

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

**Meeting of Monday 26 September 2011
Board Room, Drummond Gate, London**

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir Michael Scholar (Chair)

Lord Rowe-Beard (Deputy Chair, ONS)

Professor Sir Roger Jowell (Deputy Chair, Official Statistics)

Mr Richard Alldritt

Mr Partha Dasgupta

Ms Moira Gibb

Mr Stephen Penneck (not for item 13)

Professor David Rhind

Secretariat

Mr Robert Bumpstead

Mr Mervyn Stevens

Other Attendees

Mr Joe Grice (Office for National Statistics) for items 6 and 7

Ms Pam Davies (Office for National Statistics) for items 8 and 9

Mr Jason Bradbury (National Statistician's Office) for item 11

Apologies

Dr Colette Bowe

Ms Jil Matheson

Sir Jon Shortridge

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dr Bowe, Ms Matheson and Sir Jon Shortridge.

2. Declarations of interest

Professor Rhind advised the meeting that, in respect of the discussion of the consultation on the government's 'open data' policy, he was Chair of the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information (APPSI) and APPSI would be making its own response to this consultation.

3. Minutes, matters arising from the previous meeting

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 July were accepted as a true and fair account.

3.2 There were no matters arising.

4. Authority Chair's Report

4.1 The Chair reported that he had written to the Director General ONS on 16 August regarding the Authority's concerns about the commentary in the ONS preliminary release of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) statistics for the second quarter of 2011, which had been published on 26 July. This letter had also informed the Director General that the Authority would be undertaking an inquiry into the miscalculation and subsequent correction of the ONS Output of Construction statistics, which were released on 12 August. The draft of the Authority report of that inquiry would be considered later in the meeting.

4.2 The Chair also reported on developments since the last meeting on the recruitment of his successor as Chair of the Authority. The meeting noted that the Cabinet Office had re-advertised the post and that the closing date for applications was 3 October.

4.3 The Chair had given the annual Johnian Lecture at St. John's College, Cambridge on 10 September and the text of the speech had been published on the Authority's website.

4.4 The Authority noted that since the last meeting the Chair had written to:

- the Chair of the Works and Pensions Select Committee, Dame Anne Begg MP and to Ministers at the Department for Work and Pensions regarding statistics on Employment and Support Allowance; and
- the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt. Hon. George Osborne MP regarding the Authority's concerns at the government's position on pre-release access to official statistics, which Mr Osborne had expressed in a letter of 30 July to the Chair of the Public Administration Select Committee, Bernard Jenkin MP; and
- the Secretary of State for Health, Rt. Hon. Andrew Lansley MP about the withdrawal of funding for ONS health statistics.

5. Reports from Authority Committee Chairs

Assessment Committee

5.1 Professor Jowell reported on the meeting of the Assessment Committee held on 7 September. The meeting had discussed ten draft Assessment Reports and had recommended that all of these should be published. The publication of these Assessment Reports would be considered later in the meeting.

5.2 The Committee had considered a timetable for the completion of the first programme of Assessments and proposals for the future evolution of Assessment beyond that. It had

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been agreed that recommendations would be submitted for consideration by the October meeting of the Authority Board. The meeting had also agreed that Monitoring Briefs should be produced on:

- the arrangements for auditing administrative data used to produce official statistics; and
- UK comparability of official statistics.

Committee for Official Statistics

- 5.3 Professor Jowell reported on the meeting of the Committee for Official Statistics held on 7 September. The meeting had agreed that the Authority Chair should write a further letter to the Secretary of State for Health, Rt. Hon. Andrew Lansley MP about cuts in the funding of ONS health statistics. The meeting had agreed that a report should be produced on the overall effects to the statistical system of the cuts in statistical outputs and services.
- 5.4 The Committee had: received a report from the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Quality Taskforce; considered progress with the Monitoring review of statistical releases and publications; and reaffirmed its support for a single website for the dissemination of official statistics. The meeting had also agreed that the Authority should make a response to the consultation on the government's 'open data' policy, and this would be considered later in the meeting.

Office for National Statistics Board (ONS)

- 5.5 Lord Rowe-Beddoe reported on the meeting of the ONS Board held on 16 September. The meeting had considered a report from the Director General of ONS and had reviewed risks and progress with major programmes and projects.
- 5.6 The ONS Board had considered the position regarding the publication of the Blue Book 2011, problems with the new ONS website and the error in the ONS construction statistics published on 12 August. These matters would be further discussed by the Authority later in the meeting.
- 6. Blue Book 2011**
- 6.1 Mr Grice reported on the latest position with regard to the publication of the UK Blue National Accounts 2011, the 'Blue Book'. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) data was on course for publication as scheduled on 5 October but a postponement of the corresponding Sector and Financial Accounts (SFA) now seemed inevitable. Key stakeholders had been informed of the likely delay to the publication of the SFA.
- 6.2 The Authority was concerned to learn of these developments and directed that a date on which the SFA would be published should be announced as soon as possible, and that ONS should work with key stakeholders to ameliorate the consequences of any postponement.

7. ONS Website

The meeting considered the problems that had been experienced by users of the new ONS website. These included broken links, problems with downloading time series data and in readily accessing required statistics. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Authority would continue to monitor closely the programme of improvements to the website that ONS had undertaken to deliver.

8 Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC) Annual Report [SA(11)56]

- 8.1 Ms Davies introduced the third annual report to the Authority from the National

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Statistician's Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC). The report summarised the work of CPAC over the last year and set out its intended work programme for the forthcoming year.

- 8.2 In noting the CPAC Annual Report, the meeting expressed concerns at the pace of delivery against the Authority's priorities for prices indices. This was particularly so in respect of the inclusion of owner occupiers' housing (OOH) costs in an expanded Consumer Prices Index (CPI) - a key priority for the Authority - and accounting for differences between the Retail Prices Index (RPI) and the CPI, particularly in respect of clothing price inflation. It was agreed that, when publishing the report, CPAC and ONS needed to explain more fully the reasons why these changes could not be made until 2013.
- 8.3 In response to a specific recommendation in the CPAC report, the Authority agreed that ONS should change the method used to measure new car prices in the CPI and RPI through the collection of online price information from manufacturers' websites, instead of list prices, and that this change should be implemented for the January 2012 CPI and RPI, subject to communication with the Bank of England and HM Treasury.

9. Progress in Meeting Monitoring and Assessment Recommendations on Inflation Indices [SA(11)57]

- 9.1 Mr Alldritt presented a report on progress made by ONS in addressing the Requirements and Suggestions for improvement in the Assessment Report on Consumer Price Indices and the Monitoring Brief on Communications, which were published in December 2010.
- 9.2 The Authority noted progress. It was agreed that ONS should make a report on progress on strategic issues to a future meeting of the Authority.

10. Authority Inquiry into ONS Construction Statistics Error [SA(11)58]

- 10.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a draft of the report of the inquiry into the error in the ONS statistical bulletin on Construction Output published on 12 August. The Chair had stated in a letter to the Director General ONS on 16 August that the Authority would be undertaking its own independent inquiry into all relevant matters relating to construction statistics, and its findings would be published. The Chair's letter and a reply from the Director General on 17 August had been published on the Authority's website.
- 10.2 The meeting discussed the draft report and agreed that it should be published on the Authority's website, subject to agreed amendments.

11. Developments with the Government's 'Open Data' Policy [SA(11)59]

- 11.1 Mr Bumpstead and Mr Bradbury introduced a paper which provided an update on the government's 'transparency' or 'open data' agenda, and how this policy affected official statistics and the Government Statistical Service (GSS) generally and the UK Statistics Authority more specifically. The Committee for Official Statistics had considered this issue at the meeting on 7 September and it had been agreed that the Authority should submit a response to the government's consultation on 'Making Open Data Real'.
- 11.2 The meeting discussed a draft Authority response to the consultation and agreed that it should be sent to the Cabinet Office and published on the Authority's website, subject to agreed amendments.

12. Draft Monitoring Brief: Climate Change Statistics [SA(11)60]

- 12.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a draft of a Monitoring Brief on the accessibility and coherence of

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statistics about climate change. This revised draft reflected the comments made by the Met Office and it had been discussed with the producers of the statistics in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), and with the National Statistician.

12.2 The meeting considered the draft and agreed that it should be published, subject to agreed amendments, and sent to the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee.

13. Assessment Reports for Approval [SA(11)61]

13.1 The Head of Assessment reported that he and the Assessment Committee had recommended that the following ten Assessment Reports (ARs) be published:

- i. AR 132: Statistics on NHS Secondary Care in Scotland (Information Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland);
- ii. AR 133: Statistics on Housing in Wales (Welsh Government);
- iii. AR 134: Statistics on NHS Wales Performance (Welsh Government);
- iv. AR 135: Statistics on Health and Social Care in Scotland (Information Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland);
- v. AR 136: Statistics on Pre-School Education Provision and Early Years Profile Results in England (Department for Education);
- vi. AR 137: Statistics on Births in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics);
- vii. AR 138: Annual Statistics on Hours and Earnings (Office for National Statistics);
- viii. AR 139: Annual Statistics on Hours and Earning in Northern Ireland (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment Northern Ireland);
- ix. AR 140: Statistics on Families and Households in the UK (Office for National Statistics); and
- x. AR 141: Statistics on Re-offending (Ministry of Justice).

13.2 The meeting approved these Assessment Reports for publication.

14. Any other business

There was no other business.

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Agenda

Monday, 26 September, 2011

Board Room, Drummond Gate, London, 11:15 - 15:00

Chair: Sir Michael Scholar

Apologies: Dr Colette Bowe, Ms Jil Matheson, Sir Jon Shortridge

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 220711
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Blue Book 2011● ONS Website	Oral Report Mr Joe Grice
5	Retail and Consumer Prices Indices: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC) Annual Report● Progress in Meeting Monitoring and Assessment Recommendations	SA(11)56 Ms Pam Davies SA(11)57 Mr Richard Alldritt
6	Authority Inquiry into ONS Construction Statistics Error	SA(11)58 Mr Richard Alldritt
7	Developments with the Government's 'Open Data' Policy	SA(11)59 Mr Robert Bumpstead Mr Jason Bradbury
8	Draft Monitoring Brief: Climate Change Statistics	SA(11)60 Mr Richard Alldritt
9	Assessment Reports (ARs) for Approval	SA(11)61 Mr Richard Laux
10	Any other business	

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SA(11)56

Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC) Annual Report

This report has been published on the Office for National Statistics website.

To see the report go to:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/development-programmes/other-development-work/consumer-prices-advisory-committee/consumer-prices-advisory-committee---2011-annual-report.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)57

Progress in Meeting Monitoring and Assessment Recommendations

Purpose

1. This paper updates the Authority Board on progress that ONS has made in addressing the Requirements and Suggestions for improvement in the Assessment Report on Consumer Price Indices and the Monitoring Brief on Communicating Inflation.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. note the progress that ONS has made in addressing the Requirements and Suggestions for improvement in the Assessment Report and Monitoring Brief;
 - ii. agree to defer full designation of these statistics as National Statistics until Requirements 4 and 5 have been fully addressed; and
 - iii. agree that the Assessment team should provide the Board with further advice on these issues for its meeting in December 2011.

Discussion

3. In December 2010, the Authority published a statement on Measures of Inflation alongside Assessment Report 79 on Consumer Price Indices and a Monitoring Brief on Communicating Inflation. The Assessment Report identified five Requirements and seven Suggestions for improvement. The Monitoring Brief invited ONS and the Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC) to consider eight Suggestions for improvement. The Assessment Report gave a deadline for ONS to report on Requirements 1 to 4 by May 2011, and a deadline of January 2011 to report on Requirement 5, which was to ensure that all releases are issued at 9.30am on the day of release. Requirement 5 was an organisational Requirement for ONS, and has been the subject of further correspondence between ONS and the Head of Assessment. The Assessment Report did not include a Requirement for ONS to develop a suitable measure of owner occupiers' housing costs for inclusion in the CPI, as ONS had already made this a development priority.
4. ONS wrote to the Assessment team in May 2011 to describe the progress that it had made in addressing each of the Requirements and Suggestions in the Assessment Report and Monitoring Brief. This explained that the Requirements would not be fully addressed until August 2011. ONS has since provided the Assessment team with further information about how each of these Requirements and Suggestions have been addressed. **Annex A** provides a summary of ONS's response on each of these, along with the Assessment team's view of the position.
5. In summary, the Assessment team considers that ONS has published information that fully addresses Requirements 1 to 3 of the Assessment Report. It has taken active steps to develop a better understanding of user needs, and also plans to establish a new user group for these statistics. ONS has also published some informative pieces of analysis about the history of the indices, the differences between the indices, and the implications that these differences have for their uses as macroeconomic measures of inflation, and for compensation purposes. ONS has also made good progress in addressing many of the Suggestions for improvement in both the Assessment Report and Monitoring Brief.
6. The Assessment team considers that it is too early to say whether ONS has fully addressed Requirement 4, which concerns the need to improve the accessibility of information about these statistics through the planned improvements to ONS's website.

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The new website has improved certain aspects of the way in which CPI and RPI statistics are presented, and provides a more extensive set of spreadsheet tables than was previously available. However, it can still be difficult to access some types of information from the website. It would be helpful for the website to have a more clearly identified 'homepage' for these statistics. A particular problem is that the detailed tables for these statistics have now become detached from the commentary. Also, many of the weblinks to documents on the website are broken, although we assume that this will prove to be a temporary problem. **Annex B** provides the Assessment team's views on how far the statistical releases for these statistics now comply with the *Standards for Statistical Releases*.

7. On Requirement 5 concerning the release of statistics at 9.30am, there are ongoing discussions between the Assessment team and ONS about the extent to which ONS's new website complies with the Code of Practice. Since the new website was introduced, some releases have been published both before and after 9.30am, in breach of the Code of Practice.
8. The Assessment team plans to share the material in Annexes A and B with the producer team in ONS, along with any other comments that emerge from the Board's discussion of the progress that has been made in addressing the Requirements and Suggestions.

Neil Jackson, Monitoring and Assessment, September 2011

List of Annexes

- Annex A Review of actions taken to address Requirements and suggestions for improvement in the Assessment Report and Monitoring Brief on consumer price indices**
- Annex B Compliance with standards for statistical releases**

Annex A Review of actions taken to address Requirements and suggestions for improvement in the Assessment Report and Monitoring Brief on consumer price indices

ASSESSMENT REPORT		
Requirement	Summary of Producer response	Assessment Team view on the extent to which this requirement has been met
<p>Requirement 1 Take steps to develop a greater understanding of the use made of the statistics; publish the relevant information and assumptions and use them to better support the use of the statistics (para 3.4).</p>	<p>ONS published a note <i>How ONS Consumer Price Statistics are used</i> on the ONS website at the same time as the RPI/CPI publication on 16 August 2011.</p> <p>http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/user-guidance/prices/cpi-and-rpi/cpi-statistics-usage.html</p>	<p>Met</p> <p>The note provides a good and thorough summary of uses and users of these statistics. It cross-refers to ONS's overall user engagement strategy and lists specific groups of users. It provides a link to the Assessment Report. The note also provides detailed information about the range of uses of CPI, including the use of the index within government and by the public and the media.</p>
<p>Requirement 2 Publish information about the timeliness of these statistics, and how it might be improved (para 3.7).</p>	<p>ONS published a short note on <i>Improving the Timeliness of CPI and RPI Publications</i> alongside the RPI/CPI publication on 12 July 2011.</p> <p>http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/cpi/consumer-price-indices/improving-the-timeliness-of-cpi-and-rpi-publication/index.html</p> <p>http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/user-guidance/prices/cpi-and-rpi/improving-the-timeliness-of-the-cpi-and-rpi-publication.pdf</p>	<p>Met</p> <p>This brief note describes new systems that ONS is developing to improve the collection and production process which should allow earlier publication of CPI and RPI statistics. The note states that these new systems will be fully in place towards the end of 2012. Nearer that time, ONS will publish information about the scope to speed up the publication of the CPI and RPI.</p> <p>This note is not directly accessible from the RPI/CPI homepage on the ONS website. It can be found by searching on the title but it could be made more accessible.</p>

Annex A - SA(11)57 - Progress in Meeting Monitoring and Assessment Recommendations

<p>Requirement 3 Publish information about the history and the reasons for the differences in scope and methods between the CPI and RPI; and explain the implications that these differences have for the uses to which these statistics are put (para 3.21).</p>	<p>ONS has produced two articles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>History of and differences between the Consumer Prices Index and Retail Prices Index</i> published alongside the July 2011 RPI/CPI publication. 2. <i>Implications of the differences between the Consumer Price Index and Retail Price Index</i> published alongside the August RPI/CPI publication. <p>http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/user-guidance/prices/cpi-and-rpi/history-and-differences--cpi-and-rpi.html</p> <p>http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/user-guidance/prices/cpi-and-rpi/differences-between-cpi-and-rpi---implications.html</p>	<p>Met</p> <p>The History article (1) outlines the development of the RPI and CPI, and describes the similarities and differences between the indices. The article includes a section entitled 'Differences between CPI and RPI and the resulting implications' but this mainly contains further detail on the methodological differences between the indices.</p> <p>The Implications article (2) briefly summarises the implications of the differences between the RPI and CPI for their use. The article also contains a number of annexes, one of which covers the history of the development of the indices which replicates much of the information in article 1. Annexes 6 and 7 assess the implications of the differences between the CPI and RPI for their uses, respectively, as macroeconomic measures of inflation and for compensation purposes</p> <p>A minor issue is that the History article (1) is available on the RPI/CPI homepage but is not listed in the publications tab whereas the Implications article (2) is.</p>
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Annex A - SA(11)57 - Progress in Meeting Monitoring and Assessment Recommendations

<p>Requirement 4 Ensure that the planned improvements to ONS's website will improve the accessibility of information on the full range of documents and datasets relating to these statistics (para 3.38).</p>	<p>The new ONS website was launched on 28 August 2011.</p>	<p>Not yet met</p> <p>It is too early to say how far the new website has improved the accessibility of information about the full range of documents and datasets relating to these statistics. The new website has improved some aspects of the way in which CPI and RPI statistics are presented. It is easier to find relevant information, from statistical bulletins to information notes. The website now provides a more extensive set of tables in spreadsheet format. But it would be helpful to have a more clearly identified 'homepage' for consumer price indices. The main statistical tables have become detached from the commentary, whereas before the commentary was provided alongside a fairly detailed set of tables. Many of the weblinks to documents are also broken, although hopefully this will prove to be a temporary problem.</p>
<p>Requirement 5 Ensure that all releases are issued at 9.30am on the day of release (para 3.44).</p>	<p>ONS has reviewed this Requirement as part of its Web Development Programme. ONS submitted a collective breach of the Code from 1 May 2011 and agreed to log and report to the Authority details about delayed releases. ONS's new website went live on 28 August 2011.</p>	<p>Not yet met</p> <p>Discussions are ongoing between the Assessment team and ONS about the extent to which ONS's new website complies with the Code of Practice regarding the publication of statistics at 9.30am. Since the new website was launched some releases have been published both before and after 9.30 am, in breach of the Code of Practice.</p>

Annex A - SA(11)57 - Progress in Meeting Monitoring and Assessment Recommendations

<p>Suggestion 1 Establish an up-to-date official position on relative regional consumer price levels and regional price indices (para 3.9).</p>	<p>ONS published a report on the <i>UK relative Regional Consumer Price levels for Goods and Services (RRCPLs) for 2010</i> alongside the July 2011 RPI/CPI publication.</p>	<p>Met</p> <p>The 2010 RRCPL results compare price relatives for London, England (excluding London), Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The release notes that the next update is likely to be in 2017 when a full update of RRCPLs will be published for the 2016 reference year, in order to meet Eurostat obligations.</p> <p>The report notes that ONS is investigating ways of producing more regular regional price data. If the investigations are successful, ONS aims to publish 2011 regional data by mid-2012.</p> <p>As a minor note, the article is linked from the July 2011 RPI/CPI publication but is not available on the RPI/CPI homepage.</p>
<p>Suggestion 2 Describe ONS's overall approach to improving the way in which the RPI is constructed, taking account of the constraints imposed by legislation (para 3.14)</p>	<p>ONS published information about the governance of the RPI, the procedures for change, and ONS's overall approach to developing the RPI in the article <i>History of and Differences between the Consumer Prices Index and Retail Prices Index</i> (pages 12-13)</p>	<p>Met</p> <p>The article includes a good outline of the changes to the RPI since the 1950s. The article also references appendix 1 of the CPI technical manual for further information and a series of articles on the NS website.</p>
<p>Suggestion 3 Publish the results of pilot work to collect prices data over a longer period each month once it is complete (para 3.20).</p>	<p>The pilot work to collect information on prices over more than one day was reported to CPAC in July 2011. A full report will be published at the end of the study.</p>	<p>Not yet met</p> <p>Papers from the July meeting are not available on the website yet but the agenda indicates that a paper on temporal sampling was discussed.</p> <p>The CPAC documents on the website are zipped files with no indication of what is in each one before opening them. Ideally, ONS would publish more accessible information about the nature of the papers discussed at CPAC meetings.</p>

Annex A - SA(11)57 - Progress in Meeting Monitoring and Assessment Recommendations

<p>Suggestion 4 Consider reinstating some international comparisons in <i>Consumer Price Indices Statistical Bulletin</i> (para 3.34).</p>	<p>ONS now publishes a detailed set of tables in spreadsheet format, alongside the statistical release. These include two tables that compare inflation statistics for each of the different Member States of the European Union:</p> <p>http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-223807</p>	<p>Met</p> <p>Although ONS do not generally provide any commentary to accompany these international comparisons, which might usefully place trends in the UK in a wider, international context.</p>
<p>Suggestion 5 Provide further information in <i>Focus on Consumer Prices</i> about the uses and potential uses of the pensioner price indices and about the methods used to compile them (para 3.36).</p>	<p>http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Consumer+Price+Indices</p>	<p>Not met</p> <p>The July <i>Focus on Consumer Prices</i> (published in August) does not make any mention of the potential uses of the pensioner prices indices and the methods used to compile them.</p>
<p>Suggestion 6 Consult users about the need for separate price indices for a range of different household types, as part of implementing Requirement 1 (para 3.36).</p>	<p>ONS will consult with users on this issue during 2011.</p>	<p>Not yet met</p>
<p>Suggestion 7 Publish a summary of the changes made to the pre-release access lists (para 3.43).</p>	<p>ONS agreed to publish a summary of changes made to the pre-release access list for the CPI in July 2011.</p>	<p>Not met</p> <p>The July pre-release access list contains 36 names but does not contain a summary of changes made to the list.</p>

Annex A - SA(11)57 - Progress in Meeting Monitoring and Assessment Recommendations

MONITORING BRIEF		
Implement the matters raised in the Assessment report		
<p>1. Take forward the matters raised in the Assessment Report, including:</p> <p>a) establish an up-to-date official position on regional indicators; and</p> <p>b) consult on the demand for indices for different household types (paragraph 2.4).</p>	<p>The ONS response to matters raised in the Assessment Report is set out in the main part of this report.</p>	<p>1(a) has been met; 1(b) not yet met.</p> <p>See under suggestions 1 and 6 above (for AR)</p>
Improve the understanding of the appropriate uses of inflation statistics		
<p>2. (a) Carry out more analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the CPI and RPI as macroeconomic measures of inflation and as compensation indices;</p> <p>(b) As part of the analysis at (a), examine the benefits and disadvantages of using the preferred macroeconomic measure of UK inflation as a compensation index, and</p>	<p>ONS's response to suggestions 2 and 3:</p> <p>ONS has published 2 articles listed under Requirement 3 of the AR which include information on the strengths and weaknesses of the CPI and RPI.</p> <p>These issues have been discussed with users as part of the action to meet recommendation 1 of the main Assessment report. ONS aims to seek user views on these issues again following the publication of the reports.</p>	<p>2 (a) and (b) have been met. 2(c) not yet met.</p> <p>Ideally, ONS would publish further information in relation to 2(c), after it has consulted users about the two articles that it has published.</p>

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<p>the practicality of using different measures for these distinct uses; and</p> <p>(c) Use the analysis at (a) and (b) to guide future development of the indices (paragraph 4.10).</p>		
<p>3. In the context of this analysis, consult users on whether the current proposals for improving the CPI while maintaining the RPI represent a suitable approach to developing improved measures of inflation, while continuing to meet users' needs for existing measures (paragraph 4.14).</p>		<p>Not yet met</p> <p>This suggestion needs to be revisited after ONS has consulted users about the 2 reports it has published under requirement 3 of the Assessment Report.</p>
<p>4. Include in the <i>Consumer Price Indices</i> statistical bulletin a fuller discussion of the uses and potential uses of the different statistics on inflation, and provide some signposting to further guidance on the suitability of the different indices for particular uses. Review the continuing user requirement for RPIX and for two separate measures that exclude indirect taxation, CPIY and RPIY,</p>	<p>The Consumer Prices Statistical Bulletin was redesigned in 2010. Users were consulted in late 2010 on what further changes were wanted, including requirements for particular indices. The Statistical Bulletin was further revised late in 2010 to reflect the user requirements. Following the redesign of the Consumer Price Indices Statistical Bulletin, ONS provided commentary on the CPIY, RPIY and CPI-CT indices when the rate of VAT increased in January 2011. Information published in the Background Notes of the release is consistent with the points made in paragraphs A5.20 and A5.21 of the</p>	<p>Met</p> <p>The July 2011 CPI Statistical Bulletin (published in August) includes some brief information about the differences between other measures of inflation and their uses. The Bulletin includes links to more detailed documents on ONS's website.</p> <p>ONS could usefully provide a link to the <i>How the Consumer Price Statistics are used</i> document in the Statistical Bulletin</p> <p>http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_223009.pdf</p>

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<p>and the way these measures are described and presented in <i>Consumer Price Indices</i> (paragraph 5.10).</p>	<p>Monitoring Brief.</p> <p>In further response to this suggestion, ONS intends seeking feedback later in 2011 on the continuing requirements of the RPIX, CPIY and RPIY and how these indices may be better communicated.</p>	
<p>Improve the presentation of and commentary about the statistics</p>		
<p>5. Review the need for three separate monthly publications to release these statistics, and consider whether other arrangements would allow these statistics to be communicated more clearly (paragraph 5.3).</p>	<p>ONS is changing the publication arrangements along the lines suggested in the Monitoring Brief, as part of the move to the new website:</p> <p>(a) ONS now publishes a complete set of data tables within one 'file' at the time of the CPI and RPI publication. Before, many data tables were published almost a week later within Focus on Consumer Prices. This means that these data are now available to users earlier than currently and in a much more user friendly mode. Focus on Consumer Price Indices is no longer published. The guidance and advice that accompanied the tables in that publication are already mostly available elsewhere and where not, have been added to appropriate existing documentation; and</p> <p>(b) ONS now publishes a short summary of the data headlines and accompany this</p>	<p>Met</p> <p>The <i>Focus on Consumer Prices</i> publication has been replaced by detailed tables that are published in Excel format at the same time as the main CPI/RPI statistical bulletin, a week earlier than previously</p>

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	with a more detailed briefing note. This is consistent with the suggested approach in paragraph A1.4 of the Monitoring Brief.	
6. Build on the recent improvements in the <i>Consumer Price Indices</i> statistical bulletin by (a) including additional commentary on specific external developments that have an impact on the indices; (b) drawing attention to any particular significance of the latest figures and (c) including a clear explanation whenever the difference between the CPI and RPI headline measures of inflation is significant (paragraph 5.5).	ONS list a range of actions that they have taken to address this.	<p>Partly met</p> <p>See Annex B, which reviews the latest releases. The main areas for further development are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility (links to complementary information): paragraphs A2.3, A2.9, A2.12, A2.13. • Terminology: A2.4, A2.7. • Explanation of change: A2.5.
Better support the news media		
7. Support the news media in relation to the communication of the statistics by (a) producing additional published material for users and journalists on the differences between a consumer price index and a cost of living index; and (b) considering ways of bringing to a wider	<p>(a) This is covered by ONS's response on Requirement 3 above.</p> <p>(b) This is covered by ONS's response on Requirement 1 of the Assessment Report 79: Consumer Price Indices (see above).</p>	Met

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<p>audience the important messages about inflation statistics that are published in <i>Economic and Labour Market Review</i> (paragraphs 5.13 and 5.15).</p>		
<p>Address perceptions of inflation</p>		
<p>8. Evaluate how effective the 'personal inflation calculator' has been in addressing perceptions of inflation. Also, consider, with users, whether there are any lessons for the UK from the German index of perceptions of inflation that might supplement the work that ONS has already carried out on the way in which inflation is perceived (paragraphs 5.17 and 5.18).</p>	<p>ONS is planning to conduct further work into understanding and measuring perceptions of inflation later in 2011. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -considering the effectiveness and the use of the personal inflation calculator; -reviewing existing sources of information on UK perceptions of inflation; -reviewing international methods for measuring perceptions of inflation and considering whether there are any lessons for the UK; and -considering whether a measure of perceived inflation, based on current consumer price data could be calculated based on current consumer price data, and how this would be achieved 	<p>Not yet met</p>

Annex B Compliance with Standards for Statistical Releases

- A2.1 In October 2010, the Statistics Authority issued a statement on *Standards for Statistical Releases*¹. Whilst this is not part of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, the Authority regards it as advice that will promote both understanding and compliance with the *Code*. In relation to the statistical releases associated with Consumer Price Indices, this annex comments on compliance with the statement on standards.

Appropriate identification of the statistics being released

- A2.2 *Consumer Price Indices (CPI)* has a title which explains the period to which the latest statistics relate. The *CPI* statistical bulletin does not include a statement about the frequency of the release although comparisons are made with the previous month on the front page.
- A2.3 *CPI* does not include an account of what is included in the release in terms of tables and subjects discussed. Links are given in the bulletin to Excel versions of the tables and charts although there is no index for the spreadsheets.

Include commentary that is helpful to the non-expert and presents the main messages in plain English

- A2.4 The front page of the *CPI* identifies the headlines for the current month. Some of the language used is technical and may not be widely understood, for example 'the main downward pressure to annual inflation came from transport services, particularly passenger transport by air, sea and rail'.
- A2.5 The main statistical tables have become detached from the commentary, The commentary largely explains rises and falls. Charts are included which highlight key changes although no further information is given to explain the reasons for the changes.

Use language that is impartial, objective and professionally sound

- A2.6 The text is impartial.
- A2.7 The commentary mentions changes as 'significant' but no further information is given about the statistical basis for the statements.

Include information about the context and likely uses

- A2.8 A section in the background notes of the *CPI* statistical bulletin includes information about the policy context for the statistics. The section also includes information about the use of the statistics internationally.
- A2.9 The background notes section includes a brief discussion of the main uses and differences between methods used for the CPI and the RPI. ONS has published a document on *How the Consumer Price Indices are used* but there is no link to this from the *CPI* bulletin.
- A2.10 No information on quality is given in the *CPI* bulletin although links are given to the quality report for the bulletin and the CPI technical manual on ONS's website.

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/standards-for-statistical-releases.html>

Include, or link to, appropriate metadata

- A2.11 Various links to documents with more detailed information about methods and definitions are given within the *CPI* bulletin. A brief outline of the methods used to compile the CPI and RPI is included in the background notes section.
- A2.12 ONS's new website does not make it clear to users where to go for the most comprehensive list of metadata for the CPI. A note in the *CPI* bulletin encourages users to access CPI data via the key figures section on the homepage. This links to a CPI homepage which contains only the latest bulletin and associated tables. Users who access CPI data via the theme pages are directed to a different page which includes links to guidance and methods documents. No commentary is given on either page to explain the range of material available.
- A2.13 The links from recent statistical releases to documents on ONS's website do not work. A comment is included in the *CPI* bulletin which states 'the new ONS website improves the way users can access our statistics but many existing bookmarks and links no longer work and users need to update them'.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)58

Authority Inquiry into ONS Construction Statistics Error

A Statement has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this Statement go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/statement---authority-s-review---construction-statistics.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)59

Developments with the Government’s ‘Open Data’ Policy

The Authority’s response has been published on the UK Statistics Authority Website.

To see the response go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-sir-michael-scholar-to-rt-hon--francis-maude---open-data---11102011.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)60

Draft Monitoring Brief: Climate Change Statistics

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-7-2011---accessibility-and-coherence-of-statistics-about-climate-change.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)61

Assessment Reports for Approval

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

To see these documents go to:

Assessment Report 132: Statistics on NHS Secondary Care in Scotland
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-132---statistics-on-nhs-secondary-care-in-scotland.pdf>

Assessment Report 133: Statistics on Housing in Wales
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-133---statistics-on-housing-in-wales.pdf>

Assessment Report 134: Statistics on NHS Wales Performance
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-134---statistics-on-nhs-wales-performance.pdf>

Assessment Report 135: Statistics on Health and Social Care in Scotland
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-135---statistics-on-health-and-social-care-in-scotland.pdf>

Assessment Report 136: Statistics on Pre-School Education Provision and Early Years Profile Results in England
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-136---statistics-on-pre-school-education-provision-and-early-years-profile-results-in-england.pdf>

Assessment Report 137: Statistics on Births in England and Wales
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-137---statistics-on-births-in-england-and-wales.pdf>

Assessment Report 138 Annual Statistics on Hours and Earnings
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-138---annual-statistics-on-hours-and-earnings.pdf>

Assessment Report 139: Annual Statistics on Hours and Earnings in Northern Ireland
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-139---annual-statistics-on-hours-and-earning-in-northern-ireland.pdf>

Assessment Report 140: Statistics on Families and households in the UK
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-140---statistics-on-families-and-households-in-the-uk.pdf>

Assessment Report 141: Statistics on Re-offending
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-141---statistics-on-re-offending.pdf>