

6 August 2009

## Appointment of the National Statistician

Her Majesty the Queen has appointed **Jil Matheson** as National Statistician, to succeed Dame Karen Dunnell who retires at the end of August 2009. Ms. Matheson will take up post on 1 September 2009.

The National Statistician is appointed by Her Majesty on the advice of the Prime Minister. The National Statistician is the Head of the Government Statistical Service, and an executive member of the Board of the UK Statistics Authority. She is the Authority's chief executive and principal adviser on statistical matters.

Speaking today, Sir Michael Scholar, Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, warmly welcomed the appointment:

"I am very pleased to welcome Jil Matheson to the Authority's Board as National Statistician. She will bring much experience, knowledge and wisdom to the Authority's work."

On the announcement of her appointment as National Statistician, Jil Matheson said:

"I am delighted to be taking up this leading position in UK official statistics. I am really looking forward to working with all the highly skilled and committed people who produce official statistics. Statistics are very important to the life of the nation, and it will be a real privilege to be at the forefront of ensuring that they meet the diverse needs of the UK public."

The National Statistician will be fully involved in the recruitment of the new Director General, Office for National Statistics, with operational responsibility for the management and direction of the Office for National Statistics.

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## Notes for Editors

### About Jil Matheson

1. Jil Matheson joined the Office for Population, Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) in 1975. Jil subsequently worked as a researcher, analyst and project manager for a number of social surveys, including the General Household Survey and the Family Expenditure Survey, and later became a member of a European Union working group and a World Health Organisation panel on measuring socio-economic inequalities in health.
2. Promoted to Deputy Director in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in 1998, Jil Matheson helped to develop the vision for the *Neighbourhood Statistics* service and to establish the *Social Focus* series of topic-based analytical statistical reports. From 2002, she led the final preparations for the introduction of the National Statistics Code of Practice, and managed relations between the ONS and wider Government Statistical Service. In 2003, she moved to the ONS Census Division to lead the project to evaluate the 2001 Census, and to plan the design of the next Census in 2011.
3. In 2003 Jil Matheson became the ONS Director with responsibility for Neighbourhood Statistics, population and demography, health and care, and regional and local statistics. Between 2004 and 2008, she was the Director of Census, Demographic and Regional Statistics.
4. Jil Matheson became Director General, Statistical Delivery at the ONS in 2008 with responsibility for the delivery of all ONS statistical operations and outputs, and for the development of ONS's statistical portfolio in consultation with users. She chairs the UK Census Committee and is a member of the Inter-Departmental Migration Statistics Improvement Board.
5. Jil Matheson was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Learned Societies in Social Science in 2001, and she is also a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and a member of the Social Research Association.

### About the National Statistician

6. The National Statistician holds office as a civil servant under terms and conditions determined by the Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service.
7. The key responsibilities of the role of National Statistician are as follows.
  - Chief Executive of, and principal adviser to, the UK Statistics Authority, with responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of official statistics by all the departments, agencies and institutions which produce them.
  - Lead planning of the development of statistics across government.
  - Drawing up and promoting guidance to help statisticians and other officials operate the Authority's Code of Practice, and to promote Code-compliance.
  - Providing advice to ministers, the Cabinet Secretary and other senior officials on the production, dissemination and use of statistics across government.
  - As Head of the Government Statistical Service, providing professional leadership to all statisticians within government, and to other producers of official statistics including the devolved administrations.
  - Maintaining strategic oversight of the ONS.
  - Co-ordinating the inter-departmental programme to improve migration and population statistics.
  - Maintaining strong relationships with devolved administrations; respecting their specific needs for devolved and other statistics which serve their administration while ensuring as far as possible harmonisation, coherence and consistency in UK-wide statistics.
  - Acting as head of the UK's National Statistical Institute in European and other international meetings, promoting UK interests as well as contributing to higher standards in statistics across the world.
  - Being fully involved in the appointment and induction of the Director General to fill the new role of chief executive and Accounting Officer of ONS, charged with the efficient production and delivery of all statistics for which the ONS is responsible. This new post will report to the National Statistician.

### About the UK Statistics Authority

8. The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament. It was established on 1 April 2008 by the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.
9. The Authority's statutory objective is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. It is also required to promote and safeguard the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and ensure good practice in relation to official statistics. The UK Statistics Authority has two main functions:
  - i. oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) - its executive office; and,
  - ii. independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK.
10. **Sir Michael Scholar** KCB was appointed Chair of the UK Statistics Authority in September 2007 in open competition and with parliamentary approval under the new arrangements. He is President of St John's College, Oxford. He has been a governor of the National Institute for Economic and Social Research since 2001. Previously he was Permanent Secretary to the Department of Trade and Industry (1996 to 2001), Permanent Secretary to the Welsh Office (1993 to 1996) and Private Secretary to the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1981 to 1983).
11. The other non-executive members of the Authority, also appointed in open competition, are:

**Lord Rowe-Beddoe of Kilgetty** (David Rowe-Beddoe), who occupies the post of Deputy Chair with responsibility for advising the Authority on the governance of the Office for National Statistics.

**Professor Sir Roger Jowell** CBE, who occupies the Deputy Chair post with responsibility for advising the Authority on its responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of all official statistics across the UK.

**Professor David Rhind** CBE, FRS, FBA who was Chairman of the Statistics Commission and was Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the City University in London until July 2007. He was a non-executive director of the Bank of England's Court of Directors, and until 1998 was Director-General of the Ordnance Survey.

**Partha Dasgupta** who was Chief Executive of the Pension Protection Fund and a former Managing Director at Barclays Global Investors.

**Moira Gibb** CBE who is Chief Executive Officer of the London Borough of Camden

**Professor Steve Nickell** CBE, FBA who is Warden of Nuffield College, Oxford. He was a member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee from June 2000 to May 2006.

There is currently one vacancy for a non-executive member of the UK Statistics Authority.

The Authority also includes three executive members. These are: the National Statistician; the Head of Assessment, Richard Alldritt; and Finance Director, Office for National Statistics, Steve Newman.

12. Further information about the UK Statistics Authority may be found on the Authority's website [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk), and also in its first Annual Report and Resource Accounts for the year 2008/09.