National Statistician's Inclusive Data Advisory Committee

IDTF implementation progress and annual review

Purpose

1. This paper and the accompanying annexes provide an overview of progress towards delivery of the [Inclusive Data Taskforce (IDTF) Implementation Plan](), as well as an update on the first annual review of the Plan.

Recommendations

2. Members of NSIDAC are invited to:
    i. Review the IDTF Implementation Roadmap (**Annex A**) and comment on the current progress being made;
    ii. Review the revised plans outlined for the annual review of the 2022/3 Implementation Plan and give feedback on any areas of work which should be a priority for 2023/4.

Background

3. This paper provides an update on progress made during the last quarter (January to March 2023) against the [IDTF implementation plan](), focusing on the key commitments outlined in IDTF Roadmap (**see Annex A**). These are the most strategic or 'cornerstone' activities that will lead to the step change in UK data inclusivity that the IDTF envisaged and a summary of each initiative is included in **Annex B**.

4. For the [Inclusive Data Taskforce's second Inclusive Data Principle](), ONS made a commitment to "facilitate an annual review and published update of the IDTF Implementation Plan." The first annual review of all commitments is nearing completion. This paper gives the committee an update on this work.

Discussion

5. Between January and March 2023 positive progress has been made against several of the commitments in the IDTF Implementation Plan, including:

    5.1. The re-planned work to develop a new 'social contract' (Inclusive Data Principle (IDP) 1) is progressing. Six focus groups were completed with 18 to 24 year olds during February and March, exploring their perceptions of data sharing and trustworthiness in data holders. The findings from these groups are currently being analysed with support from the ONS qualitative team. The Task and Finish Group for the Social Contract will use a high-level summary of the findings when they meet in May. The group's views will be considered so next steps for this work can be decided.

5.2. The Scottish Government published their new [Equality Evidence Strategy 2023 to 2025](#), alongside a [blog](#) which outlined how they engaged with people to develop the strategy, to ensure they are fulfilling the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This strategy is wide-ranging, providing the basis for work over the next three years. Its focus includes improving the completeness of equality data, improving data utility, producing more detailed analysis of data already collected as well as new analysis, and sharing good practice to increase the confidence and competence in the collection, analysis and use of equality evidence.

5.3. In March, ONS published an [evidence review](#) of 'hidden' homelessness. The review highlights the challenges, complexities and main data gaps around 'hidden' homelessness and discusses some future work happening in that space. The report has been welcomed by the Big Issue. This review will be complemented by a review by Scottish Government, now due to be published in the summer, which will explore the methods used to count these populations, outlining the core populations that are likely to be hidden, and exploring the international approaches taken to identifying these groups. This work adds to our understanding of the coverage of non-private household populations and will inform action to address these hidden groups (IDP 3).

5.4. The Equality Data Asset (EDA) Proof of Concept has progressed, with the linked data asset now available to access through the Secure Research Service, linking Companies House data to Census 2011. It is anticipated the EDA will enable an intersectional approach to exploring equalities data (IDP 4; see NSIDAC(23)06 for further details). Once Cabinet Office Government Equalities Office (GEO) have evaluated the utility of the prototype, next steps are to plan the second phase of work. This will cover linking Census 2021 data with priority variables and consideration of build of the EDA in the [Integrated Data Service](#)[1].

5.5. ONS published their ['Create a Custom Dataset' product](#). This flexible table builder tool allows users to dive into the Census 2021 multi-variate statistics for themselves. It puts the power in the hands of users to find, build and download the combinations of data in which they are most interested (IDP 8). This enables users to complete their own intersectional analysis, exploring how different characteristics interact (IDP 4), as well as allowing ONS to release census statistics far more quickly than ever before.

5.6. The GSS Harmonisation team published the findings of research into the existing [disability](#) harmonised standard alongside a review into [mental health harmonisation](#). Initial findings of research into the [ethnicity](#) standard was also published, with a further publication scheduled for late Spring (IDP 5).

5.7. ONS published a [blog outlining progress on transforming the population social statistics system](#). They also published a [paper evaluating the progress](#)

---

[1] The Integrated Data Service (IDS) is a cross-government service, for which the Office for National Statistics is the lead delivery partner, which enables co-ordinated access to a range of high-quality data – critical to informing policy decisions and improving public services.

which outlines how the new experimental admin-based population estimates compare with our official population estimates. The paper explains the difference in quality and provides links to more detailed articles that underpin the findings.

6. As set out in the IDTF Implementation Roadmap (**Annex A**), the majority of key commitments are on track or have already been delivered. The roadmap has been updated to reflect known new priorities, providing clarification of the scope and extent of some work. Of note:

   6.1. Work on the 'social contract' recommendation is progressing as outlined in the update provided to the February meeting (NSIDAC(23)01). We have updated the roadmap to reflect that next steps will be planned at the May Task and Finish Group meeting, in the context of the wider ONS work on Public Acceptability (IDP1).

   6.2. The Government Analysis Function has extended its training and development programmes, adding a new programme for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds which will run from May to July (IDP 1).

   6.3. Scottish Government are in the process of commissioning research into hidden homelessness to reach a better understanding of those people who are homeless, at imminent risk of homelessness or who face housing insecurity but do not appear in Scotland's official figures. An improved understanding of the different routes into and out of homelessness will help us address gaps in provision and make Scotland's homelessness system more responsive to people's needs. This work complements the ONS work on hidden homeless (IDP 3).

   6.4. The ONS review of existing data sources for communal establishments and other special population groups is progressing, but initial findings are now expected in June/July (IDP 3).

   6.5. HM Revenue and Customs have updated their commitment, outlining plans to evaluate their approach to the collection of protected characteristics data. Their plans include an assessment of the feasibility of collecting additional demographic information that is not currently routinely collected (rather than development of a protected characteristics strategy, IDP 3).

   6.6. The Welsh Government (WG) has confirmed two new priority projects based on their [Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units Strategy](#) (IDP 3). This includes an impact evaluation of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan to understand whether it has made a real change to people's lives and experiences. An initial assessment and a framework for measuring change are being developed. The WG Race Disparity Evidence Unit is also piloting research on the protected characteristics of Public Sector Bodies boards. A data collection tool has been developed and publication is scheduled for Winter 2023.

   6.7. The roadmap has been updated to reflect 2023 priorities for the ongoing review and update of the GSS harmonised standards. This includes work developing support to data collectors and processors to harmonise administrative data (IDP 5).

   6.8. ONS is continuing work to improve the scope and outputs being provided by the admin-based population statistics, which includes work to develop frameworks for quality assessment and improvement (IDP 6). The public

consultation is now planned for summer 2023, which will inform a recommendation by the National Statistician at the end of the year on the future of population and migration statistics.

7. There have been revisions to some initiatives, aligning with updated plans and resourcing, with two currently on pause:

   7.1. ONS plans to develop and deliver inclusive leadership training for survey field force managers have been revised (status updated to amber). ONS is now developing an inclusive recruitment training module for the organisation, which is due for delivery in the summer (IDP 1).

   7.2. The methodological review of 'hidden' homelessness is now being led by the Scottish Government given their commissioning of external research (rather than ONS) with publication planned for this summer (IDP 3).

   7.3. Work exploring the feasibility of collecting survey data from non-private household populations is currently paused, following a decision to await the outcome of ONS work to review existing data sources for these populations. (IDP 3). A decision will be taken regarding progressing this work depending on the findings from this review, and subject to resourcing.

   7.4. The work by the Cabinet Office to establish a new national survey of disabled people's experiences has been added as a key commitment. This reflects we anticipate it will, if implemented substantially and sustainably address a data gap for this population in UK data (IDP 3). The status is currently red as work is ongoing to secure funding.

   7.5. ONS plans to develop intersectional analysis methods is currently delayed, pending resourcing decisions (IDP4).

8. The first meeting of the cross-GSS Analysis and Evaluation Sub-Committee on Inclusive Data is now planned for 19 May (IDP 2). A summary of discussions from this first meeting will be shared at the next NSIDAC meeting.

9. As requested at the February meeting, **Annex C** contains a list of confirmed committee members. Following engagement by Evelyn Collins, the new Chief Executive and Registrar General of Northern Ireland, Dr Philip Wales, has been in contact and we hope to confirm Northern Ireland Representation on the sub-committee.

10. We welcome members' views and advice on the progress to date.

Annual review

11. The Inclusive Data Strategy and Engagement team is progressing work on the annual review of progress against the commitments published in the IDTF implementation plan. The report will also include key planned commitments for 2023/4 onwards. The report has been delayed due to changes in staff within the team. Publication is now planned for late May.

12. A draft of the Annual Review will be shared with members for comments in late April.

Conclusion

13. This paper has provided an overview of the latest progress against the commitments made in the IDTF implementation plan along with plans to publish

the first annual review/plan update. Members are asked to provide feedback on progress made, and areas deemed to be a priority for 2023 to 2024.

Louise Vesely-Shore MBE, Centre for Equalities and Inclusion, Statistical Coherence and Inclusion Division, ONS
20 April 2023

List of Annexes
Annex A   **IDTF Implementation Roadmap 2023.04.14**
Annex B   **IDTF Summary of Key Commitments (for reference)**
Annex C   **Cross-GSS Analysis and Evaluation Sub-Committee on Inclusive Data (IDSC) Membership List**