

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

**Meeting of 23 October 2008
UK Statistics Authority Board Room, Newport**

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir Michael Scholar (Chair)

Lord Rowe-Beddoe (Deputy Chair, ONS) - to item 7

Mr Richard Alldritt

Mr Partha Dasgupta - to item 10

Ms Karen Dunnell

Sir Alan Langlands

Professor David Rhind

Secretariat

Mr Robert Bumpstead

Other Attendees

Mr Richard Laux (Monitoring and Assessment, UK Statistics Authority) - to item 9

Mr Mike Hughes (National Statistics and Policy Director, ONS) - for item 10

Apologies

Ms Moira Gibb

Mr Steve Newman

Professor Steve Nickell

1. Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Ms Gibb and Professor Nickell.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes and matters arising from the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting on 19 September 2008 were accepted as a true and fair account of that meeting. Most actions were complete. Progress was noted with the following matters arising:

- i. following Parliament's summer recess the Authority had taken the opportunity to again publicly set out its views on the Government's proposals for pre-release access to official statistics. A press release commenting on the draft Orders before UK and Scottish Parliaments had been issued and circulated to Members;
- ii. proposals for the first data sharing Order under the terms of the Statistics Act were well advanced. This would provide for information to be shared between the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCSF);
- iii. discussions were continuing with statistical Heads of Profession (HoPs) to identify suitable further statistical releases for the Authority's press briefings, although no new candidates had yet been identified;
- iv. ONS were developing proposals for revised service level agreements with customers which would be presented to the ONS Board in due course;
- v. it was hoped that an announcement on the appointment of a Deputy Chair (Statistical System) would be made shortly. The Chair reported that there had been a very strong field of candidates.

4. Reports from Committee Chairs

ONS Board

4.1 The Deputy Chair (ONS) gave a report on the meeting of the ONS Board held earlier that day. The cost implications of vacant accommodation within the ONS property portfolio in London continued to be a priority for the Board. Options to minimise these costs were being actively pursued. Other issues considered included recent ONS statistical releases and accompanying media coverage, the National Audit Office (NAO) management letter for 2007/08 and the Finance Officer's monthly report.

4.2 The meeting also heard that following comment from the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) the National Statistician planned to issue a note for staff setting out the achievements of the Modernisation Programme over the last six years and current transformation work at ONS. **Action: Secretariat to circulate the transformation note to Authority members.**

Committee for Official Statistics (COS)

4.3 The Chair gave a report on a meeting of the COS held on 13 October. That meeting had considered the first Monitoring and Assessment note about retail sales. This had been published in October. It was agreed that a second note about the comparability of NHS waiting list statistics across the constituent countries of the UK would be drafted for consideration by members of the COS and the Authority. **Action: Secretariat to circulate draft Monitoring and Assessment note to Authority members for comment.**

4.4 The Committee had also considered the Government's work toward a second Official Statistics Order. In practice, this might take the form of an amendment to the first Order. A revised version of the National Statistician's vision for the Government Statistical Service (GSS) had also been considered. Once finalised it was agreed this would be circulated to the Authority for information. **Action: Secretariat to circulate the National Statistician's vision for the GSS to Authority members.**

Risk Committee

4.5 The first meeting of the Risk Committee had been held on 30 September. The Authority noted the account of the meeting which had been approved by the Risk Committee chair and previously circulated.

5. Consultation on the Code of Practice - Emerging Issues [SA(08)35]

5.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a paper which described preparations for publishing a report on the Consultation and for publishing the Code of Practice itself. In total 44 responses to the consultation had been received including substantive responses from: Eurostat; the Royal Statistical Society; the Statistics Users' Forum; ONS and other GSS producer departments; the Devolved Administrations, and other stakeholders.

5.2 A wide range of views and suggestions had been received. This formed a significant volume of material which would be carefully considered and to which appropriate responses developed. The intention was still to provide the Authority with a draft Code and consolidated consultation response at the November meeting, prior to publication in early January. It was recognised that this was an ambitious target and that contingencies were in place to allow for slightly later publication if that were to be necessary. **Action: Mr Alldritt to provide draft Code of Practice and Consultation Response to November Authority meeting.**

5.3 The meeting considered some of the principal issues that had emerged from the consultation. It was understood that respondents were generally very supportive of the Code's intent and purpose. A recurring issue was the amount of detailed guidance that the code should contain. On the one hand, respondents welcomed the conciseness of the draft code and some wished for further brevity. On the other hand, some respondents would prefer that the Code contain more specific and descriptive guidance on the application of its principles.

5.4 There was a natural tension between the two demands. A complementary set of guidance to the Code, to be produced by the National Statistician, could help meet both demands. The Authority discussed how such guidance could be produced, and considered the wider roles of the National Statistician and the Head of Assessment, and how they related to one another. It was agreed that the Secretariat would produce a paper for the next meeting to enable further discussion on this topic. **Action: Secretariat to produce paper on respective roles of the National Statistician and Head of Assessment.**

5.5 The meeting considered various other aspects of the Code. It was noted that the manner in which the Code was implemented in practice and how the results of an assessment were derived and presented were important to a full understanding of the issues. It was agreed that a paper on this topic would also be presented to the next meeting of the Authority. **Action: Mr Alldritt to produce paper on further proposals for the operation of the Code of Practice.**

6. The Initial Programme of Assessments [SA(08)36]

6.1 Mr Laux presented a paper which proposed a programme of 10 assessments to be completed by June 2009. The programme was considered and endorsed. A statement

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would be published on the Authority's website and producers would be given three month's notice, consistent with the commitment given in the draft *Statement of Principles and Procedures for Assessment*.

6.2 The timetable for the work was considered. It was noted that, while this was demanding, it was important to set challenging targets to demonstrate that the work could be concluded swiftly, bearing in mind the requirement for the assessment of all 1,300 National Statistics.

7. Progress Update on Monitoring Report 3 [SA(08)37]

7.1 Mr Laux introduced a paper which described progress with producing Monitoring Report 3 a '*Review of Official Statistics not currently designated as National Statistics*'. The paper proposed some statistics which the Authority might invite Ministers to be subject to assessment for National Statistics status, under the terms of the Statistics Act.

7.2 The Authority considered the merits of the proposal and requested further information be provided at their next meeting. **Action: Mr Laux to provide further detail on proposals in Monitoring Report 3.**

8. Census 2011

8.1 Ms Dunnell provided an oral report about plans for the 2011 Census. The meeting heard that the Census White Paper would be published in the near future.

8.2 The Authority considered the focus of the White Paper, in particular how the Census would be conducted and how the data would be collected. The requirements of this exercise would not overshadow the need to also concentrate on user requirements and how Census outputs would be used. The meeting heard that work in this area was in hand within ONS, and it was agreed to consider a paper on this subject at a meeting in the near future. The meeting concluded that it would be important to share thoughts with users on Census outputs at an early stage. **Action: Ms Dunnell to provide paper on Census outputs and users to a future Authority meeting.**

8.3 The Authority also resolved to consider again the issue of Census data security at a future meeting, alongside the future of the Census beyond 2011. **Action: Ms Dunnell and Secretariat to agree timing for papers on Census data security and the Census beyond 2011 for future Authority meetings.**

9. Identifying and Strengthening the User Voice [SA(08)38]

9.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a paper which argued that the Authority should promote a change in the priorities of statistical producers towards identifying user needs and demonstrating responsiveness to those needs. The paper proposed inviting the Monitoring and Assessment team to prepare a formal project specification on this topic. The meeting understood that this proposal had previously been discussed and approved by the Authority's Committee for Official Statistics.

9.2 The meeting agreed that the issues raised in the paper were central to the success of the Authority, and the following points were made in discussion:

- meeting the needs of users would not be made easier by a tightening public spending environment;
- the project specification should establish clear benefits and tangible results;
- this was an extensive subject for consideration by a single report and a clear focus would be needed, and;
- gaining a user perspective on the Authority's direction of travel in its first years could form part of this work

9.3 The Authority agreed to receive a detailed project specification on a more narrowly focussed version of the proposed Monitoring Report, reflecting the meeting's discussion. The report would also consider the funding of user groups. **Action: Mr Alldritt to prepare a project specification.**

10. The Statistical System [SA(08)39]

Mr Hughes presented a paper which described the main aspects of the UK statistics system. The paper had been produced under the auspices of the Committee for Official Statistics, and it was provided for information. The meeting expressed its thanks for a useful and informative piece of work. The paper would be published on the Authority's website and it could form part of the Authority's annual report.

11. Governance of the Authority's Scrutiny Function [SA(08)40]

11.1 The Chair introduced a paper in which present arrangements and future options for governance of the Authority's scrutiny function were outlined. It was agreed to remit further consideration of this issue until the appointment of the Deputy Chair (Statistical System) was made.

11.2 As part of this discussion it was agreed that it would be useful to consider the work of the Board of the Authority and its sub-committees, and to consider how they might best be aligned in future. **Action: Secretariat to prepare an agenda item for future discussion on the work and interaction of Authority committees.**

12. Any other business

There was no other business. The next meeting of the Authority would be held on 27 November 2008, at the Authority's London office.

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Agenda

Thursday, 23 October, 2008
Board Room, Statistics House, Newport, 11:15 - 15:00

Chair: Sir Michael Scholar
Apologies: Professor Steve Nickell
Ms Moira Gibb

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 190908
2	Reports from Committee Chairs	Lord Rowe-Beddoe Sir Michael Scholar
3	Consultation on the Code of Practice - Emerging Issues	SA(08)35 Mr Richard Alldritt
4	The Initial Programme of Assessments	SA(08)36 Mr Richard Laux
5	Progress Update on Monitoring Report 3: <i>Official Statistics Not Currently Designated as National Statistics</i>	SA(08)37 Mr Richard Laux
6	Census 2011	Oral Report Ms Karen Dunnell
7	Identifying and Strengthening the User Voice	SA(08)38 Mr Richard Alldritt
8	The UK Statistical System	SA(08)39 Mr Mike Hughes
9	Governance of the Authority's Scrutiny Function	SA(08)40 Secretariat
10	Any other business	

Next Meeting: Thursday, 27 November, 2008
Statistics House, London, 11:15 - 15:00

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SA(08)35

Consultation on the Code of Practice - Emerging Issues

Purpose

1. This paper sets out the emerging issues raised by the consultation on the draft Code of Practice; and the Monitoring and Assessment Team's proposals for preparation of the report on the consultation and the publication of the Code itself.

Timing

2. We are aiming to publish Monitoring Report No. 2 on the consultation on the draft Code of Practice and Statement of Principles and Procedures for Assessment, along with the finalised Code of Practice for Official Statistics, in early January 2009. The draft report and revised Code will be circulated in advance of the November Authority meeting with a view to resolution of any outstanding issues, and approval of the report, which will then be sent for printing at the start of December. In view of the range of comments received, this timetable looks tight but, as yet, we do not see a need to extend it.

Recommendations

3. The Authority is invited to:
 - note the list of respondents to date and the main issues that they have raised (Annexes A and B);
 - endorse the planned broad responses to the issues raised (Annex B);
 - approve the planned schedule for development and publication of the report and Code (Annex C).

Discussion

Consultation responses

- 4.1 The consultation period for the Authority's document '*Official Statistics - serving the public good: Consultation on the code of practice*' concluded on 30 September 2008.
- 4.2 A total of 27 responses was received, some after the 30 September 2008 deadline. The National Statistician's response, in her capacity as Head of the Government Statistical Service (GSS), was a synthesis of separate responses from Heads of Profession (HoPs) across the GSS and from Office for National Statistics (ONS) Executive Directors. All respondents to the consultation are listed at Annex A.
- 4.3 The responses included a wide range of views and suggestions on the draft Code and, in total, contain a significant volume of material which will need to be considered in detail and appropriate responses developed. The full list of comments received runs to some 50 pages and will be included in full in the final report. A summary of main points and our responses will also be included. This paper presents only what currently appear to be the main issues that have emerged.

Emerging issues

- 5.1 The main issues are detailed in Annex B, along with an indication of the proposed response.
- 5.2 Respondents generally welcomed the draft Code's conciseness and felt that it had been set at an appropriate overall level although there were some concerns that this conciseness would lead to some variation in interpretation in the absence of further guidance. The Code already recognises the need for supplementary guidance.

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- 5.3 Some respondents felt that there was 'vagueness' in some aspects of the draft Code and that this might make assessment against the Code difficult. The concern here seems to be that the Assessment process will be weak - and overly tuned to the concerns of producers rather than users - rather than that the intention of the Code is unclear.
- 5.4 There was general support for the ten Principles although several responses (including the GSS's) suggested that the Code would benefit from the inclusion of additions to the principles and practices, the preamble and protocols. These responses and other detailed drafting points will need to be further analysed.
- 5.5 There was general support for the Code being founded on the existing European, UK and UN statistical codes of practice.
- 5.6 Several respondents felt there was a need to more tightly define the Code's principal terms. This may be something to be addressed in the supplementary guidance that will be produced rather than in the Code itself.
- 5.7 Several respondents felt that the Code required statistics producers to take disproportionate action in terms of authorisation procedures and administrative effort. It was also argued that some matters, e.g. complaints and accidental or wrongful releases, were matters for the National Statistician rather than the Head of Assessment. In practice this need not be either/or and we will seek a form of words that makes clear that both have a role.
- 5.8 There were several calls to clarify the range of producer bodies and statistics to which the Code applies - in terms of its application to producer bodies outside the Civil Service and as regards various ad hoc statistics. Again this may be best addressed through supplementary guidance.
- 5.9 Several respondents commented that implementing the draft Code and the Assessment process would have significant resourcing implications for producer bodies. We may be able to offer some reassurance on the burden of the Assessment process itself, as it is developed, but of course if statistics are not Code compliant there may indeed be resource implications in putting that right.
- 5.10 One respondent suggested that paragraph xi of the Preamble to the Code should be included within the main Code text. The statement is 'It is implicit in the Code that, within those bodies that produce official statistics, there will be sufficient managerial separation between officials responsible for National Statistics and other staff of the organisation to ensure clear lines of accountability for observance of the Code.' As drafted this is a comment, or observation, rather than a specific requirement. It *could* be included in the main body of the Code under Principle 10 in this form, 'Establish sufficient managerial separation between officials responsible for National Statistics and other staff of the organisation to ensure clear lines of accountability for observance of the Code.' However, in this form it would require a lot of supplementary guidance and, on balance, we prefer it as an observation in the Preamble (subject to changing 'National Statistics' to 'official statistics').
- 5.11 Departmental policy statements issued alongside statistical releases: Most respondents supported the consultation document's proposals to include requirements on such statements. There were some concerns, however, about clarifying responsibilities, resourcing implications, enforcement and on whether this was a matter for inclusion in the Code. Our current proposal on this point is to include in the Code the three requirements that were suggested in the consultation document (as below) but to make some additional observations in the report on the consultation to the effect that departmental statements should draw attention to the statistical release and not distract attention from it or seem to replace it. The proposed

requirements are that statements made alongside statistical releases should:

- contain a prominent link to the statistical release;
- be clearly labelled as a policy statement and be readily distinguished from a statistical release;
- present statistical information to basic professional standards (correctly quoted, charts correct etc).

5.12 There was support for the three Protocols to the Code although responses suggest that some aspects may need to be reconsidered. We are planning to shorten Protocol 2 on consultation and extend it to repeat broader points from elsewhere in the Code about user engagement. So the text of that Protocol will change substantially but the sense will be the same. There are also likely to be refinements to Protocol 3 on the use of administrative sources. This protocol did not exist in the previous Code.

5.13 Most respondents welcomed the draft Code's Principles and Procedures for Assessment while noting the potential resourcing implications and the need to avoid 'overkill'.

Timetable for publication

6.1 Annex C contains a schedule for the remainder of the process.

6.2 The Monitoring and Assessment Team is making progress with drafting the report on the consultation but is a little behind schedule due to some responses being received later than expected and the overall volume of comments being greater than expected. It should, however, still be possible to submit a full draft of the report for consideration at the 27 November meeting of the Authority. We are looking at contingency arrangements to publish later in January 2009 if further problems arise.

6.3 The Monitoring and Assessment team will be drafting letters to the Devolved Administrations shortly, thanking them for their detailed comments and setting out the Authority's response to each point. It is proposed that these letters will be circulated to Authority members out of Committee with a view to writing to the Devolved Administrations no later than mid-November.

Monitoring and Assessment Team, October 2008

List of Annexes

- Annex A** List of respondents to Consultation on the Code
- Annex B** Issues emerging from the Consultation on the Code
- Annex C** Timetable for the remainder of the Consultation and publication process

Annex A List of respondents to Consultation on the Code

Response .	Date received	Respondent
1.	30/07/08	Dr David Gordon, Head of Public Health Observatory Division, NHS Health Scotland - Comments in a personal, 'professionally-informed' capacity.
2.	20/08/08	David Spiegelhalter FRS OBE, University of Cambridge.
3.	03/09/08	Software for Data Analysis Ltd (Michael Hart).
4.	04/09/08	Philip Watson BA(Econ), C.Stat.
5.	11/09/08	Association of Regional Observatories
6.	18/09/08	Eurostat
7.	19/09/08	Manchester City Council
8.	26/09/08	Paul Barton, Luton Borough Council
9.	26/09/08	Scottish Government
10.	29/09/08	BERR (Tim Andrews)- Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
11.	29/09/08	HMRC (from Sean Whellams, Head of Profession for Statistics; includes the views of statistical colleagues and the Department as a whole).
12.	29/09/08	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
13.	29/09/08	Audit Commission
14.	29/09/08	DH - Department of Health
15.	29/09/08	FDA (Trade union for senior public servants)
16.	30/09/08	Market Research Society
17.	30/09/08	Social Research Association
18.	30/09/09	Equality and Human Rights Commission
19.	30/09/08	Royal Statistical Society (RSS)
20.	30/09/08	Statistics Users' Forum
21.	30/09/08	NHS Information Centre
22.	30/09/08	John Coyle
23.	01/10/08 (letter dated 30/09/08)	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
24.	letter dated 29/09/08	Survey, Design and Statistics Subcommittee of Home Office, Scientific Advisory Committee (SDSCC)
25.	29/09/08	Home Office
26.	01/10/08	Local Government Association (LGA)
27.	9/10/08	GSS - Response from Head of the GSS; a synthesis of the views of a range of GSS members and ONS Heads of Profession, including from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forestry Commission ● Welsh Assembly Government ● Scottish Government ● Health and Safety Executive ● Department for International Development ● Defence, Analytical Services and Advice ● Home Office ● HM Revenue and Customs ● ONS (4 directorates) ● Office for Standards in Education ● Office of manpower Economics ● National Health Service Information Centre ● Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ● Department of Communities and Local Government ● Department for Work and Pensions ● Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform ● Department of Health

Annex B Issues emerging from the Consultation on the Code

Issue	Intended response
<p>1. Respondents generally welcomed the draft Code's conciseness and felt that it had been set at an appropriate overall level. There were, however, some concerns that conciseness would lead to some variation in interpretation in the absence of further guidance.</p> <p>One respondent (GSS) felt that this supplementary guidance should form an integral part of the Code.</p>	<p>Para vii of the preamble refers to the need for supplementary advice. We will look to give that more weight in the report and in the preamble to the Code.</p> <p>There are already over 100 requirements in the Code. The incorporation of detailed guidance on these would make it unwieldy and easier to ignore.</p>
<p>2. Some respondents felt that there was vagueness in some aspects of the draft Code and that this might make assessment against the Code difficult. Eurostat, for example, comments that "... certain 'formulations' chosen - e.g. '... the assessment will take a balanced look taking account of all the circumstances' or that ' a measure of latitude will be allowed in matters of interpretation' - suggest that the designation function and assessment principle will be 'watered down' even before it starts". Eurostat suggests that this 'watering down' risks conveying a message of a focus on producers', rather than users' needs.</p>	<p>We will look at the drafting again to ensure, as far as we can, that the Code is specific in what it requires and does not overstate the 'latitude'. However, we do not see Assessment mainly in terms of achieving a pass or fail, as in the European model.</p>
<p>3. There was general support for the ten Principles although several responses (including the GSS's) suggested that the Code would benefit from the inclusion of additions to the principles and practices, and its preamble and protocols, on matters including the division between statistician's and ministers' responsibilities, revisions, timeliness, professional competence, the need to cite measures of variation, confidentiality of personal information etc.</p> <p>In particular, Principle 8 (Confidentiality) and Protocol 2 (Consultation) received some significant responses and may require amendment.</p>	<p>We will consider individual proposals on their merits and include additional requirements if a strong case is made. However, the aim is not to include every conceivable requirement and additions may detract attention from what is already there. We will also need to avoid, at this stage, additions which would require further public consultation.</p> <p>We will consider further the specific comments on Principle 8 and Protocol 2 and discuss these with selected stakeholders prior to revision.</p>
<p>4. There was general support for the draft Code's being founded on existing statistical codes of practice such as those of Europe, UK and UN. Some points of detail on the interrelationship of the European Statistics Code of Practice and the draft Code were raised by Eurostat.</p>	<p>The Authority will consider Eurostat's suggestion further and see if this can be done without adding a lot of text or complex cross-referencing.</p>
<p>5. Several respondents felt there was a need to more tightly define the Code's key terms, such as 'statistic', 'statistics', 'statistical output', 'statistics in their final form', 'official statistics', and 'national statistics'.</p>	<p>We will discuss the meaning of these and other terms in the Report on the consultation and note the need for supplementary guidance on interpretation. However, we do not think such guidance should go into the Code itself.</p>

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<p>6. Several respondents felt that the Code might lead statistics producers to take disproportionate action, suggesting, for example, that the number of situations in which the National Statistician was required to authorise matters was excessive and that the draft Code prescribed an excessive amount of administrative effort.</p> <p>Additionally, it was argued (by GSS) that matters such as complaints about professional integrity, quality or standards (Principle 1, Practice 7) and accidental or wrongful releases (Protocol 1, Practice 8) were matters for the National Statistician rather than the Head of Assessment.</p>	<p>We will review all the references to administrative action of this kind and see if some might be dropped.</p> <p>It is not a matter of 'either/or'. We will look for a formulation that conveys the sense that matters that are relevant to Monitoring and Assessment should be brought to the attention of the Head of Assessment as well as the National Statistician.</p>
<p>7. There were several calls to clarify the scope of the Code - in terms of its applicability to producer bodies outside the Civil Service and as regards ad hoc statistics. The Audit Commission, for example, makes the point that the draft Code appears to apply to large Civil Service producers and suggests that the Code's applicability to other types of body should be tested, and calls for a full costing of the impacts of complying with the Code, before it is introduced.</p>	<p>The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 is clear in establishing the scope of official statistics and the Code applies equally to any producer body seeking designation of its statistics as National Statistics. However, we will look again at requirements which may be less meaningful outside the civil service and see if there is scope to amend them.</p>
<p>8. Several respondents commented that implementing the draft Code and its Principles and Procedures for Assessment would have significant resourcing implications for producer bodies. The GSS, for example, notes the potentially large resource implications for providers, especially those statistical producers outside the GSS.</p>	<p>The Authority is developing its assessment procedures to minimise burden on producer bodies and to maximise effectiveness. We will however consider again the more burdensome requirements - ties up with the point at 6 above on administrative action</p>
<p>9. One respondent (RSS) suggested that paragraph xi of the Preamble to the Code should be included within the main Code text.</p>	<p>We think this is better left as a comment rather than a substantive requirement within the Code.</p>
<p>10. Departmental policy statements issued alongside statistical releases: Most respondents supported the consultation document's proposals to include requirements in this respect. There were some concerns, however. HMRC had concerns about clarifying responsibilities and resourcing implications while GSS had concerns about how these requirements would be enforced in practice. The HO made a range of detailed comments which will be considered. NI felt that this should not be part of the Code but, rather, should be covered by the Ministerial Code of Conduct or through training for policy colleagues.</p>	<p>Our inclination at present is to include in the Code some very basic requirements on departmental statements that accompany the statistics, as mooted in the consultation document.</p>
<p>11. There was general support for the consultation document's three protocols although responses may indicate that some aspects of the protocols may need to be reconsidered and/or refined.</p>	<p>We expect to amend the drafting of two of the Protocols at least - in line with comments received.</p>
<p>12. Most respondents welcomed the draft Code's Principles and Procedures for Assessment while noting the potential resourcing implications and the need to avoid 'overkill'</p>	<p>See 8. above.</p>

Annex C Timetable for the remainder of the Consultation and publication process

Timing	Action required
5 Nov 2008	Revise Code in light of Board's comments
13 Nov for 27 Nov meeting	Prepare Board paper covering revised Code for 27 Nov Board meeting.
14 Nov	Draft letters to devolved administrations, thanking them for, and replying to their responses to the consultation. Letters to be circulated to Authority members, for authorisation, out of Committee
28 Nov	Send advanced draft of Code to devolved administrations.
28 Nov	Final changes to the Code
1 Dec	Send to printers
8-10 Nov	Proof-reading
15 Dec	Draft note for web on comments received and changes made,
6 Jan 2009	Publication (circulation/distribution) and Press Notice
6 Jan 2009	Publication on web of feedback note.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(08)36

The Initial Programme of Assessments

Purpose

1. This paper presents an initial Programme of Assessments for consideration by the Authority. By design this initial Programme is short. Experience and consultation will help inform the development a fuller Programme, intended for publication in spring 2009.

Timing

2. Consideration at the October meeting of the Authority and subsequent publication of the Programme will allow the Monitoring and Assessment Team to begin assessments in February 2009. This will give producers three months notice of Assessments, in line with the commitment given in the draft *Statement of Principles and Procedures for Assessment*, and will be soon after the anticipated publication of the *Code of Practice* and the *Statement*.

Recommendations

3. The Authority is invited to:
 - i. endorse the proposal to publish a limited initial Programme of Assessments;
 - ii. comment on the proposed topics to be assessed (paragraph 8);
 - iii. comment on the proposed web statement (Annex A).

Discussion

4. Section 15 of the Statistics and Registration Service Act states that:

(1) The Board [Authority] must prepare and publish a programme for the assessment and re-assessment of statistics under sections 12(1) and 14(1).
5. One of the early Monitoring Reviews - scheduled for publication in January 2009 - will recommend a selection of non-National Statistics that the Authority may wish to notify to Ministers (under section 16(1)) should be assessed (under section 12) against the Code. This is the subject of another agenda item of this meeting [paper SA(08)37]. In practice this will identify a number of statistical products to be included relatively early in the Assessment programme.
6. Currently there are about 1300 National Statistics and more are likely to be added. This suggests the need to group these statistical outputs into 'chunks' which can be prioritised in an orderly Work Programme, and then assessed systematically - whilst at the same time retaining the capacity to undertake ad hoc assessments as the need arises. The consultation on the *Statement of Principles and Procedures for Assessment* suggested that Assessments would be risk-based (focusing assessment resources on those statistics which are seen to present the greatest risk to the reputation of official statistics) and proportionate to need (taking account of the concerns of users of statistics). This will be reflected in a paper about the *2009-10 Assessment Programme*, for a meeting of the Authority in March or April 2009.
7. Some of the key elements of the Assessment process are already established. For example, the collection of self-evaluation evidence from producers, and of users' views, with the Assessment team subsequently exploring this material in more depth. These processes were piloted whilst the Authority was in shadow form. But future Assessments will be against the new Code of Practice, so will involve new

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self-evaluation questionnaires, and of course the Assessment Team itself is largely new to this activity. (These process issues will be the subject of a paper to the November meeting of the Authority). Accordingly we propose to walk before we can run, and that the first few assessments be treated as pilots albeit ones making formal recommendations to the Authority as to the designation of the relevant statistics as National Statistics.

8. The following proposals for the first ten assessments would contribute both to our longer term planning and to our development of the process. The Monitoring and Assessment Team wants to learn as much as possible from the early assessments, so the list includes statistics that cover ONS, Whitehall departments, the Devolved Administrations and an 'arms length body'; statistics from a variety of sources; different types of product; and different types of series. This is an initial Programme of assessments. The sequence and timing will be kept under review, and it is possible that changes will be made to the Programme. We will keep the Programme under review.

1. Migration Statistics (ONS)
2. Road Freight Statistics (Department for Transport)
3. Emissions of carbon dioxide for local authority areas (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)
4. Prison Population Projections (Ministry of Justice)
5. Statistics on International Development (Department for International Development)
6. Department for Work and Pensions' "Tabulation Tool" (Department for Work and Pensions)
7. Enrolments at Schools and in Funded Pre-School Education in Northern Ireland
8. Recorded Crime in Scotland
9. Children looked after by local authorities (separate publications for each of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland)
10. Statistics from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse)

9. Further details of these products are provided at Annex B.

Monitoring and Assessment, October 2008

List of Annexes

Annex A Draft statement for the Authority's website

Annex B Details of the statistical products to be assessed

Annex A Draft Statement for the Authority's website

This document was published on 10 November 2008.

To see the document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/news-releases/initial-programme-of-assessments-2008-09.pdf>

Annex B Details of the Statistical Products to be Assessed

Statistics Produced by ONS

1. Migration Statistics

International: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=507>

Internal: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=7070>

First release of international and internal migration statistics, including the individual statistical series that underpins this. Assessment of migration statistics would take place in the context of the Monitoring Review currently underway.

Statistics Produced by Other Government Departments

2. Road Freight Statistics (Department for Transport)

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/goodsbyroad/>

Statistics based on two surveys.

3. Emissions of carbon dioxide for local authority areas (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/Environment/statistics/globalatmos/galocalghg.htm>

Topical. Release in September 2008 was the first to have National Statistics status - previous releases had the 'experimental statistics' label. Based on multiple sources, and compiled and produced under contract (by AEA technology).

4. Prison Population Projections (Ministry of Justice)

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/prisonpopulation.htm>

Interesting from the point of view that the published data are projections, rather than current or historic data. Quality is therefore subject more to modelling error than sampling error. Topical.

5. Statistics on International Development (Department for International Development)

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/sid2007/contents.asp>

Compendium publication including some National Statistics, some official statistics and some from other sources eg World Bank.

6. DWP's National Statistics Tabulation Tool (Department for Work and Pensions)

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/tabtool.asp>

This tool allows the user to produce and download, to their own specification, DWP National Statistics tabulated from the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) dataset of benefit claimants. In effect this would be looking at data on a range of benefits and employment programmes, and at the tabulation tool itself.

Statistics Produced by Devolved Administrations

7. Enrolments at Schools and in Funded Pre-School Education in Northern Ireland

http://www.deni.gov.uk/february_press_release_2.pdf

NI only series, giving various breakdowns of numbers in pre-school education.

8. Recorded Crime in Scotland

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/09/29155946/27>

Headline figures from this release were recently leaked to the press.

Statistics Produced Across Devolved Administrations

9. Children looked after by local authorities

England: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000810/index.shtml>
(latest figures - 2008)

Wales: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/health2008/hdw200809111/?lang=en>
(latest figures - 2008)

NI: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/statistics_and_research-cib_looked-after-children
(latest figures - 2007)

Scotland: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/TrendLookedAfter>
(latest figures - 2007)

All four countries produce estimates, presenting and emphasising different aspects. The data are available individually on each Devolved Administration's website, and are subsequently published together in Regional Trends.

Statistics Produced by an Arm's Length Body

10. Statistics from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse)

http://www.nta.nhs.uk/areas/facts_and_figures/national_statistics.aspx

Report on a range of aspects of drug treatment identified through the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS).

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(08)37

***Progress Update on Monitoring Report 3
'Review of Official Statistics Not Currently Designated as National
Statistics'***

Purpose

1. This report will set out a list of official statistics that are not currently designated as National Statistics and indicate a number of statistical products from that list in respect of which the Authority intends to issue a formal notification to Ministers under section 16 of the Statistics and Registration Service Act. The Act states:

"Where in the case of any official statistics other than statistics produced by the Board [Authority] —

- (a) the appropriate authority has not under section 12(1) requested the Board to assess and determine whether the Code of Practice for Statistics has been complied with, and
- (b) the Board is of the view that it would be appropriate for it to do so, the Board must notify the appropriate authority accordingly."

2. Thus, notification under this section is more than just a power that the Authority may use on occasion, it is an obligation or duty, and we will need to report on how we have addressed this in our first Annual Report. This paper summarises progress since the previous meeting of the Authority at which the specification for the report was agreed [paper SA(08)30].

Timing

3. Taking account of the views expressed at this meeting, a draft report will be submitted for approval at the Authority's next meeting on 27 November. The aim is to publish the results of this review alongside the report on consultation on the Code of Practice, scheduled for publication on 6 January 2009.

Recommendations

4. The Authority is invited to comment on the lists at Annexes A and B.

Discussion

5. At its meeting on 19 September the Authority agreed the specification for the review (appended as Annex D). The reasons why a statistic has not been designated are often historical, but in some cases the data collection is new or experimental and there are methodological difficulties to be overcome. Other undesignated statistics may be weekly or monthly releases of quarterly or annual National Statistics (NS); geographic disaggregations of national NS data; or digests and compendia drawing on previously published material.
6. The word 'statistic' has to be interpreted loosely to mean a statistical series, dataset or product and, crucially, includes the text and metadata that accompanies the figures when published. Much of the draft Code of Practice relates not to the figures per se but the manner in which they are compiled and delivered to the user.
7. The final report will include the initial list of undesignated official statistics that was circulated to statistical Heads of Profession (HoPs) in August, updated with their revisions. It will also include the list of statistics designated as National Statistics, which the Authority is required to publish at least once a year under section 18 of

the Act.

8. It is worth noting that even the updated list of undesignated statistics will still be incomplete. There are two main reasons for this:
 - some departmental products do not fall within the control of government statisticians. This often applies to data drawn from administrative systems. Several HoPs indicated that they have not been able to compile a list of such products and provide the requested information in the time available;
 - departments sponsor a wide range of 'arms length' bodies that also produce statistics. Many of these are Crown Bodies and fall directly within the scope of the Act or are in the process of being added by Order. Again, some HoPs were unable to identify the statistics produced by such bodies in the time available.
9. HoPs were asked for two pieces of information about each product: (i) its importance as a potential candidate for National Statistics status and (ii) the level of concern they had about quality or other issues. The overall pattern of answers to the two questions is given in Table 1 below. This shows that there are 11 products which HoPs consider to be highly important but about which they have serious concerns. Further details about these products is given at Annex C. In most of these cases the product is either outside of HoPs direct control or work is proceeding to resolve the quality issues with a view to pursuing designation. In contrast, HoPs have minimal concerns about 61 other non-NS products that they rated as highly important.

Table 1: Non-Designated Official Statistics - Number of HOPS' Responses by Importance and Concern*

	Importance as Potential Candidate for NS status			
Level of concern about quality or other issues	High	Medium	Low	Total
Serious	11	8	5	24
Medium	37	55	20	112
Minimal	61	43	63	167
Total	109	106	88	303

* Excludes missing or incomplete responses. Final figures may change slightly.

10. A list of products for which a section 16 notification might be made by the Authority is given at Annex A, selected on the basis of a judgement by the Monitoring and Assessment team about their overall importance and bearing in mind HoPs' comments. The final report will explain the basis on which each individual item has been selected.
11. A number of other products were also considered to be strong candidates for notification, but in these cases the HoP had signalled an intention to approach Ministers with a view to seeking designation. It is proposed that the Authority might, in these cases, write to the relevant Ministers simply drawing attention to the fact that we are aware of the internal discussions on these statistics and will await the outcome before considering the case for notification further. These products are listed at Annex B, together with a number of experimental products that might also be likely to be submitted for Assessment within the next year or so.
12. Further work on the full lists of a) National Statistics and b) undesignated official

and to provide better information about each product. This may be something best undertaken by ONS as part of their work with Heads of Profession to identify further official statistics as described above. The current lists are largely confined to outputs in the form of traditional publications, including portable document format files ('pdfs'). With current trends to web-based dissemination the status of other forms of product will also need to be considered, including the provision of data in Excel format and the facility for users to build their own tables on the producer's website by using a menu to extract data from an underlying database.

13. The next step will be to contact those HoPs responsible for the statistics in Annex A and seek their comments on our proposed recommendations. This will help inform the final Report which will be brought to the Authority meeting in November, with a covering paper that will invite the Authority:
 - i. to consider whether to issue section 16 notifications in respect of the statistics in Annex A
 - ii. to consider whether to write to Ministers about the items listed in Annex B
 - iii. to agree the text of the Report, and
 - iv. to agree to publish the current list of National Statistics (to be annexed to the Report).

Jill Barelli, Monitoring and Assessment Team, October 2008.

List of Annexes

- Annex A: Statistical products the Authority may wish to consider for a section 16 notification**
- Annex B: Other statistical products which may be submitted for designation by producers**
- Annex C: Non-designated products rated by HoPs as of high importance and serious concern**
- Annex D: Specification of Monitoring Report 3: '*Review of Official Statistics Not Designated as National Statistics*'**

Annex A: Statistical products the Authority may wish to consider for a section 16 notification

- 1. Workplace employment relations survey** (Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform).
Carried out at every few years, this uses questionnaires and interviews with managers, employees and worker representatives to provide evidence about industrial relations and employment practices.
<http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/employment/research-evaluation/wers-2004/index.html>
- 2. Energy sector indicators** (Department of Energy and Climate Change).
Used to measure progress in implementing the major goals of recent white papers – cutting emissions, maintaining a reliable supply of energy in a competitive market, and affordability for consumers. This is a compendium publication that draws information from a wide variety of sources.
<http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/energy/statistics/publications/indicators/page46000.html>
- 3. Fuel poverty** (Department for Energy and Climate Change)
Report with statistical annexes measuring progress towards targets in the fuel poverty strategy. Dataset available on request.
<http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/energy/fuel-poverty/strategy/index.html>
- 4. ODA GNI ratio** (Department for International Development)
Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a proportion of Gross National Income (GNI). Statistical release, also published in section 3 of Statistics on International Development.
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/sid2008/contents.asp>
- 5. Gross affordable housing supply, England** (Communities and Local Government)
New release that will be monitoring progress on PSA20. Covers provision of new homes in the social rented sector and through low cost home ownership schemes.
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/838468>
- 6. Council house sales: England** (Communities and Local Government)
Tables showing Right to Buy sales of Local Authority (LA) and Housing Association (HA) properties, and transfers of LA stock to HAs.
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/socialhousing-sales/>
- 7. Collection rates for council tax and non domestic rates: England** (Communities and Local Government)
Statistical release showing amounts collected by local authorities as a percentage of net collectable debit for that year.
<http://www.local.communities.gov.uk/finance/ctax/data/cp078release.pdf>
- 8. Housing stock: England** (Communities and Local Government)
Annual tables including housing stock by tenure, estimated annual gains and losses, vacant dwellings.
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/stockincludingvacants/>

- 9. Council tax levels set by local authorities: England** (Communities and Local Government)
Statistical release giving details of council tax levels and associated information.
<http://www.local.communities.gov.uk/finance/ctax/ctax089.htm>
- 10. Health profile of England** (Department of Health)
Compendium publication for public service professionals and officials.
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/DH_079716
- 11. National child measurement programme** (NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care)
Report, tables and online database from this programme, in which children in reception and year 6 are weighed and measured in order to assess overweight and obese levels. Collection of data began in 2005/06.
<http://www.ic.nhs.uk/ncmp>
- 12. Statistics on obesity, physical activity and diet: England** (NHS Information Centre)
Compendium publication drawing on a wide variety of sources, including Scottish and Welsh data, and with added analysis. It is on the non-NS list, but the pdf carries the NS logo – status is being checked.
<http://www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics-and-data-collections/health-and-lifestyles/obesity/statistics-on-obesity-physical-activity-and-diet:-england-january-2008>
- 13. Statistics on race and the criminal justice system** (Ministry of Justice)
Statutory publication under the *Criminal Justice Act 1991*. Includes stops by police, arrests and cautions, prosecutions and sentencing, prisons, probation, and victim data from the British Crime Survey. Although described as a compendium, it contains first release data.
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/raceandcjs.htm>
- 14. Witness and victim experience survey** (Ministry of Justice)
National telephone survey of victims and prosecution witnesses and their experience of the criminal justice system. Started in 2005. Relevant to PSA target 24.
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/docs/witness-victims-experience-survey.pdf>
- 15. Judicial and court statistics** (Ministry of Justice)
House of Commons Command Paper covering civil and criminal proceedings and the judiciary. Data sourced from various administrative systems with some manual collections.
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/raceandcjs.htm>
- 16. Statistics on the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act (FoIA) in central government** (Ministry of Justice)
Quarterly statistical release covering requests logged by departmental FoI officers where it was necessary to take a considered view on how to handle the request under the terms of the FoIA. Includes timeliness of response, outcomes of requests and use of appeal processes.
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/freedomofinformationquarterly.htm>

Annex B: Other statistical products which may be submitted for designation by producers

(i) Statistical products where the Head of Profession has already signalled an intention to approach ministers about seeking designation

- 1. NHS referral to treatment waiting times** (Department of Health)
Data collection being developed to measure NHS performance in meeting a key target.
<http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/rtt/index.htm>
- 2. Accident and Emergency (A&E) activity: total time spent in A&E from arrival to admission, discharge or transfer and waiting for emergency admission through A&E.** (Department of Health)
Planning to seek designation once a review of collected data items has taken place.
http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/data_requests/index.htm
- 3. Scottish health survey**
Planning to seek designation before the next publication in mid 2009.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/25145024/50251>
- 4. Scottish house condition survey – ‘key findings’**
Planning to seek designation before the next publication in Dec 2009.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/03/26155927/0>
- 5. Scottish crime and victimisation Survey**
Planning to seek designation before next publication in Sept 2009.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/10/12094216/0>
- 6. House price index** (Communities and Local Government)
Planning to seek designation after investigating seasonal adjustment.
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/housingmarket/publications/communities-local/house-price-index/>

(ii) Experimental Statistics that may be submitted for assessment within the next year

- 7. Northern Ireland index of services**
This measures output from the service industries.
<http://www.detini.gov.uk/cgi-bin/downdoc?id=3777>

[Other experimental items may be added here. Most are produced by ONS. Under section 16 (6) of the Act, the National Statistician will need to notify Parliament about any ONS statistics that she does not wish to be considered for designation].

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Annex C: high importance and serious concern products (according to Heads of Profession)		Frequency	Notes
Department/ administration	Title of product	Frequency	Notes
Communities and Local Government	Levels of Council Tax set by Local Authorities: England	Annual	Producer: departmental target, informs high level policy, generates Parliamentary Questions, media and public interest. However, cannot meet pre-release requirements because the levels being set by local authorities inform Ministerial decisions about whether they should be required to recalculate their budget requirement and council tax. Ministers need to be able to announce such decisions at the same time as the overall council tax levels are published. M&A team: recommend for s.16 in order to consider the pre-release issues in more depth.
Communities and Local Government	Housing Stock: England	Annual	Producer: differences with other sources of data (Valuation Office Agency), but are generally explainable. Data comes from different sources: Census, LAs and Housing Corporation. The further away from a census the less robust the information is likely to be. We are investigating other data sources (VOA). M&A team: if discrepancies generally understood, recommend for s.16 as this is key data - the housing equivalent of population estimates.
Forestry Commission	Softwood Availability Forecasts	5 year intervals	Producer: products not under professional management of HoP (as listed in FC compliance statement). Responsibility for National Inventory and for timber availability forecasts transferred in 2008-09 to Inventory & Forecasting Unit, with expected greater involvement of Statistics HoP. M&A Team: Review progress before next forecast (due in 2010)
Food Standards Agency	National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS)	Newly continuous survey	Producer: concerns about this survey are common to all dietary surveys. Low response rates, low reliability because people forget to mention everything they have eaten. The surveys are burdensome on the individual and expensive to run so sample sizes are small and data is aggregated over several years. M&A team: consider issues raised for a possible Monitoring and Assessment Note.
Northern Ireland	Tourism Performance	Annual	M&A team: Northern Ireland Tourist Board is not a Crown Body and has not yet been included in an Order.
Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Tourism Facts	Annual	M&A team: ditto - currently out of remit.
Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Statistics on the Operation of the Terrorism Act 2000	Annual	M&A team: not published since 2005? Being checked with NI.
Scotland	Scottish Global Connections	Annual	Producer: planning to pursue designation with the Authority once quality issues have been resolved and following a methodology review - before publication in December 2009. M&A team: await outcome of methodology review.
Scotland	Statistics on drug seizures in Scotland	Annual	Producer: planning to pursue designation with the Authority once current issues with data collection/quality are resolved. M&A team: keep under review.
Scotland	Racist incidents recorded by the police	Annual	Producer: planning to pursue designation with the Authority once current issues with data collection/quality are resolved. M&A team: keep under review.
Wales	Substance Misuse	Annual	Producer: this year we provide a link to Welsh Assembly Government Substance Misuse publication. Serious data issues but improving. M&A team: classed by the Assembly Government as experimental statistics. This is a fairly new data collection - keep under review.

Annex D - Specification of Monitoring Report 3 'Review of Official Statistics not Designated as National Statistics'

Extract from paper SA(08)(30) agreed by the Authority at its meeting on 19 September, 2008

Background

1. The Statistics and Registration Service Act defines those statistics and statistical reports that can bear the National Statistics label – essentially those already treated as National Statistics when the Act came into force and any others that Ministers invite the Authority to assess against the Code of Practice, subject of course to the assessment being positive and the National Statistics designation being granted.
2. The Act also defines a substantially wider set of statistics as official statistics and states (section 16) that “where in the case of any official statistics the appropriate authority has notrequested the Board to assess and determine whether the Code of Practice for Statistics has been complied with, and the Board is of the view that it would be appropriate for it to do so, the Board must notify the appropriate authority accordingly.”
3. What this means in practice is that if the Statistics Authority believes that an area of statistical work should be assessed against the Code but it does not have a statutory right to make such an assessment, it must notify the relevant Minister, or other authority, of its views. The Authority must, in most cases, lay a copy of this notification before Parliament and the relevant Minister must then respond by making a statement and laying that before Parliament.
4. One special case is in relation to statistics produced by Office for National Statistics (ONS) where the 'appropriate authority' is the National Statistician. Any decision by the National Statistician not to seek National Statistics designation for a set of statistics requires a statement by the National Statistician to be laid before Parliament (section 16(6)). This clause indicates that in this part of the Act, a clear distinction is drawn between the National Statistician (as producer) and the Statistics Authority (as a scrutiny body).
5. The Act also requires (section 18) that at least once a year, the Statistics Authority must publish a list of statistics designated as National Statistics. Preparatory work will be required to meet this requirement.

Nature of the report

6. The provisions above require the Authority to consider under what circumstances, or against which criteria, it would take the view that a set of 'official statistics' should be assessed against the Code. This exercise has now been carried out and the decisions taken are reflected in the attached text of a request for contributions from the Monitoring and Assessment Team to statistical Heads of Profession (see overleaf).
7. The review report will list those official statistics not currently included as National Statistics which can be readily identified. A comprehensive list is not a realistic goal and would be out of date almost immediately. However a list of nearly 400 such statistical series or reports is already available and this will be used as the basis for the report.
8. Against each of the sets of official statistics identified in the list, the assessment of the relevant Head of Profession against the criteria, the assessment of the

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Monitoring and Assessment Team, and the decision of the Authority on whether to make a notification (see paragraph 3) will be recorded. A decision not to make a notification at this time would not rule out doing so in the future.

9. The report will also explain how other statistics not covered in this report will be identified and considered in a similar way in the future.
10. The report will further list all those statistical series currently designated as National Statistics in accordance with section 18 of the Act. This list will then be updated annually as an annex to the Authority's Annual Report.

Conduct of the review

11. The review will be conducted by the Monitoring and Assessment Team of the Statistics Authority who will seek the assistance of ONS officials and statisticians across all producer bodies. It has been set in train by writing to statistical Heads of Profession asking for their assessments against the criteria (see overleaf).
12. There will not be a formal project board but the Head of Assessment will report progress with the review to each monthly meeting of the Authority board starting with the meeting in September 2008. The work will be led by Jill Barelli and Richard Laux.
13. Before the report is produced, the Monitoring and Assessment Team will meet with relevant Heads of Profession to ensure we understand the information provided, and to ensure that we are aware of any changes that would be required by producers. The report will then be circulated in draft to all statistical Heads of Profession on the understanding that they may offer written comments on behalf of their departments which will either be acted on or included verbatim in the report. We do not anticipate conducting bilateral discussions once the draft report has been circulated as to do so could both undermine the independence of the process and delay the report. Once the report is published however any outstanding differences of view will be the subject of bilateral discussion with the relevant producer body.

Timetable

14. We aim to publish this report alongside the final report on the Code of Practice (target date 6 January). To meet that timetable, it will need to be circulated in draft form no later than the end of October. With that in mind, it is proposed that an advanced draft be submitted for approval to the 23 October meeting of the Statistics Authority and the final report agreed at the meeting on 27 November.

Annex D (continued)

E-mail to statistical HOPs, asking them to provide information about official statistics

Dear Head of Profession,

As I flagged up in my email of 5 August, the Statistics Authority has decided that one of its early priorities will be the production of a report on the subject of statistics not currently included within 'National Statistics'. In this context I would be very grateful if you could provide me with some information about the official statistics for which you are responsible. (I have included all HOPs in this circulation, as a stimulus to help produce a complete list of official statistics).

The latest list of these statistics that I have is here. [file removed - contains approximately 380 series]. The information that I am after is the answer to two questions, about each statistic/product.

First, in your view how important is the statistic (in the context of it being considered as a potential candidate National Statistic)?

Second, how would you assess any concerns about the statistic/product?

For both questions I would suggest "1=low/minimal", "2=medium", and "3=high/serious". In order to try to achieve some comparability, and to try to make the task a little easier, here is a set of considerations which you might wish to bear in mind in answering the two questions.

Importance

1. Whether this set of statistics been used over the last few years in answering a Parliamentary Question, or quoted in a Ministerial speech
2. Whether the statistic has been used in setting or calibrating any Public Service Agreements (PSA) (or related) targets; whether it is used in measuring progress against such targets
3. Whether the statistic is produced under statute
4. Whether the statistic is used in allocating public resources, or other significant operational decision making by your department or an agency
5. Whether the statistic has been used in the last few years to inform the development of a high profile policy
6. Whether the statistical product contains new data or analysis
7. Whether the publication of the statistic typically generates media reporting
8. Whether the statistic illustrates a topic that might be considered of significant public interest

Concern

1. Whether you are aware of any users' (including Ministers) reservations about the quality of the statistic or the production/governance
2. Whether the statistic has been the subject of media (including the specialist media) concern or speculation
3. Whether you, as Head of Profession, have expressed concerns or doubts about any aspects of the statistic

Needless to say, if there are exceptional circumstances relating to any set of statistics – such as them being discontinued shortly – it would be helpful to flag these up.

I would be grateful for responses by Friday 5 September.

The Monitoring and Assessment Team (of the Statistics Authority) will then review this material and will produce a draft report including recommendations for any official statistics which we think should be notified under s16(1)(b) of the Statistics Act. Whilst this will be based on (and indeed will include) the material you provide, we will of course make our own judgements. In making any recommendations we will doubtless need to return to some of you to ask for more information - including of course any changes that would be required. This would give us the opportunity to discuss the recommendations themselves too – we are keen to avoid surprises.

Richard Laux

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(08)38

Identifying and Responding to the User Voice

Purpose

1. This note covers a paper first presented to the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) at the meeting on 13 October 2008. At that meeting it was agreed that this paper should be submitted for further discussion at the meeting of the Authority on 23 October.
2. The paper argues that the Authority should promote a change in the priorities of statistical producers towards both identifying user needs and demonstrating responsiveness to those needs. It proposes that a Monitoring Report be prepared on this topic, seeking in particular to gather together evidence of responsiveness to users across the Government Statistical Service (GSS) and practical ideas on how to make the user voice more audible.

Timing

3. If we were able to make some proposals on this subject by the end of March 2009, the Authority would be able to report on its initiatives in this area in its first Annual Report to Parliament.

Recommendations

4. The Authority is invited to ask the Monitoring and Assessment Team to prepare a formal specification for a Monitoring Report that would cover the ground outlined in the paper and engage appropriate external users and other experts in consideration of the best way to identify and respond to the user voice.

Discussion

5. At the meeting on 13 October, members of the Committee for Official Statistics recognised that there is a real problem in finding out what the multitude of users of statistics want and need; but that documentation of these needs is essential if we are to publicly justify current activities and priorities and also to plan effectively for the future. There is no simple solution. Instead, progress is likely to involve a lot of separate steps. The meeting considered distinct aspects to user engagement, in particular the need to document accurately the different uses of statistics, to evaluate the effectiveness of engagement between producers and users of statistics, and the effectiveness of processes for deciding between the priorities of the various *users* and *uses* of statistical products.
6. The Committee also discussed the importance of a comprehensive and effective Authority user engagement programme, and how it might relate to Office for National Statistics (ONS) activity in this area. It would be useful to review recent user engagement exercises, particularly the steps taken in relation to the 2011 Census.
7. The merits of various engagement strategies and associated funding questions were also reviewed. In summary, the Committee:
 - recognised the difficulty in identifying the full range of users beyond those already represented by organised user groups;
 - considered that focussing on identifying the *uses* made of statistics was an approach which could prove fruitful, and would provide essential information to inform Government decisions about allocation of resources for statistical production;

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- acknowledged the public sector resource environment was tight and was likely to remain so over the period of the current and next spending review periods. There was therefore a limit to what might be achieved in terms of resources for statistical work, but the evidence of user need would be important whether or not there was additional resources available;
 - agreed that identifying user needs and strengthening the user voice was a complex, long-term and challenging objective. It was important that the Monitoring Report set realistic ambitions and a clear timetable for delivery;
 - noted that there was a reasonable expectation among users that the Statistics Authority would champion their needs and be seen to take actions to strengthen the user voice;
 - considered the question of funding administrative support for the Statistics Users Forum (raised by Professor Adrian Smith whilst he was Deputy Chair) and decided this might be considered further as part of the work for the Monitoring Report and would require further dialogue with Economic and Social Research Council and the Royal Statistical Society.
8. In the context of this discussion the Committee agreed to recommend to the Board of the Authority that the Monitoring Report be commissioned.

Secretariat, October 2008

List of Annexes

**Annex A Paper submitted to the Committee for Official Statistics,
13 October, 2008 SA(COS)(08)05**

Annex A - Paper submitted to the Committee for Official Statistics, 13 October, 2008 SA(COS)(08)05

Identifying and Responding to the User Voice

Purpose

1. This paper argues that the Committee for Official Statistics should promote a real change in the priorities of all producers of official statistics towards both identifying user needs and publicly demonstrating responsiveness to those needs.

Timing

2. While the issue of user engagement is a long term one, it would be desirable for the Authority to be able to report on early initiatives in this area when it publishes its first annual report to Parliament. That suggests that specific steps should be agreed by the end of 2008 and taken by March 2009.

Recommendation

3. The Committee is invited to:
 - recommend that the Head of Assessment is invited to specify a Monitoring Review on the topic of "Strengthening the User Voice", based on the considerations at paragraph 11, and;
 - seek approval from the Authority for a specification of such a review.

Discussion

4. A paper for the July meeting of the Committee, *Meeting Users' Needs* [SA(COS)(08)04], argued that the Committee should approach much of its remit from the perspective of the user of statistics. It raised the question of whether sufficient work is being invested across the statistical service in understanding the use made of statistics and the related needs of users.
5. There are three key arguments as to why an initiative should be taken:
 - i. Users feel that their voice is not currently being heard sufficiently clearly - this may have serious consequences for funding, planning, delivery and securing public value.
 - ii. There is no single, simple solution. It is more realistic to think in terms of a large number of initiatives, some of which may already be in hand but are not sufficient in themselves. The aim would be to achieve a substantive improvement in engagement between producers of statistics and users, particularly users outside government, as it is their needs which so often seem difficult to ascertain with confidence and are therefore hard to factor into planning and funding discussions.
 - iii. The process of improving engagement must be seen as iterative and self-reinforcing. Statistical producers need to be able to publicly demonstrate that they are responding to the views and priorities that are being expressed by users. Without that, it is unlikely that users will see much value in devoting efforts to engaging with producers. Conversely if such a demonstration of responsiveness *is* recognised publicly this would in turn help users to publicly support producers.
6. The first argument above is a view widely shared by users and other commentators but it is not clear that many producers of statistics necessarily share it. Some of the statistical offices in government departments are very focused on their internal departmental users – who are well placed to make sure that the statisticians retain that focus. There is thus a need to raise awareness that responding to the needs of external bodies – such as local authorities, business, the voluntary sector and the general public – offers great potential

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authorities, business, the voluntary sector and the general public – offers great potential benefits both in terms of the public good and in providing incontrovertible evidence of the value of the statistical product.

7. One step that is being taken here is to recast parts of the draft Code of Practice to bring together and emphasise the requirements relating to user engagement. This suggestion emerged from discussions with the Royal Statistical Society and Statistics Users Forum (SUF). The Code of Practice can be seen as the manifesto of the Authority and will help to send a clear message, particularly if the Assessment function is tailored to reinforce that message. But this on its own may not win the hearts and minds of government statisticians.
8. Some producers may argue that they are not resourced to identify or meet the needs of a wider range of users than they currently serve, and that it is unrealistic to expect them to re-prioritise their existing, committed, resource. Given the public finance situation this might be a powerful argument in favour of the status quo – yet there is a strong counter-argument that many of the activities that would assist the user community are relatively inexpensive. There is a common assumption that users want ever more data on a topic. The SUF has suggested to us that this is no longer the case. Users often give more priority to someone being available to explain the existing statistics to them above the desire for more data. These are messages that need to be conveyed more effectively to the statistical community in government.
9. The second argument suggests that the Authority should actively canvass for ideas that will make a difference and not limit itself to a small number of high-profile steps. It might rather lend its support to as many initiatives as it can identify that seem likely to enhance user engagement and then commission work to assess the impact of those initiatives. There are already many existing ideas, some of which are being pursued, including improving websites, helping to support user events and organisations, developing interactive online statistical products, and arranging special events and products. And the idea of the Authority supporting SUF was raised by Professor Adrian Smith. An inventory of steps already being taken to improve user engagement would be helpful and might show up where the deficiencies are.
10. On the third argument, the SUF has pointed to a set of common user priorities that it announced in about 2005. It believes that there has been little government response to these priorities. That may or may not be the case and producer bodies may or may not accept the validity of the priorities that were put forward. However, it is clearly essential that bodies that aspire to represent the needs of users to government feel assured that their voice is being heard and are able to convey that message to their members and others. Users can only be expected to invest time and effort in discussing their needs if they believe the statistical service will be responsive. Therefore, the Authority may need to gather tangible evidence of government departments and other producers actually responding directly to identified user requirements and to reassure the SUF on the specific issues raised in the past.
11. Drawing together the action points here, the Authority might consider:
 - i. Inviting the Monitoring and Assessment Team to estimate the proportion of the resources allocated to statistics that is currently devoted to user engagement. This would help the Authority assess in broad terms what this proportion might need to be, in order to support the type of user engagement that it considers appropriate.
 - ii. Taking steps to explain to statisticians in government what better user engagement might look like and what might follow from it. The aim would be to reassure producers of statistics that it is not simply a rod for their backs. Indeed it might prove

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to be the route to wider recognition and appreciation of the service they provide. The Code of Practice and Assessment function can be used to drive home the message that effectively user engagement is central to the professional role.

- iii. Canvassing widely, including overseas, for ideas that would improve user engagement and support all such initiatives that seem likely to show benefit. Carry out an inventory of steps already being taken and make an assessment of those to identify where more initiatives are most needed.
 - iv. Developing further central support for the user community – supporting meetings and events and inviting bilateral dialogue with leading user voices – whilst recognising that the user representative bodies are only part of a bigger picture.
 - v. Gathering together examples of government departments and other producer bodies changing their service in direct response to identified user needs – and then seek user views on those examples. This positive feedback - that responding to a user view is demonstrably worth the effort - may be critical to making an iterative approach to improvement self-reinforcing.
 - vi. Inviting its Monitoring and Assessment Team to identify good practice in relation to user engagement (and more generally) as a by-product of its formal Assessment activity
12. This work could be taken forward most coherently in the form of a Monitoring Report. If conducted alongside the report on Long Term Planning any proposals for improving user engagement in a sustained fashion could be part of an input to the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). It would also complement work planned by the National Statistician, in her role as Head of the Government Statistical Service (GSS), to improve 'stakeholder engagement' by producer bodies.

Monitoring and Assessment Team, October 2008

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

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The UK Statistical System

Purpose

1. This note covers a paper first presented to the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) at their meeting on 22 July. The paper was revised in light of discussion and an amended version was presented to the COS meeting of 13 October 2008. At that meeting it was agreed that this paper should be submitted to the next meeting of the Authority.

Recommendation

2. This paper is presented for information.

Secretariat, October 2008

**Paper submitted to the Committee for Official Statistics, 13 October, 2008
SA(COS)(08)07**

The UK Statistical System

Purpose

1. This is a further iteration of the paper which was presented to the first meeting of the Committee on Official Statistics, *The UK Statistical System* [SA(COS)(08)02]. This described the essential features of the UK statistical system and highlighted those elements of the system which might pose a particular challenge for the Committee.
2. This latest iteration of the paper includes:
 - a new Annex – **Annex A(ii)** – which describes the extent to which the UK statistical system has already, and will continue to be, expanded by a series of *Official Statistics Orders* listing each of the non-Crown Bodies which have been deemed by Ministers to be producers of official statistics.
 - a new Annex – **Annex B(i)** – which describes the framework of ‘User Groups’ who use official statistics, and how they connect to the overall Government Statistical Service (GSS) Committee structure.

Recommendations

3. The Committee for Official Statistics are invited to:
 - note the key features of the UK statistical system which are set out in the attached discussion paper (and supporting Annexes), and the challenges they pose;
 - consider the new governance arrangements which have been put in place to complement those devised for the Authority;
 - commission any further papers that may be required on this topic.

James Denman, National Statistics and International Division (ONS), October 2008

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Annex A Discussion paper: The UK Statistical System

Annex A(i) The Size and Extent of the GSS component of the UK Statistics System

Annex A(ii) Other Producers of Official Statistics (who are neither Crown bodies nor affiliated to the GSS)

Annex B Diagram of the UK Statistical System

Annex B(i) The non-Government User Community

Annex C Different Categories of Official Statistics

Annex A - Discussion Paper: The UK Statistical System

Introduction

The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 provides only a partial description of the UK statistical system over which the UK Statistics Authority now presides. The Act incorporates several features retained from earlier statistical reforms but makes no mention, for instance, of the 'Government Statistical Service' (GSS) which was launched 40 years ago and which, currently, acts as a lynchpin for the whole UK system. The Act also departs from tradition by creating the conditions for expanding the UK statistical system well beyond its historical or traditional borders. This paper provides further details about the new arrangements established under the Act and describes the extent to which that system might pose challenges for the Statistics Authority.

Key Features of the UK Statistical system

The UK Statistical system which has evolved since the Second World War can be characterised by five distinct features:

(i) Decentralisation

Decentralisation, whereby each Government Department or Agency retains responsibility for the production of statistics relating to its own areas of policy or operational responsibility, has been a key feature of the UK statistical system since its inception. It has also been described as both a source of strength for the system (insofar as it keeps statisticians close to their policy customers and maintains statistical expertise across government) as well as a source of weakness (because it can create conflicts of loyalty by requiring government statisticians to serve two masters – the needs of their departments, as well as the demands of their profession).

(ii) The Government Statistical Service (GSS)

The GSS, which was established in 1968, is an umbrella community which is spread across about 40 separate government departments and agencies and which provides the glue that binds government statisticians together, and counters the centrifugal forces of decentralisation. It is led by a cadre of professional statisticians, coordinated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) from the centre, thereby ensuring that official statistics are managed in accordance with a professional framework. It consists of all those statisticians and other analysts across government, as well as their support staff, who are responsible for the collection, production, analysis and dissemination of official statistics, and who are ultimately responsible to the National Statistician, acting in her capacity as the Head of the GSS, through their own departmental Head of Profession. The Table in **Annex A(i)** shows the size of the GSS and the extent of its statistical reach. The National Statistician's governance of the GSS is implemented through the new cross-government committee system illustrated in **Annex B(i)**. (Further information on the GSS statistical work planning system is given in a separate paper). Two other features of the GSS are also worth mentioning:

GSS Heads of Profession

The operational viability of the GSS depends on a network of Heads of Profession known colloquially as 'HoPs'. Twenty three UK Government Departments/Agencies which have a significant GSS 'presence' - in terms of either their production or use of GSS statistics – have appointed their own designated Statistical Head of Profession. Five organisations in the three devolved administrations have done likewise. As well as being accountable to their own Ministers and departmental line managers, and working closely with the heads of the other analytical professions in their departments, these Heads of Profession/Chief Statistician are responsible to the National Statistician for the

professional competence and quality of the statisticians and statistics which they manage.

Statisticians in Government Team (SiGT)

On personnel matters, the National Statistician fulfils her role as Head of the GSS with the help of the SiGT which is a dedicated unit positioned within the ONS responsible for setting and maintaining standards across the GSS covering professional recruitment, qualifications, training, development and promotion.

(iii) Devolution

The decentralised organisation of official statistics in the UK was further reinforced ten years ago by the Devolution Settlement of 1998 which assigned responsibility for the production of official statistics between the UK Government, and the three separate administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, depending on whether those statistics relate to 'reserved matters' (i.e. matters reserved to the UK Government) or 'devolved matters'. Although all three of the devolved administrations have signed-up to the spirit of the Statistics Act, they have retained the right to mould certain legislative features to suit their own local circumstances – pre-release access being a case in point. Whilst some would argue that devolution has compromised the coherence of statistics across the UK, others would argue that it has made official statistics more relevant to the separate constituencies they serve. A new Inter-Administration Committee (IAC) has been established to oversee this area (See **Annex B(i)**).

(iv) Designation

Since June 2000, when the concept of 'National Statistics' was first launched, each of the statistical products managed by each organisation affiliated to the GSS have been labelled and branded according to whether or not they comply with a professional Code of Practice. Clause 12 of the Act allows all official statistics which were labelled as 'National Statistics' before April 2008 to retain their designation unless, and until, their designation is re-assessed by the Authority's Assessment Team. It remains to be seen whether the compliance regime which prevailed under the previous non-statutory system will stand up to close examination by the Authority's Assessment and Monitoring Team.

(v) A new feature

As well as retaining the four historical features described above, the Act has also introduced an entirely new dimension by introducing the concept of 'official statistics'. This concept extends the Statistics Authority's remit to cover not only those statistics produced by the GSS, but also all of the 'statistics' produced by Crown bodies, howsoever defined. In addition, the Act goes even further by extending the boundaries of the UK statistical system, and the Authority's remit, by giving Government Ministers the option to extend the definition of 'official statistics' to embrace, in addition, any statistics produced by any of the Non-Crown Bodies which either come under their Ministerial jurisdiction, or are linked to their Department in some way (See **Annex A(ii)**). It is difficult at this early stage to determine what impact this latest reform will have on the system simply because very little is known about the kinds of statistics these Non-Crown Bodies produce. (**Annex C** provides further details of the different categories of official statistics which now come within the Authority's remit). Here again, it remains to be seen whether this expansion in scope will prove to be an operational challenge for the Authority.

Annex A(i) - The Size and Extent of the GSS component of the UK Statistics System

The GSS comprises some 6,500 persons, the vast majority of whom are Civil Servants, about half of whom work in the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The remainder work is in 36 other UK Government Departments and Agencies, and in four statistical organisations in the two devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, 27 of which have appointed their own Head of Profession for Statistics. About 80% of all professionals in the GSS work outside the ONS alongside their policy colleagues. Although the equivalent staff in Northern Ireland are not affiliated to the GSS, they work very closely with the GSS and share a common professional culture. Together, the GSS manages a wide range of censuses, surveys and data sources from which they produce some 1,600 individual statistical products, about 80% of which are labelled as Code-compliant 'National Statistics'. About four fifths of all official statistics designated as 'National Statistics' are produced by GSS members working outside the ONS in other organisations.

Department Administration Agency	HoP (-)	No. of GSS staff**	of which professional staff	Total Number of Products	of which 'National Statistics' Products	of which 'Official Statistics' or Products
Audit Commission		1	1	-	-	-
Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)	-	80	44	28	22	6
Cabinet Office (CO)	-	3	1	-	-	-
Children, Schools, and Families (Department for) (DCSF)	-	323	100	37	37	-
Communities and Local Government (CLG)	-	77	53	50	30	20
Competition Commission		2	2	-	-	-
Culture, Media and Sport (Department for) (DCMS)	-	12	5	3	2	1
Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA)	-	200	75	19	17	2
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Department for) (DEFRA)	-	129	46	73	67	6
Food Standards Agency (FSA)	-	6	5	-	-	-
Forestry Commission (FC)	-	7	3	17	5	12
General Register Office for Scotland (GRO(S))***	-	100	17	(45)	(41)	(4)
Health (Department of) (DH)	-	48	48	18	12	6
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	-	40	17	6	4	2
HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)	-	650	125	81	79	2
HM Treasury (HMT)	-	27	22	4	4	-
Highways Agency		2	2	-	-	-
Home Office (HO)	-	106	24	16	13	3
House of Commons Library		1	1	-	-	-
Health & Social Care Information Centre (IC)	-	300	52	62	41	21

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Information Services Division – Scotland (ISD(S))***	-	200	1	(46)	(36)	(10)
Innovation, Universities, and Skills (Department for) (DIUS)	-	(See DCFS)		12	12	-
Insolvency Service		3	3	-	-	-
International Development (Department for) (DfID)	-	30	26	3	1	2
Local Government Data Unit		1	1	-	-	-
Ministry of Justice (MoJ)	-	65	28	24	14	10
National Audit Office (NAO)		3	3	-	-	-
Office for National Statistics*	-	3,374	219	376	267	109
Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)	-	20	19	-	-	-
Office of Fair Trading (OfT)		5	5	-	-	-
Office of Manpower Economics (OME)	-	7	7	4	-	4
Office of Rail Regulation		3	3	-	-	-
Office of Telecommunications		1	1	-	-	-
Office of Water Services (OfWat)		2	2	-	-	-
Passenger Focus		1	1	-	-	-
Scottish Government (SG)***	-	172	108	190	166	24
Transport (Department for) (DfT)	-	80	42	41	37	4
Valuation Office Agency		1	1	-	-	-
Work and Pensions (Department for) (DWP)	-	362	137	43	41	2
Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)	-	100	54	258	206	52
TOTAL (GSS)		6,544	1,304	1,365	1,077	288
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)	-	355	246	184	113	71
GRAND TOTAL		6,899	1,550	1,549	1,190	359

Note 1: Staff Numbers exclude Field Staff in ONS and NISRA employed to collect data for social surveys

Note 2: Product numbers exclude any (as yet ,unidentified) statistics produced by the 38 Non-Crown bodies listed in either the UK Government's 'Official Statistics Order' or the Scottish Government's equivalent Order.

* ONS's 'Other Products' include 22 'Experimental Statistics' , 2 'Other Official Statistics', and 85 products described as 'National Statistics Supporting Material' (e.g. Reports issued in the 'Methodology' series)

**All numbers include professional staff affiliated to other Analytical Groups e.g. Economists, Social Researchers, etc

Annex A(ii) - Other Producers of Official Statistics (who are neither Crown Bodies nor affiliated to the GSS)

The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 gave Ministers the option to extend the definition of official statistics to embrace, in addition, and as appropriate, any statistics produced by any of the Non-Crown Bodies which come under their jurisdiction, or are linked to their Departments in any way.

To date, UK Government Ministers and Scottish Government Ministers have exercised this option in only a limited way, and their decisions to date have been published by means of the following two statutory instruments:

- *The Official Statistics Order 2008* - which listed 37 Non-Crown Bodies
- *The Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008* - which listed three Non-Crown Bodies (two of which replicate those listed in the UK Government's Order)

However, neither of these two Orders identify which of the mass of quantitative information produced and published by the various public bodies named in each Order are deemed to be 'official statistics' in the context of the Act.

Cabinet Office statistical staff and their Department's legal counsel are currently drafting a third such Order which is likely to list another 30 or so additional public bodies whose 'statistics' have been deemed to come within the UK Statistics Authority's remit. This third Order will also limit itself to listing only the names of the public bodies deemed by Ministers to be producers of official statistics. As with the previous two Orders, it will not identify which of their quantitative products will be regarded as 'official statistics'.

Once this latest (third) Order has been presented to Parliament, and thereafter, Cabinet Office will leave it to the individual Departments concerned to draw up any further Orders, or any revisions to existing Orders.

The additional public bodies listed in the first two Orders described above are as follows:

The Official Statistics Order 2008

(Note: Ministers have subsequently decided that those bodies marked with an @ should be removed from the list when the Second Order is published)

- Audit Commission for Local Authorities and the NHS in England and Wales
- British Hallmarking Council @
- Certification Officer
- Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Coal Authority
- Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection
- Commission for Social Care Inspection
- Commission for the New Towns
- Consumer Panel
- Design Council
- Fleet Air Arm Museum @
- Gas and Electricity Consumer Council
- Health and Social Care Information Centre*
- Health Protection Agency
- Hearing Aid Council @
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
- Higher Education Statistics Agency
- Housing Corporation
- Independent Police Complaints Commission

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- Learning and Skills Council for England
- National Army Museum @
- National Patient Safety Agency
- National Policing Improvement Agency
- National Treatment Agency
- Natural Environment Research Council
- Northern Ireland Policing Board
- Office of Communications
- Parole Board
- Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland
- Royal Air Force Museum @
- Royal Marines Museum @
- Royal Naval Museum @
- Royal Navy Submarine Museum @
- Student Loans Company
- Urban Regeneration Agency
- Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

* Included in the Order because it a Special Health Authority and therefore not a Crown Body (although it is affiliated to the GSS and therefore also included in Annex A(i))

The Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008

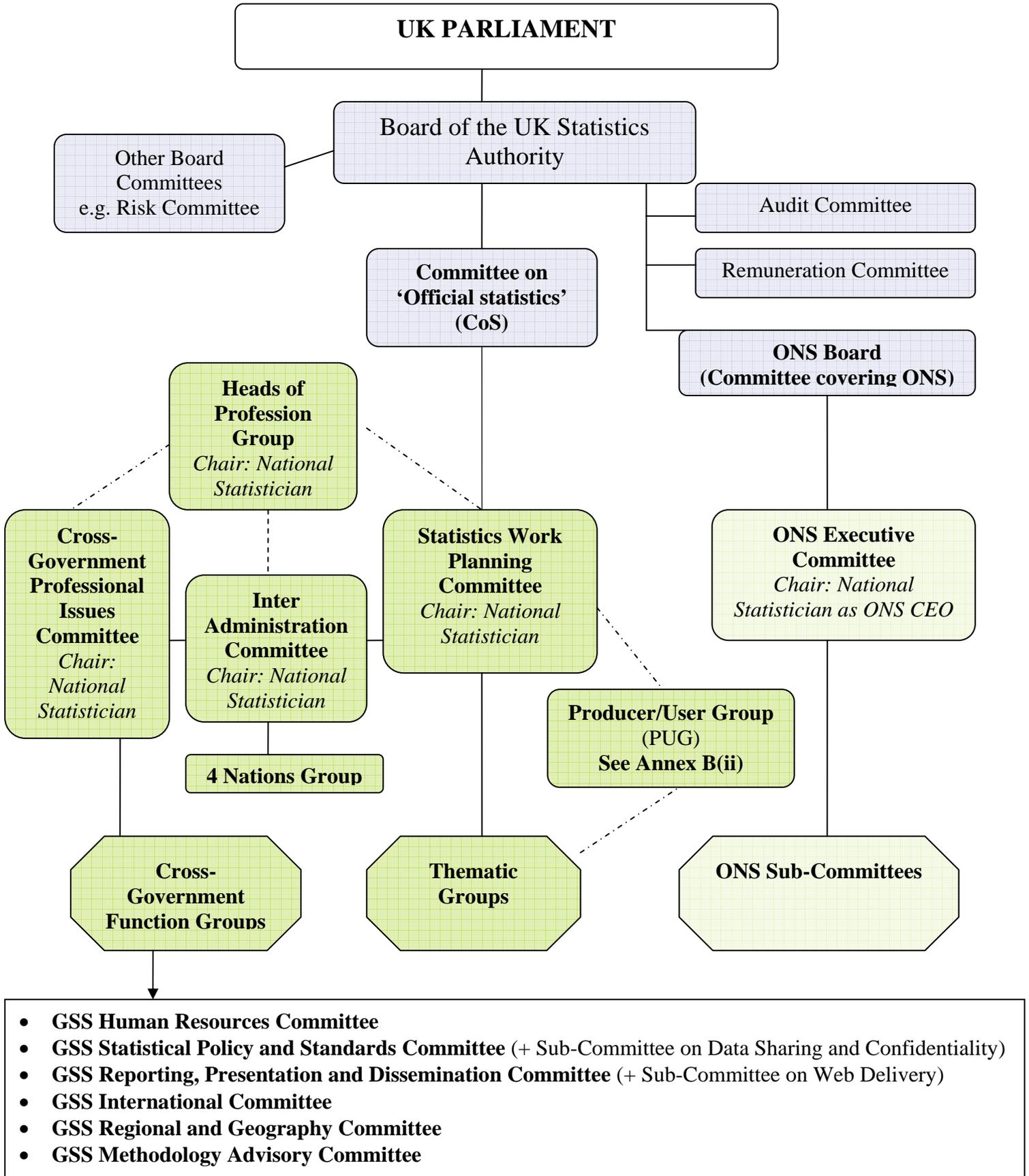
- Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service
- Higher Education Statistics Agency**
- Student Loans Company**

** Registered in England and, therefore, listed in the UK Government's Order as well

The next UK Government Order

The Cabinet Office's proposal for a second UK Government Order (which will also revise the first Order) are contained as a separate paper on this agenda. The net effect of deletions from the first Order, and additions generated by the Second Order will be an initial expansion of the UK statistical system to include the statistics produced by a total of 63 Non-Crown Bodies.

ANNEX B - Diagram of the UK Statistical System



- **GSS Human Resources Committee**
- **GSS Statistical Policy and Standards Committee** (+ Sub-Committee on Data Sharing and Confidentiality)
- **GSS Reporting, Presentation and Dissemination Committee** (+ Sub-Committee on Web Delivery)
- **GSS International Committee**
- **GSS Regional and Geography Committee**
- **GSS Methodology Advisory Committee**

LEGEND

UKSA Committees/Sub-Committees (top):	
Cross-Government Committees: (bottom left)	
ONS-only Committees (bottom right):	

Annex B(i) - The Non-Government User Community

The main body through which the ONS, on behalf of the GSS, liaises with the non-government user community is the Statistics User Forum (SUF) which is the successor to the long-established Statistics User Council (SUC). The SUF operates as an umbrella body coordinating and channeling the views and voices of some 20 or more individual user groups. The SUF is supported by a grant from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and is administered by the Royal Statistical Society (RSS).

The National Statistician and ONS Directors meet regularly with SUF Executives to discuss user needs - in what is known as the Producers and Users (PUG) meeting - and ONS sends an observer to the regular SUF meetings which involve representatives from each of its member User Groups. ONS and other GSS representatives also contribute to, and attend, the annual SUF Conference. GSS Departments and individuals also liaise more directly, as required, and as appropriate, with representatives of each of the individual user groups

SUF and individual User Groups views are subsequently articulated by ONS and the rest of GSS, as appropriate, in the various GSS producer committees. The following groups and organisations are represented on the Statistics User Forum

Affiliated groups

Association of Census Distributors
British Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (BURISA)
Business Statistics User Group
Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics User Group
Demographic User Group
Financial and Economic Statistics User Group
Fire and Rescue Services User Group
Gender Statistics User Group
Health Statistics User Group
International Trade Statistics User Group
Labour Market Statistics User Group
Local Authority Research and Intelligence Association (LARIA)
National Accounts User Group
Output Area Classification User Group
RSS Official Statistics Section
RSS Social Statistics Section
Society of Business Economists
Transport Statistics User Group

Co-opted groups

Market Research Society
Association of Regional Observatories
British Society for Population Studies

Observers

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Office for National Statistics
Local Government Association

Annex C The Different Categories of Official Statistics

Context

The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 refers to two types of 'statistics' - 'official statistics' (all of which come within the UK Statistics Authority's overall 'monitoring' remit) and a subset of official statistics' called 'National Statistics' - labelled as such because they are deemed to be compliant with the Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics. Although the Act provides a definition of the word 'official', it makes no attempt to define the word 'statistics'.

'Official statistics' - produced by Crown Bodies

In the context of the Act, this term covers all those statistical outputs produced by (i) the Statistics Authority and its executive office - the ONS; (ii) other UK Government departments and agencies; (iii) the Scottish Administration (iv) A Welsh Ministerial Authority (v) a Northern Ireland department; and (vi) any other person acting on behalf of the Crown – all of which bodies can be described collectively as 'Crown body producers'. [Note: This definition covers a very large number of public bodies, and goes much wider, therefore, than the portfolio of statistical outputs produced by members of the Government Statistical Service (GSS).]

Official Statistics - produced by Non-Crown Bodies

The Act also allows Ministers to specify, through secondary legislation (i.e. via an Order), which of the various non-Crown bodies which come under their jurisdiction, produce 'official statistics' so that their statistical products can also be subject to monitoring by the Statistics Authority and be eligible for assessment as 'National Statistics'. This provision was designed to ensure a broad definition of 'official statistics' from the start, as well as a flexible one which can be adapted over time to suit changing circumstances.

'National Statistics'

The Act allows this label to be applied only to a specific subset of 'official statistics' i.e. those which are deemed to be compliant with the Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics - currently the existing National Statistics Code; but, eventually, the Statistics Authority's own Code. In practice, and for some time to come, the label will comprise three basic types:

- **Legacy 'National Statistics'** - any statistical products which obtained their designation as 'National Statistics' before April 2008 in accordance with the arrangements set out in the *Framework for National Statistics (2000)* and which have retained their status, but which have not yet been formally re-assessed by the Authority for compliance with its Code of Practice;
- **Re-assessed 'National Statistics'** - any statistical products which have had their retained 'NS' status confirmed by the Authority after a formal re-assessment of compliance;
- **New 'National Statistics'** - any statistical products which have been nominated by Ministers (or by the National Statistician in the case of ONS) as first-time candidates for 'National Statistics' status; which have been subject to their first formal assessment by the Authority; which have been subsequently certified by the Authority as compliant with its Code of Practice for Statistics; and which, as a result, have been granted 'NS' accreditation by the Authority.

The UK Statistics Authority's remit and its Code of Practice

The Authority's overall duty to monitor and report on the production and publication of official statistics means that its remit extends across all official statistics wherever produced, and regardless of whether they are produced by Crown Bodies, or by those

Non-Crown Bodies which have designated as producers of official statistics by Order.

The standards of best practice set out in the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice (which will also encompass the principles and rules governing pre-release access set out in the Pre-Release Access Order 2008) will apply to all official statistics. However, only existing National Statistics, or statistics nominated for such status, will be formally assessed for compliance with the Authority's Code.

A Note on 'Experimental Statistics'

This is a label created and used originally by the ONS, but which has now been adopted by some other Government Departments. The label applies to a particular category of official statistics which fit the definition given in the existing *Protocol on Presentation, Dissemination and Pricing*. It refers, basically, to statistics which are being consciously 'groomed' for NS status when, and if, circumstances permit.

Those 'Experimental statistics' which had not become 'Legacy National Statistics' by 1 April have become, in the context of the Act, 'other official statistics' (albeit with the 'Experimental' label). In the fullness of time, they will have to join the queue of candidates for a formal assessment of compliance.

Although the concept of 'Experimental statistics' receives no mention in the Act, this label will retain its legitimacy simply by dint of the fact that the proposed new Code Of Practice encourages producers of official statistics to continue using this concept.

Different Categories of Official Statistics

The foregoing means that, in practical (but not legal) terms, the term 'official statistics' will embrace four distinct categories of statistics produced by public bodies:

- 'National Statistics' - which are certified as Code-compliant (see above) and which can, therefore, bear the NS Kitemark
- GSS-managed statistics that are not 'National Statistics' - a subset of which may be labelled by the GSS as 'Experimental.' [Note: This is the category to which the GSS Logo would previously have applied]
- Other official statistics produced by Crown Bodies but not under the professional management of the GSS [Note: The Home Office informed Parliament last year that an internal audit had revealed that only 12% of the Home Office's 'official' statistics were produced under the auspices of the GSS]
- Statistics produced by non-Crown Bodies, and listed by Ministers in secondary legislation (i.e. an Order) [Note: Those HoPs with an interest in, and most affected by, such Ministerial decisions are unlikely, at this early stage, to know what sort of 'statistics' these non-Crown bodies produce, nor how they are produced]

Notwithstanding the above, this will leave a large residue of 'numbers' produced by public bodies which will not be defined as 'official statistics' and which will not, therefore, come within the remit of the Authority.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(08)40

Governance of the Authority's Scrutiny Function

Purpose

1. This note is intended to introduce discussion on the topic of governance of the Authority's scrutiny functions - mainly the Assessment functions under sections 12 and 14 of the Act and the Monitoring functions under section 8 of the Act but also its more general overview of the production and publication of official statistics.
2. In August the then Deputy Chair (Statistical System) of the Authority, Professor Adrian Smith, brought to the Chair's attention the issue of how the Authority might best oversee its scrutiny function in general and the work of the Head of Assessment in particular. The Authority held a brief discussion on this matter at its September meeting and agreed to give it further consideration at a future meeting.

Timing

3. The Authority will of course wish to engage the new Deputy Chair (Statistical System) on this subject at an early opportunity. However, further discussion at the 23 October meeting is timely given a range of forthcoming events in November including the Authority's first appearance before members of the House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee.

Recommendations

4. The Authority is invited to further consider:
 - how it should best manage oversight of the Monitoring and Assessment functions;
 - if more than one committee has a role in this respect, what the inter-relationships of those committees should be, and;
 - whether this has implications for the membership of the relevant committee(s).

Secretariat, October 2008