

Announcement

26 February 2009

Reports from the Authority's Monitoring and Assessment Team

Update No. 2

Additional information further to the Announcements made on 4 July and 10 October 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.

Published and Scheduled Reports

The first three reports outlined in earlier announcements – *Official statistics serving the public good: the Consultation on the Code of Practice*; the *Report on the Consultation and the Principles and Priorities for Assessment*; and *Priorities for Designation as National Statistics* - have been published.

Reports scheduled for the remainder of 2009 are as follows:

- Progress with improving migration statistics
- Strengthening the user voice
- Barriers to trust in relation to crime statistics
- The communication of measures of inflation (and consumer prices)
- Arrangements for pre-release access to official statistics

Progress with improving migration statistics

Work on the preparation of this report is well underway. In line with earlier announcements publication of the Authority's findings in interim form are scheduled for March 2009 and in final form for summer 2009.

Strengthening the user voice

This review will begin shortly. The aim is to publish interim findings in spring 2009 and a final report by mid-2009. The Code of Practice for Official Statistics focuses heavily on the user perspective and requires producers to engage with users to the extent that users wish, and this report will develop the framework for such user engagement. The review will focus particularly on users outside government and will aim to draw together and analyse a variety of methods of user engagement.

The aim of the review is not to produce an inventory of specific users' needs; instead it aims to:

- raise awareness of the benefits of engaging in a systematic way with users;
- consider the extent to which the production of official statistics currently takes account of the needs of users;
- identify ways in which better engagement between producers of statistics and users can be achieved, and;
- identify ways in which the specific needs of different users can be communicated effectively and systematically to producers.

Barriers to trust in relation to crime statistics

In accordance with previous announcements, and the Authority's concerns about the release of knife crime statistics in December 2008, the Monitoring and Assessment Team is about to start work on this review. Publication of the Authority's findings is envisaged for autumn 2009.

Communicating the measurement of inflation

Work on this review is planned to start in the second quarter of 2009, with a view to publication by the end of the year.

Arrangements for pre-release access to official statistics

This review of the new statutory arrangements for pre-release access to official statistics will begin towards the end of 2009.

Adequacy of environmental statistics to inform public debate and government policy

Work on this review is scheduled for late 2009.

The schedule for these, and future Monitoring Reports will be appraised in mid-2009 and a further announcement may be made then.

Changes to priorities for Monitoring Reports

The priorities and timetable for the Monitoring Reports envisaged in earlier announcements have altered slightly. The main change is the deferral of the planned report considering arrangements for longer-term planning for official statistics. This report had been foreseen for the early part of 2009; however, the National Statistician has recently launched a new system for statistical planning, in discussion with statistical Heads of Profession in government. This system is intended both to improve the planning mechanisms and to provide (and integrate) regular “horizon scans”.

The Authority considers that this activity largely supersedes the proposed Monitoring Report, hence its deferral. There may however be a case for a future Authority report on the UK's future statistical requirements and the development of the statistical planning infrastructure.

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