

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Committee for Official Statistics

Minutes

Tuesday 5 October 2010

Present

Members

Professor Sir Roger Jowell (Chair)
Mr Richard Alldritt
Professor Angela Dale
Ms Moira Gibb
Professor David Hand
Mr Duncan MacNiven
Ms Jil Matheson
Professor David Rhind

Other Attendees

Mr Richard Laux
Ms Gill Eastabrook (for items 2 and 3)
Mr Jason Bradbury (for items 4 and 5)
Mr Graham Jenkinson (for item 6)

Secretariat

Mr Rob Bumpstead
Mr Joe Cuddeford

Apologies

Dr Colette Bowe
Sir Michael Scholar

Declarations of Interest

None

1 Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 13 July 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

2 Official Statistics Theme Update: Health and Social Care [SA(COS)(10)19]

2.1 Ms Eastabrook, statistical Head of Profession at the Department for Health and Chair of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Health and Social Care Theme Group presented a paper which set out the plans and priorities of this theme.

2.2 The theme was the last of the new theme groups to be set up. Its purpose was to ensure appropriate user engagement, produce an annual statement of strategic priorities, and oversee theme cross-cutting issues for health and social care statistics. The theme group had identified four emerging issues for health statistics, (i) a need for more information on activity outside the hospital setting, (ii) a need for information on ultimate outcomes for health and care interventions, (iii) a need for better information on both processes and outcomes in social care, and (iv) a tension between seeking UK-wide comparability and user preferences for diverse systems.

2.3 The disparity between the range of statistics available for health compared with social care was noted. There was less information available for social care, and what was available tended to focus on processes rather than outcomes. There was a user demand for more statistics, but the challenge was to prioritise.

3 Measurement of Childhood Obesity in the UK [SA(COS)(10)20]

3.1 Ms Eastabrook introduced a paper on issues relating to the measurement of childhood obesity in the four UK countries. The GSS Health and Social Care Theme Group had discussed this issue at its last meeting.

3.2 There were no obvious reasons for differences in childhood obesity measurement between the four countries, however the committee heard that there was limited interest from users in intercountry and international comparison. There was potential for all countries to report against the same 'growth curves' although this might cause confusion so would need careful handling.

3.3 The following points were made in the discussion.

- i. There may be other sources of information available that could provide comparable estimates, such as birth cohort studies.
- ii. User needs must be identified before new work can be justified. However, the absence of a strong user voice did not mean there was no user need. If English data was analysed by region, it seemed self-evident that there would be an interest in comparison by country. Health may be a devolved policy area, but there are other government actions that affect health.
- iii. If the raw data is available for others to analyse, it could be made comparable by a third party, for example academics.

4 Draft Monitoring Brief: Housing Market Statistics [SA(COS)(10)21]

4.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a draft Monitoring Brief on housing market Statistics.

4.2 The Committee discussed issues of timing and handling, given the National Statistician's current review of the same area. The independence of the Monitoring Brief should be preserved, but confusion should be avoided. It was valuable to have two independent evaluations, but the question was where to go from here.

4.3 It was agreed that the Monitoring Brief should be updated in light of the outcomes from

the National Statistician's review, and considered at a future date.

5 Progress with the National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics [SA(COS)(10)22]

5.1 Mr Bradbury presented an update on the National Statistician's review of housing market statistics. The Committee heard that an online survey was conducted during August, which received 214 responses. Lessons had been learnt about the media handling of this. Responses would form the basis of a report with recommendations for improving official statistics on the housing market.

5.2 The Committee noted that a single indicator is not always desirable; if there were different ways of looking at something, then different measures can be informative. The online 'survey' should be referred to as a consultation rather than a survey; 214 respondents did not necessarily mean the sample was representative.

5.3 It was agreed that the Report of phase 1 of the review would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on 10 December.

6 Benefits generated by the Quality Improvement Fund in 2009/10 [SA(COS)(10)23]

6.1 Mr Jenkinson reported on the benefits gained from the allocation of Quality Improvement Fund (QIF) money to 17 GSS projects during the 2009/10 financial year.

6.2 The Committee agreed that there should be a requirement to publish the results of each project and to promote the findings at, for example, relevant conferences. The money should not be restricted to small projects if larger projects were deemed to be beneficial.

6.3 It was suggested that the fund might be best managed from the National Statistician's Office. It was agreed that wherever the funds are held, the outcomes of QIF should be reported through the Committee for Official Statistics.

7 Draft Monitoring Brief: The Use Made of Official Statistics [SA(COS)(10)24]

7.1 Mr Laux presented a draft Monitoring Brief on the use made of official statistics. The Brief described why it is important to document the use of statistics, and suggested a framework of different types of use.

7.2 The Committee agreed that the Brief would be helpful for producers in explaining what the Authority means by 'fuller documentation of usage'. It was agreed that it should be published on the Authority website.

7.3 It was suggested that the National Statistician could challenge the GSS to use the Brief to produce user statements for their statistics.

8 Any Other Business

8.1 It was agreed that a further Report on the e-Dissemination Strategy for Official Statistics would be considered at the next meeting.

8.2 There was no other business. The Committee would meet next on Friday 10 December at 2pm in London.

Committee for Official Statistics

Agenda

Tuesday, 5 October, 2010

Board Room, Statistics House, London, 10:30 - 13:00

Chair: Professor Sir Roger Jowell
Apologies: Dr Colette Bowe, Sir Michael Scholar

1	Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising	Meeting of 130710
2	Official Statistics Theme Update: Health and Social Care	SA(COS)(10)19 Ms Gill Eastabrook
3	Measurement of Childhood Obesity in the UK	SA(COS)(10)20 Ms Gill Eastabrook
4	Draft Monitoring Brief: Housing Market Statistics	SA(COS)(10)21 Mr Richard Alldritt
5	Progress with the National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics	SA(COS)(10)22 Mr Jason Bradbury
6	Benefits generated by the Quality Improvement Fund in 2009/10	SA(COS)(10)23 Mr Graham Jenkinson
7	Draft Monitoring Brief: The Use Made of Official Statistics	SA(COS)(10)24 Mr Richard Laux
8	Any other business	

Next Meeting: Friday 10 December, 2010
Statistics House, London, 14:00 - 17:00

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(10)19

Official Statistics Theme Update: Health and Social Care

Purpose

1. This paper presents the plans and priorities of the Official Statistics Health and Social Care Theme.

Recommendations

2. The Committee is invited to note the current activities, progress and plans of the theme.

Discussion

3. The Official Statistics Health and Care Theme was one of the last to be set up. In January 2010 the National Statistician appointed the Theme Leader (Department for Health Statistics Head of Profession, Gill Eastabrook). Official statistics on health and care are produced by a wide range of organisations across the UK. After consultation with the three Chief Statisticians of Devolved Administrations the Theme Leader set up a Steering Group to drive the theme's work forward. This includes members from relevant Departments in all four countries, ONS, and arm's length bodies working outside traditional Government Statistical Service (GSS) structures.
4. The Steering Group's purpose is to give strategic support to the Health and Social Care Theme Leader in fulfilling her responsibilities and to provide a forum for discussion of high-level issues between the relevant producer organisations across the UK. In particular, to:
 - ensure that appropriate user engagement arrangements are in place across the UK health and social care statistical system;
 - produce an annual statement of strategic priorities and direction for health and social care statistics; and
 - oversee arrangements for addressing theme cross-cutting issues including by setting up working groups and time-limited task forces.
5. At its first meeting in June 2010 the Steering Group confirmed the initial priorities for the theme. These are:
 - to consider and where necessary improve arrangements for engagement with the users of health and social care statistics; and
 - to articulate a 'first cut' statement of strategic priorities for health and care statistics which could then be tested out and provide a basis for engagement with users about such priorities.
6. The Steering Group is not itself the mechanism via which producers of official statistics should normally engage with their users. That would be inefficient and would also detract from the direct engagement between users and producers that must be the aim. We need to ensure that appropriate mechanisms exist by which individual producers can engage effectively. We will also use those mechanisms ourselves to inform and test out our assessment of the strategic priorities for the health and social care official statistics system (see paragraph 9 below).
7. On the whole producers already have good channels for engagement with users of their data in government and (to a slightly lesser extent) users in the wider health and care system. The Health Statistics User Group (HSUG) also provides a mechanism for engagement with other specialist users, although as a small London-based group run by

SA(COS)(10)19: Health and Social Care Theme Group Update

volunteers it cannot be expected to do everything. In all these areas there is a need for continued effort and no room for complacency but we see the key gaps as the following.

- Establishing effective dialogue with non-specialist users including 'ordinary people' as patients, service users, carers and citizens.
 - Engaging with users about the overall priorities for the theme outputs. Whether priorities among a range of desirable improvements or those that most need to be protected at times of cuts.
8. We are following up a number of ideas for improving dialogue with non-specialist users, mainly via potential 'infomediaries'. We are also discussing a range of issues with the Chair of HSUG. These include:
- the scope for their website to provide a vehicle for at least initial contact with some more sophisticated non-specialist users; and
 - how best to ensure that (i) engagement with users at their initiative, (ii) engagement with users as producers develop proposals, and (iii) formal consultation on worked-up proposals, can best complement each other in health and care.
9. Our aim is to articulate a 'first cut' of strategic priorities for testing out more widely in the Autumn. This will be based largely on the collective experience of Steering Group members as producers and users of health and care statistics. It is not our intention that this should be definitive, rather an informed basis for discussion. We have also used some readily available sources: our secretariat has pulled common messages out of UK Statistics Authority Assessments of theme outputs and some Steering Group members have undertaken 'Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)' sessions with their teams.
10. Emerging issues include the following.
- i. Many of the best established statistical sources focus on what happens to in-patients in hospital. We see a need for more information on the whole patient pathway including activity outside the hospital setting.
 - ii. Users show increasing interest in ultimate outcomes from health and care interventions. There is a tension between this and the continuing drive to make better use of data from administrative and clinical systems in the interest of efficiency.
 - iii. Need for better information on both processes and outcomes in social care.
 - iv. A tension exists in a devolved system between the logic of seeking UK-wide compatibility and the preferences of users in individual countries to retain diverse systems. These may reflect genuine differences of priorities or of service delivery or simply that users value the continuity of time series.
11. More remains to be done on our key priorities of developing user engagement, articulating and testing out strategic priorities and also to find ways to ensure our mechanisms for influencing the priorities of producers of health and care statistics across the UK are robust to the tighter financial climate.
12. These will continue to be our focus but other areas to consider as time allows include the following.
- Clarifying our relationship with topic-focused UK-wide producer groups. Currently links rely mainly on personal links between the chairs.
 - Developing mechanisms for ensuring effective links with other arms length bodies producing official statistics. This is on hold pending changes which are likely to reduce the number of such bodies producing official statistics in England.
 - Examining (probably via time-limited taskforces) a small number of specific sentinel issues that will throw light on general issues for the UK health and care statistics system as well as being of importance to users for their own sake.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(10)20

Measurement of Childhood Obesity in the UK

Purpose

1. This paper reports on consideration of issues relating to the measurement of childhood obesity in the four UK countries.

Recommendations

2. The Committee is invited to note current work being undertaken by the NHS Information Centre (NHS IC) and relevant producers in all four countries.

Discussion

3. The UK Statistics Authority Assessment Report 18 of the National Child Measurement Programme in England noted that the methodology was consistent with international best practice but made two suggestions relating to UK data including that the NHS IC work with the other UK administrations to produce a sub-set of comparable UK-wide data on obesity in children.
4. We understand that in early 2010 the Authority considered writing to Ministers making the case for this to be given priority over other recommendations or asking the theme to examine it immediately. However, after discussion, the National Statistician and the Head of Assessment decided to allow the theme to continue with the strategic approach agreed between the National Statistician and the Theme Leader. The National Statistician advised that the issue should be remitted to the Theme Leader to examine the priority and user need for such data (in line with the strategic approach described in the paper on the Health and Social Care Theme on the agenda of this meeting [SA(COS)(10)19]).
5. The NHS IC has prioritised assessment requirements over suggestions, but has also been considering the suggestion in the context of development work they are taking forward with stakeholders in England around the use of children's growth curves in the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) and Health Survey for England. They have produced the attached discussion paper (see **Annex A**), highlighting some of the main issues, which illustrates the complexity of the considerations involved.
6. The Head of Assessment presented a paper - *UK Statistics Authority Policy on Devolved Statistics* - to the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) in July [SA(COS)(10)17], using childhood obesity as an example case. COS then requested a report from the theme on their consideration of the development of a comparable subset of childhood obesity figures.
7. The Theme Steering Group has not therefore addressed the issue in detail - or set up a taskforce on the topic in advance of establishing this as a user priority - but has discussed the issue briefly at its September meeting in the light of the COS Secretariat's request for a paper. We noted the following.
 - i. There are no obvious reasons for substantive differences in child obesity measurement between the four countries and we recognise the value of UK-compatible data where this does not conflict with other users' needs. However, we had noted limited interest from users in intercountry and international comparison. A recent well attended local Royal Statistical Society meeting on obesity attended by a range of different types of users did not identify this as an issue (though in contrast the issues relating to ethnic differences in expected growth curves were raised).
 - ii. There are significant differences in how information is collected and analysed across

SA(COS)(10)20: Measurement of Childhood Obesity in the UK

the UK in terms of measurement, timing and age groups. These could be addressed over time but at the cost of consistency of time series for whichever countries made changes.

- iii. It would be easier for all four countries to report against the same growth curves (possibly as a supplementary measure). This would have resource implications for the four producer organisations but no loss to users and no increase in burden on data suppliers, although the potential for confusion of the different methodologies would need careful handling.

Conclusion and next steps

8. The IC's discussion paper provides the basis for further work. Whether this is taken forward as one of the theme's sentinel issues or on a business as usual basis by the IC and other relevant statistics producers depends on the outcome of forthcoming engagement with users about strategic priorities.

Gill Eastabrook, Official Statistics Health and Social Care Theme Leader, September 2010

List of Annexes

- Annex A NHS IC discussion paper on issues around producing comparable UK-wide data on obesity in children**

Annex A NHS IC Discussion paper on issues around producing comparable UK-wide data on obesity in children

Purpose

1. In its Assessment of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP), the UK Statistics Authority recorded a suggestion to “*Work with the other UK administrations to produce a sub-set of comparable UK-wide data on obesity in children*”.
2. This paper explores that suggestion and outlines some of the issues for wider discussion with colleagues across the UK.
3. In examining this paper, colleagues will want to consider what is meant by comparable UK-wide data and what the requirements are. This paper outlines differences in collection and analytical methods which make harmonisation and consistency across the UK difficult; there are different curves, different modes of collection, different targets and historical data trends that need to be taken in to consideration. However, it might be possible to produce results that enable some comparisons to be made (for example, at the very least, changes over time) more easily.

Different methods of data collection in the UK

4. National data on child height and weight is collected via surveys and direct data sources using different methodologies in each country. The differences are summarised below.
5. Detailed information on the differences in the most recently published health surveys conducted in the four countries in the UK can be found in “Scottish Health Survey: Topic Report UK Comparisons”, published on August 31 2010 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/08/31093025/0>.
6. The Health Behaviours in School Aged Children Survey (HSBC) collects self-reported height and weight for adolescent children, and some estimates are produced from this for GB countries and Europe. This is a school-based self-completed questionnaire led by the WHO. This source isn't considered further in this paper because it is not measurement-based.

England

7. In England there are two national vehicles for the measurement of obesity on children: NCMP which collects data on two age groups and the Health Survey for England (HSE) which has wider age-range coverage and might therefore be more suitable for cross UK comparisons.
8. The NCMP is an NHS IC collection that takes actual measurements of Height & Weight of school children (excluding private schools) of children who are aged 4 and 5 (reception class) and aged 10-11 (school year 6). The number of children included in the collection for academic year 2008/09 (the latest year published) was just over 1 million.
9. The Health Survey for England (HSE) is an annual NHS IC household survey, where the interviewer takes the following physical measurements on children under 16, and adults 16+:
 - i. HSE 2001-2007 – height and weight of 0-15 years olds
 - ii. HSE 2008-2011 – height for 2-15 year olds and weight for 0-15 year olds

Annex A - SA(COS)(10)20: Measurement of Childhood Obesity in the UK

10. The number of children in the HSE 2008 (the latest year published) was approx 8,000.

Northern Ireland

11. Data are extracted on actual measurements of height and weight from the Health and Social Services Boards' Child Health System on children generally aged 54-66 months. Data quality issues with the Child Health System obesity data include coverage not being uniform year on year and the measurement and recording of data.
12. The NI Health and Wellbeing survey (NI HWS) was previously run in 1997, 2001 and 2005/06. In the 2005/06 survey, interviewers collected physical measures of height and weight for 2-15 year olds. The new Health Survey Northern Ireland that has replaced the HSWBS and began in April 2010 will collect individualised height, weight and age of child at measurement.

Scotland

13. In Scotland, height and weight measurements are recorded at the routine Primary 1 school review which is part of the Universal Core Programme for Child Health Screening and Surveillance. There is variation in the timing of the Primary 1 measurement, with some schools recording measurements early in the academic year and others towards the end of the academic year. Therefore the child's age at measurement can range from around 4.5 to 6.25 years of age. For the academic year 2008/09, data are available for 10 of the 14 territorial NHS Boards in Scotland. These Boards recorded the results from reviews on the child health school system. Information Services Division Scotland (ISD Scotland) receives data extracts from the school system for analysis purposes. The statistics cover approximately 62% of children in Primary 1 across Scotland.
14. The Scottish Health Survey (SHS), which has run, annually, from 2008-2011, collects physical measures of height for 2-15 year olds and weight for 0-15 year olds. The number of children in the SHS 2008 (the latest year published) was approx 1300. Previous surveys in 1995, 1998 and 2003 have also collected information on height and weight in children aged 2-15.

Wales

15. The NCMP has been piloted in Wales and there are now plans to implement the programme for specific age groups. See report at: <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/46589>
16. In the 2008 Welsh Health Survey (WHS) interviewers collected physical measures of height and weight for 2-15 year olds.

Different growth curves used in analysis

17. Besides differences in data collection methods, there are also differences in the growth curves used to analyse different sources across the UK in published data. If UK comparison is important, then it should be possible to analyse the underlying data on a consistent basis. However, this would have some resource implications, would need agreement as to which would be the most appropriate growth curve to use and would need careful handling so as to avoid user confusion of the different methods. There may also be information governance issues.
18. There are 2 different category of growth curves.

Annex A - SA(COS)(10)20: Measurement of Childhood Obesity in the UK

- A growth reference describes the growth of a sample of individuals without making any association with health.
- A growth standard describes the growth of a 'healthy' population and suggests an aspirational model or target.

(Source

http://www.sacn.gov.uk/reports_position_statements/reports/application_of_the_who_growth_standards_in_the_uk.html)

19. Within these two categories there are five different growth curves that can be considered for use in the UK:
- a. The UK90 BMI reference (**UK90**) provides centile curves for BMI for British children from birth to 23 years. They are based on a sample of 32,222 measurements from 12 distinct surveys collected between 1978 and 1994, which excluded children from ethnic minorities due to the small number of children from these groups sampled.
 - b. The **IOTF** thresholds are derived from body mass index data from six large nationally representative cross sectional surveys from Brazil, Great Britain, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Singapore, and the United States. They were first published in 2000 and have now been used in a wide range of countries and settings to calculate prevalence figures. In total these samples include 192,727 children aged 0 to 25 years. Each national data set has over 10,000 subjects with age ranges covering at least the period from 6 to 18 years.
 - c. The WHO Child Growth Standards 0-5 years (**WHO 0-5**) were released in 2006. They were developed in order to show 'how children should grow in all countries rather than merely describing how they grew at a particular time and place'. They are based on an international sample from Brazil, Ghana, India, Norway, Oman and the United States, collected by the Multicentre Growth Reference Study (MGRS) between 1997 and 2003. This consisted of a longitudinal follow-up from birth to 24 months and a cross-sectional survey of children aged 18 to 71 months.
 - d. The WHO 2007 5-19 years (**WHO 5-19**) growth reference provides BMI-for-age centiles from 5-19 years. It was developed using the same Box-Cox Power Exponential (BCPE) method as used for the **WHO 0-5**, but merge data from the cross-sectional component of the MGRS (for children aged 18-71 months) with data used for the earlier National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)/WHO growth reference (children aged 1-24 years).
 - e. We understand that the fifth growth curve is described as the UK WHO, which have been developed specifically for use in the UK for 0-4. SACN (the Scientific Committee on Nutrition) considered the application of WHO growth standards in the UK in 2007 (link provided above) and following on from this, it was decided that implementing **WHO 5-19** in England would have a detrimental effect on NCMP. Instead it was decided to implement a variation on **WHO 5-19**, the **UK WHO** which was developed based on the **WHO 5-19** and **UK90**. It is these **UK WHO** curves that are now used to monitor the growth of 0-4 year olds, and have replaced the UK 90 curves that had previously been in the Red Books (which are used by parents and health visitors to monitor growth, development, immunisations etc).
 - f. However, growth curves cannot be looked at in isolation. There is also the issue of what thresholds should be used and most growth curves have 2 sets

Annex A - SA(COS)(10)20: Measurement of Childhood Obesity in the UK

of thresholds applied to them. For example, when the **UK90** is used in a clinical setting the 91st and 98th centiles are frequently used to classify children as overweight and obese, however for population monitoring purposes the 85th and 95th centiles are used. The issue of population Vs a clinical setting should also be considered when considering which is the most suitable curve to be used with survey data.

Use of growth curves in England

20. The **IOTF** growth reference is not currently used for the production of official prevalence figures in England, but is used for international comparisons (UK versus other countries). In Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives, the government wrote: *“One of the first tasks of the Obesity Observatory (NOO) will be to assess the strengths and weaknesses of using the International Obesity Task Force cut-offs for defining BMI against the 1990 UK Growth Reference Standards currently used.”*
21. As part of this work, NOO have been producing papers for the Joint SACN/Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) Group, for which DH provide secretariat support. At these expert meetings, they have discussed the issues at length relating to growth curves and thresholds. A draft statement has been prepared, with the intention of it being published before the end of the year, supporting the use of UK-WHO growth standards for 0-4 years (applied from 2-4 years) and UK1990 reference charts for 4-18 years.
22. In relation to the HSE, the NHS IC have recently started looking at whether the UKWHO growth curves should be used for children aged 0-4, at the request of DH policy colleagues. Their reasoning for this potential change is so that the HSE aligns with the “Red Books”. No suggestion has made to change the curve used for 4-16 year olds, or that that change is made to IOTF. We are currently looking at all the evidence available to help us decide how to take this forward.
23. However, we are very conscious that any change to what growth curve used in NCMP or HSE will have a significant impact on users. If we did change the growth curve the impact this would have on historic data trends or targets would have to be carefully managed. The other consideration is using a different growth curve for 0-4 year olds could result in an artificial step change at 5 years. The 2 main options being considered are:
 - i. Publish figures using the historic and new growth curves concurrently. This would mean the data trend can be preserved but we are uneasy about this approach as it would mean producing multiple figures which would lead to user confusion about which was the appropriate figure to use in different comparisons.
 - ii. Publish figures only using the new, agreed curve. But this would mean sacrificing historic data trends and targets. It would be possible to reanalyse all of the historic data on the new growth, producing new data trends, but this will affect existing targets and may cause difficulties for users.

Annex A - SA(COS)(10)20: Measurement of Childhood Obesity in the UK

Use of growth curves across the UK

24. Across the UK, national analysis of data sources use the following growth curves:

Source	Ages for which measures are collected	UK90	IOTF	UKWHO
England - NCMP	4/5 and 10/11	X		
England - HSE	2-15	X		Proposed for 0-4
Northern Ireland – Health board extract	4.5-5.5		X	
Northern Ireland - NI HWS 2005/6	2-15	X	X	
Northern Ireland - (NI HWS) 2010/11	-		X	
Scotland – Health board extract	4.5-6.25	X		
Scotland – SHS	2-15	X		
Wales – WHS	2-15	X	includes comparison with IOTF	

NHS IC, September 2010

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(10)21

Draft Monitoring Brief: Housing Market Statistics

Purpose

1. This paper covers an early draft of a Monitoring Brief on Housing Market Statistics.

Recommendations

2. The Committee for Official Statistics is invited to:
 - i. comment on the attached draft - in particular, whether it should be expanded to cover other topic areas (e.g. market rents); and
 - ii. agree that it should be revised for approval by the Authority Board, with a view to subsequent publication as a Monitoring Brief on the Authority website, and subject to any considerations of co-ordination with the National Statistician's review of housing market statistics (due for completion in March 2011).

Discussion

3. At its last meeting, the Board was informed that a draft Monitoring Brief on statistics about the housing market would be presented to this Committee [SA(10)61]. The origins of this work lie in correspondence early last year with the then Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice - concerning press coverage of the Land Registry's house price index - and in a list of issues that the Authority might address which was submitted by the Royal Statistical Society. The latter referred to the need for a coherent and comprehensive range of indicators for the housing market covering house prices, the mortgage market and the degree of financial pressure on householders.
4. The paper at **Annex A** is an early draft and will require checking for factual accuracy (some of the information has been obtained second hand, and there are some gaps and question marks that will need to be clarified directly with the producers concerned). The suggestions for improvement are tentative at this stage.
5. The National Statistician is conducting a review of housing market statistics ([SA(COS)(10)22] on the agenda for this meeting). This is involving both users and producers and is concentrating initially on house price statistics, with particular reference to those produced by Communities and Local Government, and the Land Registry. The draft Monitoring Brief on housing market statistics is based solely on desk research. It is somewhat broader in scope, focusing on three areas: (i) house prices, (ii) mortgage repossessions, and (iii) data on first time buyers. However, the Brief could be expanded to cover other housing market topics (see Annex 1 of the draft Monitoring Brief). Market rents might be a particular priority as accurate local information is essential in order to set the rates paid to new Housing Benefit claimants.
6. Annex 1 of the draft Monitoring Brief could itself be expanded to show what official and other statistics are available about the housing market and who produces them.

Monitoring and Assessment Team, September 2010

List of Annexes

Annex A Draft Monitoring Brief on housing market statistics

SA(COS)(10)21: Draft Monitoring Brief: Housing Market Statistics

Annex A - Draft Monitoring Brief on housing market statistics

This document will be published on the Authority's website in due course.

To see this, and other Monitoring Briefs, please visit:

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

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(10)22

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

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on progress with the National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics.

Recommendations

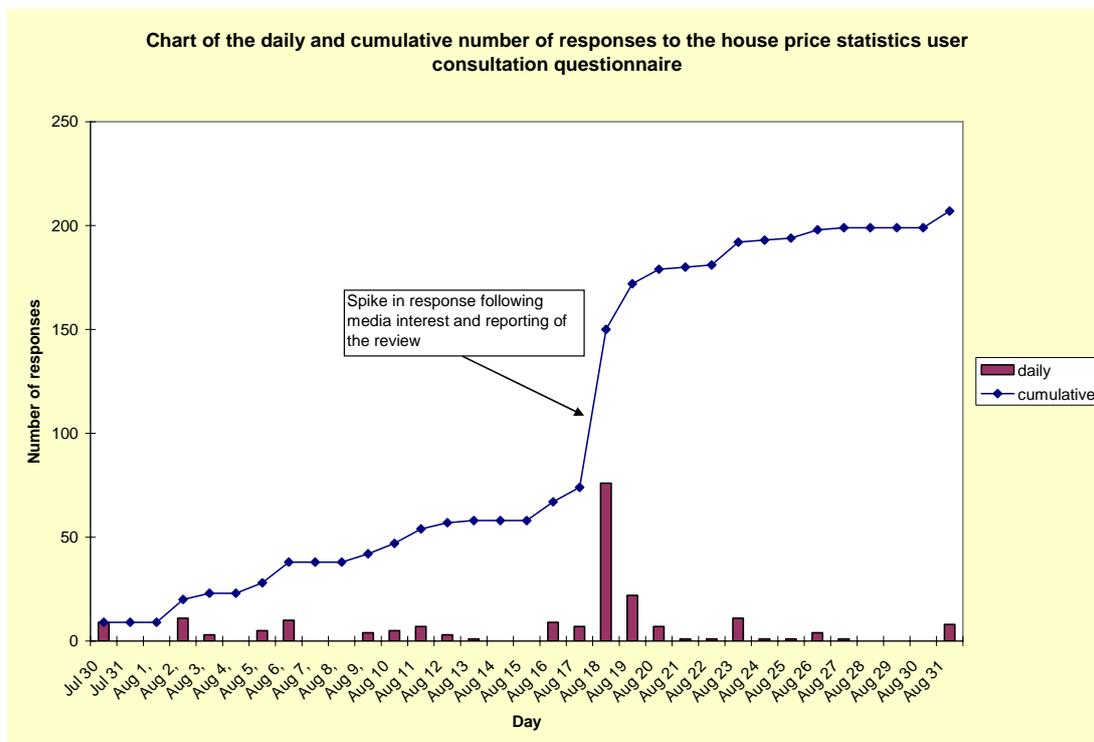
2. Committee members are invited to note the progress made and the forward plans for the review.

Discussion

3. Official statistics on house prices are published by both the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Land Registry on a monthly basis. Each use different underlying data and methods for compiling these statistics and, as a result, estimates vary between them.
4. This issue was discussed at the December 2008 UK Statistics Authority board meeting and it was proposed that officials from the Land Registry and CLG meet under the aegis of the National Statistician to further consider the matter. A letter was sent to Jack Straw MP from Sir Michael Scholar outlining this proposal to which he agreed. The letters indicated that the scope of these discussions should be wider than house prices.
5. In response the National Statistician is conducting a review of housing market statistics with both producer and user involvement. The review is taking place in two stages.
6. The first stage will examine the current house price statistics produced by CLG and the Land Registry and identify any improvements that can be made to the house price statistics from official sources to better meet user needs.
7. The second stage of the review will widen the scope to explore user needs for indicators of the housing market more generally. User consultation will take place to explore user needs for this broader set of statistics. This will form the basis of a report describing what a comprehensive set of official measures for the housing market might look like and how producers of official statistics might better support this need.
8. The first stage of the review is well underway. An online survey to gather information on user needs for and experiences of official house price statistics ran during August 2010. Documentation of existing official measures is progressing well and the first steering group meeting was held on 7 September. The survey, which was run via the Statistics User Forum's Housing Statistics Network and by direct mailing of known users, received 214 responses from users from a range of user groups. Some high level results from the online questionnaire are provided in **Annex A**. The survey questionnaire itself is at **Annex B**.
9. The user consultation attracted a high level of interest from the media. Some improvements to the media handling for this review have been identified and the

communication plan for the review has been updated to ensure that the media are well briefed when the final report is published.

- A positive consequence of the media interest was an increase in the number of responses to the online survey. The chart below shows the daily and cumulative number of responses to the questionnaire by date.



- The target for the first stage of the review is to publish recommendations for comment before Christmas. To meet this target we are planning to send a first cut of the recommendations to the steering group by the end of September and to discuss the recommendations with a select group of users in October.
- For the second stage, we are intending to develop a document providing an overview of the key statistics relating to the Housing Market. We will then consult with users to learn their views over key measures and their satisfaction with them. It is intended to publish a final review report in March 2011.
- The first stage of the National Statistician's review of Housing Market Statistics is progressing well. There are tight deadlines in order to publish recommendations from the first stage of the review prior to Christmas and to ensure that the second stage proceeds at a rate to enable publication of the final review report in March 2011 but these deadlines are felt to be achievable.

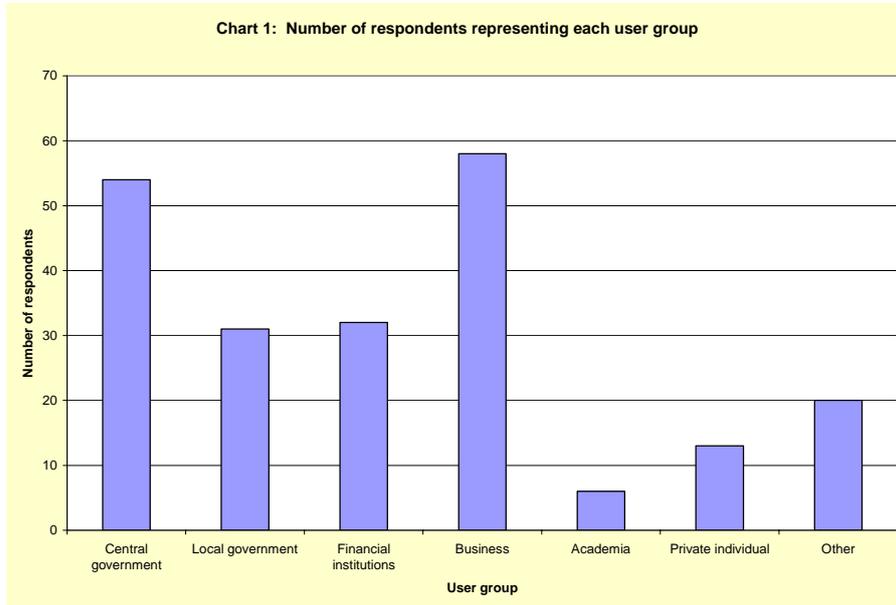
Jason Bradbury and Emily Carless, National Statistician's Office, September 2010

List of Annexes

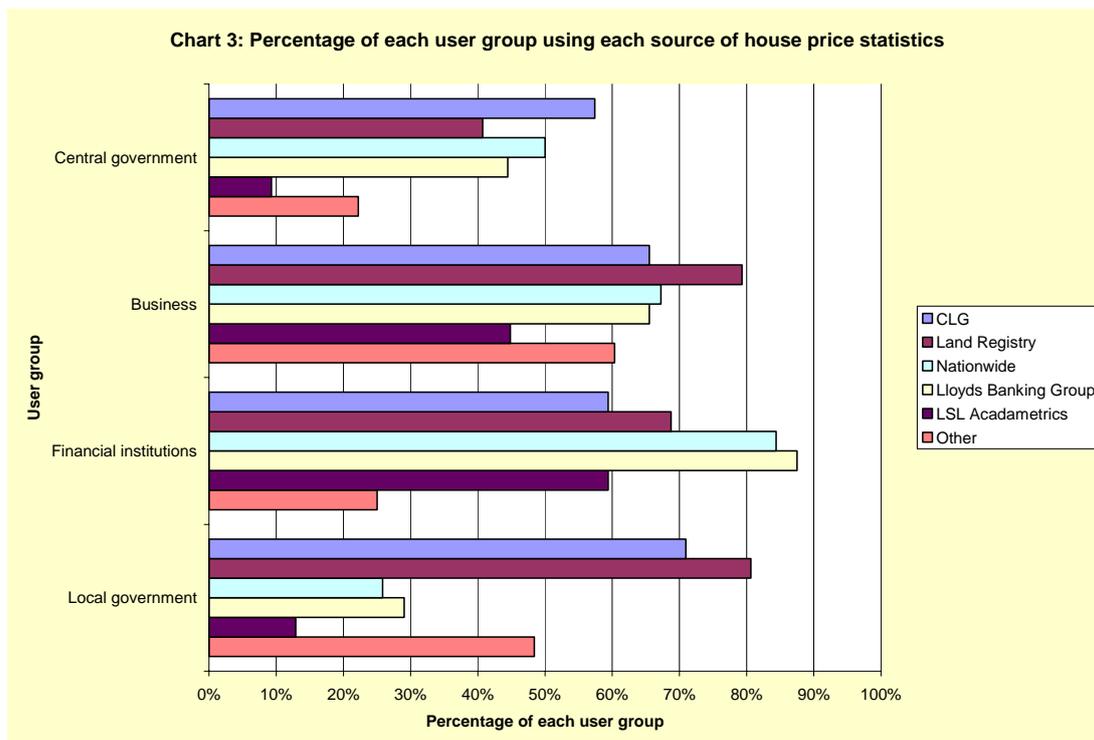
- Annex A High Level Results from the Online User Consultation**
- Annex B User Consultation Questionnaire**

Annex A High Level Results from the Online User Consultation

1. The online user consultation resulted in 214 responses being received from users. These responses came from a range of user groups. Both business and central government users are well represented with 50 responses in each group. Over 30 responses were also received from each of the local government and financial institutions groups. Chart 1 shows the split of responses by user group.



2. The survey asked respondents which sources of house price statistics they use. Differences in the use of the various sources of house price statistics by each user group were found. Chart 3 shows the percentage of respondents which use each source of statistics by user group. Respondents were able to tick more than one option.



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3. Key messages from the above graph are as follows.
 - i. The official sources and mortgage company sources are used by a high percentage of business users. A high percentage of business users also use other sources of house price statistics.
 - ii. Central Government mainly use CLG house price statistics and use mortgage companies indices more than Land Registry statistics.
 - iii. Local Government use the official statistics more than the private sector statistics and have a slightly higher usage of Land Registry figures over those produced by CLG.
 - iv. The Financial Institutions use the mortgage company data and the LSL/ Acadametrics data more than other groups.
4. The questionnaire asked respondents about their satisfaction with each of the official sources of house price statistics. An option to provide free text comments on each of the sources was also provided. Key messages from these questions were as follows.
 - i. Satisfaction ratings for both CLG and Land Registry statistics are higher for the ease of finding the statistics than for some other aspects.
 - ii. Satisfaction ratings were lowest for the timeliness of the statistics for both official sources. When comparing satisfaction between user groups, Local Government were less likely to be dissatisfied with the timeliness of the statistics than financial institutions.
 - iii. Although the satisfaction ratings did not indicate a large proportion of respondents being dissatisfied with explanations of how the statistics are compiled or the ease of determining if they are suitable for their use, quite a few free text comments indicated a need for better explanation of the methods used.
 - iv. Generally respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with comparisons between sources. However in the free text comments some respondents did feel that these comparisons are important with some suggesting that CLG should produce them.
 - v. Free text comments demonstrated an interest in further breakdowns of the statistics and greater access to the underlying data.

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

The aim of this questionnaire is to evaluate user needs for official house price statistics in order to compare these needs with the statistics currently available and set priorities for the future.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and will close on 31 August 2010.

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

1. What user group or organisation do you primarily represent?

Central government

Local government

Financial institutions

Business

Academia

Private individual

Other (please specify)

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

2. Which sources of house price statistics do you use?

- Communities and Local Government house price statistics
- Land Registry House Price Index
- Financial Times House Price Index (Acadametrics)
- Halifax House Price Index (Lloyds Banking Group)
- Nationwide House Price Index
- Other (please specify)

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

3. Which measures of house prices do you use?

- Average house prices
- Distribution of house prices (eg lower quartile)
- Individual house prices
- Seasonally adjusted house prices
- House prices index
- Other (please specify)

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

4. Which groupings of house price statistics do you use?

- Country breakdowns
- Regional breakdowns
- Sub-regional breakdowns
- First time buyers/ former owner occupiers
- New build houses
- Property type
- None
- Other (please specify)

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

5. What do you use house price statistics for?

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

6. Communities and Local Government (CLG) statistics - thinking only about these house price statistics how satisfied are you with the following aspects?

If you do not use CLG statistics please click next.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
The ease of finding the statistics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The format in which the statistics are made available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The timeliness of the statistics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The coverage of the statistics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comparisons made between sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The information explaining how the statistics are compiled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ease of determining whether the statistics are suitable for your needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

7. If you have chosen dissatisfied or very dissatisfied please provide further information

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

8. Land Registry statistics - thinking only about these house price statistics how satisfied are you with the following aspects?

If you do not use Land Registry statistics please click next.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
The ease of finding the statistics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The format in which the statistics are made available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The timeliness of the statistics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The coverage of the statistics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comparisons made between sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The information explaining how the statistics are compiled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ease of determining whether the statistics are suitable for your needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

9. If you have chosen dissatisfied or very dissatisfied please provide further information

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

10. If you have any additional comments, please enter them below:

House Price Statistics User Questionnaire

Thank you for completing this survey. A report of the review will be published later in 2010 and will include a summary of the responses to this questionnaire. The final report will be made available on the [National Statistician's pages](#) of the UK Statistics Authority's website. On submitting this questionnaire you will be directed to the Housing Statistics Network website. This website contains an online forum where you can join in further discussion of housing market and other related housing statistics. The Housing Statistics Network is affiliated to the Statistics User Forum organised by the Royal Statistical Society

If you would like to be kept informed of developments regarding the review of housing market statistics, or if you would like to discuss this topic further, please email emily.carless@statistics.gsi.gov.uk

Alternatively please ring Emily Carless on 01633 455717

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(10)23

Benefits generated by the Quality Improvement Fund in 2009/10

Purpose

1. This paper reports on the benefits gained from the allocation of Quality Improvement Fund (QIF) money to 17 Government Statistical Service (GSS) projects during the 2009/10 financial year.

Recommendations

2. The Committee for Official Statistics are invited to:
 - i. note the benefits that have resulted from the projects funded by the QIF, benefiting both those commissioning the projects and the wider GSS;
 - ii. agree that the QIF programme has been successful in achieving its aim of supporting the delivery of quality improvements in official statistics; and
 - iii. consider the value of continuing with the programme, subject to the availability of appropriate funds.

Discussion

3. In discussions prior to the setting up of the UK Statistics Authority, it was recognised that the Assessment function should lead to improvements in statistical quality, but that improvement would incur costs. The Authority made provision for a budget of £250,000 per annum to support GSS quality improvement, and although primarily designed to help the GSS with pre- or post-assessment, work that has a wider GSS context is also supported.
4. For accounting purposes, the Authority passed the QIF budget to the ONS Methodology Directorate. Decisions on the spending of this fund are made by the GSS Statistical Policy and Standards Committee (GSS SPSC) currently chaired by the National Statistician.
5. In order to administer the fund, some operating rules were specified together with some criteria to prioritise the bids received. These are set out in **Annex A**.
6. During 2009/10, three bidding rounds for QIF were conducted resulting in a total of 17 successful bids accounting for £229,883. All projects were undertaken by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Methodology Consultancy Service (MCS).
7. A wide range of projects were supported by the QIF during 2009/10, including:
 - the development of a GSS quality training course;
 - the development of a disclosure control method for administrative data;
 - the development of standard errors for weighted data from the National Travel Survey;
 - the development of an employee jobs measure for Northern Ireland, which is consistent with the UK Annual Business Inquiry (ABI);
 - a review of methodology for the English Housing Survey;
 - an assessment of possible approaches to the feasibility of correcting for non-consent bias in the Family Resources Survey; and

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- a review of small area estimation work in the GSS.
8. Of the 17 projects, nine were pre- or post-assessment linked, whilst the other eight were funded based on their wider GSS applicability. Eight projects ran over the end of the financial year. However, the majority of the underlying work was completed within the year and all projects have since concluded. All of the 17 projects ran within budget.
 9. A range of benefits has resulted from the QIF projects. For example, departments have generally found that the new research undertaken has strengthened already existing methodologies and has provided new methodologies that are transferable to other similar GSS work (e.g. through the development of a disclosure control methodology for administrative data; in calculating standard errors for the weighted National Travel Survey; through developing a composite output index for Northern Ireland). Some assessment related projects have enabled more consistent estimates to be produced (e.g. producing Local Authority level equivalised income and poverty estimates through imputation; housing stock estimates; employee job measures for Northern Ireland). A new training module has been developed covering the application of quality assurance and quality management principles for delivery across the GSS - this module has run once with positive feedback, and is scheduled to run twice a year. More detailed information on the findings and benefits emerging from the QIF projects is set out in **Annex B**.
 10. Wider dissemination of project results has already commenced. All reports are available via the GSS intranet (StatNet). Some results were presented and discussed at the GSS Methodology Advisory Committee in May 2010. Some were presented at the GSS Methodology Conference in July 2010.
 11. The overall management of the QIF budget and bidding process has required some bedding-in, and some lessons have been learned along the way. The key issue during 2009/10 was linked to some projects running over the end of the financial year. This was mainly due to all of the projects utilising MCS whose resources became overwhelmed. However, for the 2010/11 financial year, better communication processes have now been put in place requiring potential bidders to have discussed their project with the MCS and received provisional approval prior to submission of their bid. The QIF budget holders within the ONS Methodology Directorate are also requesting more regular updates from the MCS during the year, to ensure that projects are running to time.
 12. In summary, the 17 projects were all completed, bringing in a range of benefits to the commissioning departments, as well as to the wider GSS. The QIF is being increasingly viewed across the GSS as a fund that opens up the potential for new research and for taking forward quality improvements. As a result, the QIF is growing in popularity: a total of 30 bids were received within three bidding rounds in 2009/10, whilst 35 bids were received in just two bidding rounds in 2010/11. It is hoped that the implementation of the lessons learned from 2009/10 will strengthen further the overall programme.
 13. If QIF funding is made available for 2011/12 and beyond, then some further key strategic gaps (e.g. conducting research into internet data collection, improving estimates of migration flows for Eurostat, introducing quality assessments and quality summary statements for defence statistics and investigating the bias between those Family Resources Survey respondents who have consented to data linking and those who have not) could begin to be addressed. This, in turn, would add significant value to the overall programme.

Graham Jenkinson, ONS, Methodology Directorate, September 2010

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Annex A QIF Selection Criteria and Terms and Conditions

Annex B Details of Projects: Key Findings and Benefits

Annex A QIF Selection Criteria and Terms and Conditions

QIF Selection Criteria

1. The approval of bids is subject to the following selection criteria.
 - i. To support the implementation of recommendations from a designation assessment.
 - ii. To assist with preparations prior to an assessment to ensure Code compliance.
 - iii. For work that tackles a generic GSS issue.
 - iv. For work that requires expertise to be brought in from an external source.
2. Furthermore, funding is not granted for bids that are considered to be for business as usual work, 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.

QIF Terms and Conditions

3. Successful project bids must be completed within the financial year to which the fund applies, must deliver to timetable and within the agreed budget.
4. A mid-project report including progress and a financial update and outlook must be submitted to QIF Administration (maximum four pages).
5. An end-of-project report template will be issued (to include: achievements in relation to statistical process and/or output improvements, the impact on users, wider applicability across the GSS, identification of best practice, etc) and must be submitted to QIF Administration within four weeks of the project completion.
6. Documentation relating to successful bid projects must be retained for audit purposes and possible evaluation by the QIF sub-group of the GSS SPSC. If requested, this documentation must be made available within two weeks of the request.

Annex B
Key Findings and Benefits

Project Name	Project Aims	Funding & how spent	Key Findings/Outputs	Benefits to Dept	Benefits to GSS
1. Administrative data disclosure control Generic GSS project DWP	To review possible disclosure methodologies for DWP and to recommend a practical solution.	£11,792 - MCS	New methodology proposed which has been built on what DWP already had in place, reducing work required to implement. The new methods will provide users of DWP data with numbers to a much smaller rounding base.	DWP now has a robust, extensible and practical methodology for securing tabular releases from the 100% longitudinal administrative benefit and employment programme datasets.	Useful to other Departments who produce similar statistical outputs or use similar large longitudinal datasets.
2. GSS Quality Training module Generic GSS project ONS	To develop a one day course covering quality assurance and quality management, including Total Quality Management.	£6,701 - ONS Quality Centre	The course not only focuses on the quality of the statistical output, but also added to their list of GSS on quality assurance of statistical methods and managing statistical processes. It has made links with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, underpinning Principle 4 (Sound Methods and Assured Quality).	ONS has another course workshops, that will run twice a year.	The course is available to all GSS members and fits in with the GSS Framework of Statistical Training. The full benefits of this course are yet to be realised but feedback has been positive following one run of the course.

<p>3. Addressing falling response in social surveys through new modes of collection</p> <p>Assessment related</p> <p>ONS</p>	<p>1. To research the applicability of new modes of data collection in GSS social surveys, including the likely feasibility and benefits.</p> <p>2. To consider a draft standard for social surveys undertaken by internet and telephone collection.</p>	<p>£37,912 - MCS</p>	<p>New data collection mode options produced, with potential efficiency savings where cheaper data collection modes considered. Trade-offs between cost and quality however remain to be determined.</p> <p>The research into a draft standard for household surveys was not concluded since further substantial research was required to inform the content of this.</p> <p>Two key outputs for GSS researchers made available:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of literature and consultation with National Statistical Institutes; 2. Report on the workshop held at ONS in Dec 2009. 	<p>The literature review combines the findings from an international review of over one hundred papers, presentations and text books on the subject of mixed mode data collection and internet data collection. Consultations with other NSIs are also presented.</p> <p>The workshop held at ONS in Dec 2009, brought together data collection methodologists and academics from Statistics Netherlands, the US Census Bureau, the University of Michigan and GSS representatives from across the UK. This was a formidable gathering of experts and the resulting report documents the discussions.</p>	<p>The benefits of this work are wide reaching. The work brings together international data collection literature, with international and UK expert consultations. The resulting reports provide extensive and up-to-date information in the field of data collection, with sampling and estimation issues also covered. Information has been disseminated via the GSS intranet and ONS website.</p>
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<p>4. National Travel Survey - calculating standard errors for weighted data</p> <p>Assessment related</p> <p>DfT</p>	<p>1. To investigate the most appropriate method for calculating standard errors for estimates based on weighted NTS</p> <p>2. To produce a set of standard errors for key NTS outputs, with guidance</p> <p>3. To train members of the NTS team to produce standard errors</p>	<p>A method to calculate standard errors for a range of 2006 estimates has been developed, taking into account the calibration weighting. Processes have been put in place so that estimates may be repeated for later data (using STATA). Further desk instructions will be developed by the DfT team.</p>	<p>The Dept are now able to produce standard errors and confidence intervals around their estimates. They are due to publish these for the first time at the end of September 2010, meeting users needs.</p>	<p>DfT have passed on their knowledge to their Road Safety colleagues who are interested in using the methodology to construct standard errors and confidence intervals. Information has also been passed to the University of West of England in Bristol who are keen to learn about the methodology behind producing standard errors for weighted data.</p> <p>Once DfT have published results at the end of September, they will disseminate the new methodology within DfT via workshops and presentations. The final report is being disseminated to the wider GSS via the GSS intranet.</p>
<p>5. Producing Local Authority level equivalised income and poverty estimates through imputation</p> <p>Assessment related</p> <p>Scottish Govt</p>	<p>To produce a set of local authority equivalised income and poverty estimates which are robust enough to publish.</p>	<p>LA poverty estimates for Scotland produced, with a methodology report and well documented SAS code.</p>	<p>Key methodological learning has been transferred from the MCS to the Scottish Government such that figures can be reproduced in the future. Internal seminars have been held to share the information/learning. The Scottish Government have published the first official LA-level estimates of relative poverty to be produced for Scotland.</p>	<p>Information has already been shared with Statisticians from the Welsh Assembly and DWP. Wider dissemination via the GSS intranet is also taking place.</p>
<p>6. Administration of the Quality Improvement Fund</p> <p>Generic GSS</p> <p>ONS</p>	<p>To administer the QIF within timetable and to the stipulated requirements.</p>	<p>The fund was administered efficiently and effectively throughout the year.</p>	<p>The fund enabled the administration of the fund without detriment to ONS business.</p>	<p>This work supported the provision of funding to Depts from QIF and in delivering quality improvements that otherwise would not have been possible or would have taken longer to achieve.</p>

<p>7. Housing Stock Estimates</p>	<p>To reconcile trends in the annual housing stock and estimated household totals in UK from 2001 onwards.</p>	<p>£29,480 - MCS</p>	<p>Trends reconciled in the annual housing stock and estimated household totals in UK from 2001 onwards</p>	<p>The project work has provided the Department with confidence that its methodology for Dwelling Stock estimates are appropriate, and provided authoritative evidence of this which helps the reputation of the Department. The study has provided good ideas on how the Dept could improve its statistics further if sufficient resources were available; conversely it also gives evidence that could prove very helpful in taking decisions on rationalising the Department's data collections and statistical activities should statistical resources be cut substantially over the next few years.</p>	<p>Information about the new methodology has been published with the Housing Stock statistical release and the final report has been disseminated via the GSS intranet site.</p>
<p>CLG</p>					
<p>8. Develop a Northern Ireland composite output index</p>	<p>1. To scope whether a "whole economy" index could be developed for NI, drawing on current indices and other economic data. 2. If feasible, prepare a whole economy composite index based on existing indicators. 3. If feasible, ensure the NI quarterly composite index can be used for comparison with the UK national quarterly index and is a reasonable predictor of regional accounts.</p>	<p>£11,920 - MCS</p>	<p>The project proved that a whole economy index could be constructed from the existing indices and other sources to give a broad indicator of the behaviour of the economy. The final report gives details on how this can be constructed, including improvements to the constituent indices. A draft series of the whole economy index has been produced incorporating the recommendations as far as possible, but there is still some further work/refinements to be done before the index can be published. This links to project 9 below.</p>	<p>This funding will benefit the Department in that when the index is published it will provide an overall quarterly measure of the Northern Ireland economy, disaggregated into the public and private sectors, for which there is no current measure. The report also recommended improvements that could be made to the quality of the input indices IOP and IOS and hence the quality of the composite index.</p>	<p>Wider application for the development of composite output indices. Information has already been shared within NISRA and via the GSS intranet.</p>
<p>Generic GSS project</p>					
<p>DETINI</p>					

<p>9. Improve NI quarterly economic indicators Assessment related DETINI</p>	<p>To review current methodology and to suggest ways of improving the NI quarterly economic indicators.</p>	<p>£7,000 - MCS</p>	<p>The project concluded that improvements to sampling methodology were needed for both IOS and IOP. The IOP chainlinking methodology was also improved and recommendations made for the use of seasonal adjustment. Recommendations were made to make the IOS compulsory, and in-line with the IOP and UK equivalents. The public sector will now also be included within the IOS.</p>	<p>Once fully implemented, the Dept will be able to produce IOP and IOS measures that are consistent and comparable with their UK equivalents.</p> <p>The work is being disseminated within NISRA via lunch time seminars and through best practice work groups within DETI. It is also being disseminated via the GSS intranet.</p>
<p>10. Understanding mode and context effects on survey measures of public perceptions Assessment related CLG</p>	<p>1. To produce best practice around the implications of survey design on the quality of statistics. 2. To gain confidence in using perception indicators 3. To be better informed about mode and context effects in social surveys.</p>	<p>£5,000 - MCS</p>	<p>Report providing ideas for consideration in the development of future measures or setting future performance indicators. Information to support analysts in weighing up various design issues is given.</p>	<p>Assists Department and gives confidence in the development of performance indicators. Circulated via HoPs to ensure it meets its target audience. Also being disseminated via the GSS intranet.</p>

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<p>11. Developing a consistent employee jobs measure for Northern Ireland</p> <p>Generic GSS project</p> <p>DETINI</p>	<p>1. To produce a single measure of employee jobs (and employment) at NI and section level of SIC, where coverage is the same between ABI and QES.</p> <p>2. To produce a more efficient use of the sample to allow data sharing between QES and ABI.</p> <p>3. To produce a sub-NI measure of employee jobs or employment in inter-censal years.</p> <p>4. To provide a means of streamlining the Census.</p> <p>5. To produce a local unit (site based) measure of employment and turnover to meet NI's BRES obligations.</p> <p>6. To produce confidence intervals for the employee jobs measures.</p>	<p>The Census of employment now has a working sampling methodology as well as a new grossing methodology, capable of producing both estimates and standard errors. Both the new sampling and grossing methodologies can be used by other employment surveys within the branch.</p>	<p>The changes will lead to consistent series for ABI and Census, bringing benefits to the Dept through public trust and confidence. Once the results from the Census have been analysed, a similar methodology can be applied to the QES. The developments will ultimately reduce the burden on businesses.</p>	<p>The results of this work impact more widely - NI's obligations to provide BRES data can now be fulfilled, and DETI will meet its obligation to supply data to the ONS for use in the UK ABI. Wide dissemination is underway, via in-house workshops for DETI Statisticians, user group meetings and circulated via the GSS intranet.</p>
<p>12. Review of the grossing procedures for the International Road Haulage Survey and to develop a methodology for the calculation of sampling errors for the survey</p> <p>Assessment related</p> <p>DfT</p>	<p>1. To review current grossing methodology.</p> <p>2. To enable DfT to implement a new methodology to calculate sampling errors.</p>	<p>Project established that the current weighting estimation methodology was appropriate, although recommendations for improvements were made. The final report also provides a simple approach for deriving sampling errors.</p>	<p>The Dept is now able to improve the current sampling/grossing methodology for the International Freight Survey. The Dept is now also able to calculate standard errors for the survey.</p>	<p>The report has been published on the internet, been shared with DfT colleagues, and has been supplied to Eurostat to which data are supplied under an EU regulation. This method can now be shared internationally. Wider dissemination is taking place via the GSS intranet.</p>

<p>13. Review of the methodology for the English Housing Survey</p> <p>Assessment related</p> <p>CLG</p>	<p>To review current methodology to bring about cost savings whilst maintaining quality. To consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A straight pro-rata cut to the sample for both the interview and physical surveys o Reducing the household sample to the size of the current physical survey but retaining the current physical survey sample size o A reduction to the physical sample only 	<p>£10,400 - MCS</p> <p>A set of options has been identified and the level of cost savings these would achieve through both fieldwork and overall management costs. The impact on the capability of the survey of each option has been assessed against given precision targets. This will help inform how the data is used in the future.</p> <p>This is linked to project 14.</p>	<p>This work enabled the Dept to undertake a User Consultation exercise on proposals for the EHS for 2011/12. This has been published.</p> <p>The report has been shared via the GSS intranet and communities.gov.uk website.</p>
<p>14. Assessing possible approaches to and the feasibility of correcting for non-consent bias in the Family Resources Survey (FRS)</p> <p>GSS Generic project</p> <p>DWP</p>	<p>To consider possible methodological approaches and make recommendations for applying these to the FRS.</p>	<p>£8,320 - MCS</p> <p>The final feasibility report makes recommendations for identifying a non-consent effect and for imputing benefits value adjustments for non-consenters to data matching. Alternative levels of imputing are considered and benefits/shortcomings noted.</p>	<p>This work fed into the wider consultation exercise on the size and scope of the 2011/12 English Housing Survey. The report has been published.</p> <p>The report has been shared via the GSS intranet and communities.gov.uk website. The work has also been presented at various Conferences.</p>

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<p>15. Reducing revisions to short term surveys whilst increasing the accuracy of long term surveys via the implementation of best practice non-binding benchmarking methodology</p>	<p>To provide: 1. best practice guidelines for binding/non-binding benchmarking 2. draft software programs for implementing this best practice 3. a quantification of the relative benefits of the two approaches</p>	<p>£8,320 - MCS</p> <p>The project confirmed that in this area of methodology, ONS practices are fit for purpose and in line with international best practice, hence no change to current methods are needed.</p>	<p>This has provided confidence to the Dept that its methods are appropriate.</p>	<p>The benchmarking guidelines are available on the GSS intranet for other GSS departments to verify their own practices.</p>
<p>Generic GSS project</p>				
<p>16. Review the Methodology of the Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry (NIABI) Assessment related DETINI</p>	<p>1. NI systems to adopt ONS best practise in terms of: i) outlier detection ii) editing and imputation iii) grossing and imputation iv) the provision of SAS constraining NI LU results as is done for the ONS ABI 2. Re-write the NI ABI system</p>	<p>£10,000 - MCS</p> <p>The project has reviewed the current methods and made some recommendations for improvements to the NIABI. Outlier detection is now in-line with ONS' approach. Recommendations were also made to improve use of the sample in providing better quality estimates and a wider range of estimate.</p>	<p>Through adopting the new improved methods, the employment estimates will be more consistent with other estimates produced across the branch, which is a key output for other QIF related research for DETI.</p>	<p>Direct benefit to DETI. The final report is available via the GSS intranet for wider dissemination, and has been disseminated to interested parties via the Statistical Advisory Committee.</p>

<p>17. Review of Small Area Estimation work in the GSS</p> <p>Generic GSS project</p> <p>ONS</p>	<p>1. identify the range of Small Area Estimation techniques being applied across the GSS, including any development work underway;</p> <p>2. assess the scope for quality improvement, through the sharing of knowledge and experience of Small Area Estimation techniques;</p> <p>3. identify the demand for small area estimation techniques across the spectrum.</p>	<p>A useful picture of SAE activity across the GSS has now been established. A review of the previous work in this field and user requirements has been conducted, establishing that there is a considerable future need for SAE. The project identified the need for knowledge transfer and sharing.</p>	<p>The project has raised awareness within the Dept of activity in other Depts and has identified potential partners for future collaboration. As a direct result of the project, the Small Area Estimation team within ONS has volunteered to act as a central point of contact for future development of this agenda for the GSS. This might include sharing of best practice through forums or the development of a GSS working party to take forward and coordinate SAE activity.</p>
		<p>Direct links here for GSS through the central contact point being developed.</p> <p>The key results of this work have been disseminated via the GSSM Conference, the GSS Advisory Committee and GSS-wide workshops.</p>	

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Committee for Official Statistics

SA(COS)(10)24

Draft Monitoring Brief: The Use Made of Official Statistics

Purpose

1. This paper covers a draft Monitoring Brief on the Use Made of Official Statistics.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee are invited to comment upon the draft Brief attached at **Annex A**.

Discussion

3. The draft Monitoring Brief is intended to help producers address the need for more systematic engagement with users of official statistics. It describes why the Authority thinks that it is important to document the use of statistics, and suggests a framework of different types of use.
4. It is intended to publish this Monitoring Brief on the Authority's website, subject to the Committee's comments.

Secretariat, UK Statistics Authority, October 2010

List of Annexes

Annex A Draft Monitoring Brief: The Use Made of Official Statistics

SA(COS)(10)24: Draft Monitoring Brief: The Use Made of Official Statistics

Annex A - Draft Monitoring Brief: The Use Made of Official Statistics

This item has now been published on the Authority's website.

To see this, and other Monitoring Briefs, please visit:

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