

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**  
**REGULATION COMMITTEE**

*Agenda*

**18 July 2019**

**Boardroom, Drummond Gate, London, 13:00 to 16:00**

**Chair:** Professor Anne Trefethen

**Apologies:** -

**13:00 to 13:10 – Non-executive session**

**13:10 to 16:00 – Main meeting**

|                                |   |  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 1                              | Apologies, minutes and matters arising  | Meeting of 11-04-19  |
| 2                              | Review of Effectiveness   | Ms Sarah Cobden  |
| 3                              | Overview from the Director General for Regulation                               | Mr Ed Humpherson   |
| 4                              | Annual Review of Casework   | Mr Ed Humpherson & Ms Sarah Cobden                             |
| <b>Domains/Regulatory work</b> |   |  |
| 5                              | Systemic Review: Adult Social Care  | Dr Caroline Jones  |
| 6                              | Assessment of the 2021 Census   | Ms Marie McGhee & Mr Oliver Fox-Tatum<br><i>(by telephone)</i> |
| 7                              | Migration statistics  | Ms Marie McGhee & Mr Oliver Fox-Tatum<br><i>(by telephone)</i> |
| <b>Other updates</b>           |   |  |
| 8                              | Regulatory Services Update<br>(incl. draft assessment reports and designations) | Ms Mary Gregory & Mr Mark Pont                                 |
| 9                              | List and analysis of engagement activity  | Mr Ed Humpherson   |
| 10                             | Any other business  |  |

**Next meeting:** Thursday 17 October, London, 13:00 to 16:00

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**Regulation Committee**

**Minutes**

**Meeting of Thursday 18 July 2019  
Boardroom, Drummond Gate, London**

**Present**

**Members**

Professor Anne Trefethen (Chair)  
Professor David Hand  
Professor Jonathan Haskel  
Sir David Norgrove  
Mr Ed Humpherson

**Secretariat**

Ms Sarah Cobden  
Ms Vanessa Holden

**Other attendees**

Mr Oliver Fox-Tatum (items 6, 7 and 8, via Skype)  
Ms Mary Gregory  
Dr Caroline Jones (item 5, via Skype)  
Mr Rob Lewis  
Ms Marie McGhee (items 6 and 7, via Skype)  
Mr Mark Pont

**Apologies**

None

**Declarations of Interest**

None

## **1. Apologies, minutes and matters arising**

- 1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting of 11 April were agreed as a correct record. Progress with actions was reviewed; all were in hand.

## **2. Review of Effectiveness**

- 2.1 Secretariat presented the results of the self-effectiveness survey and noted comments provided by members. The Committee noted the need to consider the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) recommendations as part of this discussion.
- 2.2 The discussion of the survey results and recommendations included:
- i. on membership, the Committee would benefit from a member with a communications background; Sir David Norgrove noted that he had approached Helen Boaden to join Regulation Committee;
  - ii. the benefits and drawbacks of recruiting independent members, akin to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), and greater use of expert user groups; and
  - iii. the Committee's focus on the Office for Statistics Regulation's (OSR) outputs, rather than its inner working and controls.
- 2.3 Members also discussed the PACAC recommendations, including that of OSR's relocation to a separate office, and the transparency of the Regulation Committee. On transparency, members agreed that minutes should be published going forward. The Committee's Terms of Reference may also need to be revisited.
- 2.4 The Authority Board would consider the recommendations on 30 July. Members agreed that the Secretariat would share OSR's response to the regulation-focused PACAC recommendations by correspondence.

## **3. Overview from the Director General for Regulation**

- 3.1 Mr Humpherson introduced his update which focused on the launch of OSR's Vision that had been published as an exposure draft in June. He expanded on the launch events that had taken place in England, Scotland and Wales, and noted plans for further stakeholder engagement, including an event in Northern Ireland in September.
- 3.2 Mr Humpherson gave two further updates on:
- i. a recent freedom of information (FOI) request of the Authority's interactions with the Labour party on their use of statistics; and
  - ii. the success of some recent casework, in which the Care Quality Commission had agreed to publish some private analysis in the spirit of equality of access.
- 3.3 It was also noted that the Edinburgh OSR office would be moving to new premises in April 2020.

## **4. Annual Review of Casework**

- 4.1 Ms Cobden introduced a paper which provided a draft Annual Review of Casework report for 2018/19, and a proposed communications strategy for the report.
- 4.2 The Committee welcomed the report, and made some recommendations for:
- i. further clarity around response times, recommending greater context around casework with particularly short or long timeframes; and

- ii. greater explanation of parliamentary casework, demonstrating more clearly how many cases last year were relating to statistical misuse by politicians.
- 4.3 The Committee also discussed the proportion of casework by department, and the factors behind varying proportions.
- 4.4 It was agreed that, subject to the recommended changes, the report would go to the Board in July, with a view to publishing as recommended.

## **5. Systemic Review: Adult Social Care**

- 5.1 Dr Jones joined the meeting by Skype to present this item. The paper set out the findings of the systemic review for Scotland and England and recommended next steps.
- 5.2 The findings for Scotland were promising; while some data gaps remained, OSR had confidence that there was good leadership and commitment to improve data linkage and quality.
- 5.3 The complexities of English social care statistics were discussed, including the lack of leadership. It was noted that many gaps exist in the statistics due to inconsistent survey methods and a lack of administrative data.
- 5.4 The Committee agreed that the Authority Chair would write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, copied to the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health and Social Care, to call for his support in developing the evidence base of health and social care.

## **6. Assessment of the 2021 Census**

- 6.1 Mr Fox-Tatum and Ms McGhee joined the meeting via Skype to present on OSR's assessment against the Code of Practice of the 2021 Censuses of the UK, produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), and National Records of Scotland (NRS). The aim of the assessment was to allow for trustworthy, valuable and high quality census outputs to be published as National Statistics at the point they are first released.
- 6.2 The Committee discussed OSR's phased assessment approach, including the publication of initial findings prior to the census rehearsal in October. For the remaining assessment phases, OSR would take a flexible approach to reporting and continue to engage with census offices throughout, including on additional administrative data sources.
- 6.3 The Committee were assured that this assessment would not duplicate other census audit activity being undertaken on behalf of ONS, NISRA and NRS.

## **7. Migration statistics**

- 7.1 Mr Fox-Tatum and Ms McGhee presented this item on ONS' migration statistics.
- 7.2 The Committee noted the extensive work undertaken by the OSR to date and discussed their plans to issue a statement on migration statistics before ONS' August release. Members also discussed perceived risks associated with the International Passenger Survey (IPS); apparent discrepancies in arrivals and departures; and issues specific to Asian migration figures.

7.3 In OSR's statement, they would make recommendations around administrative data and the resourcing of the ONS teams. It was agreed that this should be reviewed by the Committee as soon as possible, with a view to publishing by the end of the month.

## **8. Regulatory Services Update**

8.1 Mr Fox-Tatum remained on the line to update the Committee on a compliance check of Department for Transport (DfT) road safety statistics, which have National Statistics (NS) status. Due to a methodology change, it was agreed that the next release should be published as experimental statistics. Mr Fox-Tatum also updated members on the upcoming systemic review on statistical leadership.

8.2 Ms Gregory and Mr Pont updated the Committee on OSR's current work programme, highlighting:

- i. the recommendation to designate ONS Statistics on Cancer Survival in England, and NISRA Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service statistics as National Statistics. The Committee confirmed their approval to designate;
- ii. a draft assessment report on Defra Air Quality and Emissions of Air Pollutants statistics;
- iii. a review of ONS' Purchases Survey. The Committee noted the difficulties around data capture, and OSR committed to providing an update in October;
- iv. the scoping of three new systemic reviews on statistical leadership (as before), mental health and Defra user engagement; and
- v. the reporting of the public finance systemic review, and how new multimedia approaches may be used.

8.3 Mr Pont also raised the Administrative Data Census Population Coverage Survey, whose development is important but appeared not to be very visible, including within the scientific community. OSR were currently looking at this as a potential issue, and if required, would raise any concerns through this Committee.

## **9. List and analysis of Engagement Activity**

9.1 Mr Humpherson introduced a list and analysis of engagement activity.

9.2 He discussed a meeting with Simon Stephens (CEO, NHS England) where they discussed the Health Index and the different ways that patient care is currently measured.

9.3 The Committee also discussed with interest a meeting with Anna Powell-Smith, who runs the Missing Numbers blog, on data that Government does not currently publish.

## **10. Any Other Business**

10.1 The Committee reviewed the Forward Look; there were no further comments. It was noted that the Authority Board would be discussing the PACAC report on 30 July.

10.2 The Committee would meet next on Thursday 17 October at 13:00 in London.