

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

**Thursday 29 January 2026
London Office**

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present

Penny Young (Chair)
Dr. Jacob Abboud
Peter Barron
Ed Humpherson
Professor Dame Carol Propper
Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter
Professor Mairi Spowage
Darren Tierney
Dr. Sarah Walsh

Other Attendees

James Benford
June Bowman
Lucinda Eggleton (for items 6 & 12)
Stephanie Howarth (for item 11)
Pamela Hunt (for item 13)
Mary Gregory
Sarah Moore
Tom Taylor
Jon Wroth-Smith (for item 11)
Jason Zawadzki (for item 11)

Apologies

None

Secretariat

Sally Jones
Tom Marsh

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 18 December 2025 were approved.

4. Report from the Authority Chair [SA(26)01]

4.1 The Chair reported on her activities since the Board last met, highlighting that the appointment process for the National Statistician was ongoing. It was noted that a panel comprising of the Chair and executive and non-executive director members would be convened to assure key Government Statistical Service (GSS) guidance on behalf of the Board in the absence of a National Statistician.

5. Report from the Permanent Secretary [SA(26)02]

5.1 Darren Tierney provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting highlighting the following:

- i. following the recruitment process for a Director of Strategy and Policy, Sarah Jennings would be joining the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-February. Megan Cooper had started in her role as Director of Economic Statistics Improvement. The appointment process for the Chief People Officer and Director General for Data and Technology were ongoing;
- ii. the finance team were leading on a year three business planning process across the organisation;
- iii. the prioritisation process was near completion. The senior leadership had considered the impact of the field force recruitment, which had plateaued. The Board would be kept fully briefed on the consequences;
- iv. the refreshed Management Information (MI) dashboard would iterate in the coming months to provide the clarity needed to inform Board discussions on ONS key deliverables; and
- v. progress of ongoing discussions with the Trade Unions on hybrid working.

5.2 Members discussed the update and highlighted a number of points. The forecast budget underspend at year-end was being managed by the finance team alongside the Senior Leadership team. Areas of focus to mitigate the underspend included remedial work on ONS estates, the use of contingent labour to advance the Statistical Business Register and website development. Members noted the need for clarity on the finance strategic risk, which had been discussed as part of the recent risk workshops led by the Risk and Assurance team to refresh the Authority's strategic risk profile.

5.3 Members welcomed the refreshed MI noting that it could include information on key risk themes at operational levels, which had been shared as part of the recent risk workshops.

5.4 Members discussed the approach to the production of Administrative Based Population Estimates (ABPE) following the decision by ONS not to implement new methodology in June 2026. It was clarified that part of the reason for this was the changing context, specifically the decision to hold a Census in 2031. ONS communications would reflect the changing context as well as referencing the recommendations by the Office for Statistics Regulation, which had set out the criteria on ABPEs.

6. Report from the National Statistician's Office [SA(26)03]

6.1 Lucinda Eggleton provided an update on activities across the National Statistician's Office (NSO) highlighting the following:

- i. a review had been undertaken on NSO model and resourcing scheduled for substantive discussion later in the meeting;

- ii. delivery progress by the ONS harmonisation team on the harmonised standard on sex and gender;
 - iii. the range of work being undertaken by National Statistician Advisory Committees; and
 - iv. the support by Heads of Profession across the Government Statistical Service on the launch of the Code of Practice for Statistics;
- 6.2 Members discussed the update and highlighted the importance of Board oversight, including an opportunity for discussion, of delivery progress in response to the UK Statistics Assembly actions and recommendations. Members welcomed the update on the range of work being undertaken by the National Statistician Advisory Committees, recognising how important they are to the work of the Authority. There was support for the work by the Deputy Heads of GSS.
- 6.3 The Board highlighted the need to ensure pace on the work on harmonised standards.

7. Report from the Director General of Regulation [SA(26)04]

- 7.1 Ed Humpherson updated the Board on the work by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) since the last meeting.
- 7.2 Following publication by OSR of its strategy in November, OSR's Business Plan 2026/27, scheduled for discussion and final approval at this meeting, set out OSR key deliverables and commitments for 2026/27. Members of Regulation Committee had provided comments and approved the plan; and had also considered the Authority's Intervention Policy, which was provided for this meeting for consideration and final approval. The policy had been updated to reflect the new Standards for the Public Use of Statistics, Data and Wider Analysis in the refreshed Code of Practice for Statistics.
- 7.3 OSR had published an update on ONS's progress on economic statistics recovery concluding that overall ONS had made encouraging early progress in terms of specific outputs, and in terms of openness and engagement. OSR also made three recommendations on how ONS should take the programme forward and communicate progress.
- 7.4 Ed Humpherson would be providing evidence in relation to trust and the use of statistics at the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee Inquiry on Propriety, ethics and the wider standards landscape in the UK.
- 7.5 Members discussed the update and highlighted the need for the OSR Business Plan to be clearer that the increase in funding had been made to deal with the backlog of statistics. They welcomed the revised Interventions Policy, and suggested minor changes strengthening the rationale for intervention on non-official statistics.
- 7.6 The Board approved OSR's Business Plan and the updated Interventions Policy subject to the changes agreed.

8. Report from the Chair Population Statistics System Committee

- 8.1 The Chair reported on the work of the Population Statistics System Committee, which had last met on 28 January 2026.
- 8.2 The Committee had considered:
- i. delivery progress of Census preparations including discussions with HM Treasury on the strategic outline business case for the Census;
 - ii. the change of approach by ONS to producing and developing midyear population estimates following an internal review with a decision to publish mid-2025 population estimates for England and Wales based on current methodology;
 - iii. the timeline of preparations towards Census 2031 with a focus on timing of decisions and the managing the tension between retaining sufficient flexibility to be effective; and
 - iv. delivery progress for 2027 Census test; including the test objectives, key features of the statistical and operational design and co-ordination across the United Kingdom, and an overview of challenges.

8.3 Members stressed the importance of testing innovations in engaging with the public and encouraging completion of the Census questionnaire.

9. Report from the Chair Audit and Risk Assurance

9.1 The Chair reported on the informal ARAC session with Darren Tierney and members of the Executive that had been held on Friday 16 January.

9.2 ARAC had previously agreed to remove the formal Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting held in January, but given the year end position as set out in the Authority's Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25 the Chair of ARAC and the Permanent Secretary had agreed to convene an informal session for members to discuss a range of topics including: Census 2031, Leadership, Prioritisation and business planning, Resourcing, skill and capability and the risk around Trustworthiness, independence and reputation. The session had been useful for both ARAC members and ONS Executive.

10. Communications Update

10.1 Peter Barron and Sarah Moore reported on recent media coverage since the last meeting. Media coverage and sentiment in December and January, which had been more balanced as a result of the proactive approach being taken by ONS. During this period James Benford appeared on the PM Radio 4 programme covering the challenges faced by ONS, recovery plans and why the public need to take part in surveys. The Board also noted some articles that were less positive. A blog by James Benford was scheduled for publication on 30 January on how ONS are listening to businesses: modernising data, reducing burden and building trust.

11. Census 2031 – Devolved Governments [SA(26)05]

11.1 Jon Wroth Smith, Director of Census Statistics, National Records Scotland, and Stephanie Howarth, Chief Statistician Welsh Government, presented a paper, which provided an update on progress from a devolved government perspective on Census 2031 planning. The paper focussed on progress of the Census 2031 programme to date, including areas of effective cross-UK collaboration, and challenges. Phil Wales, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (and Chief Statistician in Northern Ireland) had contributed to the paper but was unable to attend the meeting.

11.2 The Board heard that the four nations had made progress on census planning and consultation, underpinned by effective cross-UK collaboration and data sharing. All nations were consulting on user needs for Census statistics, with Scotland's consultation closed and the consultations for the other nations closing in early February.

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

- i. the need for a strategic approach to all aspects of resourcing for Census 2031 including where resources could be shared. This could help mitigate the challenge around building the capacity and capability in the Devolved Governments, especially given the delay in starting the Census preparations. The establishment of a senior Wales lead within the ONS Census programme would help ensure Welsh perspectives were properly represented. Resourcing would remain a key issue for the Census programme in the Devolved Governments. Resourcing at a senior level in National Records for Scotland was a key area of focus;
- ii. the development and importance of the memoranda of understanding that would detail the partnership arrangement for censuses across the UK to provide clarity on areas of collaboration; and
- iii. the data sharing work to support the Census had progressed under the ONS Future of Population and Migration Statistics Programme, which was ending. It was noted that given the explicit focus on administrative data for Census 2031 as part of the Recommendation, it would be essential to continue to have a robust mechanism to identify priorities and expedite data sharing across the UK where relevant.
- iv. the desire for as much harmonisation and coherence on certain census questions across the UK as possible, but recognising that the Census offices retain the autonomy to design their

census questionnaires. It was noted that the development of the harmonised standards should work for all nations; and

- v. with regard to the 2027 census test in Scotland it was noted that further funding decisions from Scottish Government had not yet been taken for the test to proceed in Scotland.

11.4 The Board noted thanks for the update.

12. National Statistician's Office – Resourcing [SA(26)06]

As this area is policy in development, this part of the minute will be published upon completion.

13. People Survey 2025 [SA(26)07]

13.1 Pamela Hunt introduced a paper which provided an update on the 2025 People Survey, and the cultural context, key themes from the survey and areas of corporate focus: Learning and Development, Leadership and Managing Change, Pay and Benefits and Organisational Objectives and Purpose.

13.2 The Board had discussed the short-medium term People Plan with Henry Watson in September. Addressing cultural issues across the organisation was a key focus for the ONS Senior Leadership Team. As part of the refreshed executive governance framework Darren Tierney chairs the People Committee and people action groups across the organisation were being reinvigorated.

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

- i. the need for more detailed survey results to be provided for members including comments;
- ii. in terms of best practice members provided details of the approach taken in other organisations that had worked well, which included taking a transparent approach and regularly updating colleagues on delivery progress in areas of concern;
- iii. the issues around psychological safety and trust were being addressed through the implementation of the People Plan;
- iv. the high levels of dissatisfaction on pay and benefits would be considered as part of the flexible pay case;
- v. the difference of engagement scores across the organisation with some directorates performing well, with others requiring urgent attention was due to a number of reasons and reflected the challenges experienced by teams in specific areas such as communications over the last year. It was noted that statistical output teams were more directly engaged on the organisation's purpose, which was reflected in their engagement scores;
- vi. the benefits of celebrating success across the organisation was highlighted. The work by Alex Lambert engaging the field force being a good example: and
- vii. the Board welcomed the Executive's intention to have some measurement of staff attitudes more regularly.

13.4 The Board noted the update and would remain engaged in the organisation's response to the survey. It was agreed that further detail would be provided on the results including commentary.

14. Board Effectiveness Review and Action Plan [SA(26)08]

14.1 Sally Jones introduced a paper which provided an outline draft action plan in response to findings from the external review of board effectiveness undertaken by Mo Baines, (lead Non - Executive Director, Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government and Chief Executive of the Association for Public Service Excellence) in November 2025. The report itself had been signed off ahead of the meeting.

14.2 The Board heard that the report would be shared with the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee as part of their inquiry on the work of the UK Statistics Authority.

14.3 Board members discussed the outline action plan and noted that it may need to be revisited following the publication of PACAC's report on the work of the Authority.

14.4 The following points were made in discussion:

- i. planning was underway for the next NED recruitment, which would set out the skills required. This was expected to include NEDs that have led organisations and delivered major transformational change and perhaps also technology and Artificial Intelligence; and also macroeconomic skills;
 - ii. there was support for exploring increasing the number of NEDs on the Board subject to agreement by the Minister for the Cabinet Office;
 - iii. progress on NED engagement had been made over the last year including with the Government Statistical Service and the provision of expert advice in a number of areas including risk and assurance and on major programmes;
 - iv. there was support for NEDs to be invited to attend monthly all staff event with the Permanent Secretary and the Chair;
 - v. a light touch framework would underpin NED engagement across the organisation;
 - vi. producer challenge would be convened as deep dives in specific areas, and all NEDs would have the opportunity of joining deep dives scheduled by the ARAC;
 - vii. the approach to forward planning for the Board would include the Chair, Permanent Secretary and Director General for OSR; and
 - viii. the template for board papers to be reviewed and Secretariat to ensure that papers present clear concise options reporting with candour and transparency.
- 14.5 The Board noted their thanks to Mo Baines for undertaking the external review and endorsed the draft action plan. The Board supported the addition of additional skills and ideally an increase in the number of NEDs on the Board, subject to Cabinet Office approval. There was a consensus that consideration of an ONS Board should wait until the arrival of a new Chair and should be considered alongside the outcome of the PACAC Inquiry. It was agreed that NEDs would be invited to attend monthly all staff sessions with Darren Tierney.

15. Any Other Business

- 15.1 The Chair noted that following discussions with the Chair of Regulation Committee and the Director General for OSR a recruitment process would be undertaken for two independent members of the Regulation Committee.
- 15.2 The Board would next meet on Thursday 27 February.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY
Agenda
Thursday 29 January, 11.00-14.30
London Boardroom,
Hybrid Meeting

Chair: Penny Young

Apologies: None

Attendees: Lucinda Eggleton (for items 4 & 9), Stephanie Howarth (for item 8), Pamela Hunt (for item 10), Jon Wroth-Smith (for item 8), Jason Zawadzki (for item 8)

NED Session: 10.30-11.00

1 11.00-11.05 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 18.12.25
2 11.05-11.10 5 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	SA(26)01 Penny Young
3 11.10-11.25 15 mins	Report from the Permanent Secretary	SA(26)02 Darren Tierney
4 11.25-11.40 15 mins	Report from the National Statistician's Office	SA(26)03 Lucinda Eggleton
5 11.40-11.55 15 mins	Report from the Director General for Regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSR Business Plan • Intervention Policy 	SA(26)04 Ed Humpherson
6 11.55-12.00 5 mins	Report from Committee Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population Statistics System Committee 	Oral update Penny Young
7 12.00-12.10 10 mins	Communications update	Oral update Peter Barron Sarah Moore
12.10-12.30 20 mins	Break	
8 12.30-13.00 30 mins	Census 2031 - Devolved Governments	SA(26)05 Stephanie Howarth Jon Wroth-Smith Jason Zawadzki
9 13.00-13.25 25 mins	National Statistician's Office – Resourcing	SA(26)06 Lucinda Eggleton
10 13.25-13.50 25 mins	People Survey 2025	SA(26)07 Pamela Hunt
11 13.50-14.20 30 mins	Board Effectiveness Review & Action Plan	SA(26)08 Penny Young Sally Jones
12 14.20-14.30 10 mins	Any Other Business	

Next meeting: Thursday 26 February, London Boardroom

Chair's Report, January 2026

Purpose

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

Review of recent activities

2. On 5 January, I chaired a meeting with the non-executive members of the Board to discuss the outcome of our Board Effectiveness Review undertaken by Mo Baines. Thank you for engaging in the draft report. I look forward to discussing how the Board implements its recommendations.
3. On 6 January, Sarah, Jacob and I met with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to discuss an improved format for management information presented at the Board. We will start with a summary appended to the Permanent Secretary's monthly report. The suite of metrics will iterate as the Board determines the level of detail required in the long term.
4. The recruitment process for the National Statistician continues; on 6 January I attended a shortlisting meeting with panel members. Shortlisted candidates will have the opportunity of an informal discussion with Darren and me (together); they will meet Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter and David Caplan (Royal Statistical Society) who will question them about strategic statistical issues; and they will also have a ministerial meeting. The final interviews will not complete until mid-March because of unresolvable diary issues.
5. On 12 January, I met with the Director of the National Statistician's Office, ahead of this month's paper on resourcing.
6. On 12 January, June and I met with the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Harmonisation team to discuss updated guidance for the GSS on the collection of data on sex and gender.

Correspondence

7. On 13 January I responded to a letter from Kevin Stewart MSP and wrote directly to Michael Shanks, Minister for Energy, about his misuse of statistics on waiting times in Scotland and England that were not comparable.
8. On 20 January I responded to a letter from Max Wilkinson MP about the Lord Chancellor's comments about the caseload in the magistrates' court system.

Looking ahead

9. On 22 January I will attend the second meeting of the Network of Standards Bodies, chaired by Doug Chalmers of the Ethics and Integrity Commission, to discuss current standards issues and compare how our organisations handle direct complaints.
10. On 26 January I will chair a session of the non-executive Board members to discuss our upcoming annual refresh of strategic risks.
11. On 28 January I will chair the second meeting of the Population Statistics System Committee, where we will discuss how the planning process should take shape, and how we might sequence decisions which will be made with varying uncertainty over the next five years, as well as the 2027 Test.

Penny Young, Interim Chair, 20 January 2026

Permanent Secretary's Report, January 2026

Purpose

1. This report provides the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) with an overview of activity since the last Board meeting on 18 December 2025.
2. The Board Performance Dashboard is attached as an annex to this report and provides further management information and monitoring on a suite of performance indicators.

I have made changes to the organisation's structure and executive governance, reinforcing our leadership capabilities and strengthening decision making

3. Shortly before Christmas, I was pleased to announce the appointment of Sarah Jennings as Director of Strategy and Change. Sarah's new role has been created to provide a single function that could oversee the alignment and coordination of strategies and plans, critical in the early stages of organisational recovery.
4. Alongside Sarah's role, we announced that Megan Cooper will start a new role as Director of Economic Statistics Improvement in February. Megan will be responsible for orchestration of the plan to improve economic statistics, including integration with the Survey Improvement and Enhancement Plan, which are critical to strengthening the quality and trustworthiness of our statistics.
5. January marks the conclusion of our recruitment campaigns for the role of Director-General for Digital, Data and Technology, and for the role of Chief People Officer, building on the People Plan that Henry Watson has started since his arrival on secondment from the Cabinet Office in September 2025.
6. The new Executive Committee (ExCo) sub-committees have commenced, supporting the work of ExCo, and ensuring our focus remains on our strategic priorities:
 - i. Strategic Design Committee – oversee the organisation's data governance and data protection obligations; statistical quality initiatives; ensure that the technology and designs are properly scoped, meet design standards and are fit for purpose end to end;
 - ii. People Committee – oversee the implementation of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) People Plan and reinvestment in people; making decisions on strategic people issues relating to pay and reward, strategic workforce planning, capability and strains on business capacity, skills, learning, culture and health and safety; and
 - iii. Performance and Change Committee – oversee the organisation's business as usual (BAU) delivery and portfolio of transformation.

As we commence business planning, it is essential to ensure our effort and resources are crystallised on providing high-quality economic and population statistics

7. The business planning cycle has commenced, enabling us to set a clear direction through to April 2029. Our fresh approach maximises the engagement of all Senior Civil Servants (SCS), exemplified by a very constructive all-SCS session in Newport on 19 January. This focussed on the challenges we face (legacy, skills, Census 2031, dual run) and the opportunities to become more sustainable including further prioritisation, multi-year sequencing, automation, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The next stage is a series of horizontal planning workshops with directors, to ensure that plans are aligned, deliverable and affordable.

8. This cycle follows the prioritisation exercise that took place prior to Christmas. With finite resources and a pressing need to improve our most vital national statistics, there is an urgent need for us to maximise the money and resource freed up as part of these prioritisation decisions in order to support our priorities.
9. As such, we are now entering a period of discussions with key stakeholders to reach a final position with regards to funding a range of activity. This includes reviewing the ongoing funding of our crime work, as well as reviewing ongoing funding of the Annual Population Survey (APS) in England and Wales. On subnational, we will continue some priority activity, pause some development work and seek funding for other areas.

We have now started to develop a long-term People Plan, and are progressing discussions with the Trade Unions to resolve the hybrid working impasse

10. The development of the long-term People Plan is now underway, with the aim to have a finalised plan by this summer. This plan is intended to ensure that the immediate improvements already underway evolve into sustainable, organisation-wide change. It will provide a clear, strategic framework that supports ONS's priorities, strengthens workforce capability, and embeds longer-lasting cultural and leadership improvements.
11. We are making positive progress in our discussions on attendance principles with PCS and are nearing an outcome which they will be prepared to take to their members. We are focused on bringing Prospect discussions to the same point as quickly as possible, with additional meetings scheduled, and hope to align the timing of both negotiation processes soon. Discussions with Cabinet Office will continue to ensure they remain sighted on our position.
12. Following negotiations with Trade Unions, the delegated 2025/26 pay award will be paid at the end of January and backdated to August. Prospect Union members have voted in favour of accepting the offer. I remain committed to working with the unions to produce a pay flexibility case this year.

Our business-as-usual work continues, including reaching key milestones for the Census 2031 and confronting field recruitment challenges

13. We submitted the strategic outline business case on schedule in November 2025, and have now agreed a set of financial conditions with HM Treasury moving into the next financial year (2026/2027). The first Census 2031 programme board took place in December, approving the 2027 Test aims, objectives and design.
14. Following an internal review, it has been decided that we should not move to Admin-Based Population Estimates (ABPEs) for the headline estimate of population estimates in 2026 (relating to mid-2025). We will continue to publish mid-year estimates using the current methodology, with a focus on looking at continuous improvements in a more modular way. The review concluded that we will not meet the criteria for a move in 2026.
15. Recently we have seen a plateau in the number of field interviewers we're able to recruit, following a substantial increase over the past 12 months, posing risks to the sustainability of our field operations, including the ability to fully resource the parallel run of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS). As an ExCo, we have agreed that it is sensible and prudent to change the recruitment approach to prioritise recruiting permanent interviewers to attract more candidates.
16. Last month, there was one major error, caused by a processing issue, which impacted several releases. This error caused minor changes in the data used in our productivity estimates, and minor changes in the datasets related to labour costs and labour income. Whilst the correction is classified as Major, it was a low scoring correction and would be considered Moderate under the new classifications.

17. Media and stakeholder sentiment is continuing to improve. Our open and transparent approach, which has seen a positive reception with stakeholders, included James Benford's interview on the BBC Radio 4 'PM' programme. James presented a balanced and constructive discussion about what had gone wrong at the ONS, what we're doing to improve things and why the public need to take part in our surveys.
18. The content and website transformation is continuing, where ExCo endorsed the phased rollout, beginning with a new suite of publishing systems on 16 March with a controlled, lower risk transition while progressively migrating statistical outputs in line with the updated content strategy.

Darren Tierney, Permanent Secretary, 22 January 2026

National Statistician's Report, January 2026

Purpose

1. This paper provides the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) with an overview of the National Statistician's Office (NSO), and wider Government Statistical Service (GSS), activity since the last Board meeting on 18 December 2025. The National Statistician's Report will continue over the coming months whilst recruitment for a permanent National Statistician is ongoing.

National Statistician's Office Review

2. With the support of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Chief People Officer and members of his team, I have been conducting a review of the activity and functions of the NSO to ensure they are in line with the expectations of the Board and meet the needs of the wider statistical system.
3. As part of this we have engaged with a variety of stakeholders, both internal and external, who have provided constructive feedback that we will use to shape what the NSO offering should be to best support the incoming National Statistician, the Government Statistical Service (GSS) and wider statistical system.
4. The findings of the review will be explored at this month's Board meeting in a separate paper. I look forward to engaging with the Board on this important subject.

National Statistician's Committees and Panels

5. The December meeting of the **National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Committee (NSEUAC)** discussed the refresh of the UK Statistics Authority User Engagement Strategy following the UK Statistics Assembly and plans to communicate progress on Assembly actions more widely. Considering the extent of change across the Authority and ONS, members understood that progress on the engagement strategy had been slower than originally anticipated. Members were pleased an update on the Assembly high-level priorities was to be published in December but expressed disappointment in the delay to publication on the detailed points. NSEUAC requested to see the update pre-publication which was actioned. It was agreed that the timetable of future updates would be shared with the Committee.
6. NSEUAC thought they could be better utilised if given foresight of likely prioritisation decisions, to provide ONS with a user perspective and to support ONS with how best to engage users when communicating prioritisation decisions. The Committee agreed it should hear from ONS Senior Leadership at the next meeting to provide insight to the decisions being taken.
7. The **Methodological Assurance Review Panel (MARP)** is currently recruiting a new member, replacing a recent member who stood down, looking to cover economic statistics method expertise on the panel. The job advert recently closed and is being sifted, with interviews taking place at the end of the month (late January).
8. Preparations are also underway for the next MARP meeting, taking place in London on 12 February, covering a range of papers and topics, including the Census Question Testing Framework and the Social Survey Strategy.
9. The **National Statistician's Inclusive Data Advisory Committee (NSIDAC)** were asked by the Acting National Statistician at the end of 2025 to provide advice regarding the accessibility of the proposed interim guidance on the development of a harmonised

standard for sex. An ad hoc meeting of the Committee was held on 14 January 2026 to facilitate further discussion.

10. This interim guidance is in response to the UK Supreme Court ruling and its implications for data collection during the ongoing development of the new harmonised standard. The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), Inter-administration Committee (IAC) and GSS Heads of Profession continue to be engaged in the development of this document. The publication date is to be confirmed.
11. NSIDAC is also preparing a response to both the Census Topic Consultation and the Ethnicity Consultation that will be sent as a letter to the Chair of the Board in the absence of a National Statistician.

NSO Activity and Engagement

12. The Centre for Equalities and Inclusion gave a presentation on the **Inclusive Data Taskforce (IDTF)**, its recommendations and ongoing research to increase inclusivity within the UK data landscape, to the Nuffield Foundation on 13 January 2026. Areas for potential collaboration are being explored.
13. A team from ONS and NSO held meetings with **Saudi Arabia's General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT)**. They heard about the transformation programme GASTAT is undertaking as well as preparations underway for the UN World Data Forum taking place in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in November 2026. NSO representatives were joined online by subject matter experts from ONS who gave briefings on economic and environmental statistics and on methodology to GASTAT counterparts and a return set of presentations is being planned. NSO colleagues also delivered a leadership training programme to GASTAT managers.
14. In December 2025, the **International Division** held discussions with the British High Commission (BHC), the Ghana Statistical Service and the Ghana Parliament. The team also met with the First Deputy Speaker of the Ghana Parliament. This work is focussed towards supporting better use statistics for evidence-based policy and decision making, and in informing the public debate. Discussions also covered ongoing support on amendments to legislation to establish the Ghana Statistical Service as a Statistics Authority. The Ghana Statistical Service expressed a strong interest in the UK Statistics Authority Board and would welcome opportunities for its own Board to engage with it in the future as its governance is adapted in line with legislative amendments.
15. Also in December, analysts from the NSO won an **ONS Research Excellence award** in recognition of their work on quantifying the economic effects of health problems and health interventions by pioneering the linkage of health data to tax records.
16. Working with the Labour Market division, analysts from the NSO have led an analysis of the **non-response patterns in the Labour Force Survey (LFS)** by linking the survey to tax records. They have developed a prototype for a new method to adjust for the bias.
17. Analysts in the NSO also published **all-cause and cause-specific mortality by sexual orientation** on 13 January 2026, leveraging the linkage of 2021 census to mortality data. This publication was presented at the [LGBT+ Health Evidence Review](#) steering group on Friday 16 January. The publication was well received and will be contributing to the review (which is being published soon).

Broader UK Statistical System

18. I am working closely with the Deputy Heads of the GSS to ensure strong leadership and support for the GSS whilst the role of National Statistician is vacant. Together, we are continuing to monitor and manage any gaps in support for the GSS. The Deputy Heads of the GSS would welcome ongoing input from the Board to ensure continued visible leadership for the GSS.

19. The UK Statistics Authority has [published an update](#) on the latest work in response to the [UK Statistics Assembly report](#). The update outlines progress to date and plans for the future, focused on the four cross-cutting priorities:
 - i. user engagement;
 - ii. granular statistics;
 - iii. increasing the use of administrative data; and
 - iv. UK-wide coherence.
20. Each priority is led by representatives across the GSS. Further work is needed to understand and communicate progress on the wider recommendations from the Statistical Assembly. The National Statistician's Executive Group (NSEG) will consider a paper on this issue at their next meeting in March.
21. One of the objectives in the GSS Vision, *Strength in Numbers*, is focused on improving cross-GSS prioritisation and collaboration. A key milestone towards this objective was met with the publication of [GSS Theme Lead workplans](#) which outline 2026 priorities, publications, and developments in specific statistical themes across contributing departments. These workplans will be updated annually. The challenge is to ensure that these workplans and the work on the UK Statistics Assembly recommendations provide a strategic, cohesive and coordinated approach to work across the GSS and efforts are not duplicated.
22. The **Analysis Function (AF) Data Access working group** met on 8 January 2026 and discussed case studies to take forward to understand what specific areas/barriers the working group can best tackle and discussed a proposed taxonomy, which will help focus discussions. The AF AI working group met on 21 January to discuss progress on the AF AI Hub for the AF website and what actions are needed around variable risk appetite & governance for using AI tools. There was positive progress at the GO-Science mini conference for DDANs and Chief Scientific Advisors on AI Evidence Synthesis tools and we will be discussing follow-up actions with the GO-Science team.
23. The **IAC** held a workshop on 12 January 2026 to discuss the development of the GSS blueprint for UK statistics and the GSS coherence strategy.
24. Work has begun on creation of the **2026 Strategic Workforce Data Product**. This product is a one-stop shop to understand the membership of the AF and is used to support the AF capability offer.
25. The Deputy Heads of the GSS have dedicated significant effort to developing a proposition for a **GSS leadership talent programme** to support a senior talent pipeline which is being shared with key stakeholders for comment presently.
26. They are also currently addressing final comments on the **Vision of the Future Statistician report** ahead of publication. Once published, they will launch engagement activity across the GSS to promote the vision and begin collaborative work with the RSS to take forward the recommendations.
27. The **Department for Education's Explore Education Statistics API** was shortlisted for an Analysis in Government (AiG) Award in the Innovation category. Winners of the [AiG Awards](#) were announced w/c 19 January 2026, showcasing the good quality analysis being undertaken across government over the last year.
28. Departments have been supporting the launch of the **refreshed Code of Practice** with activity including delivering ministerial teach-ins, comprehensive training for analytical communities, and running focussed engagement sessions for communication and press office colleagues.

Lucinda Eggleton, Director, National Statistician's Office, 22 January 2026

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

For decision

2. We have prepared our **business plan** covering January 2026 to March 2027 and are seeking the Board's approval for publication. This builds on the three-year strategy we published in November 2025. The draft of the business plan and associated rolling work programme are provided for sign off by the Authority Board. The plan reflects feedback from Regulation Committee. Please note that I do not plan to include a Foreword but I am keeping the option open in case the PACAC report is published prior to the business plan and I want to make reference to it.
3. We have updated **the interventions** policy to reflect the new Standards for the Public Use of Statistics, Data and Wider Analysis in Code 3.0. The proposed update is provided for the Board's approval.

Key regulatory activities since the last board meeting

4. We have published updated guidance for producers on how we carry out compliance reviews. A compliance review is the umbrella term for a review of any official statistics against the Code carried out by OSR. [Compliance reviews: A guide for statistics producers – Office for Statistics Regulation](#)
5. As a result of a piece of casework raised with us we published our Compliance review of Justice Data Lab statistics: [Compliance review of Justice Data Lab statistics – Office for Statistics Regulation](#)
6. We have been exploring the extent to which mental health statistics in the UK meet users' needs. We have previously published reviews of mental health statistics in England and Northern Ireland, as well as an update to our review in England. On 14 January 2026, we published our Review of Mental Health Statistics in Wales: [Review of mental health statistics in Wales – Office for Statistics Regulation](#)

Casework

7. We have opened a further 13 cases since the December Authority Board taking our total for the year so far to 135. The Chair wrote this week to [Max Wilkinson MP](#) regarding claims about magistrate court statistics by the Secretary of State for Justice. Earlier in January the Chair wrote to [Kevin Stewart MSP](#) and [Michael Shanks MP](#) about Waiting times in England and Scotland.

Engagement

8. Last week I published a blog on the one-year anniversary of the UKSA Statistics Assembly: [Renewed momentum? The Statistics Assembly one year on – Office for Statistics Regulation](#).
9. In terms of speaking engagements:
 - i. I attended a round table and gave a talk at Trinity College, Cambridge on the role of statistics in policy making;

- ii. Penny Babb and I presented to the Bank of England on the new Code of Practice for Statistics. There was a good deal of interest from the bank as to how the Code's principles might be applicable to their Bank's own practices; and
- iii. I gave a presentation about OSR's role to the French Statistics Authority, whose remit is similar to our regulatory function.

Published work

- 10. OSR has published new [research](#) on Trust in Official Statistics. The report provides a conceptual analysis of trust, examines levels of trust in various actors and objects (government, civil servants, scientists, journalists, media and evidence) and makes recommendations for actions producers, communicators and OSR can take to help build trust in official statistics.
- 11. We will soon publish our update on ONS's progress on economic statistics recovery. We have had good and constructive conversations with James Benford, both about the substance of progress and also about the best way of undertaking our regulatory role as ONS implements its improvement plans.
- 12. Our overall conclusion is that ONS has encouraging early progress, both in terms of specific outputs (eg producer prices) and in terms of openness and engagement. We also recognise the challenge of the programme, and make three recommendations on how ONS should take the programme forwards and communicate progress.

Issues on my mind

- 13. We have begun our preparations for the 2026 Scotland and Wales elections which is largely based on our experience and lessons learned from the 2024 UK General Election, as well as insight from recent casework concerning Scotland and Wales. This includes developing a series of explainers covering statistics on key topics and what to look out for when they are used publicly. We intend to begin publishing these from early March.

Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, OSR, 19 November 2025

2031 Census: Coherence across the UK

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on progress from a devolved government perspective on Census 2031 planning. In particular, it covers the key achievements of the Census 2031 programme to date, including areas of effective cross-UK collaboration. It highlights upcoming decisions and activities, as well as key risks, issues and dependencies that we are identifying and working through.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. note progress on Census planning and consultation;
 - ii. recognise successful cross-UK collaboration; and
 - iii. consider emerging risks, issues and dependencies.

Background

3. The legislative authority to hold the Census varies across the UK. All parts of the UK published recommendations on the future of the census and population statistics in 2025 and are now progressing plans to undertake a census in 2031.
4. Recommendations from [Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS), [National Records of Scotland](#) (NRS) and from the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#) (NISRA) all set out the importance of a formal Census of Population of Housing, supported by stronger administrative data sharing across government.
5. The Office for National Statistics carries out the census for England and Wales, working in cooperation with the Welsh Government. Welsh Ministers have a right in law to be consulted on the Census Order and the power to make regulations for administering the census in Wales.
6. National Records of Scotland recommended that a mandatory questionnaire be issued in June 2025. This recommendation, on behalf of the Registrar General for Scotland, was made to Scottish Government Ministers who accepted the recommendation building on the lessons learnt from Census 2022.
7. NISRA's recommendation received Executive approval in September 2025. Although this is not the formal direction to hold a Census which is required under law from the First Minister and deputy First Minister, NISRA were able to proceed with our high priority activities for Census 2031 on the basis of that Executive agreement.

Discussion

Progress so far

8. Considerable activity on census planning has taken place since the joint publication of the Census recommendations in June 2025. The UK Census Committee (UKCC) has been reinstated to provide a governance forum for senior cross-UK collaboration and coherence. The different nations are also represented on each other's census programme boards.
9. The three census offices are also currently working on memoranda of understanding that detail the partnership arrangement for the Census 2031 projects across the UK. This initial phase is focussed on ways of working, joint-governance arrangements, and joint contracts / cost estimates associated with delivering a census test in 2027. In addition,

there are a range of cross-UK working groups in place. These formal groups have been supported by a UK-wide Microsoft Teams channel which has helped drive joint working and sharing of expertise.

10. Initial design work for 2031 Census is also underway. UK-level meetings have been established to agree fundamental design elements and to identify where resources can be shared. The UK census offices are working together to understand priorities for the census test in 2027 and to establish where contracts are needed for the provision of systems and services.
11. Our approach to date has been to identify areas where joint working and common design elements can deliver benefits, while recognising the legislative authority of each Census taker to design a Census which meets the needs of their users. For instance, each country will have their own test plan but some elements are common, and where this is the case joint contracts will be procured to deliver. However, each Census taker has made a determination about the scope of the test proposed under their mandate.
12. The inclusion of NRS alongside NISRA and ONS for Census 2031 - compared with the two-way involvement in Census 2021 - may increase the volume and complexity of procurement activity. It may also require more extensive back-end system and platform development to support a fully coordinated UK-wide approach. To manage this, ONS has usefully suggested that Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) are signed between ONS/NISRA and ONS/NRS – with a two phased approach, focussing on the Census Test initially, then moving on to Rehearsal and Census itself.
13. All nations are currently consulting on user needs for Census statistics, with Scotland's consultation now closed and the consultations for the other nations closing in early February. NISRA, NRS and ONS have worked in conjunction on how responses will be treated/evaluated, such that the approach is common. We are also working closely to ensure that any UK angle is considered and reflected in the evaluation.
14. Cross-UK working has been particularly effective in reaching a recommendation on the 2031 census date. This has now been agreed jointly and submitted to UKCC in December. This date is provisional at this stage, pending NISRA discussions with Central Statistics Office (CSO) Ireland on potential alignment with the date of the 2031 Census in the Republic of Ireland.
15. Under the Future of Population and Migration Statistics (FPMS) programme, work was taken forward to enable ONS to onward share priority datasets with the Devolved Governments. The HMRC PAYE RTI Frameworks data was the first to be progressed, as a pilot, and NISRA successfully received this data in August 2025. Work is progressing in conjunction with ONS to prepare this data for analysis. NISRA is currently reviewing and considering how datasets like this will be used to support the Census in 2031.

Upcoming key decisions and activities

16. There are a range of important decisions and activities which need to take place over 2026 in order for the Census 2031 timetable to remain on track from the perspective of the Devolved Governments.
17. Among these, the submission of Census business cases for NRS and NISRA to take forward this work is key.
18. Agreement was reached on the scope and design of the 2027 Census Test in Northern Ireland and Scotland – including engagement strategy and question testing (which will emerge from consultation) – at the December UKCC meeting. However, the test proceeding in Scotland is still subject to further funding decisions from Scottish Government.

19. Over the course of 2026, the Census takers will need to evaluate responses to the census public consultations. This will be completed in conjunction with running topic expert working groups, and together these will drive NISRA and NRS's requirements to develop and test questions. This work will take cognisance of developments across the rest of the UK and in particular, the work that is being driven forward by the GSS.
20. Following a data audit across ONS, NRS and NISRA on sources that feed into population and migration estimates, a number of administrative datasets were identified as priority sources for the development of coherent UK admin-based population estimates. A key decision is required in relation to which priority sources to progress next to provide the most effective support to Census 2031.

Risks, issues and dependencies

21. There has been a genuinely collaborative approach to census planning so far. This recognises the benefits and efficiencies that can come from cross-UK working, as well as reflecting the importance to users of cross-UK census coherence wherever possible.
22. Nevertheless, some potential risks to coherence remain and require active management.
23. The data sharing work to support the Census to date has progressed under the FPMS programme. However, as this programme is coming to an end, there does not appear to be the same level of resource available in ONS to push forward the other priority shares or to provide support in terms of familiarisation with the data sources and methodology for how the datasets are used to produce key statistical outputs. Given the focus on admin data for Census 2031, it is important that we continue to have a robust mechanism to identify priorities and expedite data sharing across the UK where relevant.
24. There is a risk that Welsh requirements may be overlooked within the broader ONS (and UK) census programme. This became an issue during the 2021 Census preparations, when Welsh feedback – such as concerns over the ethnicity question – was not initially addressed and required late changes.
25. While early discussions about establishing a senior “Wales lead” within the ONS census programme are promising and should help ensure Welsh perspectives are represented, resourcing within Wales remains a major challenge. Most census activities fall outside the devolved responsibilities in Wales, leaving the Welsh Government without dedicated funding to participate fully. Consequently, the Welsh Government must carefully prioritise its input, despite the potential to contribute valuable expertise – especially on user engagement and bilingual operations.
26. Discussions with ONS are already underway to explore options for supporting Welsh involvement, including the possibility of secondments from ONS, so that the Welsh Government can play a meaningful role and help guarantee the Census's success in Wales. Additionally, the forthcoming Welsh Parliament election in 2026 introduces an element of uncertainty that may present further risks or issues for census programme planning and delivery.
27. Another risk stems from the potential lack of harmonisation on certain census questions across the UK. Census offices retain the autonomy to design their census questionnaires to best address local priorities. However, this flexibility can result in variations in content and definitions (e.g. the different gender identity questions used in Scotland, and England and Wales in 2021). Such differences may present challenges for users who require consistent cross-UK data, potentially limiting comparability and complicating analysis at a UK level.
28. Resourcing also remains a key risk for the Census programme in the Devolved Governments (DGs). It is possible that the DGs will struggle to build enough capacity quickly enough to meet the ramp-up in Census demand for resource. Building the capacity and capability may be more difficult given the 18-24 month delay in starting

Census preparations. NRS and NISRA are consequently actively working with ONS to realise opportunities for shared use of resource. ONS and NISRA did this well for 2021, where ONS provided resource to NISRA to support many elements of the process (e.g. Testing, Project/Contract management, Security and incident management).

Conclusion

29. The four nations have made strong progress on census planning and consultation, with notable success in cross-UK collaboration on population statistics and data sharing. Key decisions on design, resourcing, and data sharing will shape delivery in 2026-27. The Board is invited to note progress and consider the recommendations above.

Stephanie Howarth, Welsh Government; Jon Wroth-Smith, National Records of Scotland; Philip Wales, NISRA; 19 January 2026

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(26)06

National Statistician's Office – Resourcing

As this area of work is policy in development, this paper will be published upon completion.

People Survey 2025 – Results & Response

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on the recent People Survey, talking through the cultural context we find ourselves in, the stand-out themes from the survey and the actions we are committing to as an organisation. This paper also highlights ways that Authority Board Members can support this work and help drive us forward on the journey of culture change.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. note the People Survey results by Directorate; and
 - ii. share insights and best practices from other organisations, especially around: building trust and psychological safety; and sustaining momentum in culture change initiatives.

Background

3. The People Survey 2025 results reflect an organisation in transition, emerging from a period of considerable challenge and scrutiny. There is a clear recognition that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) culture has, at times, not felt safe for challenge or open dialogue. The leadership is committed to shifting this towards a culture of trust, challenge, deep listening, and decisive action. Following the launch of our new mission and leadership statements in September, the People Survey provides a point-in-time snapshot of colleague sentiment at a pivotal moment. It is complemented by other sources of data which capture the experience of our employees, such as ongoing “Your Experience” surveys.

Discussion

4. Themes that stand out for ONS overall:
 - i. **Learning & Development:** While collaboration is strong (86 per cent say their team can be relied upon in difficulty), only half of colleagues feel recent learning activities have improved their performance. This signals a risk to capability and engagement, but also an opportunity for targeted improvement;
 - ii. **Leadership & Managing Change:** Scores are below the Civil Service average and have declined, with weak confidence in senior leaders’ vision and change management. This is a critical area for rebuilding trust and fostering openness;
 - iii. **Pay & Benefits:** This remains the lowest scoring theme, with satisfaction well below the Civil Service benchmark and is directly linked to retention risk. The organisation is taking steps to address this, but immediate fixes are challenging; and
 - iv. **Organisational Objectives & Purpose:** There is a weakening connection between colleagues and our mission. With the recent launch of a new mission and changes in leadership, this is a timely moment to reinforce clarity and alignment.
5. Areas of Concern:
 - i. **Disconnect between top-level interventions and local impact:** Survey results and comments suggest that central actions are not always translating into meaningful change at all levels. There is a need for Director sponsors to lead engagement and ensure visibility and impact of initiatives;

- ii. **Variation across directorates:** Some directorates are performing well, while others require urgent intervention. There are also areas where performance is high but progress is declining, signalling emerging risks; and
 - iii. **Sustained negative sentiment on action:** Only 44 per cent of colleagues believe senior managers will act on survey results, and feedback indicates a perception that “nothing ever changes” following the survey. This is a critical trust issue.
6. Organisational Actions & Reassurance - the organisation is taking a multi-layered approach to address these challenges:
- i. **Corporate actions:** Director sponsors are being appointed for key themes (Pay & Benefits, Learning & Development, Leadership & Managing Change, Organisational Objectives & Purpose) to lead engagement and provide regular updates. Workshops and targeted interventions are underway, including a pay flexibility case and learning roadmap;
 - ii. **Local actions:** Each Directorate is required to create a focused action plan, informed by survey results and broader employee experience data. Director-led revitalisation of People Action Groups (PAGs) is required to drive these plans, supported by expertise from HRBPs and the Employee Experience team;
 - iii. **Hold to Account (H2A) process:** The Permanent Secretary will hold Directors to account through annual meetings, resulting in measurable objectives for each Directorate. This process is being reframed to cover the full employee experience and ensure leadership expectations are translated into team commitments; and
 - iv. **Dedicated resource:** Directorates are encouraged to dedicate resources (e.g., 0.5 FTE at G7) to lead culture change, demonstrating commitment and enabling tailored local actions.
7. These actions are designed to ensure accountability, visibility, and continuous improvement, with clear mechanisms for monitoring progress and sharing successful initiatives. The People Survey will continue to underpin the actions taken in the current and future iterations of the ONS People Plan.
8. The Board is asked to support our organisational response to the People Survey through support and challenge at all levels of the organisation, championing the importance of culture change and calling out behaviours that are not in line with our leadership commitment. In the sessions that are being set up between non-executive directors and ONS colleagues, we would appreciate your insights into how actions are being cascaded and felt at all levels, not just reported at the top, and how colleagues are ensuring that their teams feel safe to challenge and speak up.

Conclusion

9. The People Survey 2025 results provide a clear diagnosis of where the organisation stands and where it needs to go. The actions outlined demonstrate a robust response, but success depends on visible leadership, accountability, and continuous engagement at all levels. The Board’s support, challenge, and external perspective are vital to sustaining momentum and ensuring that culture change is real and lasting.

Pamela Hunt, People and Places Directorate, January 2026

Authority Board Independent Review of Effectiveness

Purpose

1. This paper provides the final report of the Board Effectiveness Review and outlines a draft action plan in response to its findings.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to note the final report and consider the action plan.

Background

3. In line with cross government guidance the Board undertook an external review of effectiveness, led by Mo Baines, interim Lead Non-Executive Director in the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government and Chief Executive of the Association for Public Service Excellence.
4. The methodology underpinning the review was agreed by the lead reviewer, Mo Baines with the Chair. Mo was provided with access to Board papers and observed the November Board meeting. Mo conducted a series of interviews and a group discussion with members of the Board. Interviews focused on the effectiveness of the Board, governance, culture, relationships, behaviours, skills and experience, quality of information, diversity of thought and characteristics, potential areas of improvement and future resilience.
5. Due to time constraints Mo did not attend Board subcommittee meetings, but was provided with a recording of the Regulation Committee meeting held on 4 December. The reports of the annual self-review of effectiveness for both the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee undertaken in August 2025 and the Regulation Committee undertaken in July 2025 were also provided.
6. As set out in the report's summary of findings it was agreed that the focus should be future facing on how the current Board could maximise its effectiveness.
7. Mo presented emerging findings at the Board meeting on 18 December. The report was circulated to members in January and Mo has now provided her independent final report.
8. The report will be shared with the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee as part of their inquiry on the work of the UK Statistics Authority.

Discussion

Summary of findings

9. The review reflected that the Authority has continued its improvement journey and there is clear evidence of a culture shift, with the executive embracing challenge and seeking further improvements; and the Board providing rigorous oversight, scrutiny, challenge and support.
10. Based on the review, the Board will now consider the recommendations in more detail. It may wish to refine or develop the action plan further, once PACAC has published its report.
11. As detailed in the report key themes were identified in the following areas, which are considered fully in the report:
 - i. Culture and behaviours

- ii. Non-Executive Director skills
 - iii. NED engagement
 - iv. Governance
 - v. Prioritisation of Board Agendas
 - vi. Quality of papers and management information
12. The resilience and effectiveness of the Board is critical to the UK Statistic Authority and the UK Statistical System. It should be noted that progress has already been made in many areas and the aim is to continue on that trajectory.
13. Indications suggest that the Board as a whole agrees that any major change to the governance set up should properly await a permanent Chair.

Conclusion

14. This independent review of the Authority's effectiveness reflects that the Authority has continued its improvement journey and that there is clear evidence of a culture shift.
15. The Board will want to consider its response to the recommendations, and may wish to consider further alongside the report from the PACAC Inquiry, (timing for publication not yet confirmed).

Sally Jones, Policy and Strategy, 26 January 2026