

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes
Thursday 23 February 2023
London Boardroom/Hybrid

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir Robert Chote (Chair)
Sian Jones (Deputy Chair)
Dr Jacob Abboud
Professor Sir John Aston
Sam Beckett
Professor Sir Ian Diamond
Richard Dobbs
Ed Humpherson
Nora Nanayakkara
Professor Dame Carol Propper
Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter
Penny Young

Also in attendance

Owen Brace
Robert Bumpstead
Sally-Ann Jones (Secretariat)
Will Laffan (for item 9)
Alison Pritchard
Emma Rourke (for item 9)
Ruth Studley (for item 9)
Tom Taylor
Jennet Woolford (for item 9)
Jason Yaxley (for item 8)

Apologies

None

1. Apologies

1.1 There were no apologies received.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

3. Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January 2023 were agreed.

4. Report from the Authority Chair [SA(23)09]

4.1 Non-Executive Directors had met prior to the Board meeting. They had discussed topics including the role of the Board in the post census recommendation and plans for the mid-strategy point.

4.2 The Chair welcomed the recently appointed Non-Executives Directors, Penny Young, Professor Dame Carol Propper and Dr Jacob Abboud; and Tom Taylor, who had recently been appointed Executive Director of Finance, Planning and Performance, to their first Board meeting.

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

- i. on 8 February Sir Robert had spoken at the Government Operational Research Service annual conference;
- ii. on 10 February Sir Robert had met with the Statistics and Data Directorate at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; and
- iii. Sir Robert had met with Huw Pill, Chief Economist and Executive Director for Monetary Analysis and Research at the Bank of England, as part of a series of regular meetings.

4.4 The Board commended ONS, specifically the blog by Sarah Caul that had been published on 10 February, 'How do we measure expected and excess deaths'. It was noted that ONS had convened a technical working group, with members comprising government departments that produce mortality statistics, the devolved nations and actuarial groups, to consider excess death calculation methods. The technical working group would report to the Board at a future meeting. Regarding excess deaths at home it was noted that ONS was considering the feasibility of conducting a similar survey to the earlier VOICES survey (National Survey of the Bereaved), undertaken in 2015 with results published in 2016.

5. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(23)10]

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

- i. progress towards delivery of the Integrated Data Service Full Public Beta with HM Treasury (HMT) funding confirmed for the full business case;
- ii. submission of the ONS efficiency and savings review to HMT;
- iii. progress of business planning across the organisation, with a draft ONS business plan scheduled for the March Board meeting;
- iv. the Nomis service provided by ONS supporting work by the University of Durham through the use of Nomis Application Programme Interfaces;
- v. ongoing discussions with UK Health Security Agency and the Department for Health and Social Care regarding the future of the Digital COVID-19 Infection Survey and public health monitoring;
- vi. discussions with a number of departments regarding data sharing across the Union, with the Concordat on Statistics setting out the framework for co-operation for coherence of statistics;
- vii. the collaborative work by Liz McKeown with the Royal National Institute of Blind People further to recommendations from the Inclusive Data Taskforce;

- viii. the success of the Darlington Economic Campus with a current headcount of 150 staff, and plans for up to 100 staff at the new Manchester location. Both locations providing an opportunity to increase skills and diversity across the organisation;
 - ix. ONS support for new departments following the recent machinery of government changes; and
 - x. the continued support by ONS for colleagues at the National Records of Scotland on the Scotland Census 2022.
- 5.2 The Board heard about a number of senior leadership appointments. Keith Nicholson would be joining ONS at the end of February as Chief Security Officer replacing Andy Wall. Louise Love would be joining ONS at the end of March as Head of Internal Audit. Sir Ian noted his thanks to Andy Wall for all of his work as CSO over the last five years; and to Rhys Thomas, Deputy Director Finance and Megan Cooper, Deputy Director Portfolio and Planning, for their work covering the Director of Finance role in the interim period.
- 5.3 Will Marks joined the meeting to provide a progress update on engagement activities and consultation responses for the mid-term review of the strategy, Statistics for the Public Good including an event on 22 March.
- 5.4 The Board noted the update.
- 6. Report from the Director General for Regulation [SA(23)11]**
- 6.1 Ed Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity. As requested by the Board at the previous meeting further details had been provided on OSR's wider action plan in regard to the quality of police recorded crime statistics.
- 6.2 The Board heard that OSR had published a review of excess deaths on 13 February, which had identified a number of recommendations for producers in considering changes to the calculation of excess deaths.
- 6.3 On 22 February Ed Humpherson had spoken at the Home Office Analysts network about the use and communications of statistics in Government.
- 7. Report from the Chair of the Regulation Committee**
- 7.1 The Chair reported on the work of the Regulation Committee which had last met on 16 February. Sir Robert had taken on the role of interim Chair of Regulation Committee for this meeting.
- 7.2 The Committee had considered:
- i. the draft OSR business plan 2023/24 and regulatory programme of work, following consultation with users;
 - ii. OSR's draft assessment report of Scotland's Census 2022 ahead of publication;
 - iii. progress by ONS towards re-designation of ONS Trade statistics;
 - iv. data sharing and linkage across government with a further discussion scheduled in April; and
 - v. OSR's role in providing support for producers collecting and reporting on data and statistics on sex and gender.
- 7.3 The Committee had considered a proposal following the review to refresh the National Statistics designation process. The Committee had agreed the recommended approach to clarify rather than replace National Statistics, by enhancing the description: 'National Statistics are accredited official statistics'. The Committee had also approved a change of the term 'experimental statistics' to 'official statistics in development,' A paper was scheduled for consideration by the Board in March.

8. Integrated Data Service [SA(23)12]

- 8.1 Alison Pritchard and Jason Yaxley 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).
- 8.2 The Board heard that the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) Gateway four assurance review of the readiness for the programme to transition to Full Public Beta, undertaken between 20 and 23 February, had concluded with an amber rating. The process for Digital Economy Act accreditation was ongoing. Areas of focus for the programme going forward would include stakeholder engagement; and consideration of analytical tooling to avoid legacy issues on the IDS from the outset.
- 8.3 Board members discussed progress and agreed the need for a timeline for users regarding future dual running of the Secure Research Service and IDS.

9. Post Census Recommendation [SA(23)13]

- 9.1 Emma Rourke and Ruth Studley introduced a paper which provided an update on progress towards the 2023 recommendation and the wider Census and Data Collection Transformation programme (CDCTP).
- 9.2 The Board heard that evidence to underpin the consultation would be published on or ahead of the consultation launch. The aim was to launch the consultation at the end of June.
- 9.3 It was noted that the consultation would inform the National Statistician's recommendation on the future production of population and social statistics in England and Wales. Areas of focus for the programme would include a significant stakeholder engagement with users before, during and post consultation; and delivery of the statistical evidence base.
- 9.4 Board members discussed progress made and noted the importance of an engaging and inclusive public consultation. Areas for consideration regarding the consultation included clarity of purpose, success measures, target audience, consultation length and timeline.
- 9.5 The Board would remain engaged as the work progressed.

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 The next meeting would take place on 30 March 2023.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Agenda

**23 February 2023, 10.30-14.00,
London Boardroom
Hybrid Meeting**

Chair: Sir Robert Chote

Apologies: None

Attendees: Will Laffan (for item 7), Vahe Nafilyan (for item 8), Emma Rourke (for items 7 and 8), Ruth Studley (for items 7 and 8), Jennet Woolford (for item 7), Jason Yaxley (for item 6)

NED Session: 10.30-11.00

1 11.00-11.05 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings Declarations of interest	Meeting of 26 January 2023
2 11.05-11.15 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	SA(23)09 Sir Robert Chote
3 11.15-11.55 40 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(23)10 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond
4 11.55-12.10 15 mins	Report from the Director-General for Regulation	SA(23)11 Ed Humpherson
5 12.10-12.15 5 mins	Report from Committee Chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none">Regulation Committee	Sir Robert Chote
6 12.15-12.30 15 mins	Integrated Data Service	SA(23)12 Alison Pritchard Jason Yaxley
12.30-12.40 10 mins	Break	
7 12.40-13.25 45 mins	Post Census Recommendation	SA(23)13 Emma Rourke Ruth Studley Will Laffan Jennet Woolford
8 13.25-13.50 25 mins	ONS Interface with the NHS	SA(23)14 Emma Rourke Ruth Studley Vahe Nafilyan
9 13.50-14.00 10 mins	Any Other Business	

Next meeting: 30 March 2023, Newport Boardroom

Chair's Report, February 2023

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Authority Board with an overview of the Chair's activity in late January and early February.

Review of recent activities

2. On 25 January, I met **Harriet Harman MP**, chair of the Commons Privileges Committee. We discussed the use of statistics by parliamentarians and how the select committees charged with upholding standards in the House of Commons can challenge misuse.
3. On 2 February, I was on the panel chaired by the First Civil Service Commissioner which interviewed candidates for the role of **National Statistician**.
4. On 3 February, I met with OSR's **Development and Impact team** to discuss their work on communicating uncertainty and changes in quality in statistics.
5. On 8 February, I attended the **Government Operational Research Service's** annual conference and gave a keynote speech on the use of quantitative modelling in government and fostering ties within the Analysis Function.
6. On 10 February, I met with the Statistics and Data Directorate at the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**.
7. On 13 February, I met the new President of the **Royal Statistical Society**, Andrew Garrett, to discuss his priorities for the Society and hear the views of their National Statistics Advisory Group.

Casework and correspondence

8. On 15 February, I replied to **Daisy Cooper MP** about comments the Health Secretary had made about excess deaths.

Sir Robert Chote, Chair, 15 February 2023

Chief Executive's Report, February 2023

Purpose

1. This provides the Authority Board with an overview of activity for February 2023.

Summary

2. February has been another exciting month with ONS. I visited the **Darlington Economic Campus** for a set of meetings with Heads of Campus from departments based there alongside hosting a lunch with colleagues from ONS. The **Veterans' Survey** has now closed with over 30,000 responses. These are now being linked to census data and results will be available later this year. On programmes, the **Integrated Data Programme** also received full funding this month from HM Treasury (HMT).
3. I met with **Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove**, to discuss our latest developments in granular, local statistics as well as new data sources, innovative platforms and dissemination tools, and how our locally based advisory service can support policy making. His team were engaged throughout and have now asked for follow-up discussions with ONS colleagues.

Efficiencies and financial update

4. Following the update at January Board we have actioned all aspects of the plan to mitigate the residual financial risk for 2022/23. Whilst we continue to keep a sharp focus on the figures we are now showing a broadly balanced position at the January month end (as expected) and anticipate a modest under expenditure against both resource and capital at year end. Cover across both key control totals is necessary for impacts that may surface as part of the year end external audit.
5. Following engagement across the office, the initial draft of the **ONS Efficiency and Savings Review** has been submitted to HMT officials. Engagement will continue with HMT to answer their queries and develop implementation plans.
6. **ONS business planning** ahead of the new financial year has begun with agreement on some minor changes to the strategic objectives and the key priorities for the organisation. A One-ONS event on 31 January was an opportunity for us to communicate the priorities and take feedback and questions from the organisation.
7. We have implemented a new **resourcing process** in the last month involving cross-directorate deployment and a Star Chamber, which will ensure our highest priorities are effectively resourced and our workforce remains within the targets set out at the beginning of the SR.

Review of recent activities

8. I am happy to update on some changes to key leadership posts within the organisation. Tom Taylor has started as our new **Director of Finance, Planning and Performance**. Tom has extensive experience of managing public sector finances over this career, with his most recent tenure being at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. I would like to extend my gratitude to both Megan Cooper and Rhys Thomas who have covered this role since over the past months.
9. Following the news that Andy Wall will retire from the ONS at the end of March, I am happy to report that Keith Nicolson was successful in our recent recruitment round for the post of **Chief Security Officer**. Keith joins us from HMRC at the end of February and will have an extensive handover with Andy Wall before. I wish to put on record my thanks to Andy for his leadership over the past five years within the ONS.

10. Finally, Louise Love will join us as our new **Head of Internal Audit** at the end of March. She is currently working with High Speed 2 (HS2) as part of the Government Internal Audit Agency. Louise will begin joining up with us from the start of March.
11. More broadly, our ONS Induction Team have been shortlisted for a cross **Civil Service Operational Delivery Profession Award** (Development Award), the results from which will be announced at the Award Ceremony in April 2023. These awards are an opportunity to recognise, celebrate and reward individuals and teams that have achieved something truly outstanding within the Operational Delivery Profession. With over 700 nominations across 32 government departments received this year, being shortlisted for an award is a fantastic achievement.
12. The Data Science Campus Capability Team has been engaging with the Cabinet Office Central Digital and Data Office on '**One Big Thing**', an event established as part of **civil service reform plans** – the Cabinet Secretary is keen to deliver one day of training on data to all civil servants. ONS will be supporting these plans, primarily through the Data Science Campus. This will be building on the Data Masterclass for Senior Leaders.
13. In January we launched the first quarterly strategic **OneONS event** of 2023 from our Darlington site. The Senior Leadership Team highlighted the ONS priorities for the year and invited contributions from the more than 850 colleagues who either dialled into the call or attended at our sites. The very engaged audience shared a total of 128 ideas on how we can support our strategic principles.
14. We received Chief Secretary to the Treasury budgetary **approval for the Integrated Data Programme** which will enable the programme to continue progress towards Digital Economy Act (DEA) accreditation and full public beta, and provides improved certainty for our future business planning.
15. The **Future of Population and Migration Statistics** Outline Business Case has now been submitted to HMT, timed to ensure a funding decision can be made in time for the new financial year.
16. Following a cross-programme effort **submission of the DEA evidence pack for the Integrated Data Service (IDS) has been completed on time**. A decision was made to apply for the Data Provision element only, given that Data Preparation is considered to be adequately covered by existing ONS accreditation. We will incorporate feedback and respond as the application now progresses through the formal processes.
17. **Census 2021 data is now available on IDS** and being used by super early adopters from government departments for their exploratory analytical projects. This will allow us to answer emerging challenges and allow user feedback. Preparations are being finalised for the Gateway 4 review commencing on 20 Feb with the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA).
18. On the **Census 2023 recommendation**, work continues at pace including planning for additional evidence in advance of the consultation later this year. A successful challenge session was held with external participants from across Government on the engagement arrangements. This highlighted areas for consideration and was an excellent example of cross-government sharing of lessons learned. The **Outline Business Case** on the Future of Population and Migration Statistics is progressing and will be submitted to HMT early February.
19. Further transformation progress has been made in ARIES with prices transformation **confirming that from March 2023 the Consumer Price Index will now use new rail fares data in estimates of inflation**. We are currently receiving approximately 2 million rail fares every day. To utilise this data, we have developed a new cloud-based system and world-leading methods to use data on this scale. This will provide the foundation for

exploiting similar large data, such as grocery scanner data and web scraped data, in future years.

20. These new data sources have many benefits compared with our current sources, including improved coverage, high frequency of collection, and potential cost savings. After careful consideration, we have decided not to include Second-hand cars data to allow further time for quality assurance.
21. Outside of our transformation work, this month has also seen the release of several key statistical outputs.
22. On 19 January we released the last of nine **Census 2021 topic summaries**. Over the whole period since 2 November last year, these have gained widespread reach and coverage thanks to the efforts of colleagues right across ONS. We achieved over 5,100 pieces of media coverage including in 28 new minority/specialist media outlets, 82 million social media impressions (number of times a post on census 2021 was delivered to social media feeds) and over 5.2 million views of the Census Maps product. The release of census data now moves into the next phase, a key part of which will be the release of the Flexible Table Builder tool.
23. We have also published the first two waves of data from our **Winter Panel**, focusing on energy security and keeping warm, food security and access to GPs and waiting times on the NHS. As well as widespread media coverage, findings are being briefed to Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Cabinet Office ministers.
24. We are working with Cabinet Office, DHSC and HM-Treasury to consider the likely impacts of **Industrial Action**. For rail workers and teacher strikes, this uses a range of sources including financial transactions data, real-time indicators such as footfall, along with regular reporting from the opinions and business surveys. For NHS strikes, this includes using NHS published performance metrics.
25. We continue to work closely with HMT, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), DHSC and Cabinet Office to look at the links between **health and labour market outcomes**. Leaning on previous work from the Labour Force Survey, Over 50's Lifestyle Study and exploring new data shares with DWP and DHSC data to provide more granular detail and also look at the impact of NHS waiting lists. This also provides opportunity for more strategic and ongoing data sharing opportunities within the IDS.
26. Following the January Authority Board, we have established a **technical group for harmonising excess mortality methodologies**, featuring all government departments that produce mortality statistics, the devolved nations and actuarial groups. The group is exploring differences between estimates using every method currently in use, as well as the possibility of now-casting excess. A blog will be published in February, explaining the issue to users of these statistics and inviting their input. A further update on progress will be provided to the Board in May.
27. The first meeting of the ONS Welsh language Gweithgor Cymraeg (Working Group) met on 16 February as a cross-departmental forum to bring business areas together in coordinating **Welsh language policy** in ONS. Its main objective over 2023 will be to update the ONS Welsh language scheme, to respond to modern ways of working, best practice established following Census 2021 operations, and recommendations from the Welsh Language Commissioner's office.
28. I also chaired an incredibly successful What Works Council meeting on 13 February. Among other things, we discussed how the What Works Centres measure the impact of the important work they are doing.
29. February has also been a busy month of external engagements both domestically and internationally. Mike Keoghan spoke to the **Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee in Parliament** on 7 February for their inquiry UK plc 2050, which was

focused on economic growth, productivity and net zero. Meanwhile, I attended the **UNECE Conference of European Statisticians Bureau** in Geneva. Items covered included a variety of topics from migration statistics and the modernisation of official statistics to data access and privately held data.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, February 2023

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(23)11

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. **Police recorded crime:** I committed at the last meeting to provide further details about the wider action plan for our approach to police recorded crime. An update information paper was discussed at the February Regulation Committee. This proposal emphasises the focus on the scope to address the quality of police recorded crime statistics and is clearer on the rationale and outcomes for the project, and the Committee welcomed the clarification. The paper has been included for your information within this month's Board papers.
 - ii. **Excess Deaths:** Following our conversation last month we have published a [review of excess deaths reporting](#). This review sets out our position on measuring excess deaths and the key issues for ONS in considering changes to the calculation of excess deaths.
 - iii. **Intelligent Transparency:** As part of our ongoing work on understanding how the intelligent transparency principles are working in practice, we plan to hold further round tables this year. The first will be held late February/early March and will invite large operational departments (Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice, Department for Work and Pensions, Home Office) to discuss how implementation of the principles is going, what barriers may exist to implementation for these departments and how we can work together to overcome them. A further round table will be held later in the year for other government stakeholders to get their perspective on this campaign.
 - iv. **National Statistics Refresh project:** At the Regulation Committee this month we discussed progress with the refresh project, including findings from testing new language to clarify the designation process and the label 'National Statistics' We asked Regulation Committee to endorse new language to enhance the description 'National Statistics', and to approve a change from the term 'experimental statistics' to 'official statistics in development'. We will submit a paper to the March Authority Board that summarises our findings and recommendations, addressing feedback from the Regulation Committee meeting.
 - v. **Post Eurostat Assessments:** OSR's first quality-focused pilot assessment (of ONS Producer Price Statistics) is well underway. The pilot assessment is using a Quality Assessment Framework that OSR is developing based on the Code of Practice and elements from international statistical Quality Assessment frameworks. As part of the project, OSR is engaging with the producer team, a range of key stakeholders, and other National Statistical Institutes for their expertise.

Casework

3. Since the last meeting we have received casework raising concerns about cost-of-living measures, work capability assessment data gaps, car and van statistics and the Census. We closed cases privately on A&E statistics, delayed discharges, output growth and Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act Apes.
4. We made one public casework intervention since the last meeting when I [wrote](#) on ONS's deaths by vaccination status publication. We were subsequently notified that our letter was being misused by an American anti-vaxxer to suggest that the UK government cannot prove that vaccines work. As a result, we published a [statement](#) reiterating that

extensive analyses of vaccine effectiveness are available; and that ONS made it clear that the Deaths by Vaccination Status analysis is not intended to be, nor is it appropriate for, understanding vaccine effectiveness or safety.

5. On the Home Office, Sir Robert and I have been asked to speak at the Home Office Senior Leadership Forum about the use and communication of statistics in Government; and I am speaking at the Home Office Analysts network. This follows the successful engagement I had with Matthew Rycroft regarding casework that we had in December.

Wider reach

6. On voluntary adoption, a high-profile report on the [role of civil society by Pro Bono Economics](#) featured the recommendation that charities should adopt our Code. This is a good opportunity to extend our influence over public statistics.
7. We will hold a seminar for government analysts on public good on 28 March. It will aim to demystify the concept of 'public good' and to give practical examples of how it is understood by others and reflected in their analytical work. Mary Gregory (Data Science Campus) and the National Data Guardian, Dr Nicola Byrne, will speak alongside OSR.

Issues on my mind

8. The main issue on my mind remains recruitment: We have successfully recruited and now [announced Rob Kent-Smith as our Deputy Director](#). Rob will join the team from April. Our Head of Casework recruitment was also successful with Elise Baseley due to start in March. In response to the recruitment risk we discussed at the last Board meeting, we held an Eventbrite online event to provide advice and guidance for anyone wanting to apply for a role within OSR. The event was well attended with other 50 people registering for tickets; and we saw a significant increase in applications to our most recent recruitment campaign.

Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, OSR, 16 February 2023

Regulatory Activities Dashboard

February 2023

Authority Board

Labour Market and Welfare

Compliance checks: ONS transformation of the **Labour Force Survey** (Phase 2)
PAYE RTI QA meeting with HMRC/ONS planned for February to share findings and discuss proposal to draft an assessment report.
 Drafting letter for **ONS Labour Dispute** statistics.
 Systemic Reviews: [Income-based poverty statistics](#) published January.
 Other: Letter sent and published to [Social Security Scotland](#) outlining our expectations around transparency and user engagement. Engagement with the lead official continuing.

Population and Society

Assessments: **Scotland Census** Draft assessment report on the agenda for this meeting
Measuring the population, Ongoing engagement with ONS teams ahead of its consultation in April which will feed into 2023 recommendation on the future of census.
Migration transformation ongoing. ONS have announced that they will publish a response to OSR recommendations from the report, alongside their latest estimates.
 Casework: Concerns raised about the use of statistics on the **backlog of open asylum applications, excess death reporting, and gender identity census data** in England and Wales.

Health and Social Care

Assessments: Re-assessment underway for OHID **Adult Oral Health Survey statistics**. Commencing assessment of Scottish A&E waiting times statistics.
 Casework: **Published letter about statistics on Deaths by Vaccination Status**.
 Compliance Checks: ONS **Health Index** ongoing, reviewing findings with producers. Commencing review of substance misuse statistics in England.
 Reviewing **Welsh Cancer Services** Statistics following a change in data source and a period as experimental statistics.
 Systemic Reviews: Further rounds of user engagement, following up on **Mental Health** reviews.

Housing, Planning and Local Services

Assessment: **Statutory Homelessness in England statistics**: Continuing engagement in line with DLUHC action plan
 Casework: **Scottish Cost of Living Budget** engaging with SG to understand £3bn figure.
 Compliance Checks: Initiation of DfC's NI **Homelessness statistics**
 Rapid Review: WG **Additional Housing Need estimates**. Engaging with ONS, DLUHC and LUHC committee on **Sub-national data** developments, to support public understanding of levelling up

Business, Trade and International Development

Assessment: Monitoring **UK Trade** Continuing engagement in line with ONS action plan: update paper on the agenda for this meeting. **Annual Business Survey, Purchases Survey and Business Demography** continuing follow up with ONS.
 Systemic Reviews: **Industrial Classification project work update proposed for the** April Regulation Committee on ONS SIC consultation.

Children, Education and Skills

Assessment: Planning assessment of Scottish Government **Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence** statistics
 Casework: Drafting letter to DfE on the **figures on teacher pay** quoted by SoS Gillian Keegan.
 Compliance Check: Published letter for **Welsh Government School Workforce Annual Census**

Transport, Environment and Climate Change

Assessments: **People and Nature Survey (PaNS)**. Report published early Jan 2023. Continuing engagement in line with NE action plan. Discussions underway with Defra to discuss scope of **butterfly/biodiversity statistics** assessment.

Crime and Security

Updated proposal for review of **Police Recorded Crime statistics** shared with Regulation Committee.
 Compliance checks: Drafting letters for ONS **modern slavery statistics** and Home Office **National Referral Mechanism** statistics.

Economy

Assessment: **Post-Brexit ONS Economic Statistics**
 Producer Price Index pilot assessment applying Quality Framework and speaking with key stakeholders: update paper on the agenda for this meeting.
 Casework: **ONS ICP statistics** – speaking with the productivity team regarding a simple arithmetic error.

Data and Methods

Internal work: Our priority remains maintaining existing data science tools, which enhance our regulatory work. We have recruited an SEO data scientist, who will start in March. We have an HEO going through security clearance.

Full Fact Tool: Based on feedback from across OSR, we extended our access to Full Fact's horizon scanning tool until March, to see if it can enhance our regulatory work. We will review again and decide on future options in March.

Review of [data sharing/linkage](#): We're synthesising findings from stakeholder interviews and will present these to the Regulation Committee in February. Plan to publish a report in the spring of 2023.

Insight

Intelligent transparency: Held three round table events in December with external stakeholders. Stakeholders were very positive about OSR's intelligent transparency principles and identified some areas for further improvement in our guidance. We are planning a fourth-round table within government stakeholders next.

Insight Committee: We have recruited five statistical producers to join our Insight Committee, to suggest and shape insight projects undertaken by OSR. Their input will help us ensure we are working on issues of primary relevance to producers and help us to better communicate what we learn in a way that adds value for OSR and statistical producers.

Recruitment: Recruiting for a new Evaluation and Insight Manager is ongoing.

Policy & Standards

Designation refresh: Submitted proposals on the future messaging around the designation to Regulation Committee. Completing our testing of badges. Producers are piloting our new tools – five 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 refreshing our assessment approach, conducting pilot assessments and developing guidance.

Voluntary application and wider reach: Launched our 4th award for [statistical excellence](#) in trustworthiness, quality and value with the RSS and Civil Service World. Engaging with organisations outside of government, including a private data company, along with some departments such as epidemiologists in Public Health Wales that are looking to adopt the Code pillars for their non-OS outputs. Supporting Ofcom with their development of transparency reporting as they learn from our thinking of TQV.

Research

Research Programme: After working with colleagues across OSR to pull together information from research and regulatory work, we are now drafting an initial definition of the public good of government statistics. We are continuing to promote our work such as through organising a seminar for analysts on the public good and writing an article for Significance magazine

Cross Cutting Issues

Statistical literacy: We will shortly be publishing our research and an accompanying think piece which will highlight best practice approaches for communicating statistics.

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 Board are invited to note:
 - i. achievement of HM Treasury (HMT) funding following the submission of the Full Business Case (FBC) refresh;
 - ii. upcoming Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) Gateway 4 review to validate service readiness;
 - iii. submission for Digital Economy Act (DEA) accreditation;
 - iv. an update on the new IDP Analytical Advisory Group; and
 - v. the next phase of the engagement plan is now in motion.

Background

3. The IDP plans to enter public beta service in March 2023, with tactical activity underway to meet key deliverables and secure cross-government buy-in and support for the IDS.

Discussion

4. Updates of relevance include:

Milestone progression

5. Programme delivery remains on track against the plan. All milestones are now RAG rated to provide better transparency to the Board.
6. HMT has approved the programme's FBC refresh, and funding has been secured up to the end of 2024/25, providing all funding conditions are met.
7. The programme submission for DEA accreditation was completed, as planned, on 25 January. UK Statistics Authority (the Authority) assessors are currently reviewing the Security and Data Capability evidence packs and Authority site visits are expected imminently.
8. The IPA Gateway 4 Assurance Review will take place between 20 and 23 February 2023, prior to the public beta release. This review investigates the readiness to make the transition from the specification/solution to implementation at FPB release.
9. The outcome is expected to be received by early March 2023, which will provide an opportunity to address any areas of concern ahead of public beta release.
10. As part of the review, senior stakeholders will be interviewed. The emphasis of the IPA Gateway 4 review is to ensure that the programme is well advanced in the planning for the end of the programme, and that every standard operating consideration, including funding and commercial dimensions, is well established.
11. The technical solutions that underpin the delivery of the "Safe Outputs" solutions are well progressed.
12. Discussions for user testing "Safe Outputs" are taking place with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), who are also part of the Super Early Adopters (SEAs) work, they are keen to collaborate further on this work.

Securing buy-in for the IDS: engagement update

13. Proactive engagement continues, with detailed plans formed for the coming months' activity. The programme is focused on reaching stakeholders and promoting the benefits of data supply, connecting with analysts wanting to use the IDS and how, if at all, the IDS impacts on other government departments' technology.
14. Insight gathered continues to inform engagement plans, ensuring that quality propositions are overseen by the relevant governance forums for their approval.
15. The identified governance forums are key for the IDS as it is a vehicle to showcase the development of the IDS from a technological and data sharing perspective and seek approval that these plans can support Government's analytical and data priorities. By seeking their approval, it will further encourage Other Government Departments (OGDs) to commit to implementing the IDS into their infrastructures.
16. Once the above is complete, the programme will present at the Digital Data Board in June 2023 on:
 - i. progress on the IDS and capabilities; and
 - ii. how the IDS can support government's digital and data vision for 2025.
17. Success criteria is based on commitment from OGDs to start implementing the IDS into their infrastructures, sharing of data and analytical usage.
18. HMT recognise the IDS as a key enabler to transforming for a digital future and thus, as part of the third round of Shared Outcome Fund bids, due for submission in May 2023, it has been agreed that a funding condition will be placed on bids.
19. This condition will stipulate that, should an initiative seek to share data or seek funding for an analytical platform, they will have to contact the programme and seek to partner with IDS to achieve their goals. This approach seeks to drive efficiencies and increase partnerships across government.
20. The inaugural IDP Analytical Advisory Group meeting was held on 13 February. The first meeting's focus was very much around ensuring alignment to the IDS's strategic vision and the Terms of Reference of the group, which includes; shaping the data roadmap, analytical tooling strategy and service capability to drive a greater user centric approach. The current data plans were shared at this meeting and are currently out for consultation with group members.
21. Jason Yaxley, Director of the IDP and Bill South, Deputy Director of Research Services and Data Access, recently featured on the ONS [podcast](#), talking about the IDS and how it will support future policy decision making.

Ensuring consistency and confidence in the IDP's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

22. The Board is invited to note the changes made to the KPI dashboard following last month's feedback. The programme is committed to further improvements aligned to the Board's requirements and will improve the dashboard as the service matures

Alison Pritchard, Deputy National Statistician for Data Capability, 15 February 2023

Update on progress towards the 2023 Recommendation

Purpose

1. This paper provides the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) with an update on progress towards the 2023 recommendation and the wider Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme (CDCTP).

Recommendations

2. Members of the Board are invited to:
 - i. note the progress made against the evidence framework; the additional evidence we will produce and progress towards the consultation;
 - ii. endorse the new timeline for consultation and recommendation;
 - iii. note the progress made on stakeholder engagement and endorse our plans; and
 - iv. note the findings of the recent Infrastructure and Projects Authority Gate Zero Review of CDCTP and our improvements to programme governance.

Background

3. This paper follows the update discussed by the Board in November 2022 and presents progress towards a public consultation and recommendation to Government in 2023. As discussed in our November paper, the evidence base for our recommendation is developing via a series of proofs of concept to demonstrate what can be achieved through an admin data first population statistics system. In addition, there will be a series of additional research published over the months to June 2023.

Discussion

Programme status

4. The overall status of the CDCTP is Amber/Red, which will be reviewed by the programme board 15 February. While much of our work on Census Outputs is complete, the work towards the 2023 recommendation and survey transformation remains challenging..
5. The 2023 recommendation workstream of the programme is Amber/Red, while we continue to make good progress on the evidence framework discussed in the November paper, there is a clear need for broader admin data-based evidence that has put pressure on delivery plan. An update of the latest position will be provided to the Authority Board verbally.

Progress against evidence framework

6. In November's Board paper, we provided an update on the progress towards the 2023 Recommendation, setting out our progress on delivering the evidence that will underpin the Recommendation.
7. As confirmed in that paper, the methodological assurance in the public consultation and underpinning the 2023 Recommendation will comprise four ambitious evidence components:
 - i. a comparison of our Statistical Population Datasets with the 2021 Census;
 - ii. proofs of concept demonstrating our ability to produce more timely (2022-based), and progress towards more frequent population estimates;
 - iii. proofs of concept demonstrating our ability to produce small-area univariate and multivariate statistics for a selection of topics; and
 - iv. proofs of concept demonstrating our ability to produce a Census 2021 Data Asset with a rolled forward population at the core.

8. The table provides more detail about the publications that will be delivered by the end of February, relating to these four components. We are on track and have received all required data sources to support their delivery.
9. We will also publish a paper that brings together all population estimates relating to 2021 (including 7i and 7ii above, but also 2021 Census estimates, rolled-forward mid-2021 population estimates, and 2021 population estimates rolled forward from 2011 Census) to compare these different estimates and to provide coherence to users.
10. Additionally, at the end of February we will be publishing some supplementary evidence as papers that have been presented and discussed with the Methodological Advisory Review Panel, chaired by Sir Bernard Silverman. These include provisional quality standards against which we will provide transparency in how we assess the quality of our population estimates, and a proof of concept for delivering insights into how the population changes during time of day on a typical day throughout a year.
11. In addition to the above set of evidence, we agreed additional research, particularly relating to population characteristics would aid the consultation. We are therefore extending this evidence set by June to include the following:
 - i. Final mid-2022 admin-based population estimates and comparing to the official mid-2022 population estimates. Includes a quality assessment using new quality standards, leading to an assessment of readiness for transitioning to National Statistics status.
 - ii. Updated admin-based ethnicity and housing outputs for 2021, compared with the 2021 Census. Improves the evidence set by showing more timely outputs and allows us to understand the quality.
 - iii. Admin based estimates for number, size and composition of households for 2021, compared with the 2021 Census. Improves the evidence set by including another high priority user need topic and allows us to understand the quality.
 - iv. Admin based health statistics to measure morbidity, compared with the 2021 Census to understand the variation between self-reported responses compared with electronic health records. Improves the evidence set by showing how a high priority need can be met better than in the current system.
 - v. Admin based estimates on qualifications for 2021. Improves the evidence set by showing how a high priority user need can be met better than in the current system.
 - vi. A 2021 Census Income output, meeting the White Paper Commitment. Improves the evidence set by meeting a currently unmet high priority user need.
 - vii. Further development of the Refugee Integration Outcomes data asset, in collaboration with the Home Office, made available for analysis in the SRS. Improves evidence set by a practical demonstration of cohort maintenance for a high user need topic.
 - viii. A second iteration of the proof of concept for population by time of day incorporating additional sources of data. Improves evidence set by showing how a currently unmet high priority user need could be delivered by the new system.
 - ix. Updated multivariate outputs for housing by ethnicity for 2021, including a comparison with 2021 Census. Improves the evidence set by showing more timely outputs and better understand the quality.
12. We aim to publish these new outputs on or before the launch of the consultation.
13. We have assessed items 11i - 11iv with Delivery Confidence GREEN, and items 11v to 11ix with Delivery Confidence AMBER, in identifying a route to green for these items, we have assessed the risks to delivery and put in place appropriate mitigating actions.
14. There are a number of controls we are taking to manage the risks to the delivery of the additional evidence including those bulleted below.

- i. adequate resources both within the delivery team and on the dependencies on data Growth and Operations and Methodology and Quality Directorate colleagues, to ensure requirements are met without impinging on wellbeing, reflecting this high priority;
 - ii. data flows are taken sufficiently seriously by other government departments through appropriate escalation, recognising the dependency of this programme on those effective flows; and
 - iii. maintaining progress on individual laptops to deliver final mid-2022 admin-based population estimates.
15. A verbal update on progress against this additional evidence will be provided to the board given the fast-moving nature of the work.

Consultation

16. As set out to the Board in November, we will consult later this year to inform the National Statistician's recommendations on the future production of population and social statistics, and what it means for the future of the census in England and Wales. The consultation will propose to embed administrative data at the core of our population and migration statistics, realising the long-held ambition to produce high quality small area statistics more frequently than every ten years. It will showcase proofs of concept that demonstrate the viability and quality of the proposed system, while also highlighting the benefits.
17. The consultation will pose questions that will help us understand how close our proposed system is to meeting users' needs, as well as exploring the public good and acceptability of the new system. The further progress needed to meet the requirements of users will inform our research priorities for the next five years and ultimately determine whether there remains a statistical case for a census in 2031.
18. As is proper for a consultation, we are presenting proposals at the formative stage – based on proofs of concept rather than an already-transformed system. Nevertheless, it is equally important that the consultation presents users and stakeholders with sufficient evidence to provide informed responses. As a result, the public consultation is scheduled to launch in June, allowing it to include further evidence reconciling admin- and Census-based estimates for 2022, as well as key quality information relating to the admin-based estimates.
19. The research already available has allowed us to begin preparing the consultation materials, The questionnaire is in development and will focus on the statistical needs of respondents. This will be shared with the Board in advance of the consultation. As the questions are being developed we are using them to underpin the engagement in the pre-consultation phase to inform the final set of questions.
20. We welcome comments from the Board on the overall shape of the consultation document, the narrative and proposals it puts forward, while noting that the current draft contains numerous placeholders for research that will complete in the coming months, and, as such, will continue to evolve accordingly.

Stakeholder Engagement

21. We have a substantial programme of stakeholder engagement that promoting this work, ahead of the user consultation and National Statistician's recommendation. It follows several strands of engagement by different priority groups, with various activities planned for the pre-consultation, consultation and post-consultation periods
22. In addition to mainstream engagement activity other specialist engagement is planned, including separate events specifically for Local Authorities and representative groups. Broadcast engagement including the consultation launch event/s, Statistically Speaking podcast, Government Delivery mailing lists, social media consultation explainer videos,

updated ONS website transformation pages, media; will all be used to raise public awareness of the consultation.

23. We have a separate strand on parliamentary engagement with both groups and individuals. Recent successful engagement has taken place with the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee and House of Commons Library. Further engagement is planned with committees, MPs and Lords who are expected to act as advocates.

Programme Governance

24. As part of our Integrated Assurance Action plan, the three lines of defence are programme governance; ONS governance, (e.g., Portfolio and Investment Committee and Authority board); external assurance from Government Major Project Portfolio quarterly returns and the Infrastructure and Project Association Gateway Reviews.
25. In January the programme undertook an IPA Gateway zero review. The review concluded that the programme had delivered a successful Census and dissemination of outputs as planned. The programme had delivered a many new tools despite the challenges faced around the transformation of systems.
26. The review team noted that while the programme is making considerable inroads to delivering 2023 recommendation and its transformation objectives that there was still work to do which was recognised by the programme. The review commended senior level engagement and leadership team in place and noted it was important to maintain the momentum this generated.

Next Steps

27. We will return to Board in advance of the consultation with details of the evidence.

Ruth Studley, SRO of CDCTP, Kate Davies, PD of CDCTP and Becky Tinsley, DD of SSTAR, 14 February 2023