

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY
Committee for Official Statistics**

Minutes

**Meeting of Wednesday 18 September 2013
Board Room, Drummond Gate, London**

Present

Members

Professor David Rhind (Chair)
Mr Richard Alldritt
Dr Colette Bowe
Dr Norman Caven (from item 2)
Mr Partha Dasgupta
Professor David Hand
Ms Jil Matheson

Secretariat

Mr Robert Bumpstead
Mr Joe Cuddeford

Other Attendees

Mr David Blunt (Home Office), Ms Roma Chappell (ONS) and Professor Stephen Shute (Chair of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee) (for item 2)
Mr Iain Bell (ONS), Mr Mark Hurrell and Mr Stephen McCarthy (Government Digital Service) (for item 3)
Ms Pam Davies (National Statistician's Office)
Mr Sandy Stewart (Monitoring and Assessment team) (for item 4)

Apologies

Sir Andrew Dilnot

Declarations of Interest

Professor Rhind declared that he was now a member of the Public Sector Transparency Board.
Ms Matheson declared that she was a member of the Research Sector Transparency Board.

1. Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Sir Andrew Dilnot. The minutes of the previous meeting of 17 July 2013 were agreed as a correct record. Progress with actions was reviewed, with the following points noted:
- i. the Head of Assessment and National Statistician had decided not to pursue proposals for a statement about the publication of consultation responses as there was existing government guidance in this area;
 - ii. ONS had provided a diagram of the various assurance mechanisms for Beyond 2011 which the Secretariat would circulate to Committee members;
 - iii. discussions about new data sharing legislation were ongoing; and
 - iv. the Head of Assessment had established that no action was required in relation to Welsh Short Term Output Indices as these statistics were no longer being discontinued.

2. Crime Statistics Advisory Committee [SA(COS)(13)35]

- 2.1 Professor Shute introduced a paper which described the role of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (CSAC) within the UK statistical system. The meeting heard about the reasons for the creation of CSAC, its relationship with the Home Secretary and other key stakeholders, and its 2013/14 Work Programme.
- 2.2 The following points were made in the discussion.
- i. The transfer of Crime Statistics from the Home Office to ONS, and the creation of CSAC, had been successful so far. Contributing factors to this success were that CSAC provided a vehicle for changes to occur in a depoliticised environment, and the composition and standing of the CSAC membership was appropriate.
 - ii. The area of crime statistics was in some respects a microcosm for the wider statistical system and many of the issues considered by CSAC were common in other areas of statistics.
 - iii. While CSAC was perceived as successful so far, it was likely that future challenges would test the robustness of the new arrangements.
 - iv. Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) were important users of crime statistics and had a particular interest in comparing crime figures for their area with others. The Chair of CSAC wrote to candidates before the PCC elections to reiterate the importance of appropriate use of statistics in public debate, and has published guidance for PCCs on how to use crime statistics.
 - v. Senior police leaders, for example Borough Commanders, were also important users of statistics. They also had a role in communicating statistics to local people.
 - vi. There were challenges associated with the concept of 'total crime' where all instances of crime are added to create a composite figure without weighting. These were not easily addressed.
 - vii. People's perception of crime can be affected by their own experience, and it was likely that some people's perceptions of antisocial behaviour contributed to their perceptions of the level of crime in their area. Anti-social behaviour was not currently included in the classification of crime.
 - viii. When communicating crime statistics, it was important to be clear about what the statistics did not cover, as well as what they did.
- 2.3 The Chair thanked Professor Shute, Mr Blunt and Ms Chappell for a useful discussion and suggested that the Committee would return to this topic again at a future opportunity.

3. The Future of the National Statistics Publication Hub [SA(COS)(13)36]

- 3.1 Mr Bell introduced a paper on options for improving or replacing the National Statistics Publication Hub. The meeting heard that there would be substantial costs (estimated as around £250,000 to £1,000,000) associated with either continuing with the current system or developing a new Publication Hub within ONS.
- 3.2 The advantages and disadvantages of developing a new Hub with the Government Digital Service (GDS) on the gov.uk website were considered, with the following points made in the discussion:
- i. There was a risk to the perception of independence if the National Statistics Publication Hub, which was currently located separately to departmental websites, was moved to gov.uk, which included the websites for central government departments and their policy documents. It was reported that the gov.uk website would soon also cover many arm's length bodies and non-departmental public bodies.
 - ii. There were concerns from the Devolved Administrations about their statistics being disseminated through the UK Government's central website. However, it was reported that initial discussions with the Devolved Administrations had indicated that these concerns may be allayed.
 - iii. The gov.uk content management system would be easier for producers to use than the content management system for the Publication Hub.
 - iv. Potential advantages to users of a gov.uk solution were an email alert function and the ability to download calendar information.
 - v. The audience reach of gov.uk was higher than that of the current Publication Hub.
 - vi. A GDS-hosted hub would not cost the Authority any money.
 - vii. The current Hub did not itself host any statistics, but rather it provided links to other sites where the statistics could be found. Many official statistics produced by government departments were now published on the gov.uk site.
 - viii. The current link to 'Statistics' on the gov.uk home page was contained within a paragraph about departments and policy, which could give the impression that the statistics were not produced independently.
 - ix. The development of the gov.uk site was iterative and there was scope for shaping the site to meet the needs of the Authority and the GSS.
- 3.3 The meeting considered whether the future aspiration would be for all statistics, including those produced by ONS – not just a record of what is available – to be published via the gov.uk website. It was noted that, currently, the gov.uk site did not have the capability to provide functionality such as data visualisations.
- 3.4 It was agreed that a paper should be provided to the next Authority Board meeting setting out the options and COS members' support of the GDS proposal on the basis of the presentation. This proposal should include a set of principles under which work on the Publication Hub would be taken forward should the GDS option be chosen. These principles should include the following:
- i. In order to safeguard the perception of independence, the Authority should have control over the text that describes the Publication Hub, and also over the presentation of the link to the Hub from the gov.uk homepage.
 - ii. Any new Publication Hub should retain the use of the National Statistics quality mark to distinguish those statistics that had passed an assessment, alongside a description of the meaning of the quality mark.
 - iii. The time of release of the statistics – e.g. 9.30am – should be visible on the Hub.

- iv. Entries in the Hub should also include appropriate metadata, particularly a link to the relevant Assessment Report.
- v. An evolutionary approach should be taken towards development of a new system.
- vi. The costs of the options should be fully set out, described and understood.

Action: Mr Bell to provide a paper to the next Authority Board setting out options for the Publication Hub, including a set of principles under which work would be taken forward should the GDS option be chosen.

4. **Draft Monitoring Report: Official Statistics in the Context of the Referendum on Scottish Independence [SA(COS)(13)37]**
 - 4.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a draft Monitoring Report on official statistics in the context of the referendum on Scottish independence. The draft had been developed following comments on emerging findings at the Committee for Official Statistics meeting in July [SA(COS)(13)29] and had been circulated to members of the Committee in advance for comment via correspondence.
 - 4.2 Members of the Committee summarised the comments they had made via correspondence and discussed further improvements to the draft.
 - 4.3 The meeting considered how the Authority would respond to allegations of misuse of statistics during the run up to the referendum. It was confirmed that the Authority would act consistently with current practice in investigating and responding to such complaints.
 - 4.4 It was agreed that the Monitoring Review would be revised in accordance with the comments received and would be published on 2 October. The Committee heard that there were plans for the output from the Theme Leaders' assessments of comparability to be published on the same day as the Monitoring Review, and so there was an opportunity for the Monitoring Review to make reference to this.

Action: Mr Alldritt to revise the draft Monitoring Review in accordance with the comments made.

5. **The Global Statistical System [SA(COS)(13)38]**
 - 5.1 Ms Matheson introduced a paper which gave an overview of the global statistical system.
 - 5.2 It was noted that the paper provided a useful summary and it was agreed that the annex 'an introduction to the global statistical system' should be published on the Statistics Authority website subject to any minor editing needed to make it of general interest.

Action: National Statistician's Office to provide a final copy of the international annex for publication.

- 5.3 The meeting considered Principle 9 of the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which relates to the use of international concepts, classifications and methods. It was noted that the UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics encouraged producers of official statistics to adhere to international standards. The Committee discussed the scope of outputs which were subject to internationally agreed standards, and the available information about the extent of compliance with such standards. It was agreed that the National Statistician's Office would collate information about the principle sources of international standards.

Action: National Statistician's Office to provide collated information about the principle sources of international standards.

- 5.4 The Committee agreed that, at an early opportunity, it would consider in detail the statistical issues in the European Statistical System. The meeting should include outside experts. The COS Chair and Secretariat would organise a suitable date.

Action: Secretariat to schedule a detailed COS seminar session on the European Statistical System for an early opportunity.

6. Governance of the Government Statistical Service [SA(COS)(13)39]

- 6.1 Ms Matheson introduced a paper which described the governance of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) including its recent history, structure, governing principles and associated matters.
- 6.2 The meeting considered the issue of capability in the GSS. It was noted that the Civil Service Reform plans were an opportunity to increase the capability and standing of the statistics profession within government. Capability had been boosted by Annual Assurance Reports, Continuing Professional Development, centralised recruitment of statisticians, and the professional relationship between Heads of Profession and the National Statistician. But there was further improvement needed in areas such as influencing skills, networking, and leadership development. Capability was an issue that the Committee for Official Statistics would return to at a future meeting.

Action: Secretariat to schedule a detailed COS seminar session on capability within the GSS.

7. The role of the Committee for Official Statistics in delivering the Authority Strategy [SA(COS)(13)40]

- 7.1 Mr Bumpstead introduced a paper which provided a summary of the strategic oversight work that COS had been allocated.
- 7.2 It was suggested that the delivery confidence for Work Package 2Bi 'increase the impact of statisticians in departments', which had been set at 'green' by the executive lead, might be reviewed in light of the challenging nature of this objective.

Action: Ms Davies to review the delivery confidence for Work Package 2Bi 'increase the impact of statisticians in departments'.

- 7.3 The Committee noted that plans in relation to Work Package 4Ai, for the Authority to lead a debate about the long-term vision for statistics and statistical infrastructure, were at an early stage. The meeting heard that there emerging plans for a statistical infrastructure project led by the National Statistician's Office (NSO). A high-level sponsors' group was being convened and a planning group would be meeting on 23 September.

8. Issues Raised with Authority [SA(COS)(13)41]

- 8.1 The meeting considered a paper which provided an overview of issues raised with the Authority.
- 8.2 The meeting considered an issue which had been previously raised about the reporting of statistics on deaths of people who have left the armed services. The Monitoring and Assessment team had investigated the issue. It was agreed that this issue would remain open for the time being.

9. NSO and GSS risks [SA(COS)(13)42]

- 9.1 Ms Davies introduced a paper which provided details of the high-level risks for the NSO and the GSS. The meeting noted the amendments made to the NSO risk register, and heard that the GSS risk register would be updated soon. Members of COS asked for sight of the updated GSS risk register.

10. Activities of the Government Statistical Service [SA(COS)(13)43]

- 10.1 Ms Davies introduced a paper which provided an update of GSS activities for July to September 2013. The meeting noted the summary.

11. Cuts to official statistics [SA(COS)(13)44]

- 11.1 Ms Davies introduced a paper which provided an update on plans by producers of official statistics for ceasing the production of statistics, and on public consultations relating to those statistics. The Committee noted the latest position and discussed why these seemed less than had been anticipated and whether the Authority was missing any plans for cessations.

12. Any other business

- 12.1 The Chair noted that this was Mr Alldritt's last meeting as a member of COS as he would soon be retiring. It was also Mr Caven's last meeting as he had reached the end of his term as a member of COS. The Chair thanked Mr Alldritt and Mr Caven for all their work as members of the Committee.
- 12.2 There was no other business. The Committee would meet next on Tuesday 12 November 2013 at 10:30am.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Agenda

Wednesday 18 September 2013
Board Room, Drummond Gate, London, 13:00 to 15:30

Chair: Professor David Rhind
Apologies: Sir Andrew Dilnot

1	Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising	Meeting of 170713
2	Crime Statistics Advisory Committee	SA(COS)(13)35 Professor Stephen Shute
3	The future of the National Statistics Publication Hub	SA(COS)(13)36 Mr Iain Bell
4	Draft Monitoring Review: Official Statistics in the Context of the Scottish Referendum	SA(COS)(13)37 Mr Richard Alldritt
5	The Global Statistical System	SA(COS)(13)38 Ms Jil Matheson
6	Governance of the Government Statistical Service	SA(COS)(13)39 Ms Jil Matheson
7	The role of the Committee for Official Statistics in delivering the Authority Strategy	SA(COS)(13)40 Secretariat
8	Issues raised with Authority	SA(COS)(13)41 Secretariat
9	NSO and GSS risks	SA(COS)(13)42 Ms Pam Davies
10	Activities of the Government Statistical Service	SA(COS)(13)43 Ms Pam Davies
11	Cuts to official statistics	SA(COS)(13)44 Ms Pam Davies
12	Any other business	

Next Meeting: **Tuesday 12 November 2013, London, 10:30 to 13:00**

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Crime Statistics Advisory Committee

SA(COS)(13)35

Purpose

1. This paper describes the role of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (CSAC) within the UK Statistical system featuring, in particular, its creation, relationship with the Home Secretary and other key stakeholders, and its 2013/14 Work Programme. It is intended to serve as the backdrop for discussion at the Committee for Official Statistics (COS).

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee are invited to note this paper.

Background

Establishment of Committee

3. The report of the National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics for England and Wales commissioned by the Home Secretary was published on 6 June 2011. The Home Secretary accepted all the report's recommendations including the establishment of an independent Advisory Committee.
4. Following advice from the UK Statistics Authority Board, it was decided to constitute the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (CSAC) as a National Statistician's Committee with an independent chair from outside of government, a majority of non-government members and the principal aims of advising:-
 - the Home Secretary on any changes to the data requirements from the police needed for crime statistics, and on any changes to the Home Office Counting Rules;
 - ONS (as the new producer body with effect from 1 April 2012) on changes to coverage, definitions or methodology and on the handling of any such changes; and
 - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) on risk areas in terms of the statistical quality of police recorded crime data.
5. More information about the Review and the rationale for the creation of the Committee is at **Annex A**.
6. Advertisements for the Chair and non-executive members were placed in the online media in October 2011 using procedures similar to those required by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Appointments were made the following month with Stephen Shute, Professor of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice at the University of Sussex, chosen as Chair. All members are subject to a Code of Practice (**Annex B**). A full list of current members is at **Annex C**.
7. The Committee held its inaugural meeting on 19 December 2011 when it discussed, amongst other business, its Terms of Reference and a set of fundamental principles which will inform its work. It resolved to submit an annual report to the Home Secretary and to meet three times each year. Its full Terms of Reference are at **Annex D**.

Transfer of work from Home Office to ONS

8. The management of the British Crime Survey and the publication of National Statistics were formally transferred to ONS in April 2012, whilst oversight of Police Recorded

Crime remained at the Home Office. There was (and is) a high level of collaboration between the two departments and commitment on both sides to ensuring that the transition went smoothly with user needs at the forefront of considerations. As the British Crime Survey did not cover Scotland, it was re-branded as the National Crime Survey for England and Wales from April 2012.

Changes in the classification of police recorded crime

9. The Review noted a concern that the existing classifications of police recorded crime were overly complex and burdensome on the police and concluded that there may be some scope to reduce the number of crime categories used for their reporting and collection. In response to the Review, there have been two separate consultations in October 2011 and October 2012. The Committee discussed the outcome of the consultations and possible changes to police recorded crime classifications and categories in order that it could advise the Home Secretary. The Committee reached a consensus view on the proposals for change. Exchanges of correspondence between the Chair and the Home Secretary followed.
10. The changes contribute to a key objective of the Committee to improve the presentation of crime statistics to give users and the public a clearer overall understanding of crime data. In addition the adoption of the new crime categories by both the Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary will lead to better alignment nationally.

Guidance to police and crime commissioners

11. In October 2012, prior to the election of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in England and Wales, the Chair wrote to all candidates. The correspondence outlined the importance of accurate, clearly presented, comprehensive, transparent and trustworthy statistics and included guidance on using statistics with the media and the public. Following their election, the Chair wrote again in February 2013 to PCCs outlining further plans for guidance and support.

Work Programme 2013/14

12. The Committee's 2013/14 work programme is split into two categories, Communication and Methods.

Communication

- i. Continue to look for ways to improve the presentation of crime statistics to ensure that users and the public have a clearer understanding of the overall picture of crime;
- ii. Further consider the Anti-Social Behaviour incident data and options for change in autumn 2013;
- iii. Continue to work with relevant parties to develop proposals for further reductions in existing bureaucracy and data burden. The Committee will give further consideration to these issues in autumn 2013;
- iv. Support the work of the Police and Crime Commissioners through attendance at one of their quarterly meetings to explain the work of the Committee. In addition, guidance and workshops will be provided to PCCs support staff by the Home Office; and
- v. Continue to increase awareness of the work of the Committee.

Methods

- i. Continue to examine the work related to the coverage of e-Crime and e-fraud statistics. It is noted that progress has been made over the past year with recording of fraud crimes;

- ii. Support work on investigating a further collection of data on crime against businesses in order to address a gap in crime statistics;
 - iii. Support the investigation of the feasibility of improving the availability of data on repeat victimisation in order to fill gaps in the statistics; and
 - iv. Support and provide guidance on the work of HMIC's Inspection Programme.
13. The Work Programme is dependent on relevant resources being identified in government and beyond. Due regard will also be given to the demands upon the police service. In everything it does the Committee is conscious that, at a time of public expenditure restraint, it is important that all resources are used to best purpose. The Committee strives to advise on priorities in a timely and informed way that facilitates the delivery of its Work Programme.

Stephen Shute, Chair, Crime Statistics Advisory Committee, September 2013

List of Annexes

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|----------------|--|
| Annex A | Further background about the Review |
| Annex B | Committee's Code of Practice |
| Annex C | List of current members |
| Annex D | Committee's terms of reference |

Annex A National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this Document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-reports/national-statistician-s-review-of-crime-statistics.pdf>

Annex B Crime Statistics Advisory Committee Code of Statistics

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this Document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-advisory-committees/crime-statistics-advisory-committee---code-of-practice.pdf>

Annex C Crime Statistics Advisory Committee Membership

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this Document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-advisory-committees/crime-statistics-advisory-committee-membership.html>

Annex D Crime Statistics Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this Document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-advisory-committees/csac-terms-of-reference---2013.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(13)36

The Publication Hub and www.gov.uk

Purpose

1. The future of the Publication Hub was discussed at the Committee for Official Statistics in September last year [SA(COS)(12)21]. At the meeting it was agreed that once the initial migration of government departments to www.gov.uk had been undertaken we would begin work with the Government Digital Service (GDS) to look at what a solution for the Publication Hub would look like on www.gov.uk. This paper sets out:
 - i. the options for developing a replacement Publication Hub.
 - ii. how developing a solution with the GDS would work and the approach to development with the GDS;
 - iii. some initial ideas from the GDS on how a Publication Hub on www.gov.uk might look; and
 - iv. other options for the Publication Hub.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee Official Statistics are invited to:
 - i. agree to development of a Publication Hub on www.gov.uk; and
 - ii. note the stakeholder communication plans for this option.

Discussion

3. The Publication Hub is the place where all National and Official Statistics release dates are pre-announced. It acts as a link through to all statistics published in the UK which are published on the ONS website, departmental websites, or websites of the devolved administrations. While the Publication Hub is well used (in excess of 2 million visits per year), it is not well received by users:
 - i. Users were dissatisfied with the Publication Hub. A survey of users in 2011 found that 28 per cent of users were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and that 35 per cent did not find what they were looking for. One of the main reasons for the dissatisfaction was that people wanted the statistics and the publication schedule on the same site.
 - ii. Statistical suppliers, particularly those outside of ONS have difficulty accessing the technology with many relying on ad hoc solutions. In addition the technology is cumbersome and resource intensive.
4. There are three main options for developing the Publication Hub:
 - i. continue with current system;
 - ii. develop a new Publication Hub within ONS; or
 - iii. develop a new Publication Hub with the GDS.

Continuing with the current system

5. The current system is based on ageing hardware and software. The software used runs out of support at the turn of the year and would not be suitable for running an extended period unsupported. We would therefore need to upgrade the software. As the software is situated on outdated hardware, these too would need to be replaced. The total cost would be around £250,000 and would divert money from other projects as this is currently not funded. It would also not tackle any of the user or supplier issues with the

Hub. There would also be further costs of around £400,000 per annum for ongoing maintenance).

6. In developing a new Publication Hub, developments by either ONS or GDS are feasible ways forward. However, the ONS solution would require investment by ONS to support the development (which could be in excess of £1 million). The main complexity would be in developing the Content Management system to work in every government department. The GDS has already tackled this issue for www.gov.uk.

Working with the Government Digital Service

7. www.gov.uk has developed a good reputation for the design of its services and has won numerous awards for the design of the website. There are also significant advantages to the statistics community in increasing its presence on www.gov.uk:
 - i. a significant proportion of statistical publications are already on www.gov.uk which improves the user experience of the Publication Hub – users want the statistics and the Publication Hub in one place. However, for the statistical products there will still be navigation between the Publication Hub and the statistics (mainly ONS and the devolved administration websites);
 - ii. audience reach – there are 6.5 million users of gov.uk each week of whom 1.25 million visit the Government section (where this would sit). If we exploit this correctly we could significantly improve the prominence and reach of our statistics;
 - iii. the technology already exists for all departments to upload the content securely; and
 - iv. there would be no charges for the building of the Publication Hub.
8. The main disadvantages with a solution based on www.gov.uk are how we ensure users are confident in the independence of the statistics and how the devolved administrations fit within what is often considered a Whitehall website.
9. However, some of these issues have already been broached by other areas. In recent developments:
 - i. consultations – from the end of October, central government departments have committed to all consultations being available through www.gov.uk (including exempt bodies); and
 - ii. official documents – the official documents website is moving to www.gov.uk. This already contains some material from devolved bodies (although not everything).
10. Early discussions with the devolved administrations indicate that the Publication Hub being on www.gov.uk is unlikely to be a major issue as long as it is considerably easier to update, manage and maintain than the current system. It is also important that it is clear to users that the statistics are:
 - i. produced independently; and
 - ii. cover the devolved administrations as well as UK government departments
11. The GDS has prepared some mock-ups of how a GSS Publication Hub could look on www.gov.uk. These will be shown at the meeting and can act as a starting point for a discussion on how we can best signal the independence of statistics within www.gov.uk. In considering this, www.gov.uk advice is that words act as a better signal of independence than logos as few users understand the significance of logos.
12. The GDS adopts an iterative approach to designing websites. This approach has served them well and allowed all major Whitehall departments to be migrated to www.gov.uk and they are now in the process of migrating many arm's length bodies to the new website. It also served us well in further developing the prominence of statistics for

government departments. When users complained about the difficulty in finding statistics on www.gov.uk, they quickly developed links to improve the navigation for users.

13. If the Committee is content to move ahead with a www.gov.uk solution for the Publication Hub then we can begin to further develop designs to address the issues around independence and the functionality for the site.

Stakeholder management

14. A www.gov.uk solution will require stakeholder management. The Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) is already aware that we are considering moving the Publication Hub to www.gov.uk. While PASC has not raised any concerns this is a group we need to keep on board with the developments. There are other key stakeholders who we will need to make aware of the proposals and ensure that they are comfortable, namely:

- i. the Royal Statistical Society;
- ii. the House of Commons Library;
- iii. Full Fact;
- iv. Data.gov.uk;
- v. the wider GSS; and
- vi. media commentators.

Timetable

15. The approach with the Government Digital service would aim to have a working prototype by the end of March 2014, with which user testing can be undertaken. Once we are content that the revised Publication Hub has full functionality then we can fully switch off the existing Publication Hub.

**Iain Bell, Chair of the GSS Presentation and Dissemination Committee,
12 September 2013**

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(COS)(13)37

***Draft Monitoring Review: Official Statistics in the Context of the
Scottish Referendum***

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reports/monitoring-report-6-2013---official-statistics-in-the-context-of-the-referendum-on-scottish-independence.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(COS)(13)38

The Global Statistical System

An Introduction to the Global Statistical System has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/an-introduction-to-the-global-statistical-system.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(13)39

Governance of the Government Statistical Service

Purpose

1. This paper describes the governance of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) including its recent history, structure, governing principles and associated matters. It also sets out a link between these arrangements and the GSS Strategy.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee are invited to note this paper.

Discussion

3. The current GSS governance structure - our committees and ways of working - was established in November 2009 following a major review whose aim was to develop an effective system that enjoys the full support of Heads of Profession (HoPs), Chief Statisticians and the National Statistician. No previous system of governance had been widely accepted as working in practice. The outcomes of that review were ratified by the HoPs Group in November 2009 and subsequently implemented.
4. At the time, the National Statistician undertook to carry out a review of the new governance arrangements after two years. That commitment was implemented in a 'light touch' review in summer 2011 that focused on refining the current structure and addressing any issues which had come to light during the intervening two years. The review concluded that no fundamental change to the existing governance structure was required.
5. The principles of a successful governance structure are one that:
 - enables effective and timely decision making;
 - provides appropriate support and advice to the National Statistician;
 - increases the effectiveness of meetings;
 - increases HoPs' ownership of GSS professional and strategic matters; and
 - enables and supports the collective leadership of the GSS and involves a wider group of the GSS on GSS matters.
6. Oversight of GSS Governance and support to its component parts is provided by the National Statistician's Office.

Key Committees

7. The HoPs Group is the principal policy-making committee operating with three key sub-committees – Statistical Policy and Standards Committee, People Committee and Theme Leaders alongside the Inter Administration Committee. The current structure is summarised in the diagram at **Annex 1**.

Heads of Professions Group

8. The HoPs Group comprises all current Statistical Heads of Profession appointed by their department or agency. The three Chief Statisticians of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the Statistical Directors of the Office for National Statistics are also members of the HoPs Group.

8. The HoPs Group is supported by a Steering Group, also chaired by the National Statistician. It is an informal group whose main purpose is to advise the National Statistician about the strategic development of the GSS, in part through ensuring the effective functioning of the HoPs Group.
9. More generally, HoPs are responsible for overseeing their own organisation's statistical functions, for meeting its statistical needs and for implementing the provisions set out in statistical legislation, both internally and across the UK statistical system. There is a Statement (**Annex 2**) on the 'Roles and Responsibilities of a Head of Profession' made available to HoPs on their appointment and to their Permanent Secretaries. Since 2012/13 HoPs have been required to submit an Annual Assurance Report based on this Statement to the National Statistician.
10. In the context of this Statement, HoPs are expected to both provide input to the development of wider policy and strategy on official statistics by actively participating in committees and task and finish groups, and by encouraging others in their organisation to do likewise.

Statistical Policy and Standards Committee

11. The purpose of this Committee is to assist the National Statistician, who is its Chair, to fulfil her responsibility to promote and safeguard the quality of official statistics, through the development and promotion of statistical policy, and through driving continuous improvement in methodologies, standards, and classifications.

People Committee

12. The People Committee, chaired by Andy Sutherland (Head of Profession at the Health and Social Care Information Centre), works to improve the cohesion of all members of the GSS and to get the best out of it as a whole, not just the Statistician Group (GSG). It has a specific focus on the GSG in terms of recruitment, personal development, talent management, and retention. Each year, the Committee develops a programme of work for approval by the National Statistician and HoPs, directly linked to broader GSS strategy.

Themes and Theme Leaders

13. The role of Themes is to coordinate planning and ensure deep engagement with the statistical user community. If Themes did not exist then in all likelihood something similar would need to be invented. Furthermore, the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) Statistics User Forum organises its activities around Themes. More information about the role and responsibilities of Theme Leaders is in **Annex 3**.

Inter Administration Committee

14. The Inter Administration Committee, chaired by the National Statistician, works within the context of an Inter Administration Working Agreement between the UK Statistics Authority and the Devolved Administrations which outlines the ways in which the four nations work together and cooperate on statistical matters.

Governing Principles

15. HoPs have adopted a series of governing principles which define the way that GSS Committees should function in practice -

- i. All GSS Committees should delegate work down to 'task and finish' groups to progress wherever practicable.
- ii. Delegation should be of investigation and discussion but also decision making. Where a sub-committee can demonstrate a clear consensus, the process of discussion and decision taking should not be repeated at higher level committees. Important policy documents should be brought back to the HoPs Group for ratification as necessary.
- iii. Issues for decision should be considered by one committee only before recommendations are forwarded to HoPs for ratification. Sub-committees can take particular issues direct to the HoPs Group when there is a matter of urgency or great interest.
- iv. Where there is more than one layer, a sub-committee should report once only - to the committee above it. Thus, a committee below the three main sub-committees does not routinely need to report to the HoPs Group although it may present high profile issues to its meetings.
- v. The scope of each committee should be clearly defined and set out in its terms of reference. It is expected to operate within scope (National Statistician Office (NSO) will arbitrate to ensure that there are no gaps or overlaps). Any proposal to create a new sub-committee should be approved by the NSO, who will check that it does not overlap with an existing forum.
- vi. A Committee should not be reactive. It should have forward work plans and observable, outcome-focused goals linked to the GSS Strategy.
- vii. The secretariat for each committee will ensure that papers and agendas correspond to the agreed remit for that committee.

GSS Strategy

- 16. The GSS Strategy provides a clear steer as to the strategic direction of the GSS. The achievement of its vision as, 'A collaborative community providing statistical data, analysis and advice used for the public good' should be supported by the work of the main GSS Committees, with well defined work plans, ensuring that the five main strands of the strategy are delivered efficiently. The delivery of the strategy is contingent upon each Committee taking ownership of that part of the strategy which best equates to its particular remit:
 - i. *People* - 'professionals with the right skills and experience to share knowledge to build capability' - delivery of this aim comes under the remit of the People Committee;
 - ii. *Users* - 'routinely engaged users with clearly understood needs that drive improvements to products and services' - this is to be covered by Theme Leaders;
 - iii. *Processes* - 'smart and efficient systems and methods which use technology to deliver fit for purpose statistics and advice in clear and accessible ways, whilst protecting confidentiality and minimising the cost to data suppliers' – the Statistical Policy and Standards Committee is the natural home for this strategic aim;
 - iv. *Outputs* - 'statistical data and advice communicated clearly and accessibly to the broadest range of users' - this is being covered by the Presentation and Dissemination Committee;
 - v. *Community* - 'a proud GSS that works effectively together, within the European Statistical System and with others across government and externally, both in the UK home and abroad' - given the pivotal nature of this strategic aim it is being led by the People Committee supported by the International Committee.
- 17. The terms of reference for each of the Committees should reflect the need to support the delivery of the strategic direction that the GSS is committed to taking. Each Committee is also expected to have a defined work plan to drive forward its work and ensure delivery of the GSS strategy.

18. Membership of Committees including the role of Chair is expected to be rotated with reasonable frequency and should be included in terms of reference. Membership should draw on the full range of GSS talent and contributions by non-GSG staff should be encouraged where they have a contribution to make. It is each Committee's responsibility to ensure that necessary expertise is available to it to deal with issues as they arise and that members have sufficient influence to drive through subsequent action.

Use of 'Task and Finish' groups

19. It is expected that Committees should make use of task and finish groups to progress specific pieces of work and present their findings for consideration. A task and finish group has the potential to draw on the full range of talent from across the GSS. It can also foster a greater sense of GSS identity particularly amongst more junior grades. For it to function efficiently, a task and finish group needs to operate within a clearly defined timescale mandated by the Committee to which it reports. A task and finish group will have time-boxed work plans and a sun-setting clause in its terms of reference.

Arm's Length Bodies

20. The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, and subsequent secondary legislation, have radically altered the size of the UK statistical system by generating a large expansion in both the number of public bodies and the number of public servants now deemed to be 'producers of official statistics':
 - extending the system to incorporate all Crown Bodies which produce statistics;
 - expanding the system to incorporate Non-Crown Bodies named by Order in Parliament
 - introducing the concept of 'official statistics' to embrace a wider spectrum of quantitative products than those managed by professional analysts.
21. In 2010, a taskforce was commissioned by the National Statistician to develop a framework for engagement with so-called 'Arms Length Bodies' (ALBs) sponsored by UK Government departments. HoPs ratified the taskforce's recommendation that the standard model for engagement is that ALBs will engage via sponsor department HoPs. HoPs will provide advice, guidance and support to Lead Officials for Statistics (LOs) in the ALBs on statistical matters. The LO in an ALB is responsible for the production of statistical outputs and for compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and statistical legislation within their organisation. Their sponsoring departmental HoP assists them in fulfilling these roles.

Kieron Mahony, National Statistician's Office, September 2013

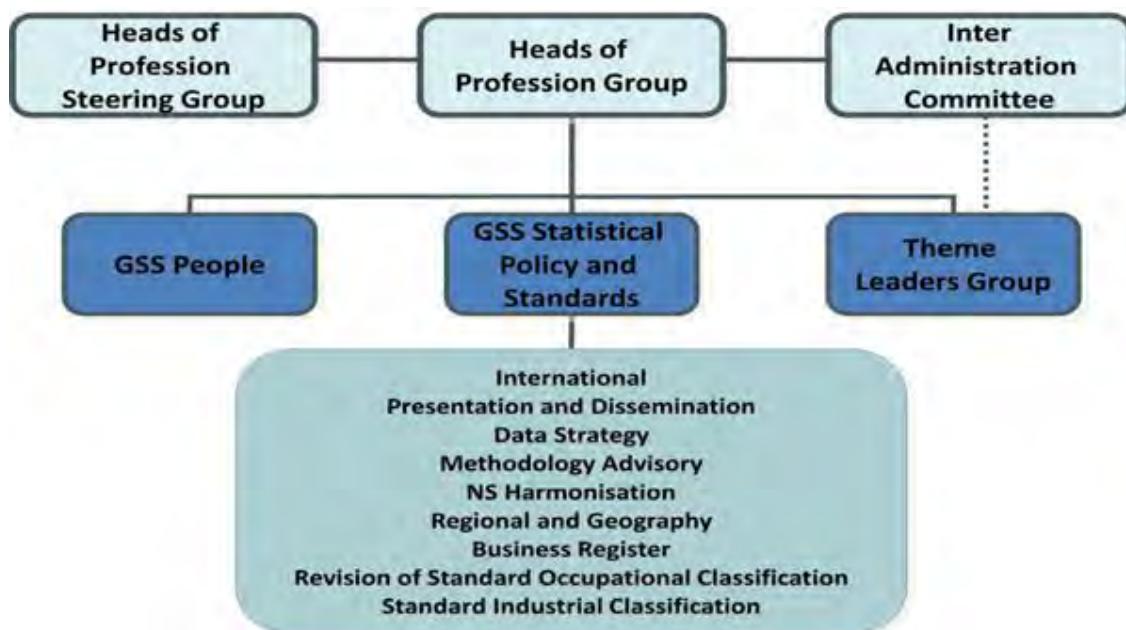
List of Annexes

Annex 1 Diagram of GSS Committees

Annex 2 Statement on the Roles and Responsibilities of Heads of Profession

Annex 3 Roles and responsibilities of Theme Leaders

Annex 1



Annex 2

Statement on the Roles and Responsibilities of Heads of Profession

1. Appointment

- 1.1 Where an official body produces ‘National Statistics’; produces or makes extensive use of ‘official statistics’; or employs an appreciable number of official statisticians, that organisation should appoint a person deemed suitable by the National Statistician to the post of Head of Profession for Statistics (HoP). Heads of Profession should be appointed by the organisation’s Head of Department, after seeking the views of the National Statistician. Appointees remain in the formal line management of their own organisation. They also collaborate with the National Statistician / Head of the Government Statistical Service and are accountable to him/her for the professional integrity and quality of their work. Where there is no suitable candidate, or insufficient justification for such an appointment, the organisation should make arrangements to rely on the services of the Head of Profession in a neighbouring (e.g. sponsor) organisation.

Summary of Duties

- 2.1 Statistical Heads of Profession are held responsible for overseeing their own organisation’s statistical functions, and meeting their own organisation’s statistical needs, and for implementing the provisions set out in statistical legislation, both within their own organisation and more generally across the UK statistical system. Their primary duty is to safeguard the professional integrity of the ‘National Statistics’ and other ‘official statistics’ produced by their own organisation. They will ensure that their own organisation’s official statistics are relevant, of high quality and have benefited from user engagement. Those statistics ought also to be produced effectively and efficiently. Heads of Profession will also play a key role in statistical planning, both in their own organisation and across government, and in the formulation of statistical policy. They will also ensure the recruitment of appropriately qualified statisticians into their organisation, investing in their development for the future statistical capability of their organisation and the Government Statistical Service (GSS) more widely.
- 2.2 Heads of Profession will:
1. Oversee the efficient and effective operation of own organisation’s statistical work
 2. Improve and maintain public confidence in National Statistics and official statistics
 3. Improve and maintain the quality and relevance of National Statistics and other official statistics
 4. Play a key role in statistical planning and statistical coordination
 5. Contribute to the formulation of statistical policy
 6. Increase and support data sharing for statistical purposes
 7. Maintain and improve the statistical competency of both the GSS and their organisation through recruitment, training and development
 8. Report performance

9. Fulfil other responsibilities, as required by the National Statistician eg in relation to arm's length bodies

Further detail on each of the above functions can be found at **Annex A**.

ANNEX A

HEADS OF PROFESSION – DETAILED DUTIES

1. Oversee the efficient and effective operation of own organisation's statistical work

- a) Ensure that their organisation has the capability/capacity to meet the service needs and to deliver statistics and analysis that are fit for purpose
- b) Deliver the outputs in their organisation's statistical work programmes required to meet the needs of customers and policy colleagues, ensuring those outputs are relevant, fit for purpose and timely
- c) Promote the use of their organisation's administrative and management systems for statistical purposes, and pursue this objective within the context of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics
- d) Estimate the compliance costs to businesses and local authorities of responding to statistical inquiries and seek to minimise the burdens on those who supply data to their organisation for statistical purposes
- e) Lead their organisation's professional statistical staff.

2. Improve and maintain public confidence in National Statistics and official statistics

- a) Keep a watching brief over all official statistics produced by their organisation and, working with their organisation's Analytical Champion (where appointed) and others including policy colleagues, ensure that practical arrangements are in place to ensure that their organisation as a whole, as well as their organisation's statistics, comply with the principles and practices set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics
- b) Safeguard the integrity of the statistical work and all National Statistics produced by their organisation. Refer matters which threaten the professional integrity of those statistical outputs, and/or are possible breaches of compliance with the Code, to the National Statistician and work with the National Statistician to address these matters
- c) Promote the professional independence of their organisation's statistical work, the propriety and impartiality of its decisions, the quality of its outputs and the integrity and validity of its statistics and commentaries
- d) Prepare for the UK Statistics Authority's formal assessment of their National Statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, actively participate in those assessments and ensure the implementation of any follow-up actions which result from the assessment process
- e) Protect the confidentiality of data, collected for statistical purposes, from unauthorised disclosure
- f) Ensure that their organisation's release practices are consistent with the requirements set out in the UK Government's Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order, and the equivalent Orders in each of the Devolved Administrations
- g) Carry out the role assigned to them in that Order – for example: overseeing the arrangements for implementing and complying with the Order; minimising pre-release access; and maintaining and publishing full lists of all those who receive pre-release access to statistical outputs and the reasons for that access
- h) Provide advice on the public use of management information and/or administrative data.

3. Improve and maintain the quality and relevance of National Statistics and other official statistics

- a) Be accountable to the National Statistician for the quality of statistical outputs within their organisation, including the methodologies used in their production
- b) Be an advocate for the use of statistics and analysis within their organisation; offer advice on statistical issues and promote the use of statistical information in their organisation's decision-making processes
- c) Be responsible for coordinating their organisation's statistical programme, and promoting within it the implementation of National Statistics policies
- e) Actively support user consultation; maintain regular links with relevant user groups; and take account of users' views when considering changes to statistical outputs
- f) Monitor the quality and comprehensiveness of the statistics produced by their organisation and implement regular quality assurance processes, including thorough reviews of outputs where appropriate
- g) Pro-actively test the National Statistics produced by their organisation to ensure they are compliant with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

4. Play a key role in statistical planning and statistical coordination

- a) Work proactively with colleagues in other analytical disciplines, policy colleagues and stakeholders to define their organisation's strategic analytical needs and to identify areas where improvements could be made
- b) Prepare a statistical work programme in consultation with the National Statistician, which meets their own organisation's analytical needs and also forms part of a wider coherent plan covering statistics in the UK as a whole
- c) Work with other Heads of Profession and the Chief Statisticians in the Devolved Administrations to identify priority areas for improvement and participate in cross-GSS planning groups to determine what improvement actions should be taken
- d) Work with the National Statistician, other Heads of Profession and Chief Statisticians to promote comparable statistics across the UK
- e) Consult the user community in order to ensure that such plans take account of users' needs and explain the extent to which they can be met.

5. Contribute to the formulation of statistical policy

- a) Provide input to the development of wider policy and strategy on National Statistics and official statistics by participating in interdepartmental committees and working groups, and by encouraging others in their organisation to do likewise
- b) Actively participate in Heads of Profession meetings and in cross-GSS committees as appropriate

6. Increase and support data sharing for statistical purposes

- a) Encourage data sharing for statistical purposes, in order to improve the quality and coverage of official statistics and reduce the cost and burden of data collection

7. Maintain and improve the statistical competency of both the GSS and their organisation through recruitment, training and development

- a) Establish and promote a learning culture for all GSS staff within their organisation; champion the Continuous Professional Development Programme (CPD); and ensure access and opportunities for personal development are open to all
- b) Ensure that the recruitment; training and development; posting; appraisal; promotion; and retention of statistical staff in their organisation is compliant with the GSS Recruitment and Promotion Guidance in order to develop a cadre of skilled staff
- c) Serve on, or otherwise ensure appropriate representation on, all recruitment, promotion and other boards for statistical staff
- d) Actively identify and nurture talent and ensure adequate succession planning

8. Report performance

- a) Actively contribute to the preparation of reports on performance by the National Statistician, as required
- b) Maintain a list of all of their organisation's official statistics, distinguishing those which are designated as National Statistics
- b) Prepare any other reports required by the United Kingdom Statistics Authority or requested by the National Statistician, as appropriate

9. Fulfil other responsibilities, as required by the National Statistician

For example, where a Head of Profession has responsibilities which extend to other parts of their organisation, or to other bodies (e.g. Crown Bodies or Non Crown Bodies sponsored by their organisation).

Annex 3

GSS Theme Leaders

Roles and Responsibilities

Strategic

- To lead on the long term statistical planning and co-ordination of cross-departmental statistics within their theme.
- To co-ordinate the theme's strategic approach to user engagement.
- To identify cross-cutting issues affecting the comparability and coherence of official statistics within the theme

Operational

- Ensure that representatives of official statistics producers within their theme (including devolved administrations) meet on a regular basis to co-ordinate their statistics. This is in order to:
 - Identify priorities, gaps, and other significant issues within their theme.
 - Co-ordinate theme-based user engagement activities
 - Take forward and share best practice in statistical development and innovation within their theme.
 - Consider and respond to issues affecting the theme (e.g. legal, international and harmonisation).
 - Identify areas of potential overlap with other themes.
 - Maintain oversight of the theme's presence on the publication hub.
- Ensure that any priorities, gaps or other significant issues identified through the theme are escalated to the National Statistician's Office when appropriate.
- Share best practice and areas of potential overlap between themes with other theme leaders.
- Take forward any pieces of theme-related work identified by the National Statistician, other GSS committees or the UK Statistics Authority.
- Report on theme activities to other GSS committees as required.

Accountable to: The National Statistician

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(COS)(13)40

The role of the Committee for Official Statistics in delivering the Authority Strategy

The Statistics Authority Statement of Strategy has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/statistics-authority-statement-of-strategy.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(COS)(13)41

Issues raised with Authority

Issues raised with the Authority are published on the UK Statistics Authority website at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/issues-log/index.html>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(13)43

Activities of the Government Statistical Service July 2013 to September 2013

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Committee for Official Statistics with an update of Government Statistical Service (GSS) activities for July to September 2013.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee are invited to note the summary of GSS activities for this period.

Background

3. Following consideration by the Committee at its May 2010 meeting of paper SA(COS)(10)13 – *GSS Activity and Governance Arrangements*, it was agreed that regular updates would be provided to all future meetings. Throughout July, August and early September, the GSS has been involved in the activities set out below.

Discussion

Capability

Raising Professional Standards

4. The People Committee has agreed its work plan and the individual project groups have started to develop detailed plans for completion of their tasks by March 2014. The National Statistician Office (NSO) is preparing new analyses of the make-up of the Government Statistics Group (GSG) and future reports to COS will reflect on how the findings impact on future work.

GSG Fast Stream Recruitment

5. Round 2 was very successful with more candidates passing than in Round 1 which is unusual. This has resulted in most of the departmental bids being met. Round 1 of this year's scheme has just opened and closes at the end of September.

Statistical Officer Recruitment

6. NSO is running another statistical officer recruitment round after receiving a high number of bids (close to 50) from departments. This should start to deliver new entrants before Christmas.

International

Reform of the European Statistical Law - EU Regulation 223

7. Negotiations in Council have stalled. Despite the Irish Presidency negotiating a good compromise with the European Parliament, the Commission and some Member States have blocked its progress. Re-negotiations are now due to begin before political agreement can be reached. Although there are now few risks for the GSS within these re-negotiations, the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee continues to stall giving its approval of the regulation due to concerns about subsidiarity, which we have advised them no longer remain a concern from the GSS perspective. The Scrutiny Committee has nevertheless requested that the proposal for reform be debated in Parliament at European Committee B. This may hinder the Government's ability to

approve any final regulation that aims to improve compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice across Member States.

Evaluation of the GSSIC Work Programme

8. A draft 2013/14 Work Programme was presented to GSS International Committee (GSSIC) members, following the evaluation of the GSSIC performance against its 2012/13 Work Programme. It focuses on how the Committee can support the GSS Strategy and international users of GSS Statistics. Comments by members will be appropriately developed into the final version of the 2013/14 Work Programme, which will be submitted to the Statistical Policy and Standards Committee (SPSC) for approval on 15 October 2013.

Sessions UK Compliance with EU Regulations

9. The GSSIC received positive feedback from the National Statistician on the July 2013 Compliance report. The next report will be submitted to the National Statistician on 11 September 2013, which will be discussed at the ONS Executive Leadership Team meeting on 24 September 2013.

UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

10. On 24 July 2013 the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) endorsed the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and recommended that they should also be endorsed by the General Assembly this autumn. This represents a significant step in terms of implementation as for the first time the Principles, under which all official statistics should be produced, have been endorsed at the global political level.

Statistical Advice and Support

GSS Methodological Support Task and Finish Group

11. Members of the task and finish group have continued to provide feedback on risk assessment templates and the use of Quality Methods Harmonisation Tool. Revisions to the risk assessment template will be introduced following which the templates will be made available more widely.
12. The structure of a draft framework for the provision of methodological support across the GSS will be presented to SPSC in October 2013.

Horizon Scanning

13. As part of a wider project on statistical planning and infrastructure, GSS Theme Leaders have been asked to carry out a horizon scan, focusing on the issues that will be central to public debate over the next two to three years. This will ensure that the GSS maintains a focus on longer term developments, enabling us to identify priorities for improvements or information gaps that need to be filled in order to support public debate.

National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics

14. The National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics was published in autumn 2012. The recommendations from the report are an important step towards meeting user needs on housing statistics and significant progress has already been made with implementing them. In June ONS published the index of private rental housing prices for the first time. The GSS Theme Leader with responsibility for housing has been working with GSS colleagues to implement the other recommendations from the review, with the aim of completing this by March 2014.

GSS Data Strategy

15. At its last meeting, the Committee was updated about progress with developing a GSS data strategy and asked to be kept informed of developments. The strategy document is due to be completed in the autumn and an event will be held in November which will bring together people from within and outside the GSS to discuss strategic data issues.

GSS Website

16. The new website for the Government Statistical Service (GSSNet) is expected to go live towards the end of September. The website will provide a public face for the GSS, as well as providing essential collaboration tools for GSS members.

National Statistician's Office, September 2013

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(13)44

Update on the impact of cuts on statistical inputs and outputs, and monitoring statistical capability

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on plans by producers of official statistics for ceasing the production of statistics, and on public consultations relating to those statistics. The paper also includes the up-to-date number for staffing statistics in the Government Statistician Group (GSG) against which reports are being benchmarked.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics are invited to note:
 - i. the latest position on reported cuts to official statistics and further potential cuts subject to public consultation and other official statistics issues being consulted upon; and:
 - ii. the current staffing numbers for the GSG.

Discussion

3. Since the last report to the Committee on 17 July 2013, there have been two notifications of cessations to the National Statistician:
 - i. In August 2013 the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) transferred responsibility for the publication of the 'Attitudes to Mental Illness' product, to a non Official Statistics producing body. The publications will be produced by two charities, Rethink and MIND, who host the wider "Time to Change" programme of work which includes responsibility for this product. This will not impact users as the only change is the location of the publication and appropriate notices will be put in place on the HSCIC and Department of Health websites to redirect users.
 - ii. On 13 September 2013 the Office of National Statistics (ONS) ceased to publish the 'New Orders in the Construction Industry' as a separate statistical release including the statistical bulletin and associated tables. The removal of five out of the thirteen published tables is in response to a user consultation exercise. This consultation concluded that all the tables in the release are accessed by users, the limited use of some tables in relation to the public resources required to produce them was questionable. ONS plans to incorporate key points and associated data into the 'Output in the Construction Industry' statistical release effective from 13 September 2013. The combining of the Construction releases will delay the quarterly publication of the New Orders data by one week
4. Further information about these cessations including the outcome of consultations can be found at **Annex A**. Historical information about cessations by department up to July 2013 can be found at **Annex B**.

5. The National Statistician's Office (NSO) has identified six new statistical consultations since the last update to the Committee. Three of these are notable:
 - i. The Office for National Statistics has launched two consultations:
 - a) The consultation launched on 2 September is focusing on the non-statutory outputs produced by the ONS and is seeking to obtain feedback on the need for and use of these non-statutory outputs. The information gained from responses will inform the decision making process for possible cuts to statistical outputs.
 - b) The consultation launched on 9 August 2013 concerns the European Standard Population (ESP) which is used in the weighting of mortality or incidence data to produce age standardised rates. EuroStat, has decided to bring this population structure up to date and ONS is consulting on how to implement the change in the UK. This consultation is on behalf of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) as a whole. However, it should be noted that because the government bodies vary in their responsibilities, priorities and resources, and the nature of their statistical publications, they will not necessarily all follow the same approach to implementation following this consultation.
 - ii. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) launched a consultation on 17 July 2013 inviting views on proposals to increase the scope for departments to share non identifying information and on proposed safeguards. They are also seeking views on the potential benefits, costs / risks and necessary safeguards for proposals to share VAT registration data, either publicly or under controlled conditions for specified purposes, for example, credit rating.
6. There are currently five live consultations and along with one closed consultation not previously reported to the Committee (see **Annex C**).

Monitoring Statistical Capacity

7. The numbers shown in **Annex D and E** reflect the latest returns from the database of professional statisticians as provided by from UK Government departments and agencies and the devolved administrations.
8. They show the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) numbers of staff by the major grade groups at a moment in time, and will be updated on a quarterly basis to provide a new time series. More staff will be joining throughout the year as those successful in recent recruitment campaigns are able to take up posts offered. In addition, a snapshot will be provided of the major departments' numbers, split as before between SCS and non-SCS posts.

Pam Davies, National Statisticians Office, September 2013

List of Annexes

Annex A	Cuts notified to the National Statistician since the last update
Annex B	Cuts previously reported to COS
Annex C	New consultations about cuts and changes to statistics
Annex D	Government Statistician Group staffing levels by department
Annex E	Government Statistician Group by grade

Annex A Cuts notified to the National Statistician since the last update

This table summarises cuts to official statistics that have been notified to the National Statistician as of 6 September 2013 since the last update was provided in May 2013.

Details	Description of statistics	Reasons for cessation or reduction	Details of consultation/ impact on users	Cost/benefits assessment	Status
Attitudes to Mental Illness Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) Ceased from 9th August 2013	Results from a survey of the public about aspects of their attitudes to mental illness. The most recently published report was published by the HSCIC under contract to DH at http://www.hscic.gov.uk/article/2021/Website-Search?productid=131&topics=13201&sort=Relevance&size=10&page=6#top Reports of earlier surveys, which have taken place sporadically since 1994, were published by DH. These are legacy National Statistics.	Transfer of responsibility for the publication to a non Official Statistics producing body. The publication will henceforth be produced by two charities, Rethink and MIND, who host the wider Time to Change programme of work, which includes responsibility for this survey.	None. This will not affect users as the survey will continue as before and the report will be produced as before by contractors TNS. The only change will be the location of the report which will be on the Rethink website. DH and HSCIC will ensure that the new location of the report is made clear to users through appropriate notices on their websites.	Nil	Confirmed
New Orders in the Construction Industry Office for National Statistics (ONS) Ceased from 13th September 2013	New Orders in the Construction Industry estimates are a short term indicator of construction contracts for new construction work awarded to main contractors by clients in both the public and private sectors within the UK. The estimates are published quarterly in the New Orders in the Construction Industry statistical bulletin and associated dataset.	Removal of the New Orders stand-alone statistical release including the statistical bulletin and associated tables. Incorporation of key points and associated data into the Output in the Construction Industry statistical release effective from 13 September 2013. The removal of five out of the thirteen published tables is in response to user consultation exercise (see details in next column). The combining of the releases is a streamlining of resources and cost saving exercise.	User consultation on the publication of new orders data ran from 22 March 2013 to 14 June 2013. The response to the consultation was published on 24 June. In addition an information note was published on 24 June informing users of the proposed changes to publication. In addition, users of construction output data were informed of these changes as a background note within the output in the Construction Industry statistical bulletin. User consultation http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/user-engagement/consultations-and-surveys/consultations/publication-of-new-orders-in-the-construction-industry-data/index.html Consultation response http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/user-	Financial benefits to the organisation and to users in the form of compliance costs arriving from the cessation of the New Orders survey have already been announced but are summarised as follows: 2013/14 IM: £25,000 BDD: £117,000 RAP: £5,000* 2014/15 IM: £49,000 BDD: £156,000 RAP: £8,000* *estimated based on existing	Confirmed

		<p><u>engagement/consultations-and-surveys/consultations/publication-of-new-orders-in-the-construction-industry-data/response-to-new-orders-consultation.doc</u></p> <p>Information note</p> <p>http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/media-centre/statements/announcement-of-changes-to-new-orders-in-the-construction-industry/index.html</p> <p>Impact on users is low.</p> <p>Construction branch communicated the results of the consultation and information note to key stakeholders personally to gauge effect. Those stakeholders communicated with voiced no concerns with any of the proposals made.</p> <p>There were however consultation responses from some users who reported high impact assessments for all tables. These appeared to be predominantly from private organisations/consultants.</p> <p>No impact on quality due to the removal of the statistical release.</p> <p>The New Orders survey has however been replaced by contracted data from Barbour ABI (see information note above).</p> <p>Headline New Orders data will continue to be released although incorporated into the Output in the Construction industry release. Timeliness of the New Orders publication has been decreased by one week to coincide with the Output release.</p> <p>The five associated New Orders tables, which were confirmed for publication in the consultation response, will also be amalgamated into this release.</p>	<p>RAP resources being reallocated to the production of the new combined bulletin.</p> <p>Compliance.</p> <p>Based on average time to complete enquiries 229 and 230 of 32 minutes the compliance costs for 10/11 are £474,573 and for 11/12 are £381,204. Published compliance costs are £357,000 for 10/11 but this would have been based on incomplete information.</p> <p>Resource savings within the branch and other areas of the organisation from combining the releases are small although there are enhanced benefits due to the re-allocation of resources to quality assure data within the production process.</p>	
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Annex B Cuts previously reported to COS

Department	Statistics	Date of cessation
Department for Communities and Local Government	The Place Survey	July 2010
	Local Government Key Facts Card: England	November 2010
	Citizenship Survey	March 2011
	Official Statistics on Supporting People	May 2011
	Changes to DCLG Statistics – Regional Outputs	October 2012 for outputs without PRA. Outputs with PRA – throughout 2013.
Department of Culture Media and Sport	Target Group Index statistics on arts attendance	31 October 2011
Department for Education	Schools Providing Access to Extended Services Statistics	October 2010
	Parental experiences of services provided to disabled children Statistics	November 2010
	Diploma Learning England	November 2011
	School Destinations of Secondary School Pupils Resident in London Boroughs	September 2011
	Behaviour in schools	1 April 2012
Department for Health	Health Profile of England	Last publication March 2010
	Mortality Monitoring: Life Expectancy and all-age-all-cause mortality, and mortality from selected causes - overall and inequalities	Last publication October 2011
	Mortality Monitoring: Infant Mortality and inequalities	Last publication December 2011
Department for Work and Pensions	New Deals and the Flexible New Deal programme statistics	March 2011
	Tax Benefit Model	8 June 2011
	National Insurance Number Allocations to Adult Overseas Nationals entering the UK	August 2012
	Vacancies handled by Jobcentre Plus	Autumn 2012
Home Office	Statistics on post-decision reviews on asylum applications, applications for asylum support, and asylum appeals.	25 th August 2011
	Basic Command Unit level recorded crime and detection statistics	April 2012

HM Revenue and Customs	Business Payment Support Service	Last publication July 2011
Ministry of Defence	RAF Pocket Brief	April 2012
	Civilian Staffing by agency, trading fund and location	February 2012
NHS Information Centre	Prescription Cost Analysis statistics NHS Nursing and Midwifery Bank Staff return	July 2012 September 2011
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency	Northern Ireland Abstract of Statistics Online Participation in full-time education and vocational training by 16 and 17 year olds in Northern Ireland	16 June 2012 December 2012
Office for National Statistics	Thirteen statistical series previously contained in the Financial Statistics compendium publication	April 2013
	Quarterly dividends inquiry	5 March 2012
Scottish Government	1. Children Educated out with Schools 2. Placing Requests 3. Teacher and Educational Psychologists Vacancies 4. Pre-Appeal SQA Examination Results 5. Expenditure on Schools 6. Budgeted School Running Costs 7. The Independent School Census	November 2010
	Various changes to Scottish Government Surveys	2012 onwards
Welsh Government	1. Health Visitors, District Nurses and Other Community Nurses 2. NHS Day Care 3. Community Psychiatric Nurses and Community Learning Disability Nurses	October 2010
	New Deal Statistics	November 2010
	Welsh Short Term Output Indices	Within weeks if that decision is made by Ministers
	Local Authority Education Expenditure	Suspended for 2010/11 year.
	Affordable housing provision – collection of information from registered social landlords	2012/13
	NHS staff vacancies	1 March 2012

Annex C New consultations about cuts and changes to statistics

This table summarises the consultations that have been notified to the National Statistician in the period 1 July 2013 to 4 September 2013 or have been discovered by the National Statistician's Office undertaking periodic trawls of departmental websites.

The list demonstrates that GSS statisticians are actively reviewing the need for continued statistics with users in order to improve efficiency, as well as responding to reductions in resources in the current public sector financial climate.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION	DESCRIPTION OF CONSULTATION	CONSULTATION END DATE AND RESPONSES
Consultations identified prior to 4 September 2013 and reported to COS in September 2013		
ONS Consultation on Statistical Products 2013 Department: Office for National Statistics Opening Date: 02 September 2013	<p>The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is seeking views to inform necessary reductions to its statistical outputs. In common with much of the public sector, ONS is facing significant funding pressures. Over the next two years there will be a need to make annual savings of around £9 million. Most of these savings will come from streamlining business operations, but some cuts to statistical outputs will also be necessary.</p> <p>As around 80 per cent of ONS outputs are required under EU or UK law, this consultation focuses on non-statutory outputs – those not required by law. While there will have to reduction in some outputs, ONS is not proposing to cut all of those listed. The aim of the consultation is to obtain feedback on the need for, and use of, these outputs so it can be determine which cuts would have the least impact on users. Views gathered will help to inform these important decisions.</p> <p>This consultation covers outputs in the following areas:</p> <p>Outputs from the following surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Lifestyle Survey • Integrated Household Survey • Labour Disputes Survey • Internet Access Quarterly update • Annual UK Business: Activity, Size and Location <p>Regional and local outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-annual local enterprise partnership profiles • Bi-annual local profiles • Small area income and poverty measures <p>Health statistics and analyses, life events</p>	Closing Date: 31 October 2013

	<p>Health inequalities analysis</p> <p>The consultation questionnaire lists each option for saving and asks about the impact these possible reductions could have on users and their work. A pdf version of the questionnaire (307.4 Kb Pdf) is provided for information and discussion purposes. Please note that responses should be submitted via the online questionnaire.</p> <p><u>Contact details:</u> Nick O'Donnell 1.101 Government Buildings Office for National Statistics Cardiff Road Newport NP10 8XG email: stakeholderconsultation@ons.gsi.gov.uk</p>	
Work Programme official statistics after June 2013: content and presentation Department: Department of Work and Pensions Opening Date: 23 August 2013	<p>This consultation invites views on recommendations to improve the content and presentation of Work Programme official statistics. The recommendations involve an improved method of presenting sustainment payment information and the inclusion of information on participants who complete the programme.</p> <p>It also seeks views on the overall presentation and content and the breakdowns available in the current official statistics. This is the first consultation on these proposals.</p> <p>Sustainment payments</p> <p>Providers can be paid a Job Outcome payment for a participant after 3 or 6 months of continuous spells in employment. Following a Job Outcome payment, sustainment payments are paid for every subsequent 4 week period in continuous employment. The maximum number of sustainment payments payable depends on the participant's payment group, which is based on their individual circumstances.</p> <p>Ways to respond</p> <p>Email to: stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Write to:</p> <p>Judith Correia Work Programme statistics consultation Room BP5201 Benton Park View Newcastle Upon Tyne NE98 1YX</p>	Closing Date: 22 November 2013
Implementation of the 2013 European Standard	<p>Category: Population and Migration</p> <p>The European Standard Population (ESP) is an artificial population structure which is used in the</p>	Closing Date: 03 October 2013

Population Department: Office for National Statistics (ONS) Opening date: 09 August 2013	<p>weighting of mortality or incidence data to produce age standardised rates. Eurostat, the statistical institute of the European Union, has decided to bring this population structure up to date.</p> <p>ONS is consulting on how to implement the change in the UK. This consultation is on behalf of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) as a whole, as there are other government bodies which publish statistics that will be affected. However, it should be noted that because the various government bodies vary in their responsibilities, priorities and resources, and the nature of their statistical publications, they will not necessarily all follow the same approach following this consultation.</p> <p>Myer Glickman Office for National Statistics Room 1.063, Government Buildings Cardiff Road Newport NP10 8XG email: ESP.Consultation@ons.gsi.gov.uk</p>	
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<p>Quarterly Afghanistan and Iraq amputation statistics</p> <p>Department: Ministry of Defence</p> <p>Opening Date: 31 July 2013</p>	<p>Defence statistics currently produce a quarterly official statistic on surviving UK service personnel who as a result of an injury sustained whilst deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan have suffered a traumatic or surgical amputation.</p> <p>Following the end of Op Telic in May 2011, defence statistics have continued to report on UK service personnel who have had an amputation on a quarterly basis, due to the potential for personnel to have a surgical or elective amputation at a later point in their care pathway as a result of injuries sustained whilst deployed on Op Telic.</p> <p>Very low numbers of Op Telic amputees are now being reported each quarter (none in the last quarter, less than five in 2012/13). Defence statistics are therefore consulting with internal and external stakeholders on the proposal to cease quarterly reporting and just update the figures of Op Telic amputees on an annual basis.</p> <p>There will be no change to the quarterly release of Afghanistan amputation statistics. Information on number of surviving UK service personnel who had an amputation as a result of an injury on Op Telic from June 2013 onwards will be available through Freedom of Information requests or parliamentary questions on an ad hoc basis.</p> <p>If you have any comments or queries regarding this report ceasing please email them to DASA-enquiries-mailbox@mod.uk.</p>	<p>Closing Date: 11 September 2013</p>
<p>English business survey: user consultation</p> <p>Department: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills</p> <p>Opening Date: 26 July 2013</p>	<p>The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) releases English Business Survey statistics every month for England and its regions. We also publish more detailed statistics for sub-regions every quarter. The survey started in November 2011 to collect information on business sentiment.</p> <p>We publish the survey's statistics are published as experimental official statistics, and carry out evaluation to ensure they meet users' needs. We are now reviewing the survey to determine options for its future direction. This consultation forms part of the review, to help us gather user's views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who uses the current survey publications and why, and how we can make them more useful • users' future needs for the survey <p>Your responses will inform the review of the survey. We will publish the results approximately 3 weeks after the consultation closes.</p> <p>Email to: ebsurvey@bis.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Write to:</p> <p>Gary Wainman 2 St Paul's Place 125 Norfolk Street Sheffield S1 2FJ</p>	<p>Closing Date: 30 Aug 2013</p>

<p>Sharing and publishing data for public benefit</p> <p>Department: HM Revenue and Customs</p> <p>Opening Date: 17 July 2013</p>	<p>This consultation invites views on proposals for HMRC to increase the scope for the department to share non-identifying information (that is, information that does not relate to identifiable individuals or legal entities), and on proposed safeguards. Options cover general and aggregate data as well as anonymised data sets.</p> <p>HMRC also seeks views on the potential benefits, costs / risks and necessary safeguards for proposals to share VAT registration data, either publicly or under controlled conditions for specified purposes, for example, credit rating. Views are welcome on the principles underlying these proposals and on the suggested approaches to implementation.</p> <p>Email to: mailbox.datapublicbenefit@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Write to:</p> <p>Data Sharing Consultation Room 1C/22 100 Parliament Street London SW1A 2BQ</p>	<p>Closing Date: 24 September 2013</p>
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Annex D Government Statistician Group staffing levels by department

Department	March 2013		May 2013		July 2013		August 2013	
	SCS (FTE)	Non -SCS (FTE)	SCS (FTE)	Non-SCS (FTE)	SCS (FTE)	Non-SCS (FTE)	SCS (FTE)	Non-SCS (FTE)
BIS	3	58	3	55	3	56	3	59
DCLG	2	52	2	50	2	53	2	53
DECC	1	25	1	28	1	28	1	28
DEFRA	2	28	2	27	2	28	2	28
DfE	2	94	2	126	2	126	2	126
DfID	1	39	1	39	1	39	1	40
DfT	2	46	2	45	2	45	2	43
DH	1	50	1	51	2	54	2	50
NHSIC	1	85	1	91	1	92	1	92
DWP	3	169	3	171	3	176	3	175
HMRC	3	112	3	139	3	141	3	141
HO	2	25	2	25	2	25	2	25
MoD	1	64	1	65	1	68	1	69
MoJ	1	66	1	77	1	77	1	79
UKSA/ONS	20	128	19	132	20	138	20	140
SG	1	150	1	191	1	159	1	159
OTHERS	2	197	3	172	2	206	4	203
Sub-totals	48	1388	48	1484	49	1511	51	1510
Totals	1436		1532		1560		1561	

N.B. All data reported are rounded, full time equivalent figures. Data excludes staff currently occupying non-analytical posts.

Annex E Government Statistician Group by grade

	March 2013	May 2013	July 2013	August 2013
Statistical Officer Grades	742	828	848	848
Fast Stream	133	134	136	136
Grade 6 & 7	513	522	527	526
SCS1 (Deputy Directors)	40	40	41	42
Directors and above	8	8	8	9
Total	1436	1532	1560	1561
Values are rounded to nearest whole number				