

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Standing Orders for the Board of the UK Statistics Authority (September 2020)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These Standing Orders should be read in conjunction with Chapter 18 of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*. The Act created a '*Statistics Board*' but by resolution at its first meeting on 2 February 2008 the Board agreed that it would operate under the name of the '*UK Statistics Authority*'.
- 1.2 These Standing Orders will regulate the procedures of the Authority and of its committees as appropriate.

2. Statutory Framework, Role and responsibilities

- 2.1 The UK Statistics Authority was established under the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* (referred to in the Act as the '*Statistics Board*') and on 1 April 2008 formally assumed its powers under the Act. The Act gave the Authority the objective of 'promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good'. The work of the Board is further defined under secondary legislation made under the Act by the UK Parliament or the devolved legislatures.

3. Statement of Strategy: Statistics for the Public Good

- 3.1 On 16 July 2020 the Authority published its strategy for the UK official statistics system for the five years from 2020 to 2025.

Mission

- 3.2 Evidence produced free from political and commercial influence is a cornerstone of democratic society. It allows for the better formulation and evaluation of public policy; it informs public understanding of the world and our place in it; it informs decision makers to take choices and lets others hold the powerful to account. The collective mission of our official statistics system is:

High quality data and analysis to inform the UK, improve lives and build the future.

Functions

- 3.3 The Authority's strategy covers the three principal elements of the UK official statistics system for which the Authority has oversight. The Authority provides professional oversight of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) and has exclusive responsibility for the Office for National Statistics, and for independent regulation.

Core Principles

- 3.4 To achieve its mission, the Authority will focus on four core principles which will underpin the work of the statistical system over the next five years. We will be: **Radical** in taking opportunities to innovate and collaborate, using data for the public good; **Ambitious** in setting out to answer the critical research questions the public needs answers to, and informing the decisions that citizens, businesses and civil society take; **Inclusive** in our approach to workforce, talent management, and the design of data, statistics and analysis; and **Sustainable** in delivering a unique service in a way which delivers value for money through partnership and collaboration. To achieve this, analysts working in the system need to develop their role as communicators. Professional commentary and

advice on contemporary issues is what the system is for. Statisticians and analysts should be confident in their ability to provide that impartial view of the world.

4. Chair and Members of the Authority Board

- 4.1 The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 provides for the appointment of the Chair of the Authority by Her Majesty the Queen as a non-executive member of the Board.
- 4.2 The Act also provides for the appointment of at least five Non-Executive members by the Minister for the Cabinet Office after consultation with the Chair of the Authority and Ministers in the devolved administrations.
- 4.3 The Minister for the Cabinet Office has, after consultation with the Chair of the Authority, agreed that one of the non-executive members is the Deputy Chair of the Authority.
- 4.4 The Act also allows for three executive members of the Authority Board, one of whom shall be the National Statistician and the other two being appointed by the Non-Executive members. The Authority Board has determined that the other two executive members of the Board shall currently be the Authority's Director General for Regulation and the Second Permanent Secretary.
- 4.5 The three Director Generals in ONS will usually attend meetings of the Authority Board and will be recorded in the minutes as being 'in attendance'.
- 4.6 The current membership of the Authority Board is at **Annex A** to these Standing Orders.

5. Chairing the meeting of the Authority Board

- 5.1 The Chair of the Authority will conduct all meetings of the Authority Board except that, in their absence, the Deputy Chair of the Authority or another member of the Authority appointed by the Chair of the Authority may take the chair.

6. Calendar of meetings

- 6.1 The Board of the Authority will usually meet at least eight times a year. See Section 21 about further information about other board and committees of the Authority.
- 6.2 Committees of the Board, with the exception of the Remuneration Committee, will usually meet at least four times a year at times to suit the business priorities for those committees and the dates will be agreed with the chairs of those committees. The Remuneration Committee will meet at least twice a year.
- 6.3 The Secretariat of the Authority will publish the dates and venues for the meetings of the Authority and its committees for the following calendar year before the end of May of every year.
- 6.4 Special meetings of the Authority Board may be called at short notice by the Chair of the Authority.

7. Timing and duration of meetings

- 7.1 Meetings of the Authority Board will usually start at 10:00 and will usually finish by 16:00.
- 7.2 Meetings will usually commence with a session of the Non-Executive members only. The Chair will report back on that discussion during his report to the main Board meeting and this will be recorded in the minutes.
- 7.3 Where the business has not been completed within the agreed time, those members present may resolve to continue the meeting in order to deal with the business notified

on the agenda. If not, uncompleted business will be noted in the minutes of the meeting and may be continued at the next ordinary meeting.

- 7.4 A meeting may be discontinued at any time if the meeting so resolves. If so, a further meeting shall be called as soon as practicable to complete the unfinished business.

8. Notice of meetings

- 8.1 As described at 6.3 above the dates and venues for meetings for the following business year will be set and published before the end of May of the previous calendar year.
- 8.2 Written notice of the meetings, agenda and papers will be sent out seven days before the meeting except where a special meeting has been called at short notice.

9. Agenda

- 9.1 The agenda will be prepared by the Board Secretary in accordance with any determination of the Board and in consultation with the Chair of the Authority.
- 9.2 Any member of the Authority Board may place an item on the agenda by writing to the Chair and Board Secretary at least two weeks before the meeting.
- 9.3 Papers that inform agenda items will usually be sent to members of the Authority Board with the agenda seven days before the meeting.
- 9.4 Late papers may exceptionally be submitted subject to the agreement of the Chair of the Authority.

10. Standing Items

- 10.1 The agenda for the meeting will usually include reports from committee chairs.
- 10.2 The Authority Board will receive a report from the Finance Director of ONS at least half yearly.

11. Late items of business / any other business

- 11.1 The agenda will include "Notification of AOB" immediately after "Apologies for absence" and any member of the Board of the Authority wishing to raise an urgent meeting item must give notice at that point in the meeting.
- 11.2 The Board of the Authority will then decide whether any such item is to be discussed or, if appropriate, deferred to a subsequent meeting.

12. Attendance

- 12.1 The Board Secretary will keep a record of those Authority Board members and all other persons present at meetings of the Authority Board and all of its committees.
- 12.2 Any member of the Authority Board who is unable to attend a meeting of the Authority or a committee of the Authority of which they are a member must send an apology to the Chair of that meeting and this will be recorded in the minutes.
- 12.3 The arrival and / or departure of any member of the Board of the Authority not in attendance throughout the meeting will be recorded in the minutes.

13. Quorum

- 13.1 The quorum for all business of the Authority Board is seven, of which at least four shall be Non-Executive members.
- 13.2 Meetings which are not quorate or become so during the course of the meeting cannot pass formal resolutions but can discuss business and make recommendations for consideration at the next meeting.

14. Access to meetings of the Authority Board

- 14.1 Apart from the members of the Authority Board and the three Director Generals in ONS who are not an Executive member of the Board (as described at 4.4 and 4.5 above), the only other person who will normally attend meetings of the Authority Board in order to give advice is the Board Secretary. The Secretariat of the Authority will also provide a minute secretary for each meeting.
- 14.2 Other officials of the Authority, ONS or other bodies may be invited to attend for specific agenda items.

15. Minutes of meetings

- 15.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Authority Board will be kept by the Board Secretary.
- 15.2 Draft minutes will be sent by the Board Secretary to the Chair of the Authority for approval. The draft minutes once approved by the Chair of the Authority will be sent to all members of the Authority Board (including absentees) within one week after the meeting.
- 15.3 Any dissenting views will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting if that is the wish of an individual member of the Authority Board.
- 15.4 Actions will be taken on the basis of decisions made at meetings and need not wait the approval of the minutes at the next meeting.
- 15.5 The approval of the minutes of the previous meeting will be on the agenda of every meeting of the Authority Board and once approved as a true record (subject to any amendments) will be signed and dated by the Chair (or Vice-Chair if absent). The finally approved minutes together with papers considered at the meeting will then be published on the Authority's website.

16. Discussion and debate

- 15.6 The Chair, or the person acting in their stead, will ensure that all members of the Authority Board enjoy equal opportunity to express their views.

17. Decision-making

- 17.1 Authority Board members recognise that all decisions must be made by the Authority Board unless the Authority Board has delegated the function to a committee or individual.
- 17.2 The Chair may consult the members of the Board if they consider that a formal vote on an issue might be required. In the unlikely event of a need for a vote, only members present at a meeting may vote on decisions and proxy voting is not allowed. A simple majority decides any matter put to a vote. In the event of a tie the Chair of the Authority has a casting or second vote. Voting will be by show of hands.
- 17.3 Members of the Authority Board share collective responsibility and all decisions of the Authority Board are binding on its members.
- 17.4 Decisions of the Authority Board may be amended or rescinded at a subsequent meeting of the Authority Board.

18. Urgent action

- 18.1 The Chair of the Authority may take urgent action or make a decision in between meetings where a delay would be detrimental to the interests of the Authority and a special meeting of the Authority Board cannot be called in sufficient time to deal with the matter.

18.2 If the Chair of the Authority takes any such action it will be notified to the next meeting of the Authority Board if not before.

19. Pecuniary and personal interest

19.1 The UK Statistics Authority maintains a register of the interests of all of its members. Nevertheless, members of the Authority Board are under an obligation to draw attention to any possible pecuniary or conflict of interests whether that has been registered or not.

20. Delegation of functions

20.1 The Authority Board may delegate work to committees of the Authority or individuals or set up working groups to provide information and / or recommendations to the Authority Board.

20.2 The arrangements for delegation will be reviewed at least annually by the Authority Board.

21. Committees

21.1 Committees to which the Authority Board has delegated any of its functions will act strictly in accordance with the terms of delegation.

21.2 The Authority Board will:

- i. determine the size of committees;
- ii. establish and record terms of reference;
- iii. review terms of reference annually;
- iv. determine the frequency of meetings of committees;
- v. establish arrangements for reporting back;
- vi. review the need for committees annually; and
- vii. set the quorum for each committee.

23.3 The Chair of the Authority has the right to attend any committee meetings and receives all meeting papers.

23.4 The Chair of the Authority will appoint the Chair and members of each Committee.

23.5 In June 2014, the Authority Board agreed the following to be its committees:

- Regulation Committee;
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee; and
- Remuneration Committee.

23.6 All committees will report in writing (usually in the form of minutes) to the next meeting of the Authority Board, except where the committee has met immediately prior to the meeting of the Authority Board and then an oral report will be given, and a written report or minutes will be sent to the following meeting of the Authority Board.

23.7 All committees will keep formal minutes and copies will be made available to the Authority Board.

23.8 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will also present a report in writing to the June meeting of Authority Board each year on the activities of their committee for the preceding business year.

24. Working Groups

24.1 The Authority Board may establish ad hoc working groups and will:

- i. determine the size, membership and chairmanship;

- ii. establish terms of reference;
- iii. determine when working groups shall meet and give timetables for delivery;
and
- iv. determine procedures for reporting back.

24.2 The Chair of the Authority has the right to attend any meetings of working groups.

24.3 Working groups established for specific purposes will be discontinued when their work has been completed.

24.4 All working groups will present a written report, including recommendations where appropriate, to the Authority Board.

25. Review

25.1 The Authority Board's effectiveness will be reviewed annually. These Standing Orders will similarly be reviewed on an annual basis.

UK Statistics Authority Central Policy Secretariat, September 2020

Annex A

UK Statistics Authority Board

Non-Executive members:

Sir David Norgrove (Chair, from 1 April 2017)
Ms Sian Jones (from 1 July 2016, Deputy Chair from 12 December 2018)
Ms Helen Boaden (from 1 July 2019)
Professor David Hand (from 1 April 2013)
Mr Richard Dobbs (from 27 May 2020)
Professor Jonathan Haskel (from 1 February 2016)
Ms Nora Nanayakkara (from 1 July 2016)
Prof. Sir David Spiegelhalter (from 27 May 2020)
Professor Anne Trefethen (from 30 June 2018)

Executive members:

Prof. Sir Ian Diamond – National Statistician and Chief Executive (from October 2019)
Mr Ed Humpherson - Director General for Regulation (from January 2014)
Ms Sam Beckett – Second Permanent Secretary and Deputy Chief Executive (from September 2020)

Previous Members:

Professor Sir Adrian Smith (from 1 September 2012 to April 2020)
Prof. Sir Ian Diamond (from June 2018 to August 2019)
Dr. David Levy (from August 2012 to May 2019)
Professor Adrian Smith (from February 2008 to September 2008)
Sir Alan Langlands (from February 2008 to April 2009)
Dame Karen Dunnell, National Statistician (from February 2008 to August 2009)
Mr Steve Newman (from March 2008 to November 2009)
Professor Steve Nickell (from April 2008 to October 2010)
Professor Sir Roger Jowell (from November 2008 to December 2011)
Sir Michael Scholar (from 2007 (as Chair designate) to April 2012)
Lord David Rowe-Beddoe (from February 2008 to August 2012)
Mr Stephen Penneck (from November 2009 to September 2012)
Sir Jon Shortridge (from February 2010 to October 2012)
Mr Richard Alldritt, Head of Assessment (from May 2008 to October 2013)
Mr Partha Dasgupta (from February 2008 to June 2014)
Dame Jil Matheson, National Statistician (from September 2009 to June 2014)
Professor David Rhind (from February 2008 to June 2015)
Ms Carolyn Fairbairn (from April 2013 to September 2015)
Dame Moira Gibb (from February 2008 to January 2018)
Dame Colette Bowe (from February 2010 to March 2018)

Board Secretary:

Ms Sally-Ann Jones (from January 2020)