NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S EXPERT USER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes
Tuesday 26 July 2022
Via Videoconference

Members Present
Professor David Hand (Chair)
Professor Paul Allin
Professor Diane Coyle
Professor Sir Ian Diamond
Ed Humpherson
Professor Ann Phoenix
Stian Westlake

In attendance
Owen Brace
Rachel Cichuta (for item 4)
Duncan Elliot (for item 4)
Tegwen Green (for item 5)
Dominic Hale (for item 4)
Anna Powell-Smith (for item 2)
Alison Pritchard (for item 4)
Richard Prothero (for item 3)

Secretariat
Fran Tovey
Simon Whitworth

Apologies
Dame Kate Barker
Professor Paul Boyle
Robert Bumpstead
Professor Jane Falkingham
Dame Moira Gibb
Professor David Martin
Sir Bernard Silverman

1. Minutes and matters arising

1.1 Members were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies were received from Kate Barker, Paul Boyle, Robert Bumpstead, Jane Falkingham, Moira Gibb, David Martin and Bernard Silverman. The minutes from the meeting of 28 March were agreed and all actions were reviewed.

2. Discussion with User

2.1 Anna Powell-Smith, the Director of the Centre for Public Data joined the meeting to reflect on her experience as a statistics user and discussed some problems and gaps that users who relied on data and statistics, but did not consider themselves as statistics users, had encountered. Some examples of these groups of users were charities and campaign groups, Members of Parliament (MPs), and Journalists. These user groups were part of the democratic process and problems around misinformation could occur if their needs were not met.

2.2 Members agreed that active user research and outreach would improve engagement, widen the notion of who is a user and enable data to be provided to those who needed it. It was important to develop and maintain good relationships with all users and the Inclusive Data Taskforce and the Integrated Data Service (IDS) would enable users to access data in an inclusive way. Work was ongoing with the NHS to develop a trusted research environment for health data. The Office for Statistics Regulation often encouraged consideration of wider users and it was an important role of the committee to reach out to user groups and drive improvement.

3. Localism [NSEUAC(22)04]

3.1 Richard Prothero presented a paper on Localism, ONS Local and the various initiatives that were happening across the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Government Statistical Service (GSS). The ONS Local initiative had been well received well and stakeholders wanted to ensure that relationships were genuine and collaborative and wanted differences across regions recognised so that commonalities could be linked. Resource had been acquired from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities which would allow the scope of the work to expand .The team was looking to expand subnational data in order to fill long standing gaps in areas such as quality of jobs, regional supply use and capital data and improve the granularity of statistics and provide analytical insight of geographical inequalities.

3.2 Members supported the work and agreed that a lot of existing users had been captured and the new system would mean further improvement when identifying new users. Analysts being located locally would allow engagement with wider stakeholders and members agreed it was important to build on past experience to build relationships and engagement. The engagement hub would take the best practice of Census and embed that into everyday work so that teams across the ONS could prioritise where demands were the greatest. The mission would be to provide local data to local decision makers on local problems.

3.3 The meeting agreed that the work was a superb example of current needs being met and new needs being identified. The Chair highlighted the role of the committee in identifying new user needs.

4.   Integrated Data Service [NSEUAC(22)05]

4.1   Alison Pritchard provided an update and overview of the IDS. The initial public beta had been launched on 15 July and the team was now in the process of remediating and scaling the service to full public beta and Digital Economy Act accreditation. The transition of the Secure Research Service was due to be reached by March 2024. Members of Alison's team presented a live demonstration of the IDS, focussing on what the user experience would look like and how simply data could be manipulated.

4.2   Members welcomed development and agreed that the IDS would be an important tool for not only researchers, but all citizens who wished to access data and should live up to the fundamental principle of equal access. The IDS used the Five Safes approach and the National Statisticians Data Ethics Committee would look at the ethics of the work before it would be approved by the approval panel. The goal of the IDS was to bring as much data and link it where possible within the framework for ethics.

4.3   The meeting supported the IDS and looked forward to further updates as the service matured.

5.   Theme Based User Engagement [NSEUAC(22)06]

5.1   Owen Brace provided an overview of the approach to theme based user engagement. User engagement was being improved to make it as easy as possible for users and producers to understand where analysis had the most impact. The paper summarised plans for setting out a GSS wide theme based approach to user engagement, tying into existing activity as much as possible to ensure that discussions had influence within the user engagement structure.

5.2   Members agreed that the challenge would be ensuring that users were able to find their way through the system with ease. The outreach team were considering how relationships were actively built and maintained in order to ensure that users received the information they needed and could contribute information that they wished to add with ease. The meeting agreed that the theme based structure should be reviewed regularly in order to react to the ongoing environment and that an update to Annex A should be provided to members at a future date in order to visualise the connections between themes.

6.   Forward Agenda

6.1   The meeting discussed ideas for future items and members were asked to provide suggestions for future external speakers.

6.2   The Chair suggested that it would be useful for the committee to have an overview of what best practice guidance was available within the ONS at a future meeting.

6.3   Roger Halliday was again suggested as guest external speaker for the next meeting and the secretariat team would issue an invite to him. It was suggested that representatives from charities, MPs, journalists, and people who use data in commercial services could be invited to share experience from their perspectives. Further suggestions included speakers from a setting other than statistics, such as the Royal Society of Arts, and a speaker from the Centre on the Dynamics of Ethnicity. The Office for Statistics Regulation had published

their State of the Statistical System review the previous week and would present this at a future meeting.

7.   Any other business
7.1   The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 4 October 2022.

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NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S EXPERT USER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Agenda
Tuesday 26 July, 10:00-12:00
Virtual Meeting

Chair: Prof. David Hand
Apologies: Dame Kate Barker, Professor Paul Boyle, Robert Bumpstead, Professor Jane Falkingham, Dame Moira Gibb, Professor David Martin, Sir Bernard Silverman

Timing	Agenda item	
1 10:00-10:05 (5 mins)	Welcome, previous minutes and actions	Meeting of 29.03.2022 Prof. David Hand
2 10:05-10:35 (30 mins)	Discussion with User	Discussion Anna Powell-Smith
3 10:35-10:55 (20 mins)	Localism	NSEUAC(22)04 Richard Prothero
4 10:55-11:15 (20 mins)	Integrated Data Service	NSEUAC(22)05 Alison Pritchard
5 11.15-11:45 (30 mins)	Theme based user engagement	NSEUAC(22)06 Owen Brace
6 11:45-11:55 (10 mins)	Forward Agenda	Discussion
7 11:55-12:00 (5 mins)	Any Other Business	

Next Meeting: Tuesday 4 October, 13:00, Virtual Meeting

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S EXPERT USER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Localism: Subnational Statistics and Analysis and ONS Local

Purpose
1. This paper sets out the user needs for increasingly granular data as well as how the Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responding to that demand through greater geographic granularity. It explains a number of new initiatives and how we will engage users in developing new products and services that meet their needs.

Recommendations
2. Members of the National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Committee (NSEUAC) are invited to provide feedback on the paper and our approach to shape and inform our future work at this early stage of the programme.

Background
3. ONS has been working to increase the granularity of the data and statistics we produce for a number of years. Two independent reviews of economic statistics have had dedicated sections on regional statistics, these are Allsopp (2004) and Bean (2016). We also know that that there is strong demand for 'flexible geographies', which is about being able to build up statistics for 'user defined' areas of the UK.

4. The Subnational Statistics and Analysis Division was created in June 2021 to enable ONS to better respond to a refreshed focus on geography and granular data. This built on innovative work from the centre for subnational analysis to develop new geographies for towns and high streets[1] and develop statistical insights about them. They also worked to develop new methods for disseminating local data through 'scrollytelling'[2]. Alongside this there has also previously been important work to develop data that is sufficiently granular to enable 'flexible geographies'[3] for the regional accounts.

5. Over the last year, the division has been critical in supporting the Levelling Up taskforce to develop the evidence base for the levelling up white paper[4], playing an advisory and fact checking role. In parallel, ONS developed and published a Government Statistical Service (GSS) wide subnational data strategy[5] in collaboration with colleagues across government and the devolved administrations. Through this process, we captured a lot of existing user needs. We have also worked closely with academics through the Economic Statistics

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[1] https://cy.ons.gov.uk/economy/economicoutputandproductivity/publicservicesproductivity/articles/productivityintownsandtraveltoworkareasuk/2019#:~:text=Our%20Understanding%20towns%3A%20industry%20analysis%20article%20examined%20industry,above%20average%20productivity%20level%20specialise%20in%20high-tech%20services.

[2] https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/dvc1370/

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/flexible-geography-for-annual-subnational-gross-value-added-gva-statistics

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom

[5] https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/gss-subnational-data-strategy/

Centre of Excellence (ESCoE) to ensure we have a clear set of considerations of the challenges around building a suit of socioeconomic indicators for the UK[6] to take with us into the future. Alongside the white paper we published a subnational indicators explorer[7], a first iteration of what an 'explore subnational statistics' digital service might look like. Finally, we published a cross ONS subnational workplan to demonstrate how ONS is working to meet the ambitions of the strategy.

Discussion

6. The levelling up white paper states a number of commitments around improving data including three elements that are highly relevant for ONS:

    i.   producing and disseminating more timely, granular and harmonised subnational statistics through the GSS Subnational Data Strategy;
    ii. making granular data publicly available through a number of tools, including a new ONS interactive subnational data explorer; and
    iii. harnessing data visualisation techniques and building capacity within the ONS to help decision-makers better understand and compare outcomes.

7. ONS has secured around £27 million of additional funding from Department for levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) over the next three years to deliver four ambitious work packages.

8. The first package, called ONS local, is the establishment of a new division to set up and manage a regional presence for ONS staff to enable them to more directly engage with local leaders, decision makers and analytical teams. This service will provide a door for local stakeholders into the wider division and the wider organisation so we can start to better reflect their needs as well as learn from them. It also includes some of the resources required to develop a digital service that supports these users to access the data they need in a single place.

9. The second package is focused on the research that is needed to understand how we can exploit new data sources, such as card payments data to improve the regional accounts, and new techniques, such as sentiment analysis or image analysis, to fill data gaps and devise new ways to measure concepts such as 'pride in place'. It has the potential to also cover the development of clear guidance that can be used consistently across producers of statistics around key issues, such as small area estimation or apportionment methods.

10. The third package is focused on developing specific sets of data and statistics at a much more granular level than previously seen, for example building on our work to estimate Gross Value Added at building block level (lower layer super output areas). We plan to extend this by looking at Gross Disposable Household Income next. In addition, we have plans to improve subnational trade data, regional capital investment statistics and to produce public sector finances statistics down to local authority level.

11. The final package is around the establishment of Levelling Up Data Analysis Platform (LUDA), which is powered by the Integrated Data Service (IDS), and the

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[6]https://pure.strath.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/135832829/Davidson_etal_ESCoE_2022_Building_a_suite_of_subnational_socioeconomic_indicators_for_the_united_kingdom.pdf
[7]https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/subnationalindicatorsexplorer/2022-01-06

development of a suite of dashboards for use across government to inform levelling up policy making. The use of IDS is critical to ensuring that we collaborate across government departments to fill evidence gaps that will be relevant and need to be acted upon in a cross-cutting way. It also ensures that users across government have a single version of the truth and a single place where we can share data. It is likely to host the Levelling Up integrated data asset once that has been developed.

12. Whilst the DLUHC funding provides a small number of posts to work on UK wide data (coherence) for levelling up specific metrics, ONS is also responding to a separate commission from the union policy implementation committee. This is to address metrics/ topics where a fully comparable data is not currently available across the four countries of the UK. The coherence team have worked closely with devolved administrations and the UK wide data steering group to establish and agreed set of priorities and quick wins along with some medium- and longer-term projects to take forward.

Conclusion

13. There are a number of exciting new initiatives happening to support the delivery of the GSS subnational data strategy and ensure that local policy makers have access to the data they need. As we are relatively early in the stages of development of this work, we would welcome any feedback to shape how we deliver this. We would also welcome opportunities to present in more depth about particular aspects of our work in future.

Emma Hickman and Richard Prothero, Subnational Statistics and Analysis Division, ONS, 19 June 2022.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S EXPERT USER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Integrated Data Service

Purpose

1. This paper provides members of the National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Committee (NSEUAC) with an update since the last meeting in March; with an overview on the Integrated Data Programme (IDP), which delivers the Integrated Data Service (IDS).

Recommendations

2. Members of NSEUAC are invited to note:

    i. the initial Public Beta Release of IDS; and
    ii. the agreed brand approach and web presence.

Background

3. The IDS Initial Public Beta (IPB) release and IDS Website went live as planned on 15 July.

4. A Full Business Case Refresh is currently being drafted with submission to Treasury in September.

Discussion

Delivery of the IDS

5. The IPB phase of the Integrated Service launched successfully, as scheduled on 15 July 2022. The IPB launch included the introduction of the IDS Website[1].

6. The IPB phase is formed of three waves, to align with business priorities. Wave one introduces the following elements:

    i. the IDS website is live and serves as an online public-facing point of entry to the IDS;
    ii. additional data to include Energy Performance Certificates, Job vacancy data and Annual Business Survey data;
    iii. enhanced user control, including a Starters, Leavers, and Movers (SLaM) process;
    iv. researcher accreditation process;
    v. a metadata management process; and
    vi. IDS branding.

7. Waves two and three will see the further development of business processes, technical capabilities, data sources, and management information including the implementation of:

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[1] www.integrateddataservice.gov.uk

     i.   integration between IDS (analytical platform) and IDP-D (dissemination platform);

    ii.   integration of the Researcher Accreditation System (RAS) with the Metadata Solution, so that users can browse and select data products available in IDS;

   iii.   enhanced data controls, including Statistical Disclosure Control (SDC) and Output Checking (OC) processes so that all data is managed in line with IDS security standards and data protection legislation;

   iv.   provision of a data processing environment and data profiling tool(s) to support the data product preparation process;

    v.   reporting on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which are mapped to the IDS business objectives and critical success factors;

   vi.   data access and usage reports;

  vii.   remediation of any outstanding or newly identified security considerations.

8. Informed by engagement across Government, a project feasibility process has been established to assess and inform the selection of data sources and associated datasets.

Full Public Beta

9. Plans for the FPB release remain on track, with detailed scoping of the FPB release to take place in mid-July. There is very limited contingency in the schedule and hence the timelines are ambitious to deliver key capabilities, alongside mitigating identified security challenges. The challenge continues, to develop an open and collaborative platform whilst also maintaining an appropriate level of security.

Migration off the Secure Research Service

10. It is imperative that the user experience on IDS is comparable – and ideally enhanced – over that currently provided by the Secure Research Service (SRS) before migration of SRS to IDS is undertaken. Therefore, the programme will continue to assess the maturity and readiness of IDS to replace the SRS capability and will continue to support SRS as long as appropriate, with migration planned to commence in a phased approach once FPB is live and expected to be complete by March 2024. The programme will continue to work with Administrative Data Research UK (ADR UK) to ensure that migration and the communications around SRS are handled effectively - and jointly where appropriate - to ensure impactful messaging to end users.

Digital Economy Act Accreditation

11. Securing Digital Economy Act (DEA) Accreditation is vital to unlock significantly greater volumes of data as the intended primary legal gateway. A dedicated team have already commenced work to secure the evidence required to apply for DEA accreditation; working closely with others across the programme to ensure that the appropriate evidence is established.

12. Security experts are working closely with each workstream to advise on data protection and to influence the design, build, and implementation of the IDS, with security assurance statements are reviewed prior to each release.

13. Detailed planning and progress tracking continues to be undertaken to inform the optimum timing of an application for DEA accreditation, anticipated to be in late 2022 with a view to gaining accreditation in early 2023.

14. IDS branding was launched on the 5 July following agreement by the National Statistician, IDP SRO and ONS Head of Brand and was featured in the roll-out of the main public-facing website which was successfully launched as planned on the 15 July readied for Public Beta.

15. The Strategy and Engagement team presented an update at June's Privacy and Consumer Advice Group. This was well received, and they would welcome further updates going forward. An update was also provided and well received at June's Government Statistical Service (GSS) Head of Professions (HoPs) quarterly meeting.

Conclusion

16. The IDS components being delivered this year will reflect the capabilities of the full Live Service and hence 2022 will see a scaling up and out of the functionality and volume of users and data. We expect the usage to scale as the impact of the service is seen and felt.

Alison Pritchard, Deputy National Statistician for Data Capability, 19 July 2022.

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NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S EXPERT USER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An overview of our approach to theme-based engagement

Purpose

1. This paper provides members of the National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Committee (NSEUAC) with an update and overview of our approach to theme-based engagement across the Government Statistical Service (GSS).

Recommendations

2. Members of NSEUAC are invited to:

   i. note the progress to date of a GSS-wide theme-based approach to engagement; and
   ii. comment on the infrastructure being established and next steps.

Background

3. The User Engagement Strategy for Statistics[1], launched in February 2021, advocates a theme-based approach to engagement activity across the GSS. The strategy's ambitions are being driven forward by a newly established Engagement Hub within the ONS Communication Division, which promotes best practice across network activity and outreach to users of statistics. There are 12 core engagement themes which will be reviewed regularly. The initial themes have been developed through discussion with external users of statistics, existing user groups, GSS Heads of Profession for statistics and various forums across ONS. Final sign-off on the themes was secured at the GSS Communications Committee (a sub-committee of the National Statistics Executive Group) in April 2022.

4. Recent discussions with users of statistics, including the Royal Statistical Society's National Statistics Advisory Group, highlighted the importance of identifying and discussing cross-cutting issues. To address this, in addition to the 12 core themes, there is an overarching cross-cutting theme, which will capture activity of an emerging nature, or topics that transcend single statistical themes, such as subnational data, inclusivity, or public acceptability of the use of data.

5. Each theme is led by a member of the Senior Civil Service from across the GSS, who produce statistics linked to the theme and bring specialist expertise in the statistical area. The theme lead is supported by at least one deputy from another government department alongside a representative from the devolved administrations. Each theme is also made up of a broad range of users and producers of statistics.

Discussion

6. The model for theme-based engagement is based on a series of theme-based forums, allowing producers of statistics and a broad range of users to regularly collaborate on, and influence work plans. The forums also provide the opportunity

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[1] User engagement strategy for statistics – ensuring official statistics meet society's needs – Government Analysis Function (civilservice.gov.uk)

for producers and users of statistics to work together to identify and address data gaps and discuss improvements to the content and style of statistical analysis. The model also retains the ability to accommodate short-term collaborations between themes and cross cutting issues via ad-hoc discussion forums or events.

7. Tailored calendars of regular and varied engagement activity are being collated for each theme, to ensure audiences are kept informed in a coordinated way and not overloaded. This will be particularly key for users interested in multiple themes. Theme activities range from newsletters to annual showcase events, allowing an ongoing and varied exchange of ideas to feed into strategic decision making, and integrating existing activity as much as possible. For example, we are already in the process of arranging a series of events in the Autumn focused on subnational data, as part of the cross-cutting calendar. The intention is for these to be a series of in-person events across the UK which will include sessions on the economy and society.

8. Theme leads and their deputies act as the visible and proactive champions of the theme, chairing the regular theme-based forums to ensure a wide range of users can help shape work plans and feed in their views to strategic decision making. A Global Trade and Investment event along these lines was held in May, and similar events for Prices and Inflation, and other themes are being planned for the Autumn.

9. Working with the theme leads, the Engagement Hub will monitor the depth and breadth of user membership for each theme. Where gaps are identified, the Engagement Hub will provide targeted outreach to ensure each theme attracts and retains a vibrant and diverse user community. This will include reaching out to users from communities and organisations that may not traditionally engage with the GSS, but who either use our statistics or could benefit from using them, to encourage them to share their ideas and experiences.

10. To supplement the 12 core engagement themes, the theme leads will come together at least every quarter to:

    i. identify and discuss the cross-cutting calendar of activity, and provide opportunities for interested audiences to join sessions to discuss high-profile topics such as sub-national statistics, inequality, and public accessibility of data – the topics that span across themes; and
    ii. discuss and provide a report on any emerging topics for escalation via the most appropriate governance route, including the GSS Communications Committee and NSEUAC.

Next steps

11. The ambition is to provide a theme-based approach to engagement across the GSS that provides a clear and simple entry route into the GSS for users of statistics, by their area of interest - regardless of who they know, or their technical knowledge of the system. A simple 'engagement' landing page is in the process of being added to the ONS website. This will list the core engagement themes with a plain English description of each. It will signpost users to a simple sign-up for the relevant theme newsletters and calendars of activity, so they can quickly register to attend any events they are interested in. It will also provide links to open consultations linked to the theme, and the theme discussion forum on our

current online collaboration platform, StatsUserNet. This engagement landing page will also be promoted on the Analysis Function website.

12. A project is underway to transform the ONS web estate into a two-way interaction platform, enabling active listening, and collaboration with users. A technical roadmap for the future ONS web estate is being compiled. StatsUserNet is being considered within this project, with key Engagement Hub colleagues involved in collating and sharing users' existing feedback and future ambitions for an online collaboration forum.

13. The 12 core engagement themes are at different levels of engagement maturity. Ongoing work includes:

   i.   an audit of current engagement activity across the GSS to identify opportunities to streamline forums which are currently serving similar purposes, and build upon best practice to produce comprehensive, tailored calendars of activity for each theme; and

   ii. list building and categorisation of stakeholders by theme as well as organisation type, to allow us to set and monitor key performance indicators on the breadth and depth of theme communities.

Conclusion

14. NSEUAC members are asked to note the ambitions of a GSS-wide approach to theme based engagement and provide comments or suggestions for how we can further evolve the infrastructure.

Owen Brace, Director of Communications and Digital Publishing, ONS, 19 July 2022