

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## Committee for Official Statistics

### Minutes

Friday 10 December 2010

#### **Present**

##### **Members**

Professor Sir Roger Jowell (Chair)  
Sir Michael Scholar (until item 6)  
Mr Richard Alldritt  
Dr Colette Bowe  
Professor Angela Dale  
Ms Moira Gibb  
Professor David Hand  
Mr Duncan MacNiven  
Ms Jil Matheson  
Professor David Rhind (until item 6)

##### **Other Attendees**

Ms Roma Chappell (for item 2)  
Mr Martin Dougharty and Mr Liam Murray (for item 4)  
Mr Jason Bradbury (for items 5 and 6)

##### **Secretariat**

Mr Rob Bumpstead  
Mr Joe Cuddeford

##### **Apologies**

None

##### **Declarations of Interest**

None

**1 Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 5 October 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

**2 Official Statistics Theme Update: Population [SA(COS)(10)25]**

2.1 Ms Chappell, theme leader for the Government Statistical Service (GSS) population theme group, provided an update on the plans and priorities of theme. The statistical topics covered by the theme included population, migration, outputs from the census, vital statistics such as births, marriages and deaths, and the Beyond 2011 project.

2.2 The theme group had overseen a user engagement day organised with the help of the Statistics User Forum at the Royal Statistical Society (RSS). The event helped users to clarify their understanding of population statistics prior to articulating their needs in response to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) public consultation on its workplan. It was agreed that a note of the user meeting would be provided to Committee members.

2.3 The Committee welcomed the theme's engagement with users, and noted that comparability between the countries of the UK was a particular strength of population statistics. The following further points were made in discussion.

- i. Population statistics had the potential for significant market value, particularly when combined with data from the commercial sector. However, there were professional issues related to the sale of public data, as this involves withholding it from users who have not paid. The private sector may hold information that could be used to improve population statistics, but it had proven difficult to realise this in practice.
- ii. Some users would like information on how robust particular population estimates were. The meeting heard that the population theme was considering ways to provide more information about the quality of these estimates.
- iii. The theme had links to two universities, but there could be wider expertise to draw from.

**Action Secretariat to circulate a note of the population theme user meeting.**

**3 Impact of Cuts on Official Statistics [SA(COS)(10)26]**

3.1 Ms Matheson introduced a paper to update the Committee on information she had received on plans for ceasing the production of statistics as a consequence of spending cuts, and on public consultations relating to cuts in official statistics. More consultations than expected were being conducted, and this was welcomed by the Committee.

3.2 While decisions to cease particular statistical series were a departmental matter, this did not prevent the Authority commenting on whether decisions were made with appropriate consideration of the consequences. It was agreed that it would be good practice for departments to make public the reasons for decisions to cut statistics.

3.3 The Committee discussed the timing of Statistical Expenditure Reports. Making an Authority statement after a decision had been made to cut a statistical output could have a limited impact. Setting out the Authority's view earlier in the process might have more chance of influencing departmental decisions.

3.4 It was agreed that the Monitoring and Assessment team should further consider criteria for deciding when the Authority will comment publically on particular cuts. For example, the criteria could include whether there had been adequate consultation, interdependencies with other statistics, and the importance of the statistics. It was further agreed that the Monitoring and Assessment team should produce Statistical Expenditure Reports (as set out in a paper to the Authority Board [SA(10)54]) for the following statistics:

- i. Statistics on schools in Scotland;
- ii. The Place Survey; and
- iii. The Citizenship Survey.

3.5 It was agreed that that, once the Monitoring and Assessment team had further considered the criteria, the National Statistician will communicate these to the civil service.

**Action Monitoring and Assessment team to further consider criteria for deciding when the Authority will comment publically on particular cuts.**

**Action National Statistician to communicate criteria to the civil service.**

**Action Monitoring and Assessment team to produce first three Statistical Expenditure Reports.**

#### **4 RSS Web-Based User Engagement [SA(COS)(10)27]**

4.1 Mr Murray updated the Committee on progress towards a web-based user engagement forum, hosted by the RSS. A contract had been signed with a software company, and a demonstration of the software had taken place. Input from producers of statistics would be critical to ensure success and stimulate user engagement. The new website would integrate with Scotland's on-line user network, ScotStat.

4.2 The Committee welcomed these developments, and noted that the Authority had recommended such a site be developed in its Monitoring Review on strengthening user engagement. The site would also assist producers in meeting a common Requirement made in Assessment Reports, to engage with users.

4.3 Users were thought likely to use the site because they had a wish to discuss statistical issues. It would be important that producers were motivated to use the site too if it were to be successful.

#### **5 Draft Web Dissemination Strategy for Official Statistics [SA(COS)(10)28]**

5.1 Mr Bradbury presented a draft GSS strategy for the dissemination of official statistics via the internet. The strategy document proposed a number of ways for utilising the web to improve the dissemination of official statistics.

5.2 The following points were made in discussion.

- i. The report could be clearer on what metadata and paradata the statistics should be accompanied by.
- ii. Once data is in the public domain, producers have no control over its use, only influence. Some producers were uneasy about this, as users may misinterpret the data. This highlighted the importance of official commentary.
- iii. It was noted that some options as presented in section 10 of the report were not appropriate, for example at paragraph 10.5, the first option is that 'producers should retain complete control over their data'.
- iv. The project should have a clear, risk-based governance plan.

- v. In relation to the future relationship between the Publication Hub and data.gov.uk, it would be informative to have information on the number of web hits for statistics on the Publication Hub compared with the same statistics on data.gov.uk.
- vi. The report could explain how the Virtual Microdata Laboratory fits in to the web dissemination strategy.
- vii. The GSS Presentation and Dissemination Committee was attended by internal GSS staff. It was suggested that the involvement of external expertise in the committee would be useful.
- viii. There was a tension between what producers want from a dissemination system, and what users want. Producers want somewhere to put the statistics produced by their department. For users, departmental boundaries have no meaning.
- ix. Recommendation 8 could be strengthened by the addition of the word 'easily' before 'findable'.

## **6 Report on the National Statistician's review of Housing Market Statistics [SA(COS)(10)29]**

6.1 Mr Bradbury presented part 1 of the National Statistician's review of Housing Market Statistics. The meeting heard that a meeting of stakeholders had been held, and that both the Land Registry and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) supported the recommendations in the report. The Land Registry and the DCLG had agreed to report back to the National Statistician on steps they could take to better meet the requirements specified in the report. If it proved unfeasible for them to meet the requirements, then there might be a role for ONS to produce a measure.

6.2 The following points were made in the discussion.

- i. While private sector organisations were able to publish figures very quickly, the possible use of private sector indicators in an official index was not being considered on quality grounds. Nevertheless, it may be possible to use private sector statistics for stage 2 of the National Statistician's review, which will look at wider measures of the housing market.
- ii. There was little in the report on the need for a house size variable in the Land Registry statistics, and this was a crucial factor.
- iii. The report could be clearer about the geographical coverage of the current official indicators.
- iv. The report could more clearly explain why housing market statistics are important, and better make the case for a single house price index.
- v. There had been a long-standing demand for better housing market statistics, and the Committee had concerns about whether the Land Registry and DCLG would be able to achieve requirement 1 in a reasonable length of time when this had not been possible in the past.
- vi. It was noted that the steering group for this project was limited to representatives from government. Without outsiders, particularly from the financial sector, there was a risk of losing expertise.

6.3 The Committee noted that a revised report would be published on Thursday 16 December. It was agreed that the Authority would look to supplement the momentum generated for improved statistics on the housing market by making its own statement in the new year.

## **7 Statistics Produced by the Bank of England [SA(COS)(10)30]**

7.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a paper which summarised the position on the assessment of statistics produced by the Bank of England. Progress had been made in formulating a framework for reconciling the *Bank of England Statistical Code of Practice* with the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*.

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7.2 The Committee agreed that discussions between the Authority and the Bank should continue with a view to establishing an agreement. It was suggested that the concept of an assessment of statistics produced by the Bank could be further explored.

### **8 Any other business**

8.1 The Committee welcomed the update on the activities of the GSS [Information Paper], noting that it was a useful summary of the ongoing work of statisticians in government, and that it wished to continue to receive the report at future meetings.

8.2 The Committee would meet next on Friday 4 February at 13:30pm in London.

## Committee for Official Statistics

### *Agenda*

*Friday, 10 December, 2010*

*Board Room, Statistics House, London, 14:00 - 17:00*

**Chair: Professor Sir Roger Jowell**

**Apologies:**

1	Apologies, minutes and matters arising	Meeting of 051010
2	Official Statistics Theme Update: Population	SA(COS)(10)25 Ms Roma Chappell
3	Impact of Cuts on Official Statistics	SA(COS)(10)26 Ms Jil Matheson
4	RSS Web-Based User Engagement	SA(COS)(10)27 Mr Martin Dougharty
5	Draft Web Dissemination Strategy for Official Statistics	SA(COS)(10)28 Mr Jason Bradbury
6	The National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics - Part 1	SA(COS)(10)29 Mr Jason Bradbury
7	Statistics Produced by the Bank of England	SA(COS)(10)30 Mr Richard Alldritt
8	Any other business	

**Next Meeting: Friday, 4 February, 2011**  
**Statistics House, London, 13:30 - 16:00**

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(10)25

***GSS Population Theme Group Update***

**Purpose**

1. This paper presents a note on the plans and priorities of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Population Theme Group.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics are invited to note the current plans and activities being undertaken within the Population Theme.

**Discussion**

3. The Committee for Official Statistics agreed at its meeting of 6 May that it would like to hear from Theme Leaders at future Committee meetings, regarding plans and priorities in their respective topic areas. This paper provides a brief update on the current plans and activities being undertaken within the Population Theme. This Theme Group is chaired by Roma Chappell, Head of the Centre for Demography at the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
4. The Population Theme Group covers population and migration statistics. It has existed and worked well for many years, initially as a group of fellow producers that met twice a year. A main task for the Population Theme Group then and now is writing the UK wide statistical work programme for population statistics which is overseen and approved by the UK Population Committee. The producer membership of the Population Theme Group includes the Devolved Administrations (DAs), the Home Office, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and other ONS officials, for the 2011 Census and the Beyond 2011 project.
5. The close co-operation that exists between producers has been helped by the many common methodological and estimation issues we face and the need to improve population and migration statistics. Across the UK close working is needed to ensure harmonisation of methods so that – for example - estimates can be added simply to give a UK total in a transparent way. In the rare occasions where approaches are not the same across all the UK countries, we adopt the principle that it must always be possible to explain the particular national circumstances that justify differences to exist and we ensure that it is possible to produce aggregations that provide UK figures for key topics.
6. Since 2009, the Population Theme Group has expanded to include representatives of users of population statistics. These include a member of the Demographic User Group (who represents commercial users in particular) and a member from the Statistics User Forum who is also on council for the British Society of Population Studies. The user representatives provide a wider perspective and external challenge and most of the government departments are also users. External user challenge and engagement on the population work programme also comes from other groups that exist outside the Theme Working Group. This includes an Advisory Board of eminent academics in relevant fields who advise the UK Population Committee and the population sub-group that exists under the aegis of the Central and Local Information Sharing Partnerships (CLIP). The CLIP subgroup has substantial local authority membership. Equivalent local government liaison groups exist in each of the UK countries.

7. The Theme Working Group continues to meet twice a year, its last meeting being in September 2010. The Group has overseen a user engagement day which was organised with the help of the Statistics User Forum and was held at the Royal Statistical Society in November 2010. The agenda is attached at **Annex A**. The event was a successful day where users from different sectors presented how they use population statistics and discussed their relative priorities. The event helped users to clarify their understanding of the suite of population outputs prior to articulating their needs in their response to ONS's public consultation that closes on 24 December 2010.
8. On the day we heard about the many uses that are made of small area population estimates and the need for more granularity in population statistics. Users want timely, up to date information but not if this can only be achieved at the expense of quality, since data must be trusted and regarded as authoritative. They appreciate the transparency of our methods and they want more triangulation between different sources. They do not really want outputs to become less frequent and ideally they would like the option to pay for non-core outputs that might otherwise be lost. They are happy for us to stop the quarterly population estimates which we consulted on in the summer.
9. Emerging priorities for the Population Theme include the following.
  - i. Preparing for the 2011 Census which will provide a new base for population statistics for the years after the Census and will provide a benchmark against which to assess the accuracy of statistics produced using the methods and data sources that have been improved under the Migration Statistics Improvement Programme during the last decade since the 2001 Census.
  - ii. Planning the analytical work programme making use of the best data sources available including the new 2011 Census data that will become available from 2012 to 2013. For example ONS and the Home Office aim to produce a joint report on migration statistics.
  - iii. European engagement – there is an EU regulation for migration statistics which neither ONS nor the Home Office can fully comply with currently. An action plan has been agreed with Eurostat and both departments are working towards compliance. We anticipate that Europe may initiate discussions around a demographic regulation to cover population statistics and we will need to work together across the Population Theme Group producers to influence the EU to ensure that the UK will be able to comply with any population regulation that is tabled.
  - iv. Review of priorities in the light of the spending review – all producers are faced with significant pressures and a hard look is being taken at priorities and areas for savings. It will be important for the cross-UK teams to continue to work together on this.
  - v. Learning lessons from Assessments – Population statistics are currently being assessed across the UK and we will support joint working across the theme to meet any recommendations.

**Roma Chappell, Population Theme Chair, December 2010**

#### **List of Annexes**

**Annex A      Agenda for population statistics user engagement workshop**

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**Population statistics and Census outputs - user engagement workshop**

23 November 2010 09:45 - 17:00 sandwich lunch provided

Population and Census outputs – user engagement workshop 23 November, at the RSS Errol St

Your chance to:

- Hear how users from a range of sectors currently use official population statistics to inform their work
- Get an overview of the range of population statistics currently produced by government and early thinking on the impact of making savings
- Hear an indication of what outputs will be available from the 2011 Census
- Help inform our views on the priorities for population statistics

Official population statistics, including Census outputs, play a fundamental part in the day to day running of UK PLC. From central and local government, to the private, third and academic sectors, these data underpin a range of important decisions. From the allocation of funds to the locations of new businesses, accurate and timely statistics are essential. Understanding the range of uses of these data will allow producers to better target the provision of statistical information where possible, and to help make prioritise the provision of population statistics at a time when the government resources will be scaled back to tackle the budget deficit.

This user engagement workshop will explore the current use made of the statistics; give producers the opportunity to check their understanding of current user requirements; provide a first chance to hear about outputs from the 2011 census; and give users an opportunity to discuss their views on the priority of statistics in this area. The ONS will be launching a public consultation on its whole work programme from 1 November to 24 December and this day is therefore timely, providing users with an opportunity to discuss priorities of population statistics before making their response to the wider public consultation.

Registration is required, please contact the meeting organiser listed below for further details.

There is no charge for this event.

## Annex A - SA(COS)(10)25 - Official Statistics Theme Update: Population

### **Programme**

**Chair:** Ludi Simpson

9:45 - Registration and refreshments

10:15 - Brief introduction from the Chair

10:30 - Uses of population statistics and census outputs across the sectors

- The private sector; Annette Dellevoet, Sainsburys
- A central government user; Janet Dougharty, CLG
- Academic / third sector; Lisa Buckner, Leeds University
- Local Authority; Jenny Boag, Falkirk Council

12:30 – lunch

13:30 – What population statistics do we need? - presentation and workshop; Steve Smallwood and Roma Chappell, ONS

14:45 – refreshment break

15:10 – Outputs from the 2011 Census; Prof. David Martin, Southampton University and Denise McGregor, Office for National Statistics

16:00 – Panel discussion on the availability of population statistics and how best to meet the needs of users (panel tbc)

16:45 – closing remarks from the Chair

17:00 – Depart

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(10)26

***Impact of cuts on official statistics***

**Purpose**

1. The National Statistician's Office (NSO) is collating information from producers of official statistics on plans for ceasing the production of statistics as a consequence of spending review 2010 (SR10) cuts and on public consultations relating to official statistics. This paper updates the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) on the information received as of 30 November 2010, and also recent activity across departments in monitoring the impact of cuts.

**Recommendations**

2. The Committee is invited to:
  - note the latest position on reported cuts to official statistics, further potential cuts subject to public consultation and other official statistics issues being consulted upon;
  - note the recent activity across departments in terms of monitoring the impact of cuts on the evidence base and analytical capability; and
  - consider whether any reported cuts or potential cuts should be brought to the attention of the Authority Board.

**Discussion**

3. The Authority Board considered a paper - Responding to Cuts in Departmental Statistical Work [SA(10)54] - at its meeting in September. The Board considered a proposal that the Monitoring and Assessment Team should follow up each significant cut in statistical output with a short report for the Authority to take a view, and report to Parliament as necessary, on specific cuts and the effect on overall official statistics' coherence. The work would focus particularly on whether the impact on users had been fully and openly taken into consideration.
4. The information being collated by the National Statistician's Office (NSO) on actual and potential cuts to statistics from Government Statistical Service (GSS) Heads of Professions (HoPs) provides the basis on which the Monitoring and Assessment team will decide to produce such a report for the Authority. The NSO's information includes details of all public consultations being conducted by departments whether for the purpose of determining the impact of a cut or some other purpose to aid their decision making.
5. The Authority Board welcomed the proposal on reporting by the Monitoring and Assessment team, and it was agreed that COS would have a role in monitoring cuts in statistical outputs and that it should advise the Board on how the Authority should monitor and respond to the effects of such cuts. COS will therefore receive a report at each meeting from the NSO summarising the reported cuts, and all public consultations including those which may result in cuts, to statistical outputs. This is the first such report. COS will also take any reports from the Monitoring and Assessment team.
6. The table at **Annex A** summarises the cuts that have been notified to the National Statistician by GSS HoPs as at the end of November. The table at **Annex B** summarises

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all public consultations that have been notified by HoPs that may result in further cessations of statistical outputs or have some other consequences.

7. There has been recent activity across departments in terms of monitoring the impact of cuts to statistics on the 'evidence-base' or on analytical capacity or capability. Sir Nick MacPherson, in his capacity as Chair of the Heads of Analysis Group (HoAG), wrote (with Sir John Beddington the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor) on 2 November 2010 to Sir Gus O'Donnell and Departmental Permanent Secretaries asking to be informed of proposed changes which would impact on National Statistics outputs. These returns will be reported to the HoAG of which the National Statistician is a member. The letter is attached at **Annex C**.
8. In early November, departments published their business plans which include sections on 'impact indicators' and 'information strategies'. These are explicitly in draft and Departments are expected to consult. The NSO is working with HM Treasury to better understand the sources that Departments are to draw on in order to report on impact indicators.
9. A HM Treasury review of government data is expected to be launched shortly. One of its aims is to reduce data collection and 'burden', but also to review dependencies i.e. the impact that any proposed cuts would have on other departments, and on users more broadly. It is expected that potential cuts to data collection identified would then go forward to public consultation. The NSO will keep in touch with developments via the National Statistician's expected involvement on the Data Review Steering Group, and feedback from an ONS secondee to the HM Treasury review team.

**Debra Prestwood, National Statistician's Office, December 2010**

### **List of Annexes**

<b>Annex A</b>	<b>Cessation of production of statistics by GSS</b>
<b>Annex B</b>	<b>All consultations about official statistics by GSS</b>
<b>Annex C</b>	<b>Letter from the Chair of the Heads of Analysis Group and the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor to Sir Gus O'Donnell and Departmental Permanent Secretaries</b>

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**Annex A Cessation of production of statistics by GSS**

This table summarises the cuts to official statistics that have been notified by departmental Heads of Profession to the National Statistician, as of 30 November 2010.

The list demonstrates that GSS statisticians are actively reviewing the need for continued statistics with users in order to improve efficiency, as well as responding to reductions in resources in the current public sector financial climate.

DATE OF NOTIFICATION	DEPARTMENT	TITLE OF STATISTICS	DESCRIPTION OF STATISTICS	DATE STATISTICS TO CEASE	REASONS FOR CESSATION AND IMPACT ON USERS
30 November 2010	Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)	Local Government Key Facts Card: England (National Statistic)	<p>The Card is published as a portable aide-memoire of CLG's compendium publication "Local Government Financial Statistics".</p> <p>From current and capital expenditure to council tax and local authority pensions, Local Government Financial Statistics England brings together data from a wide range of sources to paint a comprehensive and important overview of local government finance in England.</p> <p>It is an essential guide to local authority financial systems, both past and present and contains detailed commentary, tables, time series, full colour charts</p>	Immediately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLG has decided, in the context of the SR10 budget cuts, to cease publication of this product.</li> <li>It states that this will not result in the loss of any published data simply because the contents of this Card are available within their compendium publication 'Local Government Financial Statistics'.</li> <li>CLG has advised that it will shortly notify their customer-base about this decision by means of a note on their website.</li> <li>It has judged that this decision does not</li> </ul>

Annex A - SA(COS)(10)26: Impact of cuts to statistics

25 November 2010	Scottish Government (SG)	<p>Scottish School Statistics -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children Educated outwith Schools</li> <li>2. Placing Requests</li> <li>3. Teacher and Educational Psychologists Vacancies</li> <li>4. Pre-Appeal SQA Examination Results</li> <li>5. Expenditure on Schools</li> <li>6. Budgeted School Running Costs</li> <li>7. The Independent School Census</li> </ol> <p>(All National Statistics)</p>	and maps.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. These annual statistics provide information on the numbers of children who were educated outwith school at any point during the school year, whether out of necessity or by parental choice.</li> <li>2. Annual statistics relating to requests by parents to local authorities that a child be placed in a specified school.</li> <li>3. Annual statistics derived from a survey which measures the level of vacancies during term time in order to indicate any possible areas of shortage.</li> <li>4. Annual statistics relating to national and educational authority level information on the cumulative attainment of all National Qualifications by all pupils in publically funded secondary schools.</li> <li>5. Annual Statistics relating to figures for local authority spending on school education.</li> <li>6. Annual statistics relating to budgeted running cost information provided by education authorities, and managers of grant-aided and</li> </ol>	Immediately.	<p>warrant a public consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In September 2010, the Education Analytical Services department of SG carried out a consultation of users of its Schools statistics.</li> <li>• This consultation followed on from an earlier one which sought views about the style and content of Schools statistics, and the Statistics Authority Assessment report on School statistics.</li> <li>• The Scottish Government has drawn the following conclusions from the consultation:-             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) There was a lack of demand for the retention of the NS in column 3 so they will be discontinued;</li> <li>ii) Attendance and Absence statistics will not be retained as an annual product but moved to a biennial basis;</li> <li>iii) There was little concern expressed about the repackaging of statistical publications and therefore</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
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Annex A - SA(COS)(10)26: Impact of cuts to statistics

			<p>self-governing schools.</p> <p>7. Annual statistics relating to results of the annual census of independent primary, secondary and special schools in Scotland.</p>		<p>SG will draw together the range of School statistics and release them on 3 key publication dates - Resources in December, Assessment in February and Outcomes in June;</p> <p>iv) In response to expressions of strong user need Exclusion statistics are retained on a biennial basis and published alongside the biennial Attendance and Absence figures in the Resources publication; and,</p> <p>v) In response to expressions of strong user need School Meals is retained but that a reduced set of information is collected and published annually in June.</p>
<p>18 November 2010</p>	<p>Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)</p>	<p>New Deal Statistics (National Statistics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DWP Statistics relating to the New Deal and Flexible New Deal (FND) Employment Programmes are published monthly by provider.</li> <li>• The following day WAG publishes headline statistics for Wales.</li> </ul>	<p>November 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the New Deal and the FND are being phased out WAG will no longer be publishing this headline.</li> <li>• This information will continue to be available from DWP's website.</li> <li>• The publication of</li> </ul>

Annex A - SA(COS)(10)26: Impact of cuts to statistics

<p>6 September 2010</p>	<p>WAG</p>	<p>i. Health Visitors, District Nurses &amp; Other Community Nurses  ii. Community Psychiatric Nurses and Community Learning Disability Nurses  iii. NHS Day Care (Official Statistics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• i&amp;ii. – Used to monitor the advice and support given by health visitors, district nurses and other community nurses and by Community Psychiatric Nurses and Community Learning Disability Nurses by recording information on face-to-face contacts with patients.</li> <li>• iii – Used to monitor NHS day care facilities by recording information on first and total attendances for regular day attendees and patients using a bed by speciality.</li> </ul>	<p>October 2010</p>	<p>statistics on employment programmes will be reviewed once DWP have further information on the range of statistics that will be available under their new employment programme policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WAG have offered users an opportunity to discuss this decision by contacting them.</li> </ul>
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A user consultation was conducted to ask for views on a proposal to discontinue these statistical returns. An earlier consultation and review within the NHS had recommended that the returns be dropped.</li> <li>• The user consultation showed that 85 per cent or more of respondents felt that each of the collections should be dropped and failed to identify significant uses of the data.</li> <li>• Some users felt that it was unwise to discontinue these returns in the absence</li> </ul>

Annex A - SA(COS)(10)26: Impact of cuts to statistics

17 August 2010	Department for Education (DfE)	Parental experiences of services provided to disabled children Statistics (Official Statistics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The services for disabled children parental survey was established through the Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) programme and measures parents' satisfaction with the local education, health, and care and family support services provided for their disabled child.</li> <li>Was established to provide data for the previous government's Local Authority National Indicator Set (NI 54) and although funded by the DfE, it also forms a measure within the NHS National Operating Framework 'Vital Signs'.</li> </ul>	November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministerial decision that the survey that informs this publication should cease on cost grounds.</li> <li>Unlike previous years, there will be no central follow-up with local authorities and therefore the impact of the survey could be limited.</li> <li>Decision reflects the Coalition Government's commitment to reduce centrally imposed data burdens and to free up resources for front line services.</li> <li>No legal obligation to publish these statistics.</li> <li>DfE reported that there has been no consultation</li> </ul>	<p>of fully developed alternative data collection and publication arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As Community health information has been made a priority area by the Welsh Assembly Information Requirements Board, alternative statistics will be developed.</li> </ul>
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Annex A - SA(COS)(10)26: Impact of cuts to statistics

					<p>with users, who are mainly Local Authorities and Primary Care Trusts. Children's disability groups and parents also have an interest in the survey, but DfE does not have evidence of the level of use. DfE ministers plan to communicate to them as soon as possible, to inform them that the survey has been discontinued and providing LAs with tools that would allow them to carry out similar surveys themselves at a local level if they wish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The National Statistician has asked DfE to make an announcement on the Publication Hub setting out why publication is to end and their expectation of the impact on users.</li> </ul>
10 August 2010	DfE	Schools Providing Access to Extended Services Statistics (Official Statistics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly publication providing at a local authority level the percentage of schools providing access to the full core offer of extended services.</li> <li>Statistics were used to</li> </ul>	October 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collection will stop to achieve necessary savings.</li> <li>The percentage of schools with extended services (98%) is close to the previous</li> </ul>

Annex A - SA(COS)(10)26: Impact of cuts to statistics

			<p>inform the previous government's national indicators which may not reflect current government policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relevant administrative data are collected by the Training and Development Agency for Schools.</li> </ul>		<p>government's target.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No legal obligation to publish these statistics.</li> <li>DfE reported that there has been no consultation with users. It said that the impact on users is expected to be limited as the percentage is close to the target i.e. almost all schools have extended services. There are no known alternative sources.</li> <li>The National Statistician has asked DfE to make an announcement on the Publication Hub setting out why publication is to end and their expectation of the impact on users.</li> </ul>
27 July 2010	CLG	The Place Survey (Outputs are Official Statistics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collects the views of people on a range of issues concerning the place they live.</li> <li>Results used to measure progress on National Indicators in the Local Performance Framework.</li> </ul>	November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department's own reduced need for the data.</li> <li>The need to reduce costs and achieve savings.</li> <li>Government's desire to localise activities when appropriate, and when required.</li> <li>CLG has stated that it will provide the National Statistician with a fuller explanation for the</li> </ul>

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						decision and outline any ramifications including for users.
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**Annex B All consultations about official statistics by GSS**

This table summarises the consultations underway about both potential cuts to official statistics and other statistical issues that have been notified by departmental Heads of Profession to the National Statistician, as of 30 November 2010.

The list demonstrates that GSS statisticians are actively reviewing the need for continued statistics with users in order to improve efficiency, as well as responding to reductions in resources in the current public sector financial climate.

<b>DATE OF NOTIFICATION</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>TITLE OF CONSULTATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF CONSULTATION</b>	<b>CONSULTATION ENDS ON</b>
30 November 2010	CLG	Reductions of annual returns data collected from Fire and Rescue Services and of Fires of Special Interest reporting	CLG is seeking views on proposals to reduce non-financial annual data returns from Fire and Rescue Services in England and to terminate the majority of data collected on 'Fires of Special Interest' forms.  The annual data returns relate to fire safety, health and safety, personnel and equality, and diversity.  CLG have stated the changes envisaged are driven mainly by a desire to rationalise their data collections, and to reduce the burden imposed on data providers in the Fire and Rescue Services.	14 January 2011
30 November 2010	Ministry of Defence - Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA)	Consultation on DASA's annual manpower national statistics publications	DASA plans to change the presentation of statistics on UK Armed Forces manpower currently published as National Statistics in its annual Tri-Service Publications (TSPs).  The three National Statistics publications proposed for consolidation are : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ TSP 8: Age distribution of UK Regular Forces</li> <li>▪ TSP 9: UK Regular Forces Rank Structure</li> <li>▪ TSP 19: UK Regular Forces Intake and Outflow by</li> </ul>	27 February 2011

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			<p>Age</p> <p>last published on the 10 June 2010. DASA proposes to replace these with a single annual publication analysing the same aspects of Service manpower (age and rank) but containing more commentary, with fewer detailed tables.</p> <p>Users' views are sought on what they would like to be included in the new consolidated publication.</p>	
25 November 2010	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	Future of Agricultural Statistics	<p>DEFRA completed a consultation exercise in July 2010, writing to a number of key external stakeholders to gather views regarding the future of their Agricultural Statistics.</p> <p>DEFRA have reported that this was extremely positive and provided useful avenues to pursue. The results of the consultation are being written up and will provide a focus for internal user consultation . A smaller group of key users is in the process of being set up.</p>	July 2010
18 November 2010	WAG	NHS Performance Statistics	<p>WAG is seeking views on the service provided to their customers, the presentation of publications, whether the products meet the requirements of users and to open discussion about whether any improvements can be made.</p> <p>Given the breadth of data covered by the Health Statistics and Analysis Unit relating to NHS Performance, the consultation document has separate sections to allow respondents to give feedback on specific subject areas or all together in one document.</p>	24 January 2011
18 November 2010	WAG	Education Lifelong Learning Statistics	<p>WAG are looking for views in general on their current suite of around 40 outputs but also in response to some</p>	30 November 2010

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			<p>specific issues it has raised.</p> <p>WAG states that the purpose of this consultation is to seek feedback on the usefulness and useability of what it currently produces, how it can be improved, any gaps in what it provides and an indication of the relative priority attached to a particular analysis.</p> <p>Given the breadth of data covered by the Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics Unit, the consultation document has separate sections for schools, further education, higher education and a number of cross cutting areas.</p> <p>There are two separate response forms, according to whether you are a user of schools or post-16 education statistics.</p>	
<p>18 November 2010</p>	<p>WAG</p>	<p>Statistical Directorate Annual Compendia Publications</p>	<p>WAG's Statistical Directorate is seeking views from customers on the proposal to cease printing of hardcopy statistical publications. WAG states that the same information will still be available on their web site but will only be published electronically rather than professionally printed.</p> <p>The advantages of this approach are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data will be timelier. WAG anticipates being able to publish information on the web earlier than is currently possible due to the need to prepare and print hard copies.</li> <li>• The resources saved will be diverted into enhancing the range of information available on</li> </ul>	<p>31 December 2010</p>

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<p>17 November 2010</p>	<p>Ministry of Justice (MoJ)</p>	<p>Improvements to Ministry of Justice statistics</p>	<p>the interactive StatsWales data analysis tool, and hopefully finding innovative ways of making this information available. This will allow users to access a wider range of official statistics in a more flexible and user friendly way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It will help reduce WAG's carbon footprint and impact on the environment and be saving on resources needed to produce and distribute paper editions.</li> </ul>	<p>18 February 2011</p>	
			<p>The consultation seeks views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the definitions of statistics - making the statistics consistent across MoJ publications and clarifying the definition of certain important measurements.</li> <li>introducing a quarterly criminal justice statistics bulletin which would give an overview of trends in crime, out of court disposals, prosecutions, convictions and sentencing.</li> <li>moving to a single measure of re-offending which would get rid of the six different ways it is currently measured. This includes consolidating five separate publications on re-offending into a single publication.</li> </ul>		
			<p>These proposals represent significant improvements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>making a wider range of data available routinely through MoJ's statistical publications;</li> <li>presenting a coherent overview of criminal justice statistics to help understanding and ease of comparison;</li> <li>simplifying access to information in line with the Code of Practice.</li> </ul>		

Annex B - SA(COS)(10)26: Impact of cuts to statistics

25 October 2010	Office for National Statistics (ONS)	Work Programme Consultation	<p>The consultation is a response to a number of separate reports including the UK Statistics Authority Assessment of Criminal Justice Studies, the Stern Review of Rape Reporting and UK Statistics Authority's Barrier to Trust in Crime Statistics as well as MoJ's own internal review of criminal justice publications.</p> <p>ONS is seeking views to help determine the shape of its future statistical work programme. The budget reductions announced as part of the 2010 Spending Review mean that ONS has to consider where savings can be found. ONS considers it is critically important that statistical outputs reflect users' priorities. User feedback can also help ONS strive to become a more efficient and effective organisation.</p> <p>The consultation document outlines ONS' approach to reducing its budget, including the core principles which determine this approach, and asks stakeholders to let ONS know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what ONS outputs they use and how they use them</li> <li>• the impact on them of possible reductions in various areas of ONS work.</li> </ul> <p>Responses will be used to inform ONS' work programme for the next four years.</p>	24 December 2010
20 October 2010	CLG	The Future of the Citizenship Survey	<p>The Citizenship Survey is a face to face household survey carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government covering a representative core sample of almost 10,000 adults in England and Wales each year, plus a minority ethnic boost sample of 5,000 and a Muslim boost sample of 1,200.</p> <p>This statistical consultation sets out the intention to</p>	30 November 2010

Annex B - SA(COS)(10)26: Impact of cuts to statistics

				cancel the future Citizenship Survey, and in doing so, seeks to identify the uses of the Survey data, the implications of stopping and options for alternative information sources.	
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**Annex C Letter from the Chair of the Heads of Analysis Group and the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor to Sir Gus O'Donnell and Departmental Permanent Secretaries**

From the Chief Scientific Adviser to HM Government  
and Head of the Government Office for Science  
Sir John Beddington CMG FRS



Government  
Office for  
**Science**

Sir Gus O'Donnell KCB  
Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AS

2 November 2010

*Dear Gus*

**Spending Plans: Science, Research and Analysis**

As discussed at Permanent Secretaries on the 20<sup>th</sup> October, and reflecting earlier discussions in Heads of Analysis Group, now that departments have received their settlements and are taking forward detailed business planning, it is important that appropriate consideration is given to research and analytical requirements.

We agreed that the requirement on departments to consult the Government Chief Scientific Advisor and Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) (Nick Macpherson/Peter Schofield) on any reductions to the amount budgeted or spent on science and research should be interpreted to include professional analysis generally, including any impact on National Statistics outputs.

To allow us to engage on both research spend and analytical capacity and capability, we would be grateful if departments could set out and share with us their research and analytical requirements and plans. Specifically, it would be helpful if departments could identify for 2010-11 and for each year of the Spending Review period:

- Planned research spend, whether or not this is in a separate budget;
- Any specific implications for other departments and/or for key scientific capability (eg laboratories);
- Internal professional scientific and analytical resource, including any significant restructuring of this;
- Key research and analytical priorities, and activities to be stopped; and
- Key areas of vulnerability or risk in relation to the evidence base, including risks arising from possible decisions by other departments.

Unless we hear that departments would like us to speak to someone else, Government Office for Science and the Heads of Analysis Secretariat in HMT will engage with the Chief Scientific Adviser and Director of Analysis in each department to take this forward. We will be happy, within reason, to fit in with departments' own business planning timetables.

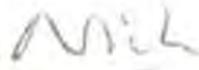
In the light of the outcomes of this work, we will advise colleagues on any significant issues arising, including wider strategic and cross-cutting issues.

This letter is copied to Wednesday morning colleagues and to the other members of the Heads of Analysis Group (Dave Ramsden, Tony O'Connor, Jenny Dibden and Richard Bartholomew).

*Yours sincerely*



**Sir John Beddington**



**Sir Nicholas Macpherson**

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(10)27

***RSS web-based user engagement***

**Purpose**

1. This paper is an update the Committee on the Royal Statistical Society's (RSS) web-based user engagement project. Progress so far points to a need for more coordinated involvement of Government Statistical Service (GSS) producers of official statistics to give the new web system the best chance of success.

**Recommendations**

2. The Committee for Official Statistics are invited to note the initial plans and progress summarised below.

**Discussion**

3. The contract with the software company, Higher Logic, has been signed. Higher Logic is a web community application software company which specialises in integrating with iMis databases, which is the system the RSS uses to manage its membership. Having a tool that is linked to the RSS membership database will allow us to understand the user community we have, targeting gaps in coverage and be more responsive to their needs. A demonstration of the software is taking place on the afternoon of 30 November at the RSS building for RSS staff and other UK customers of Higher Logic. We are currently looking to reschedule the Statistics User Forum (SUF) meeting so that SUF members can attend to see the system demonstrated by an expert.
4. A project board has been formed, with membership as follows.
  - Martin Dougharty, RSS (Chair)
  - Richard Alldritt, UK Statistics Authority
  - Jenny Church, RSS
  - Mick Johnston, Housing Statistics Network (HSN)
  - Tim Andrews, GSS
  - Fiona Steele, Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
  - Anna Chung, RSS multi-media manager
  - Liam Murray, RSS (project manager / secretary)
  - Tim Macer, IT consultant for RSS web projects
5. The RSS has had interest from both the producer and the user communities in using the system early on. On the user side this includes the following.
  - i. Migration of the HSN to the new system (the steering group has confirmed this is their preferred method moving forward with HSN).
  - ii. The Health Statistics User Group, which has some funding ring-fenced to develop their website content.
  - iii. The Crime and Justice Statistics Network currently communicates via an email group but the Chair has asked to look at moving the network to the new RSS web system.
  - iv. The Financial and Economic Statistics Network is very keen for a web tool to improve communication.
  - v. The Labour Market Statistics User Group, which recently re-launched with around 90 members. The RSS will look to manage the membership of the

## SA(COS)(10)27 - RSS web-based user engagement

group on their database and the steering group are keen to coordinate web content.

6. On the GSS side, the RSS is currently working with the Education, Children and Skills theme group to establish a high-level user network, launched through two half-day workshops in the New Year. There will be one workshop in Sheffield and another in London. It is hoped that this process will develop a model that other theme groups might consider in future. There has been lots of interest from producers but because of the devolved nature of the statistical system, implementation is on a case-by-case basis. This might mean that implementation of the system is slightly slower than could be possible with a more cohesive producer community.
7. In an ideal world, the content management would be led by users. However, it now looks as if there will need to be substantial GSS producer input to stimulate user engagement at start up, and for the at least the first year or so after delivery. Coordinated input on the producer side would help greatly with this and we hope for support from the National Statistician and the GSS.
8. The project has some interdependencies with other RSS projects, not least the upgrade of the membership database scheduled for the new year. An IT consultant is working with RSS staff to help identify a clear timetable. At a high level the aim is to deliver a proof of concept system, with some of the early adopters noted above, by March 2011.

**Martin Dougherty, Royal Statistical Society, December 2010.**

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(10)28

***Draft Web Dissemination Strategy for Official Statistics***

**Purpose**

1. This paper presents the draft strategy and recommendations of the Web Dissemination Strategy for Official Statistics for discussion.

**Recommendation**

2. The Committee is invited to discuss the strategy and draft recommendations for the use of the web and associated technologies in the dissemination of official statistics (**Annex 1**).

**Discussion**

3. Official statistics are a source of high quality, reliable information about the UK; however, the decentralised approach to the production of official statistics results in information being disseminated to users via an array of departmental and specialist websites in a range of different forms. Many official statistics are only available in static tables in Portable Document Format (PDF) documents, which are difficult for users to extract and analyse and a lack of consistency across producing departments can lead to confusion and frustration for the user.
4. There can also be a difficulty for users in finding official statistics, as there is currently no single on-line location for all official statistics and there is a danger that users will employ less robust sources, simply because they are more accessible. User consultation undertaken as part of this strategy's development (Annex C of the report) revealed that, although there was still a need for standard reports and visualisations, in many cases users primarily wanted the underlying data. The current drive for transparency and increasing demand for data mean that producer departments need to be doing more to ensure that not only official statistics are made more accessible, but that the underlying data is also available for use and reuse. The web and associated technologies are essential in facilitating the dissemination of official statistics and with tools such as Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds, Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), social media and portable media, there are many opportunities to reach and engage individuals interested in official statistics.
5. There are many examples of good practice in the dissemination of official statistics. Most producer departments already offer RSS feeds, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and data.gov.uk (Cabinet Office) are currently developing APIs to facilitate access to their underlying datasets and several producer departments, for example, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA), and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) have enabled on-line tabulation capability. The use of social media is also increasing; the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) uses a Facebook page to keep interested parties updated on new official statistics and research publications, and the ONS will soon be launching YouTube videos to inform on statistical concepts as well as providing a verbal and visual presentation of some statistical products such as the Labour Force Survey.
6. Internationally, Statistics Netherlands have created an iPhone application that includes an 'augmented reality' aspect so that users can obtain demographic data for the areas they are in at the time, as well as a Statistical Yearbook for the iPad and in 2011, Italy will be launching a new version of the Istat website based on an SDMX (Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange) datastore and open-source Wordpress software. Externally, organisations such as the BBC and other news media, Gapminder and Google devote considerable resource to presenting information in clear, accessible ways, such as the 'Gapminder World' application or Channel 4's 'Mapumental' creation.

7. In light of current practice in the dissemination of official statistics and the drivers for change in this area, several key questions have emerged.
  - i. Should a single site be used as a gateway to official statistics or should there be a single site housing all official statistics?
  - ii. What is the future relationship between the Publication Hub and data.gov.uk?
  - iii. How much control should producers seek to maintain over their data?
  - iv. To what extent should official statistics producers seek external partnerships in the web dissemination of their statistics?
  - v. Should official statistics producers utilise social media as a means of expanding their dissemination practices?
  
8. The recommendations for utilising the web and associated technology to improve the dissemination of official statistics are:
  - **Recommendation 1:** There must be one single site for access to all official statistics.
  - **Recommendation 2:** Strengthen the link between the Publication Hub and data.gov.uk.
  - **Recommendation 3:** Improve accessibility to official statistics through the use of the web and associated technologies.
  - **Recommendation 4:** Raise skill levels of staff involved in producing content for the web.
  - **Recommendation 5:** Make data available for use and reuse and adhere to open data standards for datasets and metadata.
  - **Recommendation 6:** Utilise the expertise and resources of external organisations to facilitate web dissemination.
  - **Recommendation 7:** Use social media as a means of official statistics dissemination.
  - **Recommendation 8:** To adopt the vision for web dissemination as: To utilise the web and associated technologies to ensure that all official statistics are findable from one place, in an open, standardised format and are available to download for analysis and reuse.
  - **Recommendation 9:** Government Statistical Service (GSS) Presentation and Dissemination Committee to lead the implementation of this strategy.

A set of proposed actions to support these strategic recommendations are outlined on page 22 of the strategy document.

#### **Next steps**

9. After further consultation, including with the GSS Presentation and Dissemination Committee (GSS PDC), it is intended that this strategy will be presented to Heads of Profession (HoPs) for ratification in early 2011. It is proposed that the GSS Presentation and Dissemination Committee take the lead in ensuring the strategy is taken forward. After ratification, the priority will be to raise awareness of the strategy, collate and share best practice, both via StatNet and a series of roadshow web dissemination events.

**Alison Byers, National Statistician's Office, December 2010**

#### **List of Annexes**

**Annex 1      Draft Web Dissemination Strategy for Official Statistics**

**Annex 1 Draft Web Dissemination Strategy for Official Statistics**

This document will appear on the Authority's website in due course:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(10)29

***Report on stage one of the National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics***

**Purpose**

1. Stage one of the National Statistician's review of Housing Market Statistics, relating to House Price Statistics is drawing to a close. This paper details the recommendations of that phase of the review and plans for the second part which looks at wider indicators of the Housing Market.

**Recommendations**

2. Committee members are invited to:
  - i. discuss the report and recommendations of the first stage of the National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics which is planned for publication on 16th December; and
  - ii. note and comment on the plans for the second part of the review which will focus on wider measures of the housing market.

**Discussion of stage one of the review**

3. The Committee for Official Statistics discussed progress with the National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics at its October meeting. It was noted that the first stage of the review, which is being overseen by a steering group comprising of the Department for Communities and Local Government, Land Registry and the devolved administrations, was concentrating on understanding the user need for house price statistics and how this could be better met by one or both of the existing official measures.
4. An on-line user consultation exercise was run during the summer of 2010 and one-to-one discussions with key users took place to help inform understanding of the user need for house price statistics. Initial recommendations based on this user need were discussed with a group of key users on 5 November. They offered strong support for the recommendations, suggested more was included on the challenges with measuring house prices (and the uses made of them) and helped us to refine the criteria that we believe a definitive measure should exhibit.
5. The report recommends that the two current producers of official house price statistics each indicate how they could more fully comply with the user-driven criteria for a definitive set of house price statistics, and that they will work together to explore the feasibility of producing a joint publication containing both sets of statistics to meet the user need. The full report can be found in **Annex 1**.
6. The intention is to issue a press release on the 16 December to accompany the publication of the report of the first stage of the review. An announcement containing a link to the report and thanking forum members for their responses to the consultation will be placed on the Housing Statistics Network forum shortly after the report has been published. We will be welcoming comments on

the recommended way forward for consideration prior to the end of the second stage of the review in Spring 2011.

**Discussion of stage two of the review – wider housing market statistics**

7. The second stage of the review will look at wider measures of the housing market. This is likely to include indicators such as transaction volumes, repossessions and private rents. The National Statistician's Office is working with the UK Statistics Authority Monitoring and Assessment team to define the scope and approach to this stage of the review. The objective of this stage will be to examine what statistics are currently available, from official and non-official sources, including the relevance, timeliness and coherence of those statistics. Users will be consulted over how statistics on the housing market can better meet their needs. The review is expected to be completed by Spring 2011.

**Next steps**

8. The report of the first stage of the review will be published on 16 December along with an invitation for comments on the way forward.
9. The scope, project plan and communication plan for the second stage of the review will be produced in consultation with the UK Statistics Authority Monitoring and Assessment team by early January 2011.
10. The final report of the National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics will be published in Spring 2011.

**Jason Bradbury and Emily Carless, National Statistician's Office,  
December 2010**

**List of Annexes**

**Annex 1      Draft National Statistician's Review of House Price Statistics**

SA(COS)(10)29 - Report on the National Statistician's review of housing market statistics

**Annex 1 Draft National Statistician's Review of House Price Statistics**

This document has now been published in the Authority's website:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-reports/index.html>

## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

### COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(10)30

#### *Statistics produced by the Bank of England*

#### Issue

1. The Bank of England produces a range of statistics relating to banks, banking and other economic matters (a full list is provided at **Annex A**). These have never been regarded as official statistics, or National Statistics. This creates an anomaly recognised by both the Bank and the Statistics Authority, in that, whilst clearly 'official', the status of the statistics within the statutory regime created by the *Statistics and Registration Service Act* is unresolved. From time to time concern about this has been expressed in Parliament. It is important to recognise here that the Bank is a public corporation, like the BBC, not a public body reporting to Ministers.

#### Timing

2. There is no particular urgency. It is more important that dialogue is maintained than deadlines set.

#### Recommendations

3. The Committee is invited to agree that discussions with the Bank should continue with a view to establishing a concise written agreement, or understanding, between the Bank and the Statistics Authority, under which the Authority would provide assessment against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* and, subject to the points below, against the *Bank of England Statistical Code of Practice*.

#### Discussion

4. *The Statistics and Registration Service Act* does not make any reference to the statistics produced by the Bank of England and it is not included in the official statistics Order which identifies non-Crown bodies that produce official statistics. Thus its current status is outside the locus of the Statistics Authority.
5. Discussions with the Bank pointed to two main problems facing any move to bring Bank statistics within the ambit of official statistics. Firstly, due to the way the Act is drafted, a government minister would need to take responsibility for the statistics – in various senses, such as seeking assessment with a view to National Statistics status. The Governor of the Bank of England is not identified as an authority for this purpose in the relevant parts of the Act (see for example sections 6, 11 and 12 of the Act which list 'appropriate authorities'). The omission of the Governor from such sections of the Act was probably a mistake.
6. Secondly, the Bank has its own Code of Practice for its statistics that is consistent with the public commitment on European Statistics made by the European System of Central Banks. There are some specific differences between the Bank's code and the official statistics Code. It has not proved possible to fully resolve these, although they have been mapped out and agreed as appropriate (the Bank's Code includes an appendix summarising these differences, see **Annex B**).
7. We have worked closely with the Bank to map the differences between its Code and the official statistics one and to agree the points that would require exemption or special interpretation. From the Authority's perspective, we accept the Bank's Code as appropriate for Bank statistics and the problems this creates are manageable.

8. We would expect to see the differences between the two Codes set out and recognised in the agreement between the bodies, so that Assessment against the official statistics Code could be undertaken without anxiety on the part of the Bank that it would be said to fail against aspects of the Code to which they had not committed themselves. That agreement and the reasons for the differences would be in the public domain. There have been a couple of attempts to start to draft such an agreement but as yet it has not progressed far.
9. The other issue, concerning the status of the Bank and its independence from government, is more intractable. The Bank will not accept that a government minister should be seen to be responsible for any decisions relating to its statistics. The best solution proposed so far, would be to create a special class of statistics, Bank National Statistics, which would be awarded to Bank statistics that had successfully been assessed against both the official statistics Code (with exemptions) and the Bank's own Code.
10. There is however a complication here in that whilst the official statistics Code is written as a basis for assessment, the Bank's Code is in a different style and does not map neatly on to the official one. This means that from the Authority point of view, Assessment would have to be conducted against the official statistics Code and any weaknesses identified considered in the context of both that Code and the Bank's. For example, it could be that a set of statistics would be found to be not-quite compliant with the official statistics Code, but acceptable under the wording of the Bank's Code. Such a situation would have to be addressed on its merits and resolved by agreement. The process for this would need to be part of the agreement.
11. The lack of tangible progress towards aligning Bank statistics with the statutory regime has been the subject of adverse comment in Parliament from time to time. Most recently, in the House of Lords consideration of the Official Statistics Order 2010, on 17 November 2010, Lord Newby commented:

"The body that produces the most statistics and is the most controversial, but sadly does not appear on this list, is the Bank of England. We have had happy debates in previous years about whether it would be a good idea to include the Bank on the list. I think that in the past the Bank has succeeded in persuading the Treasury that it should not be included-surprise, surprise-but the list would be strengthened, and indeed the way in which the Bank's own figures are viewed would be strengthened, if the ONS could have a look at them. I do not expect the Minister to have anything of comfort to say because I know how formidable the Bank can be in guaranteeing and protecting its independence, but it is a logical body to be covered by the order. I remain sorry that it is not."
12. The Bank intends to retain its own Code, but is happy to continue to discuss the steps that would be needed to put in place a bilateral agreement with the Authority and to see a form of Assessment, as outlined above, introduced in due course. We propose to continue to discuss the architecture of the prospective agreement and how it would work.

**Richard Alldritt, Head of Assessment, December 2010**

#### **List of Annexes**

<b>Annex A</b>	<b>List of statistics produced by the Bank of England</b>
<b>Annex B</b>	<b>Appendix 1 from the Bank of England Code: Main differences from the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics</b>

**Annex A      List of statistics produced by the Bank of England**

- Analysis of Monetary Financial Institutions' Deposits From and Lending to UK Residents
- Bank of England/NOP Inflation Attitudes Survey
- Bankstats (Monetary & Financial Statistics)\*
- Capital Issuance
- Consolidated Worldwide External Claims of UK-owned Monetary Financial Institutions (excluding central bank)
- External Business of Monetary Financial Institutions Operating in the UK
- Gross Domestic Product Real-Time Database
- Housing Equity Withdrawal
- Lending to Individuals
- Narrow Money (Notes & Coin) and Reserve Balances
- Sectoral Breakdown of Aggregate M4 and M4 Lending
- Survey of Foreign Exchange and OTC Derivatives Activity
- UK Official Reserves Data

\*Bankstats or Monetary and Financial Statistics are a set of tables that summarise the published statistics of the Monetary and Financial Statistics Division. The tables in this publication reproduce (sometimes with more detail) information from the statistical releases published by MFSD and other data compiled by the Bank. Where relevant, the statistics are in principle consistent with those published in the National Statistics publications (produced by the ONS) for the UK national accounts (including financial and balance of payments accounts).

## Appendix 1

# Main differences from the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics

The standards established by this Code draw upon a range of international, European and UK best practice. Much of its content is fully consistent with the UN's 'Fundamental Principles', the IMF's Data Quality Assessment Framework, the code of practice of the European Statistical System and the ESCB's Public Commitment on European Statistics. In addition, particular care has been taken to achieve a close alignment with the principles and practices of the UK Statistics Authority's (the Authority) code of practice for official statistics.

Nevertheless, the read-across to these various codes is by no means exact. The Bank's policy and operational responsibilities, and the linking of its legislative powers to collect and disclose statistical data to these functions, add a further set of criteria for inclusion within the Code.

The table presents the seven high-level principles of the Code alongside their equivalent statements drawn from the Authority's code. To aid comparison, some of the Authority's statements of principle have been reordered.

The Bank fully supports the aims of the Authority but believes that, if the Bank were to satisfy all requirements of the Authority's code, the Bank's ability to meet its primary statutory and operational responsibilities would be unnecessarily impeded. Accordingly, the Bank Code omits or modifies certain aspects of the Authority's code. However, the Bank wishes to be fully transparent about these differences. An account of the principal areas of divergence follows, with accompanying explanation.

### Using statistical data for non-statistical purposes

Principle 6 of the United Nations' Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics states that 'Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes'. The clear message is that when data have been collected from individuals or companies to allow the calculation of aggregated summary indicators of behaviour or performance, the component data must not

**Table 1** Key Principles of the Bank of England and UK Statistics Authority Codes of Practice

Key Principle	Bank of England Code	UK Statistics Authority Code
1. Relevance	Statistics prepared by the Bank of England will inform significant decisions in the Bank, government, business and the wider community.	<p>1. Meeting user needs</p> <p>The production, management and dissemination of official statistics should meet the requirements of informed decision-making by government, public services, business, researchers and the public.</p>
2. Integrity	Statistics will be produced using objective and transparent methods.	<p>2. Impartiality and objectivity</p> <p>Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, should be managed impartially and objectively.</p> <p>3. Integrity</p> <p>At all stages in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics, the public interest should prevail over organisational, political or personal interests.</p>
3. Quality	Statistical methods will follow international best practice and quality will be fit for purpose.	<p>4. Sound methods and assured quality</p> <p>Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality should be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices.</p>
4. Accessibility	The release of, and arrangements for access to, statistics published by the Bank will be orderly and transparent.	<p>8. Frankness and accessibility</p> <p>Official statistics, accompanied by full and frank commentary, should be readily accessible to all users.</p>
5. Confidentiality	The confidentiality of individual statistical data will be protected.	<p>5. Confidentiality</p> <p>Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only.</p>
6. Respondent burden	Respondent burden will be kept to an acceptable level consistent with legislative requirements and balancing the needs of users against the demands on suppliers.	<p>6. Proportionate burden</p> <p>The cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.</p>
7. Cost efficiency	Statistics will be produced cost efficiently and will provide value for money.	<p>7. Resources</p> <p>The resources made available for statistical activities should be sufficient to meet the requirements of this code and should be used efficiently and effectively.</p>

later be used for administrative purposes, for example for tax assessment, where its use relates to the individual identified by the information.

The Authority's code for official statistics paraphrases this UN principle in its own high-level statement on Confidentiality, Principle 5: 'Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only'. It accordingly draws a clear demarcation between statistical data, where the identity of individual data providers is not relevant, and administrative data, where the identity of the provider is central to its use. Aggregated statistics can be, and are, compiled from both classes of data but information required to perform administrative functions must be collected through systems which make clear to providers that the information they supply may carry direct consequences for them.

The Bank of England Code establishes strict controls to protect confidentiality but does not restrict the use made of statistical data in the way required by the Authority for official statistics. The Bank's various responsibilities demand both aggregated statistical indicators and firm-level detail: the Monetary Policy Committee is primarily concerned with the former, while analysts responsible for assessing financial stability may often be concerned with the latter. In many cases both requirements are served from the same data sources, yet it is normally possible to distinguish the primary motive behind each collection as either statistical or administrative.

As an example, the Statistics Division has collected information on banks' balance sheets, for aggregation into macroeconomic indicators for monetary policy purposes, over many years. However, some of these firm-level data are also seen by the Financial Services Authority to supplement information collected by them for prudential monitoring purposes. The Bank is empowered to pass information it collects under the authority of the Bank of England Act 1998 to the FSA if the Bank considers that the disclosure would enable or assist that authority to discharge any of its functions under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (see Appendix 2). Restricting the FSA's access to the statistical data would hamper its work and might, in some instances, have led to a duplicate or similar collection being introduced.

In practice, the Bank seeks to manage the dual use of statistical data through consent, whether or not there is a legal gateway allowing disclosure at its discretion.

The Banking Act 2009 has extended these powers of the Bank under the 1998 Act, with disclosure gateways now in place to serve a number of financial stability roles involving agencies within and outside the United Kingdom.

The Bank is satisfied that its controls on the disclosure of individual firm data to third parties offer reporting institutions the necessary protection for their data. It also considers that its dual responsibilities in respect of monetary policy and assessment of financial stability make the sharing of information between related agencies and within the Bank itself a fundamental prerequisite. Most of the data collected by the Statistics Division are used solely or primarily for statistical purposes, but there are occasions when operational functions require a wide range of firm-level data. To withhold information in these circumstances, because the data were only required for aggregation into economic indicators when they were first collected, would not appear to be an efficient use of resources and may not best serve the public interest.

### **The inclusion of 'full and frank commentary' with statistical releases**

The Authority's high-level statement on Frankness and Accessibility, Principle 8 requires that 'Official statistics, accompanied by full and frank commentary, should be readily accessible to all users'. Equality of access is a standard requirement in most statistical codes, but the added requirement for full and frank commentary is unusual and has no parallel in the UN's Fundamental Principles. Its significance within the Authority's code is that it reinforces the independence of UK official statistics from political influence. Any differences of interpretation between government policy statements and the statistical release will be immediately apparent.

The Statistics Division's statistical releases include only a short commentary and explanatory 'notes to editors'. But an important aspect of the Bank's monetary policy and financial stability responsibilities is the publication of detailed conjunctural commentary and assessment. These cover a wide range of economic and financial indicators, including statistics released by the Statistics Division, and represent the Bank's considered view at the time. The Statistics Division contributes to this consensus through the technical support and advice it provides to staff working in other analytical areas of the Bank. In this sense, it is not separate from the policy and operational areas of the Bank; indeed, much of its activity is concerned with serving these roles. Issuing separate commentary and interpretation when statistics are released might be thought helpful by users, but would also carry

the risk of compromising or confusing the Bank's wider assessment if nuances of drafting were perceived as material differences. Inclusion of 'full and frank commentary' as accompaniment to statistical releases is therefore not considered necessary or appropriate.

### **Naming the responsible statistician in statistical releases**

Practice 6 of the Release Practices, Protocol 2 of the Authority code says 'Include the name and contact details of the responsible statistician in statistical reports'. No rationale for this requirement is offered, but it is presumed that the principal motive is to assist users requiring technical support to find relevant expertise.

The Statistics Division has considered including contact names on statistical releases but concluded in favour of directing inquiries to an appropriate but anonymous contact address. The identification of individual staff contact details can be helpful where the named individual is the primary or only source of information, for example where he or she is the author of an article, but is less important where expertise is shared among individuals working as a team, or where a release may result from contributions from a number of individuals. The publication of individuals' contact details can also carry adverse consequences, including the encouragement of spam or nuisance calls. Contact names are, however, given in *Monetary and Financial Statistics*. The Statistics Division has considered and is satisfied that it has the balance between naming and not naming about right, but will keep this issue under periodic review.

### **Reporting the cost burden of statistical surveys**

Practice 1 of Principle 6, Proportionate Burden, of the Authority code says 'Report annually the estimated costs... of responding to statistical surveys and strive to develop methods that will reduce the cost to individual organisations or people'.

The Statistics Division has developed a cost-benefit framework for assessing proposals for new statistical collections and reviewing existing collections. This has been fully operational since 2006. Part of this framework involves the calculation of reporting cost estimates, using a complex algorithm which takes account of factors such as the frequency of the data, the number of data cells required and the inherent complexity of the data extraction from management systems. These estimates have proved to be effective in gauging the relative cost of different collections and proposals for new collections, but their reliability as measures of the absolute cost to

reporters is less certain. Direct measurement of costs by reporters is no less problematic, but it is recognised that the cost of supplying data could be considerable for some individual reporters. Statistical reporting is often carried out alongside financial reporting and supervisory reporting, so that the apportionment of costs to statistics is not straightforward. In addition, reporters may perceive an incentive to overstate this administrative burden.

For the present, the Bank does not publish cost estimates, regarding these as insufficiently reliable and potentially misleading. However, it remains committed to minimising the cost burden on reporters and believes that it has been successful in reducing costs materially since the adoption of cost-benefit techniques into its regular reviewing of collections during 2006.

### **Statistical experts commenting publicly on the misuse of statistics**

Practice 7 of Principle 3, Integrity, of the Authority code requires that agencies 'promote a culture within which statistical experts in government can comment publicly on statistical issues, including the misuse of official statistics'. The Bank Code includes similar wording (2.3.3 and following bullet) but still sufficiently different to merit comment.

Statistical staff do write and speak on a range of technical issues of relevance to users, and do this with the full support and encouragement of the Bank. However, statistical staff would not normally comment publicly on matters of statistical interpretation or misinterpretation. Where the misuse of the Bank's statistics was considered sufficiently serious, any public response could be expected to occur through the Bank's Press Office or via an Executive Director.