

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

**Minutes**  
**Thursday 25 November 2021**  
**London Boardroom**

## **Present**

### **UK Statistics Authority**

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

## **Also in attendance**

Nick Bateson  
Owen Brace  
Robert Bumpstead  
Helen Fox (for item 9)  
Alison Pritchard  
Emma Rourke (for item 11)  
Ian Townsend (for item 9)

## **Apologies**

None

## **1. Apologies**

- 1.1 There were no apologies.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

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

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

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting on 28 October 2021 were agreed.

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

- 4.1 Non-Executives had met prior to the Board meeting. They had discussed the ongoing recruitment for the Authority Chair.
- 4.2 The Chair reported on his recent activities since the Board last met. On 28 October Sir David had spoken at a public event at University College London on 'Covid and the Use and Abuse of Statistics'. On 17 November Sir David had attended the launch event of Better Statistics Community Interest Company (CIC). Speakers had included amongst others Richard Heys and Owen Brace (Office for National Statistics).
- 4.3 Board members discussed the disclosure of statistics on transgender prisoners by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) before their official publication on 25 November.

## **5. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(21)66]**

- 5.1 Sir Ian provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting.
- 5.2 Sir Ian noted thanks to Non-Executive Directors, Nora Nanayakkara and Professor Jonathan Haskel for their support with the recruitment processes for the Director General vacant posts for Economic Social and Environment Statistics, and Health, Population and Methods. The recruitment was near completion.
- 5.3 The senior leadership team had undertaken an annual cyber security exercise, which had provided an opportunity for lessons learned. Sir Ian highlighted the engagement across government on the Research Integrity Concordat.

## **6. Report from the Director General for regulation [SA(21)67]**

- 6.1 Ed Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity highlighting that the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) had written to Emma Rourke (ONS) regarding the ONS statistical publication of 1 November: Deaths involving COVID-19 by vaccination status. Ed Humpherson commended Emma Rourke for the open and constructive way she and ONS colleagues had responded to OSR's concerns.
- 6.2 Ed Humpherson had taken part in a panel alongside Professor Sir Ian Diamond on 1 November to mark the beginning of Evidence Week in the Scottish Parliament.
- 6.3 With regard to pre-release access, it was noted that this formed part of OSR's work with statistical producers on their compliance with the Code of Practice.

## **7. Report from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

- 7.1 Nora Nanayakkara reported on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee which had met on 11 November.
- 7.2 The Committee had considered:
- i. the financial position of the organisation;
  - ii. the implementation of the risk and assurance strategy including an update on the strategic risk profile;

- iii. delivery of the Internal Audit work programme and an Internal Audit Report on the future of the census;
  - iv. a review of the security risk profile and risk appetite; and
  - v. an update on the work across the organisation to address statistical quality issues.
- 7.3 The Committee had also received an update on resources and ongoing recruitment for both the Risk and Assurance and Internal Audit teams.

## **8. Spending review 2021 [SA(21)68]**

- 8.1 Nick Bateson introduced a paper which provided an update on the implementation of the spending review settlement for a three year period. It was noted that the settlement represented a positive outcome for the delivery of the strategy, Statistics for the Public Good.
- 8.2 Implementation of the settlement included three areas of focus: prioritisation of statistical outputs; redeployment, retraining and, as necessary a voluntary early severance scheme as part of the BASE review of enabling functions; and an efficiency framework. On completion of the implementation process consideration would be given to alternative funding options.
- 8.3 The Board heard that discussions were ongoing with the Department for Health and Social Care regarding the long term strategic approach to health surveillance.
- 8.4 The outcome of the implementation process would be a refreshed Business Plan for consideration by the Board at the March 2022 meeting.

## **9. Climate Change Statistics Portal Presentation**

- 9.1 Ian Townsend and Helen Fox gave a presentation on the Climate Change Statistics Portal. The portal was a cross government collaborative project to increase the coherence, accessibility and comparability of UK climate change-related data, statistics and analysis. Alison Pritchard confirmed that the Climate Change Portal would continue as part of the Integrated Data Service.
- 9.2 The Board noted thanks for an excellent presentation.

## **10. Integrated Data Service [SA(21)69]**

- 10.1 Alison Pritchard and Owen Brace introduced a paper which provided an update on the Integrated Data Service (IDS) Programme with a focus on branding. The programme was working towards Public Beta in 2022, which would widen access to a broader base of users.
- 10.2 The Board heard that the IDS would operate on similar lines to the Secure Research Service model. The IDS would ensure secure handling of data and research outputs would need to comply with the Code of Practice.
- 10.3 The Board was asked to consider three approaches for branding the IDS: ONS branding; Her Majesty's Government (HMG) branding; or tailored IDS branding. Board members discussed the options and agreed the recommended approach, HMG branding.

## **11. COVID-19 Infection Survey and Surveillance Studies [SA(21)70]**

- 11.1 Emma Rourke introduced a paper which provided an update on the COVID-19 Infection Survey programme. In October the survey had passed a milestone by completing over one million blood tests and more than six million swab tests, testing for antibody levels and infection rates respectively across the UK. A new schools infection 2021/22 survey had been launched and the schools infection survey 2020/21 had completed.

11.2 The Board heard about the monitoring work on the effectiveness and efficacy of the vaccines and the long term strategic planning for health surveillance.

**12. Strategic Risks [SA(21)71]**

12.1 Nick Bateson introduced a paper which provided an update on the Authority's strategic risk profile, which had been updated in line with feedback provided by the Board at the September meeting.

**13. Any other business**

13.1 The next meeting would take place on Thursday 27 January 2022.

## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

### Agenda

25 November 2021, 13.00-16.30

Meeting Room 10, London

**Chair:** Sir David Norgrove

**Apologies:** None

**Attendees:** Helen Fox (for item 7), Emma Rourke (for item 9), Ian Townsend (for item 7)

**NED Session:** 13.00-13.30

1 13.30-13.35 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings Declarations of interest	Meeting of 28 October 2021
2 13.35-13.45 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	Oral report Sir David Norgrove
3 13.45-14.10 25 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(21)66 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond
4 14.10-14.20 10 mins	Report from the Director-General for Regulation	SA(21)67 Ed Humpherson
5 14.20-14.25 5 mins	Report from Committee Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Audit and Risk Assurance Committee</li></ul>	Oral report Nora Nanayakkara
6 14.25-14.55 30 mins	Spending Review 2021	SA(21)68 Nick Bateson
14.55-15.10 15 mins	Break	
7 15.10-15.30 20 mins	Climate Change Statistics Portal Presentation	Ian Townsend Helen Fox
8 15.30-15.50 20 mins	Integrated Data Service	SA(21)69 Alison Pritchard Owen Brace
9 15.50-16.10 20 mins	COVID-19 Infection Survey and Surveillance Studies	SA(21)70 Emma Rourke
10 16.10-16.25 15 mins	Strategic Risks	SA(21)71 Nick Bateson
11 16.25-16.30 5 mins	Any Other Business	

**Next meeting:** 27 January 2022, 10.30-16.00, via videoconference

***Chief Executive's Report, November 2021*****Purpose**

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

**Summary**

2. November began with the successful launch of the UK Climate Change Statistics Portal ahead of the COP26 UN climate change summit where I gave a keynote speech. The Schools Infection Survey 2 (SIS2) went into the field on 8 November, with 103 schools registered so far, whilst the COVID-19 Infection Survey has conducted a new pilot into measuring the presence of antibodies in children.
3. Data from across the Government Statistical Service, and in particular from ONS, has continued to inform decisions in the Government's response to ongoing supply chain disruption, and I held meetings with both Lord True and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. I was also pleased to launch our Flexible Working Framework, whilst interviews have taken place for both vacant Deputy National Statistician positions and I will update the Board in due course.

**Review of recent activities**

4. October concluded with an evidence session alongside the Chair and Ed Humpherson at the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) on 21 October. I also delivered a lecture to the University of Nottingham on the challenges and opportunities of the COVID-19 pandemic to a National Statistical Institute which was well received. At the start of November, I led a seminar for the Permanent Secretaries group on demography with strong feedback on both the session and work of the ONS.
5. On 8 November, I hosted and chaired a public engagement summit with bodies from across government, public and private sectors on how involvement in health data could be improved. After a pause last year, I had the honour of once again leading the Remembrance Day service in Newport on 11 November, whilst Sam Beckett did the same in Titchfield. Finally, I am looking forward to welcoming Alex Chisholm (CEO for the Civil Service) to our Newport office when he visits at the end of the month.
6. During November, I held several meetings with Ministers across government. Alongside the Chair, I had an introductory meeting with Lord True who will be the Cabinet Office minister with statistics in their portfolio. We discussed the future of population statistics, the Integrated Data Service and the updated concordat on statistics. I also met with the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, covering data sharing across government and public engagement. Finally, I discussed our work on further education and skills data with Alex Burghart, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Apprenticeships and Skills.
7. We successfully released the prototype UK Climate Change Statistics [Portal](#), ahead of the COP26 UN climate change summit in Glasgow. This provides a dashboard of indicators, three 'explainer' articles, and access to the detailed data. We showcased the portal at a joint event with the Met Office at COP26, where I delivered a keynote speech. We also completed a coordinated programme of 10 climate-related statistical and analytical outputs around COP26. These covered impact on emissions in 2020, individuals' concern, energy efficiency of homes, business actions, local authority emissions and woodland cover, low emission vehicles, and UK natural capital estimates.
8. Our work on supply chain disruption continues to feed into Number 10 and the Cabinet Office with data on shape and recovery of the labour market, and worker shortages in key occupations based on the Labour Force Survey, Adzuna job vacancies and our business surveys. We are also looking at impacts on households through responses to

the Opinions survey on experiences shopping for food, fuel, medicine and other goods and services.

9. Our COVID-19 analysis continues and have published analysis on whether those who expressed vaccine hesitancy earlier in the year changed their mind or not. We continue to publish regular data on behaviours, Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions and working from home and alongside this provide regular statistics for key groups asked to take specific actions, such as compliance with isolation for those who test positive.
10. We continue to work closely with colleagues in Department for Health and Social Care and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) on a pilot to measure antibodies in children using blood sampling – we have now prepared a report on the pilot for the UKHSA.
11. Separately, the SIS2 went live in schools on 8 November, with 103 schools registered to date. SIS2 will provide results that will be representative across England from a sample of primary and secondary schools.
12. I was also delighted to hear that The Wellcome Trust have agreed funding for our proposed four-year project developing global standards and harmonised methods for reporting impacts of climate on health. The work will involve UKHSA, the Cochrane Climate-Health group, the UN Global Data Hub, and partnership with two African nations.
13. This month, we also publicly announced that we would begin collecting price data directly from supermarket checkouts for our inflation statistics. Our collaboration with the Co-Op received significant media attention and we will build these data sources into our Prices statistics over the coming months. We also continue to develop our real-time indicators, recently introducing data on the availability of goods in shops and partnering with Pret-a-Manger on store sales in various regional locations.
14. We have also published our first experimental model-based estimates of regional GDP, improving regional economic data. This has been developed in partnership with the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence and means changes in economic growth in the UK's nations and regions are available five months earlier than previously and very close to the same timeframe as UK estimates.
15. Also in November, Sam Beckett met with the Bank of England's new Chief Economist, Huw Pill. It was agreed that he would do a tour of ONS' economic statistics in Newport in January.
16. Work to develop an ONS Survey Strategy has made significant progress over the last month and the Portfolio Investment Committee approved the vision on Friday 12 November. The vision is based on four pillars: Joined up Data Acquisition, Fully Inclusive by Design, Efficient Sustainable Operation; and Productionised Integrated Capability. The focus now is on developing a strategic blueprint with supporting sub-strategies. This is the first time a vision and strategy for all surveys across ONS has been developed.
17. I am pleased that we are involved in the ONS/Number10 Data Science Fellowships which aims to attract leading academics with quantitative analytical expertise to spend a year collaborating with Number 10's data science team and the ONS. The fellows will work with us to co-design research and produce analysis using new and existing linked administrative datasets to inform policy in priority areas, and support wider knowledge exchange with researchers on effective policy collaboration and data analysis.
18. As set out in the separate paper for the Authority Board, we are carrying out intensive work to ensure that we build on the success of the Spending Review settlement we received from the Treasury at the end of October. There are three main streams of work – prioritisation of the ONS's statistical and analytical activities; implementation of the BASE Review, including revised and aligned models for the delivery of supporting functions across the organisation; and the framework for managing budgets over the

coming three year period. This work will culminate in the production of a strategic plan for the remaining three years of Statistics for the Public Good.

19. On Census, the Infrastructure and Projects Authority Gateway Review of the Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme gave an Amber delivery confidence assessment. There was much praise for the way Census 2021 was delivered in the context of COVID-19, but more clarity was required on the Programme's objectives and plans for the wider transformation activities. We welcome the recommendations of the report and will address these as a priority.
20. We are also planning to publish a number of bulletins, articles and blogs to provide timely insights on migration along with updating users on our research on Population and Migration Statistics Transformation. This research has been shared as part of an extensive period of engagement with users over the past month. These outputs, to be published later in the year, provide an opportunity to point towards the publication next year of the 2021 census results and, beyond that, our goal of providing more frequent and timely population statistics.
21. Further afield across government, we have promoted the Analysis in Government Awards, following the launch last month. The awards closed for entries on 12 November and are a great opportunity to recognise and celebrate the excellent work being done by analysts and the hugely positive impact the evidence and data they produce has on society. Awards recognise collaboration, innovative methods, communication, impact, inclusion, and – for the first time – the Sir Ian Diamond Excellence Award. Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in December.
22. I have also been worked with Tamara Finkelstein on an analytical skills audit for the policy profession which she leads. This is central to the Civil Service Modernisation and Reform agenda, driving up analytical skills across government. Earlier this month, we jointly wrote to Permanent Secretaries to formally launch the skills assessment and through November data has been gathered through a mix of surveys and focus groups.
23. Finally, I am delighted that we have been able to launch our new Flexible Working Framework. This launched on 8 November and will help us continue to make ONS a brilliant place to work. The framework takes into consideration our hybrid working approach, and lessons learnt during the pandemic, to help make the positive changes that have occurred over the past 18 months sustainable.

**Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, November 2021**



*Update from the Director General for Regulation*

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides the UK Statistics Authority Board with an overview of Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) priorities and activities.

**Discussion**

2. Our main areas of focus in recent weeks have been:
  - i. **Vaccine statistics:** Last month we discussed the emerging issue regarding the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) COVID-19 vaccine surveillance statistics, specifically a table in their weekly surveillance report. The presentation of the data, which implied vaccines were ineffective, was being used by groups opposed to vaccination to justify their stance. I [wrote publicly to Dr Jenny Harries](#), head of UKHSA, on 1 November outlining our concerns and recommending where changes could be made. We also [published a blog](#) explaining the importance of clear communication of data which went into more detail on the issue. Since our letter, UKHSA has changed the presentation of the rates in its report, included additional caveats and links to more information, and published its own [blog](#) explaining the data. These are some steps forward, but there is still room for improvement. In particular, UKHSA need to acknowledge the uncertainty in their figures, and recognise and address the limitations of the source data for their population estimates, on which vaccination rates are based. Related to vaccines, we have also received casework enquiries on ONS's latest release on [COVID-19 deaths by vaccination status](#).
  - ii. **Outputs:** At the end of October we published our report on accessibility and coherence of UK climate change statistics. The report included a number of recommendations for government statistics producers and for ONS specifically as it develops its climate change portal. We are considering what additional work may be needed in this topic area, particularly with regards to the public value of the statistics.
  - iii. **Engagement – Parliament:** On 1 November I took part in a panel alongside Sir Ian to mark the beginning of Evidence Week in parliament, bringing public concerns about evidence directly to Parliament with no intermediaries. It was great to have OSR as part of this conversation; it fits so well with our overall purpose of statistics serving the public good. Elsewhere in the parliamentary space, following our positive appearance at the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee last month, OSR has been invited to give evidence to another parliamentary select committee this month. We have been contacted by the Scottish Parliament's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to give evidence on 23 November. This is a result of our recent report on lessons learned for health and social care statistics from the pandemic, a great example of the report's impact.
  - iv. **Engagement – regulatory:** Since the last Board, the focus of my engagement has been on building new connections. I had my first meeting with Dr Jenny Harries as CEO of UKHSA – introductory, although of course the vaccine surveillance intervention did feature – and I will soon be speaking with Stephen Riley, UKHSA Director General. I've continued my engagement with the Number 10 Delivery Unit, an important relationship for our casework function. Transparency is still very much on my mind; in December, OSR will be presenting at the Chief Scientific Adviser's Brown Bag Breakfast to discuss how our functions can work together to help improve transparency of data and statistics across government. And I led a round table on lessons learned for the pandemic for the Centre for Science and Policy.

3. My main concern remains the ad hoc release of data by Government – through press notices, Tweets and other Ministerial statements – where the underlying data are not released. Although OSR does a good effective job of addressing these issues as they arise, we want to tackle the problem more upstream: this is the essence of our campaign on transparency. We are working through how we can best to land these messages with Government.

**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, Office for Statistics Regulation, 17 November 2021**

**Regulatory Activities - November 2021 - AB**

Health and Social Care	Economy	Population and Society	Crime and Security	Children, Education and Skills
<p><b>Covid-19</b> – Commencing review of QCOVID algorithm against framework for 'Ensuring statistical models command public confidence'  <b>Casework:</b> Responded on chronic pain waiting time statistics (Scotland). Preparing briefing for Scottish Health, Social Care and Sport Committee.  <b>Assessment:</b> Reviewing evidence for meeting requirements for General Pharmaceutical Services assessment.  <b>Compliance checks:</b> Working on reviewing Outpatient Waiting Time statistics published by the Department of Health (NI).  <b>Systemic Reviews:</b>  <b>Adult Social Care (GB)</b> – Preparing draft report.</p>	<p><b>Assessments: ONS Productivity Statistics</b> – Continuing discussions with ONS on progress against our requirements.  ONS Country and Regional Public Sector Finances &amp; ONS Regional GDP – In the process of planning these two assessments.  <b>Welsh Revenue Authority Statistics (WRA)</b> – Assessment started, currently gathering evidence from users...  <b>Systemic Review: Post Brexit ONS Economic Classifications</b> – Updating paper, ONS's progress on new accounting and classification arrangements for December's Regulation Committee meeting.</p>	<p><b>Assessments: Census E, W and NI</b> censuses reports should be published mid Nov. Meeting with census offices, discussing their plans for action on our requirements.  <b>Casework: Migrant Crossings statistics, statistics &amp; EU Settlement statistics,</b> letter due to be published. <b>ONS migration statistics &amp; EU Settlement statistics,</b> discussing comparisons between ONS and Home Office.  <b>Compliance check: Migration</b> – First phase of a review, ONS plans for future migration estimates and outputs. Engaging with ONS and external stakeholders. Provide an update at December's Regulation Committee with report due for February's Regulation Committee.  <b>Systemic Review: Data about sex</b> – Correspondence from stakeholders on Scotland's Census and Roger Halliday's guidance for public bodies. Regulatory work on Scottish household Survey and OSR's guidance may be influenced by outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Assessment:</b> Workshop with ONS and Home Office on 18 November to plan follow-up work on <b>police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales.</b>  <b>Compliance check:</b> Published letter for Scottish Government's <b>Criminal Proceedings in Scotland statistics.</b> Continuing desk research for new ONS/Home Office <b>knife-enabled crime figures</b> and Department of Justice's <b>Northern Ireland prosecutions and convictions statistics.</b>  <b>Casework:</b> will publish letter to Home Office HoP about statement on funding to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls.</p>	<p><b>Systemic Review: Children and Young People</b> – findings being developed with a view to publishing report in late 2021/ early 2022.  <b>Scottish Attainment</b> - User concerns raised around statistics and link to early labour market outcomes. Holding a planning event with SG and ESRC with a view to a wider user event.</p>
Labour Market and Welfare	Housing, Planning and Local Services	Agriculture, Energy and Environment	Business, Trade and International Development	Travel, Transport and Tourism
<p><b>Assessments: Pay in NI Civil Service Stats:</b> drafting report which will go to December Reg Comm.  <b>Compliance checks:</b> ONS' <b>small area income estimates</b> – drafting letter. Welsh Government's <b>Regional economic and labour market profiles</b> – letter with findings published on 10 November.</p>	<p><b>Assessment: Statutory Homelessness in England statistics:</b> Assessment report prepared for December Regulation Committee. Aim to publish mid-December.  <b>Compliance checks:</b> Initiating new compliance checks on <b>Housing statistics</b> produced by Homes England and <b>Planning applications in England</b> statistics produced by DLUHC.</p>	<p><b>Assessment:</b> People and nature survey assessment arranging meeting with new lead statistician at Natural England to discuss timing  <b>Compliance checks: Flood Defence Spending statistics</b> follow up meeting scheduled with producers.  <b>Systemic reviews:</b>  <b>Climate Change statistics</b> – Published on 27<sup>th</sup> Oct, finalising blog to go out after COP26 to further highlight report  <b>Food Statistics</b> – Discussions held with Defra regarding changes in the food statistics area.</p>	<p><b>Assessments: NISRA BESES</b> – Aim to publish report late November.  <b>UK Trade Statistics and Business Demography Statistics</b> – following up with ONS.  <b>Compliance Checks:</b> Initiating two into UK Trade statistics and two on the inclusion of VAT data into ONS's Short-term Economic Output statistics and ONS's Retail Sales Statistics.</p>	<p><b>Compliance checks:</b> Recently published: ORR's <b>Passenger Assistance and Disabled Persons Railcards statistics.</b> Ongoing: DfT's new <b>Transport Disability and Accessibility Statistics</b> publication, and Transport Scotland's new <b>Disability and Transport</b> publication  <b>Travel and Tourism</b> - Engaging with ONS on plans for future of the International Passenger Survey  <b>Systemic Review: Accessibility of Transport Networks</b> – Drafting report and sharing findings with stakeholders</p>

Data and Methods	Insight
<p><b>Project: RAP</b> – ONS looking at how to take forward some actions to progress the application of RAP principles across ONS.</p> <p><b>Project: QCovid</b> – Completed desk research and evaluated the 42 lessons from the Exams Review against the use of the QCovid algorithm for risk prediction. Meeting arranged with the DHSC team at the end of November.</p> <p><b>Project: Model Guidance</b> – Published alpha version of the <a href="#">guidance</a> for comment and blog post. Planned blog for Data in Government site.</p> <p><b>Project: Google Trends</b> – Writing up findings for publication.</p> <p><b>Recruitment</b> – Graduate data scientist and SEO data scientist should join team soon. This will support ability to undertake project and push forward data.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b> Main focus of work is supporting regulatory projects, including migration. Also providing input into NS designation quality workstream.</p>	<p><b>Insight and Evaluation Committee</b> – established a new committee to oversee the function, providing direction and challenge, with first meeting in early December. Including an official statistics producer in the membership to increase open engagement and receive direct input.</p> <p><b>Project: communicating uncertainty in statistics</b> – in progress, due for completion end of February 2022.</p> <p><b>Project: the role of official statistics in policy evaluation</b> – pending approval in December, due for completion end of March 2022.</p> <p><b>Project: Transparency</b> – blog published and engagement ongoing. Roundtable planned.</p> <p><b>Recruitment</b> – appointed an Insight and Evaluation Manager in October to coordinate the function.</p>
Policy & Standards	Research
<p><b>9.30 release practice consultation</b> – open until 21 Dec. We have received 16 responses to date. We released an <a href="#">explainer</a> on the release of statistics and public good.</p> <p><b>NS designation review</b> – we have completed the third set of workshops with heads of profession for statistics and interviewed 8 intermediaries/users. We are now developing recommendations to go to the Regulation Committee in December (before submitting a paper to the Board in January)</p> <p><b>Voluntary application</b> – we are continuing our wider advocacy of the Code pillars and planning an event for our community of practice in early December. It will focus on the Value pillar and feature presentations from two recent adopters, UKHSA's Covid dashboard and Acas. We will also have a presentation on our public good research.</p>	<p><b>Project: Public Confidence in Official Statistics Survey</b> — Fieldwork is under way.</p> <p><b>Project: Public Perceptions of the Public Good, Collaboration with ADR UK</b> — We are currently finalising membership of our project oversight group and will seek their feedback on our proposed methodology shortly. Following this, ADR will start the procurement process.</p> <p><b>Project: Internal Exploration of OSR's Perceptions of the Public Good</b> — We have developed a survey to send to the team in OSR which will ask them how they would describe the public good of statistics, along with other questions asking about synonymous terms, We will discuss this with the project sponsor shortly then plan to send it the whole team by the end of November.</p>
Cross Cutting Issues	
<p><b>Business planning</b> for 2022/23 underway. Team event held 17 November, and paper to Regulation Committee in December.</p>	

***Spending Review 2021 Outcome and Implementation***

**Purpose**

1. This paper sets out the emerging approach to implementing the UK Statistics Authority's Spending Review settlement for the years 2022/23 to 2024/25. It highlights the opportunities presented by the funding settlement, progress in identifying immediate options to build the capacity of the organisation beyond the funding provided by HM Treasury (HMT) and the process for moving to a sustainable funding position for the Spending Review period.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
  - i. note the analysis of the Spending Review settlement including the initial articulation of the areas that we will seek to fund immediately via internal resource reallocation; and
  - ii. endorse the overall approach to taking forward the implementation of the Spending Review settlement.

**Discussion**

3. The Spending Review settlement provides the platform for building the UK Statistics Authority's capacity and contribution for the next three years. Following the announcement of the Spending Review at the end of October, we are building options to further reallocate resources in support of Statistics for the Public Good.
4. This work will ensure that we are:
  - i. able to accelerate work in areas of priority and that we are;
  - ii. delivering the highest possible impact in our statistics and analysis; and
  - iii. continuing to deliver the major programmes we have committed to through the Spending Review settlement.

**Spending Review settlement and immediate funding priorities**

5. The Spending Review provided a material funding uplift for the organisation for the period between April 2022 and March 2025. The settlement represents a positive outcome for the UK Statistics Authority and a vote of confidence in the strategy.
6. The settlement has provided funding for the following:
  - i. a stable baseline funding position with the ability to recycle efficiencies for further investment;
  - ii. continuing support for the priorities of the Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme – Census outputs; the 2023 decision on the future system of population and migration statistics; and survey transformation – with the opportunity to reprofile the remaining two years of the programme funding before the start of 2022/23;
  - iii. secure funding for the Integrated Data Service Programme;
  - iv. increased investment in economic statistics, including a managed transfer from the Labour Force Survey to the Labour Market Survey and the use of scanner and other innovative data in prices;
  - v. funding for the costs of transferring our property estate to the Government Property Agency in line with government's Places for Growth agenda;
  - vi. Official Development Assistance funding; and
  - vii. capacity to deliver a pay rise across the organisation – as indicated by the Chancellor in the Spending Review announcement and in line with government pay guidance and frameworks.

7. The efficiencies aspect of the settlement provides the ability for us to identifying areas where resources can be redeployed to high priority work in support of the strategy.

### **Releasing funds for immediate priorities**

8. In order to provide the capacity to meet the immediate delivery needs, we are taking forward three main activities – prioritisation of statistical outputs and key aspects of our transformation programmes; redeployment, retraining and, as necessary, a Voluntary Early Severance Scheme for the BASE Review linked to the wind down of the Census 21 field work; and budgetary measures to encourage efficiency initiatives and proposals across the organisation.

### **Prioritisation**

9. To deliver highest value from the Spending Review settlement and provide a framework to develop the technical skills and other resources we will need to deliver, we have agreed an outline statement of the organisation's priorities.
10. The prioritisation framework will be used to ensure that the key priorities across our transformation programmes and key statistical outputs are resourced and that we are confident that they can be delivered. It will be also used to ascertain our capacity and how it should be increased and optimised, through internal and outsourcing routes, and phasing of deliveries.

### **Next Steps**

11. Once priorities and funding options are agreed, detailed planning will be undertaken to ensure that business areas have budget envelopes and resources available against the highest priorities for 1 April 2022 and that the strategic objectives, operational objectives and delivery schedules are settled for the next planning period. This will translate into a revised operational plan that ensures the organisation is confident of delivering its priority areas at pace.

### **Conclusion**

12. The Spending Review settlement provides funding to secure the key priority deliveries of Statistics for the Public Good. However, we want to go further to advance our ambitions.
13. We also have further medium-term efficiency plans, which will provide the capacity to fund further strategic priorities that we identify as our plans evolve. These will be developed, alongside options for investment.
14. Overall, these mechanisms provide the basis for reorientating the organisation to advance the strategy outside of those funded directly through the Spending Review Settlement.
15. Support from the Board will ensure that we are able to accelerate the implementation of the Spending Review and redeployment of our resources. This approach will underpin basis of our strategic planning and the next three years of the implementation of the strategy.

**Nick Bateson, Finance, Planning and Performance, 17 November 2021**

***Integrated Data Service - Branding***

**Purpose**

1. This paper updates the Authority Board on two key elements of the Integrated Data Service (IDS) Programme. It outlines the possible options for branding of the IDS; offering a recommended way forward.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to consider the factors influencing the approach for developing branding and endorse the recommendation.

**Background**

*IDS Branding*

3. The IDS recently achieved a significant milestone by delivering a Private BETA version of the service allowing colleagues (including from across government) to collaborate on a shared analytical project using the service.
4. The programme is now working towards achieving Public BETA which will widen access to a broader base of users. The branding decision and subsequent development of the brand will be a critical enabler to Public BETA, establishing and promoting a clear identity for the service.
5. Branding will include proposition; visual look and feel; logo and tone of voice. Therefore, the brand should reflect the strategic positioning for the long-term objectives of the service and considers wider government objectives on the use of data as encompassed in the National Data Strategy.
6. The success of the IDS is primarily dependent on engagement with its core stakeholder groups (consumers, suppliers, decision makers and influencers), in particular across government as data providers. Therefore, the role of the brand must engage and secure buy in from these groups. Considering this, the paper sets out below three options and a single recommendation (option ii).
7. The possible approaches for developing the brand are:
  - i. utilise ONS Branding;
  - ii. adopt HMG Branding, using the recognised cross-government coat of arms, launching IDS as a government service (recommendation); and
  - iii. develop tailored IDS branding, to be seen as an independent service.

**Discussion**

8. The IDS branding should be established in time for Public Beta in Spring 2022. Planning assumptions suggest that a decision needs to be made imminently to give adequate time for procurement and delivery by Spring 2022.
9. Given that IDS is a cross-government initiative, it is not appropriate to launch the service as a solely ONS brand and therefore as a stand-alone option, this is discounted. However, given the strength and public trust associated with ONS, and given ONS's lead role in delivery, there may be benefits in leveraging the ONS brand within the IDS identity.
10. In the near term, the implicit trust associated with the HMG brand offers some advantage as we widen our engagement beyond government. There would also be a degree of efficiency in socialising the brand ahead of the Public BETA in spring, due to existing familiarity with the government brand.

11. Adopting HMG branding sets a clear path for IDS as a cross-government service, with the potential to be associated with any department. The existing HMG brand is a trusted and well-established brand with high levels of recognition across our stakeholders and the general public. By harnessing this we can maximise the established trust and recognition of HMG for the IDS, ensuring audiences see IDS as a cross-government capability for the public good.
12. To ensure the service receives cut through and operates as a competitive entity, and in support of HMG branding, we will develop compelling content and supporting material to effectively engage our audiences.
13. IDS branding should also align with the long-term strategic ambition for the service as the reach of the service may extend beyond government. In this context, an independent brand may be preferable over the longer term. However, there are short term challenges associated with pursuing an independent brand, for example, Cabinet Office approval for an independent brand would be contingent on a clear evidence-based business case. This requirement would introduce some additional risks to landing an independent brand ahead of Public BETA.
14. Given strategic considerations alongside audience brand needs, adopting HMG branding is considered the most favourable approach, with an association to the ONS built into the communication hierarchy. The Board are invited to endorse the recommended approach.

#### **Conclusion**

15. This paper has outlined the possible approaches to develop branding for IDS, recommending the adoption of HMG/UK Government branding for formal endorsement.

**Owen Brace, Pete Stokes and Alison Pritchard, Data Capability, 12 November 2021**



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

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

**Recommendations**

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

**Discussion****Survey Performance**

3. In October the CIS passed a significant milestone by completing over one million blood tests and more than six million swab tests, testing for antibody levels and infection rates respectively across the UK.
4. Our delivery partners continue to maintain a steady state, with both critical and key performance measures met for the period September to October. Swab tests are at target and continue to be maintained whilst blood tests are close to target with a focused effort on increasing participant uptake having been carried out over the past few months.
5. Participant attrition has slowed down with the introduction of a quarterly newsletter which also allows for participant feedback to inform our continuous improvement programme on respondent experience.

**Child immunity and schools infection study (SIS)**

6. A pilot on the inclusion of CIS antibody testing of children under the age of 16 was conducted through October and in November, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) approved the 8-15 year-old antibody testing to a monthly cadence rollout.
7. The SIS 21/22 was commissioned by UKHSA on 9 September to deliver across autumn and spring terms and will include antibody testing for all primary and secondary schools ages. A collaborative ONS solution has been deployed in the redesign of the study. An online survey will collect information about the longer term health impacts of COVID-19 among children (mental health; long COVID; and vaccine hesitancy). Data collection in schools commenced early November.
8. The study will provide results that will be representative across England and the nine regions, from a sample of up to 180 schools. Alongside this data collection, a linked data asset using Department of Education and NHS data sets is under construction. Based on the National Pupil Database, the School Staff Workforce Census, and linked to Test and Trace and the National Immunisation datasets, this data asset will provide greater opportunities for analysis and insight into the impact of COVID-19 on pupils and staff within state education in England.
9. The Schools Infection Survey (SIS) 20/21 has completed, with the publication of results on Long COVID and pupil antibodies from round six, in September and October. Academic papers will be submitted over the next few months.

### Spending Review

10. The continuation of the CIS beyond March 2022 is still under discussion with UKHSA and is yet to be confirmed.
11. Consequentially, ONS have been accelerating scoping and preparation to move to a digital first model with postal testing kits and online data collection. This includes anticipating and mitigating risks associated with participant attrition and statistical continuity.

### Impact

12. In addition to providing insight into the Cabinet Office September and October data reviews, and the regular publication of bulletins and technical articles, we have made good progress across a broad range of priority novel health analysis, including:
  - i. vaccine effectiveness, including impact of booster rollout;
  - ii. the impact of vaccination on household transmission;
  - iii. the relationship between vaccination status and behaviour;
  - iv. launching a predictors of positivity model;
  - v. launching a predictors of vaccination status model;
  - vi. the impact of working from home on positivity and transmission; and
  - vii. excess mortality and mortality displacement.
13. The CIS Analysis team received feedback from the Prime Minister who commented on the usefulness of the contour plots which show changes in positivity over time across different ages.
14. To maximise our impact, the team have partnered with Health Data Research UK to publish a CIS rapid response analytical funding call. This will deliver additional insights from the CIS and linked datasets before the end of the financial year. We have received 15 bids and will award contracts before the end of the month.
15. In partnership with the Data Science Campus, we are launching a Health and Data Science seminar series. External speakers currently lined up to present represent the Wellcome Trust, Healthcare Foundation and New York Presbyterian Hospital - Weill Cornell. We hope to inspire and strengthen international interest in the application of data science in health, and share exemplary practice, including that which is undertaken in ONS.

### Future Covid scenarios

16. Under the auspices of the CIS Advisory Board, we convened a small group of international experts to discuss the viable future pandemic scenarios and how the CIS can be best placed to monitor the evolution of the virus and provide optimal evidence for related policy making.
17. This work is also feeding into the Cabinet Office led scenario planning for the transition from pandemic to endemic state.

### Next Steps

18. The funding for the CIS and the wider health portfolio is a priority to secure in the coming weeks, to enable planning and continuity across the programme and wider portfolio.
19. We will continue to work with international and domestic experts to plan our portfolio of analysis through the winter and beyond.

**Emma Rourke, Director, Health Analysis and Pandemic Insight, 16 November 2021**

*Update to Strategic Risk profile*

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides the UK Statistics Authority Board with an updated Strategic Risk profile following discussion at the National Statistics Executive group (NSEG) on 19 October 2021 and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) on 11 November 2021.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
  - i. review the updated Strategic Risk profile; and
  - ii. review the proposed new overarching Strategic Risk – ‘Independence and Trustworthiness’.

**Background**

3. The Strategic Risk profile was discussed at the Authority Board on the 30 September 2021. Following challenge from the Board to more clearly present the importance of maintaining trust in official statistics, as well as the preservation of the Authority’s independence.

**Discussion**

4. The Strategic Risk profile demonstrates the most significant risks to the successful delivery of the Authority Strategy and its statutory objectives, owned by the Authority senior leadership..
5. In the previous iteration of the Strategic Risk profile, there was one specific risk entitled ‘Stakeholder Management: Trust in Official Statistics’. This approach did not make it sufficiently clear that the mismanagement of any one of the Strategic Risks could result in a detrimental impact on trust in the Authority.
6. The Risk and Assurance team has suggested an updated approach which more clearly shows how consideration of trust and independence are entwined across all the Strategic Risks as key impacts, which could result if the risks are not properly managed. This includes alignment of the risks to the Trust, Quality and Value aspects of the Code of Practice.
7. For further clarity and focus on the Authority’s statutory remit, we have defined an additional overarching Strategic Risk. This focuses on risks to our independence, including perceptions of independence, as well as the preservation of trust in official statistics.
8. On the 11 November 2021, ARAC discussed ownership of this overarching risk by a single owner. We have concluded that this should be owned by the National Statistician. The proposed risk is entitled ‘Independence and Trustworthiness’.
9. The development of the entire Strategic Risk profile will continue to be overseen by NSEG on a quarterly basis, as well as ARAC. The Authority Board will receive an analysis of the entire Strategic Risk profile on a bi-annual basis.

**Conclusion**

10. Maintaining trust, as well as the preservation of our independence are a critical consideration throughout the entire Strategic Risk profile.
11. A new proposed Strategic Risk – ‘Independence and Trustworthiness’ further reinforces the importance of consideration of these issues by the Authority Board, sitting at the very

top of the Authority risk hierarchy. The new overarching Strategic Risk will frame the Authority Board risk discussion going forwards.

**Nick Bateson, Director Finance, Planning and Performance and Alex Dunn, Head of Risk, 18 November 2021**