

# NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S EXPERT USER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Minutes**  
**Thursday 9 March 2023**  
**Via Videoconference**

## **Members Present**

Professor David Hand (Chair)  
Professor Paul Allin  
Dame Kate Barker  
Professor Paul Boyle  
Owen Brace  
Professor Diane Coyle  
Professor Sir Ian Diamond  
Ed Humpherson  
Professor David Martin  
Professor Ann Phoenix  
Sir Bernard Silverman  
Stian Westlake

## **In attendance**

Kate Davies (for item 3)  
Tony Dent (for item 2)  
Ruth Studley (for item 3)  
Becky Tinsley (for item 3)

## **Secretariat**

Tom Marsh  
Kerri Gourley

## **Apologies**

Robert Bumpstead  
Professor Jane Falkingham  
Dame Moira Gibb

## **1. Minutes and matters arising**

- 1.1 Members were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies were received from Rob Bumpstead, Professor Jane Falkingham and Dame Moira Gibb. The minutes from the meeting of 5 December 2022 were agreed and all actions were reviewed.
- 1.2 Paul Allin provided an update on the establishment of the Royal Statistical Society's Forum of Statistics User Groups. The group held its first meeting on 8 March 2023 and was created to support and develop a thriving user community and increase the use and usefulness of official statistics.

## **2. Discussion with User (Tony Dent)**

- 2.1 Tony Dent, Director, Better Statistics CIC joined the committee to talk about his perspective as a user of statistics. Tony updated members on the creation and operation of Better Statistics CIC alongside the role and membership of its advisory group.
- 2.2 Tony presented a set of slides which highlighted several areas of potential improvement across the UK Statistics Authority (the Authority), including the usefulness of the NSEUAC material published on the Authority website, and encouraged the committee to be more transparent to encourage involvement from users.
- 2.3 Members then discussed the ONS website specifically, areas for improvement and Owen Brace provided an update on the broader efforts to improve user engagement and thanked Tony for his continued contributions on this topic.
- 2.4 Members considered whether the committee could increase its impact by discussing topics thematically, agreed further in advance, allowing members to engage with other user groups they represent in advance of the committee meetings. Members also discussed whether the committee may benefit from an in person meeting.

## **3. Post Census Consultation [NSEUAC(23)01]**

- 3.1 Ruth Studley provided an update on progress towards the delivery of the 'Consultation on the future of population and social statistics' and 2023 Recommendation and discussed the scope, purpose and approach to the consultation. Members heard that the aim of this work is to produce more timely statistics that shape our knowledge of the UK population.
- 3.2 Overall, members expressed their support for the material presented in the paper, and emphasised the importance of this work and additionally made the following points:
  - i. the consultation must keep all options open, and maintain the possibility that the UK undertakes another census, as it did in 2021;
  - ii. whether 12 weeks was a sufficient amount of time to open the consultation, especially over the summer;
  - iii. ONS must recognise that, if the decision is made to no longer conduct a census, some aspects of statistical measurement will be difficult to achieve through administrative data alone and ONS must be clear about what they are;
  - iv. ONS should carefully consider how it communicates messages with users and privacy groups on the increased use of administrative data from multiple

- government sources, potentially in place of a census, making clear the ethical and security protections ascribed to citizens' data; and
- v. ONS should continue its good work collaborating with the Devolved Administrations, bringing consistency and harmonisation wherever possible
- 3.3 Ian Diamond reassured members that ONS recognised the importance of this work, and is resourcing it accordingly, and that he, and the UK Statistics Authority Board, were very clear that this would be a real consultation, including the option of conducting another census. It was also noted that while administrative data will provide limitations in some areas, equally, it will enable ONS to significantly improve its measurement in other areas and choices will have to be made.
  - 3.4 Ruth Studley thanked members for their engagement and supportive feedback, confirming that it would be fed into the development of the consultation and asked the expert members to be ambassadors for the consultation.
  - 3.5 Members heard that extensive pre-consultation activity was underway to ensure contributors were already thinking about their input and that ONS were utilising the existing UK-wide governance to ensure the Devolved Administrations were involved as this work develops.
- 4. **Report on Impact of NSEUAC [NSEUAC(23)02]**
    - 4.1 In the absence of Rob Bumpstead, Tom Marsh presented a paper highlighting the positive feedback from members of ONS on the impact NSEUAC had on their work since engaging with the committee.
    - 4.2 Members agreed with the paper's findings and were reassured the committee was adding value in line with its Terms of Reference.
- 5. **Forward Agenda**
    - 5.1 David Hand asked members to consider the forward agenda included in the paper and consider any additional items by correspondence.
- 6. **Any other business**
    - 6.1 The next meeting would take place on Thursday 8 June 2023.

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S EXPERT USER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Agenda**  
**Thursday 9 March 2023, 11:00-13:00**  
**Virtual Meeting**

**Chair:** Prof. David Hand

**Apologies:** Prof. Jane Falkingham, Dame Moira Gibb

<b>Timing</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	
1 11:00-11:05 (5 mins)	Welcome, previous minutes and actions	Meeting of 05.12.2022 Prof. David Hand
2 11:05-11:40 (35 mins)	Discussion with User	Oral Update Tony Dent
3 11:40-12:30 (50 mins)	Post Census Consultation	NSEUAC(23)01 Ruth Studley
4 12:30-12:45 (15 mins)	Report on impact of NSEUAC	NSEUAC(23)02 Robert Bumpstead
5 12:45-12:55 (10 mins)	Forward Agenda	Discussion
6 12:55-13:00 (5 mins)	Any Other Business	

**Next Meeting: Thursday 8 June, 11:00, Virtual Meeting**



# Presentation to NSEUAC

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Tony Dent MSc  
Director, Better Statistics

# Origin of Better Statistics CIC (BSC)

- **2018 - Following a few years of concern about our National Business Statistics we formed the Campaign for Better Business Statistics.**
- **2019 – Concentrated on aspects of estimating the so-called Gig economy. Meetings with Professor Sir Charles Bean, Richard Heys (ONS), first public meeting at NLC. Conducted Foundation Survey.**
- **2020 – Lockdown interrupted progress on Business Survey plans. Instead we took interest in:**
  - Business Impact of Covid Survey
  - Escoe report
  - Consultation on inflation indices by ONS / Treasury

Changed the name to **Campaign for Better Statistics**

# Better Statistics CIC

Formed February 2021

The purpose of Better Statistics CIC is to campaign for more reliable statistics, whether produced by private companies or by public bodies. By 'better statistics' we mean more trustworthy, useful to more people, of good quality and readily accessible. BSC also benefits from occasional advice from members of the Better Statistics Advisory Group as described on the next chart.

To achieve our aims, we promote public awareness of, and interest in, the production of accurate and relevant statistics and we believe we contribute best through:

- 1. Educating people as to the value of reliable statistics, via discussion, debate and engagement**
- 2. Encouraging people to participate in appropriate surveys, which of itself can improve the potential reliability of the data.**
- 3. Challenging poorly prepared or presented published statistics**

Directors – Tony Dent, Phyllis Macfarlane, Iain MacKay

# Better Statistics Advisory Group Members:

- [Simon Briscoe](#): Simon is a director of data science start-up [t-tab](#). Among various contributions to our public life he was an adviser to parliament's Public Administration Committee and a trustee of FullFact.
- [Sir Vince Cable](#): Vince was the Business, Innovation and Skills Secretary in the coalition government, now retired from politics he retains an active interest in business and economic affairs.
- [Sir John Curtice](#): John is Professor of Politics at the University of Strathclyde and Senior Research Fellow at the National Centre for Social Research; he is also chief commentator on What UK Thinks.
- [Leon Gunning](#): Leon is Go-to-market Manager at Vodafone following from a period as Insights Manager at Giff-Gaff.
- [Ms. Vicky Pryce](#): Vicky is Chief Economic Adviser and a board member at the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR). Vicky has previously held senior positions in business and the Civil service. #e.
- [Adam Williams](#): Adam is founder and Managing Director of DBS Data, an original sponsor of Better Statistics CIC.



# Main BSC Activities 2021 / 2022

- Public Meetings:
  - Launch Event – November 2021
  - Inflation Seminar – May 2022
  - Growth Event – November 2022
- Primary Interactions with Official Statistics
  - Early involvement with user engagement
  - Correspondence with Covid-19 infection survey team
  - Correspondence with Office for Statistical Regulation
- Other activities
  - Concerns with various aspects of Population Statistics

# My purpose today

- Primarily it is to assist NSEUAC with objective C.  
*helping UKSA, ONS and the UK statistical system to improve user engagement*
- I propose to do that by commenting on the minutes of the meetings of the committee over the past year to identify any areas that Better Statistics believe offered potential opportunities for improving user engagement.
- In doing so I am aware that it is '*early days*' for committee members but I am also conscious that the need for a 'user' committee was originally identified by PACAC in 2019.

# NSEUAC Meetings - Main Contributors

- National Statistician – first meeting.
- Guest Speakers – Various (3 to date, I am the 4<sup>th</sup>).
- Integrated Data Service – Alison Pritchard
- Engagement Strategy & Website Development – Owen Brace
- Inclusive Data Taskforce (IDTF) - Liz McKeown / Lara Phelan (?)
- Office for Statistical Regulation – Anna Price

# National Statistician – Minutes of March 2022 (I).

Professor Sir Ian Diamond presented a paper on his observations for statistical priorities.

- Statistics would continue to be produced to the highest standards whilst also transforming access to data and statistics to improve the user experience.
- Work would take place to provide faster real time indicators on a variety of issues as well as improving the accuracy and relevance of data.
- Business surveys were being radically transformed with thought given to minimising user burden.
- Inclusive data was critical to make sure every citizen had a voice.
- Qualitative data was important when thinking about inclusivity.

*The paper presented by Sir Ian is not available to review, but the above are the minutes. My primary question is - how did Sir Ian expect the committee to assist these priorities?*

# National Statistician – Minutes of March 2022 (II).

The following points were raised in discussion:

1. one role of the committee was to consider inclusivity by identifying user groups and potential users that hadn't been identified before
2. the faster economic indicators work by the ONS was impressive, but data moved quickly, and care needed to be taken not to over respond to short-term random fluctuations
3. unknown unknowns were an important consideration when considering potential users
4. prioritisation of questions was important
5. questions from the public needed to be answered as well as government questions
6. the ONS had a role to play as an international organisation in collaboration and comparability of data and work was taking place with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development around international standards for comparable data.

*Please forgive me if I consider these comments to be banal. But I suspect that is more a feature of the nature of the minutes rather than, possibly, the actual discussions.*

# NSEUAC Meetings – Guest Speakers

Comments on the three speakers to date (based upon the minutes):

- 1) Anna Powell-Smith from the Centre for Public Data made some important observations, but I am a little surprised that she did not take the opportunity to explain her desire for any act of parliament to include a definition of one or more key performance measures to determine the success of the legislation.
- 2) Roger Halliday from Research Data Scotland (RDS) is not an obvious representative of the user community and his presence had suggested more questions than answers! Can users in Scotland access data from other nations within the UK and vice versa?
- 3) Paul Johnson of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) represents a major consumer of both survey and administrative data and highlighted a number of concerns with accessing relevant data. (*Better Statistics comment further on this below, in reference to the integrated data service*).

*BSC wonder if it would be more appropriate for the committee to focus on topics rather than 'representatives' of groups.*

# NSEUAC Meetings – Integrated Data Service

NSEUAC has received more than one briefing on this subject and we accept that the committee is right to take a major interest in this development. Nevertheless, the system is some way from being ready and, presently, it is difficult to see how the committee is able to influence the development

We understand that access to the system is to be determined in the same way as the *Secure Research Service* and we consider this to be unnecessarily restrictive, inhibiting innovation because:

- a) Analysts are required to specify their objective in exploring the data and to get their application approved – a process that has become less onerous than it was but it remains unnecessarily time consuming.
- b) Accessing data solely through the secure service restricts the analyst to only using ‘authorised’ software which may obscure insights exposed through more innovative software.

We note that it is intended to refer the IDS to the Ethics committee for consideration in respect of GDPR, a move we find surprising; there are many ways to ensure that the data will be anonymised and persons working within the IDS should take proper responsibility for ensuring that is achieved. If there were to be a breach by any company or individual, then why cannot such result in a fine as is presently the case with other breaches of GDPR rules - or even prison, if the breach is truly serious.

It should be noted that for a number of years now the US Census bureau (the US equivalent of the ONS) has enabled anonymised data to be downloaded from the web for ANYONE to explore as they wish. Why can't we do the same?

# Website Matters (Minutes of March & October 2022)

At the first meeting Owen Brace presented a paper about data dissemination across the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Government Statistical Service (GSS) focussing on the importance of making data, statistics and analysis available to a wider range of users.

In a second paper presented at the October meeting Owen presented progress on website transformation.

As far as can be discerned from the minutes this second paper was primarily concerned with the ONS site rather than the main UKSA site or the various other sites associated with the UKSA - ESCoE, OSR site, digitalblog.ons, style.ons, datasciencecampus.ons and the analysis function site.

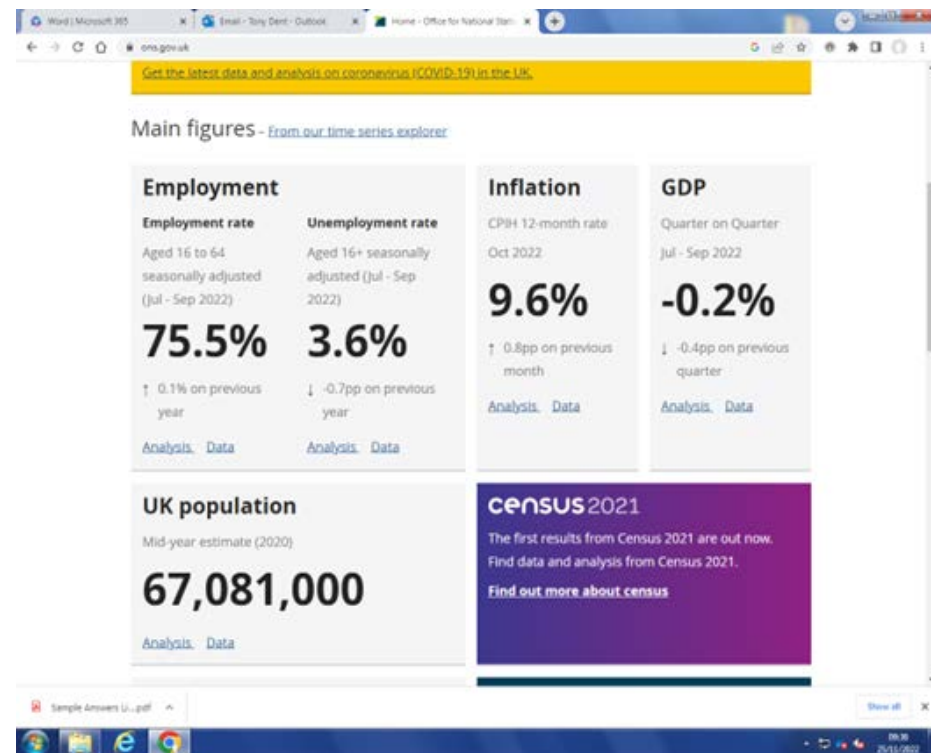
*BSC are confused as to the value of having so many sites, particularly given the duplication of information across the various .ons domains. There are 9 sites in all, including a 'fast track' site devoted to recruitment of staff to the GSS which partly duplicates the analysis function site.*



# Website Transformation Dashboards (I)

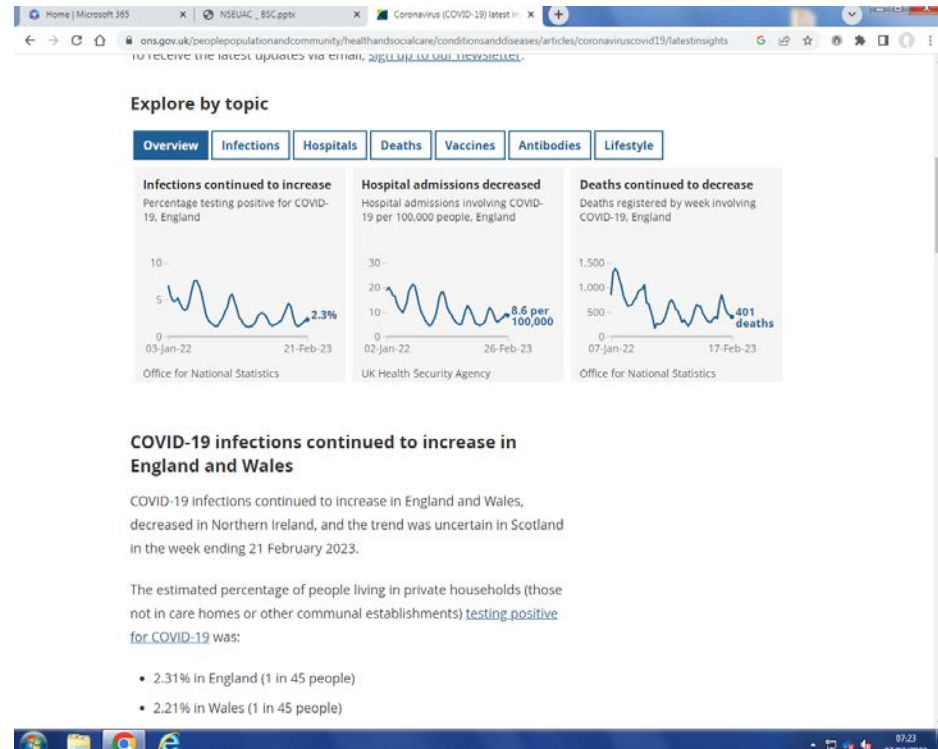
The picture to the right is a screen shot of the main dashboard as at a date of last November – the current (January) figure for CPIH inflation is 8.8%.

BSC do not consider this dashboard to be helpful at the time when the Bank of England and the Treasury actually use CPI as the usual inflation measure.



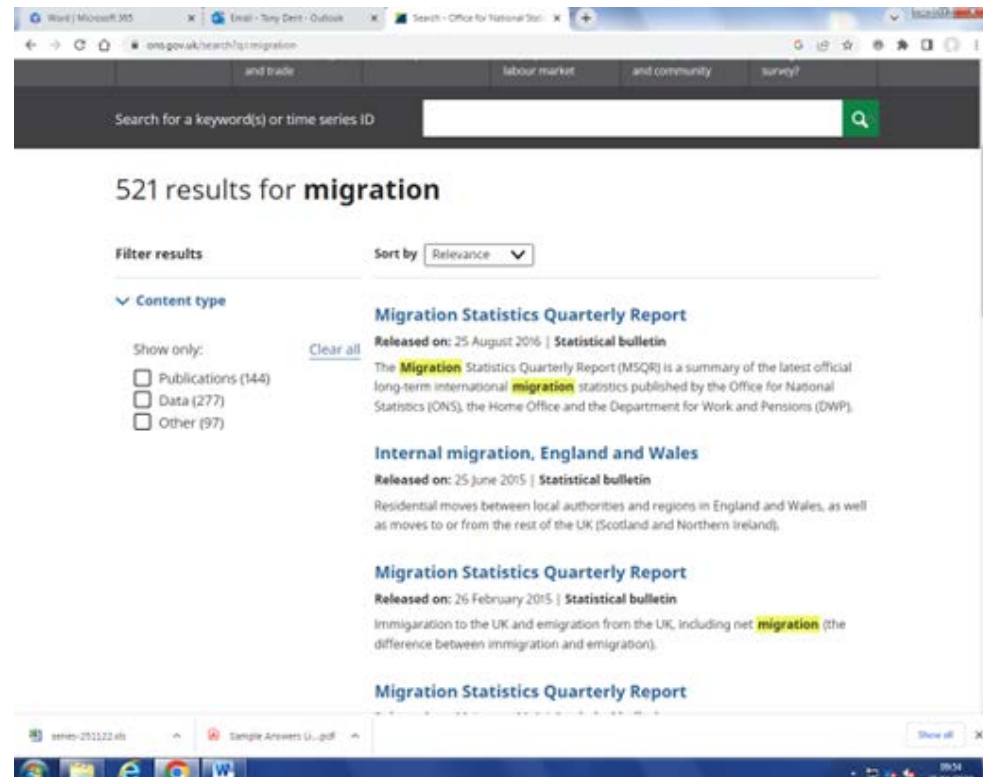
# Website Transformation Dashboards (II)

*Why does the dashboard on the right not use the same form of statistic (% of population) for both the infection rate and the rate of admission to hospital? That would facilitate better understanding of the relationship.*



# Website Transformation?

Despite all the recent work there has been no effort to improve the search function. Last November I was seeking more information on the migration data with results as indicated on the right!



# Website Transformation?

Last November I was also interested to compare the figure for the UK population of 67.081,000 (as given on the main dashboard) with the figure available from data at the time of the 2021 census for England and Wales:

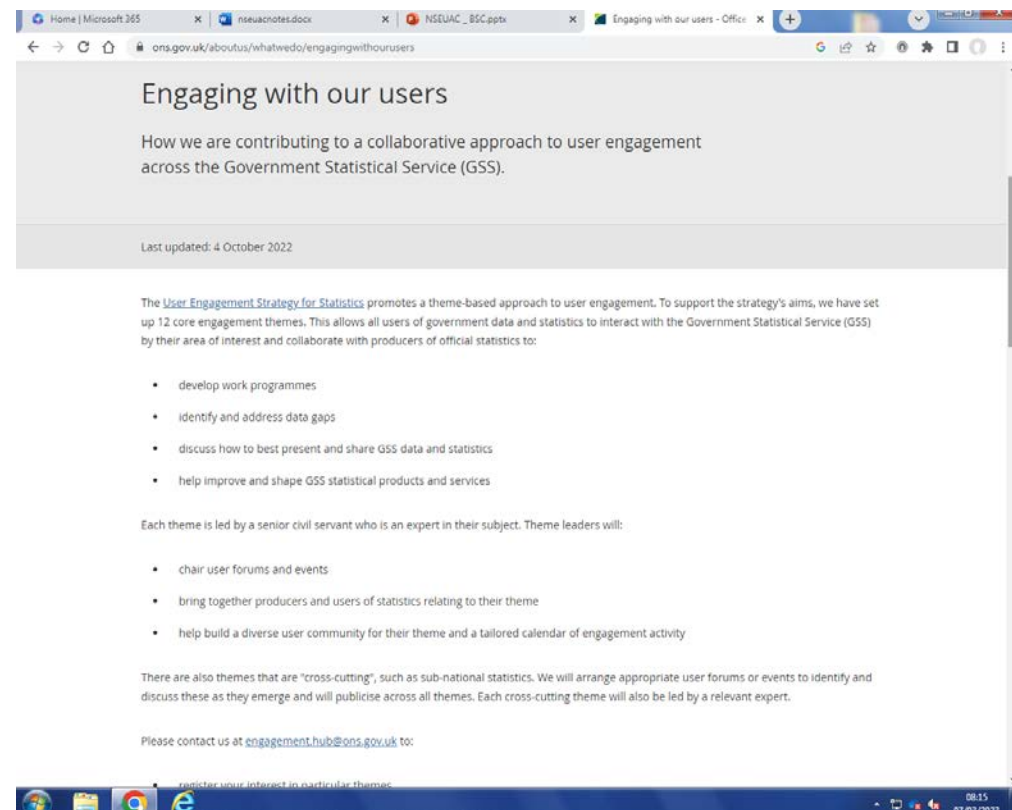
*On Census Day, 21 March 2021, the size of the usual resident population in England and Wales was 59,597,300 (56,489,800 in England and 3,107,500 in Wales); this was the largest population ever recorded through a census in England and Wales.*

The searches for the population of Scotland failed to assist me to complete my enquiry.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the ONS search results for 'population of scotland'. The search bar at the top contains the text 'population of scotland' and the results are sorted by 'Release date'. The search results are filtered to show only 'Data' (1339 items). The first result is 'Dynamic population model local authority case studies: population and migration estimates', released on 23 November 2022. The second result is 'Dynamic population model local authority case studies: credible intervals', also released on 23 November 2022. The third result is 'Deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19) by month of registration, UK', released on 23 November 2022. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows several open applications, including Microsoft Word, Outlook, and the ONS website.

# User Engagement Strategy (I)

At the July meeting Owen Brace provided an overview of the approach to theme-based user engagement and this was subsequently announced on the ONS website on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 as shown on this screenshot.



# User Engagement Strategy (II)

The strategy referred to on the previous ONS web page is as described on the right. This was produced in February 2021 and the subsequent conversations with me, Mike Hughes and Paul Allin that took place throughout 2021 had not had any influence on that strategy.

Nor indeed had we succeeded in having any real influence on the formation of this committee.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the ONS website. The address bar shows the URL: [analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/user-engagement-strategy-for-statistics-ensuring-official-statistics-meet-society-s-need/](https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/user-engagement-strategy-for-statistics-ensuring-official-statistics-meet-society-s-need/). The page title is "User engagement strategy for statistics – ensuring official statistics meet society's needs".

The page content includes:

- Publication date:** 11 February 2021
- Owner:** Good Practice Team
- Who this is for:** Producers of official statistics
- Type:** Strategy
- Contact:** GSSHelp@statistics.gov.uk

Below the metadata is a "Table of contents" section with 11 items:

1. Summary
2. Foreword
3. What we want to achieve
4. Why user engagement is important
5. Our vision
6. Goal one: Collaboration
7. Goal two: Capability
8. Goal three: Culture
9. Monitoring and measuring success
10. Background information and glossary
11. Delivery plan

On the right side of the page, there is a feedback form with the text: "If you have any feedback on the content or design of this page, please feel free to leave your comments:". Below the form is a "Submit" button. There is also a section for "Related" content with links to "User engagement guidance", "GSS user engagement case studies", and "Improving user engagement for official statistics".

# Inclusive Data Taskforce (IDTF) and Inclusive Data.

Please excuse my desire to conflate two separate contributions in this way. I do so because I feel that there would be benefit in the UKSA treating them as two sides of the same coin.

With regard to the Taskforce itself we have no comments, it is clearly an important initiative but as with other activities within UKSA one wonders about duplication of activities with other groups (e.g. localism).

Encouraging users of all kinds to encourage participation in surveys helps to ensure that the results are more representative and therefore more reliable. BSC believe that the UKSA should use advertising to encourage participation in surveys and link such participation more directly with the value of results.



# Office for Statistics Regulation

As stated on slide 5, BSC had significant dealings with the OSR last year including correspondence with Ms. Anna Price. That correspondence resulted from BSC's dis-satisfaction with some details of the Covid-19 Infection Survey and the manner in which it had been reviewed by the OSR. As a result the OSR have commissioned Professor Patrick Sturges to investigate the matter and we wait for his report.

Meanwhile the minute of the discussion following Ms. Price's report last December stated:  
*"Members discussed whether the use of official statistics was improving. OSR casework had increased in recent years, indicating that more people were aware of the OSR and where to go to highlight concerns, which therefore enhanced trustworthiness and people challenging misuse of statistics."*

BSC are less sure that such a positive spin can be placed upon the increased workload of the OSR. It is possible that the increased volume of statistics produced by the ONS are increasing the work load of the OSR, particularly because there appears to be a lack of effective quality control for some elements of the work.



# Summary

- IDS (SRS) should provide users with easier access to anonymised individual data records provided users register to abide by the code of practice. Almost all potential users are registered with the ICO and already committed to ensuring lawful processing, fines should serve as an additional incentive for ensuring the maintenance of privacy.
- Quick gains for user engagement can be achieved by rationalising the website estate and providing a more effective search function.
- The NSEUAC could benefit from more informative minutes and one or two genuine user representatives.
- The OSR needs more resources to do its job properly.
- UKSA should advertise the benefits to society of participation in research to provide more accurate data for decisions - *your country needs YOU!*

# Other Observations

- UKSA often uses third party contracts as a reason for not releasing information to users, especially when requests are made under the freedom of information act. For example it was claimed by the CIS team that information BSC sought was the intellectual property of IQVIA and they were therefore unable to provide it - this was inaccurate. Presently DEFRA is using a similar excuse for not enabling Professor Ian Plewis of University of Manchester to access 3 of their agricultural surveys on the SRS.
- The minutes of the December meeting noted that *“Members agreed that papers for the National Statistician’s Expert User Advisory Committee (NSEUAC) would be published on the UK Statistics Authority Website going forward.”* That has still to be implemented as have other suggestions such as the July note that: *“All members to suggest a user engagement issue of concern. Secretariat to collate into a document for the December NSEUAC meeting”*.
- More attention should be paid to the potential for bias created by increasing use of web-based surveys rather than face to face data collection.
- The complaints policy states that “summary of ONS complaints and outcomes will be published in the [UK Statistics Authority Annual Report](#).” It isn’t.
- Finally, during my investigation of migration last November I also reviewed the mid-year estimates to find that it specified the Q3 2022 UK population figure was estimated at 67,658,000 – almost 600,000 persons more than stated on the dashboard as shown on chart 13. It would be interesting to understand the origin of the discrepancy and which is the official figure.

# Conclusion – User Engagement

It is difficult to understand what the role of NSEUAC is from a review of the minutes. In particular, how does it represent users? That was a core role we had envisaged when ‘engaging’ with the ONS throughout 2021 and, we believe, it was the role envisaged by PACAC in 2019.

Of course there has been no public notification of the existence of this committee, the naming of which indicates that the committee belongs to the National Statistician and not to users.

Beyond that there remains the ambiguity introduced by the word ‘expert’ - is the committee *‘for experts’* or *‘of experts’*?

To quote from an email I received on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2021:

*“Looks like a strategy to divide and conquer - and keep control. They control who is on the groups and what they discuss, and deal with the “coordination”. Nothing about **independent secretariat, meetings in public, any formal role of presenting papers, links to the board, etc**”*

How are users with problems expected to contact this committee? Do we believe there are no serious problems? Even if that were the case, the committee should offer better representation of user interests than it presently does, including a means for users to communicate directly with it.

## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

### NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S EXPERT USER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NSEUAC(23)01

#### *Consultation on the Future of Population and Social Statistics*

#### **Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update on progress towards the delivery of the 'Consultation on the future of population and social statistics' and 2023 Recommendation. The paper looks at the scope/purpose of the consultation, target audiences, engagement strategy, communications approach, evidence strategy, risks/mitigations and the timeline.

#### **Timing**

2. The Committee should be aware of the following high-level milestones associated with the consultation and recommendation:
  - i. week beginning 26 June 2023 – Provisional launch of the consultation;
  - ii. week beginning 4 July 2023 – Expected launch events (England and Wales) to coincide with Evidence Week;
  - iii. October 2023 – Expected close date of the consultation; and
  - iv. to be announced 2023 – consultation response, followed by statement on recommendation.

#### **Recommendations**

3. Members of National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Committee (NSEUAC) are invited to:
  - i. note the scope and purpose of the consultation;
  - ii. note the strategic approach to stakeholder engagement; and
  - iii. note our broader timeline and approach to assurance.

#### **Scope of the 2023 Consultation**

4. In 2014, the Government set out its ambition that "censuses after 2021 be conducted using other sources of data". Since this time, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has been conducting research into producing more frequent and timely estimates using new methods and the best available sources of information. In 2018, ONS published a White Paper (Help Shape Our Future: The 2021 Census of Population and Housing in England and Wales), which set out the vision for the population statistics system and included a commitment to make a recommendation to parliament in 2023 on the future of the population statistics system. In 2023, the National Statistician will make recommendations to Government on ONS' work to put administrative data at the core of a transformed population and social statistics in England and Wales, and its implications for the future of census arrangements.

#### **Stakeholder Engagement Strategy for the 2023 Consultation**

5. Our overarching aim is to take stakeholders with us on the transformation and transition journey. We are seeking to understand user needs and how we are best placed to respond to these. To achieve this, we have worked in partnership with our key stakeholders (e.g., local Authorities), building on the successful

engagement with Local Authorities in helping to quality assure the Census estimates.

6. The consultation will capture statistical users of our population and migration statistics system. It is not a consultation on the future of the Census, instead the consultation is to ensure we fully understand the user needs for an admin-based system.
7. We have mapped our top 100 stakeholders across priority groups and planned a range of engagement activity for different stakeholder groups, split by topic area.
8. We have several target audiences including:
  - i. statistical users – reached through direct engagement, roundtables, newsletters, blogs, research publications, conferences, advisory groups;
  - ii. non expert users – reached through communications, newsletters, blogs, events;
  - iii. non-expert influencers – roundtables, events; and
  - iv. citizens – cross-ONS activity to engage the public on our use of data.
9. Priority Group one are primarily made up of key government departments, such as HM Treasury, Cabinet Office/No.10, Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities, Department for Health and Social Care etc. The aim of engagement with this group, is to promote the opportunities, listen and respond to issues and concerns and feedback, raising awareness of transformation and consultation. We will target this group with questions about their requirements. This builds on a continuum of engagement they have had with ONS about transformation and administrative data products. This activity will be at both working level and at a more senior level.
10. Priority Group two are Local Authorities, the National Health Service and other groups such as Arm's Length Bodies (ALB). These represent an important group of stakeholders and will receive semi-bespoke engagement, along the lines of Priority Group one.
11. Priority Group three are other important users of ONS data, typically from academia, third sector organisations, businesses, and government bodies. This group will typically receive broadcast type of engagement but with some bespoke intensive engagement for key stakeholders.
12. For priority groups two and three, we will be holding a series of roundtables with a representative group of stakeholders from a range of areas including Children/Education, Economics and Labour market, Transport, Health, Cultural, Census and Privacy, Welfare, Wellbeing and Housing. These include senior leaders in other organisations, such as Matthew Taylor (CEO, NHS Confederation) and Prof Martin Green (CEO Care England). We will also be using existing broadcast engagement channels (steering groups, newsletters etc.) and webinars, blogs, and conferences. We are maximising our engagement with broader ONS engagement on ONS Local.
13. These activities will ensure wide-ranging issues and concerns are understood and raise awareness of the opportunities in the transformed system and the upcoming consultation. They will also enable us to present our latest research and understand, in detail, their user needs. It will also help us inform future engagement, on an iterative basis.

14. We have also planned a series of public and data supplier engagement activities.
15. Alongside the user consultation, we will carry out a programme of engagement activity aimed at the general public. The aim of this engagement is to listen to and understand the attitudes of members of the public to our proposals for use of administrative data. It will be supported by examples of the benefits to the public good from linking administrative data and reassurance that their data is being used in line with high ethical and security standards. Public sentiment is to be recorded and evaluated alongside the consultation responses and will feed into the body of evidence used when making the 2023 Recommendation.
16. We will also engage with audiences anticipated to have concerns over privacy and use of administrative data by government i.e., privacy groups. These groups have the potential to influence public opinion. We will ensure information is publicly available to avoid any potential for misunderstanding or misinformation.

### **Parliamentary Engagement**

17. A detailed parliamentary engagement plan has been approved. The plan covers engagement with Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee as well as how we will work with All Party Parliamentary Groups, select committees and both parliaments in England and Wales.

### **Assurance**

18. The delivery of the 2023 Consultation is subject to a range of assurance processes to ensure the consultation is delivered to the government consultation principles<sup>1</sup>.
19. Internally and in addition to the standard programme management arrangements, several committees are aware of our plans and are scrutinising them. These include:
  - i. National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee;
  - ii. National Statistician's Inclusive Data Advisory Committee;
  - iii. National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Committee; and
  - iv. Methodological Assurance Review panel (MARP).
20. In addition to these committees and at the working level, we are actively engaging on a regular basis with the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). In addition, we are engaging with other experts within ONS, to test proposed consultation questions and develop reproducible analytical pipelines (RAPs) for response analysis.
21. An Equality Impact Assessment is also being prepared to coincide with the consultation launch.
22. Externally, we are engaging with several parties to ensure our consultation materials receive scrutiny from outside of the organisation. These include:
  - i. The Consultation Institute – to quality assure all our consultation documents and materials;
  - ii. The Government Legal Department – to receive legal advice on aspects of the consultation; and
  - iii. External challenge sessions – these are made up of a panel of experienced delivery leads across government to scrutinise our proposed plans. Our most

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

recent session was held on the 6 February 2023 and focussed on the engagement plan.

### **Methodology**

23. The statistical methods used in our transformation research are transparent and have been scrutinised internally by the Methodology and Quality Directorate and externally by MARP<sup>2</sup>. We are continually updating our methodologies and will continue to receive scrutiny when using these approaches. Our most recent methodological paper on the Dynamic Population Model<sup>3</sup> was published on 28 February 2023.

### **Transformation Across the UK**

24. The response to the consultation described in this paper will inform the National Statistician's recommendations for the future of population and social statistics in England and Wales, to which we anticipate responses from UK Government and Welsh Government.

25. Separate decisions, informed by National Records of Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, respectively, will be made by the Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive, and are expected in 2024 and 2025 respectively.

26. We know there is particular and significant value to users for consistent, coherent and accessible statistics for the UK, for each country and geographic areas within each country. Meeting this need has been an important factor in the proposals we are developing.

27. In November 2022, the National Statistician, along with the Chief Statisticians and Registrars General of the devolved administrations, signed a cooperation agreement<sup>4</sup> on the future of population, migration, housing and social statistics across the UK. This builds on previous cooperation and formalises our joint priority to produce population estimates that are accessible, timely, and coherent, and which our users understand, both now and in the future.

### **Communications (Published Information)**

28. We have published updates on our research on the ONS website and communicated these to stakeholders through blogs<sup>5</sup> and email notifications<sup>6</sup>. This will continue as further research is published in the lead up to the consultation.

29. The consultation will go live in late June (provisional date) and extensively publicised to ensure potential respondents are aware of it, what it aims to achieve and how to respond. We will use a variety of channels to ensure we reach a wide audience including less traditional users such as community and faith groups alongside users such as central and local government, academia and business.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/the-authority-board/committees/national-statisticians-advisory-committees-and-panels/methodological-assurance-review-panel-census/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/methodologies/dynamicpopulationmodelimprovementstodatasourcesandmethodologyforlocalauthoritiesenglandandwales2011to2022>

<sup>4</sup> <https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/statement-of-agreement-cooperation-on-future-uk-population-and-social-statistics/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2023/02/28/revolutionising-administrative-data-a-look-into-the-future-of-population-and-migration-statistics/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKONS/bulletins/348ac2e>

We are working closely with ONS Local to ensure all viable engagement routes are used. A detailed communications plan has been developed to support this.

**Ruth Studley, Director for Health Analysis and Pandemic Insights and Director for Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme Enablement ONS,  
01 March 2023**



# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S EXPERT USER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NSEUAC(23)02

### *Report on the Impact of the National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Committee*

#### **Purpose**

1. This paper provides a report on progress within the UK Statistics Authority as a result of discussions which have taken place at the National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Committee (NSEUAC).

#### **Recommendations**

2. Members of NSEUAC are invited to:
  - i. note and discuss progress of topics since their discussion at NSEUAC;
  - ii. comment on progress that has taken place since the discussions at NSEUAC; and
  - iii. note how the findings of the report link to the Terms of Reference of NSEUAC.

#### **Background**

3. It was requested during the NSEUAC meeting on 5 December 2022 that a report be collated to assess the impact of the committee's meetings on the different work topics considered, receiving updates and feedback from the relevant business areas to gauge progress and identify any potential areas to be further addressed.
4. It was agreed that Robert Bumpstead would report on the progress of the topics presented to the committee. A commission was sent out to all topic leads who had presented at NSEUAC requesting that they send back three detailed bullet points on the impact the committee discussions had on their work.

#### **Discussion**

5. A thematic analysis was conducted on the feedback received to assess the committee's impact, and three themes were identified:
  - i. Engagement – Engagement was most common theme which emerged when looking at the feedback, with advice from several of the topic leads that the committee helped them improve or form engagement plans. The Integrated Data Service (IDS) noted that the discussions helped to form plans to showcase the development of the IDS. Similarly, Website Transformation noted that the discussions helped to improve structured data to enable easier access and build in user engagement as a website function. Within the National Statistician's priorities, the post Census Consultation was highlighted as an organisational priority and the best principles provided on engagement from NSEUAC will be imperative especially on engagement with privacy groups on issues;
  - ii. Progress – Nearly all topic leads advised the discussion and feedback from the committee enabled progress to be made through their programmes. The

Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) noted that the discussion of misuse of data helped progression of their business plan. Furthermore, the Inclusive Data Taskforce noted that, since the committee, further qualitative data collection, analysis, and reporting of statistically unrepresented groups had taken place including; children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, lived experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in England and Wales and the publication of findings on equalities across different areas of life for a range of protected characteristics and other groups, from the Equality Data Programme. On Theme Based Engagement the suggestions by the committee were to regularly review the themes, as such the Engagement Hub conducting an annual review of themes with the first one due in summer; and

- iii. Education – The final theme which emerged in the feedback was education. Both user networks and public education were positively impacted by the discussions at the committee. The committee welcomed OSR’s work on public education and suggested further developments which could be considered. This resulted in OSR publishing a statistical literacy think piece and literature review in early 2023. Education for user networks also improved post the committee. Public Engagement noted that since the committee guides and toolkits have been provided to support people to engage in their communities and networks.

## **Conclusion**

6. This paper has set out the findings of the impact that discussions at NSEUAC has had on the topics that were presented at the committee. The feedback from the topic leads suggests that the committee is providing strategic advice to enhance effective engagement with all users, this is evident with engagement emerging at the most popular theme within the feedback. Progress has been made by all topic areas and the consultation with the committee has been a key part of this as evident through recommendations suggested at the committee being implemented in the business areas. This indicates that NSEUAC has positively impacted discussions and is effectively working within its Terms of Reference.

**Kerri Gourley and Robert Bumpstead, Central Policy Secretariat, UK Statistics Authority, 7 March 2023**