

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

Meeting of 25 May 2023
London Boardroom / Hybrid Meeting

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir Robert Chote (Chair)
Sian Jones
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

Penny Babb (for item 10)
Owen Brace
Robert Bumpstead
Megan Cooper (for item 8)
Kate Davies (for item 11)
Sally-Ann Jones (Secretariat)
Will Laffan (for item 11)
Alison Pritchard
Ruth Studley (for item 11)
Becky Tinsley (for item 11)
Jason Yaxley (for item 9)

Apologies

Dr Jacob Abboud
Tom Taylor

1. **Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Tom Taylor and Dr Jacob Abboud.

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 27 April 2023 were agreed.

4. **Report from the Authority Chair [SA(23)30]**

- 4.1 Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) had met prior to the Board meeting. They had discussed topics included the census consultation and the organisation's pre-audit financial position at year end.
- 4.2 The Chair reported on his recent activities since the Board last met. On 23 May Sir Robert alongside Professor Sir Ian Diamond and Ed Humpherson had given evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the work of the Authority. The session had covered a range of topics including Sir Robert's reflections since in post; delivery of the strategy, Statistics for the Public Good; the Integrated Data Service; Census 2021 for England and Wales; Scotland's Census 2022; economic statistics; and user engagement and statistical literacy.
- 4.3 On behalf of the Board Sir Robert paid warm tribute to Richard Dobbs as this was his last meeting; and also to Sam Beckett, Second Permanent Secretary and Deputy Chief Executive, who was leaving ONS to take up her role as Chief Economic Advisor to HM Treasury (HMT) at the end of May. Professor Sir Ian Diamond also paid tribute to Sam Beckett and Richard Dobbs.

5. **Report from the Chief Executive [SA(23)31]**

- 5.1 Professor Sir Ian Diamond provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting, highlighting the following:
- i. the publication of long-term international migration statistics that morning (25 May), which estimated net migration at 606,000. The methodology had been improved with the inclusion of asylum seekers. Further work was planned to continue to improve the granularity of these statistics with the next publication scheduled in November 2023;
 - ii. Consumer Prices Index inflation statistics published on 24 May, which had received a range of media coverage;
 - iii. Sir Ian had met Baroness Neville-Rolfe and had discussed a number of topics including the work by ONS on public sector productivity and progress of work on the harmonisation of health data across the Union, specifically health indicators; and
 - iv. ONS engagement with HMT and other government departments regarding public sector productivity;
- 5.2 Board members discussed the update, commended ONS on the work on migration statistics, and highlighted the importance of proactive media coverage by in this area.
- 5.3 The Board heard that Sir Ian would be delivering a lecture at the University of Leicester on 30 May, as part of the Chancellor's Lecture Series, on *The Role of a National Statistical Institute in responding to a National Crisis*.
- 5.4 With regard to the independent COVID-19 Inquiry, given ONS' role in producing data and analysis as part of the pandemic response, the Authority Covid-19 Inquiry Team had been established to prepare for engagement with the Inquiry.

6. **Report from the Director General for Regulation [SA(23)32]**

- 6.1 Ed Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity.

6.2 The Board heard that OSR had undertaken a pilot assessment of ONS' Producer Price Inflation statistics. Emerging themes had been discussed by the Regulation Committee in April with the aim of publishing the final report in June. OSR's review of data sharing across the public sector was also scheduled for publication in June, following a further discussion by Regulation Committee on 25 May. The annual review by OSR on the State of the Statistical System was scheduled for publication in June.

6.3 Ed Humpherson had completed a number of speaking engagements including an open lecture at Southampton University on data abundance; a talk on misleadingness at the University of Dundee; and had taken part in the Northern Ireland Administrative Data Research deep dive in Belfast.

7. **Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

7.1 The Chair reported on the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee which had last met on 18 May.

7.2 The Committee had considered:

- i. the Authority's pre audit financial position for the financial year 2022/23 in line with HM Treasury control totals;
- ii. delivery of Internal Audit programme of assurance 2022/23 in full;
- iii. an Internal Audit Report on Legacy technology; and
- iv. the annual Fraud Report.

7.3 The Committee had also considered and agreed the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24. The draft Authority Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 was circulated in correspondence to members following the meeting.

8. **ONS Business Plan [SA(23)33]**

8.1 Megan Cooper provided the Board with the final version of the draft 2023/24 ONS Strategic Business Plan, following consideration by the Portfolio and Investment Committee, the National Statistics Executive Group; and feedback from the Board from the March meeting.

8.2 The Board heard that the business planning process had been informed by an updated prioritisation framework and delivery of efficiencies, with the organisation continuing to innovate and deliver the strategy, Statistics for the Public Good. It was noted that prioritisation process would not impact on quality of statistics.

8.3 Board members endorsed the refreshed business plan.

9. **Integrated Data Service [SA(23)34]**

9.1 Alison Pritchard and Jason Yaxley updated members with progress on the Integrated Data Programme (IDP), responsible for the delivery of the Integrated Data Service (IDS).

9.2 The Board heard that delivery of the IDS programme remained on track against the overall plan with the exception of Digital Economy Act accreditation, which was ongoing, and scheduled for consideration by the Research and Accreditation Panel on 15 June. Cross government engagement continued to be an area of focus for the programme including a presentation to Chief Data Information Officers at the Digital, Data and Technology Functional Leaders Group on 13 June; and Permanent Secretaries at the Digital and Data Board on 22 June. The programme was on track to achieve a target of 1500 active users of the IDS by March 2024.

9.3 The Board noted the update and would continue to remain engaged as the work progressed.

10. **National Statistics Designation Review [SA(23)35]**

- 10.1 Penny Babb updated members of the Board on the OSR's project to refresh the National Statistics (NS) Designation with the potential introduction of new badges for official statistics.
- 10.2 Board members discussed progress of the review and provided a range of views on the potential to introduce badging for official statistics.
- 10.3 The Board noted the update.

11. **Census 2023 Consultation [SA(23)36]**

- 11.1 Ruth Studley and Kate Davies provided an update on progress towards the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of population and migration statistics.
- 11.2 It was noted that feedback from the February Board meeting and the follow up session in April, as part of the NED Programme of Activities, had informed changes to the consultation document ensuring it better reflected the long-term nature of the proposals. An additional section had been included articulating the long term strategic risks; the consultation questionnaire had been developed focussing on how the proposals meet users' needs; and a summary of the economic case had also been included. The consultation was scheduled to launch on 29 June and would close at the end of October 2023. Pre-consultation engagement with a range of users was ongoing, including a series of round tables and stakeholder engagement events.
- 11.3 Board members welcomed the progress made and highlighted that the consultation presented ONS's vision. It was acknowledged that the consultation was a response to the ¹White paper, 'Help Shape our Future' of 2018, on how the ONS should produce statistics about the population in future. Consideration would be given to including the historical context and to ensure respondents were able to access the questionnaire alongside a shorter outline of the proposals, based on the executive summary.
- 11.4 The Board noted the near final consultation document. It was agreed that further updates would be provided to the Board in September setting out a summary of responses mid-way through the consultation. Following the consultation closure at the end of October an update would be provided to the Board with early key findings as soon as possible after the consultation closure.

12. **Any other business**

- 12.1 The Board noted the intention to endorse the Official Statistics Order 2023, scheduled to be laid before Parliament on 19 June. The Order specified the statistics produced, or to be produced, by certain bodies as 'official statistics', as set out in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.
- 12.2 The next meeting of the UK Statistics Authority Board would be on 29 June 2023 at the Darlington Economic Campus.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-2021-census-of-population-and-housing-in-england-and-wales>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Agenda

25 May 2023, 11.15-14.00

Remote Teams Meeting

Chair: Sir Robert Chote

Apologies: Tom Taylor

Attendees: Penny Babb (for item 8), ~~Philippa Bonay (for item 10)~~, Megan Cooper (for item 6), Will Laffan (for item 9), Ruth Studley (for item 9), Becky Tinsley (for item 9), Jason Yaxley (for item 7)

NED Session: 10.30-11.15

1 11.15-11.20 5 mins	Minutes/ actions	Meeting of 27 April 2023
2 11.20-11.30 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	SA(23)30 Sir Robert Chote
3 11.30-11.55 25 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(23)31 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond
4 11.55-12.05 10 mins	Report from the Director-General for Regulation	SA(23)32 Ed Humpherson
5 12.05-12.10 5 mins	Report from Committee Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none">Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Oral update Nora Nanayakkara
6 12.10-12.30 20 mins	ONS Business Plan	SA(23)33 Megan Cooper
12.30-12.35 5 mins	Break	
7 12.35-12.55 20 mins	Integrated Data Service	SA(23)34 Alison Pritchard Jason Yaxley
8 12.55-13.10 15 mins	National Statistics Designation Review	SA(23)35 Ed Humpherson Penny Babb
9 13.10-13.55 45 mins	Census 2023 Consultation	SA(23)36 Ruth Studley Will Laffan Becky Tinsley
10 13.55-14.00 5 mins	Any Other Business	

Next meeting: 29 June 2023, Darlington Economic Campus

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(23)30

Chair's Report, May 2023

Purpose

1. This paper provides the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) with an overview of the Chair's activity in late April and May.

Review of recent activities

2. On 27 April, following the last Board meeting, I joined Dr Jacob Abboud and Penny Young for a tour of the Office for National Statistics Data Science Campus in Newport.
3. On 23 May, I will be appearing at the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) on a panel alongside the National Statistician and Director General for Regulation. This will be a one-off evidence session on the work of the UK Statistics Authority (the Authority). The last time the Authority gave evidence to PACAC on its work specifically was in October 2021, prior to my Chairmanship. This will be my second appearance at the Committee following my pre-appointment hearing in March 2022.
4. I held my regular catch-ups with the National Statistician, the Director General for Regulation and the Chairs of the Regulation and Audit and Risk Assurance Committees.
5. I held further meetings with Owen Brace, Director of Communications and Digital Publishing, to discuss communications issues, and Philippa Bonay, Director of People and Business Services, to discuss processes to deal with inappropriate behaviour and unfair treatment.

Casework and correspondence

6. On 24 April, I wrote to the Shadow Chancellor, Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP, on the presentation of Gross Domestic Product growth rate forecasts on social media.
7. On 26 April, I responded to Gillian Martin MSP, who had raised questions about the Prime Minister's use of statistics on accident and emergency waiting times in England and Scotland.
8. On 27 April, I responded to the Shadow Attorney General, Rt Hon Emily Thornberry MP, on ministers' use of statistics on crime and police numbers.
9. On 5 May, I responded to Michael Carmichael MP about the Home Secretary's use of statistics on displaced people around the world.

Sir Robert Chote, Chair, 18 May 2023

Chief Executive's Report, May 2023

Purpose

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

Summary

2. May has seen us continue to take strides to allow the organisation to start the financial year on stable footing, ensuring that funds are prioritised to allow us to deliver key priorities. It has also been a month of collaboration, with Analysis in Government month bringing together colleagues from across the analytical community. Finally, great progress has been made on our ambitious programme of work including the 2023 recommendation and the Integrated Data Service (IDS).

Update on financial position

3. Our financial position is still subject to year-end audit which is currently underway. We aim to conclude the year-end audit and Annual Report and Accounts production exercise in readiness for the June governance round in advance of laying before Parliament in early/mid-July.
4. The end of year consolidation of planning data for 2022/23 shows that 93 per cent (26 of 28) of our key deliverables in the published business plan were completed. The two key deliverables not to complete were Fiscal Statistics (new public sector balance sheet and research into central government expenditure metrics); and Efficiencies/Legacy and move to all surveys online. Both have been re-planned for 2023/24.
5. The updated Strategic Business Plan for 2023/24 is being taken through the Office for National Statistics (ONS) governance for approval this month (May), with a new set of Strategic Objectives and outcomes and an updated Accountability Framework based on our agreed priorities. Further work has been undertaken to provide an affordable starting position for the business plan which, as a reminder, is below the budget for last the last financial year and therefore requires us to scale back some of our discretionary work.

Review of recent activities

6. This month saw the news that Sam Beckett, our Second Permanent Secretary and Deputy Chief Executive has been successful in being appointed as **Chief Economic Advisor at HM Treasury**. Sam joined us during the pandemic and brought expertise and experience to the organisation during a critical period for us, and I am grateful for all her work over the past few years. I am sure you will all join me in thanking Sam for her service and wishing her all the best for her new role.
7. Owen Brace, **Director of Communications and Digital Publishing**, will be leaving ONS to join the Financial Ombudsman Service. Owen will be leaving in July. Again, I am sure you will all join me in thanking Owen for the important work he has delivered during his time here and wish him all the best for the future. I am currently in the process of recruiting Owen's replacement.
8. This month, I had the privilege of hosting the **Premier and statistical colleagues from Montserrat** to discuss future collaboration and statistical capacity development.

Montserrat faces significant challenges with data collection, having only four fulltime members of staff to publish similar outputs to those produced by ONS.

9. I also travelled to Japan to meet **ministers from the Japanese government** and discuss subjects covering the strengthening and improving of their statistical system. Additional side-meetings took place with the delegation, covering data science, regulation, and the UK's statistical system.
10. The **National Statistician's Committee for Advice on Standards for Economic Statistics** (NSCASE) celebrated its first year of progress to provide statistical governance outside the European framework. It has provided recommendations to the National Statistician on a range of topics including industrial classifications, non-monetary gold and its impact on the UK National Accounts, conceptual methods in prices and volume, treatment of package holidays, quality adjustment, and implementation of the Manual on Government Deficit and Debt (MGDD), 2022 Edition. I would like to express my thanks to all involved in the Committee.
11. In **Parliament**, Robert Chote, Ed Humpherson and I gave evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) regarding the latest work of the Authority this week. Topics discussed included a progress update on our strategy, the IDS and the transformation of population statistics, as well as regulation topics.
12. Looking across the wider analytical community, this month is **Analysis in Government month**, and we have 9,000 people signed up to events across the month so far. I was pleased to open the month-long schedule of events via a panel session alongside Jane Whittaker (HM Revenue and Customs), Esther Sutherland (ONS) and Annette Cox (Department for Transport).
13. Corporately, the new **Wellbeing Plan and accompanying Wellbeing Hub** was launched; setting out the organisation's strategic approach to supporting the workplace wellbeing of our people. This plan is split into five wellbeing pillars: Workplace, Mental, Physical, Social, and Financial. This plan will underpin our UK Statistics Authority Strategy and People Plan, supporting their success by creating an environment where people can reach their full potential through positive wellbeing.
14. Turning to **funding**, conversations between the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the Secretary of State for Health regarding funding for COVID-19 and Respiratory Infections Survey and Covid-19 Population Health Monitoring are continuing, and the Secretary of State has delayed making a decision until the end of May. We are continuing to seek clarity and explore our options with UKHSA.
15. Following the announcement that **HM Treasury have agreed to provide funding** for the first six months of the Future Population and Migration System (FPMS) the team is working through the initiation of the programme and scope of the work for the six-month period.
16. Our work on **survey transformation** continues at pace, with four further surveys onboarded from paper to online data collection. The surveys moving online are the Monthly Survey of Building Materials: Bricks, Monthly Survey of Building Materials: Concrete Building Block (both conducted on behalf of the Department of Business and Trade), The Annual Acquisitions and Disposals of Capital Assets *Survey* (ACAS) and the Business Enterprise Research and Development (BERD) Survey.
17. The **Field Re-Design project** has set out an ambitious new vision for ONS' community of interviewers. Following my approval, the project has implemented major communications to make colleagues aware of changes over the past month with videos, town hall events, deep dives and question and answer sessions. The Business Case will go to the Investment Delivery Assurance Group in June.

18. The National Statistician's **2023 Recommendation** continues to progress with the Date of the Consultation now agreed. A draft consultation will be circulated alongside other papers ahead of the May 2023 UK Statistics Authority Board. Teams are working through publication dates for the additional 'June' evidence. Initial Roundtables have been successful and Parliamentary engagement is underway with a policy briefing pod in Parliament planned and drop-in sessions with Senedd Research agreed.
19. The **Official Statistics Order 2023** is due to be laid before Parliament on 19 June. The purpose of the Order is to specify the statistics produced, or to be produced, by certain bodies as "official statistics", as prescribed with section 6(1) of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. There have been five UK-wide Orders; in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013 and 2018 with each Order revoking the previous legislation and updating the list of organisations that produce official statistics. Updating the Order regularly ensures the scope of official statistics remain relevant across government and takes account of recent changes to the structure of non-Crown bodies. The Central Policy Secretariat within the Authority have led on the update to the Order with drafting lawyers at the Government Legal Department and through engagement with government departments and public authorities. The Order will be laid before Parliament by Baroness Neville-Rolfe.
20. The **Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence (ESCoE)** held its annual conference on economic measurement and statistics organised in partnership with ONS, at King's College London on 17-19 May 2023. ONS staff and Fellows presented on a range of papers and participated in plenaries. Mike Keoghan gave the closing address, and it was well attended with 350 delegates (full capacity).
21. The ONS Digital Publishing and Prices Production teams created a [shopping prices comparison tool](#) to help people see how the average prices of hundreds of individual shopping items are changing. The tool was launched on 3 May and had more than 650,000 views in the first few days. It was embedded in the BBC website and covered widely across the main media titles including Mail Online, The Times, The Sun and The Mirror, and continuing coverage is driving traffic to the tool.
22. ONS has released a [statement](#) on **Gender Identity** in light of recent coverage and is undertaking work to investigate these data further, which were collected for the first time in the 2021 Census. The outcomes of these investigations are planned to be published in June.
23. To inform the Government's response to the **conflict in Sudan**, ONS provided 2021 Census data on the Sudanese diaspora to departments including Cabinet Office and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The new Census 'Create a custom dataset' tool allowed us to quickly brief officials on the characteristics of the Sudanese-born population ahead of a ministerial meeting on the situation.
24. Later this month, we will release new **migration estimates**. Ahead of the release of these figures, we have engaged with colleagues at the Home Office and Cabinet Office to help provide quality assurance. I shall update Board members on these figures during the May 2023 Authority Board.
25. Turning to data capability, the **IDS** programme is working with the independent assessors to provide additional evidence for Digital Economy Act (DEA) accreditation, with an ambition to submit in the coming weeks.
26. The IDS has received significant endorsement from Government following Sir Patrick Vallance's **Pro-Innovation Regulation of Technologies Review**. The Government accepted all nine of the review's recommendations, including one involving the IDS and public data, outlining that it will continue to "support the delivery of ONS' IDS as the single data analysis and dissemination platform. Departments will engage with ONS to

agree data-sharing agreements with the IDS to make public sector data available to analysts across Government.”

27. Finally, our colleagues in Digital Service and Technology have worked alongside colleagues and third-party contractors to ensure the successful delivery of the new cloud native platform meets all ONS quality and security standards. This has included the Cloud Architecture and Technical Design (CATD) which introduces automation of the ingestion of new datasets. This will empower teams utilising this technology (Prices division) to control their own data ingestion. CATD also introduced a modern cloud native dashboarding system in the form of Looker to provide a powerful, secure tool for visualising data.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, 18 May 2023.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(23)32

Update from the Director General for Regulation

Purpose

1. This paper provides the UK Statistics Authority Board (the 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. Post Eurostat Scrutiny of Economic Statistics: OSR's first quality-focused pilot assessment (of Office for National Statistics' Producer Price Inflation Statistics) is progressing well. This pilot assessment is using a Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) that OSR is developing based on the Code of Practice for Statistics (the Code) and elements from international statistical QAFs. As part of the project, OSR is engaging with a range of key stakeholders, and other National Statistical Institutes for their expertise. Following a discussion of emerging themes with Regulation Committee (RC) on 20 April, we plan to discuss the draft report at the next meeting of the committee (25 May) with a view to publishing the report in June.
 - ii. Data linkage: The OSR has conducted a review into the barriers and enablers to data sharing and linking across the public sector. Our report looks at the current situation, our recommendations for improvement and hopes for the future. We are now compiling comments from our key stakeholders after receiving approval from our RC to send the report externally for comment. We are aiming to incorporate comments by our next RC on 25 May prior to the anticipated publication date of the report of the week commencing 12 June.
 - iii. National Statistics Designation: The new messaging on the National Statistics designation is being submitted to the Board for approval in May. If the Board approves the language, we will publish a research findings paper describing the new messaging in early June and invite comments. We then plan to adopt the new language in September, accompanied by a promotional campaign targeting stakeholders and guidance for producers. We are currently completing the design and testing of the three badges and will submit the designs for approval to the RC in July.
 - iv. Regulatory judgements around the Census consultation: Following the discussion at the April RC meeting, we agreed that OSR will provide the Board with advice on the questions it should consider in reviewing the consultation process to satisfy itself about compliance with the Code.
 - v. Intervention on schools' costs funding: The Department for Education referred itself to OSR to establish whether it has published sufficiently clear evidence to establish that the pay offer made to teachers' is fully funded. The National Education Union then raised a case on the same issue. While it is a politically sensitive issue, we decided to take on both cases and focus our intervention on reviewing the clarity of evidence against our regulatory guidance for public funding. Our responses to both the [Department for Education](#) and the [National Education Union](#) received balanced media coverage which demonstrates the impartiality and clarity of our findings.

Casework

3. We have received 50 cases so far this year. Since the last Board meeting, we have cases concerned with police numbers, the cost to schools of the proposed teacher pay offer, national debt forecasts, rape convictions and Ultra Low Emission Zone compliance.
4. In terms of cases closed since the last meeting, Sir Robert wrote to Emily Thornberry MP on [crime and police recruitment levels](#), to Gillian Martin MSP on [A&E comparisons](#), to Rachel Reeves MP regarding [a GDP growth chart](#), and to Alistair Carmichael MP on [displaced people](#).
5. I [wrote to Jen Woolford](#) regarding the Census gender identity data and [to Liz McKeown](#) regarding the updated article on sex and gender in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.
6. Privately we have closed cases on access to Psychological Therapies, doctors' pay, autism referrals, and the teachers' toolkit on domestic violence.

Wider reach

7. I have been working with Full Fact to improve the quality of statistics, data and evidence produced and communicated by the charity sector. We are engaging with the Charity Commission for England and Wales to discuss how we can best support them, as well as what role voluntary adoption of the Code might play.
8. I have had several speaking engagements across the UK in recent weeks. This includes an open lecture at Southampton University on data abundance, a talk on misleadingness at the University of Dundee and I was in Belfast for the Northern Ireland Administrative Data Research deep dive.

Issues on my mind

9. The main issue I am focusing on is the upcoming Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee hearing on the work of the Authority. This takes place two days before the Board so we can discuss the hearing in the Board meeting itself.

Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, OSR, 17 May 2023

Regulatory Activities Dashboard

May 2023

Population and Society

Watching brief on **Welsh language stats** and **ONS/WG electoral roll statistics**. Ongoing engagement with ONS's **Travel and Tourism transformation team**.
Assessments: Published **Scotland Census** report, followed by **Census in England and Wales** letter (linked to Scotland census assessment), to ONS regarding UK census data
Casework: Several cases regarding ministerial use of Home Office **migrations statistics** – published a letter to Alistair Carmichael MP regarding statistics on displaced people. Responded privately to cases on **NRS, ONS registered deaths reporting, and Covid vaccines**.
Compliance Checks: **ONS mortality statistics** letter published in May
Measuring the population, Ongoing engagement with ONS teams ahead of its consultation which will feed into 2023 recommendation on the future of census.
Review is underway of statistics on **gender identity** based on **2021 England and Wales Census** data, following casework on this topic.
Systemic Review: **Migration transformation** ONS are due to publish their latest international migration estimates later this month alongside methods and research documents. This will feed into OSR's transformation update aiming to publish in June

Children, Education and Skills

Assessment: Undertaking assessment of Scottish Government **Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels** statistics. In the process of closing the **KS4 assessment**.
Casework: Have published letters to DfE and NEU on the evidence published by DfE on **schools' costs funding**. Working with the Health domain on casework on **autism statistics** from the school census by DfE.
Compliance Checks: Conducting follow up from **Health and Wellbeing Census** with Scottish Government

Health and Social Care

Assessment: Underway with the **Scottish A&E waiting times** statistics. **English A&E waiting times** statistics in planning stage.
Casework: Investigating concerns about **autism statistics in England**.
Compliance Checks/Rapid Reviews: Letter published on Department for Communities' **NI Homelessness statistics**. Drafting letters on WG's **Estimates of Housing Need and Homelessness accommodation provision and rough sleeping** management Information.
Systemic Reviews: Continuing user engagement, following up on **Mental Health** reviews

Labour Market and Welfare

Engaging with ONS on the **Household Financial Statistics** transformation.
Assessments: Statistics on **Employment and Earnings** from **Pay As You Earn Real Time Information (PAYE RTI)** finalising report, to publish in May
Casework: Supporting investigating concerns raised by the IFS on the **ONS Wealth and Assets Survey (WAS)**
Compliance checks: ONS transformation of the **Labour Force Survey** (Phase 2). Drafting update letter outlining progress against initial recommendations and expectations. Plan to share with ONS and publish early June. **DWP Benefit Sanctions** statistics, QA meeting scheduled in May.
Systemic Reviews: **Income-based poverty statistics**, continuing engagement with GSS Income and Earnings coherence lead

Economy, Business and Trade

Enhanced Scrutiny of UK **Economic Statistics (ESE stats)** Programme – Developing the quality framework and programme plans.
Assessment: **Producer Price Inflation statistics** pilot assessment as part of **enhanced scrutiny** programme draft report for discussion at May Reg Comm meeting.
UK Trade, Annual Business Survey, Purchases Survey and Business Demography continuing follow up with ONS.
Casework **International Comparisons of Productivity** –review compliance with guidance on communicating uncertainty.
Systemic Review: **Futureproofing the UK Standard Industrial Classification** - continuing engagement ONS classification team

Crime and Security

Casework: Published letter to Emily Thornberry MP about use of **crime and policing statistics** by Ministers. Responded to concerns about the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime's **Teachers Toolkit on gender-based violence**. Investigating concerns about **comparability of Home Office's police uplift statistics**, the Prime Minister's use of **statistics on rape convictions**, and Home Office's presentation of **statistics on rape crime outcomes**.
Compliance checks/Rapid Reviews: **Redevelopment of domestic abuse questions for the Crime Survey for England and Wales** letter published in April.
Systemic Reviews: **Quality of police recorded crime statistics** continuing desk research and starting engagement

Transport, Environment and Climate Change

Assessments: **People and Nature Survey (PaNS)**. Continuing engagement in line with Natural England action plan. User consultation phase of Defra's **butterfly statistics** underway; this is linked **wild bird statistics** and biodiversity indicators.
Casework: Finalising arrangements to respond on TfL's use of statistics. Query received on statistics used in a DfT news release
Compliance Checks: Continuing review of Defra's **wild bird** statistics and examination of biodiversity indicators
Systemic Reviews: **Transport Accessibility Statistics** following up with producers on recommendations from the 2022 review **Statistics** underway.

Housing, Planning and Local Services

Engaging with ONS, DLUHC and LUHC committee on **sub-national data** developments, to support public understanding of levelling up and local government performance.
Assessments: **Statutory Homelessness in England statistics: Continuing follow-up engagement in line with DLUHC action plan**
Casework: Investigating concerns raised about the PM's use of statistics on **affordable homes built in London** at PMQs and the presentation of data on empty homes in DLUHC's council taxbase statistics
Compliance Checks/Rapid Reviews: Letter published on Department for Communities' **NI Homelessness statistics**. Drafting letters on WG's **Estimates of Housing Need and Homelessness accommodation provision and rough sleeping** management Information.

Regulatory Activities Dashboard

May 2023

Data and Methods

Data Science: Now that our new data scientist has started, we have now re-launched our data science programme. Our first project is around understanding where statistics have been cited in public debate. We are working with the Data Science Campus on their ChatGPT pilot to help us answer this question.

External activities: We are engaging with external stakeholders on our draft data sharing and linkage report and incorporating comments. We will be presenting at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) conference on Machine Learning in Official Statistics, in June.

Policy & Standards

Designation refresh: We are updating the Board in the May meeting on how the proposals meet the requirements of the Statistics and Registration Service Act and of the development and testing of new official statistics badges.

Voluntary application and wider reach: The 2023 award for statistical excellence in showing TQV has closed, having received six entries. Judging will occur shortly in May. We are planning a revamp of VA and developing ideas for evolving the scheme, following a workshop with some early adopters at the end March. The ideas will be initially tested with OSR and our community of practice.

Research

Research Programme: We are developing a think piece to support shared understanding of the 'public good of government statistics', which we will discuss with Regulation Committee in May, before publication. We are continuing to promote our work, such as through presenting at the Registry Trust Annual Review. We are developing our proposal for a research project investigating the role of statistics in decision making.

Insight

Michelle Alderson has now joined as our Insight and Evaluation manager

State of the Statistical System Report: Desk research completed, currently drafting report, and planning for publication end of June.

Cross Cutting

We will host a seminar for government analysts on 20 June of statistical literacy and stats communication. We will explore what analysts can do to help the wider public audience understand, engage with, and trust their statistics and analysis.

Strategic Business Plan 2023/24

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Authority Board (the Board) with the final version of the draft 2023/24 ONS Strategic Business Plan (SBP), and a summary of the impact of financial planning.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Board are invited to approve the final SBP.

Background

3. This refreshed SBP will be the third iteration since the launch of the strategy, Statistics for the Public Good. The overall approach to the 2023/24 business planning round has involved iterative development of key aspects of the plan, including the organisation “theory of change” and strategic objectives, followed by an updated prioritisation framework to inform more detailed planning.
4. The draft SBP was submitted through our executive governance in March and included activities required to delivery our Efficiency and Savings Plan (ESPV2) whilst also emphasising the need for continued innovation in line with the strategy.

Discussion

5. The final version of the SBP reflects feedback gathered during governance reviews in March as well as further comments from Portfolio and Investment Committee (PIC) in May.
6. The plan now includes references to organisational impacts and outcomes that will form part of our evaluation activity going forward.
7. Work to address the affordability of the plan has required an increased focus on our organisational priorities and has resulted in the identification of further opportunities to make savings and/or make efficiencies in how we deliver.
8. The Accountability Framework that underpins the SBP has now been approved by PIC (May 2023). While the ESPV2 has been embedded into the business plan and Accountability Framework, any wider impact on the additional savings identified through April will be reflected through the next quarterly planning cycle due to start in mid-June.
9. External publication of the refreshed SBP will take place in June, aligned but prior to the publication of the 2022/23 Authority Annual Report and Accounts.

Next Steps

10. The Planning and Portfolio Management team will work with Communications and Digital Publishing to prepare the SBP ready for publication in June following any final feedback from the Board.

Megan Cooper and David Harris, Finance Planning and Performance, ONS, 19 May 2023

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. update on the plans to achieving Digital Economy Act (DEA) accreditation;
 - ii. that the Programme Board has reviewed the proposed asks of the Digital and Data Board (on 22 June 2023); and
 - iii. the programme is scaling up users through creating a prospects pipeline for future analysis projects.

Background

3. The IDS is now in its Public Beta service phase and the programme is finalising formal service assessment approval with the Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO). A public announcement will then be made about the IDS being a fully operational service.

Discussion

Milestone progress against plan

4. The programme continues to work towards achieving DEA accreditation, it has been challenging due to the nature of the IDS being the first of its kind, being a Trusted Research Environment that is cloud native.
5. As a result, DEA processes, policies and accreditation standards have been amended to fit the needs of the IDS, this has proven to be challenging and the programme is learning in real time.
6. Currently 98 per cent of the evidence has been gathered and the programme intends to be able to seek accreditation in May. For the security submission, there are currently no reds (i.e. blockers). There are three controls with an amber status which are vulnerability management & remediation, cryptographic controls, and data deletion processes. The Security, Assurance and Information Management are working to resolve these with the relevant teams in DST and Service Development as soon as possible.
7. As part of the Secure Research Service (SRS) transition, three data sets will be delivered into the IDS in May: Annual Business Survey (ABS), Deaths Registrations and the Living Costs and Food Survey.
8. The programme continues to progress the Dissemination Strategy as part of the IDS discovery phase, which aims to highlight key differences and dependencies and support the SRS transition strategy and plan. This will be taken to the programme's Design Authority scheduled provisionally for June.
9. The IDS programme delivery remains broadly on track, with the exception of successful DEA accreditation, which is in the process of being resolved. Current delivery confidence remains at Amber.

Securing buy-in for the IDS: Cross-government engagement update

10. This quarter, Departmental Deep Dives have taken place with the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). HM Revenue and

Customs (HMRC) have had a follow up session with the IDS data architects to understand how best they can access the IDS.

11. Insight gathered so far from the deep dives suggests that departments require reassurance on the detailed points relating to security to confidently recommend strategic alignment with the IDS to their Permanent Secretaries and Ministers of State.
12. The programme will be presenting to Chief Data Information Officers at the Digital, Data and Technology (DDAT) Functional Leaders Group (FLG) meeting on 13 June.
13. The programme will then engage Permanent Secretaries at the Digital and Data Board (DDB) on 22 June, with the following asks that have been reviewed by the Programme Board, including:
 - i. to encourage Permanent Secretaries to mobilise the IDS within their departments, making clear that the IDS is now a viable service and highlight its transformational potential with examples;
 - ii. establishing appetite and determination to progress from viable service to full vision for data usage in government that the IDS design permits; and
 - iii. surfacing what that will entail and how we can support departments in getting there.
14. The IDS has a confirmed presence in the upcoming Civil Service Live in Manchester, Newcastle, Glasgow and London.

Pipeline of Future Analysis

15. The pipeline is prioritising high impact, outputs-oriented, government research in support of the analytical and policy priorities of Government. These activities are supporting IDS Beta testing as further expansion of data and users commences. The pipeline of analytical projects was prioritised based on data availability or ability to ingest the data into the platform, cross government collaboration, UK government or Devolved Administration priority policy areas, ability to test capabilities of the platform, and whether outputs could derive potential benefits in time to support the IDS business case refresh.
16. 25 pieces of future analysis have been approved as priority projects. Of these, four have been completed, four are in progress, 12 are with Data Growth Operations (DGO) and Customer Support team to fulfil and seven remain to be progressed. There are a further 28 pieces of analysis from across Government where expressions of interest have been generated as a result of direct engagement with other government departments.
17. The Acquire service for IDS has been engaging with data sharing colleagues in government departments to agree conditions for how data can be shared through IDS. A data processing agreement has been drafted and is now with departments for substantive discussion around what datasets can be shared through the service. Data Owners have been asked to focus on assets that are already in the SRS (which is a significant migration of data by the end of November 2023). These datasets are already being used by government departments for analysis in their unlinked form and will have great potential once indexed and joined with data on IDS.

Reviewing the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

18. The KPI dashboard now has representation from the Pipeline of Future Analysis projects. This additional piece of information is expected to produce more accurate forecasts in future updates.

Alison Pritchard, Deputy National Statistician for Data Capability, 19 May 2023

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)35

National Statistics designation project update

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update to the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) on the Office for Statistics Regulation's (OSR) project to refresh the National Statistics (NS) designation. It responds to feedback from the Board meeting in March, where we first set out proposals for how we can communicate the designation and OSR's role going forward, and introduces potential new badges for official statistics.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Board are invited to:
 - i. approve an invitation for public comment on the adoption of new language 'National Statistics are accredited official statistics', 'official statistics in development' and 'independent review' by the Authority, OSR and statistics producers; and
 - ii. comment on the proposal to introduce badges for official statistics and official statistics in development, and to update the NS badge. This is at an earlier stage of development and is for Board comment, not approval or decision, at this meeting.

Background

3. We currently describe 'National Statistics' as the most important official statistics, which have been demonstrated, through OSR assessment, to meet the very highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value, set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics (the Code). Only they carry the unique logo of the NS tick mark. However, through our review, we have identified issues with the current NS designation and the use of the NS label and badge.
4. In February 2023, the Regulation Committee (RC) approved OSR's recommendation to start describing NS as accredited official statistics, to emphasise OSR's independent review of official statistics, and that experimental statistics could be called 'official statistics in development'. In March 2023 we brought these proposals to the Board, who requested further clarification about how the proposals meet the requirements of sections 12 and 18 of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 (SRSA), relating to requests to assess and designate statistics and maintaining the NS list:
 - i. "At the request of the appropriate authority the Board must, in accordance with this Part, assess and determine whether the Code under section 10 has been complied with in relation to any official statistics" (s12(1)).
 - ii. If under subsection (1) the Board determines that the Code has been complied with, it must designate the statistics as "National Statistics"; but otherwise it must decline so to designate them. (s12(2)).
 - iii. "The Board must, at least once every financial year, publish a list of statistics which are at the time of publication designated as NS under this Part." (s18).
5. To answer this request, this paper sets out the approach to be taken by OSR for approving accreditation and for suspending accreditation, highlighting where the introduction of the proposed new language will result in changes to current communications by OSR and statistical producers. We do not foresee any procedural differences. We are confident that our current proposed recommendations do not run counter to the Act. As part of the review OSR proactively approached Office for National Statistics (ONS) Legal Services who, in turn, spoke with the Government Legal Department, to make sure we had a good understanding of what we could and could not

do, to work in line with the Act. To enable a full discussion with the Board, the Legal Services Team will share the legal advice OSR received with the Board ahead of the May meeting.

6. The Board also asked how our proposals will encourage improvements in statistical practice among producers, whether they will stimulate demand for accreditation and how we could meet an increased demand. These questions are addressed in the first two sections of the discussion below.
7. As well as testing the new language and messaging, our research with stakeholders and producers involved exploring whether new badges for official statistics would be helpful. We have tested a range of concepts and designs, which has led us to propose evolving the current NS badge and introducing new badges for non-accredited official statistics. This paper presents our latest proposed designs for new badges, which are currently going through further development and testing with the RC.

Discussion

Accreditation process

8. We propose emphasising that OSR independently reviews official statistics to confirm that they comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code. We also recommend the use of new language to describe NS as accredited official statistics. These changes do not change the process itself. As required under the SRSA section 12), assessments will continue to be requested by ministers (or their Head of Profession for Statistics acting under explicit or implicit delegated authority) for official statistics producer bodies. OSR discusses with the statistics producers the most appropriate timing of the assessment and its scope.
9. The confirmation of accreditation (formally referred to as designation) will be made once the Director General for Regulation and the RC on behalf of the Authority, are satisfied that the standards of the Code have been met. This decision will be reflected in a letter from the Director General to the Chief Statistician, Head of Profession for Statistics or responsible senior executive which will state prominently:

“On behalf of the Board of the UK Statistics Authority, I am pleased to confirm that these statistics comply with the Code of Practice and can be classified as accredited official statistics – known as National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.”
10. The [National Statistics List](#) (required under section 18 of the SRSA) will be renamed as the ‘List of accredited official statistics’. It will include an introduction clarifying that NS are accredited official statistics. The list will be updated by OSR with new entries for accredited official statistics after any confirmation decision. The published list is currently also updated when any further regulatory reviews of the NS on it are completed, for example if OSR returns to a statistic to check on continued compliance with the Code. We will continue to provide this information and are working to enhance the list further, to include any non-designated official statistics we review as part of our wider regulatory activity. Finally, we intend to increase the range of information we provide, by adding when we last looked at a set of statistics, links to designation decisions, and by exploring if we can include updates on the outcomes of reviews. The List of accredited official statistics therefore becomes a comprehensive resource, summarising the history of our review and oversight of a wide range of individual sets of statistics.
11. Accredited official statistics will be subject to suspension of their accreditation should they fail to continue to comply with the Code in a significant way, as required in section 13 of the Act. We will reflect the new terms in our [de-designation policy](#). The [process](#) remains the same – the accreditation would be removed or suspended in situations in which non-compliance is clear. However, we will require the producer to publish more specific information on their intended actions to address concerns and progress against

these actions. OSR will follow-up on the actions to monitor delivery and write to the Head of Profession for Statistics should unacceptable progress be made. OSR will issue an improvement notice flagging the area of non-compliance:

- “The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) suspended accreditation of the [name of statistics] on [month/year], having concluded that they no longer comply with the Code. The main areas to be addressed are.... OSR will review the statistics once these areas have been addressed to reassess compliance with the Code.”

[OSR will highlight the areas to be addressed in its letter to the head of profession for statistics. The producer should describe its activities to address the problems, with an action plan, in the statement alongside the statistics]

Demand for accreditation

12. We are keen to see greater interest among producers in seeking accreditation and for providing their own reassurance to users about how they meet the standards of the Code. Our engagement activities with Heads of Profession for Statistics and analysts have promoted the benefits of independent review – giving assurance to users and for receiving external advice on areas to improve. We will continue to promote accreditation. We are confident we can manage an increase in demand through applying a tailored approach to the review of official statistics delivered by our domain teams, which benefits from their wider accumulated evidence about the maturity of Code compliance within individual organisations.
13. Workstream two of our designation refresh project is developing ways to support producer bodies in building a Code culture. We have prepared a maturity model using the framework of the Code pillars to help statistics leaders in strategically reviewing and planning their improvement efforts. The tool is going through pilot testing with five producers currently and has received positive feedback to date. We are publishing the framework at the end of May, to share the approach and encourage wider debate and interest.
14. Workstream three of our designation refresh project has examined what changes we can make to our assessment process to ensure that we can manage an increase in demand for accreditation. OSR regulators highlighted some areas for improvement (particularly around reporting and ongoing engagement). Overall we found that our regulatory tools have evolved over time to a naturally more flexible and proportionate model. To illustrate this, our compliance checks allow short, focused reviews, typically providing a high-level investigation of the extent to which statistics meet the standards of the Code. We also introduced [rapid reviews](#) early in the pandemic as mini assessments of official statistics, applied in specific contexts to assess how the statistics meet the standards of the Code. Our new ‘quality-heavy’ assessments provide a new model for an in-depth review that further strengthens our approaches. Overall, our goal is to ensure that assessments meet four principles:
 - i. efficient – OSR should apply an efficient approach to regulatory work, allocating resources in a way that maximises regulatory outcomes;
 - ii. flexible – OSR’s approach to regulatory work is flexible to ensure that OSR’s regulatory focus is on key areas of concern;
 - iii. proportionate – the scale and depth of OSR’s regulatory work will reflect the prominence and level of concern of the statistics which are the subject of the regulatory work; and
 - iv. high standards – OSR should maintain high standards of regulatory work to ensure that statistics meet the pillars of the Code and serve the public good.

Badge testing and design

15. The final element of the designation messaging project focuses on badges for official statistics. Currently, only NS have a badge, which is shown on all outputs that have been designated, following an assessment by OSR against the Code. The designation refresh project has considered whether the badge for NS should be modified and if badges for official statistics and official statistics in development (currently known as 'experimental statistics') would be helpful for supporting users' understanding of the designation and the official statistics landscape.
16. We commissioned designers in ONS to develop a range of badges (with English language and Welsh language versions). The options considered ranged from designs that are variations of the current badge to designs using a chart symbol for official statistics and versions influenced by the OSR logo. We conducted initial testing of the English versions in our interviews and workshops on the designation messaging with stakeholders and analysts. The devolved administrations have contributed to all testing throughout the project. The Welsh language translation and badges were tested with Welsh speakers in ONS and Welsh Government. The translation has been updated as a result and their feedback on the designs captured.
17. The feedback from producers and stakeholders indicated clear support for adopting new badges for official statistics and official statistics in development, and support for having a badge that uses the phrase accredited official statistics. Some producers expressed strong interest in keeping 'National Statistics' in the badge. In April we shared the latest designs with the RC. It also was supportive of having badges for official statistics and official statistics in development. The Committee highlighted several aspects of the badge designs for us to further refine, including making the accredited official statistics badge less busy. Other key issues to address are ensuring the badges convey the appropriate level of assurance and making clear there are three categories of statistics.
18. We are currently completing user testing of mocked-up webpages, including prototype badges. We would welcome comments from the Board members on the badge designs.
19. Feedback across all testing will be used to refine the designs of badges. These will be submitted to the Authority Board for review and approval. We would then propose to consult on the introduction of the new badges, as part of a larger public consultation we are planning for autumn 2023, which will form part of a Code stocktake. This work is under development and not presented for approval or decision at this meeting.

Next Steps

20. If the Board approves the use of the new language, we propose the following next steps:
 - i. Early June 2023: publish a findings paper, which sets out the new language we plan to introduce and the changes that will need to be made to the Code to reflect these. Rather than immediately start using the new language, we will allow a window for comments. During this time we will actively promote the paper among stakeholders, to raise awareness of proposed changes to messaging. We will share any feedback with the Board – if there are significant comments would seek the Board's approval before adopting the new language.
 - ii. September 2023: OSR, the UK Statistics Authority and producers begin using the new language to clarify NS and accreditation. OSR will launch a promotional campaign to support awareness of the changes and publish guidance for producers.
21. On the related but distinct question of the official statistics badges, we will complete the design and testing of the badges and submit the designs for approval to the RC in July. Depending on the views of the Committee, we are planning on submitting the final designs to Authority Board in September and including the badges in our 12-week public

consultation within the Code stocktake over the autumn. We will report to the Authority Board in early 2024.

Penny Babb and Helen Miller-Bakewell, Office for Statistics Regulation, 10 May 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 National Statistician's Recommendation on the future of population and migration statistics, with particular focus on the Consultation.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Board are invited to note that:
 - i. the near final consultation document, consultation questions and launch date;
 - ii. the progress made on our engagement work and the feedback received to date; and
 - iii. the summarised economic case for the Future of Population and Migration Statistics in comparison to a Census.

Background

3. The National Statistician Recommendation is a work-stream of the wider Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme. The workstream is Amber (downgraded from Amber/Red in April) reflecting the progress made towards the publication of additional evidence, establishing an agreed consultation date and progress towards finalizing the consultation document and questions.
4. We expect this work-stream to be Amber/ Green by the end of the month, reflecting our assessment against key criteria for go live, where our assessment to date shows no blockers and progress towards meeting these criteria is amber or green.
5. This paper focuses on the Consultation on the Future of Population and Migration Statistics in England and Wales, and the engagement work that accompanies the consultation. Further it presents a summary of the economic case, including benefits, for the Future of Population and Migration Statistics Programme compared to the cost of a Census.
6. This paper follows the update discussed by the Board in February 2023 and the additional briefing provided to the board on 21 April 2023. The briefing discussion outlined the progress made on the consultation document reflecting the feedback received. Since this discussion we have placed an additional greater emphasis on the survey strategy and the associated risks of this work and mitigating actions.

Consultation

7. Members of the Board were invited to a special briefing on the draft consultation document in April. Feedback from the February board and this additional session has informed changes ensuring the consultation better reflects the long-term nature of the proposals. Feedback has also been received from the Consultation Institute, who have been engaged to review and assure our preparations.
8. Since the previous iteration shared with Board, we have included an additional section articulating the long-term strategic risks with the potential to limit the delivery of our vision, alongside drafting changes to even the overall tone. We have placed further emphasis on the ten-year timeframe within which we aim to expand our range of outputs, and over which the traditional Census-cycle would offer little new insight.
9. Further progress has also been made on refining the consultation questionnaire. The questions remain focused on the critical issue of how the proposals meet users' needs, and what further needs users may have. To maximise the usefulness of the responses, the questionnaire utilises open questions designed to enable respondents to share their

full breadth of views and capture insight into how the proposal impacts user needs. It also maximises routing options, which will be more dynamic and aesthetically pleasing when viewed online.

10. We welcome the Board's comments on the document in its now near-final form. Translation, type-setting and legal checks will begin shortly, and we expect changes between now and consultation launch to be focused on the inclusion of the remaining pieces of evidence. We propose to circulate a final version to Board members by correspondence in mid-June. The final version of the document will be preceded by a final external challenge session and engagement with key Whitehall stakeholders that will be launched via letter to Permanent Secretaries in mid-May.
11. The consultation will launch on 29 June 2023 and will close end October 2023, open therefore for more than 16 weeks. While the consultation is open, we will be monitoring and analysing response to understand where further engagement is needed.

Evidence and Engagement

12. As per our previous update at the Board, the research teams will deliver the extended set of evidence by June, prior to the launch of the Consultation. This work remains on track, and we are working closely with the teams drafting the Consultation Document to ensure the research outcomes and messages are clear and aligned.
13. Alongside the development of the research, we have also started pre-consultation engagement with a range of audiences through a series of round table and stakeholder engagement events. Audiences so far have included local authorities, population and migration experts and academics, the Local Government Association and Data Cymru, the Market Research Society and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Assembly.
14. Further roundtables to come include sessions with equalities groups, think tanks via the Institute for Government, health bodies in collaboration with the National Health Service Confederation, non-statutory health bodies, housing, property and planning organisations and a session with business users.
15. Permanent Secretaries will receive letters prior to the consultation launch to raise awareness of the proposals, including requests aligned with our admin data dependencies. Permanent Secretaries are invited to brief Ministers of the forthcoming consultation and assistance with this briefing was offered. Feedback on the consultation document will be welcomed, and a summary of this will be fed back to the Board prior to launch. Government Statistical Service Heads of Profession and Departmental Directors of Analysis have been engaged and provided with additional briefing to support departmental engagement with the consultation and transformation proposal. Early engagement with other government departments, at the working level and integrating awareness of the consultation into all ONS meetings with civil service colleagues is underway.
16. An engagement plan for privacy groups, in collaboration with ONS' wider work in this space, has been developed. A useful meeting with key members of the Information Commissioner Office took place in early May to raise awareness of the proposal and provide assurance that data security and privacy requirements are central to its implementation.
17. Alongside the roundtables wider engagement is planned via social media, podcasts, media releases, webinars, blogs and presence at conferences. This engagement will be accessible to all users including the citizen user.
18. The response to our engagement so far has been positive about the work that has been delivered to date, and the future direction of travel. We have received constructive feedback about areas of further interest, priority user needs or where more development needed has included:

- i. Support for alternative population bases and definitions (seasonal populations, daytime populations, irregular migrants, students etc). Later in May we are publishing a paper “Population and migration estimates - exploring alternative definitions” setting out some of the definitions that could underpin alternative population bases and asking users to respond to the Consultation with their views. This will allow us to build the specifications of the flexible population definitions that we will make available to users. In June, as part of the evidence base, we are publishing our ‘Pop 24/7’ research, showing how we can construct ‘time of day’ population estimates.
 - ii. On local level data we have demonstrated our ability to produce some outputs at Middle-layer Super Output Area level and our commitment to working to produce Output Area level population estimates. The consultation will help identify priority requirements for local level data (including what ‘local’ means for different outputs) and develop our research plans accordingly.
 - iii. Measuring and reporting on quality of admin data and resulting outputs are vital – and some technical input provided about development of plausibility ranges. As part of our publications in June we are publishing frameworks for measuring and reporting on the quality of administrative data in Population and Migration estimates – exploring alternative definitions: May 2023.
 - iv. The ONS’s proposals for a Longitudinal Population Dataset present the opportunity to retain a rich historical record of the population to support future genealogical and social research. Such records could take the form of snapshots of data by individual and address that could also be linked longitudinally. This will cover the full population and will draw on a range of sources that could expand over time and respond to the topical issues of the day. Data held for historical purposes would be stored securely and ethically, separate from any personal identifiers, until appropriate to be published as historical records.
 - v. We recognise the importance of making microdata available for research and our plans for how we’ll achieve that include using the microdata products available from Census 2021 as the starting point for developing microdata products from linked data. We will seek to exploit the functionality of the Integrated Data Service to maximise safe access to the linked data. Clearly, protecting the confidentiality of the data and individuals will be central to the solutions we implement. In addition, we will build on the excellent innovations introduced by Census 2021 (Build a custom dataset, area profile builder) and the use of Application Programme Interfaces to make statistics from the linked microdata accessible and available to all.
 - vi. Questions about how we will mitigate fragility/immaturity of admin data system (data availability, consistency, supply, changes to data etc);
 - vii. UK level statistics and how this will be impacted by the outcome of the Recommendation for England and Wales (if Scotland and NI do different things/are on different timescales).
 - viii. Stakeholders wanting to understand plans for topics we haven’t yet evidenced.
19. We have bolstered sections of the Consultation Document to ensure that this feedback is being taken on board. Further engagement events are taking place over the next few weeks, including with experts and advocates for equalities, health, income, housing and labour market.

Economic Case

20. The Consultation Document sets out the ONS proposal on how it can use administrative data to deliver statistics about the population more often and more quickly, and with a greater level of accuracy over time. Delivering on this proposal would provide users with ability to identify changes in the population as close as possible to when they happen, and greater flexibility accessing statistics that answer their questions.
21. The resulting system, to be built through the Future of Population and Migration Statistics Programme, has the potential to underpin better investment by decision-makers in

Central and Local Government, the private sector and third sector. Improved efficiency through the reuse of existing data would make the future system more sustainable, providing value for money, and reducing the burden on the public by streamlining surveys and questionnaires. The improvements to these statistics would benefit other ONS statistics that rely on population figures, including economic outputs such as Gross Domestic Product per head, productivity and labour market statistics.

Next Steps

22. We will provide an update to the Board with feedback from other government departments. We will also provide a summary of responses mid-way through the consultation. Following the consultation closure we will provide an update to board on the key findings and an indication of the recommendation.

Ruth Studley, Senior Responsible Officer for Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme and Kate Davies, Programme Director for Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme, Office for National Statistics, 19 May 2023