

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

Thursday 28 September 2023
Newport Office

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present

Sir Robert Chote (Chair)
Dr Jacob Abboud
Professor Sir John Aston
Professor Sir Ian Diamond
Alison Pritchard (for item 1)
Nora Nanayakkara
Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter
Penny Young

Other Attendees

Dame Kate Barker (for item 8)
Robert Bumpstead
Matthew Corder (for item 8)
Mike Hardie (for item 8)
Stephanie Howarth (for item 2)
Sally-Ann Jones (Secretariat)
Rob Kent-Smith
Mike Keoghan (for item 8)
Sarah Moore
Emma Rourke (for item 9)
Ruth Studley (for item 9)
Rhys Thomas
Jason Yaxley (for item 1)
Jason Zawadzki (for item 8)

Apologies

Ed Humpherson
Sian Jones
Professor Dame Carol Propper
Tom Taylor

1. Integrated Data Service [SA(23)52]

- 1.1 Alison Pritchard and Jason Yaxley provided the Authority Board with an update on the Integrated Data Programme, responsible for the delivery of the Integrated Data Service (IDS).
- 1.2 The Board heard that at the Research and Accreditation Panel (RAP) meeting on 14 September the Integrated Data Service had achieved Trusted Research Environment accreditation under the Digital Economy Act (DEA) 2017. The programme would continue to work with the RAP on progressing the IDS to the next stage of accreditation as a Data Processor. The next IPA Gateway Review would be undertaken in October aligning with further business case discussions with HM Treasury.
- 1.3 Following discussions with the Economic and Social Research Council, Administrative Data Research UK and other external research bodies, it had been agreed that there would be a period of further dual running of the Secure Research Service (SRS) beyond March 2024. A triage process had been introduced that considers new applications to the SRS to determine whether it could be serviced by the IDS. Discussions were ongoing with Stata, about the feasibility of implementing a cloud-native version that could be implemented in the IDS. The number of data assets on the IDS continued to increase with up to 89 by the end of October.
- 1.4 Board members discussed the update and commended the team on DEA accreditation. The following points were considered in discussion:
 - i. the future of the programme following DEA accreditation to realise the full potential of the IDS, moving from a minimal viable product to growing the service to provide the ability to use data across departmental boundaries;
 - ii. progress on data sets including the work with Departmental Directors of Analysis in areas where linked data could enhance public policy; and the work being led by the Chief Data and Digital Office on the identification of Essential Shared Data Assets as referenced in Mission three of the Digital and Data Strategy;
 - iii. the need for a timeline for transition of the SRS to the IDS, with the new triage process helping determine which SRS users should transition sooner; and
 - iv. work on a tooling strategy for the IDS with a number of online analysis tools such as Stata.
- 1.5 The Board noted the update and would continue to remain engaged as the work progressed.

2. Stephanie Howarth, Chief Statistician, Welsh Government

- 2.1 Stephanie Howarth provided an update on statistics in Welsh Government and Wales. The statistical function within Welsh Governance is mainly centralised with close working with other analytical professions, policy makers and Ministers; and collaborative relationships with other statistical producers, including ONS. The priorities and ways of working of the statistical function within Welsh Government align with the strategy, Statistics for the Public Good. The partnership with Administrative Data Research Wales provides the opportunity to maximise data for public good research. The IDS was being used to understand the difference the statistics for Welsh language speakers including, specifically the disparity between the Annual Population Survey and Census data.
- 2.2 The Board heard that the Wellbeing of Wales 2023 Report had been published that morning. The report looks at how people and places in Wales are changing, reporting against statutory wellbeing indicators in areas such as cost of living, climate change and the environment.
- 2.3 Board members welcomed the update and noted their thanks for an excellent presentation. With regard to the ongoing ONS consultation on the future of population and migration statistics it was noted that a formal response would be provided by Welsh

Government. In relation to harmonisation of data across the Union the aim was to bring coherence to statistics from the outset.

3. Apologies

- 3.1 Apologies were noted from Ed Humpherson, Sian Jones, Professor Dame Carol Propper, and Tom Taylor.

4. Declarations of Interest

- 4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings

- 5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July were agreed.

6. Report from the Authority Chair [SA(23)53]

- 6.1 Non-Executive Directors had met prior to the Board meeting. They had discussed the senior level structure of the organisation.
- 6.2 Sir Robert Chote had attended the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) International Conference early September, which included Professor Sir Ian Diamond's keynote address; and an introductory meeting with the new RSS Chief Executive, Sarah Cumbers, and RSS President, Andrew Garrett to discuss the review of the Authority by Professor Denise Lievesley.
- 6.3 On 14 September, Sir Robert and Ed Humpherson had met with Lord Murray, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Migration and Borders regarding a number of regulatory casework issues relating to Home Office statistics and their use in the public debate.

7. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(23)54]

- 7.1 Sir Ian provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting, highlighting the following:
- i. the successful DEA accreditation of the IDS by the Research Accreditation Panel on 14 September;
 - ii. the annual revisions of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) published on 1 September, as part of Blue Book 2023, which prompted substantial media coverage due to the upward revision;
 - iii. progress of work across the organisation on the communication of statistical outputs from a social, economic and political perspective. Statistical outputs on migration and gender identity were planned in the coming months. The newly formed Statistical Outputs Group would ensure that a co-ordinated approach is undertaken to the publication of statistical outputs;
 - iv. Sir Ian had met the Chief Coroner of England and Wales to discuss the coronary process regarding data on excess deaths;
 - v. progress of the work by the ONS and HM Treasury on the review of measurements of public sector productivity;
 - vi. as part of the work to support the Analysis Function, a cross government Artificial Intelligence (AI) Steering Group was being launched with Sir Ian and Dame Angela McLean as co-Chairs;
 - vii. with regard to inclusion and diversity female representation within the Office for National Statistics Senior Civil Service had exceeded the target of 45 per cent. Average working days lost through sickness absence was higher amongst females. A deep dive was ongoing to understand the underpinning reasons, with the view to putting in place a policy to provide the right level of support;
 - viii. the Executive Committee was considering options for the delivery of the Crime Survey for England and Wales from April 2024;

- ix. progress of ONS's research into gender identity data from the Census 2021. ONS published a statement in June and August informing users of the further research being undertaken. The outcome of the review by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) of Census gender identity was ongoing.
 - x. the approach by Sir Ian and the Senior Leadership Team in managing the financial position across the organisation to ensure a balanced budget at year end;
 - xi. the launch of the new Winter COVID-19 Infection study scheduled for 2 October, which would run from November 2023 to March 2024.
- 7.2 Board members discussed the update and commended National Records Scotland on the publication of the first results of Scotland's Census on 14 September. The work by both ONS and OSR on gender identity relating to the Census 2021 data was discussed. Members highlighted the importance of communications by ONS and the need to publish a timetable on statistics in this area. ONS had published a statement on 30 August providing an update on research, and a letter had been published in the Daily Telegraph on 28 September from Jennet Woolford, Director of Population Statistics. It was noted that the Regulation Committee, at its meeting on 5 September, had also highlighted the need for ONS to publish a timetable of additional analysis as quickly as possible.
- 7.3 Board members discussed a number of the strategic risks, following discussion by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee in September. SR6, Communications strategic risk had moved outside of appetite with mitigating actions being put in place to address the risks in relation to the website and transparency of communications more generally. With regard to SR3, Statistical Quality Sir Ian assured the Board that quality continued to be a key focus across the organisation and remained within appetite.
- 8. Report from the Director-General for Regulation [SA(23)55]**
- 8.1 Rob Kent-Smith provided an update on regulation activity. OSR had confirmed National Statistics designation for Scotland's Census 2022.
- 8.2 The Board heard that following a request from ONS to review its estimates of UK GDP, the OSR had launched their review, which would consider quality assurance, improvements through enhanced access to wider data, and communication of uncertainty and revisions in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics. It was acknowledged that revisions were an inevitable part of producing timely and accurate estimates of GDP.
- 8.3 The review of the Code of Practice for Statistics had been launched at an event on 13 September, with over 280 attendees. On 26 September over 160 attendees had attended an event on Maintaining Quality Data. An event was scheduled on 18 October on Data Ethics and AI.
- 8.4 With regard to casework OSR had met the Deputy Chair of London responsible for Transport for London (TFL) to discuss a number of casework concerns mainly related to the Ultra Low Emission Zone. Board members discussed the response by OSR to TFL, as a voluntary adopter of the Code.
- 9. Consumer Prices [SA(23)56]**
- 9.1 Mike Keoghan, Matthew Corder and Mike Hardie introduced a paper which set out ONS's proposed approach to addressing key issues within the wider consumer prices landscape in relation to the Retail Prices Index (RPI). Dame Kate Barker, Chair of the Stakeholder Advisory Panel on Consumer Prices joined the Board meeting for this item.
- 9.2 The ONS has a legal obligation to produce the RPI.¹ ONS's current policy is to address the shortcomings in the RPI in full at the earliest and legal and practical opportunity (in

¹ <https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/response-to-the-joint-consultation-on-reforming-the-methodology-of-the-retail-prices-index/>

February 2030) by bringing the methods and data sources from the National Statistic and ONS's lead measure of inflation, the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupier housing costs (CPIH), into the RPI. Following the 2020 decision, some parties sought a Judicial Review of the decisions. The review found in the ONS and Government's favour.

- 9.3 The Board heard that as work on consumer prices transformation had progressed it had become clear that there was a degree of conflict between ensuring changes to RPI were limited, and maintaining the quality of the suite of consumer price statistics. It was noted that to enable existing data sources and methods to be continued to be used in the RPI would require significant investment in legacy systems that were no longer being used for CPI and CPIH, and would mean that the RPI would not benefit from the work on transformation. ONS proposed allowing methods and data improvements from the prices transformation to feed into the RPI where they did not substantially affect those significant shortcomings of the RPI that ONS was not able to address before 2030. The Board heard that the proposal aligned with legal advice, had been agreed by the National Statistician; and was consistent the previous decisions of the Chancellor.
- 9.4 Sir Robert thanked Dame Kate Barker for joining the meeting. Dame Kate noted her thanks to the ONS team for the high level of support provided to her as Chair of the Stakeholder Prices Panel noting that both the stakeholder and technical panel had been effective. Dame Kate noted her support for the proposed approach by ONS regarding changes to the RPI.
- 9.5 Board members discussed the update. The following points were considered in discussion:
- i. the timing of the proposal related to the treatment of RPI as part of the ongoing wider transformation and quality of the suite of prices statistics. It did not impact on the previously agreed timing of 2030 to address the fundamental shortcomings of the RPI, and there was no recommendation to revisit the 2030 decision;
 - ii. the significant cost implications of not making these marginal changes to the RPI at this point, would require investment in legacy systems that were no longer being used for CPI and CPIH. This approach would conflict with the ONS's general strategy of reducing reliance on legacy systems;
 - iii. the importance of engaging a sufficient range of views from statistical users in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics. Some stakeholder engagement had been undertaken with further user engagement planned in December as part of the impact analysis of the proposed changes; and
 - iv. in line with the statutory process the proposal would need to be reviewed by the Bank of England to determine whether the changes were fundamental and materially detrimental to relevant bondholders.
- 9.6 The Board endorsed the proposed approach by ONS. The Board noted their thanks to Dame Kate Barker for attending the meeting and in her role as Chair of the Stakeholder Advisory Panel on Consumer Prices.

10. Consultation on the future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales [SA(23)57]

- 10.1 Ruth Studley introduced a paper which provided an update on the consultation of the future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales, following the launch on 29 June.
- 10.2 The Board heard that over 200 consultation responses had been received to date with the majority being individual responses. A high level of engagement had been undertaken since April including internal and external roundtables, webinars, and over 100 other engagement activities including meetings and conferences. A number of themes had been identified in the responses with support for administrative data as the

core of population and migration statistics to produce more frequent and timely data; the need for more granularity in terms of geography and availability of protected characteristics with feedback regarding the loss of granular ethnicity and religion data; and the use of a multi-source estimation model. An analysis plan was in place and further stakeholder engagement would be undertaken.

10.3 The Board welcomed the update and would remain engaged as the work progresses

11. Report from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

11.1 John Aston reported on the work of the Audit and Risk Assuring Committee which had last met on 14 September.

11.2 The Committee had considered:

- i. the financial position of the organisation, with a high level of assurance provided on the approach being taken to achieve a balanced budget at year end;
- ii. progress implementing the risk and assurance framework, and an update on the strategic risk profile;
- iii. the provision and model of the Internal Audit function;
- iv. delivery and timing of the Internal Audit programme of assurance 2023/24;
- v. an Internal Audit Report on Planning and Portfolio Management; and
- vi. the independent security health check report.

11.3 The Committee had endorsed the recommendation by the Risk and Assurance team that the Public Health Monitoring Strategic Risk, SR10 was no longer a strategic risk, which the Board agreed.

12. Report from the Chair of the Regulation Committee

12.1 Penny Young reported on the work of the Regulation Committee which had last met on 5 September.

12.2 The Committee had considered and agreed OSR's proposal that outputs from Scotland's Census 2022 should be designated as National Statistics.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 Sir Ian informed the Board of the very sad news about Laura Lean, who had passed away. Laura had worked as Assistant Private Secretary to Sir Ian during 2021 and 2022, and had been a highly valued colleague in Private Office and across ONS.

13.2 The Board would next meet on 26 October.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY
Agenda
28 September 2023, 12.15-15:45
Newport Boardroom
Hybrid Meeting

Chair: Sir Robert Chote

Apologies: Ed Humpherson, Sian Jones, Prof. Dame Carol Propper, Tom Taylor

Attendees: Dame Kate-Barker (for item 8), Matthew Corder (for item 8), Mike Hardie (for item 8), Mike Keoghan (for item 8), Emma Rourke (for item 9), Ruth Studley (for item 9), Jason Yaxley (for item 1), Jason Zawadzki (for item 8)

NED Session: 11.30-12.15 (lan to join 12.00-12.15)

1 12.15-12.35 20 mins	Integrated Data Service	SA(23)52 Alison Pritchard Jason Yaxley
2 12.35-12.55 20 mins	Stephanie Howarth, Chief Statistician Welsh Government	Stephanie Howarth Chief Statistician Welsh Government
3 12.55-13.00 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 27 July 2023
4 13.00-13.10 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	SA(23)53 Sir Robert Chote
5 13.10-13.50 40 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(23)54 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond
6 13.50-14.00 10 mins	Report from the Office for Statistics Regulation	SA(23)55 Robert Kent-Smith
7 14.00-14.10 10 mins	Report from Sub Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and Risk Assurance Committee • Regulation Committee 	Oral update John Aston Penny Young
14.10-14.20 10 mins	Break	
8 14.20-15.10 50 mins	Retail Price Index and Next Steps on Prices	SA(23)56 Mike Keoghan Dame Kate Barker Matthew Corder Mike Hardie Jason Zawadzki
9 15.10-15.30 20 mins	Consultation on the future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales	SA(23)57 Emma Rourke Ruth Studley
10 15.30-15.45 15 mins	Any Other Business	

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)52

Integrated Data Service – September 2023 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. the achievement of accreditation under the Digital Economy Act 2017 (DEA) and the subsequent uplift of the programme overall RAG status to Amber;
 - ii. priority analysis and the related data pipeline;
 - iii. wider communications on Secure Research Service (SRS) transition as agreed with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Administrative Data Research UK (ADRUk) have now been sent to all SRS users, outlining SRS and the IDS will have a longer period of parallel running as part of the transition process.

Background

3. The IDS remains in Public Beta; with a focus on scaling up the number of use cases and accredited users, following successful DEA accreditation.

Discussion

Programme Update

4. The programme is currently tracking at **Amber**, an improvement on last month's Amber/Red status. This reflects the achievement of one of the programme most critical milestones, DEA accreditation.
5. Over the summer period the programme has replanned to ensure appropriate focus and balance across portfolio, to:
 - i. improve user experience of the live operational service, with a critical mass of active users by September;
 - ii. focus on priority use cases;
 - iii. develop a higher-quality data catalogue integrated with Google Tooling; and
 - iv. develop the transformational deposit data contribution model.
6. In early August, the programme delivered a basic data catalogue for accredited users to view on the IDS Hub. IDP has also introduced a capability to automate the creation of new projects, reducing the lead time from five days to four hours.
7. New contracts are being finalised in support of programme resourcing and strategic advice; these will provide greater flexibility compared to the current contract, whilst offering improved value-for-money.

DEA Accreditation update

8. At the 14 September Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) meeting the IDS achieved Trusted Research Environment accreditation under the DEA. Successful accreditation under DEA provides formal recognition that the IDS is a safe and secure data provisioning platform, compliant with the recognised five safes framework and opens up the research powers and the legal gateways of the DEA legislation.

9. Having been unable to achieve this outcome at June's meeting, the assessor recognised that IDS has made major improvements across all 16 controls upon resubmission and this, coupled with previous evidence of the remaining data capability controls and security controls, demonstrated a maturing, rather than capable state in many areas.
10. Security is a fundamental concern for data providers and the RAP; thus, the programme has undertaken a review of security risks, which has resulted in a significant improvement in this area.
11. The programme will now continue to work with RAP to implement their recommendations as we continue the development of IDS.
12. IDP will also continue to work with RAP on progressing the IDS to the next stage of accreditation as a Data Processor, while also working with them, and wider government, on the transformational elements of the IDS.
13. This RAP recognised the challenges faced as a radical and ambitious programme and will continue to support the delivery of this transformational service.

SRS Transition

14. Following extensive discussions with ESRC, ADRUK and some other external research bodies, we have agreed there is merit in a period of further dual running of the SRS beyond March 2024. This will enable us to:
 - i. improve the transition experience, minimising disruption to users;
 - ii. enable the implementation of a broader range of analytical tools;
 - iii. provide more time to migrate the non-ONS data currently held in the SRS; and
 - iv. provide an opportunity to replan data transition focusing on indexing, which will achieve better alignment with the wider the IDS strategy.
15. Users were made aware of this in July 2023 and no concerns with the updated approach have been raised so far.
16. We are keen this does not become an open-ended expectation of SRS operations and users and are therefore exploring with those parties to determine to whom the dual running applies, and which SRS users should make the move to the IDS sooner.
17. We have implemented a triage process that looks at existing analysis and new applications to use the SRS to determine whether this can be serviced via IDS. The process considers whether users can work with the tooling within IDS, whether the data required is available and whether IDS can ensure a good user experience.
18. The IDS continues to aim not to import legacy into the design. Progress has been made in identifying cloud-native solutions for SAS and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which is a step forward. Discussions continue with Stata, the most used alternative tooling option in the SRS, to investigate feasibility of implementing a cloud-native version that can be implemented in the IDS.

Priority Analysis and Developing the Data Pipeline

19. We are rapidly developing the pipeline of analysis for the IDS and driving the development of projects with Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Open Government Data colleagues.
20. These projects span a number of stakeholders, including but not limited to; His Majesty's Revenue and Customs, ONS, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department of Health and Social Care and combined authorities, showing the breadth of the work going on and the potential of the analysis within the IDS.
21. As set out in our last paper, we had hoped to mobilise much of this during August. However as with any BETA service, during the process of data acquisition and onboarding projects we are continually identifying and resolving a series of issues,

which has caused progress to be slower than hoped. These are being prioritised and around the themes of, data sharing agreements, pace of approving analysis proposals and data migration challenges from ONS's Data Access Platform to the IDS. Having exposed these, we have plans to resolve them at pace and put improved processes in place.

22. There has been an increase of four new users, with 37 new users expected to be added to the platform late September/early October. This would increase the total number of IDS users to 97. The addition of Tranche 1 and 2 SRS datasets will notably increase the number of datasets on IDS by October to 89. This is shown in the forecast figures for users.
23. The data roadmap for the next three months is considered 'locked-in,' with the next three months and beyond updated and reviewed according to new demands and priorities. This allows certainty on immediate deliverables and resourcing, provides a clear direction of travel beyond three months, whilst also allowing new requirements to be introduced effectively.
24. A summary of the data roadmap is below, and this is currently being reviewed considering the delays set out in point 23, above.

Data Sets	Associated Project	Expected delivery date
Annual Purchase Survey, ASHE, Census 2011, QCAS, Annual Business Survey, Living Costs & Food survey, Business Register, Business Inquiry, Wealth & Assets survey, Monthly Wage & Salary survey, Indices of Deprivation, Deaths	SRS Indexed data	July – November
Labour Force Survey	Welsh Government – Language project V2	August - Completed
HES/LFS	ONS Health and Labour Market -	August - Completed
Census 2021	Redelivery of Census 2021	August - Completed
HES /Mortality	Climate/Health Project	August - Completed
ASHE; APS; LFS; BRES	Tees Valley Economic Inactivity	August-September
21 data sets	SRS Tranche One	August-September
Census 2021 data	Ofsted Project – school attendance	September
Census 2011/HES/GP/Mortality	Public Health Research Database	September
Subnational Expenditure from 11 different Government Depts	DLUHC - Subnational Expenditure Project	September
Mobility Data	Mobility Project	September
25 data sets	SRS Tranche Two	September-October
Census 2011 linked to Companies House (bespoke linkage)	Equality Data Asset	October

IDBR (Scot cut); ABS; Ordnance Survey; SG Non-domestic Rates;	Scottish Government Interconnected Business Data	October
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Strategic Engagement

25. The IDP is planning for strategic engagement of the research community over the coming weeks and is a key partner in the upcoming ADR UK conference (14-16 November in Birmingham), which has the key themes of research to support renewal, recovery and resilience; data linkage, methods, systems and technology; ethics, law and social implications, and public engagement and involvement in population data research.
26. IDP was also represented at the Royal Statistical Society International Conference in September, which attracts delegates from over 30 countries who have an interest in statistics and data science.
27. The programme also submitted a paper to RAP in September on its strategic engagements with data owners in the last six months, welcoming guidance on further opportunities for the IDS to engage with data owners.
28. IDP will attend Digital and Data Board (DDB) once DEA accreditation is secured, with a view to reinforcing the clear and strategic link to the Government Digital and Data Strategy and Mission 3 relating to better use of data by government.
29. Further engagement includes a partnership meeting with ESRC to discuss emerging partnership with ESRC and their funded programmes. This would see them support the IDS from a user research perspective, bridging the programme to senior groups from the research community to ensure alignment and understanding.

Reviewing the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

30. The KPI dashboard provides a representation of the Pipeline of Future Analyses.

Jason Yaxley, Programme Director, Integrated Data Programme, 20 September 2023

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)53

Chair's Report, September 2023

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Authority Board with an overview of the Chair's activity in August and September.

Review of recent activities

2. From 4-6 September, I visited the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) International Conference in Harrogate where I attended the National Statistician's keynote address and a presentation from the Office for National Statistics population statistics team on estimating migration using the Dynamic Population Model. I also co-presented a panel session with Ed Humpherson and the winners of the RSS Champion and TQV awards. During the conference, I had an introductory meeting with the new RSS Chief Executive, Sarah Cumbers, and RSS President, Andrew Garrett where we discussed Denise Lievesley's review, user engagement and the Authority's relationship with the RSS.
3. I met with Denise Lievesley on 7 September to discuss the progress of her review.
4. On 14 September, Ed Humpherson and I met with Lord Murray, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Migration and Borders to discuss a pattern of regulatory casework issues relating to Home Office statistics and their use in the public debate. It was a constructive discussion which acknowledged the challenges of briefing ministers, and resulted in actions for Office for Statistics Regulation to follow-up with officials to provide further support and information.
5. On 18 September, I attended the NI Fiscal Council Annual Conference in Belfast, where Philip Wales (Chief Executive) and other Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency colleagues were in attendance. As part of the conference, there was discussion of the data that would be needed to show if public spending was contributing to economic growth.
6. On 19 September, I attended a seminar organised by the Better Statistics (Community Interest Company) on the future of the UK Statistics Authority, arranged with a view to feed into the Lievesley review. The agenda covered a wide variety of issues including measuring inflation, administrative data, user engagement, and regulation (which included a presentation from Rob Kent-Smith, OSR).
7. I also held my regular catchups with the National Statistician, Director General for Regulation, Chief of Staff, Deputy Chair, and the Chairs of the Regulation and Audit and Risk Assurance Committees.

Casework and correspondence

8. On 2 August, I responded to Stephen Kinnock MP on asylum backlogs.
9. On 29 August, I responded to Dr Sandesh Gulhane MSP on minimum unit pricing on alcohol in Scotland.

Sir Robert Chote, Chair, 21 September 2023

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)54

Chief Executive's Report, September 2023

Purpose

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

Summary

Financial Position

2. We continue to maintain a sharp focus on **cost control and ensuring our resources are prioritised on core strategic objectives across the organisation**. The relationship between salary and non-salary expenditure is critical and has been the subject of ongoing focus across the organisation. We have developed enhanced control and reporting mechanisms to ensure we are managing within financial constraints.
3. We have seen an improvement in our run-rate trajectory and a continuation in the managed reduction of our FTE numbers. We also continue to develop new, strategically aligned income streams which will also help us to live within our means. The position will continue to evolve (especially dependent on the Treasury's eventual funding decision on Future of Population and Migration Statistics (FPMS)) but we are confident that, with constant vigilance, the situation remains tractable.
4. Our **financial constraint** is driven partly by our original spending review settlement but largely by the significant increases we have been able to make in staff remuneration – both consolidated and non-consolidated. The internal recruitment marketplace which we have created as our first choice for filling roles offers opportunities for our staff to gain new experiences, grow their skillsets and gain promotion. However, there will of course be some challenges in supporting those colleagues who are being re-deployed to higher priority workstreams.
5. The action we are taking this financial year will prepare us well for next year and the run up to the next spending review. Our **business planning activities** for future years will commence during the Autumn and will include preparations for the Supplementary Estimate exercise (anticipated in November, preparation for financial year 2024/25, and early preparations for the next spending review (although this remains an unknown in terms of timescale). The work on streamlining our goals and outputs in line with our Prioritisation Framework, plus our sharper focus on cost control, have laid a solid basis for us to tackle whatever the future holds.

Review of recent activities

6. This month has seen the launch of Cabinet Office's annual **One Big Thing** - this is a new annual initiative for civil servants to take shared action each year around a reform priority. The focus for 2023 is data upskilling, with all civil servants undertaking a day's worth of data training this Autumn. As part of this, I will be hosting a day long event alongside Simon Case and Alex Chisholm at our Newport Office. This event will see speakers from across the Analysis Function speak to 100 people in the room and 3000 online on topics of data quality and using data in decision making among other themes.
7. Colleagues are also working in collaboration with the Central Digital and Data Office to deliver **DataConnect23**. Building on the success of previous years, more than 100 sessions will be hosted during the virtual conference which takes place from 25 - 29 September 2023.

8. Over summer, we have worked tirelessly to support the wider Analysis Function by providing cross government leadership and coordination on data science and Artificial Intelligence; innovation and crisis response. In particular:
 - i. on 5 September we hosted a Data Science Community event, attended by over 300 people. The potential for a Data Science profession, Data Science skills and career development in Data Science were some of the topics discussed;
 - ii. the Analysis Function are hosting an Innovation Showcase in September, with Department for Health and Social Care work on winter risks; Evaluation Task Force work on the Evaluation Academy and Government Internal Audit Agency's Insight's engine all being showcased;
 - iii. we have published a guide covering principles and best practice for sharing data, analysis, and statistics in times of national crisis: [New guidance on data sharing for crisis response](#) and [Data sharing for national crisis response](#); and
 - iv. we are launching a cross Government Analysis Function AI Steering Group which will be chaired by Sir Ian Diamond and Dame Angela McLean. The first meeting is 20 September.
9. Government Statistical Service (GSS) Heads of Profession have engaged with Emma Rourke, Deputy National Statistician for Population, Health and Methods, and I to develop proposals and next steps for a **shared vision and strategic delivery plan for the GSS**. This is being considered by the National Statistics Executive Group in September.
10. On 5 September, I gave oral evidence to the **Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's** inquiry into Transforming the UK's Evidence Base. Topics discussed included Gross Domestic Produce revisions, the structure of the UK Statistical System, the Analysis Function, new sources of data, comparing UK data, the future of population and migration statistics, data sharing and international comparisons.
11. Preparations are underway ahead of **Module 2 Hearings for the COVID-19 Inquiry** of which the Authority is a Core Participant. The Hearings will commence in October and run through to December focusing on Core UK decision making and political governance. Our internal Inquiry Team will be monitoring hearings and any activity and references relating to the activities of the Authority.
12. This month also saw the Integrated Data Service (IDS) **Digital Economy Act (DEA) accreditation** report submitted for consideration by the Research Accreditation Panel. The assessors recognised that IDS has made major improvements in the data capability controls and security controls, resulting in a positive recommendation for accreditation. We were pleased to hear that the panel approved IDS accreditation on 14 September.
13. The Reference Data Management Framework and Data Linkage Hub teams produced versions of the **Census 21 and Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data** indexed to the Demographic Index with appropriate approvals, ready for ingestion to the IDS platform. Permissions are in place for **39 Office for National Statistics (ONS) owned assets to migrate to IDS**, with a useful discussion at the Data Governance Committee on options to streamline approvals further.
14. The winning supplier for **mobility data tender**, which offered clear value for money compared with previous data procurement, has been notified and historical data is expected to arrive in ONS in early October. Delivery of real-time data has been postponed until January to ensure plans are affordable within the current financial context.
15. His Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) has commenced technical work to **deliver Pay As You Earn Real Time Information and Self-Assessment data**, due in ONS by Mid-October. Data Governance Office is working to condense ingestion and engineering

to ensure this is delivered to FPMS to support development of the Statistical Population Dataset and mid-year estimates.

16. The annual **Blue Book changes** were published this month. In this, we introduced the latest data and improved methods. This led to the UK economy being estimated to have returned to pre-pandemic levels at the end of 2021 (rather than being just below in 2023). These data were extensively quality assured, including by key external stakeholders via data access agreements. These revisions received intensive media coverage. The revised data for 2020 and 2021 will be published as official estimates on 29 September, along with our latest estimates for 2022 and 2023, as part of our Quarterly National Accounts publication. This revision received significant media attention, and we placed an Op-Ed in the Financial Times.
17. Good progress has been made on identifying causes and implementing solutions, where data quality challenges have been found through dual running the **Transformed Labour Force Survey** (TLFS). A priority survey change has been scheduled for early October with the aim of correcting the employment headline data issues. This will have some impact on the way we decommission the Labour Force Survey and is currently being planned out, but at this time we expect to transition to using the TLFS in Labour Market outputs as previously planned from March 24.
18. The consultation on the **Future of Population and Migration Statistics** continues to receive a positive volume of interaction with 192 responses received by the end of week 10. Weekly consultation briefings have continued updates on engagement activity, user responses, media coverage and feedback. Internal consultation events continue to ensure the wider ONS remain sighted on the consultation.
19. We published a [statement](#) to update on our research into **Gender Identity** data in Census 2021. The statement says we are conducting further research and broader user engagement, and our next publication will reflect the interests of a wide range of users. No timescales have been committed to at this time.
20. We have secured **funding from the HM Treasury Labour Markets Evaluation and Pilots Fund** to study the labour market effects of bariatric surgery, the NHS National Diabetes programme and the diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis. These projects will be using HMRC data linked to health data.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, September 2023

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)55

Update from the Director General for Regulation

Purpose

1. This paper provides the UK Statistics Authority Board with an overview of Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) activities.

Discussion

2. Our main areas of focus since the last Board meeting have been split into our ongoing and published work:

Ongoing work

- i. **Gross Domestic Product:** Following the request from Office for National Statistics (ONS) to review its estimates of UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) we [launched our review](#) to consider the three key areas of: quality assurance; improvements through enhanced access to wider data; and communication of uncertainty and revisions in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics.
- ii. **Code review Launch:** This month we launched our [review of the Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Our public launch event on 13 September explained how to find out more about how you can contribute to the review, with discussion from me, Tracey Brown (Sense About Science), Catherine Hutchinson (Cabinet Office), and Stephen Aldridge (Levelling up, Housing & Communities), on why having common standards in the production of statistics matter. Over 280 people attended. Penny Babb also talked about the review of the Code at the [Institute for Government's Data Bites](#). Over the next three months there will be three sessions on [Maintaining data quality: 26 September 2023](#), [Data ethics and AI: 18 October 2023](#) and [Changing user demands for data: 23 November 2023](#). Please do join if you are available, the links for the session will take you to Eventbrite where you can reserve your spot. Please do also share with your networks where appropriate.
- iii. **Enhanced Scrutiny of Economic Statistics Programme:** Following the success of pilot review on Producer Price Inflation statistics we launched our [second pilot quality focused assessment](#) on Profitability of UK companies and Gross Operating Surplus of private non-financial corporations statistics.
- iv. **Police Recorded Crime:** We have [launched](#) our [quality review of police recorded crime statistics](#), focusing on the statistics for England and Wales produced by the ONS. Our emerging findings will be presented at the October Regulation Committee.
- v. **National Statistics Designation Review:** We received 5 responses to our invitation for comments on our paper [Clarifying National Statistics](#) – we have incorporated the feedback within our guidance to producers and regulators. Implementation of the changes will begin from 25 September 2023. The badges previously shared with the Regulation Committee are included in our Code review call for evidence in which we are inviting feedback from stakeholders on ways in which the Code can be strengthened. The call also invites comments on voluntary application of the Code.
- vi. **Sex and Gender/Gender Identity:** We have a new [page](#) on our website to update publicly on our Sex data guidance update and our review of Gender Identity. On our review of Census Gender Identity, we will publish an interim report in early October. This report will set out our position so far based on the testing, quality assurance and communication and engagement with users both in advance of publishing the results and where appropriate from the research programme to date. It also will also set out

our expectations of what is needed from the ONS to provide assurance on the gender identity data and harmonised question in line with the Code of Practice.

Published work

- i. **Scottish Census:** This month we [confirmed National Statistics Designation](#) for the Scotland Census highlighting the actions taken in response to the five requirements identified in our assessment of 2022 Census in Scotland.
- ii. **Intelligent Transparency Guidance:** This month we published our refreshed [Intelligent Transparency guidance](#) following feedback from stakeholders inside and outside of government. Alongside the guidance we published a [blog revealing the importance of understanding 'how the sausage gets made', or in our case understanding the numbers used in the public domain by government!](#)

Casework

3. We have received 108 cases so far in 2023/24. Since the last Authority Board, we received concerns regarding knife crime, dementia, NHS waiting lists, ULEZ, Census, Mortality data, employment data and gambling related deaths.
4. We have closed 24 cases since the last meeting. The Chair responded publicly to [Stephen Kinnock MP](#) on asylum backlog and [Dr Sandesh Gulhane MSP](#) on minimum unit pricing. I wrote to [Gender Parity UK](#) regarding differences in online harassment by sex. We responded privately on school absence data, the Scottish Census, Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), Retail Prices Index, Gross Domestic Product, and Asylum accommodation.
5. On the minimum unit pricing casework, we received concerns from Dr Gulhane that the Public Health Scotland report 'Evaluating the impact of minimum unit pricing for alcohol in Scotland: A synthesis of the evidence' overstate the health impact of the Minimum unit pricing. We found that the press releases communicating the findings from this report often lacked contextual information and indications of uncertainty. We met with Public Health Scotland and the Scottish Government to discuss our concerns. We were also aware that this topic is politically charged in Scotland so wanted to ensure our response could not be weaponised. When we responded to Dr Gulhane our letter was picked up by the media along with the claim that we found SG cherry picked data or that we had concerns about the wording of the evaluation report. As a result, we contacted the relevant media outlet to correct the record.
6. The 2022/23 [casework report](#) was published this week after approval from Regulation Committee.
7. The Chair and I met with Lord Murray to discuss the concerns we have been receiving on the Home Office. The meeting was very positive. We offered our assistance to SPADs/comms teams and new ministers to reinforce the principles of the Code.
8. I met the Deputy Mayor of London responsible for Transport for London (TfL) this month to discuss a number of casework concerns we have received. In the main the concerns we received were related to ULEZ however, we have also received concerns with TfL outputs on other topics. In all cases the availability of the underlying data to appropriately challenge the claims have not been publicly available or clearly signposted to. TfL is a Voluntary adopter of the Code and the meeting was important to understand what support TfL needed to imbed intelligent transparency and the principles of the Code across their organisation.

Wider reach

9. **Trust in evidence:** Since the last Authority Board I hosted a joint round table with Sense about Science on trust in evidence. This round table called on experts within and outside of government to explore the challenges in maintaining trust in evidence.
10. I attended the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) conference in September to present an award to Fable, the winners of this year's [award for Voluntary Adoption of the Code](#). I also spoke at the RSS on communicating uncertainty in official statistics and communicating economic statistics, alongside OSR's Head of Research, who spoke about OSR's work on public good. I also attended the Regulatory Policy Institute conference and chaired a panel on Transactional and Distributional Fairness in the Communications Sector.
11. I presented at the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations on good use of data, the Central Government Partnership Network on our Data Sharing and Linkage report, the ONS podcast on misuse of data and to Government Communication Service staff on communicating statistics.

Issues on my mind

12. **Authority review:** We continue to contribute constructive input into the Cabinet Office review of the Authority on request. We look forward to the results of the Cabinet Office review.
13. **Financial pressures:** Through some reprofiling and support from the Authorities' finance team on pay rises our pressures have eased, as we head into a busy Autumn with a number of high-profile assessments, the code review and our guidance on Sex and Gender. I will continue to monitor our financial position closely.
14. **Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA):** I am aware that financial pressures are affecting all government departments, having highlighted at the last board meeting the steps we are taking to manage our budget. I was pleased with the proactive nature of NISRA to [highlight to us](#) their plans to consult with users on changes to their statistical outputs. We [responded](#) to NISRA publicly.

Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, OSR, 20 September 2023

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)56

Retail Price Index and Next Steps on Prices

Purpose

1. This paper seeks the Board's endorsement of our proposed approach to tackling key issues within the wider consumer prices landscape related to the Retail Prices Index (RPI). It also briefly notes progress on prices transformation which is covered more fully in the Aries update.

Timing

2. If the Board agrees to the approach at this meeting, it will enable the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to provide impact analysis data for private rental prices and second-hand cars to the Bank of England in October.

Recommendations

3. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. endorse the proposed approach for making changes to the RPI between now and 2030 in response to the improvements delivered by the transformation project, consistent with recently received legal advice; and
 - ii. note progress within the Prices Project.

Background

4. We have a legal obligation to produce the RPI. The RPI is a poor measure of general inflation, at times overestimating and at other times underestimating changes in prices and how these changes are experienced. In 2013, the RPI lost its status as a National Statistic and ONS continues to discourage its use.
5. However, its use is built into many long-term financial contracts (such as defined benefit pensions) so use of the index remains widespread. The ONS intends to address the shortcomings in the RPI in full at the earliest legal and practical opportunity by bringing the methods and data sources from the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) into the RPI. However, all changes to the coverage or basic calculation of the RPI must be reviewed by the Bank of England to determine whether they are fundamental changes '*which would be materially detrimental*' to holders of certain index-linked gilts. Where the Bank makes that determination, the ONS must then seek permission to make the change from the Chancellor of the Exchequer.
6. A 2020 decision by the then-Chancellor to withhold consent to certain changes means we are unable to address the fundamental shortcomings of this legacy measure until 2030. Following the 2020 decision, some parties sought a Judicial Review of the ONS and Government decisions. That review found in the ONS and Government's favour, and helpfully provided legal certainty in this area; clarifying what ONS was permitted to do under the Act.

Discussion

Proposed approach for changes to the RPI

7. Our current policy is to "address the shortcomings in the RPI in full at the earliest legal and practical opportunity (in February 2030) by bringing the methods and data sources from the National Statistic and ONS's lead measure of inflation, the CPIH, into the RPI".

The particular shortcomings this change will address include: formula, owner occupied housing (OOH) costs, weights, population coverage, classification structure, and single day price collections. Prior to 2030, and always with due consideration to the requirements of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007, we propose generally to follow the approach outlined in earlier policy statements, namely: “The RPI would continue to be maintained through routine changes... (for example the annual update of the basket and weights, computer systems upgrades and improvements to data validation and quality assurance methods).” By contrast, in general, we “would only consider making methodological changes to the RPI if to not do so would inhibit the improvement of CPIH and the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).” The principles underlying this policy are that, given we expect to be unable to address the key methodological shortcomings of the RPI before 2030, in the interim we will generally prioritise ensuring that changes to the RPI keep it up-to-date, and are limited and predictable (as part of ensuring the statistics are as comparable as possible over time, an important dimension of quality and a focus for users), with our development work focussed on improving our headline consumer price statistics (CPIH and CPI) as the best way to ensure the overall relevance, accuracy and reliability of our consumer price statistics, and the best and most efficient use of our resources.

8. As work on consumer prices transformation has progressed it has become clear that there is some degree of conflict between ensuring changes to RPI are limited and predictable, and maintaining the quality of the suite of consumer price statistics. To enable existing data sources and methods to be continued to be used in the RPI would require significant investment in legacy systems that are no longer being used for CPI and CPIH. This would conflict with the ONS’s general strategy of reducing reliance on legacy systems and would divert resources from enhancements to other statistics.
9. We therefore propose allowing methods and data improvements from the Prices transformation to feed into the RPI where they do not substantially affect those significant shortcomings of the RPI that we do not expect to be able to address before 2030. This allows us to continue to provide some predictability while also ensuring we devote resources to those areas which maximise scope for quality improvements across all our consumer price statistics.
10. The different elements of the Prices Transformation work have varying characteristics, we have therefore assessed each element separately. This means we have not considered the treatment of potential changes to the RPI beyond March 2025 (where we do not yet have clear plans for future transformation), but we hope a clear public explanation of our decisions will provide useful guidance to stakeholders about how we might consider future development work. The elements of the Prices transformation work that we are recommending are:
 - i. rents – new index calculation systems and methods (March 2024);
 - ii. used cars – new index calculation systems, methods and data (March 2024);
 - iii. groceries – new index calculation systems, methods and data (March 2025);
 - iv. scrutiny app – new quality assurance system (December 2023); and
 - v. local collection – new aggregation system (for traditionally collected data to allow integration with scanner data and reduce reliance on legacy systems) (March 2025).
11. Some of these changes form part of routine maintenance and system improvements (e.g. the Scrutiny app) whilst others (e.g. second-hand cars) are more significant methodological changes but do not substantially affect the known shortcomings of the RPI. Given the broader benefits to the quality of the RPI, we recommend that all the above changes should be proposed for implementation in the RPI.
12. This approach draws on the legal clarity provided by the Judicial Review of the RPI, reflects advice from Counsel and has been agreed by the National Statistician. This

approach is consistent with the previous decisions of the Chancellor. Given the significant interest in the RPI we ask for the Board to endorse this approach.

13. The Secretariat will make the legal advice available to Board members under separate cover.

Update prices transformation programme

14. As noted in updates on the ARIES Programme, we have made significant progress on our prices transformation programme:
 - i. In **March 2023** we published headline consumer price statistics including alternative data sources for the first time: Using **rail fares** transaction data significantly improved the quality and granularity of our outputs, moving from a single aggregated annual estimate to the publication of six new rail fares indices using 30 million monthly price points; as detailed in our [Impact analysis on transformation of UK consumer price statistics article](#).
 - ii. We plan to incorporate web-provided from Auto Trader into our headline measures for **second hand cars in March 2024**; increasing the number of monthly price points from around 35 popular car models at three different ages to around 400,000 car listing prices. We recently published indicative [information](#) on the updated research indices and methods improvements.
 - iii. For **private rental statistics**, we are on target to incorporate better use of existing data as well as improved methods and systems into [consumer price statistics in March 2024](#). We will publish impact analysis in November 2023 followed by a user engagement period. Given the importance of these data – with private rents and owner occupiers housing costs account for approximately 22 per cent of the CPIH basket of goods and services – we are planning several assurance events with external stakeholders in October and November 2023.
 - iv. **Groceries scanner data** for food, tobacco, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages – received directly from retailers – will follow in **March 2025**. This work should inform stronger narratives on the drivers of inflation, enable wider analytical applications and has created the infrastructure to onboard large new admin data sources at pace in future. We can already produce experimental indices using scanner data from three retailers using over 10 billion price points over a 25-month period. We have regularly published on progress and substantial methodological development work in this area, including most recently on [date trimming](#) for alternative data sources.
 - v. **Our systems and code to process traditional in-store locally collected data are also being updated**, as indices using new data and traditional data will need to be integrated at the lowest level to enable full market coverage. Uplifting processing systems for locally collected data will minimise reliance on legacy systems and improve the quality assurance of the end-to-end data journey.
 - vi. **Household Cost Indices (HCIs) will move from an annual to a quarterly output from November**. This will give users additional insights into how recent increases in inflation have affected different groups in society. This also provides an opportunity to restate the different use cases for our consumer price statistics.
 - vii. **We will shortly publish the improvement plan for Producer Price Indices**. In the near-term the plan is to rationalise the number of indices published in response to user needs and maintain the quality of our outputs. We also plan to refresh the sample, targeting those areas of greatest concern or user interest. Longer-term, the response notes our plans to move collection online and make greater use of alternative data sources as part of the ONS's wider legacy uplift programme.

Mike Hardie and Matt Corder, Prices Division, 18 September 2023

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)57

September update; Consultation on the future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales

Purpose

1. Following discussion at the May Board (SA(23)36), this paper provides an update on the consultation of the future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales outlining engagement to date and analysis plans.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to note:
 - i. the progress made on our engagement work and the feedback received to date;
 - ii. our continued engagement plans;
 - iii. outlined analysis plans; and
 - iv. timelines for internal engagement.

Background

3. On 29 June 2023, Office for National Statistics (ONS) launched a consultation on the future of population and migration statistics (FPMS) in England and Wales. Pre-consultation, we engaged a broad range of stakeholders via roundtable discussions, conferences and webinars, as well as other channels to collect feedback and raise awareness of the consultation. We have continued this engagement since the consultation launch to obtain feedback and encourage stakeholders to respond. We have assigned known stakeholders to three priority level groupings (category A-C).
4. Following consultation end (26 October) analysis will commence.

Discussion

Stakeholder engagement and feedback

5. Since 2 April 2023, we have had a high level of engagement including eight external roundtables, six internal roundtables, eight webinars and 105 other engagement activities including meetings and conferences. Through these we have met with 158 organisations. We have received 210 formal responses to the consultation by 14 September, the majority of these are individual responses. This exceeds the expected response at this stage of the consultation.
6. Within central government, we have met with all category A (highest priority) stakeholders and engaged with all category B stakeholders, meeting with a large majority and via their attendance at roundtables. We have also met separately with each of the devolved administrations.
7. Conversations with Cabinet Office and HM Treasury officials are underway to plan increased engagement with key Ministers and Special Advisors throughout the autumn, with a view to providing assurance on the development of our recommendation. Engagement will also seek to carefully manage the inter-dependencies between the recommendation and FPMS business case over this period.
8. Regular engagement with Cabinet Office at official level has continued throughout the consultation, and Cabinet Office Ministers are being kept apprised of consultation engagement, including numbers of responses received, with a particular focus on

ensuring the needs of Government users are being captured fully. Similar updates are being provided to Welsh Government.

9. We have outlined our plans for continued engagement for the remainder of the consultation to obtain maximum feedback. This includes targeted webinars, meetings, workshops, newsletters, media press releases and letter reminders to complete the consultation. We will continue to look for additional opportunities to engage with stakeholders during this period.
10. Inter-departmental discussions have generally been positive in tone, with departments welcoming the proposal for more timely and granular population and migration statistics with the caveat 'if the ambition can be achieved'.
11. Discussions have highlighted specific topics of interest from departments, and we have encouraged that these be reflected in consultation responses. For example, some users have raised the need to produce certain characteristic variables and produce consistency of data and trends when transitioning (step changes). From the data provider perspective, conversations during engagement have included ensuring continued and quality collection for use in the transformed system.
12. Permanent Secretaries have been sent letters and leaders within departments are generally engaged with the consultation. We are aware that Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Home Office, and Department for Business and Trade have briefed their ministers and we have engaged with all Government Statistical Service Heads of Profession (HoPs).
13. HoPs, Departmental Directors of Analysis (DDAN), and/or nominated senior contacts have been our first point of contact through which we have engaged with departments. They are playing a leading role in formulating consultation responses by collecting views from across their department.
14. We are currently analysing sentiment obtained from all engagement, including, emails, roundtables and meetings with stakeholders and data users. This is being collated within a 'Sentiment tracker' and the themes identified will be analysed alongside those identified from formal consultation responses. If an organisation does not provide a formal response to the consultation, then this engagement will be treated as their formal sentiment on the FPMS proposal.
15. Continued consultation engagement will be agile to response rates received in certain sectors and by sentiment tracking obtained from stakeholder engagement to date.
16. We are conducting quality assurance, with a group of consultation respondents, to ensure ease of access and content validity of the consultation materials.

Analysis plan

17. The analysis plan is a mixed-methods analysis which will combine quantitative analysis of consultation questions and qualitative feedback of formal consultation responses and feedback obtained from stakeholder engagement. As outlined above this is also feeding into our engagement plans:
18. Quantitative analysis;
 - i. descriptives; e.g. number of respondents, sector representation;
 - ii. quantitative questions; e.g. Closed questions, Likert scale responses; and
 - iii. natural Language Processing (NLP) tools will identify recurrent words in qualitative responses and provide counts.
19. Qualitative analysis:

- i. thematic analysis will be conducted by analysts to understand context surrounding terms identified via NLP allowing identification and analysis of patterns or themes within the data; and
- ii. thematic analysis will be conducted both across responses ((i) overall responses (ii) responses from Wales (iii) by sector) and within responses ((iv) per question).

20. Quality assurance;

- i. analysts will code each other's transcripts to check consistency of coding and determine inter-rater reliability; and
- ii. moderation sessions to check the narrative from the analysis with methods and subject expertise.

Conclusion

21. This paper has outlined our consultation engagement to date, a count of responses returned to date alongside a summary of feedback. We have outlined our plans for continued stakeholder engagement, analysis plan and internal engagement timeline delivery timeline. The consultation is progressing well, we expect many more responses before consultation close and further themes to emerge from the analysis. Following the consultation closure, we will provide an update to on the key findings with a view to discussing a recommendation with the Authority Board at the end of the year.
22. We will provide a more detailed update at the meeting on the sentiment to date and consultation response rates.

**Ruth Studley, Senior Responsible Officer for Census and Data Collection
Transformation Programme, Office for National Statistics**

**Dr Sophie John, Strategic Enablement & Development Division, Office for National
Statistics, 20 September 2023**