

## **UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**Minutes**  
**Thursday 29 July 2021**  
**Via Videoconference**

### **Present**

#### **UK Statistics Authority**

Sir David Norgrove (Chair)  
Sian Jones (Deputy Chair)  
Professor Sir John Aston  
Sam Beckett  
Helen Boaden  
Robert Bumpstead  
Professor Sir Ian Diamond  
Richard Dobbs  
Ed Humpherson  
Nora Nanayakkara  
Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter  
Professor Anne Trefethen

### **Also in attendance**

Jonathan Athow  
Penny Babb (for item 12)  
Nick Bateson  
Owen Brace  
Sally-Ann Jones (Secretariat)  
Will Laffan (for item 11)  
Debra Prestwood (for item 9)  
Alison Pritchard  
Emma Rourke (for item 10)  
Dawn Snape (for item 9)

### **Apologies**

Professor Jonathan Haskel

## **1. Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Professor Jonathan Haskel.

## **2. Declarations of interest**

- 2.1 Richard Dobbs had noted a conflict of interest regarding the COVID-19 Infection Survey agenda item in advance of the meeting.

## **3. Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting**

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 July were agreed.

## **4. Report from the Authority Chair**

- 4.1 Non-executive directors had met prior to the Board meeting. They had discussed the terms of reference for the forthcoming review by the Cabinet Office of the Authority.
- 4.2 The Chair reported on his recent activity since the Board last met highlighting the events that had taken place to celebrate the one year anniversary of the strategy, Statistics for the Public Good, which had included Sir Patrick Vallance (Government Chief Scientific Adviser).

## **5. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(21)42]**

- 5.1 Sir Ian provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting highlighting the following:
- i. Sir Ian had attended a number of meetings with senior officials across government regarding data sharing, which linked to the Integrated Data Service (IDS), scheduled for discussion later in the meeting;
  - ii. Sir Ian had chaired a meeting of UK Research and Innovation which had also focussed on data sharing;
  - iii. the work on Census processing was progressing well with the acquisition of administrative data a key focus for the team in the coming months;
  - iv. the progress towards the 2023 recommendation regarding the future of the census; and
  - v. the revised Concordat on Statistics between the Devolved Administrations, the Authority and the UK Government was due to be finalised, which committed to coherence of data across the four administrations.
- 5.2 The Board heard about the Royal Statistical Society 2021 Excellence Awards with ONS colleagues part of a cross organisation team to receive the Florence Nightingale Award for Excellence in Healthcare Data Analytics. The work by ONS on COVID-19 Deaths by Ethnicity won the Champion Award for Excellence in Official Statistics.
- 5.3 Board members welcomed the update. It was noted that the rollout of the Data Masterclass for Senior Leaders had continued at pace with the Data Science Campus developing the programme. The Board heard that the principles for hybrid working had been agreed which would provide flexibility for ways of working for staff as social restrictions eased.

## **6. Report from the Director General for Regulation [SA(21)43]**

- 6.1 Ed Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity noting that the recent Regulation Committee had discussed the breadth of work being undertaken by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) ranging from assessments, systemic reviews and casework to wider system wide pieces such as the National Statistics designation work, publishing times and lessons learned from the pandemic.
- 6.2 The Board heard that OSR had published a report on the State of the Statistical System, and a short statement on transparency and the role of the Head of Profession. It was noted that with the emphasis on evaluation to assess programme delivery OSR

would have a role in supporting the use of data in evaluation where the Code principles could apply.

## **7. Report from the Regulation Committee**

7.1 Professor Anne Trefethen reported on the Regulation Committee which had met on 15 July. Committee members had considered:

- i. a report on Lessons learned for health and social care statistics during the pandemic;
- ii. an update on the National Statistics Designation review;
- iii. the review of the 09.30 release time with a recommendation to consult on changing the Code of Practice (CoP) around release times;
- iv. the draft assessment report of statistics from the Annual Business Survey; and
- v. the ongoing review of the assessment of Census 2021; and
- vi. the annual review of casework.

7.2 The Committee had also discussed the annual review of effectiveness of the Committee.

## **8. Integrated Data Programme [SA(21)44]**

8.1 Alison Pritchard introduced a paper which provided an update on the key elements of the IDS. The Board heard about the collaboration with the Central Digital and Data Office to raise the profile of the programme; and the progress made towards the delivery of the Private Beta in September 2021. The infrastructure would provide the platform for data sharing for analysts across government and in the Devolved Administrations and externally accredited researchers.

8.2 The Board welcomed the update and highlighted the importance of transparency and engagement with prospective users of the service. It was noted that the development of a Data Deal would improve the efficiency of data sharing with multiple departments based on a set of principles governing its use.

8.3 The Board would remain engaged in the development of the IDS.

## **9. Presentation: Inclusive Data Taskforce [SA(21)45]**

9.1 Jonathan Athow and Dawn Snape gave a presentation on the work of the Inclusive Data Taskforce (IDTF). The National Statistician had requested the establishment of the independent taskforce to consider how to improve the inclusiveness of UK data and evidence. The report was scheduled for publication in September.

9.2 The Board noted their thanks to Dame Moira Gibb as Chair of the IDTF and its members for their work.

## **10. COVID-19 Infection Survey and Surveillance Studies [SA(21)46]**

10.1 Emma Rourke introduced a paper which provided an update on the COVID-19 infection Survey (CIS) programme. The survey had maintained performance, with swab testing targets being met.

10.2 The Board heard about the monitoring work on the effectiveness and efficacy of the vaccines, and preparations for the Spending Review 2021 (SR21) with the development of the outline strategic case.

## **11. Standards in the Government Statistical Service [SA(21)47]**

11.1 Will Laffan introduced a paper which covered the role and structure of the Government Statistical Service in relation to the National Statistician, with a focus on the support provided to uphold statistical standards and the CoP for Statistics.

11.2 It was noted that the Head of Profession (HoP) is central to the statistical activity of their department. One principle of the CoP: Independent decision making and

leadership is dedicated to the role of the HoP and notes that HoPs should have sole authority over a department's releases of official statistics.

- 11.3 Board members highlighted in discussion the importance of HoPs having the support and confidence to make independent judgements. It was noted that HoPs value their relationship with the National Statistician and the ability to call on the National Statistician's support when needed.

## **12. Review of the 09.30 Release Time [SA(21)48]**

- 12.1 Penny Babb introduced a paper which provided an update on the progress of the review of the release of official statistics at 9.30am with a recommendation to go out to consultation on changing the CoP for Statistics. During the pandemic the Director General for Regulation had granted exemptions for release times other than 9.30am.
- 12.2 The Board agreed that the OSR could consult on changing the CoP regarding the timing of the release of official statistics, subject to the Regulation Committee agreeing the draft Consultation document.

## **13. Spending Review [SA(21)49]**

- 13.1 Nick Bateson provided an update on planning for the forthcoming SR21, which at the time of the meeting had not been formally commissioned by HM Treasury (HMT). The Finance Team had been in discussion with HMT for a number of months in the approach to SR21, including engagement on the IDP Full Business Case.
- 13.2 The Board noted the update and supported the approach to SR21.

## **14. Any other business**

- 14.1 The Authority Board would meet next on 30 September 2021.

## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

### *Agenda*

**29 July 2021, 09.15-12.45 - Teams meeting**

**Chair:** Sir David Norgrove

**Apologies:** Jonathan Haskel

**Attendees:** Penny Babb (for item 10), Will Laffan (for item 9), Emma Rourke (for item 8), Dawn Snape (for item 7)

**NED Session: 09.15-09.45**

1 09.45-09.50 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings Declarations of interest	Meeting of 1 July 2021
2 09.50-10.00 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	Oral report Sir David Norgrove
3 10.00-10.20 20 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(21)42 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond
4 10.20-10.30 10 mins	Report from the Director-General for Regulation	SA(21)43 Ed Humpherson
5 10.30-10.40 10 mins	Report from Committee Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation Committee</li> </ul>	Oral report Prof. Anne Trefethen
6 10.40-10.55 15 mins	Integrated Data Programme	SA(21)44 Alison Pritchard
10.55-11.05 10 mins	Break	
7 11.05-11.30 25 mins	Inclusive Data Taskforce	SA(21)45 Jonathan Athow Dawn Snape
8 11.30-11.45 15 mins	COVID-19 Infection Survey and Surveillance Studies	SA(21)46 Emma Rourke
9 11.45-12.00 15 mins	Standards in the Government Statistical Service	SA(21)47 Will Laffan
10 12.00-12.15 15 mins	Review of the 09.30 Release Times	SA(21)48 Penny Babb Ed Humpherson
11 12.15-12.30 15 mins	Spending Review 2021	SA(21)49 Nick Bateson
12 12.30-12.45 15 mins	Any Other Business	

**Next meeting: 30 September 2021, Edinburgh**

*Chief Executive's Report, July 2021*

**Purpose**

1. This report provides the Authority Board with an overview of activity and issues for July.

**Summary**

2. July has been a busy month for the statistical system, marking one-year of **Statistics for the Public Good** with both internal and public events to discuss the challenges and opportunities ahead. While ONS data continues to inform decisions on the latest easing in the Government's Roadmap, I also presented our '**Data Masterclass for Senior Leaders**' to other Permanent Secretaries. Our non-compliance operation for the Census is coming to an end and on 13 July we launched a **consultation on Census 2021 outputs** and analysis. Our work during the pandemic was also recognised in the **RSS Excellence Awards**, collecting both the Florence Nightingale and Champion Awards.

**Review of recent activities**

3. At the start of July, I delivered a keynote talk at a joint Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, ONS and National Institute of Economic and Social Research event on '**Data After Covid**', speaking alongside Patrick Vallance on the topic of data linkage during the pandemic. On 6 July, I participated in a panel at the **UN high level political forum** on homelessness with Baroness Casey, focusing on where ONS and the GSS can help drive forward the availability of disaggregated data and innovative linkages.
4. On 8 July, I chaired a **Royal Society** and **British Academy** workshop on COVID-19 and its impact on minority ethnic groups. The session provoked a strong discussion and received positive feedback from all. I also was able to chair a **Nuffield Foundation** event on the lifelong consequences of children in care, offering the help of ONS in this area. Towards the end of July, I hosted a workshop with UK Research and Innovation's Dame Ottoline Leyser on health data linkage, presenting the same topic to government Chief Scientific Advisors. Each of these conversations will inform the way we collect and publish statistics in the future.
5. The day before the Government's announcement on Step 4, I was interviewed on **Sky News by Trevor Phillips** on 11 July. There was great interest in the latest data on infection rates, antibody levels and behaviours which led to further coverage in many national print titles during the week. On 19 July, I joined David Norgrove, Sam Beckett and Ed Humpherson to celebrate publicly the achievements of the last year at the one-year **anniversary event for the Authority strategy** among several key stakeholders.
6. I also had the pleasure of delivering the **Deane Stone Lecture** on 21 July, speaking to the title of *How a National Statistical Institute evolved through COVID-19*. This was well attended and looked at how ONS has delivered more timely, responsive, and granular data on economic measurement during the pandemic. I argued that a world class National Statistics Institute must operate in a way which is both confident and open to inclusive collaboration.
7. The **Integrated Data Programme (IDP)** reached a major milestone at the start of the month, with the successful delivery of the 'alpha' build of the IDP Analysis Platform. This phase will run until 30 September with an initial focus on the Coastal Towns Analytical Lighthouse Project, with other analysis projects being added subsequently. Support for the IDP across government remains strong but we continue to **await a conclusion from the Treasury regarding the Full Business Case** and funding for 2021/22.

8. Our '**Data Masterclass for Senior Leaders**' was presented to Permanent Secretaries at Wednesday Morning Colleagues this month. Since then, the rollout has continued at pace with the **Data Science Campus** (DSC) working with departments to scale up the programme, enrolling 11 Permanent Secretaries and over 1175 civil service leaders from across a variety of departments. This aims to strengthen data literacy across leaders.
9. The Prime Minister gave a speech on his **Levelling Up Vision** on 15 July and we are working closely with the newly established Levelling Up Unit in the Cabinet Office to provide an evidence base. On 23 July, we convened analysts from across Government to discuss to go through the development of systems thinking and the sub-national social, economic and health data and analysis required for targeting policy interventions.
10. Internally, we have been gathering insightful feedback from across the organisation on the topic of **Inclusion and Fair Treatment**. 67 colleagues joined 10 listening groups and over 3000 took part in polls on the intranet. We are now progressing with a set of recommendations to address the issues raised. To reflect the significant changes in our ways of working we are also refreshing the **People Plan**.
11. Our health surveillance work continues to provide data and insight informing the risks in a **post Roadmap** world. In the **COVID-19 Infection Survey (CIS)**, we are seeing a higher number of households not attending pre-agreed appointments or requesting visits to align with a return to school or workplaces. A new deferral process has been implemented that enables study workers to reschedule requests quickly to mitigate further attrition.
12. Finally, I would like to congratulate colleagues who have been recognised in the **RSS 2021 Excellence Awards** this month. ONS colleagues were part of a cross-organisation team to receive the **Florence Nightingale Award for Excellence in Healthcare Data Analytics**, for work done on reviewing COVID-19 Population Risk Assessment. Our own work on COVID-19 Deaths by Ethnicity won the **Campion Award for Excellence in Official Statistics** while we were also highly commended for work on international all-cause mortality.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, July 2021

*Update from the Director General for Regulation*

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides the UK Statistics Authority Board with an overview of OSR priorities and activities.

**Discussion**

2. Our main areas of focus in recent weeks have been:
  - i. **Regulation Committee:** The set of papers we took to Regulation Committee this month reflected the full breadth of work taking place across OSR – from our traditional assessments, systemic reviews and casework, to the forward-thinking, system-wide pieces like the National Statistics designation work, publishing times, and lessons learned from the pandemic. These generated excellent discussion, and we came away with lots to consider. A paper on publishing times has been included on this Board agenda for further review.
  - ii. **Publications:** This month we published our State of the Statistical System report, which reflected on how the system has coped and flourished during the pandemic, and what we'd like to continue (and change) going forward. The report has been well received, with good engagement online, and I've reused a number of the key messages from the report in reflecting on the first year of our Strategy. This week (22 July) we will be hosting an event for Directors of Analysis to discuss the messages and recommendations in the report. This month we have also published a short statement on transparency and the role of the Head of Profession. This was an opportunity to publicly reiterate our expectations and signpost to earlier work around statistical leadership.
  - iii. **Engagement:** Over the last month or so, I've had a number of useful and interesting meetings across government, academia and civil society. We've established some new relationships at Ministry of Justice, Cabinet Office and Number 10, driven by casework. I've also caught up with some of our longstanding contacts including Clare Lombardelli and James Benford at HM Treasury; Rebecca Riley, Director of Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence; and Elise Uberoi, House of Commons Library. I've also maintained good links with officials in the devolved administrations including Andrew Goodall, Chief Executive of NHS Wales; Gary Gillespie, Scottish Government Chief Economist; and Gill Imery, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland.
  - iv. **Evaluation:** As a team we are starting to think a lot more about our role in evaluation across government, a subject I discussed at the Analysis Function Board recently. There is an increasing emphasis on evaluation across government; it will be built into the Spending Review process, and evaluation hubs are being created in departments to help assess programme and project delivery. While we would not profess to be evaluation experts, I can certainly see OSR having a role in this space, using our voice to support the use of data in evaluation and demonstrating where the Code principles can apply. This has been the subject of some recent engagement with the Evaluation Task Force, Best Practice and Impact team, Jonathan Portes and Jenny Dibden (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government). Penny Babb, our head of policy and standards, will be taking a further paper to the Analysis Function Board this month on OSR's support to the Function, and an explainer piece on how the Code of Practice can help support evaluation and research.
3. On my mind at the moment is how we capitalise on the easing of demands on our time. As the intensity of interest in the pandemic eases, we have more space to deliberate, and are in a less reactive mode. I want to use this space to be more effective both



internally and externally: internally to reaffirm OSR's purpose and what we are aiming to achieve through our strategic plan; and externally to generate more attention and impact from the very strong suite of outputs we have delivered and are planning.

**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, Office for Statistics Regulation, 21 July 2021.**

#### **List of Annexes**

**Annex A      Regulatory dashboard**

**Regulatory Activities July 2021 - AB**

Health and Social Care	Economy	Population and Society	Agriculture, Energy and Environment	Children, Education and Skills
<p><b>Covid-19 - Lessons Learned</b>  <b>Review:</b> Working on findings and recommendations for project on lessons learned for health and social care data during the pandemic.  <b>Assessment: General Pharmaceutical Services</b> published by the NHS Business Services Authority: assessment report finalised and approved in July Regulation Committee.  <b>Systemic Reviews:</b>  <b>Mental Health (NI):</b> The report was approved at July Regulation Committee. The report will be published in early September to maximise traction of our key messages.  <b>Adult Social Care (GB):</b> Carrying out producer engagement to follow up actions from reports published in 2020.</p>	<p><b>Assessments: ONS Productivity Statistics</b> – Following publication of report, we are discussing with ONS the action plan to meet the requirements.  <b>Systemic Review: Post Brexit ONS Economic Classifications</b> – User consultation continues, working closely with UKSA on the development of ONS new arrangements for classification.  <b>Casework:</b> Levelling up agenda – the transparency of data used to support decisions on which local areas to target.</p>	<p><b>Assessments: Census A</b> summary of the main findings and likely requirements was presented to recent Regulation Committee meeting.  <b>Systemic Reviews: Loneliness</b> Draft report was approved at July Regulation Committee and report is now being finalised.  <b>Population projections</b> ONS due to report back with plans July 2021 (now expected August).  <b>Migration</b> Engaging with ONS on plans for future migration publications.  <b>Compliance check: Scottish Household Survey</b> Initial meeting taken place.</p>	<p><b>Compliance checks:</b> Letter for <b>ONS Natural Capital Accounts</b> being drafted. <b>Flood Defence Spending</b> statistics CC ongoing.  <b>Systemic reviews:</b>  <b>Climate Change statistics:</b> Initial meeting held with BEIS, DAERA, Welsh and Scottish governments. The review is planned to be structured around OSR climate change recommendations from work done in 2011, 2013 and 2014.  <b>Food Statistics:</b> Scoping being carried out along with desk research and initial engagement with Defra.</p>	<p><b>2020 Exam Results Review:</b> Continuing with dissemination activities including an RSS event and an event for analysts in ONS.  <b>Casework:</b> There have been delays to the Ofqual data share project following the 2020 grading. Also, user demand for data for other nations.  <b>Systemic Review: Children and Young People:</b> review exploring Children and Young People statistics during the pandemic using our 3Vs framework will be published late summer. Continued engagement with the Centre for Equalities and Inclusion to feed into the work of the Inclusive data taskforce.  <b>DFE/ICO audit:</b> Discussed progress with recommendations and lessons learnt for wider GSS with DfE Data Protection officer.</p>
Housing, Planning and Local Services	Crime and Security	Labour Market and Welfare	Travel, Transport and Tourism	Business, Trade and International Development
<p><b>Assessment:</b> Initiating assessment of MHCLG <b>statutory homelessness statistics</b>  <b>Compliance checks:</b> Published letters for Home Office <b>Fire incidents statistics</b>, Welsh Government <b>Fire Statistics</b>, and confirmed re-designation of MHCLG <b>LA budget statistics</b>. Follow-up meetings held with Scottish Government on its <b>Vacant and Derelict Land Survey statistics</b>. Arranged follow up for MoJ <b>Landlord and Mortgage Possessions statistics</b> and the devolved nations' <b>Household Projections</b> following the publication of the OSR Population Review.</p>	<p><b>Assessment:</b> National Statistics designation for Police Funding statistics confirmed  <b>Compliance check:</b> letter for CC of MOD regional expenditure statistics published.</p>	<p><b>Assessments:</b>  <b>Living Costs and Food Survey:</b> Assessment report published on 7 July. ONS also published its response on the same day.  <b>DWP's Benefit Statistics:</b> Letter to confirm National Statistics designation due to be published at the end of July.</p>	<p><b>Systemic Review:</b>  <b>Accessibility of Transport Networks:</b> Engaging with producers and users of relevant statistics.  <b>Compliance checks:</b> Carrying out compliance checks on DfT's new Transport: Disability and Accessibility Statistics publication and ORR's Passenger Assistance and Disabled Persons Railcards statistics.  <b>Travel and Tourism:</b> Engaging with ONS on plans for the future of the International Passenger Survey.</p>	<p><b>Assessments:</b>  <b>ONS Annual Business Survey</b> Assessment Report being drafted  <b>NISRA BESES:</b> User engagement now complete, now moving into discussing early judgements with producers  Continuing to follow up response to <b>Trade Statistics</b> and <b>Business Demography Statistics</b> with ONS.</p>

***Integrated Data Programme***

**Purpose**

1. To provide the UKSA Board with an update on key elements of the Integrated Data Service (IDS).

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Board are invited to note:
  - i. the collaboration with the Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO), to raise the profile of the Integrated Data Programme (IDP) with Ministers and across Government; and demonstrate how it is complementary to other programmes;
  - ii. the progress made in the delivery of the prototype and momentum towards the delivery of Private Beta in September 2021; and
  - iii. the ambition for data stewardship and the 'Data Deal' development.

**Background**

3. The programme continues to achieve milestones set out in the delivery timetable and work continues to drive forward the delivery of the IDS in collaboration with Other Government Departments (OGDs).

**Discussion**

*Developments and work ongoing with CDDO and Government Digital Service (GDS)*

4. The recently published declaration on Government reform and National Data Strategy (NDS) in depth talks about opportunities to exploit data, which resonates across departments and through forms such as the Government Digital Data and Technology Steering Group (GDSTG) and newly established Government Digital and Data Board. The ONS are playing a critical role in governments Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) transformation.
5. The ONS are working closely with CDDO and GDS, to demonstrate the compatibility between several strategic initiatives, including the IDS, One Log in (Single Sign On) and Government Data Exchange (GDx) programmes, and the collective benefit they bring as enablers of the NDS.
6. The programmes share many complex challenges and common activities, and ONS are working with both CDDO and GDS in these areas, including on data standards and quality, data sharing and governance, DDaT capability (through Data Masterclasses) and public trust in the governments use of data.
7. Alison Pritchard alongside Joanna Davinson and Tom Read have recently presented to Michael Gove and Lord Agnew as part of a reform deep dive. This was focused on how we are working together to achieve shared outcomes within the DDaT domain and demonstrate how different programmes are complementary.

*Programme Delivery and Forward Look*

8. The IDP met a significant milestone at the end of June with the release of the prototype for ONS users. Testing is continuing, alongside work to address any residual security risks and onboard a team of ONS analysts to being their Alpha validations of the prototype using the 'Coastal Towns' Analytical Lighthouse Project (ALP).
9. Further preparation continues for the next major milestone, of private beta release at the end of September, which detailed requirements being documented and final agreement of the private beta scope by the Programme Board, planned for August.

10. The creation of the cross-government IDP Design Authority and refreshed governance membership has provided significant scrutiny, challenge and support for the programme which is welcome ahead of the internal review in September.
11. This month foresees the final selection of the ALPs for private beta to allow the data to be identified, secured and onboarded..
12. The cloud compute procurement exercise continues, with a successful consultation exercise across OGDs at the inaugural IDP Design Authority Board meeting and through correspondence. We have incorporated their valuable feedback into Requirements Statements, ahead of issuing to potential suppliers on the 19 July, for response in early August.
13. Evaluation, scoring and preferred supplier selection activities will continue for the remainder of August and, subject to Commercials Approval Group (CAG) and IDP Design Authority approval of intent to award; the contract is planned to be agreed by all parties on the 13 September.
14. The above activity remains at risk pending HM Treasury (HMT) approval of the Full Business Case.

#### Data Stewardship and Data Deal Work

15. Existing data-sharing models across government take significant time to use, and are ordinarily restricted to specific data, users and uses, which has results in hundreds of bilateral data-sharing agreements, and significantly restricts the timely sharing, linkage and analysis of data, which is at the core of the vision of the IDS.
16. To resolve this, we are developing a 'Data Deal' for government, based on a model of share and access. Participating departments will agree a set of principles governing use and ownership of data, enabling use of their data in return for access to those controlled by others. Together these will streamline access, use and sharing of data between departments, benefiting all of government by enabling access to data from across the government estate, efficiently and at pace.

#### Drivers & Benefits

17. The Data Deal will:
  - i. improve the efficiency of sharing data with multiple departments, with single data sharing agreements;
  - ii. reduce costs of data extraction, with data extracted once and used multiple times;
  - iii. increase speed to accessing data, removing the need for approval from data owners on a case-by-case basis;
  - iv. utilise the full potential of data and technology through easy collaboration and providing seamless service for the public; and
  - v. facilitate delivery of the missions set out in the NDS, in particular mission three in *transforming government's use of data to drive efficiency and improve public services*.

#### Challenges

18. Access use and sharing of data across government has often been fraught with legal and cultural challenges which need addressing to make a success of the data deal and IDS. Specifically:
  - i. the data deal needs to be symbiotic; it will encounter issues if departments were to sign up and some were to offer a substantial amount of their data estate whilst others only offer for example a single data set; and
  - ii. more work is needed to assess the utility of existing legal instruments to enable a data deal.

## Principles

19. IDS will engage with departments to help shape the deal. Broadly, the deal looks to replicate existing processes employed by departments but for all of government. The broad principles for signing up to the deal include:

- i. data donated, deposited or enabled by a department is made available to other government departments enabling, donating or depositing their data, and vice-versa, by default, without case-by-case approval for use;
- ii. single data sharing agreements for data donated, enabled or deposited into the environment to cover all analytical use by government departments;
- iii. tiered, self-assessed and automated governance to enable non-contentious use of data to proceed by default;
- iv. a tiered model of data stewardship, simplifying accountability and responsibility for data donated, enabled and deposited to the platform; and
- v. services and policies covering cleaning, linkage, validation, and disclosure controlling of data.

**Alison Pritchard, Director General Data Capability, ONS, 19 July 2021**

## ***Inclusive Data Taskforce***

### **Purpose**

1. This paper provides an overview of the work of the Inclusive Data Taskforce.

### **Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
  - i. note the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Taskforce;
  - ii. note the plans for publication and a public launch event; and
  - iii. discuss and advise on development of workplans for progressing the recommendations of the Taskforce.

### **Background**

3. The National Statistician requested the establishment of an independent Taskforce to make recommendations on how to improve the inclusiveness of UK data and evidence. The Taskforce is Chaired by Dame Moira Gibb and comprises a diverse group of six senior academics and two civil society leaders who collectively have wide ranging equalities expertise..
4. The Taskforce met monthly from October 2020 to July 2021. Over this period, they commissioned papers on equalities and inclusion topics; considered papers brought to them by others (e.g., Equality and Human Rights Commission; Cabinet Office; civil society leaders, etc); and commissioned an extensive stakeholder engagement programme to identify diverse stakeholder needs for inclusive data. The latter yielded a rich set of comments which has helped to shape the set of far reaching recommendations.
5. They will submit their report and recommendations to the National Statistician on 30 July.

### **Discussion**

6. The Taskforce were asked to consider how to create a step change in the inclusivity of UK data and evidence, addressing the 'inclusive' principle of the strategic vision set out in *Statistics for the Public Good*. Given this ambitious agenda, they focused on how to improve inclusiveness throughout the whole research process from initial engagement with people asked to participate in research or to allow their data to be shared through to dissemination and feedback. They considered inclusiveness in how we produce, use and make data and evidence accessible, as well as gaps in current data where we have fallen short in ensuring 'everyone counts and is counted'. They highlighted a need for systemic change and much greater collaboration among those producing and using data in the UK as well as with the subjects of the research themselves
7. The Taskforce will submit their report and recommendations to the National Statistician on 30 July. These will be published on 28 September along with supporting evidence from the stakeholder engagement activities, and a workplan for taking forward the recommendations. For the workplans, we will consider where immediate progress is possible and where longer term changes are required. An online public event is planned the same day at which the National Statistician will formally accept the recommendations and set out initial plans for implementation. The National Statistician, Chair and members of the Taskforce will also respond to questions from the audience.
8. Recommendations intended to create a step-change will be expansive, involving wide-ranging changes and co-ordinated activity across the whole of the ONS, the Government Statistical Service and the statistics and research community to achieve them. Workplans will be developed over the summer in collaboration with a wide range of

stakeholders, including those who can work with us on specific projects as well as organisations that may be able to provide funding for workstreams. We anticipate that colleagues across government will also want to consider opportunities offered by the upcoming Spending Review. We will also need to provide thought leadership, promoting new ways of working to maximise cost effectiveness in implementing the recommendations and ensuring that we are maximising the opportunity to give additional impetus to and maximise benefits from initiatives already in train.

9. A proposed approach to the development of workplans is ongoing. This includes the stakeholders both across ONS, GSS and beyond that we aim to contact and timing. We would welcome views and suggestions from the Board.

### **Conclusion**

10. This paper provides an overview of the work of the Inclusive Data Taskforce, how it contributes to the 'inclusive principle' set out in *Statistics for the Public Good*, and plans for dissemination of the report and recommendations. It also highlights the crucial next steps of forming partnerships, both practical and financial, for taking forward the recommendations adopting a OneONS approach across the Office and a collaborative approach beyond. The Board's views are particularly sought in relation to strategic development of these next steps.

**Dawn Snape, Statistical Coherence and Inclusion Division, 20 July 2021**

***COVID-19 Infection Survey and associated surveillance studies***

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update on the COVID-19 Infection Survey (CIS) programme.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to note:
  - i. the continued successful delivery and high impact of the CIS;
  - ii. recent successful milestones, the ongoing management of participant attrition; further analysis to support urgent policy decisions; ongoing strategic development; and
  - iii. that the CIS programme remains at Amber, with considerable progress made in addressing key risks on the programme.

**Discussion**

Survey Performance

3. The survey continues to maintain good overall performance with 4.9 million swab tests and 683,000 blood tests undertaken in 2.5 million households.
4. Attrition rates have remained steady due to participants reaching the 12 months enrolment in the survey. A new deferral process has been implemented across the field that enables study workers to reschedule these requests quickly which is helping to mitigate further attrition. As a result of implementing the deferral process, DNA rates have decreased from 21 per cent to 14.7 per cent.
5. The Vaccine Effectiveness Monitoring work continues to scale up to 150,000 tests per month, we expect to achieve the target by end of July. The void rate of samples has also been maintained at an average of 4.3 per cent from 6.46 per cent in June as participants become more familiar with the process.
6. Formal contracts are now in place for both our print, pack and dispatch and our incentive suppliers. This concludes the suite of CIS procurements this year.

Impact

7. In addition to providing insight into the government's final step four assessment in July, we are making good progress across a broad range of priority CIS analysis. Notably:
  - i. understanding vaccine effectiveness: we are currently developing analysis with academics at Oxford University that answers the question: 'What reduction in risk of swab positivity is associated with vaccination, overall, of different types, and over time?' The findings from this complex analysis will use data from the Covid Infection Survey but data on administrative data on vaccinations and Test and Trace. It should be finalised in the next few weeks and are likely to be disseminated externally in August;
  - ii. impact of vaccination on household transmission: we are developing analysis with academics at the University of Manchester that answers the question: 'what is the impact of vaccination on household transmission for both symptomatic and asymptomatic infected people?' A delivery timeline is currently in development; and
  - iii. we are also planning to publish and communicate to SAGE novel findings associated with the Delta variant when examining the vaccinated and unvaccinated populations, in addition to new analysis on symptoms and antibody waning.



8. We continue to publish academic papers and have submitted articles on deaths involving Covid-19 by disability status, risk factors for 'long COVID', antibody response and vaccine effectiveness.
9. Additionally, we have published a series of Technical Articles. This is a new type of output for ONS which is aimed at the more academic user. To date we have published articles on analysis of waves and lags of Coronavirus in England; analysis of reinfections of Coronavirus and analysis of positivity after vaccination. Further published statistical analysis includes our latest estimates of the prevalence of self-reported 'long COVID' and associated activity limitation.
10. We can increase the impact and insight from analysis of CIS by linking it to other health data sources. We have successfully linked to the following sources, and continue to update these linked data assets regularly:
  - i. NHS Test and Trace data (England only) - updated monthly, the additional test results support the CIS analysis on infection post vaccination. We are seeking additional information provided by the laboratories on the specimen test results, which will allow more insightful analysis from the Test and Trace data (e.g. viral load);
  - ii. National Immunisation Management Service (NIMS), which is the system of record for the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme in England. The linked data is updated fortnightly for use in the CIS antibody and vaccination data publication, providing additional information on first and second vaccination dose to supplement data collected on the CIS; and
  - iii. Hospital and GP data, updated CIS data provided monthly, to inform wider health analysis in ONS, including research on long COVID.

#### Schools infection study and Daily Contact Study

11. Schools Infection Study
  - i. the final round of data collection, for the current academic year, has completed. Over the course of the study, 130,000 tests have been taken in school from staff and pupils. Initial results from the final round will be published on 11 August: and
  - ii. results from round 5 were published on 1 July. Infection was higher among pupils in the sampled primary school than those in secondary schools. The proportion of staff who had received the COVID vaccination continued to rise, with 86.5 per cent having had at least one dose and 43.09 per cent having had both doses. Parents were asked whether they would want their child to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, 43 per cent of primary school parents and 53 per cent of secondary school parents responded that they "yes, definitely" would want their child to receive the vaccine.
12. The DCT clinical trial ended on 25 June and the Trial Steering Committee are due to release initial headline findings, week beginning 19 July.

#### Opinions Survey on Behaviours

13. We are extending our weekly delivery on behaviors and social impacts through to the third week of August with the extension of step 4 and the current upturn in infection rates. Our plan is then to deliver each fortnight, subject to Cabinet Office requirements.
14. Latest data shows some stability in proportions meeting up, mixing and social distancing – all of which markedly different to the situation several months ago as we went through the first steps in the roadmap. We also have asked what actions people will continue to take in step four and find a majority will continue to wear face masks when shopping or on public transport. Over half will avoid crowded places, but under a half plan on social distancing, minimizing meeting with people and regularly using lateral flow tests.

### Winter flu season

15. We are working closely with our colleagues in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to explore the feasibility of introducing multiplexing for our swab tests within CIS. This will enable us to test for multiple pathogens, including flu, from the single swab test currently collected on the CIS,
16. We have worked through potential key questions to answer on flu, what data would need to be collected and integrated, and the impact on the pipeline and analysis. We have made an initial assessment of the additional resourcing requirements to deliver this. Next steps, once the feasibility of multiple swab test becomes clearer, will be to involve stakeholders and continue to revise our assessment of resource.

### Population Health Surveillance

17. A strategic outline business case for population health surveillance will be drafted over the summer setting out our ambition, intended benefits and costs in advance of the Spending Review.
18. We continue to work closely with partners across the system in the development of this business case, ensuring alignment and close fit to policy and analytical needs. In particular, the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) on their evolving surveillance strategy and with Cabinet Office in planning for the transition from a Covid –19 pandemic to endemic state. Topics such as early warning signs for future Covid- 19 variants and other pathogens of concern are being discussed. On 29 June, the CIS Advisory Board will receive a presentation from JBC on their draft surveillance strategy.
19. Positive conversations have also been held with the new Office for Health Promotion, which will sit under the Chief Medical Officer and have a particular interest in the drivers of health inequalities and the longer-term impact of Covid-19 on the population.

### Next Steps

20. Our strategic work is now considering costings and preparedness for the Spending Review. We will commence a further round of structured senior engagement to complement the development of the strategic outline case to ensure we are moving forward in alignment.
21. We are continuing exploratory work on antibody testing for under 16-year olds within the CIS cohort, in collaboration with DHSC. This is alongside the opportunity for testing other respiratory pathogens as the next stage of CIS evolution.

**Emma Rourke, Director, Health Analysis and Pandemic Insight, 20 July 2021**

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(21)47

## ***Standards in the Government Statistical Service***

### **Purpose**

1. As requested by the Board, this paper covers the role and structure of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) in relation to the National Statistician, focusing on the support provided to uphold statistical standards and the Code of Practice for Statistics (the Code).

### **Recommendations**

2. Members of the Board are invited to consider and comment on the support provided to members of the GSS and the scope for it to be strengthened.

### **Background**

3. The UK has an uncentralised statistical system: a wide range of official statistics are produced by statisticians (and other analysts) embedded within departments. This is widely held up as a strength of the system, as it is positions statisticians to work more closely with users and decision-makers such as Ministers and relevant officials, as well as more directly with administrative systems from which data are gathered.
4. Outside of ONS, producers of statistics are integrated in their department's reporting lines and have a 'dotted line' professional accountability to the National Statistician via their departmental Head of Profession for Statistics (HoP). Statistical work is subject to the resource-allocation of the department, while considering the needs and priorities of users and the requirements of the Code.
5. This is in contrast to ONS, where the National Statistician as chief executive is directly responsible for the production of statistics and all other activities of the department.
6. The past year has provided opportunities for the statistical system to demonstrate its value and deliver more responsively, but this evolving context has also tested our traditional structures and will continue to do so into the future as we pursue our strategy of *Statistics for the public good*:
  - i. we have moved quicker to establish new sources of data and publish the evidence and analysis decision-makers needed, using the scale and expertise in ONS to complement departmental capability;
  - ii. we have worked more closely with other scientific and analytical professions, and expect to keep doing so as part of a wider Analysis Function; and
  - iii. we have worked across departmental and administration boundaries to link data and provide more coherent analysis, and we expect the Integrated Data Programme to further utilise shared platforms and tools to tackle cross-cutting issues.

### **Discussion**

7. Applying the principles and practices of the Code and maintaining standards for official statistics is an integral part of the role and culture of the whole GSS, led visibly and proactively by the National Statistician and the network of HoPs.
8. It is the Authority's statutory responsibility and strategic objective to support professional standards across the statistical system and we want to ensure statisticians at all levels have the ability and influence to apply the Code in their roles, and ensure they feel confident and supported in doing so.
9. This paper draws on preliminary discussions at the National Statistics Executive Group and with the network of HoPs, that explored the support provided at present and how this might be developed and strengthened most effectively in response to the changes of the

past year. It has also paid close attention to two reports from the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR): on statistical leadership<sup>1</sup>, in February this year, and on the state of the UK's statistical system<sup>2</sup>, just this month.

### The Head of Profession

10. The HoP is central to the statistical activity of their department, both in their own right and as the intermediary for the National Statistician. One principle of the Code, *Independent decision making and leadership*, is dedicated to the role of the HoP and includes the requirement that HoPs should have sole authority over a department's releases of official statistics.
11. HoP roles vary significantly between departments, and their responsibilities are broader than statistical outputs. More than ever, HoPs are expected to lead on publishing outputs, data collection, internal analysis and the use of management information in departments. In some departments the HoP leads a dedicated statistical team, while others provide professional leadership for statisticians distributed across the department.
12. A common set of roles and responsibilities of the HoP were last updated in 2018. These are now due for review and HoPs suggested could be updated to reflect the wider role played by HoPs in departments and as part of the Analysis Function. The current version is relatively narrow, covering three elements:
  - i. Compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics;
  - ii. Leading the Government Statistical Service; and
  - iii. Building statistical capability and capacity.
13. Feeding into this paper, HoPs emphasised the value of their relationships with the National Statistician, and the ability – used sparingly – to call on the National Statistician's support when needed. While the HoP assumes responsibility for upholding standards in the day-to-day statistical practices of the department, they are stronger in this role where the Authority can raise their profile, and the importance of their role, with Ministers and Permanent Secretaries.
14. Given the critical role played by HoPs in the statistical system and the link they provide between the National Statistician and statistical work in each department, their appointment is subject to the approval of the National Statistician, and they are accountable to the National Statistician for fulfilling their roles and responsibilities within their department.
15. Although each HoP is accountable to the National Statistician and a number of teams within ONS provide support to HoPs directly, HoPs also operate as a network for mutual support. In response to the pandemic, this group has starting meeting on a more frequent, fortnightly basis. The HoPs network has been led until recently by the Deputy National Statistician for Population and Public Policy; as we redefine that role, we will want to ensure HoPs continue to be visibly supported at the most senior level.

### The Analysis Function

16. Discussions highlighted the importance of seeing the structure of the GSS in the context of the Analysis Function; within departments and across the civil service, analytical capability and outputs are increasingly organised and delivered through this lens, rather than traditional professional boundaries.
17. A programme of work is underway to encourage statisticians and other analysts to identify as 'analysts first', while maintaining the strengths of existing professional

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<sup>1</sup> [Statistical Leadership: Making Analytical Insight Count](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The State of the UK's Statistical System 2020/21](#)

networks. Similarly, we need to recognise that while the Code is central to statistical work, its principles have relevance across other disciplines and many challenges for the statistical system are shared with analysts, scientists and other professions.

18. The shift to delivering analysis as a function takes a little of the emphasis away from the role of the HoP, although their responsibilities remain. However, it also provides an additional source of leadership and support in the Departmental Director for Analysis (DDAN), who is also accountable to the National Statistician as head of the Analysis Function. As this shift to functional working becomes the norm, HoPs were keen to develop a model of best practice for the DDAN and HoP to work together.

#### Standards in Recruitment and Learning

19. The recruitment and development of statisticians across the GSS is overseen by the GSS People Committee, from induction courses on first joining through a clear development pathway all the way to the standards expected of a HoP.
20. The work of the People Committee is an important avenue to address OSR's findings. The Committee's priorities include strands of work on standards and competencies for statisticians at all levels, and a curriculum and qualifications to support progress through them. This has included learning pathways for statisticians that cover non-analytical and leadership skills alongside the specific technical skills expected from the profession.
21. As the Analysis Function further matures, the intention is for the professions to work together to provide more holistic support and broaden career horizons for statisticians and the wider community of 17,000 government analysts. Within this, statistical elements of our learning offer can instil the importance of standards and practices in upholding trust, quality and value at all levels, as part of our professional culture, as well as more widely across the Analysis Function.

#### Reporting Processes

22. Previous models for supporting HoPs have trialled more rigid reporting requirements, with HoPs submitting annual reports to the National Statistician. However these reports proved to be a slow and burdensome cycle that did little to address the most significant issues as they arose, and failed to empower the HoP within the department.
23. In preparing this paper, we sought views on the potential benefits of more light touch regular reporting. HoPs were open to the idea of a model based on transparency that could strengthen their position, such as the publication of an annual work programme. It would be important to consider if this was proportionate for all departments and how it could serve to complement or rationalise other functional or professional reporting.

#### **Conclusion**

24. Statistical activity in departments is led by the HoP, who is responsible for upholding statistical standards, supported by the National Statistician. Discussions at NSEG and with HoPs have highlighted the importance of that role, and the value of the support provided from the National Statistician and the Authority more broadly.
25. As we work more responsively and across departmental boundaries and disciplines, in line with our strategy, we need to make sure these mechanisms continue to empower and support Heads of Profession in their responsibilities. Furthermore, we need to ensure analysts at all levels are equipped to apply the Code in their work.

**Will Laffan, Central Policy Secretariat, 20 July 2021**

***Update on the Review of the 9:30am Release Times***

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update to the Authority Board on the progress of the review on the release of official statistics at 9:30am and invites the members to approve a consultation on changing the Code of Practice for Statistics.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Board are invited to:
  - i. give their views on release times, and
  - ii. agree a consultation be held on changing the Code practices around release times.

**Background**

3. During the pandemic, the Director General for Regulation granted exemptions for release at times other than 9.30am, to market sensitive statistics at 7:00am, as well as to some COVID-19 related statistics as soon as they were prepared and quality assured, later in the day at agreed times. OSR initiated this review of the 9.30am release practice (T3.6) to consider whether greater flexibility in release arrangements should be formalised within the Code of Practice for Statistics.
4. We invited views about the suitability of the standard release time and the benefits and limitations of releasing at the alternative times from staff and stakeholders affected during the pandemic. We received feedback from 26 producer bodies including comments from Heads of Profession (HoP), communications staff and analysts. We also received a range of comments from stakeholders in the media and the user community.

**Discussion**

*Our aim: support flexibility and producer judgement while maintaining orderly release*

5. The current practice in the Code sets a single time of 9:30am. It is clear from the experience over the pandemic that there are situations in which producers would sensibly want to depart from this time, and the Code should recognise the value of this flexibility.
6. At the same time, many producers welcome the maintenance of a standard time of 9:30am because, in their judgement, it is the best way to maintain orderly release in their context.
7. Our aims are therefore to:
  - i. support flexibility;
  - ii. support producer judgement; and
  - iii. maintain orderly release.

*Our proposal: consult on a change to the Code*

8. The current practice (T3.6) states: "Statistics should be released to all users at 9:30am on a weekday."
9. We propose consulting on two options for changing the Code practice:
  - i. "Statistics should be available to all users at the same time. The time of release should be announced in advance and adhered to consistently. The standard release time is 9:30am on a weekday. There may be circumstances when it better serves the public good for statistics to be released at an alternative, pre-announced time.

Exceptions will therefore be granted by the Director General for Regulation where it is agreed to be in the public interest to publish at another time.”

- ii. “Statistics should be released in a way that is transparent, independent, and orderly, in a manner that best serves the public good and is agreed by the Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for Statistics. A consistent release time should be used by an organisation for all its statistics. Exceptions may be granted by the Director General for Regulation where it is in the public interest to publish at another time. The needs of users, the wider benefit to society and the wellbeing of staff should be factored in when deciding the time of release.”
10. We did consider specifying two standard times: 9:30am or 7:00am, at the producer’s discretion. But we felt that choosing a 7:00am time would be somewhat arbitrary, and there may be circumstances when a producer wants to publish at some other time. So our proposal is to embed the principle of flexibility.
  11. We also propose making a small modification to practice T3.1, to require that the release time, as well as the date, be pre-announced. In addition we would like to remove the word ‘official’ after ‘regular and ad hoc’. The practice would become: *“The release approach of both regular and ad hoc statistics should be pre-announced through a 12-month release calendar, giving the specific release date and time at least four weeks in advance where practicable.”* Practice T3.2 requires any changes to dates and times to be announced promptly, explaining the reasons for the change.
  12. The public good criteria that we propose using to decide on the options are:
    - i. protects statistical independence by guarding against vested interests and ensuring HoP has decision making authority;
    - ii. ensures an orderly release with consistent timing and is in line with legislation;
    - iii. preserves public confidence through transparency with clarity ahead of and at the time of release;
    - iv. enhances wider public accessibility of statistics, delivered through media coverage;
    - v. enhances expert use by making statistics available at an appropriate time for their needs (for example, market practitioners for economic statistics); and
    - vi. enables appropriate media coverage by supporting wide, accurate reporting of the statistics.
  13. For existing exemptions granted during the pandemic, including those to ONS, the exemptions will stand and be regarded as exceptions; that is, these producers will not need to submit a further request for an exceptional release time.

## **Conclusion**

14. Strong views have been expressed by respondents for and against changing the release time and the use of a standard approach. It is our view that the public interest is best met by first considering the wider nature of use and the public good served by the statistics when deciding the time and manner of release. We recommend that OSR now consult publicly on these changes for Code practices T3.1 and T3.6.

**Penny Babb, Head of Policy and Standards, Office for Statistics Regulation, 20 July 2021**

***Spending Review 2021 Update and Plan***

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update to the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) on the emerging Spending Review 2021 (SR21) bid, the processes that we intend to follow in preparation for the submission and indicative timelines for the exercise.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Board are invited to review and comment on the approach and emerging bid as set out in this paper and the 'Building Towards SR21 finance strategy.

**Background**

3. In advance of the impending commission for the SR21, which we expect to receive before the end of July, this paper sets out some key initial information as to the thinking around our emerging bid, the processes that we intend to follow to manage the SR21 exercise and the indicative timelines.
4. The paper builds on initial communications with the Director Generals (DGs) and National Statistician and via previous Portfolio and Investment Committee (PIC) discussions as to the likely direction that we will take for SR21 in the context of the wider economic environment which is likely to lead to cross-government financial constraint.
5. We aim to put forward a much more focussed bid for SR21 than has been the case in prior years. This will be an evolution in our approach in comparison with the SR19 and SR20 exercises, which, whilst cohesive in argument and aligned from a strategy perspective, included an extensive list of funding requests.

**Discussion**

**HM Treasury Engagement to Date**

6. We have been in discussions with HM Treasury (HMT) for several months in the build up to SR21 including through our engagement as part of the Integrated Data Service (IDS (previously IDP)) Full Business Case (FBC).. We have provided a pre-SR submission on our potential efficiency delivery and have recently submitted our view on overall Cyber Security costs within the organisation again in preparation for the full exercise. We meet HMT frequently over the summer with SR21 as a standing agenda item.
7. As part of the next stage in the process Government Departments will be required to attend Minister led Star Chamber challenge sessions. As a smaller government body HMT may lead an 'officials led' Star Chamber challenge session for us where we will discuss our emerging plans, setting out the short/mid and long-term benefits and explore our efficiency targets. We anticipate our Star Chamber to take place in late July/early August.
8. A covering narrative will be drafted that sets out the key aspects of our bid in the context of government positioning and priorities and our strategy encapsulating a 'One ONS' approach. This will position our combined bid as a cohesive financing strategy for the next three years – providing funding for the remainder of the period covered by Statistics for the Public Good.

**Timeline**

9. We anticipate the formal commission of SR21 before the end of July and are working on the assumption that the exercise will run through the rest of the summer with submission in early September (following the trend of recent exercises).



**Conclusion**

10. This exercise will require a significant amount of work from a number of areas from across the organisation. SR21 does however present us with a fantastic opportunity to leverage the great work we have carried out in the recent past to secure a good settlement that will allow us to deliver on our strategic aims in the future.

**Nick Bateson, Director of Finance, Planning and Performance, 20 July 2021**