

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY
ADVISORY PANEL ON CONSUMER PRICES – STAKEHOLDER**

**Minutes
Friday 25 April 2025
Hybrid Meeting**

Members in attendance

Dame Kate Barker (Chair)
Professor Jonathan Haskel (Chair)
Jonathan Camfield
Richard Gibson
Jenny King
Simon Kirby
Ashwin Kumar
Jill Leyland
Tim Pike
Ellie Price

ONS secretariat

David Beckett

Presenters

Mike Hardie (ONS)
Emily Hopson (ONS)
Robert Kent-Smith (Office for Statistics Regulation)
Rishi Vaidya (Office for Statistics Regulation)

ONS observers

Stephen Burgess
Abi Casey
Grant Fitzner
Chris Jenkins
Chris Payne

Outstanding Actions

6.	ONS to produce analysis (of the HCIs) for the three methods of implementing mortgage payments (the current Retail Prices Index (RPI) method, the simple revaluation method and the lenders' formula method) with a 20% fall in house prices and a 1% increase in interest rates.	On hold
30.	Chris Payne to come back to the Panel with a proposal for how to manage revisions in the HCIs.	Ongoing
41.	David Beckett to check whether the Ofcom announcement which prevents telecoms and pay TV providers including inflation-linked price rises in new contracts would have an impact on price collection for any basket categories or on where mobile phone charges are prioritised within the framework.	Completed

46.	Stephen Burgess to circulate the CPI intensity paper tabled at today's Panel to the Technical Panel and Stefan Ubovic to circulate a draft of the public-facing paper on CPI intensity to the Stakeholder Panel when it was ready.	Ongoing
47.	ONS to engage with stakeholders to discuss the areas identified as priorities for development for the Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR).	Ongoing
48.	ONS to produce a paper which will allow discussion on whether the stock-based methodological approach in PIPR is consistent with calculating price indices using the acquisition approach.	Ongoing

Actions from today's meeting

49.	Chris Jenkins to summarise at the July Stakeholder Panel any examples of good practice of communicating and explaining GEKS-T he encounters at the Meeting of the Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices.	-
50.	At the July 2025 Panel, updates will be given on the impact of ONS website changes on stakeholders but before that a link to the preview site will be circulated to Panel members. Updates should also be given at the July 2025 Panel on the 'roadmap' to 2030, progress on scanner data parallel runs, and the household costs indices.	-

1. Introduction and reflections

1.1 Dame Kate Barker welcomed everyone to the Stakeholder Panel meeting.

1.2 The minutes from the last Joint Panel meeting with the Technical Panel (2 December 2024) were approved, as Stakeholder Panel members were now content that their comments had been reflected in the minutes. The minutes from the last Stakeholder Panel meeting with the Technical Panel (24 January 2025) were also approved.

1.3 It was agreed that action point 41 (see above for full action point list) had been completed as David Beckett had provided the Panel with an assessment on the impact the Ofcom announcement had on ONS price collection. It was also noted that the prioritisation framework would be discussed again at the July Stakeholder Panel.

1.4 Aimee North (AN) gave an update on action point 47, explaining that the housing team had continued to engage with stakeholders to discuss the areas identified as priorities for development of the Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR). These areas include the production of a longer back series; the publication of upper quartile, lower quartile and median rent values; and the publication of data by broad rental market area. AN further explained that a rents development plan had been published on 1 April.

1.5 The Panel members introduced themselves, talking briefly about their background and areas of expertise. Professor Jonathan Haskel, the new chair, then introduced himself. There followed a discussion on some of the important issues debated by the Panel in the past before potential areas of future focus were considered. One such area was how the consumer prices landscape would continue to evolve up to and after 2030, which is when ONS intends to bring the methods and data sources of the Consumer Prices Index including Owner Occupiers Housing costs (CPIH) into the Retail Prices Index (RPI).

- 1.6 Mike Hardie noted that he was working on a paper for the July Stakeholder Panel which related to the ONS's RPI communications plan on the 'roadmap' to 2030 and suggested incorporating a review of the consumer prices landscape into his paper. The review would include suggestions on how ONS can publicise the existence of the landscape with stakeholders to a greater extent.
- 1.7 Sir Ian Diamond joined the meeting to thank Dame Kate Barker (KB) for expertly leading the panel through a wide range of important topics over the past nine years. KB responded by thanking the ONS and the Panel members for their support during her time as chair.

2. Update on alternative data sources

- 2.1 Mike Hardie (MH) reiterated ONS's transformation plan to March 2026 and explained that ONS are working towards publishing a groceries scanner data impact analysis for CPI, CPIH, and RPI on 29 April as a standalone publication. A further impact analysis is likely to be published in December 2025, and the aim is to incorporate these data into ONS's headline measures of consumer price inflation in March 2026.
- 2.2 MH provided an update on the prioritisation of ongoing development work within Prices Division, advising that following the removal of the Accredited Official Statistic badge from the Producer Prices Index (PPI), resource will be allocated to address the methodological shortcomings with the aim of achieving reaccreditation.
- 2.3 MH stated that while most of the consumer price statistics processing has already been migrated to Google Cloud Platform, additional legacy reduction work is still required before the Ingres system, which was developed in the 1990s, can be fully decommissioned.
- 2.4 MH continued by discussing retailer stratification, noting that the Prices team is currently exploring options for reviewing how index weightings are applied based on retailer type.
- 2.5 Emily Hopson (EH) presented the groceries scanner data impact analysis which was due to be published on 29 April, highlighting the differences between the published and experimental indices.
- 2.6 Dame Kate Barker asked if the scanner data includes products that have been discounted (through multi-buys or loyalty card schemes), as ONS currently includes such products in their price collection. MH explained that multi-buys and loyalty card scheme purchases are included in the scanner data but that it is not possible to disaggregate these products from the other non-discounted products.
- 2.7 Ellie Price queried the ability of scanner data to provide information on deposit return schemes. EH responded that this would be very difficult to do based on the data received.
- 2.8 The Panel welcomed the video explainer of GEKS-T that was due to be published alongside the impact analysis. The Panel also welcomed the more technical explanation of GEKS-T that had been published previously. However, the Panel thought that more work could be done to ensure that all stakeholders were being provided with the information they required. By way of example, it may be helpful for a paper to be published that built on the video, but wasn't as technical as the previously-published

work. Chris Payne explained that discussions relating to the communications strategy are ongoing and that it is possible that such a paper would be published later this year.

- 2.9 Chris Jenkins (CJ) explained that he would be attending the Meeting of the Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices at the end of April and that he could discuss with other countries how they were communicating the use of GEKS-T with stakeholders. He could then summarise examples of good practice he had found at the July Stakeholder Panel.

Action: Chris Jenkins to summarise at the July Stakeholder Panel any examples of good practice of communicating and explaining GEKS-T he encounters at the Meeting of the Group of Experts on Consumer Prices Indices.

3. OSR Review

- 3.1 Rob Kent Smith (RK) explained that the Office for Statistics Regulation were about to commence work on assessing ONS consumer price statistics against the Code of Practice for Statistics, with a particular focus on the transformation work that has been undertaken by ONS in recent years.
- 3.2 Rishi Vaidya (RV) gave an overview of the review and the main questions it will ask which will include whether ONS is effectively handling the transformation, engaging with users to understand whether the proposed improvements meet their needs, and being transparent about its work. It will also assess whether ONS is adequately assuring itself and users about the quality of statistics produced using new data and methods.
- 3.3 RV then explained that the assessment will be a mix of desk research with the ONS team and user engagement. Panel members were encouraged to contact regulation@ons.gov.uk if they wished to contribute to the review, and the aim was to publish the findings of the assessment in summer 2025.

4. Future Work Plan

- 4.1 David Beckett (DB) presented the draft workplan for July and September 2025 and asked for the Panel's feedback.
- 4.2 Stephen Burgess (SB) added that in addition to the prioritisation of large transformation projects, ONS have introduced a new process within Prices Division for delivering continuous improvement while taking account of stakeholder needs and the total resource and skills they have available.
- 4.3 The Panel discussed again the work that was being carried out on creating a 'roadmap' to 2030, which is when ONS intends to bring the data methods and data sources of CPIH into RPI. It was noted that the paper that MH is preparing for the Panel in July should include a timetable of when ONS will make decisions and announce them, as this should give users and the market further confidence in the process.
- 4.4 The Panel discussed Household Costs Indices (HCIs) and DB confirmed that a paper was due to come to the Panel in September which would include a proposed HCIs revision policy and would also summarise progress towards the priority areas of development as chosen by the Panel in July 2024. However, it was noted that a short verbal update at the July Panel would also be helpful.

4.5 The Panel requested that as part of the ADS update in July there should be information on how the parallel runs have been going with scanner data.

4.6 Ellie Price (EP) asked if there had been any assessment on the impact the changes to the ONS website has had for users and observed that a brief update would be interesting at a future Panel. SB explained that there had been one round of feedback from the alternative CPI bulletin published in February which has been broadly positive, but that he would welcome any further comments from the Panel.

Action: At the July 2025 Panel, updates will be given on the impact of ONS website changes on stakeholders but before that a link to the preview site would be circulated to Panel members. Updates should also be given at the July 2025 Panel on the 'roadmap' to 2030, progress on scanner data parallel runs, and the household costs indices.

4.7 Chris Jenkins (CJ) noted that ONS had been working on how best to communicate some key messages to stakeholders relating to the Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR), which include that PIPR is a stock-based measure for rents and that ONS were not taking a 14-month average of prices. CJ then noted that the discussion in these areas had led to a more general conversation on whether a stock-based approach is suitable for an acquisitions-based index, and that a paper on this topic would be written for the September Stakeholder Panel.

4.8 DB and SB summarised the recent work NIESR had carried out for ONS on the seasonal adjustment of CPI. ONS will take some time to reflect and to consult stakeholders before going ahead with publication but expected to take a paper to the July stakeholder panel to garner views. Simon Kirby (SK) asked if the paper could be sent to members earlier than normal so he would have time to examine the content thoroughly. SK also noted the importance of members receiving all papers well in advance of the meeting so they had time to digest the contents.

5. AOB / Summary

5.1 It was agreed that the next Stakeholder Panel meeting would be held on Friday 11 July rather than Friday 4 July.