

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

*Agenda*

**23 April 2020**  
**Virtual Meeting, 13:00 to 14:30**

**Chair: Professor Anne Trefethen**  
**Apologies: Professor Jonathan Haskel**

1	Apologies, minutes and matters arising	Meeting of 13-02-20
2	Update from the Director General for Regulation	Mr Ed Humpherson
3	OSR Business Plan and Work Programme 2020/21	Ms Mary Gregory
4	Skills Systemic Review	Ms Gail Rankin
5	Any other business	

***Papers for comment by correspondence***

6	OSR Annual Review: approach and structure
7	Sex and Gender update
8	Defra User Engagement Systemic Review
9	Northern Ireland Planning Statistics
10	Regulatory Services Update

***Papers for information and supplementary information***

11	Funding Guidance
12	Adult Social Care statistics: GB report
13	List and analysis of engagement activity
14	List of issues raised with the Authority
15	Forward Look

**Next meeting: Thursday 16 July, London, 13:00 to 16:00**

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**Regulation Committee**

**Minutes**

**Thursday 23 April 2020  
Virtual Meeting**

**Present**

**Members**

Professor Anne Trefethen (Chair)  
Ms Helen Boaden  
Professor David Hand  
Mr Ed Humpherson  
Sir David Norgrove

**Secretariat**

Ms Sarah Cobden  
Ms Sally-Ann Jones

**Other Attendees**

Ms Mary Gregory  
Ms Suzanne Halls  
Ms Lauren Higgins  
Mr Mark Pont  
Ms Gail Rankin

**Apologies**

Professor Jonathan Haskel

**Declarations of Interest**

None

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

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting on 13 February 2020 were agreed as correct. The Chair acknowledged an apology from Professor Haskel and welcomed two observers to the meeting. Actions were reviewed; a number were on hold as a result of coronavirus prioritisation.

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

- 2.1 Mr Humpherson introduced an update on the Office for Statistics Regulation's (OSR's) response to COVID-19 and its draft five-year strategic plan.
- 2.2 On COVID-19, Mr Humpherson highlighted:
- i. published statements, rapid reviews of new statistical releases, and exemptions to the Code of Practice for Statistics, including the revised publication time for the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') market sensitive statistics to help guarantee equality of access;
  - ii. a published paper setting out the differences between daily indicator data used in Government briefings, and the ONS weekly deaths data, and a letter to the chair of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) on these statistics; and
  - iii. a letter to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on the publication of Universal Credit statistics.
- 2.3 On the five-year plan, it was acknowledged that the overarching Authority Strategy was still in development, and this would shape OSR's strategic direction. The impact of COVID-19 on the statistical system was still unclear, and this would be factored into planning. The Committee agreed OSR should defer publication of its strategic plan until later in the year, and Mr Humpherson would bring a short update on next steps to the April Authority Board meeting.

## **3. Business Plan and Regulatory Work Programme 2020/21**

- 3.1 Ms Gregory introduced an update on OSR's business plan and work programme for 2020/21. It was noted that the work programme would require flexibility to adjust for coronavirus reprioritisation. OSR intended to publish an update on its work programme to give users clarity on its plans in May.
- 3.2 The Committee recommended OSR keep an open mind on timing of publication in the current climate, and made comment on its drafting, recommending more explicit reference to timeliness. Members discussed the current discourse around data and statistics on coronavirus, and suggested OSR could be a helpful voice here, with an opportunity to educate the public on the use of data.
- 3.3 The meeting endorsed OSR's one-year business plan to proceed to the Authority Board for review.

## **4. Skills Systemic Review**

- 4.1 Ms Rankin introduced the systemic review on skills statistics in the UK. The Committee's comments were sought on the UK report ahead of its publication.
- 4.2 The Committee heard that this report followed the England-specific skills report published in April 2019. The systemic review had focused on a wide range of skills data including further education, higher education and apprenticeships. Since the Committee discussion in December, OSR had restructured the report to ensure clarity

of its findings and recommendations. Ms Rankin highlighted some of the reports key findings, noting the differences between education sectors and nations of the UK in terms of how users are served.

- 4.3 The Committee praised the report, noting its clarity on a complex area of a statistics. Members recommended strengthening the executive summary to highlight more clearly why it matters for users to have good comparable skills statistics, and the value of sharing good practice between nations. The report was endorsed for publication, subject to comments discussed. The report would be finalised and scheduled for publication in June.

## **5. Any Other Business**

- 5.1 Several papers were included below-the-line; the Committee discussed comments raised by correspondence:
- i. the Committee encouraged OSR to confirm the scope and purpose of the Annual Review report;
  - ii. the Defra user engagement report was endorsed for publication, subject to clarifications on sample sizing and insight;
  - iii. the assessment report on Northern Ireland planning statistics was approved;
  - iv. the Regulatory Services Update included an update on the systemic review on mental health statistics; OSR would follow up with the Committee in correspondence on the potential publication of a report.
- 5.2 The Committee would meet next on Thursday 16 July at 13:00.