

Inclusive data taskforce

Implementation Plan



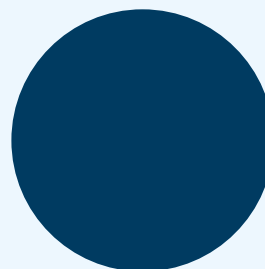
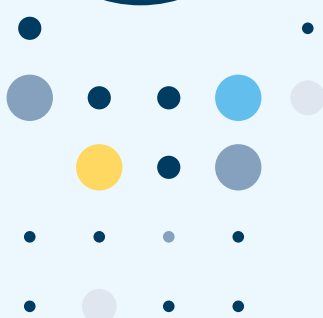
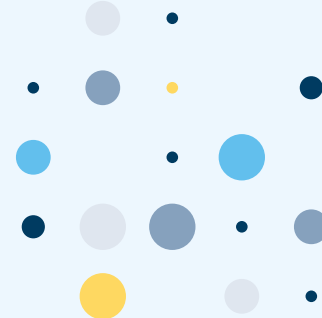
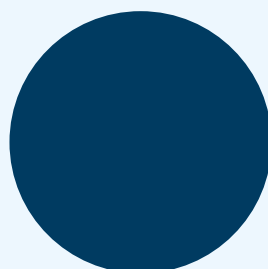
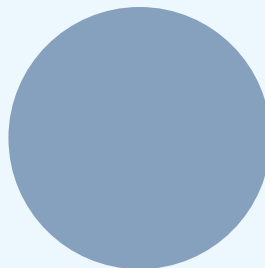
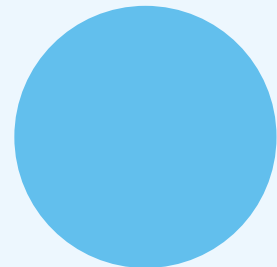
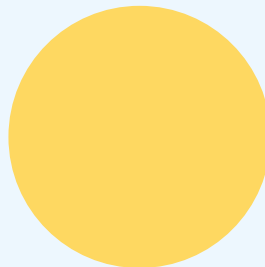
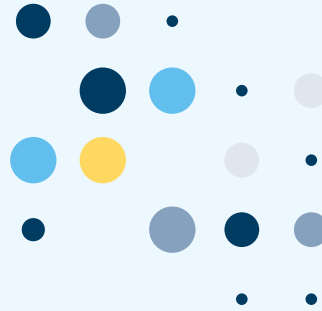
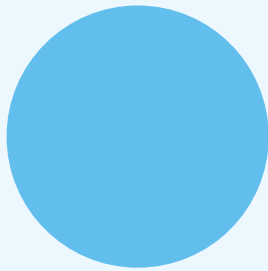


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Introduction

The National Statistician has committed to improve data inclusivity across the UK statistical system by taking a system wide approach in identifying and collaborating on initiatives so that everyone counts and is counted in UK data and evidence. This includes activities to build trust with those participating in data supply, methodological work to improve inclusion and conceptual measurement of currently under-represented population groups, and improvements in the accessibility of data and analysis.

At the end of September 2021, [the report and recommendations](#) of the [Inclusive Data Taskforce \(IDTF\)](#) were published. The report made 46 recommendations categorised under 8 Inclusive Data Principles. Alongside this, the National Statistician published [his response](#), including a high-level work programme of initial activities being undertaken across UK government and the Devolved Administrations to respond to the recommendations.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has led the production of the Inclusive Data Taskforce Implementation Plan below, which summarises known current and planned initiatives across the UK statistical system. This Plan presents a first step in joining up the work across analysts in the governments across the UK, and with initiatives happening outside government. It represents an ongoing programme of work to make the step-change needed in UK data infrastructure. It is important to acknowledge that organisations may be in different places on the journey to greater inclusivity. Some initiatives represent important first steps, though may not yet fully address the IDTF recommendations, while others may be seen as beacons of promising practice.

To develop this Implementation Plan, ONS reached out in a number of ways to collate its content. This included UK government departments and the Devolved Administrations and more widely across the system of data producers and users in the UK, inviting information from civil society organisations, academic institutions and research funders as to how they will respond to the IDTF recommendations. For brevity, we have included initiatives under the Inclusive Data Principle to which we think it best relates, although it could be of relevance to several different principles.

ONS, the Cabinet Office's Equality Hub and the Devolved Administrations of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will play a collaborative convening role in bringing people together across sectors and disciplines, to build collaborations



and join up plans, to produce systemic change towards greater inclusivity of UK data and evidence. Going forward, we will endeavour to take a 4 nations approach 'as default' in everything we do in relation to inclusivity.

As we collectively make progress the Plan will evolve, and ONS will seek further information and publish updated versions annually. As well as providing the basis for monitoring progress, we hope that publishing the information we have gathered from so many actors across government, civil society and academia will make it easier for those working on similar activities to join-up and add value to each other's work.

An independent committee on inclusive data is currently being established to advise the National Statistician on ongoing improvement in data inclusivity, its related quality and coverage, and how well progress is being made against the IDTF recommendations. In collaboration with key stakeholders and data producers across the UK statistical system, ONS will develop and set up, in Spring 2022, a governance mechanism to deliver and publicly report on the IDTF Implementation Plan.

How to comment: Please send any comments or feedback on the Plan, including for future iterations, to equalities@ons.gov.uk.



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. This will include engaging in new ways with relevant populations to understand their perspectives better.

The UK Statistics Authority will play a central role in identifying and promoting initiatives to improve interaction and build trust with survey and research participants, facilitating sharing of guidance and good practice across the UK statistical system.

Current and planned work

To enhance trust and trustworthiness in the provision and use of data:

- ONS is developing a 'Social Contract' with research participants on the information they choose to share. This will provide clear information on why data are being collected, confidentiality and security arrangements and details on how their information will be used and shared. We will work with stakeholders to develop this product and test with relevant groups and populations in advance of an expected launch in summer 2022.

- Since the launch of the recommendations, the UK Statistics Authority's Centre for Applied Data Ethics has published [guidance for analysts on ethical considerations](#) in ensuring inclusivity of data for research and statistics. This emphasises the use of self-reporting of personal characteristics and includes specific guidance in relation to collecting data from children and young people.
- The new ONS Survey Strategy outlines a future vision for surveys and has the overall intent of maximising the ability for data users to deliver statistics for the public good following the Statistics Authority Code of Practice. The strategy and supporting roadmap will ensure that the recommendations of the IDTF are embedded in all ONS surveys.

To widen engagement and build trust with prospective respondent groups:

- As part of the [User Engagement Strategy for Statistics](#), ONS will be establishing an Engagement Hub to ensure that we reach the widest possible set of users to reflect the entire population, making recommendations on how we collect, analyse and present analysis and statistics in ONS and across government. The hub is being established in 2022.
- Building on the 2021 Census community outreach in England and Wales, ONS will continue to engage through 2022 and 2023 with under-represented groups, to ensure their needs are reflected both in the analysis and outputs of the Census and in the research and plans for the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of the census and population statistics, as well as a much broader set of statistics and analysis.
- As per the 2021 Census community engagement model, ONS will evaluate the feasibility of engaging with under-represented community groups in the context of voluntary household surveys in 2022.
- Department for Education will continue to build trust with school and college teachers and leaders via the School and College Panel, including sharing results to enable dialogue on key topics whilst allowing those on the ground to have their say with complete anonymity.
- Kings College London will continue to use Citizen Science to collect data with communities, working with them to build relationships, and engaging participants in collecting data, establishing a different, more inclusive and engaging form of data collection.

To increase diversity amongst staff, facilitating trust among potential participants:

- The Government Analysis Function will work in partnership with the analytical professions across government to deliver its Diversity and Inclusion strategy, aiming to create a truly diverse and inclusive analysis community that is reflective of the UK society we serve. Priorities for 2022 include launching a mutual mentoring programme, further dissemination of our function's first inclusion tool kit and continued roll out of development events for underrepresented groups.

- In line with both the ONS People Strategy and its new Survey Strategy, ONS will aim to ensure that its workforce is fully representative of the people we serve. ONS Surveys Directorate is committed to exploring in 2022 the diversity and representativeness of its workforce, including social survey interviewer recruitment, to develop recommendations to address any potential barriers, so that it can create a more diverse workforce involved in collecting data from the public.
- ONS will endeavour to include commitment to inclusivity and diversity of staff deployed in collection of data in contracted surveys when contract renewals arise.
- As part of the recommendations of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review, the Home Office has committed to updating its diversity and inclusion strategy and will publish Workforce Diversity Statistics on an annual basis from the end of March 2022.
- The Office for Students (OfS) has put in place Equality, Diversity and Inclusion targets to create greater diversity within the workforce and lead to a step change in the way the organisation works, resulting in better outcomes for the organisation and those on whose behalf they regulate. The characteristics of OfS staff will be monitored on a quarterly basis with annual publications of progress against targets.

To better understand and address the practical barriers to participation, including in relation to accessibility:

- ONS is undertaking a review of operational processes involved in collecting data in our current portfolio of social surveys to determine the barriers to taking part, including among those underrepresented in the statistics. This will enable the design of operational processes where barriers are prevented, removed, or mitigated against. Identifying barriers and proposing solutions will be completed in 2022, followed by research to identify the optimal solutions to implement.
- ONS is transforming its portfolio of household surveys and moving to an online first mode of collection, with other modes (telephone and face-to-face) supporting data collection where appropriate. This work will build on several years research into transforming our social surveys so that they are digital by default. This multi-mode approach will ensure that those respondents who cannot or prefer not to complete the survey online are also given an





opportunity to participate, and to address barriers to completion experienced by non-English speakers, those who are not digitally enabled, and other potential barriers to completion. In 2022 we will further test and evaluate our mixed-mode approach to enable decisions to be made on our future survey data collection design. Specific work includes:

- ONS will explore the feasibility of delivering a multi-mode digital first Covid Infection Study, with telephone interviews to support non-digital participants and home testing kits to support non-mobile participants. This will be delivered in Summer 2022.
- The Crime Survey for England and Wales will also offer a multimodal survey to minimise the barriers to participation, subject to funding approval. While work to develop this alternative design is taking place, ONS continues face-to-face interviewing (as appropriate during the Covid-19 pandemic), to enable the collection of personal experiences only possible with this mode. This will enable analysis of crime statistics by gender identity in 2023 and analysis of hate crime based on a 3-year pooled dataset in 2025. The transformed multi-modal survey is expected to be delivered in 2024.
- ONS will evaluate response by different characteristics on the Time Use Survey in 2022 to understand practical barriers to participation and if adjustments are needed to address them. Based on this, further user research will be undertaken in 2023, including reviewing the instrument for different population groups and younger populations, to explore the feasibility of collection directly from children.
- During 2022, the Scottish Government's Equality Data Improvement Programme (EDIP) will consider commissioning independent research with people with lived experience of holding different and intersecting protected characteristics to explore response issues and barriers to participation in surveys. The findings of this research will be used to develop best practice guidance to help public sector data collectors improve their response rates.

- During 2021/22, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will undertake work to understand the impact of incentives on the uptake of the Participation Survey, to identify how best to enhance inclusiveness of their surveys. The Department will continue to issue paper questionnaires to those unable to participate in digital surveys and monitor requests for surveys in languages other than English, to enhance the accessibility of survey tools.
- The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has published its first formal reporting on diversity data and will publish data annually to understand the impediments in its systems, and biases in its processes, which have led to some communities, particularly some ethnic groups and people with disabilities, being under-represented in research. NIHR will introduce programmes of change, for example as part of its fellowship and research professorship programmes, testing plans with relevant communities to ensure that they are deploying resources to the areas of greatest need.
- City, University of London has worked alongside third sector organisations in the Violence Against Women and Girls sector to improve data collection instruments. New data collection systems for some third sector providers will be in place in 2022.

To address practical barriers to the access and use of data:

- ONS is exploring ways to incorporate survey design variables into publicly available Wealth and Assets Survey datasets, taking disclosure into account, to allow users to calculate meaningful quality indicators from the public data. Scoping will be carried out in 2022, with implementation to follow dependent on the outcome.
- City, University of London, Violence and Society Centre will produce an epistemological account of the barriers to access and use of data and potential solutions, based on discussions amongst academic contributors and data providers, which will be published in 2023.



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 UK 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 and promote coherence to improve data comparability and improve data quality.

The ONS Centre for Equalities and Inclusion will keep abreast of and join up activities across the UK statistical system in relation to development of guidance and promising practices on adopting inclusivity throughout the research process.

New governance is being designed and will be set up in Spring 2022 to oversee, monitor and deliver the IDTF Implementation Plan. This includes a new independent National Statistician's advisory committee on inclusive data, with an independent chair and membership from across a diverse range of organisations, and transparent reporting of the committee's activities. As part of this governance, we will consider how we achieve a wide reach across UK society to consult with and take feedback from, and will develop an Evaluation Plan to measure impact.



Current and planned work

To review the recommendations of the Taskforce and monitor and report on progress against implementing them:

- A new independent National Statistician's advisory committee on inclusive data will be launched in early 2022, to advise on priorities, ongoing improvements and evaluate progress, as UK society evolves.
- In collaboration with key stakeholders and data producers across the statistical system, in Spring 2022 ONS will set up a governance mechanism for delivering and publicly reporting on the IDTF Implementation Plan. This will include how to reach widely across the public and different population groups.
- ONS will develop an Evaluation Plan to measure the impact of the activities in the IDTF Implementation Plan, by summer 2022.
- ONS will facilitate an annual review and published update of the IDTF Implementation Plan.

To embed the work of the Taskforce into regular workstreams:

- The Cabinet Office's Equality Hub Data Quality Group has been formed. This group will influence and advise on data quality improvements in a coordinated way across sex, gender, disability, ethnicity and socio-economic population groups, for example on harmonisation. The group will lead on taking forward Cabinet Office actions listed in this Plan and provide relevant guidance to other departments in taking forward their actions. The group also works closely with other similar networks, such as the GSS Harmonisation Champions and GSS Data Quality Champions.
- Department for Education will develop a new statistics user engagement strategy in 2022, for implementation during 2023 and evaluation in 2024. This will reflect best practice recently set out by the [GSS User Engagement Strategy for Statistics](#) developed by ONS, strengthen collaboration across user boundaries, embed user engagement culture across the organisation and create a greater understanding of user needs by building meaningful and sustained dialogue between users and producers of statistics.
- Home Office has set up an internal network of key contacts and teams in response to the findings and recommendations of the Taskforce, which will be responsible for reporting progress against these recommendations.
- ONS's Centre for Crime and Justice will update its engagement strategy and develop a Crime and Justice Statistics Forum. The first annual forum will take place in February 2022 with the updated strategy to be published by the end of March 2022.
- ONS's Covid Infection Survey Analysis will adapt their existing user groups to create a continuing user forum focusing on including users and ensuring inclusivity and engagement are met continually.

To share knowledge through engagement with academics, user groups and others outside government:

- As part of the GSS User Engagement Strategy for Statistics and the creation of the ONS Engagement Hub, ONS will encourage data producers across the UK statistical system to build upon their engagement with users and stakeholders.
- ONS will continue to engage with academics, user groups and others outside government with relevant expertise, and develop new stakeholder engagement groups, to share knowledge and approaches to measurement, and to receive input on research and plans. This includes in relation to the work of ONS's Centre for Crime and Justice, Time Use Survey, and Household Finance Surveys, in the development and delivery of the 2021 Census for England and Wales analysis and as part of developing the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of the census and population statistics.
- Building on previous work with refugee advocacy groups in collaboration with the Home Office, ONS will undertake further work to ensure the inclusion of other groups at risk of exclusion or invisibility in our transformed population and social statistics system, including engaging Research Councils in the design and implementation of the new systems. During 2022 work will be undertaken in collaboration with those outside government to design methods, with prototyping the approach in 2023 followed by a systematic review of population groups to optimise the methods in 2024.
- The Office for Students will actively engage with academics and practitioners to support the development of enhanced data collection for care-experienced students studying at higher education providers. Enhanced collection will begin for academic year 2022-23, with statistical reporting of experiences and outcomes in 2024.
- Kings College London have produced a [toolkit](#) for use in Citizen Science projects to enable data producers to facilitate more engaging and inclusive data collection activities.
- As part of its Contemporary Fathers in the UK project funded by the Nuffield Foundation, the Fatherhood Institute will work with national research and statistical organisations to improve the visibility and differentiation of fathers in national large-scale statistical datasets. The project will be completed in mid-2023.

As a first step towards joint financing of data collection to develop cost-effective solutions:

- Data producers will explore new, and development of existing, joint funding partnerships.
- The ONS Centre for Equalities and Inclusion will play a convening role in identifying initiatives where there would be efficiency in collaboration.

To actively engage in international initiatives to improve inclusivity of statistics:

- ONS will:
 - Explore the creation of a new United Nations City Group on inclusivity in 2022.
 - Continue to participate in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Census Taskforce on Sex and Gender, contributing to international work to explore and propose questions about sex and gender for use in the UNECE's recommendations on future censuses.
 - Update the Inclusive Data Charter Action Plan for the Global Sustainable Development Goals and continue to engage internationally, sharing learning from international best practice on inclusive data across relevant organisations. In 2022, the renewed action plan will be launched followed by engagement with the Inclusive Data Charter network to share learning and expertise during 2023.
 - Continue to play an active role in the UNECE's Taskforce on Statistics on Children and Youth, with a specific focus on children in out of home care, disabled children, and violence against children. The Taskforce will develop recommendations and provide guidance to National Statistics Offices in 2022 to better reflect these groups in the data and evidence.
 - Continue to contribute as a member of the UN's Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys. The working group is producing a positioning paper which aims to identify priority areas for household surveys to better perform their foundational roles in the years ahead.
 - Continue to play an active role in World Health Organisation-led meetings on disability and liaise closely with international colleagues to provide important international comparisons in health.
 - Continue to engage internationally with the development of statistics in relation to human capital and unpaid work, including chairing the Unpaid Household Service Work and the Labour, Human Capital, and Education sub-groups of the Intersecretariat Working Group for National Accounts and the Modernisation of Time-use statistics sub-group of the United Nations Expert Group on Effective Ways to Collect Time-Use Statistics.
 - Continue to lead the UN City Group on Ageing and Age Disaggregated Statistics, working with National Statistics Institutes, the World Health Organisation, United Nations Statistics Division and other organisations to provide harmonisation and best practice in providing information on the older population.

- The Department for Education will work across UK government departments, the Devolved Administrations, crown dependencies and overseas territories to respond to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), providing evidence on the experience of children in the areas of interest identified by the UN, including breakdowns over time and by characteristics where possible. The next report will be submitted to the UN in 2022, with a further report required every 4 to 5 years.

To enable wider learning through sharing, evaluating and publishing effective innovative practices:

- ONS is developing a Research Strategy to enhance the impact of our research and innovation and deepen collaboration with academia and wider research organisations.
- ONS will share learning in relation to methods development to enhance social inclusion through publication of ONS Methods Research Articles and other relevant methodological and research publications. Research outputs will be made as findable, accessible, interoperable, and re-usable (the FAIR principles) as possible through, for example, direct indexing by search engines and the use of digital object identifiers.
- ONS will start to formally evaluate its innovation outputs, looking at indicative (if imperfect) metrics such as citations and journal publications.
- ONS is committed to working to develop a research program that will focus on methodological development and innovation, and which will be commissioned from the wider research and academic communities in order to improve the quality of survey data.
- On an ongoing basis, the Cabinet Office's Race Disparity Unit will publish a series of [Methods and Quality Reports and blog posts](#) to help users better understand different aspects of data collection and analysis, and data quality issues associated with ethnicity data collection and reporting.
- Using lessons learnt about ethnicity data quality in relation to health data, the Cabinet Office's Race Disparity Unit will make recommendations to improve data quality in different data collections. A prototype report for a specific data area will be developed through 2022 and will be expanded to other topic areas in 2023, depending on the response to the prototype.
- During 2022, the Scottish Government will run workshops to discuss best practice in analysing protected characteristics for public sector analysts, to showcase good practice and share learning.

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.

The ONS Centre for Equalities and Inclusion will facilitate joining up across the planned initiatives through the Inter-Administration Committee and the GSS Analysis & Evaluation Committee, to ensure that groups are robustly captured, particularly those currently under-represented in UK data and evidence.

The new independent National Statistician's advisory committee on inclusive data will advise the National Statistician on approaches and methods to improve the inclusion of under-represented groups.

Current and planned work

To identify under-represented groups and develop strategies to address under-representation:

- The ONS Centre for Equalities and Inclusion will play a convening role going forward in identifying and joining up initiatives. Current initiatives include:
- ONS will compare the 2021 Census for England and Wales with relevant administrative data to assess the representativeness of different data sources and how best to ensure that more marginalised groups are included in statistics going forward. This work will contribute to the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of the census and population statistics.



- The Cabinet Office's Equality Hub will undertake an analysis using data from the 2021 Census for England and Wales Non-Response Link Study to understand levels of non-response and non-response bias for different groups. This could be used to develop recommendations on reducing non-response for different groups. Options for analysis (whether to be carried out in-house or commissioned) will be considered in early 2023, with publication of an analytical report in late 2023.
- The ONS-led Titchfield City Group on Ageing-related Statistics and Age-disaggregated Data will undertake work to assess the current evidence and data gaps in relation to age-disaggregated data, to provide recommendations to improve its collection. Workplans, scoping and assessment of the evidence will be undertaken between 2022 and 2024 with publication of the recommendations in 2025.
- ONS will investigate the quality of ethnicity recording in key health administrative data sources in England and propose methods to account for any bias in the underlying data sources, collaborating with the Cabinet Office's Equality Hub. ONS will explore with Welsh Government expanding this work to Wales. Findings from the initial research will be published in 2022, with scope for further work to be undertaken using the 2021 Census for England and Wales data in the future.
- From October 2022 onwards, ONS will introduce representativeness as a key performance measure of its Labour Market Survey, continuously reviewing the representativeness and taking action to address any issues with under-representation.
- ONS will benchmark the Crime Survey for England and Wales against the 2021 Census for England and Wales to assess its representativeness and consider the actions needed to address any issues found, through the new Crime and Justice Statistics Forum being launched in 2022.
- ONS is investigating the feasibility of introducing responsive data collection into its operational design during 2022. This approach would involve targeting data collection towards under-represented groups to increase the presence of such groups in the data.
- ONS will work with the Cabinet Office's Equality Hub to explore the feasibility of developing data about the inclusivity of UK businesses. This includes working with data owners to encourage collection and production of business owner ethnicity statistics. The ONS Management Expectations Survey will begin collecting this information in 2023.
- The Cabinet Office's Equality Hub will review gaps in data and evidence for different population groups, and work with departments to fill these gaps, building on learning from the Race Disparity Unit's Quality Improvement Plan and the Disability Data Improvement Programme. By summer 2022, data gaps for different topic areas will have been reviewed with plans developed to address these with relevant departments by August 2022. Work will continue over the next 3 years to address data gaps.

- Welsh Government will take forward the research and data-related actions from the 'Locked out: liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19 report'. Areas where new research and data collections (including administrative data) will be needed have been identified and appropriate measures of progress are being considered with policy makers.
- The UK Research and Innovation Prevention Research Partnership (UKRI PRP) funded Violence, Health and Society Consortium (VISION) (City, University of London) is working with Imkaan and University of Warwick academics to explore biases in terms of marginalised groups and possible ways to overcome these. They will produce policy recommendations and peer-review publications while engaging with policy makers.
- Following publication of "Is Britain Fairer?" in 2023 the Equality and Human Rights Commission will revise its data gaps strategy to identify where key datasets and subjects used in their Measurement Framework do not have adequate coverage by protected characteristics, or poor and inconsistent sample sizes. Datasets will be reviewed during 2022 and 2023 with publication of the strategy in 2024 and inform any revisions of the Measurement Framework or future iterations of "Is Britain Fairer?".
- Departmental monitoring of response rates to surveys to ensure representativeness and take action to address any issues found will continue, for example the Department for Transport's National Travel Survey.

To improve the inclusivity of administrative data collection:

- In 2022 the Cabinet Office's Disability Unit will initiate the Disability Data Improvement Programme to report on the quality of government departments' data and related publications on disability and impairment, assessing their relevance to the lived experiences of disabled people, establishing ownership of disability data improvement, and identifying avenues for cross-government communication of disability data.
- The Office for Students will work with the Higher Education Statistics Agency to enhance the collection of personal characteristics information from higher education students. Enhanced data collection will begin for academic year 2022-23, with statistical reporting of experiences and outcomes in 2024.
- Scottish Government has carried out an equality data audit to assess the collection and publication of data on the nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 across the organisation, focusing on a range of datasets, including those used to produce official and national statistics, administrative data, and ad hoc research datasets used to inform Ministerial decision-making. Improvement plans will be put in place in 2022.
- Home Office will explore ways to improve the collection of personal characteristics data in all their data collections, increasing awareness of the importance of collecting these data and fostering a greater commitment to collecting this at the outset of a system or process.

- ONS is conducting research to better understand how data on personal characteristics is collected by data suppliers to highlight areas for improvement. Research will be complete by 2022 with the findings contributing to the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of census and population statistics.
- HMRC is exploring the feasibility of collecting information not currently routinely collected, on ethnicity and disability, for all new data collections. Feasibility work and recommendations will be complete in 2022.
- The UK Research and Innovation Prevention Research Partnership (UKRI PRP) funded Violence, Health and Society Consortium (VISION) (City, University of London) will explore differences in sex, age and ethnic characteristics between different data sources and settings. It will also explore using multiple imputation with a view to correct potential biases. Initial engagement with data users and providers will take place during 2022 with the project continuing over the next three years.

To address issues with the data infrastructure that cannot be provided by existing surveys and improvements to administrative data:

- A key feature of the ONS survey strategy is for joined up data acquisition which will ensure that we effectively meet user data needs by drawing on the complementary nature of our collective data sources including administrative and survey data. Where relevant the recommendations of the IDTF will guide our approach to ensuring that whatever the data source, we will put improved inclusion of under-represented population groups in UK data at the heart of our approach.
- As part of the transformation of population and social statistics, ONS will add additional questions to household survey sources where required and operationally feasible to gather data on protected characteristics where there is no or limited potential in administrative data.
- During 2022, HMRC will carry out a scoping study to assess the feasibility and affordability of collecting protected characteristic data through large scale surveys for specific customer groups, to gain insight into the makeup and experiences of these customers.
- In 2022/23 the Cabinet Office's Disability Unit will implement a survey of disabled people across the UK focused on lived experiences and barriers faced, to better understand the experiences of disabled people in society and inform targeted policy making and the evaluation of the National Disability Strategy.

To work together to ensure that UK administrative data reflect relevant characteristics, including by linking relevant datasets:

- As part of the transformation of population and social statistics, ONS is working with others, including the devolved administrations, to develop a statistical system to integrate administrative sources, census and survey data. This will produce more timely population estimates and will aim to capture relevant

characteristics to support analysis. The transformed system will make the best use of available and developing data sources to meet user needs for an inclusive statistics system. The system will be designed and built in 2022, with its progress and future developments reflected in the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of the census and population statistics.

- The Home Office will continue to work with ONS and other government departments to facilitate secure and appropriate access to the administrative data needed to understand migration, including enabling relevant and necessary linkage work.
- Feasibility research is underway at ONS to identify ways of producing more timely administrative data-based population estimates by ethnicity, using a range of data sources, including multivariate analysis across protected characteristics, using administrative data.



To evaluate and address issues with the coverage of populations not resident in private households:

- In 2022, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, jointly with ONS, are scoping out work to estimate populations not resident in private households and understand their experiences in relation to the general population. This includes work to look at people sleeping rough and in hostels and shelters. It is expected work will continue beyond 2022.

- During 2022, ONS will undertake a review of existing data sources on communal establishments across UK countries, with a particular focus on understanding how people with protected characteristics are captured within these sources. The review will identify relevant data gaps and priority areas for improvement.
- ONS is investigating the coverage of populations living in communal establishments across England and Wales from administrative data to assess the ability to capture them in admin-based population estimates in future. In 2022, research will be undertaken to identify how non-private households and their residents are reflected in administrative data and could be incorporated into methods for producing admin-based population estimates to feed into the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of the census and population statistics. Work will continue beyond the recommendations.
- ONS will carry out research into the value of, and how best to collect survey data from populations not resident in private households, including those living in Communal Establishments, when necessary. This work will take place during the first half of 2022 and will include integrating lessons learned from the 2021 Census for England and Wales.
- Welsh Government is exploring the introduction of individual-level homelessness data collection to enable a greater understanding of the situations of those who find themselves at risk of homelessness and enable improved evaluation of homelessness prevention measures. During 2022, the feasibility and success of collecting these data from pilot Local Authorities will be assessed to determine the viability of rolling it out across other Local Authorities in subsequent years.

To ensure the diverse needs of a range of users are taken into account in data collection and reporting activities:

- ONS will be publishing a roadmap for its new Survey Strategy early in the 2022/23 financial year. Being inclusive by design is at the centre of our vision for surveys and we will engage and consult on any proposed strategic changes that will be made to the existing social survey portfolio. A consultation on changes to Travel & Tourism statistics has just finished and ONS will have responded to all feedback by the end of March 2022.
- As part of the work to develop the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of the census and population statistics, ONS will undertake extensive user engagement during 2022 and 2023 to ensure diverse data needs of different users inform the development of the collection and acquisition of data and the production of new statistical outputs in the future transformed system.
- Building on the existing Covid Infection Survey Analysis user groups for key stakeholders across UK government and the Devolved Administrations, ONS will set up similar user groups for academic users to ensure engagement and their feedback informs future plans.

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will develop a User Engagement Strategy to increase focus on user engagement in their statistics. The Strategy will be developed during 2022.
- Department for Communities (DfC) is leading on the development of the new social inclusion strategies for the Northern Ireland Executive, including a Disability Strategy, Gender Equality Strategy and Sexual Orientation/LGBTQI+ Strategy. While DfC is leading strategy development they are cross-Executive strategies which Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) will feed into. Any data development projects will form part of the action plans associated with these strategies.
- The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) will diversify research participants in the studies they support and the voices of those who shape their research agenda, by extending their reach to include communities where their research will make the biggest difference, and involve a broad range of patients, public and carers at every step.
- Scottish Government will engage with equality stakeholder organisations to develop a new Equality Evidence Strategy for 2023-25. Work will take place throughout 2022 with the publication of the strategy in 2023.
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has refreshed its Fuel Poverty Strategy in line with user needs and will continue to publish fuel poverty statistics using updated metrics which more fairly reflect the fuel poverty status.
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have produced a range of new outputs from the statutory homelessness dataset (HCLIC) to meet user needs around the flows through the system of specific subgroups, including rough sleepers and those aged 18-20 leaving custody and care. User needs will be reviewed in advance of the next publication in Autumn 2022 to ensure reporting reflects groups that are the highest priority.



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.

The development of the Integrated Data Service (IDS) by ONS as a tool to enable improved data linkage and intersectional analysis across government and wider organisations will play a key role in improving UK data infrastructure. ONS is developing the IDS to significantly improve and increase access to, and use of, data from across the UK, by analysts in UK Government Departments, Devolved Administrations, the National Health Service (NHS) and Local Authorities. This service is designed to enable quick and convenient access to researchers, while protecting confidentiality of data subjects at all times, using extensive technical and operational controls, and robust and transparent governance.

Current and planned work

To improve the granularity of data to enable meaningful disaggregation:

- By Spring 2022, ONS will develop a workplan in response to the [GSS Subnational Data Strategy](#) to enable robust and reliable disaggregation and intersectional analysis to be undertaken at differing levels of geography.
- From October 2022, ONS will increase the sample size of its Labour Market Survey, which, alongside the work to monitor and address its representativeness, will improve its granularity.
- The Cabinet Office's Race Disparity Unit will work with other government departments and organisations to improve the granularity of ethnicity data, including reducing the amount of data published (only) for White and Other than White. The Cabinet Office's Race Disparity Unit will also encourage other public sector bodies to avoid use of the term 'BAME', as part of commitments set out in the [RDU Quality Improvement Plan](#). By May 2022 a review of the granularity of existing datasets will have been completed which will lead to recommendations to departments about increasing granularity through 2022 and 2023.

- Department for Education will begin voluntary collection of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan data at the level of the child instead of aggregate Local Authority level data, in January 2022. This will enable more in-depth analysis to be carried out and potential for data to be matched to other relevant datasets, to facilitate greater understanding of policy issues related to children with Special Educational Needs. First publication of data and mandatory collection will begin in 2023.
- The Welsh Government's Equality Data Unit (WG EDU) will look to strengthen equality evidence (qualitative and quantitative) to address inequality in Wales. Intersectionality is at the heart of WG EDU evidence. The WG EDU will be looking to deliver evidence to support the areas identified with the Wales Strategic Equality Plan and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan, to give a more complete picture of evidence for various small populations and disadvantaged groups across Wales, including people with characteristics protected under the 2010 Equality Act such as LGBTQ+, gender and age. The Unit will be established in 2022, developing its programme and mapping existing evidence. In 2023, the initial high priority analysis will be delivered, and key research projects will begin.
- The Welsh Government's Disability Disparity Unit (WG DDU) will look to strengthen evidence on disabled people (qualitative and quantitative) to address inequality in Wales. The WG DDU will work with the Disability Taskforce to provide ad-hoc evidence on request to support the Disability Action Plan and to provide a more complete picture of evidence that represents various disabled communities across Wales. The Unit will be established in 2022, developing its programme and mapping existing evidence on disabled people. In 2023, the initial high priority analysis will be delivered, and key research projects will begin.
- The Welsh Government's Race Disparity Unit (WG RDU) will look to strengthen ethnicity evidence (qualitative and quantitative) to address inequality in Wales. The WG RDU will work with the REAP Accountability Group to provide ad-hoc evidence on request to support the Race Equality Action Plan and to provide a more complete picture of evidence that represents various ethnic communities across Wales. The WG RDU will be established in 2022, developing its programme and mapping existing evidence on ethnicity. In 2023, the initial high priority analysis will be delivered, and key research projects will begin.
- Welsh Government will explore the potential to combine multiple years of data from the National Survey for Wales to enable more detailed sub-group analysis. During 2022, the survey content for 2023 to 2024 will be decided.
- Department for Work and Pensions will boost the sample of the Family Resources Survey to allow more robust income analysis at regional level, and to support more detailed analysis of smaller groups of interest to policy makers such as ethnicity. Following a partial boost from October 2021 to March 2022, the full boost will be introduced in April 2022, with publication of estimates using the boosted sample in 2024 and ongoing for future years.



- Welsh Government will improve evidence on socio-economic status and by different protected characteristics in Wales following the sample boost to the Family Resources Survey in Wales.
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will explore the feasibility of merging multiple years of Community Life Survey (CLS) data to produce a pooled dataset to facilitate greater analysis of sub-groups. They will also explore the feasibility of producing small area estimates to increase the potential for analysis of smaller geographical areas. This work will be carried out during 2022. The sample size for the Participation Survey will also be increased in 2021/22 to enable estimates to be produced at a lower level of geography.

To promote an intersectional approach to exploring and presenting equalities data:

- Cabinet Office's Government Equalities Office (part of the Equality Hub) is partnering with ONS to deliver its Equality Data Programme. In the initial phase of work, it will use existing data to explore how people's outcomes vary by different dimensions of equality (including geography and socio-economic background). This work will deliver analyses across a range of outcomes controlling for multiple characteristics including (where available) age, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socio-economic background and geography. Initial analyses will be published in 2022.
- The second phase of the Equality Data Programme will be to develop a linked dataset (the Equality Data Asset) through the Integrated Data Service, bringing together a range of record level, longitudinal datasets held across government, enabling more in-depth intersectional analysis and exploration of how people's lifepaths vary by different dimensions of equality. Over the course of 2022, processes to acquire initial datasets will be well-established, with an ongoing programme of work to develop the Asset and explore options to enhance the breadth and richness of data on equalities and outcomes over subsequent years.

- ONS is undertaking a range of work using linked datasets to enable more granular and intersectional analysis, including: exploring social mobility and the relationship between education and earnings mobility, investigating the educational and care background of the prison population, and using the Growing Up in England dataset to understand the characteristics, social care experiences and educational outcomes of vulnerable children. This work will take place during 2022 and 2023.
- ONS will undertake intersectional analysis using the 2021 Census for England and Wales and will collaborate with National Records of Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency to consider the provision of UK-wide analysis from the censuses across the UK.
- ONS will provide intersectional analysis of the drivers of knowledge and skills acquisition across the lifespan as part of the publication of the human capital indicator framework in 2023 to enable evidence on how differing groups evolve differently during their lives.
- The Office for Students will develop and publish a set of intersectional measures to improve the understanding of the outcomes different groups are likely to experience across the student lifecycle, including access to, and continuation in, higher education. These will be developed in 2022, with ongoing publication of measures going forward.
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission will undertake a range of intersectional analyses in relation to the labour market, poverty and health as part of the next iteration of 'Is Britain fairer?' which will be published in 2023.

To improve understanding by taking an intersectional approach to existing online tools:

- ONS is developing a flexible table builder as part of the release of the results of the 2021 Census for England and Wales to enable users to select the characteristics of interest to build their own tables, subject to statistical disclosure controls, enabling the exploration of intersectionalities. These user tools will be published during 2022 and 2023.
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has published a support needs dashboard from the statutory homelessness dataset (HCLIC) which allows the identification of the most prevalent co-occurring support needs in the homelessness population. The content of this output will be reviewed, and improvements made as required with publication of an updated dashboard in 2022.

Targeted oversampling is planned in a number of data collection activities to address specific gaps in knowledge:

- ONS will explore the feasibility of oversampling in certain areas as part of our work to establish the feasibility of a responsive data collection design. This will be either at the sampling stage (oversampling to address specific data gaps), at the collection stage (targeting collection towards under-represented groups), or a combination of both.
- HMRC will continue to explore the potential of the annual Individuals, Small Business and Agents (ISBA) Survey to provide insight on customers with different personal characteristics, initially by combining survey years to increase sample size, but if sample size continues to be a barrier, options and costs for over-sampling certain groups will be considered. Analysis of customers with protected characteristics from combining ISBA survey years will be undertaken in 2022, followed by consideration of the need for over-sampling of under-represented groups in 2023.
- The Department for Education Parent, Pupil and Learner Panel Survey will use targeted oversampling of under-represented groups, including those who are Free School Meals (FSM) eligible, those with Special Educational Needs and Disability status, and those with Children In Need status, to fill existing gaps in understanding of these groups. Research has been commissioned across the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years and will likely be re-commissioned in future years.
- Department for Education Children of the 2020s cohort study and Pupils of the 2020s cohort study, part of the Education and Outcomes Panel Studies (EOPS), will follow children from 9 months to 5 years of age and from early in their primary education (Year 1 or 2) until the end of primary school (Year 6) respectively. Both studies will include targeted oversampling of disadvantaged groups, to better understand the relationship between attainment, disadvantage and a range of personal and household characteristics. Both studies will be set up and piloted during 2021/22 with fieldwork and delivery of the data from the first wave in 2022/23, and subsequent waves in the following 3 years.

To ensure that the 2023 recommendation on the future of the Census and Population Statistics i.e., the social statistics system meet the full range of inclusivity needs:

- ONS is undertaking extensive engagement and research activities to ensure that the recommendations of the Inclusive Data Taskforce are taken into account in developing the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of the census and population statistics.

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 (see Inclusive Data Principle 7). ONS will maintain oversight of the initiatives across UK government and the devolved administrations to improve Government Statistical Service (GSS) guidance on data definitions and standards; facilitate collaboration and sharing of best practice; and promote the GSS harmonised standards and guidance.

A GSS Harmonisation Plan will be published by ONS in early 2022, setting out the plans and timescales for review and updating of the current GSS harmonised standards and guidance for the collection of data on equality characteristics. It will cover different data collection modes including face-to-face interviewing, telephone and online collection.

Current and planned work

To ensure measures for different populations accurately reflect current standards and legislation:

- ONS will keep abreast of Office for Statistics Regulation guidance relevant to inclusion and encourage its wider adoption across government and the four nations.
- Welsh Government will investigate developing evidence that is in line with the social model of disability from 2022.
- As part of ongoing work to better understand the socio-economic background of the Civil Service workforce, Cabinet Office will work with organisations to better understand drivers behind existing response rates, with the aim of publishing socio-economic background information on the Civil Service workforce as part of the annual Civil Service Statistics publication.

To ensure that a clear conceptual understanding underpins accessible and appropriate data collections:

- A GSS Harmonisation Plan will be published by ONS in early 2022, setting out the plans and timescales for review and updating of the current GSS harmonised standards and guidance.

- ONS will take a respondent centric approach to the end-to-end design of all its surveys. The work that has been done already that has adopted this approach will be consolidated and shared with users, and will guide the strategy design, roadmap, and future survey collection. This will mean that the survey experience will be relatable, understandable, and appropriate for respondents
- Cabinet Office's Equality Hub Digital Team will work with policy and analysis colleagues, to ensure that the principles of accessibility, user testing and content design are applied to writing surveys and consultation questions.
- The Cabinet Office's Disability Unit (DU) will develop its survey of disabled people across the UK working with ONS and other stakeholders, and experts on the lived experiences of disabled people, to ensure conceptual understanding of the information required and undertaking extensive testing to ensure its accessibility and the generation of appropriate data.
- Scottish Government will update guidance on data collection and question wording to be used for collecting equality data. This new guidance, likely to be based on Census 2022 questions or existing ONS harmonisation standards, will be rolled out across the public sector in Scotland during 2022.
- The design of the Department for Education's 6-weekly panel survey of school and college teachers and leaders, the School and College Panel (SCP), will continue to be based on engagement with policy teams to commission questions to be included which are based on a clear rationale of the departmental need and thorough scrutiny. Where possible the survey will use existing standardised questions with new questions based on design best practice and cognitive testing to ensure a final product that is easy to understand and relevant for the sector. The survey is currently commissioned across the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years and will likely be re-commissioned in future years.
- The design of the Department for Transport's National Travel Survey will continue to be overseen by professional statisticians and operated by an experienced contractor on behalf of the Department and new questions will continue to be tested before adding to the survey.
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will continue to work closely with the local authority [Central and Local Information Partnership \(CLIP\)](#) groups to review any new data requirements and carry out suitability testing in advance of going live.

To ensure clarity in the language used in collecting and reporting data:

- Following consultation with the Cabinet Office's Equality Hub and the devolved administrations, the GSS Harmonisation Plan will be published by ONS in early 2022, setting out the plans and timescales for review and updating of the current GSS harmonised standards and guidance.

- The Government Analysis Function Diversity & Inclusion Create working group will extend their Inclusion Toolkit for analytical teams to include a section on inclusive analysis best practice, providing resources to support clarity in the reporting of inclusivity. The toolkit will be refreshed in 2022 and then updated every 6 months on an ongoing basis.
- ONS, through the Inter Administration Committee and other relevant fora, will facilitate identification across UK government and the devolved administrations of initiatives to make improvements in clarity of language, share best practice and adopt harmonised standards where possible. Initiatives include:
- The Northern Ireland Executive will produce guidance on monitoring ethnic populations to provide a standardised framework to help public bodies collect information in a consistent but flexible manner, improving service delivery and equality for different ethnic and migrant populations living in Northern Ireland. Guidance to be considered during 2022, with implementation subject to agreement by the end of 2022.
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will continue to review questionnaires and provide clarification where needed, continuing to use harmonised measures and ensure statistics are reported accurately.
- ONS will work with communities, other government departments and academics to ensure clarity and appropriateness in the language used in the publishing of outputs and analysis from the 2021 Census for England and Wales.
- During 2022, Scottish Government will be supporting Scottish bodies to implement changes following the release of guidance on the collection of sex, gender and trans status data issued in September 2021. This will be taken into account as part of the GSS Harmonisation Review.
- Home Office will review data standards in the Police Uplift Programme to ensure clarity over language usage at the point of data collection, particularly around sex and gender, enabling greater clarity in reporting. The next review will take place in early 2022.
- Welsh Government will review the use of the terms sex and gender in data collections and analysis to ensure consistency, clarity and inclusivity across use in Welsh Government.
- The Office for Students will ensure greater clarity in publications over how data have been collected and the use of the terms sex and gender to ensure users understand the characteristics that are being reported.
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have recently reviewed and amended the definitions of sex and gender in the statutory homelessness dataset (HCLIC) in order to better represent non-binary groups. Data collection using new definitions will be introduced in April 2022 with publication based on these definitions from 2023 onwards.



To ensure transparency about how data have been collected in the sharing and reporting of data:

- In 2022, HMRC will commission a review of official statistics metadata and where necessary improve published information about how data have been collected in official statistics publications.
- In 2022, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will review documentation that accompanies survey publications to ensure metadata are provided for users to assess the quality and suitability of data.
- ONS will ensure that appropriate metadata will accompany all outputs from the 2021 Census for England and Wales, including in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, national identity, language and religion, providing clarity to users around how the data have been collected and aggregated. Publications will be delivered during 2022 and 2023, with scope for additional publications during 2023 and 2024 subject to user needs.
- ONS will ensure that all publications based on its Labour Market Survey are accompanied by key relevant survey information, including, but not limited to, proxy use, response by mode and response rates.
- ONS is undertaking an ongoing assessment of the quality of administrative sources that are being used to transform ONS's population and social statistics. This will generate metadata that will help producers and users to understand the strengths and limitations of the administrative sources. There will be ongoing releases and updates to metadata and quality reports during 2022 and 2023.
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will continue to publish a range of metadata to support published outputs including quality reports highlighting methods used and other relevant information.

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.

The ONS Centre for Equalities and Inclusion will facilitate collaboration across the planned initiatives to understand more about the lived experiences of several groups under-represented in UK data and evidence, identifying and sharing good practice.

The development of the Integrated Data Service (IDS) by ONS as a tool to enable improved data linkage and intersectional analysis across government and wider organisations will play a key role in improving UK data infrastructure. ONS is developing the IDS to significantly improve and increase access to, and use of, data from across the UK, by analysts in UK Government Departments, Devolved Administrations, the National Health Service and Local Authorities. This service is designed to enable quick and convenient access to researchers, while protecting confidentiality of data subjects at all times, using extensive technical and operational controls, and robust and transparent governance.

The new independent National Statistician's advisory committee on inclusive data will advise the National Statistician on approaches in undertaking qualitative research in order to better understand the lived experiences of these groups of people in the UK.

Current and planned work

To widen the range of methods used to collect more inclusive data:

- 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 United Nations Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science (UNCEBD). We will review other countries' experience of using big data to fill inclusive data gaps, working with the UNCEBD and relevant ONS colleagues.
- ONS is developing a non-official sources protocol to facilitate quality assurance of non-official sources and maximise their use while minimising risks. The protocol for quantitative sources will be implemented in 2022, with the development of a protocol for qualitative sources in 2023.

- ONS is researching the coverage of specific administrative datasets to better understand how certain groups within the population are represented. Qualitative research methods are also being developed to give us a greater insight into any inclusivity issues for such data sources.
- During 2022, ONS is undertaking qualitative research to examine the lived experiences of groups who are currently under-represented in UK data and evidence including: disabled adults' experiences accessing and engaging with activities, goods and services across the UK; the school experiences of children with special educational needs and disabilities in England; and the lived experiences, priorities and needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- The Cabinet Office's Disability Unit (DU) will undertake a systematic review of evidence in relation to the lived experiences of disabled people in the UK, to take stock of relevant qualitative research and identify key gaps in understanding and priorities for further work by the end of March 2022.
- ONS is continuing to investigate improved methods for data linkage, as part of the [Joined up data in Government Review](#). New tools and techniques are being investigated to both improve linkage quality and enable better measures of linkage uncertainty and bias. These will be an important part of any data analysis which uses linked data, especially for population subgroups.
- As part of the continued drive to explore Data Science methods, ONS will be examining potential biases in machine learning algorithms and when they can result in outcomes which may not be fully inclusive. These techniques are heavily dependent on the representativeness of the training data, perpetuating any biases through to the model. Work is underway to explore de-biasing methods, as well as how Machine Learning algorithms used in production are maintained. This will include managing the risk of model bias, and thus lack of inclusivity, growing over time due to model drift.
- Data are rarely complete, especially when linking sources, and the methods used to deal with missing data can have an impact on inclusivity. ONS will be examining strategies for imputation in the context of linked administrative data and evaluating the impact of missingness which accumulates due to linkage errors or lack of coverage. This will extend the work already completed to explore the [imputation of administrative based income linked to Census data](#), which found important challenges in the representation of the lower income distribution.

Data linkage for enhanced analysis is planned:

- ONS will explore data linkage as a mechanism for researching the experiences of particular groups and populations, as part of the development of the Integrated Data Service, to provide new insights into different population groups. This will include: linking benefits data to the 2021 Census for England and Wales and other sources, to support analysis of 2021 outcomes and other events (health, mortality) for those in receipt of disability-related benefits;

and linkage of historic targeted surveys to support analysis of longer-term outcomes for both individuals and households. The integrated statistics system will be designed and built in 2022.

- As part of the transformation of the population and social statistics system ONS will develop a fully representative and inclusive prospective linkage study for the population, using relevant survey and administrative data, and ethnographic studies.
- The Cabinet Office's Race Disparity Unit has been working with ONS to develop a linked dataset to provide birth and infant mortality data by mother's ethnicity alongside other socio-economic variables from the census to provide insights into maternal health disparities, allowing more targeted interventions to be developed. The dataset will be available via the Secure Research Service in 2022.
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is working with ONS and Administrative Data Research UK to link data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study with data on energy consumption to explore patterns of consumption for different household types. The dataset will be available to researchers in 2022, enabling ongoing analysis beyond this.
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities are undertaking work to link the statutory homelessness dataset (HCLIC) with a range of other data sources to provide more detailed information on homelessness and rough sleeping. The Department is also working on a cross-departmental project linking with Ministry of Justice, to potentially link offending information and drug and alcohol treatment data with homelessness collections. Pilot projects will be delivered in 2022 with cross-departmental linkage projects being undertaken in subsequent years.

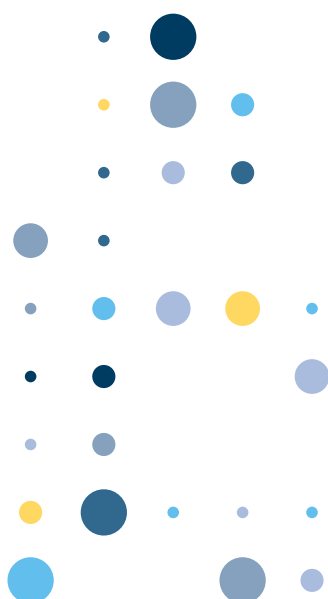
To enhance the availability of longitudinal data, including to capture temporary experiences:

- As part of the transformation of the population social statistics system, ONS will develop longitudinal assets. These will enable the flagging of disadvantaged groups and of transitory states of interest to support subsequent analysis. The integrated statistics system will be designed and built in 2022.
- Department for Education will continue its Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, following a cohort of young people aged 13/14 in 2013 through the final years of compulsory education, and onto other forms of education, training, employment and other activities, collecting information about career paths and the factors affecting them and a range of characteristic information. In 2021/22 the questionnaire will be developed, and fieldwork carried out, with data available in 2022/23.
- Department for Education's Education and Outcomes Panel Studies (EOPS) programme will deliver two new cohort studies following children from 9 months to 5 years of age (Children of the 2020s) and from early in their

primary education (Years 1 or 2) to the end of primary school (Year 6) (Pupils of the 2020s). Pupils of the 2020s will be procured and set up in 2022, with fieldwork and delivery of the first wave of data in 2022/23. It will use Free School Meals eligibility criteria from the National Pupil Database to oversample disadvantaged pupils, and better understand the relationship between attainment, disadvantage and a range of personal and household characteristics.

To ensure that innovative and flexible approaches take adequate account of issues of consent, trust and trustworthiness:

- Data producers will ensure that data linkage projects are routed through the appropriate governance and approvals mechanisms, for example:
 - Home Office (HO) will ensure that all work with ONS on data linkage is approved through appropriate programme governance with senior representation from both HO and ONS.
 - ONS will ensure that all transformed statistical production is reviewed and assured through formal channels (Census Research Assurance Group, Methodological Assurance Review Panel and Longitudinal Scientific Advisory Panel) and that all linkage studies have approval from the National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee. The transformation of our surveys will likewise be reviewed and assured through appropriate forums.
 - ONS will ensure that all datasets used in analysis of the 2021 Census for England and Wales will have been approved by the relevant ethical boards prior to the start of analytical work.





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

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

ONS will publish a Government Statistical Service (GSS) Harmonisation Plan in early 2022, which will set out plans and timescales for review and updating of current harmonised standards and guidance for the collection of data on equality characteristics (see Inclusive Data Principle 5).

This GSS Harmonisation Plan will set out the planned frequency of review of harmonised standards and guidance in order that data collection keeps pace with societal change. New governance for overseeing the delivery of the work on harmonisation across the GSS will be created. ONS will act in a convening role to identify relevant initiatives within the UK statistical system and facilitate sharing of knowledge and best practice.

ONS will continue to work collaboratively across UK government and the devolved administrations through the Inter Administration Committee and the GSS Analysis & Evaluation Committee to facilitate the production of coherent statistics across the UK statistical system. The recently updated [Concordat on Statistics](#) sets out the jointly agreed framework for statistical collaboration between the UK Government, and the Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Welsh Governments. This collaboration will help build the foundation for an inclusive statistical system across the UK.

Current and planned work

To learn from other countries and international bodies to ensure that harmonised standards remain appropriate and relevant:

- As part of the user engagement activity supporting the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of the census and population statistics, ONS will play an active role internationally in the development of harmonised standards, including with United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) / Eurostat on the 2030 Census Recommendations on population concepts and related definitions. This will ensure that the development of new standards and definitions continues to draw on international collaboration and best practice. User engagement and the evaluation of user requirements will take place during 2022 and into 2023 with publication of the recommendation in 2023.
- The ONS-led Titchfield City Group on Ageing-related Statistics and Age-disaggregated Data, which includes members from National Statistical Offices, from United Nations agencies, multilateral and bilateral agencies, academics, and civil society organisations, will continue work to develop reference guidance. Through 2022, 2023 and 2024, the group will develop workplans with publication of recommendations in 2025.

To improve the harmonisation and comparability of data across the countries of the UK, regions and over time:

- ONS will publish a GSS Harmonisation Plan in early 2022 (see Inclusive Data Principle 5). This will set out plans and timescales for reviewing and updating the harmonised standards and guidance for the conceptual measures relating to equality characteristics, covering different data collection modes including face to face interviewing, telephone and online.
- ONS will set out plans for regular review and updating of harmonised standards and guidance as part of the GSS Harmonisation Plan.
- Following consultation with stakeholders and data producers including the devolved administrations, ONS will design and implement new governance arrangements in Spring 2022 for monitoring and delivering the GSS Harmonisation Plan.
- ONS will review the June 2021 published [GSS Coherence Work Programme](#) in collaboration across the 4 nations of the UK to ensure that it has a strong focus on inclusivity. An updated coherence Work Programme will be published in 2022.
- The Cabinet Office's Equality Hub will work collaboratively with ONS and other government departments and agencies to promote and improve the use of harmonised categories for different characteristics, reflecting the commitments in the Race Disparity Unit's Quality Improvement Plan, and the Disability Data Improvement programme, providing greater coherence of data collection, analysis and reporting across public sector organisations. This work will be ongoing over the next 3 years.

- The Cabinet Office's Equality Hub will work with local authorities to understand data availability for different groups and recommend where it might be improved with regard to harmonisation and other data quality issues, reflecting the commitment from the Race Disparity Unit's Quality Improvement Plan. The remit of the work will be expanded to include other protected characteristics. Work will commence in early 2022 and continue in 2023.

To ensure the wider use of harmonised standards when collecting and reporting data:

- Reflecting the recommendation from the [third quarterly report on Progress to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities](#), the Cabinet Office's Race Disparity Unit will work with other Government Departments and agencies to understand when data collections will move to new harmonised standards for ethnicity. Timeframes are dependent on the GSS Harmonisation Plan.
- HMRC will introduce new data collection standards for HMRC surveys using GSS harmonised standards. Agreement will be sought for the introduction of new data standards and dissemination across HMRC during 2022.
- Innovate UK will work with the GSS Harmonisation team in ONS as part of their review of data collection methods.
- The UK Research and Innovation Prevention Research Partnership (UKRI PRP) funded Violence, Health and Society Consortium (VISION) (City, University of London) will bring together data producers and data users in the fields of health, civil justice, criminal justice and Third Sector providers of specialised services to victims or survivors, to provide a forum for engagement to enable harmonisation of data. Initial engagement with multiple data users and producers will take place in 2022, with proposals for data harmonisation informed by theory and engagement in 2023.

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.

Government data producers are reviewing their outputs to assess accessibility and ensure adoption of accessibility standards. The development of the Integrated Data Service (IDS) by ONS will play a key role in future accessibility to data and enabling improved intersectional analysis.

ONS is developing the IDS to significantly improve and increase access to, and use of, data from across the UK, by analysts in UK Government Departments, Devolved Administrations, the National Health Service (NHS) and Local Authorities. This service is designed to enable quick and convenient access to researchers, while protecting confidentiality of data subjects at all times, using extensive technical and operational controls, and robust and transparent governance.

Current and planned work

To improve access for a wide range of users to administrative data:

- The ONS Centre for Equalities and Inclusion will facilitate consideration of development of a centralised, explorable and accessible UK-wide equalities data and analysis resource in the context of the development of the Integrated Data Service.
- Home Office will continue to develop its statistical releases to ensure that they are suitable for expert and non-expert users. This will include increasing the number of datasets available in an open-data format for users to conduct their own analyses. In addition, a programme of work is underway to continue to improve the accessibility of all Home Office statistical releases, including reducing the number of PDF documents used and increasing the availability of statistics published in HTML format.
- Ofqual have been leading a data openness initiative with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service and ONS (the GRADE data sharing project) to share data on GCSE and A level students, making administrative micro-data available to accredited researchers through the ONS Secure Research Service (SRS). This enables independent research based on pseudonymised data, including allowing scrutiny into the awarding of grades in 2020 and

in particular on protected groups. Data for the period 2017 to 2020 is now available, with 2021 data to be made available by late Spring 2022. Further data will be shared in the future depending on demand.

Improvements to existing tools are planned, as well as development of new citizen-driven tools, to improve accessibility of data:

- ONS is developing data landscaping tools to help users navigate published crime and justice statistics. In 2022, the tool will be published collating published data on crime harm measures.
- The Cabinet Office's Equality Hub will research user needs for explorative data dashboards which will be driven from their Equality Data Store. Work to build, test and release dashboards will take place during 2022 with further iterations in response to user feedback in 2023.
- Scottish Government will continue to update and improve the Equality Evidence Finder (EEF), liaising with users to ensure it meets needs.
- Welsh Government are exploring moving their interactive National Survey results viewer from Excel format to a web-based format. This will improve accessibility while maintaining the simplicity that is important to users.
- The Department for Education is continuing development of a dissemination platform for official statistics (Explore Education Statistics) which ensures consistent open data standards across all publications and provides ease of access to all published data via an accessible web service. This enables users to create summary tables and undertake secondary analysis via a self-service table builder. Functionality of the service will be improved iteratively through the public beta phase based on user feedback. Alongside this, the Department for Education is also considering the use of complimentary dashboards (via R Shiny or PowerBI) to sit alongside their published Official Statistics to further increase the accessibility of data and analysis.
- Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will be further developing their online Outcome Indicator Framework for the 25 Year Environment Plan dashboard, which enables users to explore plots across a range of environmental themes. The dashboard will be updated in mid-2022.
- Office for Students will review the technology used to produce data dashboards to enable better access to data for users and reduce accessibility issues. Depending on the outcome of the review, any improvements should be implemented in 2023.

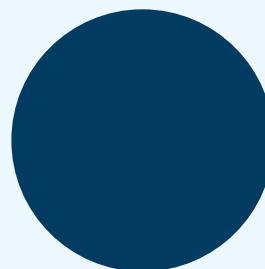
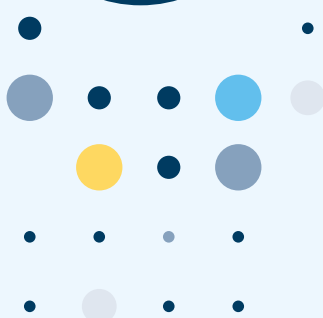
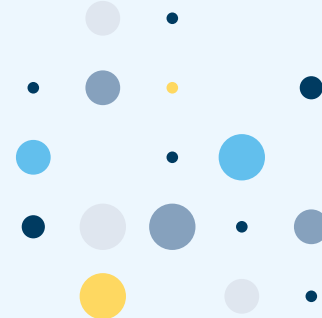
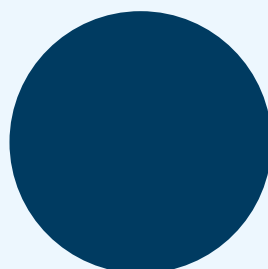
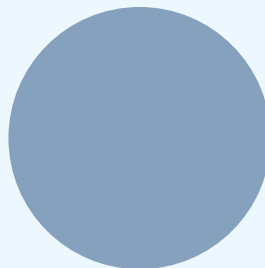
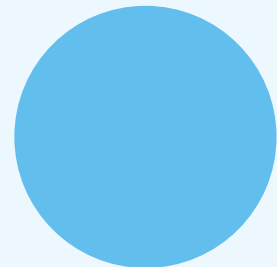
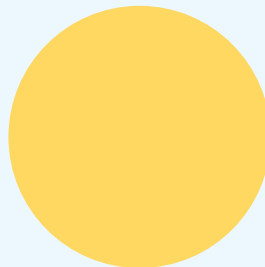
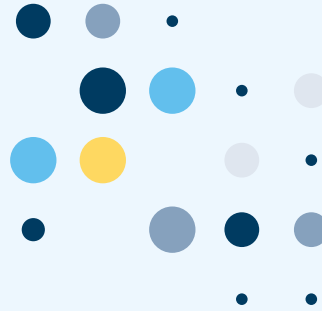
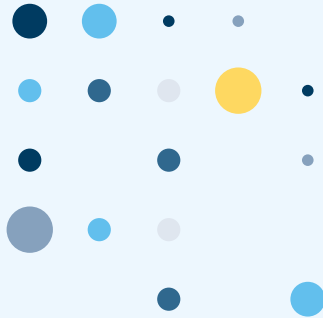
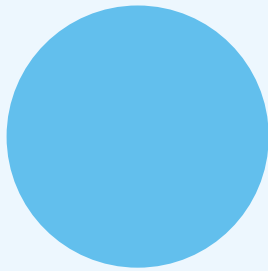
To ensure that language, literacy, format and comprehension are taken into account when presenting analysis and evidence:

- ONS is putting resources in place to establish a review of accessible communications and make recommendations for an effective and sustainable approach for ONS.

- As part of its work to develop the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of the census and population statistics, ONS will be seeking feedback on its publications and website on an ongoing basis to identify new and innovative ways to engage diverse audiences. This work will be ongoing until the submission of the recommendations in 2023.
- ONS will continue to promote adoption of government accessibility standards in outputs across the UK statistical system. Current activities include:
 - The Cabinet Office's Equality Hub digital team will commission an accessibility audit on the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website in 2022 and again in 2025, alongside ongoing accessibility testing for any new products and services. This is to ensure analysis and data are presented in a clear and accessible way, including in relation to the language used.
 - Where the Cabinet Office's Equality Hub collects or reports data, the outputs will be developed according to the Government Service Standard, which includes principles on (1) understanding users and their needs and (2) how to make services usable and accessible to all. The data publishing process will include understanding the users of the data and any specific needs. This will be undertaken on an ongoing basis as new outputs are developed.
 - During the ongoing development of its Explore Education Statistics platform, the Department for Education has, and will continue to test the accessibility of the service on a regular basis to ensure compliance with regulations.
 - Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) will be reviewing the National Statistics compendium of Biodiversity Indicators for accessibility and developing recommendations for further improvements. The report and recommendations will be published in mid-2022. Defra is also undertaking ongoing work to migrate other existing publications to HTML format and expand production of datasets and other enhanced content to fully meet user needs.
 - Office for Students has set up an internal analytical working group to review and update guidance to its analysts on accessibility issues so that future data releases will be accessible. On an ongoing basis, accessibility champions will continue to promote and support the production of accessible data products.
 - Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will continue to review accessibility requirements and implement improvements across outputs to better meet user needs.
 - Kings College London has produced [guidance](#) on making data more accessible to engage citizens with data and increase their understanding of it.
 - The ONS Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) team will ensure the UK SDG Data site meets AA accessibility standard [of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1)] by reassessment and certification in Summer 2022.

To publish existing administrative data that enhance understanding of inclusivity:

- The Department for Education will make public more data from the English School Census in relation to Free School Meals (FSM), including FSM eligibility over the previous 6 years within the main national statistics on pupil characteristics; this is in response to public interest.
- The Office for Students will publish additional student characteristics, not reported elsewhere, as part of their existing annual publications on equality and diversity among higher education students and their educational outcomes, together with data quality information. These will be published initially in Summer 2022 and then on an ongoing basis annually.
- Scottish Government will analyse individual, or household based National Performance Framework (NPF) indicators to identify the extent to which equality breakdowns are available and for each indicator set out a plan to either allow analysis of the existing indicator by protected characteristic or to identify an alternative means to provide evidence.



Contact us

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