

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Committee for Official Statistics

Minutes

**Meeting of Wednesday 4 November 2011
Board Room, Drummond Gate, London**

Present

Members

Professor Sir Roger Jowell (Chair)
Mr Richard Alldritt
Dr Colette Bowe
Dr Norman Caven
Professor Angela Dale
Professor David Hand
Ms Jil Matheson
Sir Michael Scholar

Other Attendees

Mr Jason Bradbury (for items 6 and 7)
Mr Richard Laux
Mr Frank Nolan (for item 4)

Secretariat

Mr Rob Bumpstead
Mr Joe Cuddeford

Apologies

Professor David Rhind

Declarations of Interest

None

1 Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 7 September 2011 were agreed as a correct record. Apologies were received from Professor Rhind.

2 Update on actions

Mr Bumpstead provided an oral update on actions. All actions were complete or were in hand.

3 Cuts to Official Statistics [SA(COS)(11)29] and Statistical Expenditure Reports [SA(COS)(11)30]

3.1 Ms Matheson introduced a summary of the latest plans by producers of official statistics for ceasing the production of statistics and of public consultations relating to official statistics.

3.2 The meeting recognised the usefulness of the information provided, but also recognised its limitations. By definition, an item by item list did not provide the wider, holistic perspective on the coherence and coverage of the statistical programme across government that was also needed. It was important to work towards assembling wider information on the impact of cuts on users' ability to monitor the economy, society and government performance, and on the capacity of the statistical service to respond to new issues. The current available information was piecemeal.

3.3 The following points were made in the discussion.

- i. Reductions to numbers of statistical staff in government were a concern – as were reductions to staff from other analytical professions. The National Statistician's Office (NSO) was carrying out work to monitor the capability of all analytical professions and would be reporting to the Cabinet Secretary. This would be made available to Parliament.
- ii. The rise in non-Senior Civil Service (SCS) membership of the Government Statistician Group was welcome and reflected an increasing professionalisation of statistical staff. However, the figures for Government Statistician Group (GSG) membership were not a good indicator of the overall numbers of staff engaged in statistical work, as much of the increase in GSG membership was accounted for by existing staff involved in statistics becoming 'badged' members of the GSG.
- iii. The decline in the numbers of SCS staff in the GSG was a concern. Since the Authority was created, more tasks now fell to statistical Heads of Profession, who were sometimes required to take an adversarial position in a department. Diminishing seniority could increase the difficulty of performing this role.
- iv. It was suggested that some of the very best statisticians may pursue SCS posts outside the GSG and so it was important to ensure the right opportunities for development were available.
- v. In addition to numerical information on staff ratios, concrete evidence of the damage to capability was required, through examples and case studies.

Action: National Statistician's Office to provide information presented over time on changes in staffing levels by department, and to separate Grade 3 posts from the rest of the SCS in the tables.

Action: The Committee to further consider how best to gain a holistic overview of the coherence and coverage of the statistical programme across government, including consideration of the following elements a) the current work of the NSO to monitor the capability of all analytical professions, b) the forthcoming

Monitoring Brief by the Monitoring and Assessment team on this issue and c) any other relevant information.

3.4 The meeting considered a draft Statistical Expenditure Report (SER) about statistics on the progress of children from disadvantaged backgrounds into higher education, produced by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS). The SER concluded that BIS appeared to have a suitable basis for its decision to move to the free school meals measure of participation. It was agreed that the Monitoring and Assessment team should review whether the new statistical release adequately described the free school meals eligibility rules. It was also important that the release described the proportion of people who were eligible but did not take up free school meals.

Action: Monitoring and Assessment team to revise the SER and resubmit to the Chair for further consideration.

4 Benefits generated by the Quality Improvement Fund 2010/11 [SA(COS)(11)31]

4.1 Mr Nolan provided an update on the outcomes of successful bids submitted to the Quality Improvement Fund (QIF) during 2010/11. There had been 16 successful bids for funding for work projects during 2010/11. Fourteen of these projects had had now been completed.

4.2 The Committee agreed that the projects had brought beneficial improvements to the methods used in the production of the statistics. But further benefits could be found in projects that sought to directly address the two main issues identified during assessments: improving the commentary accompanying statistics, and improving producers' understanding and analysis of the use made of statistics. Exemplar projects, which could have broad applicability across the statistical service, should be considered. Bids for these types of projects could be encouraged by earmarking a special category of funding and/or revising the criteria used to evaluate bids for funding.

Action: Mr Nolan to further advise the Committee on options for encouraging projects that more closely address the main findings from assessments

4.3 A large proportion of the funding for successful projects was used to finance expert advice from the ONS Methodological Advisory Service. As QIF was a cash fund, it was not possible to address issues that required increased staff resource in the producer department.

4.4 The meeting heard that the results of completed projects were reported on the Government Statistical Service intranet site, StatNet, which was only available to government users. It was agreed that the reports for completed QIF projects should be made available publicly, and should be referenced from statistical releases where appropriate.

Action: Mr Nolan to further advise the Committee on options for wider dissemination of QIF reports.

5 Draft Monitoring Brief: Maximising the Value of Administrative Data [SA(COS)(11)32]

5.1 Mr Laux introduced a draft Monitoring Brief about access to, and ensuring the quality of, administrative data sources for statistical purposes. The meeting heard that this paper had evolved from an original review of Statements of Administrative Sources (required under the Code of Practice) into a much broader review of administrative data, with a number of suggestions for ensuring quality and delivering the maximum value. The meeting heard that the draft Brief had only been considered internally at this stage.

- 5.2 The meeting agreed that a Monitoring Brief on this subject could be timely and influential, but further improvements were needed to the current draft. For example, it was not fully clear who the Brief was aimed at, or who should take forward the recommendations.
- 5.3 It was important that the Brief tackled issues related to protecting individuals' data and civil liberties more broadly. The following comments were made about the draft Brief in discussion:
- i. A new task force chaired by Sir Alan Langlands had been set up to develop recommendations on how future data linkages, data access and governance will be managed. It would be important not to cut across this work. The draft Monitoring Brief should be shared with Sir Alan for comment.
 - ii. Paragraph 14, concerning the recent report from the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC), should refer to the Chair's response to PASC.
 - iii. The Brief should be clear on whether it is recommending legislative change, or that the current legislation should be used more effectively.
 - iv. The proposals at paragraph 39, concerning the collective shouldering of risks and liabilities, should be reconsidered in the context of their practicality.
 - v. The well-documented risks of the use of administrative data should be summarised alongside the well-documented strengths at paragraph 3.
 - vi. The discussion of the relevance of the 1993 Statistics Act in Ireland to the current legislation should be further developed.
 - vii. Further examples of the quality of data being adversely affected by their anticipated use to hold service providers to account could be added to paragraph 16. For example, street level crime maps may have the perverse incentive of discouraging home owners from reporting antisocial crimes if they feared this would depress the value of their property.

Action: Monitoring and Assessment team to revise the draft Monitoring Brief and present to a future meeting.

6 An update on the Draft Strategy for the Government Statistical Service (GSS) [SA(COS)(11)33]

- 6.1 Mr Bradbury reported on progress with the development of a strategy for GSS. The following points were made in the discussion.
- i. The GSS was not an 'organisation' in the traditional sense. It was therefore wrong to think in terms of command and control. It was more akin to a modern community of practice. This made it difficult for leadership to direct change.
 - ii. Greater collaboration with those outside of the GSS could bring greater risks as statisticians give up control over the end product.
 - iii. The recruitment of statisticians in Great Britain was contrasted with the system Northern Ireland, where statisticians are centrally recruited and then posted out to departments.
 - iv. The GSS was a wider organisation now than in the past, and so needed a wider support network.
 - v. The GSS intranet, StatNet, was by nature insular, being accessible only to those in government. A possible recommendation for the GSS strategy was to relocate the material on StatNet to the public National Statistics Publication Hub.

6.2 The meeting heard that the draft strategy would be discussed at the December Heads of Profession meeting with a view to gaining ratification in early in 2012. Mr Bradbury agreed to keep the Committee updated.

7 Progress with the National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics

7.1 Mr Bradbury reported that a formal response from the Department for Communities and Local Government was expected shortly. Once this had been received, a public statement would be made on the future of house price statistics. Mr Bradbury agreed to keep the Committee updated.

8 Registration of Deaths [SA(COS)(11)34]

8.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a paper summarising the statistical implications of the late registration of deaths reported to coroners.

8.2 The meeting noted that there was a need for the system to be changed for the more timely recording of deaths, but that there were potential practical difficulties in achieving this.

8.3 The Committee agreed that the Authority should continue to support the case for amending the system of death registration in the terms previously set out by the Head of Assessment.

9 Activities of the Government Statistical Service

9.1 The Committee noted the summary of GSS activity.

9.2 The meeting heard that the taskforce looking at ways of raising devolution awareness was primarily concerned with improving understanding of which issues were devolved and which were not. This was sometimes different from a UK or a European perspective.

9.3 The GSS would publish a response to the Cabinet Office's Open Data consultation in due course. It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate this to the Committee once published.

Action: Secretariat to circulate the GSS response to the Cabinet Office's Open Data consultation once published.

9.4 The GSS were seeking an exemption on the recruitment ban for Statistical Officers as departments were struggling to fill these vacancies. The meeting heard that in Northern Ireland, despite having raised the minimum level of qualifications required, the number of applicants for the latest round of recruitment had far exceeded previous rounds.

10 Any other business

10.1 The Chair reported that it was likely to be Sir Michael Scholar's last Committee meeting and thanked him for all his work as a member of the Committee.

10.2 There was no other business. The Committee would meet next on 15 February at 13:30 in London.

Committee for Official Statistics

Agenda

Friday, 4 November, 2011

Board Room, Drummond Gate, London, 13:30 - 15:30

Chair: Professor Sir Roger Jowell

Apologies: Professor David Rhind

1	Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising	Meeting of 070911
2	Update on Actions	Oral update Mr Rob Bumpstead
3	Statistical Expenditure i. Cuts to Official Statistics ii. Statistical Expenditure Reports	SA(COS)(11)29 Ms Jil Matheson SA(COS)(11)30 Mr Richard Alldritt
4	Benefits generated by the Quality Improvement Fund 2010/11	SA(COS)(11)31 Mr Frank Nolan
5	Monitoring Brief: Maximising the Value of Administrative Data	SA(COS)(11)32 Mr Richard Alldritt
6	Update on the Draft Strategy for the GSS	SA(COS)(11)33 Mr Jason Bradbury
7	Progress with the National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics	Oral update Ms Jil Matheson
8	Registration of Deaths	SA(COS)(11)34 Mr Richard Alldritt
9	Update on GSS activities	SA(COS)(11)35 Ms Jil Matheson
10	Any other business	

Next Meeting: 15 February 2012, 13:30 to 16:00

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(11)29

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

Purpose

1. This paper updates the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) on plans by producers of official statistics for ceasing the production of statistics and on public consultations relating to official statistics. As agreed at previous meetings, this paper also trials a new method for recording cessation information that gives members a better insight into the impact of cuts on statistical expenditure, staffing, quality and comparability.
2. The paper also reports a new base position for staffing statistics in the Government Statistician Group (GSG) against which future reports will be benchmarked.

Recommendations

3. 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 new format for reporting cessation information.

Discussion

Background

4. The National Statistician's Office (NSO) currently collates information from producers of official statistics on plans to cease the production of statistics as a consequence of government spending cuts, as well as on public consultations relating to official statistics. An update is provided at each meeting of the Committee for Official Statistics.
5. At the COS meeting of 3 June, it was agreed that information on reductions to inputs – e.g. staff or other resources – and about changes affecting quality and comparability should be included in future updates. At the meeting of 7 September, NSO proposed that future updates would include information on consequent reductions to statistical expenditure and, where possible, to statistical capacity. NSO also proposed that it would report on the impact on quality and comparability. The meeting agreed that the next update paper from the NSO should be summarised at departmental level, with detailed information on specific cuts only included for new cuts.
6. Departmental Directors of Analysis (DDANs) have instigated a quarterly analysis of active professional analysts within their department on a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) basis. Figures for the Government Statistician Group (GSG)¹, consistent with this analysis, will be reported to COS from this point forward.

¹ The GSG is a subset of the Government Statistical Service (GSS), which includes all people working on the production of official statistics. It should be noted that the collection of information focuses solely on members of the GSG rather than the wider GSS. Whilst it may also be desirable to monitor GSS numbers, challenges relating to accurately identifying members of this group mean that such a collection would not be feasible.

Update on cessations and consultations

7. Since the last report to the Committee on 7 September 2011, the National Statistician has been notified of several further cessations of production of statistics. These include the following.
 - A decision by the Welsh Government, following a six week consultation, to cease the Social Landlords Possessions and Evictions series – as previously agreed in principle by their Housing Information Group, which represents the views of a range of stakeholders. The cessation allows resource to be re-invested into new priority areas for housing statistics, whilst utilising available data from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) should provide more frequent and timely information than the current, annual, data collection.
 - The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has announced that the statistics on Occupational Health Reporting Activity, last published in December 2010, will not be continuing. HSE are of the opinion that the data are not sufficiently valuable to users to continue to fund it. This decision follows a six week consultation during which 558 responses were received.
 - The HSE report that the annual questions in the Labour Force Survey relating to work-related ill health it has sponsored since 2003/04 will now only be asked every two years from 2013. A six week consultation took place and a small number of users expressed a desire to retain annual data. However, user consultations have also revealed that users are more interested in detail than frequency or timeliness of data – and this consideration has helped shape the decision.
8. Further information about these cessations, including the impact of them, can be found in **Annex A**. Historical information about cessations up to August 2011 is not included in this paper but is available on request. Information about the latest position regarding the ONS Statistical Work Programme is at **Annex B**. A summary by department of cessations previously notified to COS is at **Annex C**.
9. A number of statistical consultations have been notified to the NSO since the last update to the Committee, including several by ONS regarding:
 - i. replacing the time series on life expectancy by social class included in mortality statistics;
 - ii. reviewing whether the frequency of the Price Index Numbers for Current Cost Accounting Report can be reduced; and
 - iii. improving the measurement of car prices in both the Consumer Prices Index and the Retail Prices Index.
10. There are currently seven live statistical consultations – information about these is set out in **Annex D**. Two consultations were reported to the National Statistician since the last meeting but have since closed – information about these is set out in **Annex E**. Information about closed consultations previously reported to COS is not included in this paper but is available on request.
11. In addition to informing the Committee, this information will also be sent to the Secretariat frequently in order to facilitate decisions about early intervention and/or the preparation of a Statistical Expenditure Report.

Monitoring Statistical Capacity

12. As reported to the last meeting, since 2000, the NSO has collected information on membership of the GSG. A summary of the key changes underlying the GSG headline figures since 2000, and the reasons behind them, was provided as background

information at the last meeting in paper [SA(COS)(11)22]. The graphs showing the overall trend in GSG numbers are reproduced at **Annex F** for information.

13. Despite discontinuities in the series since 2000, and issues regarding the quality of the data, GSG numbers have shown an upward trend since the turn of the century. This overall increase in trend is due largely to the introduction of the Statistical Officer Scheme around 2004. Despite this overall increase, the Senior Civil Service element of the GSG has reduced. The National Statistician is undertaking a variety of work packages to address concerns regarding the relatively low number of statisticians in high level posts. The Senior Specialist Development Scheme Project, outlined in paper [SA(COS)(11)35] on the agenda for this meeting, is a significant example of this.
14. Current data on GSG membership by department is shown at **Annex G**. Future reports will highlight any significant changes from this baseline position. Please note that direct comparisons should not be made between the historical graphs and current data in Annex D as they are compiled using different bases.
15. Recent concerns from Heads of Profession over the shortage of Statistical Officers to manage scheduled statistics production has led to a request for the National Statistician to seek exemption from the recruitment ban for those grades. Evidence to support this is being actively sought.

National Statistician's Office, November 2011

List of Annexes

Annex A	Recent cessations of production of statistics by the GSS, notified to the National Statistician, and supplemented with additional information on impact on expenditure, staffing and quality
Annex B	Latest position regarding candidates for removal from the ONS Statistical Work Programme
Annex C	Summary of other cessations previously notified to COS
Annex D	Live consultations notified to the National Statistician since the last COS meeting
Annex E	Closed consultations notified to the National Statistician since the last COS meeting
Annex F	GSG membership headcount 2000-11
Annex G	GSG staffing levels by department

Annex A Recent cessations of production of statistics by the GSS, notified to the National Statistician, and supplemented with additional information on impact on expenditure, staffing and quality

This table summarises the cuts to official statistics that have been notified by Departmental Heads of Profession to the National Statistician between 12 August 2011 and 27 October 2011.

The table has been supplemented to provide COS with better information on the impact on quality of any cuts to Official Statistics.

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.

Details of cessation or reduction	Description of statistics	Reasons for cessation or reduction	Details of consultation/ impact on users	Cost/benefits assessment	Status
<p>Statistics: Self-reported Work-related ill health from the Labour Force Survey (LFS)</p> <p>Producer: ONS (HSE sponsor)</p> <p>Date of change: The first year when work-related ill health data will not be available from the LFS is 2013.</p> <p>Consultation closing date: Expired.</p>	<p>HSE have decided to reduce the frequency of the questions to biennial from 2013.</p>	<p>We have two primary sources of work-related ill health data: self-reported information from the LFS and data from GPs who have been trained in occupational medicine and report cases they see in their practices which they believe to be work-related. Both sources have their strengths and they are complementary.</p> <p>The health and safety environment does not change quickly and the LFS data has proved difficult to interpret year-on year. The real value of the data comes from combining</p>	<p>We ran a six-week consultation on the HSE website about priorities for health and safety statistics. Users were notified via our statistics eBulletin service for which we have 34,000 registered subscribers. We received 558 responses and the results are published on the HSE website.</p> <p>Impact on users: A small number of users expressed a desire to retain annual data. In particular the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) use some of this data to monitor progress with the Health,</p>	<p>Procurement costs will reduce by an average of £100,000 per year. In addition, staff savings of approximately £25,000 per year can be made.</p> <p>Impact on quality: Having data less frequently could mean that we are slow to pick up on new issues and changing trends. However, in practice it has been difficult to interpret the annual data sensibly due to large sampling errors associated with these relatively rare events. Any real change would be easier to pick up over a two year window.</p>	Confirmed

Annex A - SA(COS)(11)29 - Cuts to Official Statistics

		<p>multiple years and drilling down into the demographic detail. After the 2012 survey we will have ten years of LFS data to enable us to do that drilling.</p> <p>Our recent public consultation confirmed that users are more interested in detail than frequency or timeliness of data.</p> <p>Hence, faced with budget cuts we have proposed reducing the frequency of the LFS data collection. By retaining biennial data collection we can monitor any substantial shifts over time and ensure that policy advice remains current.</p>	<p>Work and Well-Being agenda. However, the majority of users did not suggest they would be adversely impacted by a reduction in frequency of this data.</p>		
<p>Statistics: Social Landlords Possessions and Evictions</p> <p>Producer: Welsh Government (WG)</p> <p>Date Notified: 10 October</p> <p>Consultation</p>	<p>The data collection and publication for social landlords' possessions and evictions has been running for almost ten years. Local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) provide information annually on the number of possession orders and eviction warrants that they have obtained</p>	<p>The proposal was part of a wider consultation on housing data collections. The purpose of this consultation was to meet the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To free up some resources to address new priorities for housing statistics. • To reduce some of the burden on data providers. • To ensure data continues 	<p>A consultation was held, in accordance with the Official Statistics Code of Practice, to allow users to comment on the proposed changes. The proposals in the consultation were previously agreed in principle by the Housing Information Group (which represents the views of a range of stakeholders). The consultation was therefore</p>	<p>Savings: The main savings from stopping this collection will be to the data collection team. This is a saving of approximately 30 days across grades, accounting for about £5,100 based on annual costs. This saving will be fully reinvested into the collection of new housing collections which are</p>	<p>Confirmed</p>

Annex A - SA(COS)(11)29 - Cuts to Official Statistics

<p>Closing Date: Expired</p> <p>Date of (proposed) cessation: Final statistical release will be published December 2011</p>	<p>against their tenants, as well as the number and type of tenants who are forced to leave their home as a result.</p> <p>The information is published in an annual statistical release which is used by the Welsh Government and social landlords to monitor trends in possessions and evictions. Local authorities also use the information to assist with housing planning.</p>	<p>to be available to users where needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that data collected remains relevant and of good quality. <p>More specifically, based on evidence from web hits and the number of requests we receive regarding possessions and evictions information, it is not widely used and does not justify the burden of collecting and processing the information.</p> <p>Information on mortgage and landlord possessions is available from the Ministry of Justice at a local authority level, although we acknowledge that this does not include the full range of detail of the current possessions and evictions statistics produced by the Welsh Government. If the information were no longer collected centrally, individual social landlords would still have access to their own management information on possessions and evictions for planning</p>	<p>open for a period of 6 weeks rather than the more usual 12 week period, from 6 June to 15 July 2011. The rationale for the proposed changes was included in the consultation documents which were published via the WG website.</p> <p>A detailed list of data providers and users was drawn up who were contacted, via e-mail and newsletters, to inform them of the consultation and the subsequent response. This included devolved and central government, local government, housing associations, third sector organisations, housing bodies and various groups/forums (Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee, Housing Statistics Network, StatNet, Statistics User Forum).</p> <p>Responses were received in Excel response forms or as emailed comments.</p> <p>Impact on users: Individual social landlords</p>	<p>needed to address the new priorities for housing statistics</p> <p>The analytical team who produce the output and Ministerial briefing will also save around two days a year. This saving will also be fully reinvested into producing Headline Statistics to publicise the Ministry of Justice outputs and outputs for the new data collections.</p> <p>Impact on quality: Using the Ministry of Justice statistics will allow direct comparability with England as the figures are produced for England and Wales. The information covers both social and private landlords at a local authority level in Wales. It provides a broader range, more frequent and timely information for monitoring than the current annual data collection covering only social landlords. Also these are National Statistics.</p>	
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Annex A - SA(COS)(11)29 - Cuts to Official Statistics

		and monitoring purposes.	<p>will still have access to their own management information on possessions and evictions for planning and monitoring purposes.</p> <p>Alternatively, the Ministry of Justice publishes quarterly figures on mortgage and landlord possessions. This information covers both social and private landlords at a local authority level in Wales. It provides more comprehensive, frequent and timely information for monitoring than the current annual data collection covering only social landlords.</p>	<p>Following implementation the Welsh Government will continually monitor and review the impact of these changes to ensure users needs continue to be met and that the quality of information published is not adversely affected.</p>	
<p>Statistics: Occupational Health Physician Reporting system (OPRA)</p> <p>Producer: HSE</p> <p>Date notified:10/10/11</p> <p>Consultation closing</p>	<p>OPRA is one of four GP and specialist physician reporting networks funded by HSE. Collectively these are known as the THOR schemes. OPRA is the reporting scheme for occupational health physicians.</p>	<p>The OPRA scheme does not produce representative statistics as it is limited to the workplaces which employ Occupational Health physicians. These tend to be large workplaces and often in the public sector. The data has only been used as supplementary information to other sources in the past. The results from our public consultation</p>	<p>We ran a 6-week consultation on the HSE website about priorities for health and safety statistics. Users were notified via our statistics eBulletin service for which we have 34,000 registered subscribers. We received 558 responses.</p>	<p>Savings: The procurement cost for OPRA was £163k over 5 years. Because the data is so under-used, there is minimal staff costs associated with handling and presenting the data.</p> <p>Impact on quality: More representative data on occupational ill health is available via the Labour</p>	<p>Proposed (due to go to minister for approval this month)</p>

Annex A - SA(COS)(11)29 - Cuts to Official Statistics

<p>date: Expired.</p> <p>Date of (proposed) cessation: December 2010</p>		<p>on statistics priorities in HSE found it to be the least used of our procured data sources. In the past OPRA has been tendered for as part of a package with other reporting schemes. However, in the latest retender which ended in June, we asked for separate costings for each scheme and hence are now able to make a value for money assessment of the value of OPRA on its own. Our assessment is that it is not sufficiently valuable to continue to fund it.</p>		<p>Force Survey and the remaining three THOR reporting schemes. Hence, we anticipate the impact on users and output quality to be very low.</p>	
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Annex B Latest position regarding candidates for removal from the ONS Statistical Work Programme

Between 25 October and 24 December 2010, ONS sought views to help determine the shape of its future statistical work programme. The latest position is as follows.

- Compendia and journals, including Annual abstract/Monthly digests, Monthly Financial Statistics, ELMR and Population Trends to cease from August 2011 onwards. Data will generally still be available from other sources, minimising impact on users.
- Regional analysis and reporting to be reduced, but will not cease. Final Regional Trends published 8 June 2011. Analysis will reduce through to 2014/15, but will become more focussed on user needs.
- Analysis of specific health conditions: Discussions underway with stakeholders (mainly DH) over future publications. Possible areas for reduction are: removing low priority outputs; reducing the frequency of outputs; amalgamating outputs; and removing duplication between ONS and other outputs
- The volume 'UK Health Statistics' will be discontinued, although some UK comparative tables will be provided. Users are being consulted on which tables are essential.
- Development work on the Knowledge Economy to significantly reduce (other than that required for development purposes, in some cases required by European law)
- Will cut back (but not cease) work on measuring Public Service Productivity. Development work has largely stopped, and the review of scope, methods and content of future outputs is well under way.
- Format of Labour Market analysis has changed from long (15 page) articles to shorter web based articles to increase impact from reduced resources. These changes have been well received by users.

Annex C Summary of other cessations previously notified to COS

Department	Statistics	Date of cessation
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
Department for Education	Schools Providing Access to Extended Services Statistics	October 2010
	Parental experiences of services provided to disabled children Statistics	November 2010
Home Office	Statistics on post-decision reviews on asylum applications, applications for asylum support, and asylum appeals.	25 th August
HM Revenue and Customs	Business Payment Support Service	Last publication July 2011
Welsh Government	1. Health Visitors, District Nurses & 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
Scottish Government	1. Children Educated outwith Schools 2. Placing Requests 3. Teacher and Educational Psychologists Vacancies 4. Pre-Appeal SQA Examination Results 5. Expenditure on Schools	November 2010

Annex C - SA(COS)(11)29 - Cuts to Official Statistics

	6. Budgeted School Running Costs 7. The Independent School Census	
	Various changes to Scottish Government Surveys	2012 onwards
Department for Work and Pensions	New Deals and the Flexible New Deal programme statistics	March 2011
	Tax Benefit Model	8 June 2011

Annex D Live consultations notified to the National Statistician since the last COS meeting

This table summarises the consultations that have been notified by Departmental Heads of Profession to the National Statistician in the period 26 November 2010 – 26 October 2011 or have been discovered by the National Statistician's Office undertaking periodic trawls of departmental websites.

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.

Details of consultation	Description of consultation	Consultation End
Replacing the time series on life expectancy by social class Producer: ONS 21 October 2011	<p>ONS produces statistical outputs describing both mortality and life expectancy in England and Wales by socio-economic classification. This consultation is concerned with publications relating to life expectancy, specifically the series 'Trends in life expectancy by (Registrar General's) social class'. The historical categories of social class, which were introduced in 1911, are no longer used in official statistics. Therefore, it is proposed that in future publications, life expectancy by social class is replaced by the series 'Life Expectancy by National Statistics Socio-economic Classification'.</p> <p>The consultation is expected to run from 21 October 2011 to 23 January 2012. A summary of responses will be published in April 2012.</p>	23 January 2012
Beyond 2011 Producer: ONS 17 October 2011	<p>The User Needs Consultation aims to ensure that we have a clear understanding of users' needs and priorities. The views expressed will be critical in determining how we develop our assessment criteria, how we evaluate alternative approaches and what option we recommend for further development beyond 2014.</p> <p>The User Needs Consultation document can be downloaded from the ONS website.</p> <p>This document provides brief discussion and guidance on the questions included in the questionnaire and we would appreciate it if you could look at it before responding.</p>	20 January 2011
Review of Price Index Numbers for Current Cost Accounting (MM17)	<p>ONS conducts regular reviews of all of its publications. Previous reviews of the PPI publications have suggested that the frequency of the MM17 could be reduced without any significant impact on users. The primary users of indices in tables 1 and 2 were in fact National Accountants, who used these data as deflators for the Capex and Stocks series in the National Accounts. Following the reclassification to the Standard Industrial Classification 07, National Accounts are using alternative</p>	29 December 2011

Annex D - SA(COS)(11)29 - Cuts to Official Statistics

<p>Report</p> <p>Producer: ONS</p> <p>24 October 2011</p>	<p>sources to deflate the accounts. Indices in tables 3 and 4, which are still used for asset valuations, are also published in our MM22 publication. Based on the previous user feedback, and the change in requirements for the National Accounts, the ONS will suspend the MM17 publication following the November 2011 publication, due to be released on 29 December 2011.</p>	
<p>Improving the Measurement of Car Prices in the Consumer Prices Index and Retail Prices Index (2011)</p> <p>Producer: ONS</p> <p>3 October 2011</p>	<p>The UK Statistics Authority, in September 2011, endorsed proposals from the Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC) relating to the measurement of car prices in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) and Retail Prices Index (RPI). CPAC recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Office for National Statistics (ONS) changes the method used to measure new car prices in the CPI and RPI. The proposal is to use transaction prices from car dealer websites instead of the current approach of using 'list' prices. In addition, this method will be used for both the CPI and RPI (currently, two different methods are used) 2. the new method should be introduced for the February 2012 CPI and RPI, published on the 20 March 2012 	<p>23 December 2011</p>
<p>Welsh Health Survey Outputs</p> <p>Producer: WG</p> <p>13 Sept 2011</p>	<p>We are consulting to seek user views on outputs from the 2010 Welsh Health Survey.</p> <p>The Welsh Health Survey provides unique information about the health and health-related lifestyles of people living in Wales. It covers a range of health-related issues, including health status, lifestyle and health behaviours, and health service use. The 2010 annual report was published on September 13th 2011, along with a local authority bulletin and additional online tables and charts.</p>	<p>6 December 2011</p>

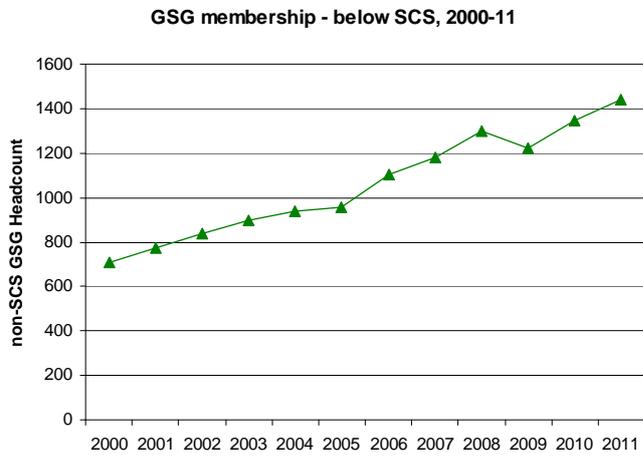
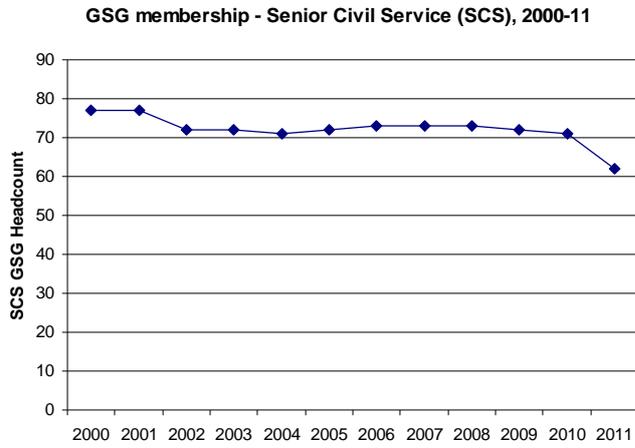
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<p>Triennial Review of Index Numbers of Producer Prices (SPPI) Voluntary Survey of Users</p> <p>Producer: ONS</p> <p>18 October 2011</p>	<p>ONS is required by Government to regularly review each of its statistical surveys. We are currently in the process of conducting a review of the SPPI and would be grateful if users of the information could take the time to provide us with feedback in this voluntary questionnaire.</p> <p>The review is a requirement of the Prime Minister's instructions on survey control. The main objective of the review is to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of all of our procedures, and to identify where improvements can be made.</p>	<p>25 November 2011</p>
<p>Triennial Review of Index Numbers of Producer Prices (PPI) Voluntary Survey of Users</p> <p>Producer: ONS</p> <p>18 October 2011</p>	<p>ONS is required by Government to regularly review each of its statistical surveys. We are currently in the process of conducting a review of PPI and would be grateful if users of the information could take the time to provide us with feedback in this voluntary questionnaire.</p> <p>The review is a requirement of the Prime Minister's instructions on survey control. The main objective of the review is to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of all of our procedures, and to identify where improvements can be made.</p>	<p>25 November 2011</p>

Annex E Closed consultations notified to the National Statistician since the last COS meeting

Details of consultation	Description of consultation	Consultation end
<p>NHS Staffing Statistics</p> <p>Producer: WG</p> <p>30/8/2011</p>	<p>We would like your views on the proposal to stop data collection and publication on NHS Staff Vacancies, and other views about NHS staffing statistics that we publish.</p> <p>The purpose of this consultation is to seek users' views on the above proposal and our other NHS staffing statistics. The reasons and evidence behind the proposal is detailed in the consultation document that can be downloaded from this page. Your contributions will help us to understand the impact these changes could have on the individuals and organisations that use these statistics. The outcome of this consultation will inform our priorities for the years ahead.</p>	<p>11 October 2011</p>
<p>HM Revenue and Customs</p> <p>Survey of Child Benefit National and Official Statistics</p>	<p>HM Revenue and Customs are carrying out a formal review of our Child Benefit National and Official Statistics publications. As a user of our statistics, no matter how occasional, your views are extremely important in order to help us ensure that the scope, format and content of our statistics remain suitable for the needs of our users.</p>	<p>30 September 2011</p>

Annex F Historical GSG membership headcount 2000-11



Annex G Government Statistician Group staffing levels by department - October 2011

Department	SCS (FTE)	Non-SCS (FTE)
BIS	3	46
DCLG	2	50
DECC	1	21
DEFRA	2	29
DfE	2	91
DfID	1	28
DfT	2	33
DH	3	59
NHSIC	1	67
DWP	2	171
HMRC	3	103
HO	2	20
MoD	2	64
MoJ	1	55
UKSA/ONS	21	123
SG	1	119
WG	1	58
Other departments and agencies	2	129
TOTAL	52	1266

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

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(11)30

Statistical Expenditure Reports

Purpose

1. This paper summarises recent work by the Monitoring and Assessment team in producing Statistical Expenditure Reports (SERs).

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) are invited to note the summary of activity below and comment on the draft SER.

Discussion

3. At the last meeting of COS, it was agreed that the Monitoring and Assessment team should investigate developments relating to the following statistics and report to the Authority Board in September:
 - i. statistics on the progress of children from disadvantaged backgrounds into higher education, produced by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS);
 - ii. statistics about people registered deaf or hard of hearing, about community care, and about the activity of social services, produced by the NHS Information Centre (NHS IC); and
 - iii. statistics about immigration and citizenship produced by the Home Office.
4. At the September meeting of the Authority Board, the Monitoring and Assessment team reported that it considered there to be merit in investigating the first two changes of the above three. The third change has been referred to the Monitoring Review of Statistical Publications as a potential example of a consultation concerning changes to statistical commentary.
5. In relation to the BIS statistics, the Monitoring and Assessment team has conducted preliminary investigations and has produced an early draft Statistical Expenditure Report (SER), which is provided at **Annex A**. This draft has been shared with BIS and the team will provide an update on any comments received at the meeting.
6. In relation to the NHS IC statistics, the Monitoring and Assessment team has asked the department for further information about the background to the changes and is awaiting a response. Developments will be reported to the Committee in due course.

Monitoring and Assessment Team, November 2011

List of Annexes

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|----------------|---|
| Annex A | Draft Statistical Expenditure Report 7 |
| Annex B | Extract from statistical release <i>Widening Participation in Higher Education</i> |

Annex A Draft Statistical Expenditure Report 7

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this Document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-sir-michael-scholar-to-rt-hon-dr-vincent-cable-mp-22122011.pdf>

Annex E

Findings from the public consultation

On 8 June 2011, BIS released a public consultation regarding the content of this publication. The consultation closed on 1 August 2011. Thirty responses were received; respondents included 13 universities, 3 bodies representing groups of Higher Education Institutions, 2 Local Authorities, stakeholder bodies, government departments, a group of academics and a private individual.

Main themes from responses

Removal of FYPSEC

The majority of respondents agreed that the FYPSEC measure was flawed and there are serious data issues that would prove difficult to resolve. A large number of students do not declare their occupational information that is used to derive Social Class status. There were also concerns about the subjective nature of the data collective process that relied on the student's view of their parents' occupation. A small number of respondents did advocate retention of the FYPSEC measure as universities have access to the SEC data, and it is a broader measure of disadvantage than FSM.

Use of the FSM measure

Generally respondents were not opposed to using FSM, but were keen that the limitations were appreciated and explained⁸. There was recognition that FSM is more robust than FYPSEC. There was support for using a range of measures, rather than FSM alone.

There were comments that FSM is a "blunt instrument"; it captures a narrow subset of the population, excluding those with incomes too high to claim FSM who may still be regarded as disadvantaged. It also excludes those who choose not to claim FSM. Some respondents noted that there may be regional differences in take-up rates that could distort interpretation. Capturing FSM receipt at a single point in time, together with the time lag between age 15 and entry to Higher Education, is an issue. It is possible to measure whether there is any record of a potential student having been on FSM since the data was first collected in 2002 and some respondents felt that using this data would capture a larger group that had experienced some period of disadvantage.

⁸ These limitations are discussed for example in:

Vignoles, A.; Hobbs, G. (2009) 'Is children's free school meal 'eligibility' a good proxy for family income?'. *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 36, no. 4, pp.1469-3518, <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/study/departments/qss/756.html>

Kounali, Daphne; Robinson, Tony; Goldstein, Harvey & Lauder, Hugh (2008) 'The probity of free school meals as a proxy measure for disadvantage', Vol. Working Paper Bristol: Bristol University <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cmm/publications/fsm.pdf>

It was noted that FSM rates may be volatile because pupils with FSM are a small section of the population, and this population may be sensitive to policy and economic changes. In particular, the number of pupils with FSM may rise temporarily during an economic downturn, which may affect progression rates.

New measure on access to the most selective universities

Many respondents accepted that access to the most selective institutions is important in securing access to the top professions. However, there were some concerns about the limitations of this measure.

The definition of the 'most selective third' of institutions will change every year. The way these institutions has been defined does not necessarily capture the "value added" by lower tariff institutions. Some lower average tariff institutions may have exceptionally competitive courses with demanding entry requirements. A focus on high achieving A level (or equivalent) students introduces a subjective assessment of the relative status of different qualifications. Equally, there is no adjustment for those who pursue different qualifications i.e. Level 3 options (i.e. BTEC National Diploma) or subjects. Another issue is that there may be changes to the UCAS tariff score that could impact on how institutions are identified in terms of selectivity.

There were comments on disaggregating the rather broad state school definition by school type and admissions policy. In addition, the measure only looks at schools/colleges which offer post-16 education (population denominator will be 17 year olds). A large number of state schools, particularly those in disadvantaged areas are 11 to 16 schools and so these schools' performance in progressing young people to post 16 education is overlooked.

Changes following the consultation

After considering the responses received from users, the scope of this publication was altered in the following ways:

- Greater clarity that the FSM and school type/selective university measures are intended to contribute to the understanding of widening participation issues as part of a range of measures, which have different strengths and limitations.
- Detailed explanation of measures, including their limitations
- A table available in Excel format with time series of the FSM measure by local authority.

Longer term BIS will consider the consultation responses in improving widening participation statistics. In particular we will review issues related to school and college type; and will review the use of the FSM measure in discussion with the Department For Education, in the light of possible future changes.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(11)31

Benefits generated by the Quality Improvement Fund 2010/11

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on the outcomes of successful bids submitted to the Quality Improvement Fund (QIF) during 2010/11.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics are invited to:
 - i. note the benefits that have resulted from the projects funded by QIF, both to those commissioning the project and the wider Government Statistical Service (GSS). Details of the funded projects in 2010/11 are included in **Annex A**. The final reports for these projects have been published on the GSS intranet;
 - ii. note that one of the projects did not finish during 2010/11. The project start was delayed due to the change in Government and the new ministers deciding whether to proceed with the appeal against the decision by the Information Tribunal. This project has now been completed but the publication of the final report has been delayed;
 - iii. note that two projects were unable to realise their expected outputs due to resource limitations within the Methodology Advisory Service (MAS). This resulted in some of the funding allocated to them being returned, and used to fund another project which was previously unsuccessful; and
 - iv. consider the revised funding criteria (approved by the GSS Statistical Policy and Standards Committee in September 2011) included in **Annex B** and agree on which of the Authority's objectives (in **Annex C**) should be included as criteria.

Discussion

3. Since 2009 the UK Statistics Authority has made provision for a budget of £250,000 per annum to support GSS quality improvements. The Quality Centre within the ONS Methodology Directorate manages the fund on behalf of the Authority and decisions on the allocation of funding are made by the GSS Statistical Policy and Standards Committee (SPSC), chaired by the Director of Methodology within ONS. Previously agreed funding criteria are at **Annex D**.

2010/11 Funding

4. During 2010/11 two bidding rounds were conducted resulting in a total of 16 successful bids. This includes a bid which was granted funding late in the process due to funds from other bids being returned.
5. Of the 16 projects, 14 ran within budget. The work on the other two bids was stopped and some of the funds returned as the ONS Methodology Advisory Service (MAS) was unable to conduct some of the required work within the required timeframe. This money was returned to the fund and reallocated to another project which scored highly, but was initially unsuccessful.
6. All but one of the projects successful in obtaining QIF funding was in preparation for, or as a result of, findings from National Statistics assessments. The other project related to work that tackled generic GSS issues, and all work undertaken had wide applicability across the GSS. The majority of the money allocated was used to buy in methodology expertise from MAS and associated travel and subsistence expenditure.

7. In addition to the two stopped projects, only one project did not complete by the end of the 2010/11 financial year. This project was delayed due to the change of Government. Once the go ahead was given by the new ministers there was a lack of specialist resource available within MAS, which resulted in a further delay. This has severely delayed the completion of the final reports.
8. The benefits of the 2010/11 QIF projects include improved methodology for a range of statistics including:
 - i. the Northern Ireland Passenger Survey;
 - ii. waiting times within Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland;
 - iii. Ministry of Justice court statistics;
 - iv. the House Price Index; and
 - v. the National Audit Social Care User Experience Survey.
9. Other benefits include:
 - i. updating mortality adjustments to use in HM Revenue and Customs personal wealth statistics;
 - ii. developing micro level disclosure control for home care administrative and micro data; and
 - iii. introducing 'Quality Assessments' and 'Quality Summary Statements' for defence statistics.
10. The outcomes of these projects have been disseminated via the GSS intranet (StatNet) and individual project dissemination activities have included presentations at various conferences and to universities and information trusts etc. Outcomes have also been shared on departments' own websites and knowledge sharing has been undertaken widely within departments and across the GSS.
11. Some of the challenges experienced by projects included:
 - i. the complexity of the work with no clear precedents;
 - ii. resource issues within departments and MAS; and
 - iii. delay to a contract being awarded resulting in project work not being able to commence.

2011/12 Funding

12. Twelve projects are currently ongoing. The outcome of these projects will be reported in due course.

2012/13 Funding

13. Early confirmation of the availability of Quality Improvement Funding for the 2012/13 period will enable early advertising of the fund and allocation of the money to successful bids before the beginning of the 2012/13 period. This will enable successful departments to better plan their resources and avoid some of the challenges faced by bidders in previous years.

Jill Pobjoy, Quality Centre; Methodology Directorate, October, 2012

List of Annexes

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| Annex B | Proposed new criteria for Quality Improvement Fund bids |
| Annex C | High level aims and objectives of the UK Statistics Authority |
| Annex D | Previous criteria for Quality Improvement Fund bids |

Annex A Tables illustrating key benefits of QIF projects 2010/11**Projects successful in the Quality Improvement Fund process during 2010/11**

More information and links to individual project reports are available to members of the GSS via the GSS intranet pages (StatNet).

Bid and Bidding Dept	Bid Amount	Outcomes Achieved	Process for dissemination
1. Northern Ireland Passenger Survey – statistical improvements (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)/ Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry Northern Ireland (DETINI))	£18,000	Fully	Report published on StatNet. NISRA website and formal presentations.
2. Proposal to review information on waiting times within Health and Social Care Trusts in NI (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Northern Ireland (DHSSPS))	£20,000	Fully	Report published on StatNet. Presented to Hospital Liaison group and Heads of Information Trusts.
3. Applying and assessing initial proposals for recommending preferred choices for adjusting current and future Family Resources Survey (FRS) datasets on an ongoing basis (Department for Work and Pensions (DWP))	£24,960	Partly. Development work will continue subject to funding from within DWP	Report published on StatNet. Once outcomes fully achieved, plan to present to Essex University, London School of Economics, and other Universities
4. Reconciling Ministry of Justice (MoJ) court statistics (as published in “Judicial and Court Statistics” with Office for Criminal Justice Reform prosecution statistics (as published in “Criminal Statistics”) (MoJ)	£20,800	Fully	Report published on StatNet
5. Review methodology for National Audit Social Care User Experience Survey (NHS Information Centre (NHS IC))	£8000	Fully	Report published on StatNet Presented to Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) colleagues
6. Temperature correction of energy statistics (Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC))	£7,500	Met	Report published on StatNet Mention at UN and other presentations planned

Bid and Bidding Dept	Bid Amount	Outcomes Achieved	Process for dissemination
7. Fuel Poverty - additional quality indicators/estimates (DECC)	£35,000	Met	Report published on StatNet Presented to The Fuel Poverty Methodology Group (with producers of English Housing Survey (DCLG) and the Family Resources Survey (DWP))
8. Mortality adjustment for Personal Wealth (HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC))	Original bid for £10,675; but £2,000 funded by QIF	Fully	Report published on StatNet Published on HMRC website
9. Assessing and improving measurement of House Price Index (DCLG)	£17,000	Met	Report published on StatNet National Statistician to feed into the National Statistician's review of house price statistics and DCLG website
10. Implementation of centralised sampling: resourcing external expertise (Scottish Government (SG))	£7,500	Fully	Report published on StatNet Presented to SG statisticians via seminars
11. Micro level data disclosure control for home care administrative data (SG)	£16,756	Met but further work will be needed in the future	Report published on Staten Seminars to researchers and Local Authority analytical colleagues
12. Statistical Disclosure control for micro data (National Records Scotland (NRS))	£12,000	Met	Report published on Staten Scottish Government

Projects failed to achieve expected outcomes due to resource issues/delay in contracts

Bid and Bidding Dept	Bid Amount	Reasons
13. Technical advice on the design and build of a new integrated survey processing system including developing methodologies for automated and selective editing and imputation for the new systems (DETINI)	£3,899 (original bid for £24,000)	The contract was only awarded in April 2011 (due to a delay in confirmation of the financing).
14. Publishing the NI Index of Services and Index of Production results including back series data, on SIC 07 basis (DETINI)	£2,571 (original bid for £6,500)	Only part of the work could be completed due to resource issues within the Methodology Advisory Service. Under spend returned to QIF central pot. A re-submitted QIF bid for this project has been approved and it will be conducted in 2011/12.

Project not completed by 31 March 2011 due to several issues

Bid and Bidding Dept	Bid Amount	Reasons
15. Update disclosure control policy for abortion statistics (Department of Health (DH))	£21,654	There was a delay starting work on the project until the new Ministers confirmed they wanted to continue with the appeal against the decision by the Information Tribunal ordering the release of statistics on abortions relating to foetal abnormalities. Once we had that decision, there was some further delay due to MAS resourcing. We are awaiting the final report from DH which will be published as soon as it is available.

Additional project granted funding due to return of previously allocated funds.

Bid and Bidding Dept	Bid Amount	Outcomes Achieved	Dissemination
16. Introducing Quality Assessments and Quality Summary statements to Defence Statistics (Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA))	£25,000	Fully	Report published on StatNet. Presentation at GSS Methodology conference in July 2011. Information publicised via DASA Website

Annex B Proposed new criteria for Quality Improvement Fund bids

Criteria for funding

The type of projects for which QIF funding is most likely to be approved:

- relates to UK Statistics Authority priorities for 2012/13;
- addresses Code compliance issues highlighted in UK Statistics Authority assessment reports;
- has wide applicability across GSS, ensuring knowledge sharing and implementation across other Departments;
- requires expertise to be bought in from an external source.

Bids must describe:

- how the work will benefit the GSS more widely;
- how benefits can be shared across the GSS; and
- how the investment will lead to better decisions and actions.

If training related, bids must identify how the training will fill a necessary skills gap and address issues already highlighted as key priorities. The training must also fit with GSS HR committee priorities.

Funding will not be awarded for work that is considered to be 'business as usual', or for the back-filling of posts, which is viewed as a departmental subsidy. The minimum threshold for bids is £5,000 and all bids should be for one-off projects with a clear end date.

Annex C High level aims and objectives of the UK Statistics Authority (extract taken from the Authority Annual Report 2010/11)

The Authority's statutory task of 'promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good' is set in broad terms. The role of the Authority is to ensure that official statistics are produced and used for the public good, that is, not necessarily for the benefit of government alone.

The Authority has developed a set of high level aims and objectives to reflect the legislation and to guide its actions.

The UK Statistics Authority aims to ensure that:

- the right range of statistics are produced;
- high and consistent professional standards are maintained; and
- official statistics are well explained, including strengths and weaknesses – leading to better decision-making in the public interest.

By so doing, the Authority aims to enhance trust in the statistical system, in terms of quality, political independence and impartiality.

In order to achieve these aims the Authority's objectives, or tasks, are to:

- support the National Statistician in improving statistical planning (decisions on what statistics will be produced and in what form) taking systematic account of user needs;
- use its scrutiny powers to ensure high and consistent professional standards across all producers of official statistics;
- work with the statistical service to help improve communication of statistics and related advice to users; and
- build confidence in the statistical service, and in the Authority, among those people who use official statistics.

The UK Statistics Authority has four principal mechanisms by which to achieve its objectives:

- systematically assessing compliance of official statistics with the Code of Practice, and investigating and reporting independently on major issues;
- direct responsibility for the governance of ONS;
- working with the statistical service to design and implement improved procedures where the need for this is identified; and
- reporting to Parliament and advising Government about any aspects of the statistical service, or the use of official statistics, about which the Authority has concerns.

These mechanisms relate to three different but overlapping spheres of the official statistics system: the Authority's scrutiny function, the Office for National Statistics, and, the wider Government Statistical Service (GSS). This structure helps shape, in turn, the structure of the report.

Annex D Previous criteria for Quality Improvement Fund bids

Introduction

In discussions leading up to the setting up of the UK Statistics Authority, it was recognised that an assessment function should lead to improvements in statistical quality, but that improvement would incur costs. The Quality Improvement Fund (QIF) is primarily designed to help the GSS (including NISRA).

Please note that the type of project for which QIF funding is most likely to be approved is:

- to tackle strategic cross GSS developments
- to support the implementation of recommendations from a designation assessment
- to assist with preparations prior to an assessment to ensure Code compliance
- for work that requires expertise to be bought in from an external source.

Funding will not be awarded for work that is considered to be 'business as usual', or for the temporary promotion of staff (with the back-filling of posts), which is viewed as a departmental subsidy. The minimum threshold for bids is £5,000 and all bids should be for one-off projects with a clear end date.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(COS)(11)32

***Draft Monitoring Brief:
Maximising the Value of Administrative Data for Statistical Purposes***

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-briefs/index.html>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(11)33

An update on the Draft Strategy for the GSS

Purpose

1. This paper reports on progress with the development of a strategy for the Government Statistical Service (GSS). It presents the latest draft strategy which outlines the vision and desired outcomes for the GSS, suggested actions for getting there and measures of success.

Recommendation

2. The Committee is invited to:
 - i. note progress with the development of a strategy for the GSS, which now focuses on the GSS as a community; and
 - ii. consider and discuss progress with the strategy and highlight any outcomes, actions or measures of success that may be missing.

Discussion

3. At the 6 April Committee for Official Statistics (COS) meeting, Committee members were provided with the first draft strategy for the GSS. This set out the key drivers, strategic choices and proposed 2020 vision for the GSS. At this meeting it was suggested that the input of members of the GSS be sought over three of the strategic choices outlined in the draft strategy.
4. Since April:
 - i. workshops have been held with around 150 GSS members across the UK with high levels of interest and engagement;
 - ii. the chairs of the GSS governance committees have been engaged over the strategic outcomes relevant to their committee. An in depth discussion was held with the Statistical Policy and Standards Committee over how the GSS can maximise quality and standards;
 - iii. members of the analytical professions in government have input their views on how the GSS can 'be more widely recognised and trusted as part of the debate and decision making process' and how we can 'access relevant knowledge and expertise wherever it lies';
 - iv. the input of Heads of Profession has been sought over how the GSS can 'ensure relevance' and 'deliver efficiency and impact throughout the statistical process'; and
 - v. meetings have been held with the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) and Economic and Social Research Council to seek their views on the future direction of the GSS.
5. Based on these discussions a second draft of the strategy has been developed which sets the goal, vision and outcomes expected of the GSS, alongside key high level actions and measures of success. This version of the strategy places the GSS in the context of its statutory duties, its responsibilities to users and the changes needed to adapt to the changing strategic environment over the period to 2020.
6. The focus on the GSS as a community comes from workshops in particular. These workshops highlighted clear confusion around what the GSS actually is, its unique positioning and the benefits and responsibilities of membership – both for government statisticians and the GSS members in other professional groups (e.g. other analysts, operational delivery, IT, communication and so on). There is significant variation and differences in understanding between departments and devolved administrations.

7. Given the huge importance of the GSS community for:
 - i. coordinated communication and engagement with users and stakeholders;
 - ii. efficient and joined up business delivery – for example in the areas of data collection, data linking, product development;
 - iii. collaborative working with other experts within and outside of government, e.g. other analytical professions, policy makers, academics and industry;
 - iv. sharing good practice, knowledge and expertise; and
 - v. coordinated people development and career management;

it is believed that there is significant merit in focusing our 2020 strategy around the GSS as a community.

Next steps

8. GSS governance committees, external organisations and the Heads of Profession Steering Group will be consulted over the latest version of the draft strategy and the re-focusing toward the GSS as a community.
9. There will be further work on the GSS values and also further work to ensure the coherence of other GSS strategies such as the GSS People Strategy and International Strategy. Work will also take place to develop an implementation plan with more detail over the expectation, responsibilities and timing of proposed actions.
10. The draft strategy will be discussed at the December Heads of Profession meeting with a view to gaining ratification (alongside its implementation plan) in early in 2012.

Jason Bradbury and Emily Carless, National Statistician's Office, November 2011

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(11)34

Registration of Deaths

Purpose

1. This paper summarises an issue related to the statistical implications of the late registration of deaths reported to coroners.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics are invited to:
 - i. note the issues raised by Professor Sheila Bird;
 - ii. note the response provided by the Head of Assessment; and
 - iii. consider whether further action should be taken to support the progression of a resolution.

Discussion

3. In England and Wales, almost half of all deaths are referred to coroners. These deaths are not registered by the Registrar General's office (within the Identity and Passport Service of the Home Office) until the proceedings are completed, usually many months later. No death can be registered without a cause of death. In Scotland, however, there is a legal requirement for all deaths to be registered within eight days of their ascertainment.
4. Users are concerned about the statistical implications of this delay. Professor Sheila Bird has argued in published articles, at conferences, and to the Statistics Authority directly, that while it is reasonable for it to take time to establish the cause of death in each case, it is not necessary to wait so long for the simple fact and date of death to be recorded.
5. Professor Bird argues that the arrangements for recording deaths should be changed. Unless deaths are recorded when they happen, with cause of death shown as 'yet to be determined' if necessary, the real time monitoring of deaths from future epidemics will be seriously impeded. Some kinds of research are already impeded, for example on deaths from drug misuse (e.g. following changes in the treatment regime or the appearance of new designer drugs), or other research where changes in patterns of deaths need to be spotted quickly.
6. Further background to the issue is provided in the article, *Dead or Alive? How the coronial system causes delay*, at **Annex A**.
7. Professor Bird has written twice to the Chief Medical Officer. We are not aware of a response. A Department of Health (DH) led group looking at flu surveillance, of which Professor Bird is a member, has adopted the following recommendation, which we understand the Chief Medical Officer has accepted:

"Government should consider amending legislation to ensure that all deaths that are subject to an inquest are registered for statistical purposes while awaiting the verdict."
8. The matter was also raised in written evidence by the Royal Statistical Society to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee.
9. Professor Bird has written to the Head of Assessment, requesting that the Statistics Authority take the matter up formally as a cross-departmental issue. The Head of Assessment has taken informal advice from officials in DH, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Home Office, and has discussed the issue with Bernard Silverman, the Home

SA(COS)(11)34 - Registration of Deaths

Office's Chief Scientific Adviser.

10. While there is broad agreement that the current system could be improved, there may be practical difficulties in achieving this for the following reasons.
 - i. Coordination across various departments would be required. DH, ONS, MOJ, Home Office and General Register Office all have various roles in the registration of deaths or production of statistics, yet no department currently regards a change to the death registration process as a priority.
 - ii. Our understanding is that legislative change would be required. But we note that there is a provision for coroners to issue an 'interim certificate as to fact of death' to assist in the administration of the deceased's estate.
 - iii. Due to the judicial independence of coroners, any change to verdict policy would need to be supported by the Head Coroner rather than MOJ.
 - iv. These statistics are used to map trends over very long periods and any change in the death registration system could have unintended consequences of various kinds.
11. With these points in mind, the Head of Assessment has offered cautious support to Professor Bird, to the effect that "subject to consideration of costs and the practicality of legislative change, the Statistics Authority supports the case for amending the system of death registration such that all deaths are registered when, or shortly after, they occur".

Joe Cuddeford, Secretariat, November 2011

List of Annexes

Annex A Article from Straight Statistics - *Dead or Alive? How the coronial system causes delay*

Annex A Article from Straight Statistics - *Dead or Alive? How the coronial system causes delay*

To view this document go to:

<http://www.straightstatistics.org/article/dead-or-alive-how-coronial-system-causes-delUm>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(11)35

***Activities of the Government Statistical Service –
September 2011 to October 2011***

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Committee for Official Statistics with an update of Government Statistical Service (GSS) activities from September to October 2011.

Recommendations

2. The Committee is invited to note the summary of GSS activities for this period.

Discussion

3. Following consideration by the Committee at its May 2010 meeting [SA(COS)(10)13] it was agreed that regular updates would be provided to all future meetings. Throughout this recent period the GSS has been involved in the activities set out below.

Transparency Agenda

Open Data Consultation

4. On 4 August 2011, the Cabinet Office launched two consultations: "Making Open Data Real" which seeks views on the overall transparency agenda and the strategy towards delivering it, and "A Consultation on Data Policy for a Public Data Corporation" which seeks views about the role of a proposed Public Data Corporation and the charging and licensing regimes that should apply to those seeking to access and use public data generally. GSS Heads of Profession (HoPs) have contributed their views and a consolidated GSS response (including on behalf of ONS) has been submitted. There is general agreement that the GSS can support the proposals set out in the consultation documents.

GSS Co-ordination

5. The GSS has prepared a draft Statement of Intent that will support the GSS. The main concerns raised by GSS HoPs are in relation to Privacy Impact Assessments and staff training. It is clear that due to the fast pace of technology good training and skills are key to enable the GSS to respond effectively.

Open Data Event

6. The National Statistician's Office (NSO), in collaboration with the Royal Statistical Society (RSS), held a successful "Open Data" event on 30 September 2011 at the RSS. The keynote speech was given by Jason Bradbury, NSO, with other colleagues involved in the day to facilitate roundtable discussions.

Capability

Improving Influence

7. Improving influence has been identified as a priority for GSS people development. It is vital that the Government Statistician Group (GSG), the body of professional statisticians within government, along with the wider GSS, are equipped with the right skills, experience and confidence to ensure that statistical thinking has an appropriate influence on decision makers. A GSS taskforce has been set up to consider what is meant by

“improving influence”, what success in improving statistical influence means in terms of people development and what action is needed to meet these requirements.

Ministry of Justice – Statistical Bulletin on Sentencing of Public Disorder Offenders

8. Following the public disorder events in August 2011, the Ministry of Justice statisticians, by responding to the demand for statistics on the sentencing of offenders, have set a good example of government statisticians focusing on what the outside world wants to know. Positive feedback has been received from the media on the timeliness and presentation of these statistics. A summary of the work will be produced to share with the GSS.

Senior Specialist Development Scheme Project

9. Sir Gus O'Donnell has asked the National Statistician to review the lack of success of senior specialists' participation in the High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) with a view to reversing that trend so as to increase their number at Director General and above level posts within government. The purpose of the HPDS is to identify and develop staff at Director level and exceptional candidates at Deputy Director level. HPDS aims to maximise the performance of those selected by providing active development and career support over a three year period to give them the opportunity of becoming outstanding leaders.
10. One possible outcome of the review may be the creation of a feeder scheme (a working title for which is Senior Specialists' Development Scheme) for SCS1 (Deputy Director) talent whose participants will have the potential to join the HPDS in due course. There is a wide range of specialist professions across government, 22 at the last count, including statisticians who form part of the analytical community.
11. The review will report by the end of 2011. It will align with the new Civil Service Talent Management Strategy and with work underway on civil service reform where 'parity of esteem' across the professions is a key driver. Terms of reference for the review are attached at Annex A.

Continuing Professional Development

12. A review of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is being carried out by the GSS People Committee. It will look at how CPD is managed within the GSS and whether what is currently available to professional government statisticians is still fit for purpose. This will include a re-examination of the Professional Competency Framework.

2012 Fast Stream Scheme

13. Applications for round one of the 2012 Fast Stream scheme are around 18 per cent up on last year. This year Fast Stream applicants are able to apply for the Government Operational Research Service (GORS) which has joined the analytical Fast Stream group of professions for the first time. This may result in a loss of potential applicants to GORS.

Recruitment of Statistical Officers

14. Evidence is being sought on the need to lift the current recruitment ban on Statistical Officers.

Spending Review 2010

Reporting on changes to statistical outputs

15. HoPs continue to be involved in responding to the challenges of the Spending Review 2010. They have been keeping the National Statistician informed as the impact of SR10 starts to affect the production of statistics, so that she, together with the Authority, can monitor the effects on official and national statistics.

GSS Governance

Review of GSS Governance

16. The NSO is currently reviewing the GSS governance structure in conjunction with HoPs. The current governance and Committee arrangements were ratified in November 2009, at which point there was a commitment to review after two years. Draft proposals will be considered by the Heads of Profession Steering Group in early November with a view to presenting any changes to HoPs at their meeting on 6 December 2011 for ratification.

Raising Devolution Awareness Taskforce

17. Following discussion at the Inter Administration Committee (IAC) in June 2011 a taskforce has been convened to look at ways of raising devolution awareness across the GSS. The aim of the taskforce is to establish what existing training is in place, identify gaps in learning and develop proposals for a training model to be rolled out across the GSS. The taskforce will present their proposals in February 2012.

Crime Statistics Advisory Committee

18. One of the recommendations from the National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics for England and Wales was to establish an independent Advisory Committee. The aim of the Committee would be to ensure that crime statistics are clearly presented, comprehensive, transparent and trustworthy. The Committee would advise the Home Secretary on any changes to the data requirements from the police needed for crime statistics, and the ONS on changes to coverage, definitions or methodology and on the handling of any such changes.
19. The NSO will provide secretariat support for the Committee. Adverts for a non-executive chair and non-executive members were placed in online media in October 2011, with a view to appointments being made in early November 2011.

International

20. Revisions to The European System of Accounts (ESA) continue to be the main focus of the (EU) Council Working Party on Statistics. Discussions are expected to continue for some months yet. Discussions are also continuing on a proposed EU regulation on people's feelings of safety from crime. There is growing concern among EU member states that the regulation is not cost-effective, its results will not be comparable and will have little policy relevance. The UK continues to argue against it.
21. The annual meeting of the Directors General of EU National Statistical Institutes (DGINs) took place in Wiesbaden, Germany in September. Strategic discussions focussed on the future of the European Statistical System (ESS), with a particular focus on integrating social and economic statistics in light of the well-being/measuring social progress agenda and how to implement the Eurostat Vision. The latter implies greater cross-ESS integration of production systems and efficient international division of labour. Member states, including the UK, were generally supportive of a drive towards greater efficiency but with calls for more clarity on financing the necessary investments, greater involvement of users, and identification of negative priorities. This was tempered with concern for ensuring that any future system would allow enough flexibility for national uses to be effectively catered for.
22. A new GSS International Strategy is being drafted for discussion at GSS HoPs meeting in December. It will focus on efficiency, maximising our influence on the European Statistical System (ESS), better cross-GSS coordination, pro-active rather reactive activities, and better defining our priorities for statistical capacity building and our own learning goals for international activity. The International Strategy forms part of the overarching GSS strategy.

GSS Overarching Strategy

23. The last of a series of GSS workshops run to discuss the development of the strategy were held in September 2011 and a second draft of the strategy has been produced. A separate paper providing an update on progress along with a draft of the updated strategy is on the agenda for this meeting [SA(COS)(11)33]

National Statistician's Office, November 2011

List of Annexes

Annex A Terms of Reference - Project to assess need for Senior Specialists' Development Scheme

Annex A

Terms of Reference

**Project to assess need for
Senior Specialists' Development Scheme**

Aim:

In support of the new Civil Service Executive Talent Management Strategy develop an approach(es) that will increase successful participation of senior specialists in schemes such as the High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) with a view to increasing the number of specialists at DG and above level posts in government.

Specifically to:

- Gather the evidence of past interest and success in the HPDS amongst specialists across government
- Evaluate whether this evidence demonstrates a lack of success amongst specialist professions in participation in the HPDS
- Identify the means and opportunities for specialists at SCS2 (Director level) to broaden their experience and skills to improve the chance of acceptance to the current High Potential Development Scheme
- Consider the need for a feeder scheme for talented SCS1 (Deputy Director level) government specialists in potential readiness for High Potential Development Scheme application.

The Project will:

- Review the metrics available for specialists' interest in and placement on the current High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS).
- Consult across specialist professions to develop proposals for improving the means and opportunities for Director level specialists and for a feeder scheme to the current HPDS for specialists at SCS1.
- Present initial recommendations to the Civil Service Senior Leadership Committee
- Produce a report and recommendations to the Head of the Home Civil Service.

Timescale:

The Project will report to the Head of the Home Civil Service by December 2011.

Outline Plan:

High level task

Agree TOR

Review metrics of specialists expressing interest in/attaining HPDS places

Consult specialist Heads of Profession

Document views and develop draft proposals

Present to CS Senior Leadership Committee

Report to Head of Home Civil Service

Target date

Mid September 2011

Early October 2011

Mid November 2011

End November 2011

December 2011

December 2011