

# **UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

## **Committee for Official Statistics**

### **Minutes**

**Meeting of Friday 3 June 2011  
Board Room, Drummond Gate, London**

#### **Present**

##### **Members**

Professor Sir Roger Jowell (Chair)  
Mr Richard Alldritt  
Dr Colette Bowe  
Professor Angela Dale  
Professor David Hand  
Mr Duncan Macniven  
Ms Jil Matheson  
Professor David Rhind  
Sir Michael Scholar

##### **Other Attendees**

Mr Iain Bell (for item 3)  
Mr David Blunt (for item 5)  
Mr Guy Goodwin (for item 5)  
Mr Richard Laux

##### **Secretariat**

Mr Rob Bumpstead  
Mr Joe Cuddeford

##### **Apologies**

None

##### **Declarations of Interest**

None

**1 Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 6 April 2011 were agreed as a correct record. There were no apologies or matters arising.

**2 Update on actions**

Mr Bumpstead provided an oral update on actions. A note prepared by the Chair of the Housing Statistics Network had been circulated to Committee members regarding user consultation for the National Statistician's review of housing statistics. An update on further progress with the review would be provided in a later paper [SA(COS)(11)20]. The April meeting of the Authority Board had discussed the proposed review of UK statistical releases and publications, and a further update would be provided in paper [SA(COS)(11)18] on the agenda for this meeting.

**3 National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics [SA(COS)(11)13] and perspective from the Head of Profession at the Home Office**

3.1 The National Statistician's Review had been sent to the Home Secretary and would be published on 6 July. Recommendations included improvements to the presentation of the statistics, incorporation of statistics on crimes against children, the establishment of an independent Advisory Committee and the transfer of responsibility for the British Crime Survey (BCS) and for the publication of crime statistics to ONS. Ms Matheson noted that the review found no issue with the professional integrity of statisticians in the Home Office or with the quality of the outputs.

3.2 The following comments were made in the discussion.

- i. The BCS was a flagship survey, with significantly higher response rates than other comparable government social surveys. It was essential that the quality and reputation of the survey were maintained.
- ii. Home Office statisticians were able to add new questions to the BCS within three months. This was important for the Home Office to monitor public behaviour and attitudes, such as use of legal highs and use of criminal information via crime maps. There were benefits in maintaining such a flexible capability.
- iii. It was essential that statistical and criminological expertise within the Home Office, and in the production of crime statistics, was retained.
- iv. ONS had work in hand to look into the practicalities of a transfer of responsibility for the survey, including issues related to contract management which would need to be handled carefully.
- v. The recommendations could lead to benefits to the perceived independence and impartiality of crime statistics; but there were risks associated with the transfer and these needed to be well managed.

**4 Update on cuts to official statistics [SA(COS)(11)14] and Authority response [SA(COS)(11)15]**

4.1 The Committee heard that one further notification of a cut had been received since the last meeting. This related to changes to household surveys in Scotland. The Committee was concerned that the information received by the National Statistician's Office did not necessarily include all the relevant information, for example whether the changes included reductions in sample size or frequency of publication. It was agreed that the Monitoring and Assessment team should prepare a Statistical Expenditure Report (SER) on the changes.

4.2 The following comments were made in discussion.

- i. It was encouraging to see that many departments were consulting users before making changes. However, there was evidence that some users felt that there were too many consultations at the same time, and that their views would have a limited impact on the outcome.
- ii. The information received by the National Statistician's Office reflected cuts to outputs. It was agreed that information on reductions to inputs – e.g. staff or other resources – would also be useful. In addition information about changes to sample size and changes affecting UK comparability should also be collected.
- iii. The effects of some reductions may be deferred. For example, the effects of cuts to professional development, the development of new statistics or methods, or to quality assurance may not be seen for some time.
- iv. The number of statisticians in senior civil service posts had diminished over the long term. Work was in hand to document this trend.
- v. While the Authority could document reductions in statistical expenditure, it was proving much more difficult to influence such decisions in advance.

**Action: Monitoring and Assessment team to prepare an SER on changes to Scottish household surveys.**

**Action: National Statistician's Office to ask Heads of Profession for information on reductions to input expenditure and other information.**

4.3 Mr Alldritt reported on the Authority's response to reductions in statistical expenditure. The Committee agreed that the revised draft of the SER on Scottish school statistics should be published. A draft SER had been prepared on the NHS Information Centre's proposal to withdraw funding for statistics on smoking and drinking.

**Action: Monitoring and Assessment team to arrange for publication of the SER on Scottish school statistics.**

4.4 The Committee discussed a possible SER on proposals by ONS for changes to the General Lifestyle Survey. It was agreed that the case for an SER would need to be reviewed once ONS had published the findings from its consultation. It was further agreed that a Monitoring Brief providing system-wide overview of the effect of reductions in statistical expenditure should be produced later in the year, once more information was available.

## **5 Meeting the challenges of the transparency agenda [SA(COS)(11)16]**

5.1 Mr Bell and Mr Goodwin introduced a paper outlining some of the issues related to the Government's Transparency Agenda. The meeting heard that there were both opportunities and challenges for the Government Statistical Service (GSS) to respond to. A GSS taskforce had been established to address the issue.

5.2 The Committee noted that there was a potential conflict between transparency and keeping confidential information secure. There was some work being carried out to look at this potential conflict.

5.3 The following points were made in discussion:

- i. it was not clear whether public data held by private companies would be subject to transparency initiatives;
- ii. there could be significant costs associated with transferring data into open format;

- iii. there was a risk that the need to publish data would overshadow the need for supporting documentation and commentary;
- iv. some Heads of Profession had already taken a leadership role in coordinating departmental responses to the Transparency Agenda; and
- v. data have the power to mislead as well as inform, so it was important for statisticians to ensure accuracy, and to explain the strengths and limitations of the data.

**6 Plans for Monitoring Briefs [SA(COS)(11)17]**

Mr Alldritt updated the Committee on plans for Monitoring Briefs. It was agreed that the title of the Brief on 'The case for a UK wide index of deprivation' should be reconsidered so as not to imply that the Brief was necessarily making the case for such an index. It was further agreed to add the following Monitoring Briefs to the forward work plan:

- i. a review of the implementation of Suggestions in Assessment Reports; and
- ii. a system-wide overview of the effect of reductions in statistical expenditure.

**7 Authority review of UK statistical releases and publications [SA(COS)(11)18]**

7.1 The Committee considered a paper which developed ideas about the shape and coverage of a project to look at UK official statistics and publications in the round. The first stage of the project would be to have a series of discussions with Heads of Profession, covering issues including how a decision is made that commentary is needed. The second stage would involve a more broadly based project board. The following comments were made in discussion:

- i. the question was not whether commentary was necessary, but what kind of commentary was appropriate;
- ii. some users report that they mainly want data, so the task for the Authority was to articulate why commentary matters; and
- iii. the review should cover what commentary is appropriate for data released in 'real-time'.

7.2 It was agreed that a project manager would be appointed from the Monitoring and Assessment team, and that three or four meetings should be set up with Heads of Profession and others for the preliminary stage of the review.

**Action: Monitoring and Assessment team to appoint project manager and take forward discussions with Heads of Profession.**

**8 Draft Monitoring Brief: Immigration statistics [SA(COS)(11)19]**

8.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a draft Monitoring Brief setting out the Authority's perspective on UK immigration statistics. The Brief had been prepared in response to concerns from the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee.

8.2 The Committee was disappointed at the lack of progress with implementing a systematic recording system for migration. It was agreed that the last two sentences of the Brief should come under the heading of 'conclusions' to highlight their importance.

**9 Update on National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics [SA(COS)(11)20]**

The Committee heard that a response from DCLG on the first stage of the review had not yet been received. It was agreed that it would be preferable to publish the report after a response had been received from DCLG, and therefore it was agreed to delay publication for a further period.

**10 Any other business**

There was no other business. The Committee would meet next on 7 September at 13:30pm in London.

## Committee for Official Statistics

### Agenda

**Friday, 3 June, 2011**

**Board Room, Statistics House, London, 13:30 - 16:00**

**Chair: Professor Sir Roger Jowell**

**Apologies:**

1	Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising	Meeting of 040211
2	Update on actions	Oral update Mr Rob Bumpstead
3	Review of crime statistics i. National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics ii. Perspective from the Head of Profession	SA(COS)(11)13 Ms Jil Matheson Oral update Mr David Blunt
4	Update on cuts to official statistics  Authority response	SA(COS)(11)14 Ms Jil Matheson  SA(COS)(11)15 Richard Alldritt
5	Meeting the challenges of the transparency agenda	SA(COS)(11)16 Mr Guy Goodwin and Mr Iain Bell
6	Plans for Monitoring Briefs	SA(COS)(11)17  Richard Alldritt
7	Authority review of UK statistical releases and publications	SA(COS)(11)18 <i>Late paper - Sent 1/6/11</i> Richard Alldritt
8	Draft Monitoring Brief: Immigration statistics	SA(COS)(11)19  Richard Alldritt
9	Update on National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics	SA(COS)(11)20  Ms Jil Matheson
10	Any other business	

**Next Meeting: Wednesday 7 September 2011,  
Drummond Gate, London, 13:30 - 16:00**

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(COS)(11)13

***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-reviews/national-statistician-s-review-of-crime-statistics.html>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(11)14

***Impact of Spending Review 2010 Cuts on Official Statistics***

**Purpose**

1. The National Statistician's Office is collating information from producers of official statistics on plans for ceasing the production of statistics as a consequence of Spending Review 2010 cuts and on public consultations relating to official statistics. This paper updates the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) on the information received as at 24 May 2011.

**Recommendations**

2. The Committee is invited to note 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.

**Discussion**

3. The Authority Board and subsequently the Committee for Official Statistics considered the need to monitor the impact of cuts to statistical outputs. Information collated by the National Statistician's Office would enable the Authority to take a view, and report to Parliament as necessary, on specific cuts and the effect on overall official statistics' coherence. The work would focus particularly on whether the impact on users had been fully and openly taken into consideration.
4. The information being collated by the National Statistician's Office (NSO) on actual and potential cuts to statistics from Government Statistical Service (GSS) Heads of Professions (HoPs) provides the basis on which the Authority will decide whether to prepare a Statistical Expenditure Report (SER). The NSO's information includes details of all public consultations being conducted by departments whether for the purpose of determining the impact of a cut or some other purpose to aid their decision making. This information is now sent to the Authority Secretariat as available in order to facilitate decisions about early intervention and/or the preparation of a SER. Additionally, the Committee receives a report at each meeting from the NSO summarising the reported cuts, and all public consultations including those which may result in cuts, to statistical outputs. This is the fourth such report.
5. Information about the actual cuts to official statistics is at **Annex A** and information about consultations and potential cuts at **Annex B**. A full account is presented here for completeness – however it should be noted that the NSO has received only one further notification of a cut since the last meeting of COS. This relates to changes to Scottish Government surveys.

**National Statistician's Office, May 2011**

**List of Annexes**

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| <b>Annex A</b> | <b>Cessation of production of statistics</b>                     |
| <b>Annex B</b> | <b>Consultations about cessation of production of statistics</b> |



**Annex A Cessation of production of statistics by the GSS (notified to the National Statistician between July 2010 and May 2011)**

This table summarises the cuts to official statistics that have been notified by Departmental Heads of Profession to the National Statistician as at 25 May 2011.

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.

<b>DETAILS OF CESSATION OR REDUCTION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF STATISTICS</b>	<b>REASONS FOR CESSATION OR REDUCTION</b>
Changes to Scottish Government Surveys from 2012 onwards	<p>A decision has now been made that provides increased efficiency and will still meet the majority of user needs. In 2011 Scottish Government will seek to procure contracts for the following three surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combined Household and House Condition Survey</li> <li>• The Scottish Health Survey</li> <li>• The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey.</li> </ul>	<p>An in-depth discussion about the future of surveys and the use of surveys across Scotland took place at the ScotStat Conference in March 2010. Further discussion on priorities, in light of public sector financial pressures, were discussed at the Annual Statistics Stakeholder Conference on 1st November 2010.</p> <p>From 2012 onwards these three surveys will be sampled in a co-ordinated way and will include the same set of core questions. SG will then pool the core questions from all the surveys together to provide more accurate data at a smaller level of detail than previously available. The first pooled data will be available in 2013.</p>

Annex A - SA(COS)(11)14 - Update on cuts to official statistics

<p>Statistics: New Deals and the Flexible New Deal programme statistics</p> <p>Producer: Department for Works and Pensions</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 4 March 2011</p> <p>Statistics to cease : 16 March</p>	<p>Jobcentre Plus offer a number of programmes to help unemployed people, particularly those who have been unemployed for a long time, people with disabilities and anyone in need of extra help to find work. However, employment programme policy is changing, with the intention to move to the new "Work Programme". In the interim, both earlier schemes: New Deals and Flexible New Deal (FND), are running concurrently.</p>	<p>Recent employment programme policy changes mean that New Deals and the Flexible New Deal programme are coming to an end</p>
<p>Official Statistics on Supporting People</p> <p>Producer: Communities and Local Government</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 15 February 2011</p> <p>Statistics to cease/reduce: 31 May 2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The statistics are derived from 'Supporting People' Client records data that provides information about characteristics of clients entering Supporting People services. This data is collected each time a client enters a housing related support service funded by 'Supporting People'.</li> <li>• Outcomes for short-term services data provide information about characteristics and outcomes achieved by clients leaving short-term 'Supporting People' services. This data is collected each time a client exits a short-term (more than 28 days but less than two years) housing related support service funded by 'Supporting People'.</li> <li>• The 'Supporting People' Client Records and Outcomes data tables below provide a breakdown of; Client Records data by service</li> </ul>	<p>From April 2011, 'Supporting People' will roll into Formula Grant and will no longer be identified as a separate funding stream at Local Authority level. Consequently, it will no longer be possible for authorities and providers to submit data that correlates specifically to their SP budget. In addition, local authority commissioning bodies are already re-configuring and merging services for vulnerable people at the local level. This trend is expected to accelerate post April 2011 as local authorities have more freedom and flexibility to pool and align funding (e.g. adult social care funding) to deliver local services. This blurring of service boundaries will make it nigh impossible for the Department to apply a national uniform definition of 'housing related support services' so that collecting data on what was a SP service becomes increasingly ambiguous.</p>

Annex A - SA(COS)(11)14 - Update on cuts to official statistics

	<p>type and primary client group and Outcomes for short-term services data by service type, primary client group and outcomes achieved against identified support needs.</p>	
<p>Statistics: The Citizenship Survey</p> <p>Producer: Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 25 January 2011</p> <p>Statistics to cease/reduce from: 31 March 2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Citizenship Survey is a face to face household survey covering a representative core sample of almost 10,000 adults in England and Wales each year, plus a minority ethnic boost sample of 5,000 and a Muslim boost sample of 1,200.</li> <li>• DCLG ran a targeted consultation from 1 – 30 November. The consultation document anticipated the outcome when it stated “as part of the current drive to deliver cost savings across government and to reduce the fiscal deficit, research budgets are being closely scrutinised to identify where savings can be made. For this reason and the belief that data can be dropped or collected less frequently, the intention is for future Citizenship Surveys to be cancelled.”</li> <li>• Within central government results from the Survey are used by policy leads and analysts across a range of government departments including Ministry of Justice, Home Office, Cabinet Office, Office for Civil Society, Department for Work and Pensions and Government Equalities Office.</li> <li>• Survey results are also used by local government, academic researchers, charities and other non-governmental organisations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Secretary of State made this decision in the context of the need to deliver cost savings in order to reduce the fiscal deficit, and in the belief that priority data from the survey can be dropped; collected less frequently; or collected via other means. A statement to this effect has been placed on DCLG’s website.</li> <li>• A detailed response to the public consultation on the future of the survey will be published on the department’s website in due course, along with a summary of each of the submissions received.</li> </ul>

Annex A - SA(COS)(11)14 - Update on cuts to official statistics

<p>Statistics: Statistical outputs and other activities falling into the following categories are <u>candidates</u> for removal from ONS' Work Programme:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Statistical Compendia and Journals</li> <li>2. A re-focus of the ONS analysis programme</li> <li>3. The Knowledge Economy</li> <li>4. UK Health Statistics</li> <li>5. Analysis of specific health conditions including Health Statistics Quarterly</li> <li>6. Statistical services and support</li> </ol> <p>Producer: ONS</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 18 January 2011</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Includes Annual Abstract/ Monthly Digest; Quarterly Consumer Trends and Monthly Financial Statistics; Monthly Economic and Labour Market Review; and, Reporting on Population Change Analysis and reporting of population statistics.</li> <li>2. Includes Public Service Productivity; Analysis of the Labour Market; and, Regional Analysis.</li> <li>3. This is principally development work, a reduction in which will partly be offset by European funding in 2011/12 and 2012/13.</li> <li>4. UK level reporting will extend only to meeting legal and international requirements eg Eurostat leading to a less comprehensive picture of health in the UK.</li> <li>5. Analytical work on healthy and disability free life expectancy will be stopped or reduced in frequency unless funding materialises. Outputs related to conceptions, teenage pregnancy and infant mortality will be less frequent. Work programme is therefore proposed to focus on mortality, data required to meet EU obligations and those activities that are income funded e.g. cancer analysis, health inequalities.</li> <li>6. Includes support to the cross-government Longitudinal Data Strategy and Virtual Microdata Laboratory Micro-Analysis and Support.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 25 October and 24 December 2010, ONS sought views to help determine the shape of its future statistical work programme.</li> <li>• Responses will be used to inform ONS' work programme for the next four years.</li> <li>• The budget reductions announced as part of the 2010 Spending Review mean that ONS has to consider where savings can be found.</li> <li>• Consultation document outlined ONS' approach to reducing its budget that was determined by the Authority. It set three central principles:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Whatever ONS does, it should do well. Compromising the quality of outputs is not in the public interest.</li> <li>2. Budget reductions must not damage the core infrastructure of the organisation. In particular, the development and renewal of the ONS Information Technology infrastructure must continue.</li> <li>3. ONS must continue to fulfil its statutory obligations, in terms of the statistical outputs that ONS is required to produce to meet international and domestic legal requirements.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• The final package of cuts is expected to be agreed by the ONS Board that next meets on 11 February.</li> </ul>
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Annex A - SA(COS)(11)14 - Update on cuts to official statistics

<p>Statistics: Local Government Key Facts Card: England</p> <p>Producer: DCLG</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 30 November 2010</p> <p>Statistics to cease/reduce from: Immediately</p>	<p>The Card is published as a portable aide-memoire of DCLG's compendium publication "Local Government Financial Statistics".</p> <p>From current and capital expenditure to council tax and local authority pensions, Local Government Financial Statistics England brings together data from a wide range of sources to paint a comprehensive and important overview of local government finance in England.</p> <p>It is an essential guide to local authority financial systems, both past and present and contains detailed commentary, tables, time series, full colour charts and maps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLG has decided, in the context of the SR10 budget cuts, to cease publication of this product.</li> <li>• It states that this will not result in the loss of any published data simply because the contents of this Card are available within their compendium publication 'Local Government Financial Statistics'.</li> <li>• CLG has advised that it will shortly notify their customer-base about this decision by means of a note on their website.</li> <li>• It has judged that this decision does not warrant a public consultation.</li> </ul>
<p>Statistics: Scottish School Statistics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children Educated outwith Schools</li> <li>2. Placing Requests</li> <li>3. Teacher and Educational Psychologists Vacancies</li> <li>4. Pre-Appeal SQA Examination Results</li> <li>5. Expenditure on Schools</li> <li>6. Budgeted School Running Costs</li> <li>7. The Independent School Census</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. These annual statistics provide information on the numbers of children who were educated outwith school at any point during the school year, whether out of necessity or by parental choice.</li> <li>2. Annual statistics relating to requests by parents to local authorities that a child be placed in a specified school.</li> <li>3. Annual statistics derived from a survey which measures the level of vacancies during term time in order to indicate any possible areas of shortage.</li> <li>4. Annual statistics relating to national and educational authority level information on the cumulative attainment of National Qualifications by all pupils in publically funded secondary</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In September 2010, the Education Analytical Services department of SG carried out a consultation of users of its Schools statistics.</li> <li>• This consultation followed on from an earlier one which sought views about the style and content of Schools statistics, and the Statistics Authority Assessment report on School statistics.</li> <li>• The Scottish Government has drawn the following conclusions from the consultation:-             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) There was a lack of demand for the retention of the NS in column 3 so they will be discontinued;</li> <li>ii) Attendance and Absence statistics will not be retained as an annual product but moved to a biennial basis;</li> <li>iii) There was little concern expressed about the</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Annex A - SA(COS)(11)14 - Update on cuts to official statistics

<p>Producer: Scottish Government (SG)</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 25 November 2010</p> <p>Statistics to cease/reduce from:</p>	<p>schools.</p> <p>5. Annual Statistics relating to figures for local authority spending on school education.</p> <p>6. Annual statistics relating to budgeted running cost information provided by education authorities, and managers of grant-aided and self-governing schools.</p> <p>7. Annual statistics relating to results of the annual census of independent primary, secondary and special schools in Scotland.</p>	<p>repackaging of statistical publications and therefore SG will draw together the range of School statistics and release them on 3 key publication dates - Resources in December, Assessment in February and Outcomes in June;</p> <p>iv) In response to expressions of strong user need Exclusion statistics are retained on a biennial basis and published alongside the biennial Attendance and Absence figures in the Resources publication; and,</p> <p>v) In response to expressions of strong user need School Meals is retained but that a reduced set of information is collected and published annually in June.</p>
<p>Statistics: New Deal Statistics</p> <p>Producer: Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 18 November 2010</p> <p>Statistics to cease/reduce from: November 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DWP Statistics relating to the New Deal and Flexible New Deal (FND) Employment Programmes are published monthly by provider.</li> <li>• The following day WAG publishes headline statistics for Wales.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the New Deal and the FND are being phased out WAG will no longer be publishing this headline.</li> <li>• This information will continue to be available from DWP's website.</li> <li>• The publication of statistics on employment programmes will be reviewed once DWP have further information on the range of statistics that will be available under their new employment programme policy.</li> <li>• WAG has offered users an opportunity to discuss this decision by contacting them.</li> </ul>

Annex A - SA(COS)(11)14 - Update on cuts to official statistics

<p>Statistics: i. Health Visitors, District Nurses and Other Community Nurses ii. Community Psychiatric Nurses and Community Learning Disability Nurses iii. NHS Day Care</p> <p>Producer: WAG</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 6 September 2010</p> <p>Statistics to cease/reduce from: October 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• i and ii. – Used to monitor the advice and support given by health visitors, district nurses and other community nurses and by Community Psychiatric Nurses and Community Learning Disability Nurses by recording information on face-to-face contacts with patients.</li> <li>• iii – Used to monitor NHS day care facilities by recording information on first and total attendances for regular day attendees and patients using a bed by speciality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A user consultation was conducted to ask for views on a proposal to discontinue these statistical returns. An earlier consultation and review within the NHS had recommended that the returns be dropped.</li> <li>• The user consultation showed that 85 per cent or more of respondents felt that each of the collections should be dropped and failed to identify significant uses of the data.</li> <li>• Some users felt that it was unwise to discontinue these returns in the absence of fully developed alternative data collection and publication arrangements</li> <li>• As Community health information has been made a priority area by the Welsh Assembly Information Requirements Board, alternative statistics will be developed.</li> </ul>
<p>Statistics: Parental experiences of services provided to disabled children Statistics</p> <p>Producer: Department for Education (DfE)</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 17 August 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The services for disabled children parental survey was established through the Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) programme and measures parents' satisfaction with the local education, health, and care and family support services provided for their disabled child.</li> <li>• Was established to provide data for the previous government's Local Authority National Indicator Set (NI 54) and although funded by the DfE, it also forms a measure within the NHS National Operating Framework 'Vital Signs'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministerial decision that the survey that informs this publication should cease on cost grounds.</li> <li>• Unlike previous years, there will be no central follow-up with local authorities and therefore the impact of the survey could be limited.</li> <li>• Decision reflects the Coalition Government's commitment to reduce centrally imposed data burdens and to free up resources for front line services.</li> <li>• No legal obligation to publish these statistics.</li> <li>• DfE reported that there has been no consultation with users, who are mainly Local Authorities and Primary Care Trusts. Children's disability groups</li> </ul>

Annex A - SA(COS)(11)14 - Update on cuts to official statistics

<p>Statistics to cease/reduce from: November 2010</p>		<p>and parents also have an interest in the survey, but DfE does not have evidence of the level of use. DfE ministers plan to communicate to them as soon as possible, to inform them that the survey has been discontinued and providing LAs with tools that would allow them to carry out similar surveys themselves at a local level if they wish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The National Statistician has asked DfE to make an announcement on the Publication Hub setting out why publication is to end and their expectation of the impact on users.</li></ul>
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Annex A - SA(COS)(11)14 - Update on cuts to official statistics

<p>Statistics: Schools Providing Access to Extended Services Statistics</p> <p>Producer: DfE</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 10 August 2010</p> <p>Statistics to cease/reduce from: October 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly publication providing at a local authority level the percentage of schools providing access to the full core offer of extended services.</li> <li>• Statistics were used to inform the previous government's national indicators which may not reflect current government policy.</li> <li>• The relevant administrative data are collected by the Training and Development Agency for Schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection will stop to achieve necessary savings.</li> <li>• The percentage of schools with extended services (98%) is close to the previous government's target.</li> <li>• No legal obligation to publish these statistics.</li> <li>• DfE reported that there has been no consultation with users. It said that the impact on users is expected to be limited as the percentage is close to the target i.e. almost all schools have extended services. There are no known alternative sources.</li> <li>• The National Statistician has asked DfE to make an announcement on the Publication Hub setting out why publication is to end and their expectation of the impact on users.</li> </ul>
<p>Statistics: The Place Survey</p> <p>Producer: DCLG</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 27 July 2010</p> <p>Statistics to cease/reduce from:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collects the views of people on a range of issues concerning the place they live.</li> <li>• Results used to measure progress on National Indicators in the Local Performance Framework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department's own reduced need for the data.</li> <li>• The need to reduce costs and achieve savings.</li> <li>• Government's desire to localise activities when appropriate, and when required.</li> <li>• CLG has stated that it will provide the National Statistician with a fuller explanation for the decision and outline any ramifications including for users.</li> </ul>

**Annex B Consultations about cessation of production of statistics by GSS (notified to the National Statistician between July 2010 and May 2011)**

This table summarises the consultations that have been notified by Departmental Heads of Profession to the National Statistician in the period 26 November 2010 – 25 May 2011.

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.

<b>DETAILS OF CONSULTATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF CONSULTATION</b>	<b>CONSULTATION END</b>
Consultation on National Statistics on Income Tax liabilities and receipts and expenses and benefits  Producer: HMRC  Opening Date: 28 April 2011	HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) are holding a consultation on its income tax liabilities and receipts, and expenses and benefits statistics with users, from 28 April to 29 July. The consultation aims to understand how customers use the statistics and how the statistics can be improved to better meet the needs of users.	29 July 2011
Consultation on collection of data on some penalties for motor vehicle offences  Producer: Scottish	Further to a stakeholder review exercise completed in late 2009, and as outlined in a note published alongside the Criminal Proceedings Bulletin in January 2011, SG are considering ceasing the data collections that derive the data presented in the following additional motor vehicle datasets:- Table 3, Police conditional offers for moving vehicle offences; Tables 8 and 9, Police fixed penalty notices issued for stationary vehicle offences;	8 July 2011

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<p>Government</p> <p>Notified to National Statistician on 24 May 2011</p>	<p>and, Tables 10 and 11, Local Authority penalty charge notices for parking infringements.</p> <p>This proposal does not affect other information on motor vehicle offences presented in the additional motor vehicle datasets or the Bulletin referred to above.</p> <p>SG are considering this action for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The usage of these data is considered low compared to other publications and resources need to be allocated to those data where clear user need is known and user interest is greatest.</li> <li>• The Safety Camera partnership now publishes in a new release a subset of data presented in Table 3 of the Criminal Proceedings additional dataset (on conditional offers for moving vehicle offences)</li> <li>• Over the last few years, these data have been used for very few responses to Parliamentary Questions, Freedom of Information and other ad hoc requests for information.</li> <li>• The collection of these data imposes a burden on the resources of the police forces and local authorities providing the data.</li> </ul>	
<p>Consultation on the National Accounts classification process and sector classification guide</p> <p>Producer: ONS Opening date: 01 April 2011</p>	<p>The consultation seeks stakeholder views on the way ONS makes and publicises classification decisions in the national accounts. The consultation document describes a number of specific proposals that ONS are seeking views on, and these are reflected in a set of suggested revisions to the current document describing the process.</p>	<p>30 June 2011</p>

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<p>Lifestyles Statistics Compendia Publications</p> <p>Producer: NHSIC</p> <p>Notified to National Statistician on 11 April 2011</p>	<p>This consultation aims to engage with the users of the reports to understand how these reports are used and to seek comments on how the relevance and usefulness can be improved. This needs to be considered against increasing resource pressures, following the Government's 2010 spending review. The overall aims are to ensure the reports remain relevant and useful to users whilst maximising value for money; we would also seek the views of users on the methodologies used in the publications to ensure they remain up to date and fit for purpose.</p>	<p>24 June 2011</p>
<p>Draft Statistics Plan for 2011-12: Consultation</p> <p>Producer: DCLG</p> <p>Notified to National Statistician on 13 April 2011</p>	<p>The draft statistics plan describes DCLG's proposals for collecting and publishing official statistics over the period April 2011 to March 2012.</p> <p>It is seeking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• users' reactions to their proposals and their views on whether their planned deployment of resources will meet their needs</li> <li>• suggestions for the development of any new statistics, products or services</li> <li>• suggestions for any further reductions in the amount of data it collects and publishes (beyond those already submitted in the context of the 'Single Data List')</li> <li>• information from users about the particular uses to which their statistics are put</li> </ul>	<p>3 June 2011 (extended from 16 May 2011)</p>
<p>Future of Nomis – Consultation</p> <p>Producer: ONS</p> <p>Notified to National Statistician on 12 May 2011</p>	<p>ONS currently has a wide range of data disseminated through a number of different formats and portals; from columns of figures in pdf files to Neighbourhood Statistics, from spreadsheets to Nomis. ONS intends to streamline this array of different ways of disseminating data to provide a smaller number of solutions with greater functionality. This document attempts to explain what these solutions will mean to users and in particular what the consequences might be for users who currently access data through Nomis.</p>	<p>20 May 2011</p>

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<p>The future of the General Lifestyle Survey</p> <p>Producer: Office for National Statistics</p> <p>Date Notified to National Statistician: 24 February 2011</p>	<p>This consultation document outlines the intention to change the way the General Lifestyle Survey data are collected, seeks to identify the current uses of the survey data, any implications of stopping the survey, and options for alternative information sources.</p>	<p>6 May 2011</p>
<p>EUSILC integration into the Family Resources Survey</p> <p>Producer: ONS</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 24 February 2011</p>	<p>This note sets out the intention by the ONS to transfer the data collection approach required for Eurostat's Survey of Income and Living Conditions (EUSILC), from the General Lifestyle Survey (GLF) to the Family Resources Survey (FRS). EUSILC questions to first time respondents will be asked within the FRS, with repeated waves of EUSILC questions (covering the longitudinal element of the EUSILC requirement) asked as an ONS stand-alone telephone survey.</p>	<p>6 May 2011</p>
<p>Consultation on changes to immigration-related Home Office statistical outputs</p> <p>Producer: Home Office</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician:</p>	<p>Home Office Statistics are proposing a phased development of changes that would ultimately lead to the release of data using the web as the main vehicle of dissemination. It relates to these outputs - Control of Immigration: United Kingdom Statistics (annual publication), Control of Immigration: (Quarterly Statistical Summary) and British Citizenship Statistics (annual publication).</p> <p>It is proposed that in a phased development between August 2011 and February 2012:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) commentary and analysis of the data should be structured in virtual topics, be shorter and focus on key points, but provide longer term trends;</li> <li>ii) the annual and quarterly Control of Immigration publications, together with the British</li> </ul>	<p>4 May 2011</p>

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<p>24 February 2011</p>	<p>Citizenship Statistics, are combined to avoid duplication;</p> <p>iii) tables are presented in such a way that makes them more accessible to users, in particular listing within tables all annual data, followed by quarterly data (a draft example of this layout is available in Table 1.2 of Control of Immigration: Quarterly Statistical Summary Q4 2010); and a standard and full country of nationality and continent list;</p> <p>iv) the number of tables released is reduced through a combination of amalgamation and a reduction in the variables reported on; and</p> <p>v) all data (except passenger arrivals) are provided unrounded.</p>	
<p>Review of Conception Statistics</p> <p>Office for National Statistics</p> <p>Date Notified to National Statistician: 24 February 2011</p>	<p>ONS is proposing to reduce the cost of producing conception statistics by publishing figures once a year (around February), rather than twice a year as at present. At the same time, ONS is reviewing the outputs to ensure they are coherent and continue to meet user requirements.</p>	<p>19 April 2011</p>
<p>The priorities for health and safety statistics</p> <p>Producer: HSE</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 16/3/11</p>	<p>In line with all government bodies, HSE's Spending Review settlement for 2011-2015 represents a significant reduction in their government grant. One implication of this reduction is that there will be less money available to procure data via surveys or other methods. Hence, some of their National Statistics will need to change. HSE is seeking the views of users both inside and outside government to determine what the priorities should be for their statistics over the next five years.</p>	<p>11 April 2011</p>

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<p>Streamlining of Annual Business Survey (ABS) Questionnaire</p> <p>Office for National Statistics</p> <p>Date Notified to National Statistician: 24 February 2011</p>	<p>The Office for National Statistics plan to remove a number of redundant questions from the Annual Business Survey. This is in order to improve the quality, along with the accuracy and efficacy of the survey.</p> <p>Prior to any decisions and implementation of any changes we are seeking feedback from our users and stakeholders to determine the exact questions to be removed.</p>	<p>28 February 2011</p>
<p>Title: Consultation on DASA's annual manpower national statistics publications</p> <p>Producer: Ministry of Defence - Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA)</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 30 November 2010</p>	<p>DASA plans to change the presentation of statistics on UK Armed Forces manpower currently published as National Statistics in its annual Tri-Service Publications (TSPs).</p> <p>The three National Statistics publications proposed for consolidation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ TSP 8: Age distribution of UK Regular Forces</li> <li>▪ TSP 9: UK Regular Forces Rank Structure</li> <li>▪ TSP 19: UK Regular Forces Intake and Outflow by Age</li> </ul> <p>last published on the 10 June 2010. DASA proposes to replace these with a single annual publication analysing the same aspects of Service manpower (age and rank) but containing more commentary, with fewer detailed tables.</p> <p>Users' views are sought on what they would like to be included in the new consolidated publication.</p>	<p>27 February 2011</p>

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<p>National statistics, published by the Department of Health re the experience of black and minority ethnic patients: a consultation</p> <p>Producer: Dept of Health</p> <p>Date Notified to National Statistician: 24 February 2011</p>	<p>The Department of Health has launched a consultation, as required under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, to seek feedback on a proposal to stop producing a report on the self-reported experience of patients from black and minority ethnic groups. The collection and publication of the data is unaffected</p>	<p>18 February 2011</p>
<p>Title: Improvements to Ministry of Justice statistics</p> <p>Producer: Ministry of Justice (MoJ)</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 17 November 2010</p>	<p>The consultation seeks views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the definitions of statistics - making the statistics consistent across MoJ publications and clarifying the definition of certain important measurements.</li> <li>• introducing a quarterly criminal justice statistics bulletin which would give an overview of trends in crime, out of court disposals, prosecutions, convictions and sentencing.</li> <li>• moving to a single measure of re-offending which would get rid of the six different ways it is currently measured. This includes consolidating five separate publications on re-offending into a single publication.</li> </ul> <p>These proposals represent significant improvements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making a wider range of data available routinely through MoJ's statistical publications;</li> <li>• presenting a coherent overview of criminal justice statistics to help understanding</li> </ul>	<p>18 February 2011</p>



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	<p>and ease of comparison;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>simplifying access to information in line with the Code of Practice.</li> </ul> <p>The consultation is a response to a number of separate reports including the UK Statistics Authority Assessment of Criminal Justice Studies, the Stern Review of Rape Reporting and UK Statistics Authority's Barrier to Trust in Crime Statistics as well as MoJ's own internal review of criminal justice publications.</p>	
<p>Title: Demography Statistical Work Programme</p> <p>Producer: General Registrar Office Scotland (GROS)</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 9 December 2010</p>	<p>The General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) is seeking views to help determine the shape of its future Demography statistical work programme. The budget reductions announced as part of the Scottish Spending Review on 17 November 2010 mean that GROS has to consider where savings can be found. It is critically important that our statistical outputs reflect our users' priorities.</p> <p>GROS is asking users to let them know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What GROS demography statistical outputs are used and how.</li> <li>The impact of possible reductions in various areas of GROS demography statistical work.</li> </ul>	9 February 2011
<p>Consultation on the proposed changes to the publication of monthly coal statistics</p> <p>Producer: Department of Energy and Climate Change</p> <p>Date Notified to National Statistician: 24 February 2011</p>	<p>The Department of Energy and Climate Change currently collects and publishes monthly data on coal production, consumption and stocks in the UK. This consultation asked for views on our proposal to make changes to the frequency of data collection, methodology used to produce coal statistics and the dissemination of these statistics.</p>	14 January 2011

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<p>Title: Reductions of annual returns data collected from Fire and Rescue Services and of Fires of Special Interest reporting</p> <p>Producer: DCLG</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 30 November 2010</p>	<p>CLG is seeking views on proposals to reduce non-financial annual data returns from Fire and Rescue Services in England and to terminate the majority of data collected on 'Fires of Special Interest' forms.</p> <p>The annual data returns relate to fire safety, health and safety, personnel and equality, and diversity.</p> <p>CLG have stated the changes envisaged are driven mainly by a desire to rationalise their data collections, and to reduce the burden imposed on data providers in the Fire and Rescue Services.</p>	<p>14 January 2011</p>
<p>User Consultation - Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom</p> <p>Producer: Department for Education</p> <p>Date Notified to National Statistician: 24 February 2011</p>	<p>As part of the Department's aim to make its statistics relevant and useful, a user consultation on the "Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom" is now being carried out. The Department is reviewing the relevance and usefulness of this statistical publication.</p> <p>Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom provides statistics relating to education and training in the UK and includes chapters relating to schools, post-compulsory education and training and qualifications and destinations, with annexes containing figures on education expenditure and UK population numbers</p>	<p>31 December 2010</p>
<p>Title: Future of Agricultural Statistics</p> <p>Producer:</p>	<p>DEFRA completed a consultation exercise in July 2010, writing to a number of key external stakeholders to gather views regarding the future of their Agricultural Statistics.</p> <p>DEFRA have reported that this was extremely positive and provided useful avenues to pursue. The results of the consultation are being written up and will provide a focus for</p>	<p>July 2010</p>

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<p>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 25 November 2010</p>	<p>internal user consultation. A smaller group of key users is in the process of being set up.</p>	
<p>Title: Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics</p> <p>Producer: WAG</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 18 November 2010</p>	<p>WAG is looking for views in general on their current suite of around 40 outputs but also in response to some specific issues it has raised.</p> <p>WAG states that the purpose of this consultation is to seek feedback on the usefulness and usability of what it currently produces, how it can be improved, any gaps in what it provides and an indication of the relative priority attached to a particular analysis.</p> <p>Given the breadth of data covered by the Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics Unit, the consultation document has separate sections for schools, further education, higher education and a number of cross cutting areas.</p> <p>There are two separate response forms, according to whether you are a user of schools or post-16 education statistics.</p>	<p>30 November 2010</p>
<p>Title: Statistical Directorate Annual Compendia Publications</p> <p>Producer: WAG</p> <p>Date notified to</p>	<p>WAG's Statistical Directorate is seeking views from customers on the proposal to cease printing of hardcopy statistical publications. WAG states that the same information will still be available on their web site but will only be published electronically rather than professionally printed.</p> <p>The advantages of this approach are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data will be timelier. WAG anticipates being able to publish information on the web</li> </ul>	<p>31 December 2010</p>

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<p>National Statistician: 18 November 2010</p>	<p>earlier than is currently possible due to the need to prepare and print hard copies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The resources saved will be diverted into enhancing the range of information available on the interactive StatsWales data analysis tool, and hopefully finding innovative ways of making this information available. This will allow users to access a wider range of official statistics in a more flexible and user friendly way.</li> </ul> <p>It will help reduce WAG's carbon footprint and impact on the environment and be saving on resources needed to produce and distribute paper editions.</p>	
<p>Title: Work Programme Consultation</p> <p>Producer: ONS</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 25 October 2010</p>	<p>ONS is seeking views to help determine the shape of its future statistical work programme. The budget reductions announced as part of the 2010 Spending Review mean that ONS has to consider where savings can be found. ONS considers it is critically important that statistical outputs reflect users' priorities. User feedback can also help ONS strive to become a more efficient and effective organisation.</p> <p>The consultation document outlines ONS' approach to reducing its budget, including the core principles which determine this approach, and asks stakeholders to let ONS know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what ONS outputs they use and how they use them</li> <li>• the impact on them of possible reductions in various areas of ONS work.</li> </ul> <p>Responses will be used to inform ONS' work programme for the next four years.</p>	<p>24 December 2010</p>
<p>Title: The Future of the Citizenship Survey</p> <p>Producer: DCLG</p> <p>Date notified to National Statistician: 20 October 2010</p>	<p>The Citizenship Survey is a face to face household survey carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government covering a representative core sample of almost 10,000 adults in England and Wales each year, plus a minority ethnic boost sample of 5,000 and a Muslim boost sample of 1,200.</p> <p>This statistical consultation sets out the intention to cancel the future Citizenship Survey, and in doing so, seeks to identify the uses of the Survey data, the implications of stopping and options for alternative information sources.</p>	<p>30 November 2010</p>

## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

### COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(11)15

#### *Authority response to cuts to official statistics*

#### **Purpose**

1. This paper summarises action taken by the Authority in response to cuts to official statistics.

#### **Recommendations**

2. The Committee for Official Statistics (COS) is invited to:
  - i. note the steps taken by the Authority at paragraphs 3 to 5;
  - ii. comment on the draft Statistical Expenditure Report (SER) at **Annex A**; and
  - iii. note that a further SER is in preparation.

#### **Discussion**

3. A draft SER on the Citizenship Survey was considered by COS at its meeting on 4 February 2011, and subsequently by the Authority Board at its meeting on 25 March 2011. The SER was published on 8 April, accompanied by a letter from the Chair of the Statistics Authority to the Secretary of State for Communities. A response was received from a Parliamentary Under Secretary of State on 27 April reiterating the department's initial position on the discontinuation of the Citizenship Survey. This correspondence is attached at **Annex B**.
4. On 8 April the Authority also published a general statement about its approach to responding to reductions in Government statistical functions.
5. A second SER, on the Place Survey, was considered by COS at its meeting on 4 February 2011, and subsequently by the Authority Board at its meeting on 25 March 2011. The SER was published on 25 May and was accompanied by a letter from the Chair of the Statistics Authority to the Secretary of State for Communities.
6. A finalised draft of a third SER, on Scottish Schools Statistics, is at Annex A. An early draft of this report was considered by COS at its meeting on 4 February 2011. Since then it has been updated and has been considered by the Authority Board at its meetings of 25 March 2011 and 15 April 2011. At its most recent meeting, the Authority Board agreed that the SER should be published, subject to some agreed revisions and further consideration and approval by COS. The chief effect of the revisions was to recast the text around what were previously phrased as 'recommendations'. It is proposed that this SER is published on the Authority website in due course, subject to comments from the Committee.
7. The Monitoring and Assessment team is currently drafting a fourth SER on the NHS Information Centre's proposal to withdraw approximately £300,000 of funding for the General Lifestyle Survey, with the likely effect of the discontinuation of long standing time series on smoking, drinking, health conditions and use of health services.

**Secretariat, UK Statistics Authority, June 2011**

**List of Annexes**

- Annex A      SER3: Scottish Schools Statistics**
- Annex B      Correspondence about the discontinuation of the Citizenship Survey**

**Annex A Statistical Expenditure Report 3: Scottish Schools Statistics**

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-sir-michael-scholar-to-john-swinney-msp-14062011.pdf>

**Annex B Correspondence about the discontinuation of the Citizenship Survey**

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

To see this document go to:

[http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---  
correspondence/correspondence/andrew-stunnell-mp-to-sir-michael-scholar---  
270411.pdf](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/andrew-stunnell-mp-to-sir-michael-scholar---270411.pdf)



**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(11)16

***Meeting the challenges of the transparency agenda***

**Purpose**

1. This paper sets out the Government's Transparency Agenda and how the Government Statistical Service (GSS) is responding to the opportunities and issues this exciting agenda presents.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Committee are invited to:
  - i. note the opportunities and challenges the Transparency Agenda will pose for the Government Statistical Service;
  - ii. comment on the programme of work the GSS taskforce on transparency are taking forward; and
  - iii. suggest any additional work strands we should consider taking forward.

**Discussion**

Overview

3. The Transparency Agenda was launched by the Prime Minister through an open letter to all Secretaries of State on 31 May 2010 and gave commitments to open up public data. The agenda is being lead by Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office. The aim is to unlock data currently held by the public sector to:
  - i. allow the public to hold local and national Government to account,
  - ii. increase trust in local and national Government through greater release of data, and
  - iii. promote economic growth through the ability to develop new markets in 'Infomatics'.
4. The first set of commitments related to spending and organisational data as well as the commitment to publish street-level crime data. This has also been supported by three further initiatives, for which an overview is in **Annex A**, which are:
  - i. Transparency principles
  - ii. Open data standards
  - iii. The introduction of right to data legislation
5. The agenda was also embedded into each government department's business plan with key commitments and data releases. So for example, the Ministry of Justice committed to publishing sentencing data by court and offence type for the first time and to explore the feasibility of mapping the court outcome onto the crime on the Crime Mapping set.

### **Opportunities for the GSS**

6. By embracing this agenda we can put our statistics at the heart of debate and allow ease of re-use by our customers of vast swathes of data. However in order to do so we need to open up our minds to how technology is developing and exploit it to maximum effect. We can also bolster the use of our commentaries by recognising that open data doesn't just apply to the numbers but also the documents.

#### Setting our commentaries free across the web

7. At present the majority of departments produce their statistical reports in Portable Document Format (PDF). This locks the commentary into proprietary software and makes re-use difficult. With a few simple steps of putting the summary in HyperText Markup Language (HTML) and posting this out through Twitter and other social media channels, the audience reached can be greatly increased. This would open the data and commentary and allow re-use and direct interaction with many more consumers of information without filtering of messages by the media or politicians.

#### Setting the data free

8. The data can also be set free by making data widely available. So for example, the Home Office unlocking of the crime data through crime mapping at street level produced record number of visitors in the first day. The Ministry of Justice similarly unlocked for the first time court-level sentencing data showing the sentences in your own court. With no publicity this has had over 30,000 hits in six months.
9. Although this also has some visualisation, the transparency agenda has recognised that developers need a basic steer before they begin to develop applications and these basic applications really help open up the possibilities.
10. It also has significant benefits for supporting research and academic customers who can access much more raw data free of charge without the recourse of the data archive. This has further benefits for the evidence bases of departments where there are always more research possibilities than funded projects.

#### Skills

11. By developing our staff to support this agenda it will help improve the communication of statistics in the digital age and the development of Information Technology skills to allow more use to be made of web-based technologies in the development and dissemination of statistics.

### **Challenges the GSS faces**

12. The technologies which are being used are not commonly used within the GSS. Although the technology needed to undertake all this work is available free of charge through open source routes, we do not currently possess the skills to utilise it. The matter of people skills is being considered as a central part of the GSS Overarching Strategy and by the GSS Human Resources Committee who are reviewing their People Strategy and Work Programme.
13. The biggest challenge which we will face within the GSS is the balance between access to data and the requirements to secure personal data. Recent rulings by the Information Tribunal have made it clear that the GSS's approach to privacy is currently viewed as over-cautious. There are, however, ways through this. So for example the Ministry of Justice will

publish later this year every sentence given in crown and magistrate court by gender, age, ethnicity of the defendant, sentence given, sentence length and offence type. By playing with the aggregations of offence types we are able to protect the privacy of victims without stopping the release of data

14. The right to data legislation team recognise the tension between privacy and open data and are currently exploring guidance on how to balance these risks. The GSS will be playing a key role in helping develop this guidance.

### **GSS - moving the agenda forward**

15. The National Statistician has established a taskforce to look at the GSS response. So far the taskforce has:

- got to grips with the issues and the key challenges for the GSS set out above, and
- agreed the programme of work needed to get the GSS into position to respond to this.

16. The key elements of this are as follows.

- i. A stock-take of where the GSS are at and the commitments already made or in train to support the transparency agenda.
- ii. Prepare a statement of intent and principles for the GSS from the National Statistician to ensure the GSS rises to the challenge of the transparency agenda.
- iii. Prepare case studies with the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and the Department for Communities and Local Government on preparing four and five star open data format datasets to identify the skills gap in the GSS and how we might fill the knowledge gaps, e.g. through 'Centres of Expertise'.
- iv. Set up a sub-group with the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the National Archives, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Justice on the new right to data legislation and the guidance we need to ensure it does not compromise our commitments to confidentiality.

17. The GSS will also need to prepare a forward plan of which datasets will be opened up and the assessment of the privacy impacts so that when requests come in for data we are not releasing on the basis of which queries but according to a forward work-plan which meets user priorities.

### **Longer term implications**

18. In the longer-term we need to consider the implications on data collection. In terms of collection of data, and how we receive data, we need to review whether we can collect some data for National Statistics through open data releases by providers rather than by traditional collection techniques.

19. In driving the agenda forward, the GSS should do so with the awareness that unless it up-skills there is a real chance that the IT programmers will take on many of our roles to the detriment of statistical quality and commentary.

**Iain Bell, Chief Statistician, Ministry of Justice**

**Guy Goodwin, Chair, GSS Transparency Sub-Group**

**List of Annexes**

**Annex A Transparency Overview**

## Annex A Transparency Overview

### Transparency Principles

The transparency principles (also known as public data principles) are as follows:

- i. Public data policy and practice will be clearly driven by the public and businesses who want and use the data, including what data is released when and in what form .
- ii. Public data will be published in reusable, machine-readable form .
- iii. Public data will be released under the same open license which enables free reuse, including commercial reuse.
- iv. Public data will be available and easy to find through a single easy to use online access point ([data.gov.uk](http://data.gov.uk)).
- v. Public data will be published using open standards, and following relevant recommendations of the World Wide Web Consortium.
- vi. Public data underlying the Government's own websites will be published in reusable form for others to use.
- vii. Public data will be timely and fine grained.
- viii. Release data quickly, and then re-publish it in linked data form.
- ix. Public data will be freely available to use in any lawful way.
- x. Public bodies should actively encourage the re-use of their public data.
- xi. Public bodies should maintain and publish inventories of their data holdings.

These principles are very much in tune with the philosophy behind national and official statistics and there are many parallels we can draw between these principles and our own for example – lists of data assets and the Statement of Administrative Sources. Public data being timely and fine grained and timeliness of National and Official Statistics. However, there will also be tensions such as between granularity of data and confidentiality and the need to balance speed against quality orderly release, particularly in the case of outputs which are sensitive or market moving.

### Open Data Standards

There is a five star system being recommended for assessing how open a format the data are being released in which can be summarised as follows.

- ★ make your stuff available on the web (whatever format)
- ★★ make it available as structured data (e.g. excel instead of image scan of a table)
- ★★★ non-proprietary format (e.g. csv instead of excel)
- ★★★★ use URLs to identify things, so that people can point at your stuff
- ★★★★★ link your data to other people's data to provide context

At present most government departments operate between two and three stars. This means that the majority of our data is difficult to easily re-use by developers and others. This is limiting the reach of our products. As the traditional print media's reach declines then it will be increasingly important for the GSS to publish data in a way which allows re-use across the web to reach wider audiences.

### Right to Data

The right to data legislation is an amendment to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act which entitles requestors to ask for underlying databases to be released in an open and standardised format. The standard FOI exemptions will apply to this. So for example, the right to data could not be used to gain access to underpinning data if there was an intention to publish the underlying database at some point in the future and so there is no risk of this undermining the release protocols under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

The exemptions under the FOI Act to ensure that personal details and commercial in confidence information is not released will also apply.

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(11)17

***Plans for Monitoring Briefs***

**Issue**

1. This is an update on plans for Monitoring Briefs to be produced by the Monitoring and Assessment team.

**Recommendations**

2. The Committee for Official Statistics is invited to:
  - i. agree the Monitoring and Assessment team should take forward the plans outlined below; and
  - ii. consider priorities for the longer term in the light of the suggestions at **Annex A** (previously circulated to the Authority Board in November 2010).

**Discussion**

3. The production of Monitoring Briefs by the Monitoring and Assessment team is normally given lower priority than Assessment Reports, Statistical Expenditure Reports and contributions to correspondence and the preparation of committee papers. This, plus the lengthy process of seeking comments on draft Briefs and securing clearance from the relevant committees, means that the time between work starting on a Brief and its publication can be several months. One consequence is that there will often be as many as ten Briefs in different stages of production or clearance at any one time. This is not ideal from the point of view of managing the work but it has not caused major problems so far and it is hard to see how the process can easily be streamlined without reducing consultation and comment.
4. Below is a summary of the work in hand or recently completed. Three Monitoring Briefs have been published recently:
  - i. Findings from the first 100 Assessment Reports;
  - ii. The impact of the Authority's Monitoring and Assessment functions; and
  - iii. Implementation of Authority recommendations.
5. This set of related Monitoring Briefs will all be updated. The 'findings' Brief is the second update in this series, and the first update of the 'impact' and 'implementation' Briefs is likely to be at the end of 2011.

**For the June Authority Board meeting**

6. Further to discussion about priorities at the November 2010 meeting of the Authority Board [SA(10)80], the following Monitoring Briefs are in production and are expected to be submitted to the Authority Board in June 2011.
  - i. **The availability of statistics for Parliamentary Constituencies.** This Brief will look at the availability of, and demand for, official statistics for parliamentary constituencies, including the position in the devolved administrations.
  - ii. **The accessibility and coherence of official statistics about climate change.** This Brief has been in production for over a year and has evolved considerably over this period. The subject matter has proved exceptionally intractable and complex but we are confident that there will be some relevant recommendations as well as guidance about what statistics are available.

- iii. **Immigration Statistics.** The Commons Home Affairs Committee commented, in several reports, on the limitations of UK migration statistics, and criticised some of the ways in which the available statistics had been used. This Brief considers the official statistics available, the comments made by the Committee, and suggests some areas for improvement. A draft of this Brief is on the agenda for this meeting [SA(COS)(11)19].

Other Monitoring Briefs currently in production

- i. **The case for a UK wide deprivation index.** The Assessment Reports on deprivation indices for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland indicated that there may be a case for an additional index of deprivation, relating to the UK as a whole. This Monitoring Brief will explore the extent and nature of user interest, the practicality of producing a UK index of sufficient quality, and the presentational aspects.
- ii. **An analysis of answers to statistical Parliamentary Questions.** This was originally intended to be part of the Brief on Parliamentary Constituencies but is different in kind. The way in which Parliamentary Questions answers (and their devolved equivalents) deal with statistics reflects on the independence and quality of the statistical service. This Brief will look at how they are answered.
- iii. **Issues relating to Administrative Sources used for statistical purposes.** Statements of Administrative Sources are a requirement of the Code. One element relates to arrangements for statistical audit of administrative systems used for statistical purposes. We want to review how much information is currently available about statistical audit – not least in view of the potential for major problems if it turns out that such administrative systems are not delivering what is assumed by the statisticians.
- iv. **Use of Official Statistics by the Voluntary Sector.** This was initially conceived as 'Use and value of statistics by sectors of industry and society'. However, we took the view that it would be better to approach that as a series rather than a single Brief. The reason for starting with the voluntary sector is that we know relatively little about their use of official data and the public good aspects of that; and that any good examples that we can draw attention to will be to the benefit of the statistical service.
- v. **Sources of Official Statistics on Health Statistics.** Again, this was initially conceived as 'Sources of statistics on health, education and other topics' but that seemed suited to a series rather than a single Brief. The sources of health statistics Brief will highlight the range of producer bodies, the consequent different sets of statistics, and the challenges this can cause for users and potential users.
- vi. Possible Monitoring Report on **Statistical Publications.** At present, the Authority Review of Statistical Publications is at a very early stage (see [SA(COS)(11)18] on the agenda for this meeting).

**Richard Alldritt, Head of Assessment, June 2011**

**List of Annexes**

**Annex A List of suggested monitoring briefs discussed at the November 2010 Authority Board meeting**



**Annex A List of suggested monitoring briefs discussed at the November 2010 Authority Board meeting**

Inclusion in this list does not necessarily mean there are currently any plans to produce the Brief. For consistency the list is set out in the order it appeared in the original paper.

- i. **Use and value of statistics by sectors of industry and society.** A recent Assessment Report has indicated that there may be value in a series of Monitoring Briefs documenting and commenting on the use of UK official statistics by particular sectors of industry or society, such as the pharmaceutical industry, insurance services, international bodies, voluntary sector and others about which knowledge is currently limited.
- ii. **The availability of statistics for Parliamentary Constituencies (*in production*).**
- iii. **The viability of a UK wide deprivation index (*in production*).**
- iv. **The role of government statisticians in meeting user needs.** It is widely accepted that the GSS has a number of roles, only one of which – activity that leads up to publishing statistical reports – is fully addressed by the Code, and hence assessment. This Brief would explore, and provide examples of, other roles – such as that of statistical advisor to policy makers. It would provide the opportunity to explore whether, and how, such activity might be given greater public recognition and valued accordingly.
- v. **The adequacy of statistics on child protection.** The assessment of statistics on child protection for Scotland found that the statistics did not meet the methodological standards expected by the Code. The Assessment team has approached the producers of corresponding statistics in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to explore the possibility of bringing forward these assessments. The Assessment team considers that the findings from these Assessment Reports may provide suitable material for a Monitoring Brief and propose to revisit this option after these Reports have been produced.
- vi. **The availability of information on who benefits from public expenditure.** This would explore the availability and coherence of statistical information about the extent to which different parts of the country, and different socio-demographic groups, benefit from public expenditure. Some such information is available – for example, about recipients of welfare payments – but there may be user interest in more complete analysis. This Brief would also explore the extent of user interest, and the likely issues that would arise in undertaking such analysis.
- vii. **Sources of statistics - on, for example, education, health and other topics (*one element in production*).** This would highlight the range of producer bodies, and the difficulty this can cause for users and potential users. A definitive Brief would be difficult to produce whilst the Government reviews the structure of the organisations responsible for public service delivery, but this context would make such Briefs all the more topical in highlighting the need for a co-ordinated approach to dissemination.
- viii. **What do we mean by ‘promoting comparability within the UK’?** This Brief would provide an opportunity to explore the desirability of comparable UK statistics. What should be the Authority’s considerations in making judgements about four nation comparability? Some of these issues were explored at COS [SA(COS)(10)17].

- ix. **Access to official statistics via websites.** Different producers' websites offer different levels of functionality and links. This Brief would identify some criteria for accessibility to sets of statistics, and review the evidence about the extent to which the criteria are met. It would also look at the accessibility of sets of statistics produced by all National Statistical Institutes.
- x. **Next 'Findings from Assessment' Brief** (*now completed and published but an update due in late 2011*).

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(11)18

***Authority review of UK statistical releases and publications***

**Purpose**

1. At its February 2011 meeting, the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) considered a paper which outlined the work of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Presentation and Dissemination Task Force [SA(COS)(11)03]. This identified the need for further development of statistical releases and publications across the statistical service; and possibly also further refinement of the Authority's Position and existing advice in this context.
2. At its April 2011 meeting, the Committee agreed that we should establish a project to look at UK official statistical releases and publications in the round [SA(COS)(11)11]. This review would be chaired by Colette Bowe. These recommendations were endorsed by the Authority Board at its meeting on 15 April.
3. This paper develops some ideas about the shape and coverage of the project. A lot of background material already exists. Over 110 Assessment Reports have already looked at sets of statistical publications; the GSS task force has offered its initial views; several previous Monitoring Reports and Briefs have touched on the issues, not least the *Strengthening User Engagement* report of June 2010; and there is prior work by the Statistics Commission, including its 2007 report *Releasing Official Statistics*. We can also draw on the first hand experience of the National Statistician, Heads of Profession (HOPs) and members of the Authority Board and the Committee for Official Statistics.

**Timing**

4. There are no major timing constraints but a project finishing by March 2012 would lay the ground for informing decisions about the Authority's priorities in 2012-13. It may also be necessary to complete this project before returning to the question of the revision and simplification of the Code of Practice.

**Recommendation**

5. Members of the Committee are invited to consider the discussion set out in this paper and to offer advice on the nature and management of the project.

**Discussion**

6. While the initial proposals for the review (as submitted to COS in April) covered the need for, and the standard and style of, commentary in statistical releases, these topics quickly fan out in to a set of more general issues about the effectiveness or otherwise of communication by the statistical service; and also about whether the portfolio of GSS outputs fully exploits the possibilities of web based dissemination.
7. It may therefore be helpful to think in terms of three parts to the review: the first part relating to the way decisions are made to produce statistical commentary; the second being the need for consistent high standards and their delivery via good training and management; and the third being a more strategic one about how the GSS as a whole embraces and exploits the possibilities of digital technology.

8. We would need to evidence our concerns, discussing what we know about the need for commentary (bearing in mind the importance of reaching over the head of other analysts to the 'end-users' of the messages, the people who deliver decisions and actions of public value): testing whether these concerns are indeed well-founded; making proposals for addressing these concerns; and then making proposals for delivering change.
9. We also need to consider options for targeting improvements. Whilst in principle it is likely that recommendations would apply equally to all producers of official statistics, it might prove counter-productive to demand change across that many organisations simultaneously. An alternative approach might be to address change in Office for National Statistics (ONS) and one other department/agency up to the standard the Board wants to see, to provide a point of reference and basis for showing what can be achieved. And perhaps also for stimulating a greater awareness of the difference between the best and the rest.
10. At the same time, if there does prove to be a need for improvement across all producer organisations, the review may need to look at the scope for a top level initiative, possibly with the Cabinet Office and/or top level Civil Service committee to settle the issues of principle and obtain central endorsement for change – rather than trying to proceed bilaterally and incrementally. These two approaches are not exclusive. An approach focusing first on ONS plus another department might be easier to sell to the Civil Service as a whole than a uniform agenda.
11. The third part of the project, about the changing digital environment has broad implications. The views of COS members are invited on how far it would be sensible for the project to reach. Some people regard the production of discrete 'publications' as old-fashioned and see the future as being fundamentally interactive, loosely structured and inclusive – the difference between a traditional encyclopaedia and Wikipedia, or between a documentary film and YouTube. What can sometimes be overlooked in this debate is that good quality content still takes a recognisable form – for example, paragraphs of useful text in Wikipedia are not so different from paragraphs in a traditional encyclopaedia; they may have been created by a different process but the user experience is largely similar. In the statistical world this debate is overlaid by one about the virtues of dynamic or interactive tables and graphics in contrast to static tables and graphs.
12. The range of possible ways of delivering a statistical message has expanded massively in recent years creating both choice and uncertainty. There may be a consequent need to make a sharper distinction between the user needs of external analysts and experts, who often want maximum detail and interactivity, and the needs of the institutions and individuals (including the news media) who eventually put the analytical products to use, who often simply want to know what the statistics have to tell them – preferably in as few words as possible. The intended role of the statistical service in serving these very different communities is fundamental to the way the various digital platforms should be exploited. How we approach these issues has implications for who should be invited to sit on the project board.

#### The Authority position to date

13. The Authority already has a developed position on the importance of statistical releases and publications. Most Assessment Reports produced so far mention the need to improve the commentary. The Code expects producers to 'provide information on the quality and reliability of statistics in relation to the range of potential uses..', and include 'factual information about the policy or operational context of official statistics'. It is only

through supporting use in the real world of decision-making and action that official statistics can deliver their potential value.

14. Better statistical commentary is at the heart of enhancing both the beneficial impact of the statistical service, and public confidence in it and its worth. In October 2010, the Authority issued a statement summarising in general terms what it expects to see in statistical releases (see **Annex A**). As yet, only a small proportion of statistical releases and publications reach that standard. The review will look again at the position that the Authority has taken to date to see if it needs to be developed further.

Starting points

15. We see the review proceeding in two stages:
16. The first stage will look at how and when HoPs take the decision that commentary is needed; and from there seek to answer some further questions:
- i. What are the drivers of such decisions?
  - ii. Would it be helpful to think in terms of a toolkit for HoPs to help guide their decisions in this area?
  - iii. What do we mean by high quality commentary (beyond the existing published guidance in Annex A)?
  - iv. Are we exploiting the resources of digital technology as a way of enhancing commentary?
17. Practical steps which we would propose in order to explore the points above and report to COS and the Authority Board include:
- A series of meetings involving the Chair of the Review, the National Statistician, Head of Assessment, monitoring and assessment project manager and small groups of HoPs.
  - Notes of the points made at the meetings to be prepared and circulated to a small group within the Statistics Authority (to be defined) to take stock and agree an initial set of conclusions.
  - A paper summarising the action taken and conclusions reached to be submitted to COS for discussion along with revised plans, and a timetable, for the second part of review.
18. The second stage would involve establishing a more broadly based project board including external experts to review the messages emerging and consider the priorities for action. That project board would also oversee the drafting of a final report and consultation on it. The report might be designed to go beyond simply making recommendations and include, or be accompanied by, a programme of work agreed at senior level by relevant government departments, to take forward changes where these are needed.

**Richard Alldritt, Head of Assessment, May 2011,**

**Annex A Authority Statement: Standards for Statistical Releases (October 2010)**

**Annex A Authority Statement: Standards for Statistical Releases (October 2010)**

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/standards-for-statistical-releases.html>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(COS)(11)19

***Draft Monitoring Brief: Immigration Statistics***

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-sir-michael-scholar-to-rt-hon-keith-vaz-mp-11072011.pdf>

SA(COS)(11)20 – Update on National Statistician’s Review of Housing Market Statistics

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(COS)(11)20

***Update on National Statistician’s Review of Housing Market Statistics***

This document will be published on the UK Statistics Authority website in due course.

The document will be available at:

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