

## **Stakeholder Advisory Panel on Labour Market Statistics: Minutes 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

### **Attendees**

#### Members in attendance

Jonathan Portes (Chair)

Harvey Daniell (Bank of England)

Tom Pybus (HM Treasury)

Nye Cominetti (The Resolution Foundation)

Chaitra Nagaraja (University of Exeter)

David Bell (University of Stirling)

Stephanie Howarth (Welsh Government)

Steve Ellerd-Elliott (Department for Work and Pensions)

Tony Wilson (Department for Work and Pensions)

Richard Murray (Scottish Government)

Philip Wales (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency)

Alan Manning (London School of Economics)

Xiaowei Xu (Institute for Fiscal Studies)

Jonathan Wadsworth (University of London)

#### ONS Secretariat

Melanie Gore

#### ONS Presenters

David Freeman

Heather Bovill

Orlaith Fraser

#### ONS Colleagues

Liz McKeown

Mike Keoghan

James Harris

Sumit Dey-Chowdhury

Sarah Henry

Tom Evans

## **Minutes**

### **1. Introduction and new Panel members**

1. The Chair opened the meeting and thanked panel members for their attendance.
2. The Chair welcomed Jonathan Wadsworth, Royal Holloway College, University of London to the Panel.

### **2. Labour Force Survey (LFS) Sustainability – David Freeman**

1. DF reminded the panel of the LFS improvements to date. He explained the changes in the LFS response rates and how these have already, and continue to, change following the recovery measures. The volatility in the LFS data was acknowledged, along with measures taken to mitigate it. DF explained the timescale involved for changes to feed through the sample wave design.
2. DF discussed improvements in the representativeness of the LFS sample, particularly in terms of tenure and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).
3. The panel discussed in detail the current quality challenges with LFS and plans to continue to address them. Two overarching steers, were given:
  - **Analysis:** A recommendation to undertake further analysis to better understand (and ultimately address) potential bias in the data (including understanding the impact of recent population changes/migration).
  - **Communication:** A steer to strengthen further our communications to users.
4. DF reminded the panel of the further improvements already being considered for the LFS, from a collections, methods and communication perspective. DF informed the panel that an impact article relating to LFS reweighting would be published on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024.

### **3. Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) Timeline and Update – Heather Bovill**

1. HB gave an overview of the TLFS timeline, highlighting where the work is currently and noting future plans and milestones. HB confirmed the shorter test questionnaire

went live on 21<sup>st</sup> October and is currently undergoing data collection. Following the test, the results will be reviewed and brought to the panel for discussion in the New Year.

#### **4. Transformed Labour Force Survey - Potential use of data – Heather Bovill**

1. HB's presentation considered whether TLFS should be used alongside LFS to help the labour market narrative, while it was still being developed.
2. On balance while some panel members advocated that in principle publishing some 'statistics in development' from the TLFS was a good idea and would also help familiarise users and move towards transition; in practice, given the ongoing work to improve TLFS quality (including both reweighting and the test of the shorter questionnaire) many panel members felt that now may not be the right time to begin publication. ONS will reflect further on the feedback received and explore what the options are in terms of whether, when and how this might be best taken forward.

#### **5. Transformed Labour Force Survey - Evidence for strategic decision– Heather Bovill**

1. HB gave an overview of the decision inputs that will enable the strategic direction decision being taken for TLFS in Q1 2025.
2. The panel discussed the inputs, and HB confirmed the evidence would be brought back to the panel in the New Year for their reflections.

#### **6. Short Survey (LMX) Content – Orlaith Fraser**

1. OF gave the panel an overview of the shorter survey, noting it is a test to identify the impact on drop-off rates, bias and response. The panel were shown the topics being included in the shorter survey, those that had been removed and those with a reduced content.
2. OF gave the panel an overview of the framework that has been developed for determining the content eligible to be included on the TLFS Core survey and the TLFS Plus survey and welcomed feedback.
3. The collective view was that the short questionnaire content captured key Labour Market user needs well and, overall, was the right direction of travel. Emerging evidence from the test suggests that questionnaire length could ideally be shortened further so the panel was asked to reflect and offer suggestions for additional elements that could potentially be removed or shortened. There was a steer that the framework to determine inclusion could be important to protect the length of the short questionnaire and that ONS should consider communicating this clearly, alongside the emerging solution for non-Labour Market content.

## **7. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) update – David Freeman**

1. DF gave an overview of the ASHE 2024 update, noting the bulletins and tables were scheduled for publication on 29<sup>th</sup> October.
2. DF explained some changes to methodology and presented a short summary of the ongoing development plans following the October publication. The panel discussed the methodology changes and comparing ASHE to other data sources.
3. The Chair suggested we return to this topic in a future meeting given the ongoing developments.

## **8. APS Update – James Harris**

1. There was no time for this item to be presented. The Chair suggested the panel review the information received and contact JH with any questions.

## **9. AOB**

1. It was agreed to increase the time for the January panel meeting, to review the TLFS evidence for the strategic decision.
2. The Chair confirmed the request from the panel to see a draft of the LFS reweighting paper prior to publication.
3. The Chair thanked the panel for their time and contribution and closed the meeting.