

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## Minutes

Thursday 26 October 2023  
London Office

### Hybrid Meeting

#### Members Present

Sir Robert Chote (Chair)  
Professor Sir John Aston  
Professor Sir Ian Diamond  
Ed Humpherson  
Sian Jones  
Nora Nanayakkara  
Alison Pritchard  
Professor Dame Carol Propper  
Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter  
Penny Young

#### Other Attendees

Rob Bumpstead  
Sally Jones  
Sarah Moore  
Emma Rourke (for item 9)  
Ruth Studley (for item 9)  
Tom Taylor  
Jennet Woolford (for item 9)  
Jason Yaxley (for item 8)

#### Apologies

Dr Jacob Abboud

## **1. Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies were noted from 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 28 September were agreed.

## **4. Report from the Authority Chair [SA(23)58]**

- 4.1 Non-Executive Directors had met prior to the Board meeting. They had discussed external communications by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) regarding the latest publication of labour market statistics.
- i. On 11 October Sir Robert Chote had taken part in the Civil Service Live One Big Thing event at the Newport office. The event had been hosted by Professor Sir Ian Diamond and speakers including Simon Case, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service, Alex Chisolm, Civil Service Chief Operating Officer and Permanent Secretary for the Cabinet Office and Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation and members of the ONS Executive.
  - ii. On 17 October Sir Robert alongside Ed Humpherson had met Jayne Brady, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and Philip Wales, Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.
  - iii. Sir Robert and Sir Ian had visited the National Situation Centre (SitCen) on 20 October.

## **5. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(23)59]**

- 5.1 Sir Ian provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting, highlighting the following:
- i. Sir Ian's attendance on 10 October at the Covid-19 Inquiry, covering the role of the Authority during the pandemic;
  - ii. ONS's role in partnership with SitCen including support in the event of a major crisis;
  - iii. the next publication of migration statistics scheduled for November;
  - iv. the statement made on 20 October by Andrew Bridgen, Member of Parliament, in the House of Commons, with reference to the calculation of excess deaths and excess deaths and Covid-19 vaccination statistics by ONS;
  - v. progress of the work by the expert working group in developing a single cross-government method for assessing excess mortality and improvements to coronial data, with a paper scheduled for the November Board meeting;
  - vi. progress of the Public Service Productivity Review by ONS and HM Treasury (HMT) working in collaboration with other government departments to help develop and improve methodology and data sources;
  - vii. ONS engagement regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the AI Safety Summit being hosted by the UK early November;
  - viii. the Civil Service People Survey had closed on 23 October. An update on ONS's results would be provided at the December Board meeting;
  - ix. the approach by Sir Ian and the Senior Leadership Team in managing the financial position with mitigating actions and controls in place to ensure a balanced budget at year end. The area of funding uncertainty was in relation to the Future of Population and Migration Statistics business case, which had been submitted to HMT for consideration; and
  - x. the Winter Covid-19 Infection Study, funded by the UK Health Security Agency, would start collecting data on Covid-19 Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test positivity at the beginning of November;

- 5.2 Sir Ian provided a comprehensive update regarding ONS's approach to the production of labour market statistics, specifically the recent publication that had been planned for 17 October. The Board heard that the declining response rate of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) had complicated the production of some of the indicators. In line with ONS's commitment to statistical quality, on 13 October ONS had announced a partial rescheduling of the UK labour market statistics publication from 17 to 24 October. Subsequently on 23 October ONS had announced that the LFS would not be published. Instead ONS had published a new series using additional data sources to produce adjusted levels and rates for employment, unemployment and inactivity for the two three-monthly periods, May to July 2023 and June to August 2023.
- 5.3 Sir Ian and Darren Morgan, Director of Economic Statistics, had met with colleagues from HM Treasury, the Bank of England and the Office for Budget Responsibility immediately prior to this meeting to discuss ONS's plans to address the current LFS issues. ONS had transferred resources to the LFS and had immediately re-introduced face to face interviewing. Discussions would continue with HMT to ensure there were no unintended consequences of diverting resources. The expectation was that the next publication of the LFS would be in December. The dual running of the LFS and the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) would continue with discussions by the Executive scheduled early next year regarding the timing for the full transition to the TLFS.
- 5.4 Board members discussed the update. The following points were considered in discussion:
- i. the regular updates to the Board on the delivery of the Ambitious Radical Inclusive Economic Statistics programme had set out the work by ONS to improve the quality of labour market statistics as part of the transformation of the LFS and the parallel running with the TLFS, which had been extended by six months. However, members had not been made aware of the extent to which the LFS response rate had fallen recently;
  - ii. the role of the Board in providing the right level of support for Sir Ian and the Executive in dealing with challenging live issues, in addition to their role in providing oversight and challenge;
  - iii. a proposal to introduce an issues log of areas of work members would like to retain a watching brief including such topics as the LFS and the ongoing review by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) in relation to Police Recorded Crime; and
  - iv. the opportunity for Sir Ian to brief members directly on his areas of concern, in addition to his regular bilateral meetings with Sir Robert.
- 5.5 The Board noted the update and the work on excess deaths methodology and improvements to coronial data. A further paper on excess mortality was scheduled for the November Board meeting. The Board agreed to the introduction of an issues log.
- 6. Report from the Director-General for Regulation [SA(23)60]**
- 6.1 Ed Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity. OSR had launched a review of the Code of Practice for Statistics with a call for evidence ongoing until 11 December and a range of stakeholder events planned. Areas of casework included a case related to the 20 miles per hour speed limit in Wales.
- 6.2 The Board heard that following ONS's decision to replace its planned LFS derived labour market statistics with a new series using additional data sources, OSR would undertake a short review of the statistics against the Code of Practice for Statistics.
- 7. Report from the Chair of the Regulation Committee**
- 7.1 The Chair reported on the work of the Regulation Committee which had last met on 12 October. Ahead of the main meeting Penny Babb and Sarah Henry presented a discussion item on the quality assurance of published data.

7.2 The Committee had considered:

- i. progress of OSR's gender identity programme of work, including the update of OSR's existing guidance on collecting and reporting data about sex in official statistics, which was being extended to include gender identity;
- ii. emerging findings from OSR's rapid review of revisions to Gross Domestic Product estimates produced by ONS;
- iii. an interim report on ONS's transformation of labour market statistics and the TLFS;
- iv. emerging findings from OSR's quality assessment of ONS's Profitability of UK Companies and Gross Operating Surplus of non-financial corporations statistics;
- v. emerging findings from OSR's review of the quality of police recorded crime statistics; and
- vi. OSR's policy and approach for cancelling or suspending accreditation of official statistics.

7.3 The Board noted the update.

## **8. Integrated Data Service [SA(23)61]**

8.1 Alison Pritchard and Jason Yaxley provided the Authority Board with an update on the Integrated Data Programme, responsible for delivery of the IDS.

8.2 The Board heard that that the areas of focus for the programme going forward included increasing the maturity of the IDS; improving the service through user feedback; increasing user numbers and data available on the service; and piloting transformational capabilities.

8.3 The IPA Gateway Review undertaken early October confirmed an amber delivery confidence. The report highlighted areas of good practice and areas that required urgent attention, which included clearly articulating the strategic vision for the IDS and the programme end state for March 2025. The full business case refresh was due for submission to HMT on 31 October, although funding was secured until the end of the programme.

8.4 Board members discussed the update. The following points were considered in discussion:

- i. the need to clearly articulate the vision for the IDS and ONS's accountability in terms of delivery;
- ii. the importance of engagement across government to realise the vision of the IDS, specifically the identification of Essential Shared Data Assets across all departments as part of the Digital and Data Strategy; and the work by the Central Digital and Data Office in developing the Data Marketplace;
- iii. ONS working in collaboration with the Cabinet Office to improve data governance to support data sharing across government.

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

## **9. Census 2023 [SA(23)62]**

9.1 Jennet Woolford and Ruth Studley provided the Authority Board with an update on the summary of published research, upcoming publications and plans for further research that demonstrates ONS's ability to deliver more frequent and timely statistics on the population of England and Wales.

9.2 The Board heard that throughout the consultation period extensive user engagement had been undertaken, working in collaboration with Local Authorities including Manchester City Council. It was noted that initial feedback from users was supportive of using administrative data to provide more timely and frequent statistics, albeit there had also been concern around the stability of data flows, data quality and the granularity that

could be provided going forward. User engagement would continue regarding the technical and statistical challenges and to ensure user needs were met.

- 9.3 Board members discussed the update. Members highlighted the need to understand the long term funding risks of the future of population and migration statistics and the ability of ONS to provide accurate population data given the reliance on departments continuing to share data. There were potential issues around inclusivity of data in hard to reach groups.
- 9.4 The Board would remain engaged as the work progressed. As part of the NED Programme of Activities a session was scheduled on 21 November ahead of a further paper to the Board in November.

## **10. Any Other Business**

- 10.1 The Board noted the amendment to the Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2017 as approved by Sir Ian.
- 10.2 The Board would next meet on 30 November.

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**  
**Agenda**  
**26 October, 11.30-14.30**  
**London Boardroom, Hybrid Meeting**

**Chair:** Sir Robert Chote

**Apologies:** Jacob Abboud

**Attendees:** Will Marks (for item 3), Emma Rourke (for item 7), Ruth Studley (for item 7),  
 Jennet Woolford (for item 7), Jason Yaxley (for item 6)

**NED Session: 11.00- 11.30**

1 11.30-11.35 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting  Declarations of interest	Meeting of 28 September 2023
2 11.35-11.45 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	SA(23)58 Sir Robert Chote
3 11.45-12.30 45 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(23)59 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond Will Marks
4 12.30-12.40 10 mins	Report from the Director General for Regulation	SA(23)60 Ed Humpherson
5 12.40-12.50 10 mins	Report from Committee Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation Committee</li> </ul>	Oral update Penny Young
12.50-13.00 10 mins	Break	
6 13.00-13.20 20 mins	Integrated Data Service	SA(23)61 Alison Pritchard Jason Yaxley
7 13.20-14.15 55 mins	Census 2023	SA(23)62 Jennet Woolford Emma Rourke Ruth Studley
8 14.15-14.30 15 mins	Any Other Business	

**Next meeting: Thursday, 30 November 2023, London Boardroom**

## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

### AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)58

### *Chair's Report, October 2023*

#### **Purpose**

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

#### **Review of recent activities**

2. On 27 September, I spoke at an Office for National Statistics (ONS) staff event in support of the One Big Thing initiative, of which this year's theme is 'data'. One Big Thing is a Civil Service-wide initiative which encourages all Civil Servants to complete one day's training on the topic. In my introduction, I reflected on the importance of data throughout my career, and welcomed the choice of this year's theme which demonstrates the government's recognition of the power and importance of data across all public service. Staff also heard from the National Statistician, Mike Keoghan, and three ONS colleagues about the innovative ways that they work with data. On 27 September I also met with the ONS team leading the review of public sector productivity for a presentation on progress to date and next steps.
3. On 9 October, I attended a workshop with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) alongside other chairs and non-executive directors to discuss and advise on best practice for non-executive boards while the ICO undergoes a transition of governance.
4. On 11 October, I took part in the Civil Service Live One Big Thing event at the Newport office. This was a hybrid event open to the whole of the Civil Service, with 94 people attending in person and a total of 2183 joining online for sessions throughout the day. The event was hosted by the National Statistician and consisted of speaker sessions, drop-in surgeries and market stalls. Speakers included Simon Case, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service; Alex Chisholm, Civil Service Chief Operating Officer and Permanent Secretary for the Cabinet Office; the Director General for Regulation and members of the ONS executive. I took part in an interactive panel session alongside Alex Chisholm and Jane Whitaker, Director of Knowledge, Analysis and Intelligence at His Majesty's Revenue and Customs, hosted by Darren Morgan, ONS Director of Economic Statistics, reflecting on the data challenges presented by the pandemic. I also held a bilateral meeting with Alex Chisholm during the day.
5. On 12 October, I took part in a strategic risk workshop alongside the other non-executive directors led by Natalie Tarr, Head of Assurance, and our external partners, EY. The workshop discussed the Authority's strategic risk profile and the outcomes of the executive-level risk workshop. Following the workshop, we held another good meeting of the Regulation Committee. Agenda items included an update on quality, Office for Statistics Regulation's (OSR) rapid review of revisions to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates, sex and gender identity, and transformation of the Labour Force Survey.
6. On 17 October, Ed Humpherson and I met with Jayne Brady, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, and Philip Wales, chief executive of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. This meeting was in response to OSR's review of the State of the Statistical System to reflect on the role of statistics and evidence in Northern Ireland. The meeting discussed strengths and challenges of the Northern Irish system, embedding intelligent transparency principles, and the importance of a solid evidence base to inform policy-making.

7. I also held my regular catch-ups with the National Statistician, Director General for Regulation, Chief of Staff, Deputy Chair, and the Chair of the Regulation Committee.

**Upcoming activities**

8. On 20 October, I will be attending the National Situation Centre (SitCen) with the National Statistician for a visit. In addition to a general overview of SitCen's purpose and outputs, the proposed agenda also includes a presentation on lessons learned from the pandemic and the ONS-SitCen partnership which includes crisis support.
9. I will also be participating in a cross-union meeting of fiscal watchdogs and forecasters on 25 October, where topics will include GDP revisions and population projections.

**Sir Robert Chote, Chair, 19 October 2023**

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)59

### *Chief Executive's Report, October 2023*

#### **Purpose**

1. This provides the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) with an overview of activity for October 2023.

#### **Summary**

2. October has been an extremely busy month for the office with key events such as an appearance at the **COVID-19 Inquiry** and a day of **data training** for the whole Civil Service at our Newport office, hosted by me, Simon Case and Alex Chisholm – attended by over 1500 people. I have also delivered a session to all Permanent Secretaries as part of **One Big Thing**. Finally, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the UK Health Security Agency and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) means a new COVID-19 surveillance survey will be stood up over Winter providing readily available data to decision makers.

#### **Review of recent activities**

3. As part of Module 2 of the **COVID-19 Inquiry**, examining UK decision making and political structures, I appeared before the Inquiry on 10 October. Counsel to the Inquiry questioned me regarding the two witness statements that I had submitted to the Inquiry. I covered the role of the UK Statistics Authority (the Authority) during the pandemic, data and insights delivered, relationships with the Government, Devolved Administrations and other key partners, lessons learned and key ONS data covering mortality, infections and long Covid amongst other topics. The transcript is now available online. The hearings for the Module will run until December and we will respond to any further requests.
4. We hosted two special hybrid events as part of the Civil Service initiative **One Big Thing**, which this year encourages colleagues to harness the power of data. The two sessions were highly successful and saw participation from across the ONS and the wider Civil Service, covering topics that included data-driven decision-making, the importance of data quality, and the impact data has on audiences. Simon Case and Alex Chisholm joined me in Newport for the day, and I also delivered a special data themed masterclass with all Permanent Secretaries alongside Tim Harford.
5. Through August and September, we have seen steady progress with our enhanced **cost control mechanisms** flowing through into our figures. As planned, we have seen a managed reduction in staff and forecast third-party expenditure alongside increases in strategically aligned income. Halfway through the year, our run-rate suggests a modest under-expenditure at year end, but this is just one forecasting scenario that we use and we are still carrying a funding risk for Future of Population and Migration Statistics (FPMS) (see below).
6. Maintaining our **current trajectory places us in good shape to live within our budget for next year** as well as newly announced limits on civil service headcount. As such, preparations for 2024/25 business planning and the next spending review are now underway with some initial workshops scheduled to consider situational context and organisational priorities in line with the Authority's Strategy. At the same time, we are reviewing our strategic risk profile to ensure that it remains relevant and focused on the key areas of challenge for the organisation.
7. On 29 September we published **Quarterly National Accounts**, Sector Accounts, Balance of Payments and related releases consistent with the Blue Book and Pink Book

(to be published on 31 October). These are some of the main routes through which our developments and improvements flow into published statistics. This is a major milestone for the implementation of change into the National Accounts which many teams across Economic Statistics Change contributed to significantly.

8. The latest quarterly **Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates** were also published on 29 September and saw revisions to only one of the latest six quarters of data, with our revision performance now matching closely to expectations from pre-pandemic. We proactively increased our external communications, with additional briefing sessions arranged for media (a new one at 9am after our standard 7am briefing) and also for wider users with a well-received webinar at 9:30am on the day, with over 150 people attending. We also included new innovative pre-recorded video content for the first time which gained traction across our social media channels.
9. As has been known for some time, response rates for some key ONS household surveys have been falling. Specifically, this has complicated the production of some of the indicators based on the existing **Labour Force Survey (LFS)**. While we transition to the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS), in the meantime, the publication of the next labour market statistics (due 17 October) is being delayed until 24 October to give us additional time to produce the best possible estimates of the labour market using available data sources. We are well aware of the risks this brings and is the first time we have intervened in the labour market figure, however we continue to work hard on bringing in admin data and insight from the TLFS pilot to help us reach the most accurate number.
10. Our **labour market transformation** continues to progress with further data from the TLFS being shared with our key external users for additional Quality Assurance and analysis. A full assessment of current confidence on performance and quality from the TLFS will be made on 23 October, which will begin informing our confidence to decommission the LFS in early 2024. The outcomes of this initial assessment will be reported to the Executive Committee in October. A final decision will be made in January 2024. If the decision is made to decommission the LFS as planned the first publications for labour market outputs using TLFS will be March 24.
11. As part of the TLFS, we successfully implemented updates to the survey during this month including key improvements on the measurement of employment, the self-employed and on earnings based on lessons so far during the parallel run.
12. The **Public Service Productivity Review (PSPR)**, commissioned by the Chancellor, is making progress against initial milestones. Our baselines and projections for long-term growth estimates are being developed and refined in ahead of the Autumn Statement. New public sector versions of our Time Use Survey and Management and Expectations Survey are under development, and due to go into the field in 2024. We have been collaborating with Other Government Departments on improvements to the Public Services Productivity estimates for Spring 2024, having met with Department for Education, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Ministry of Defence. A comms plan is being actioned, and the web page went live on 13 October.
13. The ONS have led the organisation of three international “sprints” on the theme of **Beyond GDP** through the United Nations Network of Economic Statistics, with hundreds of attendees from National Statistic Institutes across the world. We are now working on the report to the United Nations Security Council in May 2024 to help shape the international agenda on Beyond GDP and Wellbeing. We also held a well-attended series of Beyond GDP workshops with the Royal Statistical Society, aimed at linking up the international conversation with the UK conversation. We had over 1000 registrations across the three events.

14. The **Integrated Data Service** reached a major milestone at the end of September, as the programme received formal confirmation of successful Trusted Research Environment accreditation for data provision under the Digital Economy Act 2017 (DEA). The programme has initiated an assessment of the activities required to pursue accreditation for data preparation (the ability to receive data for matching, linking and de-identification). The programme also underwent an Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) Gateway Review in October and confirmed an Amber delivery confidence rating. The report highlighted several areas of 'good practice' including broad support of the aims of the Integrated Data Programme (IDP) from across those stakeholders interviewed, in addition to a few recommended areas for improvement.
15. At the time of writing, we had received a total of 276 responses to the **Future of Population and Migration Statistics Consultation**. Some 269 responses are in English and seven in Welsh. 202 are individual responses, 31 from local government and eight from Central Government. Engagement continues to ensure responses from all areas and categories and reminders were sent with a month left to respond. Overall, sentiment remains generally supportive of the proposal though is not universal.
16. The Future of Population, Migration and Social Statistics programme has had its first IPA **gateway review** which was one of the conditions to further funding set by HMT. The draft report is largely positive and has returned an Amber status with six recommendations for consideration by the team, all of which are areas the team were already working towards. The Outline Business Case refresh is on track for submission on 13 October.
17. In Population Statistics Directorate have been preparing a range of publications for 23 November. These include rebased **population and migration statistics** from 2012 to 2022 to align our statistics between censuses and provide the latest official estimates of the population and international migration.
18. The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) report on the 'Review of statistics on **gender identity** based on data collected as part of the 2021 England and Wales Census' was published on Monday. This was followed by a blog from Emma Rourke, and an exchange of letters between OSR and ONS, which have been published. There was media coverage in the Times and our communications team are monitoring for further media pick-up. Colleagues are planning how to address the recommendations in the report and will ensure an update is published within four weeks as asked within the report. The government is also launching a review into the use of sex and gender questions in scientific research and statistics, including in public bodies. We are awaiting high-level Terms of Reference and will be engaging with Cabinet Office and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology to understand the scope.
19. The **Winter COVID-19 Infection Study** (WCIS) will start collecting data on COVID-19 Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test positivity at the beginning of November, along with questionnaire data covering topics such as symptoms and whether usual activities/work/education or use of healthcare services have been affected due to illness. We began sending out invitations to former COVID-19 Infection Survey participants inviting them to sign-up to the new study on 9 October. We will be monitoring the numbers signing up over the next two weeks.
20. We are working on several projects to improve **timely access to health data**. This includes working with National Health Service (NHS) England on linked health data, engaging the Chief Coroner to obtain toxicology data for drug-related deaths, and improving timeliness of our maternity data in response to ministerial priorities at DHSC. Several projects are also exploring the use of linked data, such as on health drivers of inactivity and inequalities in accident and emergency department attendance.

21. Philippa Bonay, Director for Operations, has been asked by the Head of Place for Wales to lead the development of a **Wales Network for HR Directors**. In September, we hosted the inaugural session at our Newport office; bringing together both cross-Civil Service and wider Public Sector HR Directors to share best practice and discuss common challenges. The event was a great success, with significant enthusiasm from attendees which has led to an uplift in membership requests.
22. On **security**, following the Integrated Data Service (IDS) achieving DEA accreditation, meetings are being arranged with His Majesty's Revenue and Customs to discuss further assurance of IDS security to facilitate data sharing. This will be used as a pilot to establish a framework and repeat the same process with other key data controllers (such as DWP). On DWP, conversations are continuing around the protective monitoring requirements for our analytical and data engineering environment for supply of the minimum viable data product.
23. Internationally, the ONS hosted the **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Conference of European Statisticians Bureau** meeting this week in Cardiff, with representatives attending from across the global statistical system. The Bureau guides the direction of statistical work across the UNECE region and beyond, identifying upcoming opportunities and potential challenges. The ONS presented work on alternative or 'supplementary' population bases as well as data ethics and social acceptability. Mike Keoghan represented ONS on the second day of the meeting, making several interventions on behalf of the UK and ensuring that we continue to play a leading role.
24. We welcomed colleagues from the **Swiss Federal Statistical Office** to Marsham Street on 20 September, including Director General Georges-Simon Ulrich and his leadership team. Discussions covered a range of topics including data ethics, data science, and the evolving data landscape. Mike Keoghan and I joined the group for a working lunch which focused on data linkage and the role of the ONS during the COVID-19 pandemic.
25. September into early October has been a significant period for engagement with Westminster **Select Committees**. There was an oral evidence session with Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) as well as written submissions of various kinds to PACAC, the Welsh Affairs Committee, the Women and Equalities Committee, the Standards in Public Life Committee, the Treasury Committee, the Transport Committee and the Health and Social Care committee. We are now preparing for UK Parliament Week which will take place between 6-12 November with several events planned.
26. Colleagues in **Communications and Digital Publishing** have set out a new website fair use policy, working closely with Reuters and other agencies to reduce pressure on our website at the point of our key releases. The policy details our responsibility to ensure equal access and gives us protection to act swiftly in case of breach.
27. Communications and Digital Publishing's new 'voices' content approach brought to life Census 2021 statistics on the centenarian population in England and Wales. Through partnering **with Age UK**, we were able to speak to centenarians who shared their stories alongside the statistics in our article, achieving positive media pick-up.
28. Welsh Government has asked the Authority to review an amendment to the **Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2017**, to designate statistics produced by the newly established Commission for Tertiary Education and Research as official statistics as set out by the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007. The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research will be responsible for the strategy, funding and oversight of the further education, higher education, adult education and community learning, and apprenticeships, sectors in Wales. Welsh Government statisticians have been working with those responsible for establishing the new organisation to ensure the requirements

of the Code of Practice for Statistics are understood. The National Statistician has approved this amendment.

29. Finally, the **ONS Welsh language** scheme and its accompanying action plan have been formally approved by the Welsh Language Commissioner. This means that the updated scheme will be officially launched and published on 16 October and a comprehensive communications and implementation plan will facilitate the launch. The Welsh Language Commissioner has praised the updated scheme and has expressed that she would like to arrange a visit to the Newport office as a result. Officials from the Commissioner's office have also shared praise for the scheme in being proactive, as well as the work of the Welsh Language Team in managing to achieve a great level of change over the last year.

**Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, 18 October 2023**

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)60

### *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 split into our ongoing and published work:
  - i. Ongoing work:
    - **The Code of Practice (the Code) review:** Since the last Board meeting, we held our first public panel session, which was on maintaining data quality. This panel focused on the pressures and challenges facing the quality of research and statistics, with panel members from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), National Health Service (NHS) Wales and Research Data Scotland. We had 159 attendees and received some great feedback, along with plenty of food for thought about how we could potentially strengthen the Code. Last week we held the second session on Data ethics and AI: 18 October 2023. Non-Executive directors are welcome to join the upcoming session on [Changing user demands for data: 23 November 2023](#).
    - **Gross Domestic Product Review:** We presented the initial findings of our Rapid Review to the Regulation Committee this month. The report will be finalised following the discussion with committee members and we are aiming to publish in mid-November.
    - **Sex and Gender:** The Regulation Committee has approved our plans to update our guidance on collecting and reporting sex data and gender identity data. Though our updated guidance is for statistics producers, we will adopt a wider engagement approach, which will include holding round tables with ONS, the Devolved Administrations and other key statistics producers in October and November. We will also be undertaking engagement to hear wider views from others outside of production. We aim to publish our updated guidance in January 2024.
  - ii. Published work:
    - **Gender Identity:** Our interim report from our [review of statistics on Gender identity](#) was published this month. We received a positive response from ONS which we published on our website.
    - We updated our guide to the [UK Statistical System](#) with a new section on 'Official Statistics'. We will continue to periodically update this guide as appropriate with the most up to date information.

#### Casework

3. We have received 123 cases so far in 2023/24, including 13 cases since the last meeting. Since the last Board, we received concerns regarding the 20 miles per hour speed limit in Wales, emissions, inflation, gambling affordability checks and fixed penalty notice appeals. We have closed six cases since the last meeting responding privately on knife crime statistics, NHS waiting lists, gambling related deaths, and secondary school places.

### Wider reach

4. I attended the One Big thing initiative in Newport this month speaking about data quality and ethics. I also attended the Regulatory Policy Institute conference, and I did a session for Evaluation Month on 'why I love evaluation'.
5. **Statistically speaking:** I was invited to talk on the Statistically Speaking podcast, alongside David Spiegelhalter, around data misuse and combatting misinformation. The podcast is now [live](#).

### Issues on my mind

6. **Code of Practice review:** Following the successful sessions on the Code review, I am now looking ahead to reviewing the views and feedback we have heard. The [call for evidence](#) will remain open until 11 December and the Board can expect to receive updates in the new year.
7. **Authority Review:** The review is still very much on my mind as we await the findings of Denise Lievesley's review. We consider that our input to the review has been comprehensive and well received.

**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, 18 October 2023**

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)61

### *Integrated Data Service – October 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 Authority Board (the Board) are invited to note:
  - i. the programme's overall Amber RAG status;
  - ii. imminent submission of the Full Business Case update to His Majesty's Treasury (HMT);
  - iii. the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) Gateway 0 Review; and
  - iv. a critical piece of analysis entitled "Understanding the drivers of economic activity" went live in September, using indexed versions of key datasets to enable faster and more flexible linkage;

#### **Background**

3. The IDS remains in Public Beta; with a focus on scaling up the number of use cases and accredited users, following successful Digital Economy Act 2017 (DEA) accreditation.

#### **Discussion**

##### Programme Update

4. The programme is currently tracking at **Amber**, which aligns with the recent external gateway assurance delivery confidence assessment.
5. As we enter Quarter 3, programme focus will be on:
  - i. improving the service through user feedback;
  - ii. delivering our critical enablers;
  - iii. increasing the maturity of IDS;
  - iv. increasing user number and data available on the service; and
  - v. defining and piloting transformational capabilities.

##### DEA Accreditation update

6. Following successful DEA accreditation for data provision, the programme has subsequently initiated an assessment of the activities required to pursue DEA accreditation for data preparation, which will support the service to receive data for matching, linking and de-identification. This assessment will inform the strategy, approach and associated timescales. As previously mentioned, these activities are currently performed elsewhere such as in the Data Access Platform (DAP).

##### Full Business Case Refresh

7. This is IDP's last business case to HMT in this investment period (Spending Review 2021), as funding is secured to the end of March 2025.
8. The programme has used this update to:
  - i. strengthen benefit profiles and the economic inputs (assumptions) using all available evidence;

- ii. set out what transformation has been delivered alongside the IDS value propositions over the past 12 months and what it intends to deliver in the remaining investment period; and
  - iii. begin to set out potential funding options beyond March 2025 and present some high-level use cases for the IDS.
9. Ahead of the Full Business Case Review (FBCR) submission to HMT on 31 October, the programme has worked with programme board members, IPA, Office for National Statistics' (ONS) key stakeholders and Finance leads. The final FBCR was approved at October's Investment Delivery Assurance Group and Portfolio Investment Committee.

#### IPA Gate review

10. The programme underwent the IPA Gateway 0 Review from 2-5 October 2023.
11. The final Review Report was delivered the week of 9 October 2023 and confirmed an 'Amber' delivery confidence.
12. The report highlighted key areas of 'good practice' including broad support of the aims of the IDP from across those stakeholders interviewed; that IDP securing the first stage of DEA accreditation was a tangible success; and that recently there had been notable recent improvements in engagement on a range of topics. In particular, the review team saw evidence of an improved focus on user considerations and the experiences of enrolling users and projects onto IDS. The report also highlighted a number of areas for improvement including articulation of the strategic vision, resolving blockers around department data sharing and differing views around user needs.

#### Priority Analysis and Developing the Data Pipeline

13. In September, a critical piece of analysis entitled "Understanding the drivers of economic activity" went live on the platform. This ground-breaking research conducted by ONS analysts will analyse Labour Force Survey, Hospital Episodes Statistics and General Practitioner Episodes Statistics (GPES) datasets to understand the link between health conditions and labour market inactivity. All datasets have been indexed against the Demographic Index.
14. This approach to integrating data will allow the analyst to join the data together in a variety of combinations without the data needing to be reengineered (which is important when GPES contains over eight billion rows) and will help HMT and Number 10 to shape rapid, targeted policy to address a top governmental priority; helping more people re-enter the labour market.
15. As mentioned last month, the programme has been streamlining processes to expedite data acquisition and project application. In response to challenges regarding the utilisation of open source/low sensitivity data, the programme has agreed a lighter touch approach for the ingestion of such assets in the future. This will support the use of open-source data and that future projects can ingest low sensitivity data at a greatly increased pace.
16. The use of open-source data in addition to sensitive public sector data is a common need, and this amendment will mean that future projects can ingest low sensitivity data at greatly increased pace.
17. The programme seen the first request for outputs to be exported from external projects. Department for Health and Social Care (Deprivation) and Welsh Government (Welsh language ability) have completed the initial phase of their research, and outputs are going through Statistical Disclosure Control prior to egress. The publication of these findings will be addressed in next month's paper.
18. IDS has four new projects past all their governance requirements, which when live with take us to 93 active users. This will mean the service will have had a total number of 146

users, with 14 of those accounts now closed as those researchers have left projects). This total number of users will be reported in the dashboard from next month.

19. The programme continues to deliver on the priorities on data ingestion into IDS for the next three months. 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.
20. As part of broadening routes to acquiring new projects, the programme presented to Departmental Directors of Analysis (DDANs) in October, highlighting the projects now live on IDS, especially the health and economic inactivity project, to generate a second round of Use Cases from departments.
21. The programme is also establishing the agreement of data owners to transparently publicise the available data on IDS, including Census 2021, now DEA accreditation has been secured. The programme is revamping the IDS website to provide a “front door” for analysts to proactively approach the IDS with their own project applications.

#### Reviewing the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

22. The KPI dashboard provides a representation of the Pipeline of Future Analyses.
23. The IDS dashboard provides a representation of the Pipeline of Future Analyses. The number of users has remained stable despite the addition of the newly ingested Health and Labour Markets analysis as three users have left, and three users have joined. There has been an increase of three datasets available on the platform and we are expecting four new datasets and 46 SRS-IDS transition datasets to be ingested by the end of November, bringing the service to 22 datasets.

**Alison Pritchard, Deputy National Statistician for Data Capability, Integrated Data Programme, 17 October 2023**

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(23)62

### ***October update: Consultation on the future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales***

#### **Purpose**

1. This paper provides a summary of the published research, upcoming publications and our plans for further research that will provide this evidence base.

#### **Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority Board (the Board) are invited to note the progress made to date and the extent of our evidence base.

#### **Background**

3. The National Statistician's recommendation on the future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales will be underpinned by our collective body of research and evidence and informed by the findings of the public consultation.
4. Since May, we have published a series of statistical releases that demonstrate our ability to produce more timely statistics on the population of England and Wales. These statistics can sustain a better level of quality over time than the mid-year estimates based on the cohort component method and form the research evidence base for users to assess the future population and migration statistics proposal as outlined in the Consultation Document.
5. Our users have told us that they want more timely population and migration statistics. In May, to demonstrate our ability to deliver this, we published provisional admin-based migration estimates (ABMEs) five months after the reference period. In June, we delivered provisional admin-based population estimates (ABPE) for mid-2022, five months earlier than the official estimates. These earlier provisional estimates use past trends to inform assumptions about peoples' behaviours. The estimates will be updated to final estimates once more up-to-date data are available to provide information on actual behaviours.
6. To demonstrate our ability to meet user needs for estimates at sub-Local Authority geographies we have published mid-2021 lower-level super-output area (LSOA) ABPEs for comparison against Census 2021.
7. Our methods also allow us to use local sources of data which we have been exploring through new collaborative working with pilot Local Authorities (LA). This has been very well received by LA users, for example working with Manchester City Council on local data to understand areas of new build apartment blocks and early work with Sandwell to explore locally held data on the Sikh community.
8. In recognition of the complexities within the Dynamic Population Model (DPM) we created a short video that explains the underlying principals, aimed at a wider user base and shared with our extensive stakeholder lists. For those seeking more detailed information and assurance around the methodology within the DPM, we held a half day workshop in September, that enabled over 100 cross-government statisticians to question and probe the proposed statistical system.
9. We have published a suite of research to demonstrate how we can meet known user needs for information on the characteristics of the population:
  - i. improving existing outputs:

- admin based housing and ethnicity statistics (small area univariate and multivariate outputs); and
  - admin based occupied address (household) estimates.
- ii. the potential of longitudinal outputs to understand life outcomes:
    - Refugee Integration Outcomes Cohort Study;
    - Longitudinal Outcome of a COVID-19 infection; and
    - Updated veteran estimates.
  - iii. meeting unmet user needs:
    - small area multivariate admin-based income statistics;
    - population 24/7: Daytime population base proof of concept; and
    - admin based morbidity research.
  - iv. frameworks for quality assessment/improvements:
    - conceptual frameworks for Population and Migration Statistics;
    - a quality strategy for the future population and migration statistics system; and
    - quality framework for characteristics (including summary of methods for improving quality gaps).
10. The progress towards small area characteristics has been illustrated through case studies for Ceredigion, Blackpool, Cambridge, Manchester, and London Borough Newham. We also published small-area characteristics data for all LAs. These case studies demonstrate what we can learn about small areas using our admin-based statistics. The case studies provide comparisons between admin-based statistics and Census 2021 estimates for population, population by ethnic group, housing, and households. These generally show a high level of agreement and highlight areas for future research, for example adjusting for missing information on ethnicity.
  11. Our published research demonstrates that admin data provides good coverage for some topics, for example income and housing characteristics. However, there is a need to mature our research and methods on topics such as occupation and national identity.
  12. Throughout the consultation period we have engaged with a breadth of users and are collating their feedback around the ability of the proposal to meet their current and future statistical needs. Users are engaging with the details of the proposal and using the published research to inform their assessment of the impact on their user needs. Initial feedback from users has been supportive of the direction of travel and the aspiration to move to an administrative data-based statistical model. As the consultation has progressed, this sentiment remains strong, but as users have explored the proposal in more detail concerns around the stability of data flows, data quality, and the granularity that can be provided using current data sources are being surfaced and articulated both within the sentiment being captured through engagement and in the responses received to date (286 formal responses received 9 October 2023). This has resulted in some respondents indicating their preference for the continuation of a census.
  13. Since May, the Methodology Assurance Review Panel, chaired by Professor Sir Bernard Silverman has met three times in relation to Population Statistics Transformation. The meetings in May and June were information sessions focused on the consultation document and the upcoming recommendation, and the session in October included an update on the responses to the consultation and a statistical design paper on coverage of stock estimates, which feed into the Dynamic Population Model method.

### Next steps

14. Our work to develop the proposed administrative data-based system continues and, in line with our funding arrangements with His Majesty's Treasury, has focused on the ability to produce administrative-based migration and population estimates.
15. On 23 November, we will publish new and updated Admin-Based Migration Estimates, incorporating new methods and data sources as well as providing the reason people

immigrate and emigrate to and from the UK. For the first time, this will also include estimates of the net migration of students.

16. In December, we will publish updated Admin-Based Population Estimates from the Dynamic Population Model (DPM) for comparison with the cohort-component mid-2022 population estimates and to provide provisional estimates for mid-2023. From this point forward our official population estimates will be produced using the DPM.
17. We are continuing to develop our methods and improve the quality of the data feeding into the models, working with data providers where appropriate. Some key improvements include:
  - i. developing a coverage adjustment and estimation method to work alongside our Statistical Population Datasets, the key population stock measure informing the ABPEs;
  - ii. developing uncertainty measures for our international and internal migration flows, and a framework for producing population estimates at lower levels of geography; and
  - iii. considering how different population bases could be produced from the DPM estimation frameworks.
18. Our forward research plan continues to have user needs at the core and will be revised and reprioritised in line with the consultation recommendations and outcomes.
19. Our risk planning is actively managing the concerns around the data flows. We anticipate any recommendation being conditional on regular, stable data flows across government. The latest Infrastructure and Projects Authority review of Future of Population and Migration Statistics also raised this and recommended we continue the approach we are taking to mitigate this.
20. Our plan therefore focuses on the following key user needs:
  - i. our statistics to be consistent in their quality over time and be produced on a more frequent and timelier basis to help quickly detect changes in population and housing characteristics;
  - ii. build flexibility and resilience into our methods, processes and data pipelines to enable us to be sustainable and responsive to future and emerging needs; and
  - iii. continue development of information on characteristics of the population, including methods for adjusting for missing values.

### **Conclusion**

21. Our published suite of research and analysis demonstrates our ability to deliver more frequent and timely statistics on the population of England and Wales. Our upcoming publications and research plans set out how we will rise to the remaining challenges. This, together with the findings of the public consultation, will form the basis of the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of population and migration statistics. Our future work programme will continue to be informed by user needs as identified through the consultation and ongoing user engagement.

**Jen Woolford, Population Statistics Directorate and Fiona Dawe, Strategic Enablement and Development Division, 18 October 2023**