

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

**Meeting of Friday 16 December 2011
Board Room, Drummond Gate, London**

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir Michael Scholar (Chair)

Dr Colette Bowe

Mr Partha Dasgupta

Ms Moira Gibb (from item 6)

Ms Jil Matheson

Mr Stephen Penneck (not for items 12 and 13)

Professor David Rhind

Sir Jon Shortridge

Secretariat

Mr Robert Bumpstead

Mr Mervyn Stevens

Other Attendees

Mr Steve Newman (ONS for item 6)

Mr Richard Laux and Mr Neil Jackson (Monitoring and Assessment for items 9 to 13)

Apologies

Lord Rowe-Beddoe (Deputy Chair, ONS)

Professor Sir Roger Jowell (Deputy Chair, Official Statistics)

Mr Richard Alldritt

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Lord Rowe-Beddoe, Professor Jowell and Mr Alldritt.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes, matters arising from the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 October were accepted as a true and fair account. There were no matters arising.

4. Authority Chair's Report

4.1 The Chair reported that, following the approval motion in the House of Commons and subject to the assent of HM the Queen, Mr Andrew Dilnot CBE would succeed him as Chair of the UK Statistics Authority. The meeting noted that Mr Dilnot would take up post on 1 April 2012, and that Sir Michael would continue as Chair of the Authority until that date.

4.2 The Chair reported that he had written to the Immigration Minister, Damian Green MP on 15 November about a press release made by the Home Office on 4 November which contained statistical information on the volume of class A drug seizures by the UK Border Agency. The publication of the press release, in advance of the official statistics, was irregular and inconsistent with the Code of Practice and the Ministerial Code. The meeting noted that Mr Green had replied on 16 November. The exchange of correspondence had been published on the Authority's website.

4.3 The Chair informed the meeting that he would be writing to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Rt. Hon. Dr. Vince Cable MP about a breach within the Department for Business, Innovation Skills of pre-release access to inflation statistics.

5. Reports from Authority Committee Chairs

Assessment Committee

5.1 In Professor Jowell's absence, the Chair reported on the meeting of the Assessment Committee held on 4 November. The meeting had discussed five draft Assessment Reports and these would be considered later in the meeting.

Committee for Official Statistics

5.2 In Professor Jowell's absence, the Chair reported on the meeting of the Committee for Official Statistics held on 4 November. The meeting had considered a report from the National Statistician on cuts to official statistics, and had considered draft Statistical Expenditure Reports. The meeting had also reviewed a draft Monitoring Brief on maximising the value of administrative data, and had agreed that a further draft should be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

5.3 The Committee had received an update on the strategy for the Government Statistical Service (GSS), and had considered the position of the Senior Civil Service in the GSS. The meeting had also received a progress report regarding house price indices. These indices would transfer from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to ONS.

Office for National Statistics Board (ONS)

5.4 In Lord Rowe-Beddoe's absence, Sir Jon Shortridge reported on the meeting of the ONS Board on 11 November. The meeting had considered a report from the Director General of ONS and had reviewed risks and progress with major programmes and

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projects. The meeting had received a report on the circumstances which led to an error in the ONS release of Index of Services.

5.5 Sir Jon Shortridge also reported on the meeting of the ONS Board held earlier that day. The meeting had considered the usual monthly report from the Director General of ONS and had reviewed risks and progress with major programmes and projects, including Census 2011 and the Web Data Access programme. The Board had considered a progress report on a programme to deliver improvements to the ONS website.

5.6 The meeting had also discussed information technology (IT) and budget issues. The Board congratulated ONS on its success in gaining re-accreditation under the Investors in People scheme.

6. Finance Report 2011/12 [SA(11)71]

6.1 Mr Newman presented a paper which gave a summary of the Authority's latest financial position and details of the recent Supplementary Estimate submission to HM Treasury on the Authority's forecast financial outturn for 2011/12.

6.2 The meeting noted the position.

7. ONS 2012

7.1 Ms Matheson reported on a programme of work to deliver the ONS vision and improvements in ONS outputs and services. Changes to the senior posts at Director level in ONS would be implemented by 31 March 2012. The next stage of the programme would focus particularly on the vision of the future ONS and internal communications.

7.2 The meeting noted developments.

8. Post Legislative Scrutiny: Cabinet Office Memorandum to the Public Administration Select Committee [SA(11)72]

8.1 Mr Bumpstead reported that the Cabinet Office has sent a memorandum to the Public Administration Select Committee on 10 November regarding the post-legislative scrutiny, which has been carried out by the Cabinet Office over the last year or so, of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

8.2 The meeting noted the Cabinet Office memorandum.

9. Progress with Implementing Authority Recommendations [SA(11)73]

9.1 Mr Laux introduced an update on progress in implementing recommendations made by the Authority in Monitoring Reports and Briefs. This was in the form of an individual report for each of eleven Monitoring Reports and Briefs.

9.2 The Authority reviewed progress and approved ten of these progress reports for publication on the Authority's website, subject to agreed amendments and final approval by the Authority Chair. It was agreed that the progress report on the Monitoring Brief: Communicating Inflation should be considered further at the next meeting in the context of an update from ONS on its work on inflation indices.

10. Draft Monitoring Brief: Findings from the Assessment Programme 2009 to 2011 [SA(11)74]

10.1 Mr Laux presented a draft Monitoring Brief which summarised the findings from the Assessment programme from 2009 to date. The report reflected the findings from 169 completed Assessment Reports of a planned 250.

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10.2 The Authority considered the draft and approved its publication, subject to agreed amendments.

11. Draft Statistical Expenditure Reports [SA(11)75]

11.1 Mr Laux presented draft Statistical Expenditure Reports (SERs) regarding:

- changes to statistics on widening participation in higher education, produced by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS); and
- the discontinuation by the NHS Information Centre of social care data collections on people registered as deaf or hard of hearing and grant funded services.

11.2 The Authority approved these SERs subject to agreed amendments.

12. Assessment Reports for Approval [SA(11)76]

12.1 Mr Laux reported that the Assessment Committee had recommended that the following three Assessment Reports be published:

- i. AR 166: Statistics on Corporation Tax (HM Revenue & Customs);
 - ii. AR 167: Statistics on Births, Infant Mortality and Teenage Conceptions in Wales (Welsh Government); and
 - iii. AR 168: Statistics on Building Materials and Components in the UK (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills).
- (In total 3 Assessment reports, covering 4 outputs)

12.2 The meeting approved these Assessment Reports for publication.

12.3 The meeting also approved the publication of Assessment Report 165: Statistics on the Environment in Scotland (Scottish Government), which had been considered by the Authority Board via correspondence.

13. Meeting Requirements: Statistics on Child Protection in Scotland [SA(11)77]

13.1 Mr Jackson presented a report on how the Scottish Government had responded to the Authority's recommendations in Assessment Report 67: Statistics on Child Protection in Scotland. The Authority had removed the National Statistics designation from one of the sets of statistics contained in the release - the number of child protection referrals. The Assessment Team considered that the actions taken by the Scottish Government had adequately addressed the seven Requirements made in the Assessment Report.

13.2 The Authority noted these developments and confirmed designation of Child Protection Statistics (now Children's Social Work Statistics) as National Statistics.

14. Any other business

14.1 There was no other business.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Agenda

Friday, 16 December, 2011

Board Room, Drummond Gate, London, 12:15 - 15:00

Chair: Sir Michael Scholar

**Apologies: Lord Rowe-Beddoe
Mr Richard Alldritt**

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 281011
2	Authority Chair's Report	Oral Report Sir Michael Scholar
3	Reports from Authority Committee Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Assessment Committee● Committee for Official Statistics● ONS Board	Oral Reports Professor Sir Roger Jowell Professor Sir Roger Jowell Lord Rowe-Beddoe
4	ONS 2012	Oral Report Ms Jil Matheson
5	Finance Report 2011/12	SA(11)71 Mr Steve Newman
6	Post-Legislative Scrutiny: Cabinet Office Memorandum to the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC)	SA(11)72 Secretariat
7	Progress with Implementing Authority Recommendations	SA(11)73 Mr Richard Laux
8	Draft Monitoring Brief: Findings from the Assessment Programme 2009 to 2011	SA(11)74 Mr Richard Laux
9	Draft Statistical Expenditure Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Widening Participation in Higher Education● NHS Information Centre Statistics	SA(11)75 Mr Richard Laux
10	Assessment Reports for Approval Meeting Requirements: Statistics on Child Protection in Scotland	SA(11)76 SA(11)77 Mr Richard Laux
11	Any other business	

**Next Meeting: Friday, 27 January, 2012
Drummond Gate, London, 11:00 - 15:00**

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SA(11)71

Finance Report 2011/12

The Authority's Single Supplementary Estimate 2011/12 has been published on the HM Treasury website.

The see the document go to:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/supplementary_estimates1112_sb.pdf

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)72

***Post-Legislative Scrutiny: Cabinet Office Memorandum to the Public
Administration Select Committee (PASC)***

This document is published on the Cabinet Office website.

The see the document go to:

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/post-legislative-scrutiny-statistics-and-registration-service-act-2007-cm-8216>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)73

Progress with Implementing Authority Recommendations

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring-brief-1-2012---monitoring-update---january-2012.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)74

***Draft Monitoring Brief:
Findings from the Assessment Programme 2009 to 2011***

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring-brief-8-2011---findings-from-the-assessment-programme-2009-11.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)75

Draft Statistical Expenditure Reports

These documents have been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see these documents go to:

Statistical Expenditure Report 6: Adult Social Care Statistics for England

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

Statistical Expenditure Report 7: Widening Participation in Higher Education

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

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)76

Assessment Reports for Approval

These documents have been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see these documents go to:

Assessment Report 166: Statistics on Corporation Tax (HM Revenue & Customs)

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-166---statistics-on-corporation-tax.pdf>

Assessment Report 167: Statistics on Births, Infant Mortality and Teenage Conceptions in Wales (Welsh Government)

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-167---statistics-on-births--infant-mortality-and-teenage-conceptions-in-wales.pdf>

Assessment Report 168: Statistics on Building Materials and Components in the UK (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills)

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-168---statistics-on-building-materials-and-components.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)77

Meeting Requirements; Statistics on Child Protection in Scotland

Purpose

1. This paper covers the evidence submitted by the Scottish Government in order for its statistics on Child Protection (Assessment Report 67) to be designated as National Statistics.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to confirm the designation of Child Protection statistics (now *Children's Social Work Statistics*) as National Statistics.

Discussion

3. Assessment Report 67 was published in December 2010. It covered a single statistical output, Child Protection Statistics, produced by the Scottish Government. The report removed the National Statistics designation from one of the sets of statistics contained in the release - the number of child protection referrals. The Assessment Report contained seven Requirements as part of the designation of the remaining statistics. The Scottish Government has been taking forward these Requirements and has submitted a number of progress reports to the Assessment Team; a summary of each Requirement and the actions taken has been included in **Annex A**. The Assessment Team considers that the actions taken by the Scottish Government have adequately addressed the seven Requirements made in the Assessment Report.
4. In particular, Requirement 2 (paragraph 3.8 of the report) 'to address the implication of the removal of National Statistics from the child protection referral statistics' was met by the Scottish Government by virtue of a 'Notice to Users' (see Annex A, paragraph ii. below), which has recently been published on its website. The Scottish Government has also assured us that these statistics will be given much less prominence in the next release, and that the text and tables will clearly highlight to users that they are not designated as National Statistics. The notice also included an overview of the actions that the Scottish Government has taken to improve these statistics.
5. Following a review of statistical collection carried out by the Scottish Government, the publication of child protection statistics will, in future, be published in a statistical publication titled *Children's Social Work Statistics*. This will be a compendium publication containing statistics on child protection, children look after and secure care accommodation. The latest *Children's Social Work Statistics* was published in September 2010. The Scottish Government has assured us that the next edition will be developed to reflect the actions it has taken to improve these statistics and the publication; it will be released in February 2012.

David Duncan-Fraser, Monitoring and Assessment, December, 2011

List of Annexes

Annex A Assessment Team Review of the Evidence Supplied for Meeting the Requirements of Assessment Report 67

Annex A Assessment Team Review of the Evidence Supplied for Meeting the Requirements of Assessment Report 67

- i. **Requirement 1 (paragraph 3.3 of the Report) to take steps to develop a more complete understanding of the use made of the statistics, the needs of current and potential users, and user views of the service provide. Publish the relevant information and assumptions and use them to support the use of the statistics.**

In meeting this Requirement, the Scottish Government has liaised with the 32 councils in Scotland on the development of new guidance for these statistics, alongside having discussions on what statistics should be collected. The Scottish Government told us that the majority of this consultation was with the suppliers of the data, who were also the main users. In May 2011, we noted that the Scottish Government had done little to engage with the wider users of these statistics other than including a link to a consultation on its website; at that time no responses had been received. In November 2011, the Scottish Government published an updated document about the uses and the users of child protection statistics, which included more information about wider users and their needs, as well as a section on areas of unmet needs (link below). We consider that the actions taken by the Scottish Government to address this Requirement are adequate, and the most recent document about the uses of these statistics is helpful. The Scottish Government told us that it will continue to review its uses document as more information is made available to it through its liaison with users and any requests that it receives.

- ii. **Requirement 2 (paragraph 3.8 of the Report) 'Address the implications of the removal of National Statistics status from the child protection referral statistics and publish plans for correcting the weaknesses.'**

The Scottish Government has given assurances that the referral statistics within this publication will be given much less prominence, and that the text and tables will clearly highlight to users that they are not designated as National Statistics. The publication will also provide a clear explanation of why this is the case and what developments have taken place in order to address this in future surveys. The Scottish Government told us that the new guidance that has been created for these statistics no longer uses the term 'Child Protection Referral'. Instead, a local council will receive a 'Notification of Concern' that will require an initial investigation to be conducted, which in turn could result in an initial Child Protection Investigation being held. Future Child Protection Surveys will start counting the number of 'Child Protection Investigations' completed during the reporting period. This will be introduced for 2011/12. This information has been published in a 'Notice to Users' on the Scottish Government website.

- iii. **Requirement 3 (paragraph 3.10 of the Report): 'Promote the comparability within the UK by publishing information on the difference between Child Protection Statistics and corresponding statistics produced in other countries of the UK.'**

The Scottish Government met with colleagues in the other administrations to investigate the differences between each set of Child Protection statistics. These discussions were held in the summer of 2011 at the 'Four Nations' meeting. The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned a study to draw together data on safeguarding children and child protection data and to compare the current position in England with other countries (including across the UK). The study was conducted by the joint University of Edinburgh/NSPCC Centre for UK-wide Learning in Child Protection (CLiCP), and the preliminary findings from this project were published in autumn 2011. The Scottish Government has included a link to the report from its website and also within its 'Notice to Users' (see paragraph ii. above). Since the publication of the UK comparability report, the Scottish Government has started to consult users of these statistics about the need for a comparable dataset to be produced and included within future publications of

Children's Social Work Statistics; this is still ongoing.

- iv. **Requirement 4 (paragraph 3.16 of the Report): 'Include more commentary and analysis within the statistical release and publish information about the policy and operational context for Child Protection Statistics.'**

The Scottish Government told us that it will ensure that the next publication of Children's Social Work Statistics (February 2012) will include explanations of classifications and terminology used, and trends over time. It will also include a section on the developments being introduced as a result of the child protection survey's new revised guidance. Scottish Government statisticians have recently attended in-house training and National Statistician's Office workshops about improving commentary and analysis. The Assessment Team is reasonably confident that the Scottish Government will continue to improve the content of its *Children's Social Work Statistics* publications based on the evidence and commitment that it provided to us.

- v. **Requirement 5 (paragraph 3.17 of the Report): 'Clearly warn users about the limitations of these statistics until the methods have been improved, and to publish information about the quality of Child Protection Statistics in relation to the range of potential uses.'**

The Scottish Government will ensure that the next publication of Children's Social Work Statistics will include a notice to users about the limitations of these statistics, and an explanation of how these statistics will be improved as a result of the new revised survey guidance and the introduction of a new unit level data collection. The 'Notice to Users' (see paragraph ii. above), published on the Scottish Government website also alerts users to the limitations of these statistics and the ongoing developments.

- vi. **Requirement 6 (paragraph 3.18 of the Report) 'Publish supporting documentation for the local authority datasets. In meeting this Requirement, the Scottish Government has reviewed the information provided for use by local authorities to ensure that it is clear and concise.'**

In August 2011, the Scottish Government produced a set of instructions for the local authority datasets to assist all users who use this data to benchmark and compare local authority information. The Scottish Government has published these instructions on its website, with further guidance now included within the separate spreadsheets.

- vii. **Requirement 7 (paragraph 3.23 of the Report): 'Include the specific arrangements in place for using administrative data for Child Protection Statistics in the Scottish Government's Statement of Administrative Sources.'**

The Scottish Government has now included further information about these statistics within its organisational statements. It has also produced a useful and expanded Statement of Administrative Sources for Children and Young People on its website.