

Announcement

10 October 2008

Reports from the Authority's Monitoring and Assessment Team

Update No. 1

Additional information further to the Announcement made on 4 July 2008

Authority Monitoring Reports

The Authority has a statutory function under section 8 of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* to monitor the production and publication of official statistics. The Authority will publish reports under this section of the Act and will issue these as Authority Monitoring Reports. They will be produced with the involvement of external experts and user interests, and will reflect the independent views of the Authority.

Official Statistics Code of Practice

Monitoring Report No. 1 was the consultation document on the draft Code of Practice for Official Statistics and the statement of Principles and Procedures for Assessment. The consultation phase began with the publication of the consultation document on 8 July 2008 and the consultation closed on 30 September. Further information regarding the consultation can be found at:

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

The Authority expects to publish Report No. 2 – its report on the consultation and the finalised Official Statistics Code of Practice – in January 2009.

Statistics not currently included within “National Statistics”

Monitoring Report No. 3 will be about statistics not currently included within “National Statistics”. The *Statistics and Registration Service Act* defines those statistics and statistical reports that can bear the National Statistics label – essentially those already treated as National Statistics when the Act came into force and any other official statistics that Ministers invite the Authority to assess against the Code of Practice, subject to the assessment being positive and the National Statistics designation being granted.

In addition, section 16 of the Act sets out that where the Statistics Authority believes that an area of statistical work should be assessed against the Code but it does not have a statutory right to make such an assessment, it must notify the relevant Minister, or other authority, of its views. The Authority therefore needs to consider under what circumstances, or against which criteria, it would take the view that a set of 'official statistics' should be assessed against the Code.

This Report will list those official statistics not currently included as National Statistics which can be readily identified. Against each of the sets of official statistics identified in the list, the views of the relevant Head of Profession for Statistics, the views of the Authority's Monitoring and Assessment Team, and the decision of the Authority on whether to make a notification to the relevant Minister will be recorded. The report will also explain how other statistics not covered in this report will be identified and considered in a similar way in the future.

The report will further list all those statistical series currently designated as National Statistics in accordance with section 18 of the Act. This list will then be updated annually as an annex to the Authority's Annual Report.

Progress with improving migration statistics

Monitoring Report No. 4 will consider progress with improving migration statistics. For the purposes of this review 'migration statistics' includes statistics of international immigration into the UK and emigration from the UK; estimates of numbers of such international migrants who have taken up residence over a period of time at geographical levels down to local authority area; numbers who have left each area; and estimates of the gross and net flows of population between local authority areas.

Recent reports by both the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee (TSC) and House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs have emphasised the need for improvements. The Authority's review will examine progress in improving the statistics in recent years, plans for further improvements, and the timeframes in which they can be expected to be delivered.

The Authority's Report will draw conclusions about the adequacy of plans for improving migration statistics (including the prospective value of the 2011 Census data); about progress against those plans; about any further steps that government needs to take; and about any need to improve the communication of the statistics and their reliability to users and the public. Priority will be given to the areas of concern raised by the TSC, the House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs and any other areas governed by existing inter-departmental arrangements. A report providing

emerging findings and recommendations will be published for comment before the end of March 2009 and the final report will be published before the end of June 2009.

Long-term requirements for official statistics

Monitoring Report No. 5 will consider arrangements for longer term planning for official statistics to meet society's needs. The purpose of this review is to assist the Authority in fulfilling its obligations under section 8 of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act*. The Report will review existing published reports from any source, in the UK or internationally, that point to likely future UK statistical requirements and comment on the level of confidence that Government should have in the requirements identified.

The Report will also seek to engage users of statistics, academics and other commentators to build consensus about the shape of future statistical requirements and record their views, and report on consultations with the devolved administrations about any aspects of long term statistical requirements that are specific to them.

This Report will review current plans to address future requirements and draw conclusions about the adequacy of current plans; consider how in the UK's decentralised statistical system, the different parties might be engaged in regular horizon-scanning exercises so that coherent conclusions are reached and can influence statistical planning in a coherent way; and consider any implications of the conclusions for statistical skills and human resources – either in terms of the balance of skills or the identification of likely areas of shortage.

Consultants will be engaged, following open tender, to manage the project and to submit a written report to the Authority. The review is expected to run from March 2009 to July 2009 with an *Emerging Findings* report published in May 2009 and the consultants' report to the Authority submitted at the end of July 2009. The Authority will then circulate its own draft report incorporating the consultants' report in September 2009, inviting comments which will then be published, and will finalise its report in November 2009.

Measures of inflation, trust in crime statistics, and adequacy of environmental statistics

The scoping of work for the remaining three Authority Monitoring Reports that were announced on 4 July will continue throughout 2008-09:

- Report 6: The communication of measurements of inflation (and consumer prices);
- Report 7: Barriers to trust in relation to crime statistics; and

- Report 8: Adequacy of environmental statistics to inform public debate and government policy

Further information regarding these Reports will be provided in due course.

If you have any enquiries about any of the Reports or work mentioned in this Announcement, please email authority.enquiries@statistics.gsi.gov.uk, or write to us at: Monitoring and Assessment, UK Statistics Authority, Statistics House, Myddelton Street, London, EC1R 1UW