

# Monitoring Review

Monitoring Review 1/13  
January 2013

## ***Progress with the Implementation of Authority Recommendations in Monitoring reports***

This is the second in a series of progress updates, describing the ways in which the Authority's recommendations set out in a range of *Monitoring Reports* and *Monitoring Briefs* are being taken forward, and following the *Monitoring Update*<sup>1</sup> published in January 2012.

Below are progress updates on the recommendations set out in the Authority's reports on:

- [Official statistics and the Voluntary Sector](#)
- [Creating official statistics from administrative data](#)
- [Statistics for Parliamentary Constituencies](#)
- [The accessibility and coherence of statistics about climate change](#)
- [Review of an error in the published estimates of Output in Construction](#)
- [Immigration Statistics](#)
- [The demand for, and feasibility of, a UK-wide index of multiple deprivation](#)
- [Improving the reporting of road casualties](#)
- [Communicating Inflation](#)
- [Strengthening User Engagement](#)
- [Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics](#)
- [Scotland's Major Population Surveys](#)
- [Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics: A Review of the Statutory Arrangements](#)
- [Migration Statistics: the way ahead?](#)
- [Gender Pay Gap](#)
- [Volatility of the Retail Sales Index](#)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/monitoring-brief-1-2012---monitoring-update---january-2012.pdf>

## ***Official statistics and the Voluntary Sector***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Official statistics and the Voluntary Sector* in May 2012<sup>2</sup>.

The Brief explored how the voluntary sector uses official statistics, and how it engages with bodies that produce them. The statistical needs of the voluntary sector are relatively under-researched compared with those of, for example, central and local government, or the business sector. The Brief drew some conclusions about the adequacy of the statistical information publicly available about the voluntary sector itself.

### **Summary of progress against recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1: The use, and potential use, of official statistics by the voluntary sector would be enhanced by closer engagement between representatives of the sector and producers of official statistics, in order to:**

- i. develop a fuller understanding of the sector's needs;**
- ii. ensure that statistics are presented in ways that make them accessible; and**
- iii. identify significant unmet needs and develop plans to address these.**

#### Ongoing

We have been told that the Office for Civil Society (OCS) is helping to facilitate closer engagement through its Strategic Partners, which are providing insight into the data requirements and availability in the sector; and that this includes work with Volunteer England in assessing levels of volunteering and with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in the production of statistics on charities.

The RSS is considering whether engagement with the voluntary sector would be best achieved by increasing the sector's presence in its existing Statistics User Forum groups, or by establishing a specific group for the sector.

The National Statistician's Office, with the NCVO and the Royal Statistical Society (RSS), has arranged an open meeting in January 2013 to bring together the voluntary sector and producers of official statistics. The event will provide an opportunity to discuss the adequacy of current statistics and means of engagement, and how these might be enhanced.

**Recommendation 2: The Government may further need to review the existing statistics about the voluntary sector; to identify gaps in the evidence base and to make plans to address these gaps.**

#### Ongoing

OCS has commissioned a new survey: 'Community Life: a national survey of social action and community engagement'. The survey will gather data on issues such as volunteering, charitable giving, community engagement and well-being. OCS told us that it is actively engaged with stakeholders to ensure that the resulting statistics are accessible and used effectively by the sector.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-andrew-dilnot-to-nick-hurd-03052012.pdf>

**Recommendation 3:**

**It is likely that the amount of data being released by the voluntary and community sector will increase. The Authority considers that the Government should take steps to ensure that sufficient information is made available by such organisations that a coherent national picture can be produced, and that the activities and outcomes of voluntary sector organisations can be compared with those of other organisations.**

Ongoing

See response to recommendation 1i. The OCS's work with its Strategic Partners aims to facilitate closer engagement and provide insight into data requirements and availability in the sector.

## ***Creating official statistics from administrative data***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Creating official statistics from administrative data* in March 2012<sup>3</sup>.

This Brief reviewed whether the statistical service had sufficient access to, and influence over, the administrative data sources from which official statistics are increasingly drawn. It looked at some of the statistical implications of the Government's Open Data policy and concluded that, in order to ensure quality and maximise value, some further steps needed to be taken - both to improve access for statistical purposes and to build confidence that appropriate security arrangements exist to protect confidential information about individuals and businesses.

### **Summary of progress against recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1: A more systematic and thorough process is required for identifying administrative databases that have potential to be used to produce official statistics. The proposed Public Sector Information Inventory should be used to identify administrative sources that have the potential to be used for statistical purposes.**

#### Ongoing

We have been told that the Cabinet Office and other government departments will be working on producing the Public Sector Information Inventory in 2013. Once the Inventory is available, work can progress on its suitability for identifying administrative sources that can be used to produce official statistics.

**Recommendation 2: Ways need to be found to simplify the process of giving statisticians access to administrative data held in organisations other than the one that the statistician happens to work in. Public bodies that control administrative data should be required to publish plans to remove barriers to data sharing for statistical purposes.**

#### Ongoing

We understand that there are a number of initiatives investigating ways to free up barriers to data sharing. The Government Statistical Service's (GSS) Data Strategy Group is producing a strategy for how the GSS will respond to a number of data challenges and opportunities, including barriers to data sharing. The data strategy will seek to identify the stakeholders that need to be influenced in order to do this. The strategy is due to be completed in summer 2013.

**Recommendation 3: Administrative data are simply a by-product of administrative processes and may not exactly match the needs of the statistician or the user of statistics. There is a need for more central guidance to bodies that produce statistics from administrative data about auditing and ensuring the quality of those data.**

#### Ongoing

The National Statistics Harmonisation Group is carrying out a research project in conjunction with the University of Southampton looking at the benefits of sharing administrative data across

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-sir-michael-scholar-to-rt-hon-francis-maude---administrative-data---16032012.pdf>

government, and potential levers. This is seen as the first step towards influencing stakeholders outside the GSS by providing strong evidence of the need for harmonisation.

**Recommendation 4: The utility of administrative data as sources of statistics can be limited by, for example, inconsistencies in the data held by organisations responsible for similar types of administration, and by changes over time that result as, for example, definitions or eligibility rules change. There is a need to review the implications for official statistics of the current use of different standards, definitions and classifications in administrative systems.**

Ongoing

The ONS Harmonisation team, on behalf of the National Statistics Harmonisation Group, is currently in the process of creating a strategy for the harmonisation of administrative data sources. In the longer term the Harmonisation Group envisages working with data suppliers to promote the benefits of standardising their data sources.

**Recommendation 5: Some people believe that data sharing runs counter to civil liberties and personal privacy. There would be value in a public debate, perhaps in the context of ONS' Beyond 2011 Programme, led by an authoritative and independent figure, about the appropriate safeguards for the sharing of administrative data for statistical purposes.**

Ongoing

The Beyond 2011 project has run the first phase of its consultation, focusing on user needs. A second consultation, due in 2013, will allow users to comment on potential options being considered. We have been told that any final decision will be based on the public acceptability of the options, as well as costs and statistical viability.

## ***Statistics for Parliamentary Constituencies***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Statistics for Parliamentary Constituencies* in March 2012<sup>4</sup>.

The Monitoring Brief reviewed the current position and made the case for improving the availability of statistics for constituencies. A number of commentators, inside and outside Parliament, had noted the patchiness of data at parliamentary constituency level. The Code of Practice for Official Statistics does not contain a specific requirement to produce statistics for special geographies such as these although it does require that statistics be produced to meet user needs where possible and in as much detail as reliable and practicable.

The National Statistician's Office reported that it is continuing to engage with departments on the recommendations and conclusions set out in this Monitoring Brief.

The Brief set out the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 1: Government departments and other producers of official statistics should, subject to the resource implications being manageable, aim to accommodate the production and publication of constituency statistics along the lines proposed in this Monitoring Brief.**

**Recommendation 2: There would be virtue in a common approach across the various producers of official statistics in the UK - in practice this would mean an agreed set of criteria and processes for the production of constituency level estimates.**

**Recommendation 3: Statistical offices in government departments should aim to consult the House of Commons Library to ensure that the statistical needs of Members of Parliament are understood and taken into account; and establish an appropriate provider-user dialogue with parliamentary, political, media and special interest bodies most likely to value constituency level estimates.**

**Recommendation 4: It would be helpful if producers of official statistics were publicly to set out their plans for the provision of Westminster parliamentary constituency statistics on the new boundary basis, following completion of the current round of boundary reviews.**

**Recommendation 5: The publication of plans for the release of recalibrated 2011 Census data using the new parliamentary constituency geography should be arranged as soon as possible after the finalisation of the boundary review process.**

**Recommendation 6: There is, we believe, a strong case for production by ONS of a statistical compendium publication to bring together a wide range of constituency statistics to assist parliamentary candidates, voters and researchers; however the associated benefits and costs would need to be examined in more detail first.**

**Recommendation 7: The timing of the publication of constituency level figures for the number of registered electors should be reviewed to try to get both the reference date and timing of publication closer to election times.**

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/monitoring-brief-2-2012---statistics-for-parliamentary-constituencies.pdf>

**Recommendation 8: A user-guide describing what official statistics are available at all local geographies (including parliamentary constituency level) would be of wide value. It could indicate not only whether statistics are available but also the latest date for which they have been produced, and plans for future availability and dissemination.**

**Recommendation 9: The current proposals for new parliamentary constituency boundaries may involve constituencies crossing the boundaries of larger administrative units such as counties, and that this may have implications for the practicability of producing constituency data in some cases. Where these boundary changes present new problems in this regard, this should be explained publicly by the relevant producer body.**

## ***The accessibility and coherence of statistics about climate change***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *The accessibility and coherence of statistics about climate change* in October 2011<sup>5</sup>.

The Brief reviewed the extent to which official statistics relating to climate change are coherent and accessible. In recent years there has been increasing acceptance that economic and social pressures have contributed to climate change and that it poses significant risks to the environment. The availability of relevant statistical data is vital to the development of policy. This review concluded that, as far as the Authority can tell and in broad terms, government has access to sufficient statistical evidence on the topic. But, especially in the light of public uncertainty about the part that human activities play in driving climate change, it is important that the statistical evidence and advice is presented in a form that is widely accessible and understandable.

### **Summary of progress against recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1: We note that whilst all official statistics are expected to be produced and released according to the requirements of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* – and are liable to formal assessment against the standards of that Code – there are many scientific (or broader research) data sets used in this field about which there is little in the way of standardised information on quality readily available. Given that the official statistics and other data are often presented and used together, it would be helpful if more information could be compiled centrally on the quality of the data that fall outside official statistics.**

#### No progress

We are not aware that any progress has been made towards this recommendation.

**Recommendation 2: There is currently no main ‘climate change information’ internet site. We think users of the statistics would benefit from a portal that brought together statistics about climate change, with links to available data sources and to the information documented and collected in response to the government’s current climate change risk assessment.**

#### Ongoing

The DECC website has been updated to provide further link to other sites and information on impacts<sup>6</sup> and related material<sup>7</sup>. Defra has developed wider indicator sets on the environmental side including: Green growth indicators (OECD), Resource Efficient Indicators (EU), and on sustainable development.

**Recommendation 3: We see potential for the use of interactive maps to illustrate aspects of climate change for the general public and non-specialist user.**

#### No progress

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring-brief-7-2011---accessibility-and-coherence-of-statistics-about-climate-change.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/climate\\_stats/impacts\\_cc/impacts\\_cc.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/climate_stats/impacts_cc/impacts_cc.aspx)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/climate\\_stats/gg\\_emissions/related\\_stats/related\\_stats.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/climate_stats/gg_emissions/related_stats/related_stats.aspx)

We are not aware that any progress has been made towards this recommendation.

**Recommendation 4: There is a need for an intuitive framework for statistics about climate change that could be used as the basis for reviewing the statistical evidence base, and for the presentation of these and related official statistics. The Framework for Developing Environmental Statistics<sup>8</sup> produced by Statistics Canada and work carried out by the United Nations Statistical Commission<sup>9</sup> are relevant.**

No progress

We are not aware that any progress has been made towards this recommendation.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/fdes.htm/FDES\\_Canada\\_Paper.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/fdes.htm/FDES_Canada_Paper.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/fdes.htm>

## ***Review of an error in the published estimates of Output in Construction***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Review of an error in the published estimates of Output in Construction* in September 2011<sup>10</sup>.

This Statement followed an error in the Statistical Bulletin on Output in Construction published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 12 August 2011, and covered how this error occurred and how the episode was handled. The review comprised a brief account of the facts and a set of observations intended to help avoid similar occurrences in the future.

Progress has been reported across the range of recommendations and recommendations 2, 3 and 6 have now been completed.

### **Summary of further progress against recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1: ONS needs to be confident that fully robust quality assurance procedures are universally in place across the department, with this process documented and formally signed off in each case.**

#### Ongoing

In line with the recommendations in an internal review ONS has now implemented the system of formal process walk-throughs and certification of quality assurance. Walk-throughs for all outputs have been completed. Arrangements have been put in place for future updates of these walk-throughs.

Allied to this, the Quality Centre has provided training to output managers in key quality aspects, including the sharing of Quality Assurance (QA) best practice. This training is now being rolled out to all staff in statistical output areas.

**Recommendation 2: Whatever is now decided, in the light of this sequence of events, to be the appropriate role of senior managers, that role needs to be fully enforced with effective management disciplines. In relation to quality assurance, managers may have to accept less freedom to define their own roles on the basis of their personal understanding of what is needed and the prevailing culture of the office.**

#### Complete

Following workshops for senior managers and a change in sign-off processes, senior managers now have to certify that appropriate QA of statistical output processes are in place. This completes the recommendation, though it will require ongoing implementation.

**Recommendation 3: ONS should ensure that where such alert and responsive expertise is not fully evident, appropriate guidance, training and managerial support is provided.**

#### Complete

The training provided by the Quality Centre now covers this aspect. This completes the recommendation, though it will require ongoing implementation.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/statement---authority-s-review---construction-statistics.pdf>

**Recommendation 4: Further progress in moving away from out-dated spreadsheet technology to more robust processes must be given high priority.**

Ongoing

In relation to the construction output estimates, a SAS system has been developed and is currently being piloted in parallel with the existing spreadsheet system. The SAS system will become the primary system from January 2013 and work will then begin to transfer this onto the main production system for National Accounts. More widely, ONS has listed all its output related spreadsheets and is working towards their eventual removal. At the same time, a best practice guide for the use of spreadsheets has been developed - this has been widely disseminated and forms part of the training for statistical output staff.

**Recommendation 5: There appears to have been insufficient staff available, and weakness in terms of staff experience in the specific field of construction statistics, responsibility for which was transferred relatively recently to ONS. This is an issue for ONS management to tackle as a matter of urgency.**

Ongoing

We have been told that staff recruited to the construction branch now have a good knowledge of the sources, methods and processes and have developed vital links with the construction industry to gain a wider understanding. ONS recognises the importance of having appropriately skilled resource in this and other key areas.

A programme aimed at strengthening capability within the National Accounts business area (which includes construction statistics) has been developed and is being implemented.

**Recommendation 6: Any substantive error should be announced as soon as is reasonably possible.**

Complete

ONS reported to us that this continues to be accepted and adopted as standard practice. This completes the recommendation, though it will require ongoing implementation.

**Recommendation 7: Once a statistical Bulletin has been placed on the website, it should be possible for users to refer back to the document (both the statistics and commentary) in its original form, regardless of whether changes were subsequently needed; and that where there is an error that has to be corrected, the correction should be clearly marked, so that there is a clear audit trail.**

Ongoing

ONS has reported that it is now standard practice to have available on the website the corrected and previous statistical releases. However, it is not clear that this is consistent with current internal guidance which suggests that, for 'minor' errors, releases are replaced without a corrections notice. Senior managers are required to make a decision on whether an error is 'minor' or 'major'.

## *Immigration Statistics*

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013**

The Authority published *Immigration Statistics* in July 2011<sup>11</sup>.

A number of reports from the Home Affairs Committee in recent years have included observations about the limitations of official UK migration statistics, and criticised some of the ways in which the statistics were used in public debate. In July 2011 the UK Statistics Authority reviewed the position for these statistics and the prospects for improvement.

Our main conclusion was that whilst Parliament, Government and the public all demand a comprehensive statistical picture of immigration and emigration, this is not, in practice, deliverable without the systematic recording of people entering and leaving the UK. Such systematic recording is not something that statistical offices can establish for themselves. It would require Parliament and Government to put the necessary framework of legislation and administration in place. To the extent that such administrative recording is not put in place, there is no alternative statistical solution that will deliver comprehensive, integrated and reliable data. However, our report made some suggestions to improve communication of what is produced.

### **Summary of further progress against recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1: In line with the recommendation in the Authority's report on migration statistics and with the Select Committee's call for the use of a consistent definition of migration, it would be helpful if ONS, Home Office and DWP were to adopt a conceptual framework for migration statistics and encourage its use across government and by the broader user community. The framework would indicate how the different existing statistics relate to each other and to the process of migration more generally. It should also make clear the strengths and limitations of each set of statistics and guide users on the preferred statistic for different uses.**

#### Ongoing

ONS has developed a conceptual framework for UK population statistics, as part of Phase 2 of the Migration Statistics Improvement Programme. ONS says that the framework will underpin its development of population and migration statistics in the future. It is now looking to develop a specific conceptual framework for migration statistics, based on the population statistics framework. It is being considered by the joint departmental Migration Reporting Working Group which includes ONS, the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

ONS has released a user guide alongside *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report* (the joint release of migration statistics for ONS, the Home Office and DWP). This gives advice about comparing the different statistics on migration, and background information about the individual sources. The Home Office has also explicitly stated the strengths and weaknesses of different sources in the user guide that accompanies *Immigration Statistics*.

The Home Office and ONS are currently reviewing the future presentation of data on visas in the Quarterly Report, including how statistics on 'student visitors' are presented alongside related estimates, and how consistency can be enhanced with *Immigration Statistics*. ONS is introducing a Venn diagram that shows the overlap and gaps in categories of migrants included in different data

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-sir-michael-scholar-to-rt-hon-keith-vaz-mp-11072011.pdf>

sources. It will be added to the Quarterly Report guidance document on how to compare data sources.

**Recommendation 2: The Home Office may need to take further steps to ensure that its use of migration statistics in policy and related documents is consistent, particularly between the statistics presented in policy reports and those in statistical outputs, to help ensure their appropriate use and interpretation.**

Complete

The Home Office told us that following the Cabinet Secretary's advice ("Good Practice in the Use of Official Statistics"), guidance on the use and release of statistics was circulated by the Head of Profession for statistics to senior officials within the department. More detailed guidance for press releases was subsequently developed with the Press Office. The Head of Profession provided training workshops for Press Officers and Regional Press Officers on the use of statistics, including the Cabinet Secretary's advice. The Home Office has also held seminars for its analytical teams on how to present statistics in words.

**Recommendation 3: ONS could improve the available material by presenting migration statistics on a consistent basis wherever possible, for example, presenting LTIM and IPS estimates together for non-EEA migrants. It would also be helpful if ONS consulted users on what use they make of the data in Migration Statistics Quarterly, and then use that information to develop its presentation and accessibility.**

Complete

Since August 2011, *Immigration Statistics* has specifically presented International Passenger Survey (IPS), admissions and visas statistics for students together on a single graph in the 'Study' topic web page, which also explains the differences.

The Home Office established a Migration Statistics User Group which met a number of times in 2011. One of its focuses was the presentation of migration statistics. This Group has now been replaced by a JISCMail communication group, Migration Statistics User Forum, with an annual conference (September 2012).

ONS ran a consultation on international migration outputs from April to July 2012 in which it asked users: which migration statistics they use and where improvements could be made; and for comments specifically on the Quarterly Report. The results from this consultation informed ONS' work plans. There was strong user demand for accessible data that would enable users to create their own cross-tabulations. In August 2012, ONS published for the first time the underlying migration data on population by nationality and country of birth. It presented developments in reporting at the Migration Statistics User Forum conference in September.

## ***The demand for, and feasibility of, a UK-wide index of multiple deprivation***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *The demand for, and feasibility of, a UK-wide index of multiple deprivation* in July 2011<sup>12</sup>.

Each of the four UK administrations produces an index of multiple deprivation (IMD) – a ranking of small areas from the most to the least deprived, based on a range of statistical data about domains such as income, employment, health, housing, education, access to services, and crime. These IMDs are intended for use in relation to each administration. However, there is no corresponding IMD covering the UK as a whole, so areas in different countries of the UK cannot be compared.

This Brief reported the UK Statistics Authority's views about the demand for, and feasibility of producing, a UK-wide index of multiple deprivation. The Statistics Authority recognised that the existing IMDs are used in each administration, but noted that there was some user interest in a UK-wide index and that the UK Government itself might wish to draw on published information in order to compare different areas within the UK.

Recommendations 1 and 2 have now been completed and progress is being made towards recommendation 3.

### **Summary of further progress against recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1: Work with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to extend the scope of the published guidance about comparing IMDs between administrations to be applicable to a wide range of potential uses.**

#### Complete

The GSS' "Four Nations Group" published an update to its guidance on comparing IMDs across countries in February 2012<sup>13</sup>. The updated guidance paper is now titled 'Using Indices of Deprivation in the United Kingdom'. The focus of the guidance was broadened to be appropriate to a wider audience and to capture the full range of potential uses. Previously the guidance focused on the needs of policy makers and the use of the Indices of Deprivation for allocating resources consistently across the UK.

**Recommendation 2: Provide access to high-level guidance and metadata on existing sources of data available across the UK that might be used as indicators of multiple deprivation.**

#### Complete

As part of its review of the guidance, the "Four Nations Group" made the changes outlined in the previous Monitoring Update and reflected these in the updated guidance paper 'Using Indices of Deprivation in the United Kingdom'

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring-brief-6-2011---indices-of-multiple-deprivation.pdf>

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[http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/images/UK%20wide%20guidance%20paper%20February%202012%20revision\\_tcm97-116302.doc](http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/images/UK%20wide%20guidance%20paper%20February%202012%20revision_tcm97-116302.doc)

**Recommendation 3: The Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and NISRA should consult users about the demand for more comparable statistical information on multiple deprivation – including a ‘poverty index’ – in the UK, and publish the results**

Ongoing

Further progress has been made by the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

The Welsh Government has decided that the most optimal date for an update to WIMD is 2014. The public consultation process will now be towards the end of 2013 (previously intended to take place in 2012) and the Welsh Government will include a question about UK comparable measures. Information about the next update to WIMD has been published<sup>14</sup>.

We reported in the previous Monitoring Update that the Scottish Government had carried out a consultation between July and September 2011 exploring the best timing for the next update of the Scottish IMD. This included asking users about the demand for related outputs including a UK-wide Index and Poverty Index. A summary report outlining the findings from the Scottish Government consultation has been published<sup>15</sup>.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has decided that any consultation would have to take place after the publication of the detailed NI Census 2011 results due in 2013 and in line with the review of Local Government Districts in NI which is currently planned for 2014/15. We have been told that the issue of UK comparability may be considered at this time.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2012/120720wimdstatementen.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/ConsultationResp211>

## ***Improving the reporting of road casualties***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Improving the reporting of road casualties* in January 2011<sup>16</sup>.

In March 2010 the House of Commons Transport Committee invited the UK Statistics Authority to investigate the extent to which the Department for Transport had sought an explanation for the divergence between the number of people killed in road traffic accidents and those seriously injured. In its report to the Transport Committee, the Statistics Authority made a number of suggestions to improve the published statistics.

Updates on progress have been provided for all recommendations. Recommendation 2 has now been completed. Recommendations 1 and 3 were noted as having been completed in the Monitoring Update in January 2012.

### **Summary of further progress against recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1: More explanation should be given, in accessible terms, of the findings of relevant research. More of this research could be reported or referred to in *Reported Road Casualties Great Britain* to help explain and contextualise changes in trends.**

#### Complete

Recent editions of the main annual publication (*Reported Road Casualties Great Britain*) have contained a range of analyses that draw on other data sources, including hospital admissions data and the National Travel Survey, to explain and contextualise trends in the core police-sourced figures on road accidents. The most recent 2011 edition of RRCGB<sup>17</sup> updated and extended these analyses.

The one outstanding action from the last update was to publish a detailed technical note on the linkage of hospital and police data on road accident casualties: this was published in February 2012<sup>18</sup>.

**Recommendation 2: Further analysis should be undertaken of the dataset created by matching records from the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) and the police statistics.**

#### Complete

RRCGB 2011 incorporated a further extension of DfT's analysis of the matched dataset for 2010 (casualty rates by injury severity and age of car, as opposed to the simple counts published previously).

DfT has a contract in place with the NHS Information Centre (NHSIC) to cover the production of a linked dataset for 2011. It has also agreed with NHSIC that extracts from the linked dataset can be made available to researchers under licence, to allow them to analyse the data. DfT has already supplied one such extract (to researchers at Loughborough University).

**Recommendation 3: Consideration should be given to more analytical work to improve understanding of:**

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring-brief-1-2011---proposals-to-improve-the-reporting-of-road-casualties.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2011>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2011>

- **the serious / slight / no injury boundaries, and the impact of any changes in these**
- **regional differences in reporting and coding by police**
- **sub-population trends, such as age, sex, region, or deprivation.**

#### Complete

Minor updates since January 2012:

- the road accident dataset that is released via [data.gov.uk](http://data.gov.uk)<sup>19</sup> contains data on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) decile of casualties and vehicle drivers, where this information is known. This facilitates the analysis of road accidents according to a standard deprivation measure. Analysis by age, sex and region are already produced as standard by DfT.
- the CRASH system (for police reporting of road accidents) will significantly change the way that injuries are reported for forces that use it. Police officers will record the particulars of a casualty's injuries within CRASH, providing much more detail than the basic fatal / serious / slight categorisation that is used on the current STATS19 form. As CRASH rollout proceeds, DfT hopes to gain an increasingly detailed understanding of how injury severity is recorded in casualty records.

**Recommendation 4: Consideration should be given to the type of information that might be gleaned from the pilots of the new police system for recording details of accidents using mobile devices at the accident scene, to help estimate the effects of the discontinuities that are likely to arise in the reported road casualties statistics when the new technology is introduced across the country.**

#### Ongoing

The CRASH system went live in early October 2012 and is now being used in the first two pilot police forces (Surrey and South Yorkshire). As with any major change to a data collection process, there is the potential for unplanned and unexpected effects on the data. DfT intends to closely scrutinise the early deliveries of data from the CRASH system, and will remain in close contact with the pilot forces themselves to ensure that any unexpected findings are explored fully.

It should be noted that the CRASH system does not include a mobile device data collection capability as part of its core specification.

**Recommendation 5: DfT should work with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Home Office, and police forces to develop a strategy for communicating to police forces the use and value of road casualty data and the importance of the quality of the data that police officers gather.**

#### Ongoing

DfT and ACPO have worked together closely on the development of CRASH. Its rollout will provide both organisations with a major lever to communicate to forces about the importance and value of the data it collects.

DfT is also in the process of adding an enhanced management reporting functionality to CRASH. This will allow forces who use it to analyse their collision records and target their patrolling and enforcement activity more effectively. DfT intends to ensure that such police-focused benefits of the system are fully spelt out to police forces as rollout proceeds.

### ***Communicating Inflation***

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<sup>19</sup> <http://data.gov.uk/dataset/road-accidents-safety-data>

## Monitoring Update – January 2013:

The Authority published *Communicating Inflation* in December 2010<sup>20</sup>.

This considered issues raised in public debate about official statistics on inflation. It identified two distinct uses that are made of the measures and considered the need to respond further to these. Aspects of the way in which the official measures of inflation are communicated were also considered.

Further progress has been made on recommendations 1, 3 and 8. There has been no further change to recommendations 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7, which had been completed by the first Monitoring Update.

### Summary of further progress against recommendations:

#### **Recommendation 1: Take forward the matters raised in the Assessment Report, including:**

- a) establish an up-to-date official position on regional indicators; and**
- b) consult on the demand for indices for different household types.**

#### Ongoing

This issue was addressed in the public consultation on the ONS strategy for consumer price statistics held during summer 2012, alongside the consultation on CPIH. ONS will consider the need for a family of indices further once the new CPIH measure is established.

#### **Recommendation 3: In the context of this analysis, consult users on whether the current proposals for improving the CPI while maintaining the RPI represent a suitable approach to developing improved measures of inflation, while continuing to meet users' needs for existing measures.**

#### Ongoing

ONS consulted on this as part of the aforementioned consumer price strategy consultation. Since then, the National Statistician has launched a consultation on options for change to the RPI. ONS will also launch the new CPIH measure in March 2013.

#### **Recommendation 8: Evaluate how effective the 'personal inflation calculator' has been in addressing perceptions of inflation. Also, consider, with users, whether there are any lessons for the UK from the German index of perceptions of inflation that might supplement the work that ONS has already carried out on the way in which inflation is perceived.**

#### Ongoing

An article on perceptions of inflation and the effectiveness of the personal inflation calculator (PIC) was published in 2012. The article concluded that the German index of perceived inflation was based on unproven hypotheses and was not suitable for implementation in the UK at present. In terms of the PIC, the article concluded that it was still useful and that ONS should continue to publish it. Finally, ONS committed to looking at ways to improve users' perceptions of inflation. ONS has been doing this (and will continue to do so) through engaging with users in fora such as the CPI/RPI user group.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring-brief-7-2010---communicating-inflation.pdf>

## ***Strengthening User Engagement***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Strengthening User Engagement* in June 2010<sup>21</sup>.

This report highlights the importance that the Authority attaches to effective user engagement as a precursor to realising the value of official statistics, and made recommendations aimed at strengthening the user voice. It looked at ways of enhancing communication between producers of official statistics and users with the aim of guiding the future development of the statistical service and helping users to engage with it and make the maximum possible use of it.

Since the publication of the first Monitoring Update, recommendation 5 has been completed and further progress has been made on recommendations 1, 2 and 6, though they remain ongoing. There has been no further update to recommendation 4. Recommendation 3 had been completed by the time of the last update.

### **Summary of further progress against recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1: All the bodies that produce official statistics should take steps to enhance their compliance with the Code of Practice, particularly in three areas:**

- a. those aspects of the Code that relate to understanding the use and potential use of official statistics;**
- b. the publication of the documentation required by the Code;**
- c. ensuring that the commentary that accompanies official statistics helps the users understand and make effective use of the statistics**

**The Statistics Authority will consider with the National Statistician whether further guidance is needed on how to meet these requirements.**

#### Ongoing

Since summer 2010, the GSS's Presentation and Commentary Co-ordination Group (PCCG) has worked with a number of departments to improve specific statistical releases. The National Statisticians Office (NSO) has also provided advice to producers of official statistics to help them improve their user engagement and presentation of statistics, and has run 'improving commentary' workshops for producer bodies.

The GSS established a Taskforce for Presentation and Commentary in March 2010. It held a workshop for 19 departments to raise awareness of the importance of commentary, and reviewed specific releases from the Health and Social Care Information Centre and the Office for National Statistics. The Taskforce produced the National Statistician's Guidance, 'Writing About Statistics', which was published in January 2012. The final activity of the Taskforce was to establish a network of commentary champions in ten departments which submitted brief plans on how they will take forward improvements, provided insight into barriers and opportunities, and provided examples of improvements to be shared more widely in the GSS. This network is now managed by the Good Practice Team - a new initiative of the Statistics Authority to help develop and promote good practice in the GSS. This will run as a pilot project for six months from 1 October; the Team is focusing on two elements of the Code - improving commentary in statistical reports, and user engagement.

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/reports/strengthening-user-engagement-final-report.pdf>

In March 2012, the NSO and the Royal Statistical Society's Statistics User Forum co-organised a workshop on User Engagement for GSS statisticians. This resulted in a number of recommendations for both the GSS and user groups, which were developed into guidance with examples of good practice.

In November 2012, the Authority issued a revised Statement outlining certain Standards for Statistical Reports replacing the version published in October 2010.

**Recommendation 2: ONS should give priority to improving the navigability and accessibility of its website, and should publish its plans for doing so.**

Ongoing

In November 2011 and in May 2012, ONS carried out usability testing with external experts; a number of the recommendations from this work have been implemented. Some specific improvements to navigation include: better formatting; improved labelling and titling; and the introduction of landing pages for special features. In addition, several enhancements have been made to improve the searching functionality. ONS has developed a 'Writing for the Web' course and all staff responsible for authoring outputs have attended this.

ONS has recruited additional staff to improve the accessibility of all content that has been published since the website was launched. This will ensure that all content meets double-A accessibility standards. The work is due to complete in January 2013, and will be audited shortly afterwards for certification purposes.

Further improvements are planned including new and improved theme pages containing rich content, along with further improvements to navigation and searching capability.

**Recommendation 5: Given the great diversity of users of statistics, a high profile web-based forum (supported by an appropriate structure of meetings between users and producers) should be developed which would enable users of statistics to communicate more easily and openly with each other and with the producers of official statistics. While the lead on these developments should rest with the Statistics User Forum and the RSS, bodies producing official statistics should actively support this initiative, coordinated by the National Statistician.**

Complete

The RSS has developed an online user engagement tool, StatsUserNet<sup>22</sup>, which was launched in March 2012. It has facilities for discussions, file sharing, events publicity, blogs and multimedia.

Thirteen topic-based communities have since been established, which have been host to discussions on high profile areas such as inflation measures. The debate has helped to develop group responses to key consultations. We have been told that it has proved invaluable in supporting user group activities and allowing for an ongoing virtual dialogue to complement face-to-face meetings. Producer engagement has been encouraging, with departmental representatives responding to questions, starting discussion threads and posting useful material. The site will be marketed and rolled out more widely during 2013.

**Recommendation 6: All government departments and other producer bodies should work actively with the RSS Statistics User Forum (SUF) (and other user group structures), to help user groups represent the interests and priorities of their members.**

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<sup>22</sup> [www.statsusernet.org.uk](http://www.statsusernet.org.uk)

### Ongoing

Many departments have published user engagement strategies. GSS theme groups have increased their contact with SUF.

SUF and the NSO co-organised an event for user group leads and theme leaders to establish the way forward for improving user engagement. Best practice guidance was developed from the results of this by SUF and the Good Practice Team. This includes a recommendation for producers to develop partnerships with user groups.

StatsUserNet has provided the opportunity for user groups and producers to work more closely. For example:

- The Business and Trade Statistics User Group was set up in collaboration between the ONS and the International Business Statistics User Group, and has almost 150 members.
- The ONS has engaged constructively with the recently formed RPI/CPI User Group - through presenting at events, hosting committee meetings and helping to develop the resource library on StatsUserNet.

## ***Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics - England and Wales***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics - England and Wales* in May 2010<sup>23</sup>.

Distrust of crime statistics has been a recurring theme, with three major reviews in the previous ten years. The Authority's review aimed to identify the barriers to trust, examine the steps taken to overcome those barriers and to make appropriate recommendations.

There has been no change in the status of progress against the recommendations. Further work has taken place for parts of recommendations 3, 4 and 5.

### **Summary of further progress against recommendations:**

**Recommendation 3: The National Statistician, in conjunction with relevant government departments and the Welsh Assembly Government, should draw up proposals for the development of statistical publications on crime and the criminal justice system in England and Wales, and consult users inside and outside government. The aims should be to:**

- i) make the publications as relevant as possible to the likely uses of the statistics**
- ii) make it easier for the non-expert to understand the flow of offences and offenders through the criminal justice system.**

#### Ongoing

A publication plan for a number of tripartite publications has been developed looking at individual topics in the crime and justice area and bringing together information from across the criminal justice system. The first of these will be 'An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales'.

**Recommendation 4: The National Statistician, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice should produce the following:**

- ii) a free-standing guide that explains the strengths and limitations of different types of crime data, the circumstances in which it would be appropriate to use one source rather than another, and the kinds of judgement that need to be made when no single source is ideal**
- iii) guidelines on the presentation and use of crime and criminal justice statistics in government documents and statements**

#### ii) Ongoing

There is now an updated, free-standing user guide to crime statistics (covering police recorded crime and the Crime Survey for England and Wales) and an overview publication (*Trends in Crime; a short story*) that accompanied the regular statistical output in July 2012. Additional data sources - such as the commercial crime survey and fraud statistics - will be used to develop these publications further, as data become available.

#### iii) Complete

The Home Office had developed guidance on the presentation of statistics in press releases and Ministerial statements, and the Ministry of Justice has since adopted this. Guidance is also being prepared for the newly elected Police and Crime Commissioners.

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/reports/overcoming-barriers-to-trust-in-crime-statistics--england-and-wales.pdf>

**Recommendation 5: The Home Office, in conjunction with the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Ministry of Justice and other relevant parties, should:**

- i) review the local data on crime and criminal justice that are becoming available across a variety of government websites and consider whether there are opportunities to consolidate, share best practice, and provide more comprehensive and consistent metadata (for example, definitions, explanations of how the data are derived, and discussion of strengths and limitations)**

i) Ongoing

Criminal justices outcomes have now been added to the crime mapping website.

## ***Scotland's Major Population Surveys***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Scotland's Major Population Surveys* in March 2010<sup>24</sup>.

In 2009 the UK Statistics Authority assessed four major population surveys carried out by the Scottish Government: the Scottish Health Survey; the Scottish House Condition Survey; the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey; and the Scottish Household Survey. The purpose of this Monitoring Brief was to summarise the main areas of good practice and areas for improvement which the Authority identified during the assessments.

Updates on progress have been provided for recommendations 1 and 4. There has been no further update to recommendation 2. Recommendation 3 was noted as having been completed in the Monitoring Update in January 2012.

### **Summary of further progress against recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1: The Scottish Health Survey website included pages listing uses and user views. The findings of user consultations and plans for future user engagement are available on the website. The Authority regards this as good practice which should be adopted by other surveys.**

#### Ongoing

The Scottish Government plans to redesign the SHS website, which will allow further improvements to be made.

**Recommendation 4: All four surveys involved contractor firms collecting and analysing the data, and in some cases, drafting the reports. In general, these arrangements worked well but in several cases there were problems with the quality of the data which the contractors sent to the Scottish Government. This led to delays in publishing the survey reports. The Authority suggests that the Scottish Government reviews the contractual arrangements with contractors to ensure that the initial quality assurance is carried out to the required standard.**

#### Complete

The new contracts for all the surveys (covering fieldwork from 2012 onwards) have been worded in a way intended to ensure that errors are rectified promptly.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring---assessment-note-3-2010---scotland-s-major-population-surveys.pdf>

## ***Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics - A Review of the Statutory Arrangements***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics - A Review of the Statutory Arrangements* in March 2010<sup>25</sup>.

This report followed the Authority's independent review of the statutory arrangements for Pre-Release Access (PRA) to official statistics in the four UK administrations. The report allowed the Authority to put on record its considered views on the rules that should govern PRA to statistical reports.

The four administrations have subsequently carried out their own reviews of how PRA arrangements have worked since the various Orders came into effect. The statutory system for PRA across the four UK administrations remains unchanged.

No further progress has been made against the specific recommendations. The Authority continues to contest the current arrangements for PRA, and has further elaborated its views to the Public Administration Select Committee in written and oral evidence in 2012. In October 2012, the Chair of the Authority wrote to the Prime Minister regarding pre-release access. The letter and the Prime Minister's reply are published on the Authority's website<sup>26</sup>. The Authority will continue to press for change to the current arrangements for PRA in the four constituent countries of the UK along the lines set out in its Monitoring Report published in March 2010.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/reports/pre--release-access-to-official-statistics--a-review-of-the-statutory-arrangements.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/index.html>

## ***Migration Statistics: The Way Ahead?***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Migration Statistics: The Way Ahead?* in July 2009<sup>27</sup>.

The report reviewed progress in implementing plans to improve UK migration statistics. It concluded that the cross-government programme was doing much useful work to deliver specific improvements in the short to medium term. However, the longer term goal – for high quality migration statistics derived from an integrated statistical system that draws on administrative and survey/census data – would take some considerable time to realise, perhaps decades. The review also highlighted the importance of maintaining a national address register beyond the 2011 Census.

Further to the Monitoring Update of January 2012, progress has been made on Recommendations 2, 3 and 6 although their status remains ‘ongoing’. Recommendations 1, 4 and 5 had been completed by the time of the first Monitoring Update.

ONS has now completed the Migration Statistics Improvement Programme, incorporating an action plan to address the review’s recommendations, and published its final report<sup>28</sup>.

### **Summary of further progress against recommendations:**

**Recommendation 2: We recommend that ONS flag those local authority population estimates where there are higher levels of uncertainty, indicating the reason for the uncertainty.**

#### Ongoing

ONS published research reports in March 2012 on Quality Indicators<sup>29</sup> and Plausibility Indicators<sup>30</sup>. The Quality Indicators for each local authority show the proportion of its population that consisted of sub-populations that were more difficult to measure. These were households that were difficult to enumerate in the 2001 Census. ONS describes the Quality Indicators as the first step in quantifying uncertainty in the population estimates and expects them to lead to improved user confidence in the population statistics.

In addition ONS is developing the plausibility ranges for local authority mid-year population estimates in England and Wales. These are based on the uncertainty observed in areas of high population turnover, for example, in areas with high student populations or high levels of international migration. ONS used the available administrative data sources to explore the quality of these and the relationships between them, and to identify ways in which they can be combined to give upper and lower limits within which the population estimates could reasonably be expected to fall. ONS has said that it will undertake further work to calculate the ranges for future years and to compare them to the 2011 Census in order to evaluate the robustness of the plausibility ranges.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/reports/authority-report-4--migration-statistics-the-way-ahead.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/latest-publications/index.html>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/latest-news/uncertainty-in-la-mypes/index.html>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/latest-news/using-administrative-data-to-set-plausibility-ranges/index.html>

**Recommendation 3: We recommend, as soon as practicable, the release of information to clarify how e-Borders data might be used in the estimation of migration statistics.**

Ongoing

Under the aegis of the Migration Statistics Improvement Programme, an update report was published<sup>31</sup> in March 2012 on the progress made in determining the statistical benefits of the e-Borders programme.

In 2009, ONS undertook research on an extract of e-Borders data. This helped with understanding data quality issues and provided a sounder basis for understanding the statistical potential of e-Borders data. Coverage has since increased markedly and ONS and the e-Borders programme have reached an agreement for further data sharing to support feasibility work, subject to the agreed data safeguards being put in place. ONS says that it aims to complete the next phase of feasibility research by mid-2013, using a further extract of e-Borders data. It intends to use the results of this research as the basis for planning the delivery of early benefits and firming up the arrangements for the longer term benefits, including arrangements for the ongoing data supply, legal frameworks and mechanisms for data access. Nevertheless, improvements to migration statistics resulting from e-Borders appear to remain several years away.

**Recommendation 6: We recommend that ONS, Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions adopt a 'conceptual framework' in their releases of migration statistics, to enable users to understand how the different sets of figures relate to each other and to the process of migration more generally.**

Ongoing

In March 2012 ONS published<sup>32</sup> a conceptual framework for UK population and migration statistics, developed as part of Phase 2 of the Migration Statistics Improvement Programme. The purpose of the framework was to facilitate communication between users and providers of population and migration statistics. It was designed to promote understanding of the concepts, data sources and processes that together shape population and migration statistics outputs, and how these fit with the uses to which they are put. ONS says that the framework will underpin its development of population and migration statistics in the future.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/latest-news/delivering-statistical-benefits-from-e-borders/index.html>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/latest-news/conceptual-framework/index.html>

## ***Gender Pay Gap***

### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Gender Pay Gap* in June 2009<sup>33</sup>.

This discussed two different interpretations, from the Government Equalities Office and from the Office for National Statistics, of statistics on the difference between the earnings of women compared with men.

No further update. The recommendations were noted as having been completed in the Monitoring Update of January 2012.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring---assessment-note-4-2009--gender-pay-gap.pdf>

### ***Volatility of the Retail Sales Index***

#### **Monitoring Update – January 2013:**

The Authority published *Volatility of the Retail Sales Index* in October 2008<sup>34</sup>.

This followed discussion in the media and elsewhere of unexpectedly large estimates of month-on-month changes for the volume of retail sales in Great Britain in May and June 2008. It provided two recommendations for improving the reporting of the results of the ONS surveys, both of which took account of the fact that all such figures derived from sample surveys are estimates.

No further update. The recommendations were noted as having been met in the Monitoring Update of January 2012.

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/volatility-of-the-retail-sales-index.pdf>