

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**  
**Committee for Official Statistics**

**Minutes**

**Meeting of Tuesday 12 November 2013**  
**Board Room, Drummond Gate, London**

**Present**

**Members**

Professor David Rhind (Chair)  
Dr Colette Bowe  
Mr Partha Dasgupta  
Sir Andrew Dilnot  
Mr Roger Halliday  
Ms Jil Matheson

**Secretariat**

Mr Robert Bumpstead  
Mr Joe Cuddeford

**Other Attendees**

Ms Pam Davies  
Mr Sandy Stewart  
Ms Stephanie Howarth (for item 2)

**Apologies**

Professor David Hand

**Declarations of Interest**

None

**1. Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Professor Hand. The minutes of the previous meeting of 18 September 2013 were agreed as a correct record, subject to one amendment. Progress with actions was reviewed.

**2. Statistical Infrastructure Project [SA(COS)(13)48]**

- 2.1 Ms Matheson introduced a paper which provided an overview of the statistical infrastructure project. Sir Andrew provided a summary of a meeting of the sponsor group for this project. It was intended that a high-level horizon-scanning event would take place in 2014, to which leading experts would be invited.

- 2.2 The following comments were made in the discussion:

- i. the project group should have the right connections to the external environment, and could also include more than one departmental representative;
- ii. infrastructure should be defined in a broader sense than the traditional view of official statistics, and the project should take account of the wider data agenda; and
- iii. there had recently been a rise in the number of statisticians in government due to the lifting of recruitment restrictions and a drive to make better use of management information; however this rise was not reflected at the most senior levels.

**Action: Ms Howarth to circulate a note of the statistical infrastructure sponsor group meeting to COS members.**

**3. Increasing the impact of statisticians in departments [SA(COS)(13)49]**

- 3.1 Ms Davies provided an update on progress towards the Authority's Strategic objective to increase the impact of statisticians in departments.

- 3.2 The meeting considered a draft mandate for a project to look at issues related to capability, both within the GSS and more broadly. The Committee welcomed the proposals.

**Action: Ms Davies to further develop the capability project mandate taking into consideration comments made in discussion.**

- 3.3 The Committee would be considering capability in more detail at a seminar session in January.

**4. Issues raised with Authority [SA(COS)(13)50]**

- 4.1 Mr Bumpstead introduced a paper which provided an overview of recent issues raised with the Authority. The Committee discussed the nature of recent issues and action that had been taken in response to them.

- 4.2 The meeting also considered the way in which key strategic issues were raised with the Committee for Official Statistics. It was agreed that the National Statistician, Head of Assessment, as well as any member of the Committee for Official Statistics, could raise issues for consideration. The Secretariat would further develop the process whereby issues were gathered.

**Action: Secretariat to consider further with the National Statistician's Office and Monitoring and Assessment team.**

**5. Draft Monitoring Review: Patient Outcome Statistics [SA(COS)(13)51]**

- 5.1 Mr Stewart introduced a draft Monitoring Report on patient outcome statistics.

- 5.2 The Committee agreed that the report was useful and important and should be published in due course, following consideration by the authors of some points made in discussion. It was agreed that a suitable communications plan should be developed for the report.

**Action: Mr Stewart to revise the draft Monitoring Report in light of comments made in discussion. COS Chair, Authority Chair and Secretariat to further consider the communications plan.**

**6. Draft Monitoring Review: Use of official statistics by the financial services sector [SA(COS)(13)52]**

- 6.1 Mr Stewart introduced a draft Monitoring Report on the financial services sector.
- 6.2 The Committee made a number of suggestions for improvement to the report. It was agreed that the final report would be circulated to members of the ONS Board for information.

**Action: Mr Stewart to revise the draft Monitoring Report in light of comments made in discussion. Secretariat to circulate the final Monitoring Review to ONS Board members for information.**

**7. Activities of the Government Statistical Service [SA(COS)(13)53]**

- 7.1 Ms Davies introduced a paper which provided an update of Government Statistical Service (GSS) activities for September to October 2013.
- 7.2 The meeting noted that the reform of the European Statistical Law (EU Regulation 233) had reached an impasse in negotiations. The Committee would be considering European statistical issues in more depth at a seminar in December.
- 7.3 The GSS Data Strategy had been launched at an event on 4 November. An implementation plan was in development.
- 7.4 Mr Halliday reported on progress with Theme Leaders' assessments of UK comparability. An update would be provided to the January meeting.

**8. Cuts to official statistics [SA(COS)(13)54]**

- 8.1 Ms Davies introduced a paper which provided an update on plans by producers of official statistics for ceasing the production of statistics, and on public consultations relating to statistics.
- 8.2 The Committee discussed the format and content of this paper. It was agreed that, in addition to information about statistics that had been discontinued, it was also important to know about new statistics that were being produced. Information about situations where statistics had not been discontinued, but were collected less frequently or using different methods, would also be of value.

**Action: National Statistician's Office to review the format, content and title of this paper and consider including information about new statistics.**

**9. Any other business**

- 9.1 There was no other business. A Committee for Official Statistics Seminar about the European Statistical System would be held on 5 December at 10:00am in London. The Committee would meet again on Thursday 23 January 2014 at 10:30am.

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY  
COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

***Agenda***

***Tuesday 12 November 2013  
Board Room, Drummond Gate, London, 10:30 to 13:00***

**Chair: Professor David Rhind**  
**Apologies: Professor David Hand**

1	Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising	Meeting of 180913
2	Statistical Infrastructure Project	SA(COS)(13)48 Ms Jil Matheson
3	Increasing the impact of statisticians in departments	SA(COS)(13)49 Ms Jil Matheson
4	Issues raised with Authority	SA(COS)(13)50 Secretariat
5	Draft Monitoring Review: Patient Outcome Statistics	SA(COS)(13)51 Mr Sandy Stewart
6	Draft Monitoring Review: Use of official statistics by the financial services sector	SA(COS)(13)52 Mr Sandy Stewart
7	Activities of the Government Statistical Service	SA(COS)(13)53 Ms Pam Davies
8	Cuts to official statistics	SA(COS)(13)54 Ms Pam Davies
9	Any other business	

**Next Meeting: Thursday 23 January 2014, London, 10:30 to 13:00**

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**  
**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(13)48

***Statistical Infrastructure***

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides an overview of progress with the statistical infrastructure project.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics are invited to consider and comment on progress so far and the future direction of the work.

**Discussion**

3. The Authority's Statement of Strategy states that it will:  
"Provide leadership and vision for the official statistics system in the UK and assure Parliament and the public of the quality of official statistics. *In 2013 the Authority will lead a public debate on the long-term vision for official statistics in the UK and the statistical infrastructure that the nation needs.*"
4. The statistical infrastructure project supports the delivery of this strategic objective. The project aim is to move towards delivering a comprehensive, effective statistical system, by identifying the infrastructure that needs to be in place to help achieve this.
5. A project's sponsors group has been convened to set the direction of the work. This group will meet for the first time in the morning on 12 November to agree the scope of the project. The members of the sponsor group are:
  - i. Sir Andrew Dilnot (Chair);
  - ii. Mr Paul Boyle (Chief Executive, Economic and Social Research Council);
  - iii. Mr Robert Bumpstead (Chair of the Statistical Infrastructure Working Group);
  - iv. Mr Ed Humpherson (Head of Assessment, UK Statistics Authority – from January);
  - v. Ms Jil Matheson (Chief Executive, UK Statistics Authority);
  - vi. Mr John Pullinger (President, Royal Statistical Society); and
  - vii. Professor David Rhind (UK Statistics Authority Deputy Chair, Official Statistics).
6. The supporting paper for the sponsors group is provided at **Annex A**. An oral update about this discussion can be provided to Committee members at the meeting.
7. A working group has also been established to support the delivery of the project. The membership of the working group and a summary of its first meeting are provided at **Annex B**.

**Stephanie Howarth, National Statistician's Office, 1 November 2013**

**List of Annexes**

- Annex A**      **Statistical Infrastructure Project: An introduction**  
**Annex B**      **Statistical Infrastructure Working Group – Summary of Meeting, 23 Sept**

## Annex A Statistical Infrastructure Project: An Introduction

1. The GSS is a decentralised and devolved statistical system. Departments and the devolved administrations maintain their own budgets for statistics and are responsible for planning their own statistical activity. The Authority has a statutory responsibility to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. However, to date there has been little information available from the GSS to help the Authority exercise this responsibility.
2. The GSS has made an increasing effort to engage with users and involve them in the planning of statistics, but this is yet to be reflected in coordinated plans across departments and statistical themes. It is understandable that departmental plans, where they exist, will focus on their own statistics, and a number of departments are very effective at this type of planning. However joining up across the GSS is vital for working more efficiently to meet user needs and reducing burden and duplication.
3. In addition to a lack of joined-up planning across departments, there is also very little central planning for statistics. The Government Statistical Service produces a vast range of statistics but we don't have clear idea if, collectively, this all adds up to the right kind of statistics needed to support public debate and decision making. This was highlighted by the Royal Statistical Society in its evidence to the Public Administration Select Committee in Sept 2012.
4. This weakness in planning means that:
  - i. There is poor recognition of the needs of some groups of users
  - ii. There is no joined-up mechanism for anticipating future user needs
  - iii. The GSS has little sense of the relative priorities across the whole statistical system
  - iv. Resources cannot be targeted at the areas of greatest need
  - v. There is the potential for inefficiency and duplication
5. Many parts of the statistical system, both at home and abroad, have begun to focus more on statistical planning and coordination. The Authority and GSS strategies both recognise the need for improved planning and coordination. In addition, the Public Administration Select Committee recommended that the National Statistician and the Committee for Official Statistics adopt a more strategic role in planning across the GSS so that, where appropriate, resources can be pooled and the UK's statistical needs met as efficiently as possible.
6. There are also a number of international drivers for improving statistical planning and coordination. The revision to European statistical law is expected to place a greater emphasis on national coordination and an upcoming peer review is also likely to focus on this topic. It is also important for the GSS to take a joined-up approach to negotiating and meeting European needs, given that Eurostat has begun to show greater assertiveness in taking action against countries that do not meet their international obligations.
7. These drivers have created a need to better understand the statistical infrastructure and whether it can deliver an effective statistical system. There is no fixed idea on what the infrastructure could include, but some suggestions are:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the legal framework</li> <li>• policies and principles</li> <li>• skills and capability</li> <li>• data and statistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• common standards and definitions</li> <li>• systems for planning</li> <li>• user networks</li> <li>• coordination arrangements</li> </ul>
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8. The aim of the project, therefore, is to move towards delivering a comprehensive, effective statistical system, by identifying the infrastructure that needs to be in place to help achieve this. This will provide the basis for improved planning and coordination in the future, which will help to ensure the continuity of supply of our statistical assets.

## Annex B Statistical Infrastructure Working Group - Summary of Meeting, 23 September

1. The Statistical Infrastructure Working Group met to discuss initial ideas on the scope of the infrastructure project, ahead of the meeting of the project sponsors. The group discussed what the problems are that need solving and how they could potentially be addressed.
2. The group discussed the following areas, which could potentially be within the scope of the infrastructure project:
  - **Comprehensiveness of official statistics** – What statistics and analysis are and aren't available? What will be most important? How do we decide this? Where is there duplication (both hidden and explicit)? How can it be removed? What powers do we have to tackle decisions being made for political purposes? Is "comprehensiveness" the right thing to aim for?  
  
Is there any value in producing a catalogue of statistics that are important to the nation? Some users believe this should be one of the outputs of the project. If not a catalogue, then what are the alternative outputs that the project should produce?
  - **Planning** – Does the GSS plan and prioritise? How? How does this relate to budgets and resourcing? What influence can we have on these? Is there scope for more centralisation of planning? How can we link departmental planning with a plan for the GSS overall? Should the GSS produce a multi-year plan, similar to ones produced by other NSIs (e.g. Netherlands<sup>1</sup>)?
  - **Horizon scanning** – Do we regularly and systematically look at what is coming up and assess the impact of this on our work? Are there specific examples where the GSS anticipated a need and met it? How? What are theme leaders doing on horizon scanning? How do we join up with other horizon scanning activity across government? Do we ever look at what is going on in other countries?  
  
How does the data agenda affect official statistics? Should this group look to address these issues and how? What value does the GSS add, compared to other sources of statistics and analysis? How might Beyond 2011 change ways of working across the GSS?
  - **User engagement** – Currently a piecemeal approach. What are the best mechanisms for strategic user engagement and gaining information on the use made of statistics? How can we prioritise and weight user views? How do we engage with citizen users - via the media? Is there a role for formal user councils, like in some other countries? How can user engagement be built in to the governance of the GSS? Are the crime statistics and emerging price statistics governance models potential exemplars?

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<sup>1</sup> CBS Strategic Multi-Annual Programme 2014-2018: <http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/organisatie/corporate-informatie/publicaties/archief/2013/strategic-multi-annual-programme-2014-2018.htm>

- **The European context** – How to meet European user needs? Are we *planning* to meet them? Need to be able to negotiate and influence future European requirements. How can we coordinate across the statistical system to assist with negotiating and planning in relation to Europe?

**Members of the Statistical Infrastructure Working Group**

Pam Davies – National Statistician's Office (temporary chair)

Paul Allin – RSS Statistics User Forum (user representative)

Rob Bumpstead – Authority Secretariat

Joe Cuddeford – Authority Secretariat

Peter Helm – DEFRA (GSS producer representative)

Stephanie Howarth - National Statistician's Office

Mark Pont – Authority Monitoring and Assessment Team

Chris Fleming – Government Office for Science [sent apologies for the Sept meeting]

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**  
**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(13)49

***Increasing the impact of statisticians in departments***

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update on the progress towards the Authority's Strategic objective to 'Increase the impact of statisticians in departments' (Work Package 2B of the Authority Strategy).

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) are invited to:
  - i. note that a strategic plan is being developed for work on GSS capability, which will include increasing the impact of statisticians in departments;
  - ii. comment on the draft mandate for this work (**Annex B**); and
  - iii. note the initial plans for a COS seminar on capability in January, and provide a steer on topics of interest to the committee to help shape the event

**Discussion**

3. The Statistics Authority and GSS strategies were launched in spring 2013. Both strategies identified a number of 'people' related issues that need to be addressed if we are to achieve our vision to achieve maximum value from official statistics and advice, and promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good.
4. The initial plan for work package 2B to 'Increase the impact of statisticians in departments – GSS support' is provided at **Annex A**. The initial plan and deliverables were focussed on activities for the GSS People Committee. While the People Committee has an essential role to play in addressing capability issues for the GSS, their action alone is unlikely to be sufficient to maximise the impact and influence of statisticians in departments. If we are to make the most of the opportunities to raise our profile and increase our impact, we need to work in collaboration with others (within government and beyond) to promote ourselves and what we do, and to learn from others.
5. In addition to the Authority and GSS strategies there are a number of other drivers for change, including the opportunities presented from Civil Service Reform. To fully achieve our vision, and to take advantage of the opportunities we have, we need to maintain and enhance the skills and behaviours not only of members of the GSS but also of our users, to ensure that government and wider society are able to derive maximum value from official statistics and advice. We have initiated a project to take a more fundamental look at issues related to capability, both within the GSS and more broadly. We have produced a draft high level mandate to form the basis of a strategic plan for capability work. The draft mandate at Annex B sets out the overall aims, some high level objectives and draft success criteria.
6. We are seeking feedback on this mandate from a wide range of stakeholders, with the intention of producing a more detailed work plan in support of the mandate by the end of November. To ensure that we have the buy-in the senior stakeholders across the GSS, we are holding a workshop on capability for the Heads of Profession at their meeting on 12 December.

7. A seminar on capability is also scheduled for members of COS in January. At this event, we plan to provide more information on our plans for capability work, stimulate discussion, and seek the views of members of COS. To help plan for that event, COS members are invited to provide a steer on content.
8. Given our intention to review and update the action required to deliver against work package 2B, my current judgement is that the planning status should be set as '2' which is defined as "work has been partly planned, or planned but not yet proceeding". Delivery confidence is now Amber. The work we have underway is designed to bring the planning status to '3', defined as "work to meet this objective has been agreed is established and is proceeding", with delivery confidence Green within a couple of months.

**Pam Davies, National Statistician's Office, 4 November 2013**

**List of Annexes**

**Annex A      Implementation plan for Work Package 2B of the Authority Strategy**  
**Annex B      GSS Capability Project: Draft Mandate**

## Annex A Implementation plan for Work Package 2B of the Authority Strategy

- **Work Package 2B: Impact of departmental statisticians** “Increase the impact of statisticians in departments. *In support of the National Statistician’s vision for the GSS, the Authority will support and champion the role of departmental statisticians in effectively communicating statistics and in providing statistical advice for users.*”

Work	Oversight / Executive Lead	Deliverables (as at September 2013)	Planning status*	Delivery confidence
(i) Increase the impact of statisticians in departments – GSS support	<p><b>Oversight:</b> COS</p> <p><i>GSS Strategy reviewed at COS in November 2012 and published in March 2013.</i></p> <p><b>Executive Lead:</b> Pam Davies</p>	<p>As outlined in GSS Strategy Implementation Plan, the People Committee will take forward the following actions by December 2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Committee to promote GSS successes with Permanent Secretaries and Ministers.</li> <li>• People Committee to consider the best mechanisms to achieve senior championship for the GSS.</li> <li>• People Committee to identify examples of where GSS members have had a visible impact on policy and explore what factors contributed to the success. Publicise and promote these examples.</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>	

\* 1: No work has been agreed to meet this objective, or details have not been provided to the Secretariat.

2: Work has been partly planned, or planned but not yet proceeding.

3: Work to meet this objective has been agreed, is established and is proceeding.

# GSS CAPABILITY PROJECT MANDATE

## Project Aim

To maintain and enhance the skills and behaviours needed to ensure that government and wider society are able to achieve maximum value from official statistics.

## Project Objectives:

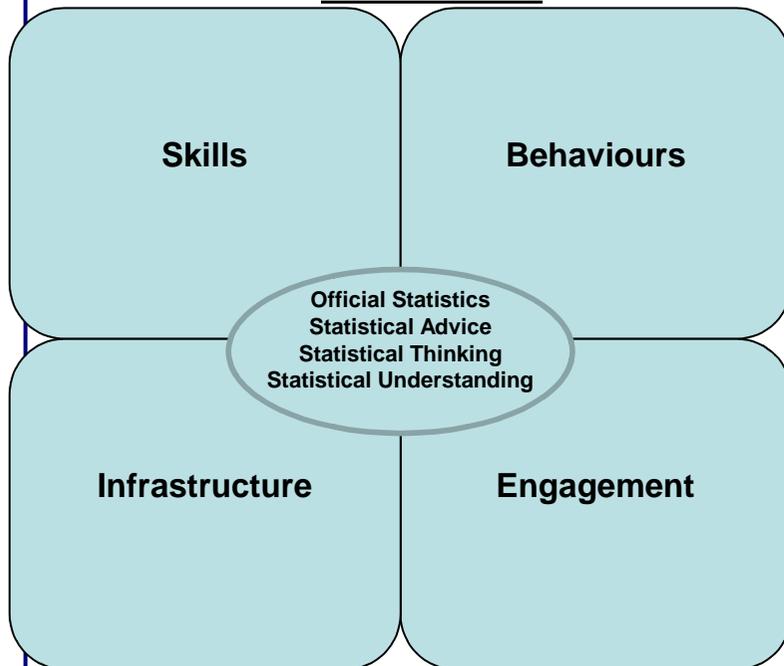
- To maintain and enhance the skills needed to achieve the maximum value from official statistics
- To cultivate the behaviours needed to strengthen the use, impact and trustworthiness of official statistics
- To establish an infrastructure to support the capability agenda
- To engage with others to maximise the value from official statistics and advice

## Project Success Criteria:

- Trusted official statistics and advice
- Appropriate statistical evidence used in decision making
- A proud, capable and valued community of statistical producers

## Project Scope:

### WORKSTREAMS



#### Skills

- Maintain the skills that we have now
- Identify the skills needed now and for the future
- Understand how we can deliver these skills

#### Infrastructure

- Recruit and develop our people
- Robust talent management
- Cross profession working
- Wide network of contacts and collaborators

### OBJECTIVES

#### Behaviours

- Increased statistical understanding amongst our users and collaborators
- Widespread statistical thinking
- Strong leadership and influencing skills
- Collaborative working
- Exploit opportunities
- Promote ourselves and what we do

#### Engagement

- Enhanced statistical thinking and advice between
- Professional Statisticians
  - Other producers
  - Government users
  - Non government users
  - Suppliers

## Programme Authorisation:

PROJECT SRO:  
PROJECT MANAGER:

Pam Davies  
Ian O' Sullivan

SA(COS)(13)50 – Issues raised with Authority

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(COS)(13)50

***Issues raised with Authority***

Issues raised with the Authority are published on the UK Statistics Authority website at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/issues-log/index.html>

SACOS)(13)51 – Draft Monitoring Review: Patient Outcome Statistics

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(COS)(13)51

***Draft Monitoring Review: Patient Outcome Statistics***

This document will be published on the UK Statistics Authority website in due course.

The document will be available at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/index.html>

SA(COS)(13)52 – Draft Monitoring Review: Use of official statistics by the financial services sector

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(COS)(13)52

***Draft Monitoring Review: Use of official statistics by the financial services sector***

This document will be published on the UK Statistics Authority website in due course.

The document will be available at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/index.html>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**  
**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

***Activities of the Government Statistical Service – September to October 2013***

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) with an update of Government Statistical Service (GSS) activities for September to October 2013.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Committee are invited to note the summary of GSS activities for this period.

**Discussion**

*Capability*

*Raising Professional Standards*

3. The National Statistician's Office (NSO) has initiated a project that aims to "maintain and enhance the skills and behaviours to ensure that government and wider society are able to achieve maximum value from official statistics."

*GSG Fast Stream Recruitment*

5. The latest round of Government Statistical Group (GSG) Fast Stream Recruitment (Round 1 2014) has closed and has seen a substantial increase in interest from candidates compared to 2013. The statistics assessment centre will be run over five days to accommodate the number of applicants.

*Statistical Officer Recruitment*

6. NSO is running another statistical officer recruitment round this autumn. For the first time in many years, ONS has asked to be included in this round and has bid for a significant number of statistical officers. Satisfying the bids of all departments will present a challenge.

*GSS Conference 2013*

7. The GSS Conference will take place on 4 and 5 November in Birmingham. The conference's aim is to "Inspire and Develop the GSS Community for the Future" with the parallel sessions structured around the themes of the GSS Strategy. A fuller report can be provided to the Committee for its next meeting.

*International*

*Reform of the European Statistical Law - EU Regulation 223*

8. Due to an impasse in negotiations, the planned debate in the UK Parliament has been postponed until a more definitive compromise agreement has been reached in Brussels. The Presidency is trying to identify a new compromise but all signs are that the Commission will withdraw their proposal. The latter is unhappy about the European Parliament's proposed stipulations for the appointment of the Head of Eurostat, which include prescribing a fixed single term that is not proposed for Heads of National Statistics Institutes (NSIs). The Commission consider such a course to be illegal in terms of the rules already established in the EU Treaties.

9. The Commission also wants to impose strong legal responsibilities on NSIs in Member States (MS) for the statistics produced by other national authorities as the central aspect of their bid to improve the reliability of European Statistics. The majority of MS, however, have previously agreed to a compromise that they believe respects subsidiarity. That compromise would give legal responsibility for ensuring reliable European Statistics to MS Governments and the NSI a 'coordinating' function (along the lines of the National Statistician's Office in the UK). The UK Parliament is concerned not only about this issue of subsidiarity but also about the proposed article empowering MS to have better access to administrative data.

#### *Evaluation of the GSSIC Work Programme*

10. The Statistical Policy and Standards Committee (SPSC) approved the GSS International Committee Work Programme for 2013/14 on 15 October 2013, recommending it, and the preceding evaluation exercise, as a model for good practice across GSS Committees. It focuses on how the Committee can support the GSS Strategy and international users of GSS Statistics.

#### *European Statistics Vision 2.0*

11. Member States (MS) and Eurostat have set up a Task Force to review the vision for European Statistics. This has been driven by a joint desire to ensure that MS views and needs are appropriately taken into account in its design and development. A refreshed vision is being developed for approval in May 2014. The current vision is being implemented through a Programme of interdependent infrastructure projects, called Vision Implementation Projects (VIPs), aimed at promoting improvements in the efficiency of statistical production through sharing data, services and tools, while at the same time ensuring quality of statistics. However, concerns have emerged among MS about potential up-front costs, confidentiality and quality issues, and duplicated costs for separate processes that may eventually be required to produce statistics for national purposes.

#### *Statistical Advice and Support*

##### *GSS Methodological Support Task and Finish Group*

12. Members of the Task and Finish Group have continued to provide feedback on risk assessment templates and the use of Quality and Methods Harmonisation Tool (QHMT). Revisions to the risk assessment template will be introduced before making them more widely available.
13. The outline structure of a draft framework for the provision of methodological support across the GSS was presented to SPSC on 15 October 2013. SPSC approved the draft framework and agreed to consider a fuller version at its next meeting in January 2014.

##### *GSS Data Strategy*

14. At the Committee's July meeting, Sean Whellams (HMRC) presented a paper about progress with developing a GSS data strategy. The Committee asked to be kept informed of developments. The data strategy sets out how the GSS will strengthen the use and impact of data. The strategy has been signed off by the GSS Statistical Policy and Standards Committee and will formally be launched at an event on 4 November.

### GSS Website

15. The new website for the GSS is now live and members are being encouraged to sign up. The website will be the first port of call for news, policies and guidance, as well as providing tools such as forums and groups which will aid collaboration across the GSS. The website also provides a public face for the GSS. It can be accessed at <http://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/>

### Annual Assurance Reports

16. Annual assurance reporting to the National Statistician was introduced last year as a means for assuring the good governance of the whole statistical system. An update was provided to the Committee in July [SA(COS)(13)33] which explained that the NSO was beginning to work with HoPs on a number of issues identified in last year's reports.
17. The NSO is relying on the existing network of committees and other fora to take this work forward only establishing new groups where necessary. It is clear that some issues (e.g. disclosure control policy, publication of management information) may not be resolved before next year's round of reports is commissioned.
18. One of the outcomes of last year's exercise was a commitment by the NSO to reflect on the current AAR template and review the Statement on the Roles and Responsibilities of Heads of Profession. A paper is to be presented to the HoPs Group meeting in December about these issues.

### Comparability Assessments

19. The Committee will be aware (see May paper SA(COS)(13)18) of the investigation commissioned by the National Statistician in her role as Chair of the Inter Administration Committee into the measurement of geographical comparability. Each GSS Theme Leader has been asked to create a list of 'headline statistics' with 5 to 15 indicators. Theme Leaders were encouraged to engage with users in order to identify these 'headline statistics'.
20. For each of the statistics on each list, the Theme was asked to undertake an assessment of cross-nation comparability based upon what is known about the uses made of the statistic in question. The outputs from the assessment will be one of three markings - fully comparable, partially comparable or not comparable. From that marking producers should include an appropriate statement of comparability to be made each time the statistic is published and potentially links to the comparable statistics where published separately.
21. Theme Leaders were asked to complete this task by 31 October. The Task and Finish Group, led by Roger Halliday, is meeting in mid-November to consider these lists and to produce a further report for IAC which meets in December.

**National Statistician's Office, 1 November 2013**

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**  
**COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

SA(COS)(13)53

***Update on the impact of cuts on statistical inputs and outputs, and  
monitoring statistical capability***

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update on plans by producers of official statistics for ceasing the production of statistics, and on public consultations relating to those statistics. The paper also includes the up-to-date number for staffing statistics in the Government Statistician Group (GSG) against which reports are being benchmarked.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics are invited to note:
  - i. the latest position on reported cuts to official statistics and further potential cuts subject to public consultation and other official statistics issues being consulted upon; and;
  - ii. the current staffing numbers for the GSG.

**Discussion**

3. Since the last report to the Committee on 18 September 2013, there has been one notification of a cessation to the National Statistician. In August 2013, the Welsh Government ceased to publish 'Coordinated Release of Population and Migration Outputs'. In the past this output has highlighted Wales-level statistics produced by other statistical producers (e.g. ONS, the Home Office) and provided links to releases produced by them. Welsh Government has not produced its own releases or bulletins to accompany it. Some elements of the 'Coordinated Release' which used to include data for Wales have been moved to an annual basis (e.g. DWP data) or discontinued (i.e. National Health Service Central Register data produced by ONS). As a result on occasions there has been nothing to report at a Wales level. See **Annex A** for further details.
4. Historical information about cessations by department up to October 2013 can be found at **Annex B**.
5. The National Statistician's Office (NSO) has identified four new statistical consultations since the last update to the Committee (see **Annex C**). Two of these are notable:
  - i. ONS has launched a consultation on the census and the future provision of population statistics in England and Wales. Research has resulted in two approaches for taking the census in future - a Census once a decade, like that conducted in 2011, but primarily online, or a Census using existing government data and compulsory annual surveys.
  - ii. The Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) are consulting users on the Health Survey for England (HSE). The contract for this survey is due for renewal from 2016 onwards and HSCIC would like to understand how the survey is used and what users' priorities are. Feedback received will help make informed decisions on the future content and structure of the survey to ensure it continues to be relevant and meaningful, and that information needs are being met in the best and most cost-effective way. The comments will be considered

against resource pressures and will be invaluable in determining requirements for any new contractual arrangements.

Monitoring Statistical Capacity

6. The numbers shown in **Annex D and E** reflect the latest returns from the database of professional statisticians as provided by UK Government departments and agencies and the devolved administrations. **Annex F** shows the split of professional statisticians by region.
7. These data show the Full-Time Equivalent numbers of staff by the major grade groups at a moment in time, and will be updated on a quarterly basis to provide a time series. In addition, a snapshot is provided of the major departments' numbers, split as before between Senior Civil Service (SCS) and non-SCS posts.

**Pam Davies, National Statisticians Office, 1 November 2013**

**List of Annexes**

<b>Annex A</b>	<b>Cuts notified to the National Statistician since the last update</b>
<b>Annex B</b>	<b>Cuts previously reported to COS</b>
<b>Annex C</b>	<b>New consultations about changes to statistics</b>
<b>Annex D</b>	<b>Government Statistician Group staffing levels by department</b>
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## Annex A Cuts notified to the National Statistician since the last update

This table summarises cuts to official statistics that have been notified to the National Statistician as of 30 October 2013 since the last update was provided in September 2013.

Details	Description of statistics	Reasons for cessation or reduction	Details of consultation/ impact on users	Cost/benefits assessment	Status
<p>Headline: Co-ordinated Release of Population and Migration Outputs</p> <p>Ceased from 30 August 2013</p>	<p>In the past this headline has highlighted Wales-level produced by other statistical producers (e.g. ONS, the Home Office) and provided links to releases produced by them. The Welsh Government has not produced its' own releases or bulletins to accompany it. The headline mentions all relevant publications published by other departments on the day.</p>	<p>Up until now when other statistical producers have published releases containing data relating to Wales, the Welsh Government has produced headlines which provide links to the relevant publication or data. The Welsh Government is currently reviewing this practice. This is due to an increasing need to prioritise resources.</p> <p>In the case of the 'co-ordinated release', some of the elements which used to include data for Wales have been moved to an annual basis (e.g. DWP data) or discontinued (i.e. NHSCR data produced by ONS). As a result on occasions there has been nothing to report at a Wales level.</p>	<p>The decision has been announced on the latest headline published 29 August 2013. Users have been invited via the headline and email circular to provide any comments in response. No comments have been received to date (20 September 2013).</p> <p>The outputs the headline has provided links to will continue to be provided irrespective as far as we are aware. There have been no announcements by the relevant departments of any planned changes to the existing outputs.</p>	<p>Cessation will release savings equivalent to around two weeks' work per year at Higher Statistical Officer (HStO) level and a week of work per year at higher grades redeployed on other outputs.</p>	Confirmed

**Annex B Cuts previously reported to COS**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b>Date of cessation</b>
Department for Communities and Local Government	The Place Survey	July 2010
	Local Government Key Facts Card: England	November 2010
	Citizenship Survey	March 2011
	Official Statistics on Supporting People	May 2011
	Changes to DCLG Statistics – Regional Outputs	October 2012 for outputs without PRA. Outputs with PRA – throughout 2013.
Department of Culture Media and Sport	Target Group Index statistics on arts attendance	31 October 2011
Department for Education	Schools Providing Access to Extended Services Statistics	October 2010
	Parental experiences of services provided to disabled children Statistics	November 2010
	Diploma Learning England	November 2011
	School Destinations of Secondary School Pupils Resident in London Boroughs	September 2011
	Behaviour in schools	1 April 2012
Department for Health	Health Profile of England	Last publication March 2010
	Mortality Monitoring: Life Expectancy and all-age-all-cause mortality, and mortality from selected causes - overall and inequalities	Last publication October 2011
	Mortality Monitoring: Infant Mortality and inequalities	Last publication December 2011
Department for Work and Pensions	New Deals and the Flexible New Deal programme statistics	March 2011
	Tax Benefit Model	8 June 2011
	National Insurance Number Allocations to Adult Overseas Nationals entering the UK	August 2012
	Vacancies handled by Jobcentre Plus	Autumn 2012

Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC)	'Attitudes to Mental Illness' publication	Change of location from HSCIC to a Non Official statistics producing body
HM Revenue and Customs	Business Payment Support Service	Last publication July 2011
Home Office	Statistics on post-decision reviews on asylum applications, applications for asylum support, and asylum appeals.	25 <sup>th</sup> August 2011
	Basic Command Unit level recorded crime and detection statistics	April 2012
Ministry of Defence	RAF Pocket Brief	April 2012
	Civilian Staffing by agency, trading fund and location	February 2012
NHS Information Centre	Prescription Cost Analysis statistics	July 2012
	NHS Nursing and Midwifery Bank Staff return	September 2011
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency	Northern Ireland Abstract of Statistics Online	16 June 2012
	Participation in full-time education and vocational training by 16 and 17 year olds in Northern Ireland	December 2012
Office for National Statistics	Quarterly dividends inquiry	5 March 2012
	Thirteen statistical series previously contained in the Financial Statistics compendium publication	April 2013
	'New Orders in the Construction Industry'	13 September 2013
Welsh Government	1. Health Visitors, District Nurses and Other Community Nurses 2. NHS Day Care 3. Community Psychiatric Nurses and Community Learning Disability Nurses	October 2010
	New Deal Statistics	November 2010
	Welsh Short Term Output Indices	Within weeks if that decision is made by Ministers

	Local Authority Education Expenditure	Suspended for 2010/11 year.
	Affordable housing provision – collection of information from registered social landlords	2012/13
	NHS staff vacancies	1 March 2012
Scottish Government	<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>	November 2010
	Various changes to Scottish Government Surveys	2012 onwards

## Annex C New consultations about changes to statistics

This table summarises the consultations that have been notified to the National Statistician in the period 4 September 2013 to 30 October 2013 or have been discovered by the National Statistician's Office undertaking periodic trawls of departmental websites.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION	DESCRIPTION OF CONSULTATION	END DATE AND RESPONSES
<b>Consultations identified prior to 30 October 2013 and reported to COS in November</b>		
<p><b>Health Survey for England</b></p> <p><b>Department: Health and Social Care Information Centre</b></p> <p><b>Opening Date: 23 October 2013</b></p>	<p>This is a public consultation on the future of the Health Survey for England (HSE), and is your chance to influence the future of this important, long-running survey.</p> <p><b>Why are we having this consultation?</b></p> <p>We need to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the survey is used and what users' priorities are, to help us make informed decisions on the future content and structure of the survey</li> <li>• how different people and organisations use the varied information from the survey and how important it is to them</li> <li>• what things about the survey you would not want to change, but also what innovations you would like to see</li> <li>• what information you would like from the survey over the next few years</li> </ul> <p>Please note the questions included in the questionnaire are suggestions designed to stimulate thought and are not advocating solutions or committing to their inclusion.</p> <p>The contract for this survey is due for renewal for 2016 onwards. This information will help us justify both the need for the survey and the related public expenditure to continue providing it. Your answers will help us decide if, for example, we should change how many people the survey covers or the way it is done. We want to ensure that the survey continues to be relevant and meaningful to the people who use it, and that we are meeting their information needs in the best and most cost-effective way. Your comments will be considered against resource pressures and will be invaluable in determining requirements for any new contractual arrangements.</p>	<p><b>Closing Date: 30 December 2013</b></p>
<p><b>Marriage, divorce and civil partnership statistics</b></p> <p><b>Department: ONS</b></p> <p><b>Opening Date: 8 Oct 2013</b></p>	<p>The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 makes provision for the marriage of same sex couples in England and Wales. This will impact on marriage, divorce and civil partnership statistics published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). ONS therefore wishes to understand user requirements for published statistics on civil partnership formations and dissolutions and marriages and divorces of opposite sex and same sex couples.</p>	<p><b>Closing Date: 17 December 2013</b></p>

<p><b>The census and future provision of population statistics in England and Wales</b></p> <p><b>Department: Office for National Statistics</b></p> <p><b>Opening Date: 23 September 2013</b></p>	<p>The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is consulting on the census and the future provision of population statistics in England and Wales.</p> <p>The 2011 Census successfully provided population statistics that will be used for the next decade by planners, policy makers and researchers across the public and private sectors. Our population is changing rapidly, and the need to understand these changes will continue. The Office for National Statistics' Beyond 2011 programme is currently reviewing these needs, and how they might best be met in the future.</p> <p>Improvements in technology and in government data sources offer opportunities to either modernise the existing census process, or to develop an alternative census method that reuses existing data already held within government.</p> <p>Our research has resulted in two approaches for taking the census in future.</p> <p>A census once a decade, like that conducted in 2011, but primarily online. A census using existing government data and compulsory annual surveys.</p> <p>Both approaches would provide annual statistics about the size of the population, nationally and for local authorities. A census using existing data and surveys would provide more statistics about the characteristics of the population every year. An online census would provide more detailed statistics once a decade.</p>	<p><b>Closing Date: 13 December 2013</b></p>
<p><b>Integrated Household Survey Questionnaire Content Review – 2014</b></p> <p><b>Department: ONS</b></p> <p><b>Opening Date: 13 September 2013</b></p>	<p>The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is consulting users on the questionnaire content for the 2014 Integrated Household Survey (IHS).</p> <p>The Integrated Household Survey is the UK's largest social survey, collecting responses from around 335,000 adults in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. A set of core questions (around 100 in total) are included on a set of ONS household surveys to produce more precise estimates at a lower geographic level than is possible from individual ONS social surveys.</p> <p>As part of the annual questionnaire review, ONS are proposing to omit the sexual identity questions from the IHS core for 2014, and then reinstate them in 2015. These questions will be replaced by a set of new questions to the IHS core, collecting data on military veterans due to their current policy importance. The questions on sexual identity were identified by the IHS Steering Group as a topic which could be rotated annually in the questionnaire. The reason for this is that they produce relatively stable estimates, with changes identified year on year that are not statistically significant.</p> <p>ONS are still committed to collecting data on sexual identity, however the rotation of these questions will enable the IHS core to collect information on new question topics, without increasing burden on respondents which can also effect response to the survey.</p>	<p><b>Closing Date: 11 October 2013</b></p>

**Annex D Government Statistician Group staffing levels by department**

Department	March 2013		May 2013		July 2013		August 2013		October 2013	
	SCS (FTE)	Non -SCS (FTE)	SCS (FTE)	Non-SCS (FTE)	SCS (FTE)	Non-SCS (FTE)	SCS (FTE)	Non-SCS (FTE)	SCS (FTE)	Non-SCS (FTE)
BIS	3	58	3	55	3	56	3	59	4	60
DCLG	2	52	2	50	2	53	2	53	2	57
DECC	1	25	1	28	1	28	1	28	1	28
DEFRA	2	28	2	27	2	28	2	28	2	30
DfE	2	94	2	126	2	126	2	126	1	134
DfID	1	39	1	39	1	39	1	40	1	38
DfT	2	46	2	45	2	45	2	43	2	45
DH	1	50	1	51	2	54	2	50	2	55
NHSIC	1	85	1	91	1	92	1	92	1	94
DWP	3	169	3	171	3	176	3	175	3	187
HMRC	3	112	3	139	3	141	3	141	3	145
HO	2	25	2	25	2	25	2	25	2	26
MoD	1	64	1	65	1	68	1	69	1	76
MoJ	1	66	1	77	1	77	1	79	1	82
UKSA/ONS	20	128	19	132	20	138	20	140	19	150
SG	1	150	1	191	1	159	1	159	1	164
OTHERS	2	197	3	172	2	206	4	203	4	213
<b>Sub-totals</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1388</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1484</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1511</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1510</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1584</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1436</b>		<b>1532</b>		<b>1560</b>		<b>1561</b>		<b>1634</b>	

**N.B.** All data reported are rounded, full time equivalent figures. Data excludes staff currently occupying non-analytical posts.

**Annex E Government Statistician Group by grade**

	<b>March 2013</b>	<b>May 2013</b>	<b>July 2013</b>	<b>August 2013</b>	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>Statistical Officer Grades</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>878</b>
<b>Fast Stream</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>Grade 6 &amp; 7</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>559</b>
<b>SCS1 (Deputy Directors)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Directors and above</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1436</b>	<b>1532</b>	<b>1560</b>	<b>1561</b>	<b>1634</b>
<b>Values are rounded to nearest whole number (FTE basis)</b>					

**Annex F Government Statistician Group by Region**

	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>WALES/WEST</b>	<b>LONDON/SE</b>	<b>OTHER</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Statistical Officer Grades</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>878</b>
<b>Fast Stream</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>Grade 6 &amp; 7</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>559</b>
<b>SCS1 (Deputy Directors)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Directors and above</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1634</b>

**Headcount basis: October 2013**