

Terms of Reference for the Advisory Panel on Consumer Prices – Technical

Overview

The Technical Advisory Panel on Consumer Prices (APCP-T) provides independent advice to the National Statistician on technical aspects of consumer price indices.

Introduction

The establishment of the APCP-T was recommended by an independent review of the governance of price statistics, which considered matters relating to the governance arrangements and structures underpinning the production of consumer price indices by the Office for National Statistics.

The report also recommended the creation of a Stakeholder Advisory Panel on Consumer Prices (APCP-S), to provide advice to the National Statistician on the uses and application of the statistics. These recommendations were accepted by the Board of the UK Statistics Authority in February 2014.

Functions

The APCP-T provides independent advice to the National Statistician on technical aspects of consumer price indices, as requested by ONS and/or the APCP-S.

Specifically, the Panel will:

- provide technical expertise on relevant aspects of the ONS consumer prices work programme;
- provide technical advice on the outcomes of relevant reviews of the range of consumer prices statistics;
- identify emerging issues in the technical approaches to consumer price statistics;
- provide a report to the National Statistician each year, describing its activities and future plans; and,
- formally review the operation of the Panel on a three-yearly basis.

Reporting and Governance

The APCP-T advises the National Statistician, who is also the Authority Chief Executive and a member of the UK Statistics Authority Board.

The chair of the APCP-T will prepare a report annually on the activities of the Panel, for the National Statistician, who in turn can decide whether specific matters need to be discussed by the UK Statistics Authority Board. This report will be created as a joint document outlining the activities and decisions of both the Technical and Stakeholder Panels. It is to be prepared following the final APCP-T meeting in September, and published prior to the final UK Statistics Authority Board in December.

Under the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*, the UK Statistics Authority Board is responsible for the compilation, maintenance and publication of the Retail Prices Index (RPI).

Relationship with the APCP Stakeholder

The Technical Panel secretariat works with the Technical Panel chair and respective members, the secretariat of the Stakeholder Panel, the UK Statistics Authority and ONS to ensure that the activities of the Stakeholder and Technical Panels are coordinated. Technical Panel members will be copied in on all correspondence sent to Stakeholder Panel members and vice versa.

Chairing

The chair of the APCP-T is the ONS Director of National Accounts and Economic Statistics.

The chair sets the Panel's agenda, guided by the strategic direction of the UK Statistics Authority Board and the Chief Executive, and by the needs of the Stakeholder Panel and ONS.

Membership

Membership of the Panel provides for a mixture of expertise in price index methodology, including international experts. Members are appointed for fixed terms of three years, by the APCP-T chair and the National Statistician. Reappointments will be permitted. The composition of the Panel will be reviewed periodically by the chair and the National Statistician.

The role of each member of the APCP-T is to participate in consideration of the full-range of technical issues within the remit of the Panel.

Substitutes will not be permitted to attend Panel meetings unless with express invitation from the chair.

Members are not remunerated. All reasonable travel and subsistence costs will be reimbursed.

Transparency / Confidentiality

The Panel will operate transparently. Meeting agendas, papers and minutes will be made publically available following meetings, unless it is deemed that they are of a sensitive nature. The sensitivity of each paper will be discussed during the meeting, and decisions that have been made will be clearly stated in the minutes, and on the APCP-T page on the UKSA website.

- Papers that are deemed to be of a sensitive nature will be withheld from publication.
- Papers that are draft versions of scheduled publications will not be published ahead of their scheduled date, but the APCP-T minutes will clearly state when the final document is expected to be published.
- Work-in-progress papers, for which no publication is scheduled, will be published and clearly labelled.
- Any papers sent by additional correspondence will be published alongside the documents for the following meeting, subject to being non-sensitive and not a draft of a planned publication.

Panel members will have the opportunity to comment on the minutes before publication for issues of accuracy. The Panel chair will have the final sign off on the minutes. The minutes are made publically available within a month following the meeting date.

Code of Conduct

Panel members are expected to provide their expertise and advice on the topics they are asked to consider. Members are asked not to share papers in advance with others. If Panel members wish to share a paper more widely to develop their advice, this should be agreed in writing by the chair of the Panel on a case-by-case basis.

On occasion members will be asked to consider topics of a sensitive nature. In these instances certain restrictions will apply. These will be clearly set out by the Panel secretariat in advance of receiving any papers. Members who feel they are not able to abide by the restrictions will not receive papers and will be asked not to attend the relevant meeting.

There may also be instances where it is not appropriate for a Panel member to sit on the Panel due to a conflict with another role that they hold. In the event of such a conflict arising Panel members should notify the secretariat as soon as possible, and they will not receive papers and will be asked not to attend the relevant meeting.

Secretariat

The secretariat will be provided by ONS Prices Division.

Meetings

The Panel meets at a minimum of 3 times each year.