

Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Statistics on Short-term International Migration for England and Wales

(produced by the Office for National Statistics)

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About the UK Statistics Authority

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*.

The Authority's overall 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 good practice in relation to official statistics.

The Statistics Authority has two main functions:

1. oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – the executive office of the Authority;
2. independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK.

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ASSESSMENT AND DESIGNATION

The *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* gives the UK Statistics Authority a statutory power to assess sets of statistics against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*.

Assessment will determine whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics comply with the *Code of Practice*. The *Code* is wide-ranging. Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Designation as National Statistics should not be interpreted to mean that the statistics are always correct. For example, whilst the *Code* requires statistics to be produced to a level of accuracy that meets users' needs, it also recognises that errors can occur – in which case it requires them to be corrected and publicised.

Assessment reports will not normally comment further on a set of statistics, for example on their validity as social or economic measures. However, reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Assessment reports typically provide an overview of any noteworthy features of the methods used to produce the statistics, and will highlight substantial concerns about quality. Assessment reports also describe aspects of the ways in which the producer addresses the 'sound methods and assured quality' principle of the *Code*, but do not themselves constitute a review of the methods used to produce the statistics. However the *Code* requires producers to "seek to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews".

The Authority may grant designation on condition that the producer body takes steps, within a stated timeframe, to fully meet the *Code's* requirements. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the *Code*.

The Authority grants designation on the basis of three main sources of information:

- i. factual evidence and assurances by senior statisticians in the producer body;
- ii. the views of users who we contact, or who contact us, and;
- iii. our own review activity.

Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, it may withdraw the Assessment report and revise it as necessary.

It is a statutory requirement on the producer body to ensure that it continues to produce the set of statistics designated as National Statistics in compliance with the *Code of Practice*.

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1 Summary of findings

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This is one of a series of reports¹ prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*². The Act gives the Statistics Authority power to re-assess whether the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*³ continues to be complied with in relation to official statistics already designated as National Statistics. The report covers the set of statistics reported in *Short-term International Migration Estimates for England and Wales*⁴ (*STIM*), produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
- 1.1.2 This re-assessment is in response to a request by ONS that local authority short-term international migration estimates (LA *STIM*), previously reported as experimental statistics in *Distributing Short-term Migrants to Local Authorities*⁵, be assessed under subsection 12(7) of the Act. During the course of the assessment, ONS made the decision to integrate the local authority (LA) estimates into *STIM*. The previous assessment of this set of statistics was reported in Assessment Report 87⁶. As a result of this decision, this is a re-assessment of *STIM* which has been expanded to include LA estimates. *STIM* was previously called ‘*Short-term Migration for England and Wales*’ prior to 2013.
- 1.1.3 Section 3 of this report adopts an ‘exception reporting’ approach – it includes text only to support the Requirements made to strengthen compliance with the *Code* and Suggestions made to improve confidence in the production, management and dissemination of these statistics. This abbreviated style of report reflects the Head of Assessment’s consideration of aspects of risk and materiality⁷. The Assessment team nonetheless assessed compliance with all parts of the *Code of Practice* and has commented on all those in respect of which some remedial action is recommended.
- 1.1.4 This report was prepared by the Authority’s Assessment team, and approved by the Board of the Statistics Authority on the advice of the Head of Assessment.

1.2 Decision concerning designation as National Statistics

- 1.2.1 The Statistics Authority judges that the statistics covered by this report are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed

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

² http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf

³ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

⁴ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/short-term-migration/short-term-migration-estimates-for-england-and-wales/index.html>

⁵ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/updates-and-reports/current-updates-and-releases/distributing-short-term-migrants-to-local-authorities/index.html>

⁶ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-87---short-term-migration-for-england-and-wales.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/guidance-about-assessment/criteria-for-deciding-upon-the-format-of-an-assessment-report.pdf>

impartially and objectively in the public interest, subject to any points for action in this report. The Statistics Authority confirms that the statistics published in *STIM* are designated as National Statistics subject to ONS implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority by July 2013.

- 1.2.2 ONS has informed the Assessment team that it has started to implement the Requirements listed in section 1.5. The Statistics Authority welcomes this.

1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

- 1.3.1 The LA *STIM* estimates were developed in response to user feedback. ONS consulted users throughout the development and testing of the statistics: through the Local Population Estimates Working Group; liaison meetings with LA users and roadshows (run as part of ONS's Migration Statistics Improvement Programme⁸ (MSIP)) which were open to anyone.

- 1.3.2 ONS has clearly documented the research development and methods used in the production of the statistics in a detailed research report, as well as in a summary paper. It has also described the associated quality issues for the national (England and Wales) and LA estimates in Quality and Methodology Information papers.

- 1.3.3 *STIM* brings together both short-term international migration estimates for England and Wales, and for LAs. It outlines the use of the statistics, and describes the patterns of short-term migration in relation to the trends in long-term international migration and travel.

1.4 Detailed recommendations

- 1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that ONS could strengthen its compliance with the *Code*. Those which the Assessment team considers essential to enable designation as National Statistics are listed in section 1.5. Other suggestions, which would improve the statistics and the service provided to users but which are not formally required for their designation, are listed at annex 1.

1.5 Requirements for designation as National Statistics

Requirement 1 Publish information about users' experiences of the *STIM* estimates, including details of whether the quality of the estimates meets their needs, to inform the further development of the statistics (para 3.2).

Requirement 2 Publish detailed information about the limitations of the estimates, particularly in relation to the risks of any potential under-count and the impact upon the national and LA estimates (para 3.4).

⁸ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/index.html>

2 Subject of the assessment

2.1 *Short-term International Migration Estimates for England and Wales (STIM)* is an annual publication that provides information about:

- the number of visits of between 1 and 12 months made to England and Wales combined by overseas residents (inflow or ‘immigration’);
- the number of visits made overseas of between 1 and 12 months by England and Wales residents (outflow or ‘emigration’);
- the average stock of short-term migrants in England and Wales over a 12 month period; and
- the average stock of England and Wales residents on short-term visits overseas over a 12 month period.

ONS also publishes estimates of short-term international migration based on the United Nations (UN) definition of a short-term migrant: a person who moves to a country other than that of his/her usual residence for 3 to 12 months for work or study purposes. The STIM estimates for England and Wales were first produced in 2007 and designated as National Statistics in 2011⁹. They are produced using completed flow¹⁰ data from the overseas travel and tourism sample of the International Passenger Survey¹¹ (IPS). ONS identifies those travellers that are short-term migrants entering or leaving the UK by all major airports and sea routes, at Eurostar terminals and on Eurotunnel shuttle trains.

2.2 ONS developed LA STIM estimates in response to user feedback, following the publication of the national estimates. An initial set of estimates was first published as part of a research report¹² in October 2009. ONS carried out further development work in order to use administrative sources directly to estimate the level of immigration in LA areas for two specific types of migrants – workers and students for a period between 3 to 12 months. This is consistent with the UN definition of a short-term migrant. The new ONS method uses the reason for migration information from the IPS to identify national short-term flows of workers and students. It then distributes these estimates directly to LAs using data from various administrative sources (see paragraph 2.3). It uses higher and further education administrative data about the numbers of students that are studying in individual LAs. It also uses visa information and National Insurance number allocations for foreign workers to estimate the numbers of workers immigrating. These component estimates are then combined for each LA. The estimates are available only for inflows since there is currently no administrative source available that records emigration. ONS published the new estimates as experimental statistics¹³ in February 2012. ONS plans to publish the LA estimates alongside the national estimates in *STIM* for the first time in May 2013.

⁹ Assessment Report number 87: see footnote 6

¹⁰ A completed flow means that a migrant is sampled (interviewed) when he/she returns back to his/her country of usual residence

¹¹ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/surveys/respondents/household-individuals/international-passenger-survey/index.html>

¹² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/updates-and-reports/historical/2009/research-report-on-local-authority-level-short-term-migration-estimates---october-2009.pdf>

¹³ See footnote 5

2.3 The administrative sources used to produce the LA STIM estimates are:

- Migrant Workers Scan¹⁴ (MWS), a Department for Work and Pensions dataset that contains all migrants who have registered for, and been allocated, a National Insurance Number;
- The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student record¹⁵, which lists all students studying at a higher education institution that is funded via the higher education funding councils for England and Wales;
- Control of immigration data from the Home Office on:
 - certificates of sponsorship¹⁶,
 - confirmation of acceptance to study¹⁷, and
 - extensions of leave to remain¹⁸ (extensions) visa applications;
- Individualised Learner Record data¹⁹ from the Data Service²⁰, which are records for individuals attending government-funded further education courses in England, including those studying English as a second language; and
- The Lifelong Learning Wales Record²¹ from the Welsh Government – records of the participation by learners after the age of 16 years in government-funded courses at Further Education level in Wales, including those studying English as a second language.

ONS produces the individual worker and student immigration estimates for each LA and then combines these to produce the overall LA STIM estimates.

2.4 The LA STIM estimates enable LAs to better understand the magnitude of short-term immigration and support their service planning and prioritisation. These services include universal services (for example waste collection, libraries) and specific services (for example provision of social housing, schools). LAs also use these estimates in the preparation of their own population estimates, to assess trends and in developing relevant policies and form an important component in population estimates and projections, particularly in areas with high levels of population turnover. (LAs' funding is based on official mid-year estimates of the usually resident population, which do not include short-term migrants.) The LA STIM estimates have also been used, in conjunction with ONS's long-term international migration estimates, as part of the quality assurance process for the 2011 Census.

¹⁴ See *Feasibility Report on the potential use of record level Migrant Worker Scan data to improve migration and population statistics*, October 2009: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/updates-and-reports/historical/2009/index.html>

¹⁵ http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_studrec&Itemid=232&menl=12051

¹⁶ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/immigration-asylum-research/immigration-q3-2012/work-q3-2012>

¹⁷ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/immigration-asylum-research/immigration-q3-2012/study-q3-2012>

¹⁸ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/immigration-asylum-research/immigration-q3-2012/extensions-q3-2012>

¹⁹ <http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/datadictionary/glossary/ILR.htm>

²⁰ The Data Service is an independently managed organisation, established and funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

²¹ <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Lifelong-Learning-Wales-Record>

2.5 ONS produces LA STIM estimates from data on migrants already collected by the IPS, which is used for the production of travel and tourism statistics, therefore the statistics do not require additional data collection. The administrative datasets used to produce the LA STIM are also used in the distribution of long-term migrants to LA areas and so entail no additional cost. The responsibility for the production and publication of the LA STIM estimates will move within ONS from the development team to the Migration Statistics team in 2013/14. The additional cost to ONS of producing *STIM* relates to the staff cost in producing the relevant tables and carrying out analysis of the resulting statistics. ONS told us that it expects that the cost of producing *STIM* will be approximately £9,500 in 2013/14.

3 Assessment findings

- 3.1 The development of the STIM estimates by ONS formed part of the wider improvement programme for migration and population statistics (Migration Statistics Improvement Programme (MSIP)). ONS sought users' views through specific consultations about the STIM estimates following its release of detailed research papers about the topic²². It also used a series of roadshows to seek feedback from users and published summaries²³ of the feedback about the STIM estimates. ONS changed the direction of the development of the LA STIM estimates in response to user requests to develop a distribution method based on administrative sources. It had previously produced modelled estimates of short-term migration. The Authority regards this proactive development of statistics in response to user needs as an example of good practice.
- 3.2 ONS's Beyond 2011 Programme²⁴ is considering options for producing population and small area socio-demographic statistics for England and Wales without the need to conduct a traditional census. Following the conclusion of MSIP at the end of March 2012, ONS told us that it is reviewing its plan for further research of the population estimates; short-term international migration will be part of that. ONS said that it will hold further road shows with users to discuss its research plans. Users told us that they would welcome further clarity over the future of these statistics. Some LA users told us that they had concerns about the robustness of the LA STIM estimates. ONS confirmed that it had received similar feedback and was considering ways of making further improvements as part of its population and migration development project. As part of the designation as National Statistics, ONS should publish information about users' experiences of the STIM estimates, including details of whether the quality of the estimates meets their needs, to inform the further development of the statistics²⁵ (Requirement 1). We suggest that ONS publish a research plan for the further development of the STIM estimates and provide clear signposting to this document, such as, within the *STIM Quality and Method Information (QMI)* document²⁶. The plan should set out how views from users will be gathered and considered. We further suggest that ONS engage users through StatsUserNet²⁷ and Knowledge Hub²⁸ as a means of highlighting statistical releases and seeking views about new developments to interested communities of users.

²² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/population-and-migration/short-term-migration-methodology/index.html> and <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/updates-and-reports/current-updates-and-releases/distributing-short-term-migrants-to-local-authorities/index.html>

²³ See *Summary of feedback for Short-term Estimates for England and Wales on Feasibility Report*. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/population-and-migration/short-term-migration-methodology/index.html> and <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/latest-news/index.html>

²⁴ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/what-we-do/programmes---projects/beyond-2011/index.html>

²⁵ In relation to Principle 1, Practices 2, 3 and 5 of the *Code of Practice*

²⁶ See *Short-term Migration Releases*: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/quality-information/population/index.html>

²⁷ <http://www.statsusernet.org.uk>

²⁸ <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/>

- 3.3 *STIM* includes estimates based on provisional data from the IPS for the latest reference year and revised estimates for the previous year using final IPS data. ONS flags that these estimates are provisional and revised. Following advice from the Assessment team, ONS extended the revisions guidance to explain the reason for the revision and to indicate the scale of change.
- 3.4 ONS has conducted a comparison of *STIM* estimates with numbers of short-term residents from the 2011 Census. The analysis demonstrated consistent results for England overall and for the estimates of short-term migrant workers. However analysis suggests that the number of short-term migrant students were potentially under-estimated, while those staying for other reasons were possibly over-estimated. These measurement issues will impact upon LAs to different degrees, depending on their proportions of each type of short-term migrant. While *QMI* provides some guidance on the appropriate use of the *STIM* estimates, it does not provide information about these measurement issues, in relation to the use that might be made of the estimates. As part of the designation as National Statistics, ONS should publish detailed information about the limitations of the estimates, particularly in relation to the risks of any potential under-count and the impact upon the national and LA estimates²⁹ (Requirement 2).
- 3.5 ONS derives the LA estimates of short-term immigration by applying a similar approach to its preparation of the local area long-term international immigration component of the mid-year population estimates. The research report, *Distributing Short-term Migrants to Local Authorities*³⁰, provides an explanation of the LA approach, giving useful illustrations of how ONS calculates the estimates for individual LAs – these examples are not highlighted in *QMI* or *STIM*. We suggest that ONS provide clear signposting to examples showing how LA short-term immigration estimates are calculated.
- 3.6 *STIM* provides a description of the main findings for the England and Wales *STIM* estimates of immigration, emigration and net migration. It also includes estimates of the stocks³¹ of migrants from other countries (outside the UK) staying in England and Wales and the numbers of England and Wales residents who emigrate to overseas countries. It includes charts to illustrate the trends in migration by variables such as sex, age group and main reason for migration. The bulletin also provides estimates of short-term immigration to local authorities, highlighting those with the highest numbers and concentration of short-term worker and student immigrants. ONS cannot currently use its method of producing LA *STIM* to estimate the numbers of migrants staying in England and Wales for reasons other than work or study, or for the production of estimates of emigration from LAs. Following advice from the Assessment team, *STIM* explains that other reasons for migration, such as staying with family or friends, may form a substantial component of short-term immigration for some local authority areas, and consequently may show different patterns from the estimated levels of worker and student migration. We suggest that ONS provide clear signposting to guidance in *QMI* about the use of *STIM* estimates in relation to their strengths and limitations. We further suggest that

²⁹ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 2 and Principle 8, Practice 1 of the *Code of Practice*

³⁰ See footnote 5

³¹ The migrant stock is the average number of short-term migrants present in or absent from England and Wales at any particular time and is calculated from data on number of migrants and length of stay.

ONS provide links to LA migration indicators³² and other related quality information available on its website.

- 3.7 Following feedback from the Assessment team, ONS ensured that *STIM* provides an overall explanation of the *STIM* estimates in relation to other measures of migration. It provides a glossary of main terms and also explains the important terms the first time that they occur in the text. ONS provides a generally straightforward commentary of the national and LA *STIM* patterns. Explanations of important trends have also been improved following the Assessment team's feedback. We suggest that ONS consider the points detailed in annex 2, in seeking to further improve *STIM*.

³² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Local+Area+Migration+Indicators#tab-data-tables>

Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to ONS's *Short-term International Migration Estimates for England and Wales*, in the interest of the public good. These are not formally required for designation, but the Assessment team considers that their implementation will improve public confidence in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Suggestion 1 | Publish a research plan for the further development of the STIM estimates and provide clear signposting to this document, such as, within the <i>STIM QMI</i> . The plan should set out how views from users will be gathered and considered (para 3.2). |
| Suggestion 2 | Engage users through StatsUserNet and Knowledge Hub (para 3.2). |
| Suggestion 3 | Provide clear signposting to examples showing how LA short-term international immigration estimates are calculated (para 3.5). |
| Suggestion 4 | Provide clear signposting to guidance in <i>QMI</i> about the use of STIM estimates in relation to their strengths and limitations (para 3.6). |
| Suggestion 5 | Provide links to the local authority migration indicators and other related quality information on ONS's website (para 3.6). |
| Suggestion 6 | Consider the points detailed in annex 2, in seeking to further improve <i>STIM</i> (para 3.7). |

Annex 2: Compliance with Standards for Statistical Reports

- A2.1 In November 2012, the Statistics Authority issued a statement on *Standards for Statistical Reports*³³. While this is not part of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, the Authority regards it as advice that will promote both understanding and compliance with the *Code*. In relation to the statistical reports associated with ONS's *Short-term International Migration Estimates for England and Wales (STIM)*, this annex comments on compliance with the statement on standards.
- A2.2 In implementing any Requirements of this report (at paragraph 1.5) which relate to the content of statistical reports, we encourage the producer body to apply the standards as fully as possible.

Include an impartial narrative in plain English that draws out the main messages from the statistics

- A2.3 The main messages are presented at the start of *STIM* in a selection of key points, and the narrative includes an explanation of what the key statistics indicate. The language used is generally clear.
- A2.4 *STIM* presents results for the national short-term international migration statistics over a longer term. The main results from the latest year's estimates are discussed in the commentary, and longer term trends are also referenced. The bulletin includes helpful maps of the UK to illustrate the concentration of *STIM* for LAs. The bulletin would benefit from the use of additional maps to illustrate the high concentration of *STIM* in London, for example, in greater detail than is currently provided by the UK map.

Include information about the context and likely uses of the statistics

- A2.5 *STIM* provides helpful contextual information about the topic of migration, including descriptions and definitions of key terms (such as inflows and outflows). *STIM* also includes references to other related statistics (for example long-term migration statistics) and the key data source used (IPS) for the production of the estimates.
- A2.6 The commentary highlights LAs as major users of the *STIM* estimates, and provides examples of specific uses of the statistics.

Include information about the strengths and limitations of the statistics in relation to their potential use

- A2.7 *STIM* includes a link to a *QMI*³⁴ document, which contains information about the methodology used to distribute national short-term immigration estimates to local authorities, and details the different administrative sources used to do this. The document also includes guidance on sampling and non-sampling errors

³³ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/standards-for-statistical-reports.html>

³⁴ See footnote 26

associated with the IPS, although standard errors cannot be produced for the local authority estimates, due to the combination of data sources used.

A2.8 *STIM* includes an explanation that other reasons for migration, such as staying with family or friends, may form a substantial component of short-term immigration for some local authorities and that these may show different patterns to the estimated levels of worker and student migration. The release would benefit from clearer signposting to guidance provided in *QMI* to inform users about appropriate uses of the estimates in relation to their strengths and limitations. ONS plans to publish on 23 May 2013 a reconciliation exercise between the LA *STIM* estimates and the 2011 Census short-term residents. It suggests measurement issues affecting some of the *STIM* estimates, including a potential under-count of short-term student migrants. ONS should flag the impact of the possible data limitations in *QMI*.

Be professionally sound

A2.9 *STIM* presents tables and charts to help readers to visualise the key trends. The text in the bulletin is impartial and descriptive statements are consistent with the statistics. Descriptions of changes, trends and patterns are professionally sound, but care should be taken not to present results without sufficient context or explanation, for example by giving results for individual LAs that are not reflective of the broader picture.

Include, or link to, appropriate metadata

A2.10 *STIM* includes links to Excel data tables relating to the figures presented in the bulletin. The bulletin also includes a prominent link to the data section of the publication, which includes related tables.

A2.11 The 'further information' section of the bulletin includes hyperlinks to the *QMI* and related methodology documents, which allows the reader to gain further information about the quality of the statistics. It does not provide links to other relevant explanatory information available on ONS's website, such as the LA migration indicators. The bulletin also includes links to the long-term immigration statistics for England and Wales, which helps to provide context. *STIM* highlights that migration statistics for Scotland and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of National Records of Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency but that equivalent statistics are not currently available for these countries.

Annex 3: Summary of assessment process and users' views

- A3.1 This assessment was conducted from August 2012 to February 2013.
- A3.2 The Assessment team – Penny Babb and Sara James – agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with representatives from ONS in August. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 31 October. The Assessment team subsequently met ONS during January to review compliance with the Code of Practice, taking account of the written evidence provided and other relevant sources of evidence.

Summary of users contacted and issues raised

- A3.3 Part of the assessment process involves our consideration of the views of users. We approach some known and potential users of the set of statistics and we invite comments via an open note on the Authority's website. This process is not a statistical survey, but it enables us to gain some insights about the extent to which the statistics meet users' needs and the extent to which users feel that the producers of those statistics engage with them. We are aware that responses from users may not be representative of wider views, and we take account of this in the way that we prepare Assessment reports.
- A3.4 The Assessment team received 9 responses from the user consultation. The respondents were grouped as follows:
- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Local authority | 5 |
| ONS | 2 |
| Data supplier | 2 |
- A3.5 Most users who responded were reasonably satisfied with the engagement by the producer team, although one user felt that they were informed of developments once they had been implemented rather than consulted on them.
- A3.6 Several users expressed concern about the reliability of the estimates for LAs and felt that more work needed to be done to compare and validate the estimates with other data sources. Users also commented on the limitations of the estimates, including the lack of information about short-term migrant outflows and estimates of STIM for reasons other than work or study.

Key documents/links provided

Written Evidence for Assessment document

