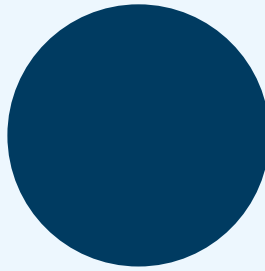
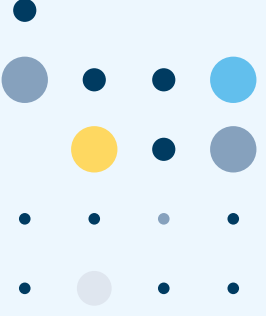
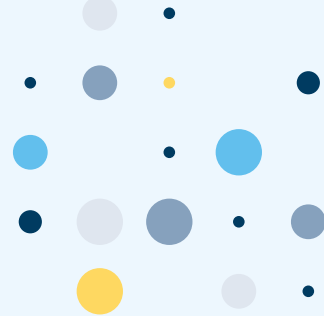
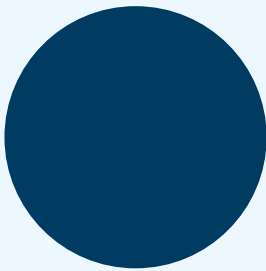
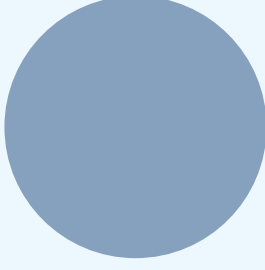
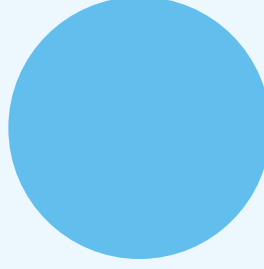
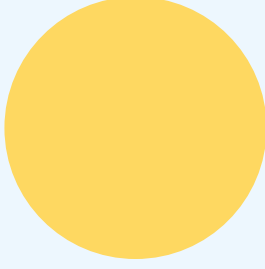
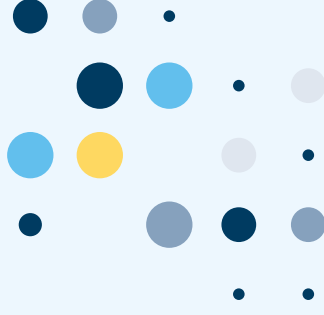
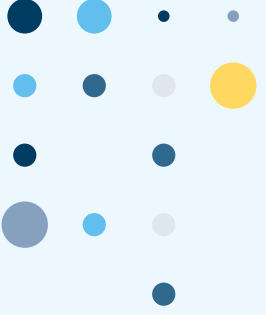
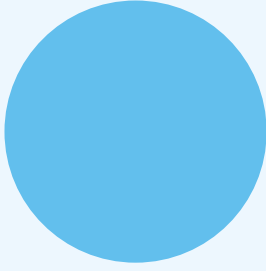


## Inclusive data taskforce

# Response by the National Statistician





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# Foreword

I warmly welcome the publication of the **Report of the Inclusive Data Taskforce** today. I commissioned this independent Taskforce in October 2020 following the **publication of the Statistics for the Public Good** in July 2020.

There is already strong commitment across the four nations to being inclusive in how we collect data reflective of the needs of all UK society, and in improving the representativeness of data, analysis and statistics.

The recommendations of this Taskforce provide a platform for working collaboratively across the UK government, the devolved administrations and more widely to make a real step change in the inclusivity of UK data and evidence.

The Taskforce reiterates the need to systemically address improvement in this area. This will entail a long-term collaborative programme of work in partnership with a range of organisations across and outside government, and today we are announcing some key initial activities in response to the report.

**An important lesson we've learned in working with the Taskforce and speaking to a wide range of people and organisations on their behalf is that we need to maintain momentum to make the step-change we're seeking, while also taking the time required to engage with people and organisations in meaningful, inclusive ways.**

To that end, a more detailed plan will follow in January 2022 after further consultation with diverse stakeholders and organisations outside government, including academics, civil society organisations and others. We will also build on stakeholder needs identified from our consultation on Census 2021 outputs and analysis, as well as the listening exercise as part of the 2023 recommendation on the future of the Census.

At this stage we have consulted with other UK government departments and the devolved administrations to identify both what's already happening to improve inclusiveness of UK data and evidence, what's planned in future and what more we need to do.

**This collaborative approach across the four nations of the UK means that we will:**

- ensure our work programme builds on and extends existing initiatives;
- bring people and initiatives together to achieve more through collaboration;
- be able to provide a holistic picture of progress.

To ensure effective monitoring across the full work programme, I will establish an independent mechanism for assessing progress publicly, reporting regularly to myself.



**Professor Sir Ian Diamond**  
National Statistician, ONS





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## **Key Activities in responding to the Taskforce Report**

The information that follows shows our high-level work programme that we will continue to develop over the next few months, with key initial activities summarised.

**These are summarised under the eight Inclusive Data Principles** highlighted by the Taskforce as **key to achieving the step-change required in inclusivity of UK data and evidence**. Many initiatives are multi-faceted and have elements contributing to several different principles.

## Inclusive Data Principle: 1

Create an environment of trust and trustworthiness which allows and encourages everyone to count and be counted in UK data and evidence.

### Our approach

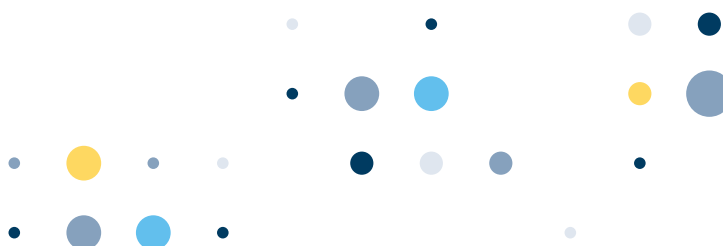
We will improve our interaction with different population groups and those currently under-represented in a range of ways.

#### Key initial activities

- Develop and implement a ‘Social Contract’ with research participants on what they can expect from their interaction with data collectors.
- Build on the 2021 Census community outreach to improve our communications with under-represented groups.
- In collaboration with others, ONS will develop clear and specific operational plans for taking forward the work programme.
- The **UK Statistics Authority’s Centre for Applied Data Ethics** will develop guidance on ethical considerations relating to inclusivity of data for research and statistics, to be available later this year.

#### Further details

- A range of initiatives are planned to widen engagement and build trust with prospective respondent groups, building on recent initiatives such as the Covid Infection Survey which feeds back to respondents on how their data have been used.
- Improvements to communications and engagement with a wider range of audiences are also planned. This includes outreach initiatives for dissemination of Census 2021 analysis and using methods developed to maximise census engagement on other surveys.
- ONS will work with others to establish a clear mechanism and timetable for monitoring progress towards the recommendations. This will form part of the operational plans published in January 2022.





## Inclusive Data Principle: 2

Take a whole system approach, working in partnership with others to improve the inclusiveness of UK data and evidence.

### Our approach

We will join up across government, the Devolved Administrations, academia, civil society and those with lived experience to develop guidance and good practice on adopting inclusivity throughout the research process; promote coherence to improve data comparability; and improve data quality.

#### Key initial activities

- An audit will be conducted of activities currently underway and planned across government, the devolved administrations and more widely, to develop a co-ordinated, systemic approach to inclusivity in data and action plans to achieve it.
- Development and dissemination of guidance, good practice, and Toolkits to promote greater inclusivity in UK data and evidence, benefiting both data users and data sharers.
- Updating the Inclusive Data Charter Action Plan for the Global Sustainable Development Goals to establish and monitor progress towards new commitments to the production of inclusive data.

#### Further details

- Improvements to data quality, for example through the data improvement programmes of the Cabinet Office's **Race Disparity Unit** and Disability Unit, and the addition of inclusivity as a key metric in GSS cross-government assessments of data quality.
- Promotion of greater consistency and coherence, for example through cross-government work to improve statistical coherence.
- Development of guidance on how to embed inclusiveness in the work of different government professions (e.g. Government Statistical Service, Government Social Research, Government Economics Service) and internationally (UN Titchfield City Group on Ageing); and in the work of specific organisations (e.g. ONS Data Principles).

## Inclusive Data Principle: 3

Ensure that all groups are robustly captured across key areas of life in UK data and review practices regularly.

### Our approach

We will build on existing work and develop new collaborative initiatives and action plans to improve inclusion of under-represented population groups in UK data in partnership with others across government and more widely.

#### Key initial activities

- We will work collaboratively to include groups currently under-represented in surveys and administrative data and implement strategies to improve representativeness.
- We will undertake feasibility work to identify new ways to enhance data inclusiveness.
- We will introduce new surveys or boost samples on existing surveys; collect new administrative data or conduct data linkage projects, and identify new and big data sources, to fill data gaps and enable better intersectional analysis.

#### Further details

- Specific initiatives to identify under-represented groups and develop strategies to address under-representation are planned by the Office for National Statistics, the Cabinet Office Race Disparity Unit and Disability Unit, Government Equalities Office, and Department for Health and Social Care/ National Institute for Health Research.
- Programmes are being developed focusing on specific groups, such as ethnic groups or disabled people; collaborative work with MHCLG, ONS and the devolved administrations to estimate the extent of homelessness incorporating a range of non-household population groups is planned; as well as initiatives such as Scotland's Equality Data Improvement Programme to improve data on protected equality characteristics (including intersectionality) collected and utilised across the public sector.
- Longitudinal data linkage projects are planned to provide insights into educational trajectories of vulnerable children, social mobility of children in care and life outcomes for different groups of refugees and migrants.
- Development of record-level data collections are also planned to provide greater insight and enable data linkage, such as an individual-level data collection on homelessness (Welsh Government).

## Inclusive Data Principle: 4

Improve the UK data infrastructure to enable robust and reliable disaggregation and intersectional analysis across the full range of relevant groups and populations, and at differing levels of geography.

### Our approach

We are developing a range of strategies to improve the UK data infrastructure and fill data gaps to provide more granular data through new or boosted surveys and data linkage to enable better intersectional analysis.

#### Key initial activities

- Publication of a GSS Sub-national Data Strategy is planned for Autumn 2021 focusing on improvement of geographical and other granularity of data, to be followed by an associated analytical plan.
- Cross-government assessments and promotion of data quality will include a specific focus on inclusiveness and representativeness as key parameters
- Existing surveys and other data sources will be improved to enable more granular analysis of specific groups and areas of the UK.
- Improvements to available data on equality issues will be delivered through linking major record level, longitudinal datasets held across government, as part of the Cabinet Office's Equality Programme.

#### Further details

- New surveys and improvements to existing surveys include work by the Cabinet Office Race Disparity Unit and Disability Unit to promote more granular data on ethnicity and disability across government.
- Approaches to filling gaps and improve data granularity include planned boost samples on the Community Life Survey (DCMS), the Participation Survey (DCMS), the Family Resources Survey (DWP) and the sample of children on the Health Survey for England (DHSC). Data linkage projects will also help to data gaps.



## Inclusive Data Principle: 5

Ensure appropriateness and clarity over the concepts being measured across all data collected.

### Our approach

We are developing plans to address known issues with existing standards and guidance in measuring concepts related to inclusion, as well as cross-government collaborative work to improve statistical coherence.

#### Key initial activities

- A GSS Harmonisation Plan will be published in Autumn 2021 with a focus on developing, reviewing, and updating standards and guidance for measuring protected and other characteristics
- New emphasis will be placed on implementation across government of Office for Statistics Regulation guidance relevant to inclusion, with encouragement for wider adoption

#### Further details

- The issue of ensuring clear and consistent approaches to concepts being measured across data sources will be addressed via ONS reviews of harmonised standards and guidance as well as in cross-government plans to improve statistical coherence.
- Welsh Government development of evidence in line with the social model of disability.



## Inclusive Data Principle: 6

Broaden the range of methods that are routinely used and create new approaches to understanding experiences across the population of the UK

### Our approach

We will undertake research using innovative methods best suited to the research question and prospective participants, to understand more about the lived experiences of several groups under-represented in UK data and evidence.

#### Key initial activities

- Qualitative research is planned to understand more about the lived experiences of groups under-represented in UK data and evidence.
- Data linkage for enhanced analysis is planned, including development of a linked Equality Data Asset by the Cabinet Office's Government Equality Office in collaboration with the ONS Integrated Data Service, bringing together data on how life outcomes and lifepaths vary by different dimensions of equality.
- Feasibility research is underway at ONS to identify ways of producing more timely admin data-based population estimates by ethnicity, using a range of data sources.

#### Further details

- Research will be undertaken to understand more about the lived experiences of groups including those not currently living in private households such as those living in care homes, hostels, shelters, sofa surfers, and those living in temporary accommodation such as B & Bs; disadvantaged and under-represented children; disabled people; and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups.
- Feasibility work on how new and big data sources can be used to fill data gaps will be undertaken, led by the ONS Data Science Campus in collaboration with international members of the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science.
- We will build on recent initiatives to widen the range of methods used to collect more inclusive data, such as the voluntary collection of biological samples for health monitoring undertaken for the Covid-19 Infection Survey in ONS.
- We will produce more analytical publications that help users understand and interpret inclusive data better, building on work such as the Race Disparity Unit's series of **Methods and Quality** reports.

## Inclusive Data Principle: 7

Harmonised standards for relevant groups and populations should be reviewed at least every five years and updated and expanded where necessary, in line with changing social norms and respondent and user needs.

### Our approach

We will consult stakeholders, data experts, users and people with lived experience for an initial and ongoing reviews of standards to ensure we are keeping pace with societal change.

### Key initial activities

- We will implement a regular review mechanism for harmonised standards as part of the new GSS Harmonisation Plan to review existing standards and guidance.

### Further details

- In consultation with data users, academia and those with lived experience, ONS will review harmonised standards and guidance for several different groups, including ethnicity and disability, and commit to reviewing these regularly as recommended by the Task Force.



## Inclusive Data Principle: 8

Ensure UK data and evidence are equally accessible to all, while protecting the identity and confidentiality of those sharing their data.

### Our approach

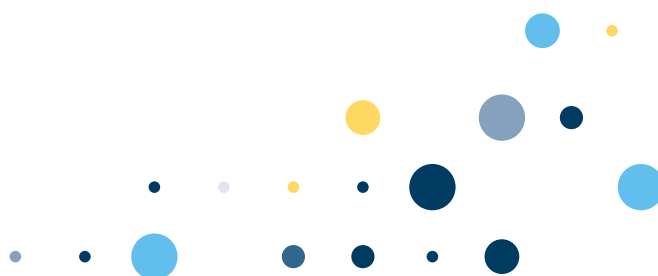
We will engage a broader range of people to understand how to make data and evidence more accessible, while ensuring data security, and take action to improve accessibility.

#### Key initial activities

- Improvements to existing tools are planned, as well as development of new citizen-driven tools, to improve accessibility of data.
- ONS will develop a Communications Accessibility Unit to ensure communications meet the needs of those in different protected characteristic groups.

### Further details

- New tools are being developed to help people find the data and evidence they need including an Equality Data Navigator Tool; the Sustainable Development Goals web platform which allows users to search for disaggregated data.
- Improvements to existing tools are also planned such as a project to redevelop the data and analysis available from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website.
- New tools for simplified, tailored data analysis are also planned including an online flexible table builder for use with 2021 Census data for England and Wales. The methods used in producing this tool will have wider applications for use with other datasets.



# Contact us

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