

Code of Practice for Statistics

Ensuring public confidence in statistics

Edition 2.0

Foreword

Statistics are an essential public asset. They are the lifeblood of democratic debate. And they go much wider in contemporary society, providing a succession of lenses on the world around us – how many people there are, where they live, how they live, their health and wealth – that enable decisions by a huge range of people, ranging from businesses and the media to individuals and community groups. This Code sets out the basic framework to ensure that statistics can enhance the way they achieve these essential functions.

Confidence in statistics is dependent firstly on the integrity of those producing statistics; the behaviours and actions of producers of statistics should reflect the public interest and this should be apparent to users. Statistics production should be underpinned by strong leadership, effective and transparent planning, and clear lines of responsibility and accountability for observance of this Code. In addition, sound professional and technical skills are needed. And, above all, the privacy of individuals and of business information must be protected.

Using and understanding the most appropriate data sources is the foundation of producing robust statistics. Transparent judgements about statistical definitions and methods, together with judgements about the strengths and limitations of the statistics in relation to their use, are essential; and producers should demonstrate how they assure themselves that their statistics are robust and reliable. If so, statistics will be consistent and comparable, and relevant to society.

Statistics must be equally available to all, and not be released partially to selected audiences. They should help to clearly answer society's important questions. To do so, producers must understand and promote the variety of uses and users, and their statistics should evolve to remain relevant in a changing world. In addition, statistics should be produced from data which have been compiled in an efficient way.

These then are the foundational principles for statistics that serve the public good. They embody a vision that is consistent with the UN's *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*¹, with guidance to Ministers² (“the Gus O’Donnell guidance”) and with broader Nolan principles of propriety in public life³.

This Code sets out these universal principles; develops them by setting out the practices that support them; and explains how they are structured into three pillars of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value. In this way, the Code builds on the first version by setting out much more clearly how it supports public confidence. The Code is also not just about official statistics. It provides a framework that can apply to a much wider range of data that have not traditionally been described as official statistics. Providers of these other types of data can draw on the Code as they judge appropriate to help support public confidence.

This refreshed Code has a clearer focus on public value; is underpinned by universal principles; and can support confidence in public statistics and data in a changing world.

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

¹ <http://www.unece.org/stats/archive/docs.fp.e.html>

² <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/letter-brennan-090227.pdf>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

Introduction

Why do we have a Code of Practice for Statistics?

- i. Official statistics are an essential public asset. They provide a window on society, the economy and on the work and performance of government. They are fundamental to the judgements and decisions made by the public, by government and by an enormous range of other organisations. These decisions range from central government and local authorities planning the delivery and development of public services right through to businesses and individuals planning their financial decisions, such as whether to invest in new assets or a property.
- ii. The UK Statistics Authority (the Authority) has a vital role in protecting these statistics. This role is set out in the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*⁴ which states that the Authority has the objective of ‘promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good’. The Act also requires the Authority to prepare and publish a Code of Practice and to assess compliance against it. The Office for Statistics Regulation, as the regulatory arm of the Authority, provides independent regulation of all official statistics produced in the UK to meet these obligations.
- iii. The Code of Practice for Statistics is an important tool in protecting official statistics by setting the standards that ensure the public can have confidence in them. It draws on and aligns with the *United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*⁵ and 15 Principles of the *European Statistics Code of Practice*⁶. Its principles also inform the data sharing provisions made possible under the *Digital Economy Act 2017*⁷.

Who is the Code for?

- iv. Users of statistics are at the heart of the Code. Compliance with the Code can give confidence to all users that statistics are of public value, high quality and are produced by departments and public bodies that can be trusted. We also advocate the Code and its principles for the release of numerical information more generally. The beneficiaries of the Code therefore are users of statistics.
- v. This Code is aimed at all who produce and use statistics and other numerical information, including statisticians, data scientists, analysts, researchers, policy-makers, communications officers and advisors. All who are involved in the production and release of official statistics should use this Code to understand why and how to achieve Trustworthiness, Quality and Value.
- vi. Public confidence in wider numerical information is also important. Wider numerical information can include aggregate data from administrative systems and outputs from economic and social research and analysis such as surveys and forecasting. It is not possible to anticipate or specify every type of numerical information, statistics and data that may be developed and used to inform decisions and debate. The Code therefore

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/18/contents>

⁵ <http://www.unece.org/stats/archive/docs.fp.e.html>

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/european-statistics-code-of-practice>

⁷ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/30/enacted>

seeks to establish a flexible framework and set of principles that can be applied to a wide range of numerical information. With this in mind, the Code should be seen as a tool to guide behaviours and not as a prescriptive list of requirements.

- vii. Part 1 of this Code describes the three key pillars of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value in more detail. It provides all producers of statistics and numerical information with a framework that can be applied in a proportionate and flexible way to improve public confidence. Although the Code does not apply formally beyond official statistics, all producers of statistics and numerical information can draw on the Code as a guide to help them provide credible, respected information to the public but without needing to demonstrate compliance with all the specific practices in the Code.
- viii. Part 2 of this Code sets out the detailed principles and practices which underpin the framework of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value. It provides producers of official statistics with the detailed practices they should adopt when producing and releasing official statistics. These practices are structured under the three pillars so that their purpose is clear. It sets the professional expectations for statisticians in government. However, the release of meaningful statistics and numerical information into the public domain requires the commitment of not just the statisticians, analysts, and Heads of Professions for statistics, but also of ministers, policy and communications colleagues and senior leaders within an organisation.
- ix. The Code is consistent with the Civil Service core values⁸ of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality, and the Nolan Principles⁹ of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. The *Ministerial Code*¹⁰ also explicitly recognises that all organisations that produce National Statistics should observe the best practice guidance set out in the Code of Practice, and the strict conditions placed on the sharing of official statistics in their final form as set out in pre-release access legislation.
- x. Part 2 of this Code also makes specific reference to the restriction of access to official statistics under the relevant Pre-Release Access legislation. The Authority considers pre-release access a significant risk to public trust in statistics. Some Government bodies choose to provide this access to statistics under the legislation. For those departments, we expect that individuals provided with such access to be kept to an absolute minimum with clear justifications for the reason for access provided for each individual listed.
- xi. The Authority's Office for Statistics Regulation will review compliance with the detailed principles and practices set out in part 2 when determining whether official statistics merit the National Statistics designation. The framework of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value will form the basis of regulatory judgements made by the Office for Statistics Regulation when commenting on the misuse of statistics.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code/the-civil-service-code>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministerial-code>

The Code of Practice principles

Principle	Pillar
Confidence in statistics is dependent on the integrity of those producing statistics; the behaviours and actions of producers should reflect public interest and this should be apparent to users	Trustworthiness: trusted people, systems and processes
Statistics production should be underpinned by strong leadership, effective and transparent planning, and clear lines of responsibility and accountability for observance of the Code	
Sound professional and technical skills are needed to ensure good statistical judgement	
The privacy of individuals and business information must be protected in the production and release of statistics and data, ensuring legal obligations are met	
Using and understanding the most appropriate data sources is the foundation of producing robust statistics	Quality: robust data, method and statistics
Transparent judgements about statistical definitions and methods, together with judgements about strengths and limitations, are essential in supporting confidence in the quality of the statistics	
Producers should demonstrate how they assure themselves that the statistics are robust and reliable	
Statistics should be consistent and comparable, while remaining relevant to society	
Statistics must be equally available to all and not released partially to selected audiences	Value: statistics that serve the public good
Statistics should help to clearly answer society's important questions	
Producers should understand and promote the variety of uses and potential uses of statistics	
Statistics need to continue to evolve to remain relevant in a changing world	
Statistics should be produced from data which have been compiled in an efficient way	

Part 1: The pillars of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value

The Code is structured around three pillars:

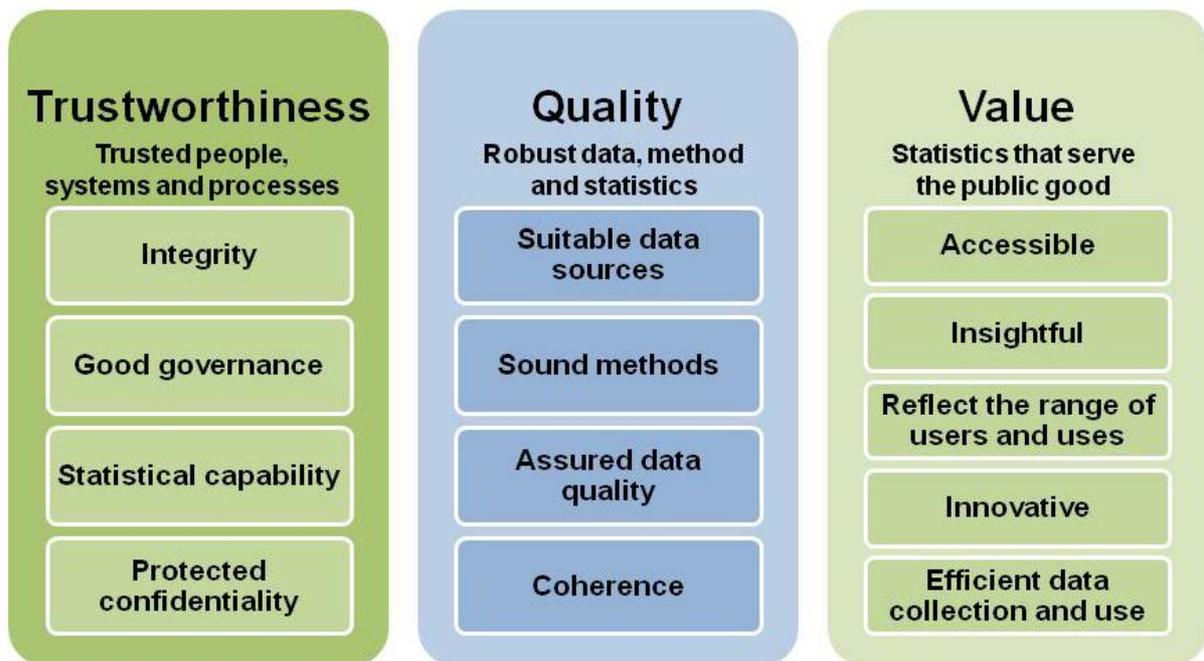
Trustworthiness: trusted people, systems and processes

Quality: robust data, method and statistics

Value: statistics that serve the public good

We see Trustworthiness, Quality and Value as universal aspirations for all who publish analysis and data. In this part of the Code we describe each of these aspirations in more detail, by explaining the principles which relate to each of the pillars (summarised in figure 1).

Figure 1: Code of Practice for Statistics framework



Trustworthiness: trusted people, systems and processes

Trustworthiness means that the statistics and other numerical information are produced free from vested interest, and are based on the best professional judgement of statisticians and other analysts.

Trustworthiness is a product of the people, systems and processes within organisations that enable and support the production of statistics and other numerical information. It is supported by the principles of integrity, good governance, statistical capability, and protected confidentiality, with the cross-cutting themes of transparency and openness:

- Confidence in statistics is dependent on the integrity of those producing statistics; the behaviours and actions of producers should reflect public interest and this should be apparent to users (Principle T1: Integrity)

- Statistics production should be underpinned by strong leadership, effective and transparent planning, and clear lines of responsibility and accountability for observance of the Code (Principle T2: Good governance)
- Sound professional and technical skills are needed to ensure good statistical judgement (Principle T3: Statistical capability)
- The privacy of individuals and business information must be protected in the production and release of statistics and data, ensuring legal obligations are met (Principle T4: Protected confidentiality)

Quality: robust data, methods and statistics

Quality means that the statistics and numerical information represent the best available estimate of what they aim to measure at a particular point in time and that they are not materially misleading.

Quality is analytical in nature and is a product of the professional judgements made in the specification, collection, aggregation, processing, analysis, and dissemination of data. It is supported by the principles of suitable data sources, assured data quality, sound methods and coherence, with the cross-cutting themes of strong relationships and communication:

- Using and understanding the most appropriate data sources is the foundation of creating reliable statistical measures (Principle Q1: Suitable data sources)
- Transparent judgements about statistical definitions and methods, together with judgements about strengths and limitations, are essential in supporting confidence in the quality of the statistics (Principle Q2: Sound methods)
- Producers should demonstrate how they assure themselves that the statistics are robust and reliable (Principle Q3: Assured data quality)
- Statistics should be consistent and comparable, while remaining relevant to society (Principle Q4: Coherence)

Value: statistics that serve the public good

Value means that the statistics and numerical information are accessible, remain relevant, and benefit society, helping the public to understand important issues and answer key questions.

Value is a product of the interface between the statistics or numerical information and those who use them as a basis for forming judgements. It is supported by the following principles: accessible, insightful, reflecting the range of users and uses, innovative, and efficient data collection and use:

- Statistics must be equally available to all and not released partially to selected audiences (Principle V1: Accessible)
- Statistics should help to clearly answer society's important questions (Principle V2: Insightful)
- Producers should understand and promote the variety of uses and potential uses of statistics (Principle V3: Reflect the range of users and uses)

- Statistics need to continue to evolve to remain relevant in a changing world (Principle V4: Innovative)
- Statistics should be produced from data which have been compiled in an efficient way (Principle V5: Efficient data collection and use)

Value is at the heart of National Statistics status: there is no merit in a statistical output that has trusted processes and high quality data, methods and statistics, if it doesn't help to clearly answer society's important questions.

Part 2: Principles and practices

Trustworthiness: trusted people, systems and processes

Trustworthiness means that the statistics and other numerical information are produced free from vested interest, based on the best professional judgement of statisticians and other analysts.

Trustworthiness is a product of the people, systems and processes within organisations that enable and support the production of statistics and other numerical information.

T1: Integrity

Confidence in statistics is dependent on the integrity of those producing statistics; the behaviours and actions of producers should reflect public interest and this should be apparent to users

- 1) Those producing statistics should be protected from any undue pressure that may influence the production or presentation of the statistics.
- 2) Statistics and the accompanying narrative should be presented clearly and objectively, and based on the underlying facts and figures.
- 3) Statistics should be released in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence:
 - i) Pre-announce the release of both regular and ad hoc statistics with as much notice as is practicable, through a release calendar.
 - ii) Announce changes to any pre-announced release dates or time, as agreed by the Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for statistics, explaining the reasons for the change.
 - iii) Limit access before public release to those essential for the production and publication of statistics. Ensure that no indication of the statistics is made public or given to any other party not recorded as eligible for access.
 - iv) Restrict the circulation of statistics in their final form, in line with the rules and principles on the pre-release access set out in legislation, to the essential recipients; publish details of those given access and the reasons for the decision.
 - v) Release statistics as soon as they are ready, so that there is no opportunity, or perception of opportunity, for the release to be withheld or delayed.
 - vi) Publish statistics to all users at 9.30am on a week day.
 - vii) Issue statistics separately from any other policy statement or comment about the figures.
 - viii) Ensure that government statements released alongside or following the release of official statistics, which present numerical information and statistics, meet basic professional standards, and that any such statements are clearly labelled as policy (or ministerial) statements, provide a prominent link to the source of the statistics, and are readily distinguishable from statistical outputs.
- 4) Any scheduled revisions or corrections to the statistics should follow transparent procedures for their handling and release which are proportionate to the impact on the interpretation of the statistics. The scale and nature of the changes should be explained alongside the statistics, in line with a published policy for their handling and release.

T2: Good governance

Statistics production should be underpinned by strong leadership, effective and transparent planning, and clear lines of responsibility and accountability for observance of the Code

- 1) All staff handling and using statistics should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to meet the principles of the Code of Practice.
- 2) The Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for statistics (see Annex A) should have ultimate responsibility for the production and development of statistics and numerical information:
 - i) The Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for statistics should have sole authority for deciding on the methods, content, and timing of the release of regular and ad hoc statistics.
 - ii) As the principal advisor and accountable officer within the organisation on statistical matters, the views of the Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for statistics should be considered in matters relating to statistics and numerical information, including advising on the release of new statistics.
 - iii) The Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for statistics should actively advocate the application of the Code framework when working with numerical information.
 - iv) The Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for statistics should report to the National Statistician on professional matters.
- 3) All statutory obligations and internationally endorsed guidelines governing the collection of data, confidentiality, data sharing and release should be followed.
- 4) Any concerns regarding professional independence or any accidental or wrongful release of statistics should be reported immediately to the National Statistician or Chief Statistician for the Devolved Administrations.
- 5) Any concerns about meeting the principles of the Code should be reported to the Director General for Regulation.
- 6) Details of any exemptions from the practices of the Code, as agreed by the Director General for Regulation, should be published.
- 7) Sufficient resource should be provided to deliver a good service to users, to the standards of this Code, with transparent statistical planning that fully takes into account society's needs.
- 8) A statistical work programme should be established and regularly reviewed, with progress against statistical plans reported.
- 9) Good business practices in the use of resources should be maintained, and where appropriate statistics producers should look to share resources and collaborate with other producers to achieve common goals.
- 10) Independent measures should be used to monitor the quality of statistical processes, being transparent about the areas for improvement.

T3: Statistical capability

Sound professional and technical skills are needed to ensure good statistical judgement

- 1) Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and supporting guidance should be provided to aid staff in carrying out their roles.
- 2) Staff with lead statistical responsibilities should seek advice and guidance from the National Statistician, as the principal advisor on official statistics, where appropriate.
- 3) Appropriately skilled staff should be recruited, using a relevant professional competency framework.
- 4) Staff should be provided with the time and resource to develop their skills, knowledge and competencies to produce valuable statistics.

T4: Protected confidentiality

The privacy of individuals and business information must be protected in the production and release of statistics and data, ensuring legal obligations are met

- 1) Participation in statistical surveys should be sought through informed consent rather than using statutory power wherever possible.
- 2) The identity of individuals or organisations must be protected at all times. Appropriate disclosure control methods, including the nature of any consent given, should be applied when releasing statistics.
- 3) Those providing their information should be informed that their data will be used to produce statistics and research that will not identify individuals or organisations and will be protected at all times.
- 4) Appropriate training and guidance in the safe access and handling of data should be provided to staff.
- 5) Users should be informed how the private information for an individual or an organisation is protected.
- 6) The use and sharing of data should be encouraged to make the best use of statistical assets, while meeting legal obligations around confidentiality and following transparent data-sharing arrangements.

Quality: robust data, methods and statistics

Quality means that the statistics and numerical information represent the best available estimate of what they aim to measure at a particular point in time and are not materially misleading.

Quality is analytical in nature and is a product of the professional judgements made in the specification, collection, aggregation, processing, analysis, and dissemination of data

Q1: Suitable data sources

Using and understanding the most appropriate data sources is the foundation of producing robust statistics

- 1) Statistics should be based on data sources in which the definitions and concepts are good approximations to what the statistics aim to measure.
- 2) The nature of data sources used, and the factors that led to the choice of these data sources, should be explained to users. Where administrative sources of data are used, this information would include the original purpose for the recording of the data and the collection arrangements.
- 3) Changes in the data source context (such as in the legislation, or operational, policy and data collection arrangements) should be evaluated by statistics producers, to determine the nature of any impact on the statistics.
- 4) Potential sources of bias and any distortive behaviour in the collection, reporting or recording of data should be identified and the impact on both the data and on the statistics should be understood and communicated to users.
- 5) The causes of any limitations identified in data sources should be addressed. Any actions taken to address these limitations should be explained to users, as should any restrictions or constraints which may mean actions are not possible.
- 6) Constructive relationships should be established and maintained with organisations involved in the collection, recording and supply of data, to ensure the effective and efficient provision of data and, for administrative data sources, influence over the design of administrative systems.
- 7) A clear statement of data requirements should be shared with organisations involved in the collection, recording and supply of data, setting out the decisions on timing, definitions and format of data supply.

Q2: Sound methods

Transparent judgements about statistical definitions and methods, together with judgements about strengths and limitations, are essential in supporting confidence in the quality of the statistics

- 1) Robust methods and processes, based on sound principles and international good practice, should be adopted.
- 2) The methods used should be clearly explained to users, giving the reasons for their selection. The detail of the explanation should be proportionate to the complexity of the methods chosen and reflect the needs of different types of users.
- 3) Opportunities to collaborate with others producing related statistics and with topic and methods experts should be identified and exploited.
- 4) Advance notice about changes to methods and procedures, and why these judgements have been made, should be given to users.
- 5) Any potential biases arising from the methods, an indication of their likely scale, and the steps taken to minimise their impact on the statistics, should be explained to users.

Q3: Assured data quality

Producers should demonstrate how they assure themselves that the statistics are robust and reliable

- 1) Statistics producers should establish and maintain assurance arrangements that are proportional to the likelihood of quality issues arising in the data and the public value of the statistics:
 - i) Information about the quality of the data sources should be obtained from those involved in collection and supply, to gain reassurance about accuracy and completeness.
 - ii) The risks to data quality should be minimised – both operationally, such as using insight from audits and inspections of the data – and in the collection and data preparation processes.
 - iii) A current understanding of data quality issues should be maintained by reporting quality indicators, such as sampling and non-sampling errors, and completeness and coverage rates.
- 2) Decisions about these quality assurance arrangements and the quality concerns identified by them should be communicated to users:
 - i) The implications of data quality concerns at source on the quality of the statistics should be explained to users
 - ii) The steps taken to assure the quality of statistics should be explained clearly to users, setting out the implications of data quality concerns.
 - iii) Judgements made about the quality of input data and of methods should be explained clearly to users.
- 3) The strengths and weaknesses in the data should be systematically and regularly identified, to inform judgements about how to continuously improve the quality of the

statistics. Statistics should be validated through comparison with other relevant data sources and statistics.

Q4: Coherence

Statistics should be consistent and comparable, while remaining relevant to society

- 1) Statistics should be internally coherent, logically consistent and compiled using recognised standards, classifications and definitions. Users should be provided with reasons for any deviation from these and explanation of any implications for the use of the statistics.
- 2) Statistics should be consistent over time and between geographical areas while remaining relevant to society. Users should be provided with reasons for any deviation from accepted good practice and explanations of any implications for the use of the statistics.
- 3) Consistent time series should be produced, with back series provided to users wherever possible in the event of changes to methods and definitions, together with key judgements about the impact of methods or data changes on the time series.

Value: statistics that serve the public good

Value means that the statistics and other numerical information are accessible, remain relevant and benefit society; helping the public to understand important issues and answer key questions.

Value is a product of the interface between the statistics or other numerical information and those who use them as a basis for forming judgements.

V1: Accessible

Statistics must be equally available to all and not released partially to selected audiences

- 1) Free and equal access must be given to regular and ad hoc statistics on the internet.
- 2) Straightforward and open ways of accessing the statistics, data, and related guidance should be provided.
- 3) Statistics, data and associated metadata should be published at the lowest level of detail while maintaining confidentiality and quality.
- 4) The needs of different types of users should be considered, for example, as a result of levels of technical skill or access to software, in designing the ways of releasing statistics.
- 5) Statistics producers must consider the needs of people with disabilities and statistics should be disseminated using accessible communication formats and means.
- 6) A clear pricing policy for supplementary statistical services should be adopted and published.
- 7) Once released, statistics, data and accompanying metadata should continue to be publicly available; official statistics should be archived as required in line with relevant legislation.

V2: Insightful

Statistics should help to clearly answer society's important questions

- 1) Statistics should be presented in a clear, unambiguous way that supports and promotes use by all types of users.
- 2) A clear insight into the main statistical messages and relevant context should be provided to help answer key questions, demonstrate the relevance of the statistics and support the use of the statistics.
- 3) A complete picture of the statistical topic should be provided by working collaboratively with producers of related statistics and topic experts, including international comparisons where possible.

- 4) The coherence of the statistics with other related data sources and statistics should be explained. The lack of coherence with other similar statistics should be explained, with clear signposting to the related statistics.
- 5) Statistics should be reviewed regularly to determine whether they meet a reasonable range of uses required by users, considering whether they should be continued, discontinued, adapted, or provided through other means.

V3: Reflect the range of users and uses

Producers should understand and promote the variety of uses and potential uses of statistics

- 1) Statistics producers should engage with users of different types, to develop and maintain a current understanding of the value and potential value of the statistics, and recognise known concerns of users.
- 2) Opportunities to increase the value of the statistics should be identified, considering the needs of different types of users.
- 3) Feedback should be provided to users about how their needs can and cannot be met, being open about resource and technical constraints.
- 4) Advice should be given to users about the appropriate use of the statistics; any misuse should be challenged.
- 5) The lead statistician or analyst should be visible and accessible to users and supported to speak publicly about the statistics and their use.
- 6) Statistics should be publicised in ways that enable users to identify and access information relevant to their needs.
- 7) The timeliness of statistics should take into account the uses made of the statistics as much as possible, balancing quality and cost considerations.

V4: Innovative

Statistics need to continue to evolve to remain relevant in a changing world

- 1) Statistics producers should keep abreast of technological and methodological advances and seek out new partnerships which could improve the value of their statistics.
- 2) Statistics producers should seek to innovate throughout the statistical process:
 - i) The potential of integrating new and existing data sources should be exploited.
 - ii) Methods and processes should be continuously improved, explaining to users the impact on the statistics and data and the reasons for change, balancing the need for consistency and comparability.
 - iii) Continuous improvements should be made to the presentation and dissemination of the statistics.
 - iv) New and innovative ways to engage users should be exploited.

- 3) Users and other experts should be involved in the ongoing development of statistics, in identifying statistics to be improved, and in exploring and evaluating innovative ways to calculate statistics to meet the needs of society.
- 4) Development plans and the outcomes of research to improve the statistics, data, and methods should be made publicly available, including any feedback received from users and other experts.
- 5) Newly developed statistics, including those published as Experimental Statistics¹¹, should involve users in the analysis of their suitability.

V5: Efficient data collection and use

Statistics should be produced from data which has been compiled in an efficient way

- 1) The burden on those providing their information, and on those involved in collecting, recording and supplying data, through surveys or administrative sources, should be considered to ensure that it is proportionate and not unduly excessive.
- 2) Existing data should be evaluated and used wherever possible before undertaking a new data collection.
- 3) Providers of statistics should maximise opportunities for the use of administrative data, cross-analysis of sources and for the exchange and re-use of data to avoid duplicating requests for information.
- 4) The need for extending or creating data and data sources should be demonstrated to those organisations involved in the collection, recording and supply of data.

¹¹ Experimental Statistics are a subset of official statistics undergoing evaluation. They are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.

Annex A: Supplementary notes on the Code

- i. The Code is specific but, in many cases, its principles and practices will need interpretation and professional judgement. The National Statistician and the Office for Statistics Regulation will provide supplementary guidance to assist bodies that produce official statistics. The Chief Statistician or Head of Profession for Statistics is responsible for ensuring the principles and practices in this Code are met for official statistics and National Statistics. It is expected that within every organisation there are clear lines of accountability for observance of the Code to underpin effective statistical production.
- ii. Under some circumstances it may be appropriate for the UK Statistics Authority to agree exemptions or exceptions to the practices, though not to the principles. Where an organisation that produces National Statistics is aware of a need for an exemption, it should make a case to the Office for Statistics Regulation. Details of all exemptions will be made public.
- iii. This Code is consistent with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the European Statistics Code of Practice.

How often is the Code updated?

- iv. Edition 1.0 of the Code of Practice was published in 2009. Since that time the landscape of information production and dissemination has changed significantly. To ensure the Code of Practice remains relevant, flexible and an enabler of innovation we undertook a Stocktake of the Code of Practice¹² to understand how far the Code has been flexible in the face of these developments.
- v. This is the second edition of this Code and, following the recommendations of the Stocktake of Edition 1.0 of the Code, includes the following key changes:
 - The Code should have a greater emphasis on Trustworthiness, Quality and Value
 - The Code should be more explicit about the role of Chief Statisticians and Heads of Profession for statistics and how this fits within the wider context of the organisation's responsibilities
 - The Code should have a greater emphasis on innovation and coherence
- vi. Edition 2.0 of the Code recognises that the context and technologies involved in statistical production will continue to evolve. The Code may be subject to future updates as deemed necessary by the Office for Statistics Regulation, informed by feedback from users of the Code and the needs of stakeholder groups.

Terms used in this Code

National Statistics – The regulatory arm of the UK Statistics Authority, the Office for Statistics Regulation, assesses compliance against the Code. Official statistics assessed as fully compliant are designated as National Statistics in line with the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.

¹² <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/stocktake-of-the-code-of-practice-for-official-statistics-exposure-draft/>

Official statistics – defined in section 6 of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* as statistics produced by crown bodies, those acting on behalf of crown bodies, or those specified in statutory orders.

Experimental Statistics – Experimental Statistics are a subset of official statistics undergoing evaluation. They are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.

Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for Statistics – Where an official body produces ‘National Statistics’; produces or makes extensive use of ‘official statistics’; or employs an appreciable number of official statisticians, that organisation should appoint a person deemed suitable by the National Statistician to the post of Head of Profession for Statistics (HoP). Heads of Profession should be appointed by the organisation’s Head of Department, after seeking the views of the National Statistician. Appointees remain in the formal line management of their own organisation. They also collaborate with the National Statistician/Head of the Government Statistical Service and are accountable to him/her for the professional integrity and quality of their work. Where there is no suitable candidate, or insufficient justification for such an appointment, the organisation should make arrangements to rely on the services of the Head of Profession in a neighbouring (for example, sponsor) organisation.¹³

Voluntary Compliance – We advocate the framework of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value to be considered by official bodies and by organisations outside government in relation to the publication of wider numerical information that has the potential to enhance debate. This approach is flexible, and entirely optional. We consider that such an ambition has the potential to raise standards and to enhance the profile of the Code.

¹³ <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/about/governance-and-structure/roles-responsibilities-head-profession/>