

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

**Thursday 26 June 2025
Manchester Boardroom**

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present

Sir Robert Chote
Dr Jacob Abboud
Peter Barron
Ed Humpherson
Emma Rourke
Professor David Spiegelhalter
Professor Mairi Spowage
Professor Dame Carol Propper
Dr Sarah Walsh
Penny Young

Other Attendees

June Bowman
Alex Lambert (for item 13)
Liz McKeown (for item 13)
Sarah Moore
Professor Alice Sullivan (for item 10)
Tom Taylor

Secretariat

Sally Jones

Apologies

None

1. Apologies

- 1.1 There were no apologies.

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 May 2025 were approved.
- 3.2 The Secretariat recommended quarterly reporting for early warning indicators on quality to align with senior level meetings attended by the Acting National Statistician with key stakeholders including HM Treasury (HMT). The Director of Quality and Methodology would meet regularly with the HMT representative who had previously been a member of ONS Quality Committee. At the pre NED session members had discussed the importance of relevant management information to inform effective oversight by the Board. It was noted that work was already in progress by the ONS to improve the Integrated Performance Report.

4. Report from the Authority Chair [SA(25)30]

- 4.1 Non-Executive Directors had a pre meet. They had discussed the review by Sir Robert Devereux and Board oversight of delivery.
- 4.2 The Chair reported on activities since the Board last met highlighting the following:
- i. Sir Robert had continued to work with Sir Robert Devereux and the Cabinet Office on the review, with the final report scheduled for publication later in the day;
 - ii. the ongoing work in preparation for the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) hearing on 1 July;
 - iii. that on 17 June, the Authority had published its recommendation of the Future of Population and Migration Statistics in England and Wales; and
 - iv. the completion of the appointment process for the new Director General for the ONS Economic, Social and Environmental Group with James Benford joining the Office for National Statistics (ONS) early August.

5. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(25)31]

- 5.1 Emma Rourke provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting highlighting the following:
- i. following changes to ONS's executive governance, Executive Committee (ExCo) continued to meet weekly. The duration of meetings had been extended to 90 minutes to ensure sufficient time to deal with key strategic discussions and Task and Finish Groups were being convened to allow for focus on specific areas, maintain pace of delivery with membership comprising the skills needed for the task;
 - ii. delivery progress of the work to develop and improve management information provided to ExCo to inform decision making and a broader piece of work on the control and assurance framework across the organisation;
 - iii. James Benford, the incoming Director General for the Economic, Social and Environmental Group had met with ESEG colleagues;
 - iv. a visit by the Cabinet Secretary to the Newport office, which had included presentations on the census taskforce, economic statistics and prices transformation;
 - v. the approach to cyber security and risk exposure following recent the Legal Aid Agency security incident with a paper scheduled for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee in September;
 - vi. the impact of improved quality assurance processes highlighting errors with the most recent in relation to the Annual Business Survey. A correction notice had been published on the ONS website on 25 June explaining the processing error. It was noted that the error was not related to legacy systems but a result of improved quality assurance processes. As part of

- the process for handling errors the communications team provide advice on stakeholder and user engagement; and
- vii. preparation ahead of the PACAC hearing on 1 July.

5.2 The Board noted the update.

6. Communications update

- 6.1 Peter Barron and Sarah Moore reported on recent media coverage of ONS noting some good coverage of key releases including Labour Market, Gross Domestic Product and migration statistics. Negative coverage related to ONS leadership and culture and the recent Consumer Prices Index error.
- 6.2 The Board heard that Sir Robert Devereux's independent review of the performance and culture of the ONS was scheduled for publication later in the day (26 June). At the same time ONS would publish its plan for ONS Economic Statistics and ONS Survey Improvement and Enhancement Plan.

7. DG update and Code of Practice for Statistics [SA(25)32]

- 7.1 Ed Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity since the last meeting. The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) had published the final phase assessment of the 2021 Census in England and Wales; and a review of statistics from ONS's Wealth and Assets Survey. Key areas of focus included preparation for the PACAC hearing and the development of OSR's strategy.
- 7.2 OSR were in the final stages of drafting the refreshed Code of Practice (CoP) for Statistics having reviewed feedback from the consultation. OSR colleagues presented the key changes: a new Trustworthiness Quality and Value framework with simple, direct principles, ten 'must' statements with action-oriented practices and the integration of Intelligent Transparency.
- 7.3 Members discussed the proposed changes to the CoP and commended OSR on the work undertaken in reaching this point. Members welcomed the clarity of the document and focus on different users. There was a need to consider the relevance of the CoP for different users across government; the potential to further highlight the responsibility of producers and analysts; and it could be more explicit about the standards in relation to Special Advisors. Reference to the risks around Artificial Intelligence (AI) could be included and the pre-emption of misuse of data could perhaps be more prominent. It was noted that extensive engagement had been undertaken with Government Statistical Service (GSS) Heads of Profession (HoP) throughout the development of the refreshed CoP including a role for HoPs embedding it across the GSS.
- 7.4 The Board welcomed the clarity of the refreshed document. Following a further discussion by Regulation Committee at its next meeting on 21 July a final draft would be considered for approval by the Board at the July meeting.

8. Report from the Chair of the Regulation Committee

- 8.1 The Chair reported on the work of the Regulation Committee which had last met on 5 June.
- 8.2 The Committee had considered:
- i. the outline of the State of the Statistical System Report;
 - ii. the refresh of the Code of Practice for Statistics;
 - iii. OSR's Annual Review of Casework;
 - iv. the development of OSR's strategy and business plan;
 - v. a presentation on how the public use statistics to inform personal decision making; and
 - vi. approved Assessment Reports for Phase three Census for England and Wales; Cancer waiting times and Northern Ireland public transport statistics.

9. Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

- 9.1 The Chair reported on the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee which had last met on 19 June.
- 9.2 The Chair reported that based on the work of the Committee during the year and assurance work carried out by external and internal auditors, it was his opinion that the Authority's governance and control framework was generally effective, but with some significant weaknesses identified particularly in relation to data governance and technology. The Committee accepted the overall limited opinion from the Head of Internal Audit. External Audit would be recommending to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) that he should certify the 2024/25 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion. The C&AG had concluded that he should qualify the regularity opinion as a result of the previous breach of Cabinet Office controls and the materiality of the cumulative crime survey contract spend. It was noted that in the year ahead the Committee would be looking for improvements in developing the culture of ownership and accountability; progressing critical enabling capabilities in resourcing and technology; strengthening risk and oversight functions and strengthening governance.
- 9.3 The Board heard that due to timing of governance meetings this year final consideration and approval of the Authority's Annual Report and Accounts would be undertaken in correspondence in time for laying in Parliament on 17 July.
- 9.4 Members highlighted the challenges ahead and the need for ONS to address the key areas of weakness around data governance and technology while also delivering the Economic Statistics Plan. It was acknowledged that sequencing of the work would be challenging, which was a key area of focus for ExCo.

10. Independent review of data, statistics and research on sex and gender

- 10.1 The Chair welcomed Professor Alice Sullivan to the meeting. Professor Sullivan led on the independent review of data, statistics and research on sex and gender. This had been commissioned in February 2024 by the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology and published on the 19 March 2025. The aims of the review: Identifying obstacles to accurate data collection and research on sex and on gender identity in public bodies and in the research system; and setting out good practice guidance for how to collect data on sex and gender identity.
- 10.2 Professor Sullivan highlighted her findings that Civil Servants wanted clear guidance on recording data on sex and gender. Professor Sullivan referenced the clear recommendations made by the Inclusive Data Taskforce – How can we be more inclusive in our data, published in July 2021; OSR's guidance on data and statistics about sex and gender identity published in December 2024; and the recent Supreme Court Judgement in For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers in April 2025. Professor Sullivan highlighted that her review could assist in providing recommended questions, which she presented.
- 10.3 Board members welcomed the presentation by Professor Sullivan and noted the clarity of the analysis. It was noted that the GSS Harmonisation Team led by ONS were undertaking a programme of work to review standards for sex and gender identity for statistical producers with a clear timeline in place for delivery. Professor Sullivan would be speaking to the GSS Harmonisation Team on her findings.

11. Authority Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25 [SA(25)33]

- 11.1 The Board had discussed the approach to the approval for the Authority's Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25 earlier in the meeting, as part of the Dr Jacob Abboud's update on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting held on 19 June.

12. Integrated Data Service [SA(25)34]

- 12.1 Megan Cooper introduced a paper which provided an update on the Integrated Data Service Programme.

12.2 The Board heard that ONS were in the process of closing the Integrated Data Programme and removing it from the Government Major Projects Portfolio. The closure of the programme would enable the release of staff to support delivery of the economic statistics plan. The ONS would continue to maintain the IDS infrastructure while continuing to explore opportunities to use it internally and to find efficiencies and synergies across programmes of work across the organisation. The Secure Research Service (SRS) would continue and the aim was to bring the SRS and IDS closer together. ONS continued discussions with the Department for Science Innovation and Technology about the lessons learnt from IDS in relation to the National Data Library. Work was ongoing to manage live analytical projects. The approach to internal and external communications was under development and would include details of the programme closure, the availability of the SRS, the continued use of the platform data and analysis infrastructure within ONS.

12.3 Members discussed the update. The following points were made in discussion:

- i. the need for clear communications on the closure of the programme setting out the remaining available service for academic researchers and government analysts;
- ii. discussions on treatment of projects that are currently on the IDS pipeline were scheduled for ExCo in the coming weeks;
- iii. members appreciated that the benefits profile of the programme would shift to the right;
- iv. the value of the SRS which enables research for the public good;
- v. the work in reaching this point in the IDS programme which had produced a valuable asset not only for ONS but with the potential for the whole of government. While the programme was closing the value of the asset created would be retained for ONS and potentially for externals in the future; and
- vi. discussions by ONS with DSIT colleagues would continue.

12.4 The Board noted the update and approach being taken to the closure of the IDS programme with elements of the service remaining.

13. Transformed Labour Force Survey [SA(25)35]

13.1 Alex Lambert and Liz McKeown introduced a paper which provided an update on the Transformed Labour Force Survey programme, ONS social survey portfolio and wider labour market statistics landscape.

13.2 The Board heard that the TLFS programme had been set up as a formal programme with Alex Lambert as the Senior Responsible Owner. The Board acknowledged that TLFS is reporting Amber-Red from the first programme board as a result of two key issues in relation to the UK data coherence and complex data collection, coding and processing. The Board noted the progress in delivering the new short core TLFS, which would go live on 7 July. With regard to social survey portfolio performance, an initial recovery plan had been launched in October 2023, expanding to a full portfolio of work following HMT investment in April 2024, which had enabled the recovery of wave one of the LFS. A new recognition scheme for interviewers has been developed and approved by HMT, to support the retention and performance of interviewers. The recruitment of field force interviewers had been strengthened through a new strategic resourcing partner. The plans to improve social surveys and business surveys would be set out in the Survey Enhancement and Improvement Plan, (due for publication later in the day).

13.3 Members discussed the update. The following points were made in discussion:

- i. it was clarified that TLFS is the collective term for two related surveys, a streamlined labour market-focused multi-wave (longitudinal) survey (the TLFS Labour Market Core) that would take 15 minutes to complete on average and a separate cross-sectional survey (the TLFS Plus) collecting wider socioeconomic and household data;
- ii. the decline in interviews for the Living Cost and Food (LCF) survey was primarily due to the loss of LCF trained interviewers and their replacement with inexperienced new recruits. To

address this increased coaching had been introduced with coaching partners spending time in the field actively interviewing; and

- iii. the key risks to the programme around UK data coherence and complex data collection were underpinned by clear mitigation plans. It would be a further six months to conclude the parallel streams of work to provide an evidence based assessment for addressing these risks. An extraordinary meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Panel was scheduled to consider the UK coherence risk;

- 13.4 The Board noted the progress and emphasised the need to remain engaged on delivery of the TLFS in line with the decision made by the Board at the March 2025 meeting. ONS confirmed that the ambition remained to transition to using TLFS for labour market statistics in November 2026, noting that the decision would be evidence based and data led and may be later than November 2026.

14. Any Other Business

- 14.1 Members noted the need for programme reports to provide an executive summary setting out progress against delivery including successes, failures and lesson learned.
- 14.2 The Board would next meet on 31 July.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY
Agenda
Thursday 26 June 2025, 12.00-15.00
Manchester Boardroom, Hybrid Meeting

Chair: Sir Robert Chote

Apologies: None

Attendees: Helen Miller-Bakewell (for item 5), Megan Cooper (for item 9), Alex Lambert (for item 10), Marie McGhee (for item 5), Liz McKeown (for item 10), Anna Price (for item 5), Prof. Alice Sullivan (for item 7), Rhys Thomas (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 May 2025
2 12.05-12.15 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	SA(25)30 Sir Robert Chote
3 12.15-12.45 30 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(25)31 Emma Rourke
4 12.45-12.55 10 mins	Communications update	Oral update Sarah Moore Peter Barron
5 12.55-13.20 25 mins	Report from the Director General for Regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of Practice for Statistics 	SA(25)32 Ed Humpherson Penny Babb Marie McGhee Anna Price
6 13.20-13.35 15 mins	Report from Committee Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation Committee Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 	Oral update Prof. Dame Carol Propper Dr Jacob Abboud
13.35-13.45 10 mins	Break	
7 13.45-14.00 15 mins	Independent review of data, statistics and research on sex and gender	Oral update Prof. Alice Sullivan
8 14.00-14.20 20 mins	Authority Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25	SA(25)33 Tom Taylor Rhys Thomas
9 14.20-14.35 15 mins	Integrated Data Service	SA(25)34 Megan Cooper
10 14.35-14.55 20 mins	Transformed Labour Force Survey	SA(25)35 Alex Lambert Liz McKeown
11 14.55-15.00 5 mins	Any Other Business	

Next meeting: Thursday 31 July, London Boardroom

Chair's Report, June 2025

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Authority Board with an overview of the Chair's activity in June.

Review of Recent Activities

2. This month I have continued to work closely with Sir Robert Devereux and the Cabinet Office as we reach the final stages of Sir Robert's review of the ONS. We expect his review to be published towards the end of June alongside a short joint response to his recommendations from the Authority and the Cabinet Office. In parallel, ONS will also publish its strategy for core economic statistics recovery.
3. On 17 June, the Authority published its recommendation on the Future of Population and Migration Statistics (FPMS) in England and Wales. This represents years of work by ONS colleagues and multiple discussions by the Board. Reception from stakeholders on our recommendation to hold another census in 2031 while also making greater use of administrative data has been positive. We now await the Government's formal response which we hope to receive before summer recess.
4. Throughout this month I have also met with Ed Humpherson, Emma Rourke and policy colleagues to rehearse for the Authority's appearance at Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on 1 July. As well as the topics set out in the inquiry's terms of reference, we expect the Committee to focus on the Devereux review and the future of the National Statistician role.
5. I have continued to hold my regular catch-ups with the Acting National Statistician, Director General for Regulation, Deputy Director of Strategy and Policy, and Committee chairs.

Correspondence

6. On 17 June, alongside the publication of the FPMS recommendation, I wrote to Georgia Gould MP, Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office, and Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, Welsh Government.

Sir Robert Chote, Chair, 19 June 2025

Chief Executive's Report, June 2025

Purpose

1. This provides the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) with an overview of activity since the last Board meeting on 29 May 2025, aligned to our priority outcomes for 2025/2026 as provided within our latest Strategic Business Plan.

An Update on Ongoing Reviews and Organisational Changes

2. In the coming weeks, we expect to see the publication of Sir Robert Devereux's review into the Office for National Statistics, and I look forward to working closely with Sir Robert and fellow members of the Executive Committee (ExCo) as we implement any changes from his review.
3. Alongside the Devereux Review, we will publish our plan for improving quality and restoring confidence in our economic statistics. This plan will set out transparently to users how we will restore sustainable quality and trustworthiness in our economic statistics. The plan anticipates further funding to be released in 2025/26 and beyond by stopping discretionary and lower priority work, which will enable the right input of capacity and capability.
4. Following my decision to simplify the executive governance structure, Executive Committee (ExCo) now takes place weekly to enable faster, clearer decision making and strengthen joined up leadership. In the latest period, ExCo have discussed Census Taskforce funding and approved the proposal to recruit a Senior Commercial Lead (Deputy Director) to deliver the procurement strategy and Commercial planning for Census 2031. Elsewhere, an ExCo Task and Finish Group on Pay, convened by Philippa Bonay, Director of Operations and Chief People Officer, will report to ExCo on 2 July with findings on how to maximise the pay remit to address critical skill gaps within the organisation.
5. An ExCo Task and Finish Group was convened by Grant Fitzner, Acting Director-General for Economic, Social and Environmental Statistics (ESEG), to outline resource release options to enable delivery of the plan for economic statistics. As an ExCo, on 11 June, we accepted options for the streamlining of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) and Analytical Hub as part of the first phase of our reallocation of capacity and capability. Members agreed to move to a monthly OPN but agreed it is an important test bed for household surveys and future census.
6. Across the last month, I have been working closely with our senior leaders to prepare for- and deliver- the change that will be necessary for us as an organisation moving forwards. This has included tough conversations on how we prioritise activity, aligning to our core role of delivering economic and population statistics, and making difficult decisions on discretionary activity. I am confident that our plan for enacting much needed change will deliver improvements to our statistics in the months ahead.
7. Additionally, ExCo now turns its attention to the right management information and second line assurance that will strengthen its ability to drive delivery and adjust in a timely way. ExCo have endorsed a phase of examining detailed plans and prioritisation across the organisation to increase alignment of prioritisation and ensure the intersectionality of the economic statistics plan is fully known and resourced appropriately.

We are now planning and coordinating our activity following the outcome of the Spending Review

8. The Authority's settlement under Spending Review (SR25) Phase 2 (which agrees funding for 2026/27 to 2028/29) was published as part of the overall cross-government fiscal event on 11 June.
9. This settlement provides us with certainty, flexibility and opportunity across a multi-year time frame and therefore we feel it is a positive outcome. The settlement is likely to come with formal

conditions requiring a continued sharp focus on core statistical production; with linked conditions on surveys recovery including on the LFS/TLFS; reference to the impending Devereux Review recommendations; and the decision to pare back the IDS for internal use/support only.

10. A clearer picture of the average net expenditure for Periods 1 and 2 will be available by the end of Period 3 as the early months' distortions wash through. Period 3 will also reflect the additive TLFS/LFS funding made available to us through the recent Main Estimates for 2025/26. We are still at the earliest stages of 25/26 and thus any financial data comes caveated as there is generally a degree of volatility in Periods 1 and 2 as we transition from one financial year to the next. An extraordinary ExCo in July will review P3 spend and determine any reactive action required.
11. A fuller update on the Annual Report and Accounts progress is included in the document set for this meeting. For full disclosure and given the known Cabinet Office control framework transgression relating to 2023/24, we expect our Annual Report and Accounts to be qualified in 2024/25 on regularity grounds. This is based on a cumulatively material contractual spend on the Crime Survey for England and Wales which was noted in the 2023/24 annual report.

Whilst we have renewed our focus for delivering our core economic statistics, challenges remain to continue to ensure these statistics are of the highest quality

12. Following an exchange of letters with the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), we have agreed to suspend temporarily the accredited status of the Producer Prices statistics, whilst work is completed to rebuild the production pipelines to address the errors found. The work remains on track to recommence publication in the summer, in line with our earlier public commitment. The team are also exploring the option of making a limited set of series available to key economic policymakers on a faster timetable.
13. An error was identified in an extract of the licensed vehicles data provided to the ONS by the Department for Transport (DfT), used to calculate the April 2025 Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) component of Consumer Prices Inflation. No other periods were affected. In line with our Consumer Prices revisions policy, these statistics will not be amended. The ONS will be using the correctly weighted data from May 2025's figures onwards. All relevant stakeholders have been notified, and communications were published as of 7am Thursday 5 June. Following the error, I agreed with the team to review our revisions policy and provide some clarity on the kinds of future situations in which we would revise the Consumer Price Index/ Consumer Prices Index, including owner occupiers' housing costs.
14. The exchange of letters between ONS and OSR on the de-accreditation of the Wealth and Assets Survey (WAS) took place on Friday 13 June. On the shorter-term Secure Research Service (SRS) challenges, we have assured both the Resolution Foundation and the Institute for Fiscal Studies that the Data Management team estimate they will make the latest WAS data available in SRS by late June/early July.
15. Across our environmental statistics, we recently published our annual UK Environmental Accounts, including greenhouse gas emissions, emissions intensity, energy use and the environmental economy. The team also presented their green economy and environmental business surveys work at the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence (ESCoE) conference and visited the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Ethiopia to discuss next steps for our Overseas Development Assistance (ODA)-supported capacity building for partner countries' natural capital accounting this financial year.

We have recently published our recommendation on the future of population and migration statistics

16. On 17 June, we published the formal recommendation to Government regarding the future of population and migration statistics (FPMS) in England and Wales. The recommendation outlines a vision for a mandatory questionnaire-based census of the whole population, which also builds on the growing power of administrative data. Similar documents were published in parallel by Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and National Records Scotland to

enable a UK wide coherent approach. The Census 2021 General Report was laid in Parliament at the same time. The Government response to the recommendation will follow in due course, subject to which the Census Taskforce will take forward work and begin preparations for Census 2031, including getting ready for our topic consultation to launch this autumn. We will also maintain focus on administrative data development and work with UK and Welsh Governments to secure commitments for reliable administrative data flows.

17. The Census Taskforce is developing a first draft of the Future Operating Model (FOM). A workshop took place on 16 June with cross-ONS stakeholders to explore what we want to retain, retire and reimagine for Census 2031, building on the learnings from previous censuses. Following this, outputs will be taken through formal Taskforce governance with the aim of prioritising the workplan for the coming months.
18. Testing is underway for a new method of estimating British and EU nationals which we aim to implement for the next Long-Term International Migration release in November 2025. The British nationals method in development, based on data from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), was submitted to the Methods and Research Assurance Group (MARAG) earlier this month. Feedback received is being worked through to make improvements to the method. All efforts are being made to publish changes to both British Nationals and European Union migration in November 2025.
19. The Health and International Directorate (HID) published an analysis of the impact of pregnancy loss on monthly employee earnings and employment. This work has been funded through the HM Treasury Labour Markets Evaluation Fund (2024/25). It was the first analysis of its kind looking at the relationship between pregnancy loss and earnings.
20. Kirsten Newton, Head of International Relations, represented the National Statistician at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Conference of European Statisticians and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy. There was an engaged discussion on the implementation of the 2025 System of National Accounts at the CSSP, where we outlined our plans and shared challenges.
21. In May, the International Division hosted its partner, the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) along with Members of the Ghanaian Parliament. This visit built on ONS's work to date supporting the GSS with elevating its relevance in informing evidence-based policy and decision making and in informing the public debate. On Wednesday 18 June, the First Deputy Speaker of Parliament made a statement to the house and set out a series of recommendations in light of the visit to ONS including "to amend the Ghana Statistical Service Act, 2019 (Act 1003), to transform the GSS into an independent Statistical Authority with a stronger legal mandate to set national statistical standards, provide oversight, and lead the recruitment and training of statisticians across government institutions."

We're reinforcing our business and social surveys, and strengthening our wider operations, to ensure the organisation is fit for the future

22. The Producer Price Index (PPI) Survey has successfully launched online, reducing paper use by 3,000 cases and improving the respondent experience. Early response rates are strong (40 per cent in week one). Despite some technical challenges integrating with legacy systems, this marks a further step in modernising our data collection and sets the stage for moving the remaining Prices surveys online this year.
23. We are making strong early progress on the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2025 despite a 13-day shorter processing window. At day 25 of 77, data clearance is 83 per cent ahead of last year. Error clearance is also significantly improved, supported by targeted staffing and technical investment in recognition of ASHE's strategic importance.
24. On 16 June, the face-to-face field interviewer community exceeded 800 interviewers for the first time in its existence. Recent performance management of the new field strategic resourcing

partner has ensured increased external resources and ensured that they are now likely to meet an intake of 20 interviewers a week.

25. In the coming weeks, the Survey Improvement and Enhancement Plan (IEP) will be published. The IEP directly addresses recent OSR actions to demonstrate how ONS will restore confidence in social surveys and reduce risk in business surveys. It will also provide the further detail against the survey commitments made within the new plan for economic statistics.
26. We have a formal agreement in place for DWP to provide the Customer Information System (CIS) dataset to ONS, following a longstanding negotiation spanning several years. The CIS is a key source of data when developing statistical population datasets, particularly for measuring international migration, and contains deidentified demographic information on individuals with a National Insurance number, including data from DWP, HMRC, and death registrations.
27. While work continues to transform the range of content for our new ONS website, the date for the first statistical release on the site is moving from July to the autumn. This is to allow us to undertake additional work to ensure our new platform complies with the latest security standards, and that we can provide a consistent user experience between data files published currently on the legacy platform and how they will present on the new website.

We're focused on improving our data governance and continuing to modernise our digital infrastructure to make progress on legacy uplift

28. The Spending Review condition related to the Integrated Data Service (IDS) aligns to the baseline option in the last business case and will involve re-pointing any further development work towards ONS requirements and removing the programme funding ring-fence to enable this. We have now initiated the controlled closure of the Programme, whilst continuing to work through how to maximise the value for ONS of the ongoing service and the underpinning infrastructure for data linkage, including for a potential 2031 Census.
29. Despite the shifting context, progress continues to be made against the programme roadmap and the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) assurance action plan including delivery of a new project and user accreditation system for the ONS Trusted Research Environment.
30. Pete Benton is leading a three-month Strategic Review on Data Governance, in response to the Internal Audit into Data Governance which had reported an 'Unsatisfactory' opinion, with the objective of delivering a recommendation for a strategic enterprise-wide framework. This Task and Finish Group will report to ExCo on 3 July. PwC, who are a recommended partner of the Enterprise Data Management (EDM) Council, are lending independent support to ensure that we are drawing on best practice in other sectors and organisations and able to stress-test options as we progress.
31. The Corporate IT Security team has been advancing efforts to enhance authentication and monitoring capabilities across our devices. A key initiative includes the rollout of updated sign-in technologies for newer operating systems, aimed at reducing the risk of unauthorised access and improving overall credential protection. In addition, the team has successfully retired several legacy systems that previously supported authentication and infrastructure monitoring. These have been replaced with more modern, cloud-based solutions that align with current enterprise platforms and provide improved scalability and performance.

Emma Rourke, Acting National Statistician, 19 June 2025

Update from the Director General for Regulation

Purpose

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

Discussion

2. Key regulatory activities since the last Board meeting include:
 - i. **Assessment of compliance with Code of Practice of Statistics 2021 Census in England and Wales:** On 12 June we published the final phase of our assessment of the 2021 Census in England and Wales. This focused on the extent to which the Office for National Statistics (ONS) met the requirements we set out in our 2022 assessment and how well census publications have met user needs. We have one requirement which we expect ONS to address within six months and six recommendations. Subject to ONS meeting our expectations for this requirement, we can reconfirm the accreditation of the 2021 Census in England and Wales outputs;
 - ii. **Review of Statistics from the Wealth and Assets Survey:** On 13 June we published a review of ONS's Wealth and Assets Survey (WAS) which looks at the financial wellbeing of households and individuals in terms of their assets, savings, debt and planning for retirement. As a result, it was our recommendation based on the findings of this review that accredited official statistics status should be suspended from WAS statistics;
 - iii. **Review of review of gender identity estimates for England and Wales from Census 2021 – recommendations update.** On 12 June, I wrote to Emma Rourke, Acting National Statistician to acknowledge that the recommendations in our final report on the review of Gender Identity in the 2021 England and Wales Census related to guidance for the use of the census gender identity statistic have now been actioned. I confirmed that the recommendations related to the development of the gender identity question remain open;
 - iv. **Review of Gambling Survey for Great Britain (GSGB):** On 22 May we published a review conducted at the request of the Gambling Commission. Its aim was to provide recommendations for improving the GSGB statistics; it did not assess the suitability of accredited official statistics status. We expect the Gambling Commission to respond publicly by July 2025 detailing its proposed actions and progress against each of our recommendations. On the same day, to respond to specific concerns raised with us on the GSGB, we also published a statement which summarises the keys issues raised with us and our position on these; and
 - v. **Refreshing the Code of Practice for Statistics:** We are in final stages of drafting Code 3.0, having reviewed feedback that we received in our Code consultation. Having presented the current version of the Code to the OSR Regulation Committee earlier in June, we are now sharing it with the Authority Board for your comments and questions. We plan to bring Code 3.0 back to the Board in July, for final sign off.

Casework

6. Since the last Authority Board, we have received seven new cases, resulting in a yearly total of 35 cases considered by OSR and the UK Statistics Authority this year so far (2024/25 total: 219).
7. Since the last Authority Board paper, we have received two further cases from parliamentarians covering claims about an increase in National Health Service (NHS) activity, and around the costing estimates of the Chagos Islands deal. We have published responses to James Cartlidge MP on the above concern about the Chagos Deal, and written privately to Lord Moylan on Abortion Statistics related to a case from earlier this year. We also published our response to a

case from a member of the public on [Graduate Outcomes](#) following media interest in our judgement.

Engagement

9. External events:

- i. on 9 June, I spoke at London conference for ONS and OSR staff on the use of statistics in personal decision-making;
- ii. on 17 June, I spoke at the United Nations Economic Council for Europe with OSR's head of casework, Nicky Pearce, on addressing the misuse of statistics;
- iii. on 18 June, I spoke at the Public Engagement in Data Research Initiative on the importance of public engagement; and
- iv. on 25 June, I will speak about communicating uncertainty at the Department for Transport's analyst conference.

Issues on my mind

10. **Reviews:** Preparation for the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) hearing will occupy a lot of my time over the next month.

11. **Developing OSR's strategy:** We continue to evolve OSR's strategic thinking, alongside the Authority's own strategy.

Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, OSR, 18 June 2025

Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on the progress in finalising the UK Statistics Authority's (the Authority) Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board (the Board) are invited to:
 - i. note the proposed process and timelines for finalising the Annual Report and Accounts for 2024/25;
 - ii. note the findings from the audit completion report of the National Audit Office (NAO); and
 - iii. note the proposed date for laying the accounts, which is Wednesday 16 July.

Background and discussion

3. The Annual Report and Accounts provides an annual summary of the performance of the Authority, a statement on the governance of the organisation, and the detailed statutory financial statements and supporting notes. The report needs to provide a transparent view which balances the positive outcomes achieved in the year with a candid assessment of the challenges we have faced.
4. Given the timings of governance meetings this year, it was not possible to provide a fully finalised version of the Annual Report and Accounts to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting held on 19 June. Nonetheless, a rich discussion was held at ARAC on the draft version that was tabled, with suggestions for improvement that are all being followed up.
5. The wider context surrounding the publication of what is generally an innocuous document means that we require more time to ensure that the Annual Report and Accounts provides the appropriate balance of candour with factual assessment of performance. To that end, ARAC recommended that a much more holistic review of the document is required, calling on Communications colleagues' judgement.
6. Ordinarily the June Authority Board would consider a near final draft version of the Annual Report and Accounts generally with a recommendation from ARAC endorsing approval. This has not been possible in time (the Board meeting is a week earlier than last year) and given the work still required considering the above circumstances. We apologise that the level of maturity of the document is not yet where it needs to be. However, we remain committed to ensuring that we achieve a pre-recess date for the laying of the document to the requisite quality.

Timeline and plan

7. We intend to provide a final version of the document to ARAC and Board members on 25 June. We will need to allow ARAC members time to review the final document before providing their recommendations to the Board. We will facilitate this review by providing a full reconciliation of the comments ARAC members have made and the adjustments that have been made to the document as a result.
8. The final review will need to be in correspondence, with views provided back by 2 July, with a 'committee view' confirmed by the Chair of ARAC shortly after. This will be communicated to the Board.
9. We would be grateful if Board members could provide any final comments relating to the Accounting Officer signing the report, by 7 July.
10. Upon confirmation of approvals it is our intention that the Accounting Officer will sign the documentation on 8 July. This will then be forwarded to NAO for the Comptroller and Auditor General's final review and certification.

11. We aim to lay the annual report and accounts in Parliament on 16 July.

NAO Audit Completion Report

12. Whilst the work required to finalise narrative sections of the Annual Report and Accounts (primarily the Performance Report) has taken longer than desirable, ARAC has received an Audit Completion Report from the NAO, which provides the Board with assurance from a financial perspective. NAO (through KPMG as its outsourced provider) gave an update to ARAC together with their Audit Completion Report on 19 June. There were no audit adjustments or unadjusted misstatements reported. Of the actions outstanding, all are close to completion with no further ancillary action or adjustments expected. From this perspective the audit can be considered 'clean' and will be certified as unqualified.

Cabinet Office commercial control breach disclosure

13. The Governance Statement of the Annual Report and Accounts sets out the background to a control breach which occurred during 2023/24 and was reported to the Board and to Parliament in full last year. In summary, the organisation faced a difficult pragmatic choice between awarding an improved contract for the Crime Survey England and Wales in the context of a relatively minor breach of procedural processes (Cabinet Office view); or run a new procurement exercise that would likely lead to a two-year gap in national crime statistics with far less favourable contractual terms.
14. The Authority considered the balance between meeting value for money requirements and ensuring continuity of service for national crime statistics against the technical regularity requirements. Following a statement from the Cabinet Office that the Crime Survey business case rejection due to a relatively minor procedural irregularity *"does not preclude you from making your award in line with your procurement timeline"*, the Authority concluded that the best course of action was to continue with the process to let the improved contract, which was subsequently signed on 2 April 2024.
15. The breach will lead to a qualification of our Annual Report and Accounts on the grounds of regularity for 2024/25. This is because the cumulative value of expenditure on the contract across 2023/24 and 2024/25 is now judged to be material (it was not at a material level in 2023/24 when the breach was first reported). This is restricted to a *regularity* qualification – a concept unique to government accounting through parliamentary convention. The Comptroller & Auditor General notified Parliament last year that this breach was likely to lead to a qualification of his opinion for 2024/25.

Conclusion

16. The organisation has delivered significant achievements across the year this has to be taken in the context of equally significant challenges and shortcomings. The Board will see this reflected in a final draft of the Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25, to be circulated in early July after further review by ARAC. This will show an unqualified set of financial statements but with a qualification on regularity grounds.

Rhys Thomas, Deputy Director Finance, 19 June 2025

Integrated Data Service Update

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Authority Board (the Board) with an update on the Integrated Data Programme (IDP), responsible for the delivery of the Integrated Data Service (IDS).

Recommendations

2. Members of the Board are invited to:
 - i. as per the spending review outcome, and the Board's recommendation in relation to a potential 2031 Census, we are now planning to:
 - close the Integrated Data Programme and remove it from the Government Major Projects Portfolio;
 - keep the Google Cloud Platform (GCP) up and running as we "explore all opportunities to use IDS internally to find efficiencies and synergies across programmes of work across the organisation"; and
 - An initial commitment to support Economic Statistics in 2025/26.
 - ii. discussions continue at senior levels with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) in relation to the National Data Library (NDL) and the ONS linked data assets.

Discussion

The Spending Review Outcome and the Board's recommendation for a 2031 Census

3. The HM Treasury (HMT) conditions for the ONS spending review settlement state that:
 - i. "HM Treasury will remove the IDS policy ringfence for 2025-26, in line with agreement that Office for National Statistics (ONS) to pursue the 'baseline' option for IDS as set out in the Outline Business Case (OBC) 2025-26. This 'baseline' option must stop further development of the IDS analytical environment as a service for government and non-government users. ONS should continue to explore all opportunities to use IDS internally to find efficiencies and synergies across programmes of work across the organisation."
4. We have brought forward the controlled closure of the Programme from March 2026 and its removal from the Government Major Projects Portfolio and the associated release of staff, some of whom will have the skills required to support the economic statistics strategy.
5. As per the HMT conditions, we will continue to maintain the IDS infrastructure and data pipelines we have built in the GCP, with a slimmed service management team, whilst we continue to "explore all opportunities to use it internally to find efficiencies and synergies across programmes of work across the organisation".
6. This includes exploration of the opportunities relating to the Board's recommendation for "a statistical system for population and migration that combines the strengths of data collection through a questionnaire-based census of the whole population with the increased value from administrative data, both to support the delivery of a census in 2031 and to deliver improved outputs each year"
7. We will agree on the optimal way forward with the ONS Executive Committee (ExCo). In the meantime, a decision at a recent ExCo on 11 June committed to an initial amount to be transferred to support Economic Statistics in 2025/26 as part of a wider set of resource releases across ONS.

Relationship to the ONS Secure Research Service (SRS)

8. ONS currently receives some funding from Administrative Data Research UK (ADR UK), part of the Economic and Social Research Council, to prepare data and make it available through the SRS. Department for Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT) have recently approved a further five years' enhanced ADR UK and, as an existing partner, this is expected to result in increased funding for ONS.

External Discussions in Relation to the Google Cloud Platform (GCP) infrastructure and the linked data assets

9. In the run up to the Spending Review outcome, discussions were well underway with DSIT about the lessons learnt from IDS in relation to a National Data Library (NDL) and the potential for use of the GCP data infrastructure.
10. Discussions were also well underway with the Civil Service Leadership Group (comprising all Permanent Secretaries and Director Generals across the UK) and the Senior Responsible Owners for two of the five Government Missions about the potential for analysis of the linked data assets to support the Government's ambitions relating to opportunity, child poverty and safer streets.
11. We plan to continue these discussions as we support DSIT and mission fs in shaping their strategic approach.

Internal and External Communications

12. Our internal and external communications are currently under development and will include clear messaging about the closure of the Programme; the continued use of the GCP data and analysis infrastructure within ONS; the ongoing availability of the SRS and our discussions with DSIT about the relationship to the NDL.

Pete Benton, Senior Responsible Owner of the Integrated Data Service, Megan Cooper, Programme Director for the Integrated Data Service, ONS, 19 June 2025

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(25)35

Transformed Labour Force Survey – June 2025 Update

Purpose

1. An update to the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) on the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) programme, Office for National Statistics (ONS) Social Survey portfolio and wider Labour Market statistics landscape.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Board are invited to note:
 - i. the progress that has been made, the current challenges with delivering complex data improvements within required timeframes, and that the TLFS programme remains Amber-Red;
 - ii. the performance of the ONS social survey portfolio; and
 - iii. the latest developments in the wider Labour Market statistics landscape.

Discussion

Programme stand-up

3. In-line with feedback from the TLFS Lessons Learned exercise and commitments made to the Board, the TLFS became a formal programme in June 2025 with Alex Lambert as the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO). The programme brings together and strengthens delivery from existing contributing projects within ONS and the high-level programme design is based on that used successfully for the COVID Infection Survey.
4. TLFS remains a collaborative effort with Alex working in partnership with Liz McKeown and Jen Woolford in their roles as Director leads for Labour Market and non-Labour Market data respectively. The programme leadership team are committed to building a programme, community and way of working that sets the bar for how ONS comes together to work on its biggest challenges. We are learning from the past to effectively navigate the challenges and complexity on the programme.
5. A key priority of the new programme is to ensure effective end-to-end integration and assurance. The programme is also rapidly growing the non-labour market work. Led by Becca Briggs, Deputy Director of Household Resilience, work is currently focusing on a rapid stocktake of user needs for household, socioeconomic and local ('non-Labour Market') data, including the latest assessment of quality for relevant TLFS variables. This will support us in moving towards a clear agreement on priorities, stakeholders and requirements, as we formally establish this element of the programme.

Programme delivery

6. With the Ambitious, Radical, Inclusive Economic Statistics (ARIES) and Survey Transformation Programmes ending in March 2025, there is a short interregnum before the first TLFS Programme Board on 24 June 2025. Within this context, TLFS reported Amber-Red in March on both programmes given data quality risks associated with the integration of Northern Ireland data and the timing and extent of Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) data quality improvements.
7. Since the last Board update, positive progress has continued as follows:
 - i. work to implement the new TLFS design is progressing well with testing of the short core survey successfully completed and go live on track for 7 July 2025;
 - ii. one of the key TLFS data quality concerns was in relation to the 'hours worked' variable. Imputation methodology to address missingness within this variable is entering its final

stages of testing and full quality assurance of the variable, including input from key users, is planned for July 2025;

- iii. a package of work to understand mode effects between Labour Force Survey (LFS) and TLFS, specifically on the 'inactivity by reason' variable, is advancing, with the crossover survey launching on 7 July 2025, qualitative research now complete, and data linkage work underway. We will report on findings in October 2025; and
 - iv. stakeholder engagement efforts continue with the latest TLFS data update shared for quality assurance with our key external stakeholders on 5 June 2025 and regular meetings of the Labour Market Technical Group, Stakeholder Advisory Panel and the new Household, Socioeconomic and Local User Group (to support non-labour market discussions). Recent discussions have focused on agreeing acceptable trade-offs and timelines.
8. Focusing on the top two key risks on the programme:
- i. UK data coherence – we are continuing to engage closely with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) as we work through potential solutions to maintaining UK data outputs and publication timelines as they transition to their new Labour Market Survey (LMS). At present, there is a risk that ONS will be unable to meet current UK publication timelines due to the lengthening of the Northern Ireland (NI) collection period and the additional time NISRA now require to process and weight NI data (previously performed by ONS) meaning that NI data will be delivered at least two weeks later each month. While significant work on both sides has gone into reducing data processing timelines (alongside a range of other potential solutions), a jointly agreed approach that fully mitigates the risk remains to be identified. We will shortly enter a period of end-to-end testing of combining LMS and LFS data now that ONS have nearly completed mapping and coding work required to amend our LFS systems; this will better inform the risk and feasibility of the remaining solutions to maintaining UK Labour Market outputs until we transition to TLFS. A similar testing period is planned for TLFS from early 2026. A joint meeting of the Labour Market Technical Group and Stakeholder Advisory Panel, led by NISRA, will take place on 26 June 2025; and
 - ii. complex data collection, coding and processing – An upgrade to the Classification Index Matching Service (CIMS) for Standard Industrial Classification data will go live in July alongside Blaise improvements in August. Both will support improved classification of complex data. As previously reported, two strategic solutions are being developed in parallel to upgrade the respondent interface (Search As You Type and Survey Assist). Significant progress in researching and developing both solutions has now occurred as per the plan. This work indicates that neither is currently likely to deliver within the January 2026 timeframe required for survey upgrades to be complete. Addressing this issue is the top priority on the programme and all options are being explored. This issue will be covered with the Executive Committee (ExCo) in detail on 9 July 2025.

Social Survey portfolio performance

9. Within the context of long-term declining response rates, ONS has faced significant post-pandemic quality challenges as a result of significant societal changes, financial disinvestment, recruitment restrictions and high interviewer turnover. An initial recovery plan was launched in October 2023 and expanded to a full portfolio of work following HM Treasury (HMT) investment in April 2024. This investment has already made a difference:
- i. the field community has increased from a low of 517 in March 2024 to 785 in May 2025. This is already enabling an additional 400 LFS Wave 2 plus cases to be achieved per week, directly supporting the aim this financial year to deliver an additional 47,000 LFS Wave 2 plus cases;
 - ii. recruitment to our field community has been diversified and strengthened, through the introduction of agency interviewers for the TLFS and the outsourcing of recruitment to an external resourcing partner. However, new interviewers take time to have an impact, with a minimum of three months to perform effectively;

- iii. to build the capability of our new interviewers, and improve retention of experienced colleagues, we have implemented a new progression and promotion pathway, creating 42 new Coaching and Learning Partners roles. We have also developed a new recognition scheme for interviewers to support retention and performance, which received HMT approval on 18 June 2025;
 - iv. we have increased the value of respondent incentives for taking part in our surveys across our survey portfolio. For example, on the LFS we have moved from a £10 incentive to a £50 incentive per household (£25 unconditional and £25 conditional) for Wave 1 of the survey; and
 - v. major improvements to the International Passenger Survey (IPS) design, methods, processing and operation were successfully implemented in July 2024 to increase achieved sample sizes and improve survey cost-effectiveness.
10. Recovering social survey quality is not a quick fix and while encouraging progress has been made, key quality issues remain until the strategic improvement work completes:
- i. Labour Force Survey (LFS) - response levels for Waves 2 to 5 and representativeness remain lower than their pre-pandemic level and this is the primary focus for significant additional interviewer resource this year;
 - ii. Living Cost and Food (LCF) survey - despite positive progress increasing achieved interviews until recently, March and April has seen a notable drop (336 interviews vs 400 per month in January). This decline is primarily due to the loss of LCF trained interviewers to promotion and natural attrition, and their replacement with inexperienced new recruits. To address this issue, operational actions have been implemented, including real-time interviewer manager intervention and support, increased coaching, weekly performance focus at all levels. While May's fieldwork is still open, these actions are already having a benefit. The estimated number of achieved interviews for May is between 357 and 380. Senior leaders from across Surveys and Economic Statistics have met to review and approve the actions to address this issue and are maintaining close oversight; and
 - iii. Wealth and Assets Survey (WAS) - performance remains significantly below target but as expected, as the survey is currently only ~50 per cent resourced given LFS and LCF prioritisation. Recruitment plans will see WAS fully resourced from January 2026 but it remains a lower priority for improvement. WAS outputs are no longer accredited official statistics, and we are developing plans for survey and methodological recovery.
11. A more positive picture can be seen in the performance of other social surveys, including the TLFS, Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) and International Passenger Survey (IPS), which are all meeting data collection targets and requirements. The latest assessment of LFS data quality is also encouraging, providing evidence that the interventions made over the last two years have led to improvements (see paragraph 14 for further detail).
12. We are now building on the progress to date to deliver significant further improvements as a result of the £27.1 million additional investment in social surveys within the ONS strategic business plan. ONS will shortly publish a Survey Improvement and Enhancement Plan, which has recently been shared with the Board, this details the full set of work which falls under four themes:
- i. sustainable Field Operations – focusing on improving field capacity and capability;
 - ii. refreshed Citizen Relationship – improving trust, brand recognition and the understanding of the importance of our surveys;
 - iii. improved Survey and Statistical Design – redesigning our surveys to be more streamlined, reduce respondent burden, and improve accessibility; and
 - iv. technology improvement – improving our systems and processes, taking opportunities to improve efficiency and agility of our technology.
13. We are closely monitoring the performance of ONS's Social Surveys and will report management information to ExCo and the Board on a monthly basis.

Wider labour market statistics landscape

14. The TLFS programme forms a key part of the wider labour market statistics landscape. Pertinent updates on developments across the wider landscape will be provided as part of the regular TLFS reporting to the Board. Recent activities include:
- i. Labour Force Survey (LFS) quality – the main interventions made to address quality concerns with the LFS have now fed through all five waves of the survey for the latest data period (January to March 2025). Following discussion with key users an [update on LFS quality](#) was published on 13 May, outlining improvements to quality. The article has been well received and should increase users' confidence in the LFS-based estimates until transition. The main conclusions were that improvements can broadly be seen in response levels and rates, the composition of respondents according to different characteristics and the coherence of LFS estimates with other data sources. However, response levels for Waves two to five and representativeness remain lower than their pre-pandemic level. Further improvements are planned for the LFS, namely further interviewers for Waves 2 to 5 (as above) and a full reweighting exercise; and
 - ii. we are refining our approach across the labour market statistics landscape, liaising with stakeholders and experts to inform a Labour Market Statistics Strategy as part of the wider strategy for economic statistics. We are exploring organising the work under a Labour Market Portfolio to ensure delivery of labour market (and associated productivity) statistical priorities.

Conclusion

15. The establishment of the formal end-to-end TLFS programme marks a significant milestone in ongoing efforts to ensure the sustainable delivery of high-quality labour market and social statistics through the transformation of the LFS. TLFS progress continues to be significant and leadership attention remains focused on addressing complex data and UK coherence risks.
16. Significant data quality issues remain within the social survey portfolio. In the short-term, field interviewer headcount growth is the key strategic priority with a focus on improving quality on LFS Waves 2 to 5 and the LCF survey. The collective set of actions outlined within our Improvement and Enhancement Plan aims to directly address social survey quality concerns and restore user confidence.

Alex Lambert, Director for Social Surveys; Liz McKeown, Director Economic Statistics, Production and Analysis, and Jen Woolford, Public Policy Analysis, ONS, 19 June 2025