

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

Meeting of Friday 17 July 2009
Board Room, Statistics House, Newport

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir Michael Scholar (Chair)
Professor Sir Roger Jowell (Deputy Chair, Official Statistics)
Lord Rowe-Beddoe (Deputy Chair, ONS)
Mr Richard Alldritt
Mr Partha Dasgupta
Dame Karen Dunnell
Mr Steve Newman
Professor Steve Nickell

Secretariat

Mr Robert Bumpstead
Mr Mervyn Stevens

Apologies

Ms Moira Gibb
Professor David Rhind

Other attendees

Mr Richard Laux (Monitoring and Assessment, UK Statistics Authority) (items 9 to 11)

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1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Moira Gibb and Professor David Rhind.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes and Matters arising from the Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 June, 2009 were accepted as a true and fair account.
- 3.2 The Chair confirmed that he had written to John Healey MP, Minister for Housing and Planning on 8 July 2009 with regard to the Authority's views on the need for the development of a national address register if there were to be significant improvements in counting the population.

4. Reports from Committee Chairs

Audit Committee

- 4.1 In Professor Rhind's absence, Mr Dasgupta reported on the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 23 June, 2009. The main business of the meeting was to consider a draft of the Authority's Annual Report and Accounts for 2008/09 and to receive the National Audit Office Audit Completion Report. The Committee had also reviewed the Accounting Officer's Statement on Internal Control and, on the basis of all of this, had recommended that the Accounting Officer should sign the Accounts as submitted.
- 4.2 The meeting had also received the overall opinion of the Head of Internal Audit for 2008/09 and the Committee approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2009/10. Revised Terms of Reference for the Committee were also approved.
- 4.3 At their next meeting the Committee would be looking at how to map sources of assurance across all of the Authority's remit.

Assessment Committee

- 4.3 Professor Jowell reported that the Assessment Committee had met on 9 July, 2009. The Committee had reviewed six draft assessment reports and the recommendations of the Committee were for consideration by the Authority later in the meeting.

Committee for Official Statistics (COS)

- 4.4 Professor Jowell reported on the meeting of the Committee for Official Statistics held on 9 July, 2009. The meeting had received a report on the progress of the *Strengthening the User Voice* project and had received a paper presented by Dr. Martin Dougherty, Director of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) on the future strategic direction of the RSS Statistics User Forum.
- 4.5 The National Statistician had provided an update on the programme for the revitalisation of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) and the meeting had also considered a paper on future Authority engagement with the GSS. The Committee had considered an initial draft of criteria for the removal of National Statistics designation and had requested a further draft be submitted for their next meeting.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) Board

- 4.5 Lord Rowe-Beddoe reported on the meeting of the ONS Board held on 10 July,

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2009. The Board had received presentations on the findings of the Employee Engagement Survey and on the strategy for the Web Development Programme. The Board had considered issues including the ONS property estate and human resource matters.

- 4.6 Lord Rowe-Beddoe informed the meeting that he would be meeting with officials from the ONS Trades Unions later in the day as part of a regular series of meetings.

5. Authority Comment: Management Information, Research and Official Statistics [SA(09)37]

- 5.1 Mr Alldritt presented a paper which included a revised draft statement on the circumstances under which the Authority might comment in relation to Official Statistics. The draft had been revised in the light of comments made by the GSS task force on the use of management information in Official Statistics. In approving the statement for publication the meeting noted that the National Statistician had recently issued guidance to the GSS on the use of management information and research data.

6. The Monitoring Function

- 6.1 After discussion it was agreed that:

- i. the current arrangements - agreed by the Authority at their meeting on 27 November, 2008 - for the investigation of immediate issues of public concern and for providing advice to the Authority should continue and these should be known as 'special monitoring';
- ii. the Authority would continue to commission Monitoring Reports from the Monitoring and Assessment Team, and;
- iii. the Authority would also ask the National Statistician for reports where appropriate on a range of issues where, for example:
 - a. cross-departmental work was required;
 - b. professional issues were a major consideration;
 - c. extensive work was required and significant expenditure might be involved;
 - d. a system-wide view was required - e.g. as with the current planning work .

7. Census Order 2009 [SA(09)38]

- 7.1 The National Statistician introduced a paper which outlined the legislative process and a timetable for the secondary legislation for the 2011 Census in England and Wales. A draft Census Order would be submitted to the Minister for the Cabinet Office in August for approval by the Domestic Affairs Committee of the House of Commons and Welsh Assembly Ministers. The Census Order would be laid before Parliament in October. The approval of the Authority to the draft Order was required before it could be sent to the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

- 7.2 The meeting noted the proposed arrangements and approved the draft Census Order for submission to the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

8. Future Funding Settlements [SA(09)39]

- 8.1 Mr Newman introduced a paper which gave details of the Authority's current funding settlements with HM Treasury for the financial years to 2011/12. The meeting noted the Ministerial commitment given to the House of Commons in January 2007 to a five-year funding settlement for the Authority. This settlement runs to 2011/12. Other government departments had their funding confirmed for a three-year period until 2010/11.

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- 8.2 The meeting noted the paper and in particular the funding in future years for the 2011 Census. It was agreed that it was very important that the five-year funding commitment for the years up to 2012 should not be abandoned.

9. Assessment Programme Progress Report [SA(09)40]

- 9.1 Mr Laux presented a paper which reported on progress with the assessment programme. The meeting considered broad estimates of future work and how this might be done. About thirty assessment reports should be published by 31 December 2009 and assessments of more than 150 National Statistics should be completed by 31 March 2010. It was estimated that up to 300 assessments could be completed in any subsequent business year. A list of proposed assessments - including sets of grouped statistics for certain government departments - for phase two of the assessment programme was considered by the meeting.

- 9.2 The meeting noted progress and approved the list of assessments in the phase two programme for publication.

10. Assessment Report 4: Road Casualty Statistics [SA(09)41]

- 10.1 Mr Alldritt presented this assessment report which the Assessment Committee had considered at their meeting on 9 July, 2009. The Assessment Committee had recommended that the report should be published and that designation as a National Statistic, subject to the implementation of certain recommendations for enhancements, should be confirmed.

- 10.2 The meeting agreed with the recommendations of the Assessment Committee and approved the report for publication, subject to further amendments to be agreed by Sir Roger Jowell.

11. Assessments Reports 5 to 9 [SA(09)42]

- 11.1 Mr Laux presented the following assessment reports:

- *Assessment Report 5: UK Energy Sector Indicators*
- *Assessment Report 6: Road Freight Statistics*
- *Assessment Report 7: Prison Population Projections*
- *Assessment Report 8: Migration Statistics*
- *Assessment Report 9: Statistics on International Development and the ODA: GNI ratio*

- 11.2 The Assessment Committee had considered all of these reports at their meeting on 9 July, 2009 and had recommended that the reports should be published and that designation as National Statistics, subject to the implementation of certain recommendations for enhancements, should be confirmed in each case (again, subject to the agreement of Sir Roger Jowell on some further possible changes to the text).

- 11.3 The meeting agreed with the recommendations of the Assessment Committee and approved all of the reports for publication.

12. Any Other Business

- 12.1 The Chair remarked that, in view of her retirement at the end of August, this would be the last meeting of the Authority that Dame Karen Dunnell would attend. The meeting joined the Chair in thanking Dame Karen for her service to the Authority.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Agenda

Friday, 17 July, 2009

Board Room, Statistics House, Newport, 11:15 - 15:00

Chair: Sir Michael Scholar
Apologies: Ms Moira Gibb

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 190609
2	Reports from Committee Chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audit Committee• Assessment Committee• Committee for Official Statistics• ONS Board	Prof. David Rhind Prof. Sir Roger Jowell Prof. Sir Roger Jowell Lord Rowe-Beddoe
3	Authority Comment: Management Information, Research Data and Official Statistics	SA(09)37 Mr Richard Alldritt
4	The Monitoring Function	Oral Report Sir Michael Scholar
5	Census Order 2009	SA(09)38 Dame Karen Dunnell
6	Future Funding Settlements	SA(09)39 Mr Steve Newman
7	Assessment Programme Progress Report	SA(09)40 Mr Richard Alldritt
.	Draft Assessment Reports	Mr Richard Alldritt and Mr Richard Laux
8	AR 4: Road Casualty Statistics	SA(09)41
9	AR 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9	SA(09)42
10	Any other business	

Next Meeting: Friday, 11th September 2009
Edinburgh, 11:15 - 15:00

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(09)37

***Statistics Authority Comment on Management Information, Research Data,
and on the Use of Statistics in Policy Documents***

Purpose

1. This paper covers a revised draft statement setting out a policy for Statistics Authority comment on management information, research data, and on the use of statistics in policy documents.

Timing

2. The Authority Board agreed at the June meeting to adopt and publish a policy statement as soon as practicable.

Recommendations

3. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. approve the policy statement for publication (**Annex A**), and;
 - ii. note the comments from the Government Statistical Service (GSS) task force (**Annex B**) on the original draft of this statement, and the National Statistician's guidance to the GSS on the use of management information, research and Official Statistics (**Annexes C and D**).

Discussion

4. The Authority first identified the need to agree and publish a statement setting out its locus in relation to Official Statistics and when it might make interventions in these matters at the end of 2008. This followed the Authority's intervention in December 2008 on the Home Office's fact sheet about knife crime.
5. The value of such a statement would partly be in providing context and justification for Authority comment in relation to matters that are not covered in the *Code of Practice*, including the treatment of statistics that departments do not regard as Official Statistics, and the use of Official Statistics in departmental policy documents and political statements. A draft Authority policy statement was first considered at the meeting of 20 February 2009 [SA(09)08] *Management Information and Policy Documents*
6. It was agreed that this position should be developed alongside guidance being formulated by the National Statistician's task force in respect of management information. Subsequently, the task force conducting the work expanded its remit to also consider questions of government research. The results of this work were released at the end of June and circulated to Authority members on 29 June. (**Annexes C and D**).
7. The GSS task force on the use of management information in relation to Official Statistics was also invited to comment on the draft Authority statement. Comments were circulated to Authority members on 30 June and are attached at **Annex B**.
8. The Authority statement has been amended in light of these comments and is attached at **Annex A**.

Secretariat, UK Statistics Authority, July 2009

List of Annexes

- Annex A Statistics Authority Comment on Management Information, Research Data, and on the Use of Statistics in Policy Documents**
- Annex B GSS Task Force Response to Draft Authority Policy Statement**
- Annex C Covering Letter and Guidance on the Distinction Between Statistics and Research**
- Annex D GSS Guidance on the Use of Management Information in Relation to Official Statistics**

**Annex A - Statistics Authority Comment on Management Information, Research Data
and on the Use of Statistics in Policy Documents**

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website

To see the document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/statement---management-information--research-data--and-the-use-of-statistics-in-policy-documents--22-july-2009.pdf>

Annex B Government Statistical Service (GSS) Task Force Response to Draft Authority Policy Statement on Management Information [SA(09)08]

During the 15 May meeting of the UK Statistics Authority, the GSS Task Force on the use of management information in Official Statistics was asked to consider the implications of the draft Authority policy statement on management information (action 5, bullet 2). This is the response from the Task Force.

1. Definitions

What do the documents say?

The key question here is “whether all Management Information (MI) or statistics that are put into the public domain should be regarded as Official Statistics and come under the remit of the *code*?”

Paul Wiles’ and Karen Dunnell’s joint guidance note on the distinction between statistical and research outputs (hereafter referred to as the statistics/research guidance) defines the properties of statistics - national coverage; part of a series; statistical principles. It also says that:

“Statistical outputs – which are intended to inform politicians, officials and wider public about the national position on specific topics on an ongoing basis - are governed by the Statistics Code”.

The UK Statistics Authority document does not deal with properties of statistics but says that:

“We define Management Information here to include all numerical data produced, or publicly used, by official bodies but which that body does not regard as Official Statistics”.

And that it will define the sub-set of this information that it could regard as Official Statistics based on two criteria:

- *the management information is used publicly in support of decision-making by government – including decisions on policy, resource allocation and any other major decisions of public interest, or:*
- *the management information attracts public comment or controversy when published and the UK Statistics Authority takes the view that it would better inform public debate if the figures were to be handled as Official Statistics and a proper statistical release prepared*

The Task Force view

The Task Force has three key principles for defining how it would distinguish between MI and Official Statistics

- If the information is used for internal purposes only then it would regard it as MI and outside of the scope of the *code* (but has given guidance on how to manage the risk that it could be used to disclose the findings of any related Official Statistics)

- If the information is used publicly then it **could** be regarded as Official Statistics, but **that criteria alone is not sufficient** to define all MI as such
- The MI should also have the characteristics of Official Statistics as outlined in the statistics/research guidance and be of sufficient interest to be subject to the *Code*

For this latter point, we have accepted that it is neither possible nor desirable to attempt to come up with a completely watertight definition that will cover every possible case. So we have accepted that the Authority definition is a reasonable guide to work with and will require Heads of Profession (HoPs) and the National Statistician to make judgements for their departments on the numerical series that should be regarded as official statistics. We need to build up some case law and share common practices, but the expected starting point is that as a minimum it should include statistics and MI that are used for key targets (Public Service Agreements (PSAs), Designated Strategic Objectives (DSO), other key performance measures).

We agreed that it would be useful to develop the GSS planning process to identify new MI or statistical series that are under development and take a view from the outset as to which ones should be regarded as Official Statistics. This is not yet covered in any guidance, but will in effect be a key element of the process that the Authority has suggested for securing agreement on what should be regarded as Official Statistics.

We also recognised that the set of MI that attracts public interest and/or controversy will change over time. An exceptions process is therefore needed, which also relies on HoPs making judgements on behalf of departments. This is covered in our summary and main guidance.

The main practical implication of classifying a series as Official Statistics is around the requirement to release the numbers for the first time in some form of statistical release, separate from any political comment and before they are used in any policy/departmental/organisational documents.

We would then expect the Authority to play a challenge role on decisions by the National Statistician and the HoP. We would like a system whereby the Authority engages with the National Statistician and HoPs to clarify what advice has been given and decisions made, before it comments publicly.

What does this mean for the summary Task Force guidance?

The Task Force summary guidance does not include anything on definitions and refers to other documents for this. The statistics/research guidance talks about 'specific topics' but does not say how they are arrived at. So, we need to decide whether to:

- use the one in the research paper and have a line on the "how do we decide on the topics?" question (for National Statistics this was effectively decided by Ministers);
- accept the Authority definition, which brings in the concept of the wider public interest, and;
- Come up with something else?

Pragmatically, the Authority definition is arguably more useful. Provided that there is recognition that:

- the National Statistician, Head of Government Social Research (GSR) and HoPs should play the key role in identifying the series that should fit this definition
- They will make their decisions transparent
- The Authority should perform the challenge role and consult the National Statistician and HoPs before commenting publicly
- The starting point should not be that “all MI or research should be regarded as Official Statistics unless proven otherwise”

This is the key point that needs to be bottomed out.

2. Other comments on the Authority paper

The first point relates to the following statement:

‘We define Management Information here to include all numerical data produced, or publicly used, by official bodies but which that body does not regard as Official Statistics’

The Authority needs to recognise that there are other forms of numerical information that are neither MI nor statistics; and that some information is covered by other codes that are outside the remit of the Authority. The main example is financial/accounting data that are governed by separate rules.

The other issue is whether the Authority should comment on MI that we have decided does not fit the definition of Official Statistics, but is used publicly and attracts controversy. The Authority paper talks about challenging whether the MI should have been released as an Official Statistics; and whether it would challenge the presentation of such statistics where there may have been an intention to mislead.

In principle it could also be asked to comment on MI that is not judged to be Official Statistics and has been presented in a way that could be judged to be misleading. It is not necessarily for the GSS to say whether the Authority should take on this role.

However, the Task Force guidance will help in two ways:

- the HoP and possibly the National Statistician should have been involved in the decision as to whether a piece of MI should be released as an Official Statistic, and;
- Analytical professionals should have been consulted on the presentation of the numbers in policy documents.

So, if the Authority were to consult with the National Statistician and HoPs before commenting publicly, this will better equip them to judge the ‘should this MI have been released as Official Statistics?’ and ‘the intention to mislead’ issues.

Annex C Covering Letter and Guidance on the Distinction Between Statistics and Research

To: All Heads of Profession for Statistics and Social Research

Re: Joint Guidance on Official Statistics – the distinction between statistical and research outputs and the treatment of management information

Dear Head of Profession

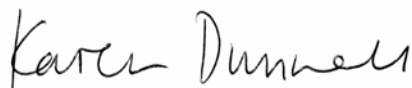
Two sets of guidance have been developed to help the government analytical community make robust decisions about the treatment of data.

The first is a guidance note on the distinction between statistical and research outputs developed jointly by Karen Dunnell, the National Statistician and Paul Wiles, the Chief Government Social Scientist, to help all those in the government statistics and social research services determine – in a robust and consistent way – which outputs they produce should be treated as statistics and which as research. These guidelines should facilitate close and collaborative working between the statistics and research professions, as encouraged by the Heads of Analysis group. They have been designed to assist the decision making of departmental statisticians and researchers and help them manage risk. They provide a clear mechanism for unlocking problems through recourse to both the National Statistician and the Chief Government Social Scientist.

The second note sets out guidance on the use of administrative/management data which is also used for statistical purposes and which may be used to produce Official Statistics. It has been developed by a Government Statistical Service Task Force led by David Frazer of DWP. The guidance provides advice on how the principles and practices set out in the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* should be applied in relation to administrative/management data. It applies to all public servants who deal with management and similar forms of information.

The principles in these guidelines should be followed from this point forward. Please cascade to those working in your profession as you see fit.

Yours,



Karen Dunnell, National Statistician and Paul Wiles, Chief Government Social Scientist

cc the Heads of Analysis group

GUIDANCE ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN STATISTICAL AND RESEARCH OUTPUTS

The *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* (the '*Statistics Code*') and the Government Social Research Code (the '[GSR Code](#)') have each been developed to ensure that statistical and research information produced by government is generated, handled and released in a way that maintains public trust in its robustness, integrity and impartiality. This Guidance Note has been produced to help members of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) and Government Social Research (GSR) service determine, in a robust and consistent way, which outputs they produce should be treated as statistics, and which are research.

Statistical outputs – which are intended to inform politicians, officials and wider public about the national position on specific topics on an ongoing basis – are governed by the *Statistics Code*. Research publications – which are intended to provide the government of the day with social science evidence to inform policy making and delivery, but are also released for accountability purposes – are governed by the GSR Code.

The main difference between the two Codes relates to their status, and the specific detail contained in their release protocols. The *Statistics Code* is already mandatory and underpinned by legislation¹, while the GSR Code is currently based on self-regulation by the GSR profession. Both Codes promote the need for research and statistics outputs (findings and, where possible, datasets) to be released into the public domain, in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives access to the widest range of users. Both Codes highlight the importance of clear planning and timely publication to increase the standard and impact of the information produced, and to ensure there is no opportunity for release to be withheld or delayed for political reasons. Where the release protocols differ is in rules governing who can see the findings before they are released, for how long, and the extent to which there is flexibility over the timing of publication. The similarities and differences between the Codes and the release practices are summarised in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively.

Given that the public will not always be able to distinguish between statistics, research and other 'numbers' produced by official bodies, the UK Statistics Authority has an important role in monitoring all such outputs. This Guidance will help reassure the UK Statistics Authority that classification and handling of research publications is based on sound and consistent principles that are consistent with, and support, those in the *Statistics Code*.

Public bodies – with endorsement from the UK Statistics Authority – have already determined which outputs, from which underlying datasets, are already regarded as National Statistics. They have also identified a set of outputs for consideration as National Statistics (subject to assessment and approval by UK Statistics Authority). All these outputs should be regarded as Official Statistics.

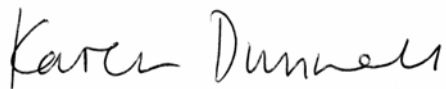
There are two parallel sets of principles (set out below) which help define the essence of statistics and research. It is important that statistical and research Heads of Profession apply these principles at the outset of planning for any new data collection exercise or proposed publication, whether the outputs will be classified as statistics or research. This will ensure the full process of planning, collection, management and release of data is governed by the appropriate Code.

¹ The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007

PRINCIPLE	STATISTICS	RESEARCH
1. NATIONAL REPRESENTATION	1. MUST be nationally representative Nationally complete data – covering one or more of the national or geographic territories; or covering every one of the entities that it might reasonably be expected to embrace.	1. MAY be nationally Representative Statistically representative of any target group of interest; qualitative samples selected to ensure inclusion of <u>range</u> of experience/ characteristics.
2. PART OF A SERIES	2a. Structured data collection system which is part of a series <p>The collection process is conducted on either a regular or recurring basis, or there are publicly announced plans to develop such series.</p> <p>e.g. Routine outputs from management information and other data which comment on progress of nationally rolled out programmes</p> <p>e.g. First-release outputs from regular nationally representative surveys</p> <p>OR</p> 2b. A data collection exercise is undertaken to test whether a series can be developed or benchmark an existing data collection exercise. <p>e.g. Experimental statistics.</p>	2. Where data collection is structured it MAY be repeated but is not intended at the outset to be part of a long-term series <p>e.g. one-off survey where the intention was to answer a specific policy question</p> <p>e.g. Evaluation reports of pilot policies, drawing on a range of survey, management information and other data.</p>
3. DATA COLLECTION AND EVIDENCE & ANALYSIS BASE IS ROBUST	3. Application of sound statistical principles <p>Application of sound statistical principles, consistent with international statistical practice, and quality assured by professional statisticians.</p>	3. Evidence and analysis is rigorous and robust, based on scientific methods <p>Range of professional standards apply depending on the methods used. These include statistical principles – especially those relating to statistical inference – where appropriate. Methods and outputs quality assured by appropriate professional specialists.</p>

One of the main ways in which public bodies can maintain public trust in their outputs is to ensure that key decisions about classification and handling should be made at the outset to avoid accusations that handling decisions were made on the basis of the results of the work. All departments and devolved administrations should therefore proactively review their planned quantitative outputs and determine in advance whether these should be regarded as Official Statistics so that they can plan for compliance with the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. It is highly recommended that the decisions made – which should be formally agreed by the Heads of Profession for both GSS and GSR – are recorded so that they can be referred back to.

Inevitably there will be circumstances where the application of this guidance does not lead to a clear classification and Heads of Profession for GSS and GSR need to exercise their professional judgement. In those circumstances where the GSR and GSS Heads of Profession are unable to reach agreement, they should refer the case to the National Statistician and Head of GSR for a ruling. The National Statistician and Head of GSR will inform the UK Statistics Authority of any such judgements.



Karen Dunnell, National Statistician



Paul Wiles, Chief Government Social Scientist

ANNEX 1: Summary of key similarities and differences² between the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* and GSR Code.

GSR principle: relevant, accessible

UK Statistics Authority principle: meeting user needs

Similarities

GSR products and Official Statistics should be aimed at informing their main users, and should effectively engage with their primary audiences to ensure final products are relevant.

Main differences

GSR Products

- Research should be planned to fit with policy timescales;
- Anticipate future policy issues as well as addressing current ones, and;
- Should contribute to all stages of the policy delivery process.

Official Statistics

- Should be published to a timetable that takes account of user needs, and;
- Adopt planning arrangements that reflect the obligation to serve the public good

GSR principle: Rigorous and impartial

UK Statistics Authority principle: Impartiality and Objectivity, Integrity, sound methods and assured quality

Similarities

GSS and GSR products should be based on sound methodology and established scientific principles. They must be designed, conducted, produced to high standards and quality assured. Data should be managed and presented impartially and objectively, and conclusions supported by data. The production and presentation of data should be free from political influence; research should not be undertaken with a view to reaching particular conclusions or prescribing particular courses of action.

GSR principle: Legal and Ethical

UK Statistics Authority principle: Confidentiality

Similarities

GSR products and Official Statistics should comply with relevant legislation, and ethical guidelines.

Main Differences

Official Statistics

- Should not reveal the identity of an individual or organisation, or any private information related to them.

GSR Products

- Should not reveal the identity of an individual or organisation without prior consent.

² This is not an exhaustive reproduction of the full set of practices specified in the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* and GSR Code.

GSR principles: Relevant, Perform Role with integrity, Legal and ethical
UK Statistics Authority principle: Proportionate burden, Resources

Similarities

GSR Products and Official Statistics must represent value for money and not replicate existing work. Government Social researchers and Statisticians should be appropriately skilled and continuously developed. Participation should be with informed consent.

Main Differences

Official Statistics

- Statisticians to consult users before changing the allocation of resources to statistical activities.

GSR Products

- Government Social Researchers to consult internally whether reallocation of resources is appropriate.

GSR principle: Accessible

UK Statistics Authority principle: Frankness and Accessibility

Similarities

GSR Products and Official Statistics should be published, draw out relevant information, and produced in clear and accessible ways.

Main Differences

Official Statistics

Make statistics available in as much detail as is reliable and practicable, subject to legal and confidentiality constraints.

GSR Products

Ensure outputs reflect the needs and constraints of the user, are clear, concise and jargon free, using 1:3:25 formats where possible.

ANNEX 2: Summary of key similarities and differences between Official Statistics and Government Social Research draft publication/release practices³

Similarities: GSR products and Official Statistics reports should be released into the public domain. Publication practices should take place in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives access to the widest range of users. Clear planning and timely publication should increase both the standard and impact of work. There must be no opportunity, or perception of opportunities – for release to be withheld or delayed for political reasons.

UK Statistics Authority Code, Protocol 2: release practices	GSR Code: GSR Publication Guidance (draft)
Release statistical reports as soon as they are judged ready	Release GSR outputs promptly (within 12 weeks of agreed final draft)
Publish a timetable of statistical releases for twelve months ahead	Announce a release date not less than 4 weeks before the actual release. The timing of publication can be made to coincide with a policy statement, decision or event, as long as this remains within the 12 week period. Set up a communication plan, including plans for both internal and external dissemination of interim findings and of final products at the beginning of a project
Issue statistical releases at the standard time of 9:30 am on a weekday to maintain consistency and to permit time for users to understand and respond to information during normal working hours.	Research should be released in formats and at times of the day which are convenient to the widest range of users, and which facilitate widespread access and informed debate.
Subject to compliance with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation, limit public access before public release to those people essential for production and publication, and for quality assurance and operational purposes. Publish records of those who have access prior to release	Ministers and policy/delivery colleagues may be briefed on findings at any point during a study to enable them to draw maximum benefit in making policy and delivery decisions. Those who have access to research findings prior to their publication should avoid public comment about these findings to avoid undermining the integrity of Government Social Research. An early understanding of Ministerial views and policy direction must not lead to a compromising of the objectivity of the research products

³ GSR Publication Guidance is currently being piloted in 8 departments and devolved administrations for a 12-month period to gauge its effectiveness and utility. The experience of these departments in implementing the guidance will be monitored and a report prepared to consider changes that might be adopted permanently in the future. The pilot started in May 2008 and recommendations based on the evidence collected will be fed back to Permanent Secretary Sub group overseeing this project late 2009.

Annex C - SA(09)37 - Authority Comment on Management Information and Research

Ensure that no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication. Report to the National Statistician immediately any accidental or wrongful release, and investigate circumstances	Embargoed access to research products may be given to accredited journalists and others where it is deemed necessary to provide them with a period of time to assimilate and comprehend the research in order to provide for informed comment at the time of release. The embargo period will span usual office hours, so that those with access can reach the relevant departmental researchers or press office for clarification or briefing.

Annex D

GUIDANCE FOR ALL STAFF

Good Practice in the Use of Management Information and Related Official Statistics

This note applies to all public servants who deal with management and similar forms of information. It has been issued by the National Statistician and builds on earlier guidance circulated by the Head of the Home Civil Service. It has been endorsed by the UK Statistics Authority and supplements the Authority's *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*.

Key Message

The *Code of Practice* encourages organisations to use quantitative information drawn from administrative systems for the management of government business, decision making and the production of Official Statistics. It also sets out the practices that must be followed in such circumstances, especially when this information is put into the public domain. If there is any conflict between these purposes, the public good should be the deciding factor.

Summary of Key Practices - to be followed by everyone who uses such information

Public use of management and similar information, and related Official Statistics

- seek and follow the advice of the appropriate Head of Profession (HoP) for Statistics (or equivalent official) or their colleagues on the public presentation of such information;
- use published Official Statistics, where available, in any form of public statement prepared for Ministers or officials; do not use any similar, unpublished management or other quantitative information where published official statistics are available;
- if you need to issue public statements which use quantitative information that has not previously been published, then:
 - obtain advice from the HoP on how that information should be presented/released, and;
 - if this information is likely to be released on a regular basis, arrange with the HoP for that information to become an Official Statistic so that it complies with the *Code*, and;
- in normal circumstances, access to provisional versions of Official Statistics should only be given to those persons involved in their production, distribution and quality assurance. In exceptional circumstances, however, HoPs may grant access to others if they decide that this is in the public interest, including policy decisions. Access will not be granted for the purpose of presenting or defending official policies.

Access to Management Information that covers similar ground to Official Statistics

- access will be given to management and similar information when it is needed for supporting the day-to-day management/operation of the organisation or decision making;
- if you do have access to such information before any related Official Statistics are published, you must not issue public statements based on that information, except in the circumstances described above, and;
- your organisation has a list of administrative sources that are, or can be, used to produce Official Statistics. It should make public, on request, details on any information from those systems that is given to Ministers, chief executive officers (CEOs) and senior officials before the publication of related Official Statistics.

NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S DETAILED GUIDANCE

Treatment of Administrative/Management Data used for Statistical Purposes

Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and advice on how the principles and practices set out in the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* should be applied in the following circumstances:
 - where quantitative information derived from administrative, operational, managerial, financial, scientific, and research sources are used to serve the day-to-day business of government and are, or should be, published with or without the designation 'Official Statistics'¹;
 - where data that are collected for the sole purpose of supporting government business demonstrate the potential to generate 'Official Statistics' as a by-product; or where it is in the public interest that they should do so, and;
 - where provisional data from purely statistical surveys are made available for administrative, managerial, operational and related purposes on an exceptional, and case-by-case basis.
2. For all practical purposes, all of the circumstances described above mean that a wide range of people, both within and outside government, many of whom may not be acquainted with the concept of a statistical *Code of Practice*, will be in a position where they can use and disseminate the data from those systems before those data are converted into Official Statistics, and often before any derived Official Statistics are published and made available to all. In other words they will have early access to Official Statistics which are not yet in their final form.
3. The early availability of such data before their conversion into Official Statistics (albeit justified) can lead to their uncontrolled or ad hoc use, and to the risk of their public disclosure or dissemination. Such early release may, in turn, pre-empt or undermine the eventual and more formal release of Official Statistics based on those data. The selective use of favourable information of this type can also undermine public trust in Official Statistics.
4. The risks outlined above mean that the arrangements for handling such access must be managed in a way which ensures that organisations fulfil their duty to comply with the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*.

Complementary Guidance

5. A different, but complementary, set of principles and rules apply in those circumstances where Government Ministers, Chief Executives and their close officials are given pre-release access to Official Statistics which **are** in their final form prior to publication. The arrangements governing this particular type of early access are set out in a series of legislative Orders laid by the UK Government and the three Devolved Administrations (DAs) and are explained more fully in separate guidance issued by each.²

Scope of Guidance

6. The principles and rules set out in this guidance apply to

¹ For a definition of what is meant by the phrase 'official statistics', see the complementary guidance document entitled: Guidance on the distinction between statistical and research outputs

² To date, three Pre-release Access Orders have been affirmed by the relevant Parliament/Assembly

- all Crown Bodies and those Non-Crown Bodies identified in any Official Statistics Order;³ and;
 - officials in any of the above bodies (whether or not statisticians) who either:
 - a. own, control, manage or use any administrative, management, monitoring or research systems or processes which either generate, or have the potential to generate, either 'Official Statistics', or Code-compliant 'National Statistics'
 - b. use the data obtained from such processes or systems to: meet managerial, policy or operational requirements; answer Parliamentary Questions; reply to requests for information under the *Freedom of Information Act*; or produce Official Statistics.
7. This guidance does not apply to staff in local bodies with respect to the provision of their own data (even when those data feed into central government systems) but it does apply when they are given access to national information, or information about other local bodies, that eventually feeds into Official Statistics.

Guiding Principles

8. The following guidance is based on a number of fundamental principles, namely that:
- it is entirely legitimate for organisations to make full and effective use of quantitative information obtained from their administrative systems for operational and managerial purposes. *The Code of Practice for Official Statistics* is there to reinforce rather than impede such usage;
 - where operational, managerial or policy decisions are informed by quantitative evidence, this process should be based on the best information available;
 - organisations should employ the skills of professional statisticians to improve the information derived from administrative systems and should also encourage them to exploit such information for statistical purposes in order to achieve value-for-money and reduce the potential burden on data suppliers;
 - neither the *Code* nor the statutory rules relating to pre-release access can apply in their entirety to such information. Instead, specific and appropriate arrangements for the application of the *Code* must be developed in each case;
 - the regular or recurring use of administrative/management information in public statements or releases places an obligation on organisations to either publish such information as Official Statistics, and in a way which conforms to the *Code of Practice*, or publish a public explanation for the continuance of such practice;
 - whatever arrangements are in place, openness and transparency are key to the maintenance and enhancement of public trust in the government's use of quantitative resources, and to safeguarding the integrity of any resulting Official Statistics, and;
 - the overriding imperative must be to serve the public good.

³ The UK Government's Official Statistics Order 2009; and the equivalent Orders in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

BEST PRACTICE

The complexity of all the different arrangements in place across government makes it difficult to lay down a simple set of rules that will govern all the circumstances that can apply. Owners, producers and users must often make on-the-spot judgements about propriety and the correct course of action. Those judgements, however, must be based on a set of sound ground-rules which are transparent to both practitioners and the wider community. The best practices outlined below reflect and expand on those set out in the *Code of Practice* – particularly those in Protocol 3 of the *Code*. They focus on five key areas of management:

- publication and dissemination;
- access;
- stewardship and development of administrative/management systems;
- assessment and maintenance of quality, and;
- public accountability and transparency

1. Managing the Publication and Dissemination of Management and similar Information which generates Official Statistics

Proactive Release

Many organisations use administrative, management and other forms of quantitative information in various forms of public releases, including Ministerial press releases, fact sheets, departmental reports, Chief Executive press releases, etc. The numbers given in these releases should be based on published Official Statistics whenever they are available. If there is a need to use unpublished management or other forms of quantitative information then it is incumbent on the responsible officials to:

- a) consult the appropriate HoP for Statistics (or equivalent lead official) on the options for meeting such requests;
- b) take any advice offered by the HoP for Statistics on the quality of administrative/management data and on its proper application and usage, and include that advice in any Ministerial submission which covers that data;
- c) take any advice offered by the HoP on how the information should be put into the public domain (i.e. whether it should be regarded immediately as Official Statistics and released in line with the *Code of Practice*), who will consult with the National Statistician when necessary;
- d) where information is not released as Official Statistics, clearly label any alternative dataset as lying outside this domain; draw attention to its provenance and status; explain the relationship between that dataset and any equivalent Official Statistics and highlight any shortcomings compared with any related statistics;
- e) avoid any statement which might pre-empt or compromise the later release of Official Statistics;
- f) avoid selective or partisan reporting that might undermine public trust in the statistics;
- g) if the need for such an action becomes a regular requirement, consult the HoP with a view to converting that information into Official Statistics, and;
- h) avoid the proactive publication of selective favourable data, or any action which might encourage such a perception.

In turn, and in order to mitigate the need to use administrative/management data in the interim, and as an alternative, producers of Official Statistics should endeavour to publish derived statistics in accordance with a timetable which strikes an appropriate balance between timeliness of release, users' needs, resource availability, and fitness-for-purpose.

Ad hoc or Reactive Release

In the normal course of their business, organisations will receive regular requests for quantitative information – perhaps in the form of Parliamentary Questions or in the context

of the *Freedom of Information Act* - which can only be met by reference to data gleaned from their administrative or management systems. When officials respond to such requests they should, where practicable, use the Official Statistics derived from those systems in preference to any intermediary or alternative version of the information. In so doing, officials should:

- provide, or at least point to, the latest available Official Statistics which are germane to the enquiry rather than provide any intermediary, provisional or alternative versions of the data, and;
- call in aid the appropriate section of the appropriate *FOI Act* which protects from disclosure Official Statistics which are due to be published later.

Clearly the more that an organisation is able to publish data from its administrative or management sources in the form of 'Official Statistics', the less the likelihood that the organisation will be forced to countenance the unplanned release of internal administrative/management information. Quantitative information obtained directly from these systems should only be used to meet *FOI* and other requests if there is no statistical alternative. If there is an overriding case for publishing quantitative information from such systems in advance of the release of any derived Official Statistics, then officials should consult the HoP and follow points a) to f) above.

In such circumstances, HoPs should consider bringing forward publication of any planned Official Statistics in an ordered and transparent way in order to ensure equality of access.

However, it should be noted that if there was no intention to release any relevant management information as Official Statistics at the time that a *FOI* request is received, then the management information has to be provided under *FOI* rules. Once the Official Statistics have been published they can be used to answer any subsequent *FOI* requests using the latest published set.

Some organisations produce Official Statistics from administrative sources that are updated on a frequent basis. This means that there will normally be management and other forms of information that is timelier than the Official Statistics. Organisations should continue to use the latest published Official Statistics in these circumstances. However, they should consider whether changes should be made to the frequency of the published Official Statistics if there is a significant need for more timely data. They could also consider producing provisional versions of the Official Statistics.

2 (i) Managing Access to Administrative/Management Information prior to the Publication of any derived Official Statistics

Organisations that are covered by the *Code* are encouraged to make full and appropriate use of management and similar forms of quantitative information for the day to day running of their business. However, care must be taken when this information covers similar ground to any Official Statistics that are due to be published subsequently.

The controllers of such systems must:

- a) where possible limit additional access to management and similar data (whether in electronic or hardcopy form) on a need-to-know basis. i.e. to those persons required to peer review the data and to persons within the originating or owner organisation who have a legitimate need to use the data for managerial, operational or other appropriate decision making purposes in advance of their publication as statistics;
- b) where people have access ensure that they understand their responsibilities under the *code* and give a clear undertaking not to place such data in the public domain;
- c) ensure that any web-based access to such data is appropriately protected;

- d) keep records of which sets of information that are provided to Ministers and senior officials and other post-holders who are granted access for the purposes described in (a) above, and make this record publicly available on request;
- e) where access is restricted but subsequently granted to additional parties, e.g. for exceptional reasons, refer any such instance to the statistical HoP;
- f) keep records of which post-holders are granted access for the purposes described in (a) above, and make this record publicly available on request, and;
- g) formulate and apply clear 'Conditions of use' on such access – modelled on this guidance.

In such circumstances, users must:

- a) abide by the 'Conditions of Use' attached to administrative/management data by the HoP. This also applies to any people outside the owner organisation who are granted access for specific purposes (e.g. staff in other organisations who may be collaborating on an initiative that spans several organisations);
- b) avoid ad hoc or selective comments on, or reporting of, administrative/management data which might undermine trust in any derived statistics;
- c) avoid making any public statement that pre-judges or pre-emptes the contents of any subsequent statistical release, and;
- d) comply with the rules set out in the relevant Pre-release Access to Statistics Order in the period immediately before publication of any derived Official Statistics, e.g. by not making any comment, or issuing any statement that might compromise the integrity of those statistics.

Producers of Official Statistics must:

- a) provide advice on integrity and propriety to colleagues who use administrative or management data before they are converted into statistics;
- b) grant pre-release access to the Official Statistics in accordance with the principles and rules set out in the relevant *Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order*, and;
- c) escalate to the HoP or National Statistician any concerns about the improper use of administrative/management data.

2(ii). Managing Access to derived Official Statistics not yet in their Final Form

- a) controllers must **not** grant early access to derived Official Statistics for policy or briefing purposes, other than for the purposes, and under the conditions, set out in the relevant *Pre-Release Access to Statistics Order*. This is because such access would breach the fundamental principle of 'equality of access', and might raise suspicions that such access was being used to circumvent the rules which govern pre-release access to statistics in their final form;
- b) this rule can only be waived in exceptional circumstances where, in the opinion of the HoP, acting in consultation with policy colleagues, the public benefit likely to result from such access significantly outweighs the detriment to public trust in Official Statistics which is likely to result from such access. In making such a decision the HoP will judge whether the latest available quantitative information provides sufficient cause for a policy decision or intervention to be taken before the figures are placed in the public domain, seeking advice from the National Statistician as appropriate, and;
- c) in the case of UK Government organisations, such exceptional access must be publicly documented at the time of publication.

3. Stewardship of Administrative/Management Systems which also generate (or have the potential to generate) Official Statistics

As the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* recognises, the statistical advantages of administrative or management systems (relating, for example, to their timeliness and breadth of coverage) can only be fully realised if statistical purposes are actively promoted

in the design, development, maintenance, and adaptation of such systems. Close collaboration between the controllers of such systems and their statistical colleagues can also generate complementary improvements to the systems themselves, and to their capacity to deliver robust and useful management information. Benefits can also accrue to the wider community if such collaboration leads to the elimination of expensive data collection systems, a reduction in the form-filling burden placed on data providers, and improvements in the quality of management information. Senior managers should ensure, therefore, that close links are established and maintained between the controllers of administrative or management systems and the producers of any derived Official Statistics; that system managers and IT staff involve their statistical colleagues in the stewardship of such systems; and that statisticians are given the opportunity to influence their thinking. More particularly the controllers of such systems must:

- a) recognise that the experience and expertise of professional statisticians and other professional analysts in government can make a valuable contribution to the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative/management systems and their application to policy or operational purposes;
- b) establish governance arrangements which give government statisticians and other professional analysts appropriate access to administrative or management systems and the opportunity to influence the design, and further development of administrative and management systems in ways which increase the potential of those systems to provide Official Statistics which remain consistent over time, and;
- c) consult statisticians and other professional analysts in government before considering, or making, any changes to administrative/management systems or any related performance targets which might damage the viability, integrity or continuity of any derived statistics.

Those responsible for producing Official Statistics must, in turn:

- a) recognise that early access to administrative, management and related data for the purposes for which those data were originally collected does not constitute inappropriate access;
- b) avoid imposing over-zealous statistical standards on such data, or obstructing the legitimate use or the exceptional publication of such data before their conversion into Official Statistics;
- c) consider the alternative option of exploiting existing administrative or management systems before launching new statistical surveys in order to avoid the possibility of imposing duplicative and burdensome obligations on data providers;
- d) collaborate with the owners/administrators of such systems to ensure that the definitions and concepts used for administrative or management purposes are as close as appropriate to those required for statistical purposes, and;
- e) work in partnership with the owners/managers/controllers of administrative/management systems to help enhance the potential for those systems to generate Official Statistics.

4. Managing the Quality of Administrative/Management Sources which generate Official Statistics

The controllers of administrative/management systems, as well as their policy, operational and statistical customers, all have an interest in maintaining the quality of the information they extract from those systems. For statisticians, however, there are several overriding issues:

- whether they have sufficient understanding about the basis of an administrative or management system to be able to judge whether or not that system is capable of delivering robust Official Statistics;
- their ability to link to other statistical sources at the design stage of new or redeveloped systems and the opportunities that exist for shared IT systems, and;

- the extent to which changes to the underlying systems – whether generated by policy shifts, or changes in IT systems or business processes – have the potential to damage the quality of the Official Statistics derived from those data, and in particular their relevance, coherence, comparability and consistency over time. (The degree to which such changes pose a problem for statisticians depends to a large extent on their understanding of, and influence over, the source data; and their ability to mitigate such changes.)

Senior managers should ensure, therefore, that controllers and statisticians cooperate in the task of assessing and documenting such systems in a manner which will serve the following purposes.

Organisations must:

- a) compile a 'Statement of Administrative Sources' (SAS) – in accordance with Protocol 3 attached to the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* – which describes how administrative, management or similar information is used within organisations, and the extent to which that information is released prior to its eventual publication as Official Statistics. A recommended template for a 'Statement of Administrative Sources' is shown in **Annex A1**;
- b) apply appropriate quality assurance procedures to administrative/management systems – thereby informing, supplementing and reinforcing the UK Statistics Authority's statutory accreditation 'Assessments' of any derived statistics;
- c) create and maintain a high-level 'Process Map' for each system which provides a clear description of the process which leads to the production of the original administrative or management data, and the relationship between that data and any resultant statistics;
- d) ensure, where practicable, and where there is no risk of adverse consequences, that administrative/management systems use definitions and classifications which match, or map to, those used for statistical surveys;
- e) compile appropriate documentation (as shown in **Annex B1**) in order to:
 - inform judgements about the potential for such systems to generate Official Statistics;
 - explain any system changes which have had an impact on the continuity of any derived statistics;
 - inform decisions about the most appropriate way to handle discontinuities or issue revisions, and;
 - foster greater public understanding of how the underlying administrative/management data are collected, processed, used, and released and how they relate to any resultant statistics;
- f) accompany any publication of administrative/management data with balanced commentary and supporting metadata which describes the nature and quality of the data used, and their fitness for purpose, and;
- g) otherwise, make transparency a key component of good practice.

5. Compiling a Statement of Administrative Sources

One of the most effective ways of preserving public trust in Official Statistics is to be totally transparent about their provenance, and about the processes and procedures which lead to their compilation and publication. At the simplest level this requires officials to make publicly available a list of the 'names' or 'titles' of all the quantitative systems and sources within organisations which can be drawn upon for administrative, management, or operational purposes as well as for statistical purposes, and to which the principles and rules in this Guidance apply.

The UK Statistics Authority, however, expects government officials to go several steps further. The third Protocol attached to its *Code of Practice* requires officials to publish a 'Statement of Administrative Sources' which identifies not only those administrative or

management systems which are already used in the production of Official Statistics, but also those systems which have the potential to be so used.

In addition, and for each system used to produce Official Statistics, the Authority expects officials to describe the arrangements made to:

- take account of the effect of administrative changes on the resultant statistics;
- provide statistical staff with access to the data for statistical purposes;
- audit the quality of the source data, and;
- ensure the security of the statistical processes that draw on such systems.

ANNEX A1

BEST PRACTICE TEMPLATE – STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SOURCES

This Annex provides guidance on the recommended format, structure, and content of each organisation's 'Statement on Administrative Sources'

To comply with the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* (and more particularly Protocol 3 of that *Code*) every organisation that produces Official Statistics must publish a 'Statement of Administrative Sources'. This statement must include a list of the 'names' or 'titles' of all the quantitative information systems which are in operational use throughout the organisation, distinguishing between:

- those which are already used for both internal and external administrative/management purposes as well as for statistical purposes, and;
- those which, currently, are used only for administrative/management purposes but which have the potential to be used, additionally, for statistical purposes.

In the interests of making their arrangements as transparent as possible, government organisations are urged to publish Statements which are as comprehensive and detailed as resources will allow. For each of the first type of system described above, the Statement should also include the following details:

Collection – a short outline of the process through which the system's underlying 'raw data' are captured;

Application - a description of each of the main applications/uses to which the administrative or management data are put before they are transformed into Official Statistics (e.g. operational monitoring, resource allocation, performance measurement, etc);

Access and Dissemination – a summary of the arrangements put in place for sharing and disseminating the administrative/management data, either inside or outside the organisation, during the period before they are converted into Official Statistics – whether via a hardcopy, an intranet, access to a database, whatever. The details provided should cover the range, nature and timing of such access;

Non-statistical Publication - a summary of any exceptional arrangements put in place for placing the administrative/management data in the public domain during the period before they are converted into Official Statistics. This should cover the reason for such publication and the nature and timing of such publication;

Statistical Publication – A listing of each of the 'official' or 'National' statistics series derived from each system, and;

Synergies – a mapping which explains the relationship between any public manifestations of the administrative/management data, and any subsequent statistical releases or publications.

Security/Data Protection Arrangements

Organisations are also encouraged to link their Statements to the more detailed metadata documentation described in **Annex B1** overleaf. The extent to which this metadata can be compiled will give a good indication as to whether sound judgements can be made on the suitability of such systems to provide relevant statistics that are fit for purpose.

ANNEX B1

BEST PRACTICE – SUPPORTING METADATA

This Annex lists the metadata fields that should underpin the description of each information system listed in each organisation's 'Statement of Administrative Sources'

The quality of Official Statistics derived from administrative/management systems depends to a large extent on having a clear description, and thus understanding, of the processes through which both the original data are collected, and the resultant statistics are produced. The essential requirement is to provide a detailed and easily accessible 'Process Map' which describes the complete chain of production - starting with the original collection process and ending with the delivery of the final statistical product – through provision of the following metadata.

Recommended Metadata Fields:

Statistical End-Product

- Title of the statistical product derived from an administrative/management source
- Name of the organisation responsible for this statistical end-product
- Name/E-mail address of Contact Point for this product

Administrative/Management Source or System

- Name/Title of the original administrative/management data source
- Name of the organisation responsible for the original data source
- The purpose of the administrative/management system/source
- Unit of Inquiry (Claimants, Taxpayers, Households, Accidents, etc)
- Intended coverage of administrative/management system/source
- Completeness i.e. actual coverage (e.g. take-up rate)
- Geographical coverage of statistical product
- Lowest level of geographical coverage
- Extent to which statistical end-producers can influence the system
- Data definitions used
- Classification systems used
- The data collection process
 - Periodicity/Timing
 - Validation procedures
- Access arrangements for policy/operational/etc purposes
- Dissemination procedures (and publication procedures where appropriate)
- Timing/Periodicity of public release (if any)
- Nature of changes to the system/source (or other 'Noise') which can impact on the statistics

Change Process

- Procedures for changing definitions, scope, etc

The Subsequent Statistical Production Process

- Validation procedures
- Quality assessment
- Periodicity of release
- Potential impact of changes to the administrative/management system on the statistics
- Procedures for mitigating such discontinuities

Census Secondary Legislation

Purpose

1. Draft legislation for the 2011 England and Wales Census will need to be submitted to the Cabinet Office Minister in August for approval by the Domestic Affairs Committee and Welsh Assembly Ministers. This is necessary for the Census Order to be laid before Parliament in October, approved in Privy Council in December and for the Census Regulations to be laid in January. The UK Statistics Authority will first need to approve the draft Order and the process for clearance with Ministers.

Timing

2. Initial approval is needed urgently. The results of the further question testing will be available in early August, so final question recommendations cannot be reflected in the draft Order until then. A final draft Order will be available for UK Statistics Authority approval on 10 August. We will then seek sign off by the 21 August.

Recommendation

3. Members of the UK Statistics Authority are invited to comment on the draft Census Order (**Annex A**) and the proposed legislative timetable (**Annex B**). The draft Order may still need to change because of further 2011 Census question testing so the Authority Board is asked to:
 - i. provisionally approve the draft Order and the legislative timetable, and;
 - ii. agree the process for providing final sign off during August.

Discussion

4. The Census Act 1920 states that two pieces of secondary legislation are required: the Census Order and the Census Regulations. The Census Order defines when the census is to be taken; the people by whom, and with respect to whom, the census forms have to be completed; and the information to be recorded on the forms.
5. The attached draft Order is based on the proposals set out in the White Paper *Helping to Shape Tomorrow*, presented to Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales in December 2008.
6. The draft Order is traditionally debated by both Houses (in the Commons by a Delegated Legislation Standing Committee and in the Lords by a Full Committee of the House) even though only part of it formally requires affirmative resolution (those items set in italics in Schedules 2 and 3 of the attached draft).
7. Section 4 of the Transfer of Functions (No. 2) Order 2006, gives the Welsh Ministers a statutory right to be consulted on the Draft Census Order prior to its being considered by Parliament. Office for National Statistics (ONS) officials have worked closely with colleagues in the Welsh Assembly Government on the drafting of the Order and do not anticipate any issues of major concern.

Census Regulations

8. The Census Regulations detail the method of carrying out the 2011 Census and the precise wording and layout of the questions. These are scheduled to be laid before Parliament early in 2010 (once the Census Order has been made) by the Minister for the Cabinet Office and will come into effect by negative resolution. The Regulations are currently being drafted. Briefing will be provided on these later in the year.

SA(09)38 - Census Secondary Legislation

Questions still to be Agreed

9. Ethnic group – The ethnic group question results from extensive user consultation to assess the requirements for ethnicity statistics and public acceptability among particular ethnic minority communities. Following lobbying by MPs and a number of Kashmiri community groups since the Census White Paper was published we are considering adding a Kashmiri tick box. To this end we are testing how people would respond to the inclusion of such a tick box, whether there is any hard evidence of differential levels of disadvantage between Kashmiri and other Asian ethnic groups and whether there would be any unintended consequences among other ethnic groups.
10. Citizenship - A new question on citizenship is proposed for 2011 to meet the needs of central Government Policy Departments and Eurostat. The proposed question asks 'which passports do you hold', but we are still testing the more direct question 'what is your citizenship'. Change to the current recommendation would involve change to the draft Census Order.
11. Further testing is also underway on the Religion question and student addresses but any changes would not affect the wording of the Census Order.

Timetable

12. The draft Order, once developed and quality assured by Treasury Solicitors and ONS officials, agreed by the UK Statistics Authority and by the Cabinet Office Minister, must go to the Welsh Assembly Ministers and the Domestic Affairs Committee for approval. The Cabinet Office Minister can then lay the draft Order before Parliament. It must lay there for forty days, during which time it is scrutinised by two specific Parliamentary Committees: the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments (JCSI), where the drafting of technical aspects and feasibility of the legislation are examined; and by the Merits Committee, who assess the legislation to determine whether or not it is necessary, examine the consultation undertaken, see how it will affect current legislation and consider the impact on peoples' lives and the work of government and business etc. The legislation is then debated by both houses of Parliament (most likely through committees). If approved, the Order is then 'made' by the Privy Council, at which point it becomes law.
13. The Regulations for England follow a similar path in terms of drafting and legal checking as the Order. Welsh Assembly Ministers have the power to make their own Regulations with respect to the Census in Wales. Once sign off of the Regulations has been obtained and the Minister is satisfied, he/she makes the Regulations and lays them before Parliament. After twenty-one days they become law and after a further nineteen days that law comes into force, unless a motion is passed by either House to annul the Regulations. ONS can start acting under the Regulations as soon as they are made.
14. The anticipated time for a General Election is May 2010, although this is uncertain. If this were to be the case then Parliament would probably rise around mid to late March 2010. Therefore the Regulations would need to be laid as early as possible in the New Year to allow the forty days to have expired by this time.
15. This proposed timetable has been submitted to the Cabinet Office for their agreement and at the point of writing this submission we were still in discussion with them on this point

Financial and Legal Implications

16. There are no specific financial implications to this issue, unless the legislation fails to gain Parliamentary agreement. The services and advice of the Treasury Solicitors has been sought throughout.

Interdependencies

17. The White Paper was presented simultaneously to Parliament (by the Cabinet Office Minister) and to the National Assembly for Wales by Welsh Ministers. In Wales the White Paper was published in a bilingual format.
18. Separate legislation for the 2011 Census in Scotland and Northern Ireland is being prepared by the Registrars General for presentation to the respective legislatures to the same timetable. The Welsh Assembly Government will prepare separate Regulations for Wales to meet this time table.

Presentational Issues

19. The secondary legislation is likely to attract some media attention.
20. A Ministerial Statement introducing the legislation will be prepared shortly and added to the submission that will be sent to the Minister in September, and will be shared with the UK Statistics Authority for approval in August.

Glen Watson, ONS Census Director, 9 July 2009

List of Annexes

Annex A	Draft Census Order
Annex B	Proposed Legislative Timetable

Annex A - Census Order

It is planned that this Order will be laid before Parliament in Autumn 2009.

Annex B Proposed Legislative Timetable

Test results available.	03/08/2009
Recommendation of final questions, submission to Minister including briefing, Ministerial statement and non confidential brief agreed with the Statistics Authority.	10/08/2009 - 21/08/2009
Final Draft Order ready.	24/08/2009
Agreed submission sent to Minister.	26/08/2009
Draft Order sent by Minister to Welsh Ministers and Domestic Affairs Committee.	01/09/2009
Draft order approved by Welsh Minister and Domestic Affairs Committee, any agreed changes to Order are made.	21/09/2009
Final Ministerial approval of draft Order and all accompanying material.	09/10/2009 - 12/10/2009
Order and the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum are laid before Parliament by Cabinet Office.	19/10/2009 - 30/11/2009
Debates and approval for Order in Commons and House of Lords Committees.	November 2009
Final draft English and Welsh Regulations sent to the Statistics Authority.	07/12/2009
Order made by Privy Council.	9/12/2009 (assumed date)
Statistics Authority approves English and Welsh Regulations.	14/12/2009
Submission to Minister including final draft English Regulations and Explanatory Memorandum sent to Minister.	18/12/2009
Minister approves draft English Regulations and accompanying material.	08/01/2010
Minister makes English Regulations.	18/01/2010
Welsh Minister makes Welsh Regulations.	18/01/2009
English Regulations laid before Parliament.	18/01/2010
Welsh Regulations laid before Welsh Assembly.	18/01/2009
Both Regulations become law.	08/02/2010
Both Regulations come into force	15/3/2010 (depending on recess dates)

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(09)39

Future Funding Settlements

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update for Authority members on the Treasury's intentions around future spending settlements.

Timing

2. This paper is for information.

Recommendations

3. Members of the Authority are invited to note the progress being made with the Treasury Spending Team.

Discussion

4. Government departments' spending is agreed via what is known as a Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) where Government sets out its priorities over the period under review, departments respond with bids, and from which settlements are announced in terms of the Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL).
5. The Authority has a spending settlement that takes it through to March 2012, which is one year more than other departments. The current settlement is outlined out **Annex A**.
6. The paper at **Annex B** shows the current Treasury thinking and at the recent meeting with the Spending Team a number of areas became clearer. The next review will not be a comprehensive one, but for the Authority, the Team see it being split into two areas:
 - i. the Census, including funding to complete the 2011 Census and work towards any future Census, including alternatives to a traditional Census, and;
 - ii. the remaining part of the Authority's spend which they see as 'business as usual'.
7. In respect of the Census, we are updating the business case for the 2011 Census to enable the Treasury to understand the costs of completing the Census post March 2012. Separately, an outline business case is being prepared that will give options to either conduct a traditional Census in 2021 or a number of alternatives, and allow Treasury to make a decision on this area of the funding requirement for the next settlement. The Spending Team discussed the prospects for future census activity when they had an acquaint visit to Titchfield in May, and wish to keep informed on this work.
8. On 'business as usual' the Spending Team are unsure yet whether the approach will be to take the existing settlement and roll forward a settlement based on some kind of formula, or to conduct some kind of review as outlined at **Annex B**. At the second reading of the *Statistics Bill* In January 2007, the then Treasury Minister John Healey said:

"I have already made it clear that the funding arrangements for the board should reinforce statutory independence, and I have announced that the board's funding will therefore be set outside the normal spending review process. The aim is to ensure that the board has a certainty of funding over several years, to aid long-term planning and to minimise the dealings that the board will need to have with the Treasury.

I can confirm that the Government will guarantee the board's funding over five-year

periods—considerably longer than the three-year settlements that apply to other Departments through the spending review process. The certainty will be guaranteed through the setting of a transparent formula for the annual resources to be given to the board in each of those five years. Following consultation responses and the recommendations of the Treasury Committee, I can confirm that we propose funding the Census on a similar five-year period, integrated with the overall budget of the board."

9. The Spending Team have discussed whether a future settlement should terminate at the same time as other settlements. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) have found difficulty in agreeing cross government funding for 2011-12 for Census and migration as other departments current settlement ends in 2010-11 and it could seem sensible to have a settlement that was coterminous in the future.
10. However, there is a risk that by falling into the timetable that all other departments follow that the Treasury will re-open the final year of our settlement. We have pointed out to the Treasury that the largest element of the spend of that year is the Census and increasingly costs for that year are committed via contracts, the biggest of which with Lockheed Martin UK and Capita were signed off by the Treasury.
11. The present timetable outlined in **Annex B** allows for a spending decision to be made in the Spring of 2010, and allow most departments a year's notice before their settlement comes into effect in April 2011.

Steve Newman, Chief Finance Officer, July 2009

List of Annexes

Annex A Current Settlement

Annex B Forward Value for Money (VfM) – The Expanded Public Value Programme

SA(09)39 - Future Funding Settlements

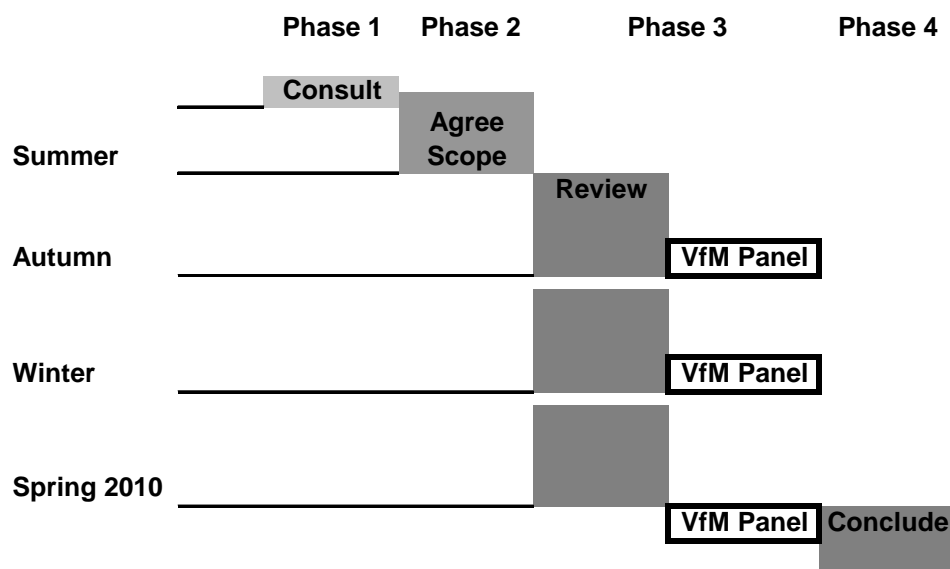
Annex A Current Settlement

£m	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Operating Costs # :					
Census	12	53	56	155	171
Other	130	140	134	131	133
Total	142	193	190	286	304
Non Cash Costs (capital charges and provisions)	21	21	20	20	20
Total Operating Costs (RDEL)	163	214	210	306	324
Total Capital Costs (CDEL)	16	21	15	15	15

Annex B Forward Value for Money (VfM) – The Expanded Public Value Programme

Budget 2009 announced that the Public Value Programme will be extended to cover a minimum of 50 per cent of each department's budget, with a particular focus on areas of spend that impact across departmental boundaries. This will be a year-long process, reporting around Spring 2010, comprised of joint reviews between HM Treasury spending teams and departments. As we scope the work, we shall also be looking for some topics where we can make faster progress.

A small network of Public Sector Innovators, individuals with experience of delivering transformational VfM programmes across the public sector, will bring expertise, independence and front line experience to the process. These Public Sector Innovators will work with reviews to help shape the process and extend best practice value for money approaches and examples across the public sector.



There will be a high-level central timetable, set out in the figure above, within which there will be significant flexibility. This timetable builds in consultation on key aspects of how the process will operate and the identification of Public Sector Innovators. Further detail on each phase of the process is set out below:

Phase 1 – Communicate and Consult

A month's consultation has been built into this process to engage departments on key aspects of how this process should operate. Feedback will be taken into account in determining who to involve in this process going forward and in a "toolkit" that will be issued during the scoping phase. Three key aspects for consultation with departments are:

1) Who are the key people in your or other departments who have achieved real success in delivering 20 per cent or more value for money savings in an area and who you think would be interested in supporting the programme?

A small number of such individuals will be invited to become part of the Public Sector Innovators' network. These individuals will be asked to sit on VfM Panels (see below) and where appropriate be involved with relevant reviews e.g. by providing advice or joining the joint review team. These Public Sector Innovators will inject their own best

practice experience to this process to help identify the areas of spend to be reviewed and the VfM methodologies that could be applied. Public Sector Innovators can come from any background, but will likely have experience delivering transformational VfM and continuous improvement techniques. We will seek to be flexible around time commitments to fit around what key individuals are able to offer the programme.

2) *What are the value for money approaches, such as Lean, Value Stream Mapping or similar models, which your department has used successfully? Could these models be applied elsewhere? Would you like to find out more about these approaches?*

There is a significant amount of existing good practice already taking place across government. A toolkit, which will be issued during the scoping phase, will outline the different VfM approaches currently being successfully used. While there is no 'one size fits all' model, the toolkit will set out a menu of options that can be applied to relevant areas.

3) *Which other departments or delivery agencies are most important to the delivery of value for money in your Departments' objectives or have similar business models that might provide scope for greater cross-working?* (Clearly, this may vary for different parts of your operations). We are keen to include a significant focus on reviews that look at the potential VfM savings from processes and outcomes that cut across a number of departments. We hope to help departments come together to examine shared outcomes and to help share best practice approaches across government.

During this phase we are also proposing that spending teams and departments should identify some resource to take forward the subsequent scoping phase.

Departments and spending teams may wish to start initial scoping discussions in May, overlapping with the consultation phase.

Areas for review will be prioritised on the basis of clear, shared criteria, e.g.:

- most significant areas of spend/people;
- key cost drivers and processes;
- priority outcomes, and;
- spend by all relevant departments where outcomes or processes are cross-cutting.

Phase 2 – Agree Scoping

At the start of June, Treasury will issue a toolkit with more details about how this process should operate, based on departments' feedback to the three questions above. The Toolkit will contain criteria for selecting areas to review, details of how departments and spending teams should work together to deliver these reviews, and a menu of VfM approaches that may be useful in the reviews (see question two above).

A central process involving the newly selected Public Sector Innovators will feed into selection of review areas, including the right representation of reviews of cross-departmental spend. Review areas (beyond those already agreed as part of the existing PVP) will therefore be confirmed after this.

The scoping phase should conclude with clear terms of reference and project plans for each review agreed between spending teams and departments. Again the Toolkit will set out in more detail the key features required here.

Phase 3 – Reviews and the VfM Panel (VP)

Some reviews should be completed earlier than others but given the size of spend that is expected to be covered, some reviews may take up to nine months. Review teams will have significant flexibility over how to structure each review over this period taking account of the VfM Panel timetable. Reviews could focus on the same large area of spend, phased in three parts, or choose to gradually focus in on key issues as they are identified in previous phases or choose to simply divide the area of spend into three more manageable pieces at the start of the process.

The intention is to model the VfM Panels on the success of the Major Projects Review Group (MPRG). Each will be chaired by a Treasury Director, bringing together a small group of people with relevant expertise to offer independent challenge and share advice – these will be rotating members drawn from the Public Sector Innovators network and other senior peers including Finance Directors and relevant senior officials from Departments. The review team will be required to give a formal presentation to this group and respond to the panel's questions. The panel may suggest ways in which the review should be taken forward and these recommendations should be taken into account in the next phase of the review.

Phase 4 – Conclusions

In this phase the review teams will present conclusions as a series of options for delivering transformational VfM savings - setting out impacts and critical paths and possible implementation plans. The VfM Panels will be involved in further road testing this analysis and refining the proposed actions.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(09)40

Assessment Programme Progress Report

Purpose

1. This paper addresses a number of aspects of the assessment programme that the Board may wish to consider ahead of the next phases of the work.

Timing

2. To maintain progress, agreement on these matters are required at the 17 July 2009 meeting.

Recommendations

3. The Authority Board is invited to:
 - i. note progress of the assessment programme;
 - ii. agree the publication of the web statement on the assessments to be included in phase 2 of the programme;
 - iii. agree the guidelines for grouping and prioritising statistics for assessment, and;
 - iv. comment on the illustrative grouping of statistics from Department of Energy and Climate Change.

Discussion

Progress on the Initial Tranche of Assessments

4. Three assessment reports were published on 24 June. To date there is no known press coverage. Six more are to be discussed at this meeting, with a view to publishing in the week of 20 July.
 - i. Road Casualty Statistics, revised following the discussion at the June meeting of the Authority and at the Assessment Committee on 9 July;
 - ii. Prison Population Projections;
 - iii. Office for National Statistics (ONS) Migration Statistics;
 - iv. Statistics on International Development and ODA/GNI;
 - v. Road Freight Statistics, and;
 - vi. Energy Sector Indicators (section 12 request).
5. The Assessment team will invite the Assessment Committee to consider the four-country assessment of statistics on Children Looked after by Local Authorities and three Scottish surveys by correspondence during the second half of August with a view to Authority Board consideration at the September meeting. The timing is important for the Scottish survey assessments to meet annual publication deadlines. The progress chart is at **Annex A**.
6. In the course of the initial series of assessment reports, we identified a need to be specific about the criteria which would lead to the removal of National Statistics designation; as opposed to the granting of a 'conditional designation' which is becoming the norm. The Committee for Official Statistics discussed draft criteria at its meeting on 9 July. It was decided that work to further refine these criteria would be carried out over the next few weeks. For information the draft criteria considered by the Assessment Committee are attached in the paper at **Annex B**.

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Phase 2 Assessments

7. Following a range of discussions with statistical producers we now have a planned programme for the summer and autumn. The detail of the programme is included in **Annex C**, which we would propose to publish on the website. Work is underway to agree details of scope and timing with producers, and to collect written evidence.
8. One noteworthy element of phase 2 is our proposal to develop plans relating to the 2011 Census. The June Authority meeting discussed the designation of new statistical outputs, which would be based on the evidence available to the Authority at the time of the assessment, and in the absence of a full consultation with users about the extent to which outputs meet their needs. We will therefore want to identify well ahead of publication of Census outputs (2012) any areas of *Code* compliance that may need to be addressed. We have in mind that part of this process should be a 'special assessment' of Census 2001 outputs. This will allow us to have on public record a broad statement about *Code* compliance for the Census ahead of the formal assessment of 2011 outputs. This special assessment will cover around 40 outputs, across the four countries, on the current list of 1200 National Statistics (NS) products.

Phase 3 Assessments

9. As described in an Authority Board paper in June [SA(09)32], the main elements of phase 3 will be:
 - i. separating the existing Written Evidence for Assessment (WEfA) form into two - to cover separately organisational and output-specific aspects of *Code* compliance;
 - ii. grouping and prioritising statistical outputs for assessment; we will ask Heads of Profession (HoPs) to propose groups of outputs and provide us with information about perceived importance etc for each group, according to the agreed guidelines, and;
 - iii. in-house development of a 'fast track' procedure, to enable us to sweep up relatively large numbers of selected NS outputs by the end of 2010.

Reviewing Procedures and Splitting the WEfA

10. We have continued to review our procedures as the initial programme of assessments has progressed. In the light of experience we have made some improvements to the WEfA to be used for the forthcoming batch of assessments.
11. We have also considered further the sequence for production and approval of assessment report and have revised the website statement on this. This was considered and agreed by the Committee for Official Statistics on 9 July, and subject to any further comments from the Board will be published. The statement on sequence is included at **Annex B**, the second part of paper [SA(COS)(09)21].
12. In paragraph 1.2 of the assessment reports, we have indicated that we will seek feedback on the initial assessment process. We will formally contact each of the producers involved in the first batch of assessment to elicit more feedback. We will use this to make further improvements to the process as necessary. Some changes, notably a) to make section 2.1 of the Assessment Reports which grants NS designation a more explicitly positive statement about the statistics, and b) to expand and develop the statements on the use made of the statistics in Section 3, are now in train.
13. Work is ongoing to split the WEfA into two - one part for those practices that relate to organisational policies, and one for those that relate to specific outputs. As stated previously, we intend to ask all producer bodies to publish and supply to us evidence of

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organisational compliance with the *Code* by December 2009.

Grouping and Prioritising

14. Since the last Authority meeting, we have refined the guidelines (to help producers to group and prioritise their statistical outputs), following a number of bilateral discussions with HOPs. These discussions were followed up with a presentation to the HoPs meeting on 6 July, and the approach was accepted. The guidelines are attached at **Annex D**, for the Authority's comment and approval. Once approved by the Authority, we will ask HoPs to provide indicative groups and priorities by early September. We will use that information to specify the ongoing assessment programme (phase 3).
15. As an indication of the types of grouping, **Annex D** also shows the grouping of the National Statistics outputs from the Department of Energy and Climate Change. This suggests that three assessment reports would cover 15 NS products in this department.
16. The long-term programme will be specified in light of information received from producers. We expect to present this to the Authority for agreement in October.
17. Work is also beginning to specify the more fast track procedures for selected groups of statistics. We expect to present emerging findings from this work for discussion at the Authority meeting in October, with a view to implementation from November 2009.

Staffing

18. The following developments have occurred since the last meeting:
 - Ed Swires-Hennessy (Grade 7) started with the Monitoring and Assessment Team in Newport on 1 July. Ed is with us on a two-year contract, part-time, and will concentrate on the management of the streamlined programme for selected groups of statistics;
 - Ruth Naylor (HEO) started in the Edinburgh office on 15 June;
 - Phil Grigor (Grade 7) is due to start in the Edinburgh office on 27 July. Phil comes to us from Audit Scotland, and;
 - Elspeth Maclean and Catherine Barham (both Grade 7s) are due to start in Newport on 17 August. Both are presently at ONS.
19. That leaves two unfilled posts in the Monitoring and Assessment Team in Edinburgh - work is ongoing to recruit people to those.

Mark Pont, Monitoring and Assessment Team, July 2009

List of Annexes

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Annex A | Detailed Assessment Progress Chart |
| Annex B | SA(COS(09)21: Criteria for De-designation and Revised Sequencing Document |
| Annex C | Assessments to be Included in Phase 2 of the Programme |
| Annex D | Guidelines for Grouping and Prioritising Statistics for Assessment and Example |

Annex A: Assessment progress as at 10 July 2009

Assessment	Assessment Specification Letter sent	Initial meeting	Written Evidence of Assessment back	Comments returned from users and others	Follow up meeting	Draft report	Report to Assessment Committee	Report to Authority Board	Report published
National Drug Treatment Monitoring System Statistics	y	9/2/09	13/3/09	20/3/09	8/4/09	24/4/09	19/5/09	19/6/09	24/6/09
Recorded Crime in Scotland	y	27/3/09	1/5/09	24/4/09	28/5/09	29/5/09	8/6/09	19/6/09	24/6/09
Enrolments at Schools and in Funded Pre-School Education in NI	y	1/4/09	7/5/09	8/5/09	29/5/09	1/6/09	8/6/09	19/6/09	24/6/09
Road Casualty Statistics	y	10/3/09	21/5/09	15/5/09	by email	22/5/09	8/6/09	17/7/09	23/7/09
Road Freight Statistics	y	2/4/09	3/6/09 (draft)	13/5/09	11/6/09	19/6/09	1/7/09	17/7/09	23/7/09
Energy Sector Indicators	y	27/4/09	15/5/09	15/5/09	11/6/09	17/6/09	1/7/09	17/7/09	23/7/09
Migration Statistics	y	17/4/09	27/5/09	29/5/09	15/6/09	29/6/09	1/7/09	17/7/09	23/7/09
Prison Population Projections	y	27/4/09	28/5/09	22/5/09	22/6/09	25/6/09	1/7/09	17/7/09	23/7/09
Statistics on International Development	y	28/4/09	1/6/09	29/5/09	23/6/09	30/6/09	1/7/09	17/7/09	23/7/09
ODA/GNI ratio	y	28/4/09	1/6/09	29/5/09	23/6/09	30/6/09	1/7/09	17/7/09	23/7/09
Children looked after by local authorities (E)	y	14/4/09	22/5/09 (draft)	11/5/09	2/7/09	7/8/09	14/8/09	11/9/09	
Children looked after by local authorities (W)	y	24/4/09	28/5/09	11/5/09	25/6/09	7/8/09	14/8/09	11/9/09	
Children looked after by local authorities (NI)	y	1/4/09	10/7/09	11/5/09	w/c	7/8/09	14/8/09	11/9/09	
Children looked after by local authorities (S)	y	27/3/09	1/5/09	11/5/09	24/6/09	7/8/09	14/8/09	11/9/09	
Three Scottish Government surveys s12 request	y	24/6/09	31/7/09	31/7/09	w/c			11/9/09	
Wealth in Great Britain	y	14/5/09	2/7/09 (draft)	13/7/09	17/8/09	7/9/09	14/9/09 tbc	16/10/09	
Statistics on the Criminal Justice System	y	22/6/09			tbc			tbc	
Scottish Household Survey	y	24/6/09						20/11/09	
Referral to Treatment Waiting Times		16/7/09							
Defra Agriculture Statistics		16/7/09							
National Child Measurement Programme		16/7/09							
DECC Energy Statistics		w/c							
DECC Regional Statistics		27/7/09							
Producer Price Indices (inc Services Producer Price Index)		w/c							
Average Weekly Earnings/Index of Labour Costs Per Hour									

(shading indicates actual dates)

***Criteria for Removal of National Statistics Designation
and Changes to the Sequence for Assessment Reports***

Purpose

1. This paper covers two separate points of clarification in relation to the production of Assessment Reports.

Timing

2. Pressing. A decision on the criteria for the removal of National Statistics designation is required so as to enable consistency of approach in future Assessments. A separate decision on changes to the sequence for the production and publication of Assessment Reports in light of recent experience is also required.

Recommendations

3. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics are invited to agree the proposed criteria for removal of National Statistics designation and changes to the sequence for the production of Assessment reports.

Discussion

Criteria for Removal of National Statistics Designation

4. The first three Assessment Reports, now published, all offer what might be called 'conditional designation' as National Statistics. That is, the statistics are allowed to carry the National Statistics designation but certain actions to ensure closer compliance with the *Code of Practice* are required by a specified date. The reports explain that this is to avoid confusion. Strictly speaking we have judged those statistics to be below the standard of the *Code* but not by such a degree to justify the immediate removal of the National Statistics designation.
5. This raises the question of under what circumstances the Authority would decide to remove the National Statistics designation with immediate effect. The *Act* says:

"If .. the Board determines that the Code continues to be complied with in relation to any statistics already designated as National Statistics ... it must confirm their designation as National Statistics; but otherwise it must cancel their designation."
6. Thus, the *Act* assumes that cancellation of the National Statistics designation is a proper outcome of an Assessment Report.
7. Where an Assessment Report does remove the National Statistics designation, it will be necessary to state reasons why a 'conditional designation' was not considered appropriate. The Assessment Team has therefore drafted the attached short statement to be included on the website (**Annex A1**).
8. It sets out criteria against which the case for removal of the National Statistics designation would be considered. We would further propose that in any case where the decision is taken to remove the designation, the Assessment Report should refer directly to these criteria, explaining how they had been interpreted in relation to the specific set of statistics. The 'Requirements for designation' section should then set

Annex B - SA(09)40 - Assessment Programme Progress Report

out clearly the remedial action that would allow the National Statistics designation to be restored; these should map directly to the criteria for removal of the designation.

9. Departments have made clear to us that they will regard the removal of the National Statistics designation as a serious matter and they are thus likely to challenge any such decision rather than focus on the improvement actions. Bearing this in mind and also that the Authority's influence over statistics is reduced if we remove the National Statistics designation, we may prefer to keep statistics in the National Statistics fold if we reasonably can. However, we need to be prepared to follow through on the removal of the designation where that is warranted.
10. In passing, we note that there may be instances when we assess a non-National Statistic against the *Code*, as required by section 12 of the *Act*, and we need to decide whether to recommend 'conditional' designation, or whether we think we should decline to designate them as National Statistics. We would be influenced by the second and third criteria in Annex A1.

Sequence for Producing Assessment Reports

11. In the light of experience with the first few Assessment Reports, some amendments are proposed to the sequence for assessment which is published on the website. The revised version is attached at **Annex B1**.
12. The main changes are to remove the first few steps which were about drawing up a programme rather than individual assessments and to bring forward consultation with the producer department and National Statistician to the step before consideration by the Assessment Committee. Otherwise the changes are minor drafting points. It is important that the Sequence document is kept up to date as it is consulted by producer bodies during the production of reports.

Richard Alldritt, Head of Assessment, July 2009

List of Annexes

Annex A1 Draft Statement for Authority Website - Criteria for the Cancellation of the National Statistics Designation

Annex B1 Sequence for the Production and Approval of Assessment Reports

Annex A1 - Statement for Authority Website - Criteria for the Cancellation of the National Statistics Designation

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

Information about the principles and procedures is available at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/principles---procedures/index.html>

Annex B1 Sequence for the Production and Approval of Assessment Reports

These steps are the normal sequence for individual assessments. In some circumstances steps may be skipped or combined where this is acceptable to the producer body.

1. Following consideration by the Authority Board, the Assessment Team publishes the Assessment schedule on the website [<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/current-assessments/index.html>], writes to statistical Heads of Profession (the Assessment Specification Letter), and seeks information from them about users and other stakeholders.
2. The Assessment Team that will write the report arranges a meeting with the Head of Profession and staff to ensure understanding of the process and of the template for written evidence.
3. The Assessment Team writes to selected users, including a link to the user questionnaire.
4. The Assessment Team publishes a web note inviting comments on the set of statistics to be assessed.
5. The Written Evidence for Assessment (WEfA) arrives from the producer body.
6. Questionnaires, and any other comments, are received from users. In some circumstances the assessment team leader may arrange a meeting with one or more users to better understand their perspectives.
7. The Assessment Team produces a summary of the issues raised by users.
8. The Assessment Team reads the evidence and prepares a first draft compliance chart against each of the 74 requirements of the *Code*. (The compliance chart is a working document, not part of the report).
9. The Assessment Team drafts Section 2, the Summary of findings of the Assessment Report.
10. A quality assurance meeting takes place involving the Assessment team leader, and specified senior managers. The aim of this is to challenge and probe the draft summary in the light of the evidence provided and then formally agree the summary as the Assessment Team's initial assessment. A question schedule for bilateral discussion between the Assessment Team and the producer body will also be agreed.
11. Face to face discussion, as necessary, of the agreed points (essentially the draft summary and any points on which the evidence was deficient) between the Assessment Team and the producer body.
12. A brief note of this meeting is prepared and agreed.
13. The summary is then revised as necessary, the remaining parts drafted, and the draft Assessment Report is made available to the National Statistician and the producer body to offer written comment. (Generally the producer body will be given at least five working days to comment).
14. The same version of the Report is presented to the Assessment Committee, along with any written comments provided by the producer body or the National Statistician. This material will normally be considered at one of the regular meetings of the Committee but may be taken in correspondence if timing necessitates that.
15. The Report is then revised as agreed by the Assessment Committee and submitted to the full Authority Board. The Authority Board will then either approve it for publication or ask for further work.

Annex C Assessments to be Included in Phase 2 of the Programme

PROGRAMME OF ASSESSMENTS – SUMMER/AUTUMN 2009

Under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*, the UK Statistics Authority has a statutory responsibility to assess whether the *Code of Practice* has been complied with in relation to any Official Statistics, subject to a request from an appropriate authority (as defined in the *Act*). Where the Authority determines that the *Code* has been complied with it will designate the statistics as "National Statistics", but otherwise not. These arrangements also apply to statistics already designated as National Statistics which will all be re-assessed.

In fulfilling its statutory remit, the Authority will use the assessment process, in line with the *Code of Practice*, to identify steps that could be taken to improve the service to users of the statistics, and will report accordingly. Such assessment will support the Authority's overall objective, which is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good.

The Authority also has a statutory responsibility to prepare and publish a programme for the assessment of statistics. Following the completion of the initial set of assessments¹, the Authority has asked its Monitoring and Assessment Team to begin to assess the following groups of statistics against the *Code*. The precise scope of these assessments will be discussed and agreed with producers.

This set of assessments will be supplemented with a more extensive and detailed programme for the remainder of 2009/10 and future years once more formal arrangements have been made to group and prioritise outputs for assessment. This programme will be announced in the autumn.

The Authority will keep the sequence and timing of these assessments under review, and it is possible that changes will be made to the programme.

To start in July 2009

Energy Statistics (Department of Energy and Climate Change)

Agriculture Statistics (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

NHS Referral to Treatment Waiting Times (Department of Health)

Child Benefit Statistics and Tax Credit Statistics (HM Revenue and Customs)

National Child Measurement Programme (The Information Centre for Health and Social Care)

Criminal Justice Statistics (Ministry of Justice)

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/programme-of-assessment/index.html>

Annex C - SA(09)40 - Assessment Programme Progress Report

Average Weekly Earnings and the Index of Labour Costs per Hour (Office for National Statistics)

Outputs relating to Producer Price Indices and the Services Producer Price Index (Office for National Statistics)

Large-scale cross-sectional Scottish Government surveys (Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, Scottish Health Survey, Scottish House Condition Survey, Scottish Household Survey) (Scottish Government)

Special assessment of outputs from the Population Census (Office for National Statistics, Welsh Assembly Government, General Register Office for Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency)

To be started in October 2009

Regional Statistics (Department of Energy and Climate Change)

Labour Market Statistics (Office for National Statistics, Welsh Assembly Government, Scottish Government, NI Departments)

Education Statistics (Department for Children, Schools and Families, Welsh Assembly Government, Scottish Government, NI Departments)

Annex D Guidelines for Grouping Statistical Outputs for Assessment and Example

This note describes the way the Monitoring and Assessment Team will ask statistical Heads of Profession (HoPs) to group statistical outputs for assessment. This is to maximise efficiency of the assessment process by grouping outputs that are sufficiently homogeneous. The Monitoring and Assessment Team will take account of statistical HoPs' views to determine which outputs will be grouped together. This approach is in line with the Principles and Procedures for Assessment, which were published, following consultation, alongside the *Code of Practice* on 6 January 2009. These say that "In the interests of efficiency, the Authority may group together ('bundle') related statistics, or statistics with common features, for the purposes of assessment."

HoPs will be asked to suggest ways their statistics may be grouped, taking into account factors such as:

- commonality of topic;
- commonality of users and uses of the statistics;
- homogeneity of methods, data collection and production processes, and;
- the extent to which the statistics are produced by the same statistician/analytical team.

In general, we expect groups to consist of typically between three and eight outputs. It won't be possible to form sensible groups in all cases, which means some statistics will be assessed alone. Similarly, it may be sensible to have some larger groups, or to assess several groups together. A particular case of this might be where we assess the same broad group of statistics in each of the four countries in parallel.

Guidelines for Identifying Level of Priority and Concern for Statistical Outputs

Introduction

This note describes the way that the Monitoring and Assessment Team will ask statistical Heads of Profession (HoPs) to rate the importance of their statistical products and the level of concern about them. The Monitoring and Assessment Team will use this information to help prioritise groups of outputs for assessment. This approach is in line with the Principles and Procedures for Assessment, which were published, following consultation, alongside the *Code of Practice* on 6 January 2009. These say that the assessment programme will be 'Risk-based - prioritising those areas of statistical activity which are considered to present a risk to the quality and reputation of Official Statistics'.

HoPs' Assessment of Importance and Concern

HoPs will be asked to consider two issues for each group of outputs: (i) its importance as a group of statistics, and (ii) the extent to which they have concerns about quality or other aspects. This approach mirrors that used by the Monitoring and Assessment Team in Autumn 2008 to identify Official Statistics that should be put forward for designation as National Statistics. We suggest that HoPs may use the following factors in reaching their judgment:

Importance (high, medium, low)

- whether the group of statistics is used as an indicator in economic or social policy making and the potential impact on decision-making of poor quality statistics;
- whether the group of statistics is used in allocating public resources, or other significant operational decision making by the department or an agency;
- whether the group of statistics has been used in setting, calibrating or measuring progress against any Public Service Agreement (or related) targets, and;
- whether the publication of the group of statistics typically generates significant media reporting or other public attention.

Concern (serious, medium, minimal)

- whether the HoP is aware of any users' (including ministers' and the media's) reservations about the quality of the statistics or their production/governance arrangements;
- whether the statistics have been the subject of a recent breach of the *Code of Practice*;
- whether there are any known issues of quality, including the HoP's own concerns or doubts about any aspects of the statistics, including the quality of the input data;
- the age of the systems used to produce the statistics, and;
- the extent to which the statistics may be open to misuse, abuse, or misinterpretation.

Prioritisation by the Monitoring and Assessment Team

In deciding priorities, the Monitoring and Assessment Team will also take account of other factors, such as:

- whether the group of statistics is the subject of a section 16 letter;
- the ease and appropriateness of grouping statistics together for assessments;
- our timetabling, including the need to maintain a balanced programme, and availability/timing of particular expertise to undertake the assessment;
- other developments in the producer body, for example organisational reviews, and;
- The Authority's own views on the statistics (for example, their quality or cost), including whether they have been the subject of complaints or comment to the Authority.

Example of Statistical Grouping

Department of Energy and Climate Change

Energy Statistics

Monthly Energy Statistics on the Internet (Monthly)
Energy Trends (Quarterly)
Quarterly Energy Prices (Quarterly)
Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics (Annual)
UK Energy in Brief (Annual)
Energy Consumption in the UK (Annual)
Energy Flow Chart (Triennial)

Regional Statistics

Consumption of Non-gas, Non-electricity and Non-road Transport Fuels ('Residual Fuels') at Local Authority Level (Annual)
Electricity and Gas Consumption at Middle Layer Super Output Area (MLSOA) and Intermediate Geography Zone (IGZ) level (Annual)
Electricity Consumption at Local Authority Level (Annual)
Gas Consumption at Local Authority Level (Annual)
Road Transport Fuels Consumption at Local Authority Level (Annual)
Total Fuel Consumption at Local Authority Level (Annual)

Climate Change Statistics

Emissions of Carbon Dioxide for Local Authority Areas (Annual)
UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Annual)

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(09)41

Assessment Report - Road Casualty Statistics in Great Britain

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

To see the document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-4---road-casualty-statistics--27-july-2009.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(09)42

Assessment Report - UK Energy Sector Indicators

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

To see the document go to:

[http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-5
---uk-energy-sector-indicators--27-july-2009.pdf](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-5---uk-energy-sector-indicators--27-july-2009.pdf)

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(09)42

Assessment Report - Road Freight Statistics

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

To see the document go to:

[http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-6
---road-freight-statistics--27-july-2009.pdf](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-6---road-freight-statistics--27-july-2009.pdf)

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(09)42

Assessment Report - Prison Population Projections

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

To see the document go to:

[http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-7
---prison-population-projections---27-july-2009.pdf](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-7---prison-population-projections---27-july-2009.pdf)

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(09)42

Assessment Report - Migration Statistics

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

To see the document go to:

[http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-8
---migration-statistics--27-july-2009.pdf](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-8---migration-statistics--27-july-2009.pdf)

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(09)42

***Assessment Report - Statistics on International Development
and the ODA:GNI Ratio***

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

To see the document go to:

[http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-9
---statistics-on-international-development-and-the-oda-gni-ratio--27-july-2009.pdf](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-9---statistics-on-international-development-and-the-oda-gni-ratio--27-july-2009.pdf)