

# UK Statistics Authority Business Plan

April 2018 to March 2021

# 01

## FOREWORD

The period of this plan will see the realisation of the ambition set out in our strategy, Better Statistics, Better Decisions.

The UK has important decisions to make on EU exit and our place in the world, the macroeconomy and industrial strategy, population change and migration, health, security amongst many more. To inform these decisions our job is to provide clear insight quickly, in fine grained forms and targeted on the issues at hand. All our services need to be designed to be helpful to government, business, communities and individuals when important choices and judgements are being made.

The data revolution has created previously unimaginable sources of information for us to work with for the public good. We have built our ability to recognise the possibilities and develop technologies. We have invested in our skills and capability. Over the next three years we will be curious and innovative to make the most of the opportunity.

2017 was the third year for implementation of the Better Statistics, Better Decisions strategy. From the outset, we had envisaged five stages of implementation, each building on the other. The first year was primarily about leadership – building the leadership team and developing the relationships needed with partner organisations.

During the second year the focus turned to finance - getting clarity about the resources available, notably through the 2015 Spending Review and subsequent funding from Sir Charles Bean's review of economic statistics, and improving our financial competence.

The third year was about technology and data – building on early progress made with the ONS website and our IT sourcing, we have delivered on the promise of the Data Science Campus and seen enactment of important provisions in the Digital Economy Act. We have also made significant progress with improving the technology available to staff (especially field staff) and moved off long running, expensive and high risk legacy systems.

There is still work to do on leadership, finance and technology but we are now on a much firmer footing as we move into the fourth phase of the strategy. Now the focus is on our staff, their skills and how we work together to maximise our collective contribution. We are on track to complete the final stage of this period of radical change in our three priority areas: economic statistics, contribution to public policy (including through the census and other data collections) and data capability (technology and skills) in year five, ready for the next Spending Review period.

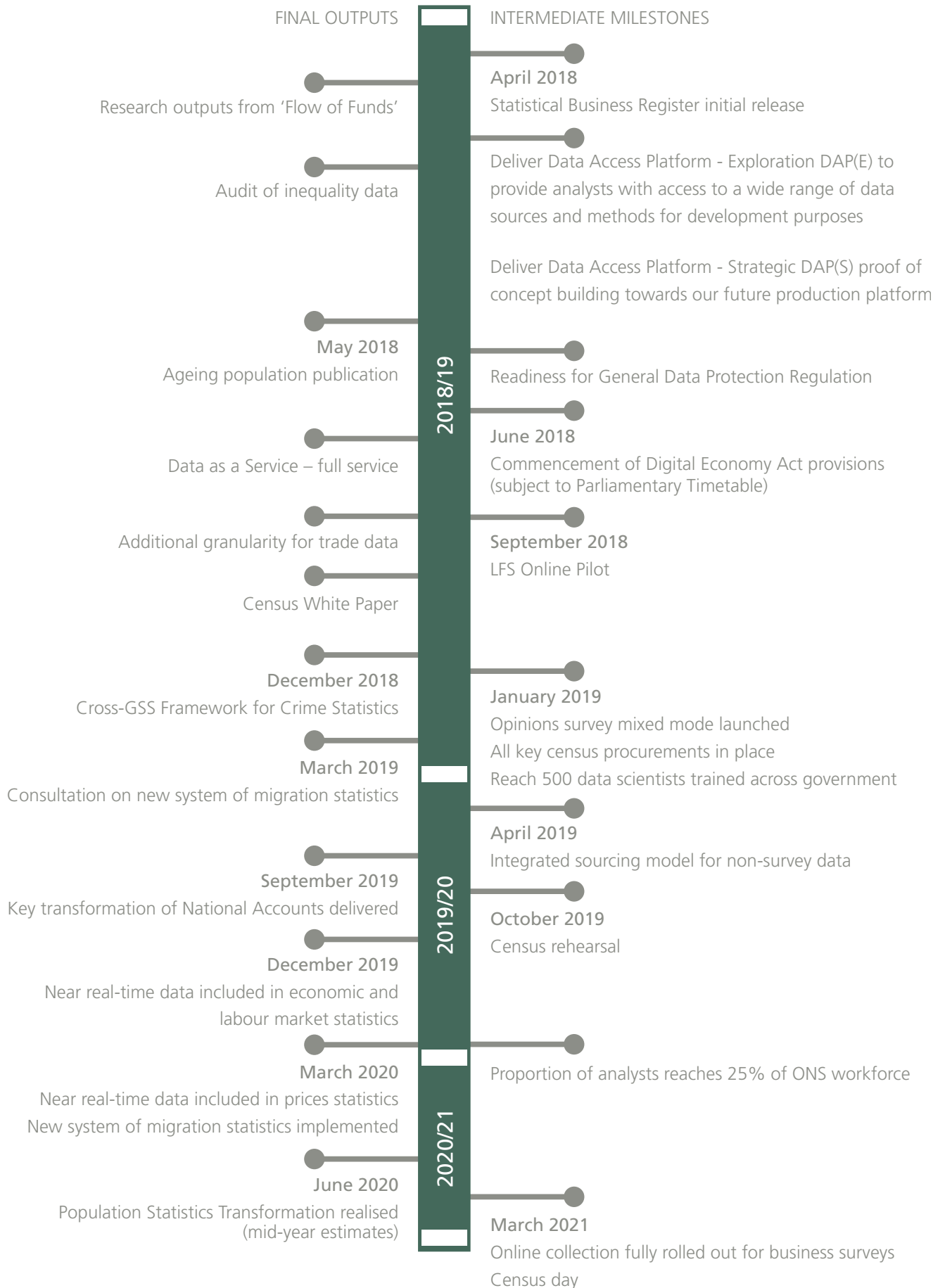
We will face many challenges. To earn trust we need to be professional in all we do. This means we have to demonstrate our impartiality through our actions. Our values of honesty, integrity, objectivity and impartiality need to shine through in all our work. We need to respect the interests of those whose data we utilise for public benefit and never stray from description into advocacy. Outstanding communication of our findings and our ethos is essential if we are to ensure that good evidence is used in the service of democracy.

Our work is increasingly based on partnerships. We will continue to grow a community working together across the Office for National Statistics, the Government Statistical Service and wider Government Analysis Function, with civil service colleagues in various professional communities and alongside an ever-growing group of academics, private sector organisations and international bodies. I am looking forward to building all these relationships to maximise the positive impact we can make.

As we reach each milestone in this plan we can say with growing confidence that we are mobilising the power of data to help Britain make better decisions.

**John Pullinger**  
April 2018

High-level timeline



# 02

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

This plan describes how we will deliver our mission, set out in our strategy. We will do this through delivering specific results against each of our 5 perspectives: Helpful; Professional; Innovative; Efficient and Capable. For each of our perspectives, we will set out what we plan to achieve, how we will ensure success and the risks we face.

The focus of the plan is the work of ONS, the executive arm of the UK Statistics Authority. The activities of the wider Government Statistical Service (GSS) are mainly covered by the plans of each government department and the 4 nations of the UK, although this plan includes the cross cutting elements which support the official statistics system as a whole. The work of the Authority's regulation function, the Office for Statistics Regulation, is covered by a separate business plan.

We have three priorities for change and this business plan sets out the next steps:

1. In **economic statistics**, we will fill the gaps highlighted in the Bean Review, following through on improvements to statistics on trade, productivity, prices and the flow of funds. Our target date to deliver on the key Bean Review outcomes is summer 2019. We will continue to move our emphasis towards delivering services to enable clearer insight about the UK economy. Success will be measured by the ratings given to us by those using what we make available.
2. In **public policy**, we will significantly improve population and migration estimates by putting administrative data at the heart of the system by summer 2020. Successful delivery of the 2021 census will be a major milestone at the end of the planning period. We will provide better statistics on societal issues such as crime, health and inequalities, moving away from publishing statistics by source towards well-rounded topic reports. We will re-engage policy makers and others by providing new insight that progressively develops over the planning period.
3. In **data capability**, we will consolidate the transformation of our technology and workforce to enable the delivery of the areas above. As the Digital Economy Act comes into force we will introduce the idea of 'data as a service' in 2018 to support the UK research and evidence base, and we will use our Data Science Campus to help transform how data is used for the public good. We will grow new skills and develop a diverse and high performing workforce.

# HELPFUL

Statistics play a central role in the functioning of democratic society, enabling sound decisions and supporting public debate. They serve those in power and also those seeking to hold the powerful to account. We will focus on what people care about and on the needs of our key customers and stakeholders. We will do things in real time and not in the rear-view mirror; delivering products and services to fit with people's experience and locality; drawing information together and communicating in ways which make sense to the audience. We will engage with our users continuously so that our service will help them make better informed decisions.

## WHY WE ARE CHANGING

A vital part of our strategy is to keep pace with the rapidly changing nature of the economy and society, and the changing expectations from all users of official statistics. We set out later how we will be professional, innovative, efficient and capable in all we do, but our success is ultimately measured by the value we bring to UK decision making.

Changes we have made to our economic statistics raise their relevance to the modern world, addressing important questions about productivity, the services sector and other aspects of UK prosperity and performance. We will closely monitor the economy as the UK leaves the EU. Policy makers need early warning of any changes so they can consider how to respond. In the past, our data has struggled to identify turning points. Data such as VAT will be helpful in complementing our survey data. There is also a need for better data about the UK's trade, and how trade affects the wider economy. There is a need to understand the products the UK trades, the industries that produce those goods and services and the countries with whom the UK trades. In the longer term, the country's industrial strategy requires understanding different industries and the geographies in which they operate.

The country also faces challenges around measuring societal change, inequalities and devolution. Our ability to describe our society in detail through statistics objectively and clearly will be our mark of success. We must be able to monitor societal changes in a way which helps us report on the impact of future changes, in response to a variety of shocks and influences. We know there is a greater appetite for statistics and data from policy makers and from the general public to receive data and statistics in ways which matter and they can make use of. The nation requires a coherent collection of statistics that are presented in a way which all users can understand and reflects the breadth of decisions which people make.

## WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

We will design all our services to be helpful to parliament, government, business, communities and individuals when important choices and judgements are being made.

- 1.1 Later in this plan we set out how we will deliver our priorities, from improvements to our statistics and analysis, to improved use of data, digital transformation, and the census. Our ultimate goal, however, is to improve public understanding of the state of the nation. We will measure success through feedback from users across all sectors; measures of trust and satisfaction in ONS and official statistics; and, ultimately, through whether there is an improvement in public understanding of the key economic and social issues (see measures below).
- 1.2 In the context of the UK's exit from the European Union, the UK statistical system will provide the evidence base and analysis needed to inform debate across all policy areas and nations of the UK. As the future for the UK following exit from the European Union becomes clear we will ensure the stability of the system of UK official statistics. This will include developing our future relationship with the European Statistical System.

## ECONOMIC STATISTICS

- 1.3 Our first priority remains economic statistics. Our plans have been guided by Sir Charles Bean's review and incorporated in our Economic Statistics and Analysis Strategy.
- 1.4 Our main areas of focus will be to improve understanding of:
  - the modern economy
  - trade
  - devolved, regional and local economies
  - productivity and the supply of labour and capital
  - prices and inflation
  - beyond GDP – broader measures of welfare and activity

## POPULATION AND PUBLIC POLICY

- 1.5 It is also a priority for us to work across the system of UK official statistics to improve the understanding of specific societal issues. Working with colleagues across government and the devolved administrations, our main areas of focus will be to:
  - provide greater statistical insights into the number of migrants, where they live, and the benefits and impacts to local communities
  - provide a complete and coherent overview of trends in crime, new and emerging crime types and how the police justice system is dealing with these cases
  - provide a clearer picture of health issues through new insight and linking health and non-health data to help understand health outcomes better
  - make housing statistics easier to understand, navigate and use providing a coherent and compelling picture of trends in housing
  - shed new light on issues of social inequality and how different groups of people are affected by inequality issues
  - support decision making at community level through statistics provided on a devolved, regional and local basis
  - deliver ad hoc analysis and be increasingly agile to support emerging policy agendas
  - support work led by DfE and OFSTED to make education data more coherent and to enhance understanding of what works in the education system for the benefit of children

## DATA CAPABILITY

- 1.6 We will work with others to improve data services, partnerships and architecture across government in the public interest. This will include:
  - ensuring outputs developed by the Data Science Campus during 2018 and beyond are adopted by the ONS, government departments and research programmes, resulting in demonstrable public benefit
  - enhancing our service to researchers using the Secure Research Service, which will drive a step change in the government's ability to provide access to public data for research purposes; in 2018 we plan to roll out desktop access to

the Secure Research Service to local government and other third party organisations to maximise reuse and impact.

## THE RISKS WE FACE

- 1.7 In the current environment there is a risk decisions are taken on an unsound evidence base. Official statistics must keep pace with customer needs in terms of their relevance, usefulness and insight and take advantage of new data sources and analytical capability to ensure decisions are based on the best information available.
- 1.8 Our products should reflect the most important issues of the day giving insight into key areas such as inequality, the economy, trade, health and social care, population growth and migration. If we do not respond and adapt to the changing environment there is a risk we fail

to provide the information the country needs to make better decisions.

- 1.9 In order to succeed we know we need to be open to taking some risk. We will seek to anticipate trends and prioritise analysis and advice which will help Britain make better decisions, even if it means reducing our existing work. We will also be open to new methods and new ways we can help. Where this may face criticism we explain our approach and rationale openly.
- 1.10 We cannot just deliver through our products but also through our relationships. We will be open to working with a broad range of partners and will ensure statisticians across government have a 'seat at the table' when it comes to informing the policy debate.

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### Customer perception of whether ONS is helpful in improving decision making

Measured through a) feedback from key customers against product area (see Figure 1), b) year-on-year increase in proportion of customers satisfied with ONS performance, c) improving public perception of policy issues vs reality measured by ONS and others' research

#### Data science campus outputs adopted

New outputs (products, reports, insights) being used in production and by multiple partners, including across government

#### Public confidence in official statistics

2016 Position: 90%, Target: Increase in 2018

### OPERATIONAL MEASURES

#### ONS online end user satisfaction

2017 Position: 76% neutral or positive,  
Target: Year-on-year increase

#### Help the UK research and innovation community to thrive through increased use of the secure research service

Target: Reach 400 projects run through the Secure Research Service in 2018/19, with value and impact demonstrated through case studies

#### Media sentiment across print and online

Target: <10% of media stories 'negative'

**Figure 1: How are we helping and who tells us whether we are...**

How we are helping...	Who will tell us whether we are...
Helping make decisions on Brexit and Britain's place in the world, especially in relation to trade and migration	Department for Exiting the EU, Department for International Trade, Migration Advisory Committee
Helping make decisions on public finances, especially in relation to the Budget, Monetary Policy and Financial Stability	HM Treasury, Bank of England, Office for Budget Responsibility
Helping make decisions that support British business, including on UK productivity and industrial strategy, understanding the modern economy and UK research and innovation	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Confederation of British Industry, Institute of Directors, UK Research and Innovation
Helping make decisions on sustainable development including understanding the national balance sheet	Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, environment and food farming sectors
Supporting devolution	Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and city authorities
Helping understand equalities, identity and social mobility to support social justice for individuals and communities	Community groups, Resolution Foundation etc.
Helping make decisions related to health and social care	Health service providers, local authorities and the public
Helping make decisions related to housing	Department for Communities, Housing and Local Government, the sector and the public
Helping understand trends in crime and the justice system	Home Office, Ministry of Justice and the public
Helping people make important decisions in their lives including on education, jobs, transport	Public surveys



# PROFESSIONAL

To be helpful we must be professional. When we collect data, citizens and businesses trust us to keep it secure and use it for the public good. When we publish statistics we want users to trust that we provide a fair view and we meet our commitments to the delivery of statistics to deadlines and measures of quality. We also need to build trust by demonstrating progress towards the delivery of the 2021 census, which will make significant contribution to the overall transformation programme.

## WHY WE ARE CHANGING

The 'National Statistics' quality mark is a sign that statistics meet the highest professional standards of trustworthiness, quality and value. We need to maintain the trust of our users as we transform statistical products and services. The majority of statistics produced by ONS are underpinned by international frameworks or legislation; we must continue to meet international standards and also shape new international frameworks to help users understand UK performance in the context of global trends. With all the challenges the country faces it is essential official statistics are the trusted source for citizens and decision makers and we meet our commitments to provide them in a timely fashion to meet user needs.

## WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

We will deliver timely, high quality economic and social statistics which meet international best practice and user needs. We will provide excellent analysis of key public policy areas, providing simple frameworks to allow users to navigate a wide range of data on potentially complex issues.

- 2.1 We will deliver, on a daily basis, the national and official statistics which our users need to inform debate and decision making. This will be around 650 statistical releases per year for the ONS alone.
- 2.2 Wherever possible we will improve the timeliness of statistical outputs to ensure we release data as close to real time as is feasible.

## ECONOMIC STATISTICS

- 2.3 Our economic statistics will be of the quality required to enable users to understand the picture of the modern economy. This will fall into several key areas.

- 2.4 **Productivity:** We will produce improved understanding of UK productivity through an enhanced range of productivity statistics, including a focus on intangible assets in 2018 and enhanced labour productivity data in 2019.
- 2.5 **Trade:** to help inform important debate around the UK's position in the global market we will improve our trade statistics. Changes will include increased granularity of trade data from October 2018 and improved sources in deflators in August 2019.
- 2.6 **Services:** We will improve the measurement of service sector activity through the use of data from the Annual Survey of Goods and Services in the National Accounts from December 2018.
- 2.7 **Environmental Accounts:** ONS and Defra will work in partnership to improve the UK's Environmental Accounts and understanding of Natural Capital, including new estimates of Raw Material Consumption in spring 2018 and new Urban Natural Capital Accounts (including the value of nature implicit in house prices) in summer 2018.

- 2.8 In addition to these areas of development we will maintain the quality of all economic statistics, including through the following:
- we will develop our economic statistics to adopt and maintain consistency with international standards SNA08 and ESA10 – this will enable us to meet international obligations
  - in 2018 we will publish estimates incorporating improved methods to address Gross National Income reservations
  - we will retain National Statistics status on our outputs and, where appropriate, regain status on those outputs de-designated – this will include regaining National Statistics status for statistics on UK trade and construction
  - to improve the measurement of Gross Value Added (GVA) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) we will introduce double deflation into the National Accounts from 2019
  - by 2018 we will have published the results of the Purchases Survey and we will begin to use the data in the production of Supply and Use Tables within the National Accounts – Purchases survey will be fully integrated into the National Accounts in 2018/19

## POPULATION AND PUBLIC POLICY

- 2.9 As we move towards delivery of the 2021 Census in March 2021 we will:
- design key services and approaches, and start on-boarding suppliers by October 2018
  - finalise the 2018 Census White Paper in autumn 2018, leading to the Census Order in 2019
  - successfully deliver the 2019 Census Rehearsal in October 2019
  - deliver a predominantly online 2021 census in March 2021
- 2.10 We will consult on a new system of migration statistics based around administrative data in 2018/19 and implement the new system into our statistics during 2019/20. As we develop the system we will publish insights through our Migration Centre of Expertise that support decision-makers.
- 2.11 We will seek to create and communicate a more detailed and clearer understanding of the nature of crime in the UK. This will include the introduction of a single cross-government framework for crime and justice statistics from 2018, and statistics which tackle key themes such as fraud and new crime types.
- 2.12 We will work with the Office for Statistical Regulation on the re-assessment of Crime Statistics on the basis of whether ONS is helping users understand trends in crime.
- 2.13 In spring 2018 we will publish a wide-ranging publication on the ageing population with contribution from all appropriate parts of the system of UK official statistics.
- 2.14 We will build on recent improvements to modernise the operations of our nationwide field force. This will include completion of the roll-out of tablets across the International Passenger Survey, and automated allocation of fieldwork and access to real-time progress information from July 2018.
- 2.15 We will explore areas for potential reuse of ONS online collection tools across government from December 2018.
- 2.16 We will improve the publication of statistics on inequality issues, including measurement of progress towards UK Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This will include:
- integrating earnings data from the PAYE system with Census data to consider earnings mobility and progression at fine geographic levels in 2018
  - consideration of ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’ data by disability and ethnicity in spring 2018
  - introduction of annual wealth estimates, following development work in 2018/19 based on the Wealth and Assets survey
  - developing intergenerational linked administrative data sets to support policy and decision-making by 2021
- 2.17 A new partnership between ONS and DFID will aim to improve the quality and availability of data to support SDGs globally and ensure no one is left behind. This will include supporting modernisation and building skills in countries such as Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda.

## DATA CAPABILITY

- 2.18 To continue to improve the quality of all ONS outputs we will conduct National Statistics Quality Reviews on key areas of user need and a regular programme of internal Quality Reviews on all ONS outputs – and address any recommendations made.
- 2.19 We will increase our efforts on harmonisation and methodological best practice across the GSS, including through the methodology advisory service.
- 2.20 Data security is of fundamental importance to us. We will continue to keep under review all security policies and practices covering physical, systems and data security and remain committed to security by design in all our systems.
- 2.21 In preparation for implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation in May 2018, we will work across the statistical system to ensure we are prepared for and not impacted by the new regulations. Within ONS we will establish a Data Protection Team led by the Data Protection Officer.

## OPERATIONAL MEASURES

### Proportion of statistical releases free from major errors (ONS)

2017/18 Position: 99.8%

2018/19 Target: 100%

### Proportion of statistical releases within the 09:30 deadline (ONS)

2017/18 Position: 98%

2018/19 Target: 100%

### Response rates for ONS surveys

2018/19 Target: 90% (business) 56% (LFS)

### Significant data breaches or losses

2017/18 Position: 0

2017/18 Target: 0

### Retain National Statistics Status for key outputs and regain National Statistics Status for Trade and Construction in 2018/19

### Proportion of ONS systems and processes that are assessed as resilient

2017/18 Position: 86%

2018/19 Target: year-on-year increase

## THE RISKS WE FACE

- 2.22 Our most significant risk in this area is the loss of public trust due to bias, errors or losses of data. We will ensure the quality of UK official statistics and the security of the data entrusted to us.
- 2.23 Formal outputs must be of high quality to maintain confidence and as a precaution we use a range of assurance tools. We recognise the need to avoid mistakes (errors) but also accept some known imprecision to ensure timeliness.
- 2.24 We must be an exemplar in data assurance, including security and in the quality of our statistics. Our appetite for risk is minimal as any breach of confidentiality, or disclosure through data linking would fall short of our expectations and would damage public trust in our organisation.
- 2.25 However, we must also enable the use of data to improve the understanding of key policy questions. Our systems will allow appropriate access to data for ONS staff and the wider analytic community in support of research and to further knowledge.

# INNOVATIVE

Underpinning the changes to our products is a fundamental transformation in the way we work and how we interact with data. We have to make a step change in our thinking, being relentlessly curious about how we can do better. We must change fast enough to take advantage of the rapidly increasing range of data sources and be at the forefront of digital and technology development.

## WHY WE ARE CHANGING

More data, in richer and more complex forms, is available than ever before. The opportunity provided by the Digital Economy Act allows us to access data directly from administrative and commercial sources. This will both relieve the burden on citizens and businesses but also allow us to transform our data collection operations and produce statistics based on billions of records (rather than hundreds of thousands), allowing for increased accuracy, timeliness and granularity. Central to our understanding of the population at a local level is the census. It is now possible to deliver census outputs from alternative sources. In 2021 we will run a modern, online, census and a parallel administrative data census.

As the world around us changes it is becoming increasingly apparent that we cannot operate in isolation, we must deliver the outcomes the country needs to take better decisions through collaboration across central and local government; with academia and commercial partners; and through engagement with the international community. Our customers need new and innovative products through a more active research and development environment outside the confines of traditional official statistics. ONS will seek to be innovative in all it does, from the transformation of our economic and social statistics to the research outputs produced by the Data Science Campus.

## WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

3.1 As the statistical system level, we will work on sharing data within legal gateways to support the production of better statistics and statistical insight across the UK.

### ECONOMIC STATISTICS

We will provide new products and services, and more timely and granular data to give increasing insight on the UK economic story by utilising rich sources and exploiting administrative, regulatory and third party data in the production of statistics.

3.2 We recognise the potential for improved understanding of the financial flows in the economy and, particularly in light of the 2008 financial crisis, the need to understand the build-up of liabilities. Delivery of Enhanced

Financial Accounts will improve understanding of financial flows within the UK economy, experimental research outputs will be published in April 2018 with experimental flow of funds included in the 2019 Blue Book and full integration in Blue Book 2021.

3.3 Expanded use of VAT and PAYE data in the national accounts will seek to improve our economic statistics outputs. This will include short term statistics in December 2019 and regional/local breakdowns using VAT data and Gross Value Added by fine geography in 2018/19.

3.4 For inflation statistics, we will aim to blend together a variety of data sources e.g. 'scanner data' from supermarkets with web-scraped data, to produce near to real-time measures of consumer price inflation from March 2020.

- 3.5 Through the development of new methods for the use of administrative data we will use PAYE and RTI data for employment, wages and GDP, giving us the opportunity to improve speed and detail. Users will see the use of PAYE data from end 2019.
- 3.6 We will publish our first estimate of monthly GDP in July 2018, as well as developing a package of products to be published as part of the new monthly and quarterly GDP publications. In spring 2018, we will publish a paper outlining the plans for implementation in more detail.
- 3.7 We will work closely with colleagues in departments such as BEIS and DWP to transform Labour Market statistics using administrative data sources to replace/supplement the Labour Force Survey from 2021, leading to increased speed and detail.
- 3.8 Working with the Data Science Campus and external partners we will explore joint projects which test new methods for understanding the economy and economic statistics.

## POPULATION AND PUBLIC POLICY

Following our move to a digital by default model across our suite of rationalised business and social surveys and the census, we will embed the use of alternative data sources in order to move towards surveys supplementing our outputs only where necessary.

- 3.9 Respondents will be able to provide data through a variety of channels. Mixed mode collection available for LFS in 2020 and Opinions Survey in 2019.
- 3.10 We will publish annual Admin Data Census stock-take and research outputs to continue to develop the administrative data approach a potential replacement to the traditional census in the future.
- 3.11 By March 2021 we will have aligned population estimates, administrative data census, migration, and labour force collection methods and outputs in order to establish a sustainable model for the future through the use of integrated administrative data and ongoing social surveys.

- 3.12 We will develop new surveys to complement the administrative data we use, this will include an integrated UK Household Survey Model (incorporating the Administrative Data Census Coverage Survey Test) in June 2020.
- 3.13 Through increased use of data science and innovative approaches to problem solving we will find new ways to explore societal issues such as obesity, natural capital and rental prices.

## DATA CAPABILITY

We will have effectively enabled the delivery of ONS transformation, including new statistics, analysis and research products through the provision of effective data services, methods, systems and solutions.

- 3.14 We will develop our capability to acquire, prepare and link non-survey data using a fit for purpose Data Architecture. This will include the acquisition of large data sets aligned to ONS priority areas in 2018 (such as Real Time Information from HMRC and mobile phone data from commercial sources), and collection through an integrated model from April 2019.
- 3.15 As part of the cross-office digital transformation we will continue our move to a platform-based approach to technology. This will allow us to explore new data sources and produce the more detailed, granular statistics and analysis, as well as generate significant efficiency savings due to a move away from our legacy of independent technology infrastructure.
- 3.16 Our key priority areas will be:
- Data Access: developing a platform to enable the use of new and diverse data sources, initially supporting priority areas such as exploratory work around migration, trade, education, and enhanced financial accounts whilst also providing a mechanism to carry out research, ad hoc analysis and to prototype new methods
  - Data Collection: our collection platform will enable the rollout of more online surveys and improved respondent management
  - Statistical Production: following the prototype platform used to incorporate VAT data in the National Accounts we will be able to expand this platform across other production areas, facilitating the modernisation of UK official statistics

We will improve the communication of statistics and expand and develop our relationships with stakeholders and partners both nationally and internationally. This will allow us to increase our impact through the adoption of innovative and new approaches, for example through the Data Science Campus.

- 3.17 In order to improve the communication of official statistics, ensure they make the right impact and serve the public good, we will continue to improve the ONS website – but also use new and innovative ways to disseminate information, including abilities for users to customise their own data and through expanded use of social media and continued exploitation of data visualisation.
- 3.18 The enhancement of our data dissemination capability and the increased capability of features enabling data to be customised by users at the point of download will further increase the usability of published data sources. To support this we will provide a modern platform for the dissemination of sub-national statistics.
- 3.19 We will work with partners from across the United Nations to develop a Global Data Platform, allowing data, services and applications to be shared and developed for the public good.
- 3.20 The ONS Data Science Campus was successfully launched in March 2017 as a centre of excellence and capability in data science. Building from the first Data Science Campus outputs in 2017 we will deliver around 30 data science projects which develop new and innovative approaches to key questions of interest and which further the modernisation of UK official statistics.
- 3.21 From 2018 we will experiment with artificial intelligence and machine learning, finding new ways of producing outputs, for example using text and image data.

- 3.23 We will be relentlessly curious about experimenting with new products, approaches and ways of working.
- 3.24 To mitigate the risk posed by the failure to innovate we must continuously seek new and innovative solutions and make full use of our spirit of curiosity to effect change. In this immediate term this will involve the use of administrative data and commercial data sources to develop modern statistical products and analysis.
- 3.25 Technology development aligned with business milestones will support this change and deliver a complex and challenging transformation of ONS. We will prioritise the development of new and emerging technologies and be open to risk where our technology development will deliver the greatest value.

#### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

**80% of ONS 'Legacy' IT Systems to be replaced with new technology by April 2020**

**Data Science Campus methods, processes and techniques used in production**

New data sources, methods, code, and other techniques being used in production and by multiple partners

**Deliver significant progress towards modernising ONS, including Census 2021**

Deliver all activities and milestones as outlined for ONS transformation

#### OPERATIONAL MEASURES

**Reduction in reliance on surveys due to the use of alternative data sources**

Increased availability and use of acquired administrative and commercial data sources through new ONS systems

## THE RISKS WE FACE

- 3.22 Delivering the necessary innovation in data collection, dissemination and statistical production will be challenging. To be truly innovative means the acceptance of failure and the associated threat to reputation. However, we actively seek change even if it creates risk.

# EFFICIENT

We must drive efficiency, while also demonstrating the value we deliver to business, citizens and government is substantially greater than our costs. ONS will deliver 19% efficiency savings by 2020 and will demonstrate how the value of the organisation has changed as a result of investment in the business, driven by the Census, economic statistics transformation and improvements in our approach and underlying business processes.

## WHY WE ARE CHANGING

Modern organisations operate in an increasingly dynamic way, building capability and creating a modern and flexible work environment. As our organisation transforms we will ensure we are fit for purpose in all that we do. In an environment where we have increasing access to data from administrative and commercial services we have the opportunity to modernise in a way which has not been previously possible. In order to make this happen we must invest in the right areas, find significant efficiencies through continuous improvement and demonstrate the value for money we are achieving from our funding streams. These developments require us to improve our management approach and the supporting business processes to match the speed of transformation.

## WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

We will deliver value for money services which our customers want and need. This will include improving our approach to measuring the value we are generating from our transforming business and improving our business processes, approach and organisational culture. In order to achieve this, we need to plan and manage our resources effectively, demonstrate how we are achieving our efficiency targets and the benefits our transformation programmes, and ensure that we make the most of the commercial opportunities that will arise from the capabilities and systems we are building.

- 4.1 During 2018/19, as set out across this business plan, we will be enhancing the value we are providing to our stakeholders; improving the quality of our statistical outputs; and developing our understanding of the key economic and public policy issues they illustrate.
- 4.2 However, in order to demonstrate the benefits of these outcomes to our external stakeholders, we need to identify and manage how we are delivering greater value across ONS. To do this we need to show how we are improving our approach to managing our funding; demonstrate efficiencies and productivity improvements in our

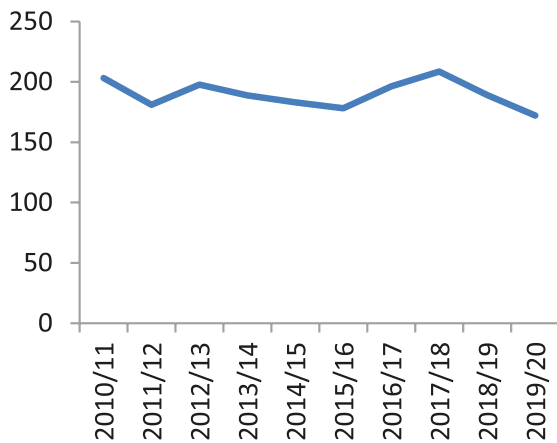
core business through innovation and continuous improvement; and delivering increased value through the delivery of a wider range of statistics, insight and capabilities.

- 4.3 In order to meet our commitment to deliver 19% efficiencies, we will ensure that we meet the funding and control totals agreed with HM Treasury at the 2015 Spending Review. We will also demonstrate how we have reinvested over £30 million from 2016 to 2020 in reforming our business processes. This will include tracking benefits we have delivered and a programme of continuous improvement in the collection of data.
- 4.4 We will also provide a clear view of the benefits of transforming ONS's approach through the Census Transformation Programme and Economic Statistics Transformation and the range of metrics set out across this business plan. This will include the wider economic benefits we will deliver for the public and key stakeholders through our transforming business.
- 4.5 An important part of this is through the development of rationalised surveys using all modes available that deliver unbiased results.

This will include:

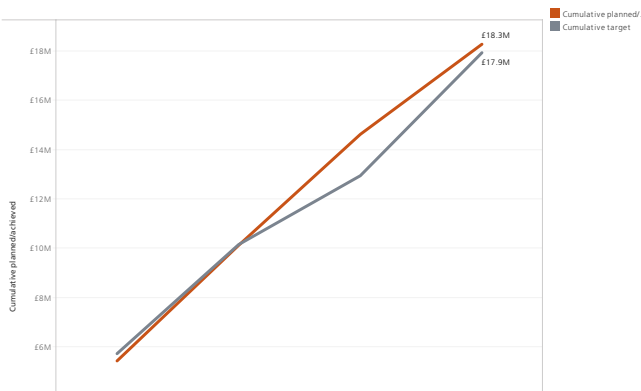
- rationalised online Financial Surveys and an integrated online Retail Trade Survey in early 2019
  - full transformation of short-term business surveys in December 2019
  - integration of online financial business surveys in March 2020
- 4.6 Our costs will reduce through moving surveys online using our newly developed Survey Data Collection platform. By March 2019 we will have over 222,000 business forms online and 957,000 by March 2021.

Figure 2: Gross budget



1 Includes Resource, Capital, Income funding, excludes Depreciation  
 2 GDP Deflator dated 25th November 2015 per Autumn Statement

Figure 3: Planned SR15 Efficiencies



- 4.7 To support these aims we will continue to improve our business planning and programme management to ensure successful delivery and appropriate oversight, with a data led approach to evidencing progress.

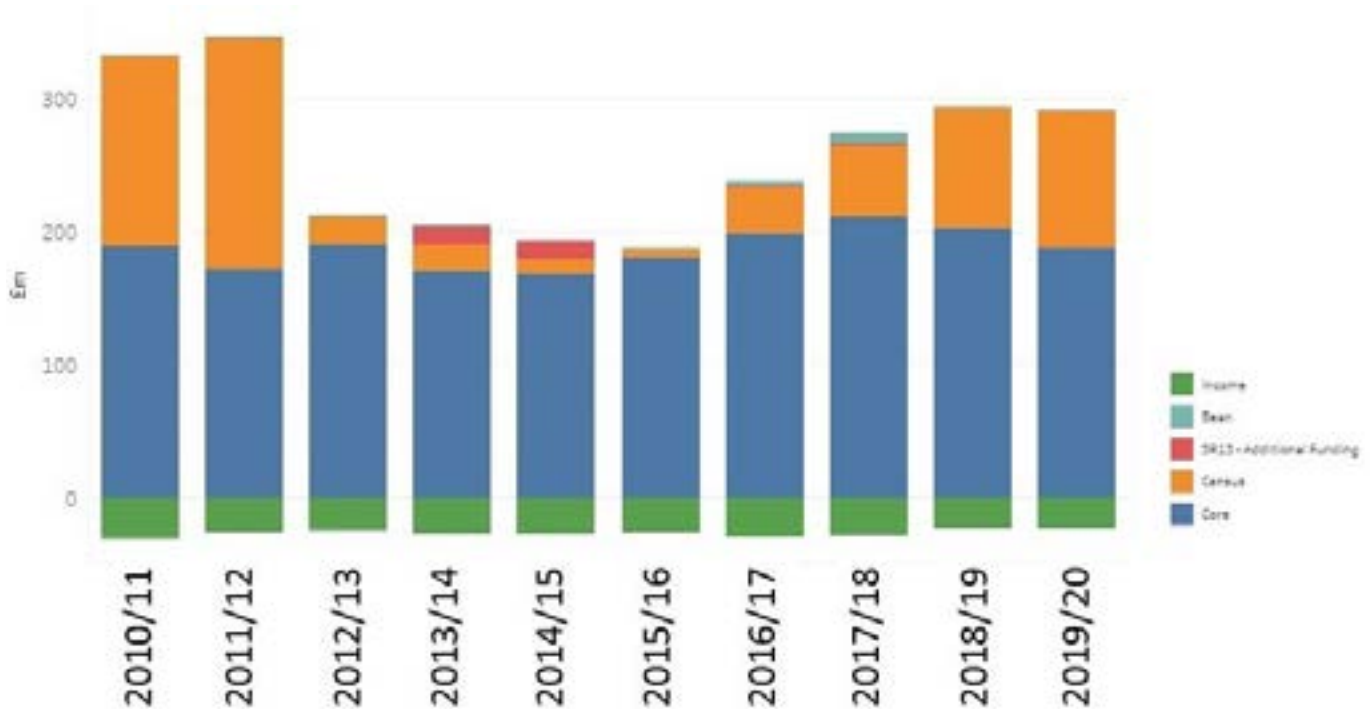
- 4.8 We will develop our financial management capability centrally and by increasing our financial skills across the business. This will include clearer accountabilities and delegation to ensure that the execution of this business plan is robustly managed.
- 4.9 Through developing our management information and business intelligence, we will provide insight into our business performance and ensure decisions can be taken quickly and robustly. This will include full utilisation of our Enterprise Resource Planning system to provide an integrated view of resources.
- 4.10 We will support our business model and develop new funding streams through new income generation opportunities, whilst maintaining our core remit which is provided free for the public good.
- 4.11 We will establish efficient and effective procurement contracts, particularly in relation to the significant outsourced elements of the 2021 Census.
- 4.12 During 2018/19 we will complete the focused refresh of the ONS property estate to ensure future sustainability. We will also continue our drive to implement a 'one-office' culture where teams are flexible, project based and multi-disciplinary, therefore improving productivity and breaking down organisational silos.

## THE RISKS WE FACE

- 4.13 The public sector faces an extended period where funding from government will be under pressure. In the face of this we must be prepared to make the necessary changes to our business, to be as efficient as can be if we are to live within a reduced budget whilst maintaining the quality of our products and services.
- 4.14 We must ensure we have sound financial management to enable us to use our resources effectively by deciding our priorities and matching these with budgets and people.
- 4.15 We will also keep our business model under review and seek opportunities for a different approach, including to the way we operate and the way we are funded, that could allow us to enhance the services we provide in the face of limited resources.



Figure 4: Funding SR10 & SR15



### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

**Deliver our business while achieving annual efficiency savings**

19% efficiencies in our core funding by 2019/20, through reductions in our cost base and re-investment

**Demonstrate the benefits from Economic Statistics and Public Policy transformations**

Tracking the direct and wider economic benefits from ONS transformation programmes and designing a framework to demonstrate the value of the technology and data-led approach

### OPERATIONAL MEASURES

**Achieve set income target**

2018/19 Target: £20 million to £25 million

**The number of staff days lost per person across the Authority**

2018/19 Target: <7.5

**Proportion of business surveys available online**

Target: Majority of ongoing business surveys online by March 2020 (see Figure 5)

**Estimated respondent time and cost for completing ONS surveys**

Target: a) 25% reduction in average processing cost for surveys transformed and online and b) Monetary value of respondent burden, as estimated by ONS, reduces over time

Figure 5: Actual and Planned Transition of Business Surveys Online

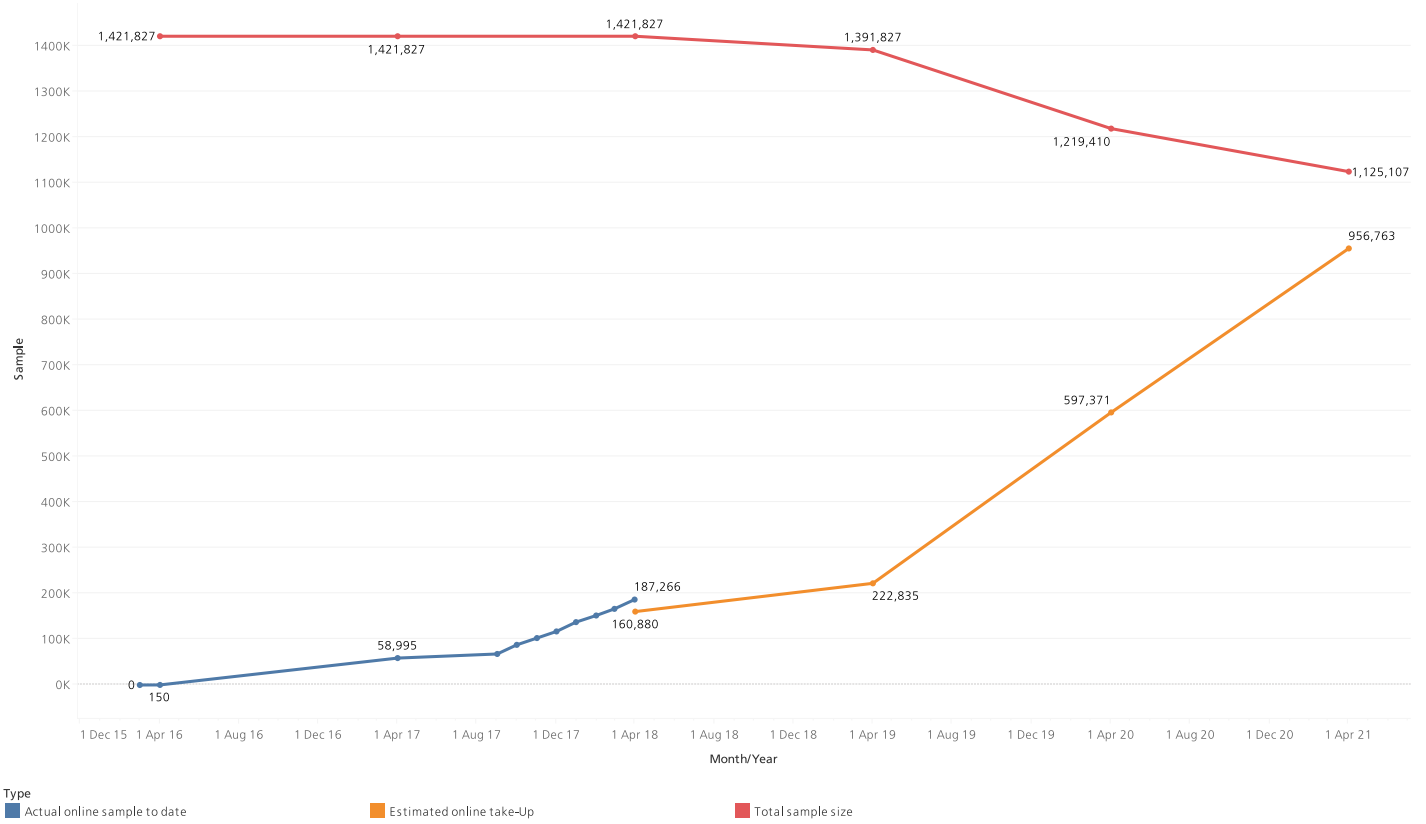


Table 1 – UK Statistics Authority Settlement

£million	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Resource (RDEL) SR15	145.4	159.1	168.1	164.6	156.7
Resource (RDEL) Bean Review	0.0	3.6	8.1	11.0	10.1
Capital (CDEL)	8.8	10.6	14.0	13.4	7.0
TOTAL	154.2	173.3	190.2	189.0	173.8

Table 1a – Census Transformation Programme (CTP) Settlement

£million	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Census	19.9	25.9	44.2	78.9	91.1
Wider Benefit	0.0	10.0	11.2	15.1	12.7
TOTAL	19.9	35.9	55.4	94.0	103.8

Table 2 – Office for National Statistics Resource Budget by Function

£million	2015/16*	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Economic Statistics	–	30	39	39	35
Population and Public Policy	–	62	83	99	101
Data Capability	–	109	111	129	123
Other	–	7	13	16	19
TOTAL	–	209	246	283	278

\*functional structure introduced in 2016, current splits are subject to adjustment

The tables above show spending review budgets subject to change through the annual estimate process.

# CAPABLE

We have set out within this plan how we will become more Helpful, Professional, Innovative and Efficient as part of the delivery of our strategy. This will see us demonstrate the delivery of high quality statistics utilising new and innovative technology and opportunities to meet our stakeholders needs, and shape and inform public debate and policy.

To be Helpful we must have the capability to use new tools and techniques to draw insights from data which were not possible a few years ago, and we must be able to work effectively in partnership with others. To be Professional we must continue to improve our technical skills as well as leadership and management. To be Innovative we must grow our capability in data science, data management, and the utilisation of new technology. To be Efficient we must improve our leadership and management capability. The change will be cultural as well as technological. We must be more collaborative, open and flexible in how we work; and focus on attracting great people, growing and developing skills, and further developing a diverse and healthy workforce.

## WHY WE ARE CHANGING

This business plan describes the changing the way we do business and the transformation of our digital and technological capability. Our conventional approach to delivering services must be driven by the needs of the user and reflect our ambition to become increasingly central to decision making. To deliver these changes, we need to build a workforce that is ready, willing and able to do things differently and one that aspires to be the best it can be.

With the rise of new technological and digital solutions we now have the opportunity to produce many of our outputs more efficiently. This will allow us to focus our energies on unlocking the high value potential of our statistical products and adding additional value for our customers. We must ensure our people have the right skills to deliver this work and that the ONS is able to retain and attract the best possible talent. This increasingly skilled workforce will allow us to move quickly to provide analysis of emerging issues and use cutting-edge techniques to innovate at the vanguard of economic and social research.

## WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

We will improve our capability and transform our workforce to ensure we have the right people with the right skills to enable us to effectively deliver. This will see us develop our approaches to recruitment and retention, staff training and development, and diversity.

### ECONOMIC STATISTICS

- 5.1 We will work in partnership with stakeholders, including academics, to enhance our capability in economic research and translate this into improvements in economic statistics. This will include:
- providing increased capability in economic issues through the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence and ONS Fellows, publishing research outputs on key issues from 2018
  - expanding our interface with users of economic statistics, particularly through the Economic Forum as an opportunity for debate around key economic issues facing the UK, therefore influencing our future direction and understanding of stakeholder needs

### POPULATION AND PUBLIC POLICY

- 5.2 In order to deliver increased understanding of the external environment we operate in and to understand and react to public policy changes we will invest in core skills across all areas of statistical production and through our nationwide field force. The priorities for 2018/19 will be investing in communication and leadership skills across all grades.
- 5.3 Our Centre of Expertise model has been established as a primary vehicle for building our capability as well as increasing impact, engagement, coherence and accessibility. This will enhance our model beyond pure statistics into broader analysis and insight by having established Centres of Expertise on Crime and Justice, Migration, Demography and Ageing, Inequalities and Cities and Regions by April 2019, establishing ONS as leaders of the development of statistical insight in these areas.

### DATA CAPABILITY

- 5.4 We will deliver our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2017-20) to ensure we use the diverse talents of our workforce to deliver better statistics. This will involve focusing on creating a diverse and representative workforce, creating an inclusive environment, embedding diversity and inclusion into our work and raising levels of inclusion at all levels. We will monitor this through our Diversity and Inclusion Dashboard.
- 5.5 Our aim is to increase the proportion of analysis in the ONS workforce to around 30% by 2020 – through development and recruitment. This will include attracting economists, developing the Operational Delivery Profession analysis pathway, and increasing recruitment of statisticians and researchers.
- 5.6 We will increase data science skills through our Data Science Campus, including: mentoring 20 projects as part of the Data Science Accelerator Programme, ensuring all Campus apprentices deliver projects and achieve diplomas and delivery of training courses to the wider ONS and government workforce. This will provide a centre of expertise for Government Data Science.
- 5.7 The ONS Learning Academy programme will be aligned to the needs of the organisation, based on a regular skills assessment and the development of career pathways. Priorities for 2018/19 include digital learning (R, Python, advanced machine learning), change management and leadership development.
- 5.8 We will take a leading role in the delivery of the Cross Government Analytical Functions strategy to bring analytical professions together and to meet the anticipated demands of the future. By 2019 we will deliver career and learning pathways for all professions.
- 5.9 As the ONS business model changes we will re-shape the workforce to be smaller and more highly skilled. This includes the implementation of the Target Operating Models for the Economic Statistics and Population and Public Policy areas – driving a change in organisational design for the future.

- 5.10 In 2018/19 we will introduce a new performance management model in ONS which will also align with the continued development of our approach to pay and reward. These objectives improve our offer to new recruits from specialist areas, therefore helping to enable workforce change.
- 5.11 In 2018/19 we will implement a new recruitment service offer to provide a faster, more straightforward user focussed service. This will enable ONS to recruit the specialist skills it needs to deliver the stretching targets for improvement in this business plan.
- 5.12 In 2018 we will develop a plan to deliver the ONS priority of improving leadership capability across the office. We will develop business and people management skills and behaviours at all levels including through our future leaders leadership programmes (at SCS, G6/7, SEO and cross-GSS).
- 5.13 We will use the information gathered from the Civil Service People Survey to help develop a workforce fit for the future. This will working towards the creation of a 'one office' culture that creates an inclusive working environment where employees maximise their potential, feel empowered and are able to challenge.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Level of staff engagement (UKSA)

2017/18 Position: 61%, 2018/19 Target: 65%

**Through the Data Science Campus produce 500 qualified data analysts for government by 2021**

## OPERATIONAL MEASURES

### Share of the ONS workforce who are members of the 4 government analytical professions (Statistics, Economics, Operational Research and Social Research)

2015/16 Position: 19% of total workforce

Target: 50% increase by 2019/20 (see Fig 6)

### Proportion of new ONS recruits who are analytical professionals

Target: >50% recruits in 2018/19

**ONS Learning Academy courses and attendees aligned to priority skills development: analytical, digital, leadership**

## THE RISKS WE FACE

- 5.14 Our key risk is around the recruitment and retention of the people we need to drive a significant change in our business. We must ensure we have sufficient analytical and technological capability and the people who are able to respond to the challenges we face.
- 5.15 To ensure we have the right people we need to be able to compete on the global market for scarce skills. We must also grow our own talent through a strong programme of learning and development.
- 5.16 To develop our workforce in this way means we need to take some risk by exploiting new approaches and opportunities. Through this our workforce should develop to meet the needs of the future.

Table 3 – Staffing Levels

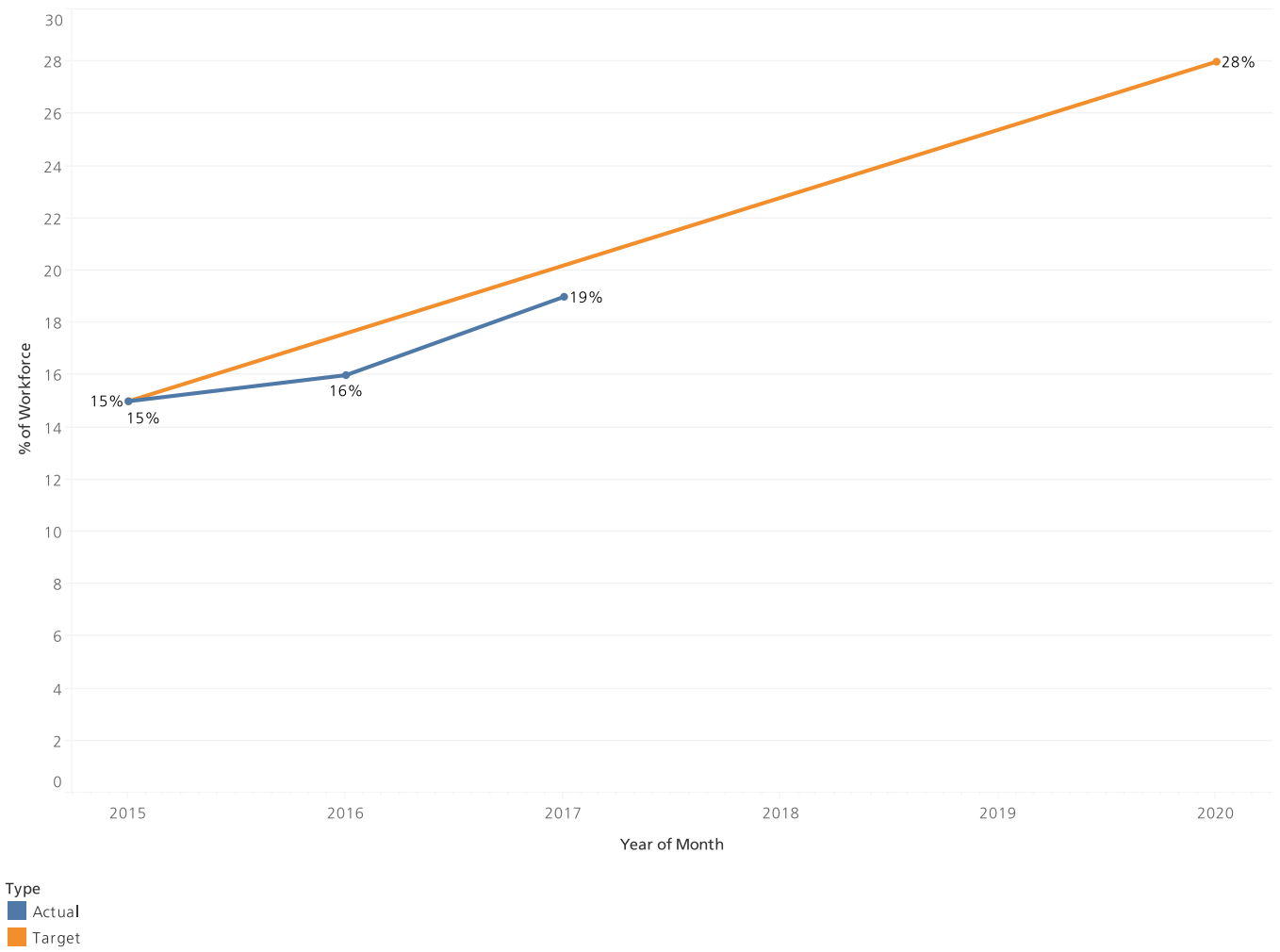
Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	2015/16*	2016/17*	2017/18*	2018/19	2019/20
Delivery (existing operations - efficient)	2,766	2,713	2,911	2,495	2,359
Delivery (income funded)	60	63	68	75	90
Reform (new work – meeting user needs)	72	157	159	244	238
Transform (temporary - to deliver change)	157	242	263	303	228
TOTAL (exc CTP)	3,055	3,175	3,401	3,092	2,890
Census Transformation Programme (CTP)	233	272	316	359	399
TOTAL (inc CTP)	3,288	3,446	3,717	3,476	3,314

\*actual end-year positions, future position represents a target, workforce in future years will reduce through investment in transformation

Table 4 – Staffing Levels by Function

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	2015/16*	2016/17*	2017/18*	2018/19	2019/20
Economic Statistics	569	613	652	658	591
Population and Public Policy	1,743	1,835	1,929	1,995	1,925
Data Capability	809	851	964	710	687
Other	148	147	172	113	110
TOTAL (inc CTP)	3,253	3,446	3,717	3,476	3,314

\*actual end-year positions, future position represents a target, workforce in future years will reduce through investment in transformation

**Figure 6: Analytical staff**



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to:  
UK Statistics Authority  
1 Drummond Gate  
London  
SW1V 2QQ

Email: [authority.enquiries@statistics.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:authority.enquiries@statistics.gsi.gov.uk)