

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## *Minutes*

**Thursday 21 March 2024**

**Remote Teams Meeting**

### **Members Present**

Sir Robert Chote (Chair)  
Professor Sir John Aston  
Professor Sir Ian Diamond  
Ed Humpherson  
Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter  
Penny Young

### **Other Attendees**

Robert Bumpstead  
Sally Jones  
Sarah Moore  
Jane Naylor (for item 9)  
Victoria Obudulu (for item 9)  
Emma Rourke (for item 9)  
Tom Taylor  
Lucy Vickers (for item 9)  
Jason Yaxley (for item 10)

### **Apologies**

Dr Jacob Abboud  
Sian Jones  
Nora Nanayakkara  
Alison Pritchard  
Professor Dame Carol Propper

## **1. Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies were noted from Dr Jacob Abboud, Sian Jones, Alison Pritchard, Professor Carol Propper and Nora Nanayakkara.

## **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 29 February were agreed.

## **4. Report from the Authority Chair**

- 4.1 Non-Executive Directors had met before the meeting. They had discussed topics including the current recruitment for Non-Executive Directors, the Chair's departure from the Garrick Club, quoracy of the meeting and business planning, specifically in relation to the support provided for the Authority function. The Chair noted that the Board Authority function had been well supported by the Central Policy Secretariat and this support should continue. The Authority would be increasingly visible with the ownership of the Statistical Assembly, as set out in the Lievesley Review.

- 4.2 The Chair noted that the meeting was inquorate. In accordance with the Authority Board Standing Order the meeting could continue in an advisory capacity with any decisions endorsed at the next meeting. As the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) Business Plans were due for publication ahead of the April Board it was agreed that they would be circulated for comment and final agreement in correspondence.

- 4.3 The Chair reported on his recent activities since the Board last met. Sir Robert had met with Baroness Neville-Rolfe, Minister of State for the Cabinet Office, to discuss the Non-Executive Director appointment process, which had received a high level of interest. The Cabinet Office may extend the closing date for applications.

- 4.4 The review by Professor Denise Lievesley and the government response had been published on 12 March. Prof. Lievesley had given evidence on the report to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the same day. The Board was scheduled to discuss the report and the Authority's response at the May meeting. Work was already underway across OSR and ONS and including early discussions with the Royal Statistical Society to help shape the Statistical Assembly.

- 4.5 On 20 March Sir Robert had met members of the new Board of Directors of the Somalia National Bureau of Statistics.

- 4.6 Sir Robert on behalf of the Board paid warm tribute to Robert Bumpstead who had led the Secretariat since the creation of the Authority becoming the Chief of Staff in 2016. Rob had attended the majority of Board meetings, from the first to today's meeting being his 168<sup>th</sup>. Rob had worked with four Authority Chairs and four National Statisticians and had been at the centre of the biggest decisions made by the Board. Sir Robert noted his personal thanks to Rob for the enormously valuable support and advice he had provided to him and the Board over the years. Rob was highly regarded by his Central Policy Secretariat team and across the organisation. Rob responded noting that it had been a pleasure to work with all Chairs and National Statisticians and with the Board, working across the four nations of the UK.

## **5. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(24)12]**

- 5.1 Sir Ian provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting, highlighting the following:
- i. phase one of hybrid working with colleagues spending 20 per cent of their time in the office from January to end of March 2024 with a move towards 40 percent on site

working from April. Colleagues had been supported throughout the transition. Following agreement by the Senior Leadership Team additional flexibility would be provided for those who joined the organisation from 1 March 2020 with commute times of an hour or more.

- ii. the year-end financial position was forecast to be a small under expenditure following careful management throughout the year by the finance team led by Tom Taylor alongside the Senior Leadership Team;
  - iii. business planning for 2024/25 was near completion with the draft ONS Business Plan scheduled for discussion at this meeting;
  - iv. progress towards the future of population and migration statistics recommendation would include a series of seminars by Professor Sir Ian Diamond across the four nations. The aim was to share the draft recommendation for comment with Board members before Easter;
  - v. the International Steering Group formed in May 2022 for Scotland's Census 2022 had met for the last time on 14 March. The group had provided assurance, direction and support to National Records of Scotland in delivery of Scotland's Census.
  - vi. Sir Ian was scheduled to meet a number of Ministers in the coming months including Scotland's Deputy First Minister and the Minister of State for Trade Policy in the Department for Business and Trade.
  - vii. as part of the Ambitious, Radical, Inclusive Economic Statistics Programme transformed rents statistics had been published and incorporated into headline measures of consumer price inflation;
  - viii. progress of work with the Department of Health and Social Care to reform death certification was ongoing;
  - ix. work was ongoing in response to the recommendations in the Lievesley Review, which included a recommendation to agree a Memorandum of Understanding with Eurostat; and
  - x. the work by the National Statistician's Committee for Advice on Standards for Economic Statistics.
- 5.2 Members discussed the update and looked forward to engaging with the work in response to the Lievesley Review, particularly the development of the Statistical Assembly where Board members noted their desire to be involved from the outset.

## **6. Report from the Director General for Regulation [SA(24)13]**

- 6.1 Ed Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity, highlighting that OSR's guidance on collecting and reporting data about sex and gender identity in official statistics had been published on 29 February and had been well received. Following the publication of the Lievesley Review, an action plan setting out OSR's response to the report would be discussed at the April Regulation Committee meeting.
- 6.2 OSR had published a review of Labour Force Survey derived Labour Market Statistics on 21 March, which highlighted the need for improved communication by ONS regarding its approach to transitioning from the Labour Force Survey to the Transformed Labour Force Survey.
- 6.3 OSR's draft business plan and budget 2024/25 had been considered and endorsed by Regulation Committee. The baseline budget remained at £3.4 million with a small ringfenced contingency in place for this year only, should the General Election pose an increase in demand for regulatory intervention beyond OSR's current capacity.
- 6.4 Members discussed the draft plan. With regard to OSR's approach to election planning OSR were producing a series of topic notes across a range of public interest areas. It was noted that ahead of the General Election Sir Robert Chote would write to the leaders of all UK political parties reminding them of their duty to use statistics accurately and fairly in the election campaign, and the consequences of not meeting the required expectations.

- 6.5 Sir Ian noted that as part of OSR's work on the future of population and migration statistics ONS would welcome a review of internal migration.
- 6.6 Board members endorsed the draft business plan, subject to comment and approval in correspondence by members not in attendance.

## **7. Report on the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee**

- 7.1 On behalf of Dr Jacob Abboud Sir Robert reported on the work of the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee which had last met on 14 March 2024.
- 7.2 The Committee had considered:
- i. the financial position of the organisation as a result of the controls put in place throughout the year, with a small under expenditure forecast for year-end;
  - ii. confirmation by HM Treasury of the Supplementary Estimate and submission of the Main Estimate;
  - iii. business and financial planning for 2024/25;
  - iv. an update on the strategic risk profile with a focus on areas of challenge and an improvement in the maturity of risk discussions across the executive governance framework;
  - v. a risk deep dive on legacy transformation;
  - vi. Internal Audit Reports on Cloud Technology, Data Science Campus and Business Survey Transformation;
  - vii. delivery of the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24;
  - viii. the draft Internal Audit Plan 2024/25; and
  - ix. the annual update on Whistleblowing and Speaking Up policies.

## **8. ONS Business Plan [SA(24)14]**

- 8.1 Tom Taylor and Megan Cooper introduced the final draft of the ONS Business Plan 2024/25. The overall approach to business planning had focussed on horizontal planning for ONS's highest priority output area within a constrained financial environment.
- 8.2 Board members discussed the draft business plan. The following points were considered in discussion:
- i. the narrative could be strengthened to sufficiently reflect the degree of challenge and degree of transformation across the organisation;
  - ii. the focus on the most important outputs, which were the foundation of ONS's license to operate as a National Statistics Institute.
  - iii. the need to reference the Lievesley Review, noting that the ONS would act on all recommendations; and
  - iv. the inclusion of further detail about access to data across government.
- 8.3 Board members endorsed the draft business plan, subject to comment and final approval in correspondence by members not in attendance.

## **9. GSS Vision [SA(24)15]**

- 9.1 Jane Naylor and Lucy Vickers introduced a paper which provided an update on work to develop a Government Statistics Service (GSS) Vision and Strategic Delivery Plan. The GSS Heads of Profession for Statistics (HoPs) had been working collaboratively to develop a GSS Vision and Strategic Delivery Plan. The plan focused on four areas: Coordination and cooperation, capability, standards and transformation. It was noted that the Lievesley Review, which had been published following the drafting of this paper, would be considered as part of the development of both the Vision and Plan.
- 9.2 The Board heard that the National Statistics Executive Group (NSEG) had discussed the development of the plan. An initial discussion had also been held with the Royal Statistical Society on a range of issues that would need to be addressed including: the

scope of the statistics profession; ensuring an inclusive and diverse profession; the impact of available tools and engagement with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models; and an emphasis on statisticians being communicators. It was noted that a first draft of the GSS Vision and Strategic Delivery Plan was scheduled for discussion by NSEG in June.

9.3 Board members discussed the approach to the development of a GSS Vision. The following points were made in discussion:

- i. the strength and value the GSS brings when dealing with challenging issues in a collaborative way;
- ii. the future of the GSS starting from a point of strength with challenging and exciting times ahead including the use of new tools such as AI;
- iii. the draft plan could perhaps emphasise the challenges ahead, such as communication, and administrative data methodology;
- iv. further collaboration across the professions including data scientists, with work already ongoing in this area;
- v. the strength of the GSS in relation to data sharing across departments to help inform policy questions;
- vi. the movement of statisticians across the public and private sector and the need for retention within the GSS; and
- vii. the creation of a new role – Deputy Head of the GSS, to strengthen the GSS and support the Sir Ian as Head of the GSS.

9.4 The Board noted the update and would remain engaged as the work developed.

## **10. Integrated Data Service [SA(24)16]**

10.1 Jason Yaxley introduced a paper which provided an update on the progress of the Integrated Data Service.

10.2 The Board heard that areas of focus going forward included the transition of the Secure Research Service to the IDS, increasing the user base, improvement in cross government data sharing, Digital Economy Act re-accreditation in September 2024 and accreditation for data processing later in the year.

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

- i. the longer term focus in changing the culture around data sharing across government with a link to the previous discussion on GSS collaboration across government in relation to data sharing;
- ii. the use of the IDS to support a rapid response to policy making, with work at a very early stage to support rapid analysis underpinned by simpler data sharing principles. This linked to the work by the Office for Statistics Regulation on the evolution of the five safes mode of data access;
- iii. the recent event by the Secure Research Service (SRS) team for current SRS users to discuss the transition to the IDS. Progress was being made to address tooling issues; and
- iv. the need to be able to calibrate the key performance indicators with delivery of the programme. Currently there were 15 live projects on the platform, users had increased to 124 and 97 datasets on the platform.

10.4 The Board noted the update.

## **11. Any Other Business**

11.1 The Board would next meet on 25 April.

## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

### Agenda

Thursday 21 March, 12.00-15.00

Newport Boardroom

**Chair:** Sir Robert Chote

**Apologies:** Sian Jones, Prof. Carol Propper, Alison Pritchard

**Attendees:** Megan Cooper (for item 6), Jane Naylor (for item 7), Victoria Obudulu (for item 7), Emma Rourke (for item 7), Lucy Vickers (for item 7), Jason Yaxley (for item 8)

**NED Session: 11.15-12.00**

1 12.00-12.05 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 29 February 2024
2 12.05-12.15 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	Oral update Sir Robert Chote
3 12.15-12.45 30 mins	Report from the Chief Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Census 2023 - Future of Population and Migration Statistics</li></ul>	SA(24)12 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond
4 12.45-13.05 20 mins	Report from the Director General for Regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>OSR Business Plan</li></ul>	SA(24)13 Ed Humpherson
5 13.05-13.15 10 mins	Report from Committee Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Audit and Risk Assurance Committee</li></ul>	Oral update Dr Jacob Abboud
13.15-13.35 20 mins	Lunch	
6 13.35-14.00 25 mins	ONS Business Plan	SA(24)14 Tom Taylor Megan Cooper
7 14.00-14.30 30 mins	GSS Vision	SA(24)15 Jane Naylor Emma Rourke Lucy Vickers Victoria Obudulu
8 14.30-14.50 20 mins	Integrated Data Service	SA(24)16 Jason Yaxley
9 14.50-15.00 10 mins	Any Other Business	

**Next meeting: Thursday, 25 April 2024, London Boardroom**

*Chief Executive's Report, March 2024***Purpose**

1. This provides the Authority Board with an overview of activity for March 2024.

**Summary**

2. March has seen a significant focus on finalising **business planning** and budgets across the organisation to ensure we are prioritising activities against organisational objectives and user needs. We are making strong progress and are now close to finalising these allocations which will put us in a strong position going into the new financial year.
3. The Denise **Lievesley Review** of the Authority and Government response was published on 12 March. These recommendations covered a wide range of areas including data sharing across government, the Integrated Data Service (IDS), website improvements and enhancing user engagement across the statistical system. We are now working on our next steps.
4. At the end of February, I gave oral evidence to the **COVID-19 Inquiry** again, this time in Cardiff and covered political governance and core decision making in Wales. Finally, the ONS attended the 55<sup>th</sup> **UN Statistical Commission** in New York, making decisive interventions on topics including expanding the Statistical Commission and data science.

**Review of recent activities**

5. We maintain a sharp focus on **our financial position** as we head into the final stages of the financial year. We remain confident but not complacent that we will achieve our financial objectives in what has been a challenging set of circumstances during 2023/24. Our preparations for the 2023/24 annual report and accounts are progressing in line with plans, with no issues emerging from the interim audit by the National Audit Office.
6. February saw the publication of our best ever **research and development statistics** following an end-to-end survey transformation. The changes included ten times increase in the sample, online data collection, more detailed information being collected and new methods and processing systems. A webinar was held on release day with over 160 people attending to hear about the work and the new insights from the data.
7. The next public update on the **Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS)** will take place in April which will also reflect any relevant recommendations from The Office for Statistical Regulation's (OSR) current review of LFS. In addition, updated TLFS guidance also referred to last week was [published](#) on 5 March.
8. The **Prices Project** has reached a number of key milestones. On 20 March, we will be publishing **transformed rents statistics** as a standalone regular monthly publication and also incorporating these data in our **headline measures of consumer price inflation**. These new statistics provide a greater level of granularity in rental price statistics, including local authority estimates, and estimates by property type and number of bedrooms.
9. We will also be incorporating **new second-hand car statistics**, improving both the quality and granularity of these estimates, and moving a large proportion of monthly processing for consumer price statistics from legacy platforms to the cloud. These meet a number of key milestones for the Ambitious, Radical, Inclusive Economic Statistics Programme and also move us a **step closer to delivering groceries scanner data in March 2025**.

10. The Data Science Campus are preparing two new outputs; on 25 March we will publish the latest statistics from **consumer card spending data**, including card spending flows at a postal district level broken down by merchant and cardholder locations, which shows the relationship between where cardholders live and spend over time. This will be followed in mid-April by our first publication of **shipping indicators through international critical straits**. These statistics are currently being used by the Department for Business and Trade, Joint Intelligence Organisation and Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office to assess the impacts of the Red Sea crisis on the economy.
11. Piloting of our **new online Young Person's Safety Survey (YPSS)** is positive. The response rate in the first week was higher than anticipated (>25 per cent) and collection will continue throughout March. The YPSS is a crucial redesign of the current Children's Crime Survey for England and Wales, which has been struggling with response rates since the pandemic. The new design will improve sample sizes and expand outputs to meet user needs relating to child victimisation, bullying and online experiences.
12. In addition, our most recent statistics on **bullying and online experiences of children were published on 7 March**, alongside two other articles the preceding day: Crime in England and Wales: Victims Characteristics, and our explainer piece 'Crime Trends in England and Wales and how we measure them'. As part of this, we also announced an internal review of the dissemination and communication of ONS crime statistics.
13. On **Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme closure**, activities are progressing as planned and will be completed at the end of March 2024. The National Statistician Recommendation will be considered at the April Board meeting.
14. Despite this uncertainty a considerable volume work and many achievements are being delivered including work towards publication of Admin Based Population Estimates (ABPEs) in June 2024, this will be aligned with the mid-year estimates publication. The OSR Phase 1 assessment of the ABPEs produced by the Dynamic Population Model began in early February 2024 and aims to share findings with ONS towards the end of May 2024.
15. The **Winter Covid Infection Survey (CIS)** continues to publish fortnightly, and further analysis on symptoms and long Covid is in development. Closedown activities are now underway. We have also received a letter of intent from **NHS England** to fund a survey on experiences of health care, to begin in Quarter 1 2024/25. In addition to filling a priority evidence gap, this will enable ONS to repurpose the Winter CIS platform and move towards a more flexible approach to surveys in the future.
16. In Data Capability, the **Process Portal** (Lotus Notes replacement) has gone live and is now being used across all relevant business areas. This is an important step to reducing the ONS' technical debt. The move to a new cloud-based system brings several benefits including scalability increased reliability, integration with administrative data and improved ability to update statistical methodologies.
17. The **Secure Research Service (SRS)** engagement team hosted an event for current SCS users to discuss the transition to the IDS, including the capabilities of the IDS and structure of the planned deprecation plan. They demonstrated the Stata proof of concept solution, with 66 per cent of attendees reporting it meets most or all of their requirements and 98 per cent at least some. With tooling largely resolved, the programme will now intensify engagement with data owners to transfer SRS data to the IDS. Further details are in the IDS paper.
18. At the end of February, we published our 2023 **Gender Pay Gap Report** on the Authority website. Some key achievements within space include the further decrease in our mean gender pay gap to 6.3 per cent (from 7.1 per cent in 2022), and the mean bonus gap is the lowest recorded over the past five years, having reduced from 3.3 per



cent to -1.9 per cent in favour of women. Work continues to improve other pay and bonus gap areas, for example those for ethnic minority colleagues.

19. **Field recruitment** continues at pace with rolling monthly permanent recruitment for interviewers alongside agency recruitment for our TLFS. 37 permanent interviewers onboarded in January and a further cohort of approx. 49 interviewers to be onboarded in April. Agency recruitment target is 40 new colleagues by end of March. Alongside the recruitment, Field Re-Design has seen 17 new Executive Officer roles having been filled, and the pilot is now live in the field with an evaluation due at the end of March before the approach is rolled out these new roles on a wider scale and volume.
20. On **security**, communications on security awareness and further mandatory training regarding physical security has been disseminated.
21. The independent security assessment of the Government Functional Standard 007 against ONS's Data Access Platform (DAP), which is critical national infrastructure, has been complete. The report states 'The ONS has demonstrated a commendable level of maturity in the Cyber Assessment Framework, for the Data Access Platform system'. We anticipate further detail will be shared early next week.
22. As part of the work Security and Information Management have undertaken with local schools to develop cyber skills for the future, ONS' partnering school in St Albans have successfully attained a Silver Award from CyberFirst (part of the National Cyber Security Centre). ONS will be visiting the school next week to present the award and discuss the educational framework moving forward.
23. Internationally, the ONS attended the 55th **UN Statistical Commission in New York**, making decisive interventions on topics that included the review of the System of National Accounts, the expansion of the Statistical Commission, and data science. During the conference, Emma Rourke met with our new Pandemic Preparedness Toolkit partners and led a luncheon with the international development team's partnership countries. Osama Rahman also led an impactful workshop on the future of National Statistics Institutes (NSIs), which was well received by delegates and has led to some concrete actions for the future, including agreement for an outline on a position paper for the future shape of NSIs.
24. On 12 March the **Government Statistical Service (GSS) Heads of Profession** will meet to discuss recently published guidance from OSR on sex and gender, as well as pre-election guidance. They will also receive two presentations on web dissemination and breaking the numerical axis. They will then discuss work on the GSS vision with deep dives into the prioritisation and community work streams. A discussion also took place on the FPMS recommendation.
25. Natcen is continuing data processes and report planning for the 2023 **Public Confidence in Official Statistics Survey**. The Authority is due this month to receive the final technical report and draft headline report.
26. Finally, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, in partnership with the Cabinet Office, launched an independent review of 'Data, Statistics and Research on Sex and Gender' in public bodies on 1 March (including both producers of official statistics and also universities), led by Professor Alice Sullivan of University College London. Prof Sullivan's review is expected to report to the Science Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister by 31 July, and publicly by 31 August 2024.

### **Communications**

27. Publication of the revised methodology for calculating **excess deaths** landed well in the news media, with supportive comments from leading experts and a well-attended briefing hosted with Science Media Centre.

28. The monthly round of **economic releases** also received good coverage, with Gross Domestic Product and inflation both leading the national news agenda. While most media headlined the news that the UK has entered 'technical recession' our messaging about uncertainty in initial estimates cut through successfully.
29. Our stats and data literacy collaboration with BBC and **Micro:bit Education Foundation** has continued to develop with the launch of the Playground Survey project for primary school children. We are also contributing articles about data science and stats which are being published on the BBC Teach website.

**Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, 15 March 2024.**

*Update from the Director General for Regulation***Purpose**

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

**Discussion**

2. Our main areas of focus since the last Board meeting have been:
  - i. Ongoing work:
    - **Business planning:** Presented today is our draft OSR business plan 2024/25 – including associated budget. The plan has been shared with Regulation Committee, who commend it to the Board for sign off today. Our business plan for 2024/25 is an extension of the previous year's plan, focusing on the priorities that continue to resonate with our stakeholders.
    - **State of the Statistical system:** We are continuing our report development work and reviewing our timelines in light of the recommendation in the Lievesley review to establish a Statistical Assembly.
    - **Election planning:** We continue to finalise our topic statements on and have arranged an election simulation with Full Fact this month to identify where we can best use each other or amplify our voices when concerns are raised during the election period.
    - **Future proofing the Code of Practice for Statistics:** In the week of 18 March, we will publish a report responding to feedback from the Code review call for evidence. It sets out the conclusions and next steps and has three actions:
      - a. to undertake a refresh of the Code, enhancing the focus on the key principles of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value, and clarifying expectations on communication, user engagement and quality;
      - b. to change the National Statistics badge to the new accredited official statistics badge; and
      - c. to further develop our voluntary adoption scheme.
    - **Population estimates:** Our phased assessment of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Admin Based Population Estimates for England and Wales is underway. This first phase focuses on quality, and our current activities include engagement with a broad range of users to capture their views, liaising with ONS and analysing documentation to understand current processes and planned developments, as well as the procurement of independent methodological expertise to assist with scrutinising the new method.
    - **Labour Force survey (LFS):** Our follow up review following the reintroduction of Labour Force Survey based estimates is planned to be published on the same day as the Board meeting. The review focuses on the suitability of the revised methodology, communication, transparency, user needs, and further actions planned to improve the quality of the LFS during the transition period to the Transformed Labour Force Survey.
  - ii. Published work:
    - **Sex and Gender guidance:** Our [guidance](#) was published at the end of last month and landed well;

- **LFS:** I [wrote to](#) Alex Lambert and Liz McKeown setting out that we had begun our short review of the reintroduction of LFS derived labour market statistics; and
- **Business Enterprise Research and Development (BERD) statistics:** We wrote to [ONS](#) and [NISRA](#) about undertaking a Spotlight on Quality assessment on the BERD statistics.

### Casework

3. We have received 215 cases so far in 2023/24, with 12 new cases since the last update. These new cases include concerns around visa numbers, Scotland waiting times, mortality rates and badgers. We have closed nine cases since the last meeting with no public interventions. Our private interventions related to drone numbers, wage inflation, fraud, school ratings, waiting lists and mortality methodology.

### Wider reach

4. **Voluntary adoption:** We are still accepting entries for our [2024 Award](#) for statistical Excellence in Trustworthiness, Quality and Value (TQV). This award recognises excellence in the voluntary application of the 'pillars' TQV. Deadline for entries is midnight Sunday 21 April 2023.
5. **Blogs:** I wrote a [blog](#) discussing the divergence between internal positive and external scepticism that I highlighted in my session at the *Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee* session on analysis in Government, and we also published a [blog](#) that focused on evidence I provided on cross-UK comparability. We published a guest [blog](#) from Policy Institute at King's College London, on how individuals may use statistics in their personal lives. The blog asks readers to get in touch with suggestions, which could inform OSR's upcoming research into how members of the public use official statistics in decision making. We'd welcome your ideas.
6. **External meetings:** I have met with a number of external stakeholders this month, including the National Data Guardian, Health Data Research UK and the new Chief Inspector of Ofsted. I also met with Grant Cawthorne-Hill, Head of House of Commons Library, discussing the Library's newly launched Good Information campaign for MPs (see below).
7. **External events:** I will speak at the launch event for the House of Commons Library Good Information campaign at the House of Commons on 19 March. I will use the opportunity to discuss our thinking on misinformation, Intelligent transparency and casework. I will also speak at the CXPN conference on 18 March, discussing public engagement and opening up statistics as a public asset. I also joined an Information paradox session at Sense about Science that discussed if influencers help or hinder promotion of reliable evidence. We considered the benefits of engaging with influencers to share OSR messages and interventions. I also attended the Administrative Data Research UK Ambassadors reception on 15 March.

### Issues on my mind

8. **Lievesley review:** I am looking forward to implementing the Lievesley recommendations relevant to OSR, which encompass the Code of Practice; the State of the System report; and the need for our separation from ONS in governance terms to be more visible externally. Overall, I think the Lievesley review is fair, thoughtful and helpful.
9. **Away day:** This month we held our annual away day giving staff a chance to reflect on our values and behaviours. In particular this year focus will be on developing OSR for the future, asking what that might look like and what we need to get there.
10. **Social media:** We have been assessing our risk to staff from our website and developing social media guidance for staff to enable staff to consider the risks that social media present. In line with the Authority we have removed staff emails, phone numbers

and surnames, instead providing contact forms on the website. We hope this will also reduce our risk to cyber scams and calls.

**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, OSR, 13 March 2024.**

### Children, Education and Skills

Our main piece of work is the Graduate Outcomes assessment. We have discussed our findings within OSR and will be writing our report with the view to complete it for the April Reg Comm.

### Crime and Security

Finalising the draft report for our review of the quality of police recorded crime statistics. We discussed key findings and draft recommendations with ONS, the Home Office and HMICFRS. We will be sharing the draft report with Regulation Committee and all stakeholders.

### Economy, Business and Trade

Spotlight on Quality of Business Investment statistics and the Business Enterprise Research and Development statistics. Spotlight on Quality framework is currently undergoing peer review by a variety of producer teams, users and other stakeholders ahead of publication. Finalising key findings from our review of the public sector classification process. Continuing to scope a systemic review on 'Ensuring that Economic Statistics are fit for the future'.

### Health and Social Care

Follow up review of Mental Health statistics in Northern Ireland, engaging with stakeholders. Engaging with stakeholder views for review of the statistics the Winter Coronavirus Infection Study, Mental Sealth statistics in Wales and Health Inequalities across the UK.

### Housing, Planning and Local Services

Finalising review of Valuation Office Agency's Council Tax levels and Council Tax challenges and changes statistics and Scottish Government's Scottish House Conditions Survey statistics to inform reaccreditation decision.

### Labour Market and Welfare

Follow-up review of ONS's reintroduction of Labour Force Survey (LFS) data in its monthly Labour market release, and their plans to improve it further. Ongoing support for ONS on its development of the Transformed LFS (TLFS). ONS outlining their revised timescales against our recommendations following delays to their plans.

### Population and Society

Phase one of the Assessment of the Office for National Statistics' Admin Based Population Estimates underway. Planning for Census Phase 3 (England/Wales and Northern Ireland). Finalising review of the Scottish Household Survey statistics to inform reaccreditation decision.

### Transport, Environment and Climate Change

Continue discussions with Defra team regarding meeting requirements from the Assessment of Butterfly statistics. Supporting statistical development - ongoing discussions with Transport for Wales on Welsh travel survey and 20mph implementation reporting

### Casework

Economy, Business and Trade	We received a concern from Andrew Gwynne MP on the accuracy of comments made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he "put up the budget by nearly 40%" in his first autumn statement.
Health and Social Care	Due to respond to the shadow minister for health, Karin Smyth MP, about the Department for Health and Social Care's claim that it has delivered 5,000 extra hospital beds this winter.

### Planning/Delivery

Population and Society	Dynamic Population Model Admin Based Population Estimates: Phase 1 (Office for National Statistics)
Population and Society	Excess deaths including follow up of mortality CC
Economy, Business and Trade	Household Costs Indices (Office for National Statistics)
Economy, Business and Trade	Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR) and owner-occupiers' housing element of Consumer Price Inflation statistics (Office for National Statistics)
Economy, Business and Trade	Research and development expenditure statistics (Office for National Statistics)
Labour Market and Welfare	Reweighted Labour Force Survey estimates (Office for National Statistics)
Health and Social Care	Scottish Health Survey (Scottish Government)
Housing, Planning and Local Services	Scottish House Condition Survey (Scottish Government)
Crime and Security	Systemic Review of Police Recorded Crime statistics (Office for National Statistics and Home Office)

### Published/Follow up

Cross-cutting	Sex and Gender Programme
Economy, Business and Trade	Statistics on Profitability of UK Companies and Gross Operating Surplus of private non-financial corporations (Office for National Statistics)
Health and Social Care	England Mental Health Statistics Review - follow up
Health and Social Care	Urgent and emergency care waiting times (NHS England & Improvement)
Health and Social Care	Winter Covid-19 Infection Study (UK Health Security Agency and Office for National Statistics)
Labour Market and Welfare	Personal Independence Payment statistics (Department for Work and Pensions)

### Closed

Data and Methods	Data Sharing & Linkage Review
Population and Society	Follow up to Compliance Check of Transformed Migration Statistics

Period - 01/12/23 - 29/02/2024



### Data and Methods

Drafting a blog post on OSR's position on AI, after a discussion at our Regulation Committee. Starting work on a follow on report to our 2023 report on data sharing and linkage across government

### Insight

State of the Statistical System 2023/24 - Taking a top down approach this year, and therefore workshops are being held with SLT and the wider OSR team on issues across the system the report will cover. Reducing Outputs - continuing to collect content and produce a narrative. Final product is currently in design stages.

### Policy and Standards

Code review: analysed the responses from the call for evidence and submitted a paper to the Regulation Committee. Finalising a response paper to publish in early March. Voluntary application: launched our fifth award for statistical excellence in showing TQV with the RSS. Added The Office for Environmental Protection to our list of adopters.

### Research

Published our think piece on 'How Statistics can serve the Public good'. We have initiated our research project about the role of statistics in decision making by individuals, working with Kings College London and the Behavioural Insight Team

***ONS Strategic Business Plan 2024/25***

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides the UK Statistics Authority (the Authority) Board with the final draft of the 2024/25 Office for National Statistics (ONS) Strategic Business Plan (SBP) for comment and endorsement ahead of external publication on the Authority website in April.

**Timing**

2. External publication of the refreshed SBP is scheduled to take place in April, to coincide with the start of the new financial year.

**Recommendations**

3. Members of the Board are invited to approve the draft SBP.

**Background**

4. This refreshed SBP will be the fourth iteration since the launch of the Authority strategy, Statistics for the Public Good, and the format and content remain in line with the 2023/24 version approved by the Board in May 2023. The overall approach to business planning has evolved further this year, with greater focus on the end-to-end plans for our highest priority output areas and early stakeholder engagement.

**Discussion**

5. This plan reflects the outcome of careful consideration in deciding on our priorities for 2024/25 and early stakeholder engagement on the statistical products that they find most impactful. Any changes to specific outputs will only be made after engagement with users. We will also continue to focus on content quality, producing concise, clear, and impactful statistics that are easier for users to find, understand and explore.
6. The structure of the plan has remained consistent with last year, with the following changes introduced to bring ONS more in line with public-facing plans from other government departments:
  - i. the introduction of 'Priority Outcomes' to replace 'Strategic Objectives'; and
  - ii. narrative of key milestones aligned to priorities, with the list of milestones included as an annex.
7. Based on feedback from the Board (February 2024), the following changes have also been incorporated into this latest version:
  - i. further detail on the financial context and the need for careful prioritisation; and
  - ii. wider discussion on how we have engaged our stakeholders.

**Next Steps**

8. Feedback from the Authority Board will be addressed and incorporated into the final SBP ahead of publication in April.
9. Output teams will continue to engage users on any changes that may be required to specific statistical outputs that result from the priorities set out in this plan.

**Tom Taylor, Finance Planning and Performance, ONS, 12 March 2024**

***‘Strength in Numbers’ - delivering a vision for the GSS***

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update on work to develop a Government Statistical Service (GSS) vision and strategic delivery plan.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the UK Statistics Authority (the Authority) are invited to:
  - i. feedback on the progress made for the GSS vision and strategic delivery plan;
  - ii. provide steers on the approach proposed for analytical prioritisation; and
  - ii. provide steers on the ‘future of the statistics profession.

**Background**

3. The GSS is integral to the UK Statistics System, requiring a well-articulated vision for the part the GSS should play in delivering ‘Statistics for the Public Good’ and beyond. As set out in the UKSA Board December paper GSS Heads of Profession for Statistics (HoPs) have been driving forward work to develop such a GSS vision and associated strategic delivery plan in line with feedback from members of the statistical community and senior steer from the National Statistics Executive Group (NSEG).
4. This vision and strategic delivery plan do not cover what and how each individual organisation produces official statistics and contributes to the GSS. Instead, this work focuses on where and how the GSS needs to collaborate across organisational boundaries to maximise impact and realise “Statistics for the Public Good”. Hence the vision statement of, ‘*Strength in Numbers*’.
5. The strategic delivery plan focuses on four thematic areas:
  - i. **Coordination & Cooperation** – the right governance to support the National Statistician and HoPs to provide strong and effective leadership of the GSS. Senior GSS leaders should be empowered to coordinate and prioritise analytical work to meet user needs;
  - ii. **Capability** – ensuring the GSS comprises a diverse, inclusive and thriving community capable of delivering ‘Statistics for the Public Good’;
  - iii. **Standards** - recognising that the GSS is unique within the Analysis Function in championing the Code of Practice and associated protocols that set the standards for our work, and ensuring we collectively uphold the integrity of statistics by adhering to these protocols; and
  - iv. **Transformation** - meeting the vision set out in ‘Statistics for the Public Good’ for the statistical system to be “boldly innovative with our methods and sources”, to continue to drive momentum in data sharing, and to deliver statistics in unique and sustainable ways.
6. In some cases, existing governance processes facilitate successful collaboration across the GSS. We have focused our efforts on areas where there is an opportunity to strengthen support and/or coordination, in particular:
  - i. analytical prioritisation, commissioning and coordination (paragraphs ten to 12);
  - ii. statistical leadership – where proposals have been made to create a new Deputy Head of the GSS role and to review the terms of reference/membership of NSEG;
  - iii. building the GSS community;
  - iv. funding model for central GSS support – GSS HoPs are feeding into discussions that continue across the Analysis Function (AF);
  - v. GSS induction course - proposals have been put forward within ONS;



- vi. talent/career management, where existing GSS and AF initiatives have been more widely publicised; and
  - vii. methodological transformation coordinating and sharing expertise.
7. We have also developed metrics for the GSS strategic delivery plan to measure progress against achieving our vision. Specific metrics are being identified against specific actions as well as overarching metrics that capture culture and the strength of the GSS.
  8. We are developing the GSS vision and strategic delivery plan in collaboration with key stakeholders. We regularly engage with the Government Economic Service (GES) strategy team and AF colleagues to ensure join up across the analytical professions. We have also engaged with the Royal Statistical Society (who are developing their new strategy) to identify areas of potential collaboration, focused on the future of the statistical profession.
  9. In this paper we focus on two key areas where steer from the Board would support our progress in developing a GSS vision and strategic delivery plan; analytical prioritisation and the future of the statistical profession. We welcome feedback from the Board on the scope and progress made for the GSS vision and strategic delivery plan.

## **Discussion**

### Analytical Prioritisation

10. As a statistical community, we are strongest when we work together, recognising and respecting the individual expertise and remit of departments and agencies, but working collectively and collaboratively across boundaries to maximise the impact and delivery of statistics and insights. There are areas where we have achieved this, for example successful data linkage across the Home Office, Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and devolved administrations in response to the Ukraine crisis. However, there are also areas where prioritisation is not as effective as it could be and there are both gaps and areas of duplication in our analytical work – for example during the pandemic, different organisations began to collect hospitalisation data in different ways. Building on the examples where coordination has worked well, we see the following key ingredients as essential for effective collaboration across priorities areas, and would welcome the Authority’s view on this proposition:
  - i. leadership – horizon scanning, building trust, encouraging flexibility, and emphasising pragmatism;
  - ii. a culture that supports collaboration to meet priorities;
  - iii. leveraging the data, infrastructure and statistical capability of the GSS as a whole
  - iv. collaborating as standard, with the right people doing the work, and clear about who, when, what, why;
  - v. aligned to the priorities of the day, meeting the needs of senior stakeholders and Ministers; and
  - vi. continuous review and reprioritisation - dynamic and responsive.
11. Our proposal improves the current approach by optimising each stage to deliver a collaborative impact across organisations. This approach sees statistical leaders coming together on themes, to develop shared plans that promote a coherent narrative in a dynamic way, building in flex for new emerging needs, and overseen by some of the existing governance. We have a choice as to whether this should take a statistical focus, or whether because, many issues will be cross function, there is a preference for involvement from Directors of Analysis. This will be discussed further at the next GSS Heads of Profession Meeting on 12 March and then NSEG on 19 March, since decisions on operational planning for the GSS sit with this group.
12. We note though that it is as much about a cultural shift as a process shift. There is a risk that people compete not collaborate (especially when organisations are new and

establishing their position or feel they need to demonstrate value in a tough fiscal position).

### Future of the statistics profession

13. The GSS strategic delivery plan will set the foundation for how organisations within the GSS should work together to deliver 'Statistics for the Public Good'. In addition, the plan should be forward looking, beyond the life of the strategy (which runs until 2025). The GSS vision and strategic delivery plan need to support the GSS working together and growing from strength to strength ('in numbers'!) into the future. One area where we have started to do this is around developing career frameworks within the profession.
14. Initial discussions with the RSS have identified the opportunity to collaborate on a think piece that addresses the question, 'what will the statistics profession look like in year's years' time?'. The results of this work could feed into both the new RSS strategy, a new strategy for the UK Statistical System, as well as influence approaches towards learning and development/recruitment/education/career pathways.
15. We have proposed a conceptual framework for this work that would consider:
  - i. what aspects of the work of a statistician remain constant over time, e.g. obtaining appropriate data, analysis and insight, trust, transparency, quality;
  - ii. what aspects of the work of a statistician evolve over time, e.g. tools, data sources, technologies, ways of working, pace; and
  - iii. for those areas that evolve over time, what will influence these areas over the next ten years, what will the profession need to anticipate and respond to and what change should the profession be driving itself.
16. An initial discussion with RSS colleagues identified the following issues that would need to be addressed:
  - i. scope of the 'statistics profession' and the need to be sensitive to evolving analytical roles across the public and private sector such as data scientists/data analysts as well as statisticians;
  - ii. links to trends in education and skills;
  - iii. ensuring we are an inclusive and diverse profession as possible now and going forward into the future;
  - iv. changing risk appetites and user expectations, i.e. timeliness of data, varying quality expectations, lower-level geographies with lower-level sample quality, greater use of administrative data;
  - v. how do the tools available impact on what we do within the profession? How can statisticians engage with artificial intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models in a way which enhances their value to statistics in terms of the principles of trust, value and quality and ethics?
  - vi. more emphasis on statisticians being communicators/interpreters; and
  - vii. issues that could impact on the statistical profession over the next ten years – regulation, technology (e.g. AI), Research and Development, global instability, fake news/public trust and cyber security risks.
17. We welcome additional steers from the Board on this topic that will be taken forward with the RSS to further develop this think piece through wider stakeholder engagement, subject to approval from the RSS board.

### **Conclusion**

18. This paper has set out the progress that has been made towards a GSS vision and strategic delivery plan. We welcome steers from the Board on all elements of the plan, particularly proposals around prioritisation and early thinking on the future of the statistics profession. We will continue to develop the GSS vision and strategic delivery plan with the aim of presenting a first draft to NSEG in June.

**Jane Naylor, Chief Statistician, Department for Business and Trade**  
**Lucy Vickers, Chief Statistician, Department of Health and Social Care**  
**Matthew Gaskins, Department for Business and Trade, 14 March 2024**

***Integrated Data Service – March 2024 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).

**Background**

2. The IDS remains in Public Beta; its focus is on scaling user numbers, improving user experience and increasing the capabilities of the IDS.

**Discussion****Programme Update**

3. Progress so far this quarter has been positive in addressing some user feedback. As of March 2024, the IDS has **124** cumulative users engaged in live projects, which will rise to around 150 by end of March 2024. The programme holds an **AMBER** delivery confidence rating.
4. The programme is currently in its *critical mass* phase, with intensified focus on increasing accredited users through the 'prospects' drive, as well as the IDS "front-door", the process through which analytical users have started to approach the IDS directly. Government bodies are increasingly approaching IDS to develop projects and partnerships. In the last month, this has included HM Treasury (HMT), Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), NHS England and Ofsted.
5. The programme is now moving into its *steady growth* phase, shifting its focus to identifying and onboarding high impact, high value research from key government departments. The next critical milestone is moving new Secure Research Service projects onto IDS, which will see user growth of around 50-75 users per month. The primary barrier to this transition, the previous lack of Stata-equivalent tooling, now has a solution and an initial survey getting user reaction to a demo showed 98 per cent felt it met some of their requirements, with 66 per cent indicating it met most or all of their requirements. In depth user testing has established that the solution meets virtually all analytic needs – the gaps are around the wider user environment (different ways to view data, produce documentation etc). Many of these gaps can be mitigated for the live production version and we will maintain ongoing communication with data owners and external stakeholders to encourage transition or duplication of data currently held in the Secure Research Service (SRS) into IDS.
6. The Programme is also working intensively with government analysts to ensure that it can interact with the highly non-linear processes involved in government policy making. This has derived a set of feasible requirements which leverage the existing design of IDS, ensuring that we achieve our core business case goals. We will be working with our Office for National Statistics (ONS) analytical colleagues to implement them.
7. As part of ONS-wide Finance and Business Planning process, we are focussing resources on the core of the IDS Business Case – ensuring the platform is capable of meeting both SRS user needs, and government analyst's needs, including ONS analysts. We will also continue to improve our capabilities, which will be externally validated through the Digital Economy Act (DEA) re-accreditation process in September 2024.
8. This month the Reference Data Management Framework products team organised an ONS 'Privacy Enhancing Technology' hackathon, considering how the output of Reference Data Management Framework (RDMF) could be adapted to meet enhanced security and privacy requirements. The event was a big success, with teams working

together to build practical solutions to presenting indexed data in a secure way on the IDS. Next steps will be to explore how the approaches showcased in the hackathon can be productionised and put into practice. This will feed into ongoing conversations with the devolved administrations on the technical compatibility of the respective demographic indexes once feasibility work in this area has completed.

9. Finally, we continue to act as a catalyst for cross-government improvements in data sharing and to engage with other data sharing initiatives, exploiting emerging synergies with the IDS's unique transformational elements. Each of these areas is set out in more detail below.

#### Project and Analytic User Growth

10. The programme's Strategy sets out four phases for growth in projects and users on the IDS:
  - i. Early adopters: initial exploratory analysis by super-early adopters;
  - ii. Critical mass: sufficient live user activity to refine Beta model and start demonstrating power of platform;
  - iii. Steady growth: on-going growth in user numbers establishing IDS as future for secure data analysis; and
  - iv. Transformative expansion: rapid expansion of user base to bulk of government analysts, enabling govt to use its data better.
11. The first two of these phases are complete, with the *critical mass* phase delivering 120 plus users onto the platform, which will rise to around 150 users by end of March 2024. The focus now is on moving to the *steady growth* phase.
12. Throughout the *critical mass* phase, the programme has employed its prospects process to tactically onboard projects and users. This has been driven by bespoke, bilateral discussions with government departments, which will continue as the IDS services matures into the *steady growth* phase, shifting its focus to identifying and onboarding high impact, high value research from key government departments, especially through engagement with Departmental Directors of Analysis Network (DDANs) and similar forums. This includes:
  - i. Nursing & Midwifery Workforce: This project is evaluating changes in the nursing and midwifery workforce across the UK, informing policies to retain and rehire of nurses and midwives. This analysis will provide a template for further work on other crucial public sector workforces;
  - ii. Equality of Service Provision: This project examines the equality of service provision for His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) customers. This will provide a template for undertaking assessments of the equality of service provision across multiple public services;
  - iii. Costing complex initiatives: This collaborative project with Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), HMRC, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Department for Education (DfE), Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and ONS, is looking at improving the costing of initiatives to tackle wicked issues (those where the costs are spread across multiple public services). We are currently exploring how this will support the Demand Management strand of the cross-govt Strategic Priorities work.
13. The second element of *steady growth* comes through the IDS "front-door", with analytical users approaching the IDS directly with their applications. This process is starting to gain momentum, including directly submitted project applications from highly influential users such as the Institute for Fiscal Studies.
14. We are looking to boost project and user numbers during the steady growth phase through targeted partnerships and initiatives. We are partnering with the Geospatial Commission to host their new "sandbox" environment on the IDS (previously they had been looking to commission the building of an entirely new environment). This will bring

the related use cases onto the IDS platform. We are also planning a hackathon, in association with 10DS Evidence House, aimed at introducing new users to the IDS.

15. The Programme would appreciate the assistance of the Board in identifying other high-value groups to target.

#### SRS Transition

16. The Programme presented a strategic paper to the National Statistician earlier this month, which set out strategic approaches for the closure of SRS and migration to new datasets and projects, as well as an indication on timeline to dual run the SRS alongside IDS to allow time to transition existing projects in flight.
17. The SRS Engagement team ran an event on 27 February targeted at SRS users to provide an update on the latest transition progress and build interest in transitioning to the IDS. The event took users through the capabilities of the IDS and the structure of the planned deprecation, detailing closure to new projects (once IDS is ready and meets user need) and later closure to existing projects in a way that minimises the numbers that need to transition 'in flight'. The event was successful, with some excellent feedback received, and useful challenge to help target future communications and engagement activity.
18. Due to the progress made on tooling solutions for IDS, along with an accelerated plan to transition data, it is expected user numbers will increase as new projects will start in IDS, rather than use SRS. As part of the 27 February event, a demonstration of the new Stata proof of concept solution was included, which yielded positive insight from users towards implementation in IDS: 98 per cent indicated that this solution would meet at least some of their requirements, with 66 per cent indicating it would meet most of or all their requirements. Our feedback from the leading economists that wrote to the National Statistician about the importance of Stata last year is that: *"We all found the presentation that SRS/IDS gave on Tuesday [27<sup>th</sup> Feb] covered most of the ground that we have been concerned about. It looks to us that you have made commitments to tackle, or at least try to tackle, all of the concerns we've raised. We appreciate this."*
19. The critical external dependency for transitioning users to the IDS is gaining other government department (OGD) data owner permissions to duplicate their existing SRS data on the IDS. Given concerns about tooling, particularly Stata, data owners have been reluctant to give this permission. With these concerns resolved, we are increasing the intensity of our data owner engagement. The Programme currently has the capacity to duplicate the data, but as we approach Programme shutdown towards the end of 2024, it will be increasing difficult to do and data owners risk their data being "stranded" on the deprecated SRS. The Programme would appreciate the assistance of the Board in encouraging data owners to give the necessary permissions.

#### Further increasing the potential user base

20. The programme is currently part of an ONS-wide Finance and Business Planning process. This will inform IDP's plans to the end of the programme in March 2025 and this, alongside quarterly planning, will better inform the programme's ability to deliver its ambitions. The aim is to focus resources on the core of the IDS Business Case – ensuring the platform is capable of meeting both SRS user needs, and government analyst's needs, including ONS analysts.
21. The Programme is focusing its development resource on moving our core capabilities from the existing minimum viable products (MVPs) to fully scalable final products. As well as providing the base for continued expansion, these improvements will feed into our DEA provider re-accreditation in September 2024 as part of the annual data provision re-accreditation process. This will focus on a sub-set of data capability and security controls rather than a full audit.

### Cross government improvements in data sharing

22. Longer term, the Programme is seeking to catalyse improvements in how government shares data. This wider engagement seeks to change the culture around data sharing, increase the ability of government to make use of its own data and, as a consequence, increase the data available and usage of IDS. The Programme is engaging through the cross-government governance structures, working in partnership with Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO).

### IDS's role within the evolving government data environment

23. The Programme is continually engaging with other data initiatives across government. Where these are at an early stage, such as the work of the Geospatial Commission on a sandbox environment, we are integrating these initiatives with the IDS. This delivered a substantial financial saving which the Commission would otherwise have spent on building a new environment.

24. We also work closely with other, more mature initiatives which have a complementary mission to the IDS. For example, the MOJ led Better Outcomes through Linked Data (BOLD) programme focuses on end-to-end policy to implementation development, using linked data within its work. BOLD does not have its own data infrastructure but relies on an ad hoc mix of other departmental environments.

25. Similarly we are working closely with CDDO's data marketplace initiative. This allows government users to see what data is available and where they can access it. IDS will provide a key platform in which those analysts can actually access the data itself.

26. The IDS continues to uniquely provide the key benefits and transformational elements set out in our business plan, including:

- i. allows more collaborative research and analysis to take place both across government and externally by accredited researchers;
- ii. controlled access to a volume of integrated de-identified data assets;
- iii. state of the art cloud-based infrastructure and technology which enables connectivity with data sets where they are held;
- iv. reduction in platform and data acquisition costs for individual departments, as IDS will secure, store and maintain integrated data assets which will also include commercial data; and
- v. eliminating duplication in the whole of government statistical services and driving forward government efficiencies i.e. time and money.

### The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

27. The number of cumulative analyses (projects) has **remained at 20** with 15 live projects on the platform and five concluded. IDS is expecting two new analyses to get underway in the coming months. The projects forecast to commence shortly are:

- i. Tees Valley Combined Authority/Tees Valley Uni/ONS Economic inactivity within Tees Valley (nine users); and
- ii. Scottish Government Improvement of interconnected business across Scotland (three users).

28. Cumulative user numbers have risen to **124**, due to pending users being added to three analyses. We are expecting 20 new users to be added in the coming months with eight users going through accreditation who will be added to the 15 live analyses we currently have on the platform, in addition to those within point 25.

29. The number of datasets on the platform is now **97**. There are an additional 38 datasets expected to be added to the platform in the coming months coming from the SRS-IDS transition work DGO are currently undertaking as well as new datasets looking to be ingested. 14 indexed datasets are now available for analysts on the platform.

**Jason Yaxley, IDP Programme Director, ONS, 12 March 2024**