

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## Minutes

Thursday 29 September 2022

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

### **Present**

#### **UK Statistics Authority**

Sir Robert Chote (Chair)

Professor Sir John Aston

Helen Boaden

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Richard Dobbs

Professor Jonathan Haskel

Ed Humpherson

Nora Nanayakkara

Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter

### **Also in attendance**

Esther Akleh-Amankwah (for item 14)

Owen Brace

Robert Bumpstead

Siobhan Carey (for item 2)

Megan Cooper

Chris Ganley (for item 2)

Sally-Ann Jones (Secretariat)

Mike Keogh (for items 12 and 13)

Deborah Lyness (for item 2)

Joe Moore (for item 14)

Chris Payne (for item 12)

Sofia Poni (for item 13)

Alison Pritchard

Rhys Thomas

Jason Zawadzki (for item 13)

### **Apologies**

Professor Anne Trefethen

Sam Beckett

Sian Jones (Deputy Chair)

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Sir Robert Chote welcomed everyone, noting thanks to colleagues from the Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency (NISRA) for hosting the meeting.

## **2. Presentation: NISRA Recent Developments**

- 2.1 Siobhan Carey, Chief Statistician and Registrar General, Chris Ganley, Economic Accounts, and Deborah Lyness, Administrative Data Research Northern Ireland (ADR NI), gave a presentation on areas of focus for NISRA.
- 2.2 The Board heard about the Northern Ireland Census 2021, which had been a collaborative effort with the Office for National Statistics (ONS), achieving a 97 per cent response rate and accredited National Statistics status by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR); the development of Economic Accounts; and the impact of ADR NI successfully linking administrative data to inform policy in areas including the impacts of COVID-19, education and work and social inclusion.
- 2.3 The Board noted their thanks for an excellent presentation.

## **3. Apologies**

- 3.1 Apologies were received from Professor Anne Trefethen, Sam Beckett and Sian Jones.

## **4. Declarations of Interest**

- 4.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

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

- 5.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 July 2022 were agreed.

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

- 6.1 Non-executives had met prior to the Board meeting. They had discussed topics including appointments and the Non-executive Director recruitment process, delivery of the Integrated Data Service (IDS), and economic statistics.
- 6.2 The Chair reported on his recent activities since the Board last met:
  - i. on 3 August Sir Robert Chote had met Stian Westlake and Paul Allin of the Royal Statistical Society;
  - ii. Sir Robert alongside Professor Sir Ian Diamond had attended the Inter Administration Committee and UK Census Committee on 4 August;
  - iii. Sir Robert had met Will Moy of Full Fact on 10 August; and
  - iv. on 14 September Sir Robert had met colleagues from NISRA, Siobhan Carey, David Marshall and Sandy Fitzpatrick regarding the Northern Ireland Census 2021.
- 6.3 It was noted that in the coming months Sir Robert and Sir Ian would be visiting Heads of Profession and their teams across Government Statistical Service departments.

## **7. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(22)46]**

- 7.1 Sir Ian provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting, highlighting the following:
  - i. Sir Ian acknowledged the sad death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. He noted the delivery of the ONS operational plan in response, which had included adjustments to ONS field force operations in respect;
  - ii. Sir Ian had delivered a keynote speech to the British Society for Population Studies Annual Conference at Winchester University, on 'Measuring Populations and their Characteristics: Past, Present and Future';
  - iii. the continued support by ONS for colleagues at National Records of Scotland (NRS) on the Scotland Census 2022;

- iv. the COVID-19 Infection Survey had successfully transitioned to a digital first data collection;
  - v. following the launch of the new Analysis Function Strategy in July Sir Ian had delivered a number of presentations to departments and Professions on the importance of analysis to inform decision making; and
  - vi. the work being led by the International Team raising the profile of the Authority to support statistical development and co-operation.
- 7.2 Board members discussed the update. It was noted that the Analytical Hub comprising of a group of analysts, led by Hugh Stickland and working closely with the Policy Liaison Unit, was an agile workforce able to move at pace between projects such as energy, health and cost of living. Following the publication of the first Census 2021 results in June, work was ongoing to reconcile and rebase the mid-year population estimates for the past decade. A feedback tool had been published for users of local population statistics.
- 8. Report from the Director General for Regulation [SA(22)47]**
- 8.1 Ed Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity highlighting that the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) had written to National Records of Scotland (NRS) setting out OSR's expectations for Scotland's Census 2022, ahead of their next assessment report scheduled towards the end of the year. NRS had recently published a detailed article on its approach to estimating the population in Scotland.
- 8.2 The Board heard that following a number of concerns from members of the public regarding a Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy consultation on Weights and Measures, OSR had published a statement in the form of a blog. OSR had written to the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) regarding DWP's Way to Work target and the need for more formal structured reporting of statistics in line with the Code of Practice. OSR had also asked DWP to be clear about gaps in its Universal Credit Work Capability Assessment Statistics.
- 8.3 The Board noted the update.
- 9. Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**
- 9.1 Nora Nanayakkara provided an update on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 15 September, highlighting that it had been the final meeting for Nick Bateson, Director of Finance, Planning and Performance. During the recruitment process for a new Finance Director Megan Cooper and Rhys Thomas would be covering the role.
- 9.2 The Committee had considered:
- i. the financial position of the organisation at the half year point;
  - ii. progress made in addressing legacy transformation with the completion of a risk review of legacy systems in relation to key statistical outputs;
  - iii. a risk deep dive on data assets including progress on the acquisition of non-negotiable administrative data assets; and
  - iv. delivery of the Internal Audit Work Programme.
- 9.3 The Committee had also considered the strategic risk profile and highlighted the need for the organisation to understand risk tolerance levels for the strategic risks in relation to appetite, and provide a clear path for their development.
- 10. Strategy Update [SA(22)48]**
- 10.1 Robert Bumpstead and Megan Cooper introduced a paper which provided the sixth quarterly update on progress against the delivery of the Strategy, Statistics for the Public Good.
- 10.2 Since the last quarterly update ONS has stayed at the forefront of informing the public and government about fast changing national priorities with the provision of joined up

data and analysis. The Initial Public Beta of the IDS had been launched including the public facing website. The COVID-19 Infection survey had successfully transitioned to a digital model. HM Treasury (HMT) had approved funding for economic statistics transformation. The National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Group established earlier in the year had now met on three occasions chaired by Professor Sir David Hand. As part of the recommendation of the Inclusive Data Taskforce ONS was making greater use of qualitative research.

- 10.3 Board members welcomed the update and would remain engaged in the development of the refreshed business plan in the coming months.

## **11. Integrated Data Service [SA(22)49]**

- 11.1 Alison Pritchard introduced a paper which provided an update on key elements of the Integrated Data Programme (IDP) including an update on the data pipeline and progress of the IDS Full Business Case refresh.
- 11.2 The Board discussed progress and highlighted the need for a clear timeline for delivery that reflects the breadth of ambition of the programme. There was a need for clarity on the impact of the IDS and progress of Digital Economy Act accreditation. It was noted that the Full Business Case refresh would be submitted to HMT on 30 September.

## **12. Retail Prices Index Update [SA(22)50]**

- 12.1 Mike Keoghan and Chris Payne introduced a paper which provided an overview of the outcome of the Retail Prices Index (RPI) Judicial Review.
- 12.2 The Board heard that the RPI Judicial Review judgement, on the decision to change the formulation of the index, had found in favour of the Authority and HMT. The subsequent request by claimants for permission to appeal to the High Court had been refused.

## **13. Economic Statistics Transformation: ARIES Programme [SA(22)51]**

- 13.1 Mike Keoghan, Jason Zawadzki and Sofia Poni introduced a paper which provided an update of the Ambitious Radical Inclusive Sustainable (ARIES) transformation programme.
- 13.2 The Board heard about the changes in programme leadership with Jason Zawadzki as Senior Responsible Owner and the addition of a new Programme Director role. Resourcing had been an area of focus for the Programme Board with consideration of alternative options for delivery, such as outsourcing. The programme had delivered in a number of areas including work to transform Labour Market statistics, the launch of a public consultation on the future of the Crime Survey for England and Wales and the transformation of Consumer Price statistics.

## **14. ONS Input – Rail Service Disruption [SA(22)52]**

- 14.1 Joe Moore and Esther Akleh-Amankweh introduced a paper which detailed the work ONS has produced to support understanding of impacts of railway service disruption.
- 14.2 The Board heard how the Policy Liaison Unit had worked proactively with wider government, which had enabled the ONS to provide an analytical response to benefit both public and policymaker understanding of issues of national importance.

## **15. Any other business**

- 15.1 It was agreed that an update on Trade statistics would be provided at the next meeting.
- 15.2 The next meeting would take place on 27 October remotely.

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## Agenda

29 September 2022, 09:15-13:45

### Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, Belfast

**Chair:** Sir Robert Chote

**Apologies:** Sam Beckett, Sian Jones

**Attendees:** Esther Akleh-Amankwah (for item 12), Megan Cooper (for item 8), Rhys Thomas, Mike Keoghan (for items 10 and 11), Joe Moore (for item 12), Chris Payne (for item 10), Sofia Poni (for item 11), Jason Zawadzki (for item 11)

#### 09:15 – 10:00: Non-Executive's Session

1 10:00-10:05 5 mins	Introduction and welcome	Sir Robert Chote
2 10:05-11:00 55 mins	Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NISRA Recent Developments</li></ul>	Siobhan Carey Deborah Lyness Chris Ganley
3 11:00-11:05 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Declarations of interest</li></ul>	Meeting of 28.07.22
4 11:05-11:20 15 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	Oral report Sir Robert Chote
5 11:20-11:50 30 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(22)46 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond
6 11:50-12:05 15 mins	Report from the Director General for Regulation	SA(22)47 Ed Humpherson
7 12:05-12:15 10 mins	Report from Committee Chair Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Nora Nanayakkara
<b>12:15 – 12:25 Lunch</b>		
8 12:25-12:40 15 mins	Strategy Update	SA(22)48 Robert Bumpstead Megan Cooper
9 12:40-13:00 20 mins	Integrated Data Service	SA(22)49 Alison Pritchard
10 13:00-13:05 5 mins	Retail Prices Index Update	SA(22)50 Mike Keoghan Chris Payne
11 13:05-13:25 20 mins	Economic Statistics Transformation: ARIES Programme	SA(22)51 Mike Keoghan

		Jason Zawadzki Sofia Poni
12 13:25-13:35 10 mins	ONS input – Rail Service Disruption	SA(22)52 Joe Moore Esther Akleh-Amankwah
13 13:35-13:45 10 mins	Any other business	

**Next meeting:, Thursday 27 October, Teams Meeting, 09:30 to 14:00**

*Chief Executive's Report, September 2022*

**Purpose**

1. This provides the Authority Board with an overview of activity for August and September 2022.

**Summary**

2. August and September have been a busy period across our statistical and analytical insights, with a focus on **labour market** inactivity in over 50s, **Ukraine** arrivals and sponsors survey, **cost of living**, and disruption from **industrial action**. The **COVID-19 Infection Survey** (CIS) successfully transitioned to a digital first data collection model to timetable and budget in August.
3. Following the profoundly sad death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the ONS **London Bridge operational plan** was successfully delivered at pace. This involved adjustments to our field operation, alterations to publications and assisting the central Bridges Secretariat on analytical requests relating to events during the period.

**Review of recent activities**

4. We have consolidated information on when and how our statistics informed decision-making during the pandemic, conducted informal interviews with key colleagues to create an organisation-wide understanding of events, and reached out to former colleagues to forewarn of potential involvement during the inquiry.
5. In September, Mike Keoghan and David Freeman gave evidence on labour supply to the **Lords Economic Affairs Committee**, and I to the **Scottish Parliament** on the Scottish Census. ONS have continued to offer support to the National Records of Scotland, making best use of statistical and methodological techniques to help produce high-quality population estimates, especially in relation to their census coverage survey.
6. We are continuing to pursue initiatives around automation and survey transformation in alignment with conversations previously at the Board. The next iteration of the **Integrated Data Programme** business case is due to be submitted to HMT at the end of this month.
7. In other programmes, we are discussing the outline case for the future programme of transformation of population and migration statistics, linked to the upcoming decision in Autumn 2023. This case seeks to ensure that funding is available to support ongoing development during 2023/4. On the CIS, we continue to discuss the 2023/4 funding with the UK Health Security Agency.
8. Following the publication of first **Census** 2021 results in June, we are now carrying out **reconciliation and rebasing** of the mid-year population estimates for the past decade. This is particularly important given the pandemic is likely to have had an impact on people's movements. We have also published a feedback tool for users of local population statistics to suggest sources of data that provide insight into local population levels and change. A pilot study of 14 local authorities is also helping to inform work on the transformation of population statistics, building on our existing collaboration with local authorities as part of the 2021 quality assurance process.
9. I delivered a keynote address to the **British Society for Population Studies** Annual Conference at Winchester University, on 'Measuring Populations and their Characteristics: Past, Present and Future'. This explored the success of the 2021 Census and how ONS is using more data sources than ever. I concluded by looking at how ONS would produce population estimates in a post-census world.

10. The **COVID-19 Infection Survey** has successfully transitioned to a digital first data collection to timetable and within budget. Opt-in to CIS Digital is at around 80 per cent and participation rates are c.90 per cent with the majority of participants completing the online questionnaire and returning their bio-samples by post. No substantial mode effect has been observed over the transition, so data from the two methods of collection have been successfully merged without the need for statistical adjustment.
11. On **Ukraine**, we have published a follow-up survey of those who arrived in the UK before April with largely positive outcomes in terms of integration into society. A survey of **UK sponsors** has also been published to inform policy once the initial six-month period has ended. The second wave of the **Over 50s Lifestyle Survey** has now closed after working across government on survey design, gaining over 20,000 responses from 50-65 year olds. Insight will be provided on the reasons many left work over the pandemic, with a focus on health, finances and flexible working.
12. We are supporting Cabinet Office on **winter risks preparedness** and monitoring. This work covers data and analysis on energy, health, supply chains, labour market and cost of living. Our data is being used to monitor the situation and help to evaluate government policies and packages of support. We have produced our first joint product for government in collaboration with the Joint Data and Analysis Centre in Cabinet Office, focusing on inflation, which has been circulated to the Board.
13. On **cost of living**, we have published several articles analysing demographic groups and how they are impacted by rising prices and their mitigation strategies. We are also working with the Bank, Financial Conduct Authority, and the range of regulators to gather timely data and insight. On prices, a statement was made explaining that the government energy bills support package will not impact our consumer price inflation statistics, given its classification as a transfer paid by central government.
14. In **Household Financial Survey Transformation**, design work for a new survey continued with user workshops held including devolved administrations, HMT, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), HMRC, Band of England, Resolution Foundation, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and the Pensions Policy Institute. The **Crime Survey Transformation** consultation closed, outcomes are now being analysed prior to review by the Crime Steering Group.
15. Members of the **Data Science Campus** (DSC) took part in a cross-government hackathon with Number 10 Data Science and the Department of Health and Social Care on optimising ambulance services. The team were able to build a tool that can simulate trips from ambulance stations to the postcodes they service – they were awarded first place in the hackathon.
16. The **Labour Market Survey** (LMS) has successfully met Transition State 4 with a significant addition of core questions onto the survey which will enable economic statistics colleagues to effectively compare the overall LMS to the current Labour Force Survey. Recruitment for the LMS is nearing completion – training and supporting resource is in place for the parallel run starting in November.
17. **Internationally**, this month ONS hosted a delegation from Statistics Korea's Statistical Training Institute where our Korean colleagues received presentations on the Data Science Campus' capability programme and academic engagement. I also met with Dr Fahad, the new Chief Statistician of Saudi Arabia to discuss his priorities and how we might support these through a Memorandum of Understanding. I met with Dr Eduardo Rios Neto, the new Chief Statistician of **Brazil** in a similar way, discuss how we may collaborate going forwards, with a particular focus on the sharing expertise on the Census.
18. In late August, a small team visited **Argentina**, at the request of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The mission focused on strengthening the

Argentine statistical system and helping them develop new legislation. A delegation from the UK also visited the **US** to meet with the UN, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and US statistical bureaus. The visit covered topics including secondments, national accounts, and data stewardship.

19. In late September I will host the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building in London. The group provide strategic leadership for the Sustainable Development Goals implementation process as it concerns statistical monitoring and reporting.
20. Following the successful **launch of the new Analysis Function Strategy** in late July – setting out the next phase of delivering the best critito inform decision making and deliver better outcomes for the public – we have continued to engage widely to embed the strategy across and beyond the whole analytical community. I have now delivered several presentations to departments, Professions and the boards of other functions on the important role of analysis in government, and later this month will bring the Departmental Directors of Analysis group together for a strategic forward look across government.
21. The delivery of the **Inclusive Data Taskforce Implementation Plan** is progressing well. Dame Julia Cleverdon has been appointed as the Chair of a new National Statistician's Advisory Committee on Inclusive Data and the inaugural meeting is planned for October; with the Committee providing transparent, external scrutiny and advice on our delivery. Recent delivery highlights include the publication of qualitative research in on disabled adults' experiences of accessing services, which included an easy read report.
22. We also held a successful **two-day workshop with Nesta**, to kick off a collaboration between our organisations on their key missions; a Fairer Start, a Healthy Life, and Sustainable Future. We have begun planning a joint project to link local area data on health inequalities with food venue location, type, and turnover to fill data gap on food consumption at restaurants/takeaways, as well as discussions on secondment opportunities between the two organisations.
23. The third update to the [Subnational Indicators Explorer](#) went live in August, which incorporates significant improvements. Nine new subnational indicators have been added, with an expanded range of geographies included. An automated ingestion pipeline has also been developed in collaboration with the cross-government Levelling Up Data Access platform, substantially reducing the time spent in gathering data from across 30+ different datasets from across multiple government websites.
24. Finally, ONS undertook a **Smarter Working Maturity Assessment** with the Government Property Agency, and were rated as 'mature' (highest rating) at the end of July across all four pillars: Culture and People, Leadership, Workspace, Technology. This is a cross government standard against which all departments are assessed.

**Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, 22 September 2022**

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(22)47

## *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. **Census:** We have continued engagement with National Records for Scotland (NRS) on the Census in Scotland and have written to NRS outlining our [expectations for Scotland's Census ahead of our next assessment report](#) due towards the end of this year. Since then, NRS has published a [summary update](#) and a more-detailed [article](#) on its approach to estimating the population in Scotland, which is an important step forwards. We will provide a paper to Regulation Committee on the latest position at the next meeting. NRS is also due to give evidence to the Scottish Parliament census inquiry on 22 September.
  - ii. **Casework:** We have had a number of public cases since the last meeting.
    - **Weights and measures:** We have received a significant number of concerns from members of the public regarding a Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy consultation on Weights and Measures. We published our statement in the form of a [blog](#) on Wednesday 21 September.
    - **Scottish statistics on children:** I raised my concerns with Alastair McAlpine about the [Health and Wellbeing Census in Scotland](#). This Census was designed for use in schools, but there were weaknesses in the approach to question design that we have brought to the Scottish Government's attention.
    - **DWP:** I wrote to Peter Schofield regarding the [Department for Work and Pensions \(DWP\) Way to Work target and use of figures by government](#). We also have had ongoing correspondence with DWP regarding [our concerns that there is a gap in the Universal Credit statistics](#) available to the public. We have asked the Department to be clear about gaps in its [Universal Credit Work Capability Assessment Statistics](#).
  - iii. **Wider reach:**
    - OSR was invited to present at the Institute for Government's [Data Bites seminar series](#) in September. We talked about the principles of Reproducible Analytical Pipelines and how this approach to analysis supports the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value (TQV).
    - We have two more seminars for government analysts planned: one on communicating uncertainty in September and one of data sharing and linkage in October. The uncertainty event has, at the time of writing, had over 500 sign-ups from analysts across Government. The uncertainty event accompanied OSR's Insight report on [communicating uncertainty](#).
    - **State of the statistical system:** Since we published the [State of the Statistics System report](#) we have received positive feedback with several Heads of Profession inviting us to give a presentation to their Departmental teams on the report and its themes.
    - **Guidance for models:** we published our [Guidance for Models: Trustworthiness, Quality and Value](#), with an accompanying [blog](#). This guidance highlights how principles in the Code of Practice can help in designing, developing and using models to improve TQV.
    - We've published [three new case studies](#) on the Code site, which can be a really good way of recognising good practice at the end of a project. We

published a [blog](#) exploring the work done to communicate data on COVID-19 publicly, from inside and outside the official statistics system, supporting an army of armchair epidemiologists. And we published [our guidance and FAQs on Intelligent Transparency](#).

- iv. **Impact:** We have had media interest in a number of our recent casework interventions, notably on our Way to Work intervention:
- [The Guardian](#) looks at the Government's Way to Work scheme, highlighting claims made about its success: "Boris Johnson's flagship jobs scheme appears to have failed, despite his claim that it helped half a million people into work."

## **Conclusion**

### *Issues on my mind*

3. The main issue on my mind at the moment is economic statistics, and **the role of OSR now that we are no longer part of the European Union**. I have established a small steering group to take our own thinking forward, and plan to start engaging with a range of stakeholders imminently to help shape our thinking on what this work will look like. We will press on with designing an expanded programme of assessments of ONS economic statistics to give greater assurance on their quality and compliance with international standards, which we see as being one important part of the way forward on this issue.

**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, OSR, 21 September 2022**

## Regulatory Activities Dashboard

September 2022

Authority Board

### Population and Society

**Assessments: Census** Conversations continue with NRS with preparations being made to make public OSR's expectations for Scotland's Census.  
**Measuring the population**, estimates, migration, census (and census 2023 recommendation) and LFS progressing with ONS and others. Further user engagement on migration statistics planned for the Autumn.  
**Compliance Check:** ONS mortality stats: continuing desk research.  
**ONS transformation of Migration Statistics** Phase two of the review is ongoing. Update report due to go to October Regulation Committee.

### Health and Social Care

**Assessments:** ONS statistics on **Deaths in the Care Sector** draft report to October Reg Comm.  
**Compliance Checks:** ONS Health Index ongoing, currently reviewing findings with producers.  
**Systemic Reviews:** Further rounds of user engagement, following up on Adult Social Care and Mental Health reviews.  
**Other Reviews:** Published review of ONS Covid Infection Survey in August and continuing follow-up of 2021 covid lessons learned review.

### Economy

**Assessments: ONS Regional GDP** Gathering further feedback following ONS's publication of new estimates (method) of Regional GDP.  
**Casework:** HMRC/HMT responding to concerns around the presentation of HMRC personalised **Annual tax summary statistics**  
**Compliance Checks:** HMRC Benefit in Kind statistics letter published in August.  
**Systemic Review: Post-Brexit ONS Economic Classifications** Planning external scrutiny of economic classifications, National Accounts and the Bean systemic review.

### Children, Education and Skills

**Casework: Health and Wellbeing Census in Scotland** responding to concerns around the confidentiality and ethics of the census of school age children. **Future Curriculum Body** concerns raised about DfE evidence for new arm's length curriculum body. **Student loan interest rates** concerns raised about the method used to derive the interest rate and the nature of the communication around it. **JCQ collection of sex/gender** concerns raised about JCQ looking into collecting information on non-binary students.  
**Compliance Check: Welsh Government School Workforce Annual Census** feeding into a wider review of this data collection.  
**Systemic Review: Children and Young People** planning follow up engagement.

### Business, Trade and International Development

**Compliance Check: ONS International Trade in the Countries, Regions and Cities of the UK** findings will be published in September.  
**Rapid Review of DIT's Trade and Investment Compendia statistics** Letter published in August.

### Housing, Planning and Local Services

**Assessment: Statutory Homelessness in England statistics:** Continuing engagement in line with DLUHC action plan, ahead of October Regulatory Committee.  
**Compliance Checks:** Letter published for **Fire incident statistics** produced by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. **Scottish Government planning statistics** follow up.  
**Rapid reviews:** Letter published for DLUHC's **MI on Support for people sleeping rough in England**, resulting in more regular publication of data. Follow up of Welsh Government **MI on Homelessness accommodation provision and rough sleeping**. Engaging with ONS & DLUHC on **Sub-national data** developments.

### Labour Market and Welfare

**Assessments:** Reviewing evidence and drafting letter for the **Living Costs and Food Survey**  
**Poverty:** Anticipating update in Sept from GSS **Income and Earnings** lead around progress on our recommendations.  
**Compliance checks:** DWP **Pensioners' Income series** letter being finalised, due to publish in September  
**ONS transformation of the Labour Force Survey (Phase 1):** pulling together key findings and recommendations with a view to publish letter in October.  
**Social Security Scotland:** Briefing prepared re removal of sex/gender question from disability payment application forms in Scotland.

### Transport, Environment and Climate Change

**Assessments: People and Nature Survey (PaNS).** Kick-off meeting held, now reviewing evidence and meeting with users.  
**Casework:** Prepared briefings on support for **energy bills, renewable energy capacity, salmon stocks and animal testing**.  
**Compliance Checks: UK Food Security report** letter due to be published this month.  
**Systemic Review: Accessibility of Transport Networks** – follow up with producers ongoing.  
**Climate Change** – further discussions planned around potential scope of this review.

### Crime and Security

ONS **Modern slavery statistics** drafting think piece on **Police Recorded Crime Data** – Options paper drafted to help us think through what that think piece could/should look like and what it might entail.  
**Assessments:** Scottish Government **Scottish Prison population statistics** – Started gathering evidence.  
**Compliance checks: MoJ Women and the Criminal Justice system** Finalising the findings

## Regulatory Activities Dashboard

September 2022

## Authority Board

### Insight

**Insight Committee:** Committee met in early September: we discussed narrowing the focus to Insight alone (previously Insight and Evaluation), the first OSR Insight Forum, inviting new statistics producer members to the Committee and ongoing Insight projects.

**OSR Insight Forum:** A poll conducted at the first Insight Forum (a cross OSR meeting to discuss common themes emerging in regulatory work) revealed key themes to be lack of producer resource, data protection/sharing issues and changes in quality of statistics over time.

**Communicating Uncertainty in Statistics:** Publication set for September, accompanied by a blog, press release and seminar for government analysts.

**Other:** Insight webpage design will begin this month as soon as OSR's website is upgraded.

### Data and Methods

**Internal work:** Data science projects have been put on hold until we have the resource, maintaining what we already have.

**Data in government:** Review of **data sharing/linkage**, we've scheduled interviews with stakeholders in September. We will be together emerging findings as we go.

**Wider reach:** Models guidance published in August: promoted in government newsletters and in a presentation to GSS HoPs

### Policy & Standards

**Designation refresh:** Developing material with communications experts in ONS to test new ways of communicating OSR's work to users of statistics. Aiming to begin testing in September. Shared new materials on enhancing the Code culture in producer organisations with six producers for comments, with some piloting the Code maturity model. **Quality grade tool** – considered feedback from initial producer testing, expect to being second iteration testing in September. We have also begun looking at ways of refreshing our assessment process.

**Voluntary application and wider reach:** Working with the Greater London Authority and Transport for London embedding Code pillars. Several conversations with organisations outside of government, along with some departments that are looking to adopt the Code pillars or extend their application of the Code. We have been invited to be part of the technical advisory group for developing a civic strength index and have contributed to discussions with the Royal Statistical Society on public statistics.

### Research

**Public Perceptions of the Public Good, Collaboration with ADR UK:** Planning to publish the research findings report in September. It is currently with our external project advisory group, who have been very positive about it so far. ADR UK and OSR briefly presented the work at the International Population Data Linkage Network conference in September

### Cross Cutting Issues

**Wider reach:** We have two further seminars planned for government analysts: one on communicating uncertainty in September, at which David Spiegelhalter will speak, and another on data sharing and linkage in October.

**Annual casework report 2021/22:** Intending to publish following discussion at October Regulation Committee.

***Strategy and Business Plan Update***

**Purpose**

1. This paper is the sixth quarterly update on progress against the delivery of the UK Statistics Authority (the Authority) strategy, Statistics for the Public Good.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
  - i. note progress against the delivery of the strategy; and
  - ii. consider the ongoing areas of focus.

**Background**

3. We are now into the second year of the strategy, and work continues at pace to meet our key strategic objectives. As we look forward to 2022-23, we are continuing to focus on delivery – following the successes of the 2021 Spending Review settlement and progress made in planning for the period to March 2025.
4. Looking back at what we said we would deliver; progress has continued to be strong during 2022. In our strategy we set out to:
  - i. respond flexibly to the uncertainties and challenges of COVID-19, including tracking the impacts of new variants, and delivering long term value from the survey approach;
  - ii. provide an inclusive, trusted and engaging narrative on the UK's economic and social fabric and trends, addressing cross-cutting issues and providing analysis to inform and engage governments, policy makers and the wider public;
  - iii. build flexible and integrated analytical capabilities and data management tools to address COVID-19 and other priorities to enable the organisation to manage data and deliver analysis that cuts across organisational boundaries;
  - iv. deliver high quality, inclusive and efficient economic and social statistics that are internationally recognised, by streamlining our processes and blending administrative data with transformed survey capabilities with the capacity to answer key questions quickly;
  - v. deliver a successful Census in March 2021, deliver high-quality outputs from the Census in 2022 and make a robust recommendation on the future of the Census in 2023;
  - vi. deliver a revised and comprehensive system of population and migration statistics based on administrative data and a consolidated social survey platform, having successfully delivered the full benefits of Census 2021;
  - vii. take opportunities to advocate for improved statistical literacy – with the analytical community, Parliament, schools and media; and
  - viii. build our organisational capabilities and resilience including the working environment that will support our hybrid working principles.
5. Since the last quarterly update, ONS has stayed at the forefront of informing the public and government about fast changing national priorities, serving the public good through the provision of crucial evidence and further demonstrating the value of joined-up data and analysis.
  - i. The first set of Census outputs was released on 28 June and included five datasets containing population and household estimates for England and for Wales at local authority level. To help explain the data we published two statistical bulletins, as well as a selection of supporting material, an interactive article and an online game. The outputs have been designated National Statistics for the census, meaning that they

- are fully compliant with the Code of Practice for Statistics, meeting the highest standard of trustworthiness, quality and value.
- ii. The operational transition to a sustainable digital model for the COVID-19 Infection Survey has made good progress, following positive user feedback from the private beta and successful delivery of the public beta on 7 July. Comparisons between study worker and digital data has revealed little evidence of significant mode effect.
  - iii. Following a structured release process, the initial public beta of the Integrated Data Service went live as planned on 15 July including the roll-out of the main public-facing website. Planning for full public beta is now underway with a focus on maintaining an appropriate level of security on an open and collaborative platform.
  - iv. The Reproducible Analytical Pipelines (RAP) strategy was launched this summer across the GSS, setting out a path towards making analysis across government more sustainable by embedding RAP as the default approach. ONS support for this strategy, through the Analysis Function, is itself a model for sustainable delivery of transformation, with peer networks and departmental champions taking responsibility for upskilling analysts with the necessary tools and opportunities to learn from best practice across the GSS.
  - v. The use of radical new data sources and methods continues, for example on prices, where we published research in July on new data from Autotrader on second-hand cars and Rail Delivery Group on rail fares. The Prices Alternative Data Sources Project has meanwhile reached a key milestone of delivering an end-to-end system on a new cloud-based platform, which is capable of processing billions of price points as part of the monthly publication round. In 2024, our focus will be on groceries and private housing rents.
  - vi. Population estimates for 14 local authorities in England and Wales based on the Dynamic Population Model will be published this autumn as a research output. The pilot study of local authorities is helping us test our methods relating to social and geographic features such as high student numbers, coastal, rural, and metropolitan city locations. This builds on the extensive collaboration with local authorities who supported our rigorous quality assurance processes for the first time in a census earlier this year.
  - vii. The recommendations of the Inclusive Data Taskforce (IDTF) have continued to inform new inclusive ONS work, now overseen by the National Statistician's Advisory Committee on Inclusive Data. An important recommendation of the IDTF was that ONS make greater use of qualitative research. Lately this approach has borne fruit, generating evidence in areas where there were data gaps. In July we published on disabled adults' experiences of accessing services, which included an easy read report. Autumn publication dates have been agreed for research conducted with external partners on the lived experiences of children with special educational needs, and gypsies and travellers. Procurement has also been launched for two further qualitative studies – one on women living in temporary safe accommodation following domestic violence, and another on the wellbeing of young migrants and refugees.
  - viii. The Policy Liaison Unit has continued to co-ordinate cross-government demands for data to inform emerging situations, and a paper elsewhere in this pack details work undertaken this summer to gauge and visualise disruptions to rail travel due to industrial action.

## **Conclusion**

6. As we head towards the autumn we will be reviewing and updating where necessary the 2022-23 business plans for the ONS and Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) ensuring that we align with the outcomes of the CS2025 exercise or further central fiscal/planning events. We will hold an event to mark the halfway point of the five-year strategy period to take stock, celebrate progress so far, and look ahead to the challenges remaining.
7. This paper sets out recent progress and the ongoing focus on the delivery of the strategy. Over the next quarter we will continue to focus on the high-level priorities for

the Authority as set out in the business plans for the ONS and OSR that were considered in draft form by the Board at the end of March.

**Rob Bumpstead, Chief of Staff, Megan Cooper, Deputy Director of Finance, Planning and Performance, 20 September 2022**

***Integrated Data Service – Public Beta Release and Programme update***

**Purpose**

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

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Board are invited to note:
  - i. progress on Data Pipeline; and
  - ii. progress on Full Business Case refresh.

**Background**

3. Cabinet Committee papers and the recently launched *Government's Digital and Data Strategy* both identify the Integrated Data Service (IDS) as a core component of data sharing for better decision making and evaluation under Mission 3 sponsored by the National Statistician:

*"Will work to make all 'critical' data assets available and in use across government through trusted APIs and platforms such as GDX and IDS."*

**Discussion**

*Data Pipeline*

4. To better address the multiple data priorities for the IDS, a twin-track approach has been adopted which takes account of the demand from Government Departments and Devolved Administrations alongside a drive to identify data from ONS and elsewhere that is anticipated to provide benefits to multiple users and drive take-up of the service, the 'Anticipate and Acquire' approach.

*User-Led Demand*

5. The key focus for anticipated completion November 2022 will be making a first cut of the ONS Census data available for government users only. There are already several Census data user requests from across government, including: Home Office request to facilitate modelling of police funding; HMRC equalities analysis for customer experience; and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities levelling up analysis for Blackpool.
6. Priority is given to User-led Demand datasets over the Anticipate and Acquire strand, though both are being progressed in tandem.

*Anticipate and Acquire*

7. Data from the Anticipate and Acquire work-strand will also be made available to IDS users in a priority order; this currently represents the bulk of the IDS data pipeline.
8. Once the three tactical cross-government datasets and the indexed datasets are on the platform, which we expect imminently, it is proposed that the focus now move to high demand Secure Research Service (SRS) datasets.
9. We are working towards the SRS datasets being indexable to the Reference Data Management Framework in order to realise the benefits of our vision for the enterprise data model. Focusing on high demand SRS datasets will mean delaying the remaining four of six cross-government tactical datasets. Good progress has been made on three of those cross-government tactical datasets, and further work can be absorbed on the acquisition side for the SRS datasets, with increased resources.

### Next Steps

10. Having received endorsement of the outlined approach at the August IDP Programme Board, two fully informed Data delivery roadmaps and timetables will be produced by the middle of September:
  - i. a high-level data delivery roadmap covering the full set of IDS pipeline demand and
  - ii. a bespoke delivery roadmap and timetable for the Census data.
11. In addition, we are receiving multiple requests for different cuts of the same data, leading to additional work to overcome data control challenges. In the long term, this will be resolved through our meta-data catalogues, however, in the interim, we will explore opportunities to consolidate data requests to help with good data management and clearer upfront requirements.
12. Finally, we will be progressing joint data plans with individual departments in line with the Infrastructure and Projects Authority Review recommendations in order to agree the above roadmaps with departments, and to discuss further the concepts around data stewardship models supporting different data access models.

### Full Business Case Refresh

13. The Full Business Case (FBC) refresh has been taken through both internal investment groups (Investment and Delivery Assurance Group and Portfolio and Investment Committee). Several conditions were set to unlocking the cases, which have mostly been completed and are pending key holder sign off.
14. Pete Stokes and Megan Cooper (Planning and Portfolio Management (PPM)) met with Sir Ian (in his capacity as Accounting Officer) early September to present the latest position with the business case and discuss a couple of caveats ahead of his formal sign off in two weeks' time.
15. The business case will be finalised ahead of Senior Responsible Owner approval on 23 September. After which PPM will undertake Accounting Officer sign off and submission to HMT, by 30 September.

### Programme Update

16. Good progress is being made to close the IPA Gateway 0 review recommendations, with mitigations in place or being established to address any challenges.
17. Recent successes include decommissioning technology resulting in significant cost avoidance, and implementation of a more effective requirements management system, and implementation of a more effective requirements management system via the IDS requirements Front-door, providing greater monitoring and control of IDS deliverables.
18. The Strategy and Alignment team are now coordinating a demo alongside the Levelling Up Data Asset team to be presented to Alex Chisholm, the Chief Operating Officer of the Civil Service. There has been an increase in demand for demos of IDS following the successful presentations with IDP Programme Board, the Authority and National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Committee.
19. Shared Outcome Funds will be releasing more funds for projects to extend their projects. IDS had provided supported previously with a number of these projects and will look to the same this time round to help bids deliver their projects.

**Alison Pritchard, Deputy National Statistician for Data Capability, 20 September 2022**

***Retail Prices Index Judicial Review*****Purpose**

1. We have provided various verbal updates for the Board on reform to the Retail Prices Index (RPI). Following the outcome of the Judicial Review, this paper provides the Board with an overview of the outcome of the Judicial Review.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to note the outcome of the Judicial Review.

**Background**

3. The RPI is the oldest measure of consumer prices in the UK and it is widely used across the economy and in financial transactions. However, it has a number of shortcomings, meaning that it has at times greatly overestimated, and at other times underestimated, the rate of inflation. The Statistics and Registration Service Act requires the UK Statistics Authority (the Authority) to compile and maintain the RPI, which is published and calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
4. In certain circumstances, changes to the RPI require the consent of the Chancellor of the Exchequer before they can be implemented. The requirement to seek the Chancellor's consent is triggered if the Bank of England determines that the proposed changes are "a fundamental change in the index which would be materially detrimental to the interests of the holders of relevant index-linked gilt-edged securities" ("the RPI protocol").
5. In March 2019, the Authority Board made a proposal to address the shortcomings of the RPI by bringing the data sources and methods of the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) into it. In certain circumstances, changes to the RPI require the consent of the Chancellor of the Exchequer before they can be implemented. In September 2019, the then Chancellor announced that he was unable to consent to the introduction of the change proposed based on the available information at the time and the government would consult publicly on when between 2025 and 2030 such a change should be made.
6. A joint HM Treasury (HMT) and Authority consultation was launched in March 2020 and sought views on the specific date that the Authority's proposal would be implemented and the technical approach for bringing the robust methods and data sources of the CPIH into RPI.
7. Following the consultation and having considered all of the relevant factors, in October 2020 the Chancellor wrote to the Authority stating that, in order to minimise the impact of the Authority's proposal on the holders of index linked gilts, he would be unable to offer his consent to the implementation before the maturity of the index-linked gilts in 2030. The Authority also concluded that its preferred statistical method for bringing the data sources and methods of CPIH into RPI remains that set out in the original consultation document.

**Judicial Review**

8. A challenge by way of Judicial Review was issued on 8 April 2021 against the Authority and HMT as joint defendants, by holders of 'old style gilts', in particular Ford, Marks & Spencer and BT pension trustees.
9. The claim challenged the Authority decision to bring the methods and data sources of CPIH into the RPI in 2030, and the Chancellor's decisions that this did not trigger the cessation clause (as built into old style gilts) and not to award compensation.
10. The grounds of the challenge were as follows:

- i. Ground 1: Claimants contend that the Authority's proposed change to RPI is not permissible under s.21 of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and in substance involves abolishing RPI.
  - ii. Ground 2(1): Claimants contend that the Authority should have taken into account the impact on holders of index-linked gilts when taking the decision to reform RPI
  - iii. Ground 2(2): Claimants contend that the Authority failed to comply with the public sector equality duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 by not considering the allegedly greater impact of RPI reform on women than men due to women's greater life expectancy.
  - iv. Ground 3: Claimants contend that the Authority failed to consult properly by not asking about or considering the interests of index-linked gilt holders.
11. Alongside the Judicial Review the claimants also brought a private law claim against HMT, challenging their decisions that the cessation clause was not triggered and to not offer compensation.
  12. The claim was heard over two days in the High Court before Mr Justice Holgate on the 21 and 22 June 2022. Counsel and solicitors for both parties were in attendance, along with ONS staff from Prices and Legal Services. The court reserved its judgement to be handed down at a later date.
  13. The judgement was handed down on 1 September 2022, a full and summary version have both been published. The court found in the Authority and HMT's favour on all grounds in the Judicial Review and on the private law claim. The claim was dismissed in its entirety.
  14. As well as determining that the Authority has the legal power to make the proposed change to RPI, the court also determined that in making decisions (both in relation to RPI and other statistics) the Authority can only take into account statistical matters and not wider policy considerations, or the effects on users.
  15. The claimants submitted a request to the High Court for permission to appeal and this had been refused, they now have three weeks to seek permission to appeal from the Court of Appeal. We will resist any such application.

### **Conclusion**

16. This purpose of this paper was to summarise the recent RPI Judicial Review and the successful outcome for the Authority.

**Dr Michael Keoghan, Economic, Social and Environmental Statistics Group, 20 September 2022**

***ARIES Programme Update***

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides an overview of recent progress and look ahead for the coming months of the ARIES transformation programme in Economic Social Environmental Statistics Group (ESEG). It also presents a focussed look at progress in the development of consumer price statistics.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
  - i. note progress made across the programme since the last update in April 2022, and our plans for the coming months; and
  - ii. offer feedback on the updates, most notably in the context of alignment with wider ONS and Authority plans.

**Background**

3. The ARIES programme brings together the four pillars of the Authority Strategy 'Statistics for the Public Good' (Ambitious, Radical, Inclusive, Sustainable) with the transformational aims of ESEG. It continues to be one of the ONS key strategic enabling programmes with a vision to deliver an ambitious transformation.
4. At the start of the 2022/23 financial year, the programme was reset to align with the outcomes of the Spending Review 21 settlement. It consists of seven projects (), each focussed on a combination of process enhancements, new measures and risk reduction, with the aim of improving the quality and sustainability of our statistics.

**Discussion**

*Recent work and near-term plans*

*Progress April – September 22*

5. The first six months of the refreshed programme has seen a significant focus on planning in order to address challenges experienced during 2021/22. Between April – June, each project undertook an in-depth exercise, facilitated by the Programme Management Office and encompassing enabling partners, to define clear, coherent milestone plans which linked individual project output to overall programme benefits and the organisational Action Framework Objectives. Aligning to the corporate business planning round, the programme has also introduced an inclusive, repeatable quarterly planning cycle to track progress more effectively and react to challenges sooner.
6. Recruitment and capacity have been of particular interest to the Programme Board, reflecting the overall organisational challenge in this space. Project teams have been asked to consider alternative delivery options, (e.g. outsourcing,) where feasible and put mitigation steps in place to help manage risk associated with critical vacancies. There has been recent success across the programme in this space with all project delivery posts now filled and a successful Grade 7 and Grade 6 campaign undertaken in partnership with People and Business Services.
7. Recent success for the programme includes the delivery of capability to incorporate alternate data sources into the headline measure of Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH), the acquisition of PAYE RTI data from HM Revenue and Customs to expand transformation of Labour Market statistics, launch of a public consultation on the future of the Crime survey for England and Wales (CSEW), and the conclusion of a successful public consultation on the future of Research and Development (R and D) statistics.

8. The Programme Board also approved a temporary change for 2022/23; utilising some projected underspend, the next iteration of the Over 50s Lifestyle survey was brought into scope allowing ONS to meet a key user need. The survey was conducted throughout the summer with a response rate of 54 per cent. Results and analysis will be published on the ONS website during the week commencing 26 September.
9. A follow-up to the independent critical friend review was held in July by an Infrastructure and Projects Authority high risk reviewer, and it noted positive progress against the recommendations from March. Of particular note was the support for the planning approach the programme had undertaken, and acknowledgement of the effort associated with this. The follow-up recommended a continued effort to align dependencies across the organisation in order to share accountability and maximise chance of successful delivery.
10. There have been some recent changes in programme leadership. Following Donna Leong's move to the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), Jason Zawadzki joined ESEG in September and will take on the role of Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for ARIES. A new Programme Director role has also been established which will help bring more strategic leadership on a day-to-day basis. Lisa Evans has taken-up this responsibility alongside her role as Deputy Director for Business Architecture Transformation and Strategy. There will also be a new Programme Manager from the start of October as Luke James moves into a role overseeing the office's drive to reduce reliance on legacy technology. Victoria Gannon will step into the Programme Manager role on an interim basis until a permanent replacement is recruited.

#### Look-Ahead October 2022 – March 2023

11. The remainder of this financial year will see notable deliveries across all of the programme's projects. These are summarised below.
  - i. Prices – publication of CPIH with the inclusion of rail fares and used cars alternative data sources;
  - ii. Labour Market – decision to proceed with implementation of new Transformed Labour Force Survey taken based upon detailed analysis of the parallel run. A discovery also completed to inform incorporation of PAYE RTI data into Labour Market statistics;
  - iii. Legacy Reduction – migration of the Monthly Business Survey suite of systems from legacy Ingres to strategic technology;
  - iv. Business Statistics Transformation – initial quality improvements to R and D statistics published and transformed surveys (Business research and Development, Private Non-profit Institutions, Government Expenditure on Research and Development) ready for launch as electronic questionnaires;
  - v. Public Sector – new sub-national education output metrics implemented within the regional accounts and a new style Public Sector Finance release published incorporating balance sheet and central government expenditure metrics;
  - vi. Crime – public consultation on future of CSEW concluded and ONS response published; and
  - vii. Household Financial Statistics Transformation – initial end-to-end design of a new survey complete.
12. Following the critical friend reviews conducted so far, a more formal gateway review will be planned for Q4 2022 to provide assurance that ARIES is on track and to inform continued evolution of planning, risk management, and benefits management.
13. The programme will also engage closely with the work being undertaken on automation to ensure alignment and maximise opportunities for delivering benefits. The impacts of automation plans will also be fed into future planning rounds, and where needed future iterations of the programme business case.

### Spotlight: Transforming Consumer Price Statistics

14. The Prices Alternative Data Sources Project is working towards delivering the level zero milestones of incorporating new rail fares and second-hand car data in 2023 and grocery electronic point of sale data in 2024. The data will be used in Consumer Prices Index (CPI) and Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH), significantly improving the quality and granularity of these statistics. These new data sources will result in hundreds of millions more price quotes being processed each month and to maximise their benefit, ARIES is implementing changes to methodologies and systems.
15. Implementing the solution through the use of Google Cloud Platform (GCP) technology and in partnership with Cloud Technology Solutions, ONS is receiving electronic point of sale data from several retailers, - regular through to test data – with sufficient regular feeds of grocery scanner data in place to go live in 2024. Additional development will continue to onboard further, correctly structured, data.
16. Statistical pipelines have been built on GCP for existing and new data sources, including electronic point of sale data, with user interfaces that allow the interrogation, matching and editing of data. This will help to reduce the reliance on legacy platforms, including some elements of Ingres, which are currently used for the monthly production of CPIH and CPI.
17. The next stage of the transformation will focus on the research capability, business readiness for the parallel run of grocery scanner data in 2023 and addressing technical debt. This is on track to be completed by the end of November.
18. A breadth of business change work is progressing in parallel to ensure that an appropriate organisational design is in place and the teams have the skills required to use the new platform and interrogate the new data sources.
19. The transformation has been communicated through a range of publications and the project has proactively looked for opportunities to engage our stakeholders. Feedback received from a wide range of stakeholders has been very positive, including the Bank of England, HM Treasury, and our Advisory Panels on Consumer Prices with specific comment on the ambition, pace, and quality of this work including our 'world leading research'.
20. Overall, the project is progressing at pace and with current delivery confidence assessed as Probable (Amber/Green) reflecting the progress that's been made but also acknowledging the scale, complexity, and risk appetite of the transformation.

### **Conclusion**

21. ARIES has made good progress since its relaunch in April 2022, with the first six months of the programme dedicated to building upon the lessons learnt from 2021/22 and building a cohesive scope and deliverable set that meets the primary needs of the users of ESEG statistics.
22. Looking ahead for the remainder of 2022/23, there are a number of significant milestones which will be delivered, at the forefront of which will be the publication of CPIH in Q1 2023 which will see the incorporation of alternate data sources for the first time.

**Jason Zawadzki, ARIES SRO, Economic, Social and Environmental Group, 7 September 2022**

***ONS input into understanding of rail service disruption***

**Purpose**

1. This paper details the work the ONS has produced to support understanding of impacts of railway service disruption due to ongoing industrial action in the UK.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to note the work ONS has contributed to this area and our aim to replicate a similarly proactive response for other issues of national importance.

**Background**

3. Beginning on the 21 of June 2022, various trade unions have taken industrial action resulting in severe disruption to the UK's rail services. The ONS Policy Liaison Unit worked with teams in the ONS and across government to coordinate a robust and timely insights into the impacts of disruptions.
4. Proactive engagement with colleagues across government allowed the ONS to pre-emptively assess evidence gaps and deliver a coordinated and comprehensive analytical plan on the issue. Throughout the summer the ONS has provided an objective evidence base for public and policymaker understanding of impacts of rail disruptions.

**Discussion**

5. Below is a summary of ONS analysis on rail disruptions.
6. Data Science Campus visualisation of route networks – To provide more intuitive and accessible geographic mapping of disruptions the Campus developed innovative techniques to process and visualise open-source timetable data before strike days to give an actionable and relevant view of anticipated disruptions. This was published on the Campus blog and used extensively in central government briefing on the topic.
7. Rapid response survey questions – Recognising the need for an up-to-date baseline of travel methods, questions were added to the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) before strikes occurred. This baseline was monitored against as strikes materialised, alongside further questions in both OPN and the Businesses Insights and Conditions Survey to rapidly pinpoint perceived impacts. These responses proved to be key evidence in assessing impacts and determining necessary mitigation actions.
8. Use of trains by occupation – The ONS published timely, detailed cuts of the Labour Force Survey to provide insights on occupational and geographic usage of rail for commuting. This provided a robust evidence base to assess if critical public services (e.g. health and social care, emergency services) were likely to experience worker shortages on strike days.
9. Faster economic indicators – Due to the short duration and infrequency of strikes, economic impacts are impossible to isolate from headline national statistics. However, the suite of faster economic indicators developed by the ONS helped fill this evidence gap. Trends observed included drops in instore card spending, fewer seated dinner reservations, and fewer café visits on strike days.

**Conclusion**

10. The approach taken to rail disruption showcases how the ONS can proactively work with wider government to prepare timely analytical responses to benefit both public and policymaker understanding of issues of national importance.
11. As we approach winter and further challenging times for the UK, we will look to continue to provide a proactive, coordinated, and timely response. The Policy Liaison Unit is

working to assess the priorities of the new government, and alongside the Coordination Team, ensure the ONS remains an authoritative and relevant voice in decision making.

**Jacob Seamons, Policy Liaison Unit, 20 September 2022**