor Sir Ian Diamond (by telephone)  
Professor David Hand  
Professor Jonathan Haskel  
Mr Ed Humpherson  
Ms Nora Nanayakkara  
Mr John Pullinger  
Professor Anne Trefethen

### **Also in attendance**

Mr Jonathan Athow  
Mr Owen Brace  
Mr Robert Bumpstead  
Ms Vanessa Holden  
Ms Luise McCulloch (Australian Bureau of Statistics, from item 5)  
Mr Yusuf Murawanga (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, from item 5)  
Ms Heather Savory

### **Apologies**

Ms Sian Jones  
Dr David Levy

## **1. Apologies**

1.1 Apologies were received from Ms Sian Jones and Dr David Levy.

## **2. Declarations of interest**

2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

## **3. Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings**

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 1 November 2018, were agreed.

## **4. Report from the Authority Chair**

4.1 The Chair reported on his activity since the last meeting.

4.2 On 20 November, Sir David and Ms Jones met with other members of the panel responsible for recruiting the next National Statistician. Sir David reported that the panel had agreed a job specification and timelines for the process, ahead of the competition formally launching on 22 November.

4.3 The Economic Experts Advisory Group met on 23 November. Members of the group spoke positively about work being undertaken by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to improve the UK's economic statistics.

4.4 Sir Bernard Jenkin had written to Sir David, advising that the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee intended to undertake an inquiry on the work of the UK Statistics Authority, ten years after its establishment.

## **5. Report from Committee Chairs**

5.1 Sir Adrian reported on the work of the Regulation Committee, highlighting:

- i. discussions about the binary nature of the National Statistics designation;
- ii. early thinking by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) about the ways in which the evolving external environment might necessitate changes in its work; and
- iii. the inadequacy of current data on adult social care.

5.2 Ms Nanayakkara reported on the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, highlighting:

- i. reports provided to the Committee on the Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme;
- ii. actions taken in response to the Committee's review of effectiveness;
- iii. an update provided on the Authority's financial position;
- iv. the Authority's strategic risk profile;
- v. progress in delivering the ONS security strategy; and
- vi. the Committee's 'deep-dive' into the Economic Statistics Transformation Programme. This high-level discussion of strategic risks was the first of several similar discussions planned by the Committee.

## **6. Report from the Chief Executive**

6.1 Mr Pullinger provided an overview of activity over November.

6.2 Board members considered progress with the Census and Data Collection Programme. Over the coming months, the Programme team would review the Census route-map, develop plans to address any issues identified, and enhance capability within the Programme Management Office, to allow for deeper monitoring against the Programme's critical path.

6.3 Board members stressed the importance of this work, and requested monthly updates on the Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme.

## **7. Report from the Director General for Regulation: Regulatory strategy**

7.1 Mr Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity since the last Board meeting, before opening a discussion on future strategic priorities for the OSR.

- 7.2 Board members heard that developments in the economy, in society, across the data landscape and the statistical system were changing the demands faced by the OSR.
- 7.3 Discussion focussed on the importance of impartiality, the roles of other actors across the data landscape, 'real-time' demands for regulation, and symmetries between production and regulation. Board members thanked Mr Humpherson for his wide-ranging presentation on future strategy.
- 7.4 Board members also heard from Luise McCulloch (Australian Bureau of Statistics) and Yusuf Murangwa (Statistics Rwanda), about their perspectives on the changing environment, and how the UK's experiences compare internationally.

## **8. Communications**

- 8.1 Following the Board's discussion on communications in June, Mr Brace discussed his plans for the UK Statistics Authority's communications for the next 12 months. He spoke in detail about communications plans for the 2021 Census for England and Wales.
- 8.2 Board members considered:
  - i. public attitudes to data and privacy;
  - ii. plans to engage 'hard-to-reach' groups during the Census; and
  - iii. timelines for launching Census branding.
- 8.3 It was agreed that the Board would look again at plans for Census communications in early 2019.

## **9. Any other business**

- 9.1 There was no other business. The Authority Board would meet next on Thursday 18 December 2018 at 09:15 in London.

## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

### *Agenda*

29 November 2018, 10:00 to 15:00

Boardroom, Newport

**Chair:** Sir David Norgrove

**Apologies:** Ms Sian Jones, Dr David Levy

**Attendees:** Mr Owen Brace (for item 6), Ms Luise McCulloch (Australian Bureau of Statistics, from item 5), Mr Yusuf Murangwa (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, from item 5)

#### **10:00 – 10:15: Non-Executive Session**

1 10:15-10:20 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Declarations of interest</li></ul>	Meeting of 1 November 2018
2 10:20-10:30 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	Oral report Sir David Norgrove
3 10:30-10:45 15 mins	Reports from Committee Chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regulation Committee</li><li>• Audit and Risk Assurance Committee</li></ul>	Oral reports Sir Adrian Smith Ms Nora Nanayakkara
4 10:45-11:00 15 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(18)53 Mr John Pullinger
5 11:00-11:45 45 mins	Report from the Director-General for Regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regulatory strategy</li></ul>	SA(18)54 Mr Ed Humpherson
6 11:45-12:25 40 mins	Communications	SA(18)55 Mr Owen Brace
7 12:25-12:30 5 mins	Any other business	

**14:00 – 15:00: Market Stalls: Meet and Greet with Newport Staff**

**Next meeting: 18 December 2018, London, 09:15 to 12:45**

**Chief Executive's Report, October 2018****Purpose**

1. This report provides the Board with an overview of activity and issues for November.

**Summary**

2. This month there have been several events which will help our community make the connections they need to have greater impact. We celebrated the 10 Year Anniversary Event for the UK Statistics Authority. This brought together key stakeholders and partners to celebrate the work of the Authority since its inception in 2008. We hosted the second ONS Research Excellence Awards with a focus on bringing the Policy and Research communities closer together. We have also held the Commonwealth Heads of Statistics Conference (CHoSC), bringing together representatives from the 53 Commonwealth nations to share practice and tackle common statistical issues, based around the principles of the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM): notably ocean statistics and education statistics. We also explored the questions of leadership, big data and working together.
3. We have received results from the People Survey, to which 3,589 people who work for Authority responded (82 percent). Our scores are slightly up from last year across most of the themes, and our overall 'engagement index' is at 62 percent which is on the Civil Service benchmark. Over the next month I will be considering them with others in the organisation to help prioritise areas of focus for the year ahead.

**Review of recent activities**

4. Important statistical developments in recent weeks include the following:
  - i. we hosted a round table on the distribution of household income on 9 November. Participants came from across government, civil society and think tanks, and academia. Topics covered included joint ONS/Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) work on measuring top incomes, the redevelopment of ONS releases and microdata to better meet user needs, and future transformation plans including the use of administrative data;
  - ii. nine new projects which have been awarded funding as part of the Turing-HSBC-ONS Economic Data Science Awards 2018 have been announced this week. The Campus assisted in the selection process and ONS will support the successful applicants to the programme, which aims to advance ground-breaking research in understanding of the economy; and
  - iii. Jonathan Athow gave evidence on current Northern Ireland trade patterns to the House of Commons International Trade Committee for their inquiry considering the impact of UK-EU arrangements on wider UK trade policy. The Committee asked Jonathan for detail on key exports and imports for both goods and services, and the typical exporting business profile in Northern Ireland.
5. Other activities and risks being managed during this period include:
  - i. We have submitted our proposed Supplementary Estimate to the Treasury. There are three key aspects to the return – a resource for capital exchange; an increase in our Annually Managed Expenditure control total to create space for a Voluntary Exit Scheme if required; and a formal recognition of the 2018-19 EU Exit Funding for Trade Statistics, as delegated at the Main Estimate; and
  - ii. The Labour Force Survey response rate remains below target. There have been staffing issues this period especially in London. A plan is in place to resolve this. Figures for the most recent period are looking more positive.

**Future look**

6. In December, we will have a meeting of the Inter-Administration Committee in Edinburgh, and host our annual veterans Christmas lunch in Newport for veterans and pensioners from across South Wales.

**John Pullinger, 22 November 2018**

**Report from the Director General for Regulation****Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update on regulation activity since the last Board meeting.

**Recommendation**

2. Members of the Board are invited to note the activities and proposed actions.

**Discussion**

3. Key activities since the last Board meeting include:
  - i. Strategy - We are working towards a new strategy. We are starting with a stocktake of OSR's progress two years after launch, and then looking at the changes in the external environment to which OSR must respond.
  - ii. Department for Education - We continue to liaise with the Department around communication and use of statistics. The reaction remains positive. For example, I held a series of discussions with Departmental analysts in their Sheffield offices and I was struck by the absence of defensiveness about our strong interventions. These analysts saw our intervention as a welcome support to their work.
  - iii. Voluntary adoption of the Code - We are holding an event for organisations that have adopted the Code on a voluntary basis on 26 November, and I am the keynote speaker at a Transport for London conference on 30 November. TfL are one of the most enthusiastic voluntary adopters. In last month's report to the Board, I encouraged ONS to be open to voluntary adoption for innovative and non-traditional outputs. There is nothing to report on this.
  - iv. Data linkage - We are speaking at a wide range of events to raise awareness of our report and the importance of data linkage. We also have launched our review of NHS Digital's data access arrangements, and are holding a producer round table on public engagement around linkage in February.
  - v. Accident and Emergency statistics - We publish our summary of issues with A and E the day before the Board meeting. The summary highlights the importance of policy makers and operational managers paying attention to the advice of analysts on data quality issues and the purpose of the performance measures. It is a strong statement of the regulatory perspective on these high-profile statistics.
  - vi. Scotland official statistics - I was the keynote speaker at the Scotland official statistics conference in November. I emphasised the importance of opening up perspectives – to think about the debates that statistics seek to inform and to think from the perspective of citizens rather than producers. The debate about Pre-Release Access to statistics in Scotland continues. My evidence to a Scottish Parliament Committee last year was reused in a letter from the Finance Minister in Scotland to the Committee, though the letter only used part of what I said. Finally, we are considering a reasonably strong intervention on the use of excess mortality statistics in Scottish Government press notices.
  - vii. People Survey - We received good scores in our People Survey which demonstrate that OSR continues to be an engaged team.
4. As reported at the beginning of this month, the main challenges remain:
  - i. Strategy - We are developing a strategic vision for OSR over the next 3-5 years, based on an analysis of the changing environment for statistics. The challenge will be to distil the range of developments - AI, big data, data ethics, rise of social media,

growth in real time analytics, political and economic change, new institutions like the Centre for Data Ethics, etc - into a compelling strategic narrative aligned with the Authority's overarching ambition and is outward-facing.

- ii. Proactivity - the OSR team is increasingly proactive - as shown by the DfE case (where my team responded quickly to the emerging issue, and before any public complaints) and the work on A and E statistics (which anticipates rather than reacts to an increased focus on this issue). This proactivity does take a toll on a small team, however: we have suspended some planned work (we have not yet initiated a range of projects in our business plan) and some staff members are seeing significantly increased workloads. Our most recent recruitment round looks like it has been more successful than those earlier in the year, and this may alleviate some of these pressures towards the end of the year.

5. The dashboard summary of regulatory activities is at **Annex A**.

**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, 22 November 2018**

### **List of Annexes**

**Annex A      Regulatory Activities**



## Regulatory Activities November 2018

Economy	Business, industry, energy and trade	Health and social care	Labour Market and welfare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assessment:</b> Met HMT on Country and Regional Analysis. UKSA/OSR met ONS to discuss assessment of Experimental Labour Productivity stats. Moving from assessment to CC.</li> <li>• <b>Public Finances Systemic Review:</b> Update Reg Comm on first stage review. Second stage starts after feedback. Speaking on findings with Devolved Administrations.</li> <li>• <b>Casework:</b> Complaint from Lord Lilley about the Govt's claims of post-Brexit usage for repayment Mechanism in tariffs.</li> <li>• <b>Compliance Check:</b> Met ONS on CC of FDI stats. Alerted ONS change from assessment to CC of experimental labour productivity stats. Met HMRC on CC Measuring Tax Gaps stats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Construction Output and Prices:</b> New articles in Oct examining coverage of new orders and output by ONS. Recommendations to address the relationship between two series suggest users do not compare data. Further analysis is being compiled alongside case for re-designation by Feb.</li> <li>• <b>UK Trade:</b> Case for re-designation discussed at Nov Reg Comm. Outcomes of discussion suggest concern over disaggregate asymmetric data. Further options now required for re-designation with focus on "aggregate" figures and management of asymmetric data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assessments:</b> Assessment Report on Avoidable mortality statistics (ONS and NRS) published this month.</li> <li>• <b>Systemic review:</b> Highlight findings from the stakeholder engagement phase of the systemic review of Adult Social Care discussed with stats producers and plans being arranged.</li> <li>• <b>Casework:</b> Published letter concerning the presentation of ISD mortality statistics. Published a report into a number of pieces of casework about A&amp;E statistics to share the learning more widely.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Systemic reviews:</b> Attended meeting on 7/11 with the ONS harmonisation team to discuss them helping the I&amp;E team implement recommendations. Still awaiting letter from Jonathan Athow outlining plans.</li> <li>• <b>Compliance checks:</b> Published CC letter on 9/11 on ONS's Effects of Taxes and Benefits on Household Income release.</li> <li>• <b>Domain activities:</b> Attended meeting 5/11 to discuss the uncertainty in the Labour Market release. Investigated casework related to PMQ.</li> </ul>
Crime and Justice	Housing, planning and local services	Children, education and skills	Agriculture and Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Systemic Reviews:</b> Policing statistics review: <a href="#">The value of statistics on policing to the public debate</a> – set up phase underway.</li> <li>• <b>Casework:</b> Investigated Jeremy Corbyn tweet on hate crime – informal action taken.</li> <li>• <b>Compliance checks:</b> Published positive response from Siobhan Carey, CEO, NISRA to our letter on CC of Northern Ireland Safe Communities Survey. Letter published on findings of our CC of prison population projections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assessments:</b> Welsh Housing Conditions Survey with Assessment Report published Oct.</li> <li>• <b>Compliance checks:</b> Drafting CC of ONS's Household Projections for England; following talks with ONS on findings and plans for Stage 2. Projections published in Dec.</li> <li>• <b>Systemic reviews:</b> Spoke to ONS on GSS work to improve housing stats, and joint plans to develop User Engagement Strategy. Expecting update on progress late November.</li> <li>• <b>Assessment:</b> Letter sent to HM Land Registry, ONS, Registers of Scotland and LPS confirming designations of HPI.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Casework:</b> Recently published casework on the attainment gap in schools, and sent private letter to DfE on use of evaluation data of 30 hours of free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.</li> <li>• <b>Skills Systemic Review:</b> Currently sharing findings with official producer bodies, senior officials and ministers. Ongoing engagement with users.</li> <li>• <b>Compliance checks:</b> Recently completed CC of YR12/14 exam performance at post primary schools in Northern Ireland, ongoing work on Phonics and KS1 assessments in England and HESA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Compliance checks:</b> Finalising CC of Scottish Sea Fisheries and meeting with producers for UK Sea Fisheries CC in Nov. Started CC of results of the June Agricultural Census, Final results of the June Agricultural Census and Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture. Expecting to publish letters in December.</li> <li>• <b>Assessment:</b> Meeting for double assessment of Defra's Air Quality Statistics in the UK and Emissions of Air Pollutants in the UK scheduled for December.</li> <li>• <b>Casework:</b> Looking at Defra statements about the effectiveness of badger culling on incidence of bovine TB.</li> </ul>
Security, defence and intl relations	Travel, transport and tourism	Population	Culture and Identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assessment:</b> Agreed Assessment of National Rail Passenger Survey with Transport Focus to start in Feb 2019.</li> <li>• <b>Compliance Checks:</b> Finalising CC of DfT Port freight statistics. Beginning CC of GB Road Safety Statistics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Systemic review:</b> Attended Migration Stats User Forum with presentations from producers and from users on current use and need for statistics.</li> <li>• <b>Assessment:</b> Ongoing communication with 3 census offices on phase 1 assessment submissions to OSR expected early 2019.</li> <li>• <b>Domain activities:</b> Attended University of Southampton Public Lecture Series on Population and Migration – Costs and Benefits of Int'l Students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assessment:</b> DCMS Economic Estimates Assessment Report was presented to Reg Comm in Nov. Further meeting with DCMS to finalise next steps later in the month.</li> </ul>

***Communication Plan – Update***

**Purpose**

1. This paper sets out the communication plan for the UK Statistics Authority over the next 12 months and the longer-term communication approach for the Census.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Board are asked to:
  - i. comment on the communication plan for the next 12 months;
  - ii. comment on the communication plan for the Census; and
  - iii. note the progress since the last communication update.

**Background**

3. The Communication Strategy and Workplan was presented to the Board in June which outlined the steps to build an effective and strategic communication function for the UK Statistics Authority.
4. Although there is still work to do, including bringing in new skills and capability, the progress made shows we are delivering the agreed actions. This has enabled the Communication function to identify challenges over the next 12 months and set plans to mitigate risk.

**Discussion**

5. The Strategy agreed in June set out the broad ambition for communications to expand from solely promoting outputs.
6. While the promotion of products and insight will continue throughout the year, Authority communications will focus on two further factors – quality of statistics and confidence in use of data.

**Quality of Statistics**

7. ONS has been open about its ongoing work to improve key economic and population statistics. However, every improvement needs careful management to ensure users are aware of the context, particularly if the work results in revisions to previous statistics. Communication is working closely with the statistical teams to ensure stakeholders and media organisations are briefed appropriately with major pieces of work.
8. Examples of this work over the next 12 months include the migration consultation, crime statistics, the student loans classification, and the Blue Book. Handling plans have been set for each of these areas to manage messages and provide reassurance to key audiences over quality. In addition, the Public Confidence in Official Statistics publication will provide an opportunity for ONS to set out the work plan and to identify improving quality, and for OSR to promote the importance of quality.
9. The communications team will continue to work closely with teams across economic and population statistics to identify key issues and ensure ONS statistics are part of the important debates. This communications approach secures widespread media and social media coverage, with supportive stakeholder comments, on issues such as trade, GDP and the broader economy, crime, housing and generational challenges, building awareness of ONS and the statistics it produces.

### Confidence in Use of Data

10. The perception and understanding of the UK's statistical system among the media and public has not kept pace with the transformation of the way we work. Over the next 12 months we intend to build a narrative around the use of different data sources to improve the nation's statistics.
11. At this time, it is particularly important that our external narrative matches the internal messages to colleagues, and aligns with the work on building values and culture across the ONS. This will ensure colleagues are confident and engaged with the approach and aware of our responsibilities on maintaining quality and confidence.

### Census Communication Plan

12. The communications plan and execution are critical to the success of the Census. It needs to engage with and activate all households in England and Wales by raising awareness, trust and advocacy and by being clear on what the public needs to do and when.
13. For planning, targeting and messaging purposes, we are segmenting audiences according to their ability and willingness to engage. Communication will be focused on phases, some of which overlap:
  - i. Phase 1 (to spring 2019) – Manage the environment: stakeholders and data users have been consulted, public see ONS as a trustworthy and impartial body;
  - ii. Phase 2 (pre-rehearsal) – Raise awareness and trust in Census and ONS: create advocates in rehearsal areas and public understand the Census;
  - iii. Phase 3 (rehearsal activation) – Engage public and activate Census completion: public know it is important to support the Census rehearsal and are confident in ability to respond;
  - iv. Phase 4 (pre-Census 2021) – Manage the environment and raise awareness and trust in Census and ONS: public know the Census is important and confident their data is safe;
  - v. Phase 5 (Census 2021 activation) – Drive response through calls to action and engagement, reminder to complete and enforcement: public know the Census is important, are confident about their privacy and are willing to participate;
  - vi. Phase 6 (post-Census) – Manage the environment for outputs and transformation: public know their information will be used well; and
  - vii. Phase 7 (outputs and transformation) – Promote the outputs: partners and data users see the benefits of the Census and utilise the data.
14. We are continuing to test messages, channels, audiences (including motivations and attitudes) and other external factors throughout all phases of the campaign to ensure we are responsive to the changing environment, especially on attitudes to use of data.

**Owen Brace, Directors, Policy, Communication and Digital Publishing, ONS,  
November 2018**