

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes
Tuesday 20 December 2022
London Boardroom

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir Robert Chote (Chair)
Sian Jones (Deputy Chair)
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

Owen Brace
Robert Bumpstead
Megan Cooper
Sally-Ann Jones (Secretariat)
Alison Pritchard
Rhys Thomas
Jason Zawadzki (for item 12)

Apologies

Professor Sir John Aston

1. Presentation by Georgina Sturge: The use of data in policy making

- 1.1 Sir Robert Chote welcomed Georgina Sturge for this item ahead of the main Board meeting. Georgina Sturge is a statistician at the House of Commons Library, author of *Bad Data: How Governments, Politicians and the Rest of Us Get Misled by Numbers* and Chair of the ONS Migration Statistics User Forum.
- 1.2 The discussion focussed on the use of data in policy making, transparency around the uncertainty of statistics to build trust amongst users and data gaps. The Board discussed areas including migration, police recorded crime, coherence of data and interventions by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR).
- 1.3 The Board noted their thanks for an excellent presentation.

2. Apologies

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Professor Sir John Aston.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

4. Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings

- 4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 November 2022 were agreed.

5. Report from the Authority Chair [SA(22)64]

- 5.1 Non-Executives had met prior to the Board meeting. They had discussed topics including the recruitment processes for Non-Executive Directors and the National Statistician; and performance reporting of key objectives.
- 5.2 The Chair reported on his recent activities since the Board last met. On 13 December Sir Robert alongside Professor Sir Ian Diamond had delivered the opening speech at the Government Statistical Conference (GSS), with a theme of *Changing statistics for a changing world*.
- 5.3 Sir Robert had written to Dr Sandesh Gulhane, Member of the Scottish Parliament, about statistics on accident and emergency waiting times in Scotland.

6. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(22)65]

- 6.1 Sir Ian provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting, highlighting the following:
 - i. the GSS Conference held on 13 and 14 December in Manchester, which had provided the opportunity to bring over 400 GSS colleagues together in person for the first time since the pandemic. Sir Ian commended the organising team who had overcome a number of challenges and delivered a successful event;
 - ii. the visit by Baroness Neville-Rolfe on 16 November to the Newport office, which had included presentations on the labour market, health surveillance, business survey transformation and plans for the future of population and migration statistics;
 - iii. progress and future of the COVID-19 Infection Survey with discussions ongoing with the UK Health Security Agency;
 - iv. the work across the organisation on efficiencies and prioritisation being led by Sir Ian with Rhys Thomas and Megan Cooper; and
 - v. the high level results of the People Survey 2022, a positive set of results showing that high scores had been maintained consistently achieving above the Civil Service benchmarks.
- 6.2 The Board heard about the response by ONS to the error in Producer Prices Indices (PPI). Sir Ian provided assurance on the quality of Consumer Prices Indices noting that he would be chairing a small group, commencing on 4 January, to consider the quality framework underpinning economic statistics.

6.3 Board members discussed the update. It was agreed that going forward the performance report would include a time series of delivery against strategic objectives and strategic risks.

7. Report from the Director General for Regulation [SA(22)66]

7.1 Ed Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity. As part of the business planning process the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) had published their priorities for 2023/24 for comment.

7.2 The Board heard that on 21 November OSR had written to Matthew Rycroft, Home Office Permanent Secretary, about the transparency of Home Office statistics. A positive response had been received from the Permanent Secretary. With regard to external economic scrutiny OSR would be undertaking a pilot assessment of ONS Producer Price Indices (PPI). The Deputy Director recruitment process was ongoing with interviews scheduled in January 2023.

8. Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

8.1 Nora Nanayakkara reported on the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee which had last met on 10 November.

8.2 The Committee had considered:

- i. the financial position of the organisation;
- ii. delivery of the Internal Audit Programme 2022/23 and an Internal Audit Report on Reproducible Analytical Pipelines;
- iii. the implementation of the Risk and Assurance Strategy including an update on the strategic risk profile and risk appetite statements;
- iv. an update on the programme of work, which had resulted in the statistical quality risk being brought within risk appetite; and
- v. the mid-year fraud report.

8.3 The Committee had also heard about changes to the Internal Audit team. The Committee would be meeting on 21 December to consider the proposed changes to the Internal Audit Programme 2022/23. There would be a change of external auditors as the current NAO representatives had come to the end of their term.

9. Report from the Chair of the Regulation Committee

9.1 Professor Trefethen reported on the work of the Regulation Committee which had last met on 19 December.

9.2 The Committee had considered:

- i. two draft assessment reports: Statistics for the People and Nature Survey; and Statistics on the Scottish Prison Population;
- ii. OSR's draft priorities for 2023/24;
- iii. the pilot assessment by OSR's economy domain of ONS's PPI statistics;
- iv. the proposed approach to research and publish a think piece of police recorded crime;
- v. OSR's regulatory role on the recording and reporting of demographic data; and
- vi. the UK Standard Industrial Classification Review.

10. Strategy Update [SA(22)68]

10.1 Will Marks and Megan Cooper introduced a paper which provided the seventh quarterly update on progress against the delivery of the strategy, Statistics for the Public Good.

10.2 Since the last update, a number of Census 2021 topic summaries had been published in areas including demography, veterans, ethnicity, language and religion, travel to work and the labour market. In response to recommendations from the Inclusive Data

Taskforce in 2021 a comprehensive report on the lived experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in England and Wales had been published. The response to the digital COVID-19 Infection Survey had exceeded 1 million online questionnaires and had received over 1.4 million completed blood and swab samples. The move to 2 Marsham Street and co-location with other departments had provided the opportunity for greater collaboration.

- 10.3 The Board heard that in the coming months a mid-term review of the strategy would be undertaken alongside the development of the refreshed business plans for ONS and OSR.

11. Integrated Data Service [SA(22)69]

- 11.1 Alison Pritchard introduced a paper which provided an update on the progress of the Integrated Data Programme (IDP) responsible for the delivery of the Integrated Data Service (IDS).
- 11.2 The Board heard that the IDS initial Public Beta was being used to grant access to a proportion of Census 2021 data for the user group of super early adopters. Programme development of the full Public Beta and Digital Economy Act accreditation was scheduled for March 2023. Securing cross government support would be a key area of focus going forward, and a review would be undertaken of programme key performance indicators reported to the Board.
- 11.3 Board members welcomed the update and noted the value of an external champion to showcase the potential of the IDS.

12. ARIES [SA(22)70]

- 12.1 Jason Zawadzki introduced a paper which provided an overview of progress and look ahead for the coming months of the Ambitious Radical Inclusive Sustainable (ARIES) transformation programme.
- 12.2 The Board heard that since the last update in September the programme had delivered in a number of areas including: the publication of baselined Research and Development statistics, publication of ONS's response to the public consultation on the future of the Crime Survey for England and Wales, and completion of a review of risks to core statistics due to legacy technology. The transformation of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) was dual running both the LFS and the Transformed Labour Force Survey, an on-line first, multi-mode survey until June 2023.
- 12.3 The Board would continue to remain engaged in the delivery of the ARIES programme.

13. Any Other Business

- 13.1 The next meeting would take place on 26 January.
- 13.2 Sir Robert paid warm tribute to the Non-Executive Directors who were coming to the end of their appointments, Professor Anne Trefethen and Helen Boaden, on 31 December, and Professor Jonathan Haskel ending on 1 February. (Professor Haskel had noted apologies for the January Board meeting).

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Agenda

20 December 2022, 10.30-13.00, London Boardroom

Chair: Sir Robert Chote

Apologies: None

Attendees: Jason Zawadzki (for item 9)

NED Session: 10.00-10.30

1 10.30-11.00 30 mins	The use of data in policy making	Georgina Sturge
2 11.00-11.05 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings Declarations of interest	Meeting of 21 November 2022
3 11.05-11.15 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	SA(22)65 Sir Robert Chote
4 11.15-11.40 25 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(22)66 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond
5 11.40-11.50 10 mins	Report from the Director-General for Regulation	SA(22)67 Ed Humpherson
6 11.50-12.00 10 mins	Report from Committee Chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audit and Risk Assurance Committee• Regulation Committee	Oral Updates Nora Nanayakkara Prof. Anne Trefethen
7 12.00-12.15 15 mins	Strategy update	SA(22)68 Will Marks Megan Cooper
8 12.15-12.35 20 mins	Integrated Data Service	SA(22)69 Alison Pritchard
9 12.35-12.55 20 mins	ARIES	SA(22)70 Jason Zawadzki
10 12.55-13.00 5 mins	Any Other Business	

Next meeting: Thursday 26 January 2023, Remote Teams Meeting

Chair's Report, December 2022

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Authority Board with an overview of the Chair's activity in November and early December 2022.

Review of recent activities

2. On 16 November Ian Diamond and I met **Baroness Neville-Rolfe** to give her an introduction to the work of the Authority, ahead of her visit to Newport. She showed particular interest in business surveys, migration, research and development and the census.
3. On 21 November I met **William Wragg MP**, chair of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee. We discussed the independent review of the Authority, the Integrated Data Service, the spending outlook, data comparability across the Union and our new office in Manchester (near his constituency).
4. On 22 and 23 November I chaired the assessment panel interviewing for the **non-executive directors** to join the Board. A submission with the panel's recommendations is currently with ministers for their decision.
5. On 23 November, Ed Humpherson and I joined a meeting of Senior Civil Servants in the **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities** to speak about intelligent transparency and comparable data across the Union.
6. On 29 November, I met ONS teams in Titchfield working on **census outputs and the future of population statistics**. In addition to exploring the latest work on population, we discussed the nature of the consultation process and the assurances that the Board would need to recommend that another census is not necessary.
7. On 30 November, I attended a conference by the **Better Statistics** group, with presentations from ONS, government, academic and private sector organisations about statistics on growth and productivity.
8. On 12 December I spoke at the relaunch event for the **Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence**, which from spring 2023 is moving to King's College London, in partnership with other academic institutions.
9. On 13 December I am attending the **Government Statistical Service (GSS) conference** in Manchester, where I will be giving the opening address and am looking forward to seeing a wide variety of work from across the GSS showcased.

Casework and correspondence

10. On 29 November, I replied to **Andrew Gwynne MP** about a graphic the Department of Health and Social Care had used to describe trends in the pay of nurses. I also sent this letter to the Chief Executive of the Government Communication Service, who has agreed to remind departmental Directors of Communication of the importance of working with their statisticians on presenting data.
11. On 7 December, I wrote to **Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP** about statistics from research reports on renewable energy in Scotland.
12. On 8 December, I replied to **Drew Hendry MP** about statistics on trade deals used by the Conservative Party.

Sir Robert Chote, Chair, 13 December 2022

Chief Executive's Report, December 2022

Purpose

1. This provides the Authority Board with an overview of activity for December 2022.

Summary

2. December rounded off a busy year for the statistical and analytical system, with a range of successful engagements taking place and new insights published. Baroness Neville-Rolfe, our Cabinet Office Minister, visited the Newport office to hear about the impactful work being done throughout the ONS. The event was a huge success, and we received a letter of thanks from the Baroness herself. Presentations included the labour market, health surveillance, business survey transformation and our plans for the future of population and migration statistics.
3. This month also saw Sir Robert Chote visit Titchfield to discuss progress on the future of population statistics. Robert was fully engaged and it was a great opportunity to update him on migration statistics, the Dynamic Population Model, work going into the 2023 recommendation and the upcoming consultation.
4. Further progress has been made in the subnational statistics space with ONS Local currently around halfway through their series of roundtables across the English Regions, with the most recent bringing together key local decision makers from the South-East. These aim to ensure the service is co-designed with its users and attendees were enthusiastic about getting closer to the broad and varied subnational catalogue of work from across the ONS. The team to deliver this analytical advisory service continues to grow with only two in-area posts yet to be recruited. The team also showcased to Will Garton, Director General in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the huge range and potential of the whole ONS subnational offer.
5. This month also saw three further census topic summaries released; ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion (EILR), Welsh Language and Labour Market/Travel to Work. There was wide media coverage, particularly following the EILR release when Census 2021 was trending at number four on social media.

Review of recent activities

6. Following consultation with colleagues, we are reducing our footprint across our Newport and Titchfield offices on a trial basis. This approach will drive financial savings on outlays, such as heating and cleaning, and will also improve our environmental footprint; linking well with the sustainable arm of our strategy.
7. We have now received confirmation of the requirements for the HM Treasury (HMT) efficiency savings review, including the template and timings. The request is that the UK Statistics Authority “live within our means” for the remainder of the spending review period, including absorbing inflationary pressures and not calling on the reserve for additive funding. The deadline to return our efficiency plan is the end of January 2023, which fits with existing planning and governance activities – we are on track to meet this.
8. Our programmes, including Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme, Integrated Data Service Programme (IDSP) and ARIES were all included within the Spending Review '21 settlement letter, enabling us to continue to pursue funding for these programmes where not already confirmed. We have also submitted an initial business case on Future Population Migration Statistics (FPMS) which will constitute ‘new funding’ but is based on the principles of higher quality, greater granularity and lower costs (than a traditional Census model).

9. We have had positive engagement with the centre through an initial FPMS Treasury Approvals Process (TAP) (HMT, Cabinet Office, Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA)) and follow-up discussion with IPA on how to ensure HMT have oversight of the programme to support the funding decision.
10. ONS business planning activities continue as planned, including the requirement for business areas to set out their efficiency plans, with a refined set of Strategic Objectives being taken to the Portfolio and Investment Committee in December alongside greater clarity on the scope of our prioritisation framework.
11. More broadly, this month has seen a significant amount of parliamentary engagement - Mike Keoghan and Darren Morgan gave evidence to the Science and Technology Committee on research and development statistics on 7 December, further illustrating the wide range of stakeholder interest in these improvements.
12. We have also responded positively to a recommendation from the Lords Environment and Climate Change report which asked for further behavioural change statistics to be brought together in our cross-government UK Climate Change Statistics Portal.
13. We are also anticipating the publication of the Lords Economic Affairs Committee's report for their inquiry UK Labour Supply this month, which Mike Keoghan and David Freeman provided oral evidence to earlier in the year (September).
14. Turning to the wider analytical community, final preparations are underway for the GSS Conference on 13 and 14 December in Manchester. This will be the first held in person since the pandemic and will see over 400 analysts come together from across the GSS to collaborate. The theme is "Changing statistics for a changing world".
15. The international community has also been busy. Last month's GSS International Committee focused on the 'Influence' pillar of our international strategy. There were presentations on the Data Gaps Initiative 3, Special Data Dissemination Standards plus, and an update from the Department of International Trade on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The committee was also joined by President of Statistics Poland, Dominik Rozkrut, to discuss his work on championing Data Stewardship within his organisation.
16. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Expert Meeting on Modernizing Statistical Legislation took place in Geneva last month and was chaired by our Head of International Relations, Nicola Shearman. The three sessions covered access to privately held data, revising and enforcing statistical legislation, and data stewardship and governance.
17. Beyond this, work continues to deliver the IDSP. The programme has completed a refresh of the overall business case, and successfully took part in a Treasury Approval Point (TAP). As part of the TAP process a technical review took place, led by HMT, Central Digital and Data Office and No10, which successfully highlighted the confidence those stakeholders have in the platform and the trajectory it is on.
18. On 5 December, the programme held a session with board members Sian Jones, and Nora Nanayakkara, which culminated in a demonstration of the platform, showing the power of Integrated Data Service (IDS) in bringing together multiple data sources to answer policy questions at pace. The session covered a lot of ground and provide useful steers.
19. The programme is on track to submit Digital Economy Act (DEA) evidence on the 25 January to achieve DEA accreditation by 24 March 2023. Alison Pritchard attended the Research Accreditation Panel to discuss latest progress in securing DEA accreditation.
20. On migration, long term international migration estimates received wide media coverage when published in late November, following extensive collaboration with the Home

Office. For population, mid-year estimates will be published on 21 December. These will roll forward the population estimates from census day to mid-year 2021 and will incorporate new methods for measuring international migration.

21. In health surveillance, we are now providing regular monitoring of Influenza A/B and Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection alongside COVID-19 in our weekly slide packs to government, enhancing the disease surveillance value of the COVID-19 Infection Survey cohort. Samples are randomly selected weekly as part of a 20-week pilot study and then tested by pathology laboratories.
22. At the start of the month, I presented our latest Ukraine Humanitarian Response surveys to Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and other ministers. Our recent follow-up survey of Ukrainians living in the UK provided insight into how best to help these individuals into jobs that fit their education, skills, and experience from before the conflict. Our follow up Homes for Ukraine Sponsor Survey, published 16 December, further reveals the experiences and intentions of hosts to provide various types of ongoing support including help settling into UK life, access to private rented accommodation as well as the labour market amid challenges including rising living costs.
23. Work on winter pressures continues at pace. Teams have used Census 2021 data alongside primary care records and indicators of poverty to focus on 2 million people in England at risk of both poor health and poverty. We have also constructed a winter panel of participants to explore questions around health, heating and keeping warm, access to GPs and healthcare and mitigating the cost of living. The first results will be published in December and follow ups are planned through to March.
24. To enable insight and comparability of the impact of rising energy prices across the four nations of the UK, we are exploring with the devolved administrations the feasibility of modelling the four separate definitions of fuel poverty that exist.
25. On economic statistics, the Consumer Prices Transformation Project published for the first time an impact analysis of including new alternative data and methods in our headline consumer price statistics – this first edition is for rail fares and second-hand cars, expected to be included in headline measure from 2023.
26. We will also be launching our new Cost of Living Insights Tool on the ONS website on 15 December. The tool synthesises GSS data and insights on the cost of living across themes of economy, spending, work, energy, business and society. The product is being developed to help users access the latest insights, interpret complex trends and personalise the data to their region and personal characteristic.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, 12 December 2022

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(22)67

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. **Draft business priorities:** This week we [published our priorities for 2023/24](#) and asked for users to provide input on them. The draft priorities focus on supporting and challenging producers to innovate, collaborate and build resilience; championing the effective communication of statistics to support society's key information needs; continuing to widen our reach beyond official statistics and official statistics producers; and increase our capability as a regulator.
 - ii. **Police recorded crime:** We presented a paper to Regulation Committee yesterday on our proposals to research and publish (in spring 2023) a think piece on police recorded crime. We are proposing to develop the think piece in two phases. Phase one will be a quality baseline review aiming to raise awareness of the quality of the statistics for a wide audience. The second phase will focus on value and public good, providing an understanding of the uses of police recorded crime statistics – including interpretation and use alongside other data sources.
 - iii. **Intelligent Transparency:** We held two round tables on our intelligent transparency campaign. During these events we provided external stakeholders with an update on our work and asked for feedback on our principles (equality of access, enhancing understanding and analytical leadership) to identify improvements and ideas for future work. We found that the concept of intelligent transparency resonated with stakeholders, some of whom are keen to adopt it in their own work.
 - iv. **Economic Scrutiny:** In September OSR held the first meeting of its external scrutiny project board. The main purpose of the board is to review progress, co-ordinate ongoing work and provide a steer on OSR's external scrutiny activities. At its October meeting the board reviewed several groups/sets of statistics on which OSR might seek to undertake a pilot assessment (enhanced focus on the Quality Pillar of the Code of Practice) to support the development of OSR's external scrutiny proposition. The project Board decided to conduct the pilot assessment on ONS Producer Price statistics, given the contained scope and the achievability of a quick review of these statistics.
 - v. **Scotland Census:** We continue to engage with the National Records of Scotland (NRS) regarding their plans and progress to secure quality estimates of the population of Scotland. We [responded](#) to their letter of [28 October](#). We are encouraged by NRS plans for engagement with stakeholders on their data processing and quality assurance approaches and about the level of quality that stakeholders may expect from census outputs. We plan to finalise our judgements and publish formal assessment report early in 2023.

Casework

3. We continued to receive casework on a range of topics including concerns about vaccine surveillance, nurses pay, train cancellations, producer price inflation and Northern Ireland protocol modelling.
4. We made several public casework interventions including a letter to the [Home Office](#) in response to concerns raised by [After Exploitation](#) about claims that people are "gaming" the modern slavery system. Following the update last month on a number of issues that

involved the Home Office we [wrote to the Permanent Secretary](#) highlighting concerns about claims that had been made based on unpublished data on small boat arrivals, asylum casework and adult migrants. We received a positive [response](#) from the Permanent Secretary who is keen to engage with us on these issues.

5. Sir Robert also sent a letter to the [leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats](#) regarding claims that Scotland has 25 per cent of Europe's renewable energy potential and a letter to [Drew Hendry MP](#) regarding concerns with a Conservative party trade infographic.

Wider reach

6. We held Voluntary adoption community of practice workshop in December. Voluntary application (VA) of the Code is for any producer of data, statistics and analysis which are not official statistics, whether inside government or beyond, to help them produce analytical outputs that are high quality, useful for supporting decisions, and well respected. The event went well and was a great opportunity to engage the community and highlight how we will support them in 2023.

Issues on my mind

7. The main issue on my mind now is:
 - i. **Recruitment:** We have launched recruitment for our Deputy Director role, interviews will be held in early January. We will shortly be launching our Head of Casework role and our Economist and Data Scientist roles are continuing through the recruitment process. Recruitment is still a short-term risk that could start to impact on our ability to deliver. We are working closely with our Recruitment Partners in ONS to fill vacancies and doing some reprioritisation of our programme.

Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, OSR, 12 December 2022

Regulatory Activities Dashboard

December 2022

Regulation Committee

Health and Social Care

Assessments: Re-assessment planned for OHID **Adult Dental Health Survey statistics**.
Casework: Letter published to PHS and Scottish Government about the NHS Inform dashboard on **Waiting Times**. Investigating concerns about **vaccine coverage** and **A&E waiting times** in Scotland.
Compliance Checks: ONS **Health Index** ongoing, reviewing findings with producers.
Systemic Reviews: Further rounds of user engagement, following up on **Mental Health** reviews.
Published report and held launch about the review of **COVID-19** lessons learned.

Labour Market and Welfare

Compliance checks: ONS transformation of the **Labour Force Survey** (Phase 1) [letter published November](#). Planning for phase 2 underway.
PAYE RTI User engagement completed, review ongoing, plan to publish findings in January
Social Security Scotland removal of sex/gender question for disability payments discussed with Social Security Scotland Chief Executive. Drafting letter
Systemic Reviews: Update blog for **Income-based poverty statistics** planned early 2023.

Crime and Security

Think piece on **Police Recorded Crime statistics**. Paper for Regulation Committee.
Casework: concerns raised about Home Office's use of statistics and release of data on **modern slavery**.
Assessments: Scottish Government **Scottish Prison population statistics** draft report shared with Regulation Committee.
Compliance checks: Drafting letter for ONS **modern slavery statistics** and Home Office **National Referral Mechanism** statistics.

Business, Trade and International Development

Assessment: Monitoring **UK Trade** Continuing engagement in line with ONS action plan. **Funded Occupational Pension Statistics** follow up – Paper for Regulation Committee, proposal for confirming NS designation
Rapid Review: In December, DIT **Inward investment** letter published. ONS **Business Enterprise Research and Development statistics** letter published confirming National Statistics designation for total **UK BERD statistics** and temporary suspension of statistics **below UK totals**. Letters to NISRA and Scottish Government suspending **R&D spending estimates**. Letter with findings of ONS **BERD** statistics. **Industrial Classification project work** paper for Regulation Committee, endorsement of OSR engagement approach to ONS

Housing, Planning and Local Services

Assessment: **Statutory Homelessness in England statistics**: Continuing engagement in line with DLUHC action plan.
Casework: Investigating government claims on the numbers of **houses builds**.
Compliance Checks: Drafting letter after following up with **ONS** on **Housing Affordability** outputs.
Engaging with ONS, DLUHC and LUHC committee on **Sub-national data** developments, to support public understanding of levelling up.

Economy

Assessments: **Regional GDP** drafting letter for ONS covering interim findings.
Systemic Review: **Post-Brexit ONS Economic Statistics** Producer Price Index pilot assessment applying Quality Framework and contacting key stakeholders

Children, Education and Skills

Casework: **Student loan interest rates** concerns raised, method used to derive the interest rate and nature of the communication around it. Letter published November, follow up complaint received. **UCAS collection of sex/ gender** two concerns raised about UCAS plans to change question on gender in application process. **Ofqual Art and Design A Levels** concerns around how the grade boundaries have been calculated for the Art and Design A level this year.
Compliance Check: **Welsh Government School Workforce Annual Census** feeding into a wider review of this data collection.

Population and Society

Assessments: **Scotland Census** continues with likely reporting in the new year. Interim [correspondence between OSR and NRS](#) published in November.
Compliance Check: **ONS mortality stats** aiming for publication in December
Casework: Concerns raised about statistics on **small boats** by the previous Home Secretary, numbers of **asylum caseworkers** by Rishi Sunak and a quote on age disputes of **asylum seekers** by the minister for immigration.

Transport, Environment and Climate Change

Assessments: **People and Nature Survey (PaNS)**. Draft report provided for Regulation Committee in December.
Casework: Two separate concerns about **renewable energy** investigated; letter published in November and another due to be published early December. Ongoing **Salmon Stocks** statistics.
Compliance Checks: **Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals** underway.

Data and Methods

Internal work: New data science projects are on hold until we have more resource, our priority is maintaining existing tools. Recruitment ongoing.

Full Fact Tool: We have started a three-month trial of Full Fact's horizon scanning tool, to see if it can enhance our regulatory work. We will review and take a decision on future options in December.

Review of [data sharing/linkage](#): We're pulling together emerging findings from stakeholder interviews. Plan to publish a report this business year. Held a successful seminar for government analysts with ~250 attendees and guest speakers from Ofqual, Ofsted and ADR UK.

Wider reach: Models guidance published in August: gathering evidence of its use to use as case studies.

Policy & Standards

Designation refresh: User testing of designation messaging continued in November in collaboration with ONS Comms. Producers are piloting our new tools – four are applying the Code maturity model over the coming year, and we are trialling a second version of our guidance for summarising quality. Our regulatory team is reviewing our assessment approach, with pilot assessments being planned.

Voluntary application and wider reach: We held a community of practice event in early December for anyone with an interest in applying the Code pillars. We are engaging 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 given a training session to the Financial Conduct Authority as they extend their application of the Code.

Insight

Intelligent transparency: Holding two round table events in December with external stakeholders to explore the principles of intelligent transparency and discuss progress and next steps.

Recruitment: Recruiting for a new Evaluation and Insight Manager

Research

Public Perceptions of the Public Good, Collaboration with ADR UK: Promoting [research findings report](#) through writing [blog posts](#) and an article for Royal Statistical Society magazine.

Public Confidence in Official Statistics survey: Analysing the Public Confidence in Official Statistics (PCOS) data to explore answers to the questions we added.

Research Programme Overview: Reflecting on work to date and planning the future directions for the research programme

Cross Cutting Issues

Reproducible Analytical Pipelines: Our seminar for government analysts on Reproducible Analytical Pipelines in November. With speakers Professor Ben Goldacre and Scott Heald from Public Health Scotland, was very successful with over 500 attendees.

Strategy and Business Plan Update

Purpose

1. This paper is the seventh 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 areas of focus over the next three months.

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 2023, we are focussing on delivery – following the successes of the 2021 Spending Review settlement and progress made in planning for the period to March 2025.
4. This report provides a wide-ranging update on highlights and challenges experienced in the last quarter. It is intentionally wide-ranging to provide a rich flavour of activities undertaken in pursuit of the strategic ambitions. The monthly Integrated performance Report demonstrates how we are progressing against the strategic drivers, strategic objectives and key deliverables set out in the ONS business plan.
5. A key feature of the next quarter will be the mid-term review of the strategy. This will appraise our ambitious, radical, inclusive and sustainable missions, looking back at the successes so far and future milestones. We will measure this against metrics to assess our success on the strategy journey so far. This will be accompanied by a public report and series of internal and external engagement events, across the Government Statistical Service and beyond.
6. Looking back at what we said we would deliver, progress has been 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;
 - 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 agile 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;
 - v. deliver a successful Census in 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 supported by funding through the Spending Review 2021.

Discussion

7. We have made good progress against these aims. Since the last quarterly update:
 - i. We have published a number of topic releases from census data, including demography/migration; veterans; ethnicity, identity, language and religion; and travel to work and the labour market. Each release consists of a range of products including a statistical bulletin, data, census maps and supporting quality information. The publications reveal the diversity of the population down to granular geographies and have had excellent pick up from a range of national and local press, as well as key stakeholders across government, including the Chief Medical Officer.
 - ii. England and Wales census data on UK armed forces veterans was included in the topic summaries, allowing service providers to see the size of these communities in different areas of England and Wales for the first time. This was followed by the successful launch of a veterans survey in collaboration with the Office for Veterans' Affairs to help us better understand the experiences, needs and well-being of veterans, and guide future action. The survey is open for 12 weeks from November 22, and at the time of writing had over 20,000 responses. I have also met with the Veterans Minister, Johnny Mercer MP, to discuss this and other topics.
 - iii. With the cost of living being a persistent challenge across the country, we invited a range of stakeholder organisations to a hybrid event to showcase how ONS statistics help understanding of the situation. The event was attended by over 650 people representing citizens, workers, business, academia, charities, local authorities and government with an interest in using data to inform policy, strategy and decision making and gained positive feedback. Our personal inflation calculator, which allows individuals to assess their own personal inflation rate, is hosted on the BBC website and has to date received more than one million views.
 - iv. We have made real progress in the data ethics space this quarter. In October the National Statistician's Data Ethics Committee (NSDEC) met and discussed five projects from the ONS. These covered: qualitative research involving domestic abuse survivors, qualitative research covering the lived experiences of asylum seeking, refugee and migrant young people, experiences of non-housed populations accessing Improving Access to Physiological Therapies, risk factors associated with self-harm and suicide in adults and children and future plans for the ONS Public Health Data Asset. At the end of November NSDEC also reviewed two projects via correspondence from the ONS on an update to the COVID-19 research programme to cover winter pressures on the NHS and the development of a child abuse prevalence questionnaire and safeguarding procedure. The committee are currently in the process of advising the researchers as to the ethical risks and possible mitigations that they may employ in this work.
 - v. This quarter has seen the continuation of our exciting expansion into qualitative methods. We have published a comprehensive report on the lived experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in England and Wales. This is the third qualitative project we have completed this year in response to the Inclusive Data Taskforce recommendations from 2021. It represents an exciting and successful project carried out jointly with the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group to ask participants about their life stories, and specifically about their experiences with homes, health, education and employment, and justice. We have now procured two further qualitative research projects exploring the well-being of refugee and asylum-seeking young people; and secondly, the lived experiences of women survivors of domestic abuse with current or previous experience of temporary 'safe' accommodation in England.
 - vi. The economy has been front and centre of debate across government and society in recent months. The labour market and number of people who are disengaging with it has featured. We have developed an excellent understanding of the issue and have been advising ministers across government and spoken at several public forums to

- inform policy and debate on the topic. Our analytical relationship with Cabinet Office has further developed and ensures this analysis informs policy with real impact.
- vii. On economic statistics quality, our improvements to the measurement of Research and Development (R&D) and their impact has also attracted significant attention. We have continued to engage widely on what we have done so far and our future plans, including hosting a well-attended (close to 100 people) and well received forum on 6 December where the British Academy, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Go-Science and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy spoke. Mike Keoghan (Deputy National Statistician) and Darren Morgan (Director of Economic Statistics) also appeared at the Science and Technology Committee to explain the improvements already delivered and our future plans.
 - viii. Since transition to the digital-first COVID-19 Infection Survey (CIS), we have seen a brilliant response from participants completing both their postal swab kits and the online questionnaire. From just under 375,000 participants currently enrolled in the survey, we have received over 1.4 million completed blood and swab samples and over 1 million online questionnaires.
 - ix. We released the latest ONS Health Index with data for 2020 providing a picture of the nation's health, whether it is declining or improving, how it varies from area to area and what factors may be causing this. Alongside this, we released a new tool, "Health in my area", that allows people to see how health has changed in their area over time, and working with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation, enabled them to explore health challenges facing its residents.
 - x. To inform the Treasury Approval Point of the refreshed Integrated Data Programme Business Case, we supported a technical review of the Integrated Data Service (IDS), commissioned by HM-Treasury and led by 10 Downing St Data Science team and Central Digital and Data Office technical experts. The review provided positive feedback and two key recommendations related to engagement and communications and a focus on Digital Economy Act accreditation - both of which are being progressed. We also are now working towards onboarding a series of 'super early adopters' to use the IDS within government and focusing on ingesting census 21 data onto the platform.
 - xi. The next stage of our transformation journey for population and migration statistics has been set out in a Strategic Outline Business Case and subsequent HM-Treasury Approval Point. We now await the outcome of a Chief Secretary to the Treasury (CST) decision on our plans, including a request for seed funding that will enable us to deliver some early benefit from the Census outputs ahead of the 2023 recommendation.
 - xii. On our estates strategy, we have made excellent progress with successful transition for our London colleagues from 1 Drummond Gate into 2 Marsham Street. The new space has been welcomed by colleagues and co-location with other departments already providing several opportunities for collaboration. We have also now secured office space in Manchester to broaden our reach and attraction of talent. With the continued success of Darlington, this sets us up well across the country.
 - xiii. Earlier this year, the ONS published its Evaluation Strategy, which will help us measure our achievements more robustly in the second half of the strategy. ONS also now has a departmental theory of change aligned to our strategic objectives and strategy, which will do the same. Evaluations have now been embedded within business cases to ensure they aligned to the strategy and we will learn valuable lessons from our activities in this process, as well as celebrating successes.
 - xiv. Finally, Baroness Neville-Rolfe, our responsible Cabinet Office Minister, visited us in Newport during November. She spent the day speaking with colleagues, exploring our new workspaces, and receiving presentations on our work including labour market, prices transformation, business surveys, health surveillance, data science,

and the transformation of population and migration statistics. We received excellent feedback from the Minister who took a keen interest in the work.

8. Over the coming period the focus will be on the following areas:
 - i. Following preparatory scenario planning and the receipt of the HM-Treasury Efficiency Savings Review commission, planning is underway to explore how ONS can continue to deliver against the ambitions of the Authority Strategy whilst delivering efficiencies over and above those committed to in the SR21 across the organisation. Work will continue to refine plans ahead of the January return.
 - ii. Alongside this, we continue close engagement with key stakeholders to secure financial support for our transformation portfolio. We await the outcome of CST decisions on Future Population Migration Statistics, Integrated Data Services Programme, and continue to explore options for continued health monitoring on behalf of UK Health Security Agency relating to the future of the CIS.
 - iii. The above aligns to the regular business planning activities that will also take place in quarter four, including refreshing the strategic objectives, the prioritisation framework and defining our priority deliverables for FY23/24. This will ensure greater alignment to the strategy and be complemented by adding measurable metrics to strategic objectives, publishing our first Impact Report, and developing the monitoring and evaluation plan for evaluating the strategy itself.
 - iv. Building on this, we will hold an event and produce a mid-term review 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 during the period.

Conclusion

9. 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 as set out in the business plans for the ONS and the Office for Statistics Regulation, and begin development of the next set of plans. A mid-term review of the Authority strategy will complement this work, restating our ambitious, radical, inclusive and sustainable ambitions whilst working towards the future.

Will Marks, Principal Private Secretary to the National Statistician, Megan Cooper, Deputy Director of Finance, Planning and Performance and Rob Bumpstead, Chief of Staff, 12 December 2022

Integrated Data Service – Update

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on the progress of the Integrated Data Programme (IDP), responsible for the delivery of the Integrated Data Service (IDS).

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to note:
 - i. updates against programme milestones;
 - ii. progress against key actions relating to onboarding new users and the ingestion of data;
 - iii. the onboarding of some Census 2021 data; and
 - iv. work underway to ensure that the programme reporting is sufficiently consistent and insightful, giving the Board the information it needs to challenge and champion the IDS.

Background

3. The IDP is moving forward to deliver a full public beta service, with tactical activity underway to meet key deliverables and secure cross-government buy-in and support for the IDS.

Discussion

4. Updates of particular relevance and note include that:
 - i. programme development will enter full public beta and secure Digital Economy Act (DEA) accreditation in March 2023;
 - ii. the programme will be leveraging the Permanent Secretary-level cross-government Digital and Data Board to secure cross government support; this will be critical to full rollout;
 - iii. a review of the information and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) provided to the UK Statistics Authority (the Authority) is being conducted; and
 - iv. programme delivery confidence assessment remains Amber.

Milestone progression

5. The programme has completed a refresh of the overall business case, and successfully took part in a Treasury Approval Point (TAP). As part of the TAP process a technical review took place, led by HM Treasury (HMT), Central Digital and Data Office and No10, which successfully highlighted the confidence those stakeholders have in the platform and the trajectory it is on. As a result, there is now a recommendation to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to continue funding to enable the development of the service.
6. The programme has secured endorsement from Sir Ian Diamond to review ONS's resourcing portfolio enabling the programme to deliver at pace.
7. Implementation of technical solutions and underpinning business processes addressing the issue known as 'safe outputs' are well underway and on target to be completed and tested by 16 December.
8. The Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) Gate 4 review is scheduled to take place in late February 2023. At that point, IPA will test IDS readiness to "go live". Where appropriate it will assess the capabilities of delivery partners and service providers.
9. The programme is on track to submit DEA evidence on the 25 January to achieve DEA accreditation by 24 March 2023. The Senior Responsible Owner has attended the Research Accreditation Panel to discuss latest progress in securing DEA accreditation.

Securing buy-in for the IDS: engagement update

10. To successfully implement the vision of the IDS, there are now clear technology and data asks emerging from departments across Government, with need for Permanent Secretary-level buy-in and support. As such, in the next quarter the programme is collaborating with the Functional Leaders' Group, Chief Data Officer Council, the cross-government data linkage group and ultimately, the Digital and Data Board to secure cross-government support on the technology, data and service approach ensuring that the programme continues to support Mission 3 of Government's Digital and Data Strategy.
11. This will help secure:
 - i. buy-in to the approach on the Reference Data Management Framework (RDMF), and progress on the data and agreements needed for data indexing;
 - ii. agreement on technical architecture and progress on security needed to ensure that Departments can access the IDS, such that Other Government Department analysts are able use the platform; and
 - iii. ultimate Digital and Data Board endorsement that departments will move to facilitate cross-Government use of the IDS.
12. More widely, a refresh on the overarching communication and engagement strategy is in flight. In line with the programme plan it is expected to be completed in January 2023.
13. Measures are being taken to improve end user engagement, particularly with the impending establishment of a cross-government analytical steering group to drive a greater user centric approach to data, tooling, and platform design recommendations to the design authority. For example, the programme provided a progress update to Government Statistical Service Heads of Profession as part of their quarterly meeting in December 2022.
14. On 5 December, the programme held a session with board members Sian Jones, and Nora Nanayakkara, which culminated in a demonstration of the platform, showing the power of IDS in bringing together multiple sources of data to answer policy questions at pace.

Progress on onboarding new users and data assets into IDS

15. As set out in October's paper, a small number of SEAs were identified to use IDS Beta from across a number of Whitehall departments and Devolved Administrations.
16. This group, currently 29 users from six departments in addition to the 26 existing users has been supported to propose high impact projects and is being given close supervision and assistance to resolve challenges and allow user feedback.
17. A two-phase approach has been taken which will enable this group access to the IDS:
 - i. access to a proportion of Census 2021 data in silo through an exploratory project submission in December 2022; and
 - ii. user requirements will be enforced around data linkage of Census against other ONS data in relation to top government priorities i.e. economy, health and energy in the first quarter of 2023.
18. There are four projects lined up with three other government departments/organisations. These include:
 - i. exploring Census 2021 data to Inform Administrative Data Agricultural Research Collection project (Welsh Government);
 - ii. exploring the difference in reporting of Welsh speaking ability project (Welsh Government);

- iii. exploring capability and capacity of local authorities (10 Data Science/Cabinet Office); and
 - iv. exploring the relationships between the wider determinants of health and self-assessed health status (Department for Health and Social Care / Welsh Government collaboration).
19. Additional projects involving HM Revenue and Customs and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities are emerging, and the programme has been in talks with HMT analysts about usage in early 2023.
20. Census 2021 data has been processed, engineered and checked ahead of being moved to IDS. It is now in the process of being moved to the platform for SEAs to access.
21. Overall, there are currently 24 datasets available in IDS.

Ensuring consistency and confidence in our KPIs

22. Following a review and demonstration of IDS with Sian Jones and Nora Nanayakkara, alongside Sir Ian Diamond, it has been agreed that the programme will provide more tangible KPIs to the Authority to show progress of the delivery of IDS.
23. In the first instance, it was agreed the following KPIs would be provided to the Authority from now on and in future will be referenced as an annex to provide delivery confidence that the programme is moving towards achieving the IDS vision.

Number of Projects	Total Accredited Users	Total Number of Datasets
Nov 2022	Nov 2022	Nov 2022
5	27	24

24. The programme further took an action to consolidate and ensure consistency in the communication on KPIs relating to resourcing, finances, engagement, and to ensure that there is clearer reporting of challenges and slippages, with clarity of ask where the Board may be able to offer support. A bespoke session will be offered in due course and all feedback is welcome.

Alison Pritchard, Deputy National Statistician for Data Capability, 12 December 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 and Environmental statistics Group (ESEG). It also presents a spotlight on the success and challenges across Labour Market transformation.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. note progress made across the programme since the last update in September 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 UK Statistics Authority (the 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 transformation aims of ESEG. It remains a key strategic enabling programme for ONS 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.
5. Outline Business Case submission resulted in investment approval being granted by HM Treasury (HMT) for the period to March 2025. This Outline Business Case is underpinned by the programme baseline plan on a page showing high level milestones for the period March 2022 – March 2025), and a summary of the overall progress of each project during 2022 against that plan is included at.

Discussion - Recent work and near-term plans

Progress September 2022 - December 2022

6. The previous quarter has seen a number of successes including:
 - i. use of the Whole of Government Accounts data to improve quality, accuracy and coherence of Public Corporation balance sheet estimates in Public Sector finances;
 - ii. continued analysis of the use of alternative data sources in headline measure of consumer prices with an article on indicative impacts of the planned improvements to rail fare and second-hand car measurement published late November;
 - iii. the publication of improved Research and Development (R&D) statistics in November, answering important stakeholder demand and concern through applying uplift factors to account for under-coverage in the sample design;
 - iv. the publication of our response to the public consultation on the future of Crime survey for England and Wales, committing to inclusion of safeguarding across all aspects of the survey and further research on attrition and comparability;
 - v. provided a comprehensive and well received review of the level of risk posed to our core statistics due to legacy technology use to the Audit and Risk Assurance committee which is now being used to inform future plans; and
 - vi. launched a public consultation on our vision and plans for Household Financial statistics, a collaborative effort across ONS including population and social statistics transformation and external stakeholders to ensure a coordinated strategy for the

increased use of administrative data in the longer term with shorter term reliance and transformation of household surveys.

7. Alongside continued delivery momentum, several key challenges persist that are likely to impact plans. Some of the more recently established projects, e.g. Public Sector, Household Financial Statistics are unearthing high levels of complexity as they move through discovery phases. Other challenges include recruitment and retention within a competitive marketplace, securing relevant and regular external sources of data, and making best use of novel technology and methods. An analysis and reforecasting exercise are currently underway to review plausibility of plans in concert with our delivery partners and wider strategic planning across ONS. Where action is needed beyond the programme, we will seek support from the Senior Responsible Owner community and Portfolio and Investment Committee in the new year.
8. The revised plans and associated benefits profile will underpin submission of the programme's Full Business Case (FBC). The assumption remains that the programme will meet its current Business Case commitments but acknowledges this may happen through resequencing of work and/or a reprofiling of the benefits across the full SR period to March 2025
9. Throughout this the programme continues to manage risks on a day-to-day basis including through use of third party suppliers to deliver across Prices and Legacy projects, providing clear rationale and high levels of engagement on the acquisition of key data sources, continuing to recruit at pace to critical vacancies, and working closely with Data Capability to make best use of available and upcoming technologies.

Look-Ahead January 2023 – March 2023

10. The replanning of the programme may see some changes "in-year" however, current plans show key deliveries over the next quarter as:
 - i. the publication of Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing with the inclusion of rail fares and used cars alternative data sources;
 - ii. the decision to proceed with implementation of new Transformed Labour Force Survey taken based upon detailed analysis of the parallel run and a discovery completed to inform use of PAYE RTI data into Labour Market statistics;
 - iii. capability in place to support the migration of the first set of surveys from legacy Ingres platform to the Statistical Production Platform;
 - iv. the publication of baselined R&D sub-national estimates, transformed R&D ready for online collection, and completion of discovery for the first phase of transformed structural surveys (including Annual Business Survey);
 - v. the implementation of new sub-national education output metrics within the regional accounts, a new style Public Sector Finance release published incorporating new balance sheet statistics, and research on the feasibility of new central government expenditure metrics; and
 - vi. conclude and respond to the public consultation on Household Financial Statistics, complete initial end-to-end design of new survey supported by administrative data.
11. The programme will undertake an independent review during early 2023 to assure the robustness of the programme governance and controls ahead of submission of the FBC to HMT in February 2023. Following this the case will remain subject to regular reviews to ensure it remains a true justification of the programme.
12. Permanent recruitment has now concluded for the ARIES Programme Manager with Drew Martindale joining the Programme fully from February 2023. Drew joins from Digital Publishing and brings a broad range of delivery and ONS experience to the role.

Spotlight: Transforming Labour Market Statistics

13. The Transformation of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) project is currently dual running both the LFS and the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) an on-line first, multi-mode survey; the second largest household survey behind the Census. Labour market statistics have declined in quality over recent years following drop offs in response rate and increased bias in the LFS. The TLFS has improved survey and sample design with multimode collection; the aims are to improve response, bias, coherence and quality in labour market statistics. The transformation is highly complex and as such inherently risky.
14. Both the TLFS and LFS are dual running until June 2023. Labour Market estimates are currently produced using LFS, whilst the TLFS develops fully in order to collect survey information across on-line, telephone and knock to nudge. In June 2023 we have a key decision point to begin the decommission of the LFS and transition to produce headline labour market and productivity outputs using the TLFS. Overall, the project is progressing at pace and delivering major milestones to time, however notable challenges remain in our ability to get a stable data position and meet data quality ahead of the decommission decision.
15. The development of the TLFS is a huge cross office effort being delivered as a collective across Social Survey Transformation, Social Surveys Collection and ESEG. Throughout 2022 significant progress has been made in developing the survey. The final critical transition state having gone live in November 2022 introducing 'knock 2 nudge' field activity to complement the online and telephone mode collections in place. This is key to enable us to target areas of low response and aims to reduce bias through targeting certain socio demographics.
16. Statistical processing systems have been developed within ESEG. We are now in the process of implementing new methods in collaboration with Methodology and Quality Directorate to improve our weighting, estimation and imputation, alongside understanding and being able to explain discontinuities in the data.
17. The transformation has been communicated through articles, blogs and user engagement exercises and the project has proactively looked for opportunities to engage our stakeholders. Feedback received from a wide range of stakeholders overall has been positive, welcoming much needed transformation of the LFS given the continued challenges with response and bias. However, stakeholders are keen to start seeing the data and understanding the changes from TLFS. These stakeholders include, devolved admins, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Bank of England and HMT.
18. Throughout 2022 we have worked closely with the Office for Statistics Regulation in order to retain the National Statistics badge status for Labour Market Statistics. This work will continue into 2023 with much of the focus starting to shift to the data quality and statistical outputs we will produce from the TLFS. We expect an outcome decision on the badge status by summer 2023.
19. Labour Market data is an area of intense economic interest due to the wider fiscal position of the country. As we move into 2023 we are committed to start sharing early insights and analysis of the TLFS data with stakeholders for both assurance and to build confidence in the data. Due to the changes in economic climate, stakeholders risk appetite appears to be reducing, an area we will continue to monitor and engage ahead of the transition to TLFS particularly when we begin to share new data in early 2023.
20. To support the decision on the future of the LFS, the project will need to provide confidence in the data quality, effectively explaining discontinuities and changes.

- i. The risk profile on meeting data quality and the timescales the project are working within remain very challenging. We expect to reach a stable data position by end of May 2023, a few weeks ahead of the decommission decision.
 - ii. We must meet statistical and data quality criteria i.e. as a minimum, this must meet the quality of the current LFS (with the view we continue driving this up over time). Whilst some criteria are already being met, we are working to mitigate risk where some are not currently projected to be met to time.
 - iii. We need time to build a body of evidence to robustly understand and explain data changes to support the decommission decision. Presently time is capped due to current length of funded parallel run, for which contingency options are being explored.
21. Risk mitigation activities are being worked through at pace to build as much confidence in the data as we can ahead of June 2023. However due to the timing of the data delivering from TLFS and when it will reach a stable state, the project is and will remain high risk as we need to offer confidence in our numbers.
22. We are continuously assessing the challenges/risks to this date and adapting the work and plans. Given we cannot completely discount an extension of the dual run at this time, we are working to put in place contingency plans to manage this scenario.

Conclusion

23. ARIES continues to make positive progress in key areas and whilst it is continuing to evolve as a programme improving its day-to-day practices, it remains a good example of the 'One ONS' approach to delivery.
24. Wider organisational challenges are being felt across the programme, impacts of which will be flushed out through the current reforecasting exercise. It is likely some changes to plans will be made as the programme makes internal adjustments and organisational priorities and efficiency plans become clear.
25. Strong focus remains on key high impact deliveries despite these challenges, most notably on meeting our Prices and Labour Market transformation commitments.

Jason Zawadzki, ARIES SR, Economic, Social and Environmental Group, 6 December 2022