

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes
Thursday 31 March 2022
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
Mary Gregory (for item 9)
Fiona James (for item 10)
Alison Pritchard
Ruth Studley (for item 11)

Apologies

None

1. Apologies

1.1 There were no apologies received.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

3. Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 February 2022 were agreed.

4. Report from the Authority Chair

4.1 Non-Executives had met prior to the Board meeting. They had discussed the recruitment process of the Authority Chair. The pre appointment hearing for the preferred candidate had been held by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) on 29 March.

4.2 The Chair reported on his recent activities since the Board last met:

- i. Sir David had spoken at the launch of the Office for Statistics Regulation's Systemic Review of the importance of including children and young people in official statistics, on 3 March;
- ii. Sir David had been interviewed at that Institute for Government on 7 March;
- iii. the discussion by Regulation Committee on 7 March regarding the Authority Intervention policy;
- iv. on 9 March and 30 March respectively Sir David had presented a farewell question and answer session to ONS staff and to OSR staff; and
- v. Sir David and Ed Humpherson had spoken to a meeting of the Civil Service Board about transparency in government on 23 March.

4.3 Sir David informed the meeting that the terms of appointment for Non-Executive Directors, Professor Anne Trefethen and Helen Boaden, had been extended by the Cabinet Office to the end of 2022. The Deputy Chair, Sian Jones, would be interim Chair of the UK Statistics Authority until the appointment process for the next Authority Chair was complete.

5. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(22)15]

5.1 Professor Sir Ian Diamond provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting, highlighting the following:

- i. Sir Ian had delivered a data masterclass to members of PACAC and Ministers in early March;
- ii. progress of the statistical processing of census data with work ongoing with Local Authorities as part of the quality assurance process;
- iii. Sir Ian had attended a cross government meeting regarding the production and coherence of data across the UK, which linked to the work by ONS on sub-national data;
- iv. the publication of three articles on the results of the Over 50s Lifestyle Survey;
- v. Sir Ian had attended a cross government meeting regarding efficiencies across all departments underpinned by clear monitoring and evaluation strategies; and
- vi. approval had been received from the Cabinet Office on the ONS approach to the recruitment of digital and data capability resources.

5.2 Hugh Stickland joined the meeting to update the Board alongside Sir Ian on the work across the organisation to coordinate and deliver data and analysis following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, including a bespoke survey: UK Humanitarian Response Insight Survey.

6. Report from the Director General for Regulation [SA(22)16]

- 6.1 Ed Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity highlighting OSR's Systemic Review: Visibility, Vulnerability and Voice: the importance of including children and young people in official statistics, which had been published on 3 March. The aim of the review was to add to the evidence base of the strengths and weaknesses of the current official statistics on children and young people and provide a framework for statistics producers to make improvements.
- 6.2 Ed Humpherson had attended: the Science and Technology Committee on 2 March regarding the importance of statistical information throughout the coronavirus pandemic; and the Authority Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 17 March reporting on OSR activities over the last year.
- 6.3 The Board heard that the consultation paper on OSR's release times review had been published on 24 March with changes to the Code of Practice scheduled on 5 May 2022. A team had been set up to prepare for emerging issues in relation to the Ukraine invasion and the need for data.

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 17 March 2022.
- 7.2 The Committee had considered:
 - i. the financial position of the organisation, expenditure at year end and the pace of delivery of the transformation programmes;
 - ii. progress implementing the risk and assurance framework, commending the work of the Risk and Assurance Team; and
 - iii. progress made in addressing legacy transformation and the planned work to bring together key areas of focus including statistical production and quality and transformation.
- 7.3 The Committee had endorsed the revised approach to security risk appetite with clear controls and governance in place.

8. ONS Business Plan [SA(22)17]

- 8.1 Nick Bateson introduced a paper which provided the draft refreshed ONS Strategic Business Plan (SBP). The business plan was scheduled for publication in the next few months.
- 8.2 The Board heard that the work on delivery of the business plan was already in progress. The draft plan would include a summary narrative at the start to clearly reflect the high level of ambition of the organisation in the continued delivery of the strategy, Statistics for the Public Good.
- 8.3 Board members discussed the draft plan and highlighted the need to ensure it reflected the focus on delivery for the public good for all users. It was noted that the value of the Integrated Data Service could be further highlighted in the text.

9. OSR Business Plan [SA(22)18]

- 9.1 Ed Humpherson and Mary Gregory introduced a paper which provided a draft of the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) Business Plan for 202/23. The draft plan focused on three high-level activities; projects which improve public understanding of matters of greatest public interest; promoting data sharing and linkage; and widening OSR's reach and influence.
- 9.2 Board members endorsed the areas of focus and priorities. It was noted that OSR could also focus on horizon scanning to further identify medium to long term issues.

10. Integrated Data Service [SA(22)19]

- 10.1 Alison Pritchard and Fiona James introduced a paper which provided an update on key elements of the Integrated Data Service (IDS).
- 10.2 The Board heard that the IDS would build on ONS expertise of handling data and managing trusted research environments. The service would enable data to be shared and linked; and it would provide evidence to inform policy decisions. The programme was on target for delivery of the initial Public Beta in Summer 2022. The IDS team continued to work collaboratively across government on data sourcing.
- 10.3 Board members discussed progress and highlighted the need for ONS to continue demonstrate the value of the IDS for all users. The Board would remain engaged in the delivery of the IDS as work progressed.

11. COVID-19 Infection Survey and Surveillance Studies [SA(22)20]

- 11.1 Ruth Studley introduced a paper which provided an update on the COVID-19 Infection Survey (CIS) programme. The commissioning of the CIS to March 2023 had been secured with a budget in place. Efficiencies had been agreed, including reductions to the sample size in order to remain within budget.
- 11.2 The Board heard that the CIS team were focussed on the stabilisation of the CIS transition with robust plans in place. Board members welcomed the update and commended the CIS team on their delivery.

12. Media Strategy [SA(22)21]

- 12.1 Owen Brace introduced a paper which set out how the ONS engaged the media to promote awareness and understanding of statistics and the work by ONS, and how it communicated directly to the public.
- 12.2 The Board heard about the objectives for media engagement including the promotion of statistics and analysis. The central media team was responsible for all media activity across the organisation, including working with statisticians to act as spokespeople. A network of statisticians were trained on social media engagement to engage in dialogue on particular issues, and deal with misinformation. It was noted that the pandemic and the Census had brought a much wider user base to ONS outputs and had raised the profile of the organisation significantly.
- 12.3 The Board noted the update.

13. Any other business

- 13.1 Sian Jones, Sir Ian and all members of the Authority Board paid warm tribute to Sir David Norgrove at the conclusion of his term of office as Chair of the UK Statistics Authority. Sir David noted thanks to Sir Ian and the Executive Team for the quality of their open and honest papers for consideration by the Board. Sir David said his time as Chair had been a real pleasure.
- 13.2 The next meeting would take place on Thursday 28 April 2022.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Agenda

31 March 2022, 13.00-16.00

London Boardroom

Chair: Sir David Norgrove

Apologies: None

Attendees: Mary Gregory (item 7), Fiona James (item 8), Ruth Studley (for item 9)

NED Session: 12.30-13.00

1 13.00-13.05 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings Declarations of interest	Meeting of 24 February 2022
2 13.05-13.15 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	Oral report Sir David Norgrove
3 13.15-13.40 25 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(22)15 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond
4 13.40-13.50 10 mins	Report from the Director-General for Regulation	SA(22)16 Ed Humpherson
5 13.50-13.55 5 mins	Report from Committee Chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none">Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Oral report Nora Nanayakkara
6 13.55-14.15 20 mins	ONS Business Plan	SA(22)17 Nick Bateson
14.15-14.25 10 mins	Break	
7 14.25-14.45 20 mins	OSR Business Plan	SA(22)18 Ed Humpherson Mary Gregory
8 14.45-15.10 25 mins	Integrated Data Service	SA(22)19 Alison Pritchard Fiona James
9 15.10-15.30 20 mins	COVID-19 Infection Survey and Surveillance Studies	SA(22)20 Ruth Studley
10 15.30-15.50 20 mins	Media Strategy	SA(22)21 Owen Brace
11 15.50-16.00 10 mins	Any Other Business	

Next meeting: Thursday 28 April 2022

Chief Executive's Report, March 2022

Purpose

1. This provides the Authority Board with an overview of activity and issues for March 2022.

Summary

2. March has seen the organisation respond to multiple competing pressures, working at pace to provide analytical insights to central government on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, alongside continuing existing work on COVID-19, cost of living and supply chain disruption. I also gave evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC), delivered a data masterclass to the members of the PACAC committee and ministers.
3. I was delighted to learn that the COVID-19 Infection Survey (CIS) had not only been funded for an additional year, but also awarded the Harding Prize for Useful and Trustworthy Communication by the University of Cambridge. Statistical processing of the census data continues to progress well and at the start of April we will provide provisional estimates to Local Authorities.

Review of recent activities

4. After being commissioned by the Cabinet Office to stand up the **Over 50s Lifestyle Survey** to understand the reasons people have left work, and the motivations and barriers to returning to work, we have published three articles. These have included both quantitative and qualitative insights, which continues to feed into policy work.
5. On **cost of living**, we continue to explore the drivers and impacts including work on a personal inflation calculator where users can input their spending habits to produce a personal inflation rate which better reflects their personal situation. We also published an analytical article and online tool looking at how households compare on income, spending and wealth. The annual updating of the inflation basket of goods achieved wide coverage, led by an interview with Sam Beckett on Radio Five Live, and helped secure messaging around use of scanner data.
6. Following the **Russian invasion of Ukraine**, we have worked at pace to coordinate across the organisation and deliver data, analysis and insight on the latest situation. This has so far included impacts on the UK economy, specific sectors exposed to energy price rises and trade with Russian and Ukraine, and what we know about the impacts of sanctions on Russia. We are working closely with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Cabinet Office, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Department for International Trade (DIT), HM Treasury and the Bank of England across all this work. This included early counts of country of birth by local authority for Ukraine and neighbouring or relevant countries from census 2021 to help local and national response planning.
7. We held our **first Annual Crime and Justice Forum** which was well attended by colleagues from academia, business and government. Topics included changes made in measuring crime and justice across the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic and updates from colleagues from the USA and Sweden on their multimodal approaches to surveying crime. I opened the forum and the event was a great success.
8. After an extension in funding, the **COVID-19 Infection Survey** (CIS) will continue to provide critical evidence to central government. Over the coming months CIS will implement new efficiencies and continue to be responsive to user needs and evolving demands; we will retain capability to surge additional analysis during periods of uncertainty, for example in the case of a variant of concern. The transition to CIS Digital

continues to progress well with a revised protocol approved and the online data collection build underway. Additionally, the study has been awarded the Harding Prize for Useful and Trustworthy Communication by the University of Cambridge, a great achievement.

9. This month I gave evidence to the **Public Accounts Committee** on Government's use of evaluation and modelling in throughout the pandemic on the back of two NAO reports on these areas. I discussed the Analysis Function, responsibility for regulating the use of modelling across government, importance of transparency at every stage from development to implementation, and standards in cross-government data sharing.
10. On 7 March, I delivered a **data masterclass** alongside Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter at our Newport office to members of the PACAC Committee (William Wragg MP, David Jones MP, Karin Smyth MP, Jackie Doyle-Price MP and Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP, and staff). It generated an interesting discussion on modelling figures, the impact of testing changes on figures, international comparisons of COVID deaths, the international statistical community, wellbeing indicators, and our work on data acquisition. The same masterclass was also delivered to ministers, including DWP Secretary of State.
11. The **53rd United Nations Statistical Commission** was held virtually at the start of the month. Representatives from 193 Statistics Offices were present. The UK made interventions on several items including Health Statistics; Big Data; and Peace and Governance Statistics. During Peace and Governance Statistics, the UK took the opportunity to include in its intervention a statement expressing solidarity with the Ukrainian people and condemning the Russian invasion.
12. In the Data Science Campus (DSC), we have been involved in a **collaboration with the RAF**. The Campus have published a report on the work to help upskill RAF staff in the Python programming language and natural language processing methods.
13. The **Labour Market Survey (LMS)** transformation programme reached a key milestone in February as our telephone capture mode went live alongside our online data collection system. In April we will increase in sample size on the LMS, start the formal dual run and begin recruiting field interviewers to support the October introduction of a knock to nudge field mode as part of the dual run.
14. Statistical **processing of the census data** continues to progress well and at the start of April we will provide provisional estimates of population by age and sex to each Local Authority for Quality Assurance. At the beginning of March, we issued a statement announcing that the complex processes to get the best possible estimates have taken slightly longer than planned and, in order to allow time to get the maximum value from the insights from Local Authorities, we now aim to publish the first Census results in early summer, rather than the end of May.
15. The **Integrated Data Programme** status is AMBER, driven largely by resourcing challenges. Work is ongoing to proactively mitigate this issue and minimise impact.
16. We are establishing the next iteration of our statistics transformation programme, **ARIES 2.0**, in preparation for the new financial year. ARIES was initially designed as a one-year programme and as we move into the next phase, we are reviewing the scope, ambition and delivery timescales.
17. ONS hosted the first **Beyond GDP sprint workshop** for the UN Network of Economic Statisticians this month. This brought together 70 delegates from National Statistic Institutes as well as academics from across the world, discussing common issues and themes in the measurement of modern capital. The sprint helped solidify agreement on key methodological issues across natural, human, and produced capital.

18. We are also rapidly progressing plans for the publication of a new quarterly article presenting the latest **insights on climate change**. The article will bring together faster (updated at least quarterly) climate-change related indicators from across ONS, government and wider sources, setting them in the context of our annual natural capital and environmental accounts and within our longer term 'beyond GDP' work programme. The first publication is provisionally set for 12 May, alongside the first quarterly estimate of GDP for Q1 2022.
19. The start of the month marked the first 'birthday' of our UK Statistics Authority-ONS **Centre for Applied Data Ethics**. This is a key pillar in our ambition to be 'recognised world-leaders in the practical application of data ethics for statistics and research'. Over the last year, the centre has produced applied and practical guidance, training and engagement through which a number of our stakeholders have been engaged with and have been visibly supported including on: the ethical considerations of using geospatial data, research for public good, use of data for third party research, and supporting the inclusivity of data agenda.
20. The **Operations Group**, led by Sam Beckett, alongside other key members of the leadership team met in the new Darlington Economic Campus. While there, the group were able to view both sites, meet with local campus and field force staff, and speak to other Heads of Campus from HMT and DIT to shape the longer-term vision for the campus and reflect on the progress so far.
21. The Security and Information Management Directorate have been heavily focused on **ONS Cyber Threat resilience** over the last month due to the invasion of Ukraine and the heightened threat to UK Government. This has involved a focus on validating existing security controls, defence reviews, tabletop incident exercises, and incident management plan reviews.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, March 2022

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(22)16

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) activities.

Discussion

2. Our main areas of focus since the last Board meeting have been:
 - i. **Science and Technology Committee:** I was invited to attend the [Science and Technology Committee](#) on 2 March to discuss the importance of statistical information throughout the coronavirus pandemic. This resulted in some positive [media](#) coverage. A particular focus was the best measure for Covid deaths. I was questioned about the number of death certificates where the only stated cause is Covid-19, a figure we and ONS consider as misleading, since death certificates can legitimately refer to multiple causes of death. When questioned about the misleading figure I replied that "I so dislike that figure I'm not going to repeat it back", thereby seeking to avoid the repetition of the misleading statistic.
 - ii. **Scottish Parliament Evidence Week:** I spoke at the opening event of the Scottish Parliament's evidence week, alongside a range of Members of the Scottish Parliament. It was an excellent event where a range of evidence questions were raised by members of the public.
 - iii. **OSR outputs:** As the dashboards at **Annex A** show, we published our report into the importance of [children and young people](#) and held a successful launch event with over 130 attendees. The event generated positive engagement that we are following up on. We also completed our rapid review for [ONS over 50s lifestyle study](#) and our compliance check on [planning applications in England](#). We also confirmed [Northern Ireland's Broad Economy and Exports Statistics](#) as National Statistics.
 - iv. **Casework:** There has been an increased volume of casework since the last Board meeting. The cases cover a range of issues, including questions related to the numbers of refugees from the war in Ukraine, and data on vaccines and their effectiveness. Of this range of cases, the main published intervention has been the letter I [wrote](#) to the Head of Profession for Statistics at UK Health Security Agency regarding the use of unpublished estimated costs of test and trace.
 - v. **The Regulation Committee:** As part of our escalation of casework Sir David [wrote](#) to the Prime Minister about his references to employment. This resulted in an extraordinary meeting of the Regulation Committee in March to discuss casework interventions in more detail. The aim was to understand if we have the right tools in place to enable the desired impact. Anne will update the Committee more fully but overall it was a useful discussion of our policies and practices.
 - vi. **Audit committee:** The paper for the March Audit Committee, highlighted the activities and success of OSR for the year. The Committee was very supportive of the work we have done not just in regulating ONS, but in driving improvements across the whole of the Government Statistical Service.
 - vii. **Population:** Since the last Committee we have [published a report](#) on our review of migration statistics. This highlights positive developments and outlines recommendations for further improvement, specifically around user engagement and clear and coherent communication across population and labour market transformation. We are continuing to engage with ONS around the broader transformation programme, with a discussion planned for the next Regulation Committee.

- viii. **Business planning:** The OSR Business Plan will be discussed in more detail in a separate agenda item.
- ix. **Impact:** the team is looking at how we measure and record the impact of our work as well as understanding if there are areas where we can improve our impact or interventions to get greater impact.
- x. **09:30 consultation:** Following approval by the Authority Board for changing the Code we are making final arrangements to publish the consultation paper on 24 March and update the Code on 5 May.

Conclusion

3. On my mind at the moment are:

- i. **Ukraine:** Although this crisis is less ostensibly about the availability of reliable statistics than Covid-19 has been, it is already having an impact on casework and the desire for data e.g., on the numbers of people settled in the UK. A cross discipline team has been stood up to discuss how best to prepare for and react to this emerging issue.
- ii. **OSR development and support:** OSR received very good People Survey results, but we want to improve our approach to development and support to OSR staff and improve our approach to management. This will be a significant focus for 2022/23.

Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, OSR, 23 March 2022

Regulatory Activities – March 2022 Authority Board

Health and Social Care	Economy	Population and Society	Crime and Security	Children, Education and Skills
<p>Casework: Published letter to Cabinet Office and UKHSA to request transparency on government statement about Test and Trace.</p> <p>Assessment: Drafting report on Family Practitioner Services statistics in Northern Ireland and continuing user engagement for NHS Education Scotland Workforce statistics. About to start assessment of ONS statistics on Deaths in the Care Sector.</p> <p>Systemic Reviews: Performing further rounds of user engagement, following up on Adult Social Care and Mental Health reviews.</p> <p>Compliance Checks: Healthcare associated infections statistics, transferred to UKHSA from PHE.</p> <p>Review of QCovid algorithm: Publishing a blog on our findings later this month.</p>	<p>Assessments: ONS Productivity Statistics – Expecting to propose NS designation to April Regulation Committee meeting.</p> <p>ONS Country and Regional Public Sector Finances – Draft assessment report scheduled to go to April Regulation Committee.</p> <p>ONS Regional GDP – Assessment on hold until May 2022, when it is expected, following user consultation, ONS will publish improved estimates of regional economic performance</p> <p>Systemic Review: Post-Brexit ONS Economic Classifications – Under the new ONS governance arrangements for economic classification and National Accounts scrutiny, OSR and ONS have been discussing the risks of engaging the IMF or OSR in the role of external auditor.</p>	<p>Assessments: Census We continue to discuss how ONS and NISRA are working to meet the assessment requirements. Update paper being drafted for April Regulation Committee meeting.</p> <p>Compliance Check: Migration – First phase of a review of ONS plans for future migration estimates and outputs published 1 March.</p> <p>Scottish Household Survey – QA meeting set up for late March with aim to draft and publish a letter in April</p> <p>Casework: Investigating concerns raised about NI Religion statistics. Building on a range of casework to bring together views on COVID related deaths statistics and excess death reporting.</p>	<p>Assessments: Home Office Police Officer Uplift statistics – started reviewing evidence and arranging meetings with users.</p> <p>Hate Crime statistics – drafting letters. Provisional publication date of 10 May.</p> <p>Rapid Review: NI Safe Community Telephone Survey – Kicked off review.</p> <p>Casework: Investigating concerns about MoD defence spending.</p>	<p>Systemic Review: Children and Young People – Report published on 3 March. Successful launch event held with over 130 attendees. Planning for follow up engagement.</p> <p>Assessment: Key Stage 4 statistics in England – In the user engagement phase of this assessment and moving into the analysis phase.</p> <p>Compliance Check: Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland - Quality Assurance meeting and findings meeting with Skills Development Scotland set up for late March.</p> <p>Casework: Health and Wellbeing Census in Scotland – concerns raised around the confidentiality and ethics of the census of school age children.</p>
Labour Market and Welfare	Housing, Planning and Local Services	Agriculture, Energy and Environment	Business, Trade and International Development	Travel, Transport and Tourism
<p>Assessments: DWP Benefit Cap statistics: postponed following discussion with producer.</p> <p>ONS Employment and Jobs – All evidence now provided by ONS; Expecting to propose confirmation of NS designation to April Regulation Committee meeting.</p> <p>Labour Market Survey Phase One – Internal discussions are taking place about the kick-off meeting due in April.</p> <p>Compliance Checks: Letter published for ONS Over 50s on 14 March 2022</p> <p>Casework: 3 pieces of active casework on DWP statistics.</p>	<p>Assessment: Statutory Homelessness in England statistics: Engaging with team in line with DLUHC action plan for addressing assessment requirements</p> <p>Compliance Checks: Letter for review of Housing statistics produced by Homes England scheduled for week commencing 21 March. Letter for review of DLUHC Planning applications in England statistics published.</p>	<p>Assessment: People and Nature Survey Defra HoP has withdrawn interest in assessing these.</p> <p>Casework: Fuel Poverty meeting with BEIS 22 March to discuss definitions of fuel poverty.</p> <p>FOI query: response drafted and under review for query regarding Home Office animal testing statistics.</p>	<p>Compliance Checks: Expect to publish our CC on consistency of exports estimates at industry level between UK Trade and National Accounts sources before Easter.</p> <p>Assessments: Started an assessment of ONS's Funded Occupational Pension Schemes: UK statistics which we hope to take to Regulation Committee in July</p> <p>Northern Ireland's Broad Economy and Exports Statistics (BESES) – letter confirming designation as National Statistics published 22 March.</p>	<p>Systemic Review: Accessibility of Transport Networks – Report published 10 February.</p> <p>Compliance Checks: DfT's new Transport Disability and Accessibility Statistics publication, and Transport Scotland's new Disability and Transport publication published.</p> <p>Travel and Tourism - Engaging with ONS on plans for future of the International Passenger Survey. Meetings with Transport Focus and upcoming meeting with Transport Scotland where follow on from systemic review was discussed.</p>

Data and Methods	Insight
<p>RAP – ONS looking at how to take forward actions to progress the application of RAP principles across ONS. ONS team has undergone a restructure, so we are revising how we work with them going forward. Met with NHS Digital who have done some great work, meeting again in 6 months to talk about guest blog. Putting together case studies for the Code on website.</p> <p>QCovid – Blog now written and comments back from DHSC. Blog to be published w/c 21st March and will also be sent to relevant stakeholders Blog</p> <p>Model Guidance and exams lessons merger – Started work on comparing the two and what might need to be added to the beta version of the guidance to capture what we have learnt from the exam review and the relevance of the lessons to QCOVID. Also exploring what work we have coming up that could inform our thinking further on this such as the models for housing need that HPLS are looking at.</p> <p>Methods - Main focus of work is supporting regulatory projects, including migration. Also providing input into NS designation quality workstream and helping with a methodological process in the population domain.</p> <p>Data Science Projects – Delivered user tool for KS4 assessment to CES domain and now working on providing sentiment analysis for school league tables. This pipeline will also be useful for other projects already identified such as finding users for the pension assessment within economy domain. Working with C&S on analysis of HO press releases with may generate insight for the potential HO review. Working closely with the data scientists at Full Fact on their automated fact checking tool. We now have a live version to test which we will be using to identify potential casework.</p> <p>Other – Recruitment of SEO Data Officer now live which will help to put more weight behind our work on data in government. Planning on who will take on which roles within the function ongoing with Helen's role now active.</p>	<p>Insight and Evaluation Committee – Third meeting scheduled for 31 March to sign-off projects, share progress on Theory of Change and introduce upcoming projects such as State of the Statistical System Report and Annual Report.</p> <p>Communicating Uncertainty in Statistics – In end stages, due for completion end of March 2022.</p> <p>The Role of Official Statistics in Policy Evaluation – External engagement complete with report write-up in progress, due for completion end of March 2022 and sign-off at March I&E Committee. We plan to run a second phase of this project in 2022/23.</p> <p>Regulatory Insight – We are holding our first Insight Forum on 23 March to gather input from regulators on key insights from their work in 2021/22. We will use this information to steer the State of the Statistical System Report.</p> <p>Other – We published a blog introducing the Insight programme and the role of the Insight and Evaluation Manager in Feb 2022, inviting feedback from producers.</p>
Policy & Standards	Research
<p>9:30 release times review - Following approval by the Authority Board for changing the Code we are making final arrangements to publish the consultation paper on 24 March and update the Code on 5 May. We are in contact with HoPs for confirming alternative release times (where previously granted exemptions).</p> <p>NS designation review - Developing plans for the implementation project, including the Assessment, the Code Maturity Model and the Quality Grade developments and in contact with producers to find collaborators.</p> <p>Voluntary application and wider reach - Continuing wider engagement with other analysts to promote TQV; working with TfL and GLA on further embedding the Code; and launched the 2022 Award for Statistical Excellence in Trustworthiness, Quality and Value.</p>	<p>Public Confidence in Official Statistics Survey — We have just received the data from UKSA and are preparing to analyse this. The final PCOS report is still on track for publication by the end of April.</p> <p>Public Perceptions of the Public Good, Collaboration with ADR UK — The invitation to tender for the project is currently live, with a deadline of 22 March. Following this, each bidding company will be interviewed and evaluated by Mary Cowan (who leads the research programme) and representatives from ADR UK. The first meeting of the project advisory group will take place on 25 March and the contract for the project is due to be awarded on 8 April.</p> <p>Internal Exploration of OSR's Perceptions of the Public Good — The quantitative analysis is complete, and the qualitative analysis is underway. The findings will be written up and presented to the team shortly.</p>
Cross Cutting Issues	
<p>Business planning for 2022/23 is developing well. We shared a draft business plan with Regulation Committee in February and will share the latest version with the Board this month.</p> <p>Analytical leadership public event held on 3 February (almost 200 people joined us) and we are launching a 6-month seminar series for the Analysis Function in Spring. Helen Miller-Bakewell joined us at the end of February as our Grade 6 Head of Strategic Development and Impact.</p>	

Strategic Business Plan 2022/23

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Authority Board with the draft refreshed 2022/23 ONS Strategic Business Plan (SBP).

Timing

2. To ensure that we are on course to develop a clear set of objectives and financial budgets for the new Spending Review (SR) period/financial year, the draft SBP is presented to the Board for review and comment.
3. The final version of the SBP will be reviewed by the National Statistics Executive Group (NSEG) and its sub-committees prior to publication.

Recommendations

4. Members of the Authority Board are invited to review the Business Plan.

Background

5. The Board confirmed at its November 2021 meeting that the Authority Strategy will not change in response to the SR settlement and remains relevant in the current context.
6. The financial year 2022/23 planning round is now in its final stages; the refreshed SBP has been developed, capacity planning and prioritisation of the Tier 0 and Tier 1/2 priorities is concluding, and the detailed directorate level objectives – termed Accountability Framework Objectives – are being finalised.
7. The overall approach to the 2022/23 Business Planning Round was approved at December Portfolio and Investment Committee (PIC). As part of this approach, nine workstreams were commissioned that have contributed to the collaborative development of the draft, refreshed, ambitious SBP covering the remaining period of Statistics for the Public Good.
8. The draft Business Plan was submitted through the internal approval governance in March. PIC were supportive and positive, with some relatively minor changes suggested and incorporated before its onward submission to NSEG who met on Tuesday 22 March.

Conclusion

9. Planning and Portfolio Management team will continue to fine tune the Business Plan incorporating:
 - i. Board feedback;
 - ii. the outcome of the final stages of organisational prioritisation on the key delivery milestones and areas of work that will be stopped, reduced or rescheduled; and
 - iii. the final picture of the 2022/23 Key Deliverables and budgets.

Nick Bateson, Finance Planning and Performance, ONS, 21 March 2022

Office for Statistics Regulation Draft Business Plan

Purpose

1. This paper provides a draft of the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) Business Plan for 2022/23.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to comment on the Draft Business Plan and suggest areas that are missing or require further development.

Discussion

3. We shared an early draft of our Business Plan with Regulation Committee in February and will seek approval of the plan, and our planned update to our published rolling regulatory work programme, at the April Committee, before returning to the Board for final sign off.
4. The Draft Business Plan focuses on our high-level Activities, Outcomes and Impacts for 2022/23 and how we will continue to mature as a regulator by strengthening our capability. Here is a summary of our proposed high-level activities:
 - i. prioritise projects which improve public understanding of matters of greatest public interest;
 - ii. promote data sharing and linkage in a secure manner; and
 - iii. widen our reach and influence.
5. We also have three priorities related to strengthening our capability:
 - i. ensure our opinions and judgments are transparent and easy to find, and improve public access to OSR;
 - ii. improve our people's confidence and skills to drive improvement autonomously; and
 - iii. embed a culture and infrastructure for gathering and sharing insights.
6. Regulation Committee highlighted the importance of considering how well our programme aligns with what we anticipate being the biggest emerging issues of the coming year. We are keeping this in mind as we finalise the work programme. We expect to have a strong focus on health coming out of the pandemic, population – including census, population transformation, and migration, including in relation to movement of people from Ukraine – and inequalities and regional disparities.

Conclusion

7. We welcome feedback on the business plan and our focus for 2022/23. As always, we seek to align with the broader Authority Strategy while presenting an ambition and work programme for 2022/23 that is clearly independent of statistics producers and supports our vision of statistics that serve the public good.

Mary Gregory, Office for Statistics Regulation, 23 March 2022

Integrated Data Service – Data Sourcing and Strategy and Engagement Update

Purpose

1. To provide the Authority Board with an update on key elements of the Integrated Data Programme (IDP).

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to note:
 - i. strategic and tactical activities to source Data and to maximise the opportunities for data being available for the Integrated Data Service (IDS) as early as possible;
 - ii. update on Strategy and Engagement activities; and
 - iii. programme update.

Background

3. A critical enabler of the National Data Strategy, the IDS will build on ONS expertise of handling big data and managing Trusted Research Environments. The service will enable data to be shared, standardised, linked and accessed using common tools. It will provide evidence to inform and underpin policy decisions and deliver better outcomes for citizens while maintaining privacy.

Discussion

Data Sourcing and increasing the availability of data.

4. The Programme roadmap, endorsed at the January Programme Board, identified the target number of data sources that are intended to be available for each IDS release in 2022. These are as follows:
 - i. new Private Beta (Spring 2022) - up to around 3 data sources;
 - ii. initial Public Beta (Summer 2022) - up to around 10 data sources; and
 - iii. full Public Beta (late Autumn 2022) - up to around 30 data sources.
5. This update outlines the activities underway to meet those targets and the factors that will impact success.
6. Following direction from Programme Board in February, the programme is pursuing both strategic and tactical approaches to sourcing further data and putting in place relevant data sharing agreements.
7. Strategic: Putting in place strategic Data Sharing Agreements in line with the Digital Economy Act (DEA).
8. The Secure Research Service (SRS) is already accredited as a processor under the DEA. Over time, data agreements relevant for the SRS will be replaced by new Data Sharing Agreements, which will enable faster, more transparent access to data. The new agreements seek to put in place one agreement to cover multiple data sources, negating the need to approach departments on a dataset-by-dataset basis to seek approval from data owners. In addition, the agreements will enable faster automation of a number of underlying operational processes such as greater access to a broader set of datasets (where permission exists to do so) and a new governance tool, which will fast-track requests through as quickly as possible without the need to wait for governance panels.
9. After the last Programme Board, an early copy of a new Data Sharing Agreement was circulated to Authority Board Members, in line with the DEA. The Government Legal Department are now largely content with the agreement, which will continue to evolve with feedback from departments.

10. Nonetheless, having established this approach on SRS, the same model will be implemented for IDS once DEA accreditation is achieved in late 2022. Subsequently, SRS data and agreements will be transferred to IDS. This approach will enable ONS to ensure that the agreements meet the needs of data owners as well as test the automation of the underlying operational processes. In the event that the strategic agreements are delayed or are not palatable to some departments, the existing approach to data processing agreements can continue to be employed to enable access to data on IDS.
11. Tactical: onboarding and provisioning access to data on IDS Initial Public Beta, using existing legal gateways available to ONS and other Departments. Two tactical elements are being pursued.

Targeted Data

12. The February Programme Board endorsed an approach to pursue a shortlist of twelve projects/datasets covering a variety of themes across society and economy, using data obtained from a mix of Government Departments, public sector organisations and businesses, and which are likely to meet some research needs. These datasets/projects were selected to showcase the capabilities of the Service in Public Beta, as it was judged possible that the necessary datasets can be acquired and utilised without the need for DEA accreditation.
13. The Programme Board endorsed the preliminary list of datasets and extended the support of all departments represented to make sure this data can be acquired for Public Beta. Data acquisition has started to make solid progress to agree the use of these datasets, with one data sharing agreement with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service expected to be agreed shortly.

Pipeline of Opportunities

14. The IDS Engagement team continue to work with partners across Government to identify potential datasets and analytical project opportunities that may be viable for IDS. This pipeline currently includes 24 potential opportunities and there is a programme process in place to prioritise these for feasibility assessment, which is the first step in establishing the viability of making the data or project available through IDS.

Data Sourcing and increasing the availability of data

15. Several activities and mitigations are in place to reduce the risk of data not being available to IDS:
 - i. the programme has refreshed its approach to categorising and engaging with Government Departments and continues to be pro-active in seeking opportunities with partners across Government;
 - ii. the programme is implementing a mixed approach to securing data as outlined above;
 - iii. a new Director of Data Growth and Operations was appointed in February 2022. Fiona James will be prioritising IDS Data opportunities as part of her role, providing oversight of strategic and tactical Data activities;
 - iv. a new front-door and prioritisation process is being developed for the programme; and
 - v. potential limiting factors, such as having adequate Data Architect resource are kept under review through Programme Governance.

Strategy and Engagement Update

16. Work continues to develop IDS branding; the design agency has created three design routes that have undergone testing with focus groups. The chosen route is due to be shared with Core Group on 28 March.

17. In parallel to the branding a website recommendation paper has been submitted to the Programme Senior Responsible Owner, and ONS Director of Communications, for review. This paper recommends that the IDS has its own web presence utilising the known and trusted gov.uk URL to support this. Following review and endorsement, this paper will be presented at Programme Board in March for endorsement.
18. Following the programme update to stakeholders in January, an IDP monthly newsletter is being developed and is due to be issued to stakeholders in April. This will provide regular updates on progress and a forward look at key milestones for 2022, including the pathway to Public Beta in the Autumn. An ambassador network is also being created, which includes representation from senior leadership across government to be advocates for IDS and raise the profile of the service.
19. Engagement with senior leads in Whitehall has also continued, including updating the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Chief of Staff at Number 10 on the progress of IDS with an extended invite to demo the service. The programme is also meeting Chief Data Officers at April's Chief Data Officer Council where Fiona James will present. The programme also recently attended the Departmental Directors of Analysis to provide an update and talk about the prioritisation of data.
20. A process for receiving and prioritising expressions of interest for prospective IDS projects is being developed and piloted. This will support the seamless transition of projects from identification of initial prospects, through to prioritisation and feasibility assessment and will lead to a development of a prioritised data pipeline for IDS.

Programme Update

21. Challenges remain around recruitment, particularly for specialist roles, and the Programme's RAG status remains at Amber.
22. The programme remains on track as re-baselined at New Year – albeit without contingency.

Alison Pritchard, Deputy National Statistician for Data Capability, 21 March 2022

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, and the work to support urgent policy decisions;
 - iii. ongoing CIS Digital development in the context of ongoing uncertainty; and
 - iii. that the CIS programme remains at Amber, with considerable progress made in addressing key risks on the programme.

Discussion**Tracking positivity**

3. Following the early identification of the new variant of Omicron (known as BA.2), the CIS has continued to track and report its dominance. In late February we observed the percentage of people testing positive increasing in five of the nine English regions and all age groups over 25 years old. By mid-March, rates were increasing in all regions and age groups which was driving overall growth in positivity across the UK. We have also recently seen a marked increase in viral load evidenced through the reduction in Cycle Threshold values.
4. CIS has additionally generated a range of novel insights including:
 - i. Predictors of positivity: a variety of factors contribute to an individual's likelihood of testing positive in including those who have not experienced prior infection, those who had travelled abroad in the last 28 days and those working in the education sector.
 - ii. Reinfections: risk of reinfection was approximately 10 times higher in the time period when the Omicron variant was most common (20 December 2021 to 6 February 2022) compared with the time period when the Delta variant was most common (17 May to 19 December 2021).
 - iii. Risk factors of reinfection: people who were unvaccinated were approximately twice as likely to be reinfected than people who had their second vaccine 14 to 89 days ago.

Mortality

5. In addition to the CIS analysis, we have updated the mortality by vaccination status and are planning an update to the excess deaths analysis now non-Covid excess deaths are apparent in the data again.
6. To investigate concerns around the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines, we conducted a study examining change in the incidence of cardiac and all-cause death in young people following COVID-19 vaccination. We also collaborated with the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities to deliver an analysis of excess mortality in young people during the pandemic.
7. An in-depth analysis of excess deaths during the pandemic is published on 22 March. This shows that there were more than 130,000 excess deaths from the start of the pandemic to the end of 2021, with Covid being the main driver. Focus is given to the final six months of 2021, when deaths were above average and were not, directly, caused by

Covid. Conditions associated with old age and frailty were the leading causes during this period.

Child immunity and schools infection study

8. Initial antibody estimates for children aged 4-18 from the second wave of the Schools Infection Survey 2 are due to be published on 1 April, having been shared as Management Information with government colleagues.
9. The final wave (wave 3) of the Schools Infection Survey 2 is currently taking place, with 173 schools participating and over 12,500 pupils registered to take part in both antibody testing and the completion of online questionnaires. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) have extended the funding to June 2022 to facilitate the analysis and publication of the results.
10. Further analysis from the linked education and health data analysis, focusing on COVID infection in all state schools in England in the Autumn terms, 2020 and 2021, is due to be published on 24 March.

CIS Digital

11. The commissioning of the CIS to March 2023 has been confirmed by UKHSA. Reductions to the sample size and incentive value has been agreed to keep within the financial envelope.
12. Protocol approval has been received from the Oxford Research Ethics Committee, allowing changes to become operational from 1 April, including the revised incentives to allow early efficiencies to be realised. The protocol is UK wide.

Next Steps

13. The stabilisation of the CIS transition and clarification of scientific priorities within the survey in 2022/23 is a priority to secure in the coming weeks, to enable delivery and continuity across the programme and wider portfolio. The team will continue to prepare robustly for a rapid launch of and stepped wedge transition to the revised model.

Emma Rourke, Director, Health Analysis and Pandemic Insights, 21 March 2022

Media relations and direct communications

Purpose

1. This paper sets out how the ONS engages the media to promote awareness and understanding of our work and our insight and how we communicate directly to the public.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. comment on the ONS media activity; and
 - ii. identify key opportunities to explore further.

Discussion

3. The Board has previously discussed how we engage users and other influential organisations to aid collaboration, meet user need and improve our services.
4. This paper follows that discussion to set out our objectives for media engagement, how we promote our statistics and analysis, the changing media landscape and opportunities for continual improvement in our media activity. We have also set out how we are exploring communications activity direct to public audiences.

ONS media operations

5. The central media relations team coordinates all activity with the media, providing a 24/7 response to all enquiries and identifying opportunities to promote the ONS and our outputs.
6. With an average of approximately 32 media enquiries per working day, and promoting an average of three - four statistical releases, corporate announcements or placed stories per day, we are one of the busier media operations in any government department.
7. The role of this team is to:
 - i. present and communicate our statistics and analysis so that it is easily understood, to the widest possible audience, while minimising the chance of misrepresentation;
 - ii. identify opportunities to raise the profile of the ONS and to communicate our strategic aims; and
 - iii. manage the reputation of the organisation within the media.
8. Of these three objectives, this paper focuses on the work to present and communicate our statistics and analysis to the widest possible audience.
9. We build relations with producers, editors, lead reporters and subject matter experts in target media outlets to encourage clear reporting of our statistics and analysis and to provide a direct channel back for media to confirm details for immediate deadlines.
10. The media team has subject leads to cover our main output areas and works closely with the outputs and data journalist teams to agree messaging and presentation, identify areas where insight could be misrepresented or misunderstood and mitigate through our presentation, and identify particular outlets and journalists who would have an interest in the subject.
11. The media team works with statisticians to act as spokespeople and generates interviews with key outlets, and facilitates in-depth briefings with media on key issues, themes and more detailed analysis. We now have over 100 media trained colleagues in ONS, with over 500 trained in basic media handling skills. This has enabled us to take

part in 615 television and radio interviews since March 2020 including interviews during the Census.

12. For each release, material is packaged specifically for use in media, including statistician comments, media release with main points, and reusable and shareable social media posts and content.
13. The economy is consistently the driver of our coverage although this is occasionally surpassed by people, population and community. These two themes regularly account for 70 per cent to 80 per cent of our coverage. Employment and the labour market and business, industry and trade make up the remaining drivers of coverage.
14. Reflecting the influence and reach of news outlets, the media team primarily focuses on broadcast, social and online news feeds on the release of statistics and analysis, and then print. We have built strong relationships with the various newswires and brief them as a priority, particularly on market-sensitive releases, as they will often lead the tone and messaging in subsequent online and print coverage. As an example, press association syndicates copy to many of the local and regional online news feeds.
15. The nature of media is that one journalist could cover a variety of different channels which reiterates the importance of maintaining key relationships. In addition, social channels, both our own and those used by commentators, can often set the media agenda.
16. Between March 2021 and February 2022, there were approximately 67,000 mentions of the ONS recorded in print and online coverage. This included noticeable peaks for key employment, Covid, inflation and public finances releases.
17. In February 2022 there were 47,800 Twitter engagements (likes, shares, etc) and 4 million Twitter impressions (views), driven by Covid infection coverage and inflation. This followed one of highest months in January (78,000 engagement and 8.69m impressions) due to extensive coverage of inflation and household costs.
18. In recent years we have targeted the main broadcast media with the largest reach¹ including BBC1 main bulletins (6pm, 10pm), the Andrew Marr Show, ITV Peston on Sunday, ITV Evening News, BBC Radio 4 and Radio 2, Capital and Heart radio. We have successfully landed commentary and specific analysis and statistics consistently across these channels. We experienced a significant increase in broadcast exposure in 2021 (391 interviews) against 2019 levels (91 interviews).
19. We have achieved growing coverage in print titles, although some of the widest read, particularly those with both print and online platforms such as the Sun and Mirror, have not reported our content as regularly as other titles.
20. In recent years, we have focused our efforts on ensuring key findings are reported accurately and lead the coverage. We have achieved this by clearly setting out key findings in media material and introducing statistician comments and interviews to emphasise those messages. Between March 2021 and February 2022, we recorded 7,620 pieces of print and online coverage which featured an ONS spokesperson.

Changing landscape

21. The news landscape has become increasingly fragmented in recent years. The Digital News Report² from Reuters Institute has regularly tracked news consumption.

¹ https://3x7ip91ron4ju9ehf2unqrm1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Modern_Media_Operation_A_Guide_GCS.pdf

² <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2021>

22. In recent years, consumers increasingly get their news from search and social. Use of Facebook has declined and Twitter has remained relatively stable, while channels like WhatsApp and Instagram continue to grow.
23. Even though search and social has increased, the trust gap is widening between this and what are considered reputable news sources. In other words, the least trusted sources are becoming the primary channels for news, particularly with younger audiences.
24. The pandemic has influenced media habits but we are yet to see if these are lasting changes. For example, after several years of continuing decline, the UK saw a growth in television news use in 2021. Trusted brands of reputable news sources perform well against other online news sources. The pandemic has also accelerated the decline of print as a primary news source.
25. In recent years, both the pandemic and the Census have brought a much wider user base to ONS outputs and raised awareness of the organisation and our work. We have seen significant growth in ONS mentions in UK media triggered by key points such as the pandemic and Census. This has also coincided with the 7am release time for market sensitive releases which has broadened our reach to additional target media outlets.
26. Our regular reputation tracker records public awareness of the ONS at an average of 85 per cent but relatively stable throughout 2021. Although not directly comparable, a similar study in 2018 recorded awareness of ONS as 69 per cent. Awareness does vary by age group from 62 per cent among 18-24yrs to 91 per cent in 55+ category. There are also variations by geography from 79 per cent in Scotland and 81 per cent in both the Midlands and London to 87 per cent in the South and 96 per cent in Wales (which is likely to be affected by extensive media coverage of the Census).
27. The Reuters Institute has also undertaken a study into the relevance of impartial news³, which stresses the value consumers place on impartiality as a key driver for trust in news with the presentation of facts at the centre of this model, while noting the growing pressures on impartiality from the prominence of opinion in new digital formats. The ONS demonstrates impartiality through our messaging, presentation of information and profile raising through the media and the ONS reputation tracker notes an average throughout 2021/22 of 73 per cent of participants agreeing the ONS uses data to produce impartial statistics and analysis.
28. While these are very positive metrics, it highlights several areas we can target to broaden the reach of our outputs and raise the profile of the ONS, across all media channels, to specific age groups and regionally.

Direct communications

29. While the majority of audiences will engage with ONS content through media channels, we manage our owned channels and identify any new opportunities to communicate our outputs and raise the ONS profile directly with the public.
30. Our main social media presence is the @ONS Twitter account with 343,000 followers, which achieves good engagement and reach. This is predominantly a broadcast channel with threads created to support outputs and to respond to specific trends on social media.
31. We have created a network of statisticians who are trained on social media engagement and will converse in dialogue on particular issues, themes and releases. In recent months, we have also trialled material and commentary on LinkedIn to understand opportunities to reach out to business audiences.

³ https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-10/Vir_the_relevance_of_impartial_news_in_a_polarised_world_FINAL_0.pdf

32. Social media is also where we have set up teams and structures to tackle misinformation and disinformation. During the Census, we employed extensive resource to monitor social channels, identify misinformation and disinformation and work directly with social media companies to remove content and accounts. While specific agreements were made with the social media companies during the Census, this does not translate to daily activity. In addition, there are organisations such as the Office for Statistics Regulation and FullFact who are also acting in this space.
33. The ONS has undertaken extensive activity to increase data literacy and build the ONS profile directly with a younger audience. This includes the highly successful Let's Count material that was introduced to the primary school curriculum during the Census, and has continued for a broader benefit for the ONS, and educational material for economics students. We are building on these foundations to create an overall education offer for a variety of students and levels.
34. As part of our efforts to trial new ways of building the ONS brand to a wider audience and in turn promote the Census, we released a book entitled The Official History of Britain, and will be releasing the paperback in Spring. In February 2022 we have launched our new ONS Podcast, Statistically Speaking, helping us tell the story behind the numbers. We are also exploring the potential for live briefings and live-streaming of analysis, and other video-based content, maximising the opportunities that hybrid working and improved technology has brought. This is alongside work we are undertaking to create direct feeds to disseminate data to newswires as soon as data is released to replace the previous secure briefing service.

Opportunities

35. Broadcast: We have achieved extensive coverage of the main broadcast and have broadened our reach during the pandemic. We will build on this to target some harder to reach broadcast news programmes such as BBC1 Newsnight and Channel 4 Dispatches, and BBC Radio 1 as an additional channel to reach a younger audience.
36. Print: We have continued to grow our print coverage and the extensive Census reach demonstrated the value of additional titles. We will target titles with wide combined print and digital reach, such as the Sun and the Mirror, and Weekend publications to reach a new audience and allow for more in-depth features, which would be a very realistic prospect if we were to release secondary analysis, for example, over weekends or under embargo.
37. Consumer media: We successfully promoted the Census through consumer titles across a variety of media, such as BBC1's One Show, Cosmopolitan, TalkSport, Good Morning Britain and Money Saving Expert. We will target these titles and outlets with in-depth analysis and profiles to reach a completely new demographic to our existing audience.
38. Digital and online: We have previously achieved widespread digital and online coverage as a consequence of targeting associated outlets such as print and broadcast. We will expand this reach by targeting some of the digital-only channels such as MSN.com and BuzzFeed.com to reach new audiences.
39. Regional and specialist: We showed the value of reach, awareness and brand building through regional media and other channels for specific audiences, such as ethnic minority groups, through the Census activity. We are dedicating resource to target these outlets more regularly and considering ONS-wide regional spokespeople to build on the Census operation. This will enable us to address regional variation in the awareness of the ONS brand, which in turn supports our survey collection efforts.
40. Social media: We achieve high reach and engagement through our corporate account, which compares favourably with similar organisations. This tends to be used as a broadcast service and we will improve how we use social media by embracing social

media as a two-way engagement channel and exploring other growing social media channels. While this takes time to build a genuine and engaging presence, it will enable us to reach a younger and more diverse audience than presently. We are also considering our role in tackling misinformation and disinformation through social channels.

41. Media partnerships: We have a stated policy and ambition⁴ to collaborate with media outlets to present analysis in the most engaging way. The crime calculator⁵ we co-created with BBC data journalists was our most successful collaboration in recent years and achieved millions of uses in just a matter of days, significantly more than if we just relied on ONS channels. We have supplemented these partnerships to achieve wide reach by creating tools to standards which media channels (digital and online mainly) regularly embed and will focus our efforts on further media partnerships to replicate previous success.
42. Robo-journalism: As part of the Census outputs work, we are exploring the potential to create self-contained modules with accompanying text which adjusts according to user input to provide a clear narrative, which would be embeddable and reusable by media and will personalise content automatically. We are also exploring template copy with adaptable inputs to enable one data set to generate hundreds of articles, such as local and regional outlets.
43. Census outputs: These will provide a platform to not just disseminate the vast insight gained from the Census but will also allow us to pivot to wider societal analysis and other ONS outputs.

Conclusion

44. We have experienced a growing profile and wider reach of our outputs in recent years and are focusing on further opportunities to maintain our profile and continue to grow reach to wider audience groups.

Owen Brace, Communications and Digital Publishing, 21 March 2022

⁴ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/whatwedo/programmesandprojects/theonsandmediapartnerships>

⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41178903>