

Stakeholder Advisory Panel on Labour Market Statistics: Minutes 13th June 2024

Attendees

Members in attendance

Professor Jonathan Portes (Chair)
Huw Pill (Bank of England)
Dan Gallagher (HM Treasury)
Tim Butcher (Low Pay Commission)
Nye Cominetti (The Resolution Foundation)
Chaitra Nagaraja (University of Exeter)
Alan Manning (London School of Economics)
David Bell (University of Stirling)
Stephanie Howarth (Welsh Government)
Steve Ellerd-Elliott (Department for Work and Pensions)

ONS Secretariat

Melanie Gore

ONS Presenters

Liz McKeown
David Freeman
Tom Evans

ONS Colleagues

Mike Keoghan
James Harris
Sumit Dey-Chowdhury
Heather Bovill
Leigh Skuse
Sarah Henry

Matt Hughes (for Alex Lambert)

Minutes

1. Introduction, Panel context and apologies

1. ONS (Liz McKeown) and the Chair welcomed everyone to the Stakeholder Panel meeting.
2. Panel members were thanked for their participation and the context to the formation of the Panel was explained as a further step to improve engagement, drawing on external expertise of the UK labour market and to ensure the ONS understands the priorities of our key external users.

3. Apologies were received from;

Tony Wilson (Institute of Employment Studies)

Richard Murray (Scottish Government)

Stephen Farrington (Office for Budget Responsibility)

Xiaowei Xu (Institute for Fiscal Studies)

2. Terms of Reference

1. The Chair (Prof. Jonathan Portes) gave a summary of the Terms of Reference. A question was raised regarding the Panel scope, with confirmation that the primary scope is labour market statistics and associated outputs, rather than the underpinning surveys, of which were acknowledged are used for purposes other than labour market statistics in some cases.
2. The Terms of Reference were agreed by the Panel and the chair reminded panel members of any materials shared prior or in the panel marked as official sensitive and the necessity to treat this information in line with panel members signed confidentiality agreements.

3. Deep Dive – Labour Force Survey and the Transformed Labour Force Survey

1. The Chair introduced item, noting the pre-read paper and questions provided to the Panel.
2. David Freeman (DF) discussed the Labour Force Survey (LFS) Recovery Plan and its actions to date.

This included detail on the return to face-to-face interviewing, increases in response chasing, increases in respondent incentives and the boost to the LFS sample. DF confirmed the reinstatement of the majority of LFS-based labour market statistics in February 2024, with reweighted data back to Jul-Sept 2022

3. DF presented the current LFS reweighting, noting that the reweighted LFS was published in February 2024 labour market release. This data used 2020-based population estimates that were published in November 2023 and the population was projected forward using assumptions at the time. DF noted that only some data have been reweighted, specifically LFS person (back to Jul-Sept 2022), headline (by age and sex) modelled back to 2011, LFS longitudinal (flows), reweighted from 2024, households reweighted from 2024. DF also noted that the APS is still available but is on the previous weights.
4. DF gave the Panel information regarding future ONS population data; what is currently available and what will become available through 2024/25. The key dates being;
 - January 2024, when 'interim' projections were produced which are 2021 based and no sub-national projections produced.
 - November 2024, where National projections are published that will include the 2022 Scottish census
 - February 2025, when Sub-national projections are to be published.DF noted we aim to use this to reweight LFS back to 2012 and start publishing data in outputs in 2025 for person level data, with longitudinal, household and APS data following.
5. DF presented the Panel with potential options for interim LFS reweighting before the full reweighting noted in point 4 can be implemented.
 - i. Option 1: Take current weights back to 2019 (this will provide a longer time series including pre-covid).
 - ii. Option 2: Update to the January 2024 'interim' projections, to 2022. This would be available by the end of 2024.
 - iii. Option 3: Update to November final National Population Projections for 2022.
6. The Panel discussed the options presented. The detail of the discussion has been redacted due to the market sensitive nature of the subject.
7. The Chair summarised the discussion noting that consistency of population and labour market statistics is important for policy makers.
8. DF presented an update on the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS), reminding the Panel of its objectives of higher quality, more granular data,

where the survey is more flexible in responding to change and updated to align with latest user needs.

9. DF noted that an interim stocktake of the TLFS was held in May 2024, led by ONS Director General, Pete Benton; the establishment of the Stakeholder Advisory Panel on Labour Market Statistics and methodological review of the TLFS survey design, being actions from that stocktake.
10. The Panel discussed the update presented and the detail from the interim stocktake. The detail of the discussion has been redacted due to the market sensitive nature of the subject but included discussion of ongoing challenges such as the coding of industry and occupation variables and missingness within the survey.

4. Horizon Scan – Broader Labour Market Topics

1. The Chair noted the previous discussion had run over time and to give sufficient time for the paper and discussion, suggested pushing the topic to next panel. The Chair further recommended a Panel before the next quarterly Panel.

ACTION: Secretariat to add ‘Horizon Scan – Broader Labour Market Topics’ item to the agenda for the next meeting.

ACTION: Secretariat to schedule the next Panel sooner than the regular 3-month frequency.

5. Any Other Business and Close

1. A Panel member expressed their appreciation of the sharing of information and engagement.
2. A panel member questioned whether the ASHE would be discussed at a future Panel. This was confirmed as within the remit of Panel and could be discussed at a future session.
 - a. **ACTION**: Secretariat to add a discussion on ASHE to a future Panel agenda.
3. **A Panel member** noted that a full set of survey and outputs within the scope of the Panel would be useful, asking specifically for the Panel to discuss AWE (Average Weekly Earnings.) ONS noted this can be covered in the horizon scan item at the next meeting.
 - a. **ACTION**: Secretariat to include AWE as a topic within the ‘Horizon Scan’ item at the next meeting.

- b. **ACTION**: ONS to provide a full list of outputs and surveys within scope of the Panel.
4. The Chair thanked the Panel members for their contributions to the meeting and ONS for their presentations and papers.
5. The Chair closed the meeting.