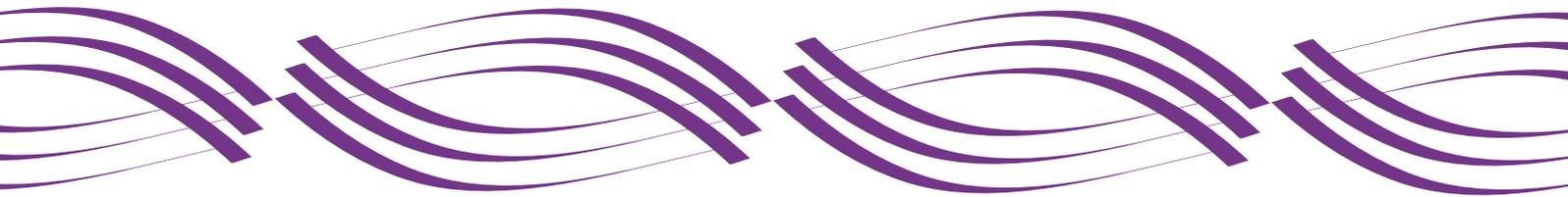


Statistics Commission



Report No. 27

Managing the Quality of
Official Statistics

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Official Statistics

Report by the Statistics Commission

October 2005

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Foreword

By the chairman of the Statistics Commission

At first glance, managing the quality of official statistics might seem to have some parallels with managing the quality of manufactured goods as they roll off a production line. The goods are produced for a purpose and so are statistics. We can ask in each case whether they are fit for that purpose. But, whilst we would normally know with some confidence how a manufactured product is likely to be used, the uses of statistical series are often much less prescribed. Population statistics, to take just one example, are used for the study of human geography, in the distribution of billion of pounds of public money and as the basis for calculating incidence rates, such as infection rates, as well as much else besides.

In the absence of a detailed understanding of their uses, more elaborate ways of looking at the quality of statistics have evolved. Often these focus on ideas of accuracy, relevance, timeliness etc. This report has concluded however that these approaches, whilst helpful at a conceptual level, may not help greatly in the practical management of quality. There may be little extra value in pursuing greater accuracy, for example, if current levels are adequate for the purposes to which the statistics are likely to be put. Thus, no matter how challenging it is to pin down the main uses of the statistics, the key to statistical quality management must still be a sound understanding of the user requirement coupled with systematic assessment – or audit – of the underlying processes to ensure the figures are fit for that purpose.

The June 2000 *Framework for National Statistics*, a government white paper, rightly placed responsibility for the assurance of statistical quality on the National Statistician, who is also head of the Office for National Statistics. But as this report highlights, ONS itself is directly responsible for only a minority of the 1,000 or so statistical series recognised as ‘National Statistics’.

The current position therefore is that the National Statistician has a responsibility for, but little practical authority over, statistical work carried out in other government departments or the devolved administrations. So, whilst he or she has been able to advise on the principles of quality assurance and a recommended approach to quality reviews, the implementation of these principles and review procedures has often been in the hands of other departments and administrations. Our research suggests that where quality reviews have been carried out, they have been seen as helpful within the relevant departments but their coverage and impact have been uneven. This, of itself, argues for a more systematic approach.

We are indebted to the National Audit Office for setting out their advice to us in a paper which is included in full at Annex B to this report. This served to crystallise many of the issues and pointed to the scope for, and need for, a more systematic audit-based approach. We believe such an approach should be managed centrally as a single cross-government programme that would be grounded in the assessment of risk and materiality.

This report makes important recommendations for the future quality management of official statistics in the United Kingdom and I commend it to all those Ministers and officials who are ultimately responsible for deciding on the statistical programme across government.

As well as the National Audit Office, I would like to thank the project board, led by commissioners Ian Beesley and Colette Bowe, which oversaw our research, and also the Office for National Statistics and others who contributed valuable insights.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Rhind". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Rhind
Chairman, Statistics Commission

Summary and recommendations

The quality of official statistics is fundamental to the quality of decision-making at all levels in society and to the trust citizens place in their government. This report by the Statistics Commission looks at the quality management of statistics across government. Under the *Framework for National Statistics* introduced in 2000, these matters are the responsibility of the National Statistician.

The Commission concludes that although the definition of quality in statistics is not straightforward, there should be greater emphasis on 'fitness for purpose' rather than on abstract concepts such as accuracy or coherence, and that fitness for purpose should be the foundation for a set of quality standards.

Quality standards are crucial at three stages in the statistical process: the design; the production; and the dissemination of statistics and analysis. We have identified four keys to delivering statistical quality, namely: clear and accessible quality standards; good management of day-to-day processes that produce the statistics; an appropriate response to risk; and purposeful periodic reviews of statistical outputs.

The report reaches a number of conclusions. These include:

- that the responsibility for the quality of all UK official statistics rightly rests with the National Statistician and a clear, strong statement of the National Statistician's authority in respect of quality assurance and management would be helpful in enhancing public trust in official figures
- that the protocols of the Code of Practice on quality and data management are insufficiently rigorous as a quality assurance tool
- that the quality review programme has not delivered what the *Framework for National Statistics* requires and that henceforth the National Statistician should take a central role in setting the agenda and guiding the programme of reviews
- that an audit-based approach to quality reviews is feasible, and should be adopted.

Recommendations

On the basis of these conclusions, the Commission makes the following four recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1:** Ministers should re-affirm the responsibility of the National Statistician for the quality of all UK official statistics, wherever they are produced.
- **Recommendation 2:** Two of the protocols of the National Statistics Code of Practice (the *Protocol on Quality Management* and the *Protocol on Data Management, Documentation and Preservation*) should be tightened and augmented so that they are able to provide a suitable base for quality audit. Changes needed relate to: exceptions; compliance statements; documentation of system operations and reports on management controls; risk assessment; and quality statements to accompany key statistics.
- **Recommendation 3:** The quality review programme should be developed into an audit-based approach. The National Statistician should lead this programme, deciding what to review and when, and basing those decisions on risk and materiality.
- **Recommendation 4:** The quality programme should be comprehensive, covering the design of statistical systems, the management of the production of statistics and the guidance given to those who use official statistics.

Purpose and structure

1. The quality of official statistics is fundamental to the quality of decision-making at all levels in society.
2. This report by the Statistics Commission looks at the arrangements for statistical quality management across government. It considers the meaning of quality in the context of statistics – something that the *Framework for National Statistics* published in 2000 and the earlier White Paper *Building Trust in Statistics* did not address directly.
3. The report goes on to discuss the general principles of quality management for statistical outputs, including the proper role of risk assessment and the potential of a more systematic audit approach. Finally, it looks at the current approach to statistical quality assurance – in particular the National Statistics (NS) quality review programme and the operation of the *National Statistics Code of Practice* and supporting protocols that deal with quality management. It draws conclusions on the difference between current approaches and the general principles.
4. Throughout, the report draws on a paper prepared for the Commission by the National Audit Office (NAO), based on its experience in auditing the information systems that underpin Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets. It also draws on an evaluation of National Statistics quality reviews carried out jointly by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Statistics Commission, and on an assessment by the Commission of the NS quality review programme. All these papers are attached as Annexes.

Responsibility for the quality of National Statistics correctly lies with the National Statistician

5. The *Framework for National Statistics* places responsibility for quality assurance for UK official statistics on the National Statistician. (“...the National Statistician will establish a quality assurance programme including thorough reviews of key outputs at least every five years with the involvement of external expertise.”)

6. However, the UK does not have a centralised statistical system and by no means all the key statistical outputs of government lie under the direct control of the National Statistician. Of some 1,000 UK statistical series designated as National Statistics (ie those which must adhere to the Code of Practice), only 240 are produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), headed by the National Statistician. Some 360 series are produced by other central government departments and agencies and nearly 400 by the devolved administrations. In addition, whilst all official statistics published by ONS are designated as National Statistics, many other official statistics are not so designated by their originating departments, so there is even less central control or influence over how they are produced.

7. Under the *Framework for National Statistics*, responsibility for non-ONS statistics is delegated to departmental Heads of Profession and to the Chief Statisticians of devolved administrations, reporting on professional matters to the National Statistician. But Heads of Profession are first and foremost accountable to their departments – the resources available to them are departmental resources, and their budgets are departmental budgets. So whilst the National Statistician’s overall responsibility for quality is clear, in practice it is a responsibility that is to some extent shared with the permanent secretaries of statistics-producing departments and with the heads of devolved administrations.¹

8. For reasons which are set out throughout this report (see especially Annex A), the Statistics Commission believes that it is right to focus the responsibility for the quality of official statistics on the National Statistician. She is responsible for professional leadership in relation to all UK official statistics and is publicly perceived to be the custodian of the integrity of official statistics. In this report, the Commission advocates that the National Statistician’s responsibilities for quality assurance should cover – and be seen to cover – all aspects of quality management, including quality controls in production systems, and should include an obligation to look at the management of risk for those systems.

¹ Throughout this report the term ‘permanent secretaries’ should be read to include the heads of departments in devolved administrations.

9. Where official statistics are produced outside ONS, the relevant permanent secretaries should, by formal agreement, look to the National Statistician for assurance on the appropriateness of the statistics produced in their departments' name, and for advice on the management of quality for those statistics. In this respect, the position of the National Statistician might be seen as analogous to the Head of the Government Economic Service or the Head of the Government Accountancy Service, whose professional leadership goes beyond departmental boundaries. It places particular requirements on the integrity and influencing skills of the incumbent but these are not unique in government.

10. Nevertheless there remains a risk that the National Statistician's lack of direct authority over statistics produced outside ONS has the potential to hinder the proper exercise of her responsibilities for quality assurance. Presently, the National Statistician can set standards for statistical quality, and offer guidance on the principles and processes of quality management. But she cannot enforce compliance with these standards, or require participation in a programme of quality reviews, except with the co-operation of the other statistics-producing departments.

11. As we have argued elsewhere, the quality of official statistics, and the way in which the quality is assured, form one factor in the public's trust in statistics. The Commission believes that a clear, strong statement of the National Statistician's authority in respect of quality assurance and management would be helpful in enhancing public trust in official figures. The National Statistician needs to have the authority to require compliance with specified quality management aspects of the Code of Practice and relevant protocols, as a necessary condition for the series in question continuing to be labelled 'National Statistics'.

12. To this end, we propose that the National Statistician should be given responsibility and authority to conduct quality audits of any official statistics and should lead a programme of quality reviews of statistical outputs, following a priority-based approach. This would provide more comprehensive and trustworthy quality assurance than the current arrangements. We return to this proposal later in this report.

The definition of quality in statistics is not straightforward

13. A general definition of quality is 'fitness for purpose'. This is particularly appropriate in the case of official statistics where value is ultimately dependent on their usefulness for decision-making inside and outside government. We believe that this should be the foundation for the definition of, and standards for, statistical quality.

14. A judgement that a statistical series is 'fit for purpose' is only possible if the primary purpose is understood. So demonstration of 'quality' requires a clear statement about the expected uses of a statistical series, and about the limitations of the data in relation to those uses. And it requires that the series be produced by a reliable process. All these are necessary components of statistical quality, and should be the focus of a quality assurance process.

15. 'Quality' is critical at three main points in the statistical process:

- at the **design** stage when concepts and the production strategy are considered
- during the regular **production** of statistical series
- when the statistics are disseminated to **users**, and used.

Design

16. Statisticians have always given a great deal of attention to statistical design. In some cases, particularly macro-economic statistics, explicit standards for what will be prepared and how estimates will be produced and disseminated are the subject of international agreement or legislation. Adherence to such standards covers one dimension of quality. But in many cases the methods to be followed in producing the statistics are not so formally agreed and are the product of an ongoing compromise between considerations of cost, timeliness, respondent burden and the capacity of the expert resources within the responsible statistical offices.

17. The definition of quality that is now used for the National Statistics quality review programme is based on a technical statement drawn up for the European Statistical System² (ESS). This defines quality in terms of relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, comparability and coherence. The summary quality statement for GDP statistics recently launched by ONS, for example, presents information using the ESS model.

18. As the dimensions of the ESS model suggest, the vast majority of statistics produced by government are estimates of unknown and often elusive quantities. Even a concept as seemingly simple as the population of the UK is far from a fact – there is no direct way of measuring it; it changes minute by minute and we cannot be sure that any one estimate is right to within several hundred thousand people. The 2001 Census, for example, produced estimates that were well below the level that many experts were expecting, indicating the inherent uncertainty of the measurement process. So, whilst in principle we might want to look at the accuracy of estimates, we often cannot measure accuracy with any certainty.

19. Where statistics are the product of statistical surveys with a formal randomised design, it is possible to estimate 'confidence intervals' which give a measure of the precision of the survey estimates. These are useful but can also be misleading – they do not take account of 'non-sampling errors', such as survey respondents misunderstanding a question or giving the wrong information. The more statistical series are used as performance targets, the more risk there is of distortion.

20. Increasingly, many statistics are produced from administrative records such as those held by the NHS, tax authorities or schools, rather than from surveys. These are usually not of a kind for which confidence intervals can be derived. Nevertheless, issues of design quality are properly a matter of concern for government statisticians. ONS has recognised this and is developing guidelines for statistics derived from administrative data sources, which will supplement the guidelines, issued in 2004, for statistics from survey data (see paragraph 31).

² The ESS is a statistical network comprising Eurostat and the statistical offices, ministries, agencies and central banks that collect statistics in EU member states.

Production

21. In the manufacturing sector, two commonly used quality standards are six-sigma processes that measure and control deviations from the design tolerances³ and ISO 9000 recognition. In the production of statistics, however, the inherent difficulties in testing make the application of six-sigma techniques problematic. Nonetheless, the Royal Statistical Society has set up a study group to look at the implications for professional statisticians of the six sigma principles. ISO 9000 accreditation is achieved by defining a particular set of procedures and processes and demonstrating adherence to them; the first stage is crucial if the overall system is to be effective, efficient and transparent. One area of activity in ONS (the Consumer Price Index) has received ISO 9000 accreditation in respect of their processes. In general, however, as the NAO paper in Annex B makes clear, the protocols of the *National Statistics Code of Practice* put too little emphasis on management processes and controls and on identifying and mitigating risks to data quality.

³ Six sigma is a quality management approach that aims for the likelihood of a failure to be beyond the sixth standard deviation in a normal distribution – on reasonable assumptions less than 3.4 defects in one million instances.

Users

22. *Caveat emptor* applies at least as much to statistical services as to other goods and services; the more expert users often invest considerable time and energy in understanding how statistical series are compiled. Users can face difficulties, however, when important caveats about the data are not included in the statistical report or not recognised as important.

23. Statisticians have a responsibility to provide users with sufficient, and readily understood, guidance about the data. It would be inappropriate for manufactured products to be released without user guidance and, by analogy, some form of description of what kind of uses the data are intended for is a component of statistical quality. For example, it is well recognised by economic commentators that the current account balance in the balance of payments is a relatively small difference between two very much larger numbers (exports and imports of goods and services). Small errors in the estimates of exports or imports can bring large errors in the balance on the current account. So commentary on fluctuations must probe why the underlying aggregates have moved in order to understand the derived estimate of the balance on the current account.

24. Ultimately, the extent to which statistics are seen by the more expert users as being of sufficient quality to meet their needs – fit for purpose – now and in the future, is as good a test of quality as any.

There are four keys to delivering statistical quality

25. Having defined what is meant by statistical quality, its delivery must be assured:

- **Quality standards must be clear and accessible** – built around a statement that addresses fitness for purpose, and supplemented by statements about what that purpose is, limitations of the data, and the production process. Standards should preferably be expressed in a positive manner with guidance on how to obtain further advice from the responsible statisticians if required. It is important that statisticians do not become seen as ‘use prevention officers’ – quality does not reside in the pursuit of total risk avoidance.
- **Day-to-day management of statistical systems** should encompass good systems documentation and effective management controls and checks.
- **Risk assessment is important** – an assessment of where the risks to data quality lie should underpin the design of data systems and quality controls for those systems. Escalation procedures are essential to cope with the situation where common sense credibility checks of key outputs indicate unexpected results.
- A somewhat different aspect of quality management is the role played by **periodic reviews of statistical outputs**. These provide an opportunity to look more systematically at the different dimensions of quality and at the overall fitness for purpose of the statistics reviewed.

26. We sought the advice of the NAO on whether the principles of audit could be applied to quality management in statistics.

The Principles of Audit

1. There is a normative base and, preferably, a consensus on good practice.
2. Management has a duty to demonstrate adherence to the norms and to good practice.
3. A third party (eg shareholders, Parliament or the general public) needs to have an independent validation of management claims in this regard.

27. The NAO response was encouraging, drawing attention to flexibility in audit approaches that have made them valuable in a number of areas such as clinical audit, social audit, health and safety audit etc. Its assessment was that the three essential elements of audit (see text box) are present to some degree in official statistics and concluded that, “...our ability to take forward our [PSA] validation remit, employing an audit approach, confirms the feasibility of audit work in this area”.⁴

⁴ For a fuller description of the NAO approach to data systems validation see Appendix 1 to *Public Service Agreements: Managing Data Quality* – Compendium Report HC 476 Session 2004-2005, 23 March 2005.

Quality assurance for National Statistics currently has two main elements

28. There are currently around 1,000 official statistical series, labelled as ‘National Statistics’. These series need to meet the standards for National Statistics that are set out in the *National Statistics Code of Practice* and its protocols, in particular in the *Protocol on Quality Management* and also in the *Protocol on Data Management, Documentation and Preservation*. The Code of Practice and associated protocols form the first main element of quality assurance for National Statistics. The *Protocol on Quality Management* recognises the different dimensions of quality and the importance of assessing the extent to which users’ needs are being met. It describes how producers of National Statistics should carry out their responsibilities in respect of quality management, and sets out the basic elements which are required to ensure the quality of those individual statistical outputs designated as National Statistics. The *Protocol on Data Management, Documentation and Preservation* sets out how the producers of National Statistics should carry out their responsibility for managing, documenting, retaining and preserving the statistical resources which they control. It says “a culture of evaluation will be systematically fostered, including peer group appraisal and comparative benchmarking”.

29. A second main element is the National Statistics quality review programme, a rolling programme of periodic reviews of statistical outputs which has its origins in a specific requirement that the National Statistician “establish ... a programme of thorough reviews of key outputs ... with the involvement of external expertise”. The Framework goes as far as specifying the length of time – five years – over which all key outputs should be reviewed under the programme. Until now (Summer 2005) 43 quality reviews have been completed under the programme, ranging across 11 of the 12 National Statistics ‘Themes’ (there have been no quality reviews in the Health and Care area). The number of reviews is well below that which would have been required to cover all key outputs. (See Annex D for a detailed discussion.)

30. As well as the reviews undertaken under the auspices of the quality review programme, there have been a number of major *ad hoc* reviews of statistics. Two recent well-publicised examples are the *Allsopp Review of Statistics for Economic Policymaking* and the *Atkinson Review of Measurement of Government Output and Productivity*. These externally-led and policy-driven reviews have ranged wider and dug deeper than a standard quality review and have been important in assessing statistical quality and identifying options for improvement.

31. This quality assurance system has recently been supplemented by further ONS initiatives. The first of these is the *Guidelines for Measuring Statistical Quality* issued in 2004. This sets out best practice for measuring quality throughout the statistical production process. It provides a checklist of quality measures and indicators for use when measuring and reporting on the quality of statistical outputs. It is predominantly geared towards surveys but future plans include guidelines for administrative data. Issued by ONS, these guidelines are intended for application to all official statistics. However they are advisory – there is no formal requirement for compliance with them.

32. A further initiative is the introduction by ONS of a series of quality summary statements for specific statistical outputs. This has been billed as the first in a series of summary quality statements covering the whole of the national accounts, and eventually all ONS outputs. The first, released at the end of June 2005, covered GDP. However this is an ONS initiative, not a National Statistics one. Whether quality statements are produced for non-ONS outputs is currently a matter for individual departments.

The Statistics Commission's conclusions

33. The Commission has considered the present arrangements for quality assurance and management of official statistics in the light of the four keys to delivering statistical quality (see paragraph 25 and above). Our main conclusions are summarised below. Further analysis underlying these conclusions is included as Annex A to this report. In making our conclusions, we have also drawn upon three other reports as well as our own discussions with relevant parties. For convenience and ease of comparison, these reports are included as Annexes:

- Annex B – *National Statistics Quality Assurance: A Perspective from Validation of PSA Data systems* – report by NAO
- Annex C – *An Evaluation of Four Quality Reviews* – joint report by ONS and the Statistics Commission
- Annex D – *Assessment of National Statistics Quality Review Programme* – report by the Statistics Commission.

Responsibility for quality of National Statistics

34. Responsibility for the quality of UK official statistics rightly rests with the National Statistician. This includes a responsibility to establish a quality assurance programme for statistics wherever they are produced. Currently it is a responsibility shared with permanent secretaries of other statistics-producing departments, including the devolved administrations, who have the direct authority over the statistical resources within their own departments and administrations.

35. A clear, strong and more formal statement of the National Statistician's responsibility and authority in respect of quality assurance and management would be helpful in enhancing public trust in statistics and in supporting the National Statistician in the exercise of her role.

Meaning of quality and quality statements

36. We welcome the recent introduction of a 'summary quality statement' for GDP (30 June 2005), and the declared intention to release such statements for all ONS outputs eventually. However, we have two observations about current policy on quality statements. First, the practice of issuing quality statements should not be confined to ONS statistical series alone; it should be extended to all National Statistics, whichever department produces them.

37. Second, we would like to see quality statements that are built around ‘fitness for purpose’, as proposed in paragraphs 13 and 14 of this report. We have reservations about building quality statements around the European Statistical System definition of quality for statistics – the approach followed for the GDP summary statement and planned for future summary quality statements. We believe the ESS definition of quality to be both complex in design and abstract, and that its use as the basis for quality statements can lead to statements that are producer driven. For practical decision-making more emphasis should be placed on ‘fitness for purpose’ – a user driven concept which we believe should be the foundation for the definition and standards for statistical quality.

Managing quality for National Statistics – the *Code of Practice* and protocols

38. At present the protocols on quality and data management are insufficiently rigorous as a quality assurance tool because:

- they allow too many exceptions
- declarations of compliance are generally made at departmental level rather than at the level of specific statistical series
- requirements to document system operations and to report on adequacy of management controls are insufficient (the data management protocol requires documentation of systems, but only of system design)
- risk assessment in relation to data quality should be more central to the quality strategy
- there is no requirement for quality statements for key statistics.

The quality review programme

39. Over its first five years, the quality review programme has not delivered what the *Framework for National Statistics* requires that it deliver – thorough reviews of key outputs at least every five years. There is a general consensus that changes to the programme are needed – for example, in a letter to the Commission in January 2005⁵, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (the minister with responsibility for ONS) observed “the formal National Statistics Quality Review Programme, as originally designed, was too ambitious, [and] under resourced ...”.

40. In the Commission’s view, a key change required is for the National Statistician to take a central role in setting the agenda for, and in guiding, the programme of reviews. Decisions about the coverage of the programme should be taken on the

⁵ *National Statistics Annual Report, 2003-04*: Letter from Financial Secretary to the Treasury to Chairman of Statistics Commission, 31 January 2005

basis of an analysis of materiality (ie importance of the statistics concerned), risks to data quality and the likely consequences of a quality failure, whether that be in design, in production, or in dissemination with appropriate guidance on use and meaning. The likely cost of review must also be considered. We do not think that the changes that ONS propose to introduce when the second quality review programme is launched, and to which the Financial Secretary referred in his letter, go far enough in this direction.

41. The evidence from the joint evaluation of the programme concluded that overall the quality reviews have been judged a success – by those involved. However we believe that the quality reviews can be developed to contribute more. The main purpose of quality reviews is to provide assurance about quality. Yet NAO has reported that they were not able to use the reviews as a comprehensive source of assurance in their work on validation of PSA targets, as key aspects of quality had typically been excluded from the scope of the reviews – including the detailed operation of data systems.

An audit-based approach to quality reviews

42. In their report at Annex B, the NAO considers the possible use of audit approaches in statistical quality reviews and concludes that an audit approach looks relevant and feasible. We understand that ONS are piloting an audit-based self-assessment tool for data quality. We support this as far as it goes, but would go further. Important improvements should include tightening the statements of required quality, targeting quality audit, looking for a degree of independence in the audit team and remedying the absence of any assurance over the day-to-day management of data systems. Whilst quality reviews generally consider a wider range of issues than would be the concern of an audit, a quality audit might be the first stage of a two-stage review process, identifying issues arising from the historic operation of data systems for investigation at a further stage.

43. A quality audit would look at the quality of a statistical series against a more rigorous set of technical standards set out in the *Code of Practice* and its protocols. The audit would assess quality of the series against the standards in the Code, and offer an opinion as to whether or not these standards are being met. On this basis, the National Statistician would either confirm that the statistics met the requirements for designation as ‘National Statistics’ or would qualify them, in the worst case removing them from designation as National Statistics.

Quality reviews – the National Statistician’s responsibilities

44. The National Statistician should lead a programme of audit-based quality reviews. She should decide what to review and when, basing those decisions on risk, materiality, likely consequences of failure and cost. Agreement on the coverage

of a programme of quality reviews is an important element in the discharge of the National Statistician's responsibility for quality assurance.

45. Under the present arrangements, there is only limited central direction of the quality review programme. Whilst the central divisions of ONS provide guidance on how to conduct quality reviews, it is largely left to the statistical units within government departments, working together in Theme Working Groups, to decide upon and carry out the reviews that fall within their areas of responsibility. This approach has led to an uneven distribution of reviews, reflecting varying levels of engagement with, and commitment to, the review programme. We believe that the National Statistician needs to exercise tighter control over the programme of quality reviews. The draft guidelines written by ONS take only limited steps in this direction.

46. Inevitably some of the National Statistician's priorities for an audit-based quality review programme will involve statistics produced outside ONS. Success in the conduct of quality audits outside ONS will require the individual government departments and agencies involved to work with the National Statistician to ensure the effectiveness of the review programme as a whole.

Quality reviews – external involvement, implementation of recommendations

47. We support the suggestion that emerged from the ONS/SC evaluation (Annex C) that the lead reviewer should come from outside the work area being reviewed. So far, external expertise appears to have been usually limited to inclusion of a representative on the review steering group.

48. One of the principles of audit is the requisite independence of the auditor from the area being audited. How this is achieved in relation to statistics is likely to vary with the circumstances. For certain key outputs, it will be important that the auditor be seen as recognisably independent of the producers of the statistics reviewed – though that does not necessarily mean external to the department whose outputs are being audited. In other circumstances, a self-assessment audit may be acceptable, as long as the audit process follows a clear set of rules and the results are openly reported.

49. Under the existing guidelines, the department(s) undertaking a quality review is required to publish the completed review and to release an implementation plan within three months of publication. However, there has been no requirement to monitor implementation. We understand that ONS will be making some changes to the guidelines for reviews, which might address these concerns, and introduce a requirement for regular maintenance, with interim and closure reports. We welcome these prospective changes.

Quality reviews – resources

50. Inevitably, quality procedures raise issues about resources. We are not in a position to judge the extent to which resources need to be diverted to quality assurance. What we can say, however, is that skimping on quality assurance for statistics that are designated of national importance would be against the national interest. In our view proper quality assurance for statistics, along the lines discussed above, is not optional.

51. The intangibility of the concept of statistical quality combined with the complexity of many statistical data systems – and the fact that these are often not under the direct control of the statisticians – mean that conducting and securing benefit from quality reviews requires a substantial input of expert resources, whoever provides those resources. The Commission favours the setting up of a dedicated central team responsible both for supporting the National Statistician in agreeing the programme and for ensuring that the individual reviews are adequately staffed and that recommendations are properly considered and implemented. This could be particularly beneficial for departments with small statistical units, who may not otherwise have the resources for a review of their outputs.

Recommendations

52. On the basis of these conclusions, the Statistics Commission offers the following four recommendations. The first recommendation is to all ministers, including in the devolved administrations, with a responsibility for production of some part of official statistics. The remaining three recommendations are primarily to the National Statistician.

- **Recommendation 1:** The Statistics Commission is concerned to maintain and enhance public respect for, and confidence in, official statistics. We recommend that Ministers should re-affirm the responsibility of the National Statistician for the quality of all UK official statistics, wherever they are produced.
- **Recommendation 2:** Two of the protocols of the *National Statistics Code of Practice* (the *Protocol on Quality Management* and the *Protocol on Data Management, Documentation and Preservation*) should be tightened and augmented so that they are able to provide a suitable base for quality audit. Changes needed include:
 - reducing the scope for exceptions
 - requiring declarations of compliance at the level of specific statistical series
 - requiring documentation of system operations and reports on the adequacy of management controls
 - putting risk assessment in relation to data quality at the centre of statistical design and production
 - requiring that quality statements accompany key statistics, with details of how users can get more information and engage in a dialogue with those who manage the data.
- **Recommendation 3:** The quality review programme should be developed into an audit-based approach and agreed as appropriate with departmental permanent secretaries. This programme of audit-based reviews should be led by the National Statistician, who should decide what to review and when, basing those decisions on risk and materiality.

- **Recommendation 4:** The quality programme should be comprehensive, covering the design of statistical systems, the management of the production of statistics and the guidance given to those who use official statistics. It should provide assurance covering the four keys to delivering statistical quality:
 - quality standards that are clear and accessible
 - day-to-day management of statistical systems that encompasses good systems documentation and effective management controls and checks
 - data systems and quality controls that are underpinned in their design by assessment of risks to data quality
 - periodic reviews of statistical outputs that provide an opportunity to look more systematically at the dimensions of quality and overall fitness for purpose.

Annexes

Annex A

Observations on the Current Arrangements for Quality Assurance of Official Statistics

Statistics Commission, October 2005

Introduction

1. The quality assurance arrangements for official statistics include:
 - the *National Statistics Code of Practice* and its protocols, which, among other things, outline certain standards that official statistics are expected to meet
 - the National Statistics quality review programme
 - the *Guidelines for Measuring Statistical Quality* issued by the Office for National Statistics in 2004
 - the new series of summary quality statements launched by ONS in June 2005.
2. The Guidelines set out some principles for measuring quality throughout the statistical production process, but are not mandatory. There is to date only one statistical series (GDP) that is accompanied by a summary quality statement.
3. This annex focuses on the two main elements of quality assurance – the *Code of Practice* and the quality review programme. The analysis here forms the basis of many of the conclusions of the main report. It draws heavily on three further papers:
 - *National Statistics Quality Assurance: A Perspective from Validation of PSA Data systems* – report by the National Audit Office (Annex B)
 - *An Evaluation of Four Quality Reviews* – joint report by ONS and the Statistics Commission (Annex C)
 - *Assessment of National Statistics Quality Review Programme* – report by the Statistics Commission (Annex D)

Code of Practice

4. The National Audit Office (NAO) has a remit to provide external validation of the data systems that underpin the targets specified in Public Service Agreements (PSAs). Most PSA targets are measured by official statistics and surveys.

5. The NAO paper (Annex B) observes that a: “Code of Practice, with associated operational protocols, offers in principle the sort of infrastructure which would provide assurance on quality – by guaranteeing that a variety of assessments and controls underpin statistics with a National Statistics badge”. The most relevant protocols are those on quality management and data management. The *Protocol on Quality Management* “provides useful guidance on general approaches to quality, to change management and to meeting user needs”. But as well as setting out what it describes as ‘best practice principles’, the protocol allows for a number of broad derogations from these principles; this raises concerns as to the actual level of compliance that is required for any individual statistical series.

6. These observations raise a number of questions about the Code as a vehicle for encouraging good quality management practices:

- Are the requirements of the Code (and protocols) in respect of quality management strict enough?
- Are the derogations allowed so extensive as to reduce the effectiveness of the Code as an instrument of quality assurance?
- Are key requirements for good quality management missing from the relevant protocols? For example, should there be more requirement for specific management processes such as documentation of systems and assessment of risks?
- Are the Code and protocols enforceable?

7. The NAO paper draws attention to a paragraph in the *Protocol on Quality Management* that appears to list a wide range of reasons why a department producing statistics need not follow the ‘best practice principles’. These include cost, relative priorities for resources and lack of control over primary sources of data (eg data from administrative systems). The effect of these multiple derogations is that assertion of compliance with the protocol cannot be taken as a guarantee that the quality management principles are actually being followed.

8. In the view of the Statistics Commission, compliance with the relevant protocols should provide assurance that individual statistics meet the stated quality standard. At present we cannot have confidence that this is the case.

9. Clearly one option to address this would be to revise the protocols so as to reduce the scope for claiming exceptions. This could potentially result in a number of statistical series having their ‘National Statistics’ designation withdrawn. An alternative, but possibly less effective, approach would be to maintain the existing derogations but require specific acknowledgement where they had been invoked – thus flagging up where the best practice guidelines in the protocols had not been followed.

10. With respect to the *Protocol on Quality Management* and relevant parts of the *Protocol on Data Management, Documentation and Presentation*, the NAO paper comments that there is not sufficient focus on specific management processes. If considered as a quality management statement, two different elements are missing from these protocols – a mandatory requirement for a ‘quality statement’ for each statistical series, and for documentation of system operation, including management controls and risk assessment. (The data management protocol requires documentation of systems, but only of system design.)

11. The NAO paper offers a number of observations on ways in which the quality system could usefully be developed. These include the following:

- “Clarify specification of the ‘quality’ of National Statistics. (...) it would be helpful to give a clear sense of what the level of noise is in any system ...”
- “Emphasise the importance of risk assessment, and use it to underpin system and control design. (...) make better, more focussed assessments of the risks to attaining that quality. Good risk assessment helps devise cost-effective management controls ...”
- “Extend the Protocols to cover these issues and require documentation not only of the systems but their operation (...) non-compliance with substantive elements of Protocols could usefully be disclosed with the relevant statistics.”

12. The desirability of producing, and having readily available, for each key statistical series, a ‘quality statement’ bringing together material relevant to the different dimensions of quality is supported by the recent (June 2005) introduction of a summary quality statement for GDP. This was heralded as the first in a series of summary quality statements that would cover the whole of the national accounts and eventually all ONS outputs. But, though welcome, this ‘quality statement’ initiative appears to be confined to ONS outputs; we are not aware of any plans to make this a requirement on other government departments.

13. The NAO paper emphasises the importance of risk assessment in quality management. The Statistics Commission would like to see specific reference to the need for risk assessment in either the quality management or data management protocol.

14. There is also a good case for extending the protocols, as NAO suggests, to include a specific requirement for documentation of systems operations to be made available, and a best practice recommendation that systems design and controls be explicitly based on a thorough risk assessment.

The quality review programme

15. The National Statistics quality review programme has been in operation for approaching five years. During this time more than 40 quality reviews have been completed. At Annex C is an evaluation of a selection of the early quality reviews, carried out jointly by ONS and the Statistics Commission. Annex D is an assessment by the Commission of the quality review programme against its original aspirations.

16. The evidence from the ONS/SC evaluation is that, overall, the individual quality reviews have been judged a success by those involved. They have led to quality improvements in a number of areas; and they have provided an opportunity for the constructive involvement of users of statistics in the assessment of their quality.

17. Whilst the 40 plus reviews that have reported have been quite widely spread across statistical subject areas, there are a number of gaps – most notably health – where there have been no quality reviews under the programme. On any plausible definition of ‘key outputs’, a substantial number of them will not have been reviewed by the end of the first five years of the programme.

18. The NAO paper also makes some observations about the quality review programme which the Statistics Commission endorses:

- quality reviews should look at the actual operation of data systems before moving on to more strategic issues
- the extent of stakeholder consultation in the reviews needs clarification, as does the degree of external representation on the review team
- the significance of the reviews should be increased, by establishing a requirement for a formal response and setting out the range of actions that might flow from review findings
- the necessary resources to undertake reviews, and to follow them up, should be factored into the relevant departmental budgets.

19. The requirement in the *Framework for National Statistics* to review all key outputs at least every five years is possibly overly prescriptive. The Statistics Commission would question whether a cyclical review of all key outputs is the optimal approach. ONS apparently shares this view; the draft guidelines for the ‘second quality review programme’ cut the length of the programme to three years, and at the same time make it clear that the programme is intended to be selective, rather than comprehensive.

20. A key issue is who should decide what to review. The approach followed until now has been that the central divisions of ONS have provided guidance on how to conduct quality reviews under the programme, but have largely left it to statistical staff in government departments – co-ordinated through a system of Theme Working

Groups – to decide upon and carry out reviews that fall within their areas of responsibility.

21. This approach has led to an uneven distribution of quality reviews, reflecting varying levels of engagement with, and commitment to, the review programme. The Statistics Commission believes that the National Statistician should take a strong lead in setting the programme of quality reviews, and deciding on the key areas to review – and that government departments must give this their full co-operation.

22. The central aim of the quality review programme is to provide quality assurance about official statistics. But NAO reports that, in the context of its work on validation of data for PSA targets, it “has not been able to use them [quality reviews] as a comprehensive source of assurance”. This is partly because the “reviews do not assess the detailed operation of data systems”. One of NAO’s recommendations is that the reviews should be required to look at the operation of data systems “before moving on to more strategic issues”.

23. The NAO paper also considers the possible use of audit approaches within the quality reviews. The paper argues that the factors that need to be present for an audit approach to work successfully “are present to some degree”, and that an audit approach to assessment of quality is feasible.

24. Nevertheless quality reviews also address wider questions – about the validity of statistical measures and about opportunities to adopt better and/or cheaper approaches – which an audit approach would not necessarily address. The NAO see audit as part of a two-stage review structure – an audit approach to identify issues arising from the historical operation of data systems, and to flag up management issues meriting deeper scrutiny in a subsequent stage.

25. Both the NAO paper and the ONS/SC evaluation of quality reviews raise the issue of finding the necessary resources to carry out reviews. Firmer central direction of the programme of quality reviews, as proposed above, may require revisiting the question of responsibility for providing resources. At present the ONS provides central support for the programme in the form of detailed guidance on how to undertake a review, plus some limited administrative support for individual reviews, including dissemination of the final report on the NS website.

26. The NAO paper observes that stakeholder consultation and external representation on the review team are “important elements in generating insights into quality issues and in giving the review credibility”. On both stakeholder consultation and external representation, NAO believes that there has been less external involvement than originally envisaged, and that this should be addressed. The Statistics Commission agrees with this view.

27. Existing guidance requires some external involvement in each review, in line

with the requirement in the *Framework for National Statistics* that the reviews “involve... external expertise”. This has usually been met by including an external representative – generally someone from outside the statistical service – on the review steering group. A suggestion made in the ONS/SC evaluation was that the lead reviewer should come from outside the work area being reviewed.

28. Under the existing guidelines, the department(s) undertaking a review is required to: (a) publish the completed review; and (b) release an implementation plan within three months of publication of the review.

29. The view expressed in both the NAO paper and the ONS/SC evaluation is that certain aspects of these arrangements should be strengthened. NAO offer a general observation that the significance of the reviews should be increased by “establishing the requirement for a formal response, and setting out the range of actions that may flow from review findings”. Comments in the ONS/SC evaluation focused on what happens after the publication of the implementation plan, where it was felt that there was a good case for formal monitoring reports.

30. We understand that the draft guidelines for the second quality review programme introduce a requirement for regular monitoring of progress on implementation plans, together with interim and closure reports. The Statistics Commission welcomes this as an important step and will monitor its impact.

Annex B

National Statistics Quality Assurance: A Perspective from Validation of PSA Data Systems

National Audit Office, June 2005

Introduction

This paper responds to a request from the Statistics Commission asking the National Audit Office to summarise our experiences of the National Statistics quality assurance arrangements, viewed from the perspective of our work validating the data systems underlying Public Service Agreement (PSA) progress reporting, and to offer views on the prospects for employing an audit approach in National Statistics Quality Reviews.

Perspectives from validating PSA data systems

Validation findings

Our validation work deals with National Statistics only inasmuch as they are used as monitoring sources for PSA targets. And our views of quality relate to the needs of management and Parliament in assessing progress towards those targets. Our validation work cannot therefore be taken as a representative review of all National Statistics, or as representing all stakeholders' quality interests. Our findings nevertheless relate to an important use of National Statistics – the strategic management of public services. And while auditing practices impose specific requirements for evidence underpinning a conclusion, the issues raised should nevertheless be relevant to those with broader interests in data quality.

We summarised the results from the first tranche of PSA validation work in our report *Managing Data Quality – Compendium Report* published in March. That covered the issues raised in the validations of some 64 data systems, covering the targets for eight departments and associated bodies. Overall, some 30 per cent of targets were supported by data systems which needed strengthening, while in some 40 per cent of cases known limitations in the data systems could have been better disclosed when reporting progress. The Figure below highlights a number of practices that should be more widely applied.

Figure 1: Practices that could be applied more widely

- **Departments should raise the profile of data quality issues.** They could, for example, allocate clear responsibilities for data quality and maintain active management oversight of systems, including challenging outturn data, to reinforce the importance of data quality.
- **They should plan and co-ordinate the data needs for new systems.** Many weaknesses stem from inadequate attention to data issues when PSA targets are selected and specified. Departments should define the quality of data needed for effective progress monitoring, and then assess whether existing or new data systems can best meet the requirement.
- **They should develop a corporate view of risks to data quality.** This would help ensure data quality issues are understood, actively monitored, effectively managed and, where necessary, disclosed in performance reports. Reflecting key data quality risks in wider corporate risk registers can increase the attention that is given to these issues.
- **Systems should be adequately documented and updated for any significant changes.** Clear definitions of terms, well-documented controls and unambiguous criteria for judging success enable systems to operate consistently over time and provide the foundations for making robust judgements of performance. Where departments revise systems for live PSA targets they should update documentation and agree major changes with HM Treasury and explain them in Technical Notes.
- **Managers should look for opportunities to apply low cost credibility checks to data.** Managers can check outturn data and trend data by comparing them with other data sets covering similar or related aspects of performance. Such controls are particularly valuable where departments' systems draw on data which may be subject to sampling error, or data provided by other organisations.
- **Users of performance data should be made aware of limitations in underlying systems.** Identifying limitations and explaining their implications for outturn results builds trust in public reporting by helping users make informed assessments of reported results.

Our validation work also pointed up a number of factors which indicated higher levels of risk to data quality.

Figure 2: Factors which can influence the risks of data reliability

- **Complexity of data collection:** Risks are likely to be greater if there are a large number of data sources (for example, a network of local offices) or providers, or if measures require difficult judgments to be made by data collectors. In the case of sample surveys, high levels of non-response among 'difficult to reach' members of the target population will increase the risk of bias.
- **Complexity of data processing and analysis:** The more complex the processing or analysis required, the greater the risk of error arising, for example, through incorrect data entry or flaws in calculation routines. Weaknesses in the extraction of data for analysis may result in the omission (or inclusion) of relevant (irrelevant) data items. Invalid results may be obtained from sample surveys if inappropriate weightings are applied or if inappropriate methods are used to extrapolate the information gained from the sample.
- **Reliance on external sources:** Where data systems are outside the control of the user/reporter of the information, data quality or fitness for purpose can be difficult to establish. Users/reporters may not exert appropriate influence over third parties, or not establish with them what quality is intended for the data, or what quality management systems have been applied.
- **Level of subjectivity:** Where analysis and assessment involves subjective judgements, there is greater risk of inconsistency over time.
- **Maturity and stability of the data system:** Although age by no means guarantees quality, risks may be greater if the system is new, if it has been recently modified or if there have been significant changes in key staff.
- **Expertise of those who operate the system:** The professional skills and experience of those responsible is an important factor in controlling the risk in individual data streams. Risks may be greater where non-specialists operate more complex systems.
- **Use of data to manage and reward performance:** Risks may be greater if data are used to determine individual or team pay or the department's (or its service provider's) rating, funding or autonomy. Risks may be lower if data capture is well-integrated with operations, or if those capturing/collating the data are also using the data for their own management purposes.

These findings draw from all the data systems we examined – of which around one third used National Statistics as sources, sometimes in combination with other statistical sources. In general, we found that data systems under the management of statisticians were better controlled than those from administrative or external sources – regardless of the presence or absence of the National Statistics badge. Issues raised with National Statistics sources fell into two broad categories. First, the extent to which departmental managers had established whether a National Statistic was a fit source for their particular use. This responsibility is clearly properly allocated to the user – a National Statistic cannot reasonably satisfy demands from all potential users of a given type of statistic. But in working through this issue with managers, we found that it was often difficult to establish what were, in principle, the quality and limitations of a National Statistic. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has recognised the importance of this issue, as represented by their *Measures of Quality* booklet and associated current work.

The other issue relates to the ability of National Statistics procedures to demonstrate delivery of statistics of the planned quality. Here the issue relates mainly to the design, operation and documentation of the National Statistics quality system, discussed below.

Code of Practice and Protocols

The introduction of a *Code of Practice*, with associated operational protocols, offers in principle the sort of infrastructure which would provide assurance on quality – by guaranteeing that a variety of assessments and controls underpin statistics with a National Statistics badge. The protocols of most potential relevance to our validation remit are those on quality management and on data management.

The *Quality Management Protocol* provides useful guidance on general approaches to quality, to change management and to meeting user needs. It also, by design, gives considerable flexibility over process and judgement. As an example, the section in the protocol on compliance is quoted in full below.

“The best practice principles set out in this Protocol may require producers in government departments and agencies to develop and establish new systems and procedures. Compliance may, therefore, be an incremental process and dependent on cost constraints and competing priorities. Furthermore, it may not be possible for producers to apply these principles fully to all systems from which statistics are derived – a qualification which applies in particular to management or administrative systems.”

This statement provides a number of factors which may prevent or limit the application of the ‘best practice principles’, including cost, relative priorities for resources and lack of control over primary sources of data – such as those sourced in administrative systems. Such broad derogations naturally raise concerns about the actual level of compliance for any given statistic. And in practice we have found that administrative systems, especially when operating at many sites and involving judgements over data classification, present high risks to data quality.

The protocol also lacks elements which would be useful for validation assurance. Unlike many quality management statements, the protocol does not focus on specific management processes. So there is no firm requirement for each National Statistic for a quality statement, or an outline of the data system, or a risk assessment – although all these issues are raised in general terms.

Auditing guidelines require us to seek evidence on the actual operation of a control system, if we plan to take assurance from it. In practice, this requirement is usually satisfied by reference to documentation of control results and/or management review. But the protocol does not require the maintenance of such records; the section on documentation is related purely to the representation of the published statistics, not to the need for management records of either design or operation of the system.

The *Data Management Protocol* does require documentation of system design, and deals with other important issues including data security. But it doesn't require documentation of system operation, or deal with risk assessment. It has the same statement with regard to compliance as the *Quality Management Protocol*.

While the *Code of Practice* and protocols may have made an important contribution to the development of better statistics, the lack of explicit material to date on quality assertions, risk management or documentation of management controls and their operation, has limited the assurance we can take from the National Statistics badge. And since protocol compliance statements are made (where they are made) at departmental level, there is no ready way to assess the extent to which any derogation have affected a given statistic. Some of these issues surface again in our ability to draw assurance from quality reviews.

Quality reviews

The National Statistics framework provides for deeper reviews of the quality of National Statistics on a five year cycle. Several reviews have been completed for statistics used in PSA monitoring, and we have drawn on them in validating PSA data systems.

The reviews we have seen concentrated mainly on high level issues, such as the validity of the statistic in measuring the underlying concepts, and the measurement strategy. They have been useful in flagging major quality concerns, which have fed into our own risk assessments and validation conclusions. For example, quality reviews of GCSE education statistics raised a number of issues with the treatment of proxy responses and 'other' qualifications which led the Department for Education and Skills to propose a new data system. Alerted to these issues, we were able to push the department to disclose the limitations of the system when reporting against education PSA targets until the new system could be brought in.

While the quality reviews have been useful to us in highlighting substantive quality issues, we have not been able to use them as a comprehensive source of assurance. The main reason is that areas of concern to us have been excluded from the scope of the review. Sometimes, this has related to the sources of statistics – as when, for example, consideration of Transport for London bus statistics was excluded from the wider review of bus statistics. More generally, the quality reviews do not assess the detailed operation of data systems. This may in part be a reflection of the lack of ready documentation on these issues which result from the Code and protocols. But we also sense that, with limited resources, reviewers have not seen such detailed work as being of high priority.

More generally, we are also aware that the programme of quality reviews has slipped. And statisticians have told us that they do not have the resources to implement all review findings. The system for following-up review recommendations, or of applying health warnings to National Statistics, or indeed withdrawing ‘accreditation’, does not seem to be well-formed.

Issues arising

There are a number of areas where developments in the National Statistics quality management system would be needed before we could draw more assurance from it for validation purposes. Whether such developments should be taken forward depends on wider judgements of the balance between cost and reward, and indeed the strategy for developing the National Statistics brand. We offer the following observations, therefore, as issues for debate, not firm, costed recommendations. From our validation perspective, the National Statistics quality system could usefully be developed so as to:

- Clarify specification of the ‘quality’ of individual National Statistics. While it may not be possible to give a fully statistical representation of bias or uncertainty, it would be helpful to give a clear sense of what the level of noise is in any system. One of the key issues in using National Statistics in target monitoring is being able to track progress towards relatively small targeted increments. So a stream of statistics that is perfectly sound for giving a sense of movement over 20 years may be totally unsuited to tracking small changes over three year periods.
- Emphasise the importance of risk assessment, and use it to underpin system and control design. Given a clearer statement of the desired quality of any statistic, it should be possible to make better, more focused assessments of the risks to attaining that quality. Good risk assessment helps devise cost-effective management controls, tailored to the risks faced.
- Extend the protocols to cover these issues, and require documentation not only of the systems but their operation, including evidence of management

review. The significance of any non-compliance with substantive elements of protocols could usefully be disclosed with the relevant statistics.

- Have all quality reviews look at the actual operation of the data systems, before moving on to more strategic issues. Where there are pre-existing reviews covering issues of operation, such as quinquennial reviews under Survey Control arrangements, they can be used as source material. This would give added force to the importance of the Code and protocols, and would surface any practical issues with current systems which might influence the strategic measurement approaches considered in the remainder of the review.
- Clarify the extent of stakeholder consultation required as part of reviews, and the degree of external representation on the review team. These are important elements in generating insights into quality issues, and in giving the review credibility. We sense variable approaches to consultation, and less external representation than originally planned.
- Increase the significance of reviews, establishing the requirement for a formal response, and setting out the range of actions that may flow from review findings. Ways in which users of statistics can be made aware of any concerns, and in the worst case withdrawal of National Statistics status, should figure in those possible actions.
- Make sure the necessary resources to undertake reviews, and follow them up satisfactorily, are factored into relevant ONS and departmental budgets.

ONS work in hand, such as their work on quality measurement and self-assessment, may help address some of these issues.

The use of audit approaches in quality reviews

Audit approaches have proved sufficiently flexible to be valuable in a variety of areas – hence the rise of terms such as clinical audit, social audit, health and safety audits and so on. Audit has, however, a normative base, and it works most cost-effectively where there is a reasonably good consensus on what might be termed standards or good practice. And it is usually applied in circumstances where management have the responsibility not only to adopt good practices, but also to be able to demonstrate their adoption of them. Finally, audit is usually employed where a third party wants an independent view of the topic of interest.

These three elements are present to some degree in the case of National Statistics. There is good general agreement on the mechanical aspects of designing systems to yield information of a defined quality. The existence of the Code, protocols and reviews establishes the need for management compliance and statements of compliance. And the whole National Statistics project is grounded in the need to establish the credibility of key statistics, so there is a clear case for review work aimed at external audiences. Notwithstanding the suggestions above for

strengthening this system, our ability to take forward our validation remit, employing an audit approach, confirms the feasibility of audit work in this area. And ONS tell us that the National Statistics Self-Assessment Tool, currently being piloted, is an audit-based process – although we have not come across this tool in our validations to date.

Quality reviews also address wider questions, however, about the validity of the measures, and opportunities to adopt better and/or cheaper approaches. Audit approaches can help ensure such issues are considered – indeed, audit approaches form the basis of many quality management reviews, including those initially based on self-assessment, such as the European Foundation for Quality Management scheme. But to follow-up any issues arising, subsequent work might well have a more exploratory or creative sense than that associated with audit.

The purpose of quality reviews, and their context, naturally determine the approaches used. Assuming that the current stated purposes remain, audit could fit very well into a two-stage review structure. Audit could help identify issues arising from the historic operation of data systems, flagging up any management issues meriting deeper scrutiny in the later stage. That would also help fill a gap that we see in the current quality management system: the absence of assurance over the day-to-day management of data systems. If current processes, such as quinquennial reviews, or new ones such as the Self-Assessment Tool, can help provide that assurance, they could usefully be bound into the quality review process. Even if they remain separate exercises, input and process issues affect output quality and merit consideration in output reviews.

Annex C

Review of Quality Management Programme Evaluation of four Quality Reviews 2005

Office for National Statistics and the Statistics Commission, August 2005

Summary

This report has been produced following a joint project carried out by National Statistics and International Division (NSID) in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Statistics Commission secretariat. The objectives were:

- to qualitatively assess the effectiveness of quality reviews in ensuring fitness for purpose, the quality of production and dissemination and in identifying quality issues
- to analyse the benefits from specific quality reviews against the costs of carrying out the review and of implementing the recommendations.

The criteria used to select reviews for inclusion in the project were based on:

- the year of review publication (2002)
- Theme Working Group
- the review type and number of recommendations.

Four reviews were selected, the *Review of the Framework for Labour Market Statistics*, the *Review of Higher Education Student Statistics*, the *Review of Government Accounts and Indicators* and the *Review of Armed Forces Medical Statistics*. The project was split into two overlapping phases, the first carried out by NSID and the second by the Statistics Commission. Data collection methods included interviews, a web-based survey and email consultation.

Results indicate that a range of definitions of quality had been used across the different quality reviews. The majority of respondents felt that the reviews had improved the quality of National Statistics (NS) although quality was judged to be good in two reviews already. Substantive improvements in data quality in these reviews were considered unlikely to be as a consequence of the review, possibly because the data were already of good quality and fit for purpose.

Suggestions made by respondents to improve the review process included allowing greater flexibility in the quality review process, improving ONS guideline notes and

more formal monitoring of recommendation implementation. Reasons given for not implementing recommendations included waiting for organisational change to take place, lack of time and money.

It proved difficult to establish whether the reviews were value for money, with mixed responses across the topics areas. On the cost side, carrying out a review is a lengthy and resource intensive process. The reviews were seen as having been worthwhile undertaking by respondents, but exact quantification of benefits had not proved possible by the project team. Two of the reviews, the *Government Accounts Review* and the *Review of the Framework of Labour Market Statistics*, were considered too important not to have been done. There was a less clear consensus in the other two reviews. There had been a number of benefits coming from the quality review programme. The individual reviews had an important role to play in quality assuring data and to a lesser extent in improving data quality.

A number of issues emerged from the evaluation concerning definitions of quality and the governance of the quality review programme. Many of these issues are addressed in the draft for the second quality review programme.

Introduction

The joint project was initiated as NSID and the Statistics Commission were carrying out separate work looking at the issues of quality and the National Statistics Quality Review Programme. It was agreed that a joint project would pool resources and avoid the duplication of work. The project started in November 2004 by identifying four quality reviews for evaluation. The project team consisted of two members of NSID and two members of the Commission secretariat. The project stands alone, but also feeds into ongoing work being carried out by NSID to evaluate the current Quality Review Programme and more general work being taken forward by the Statistics Commission looking at a broader programme of work on quality management for UK official statistics.

Background

The publication of the White Paper *Building Trust in Statistics* (1999) set out a framework for quality assuring National Statistics, stating there should be "...a quality assurance programme including thorough reviews of key outputs at least every five years, with the involvement of external expertise." The publication of the *Framework for National Statistics* in 2000, which has as one of its objectives to improve the quality and relevance of National Statistics, led to the creation of the National Statistics Quality Review Programme later in the same year. The remit of the Programme is to review, assess and, where required, recommend change to National Statistics products and processes.

The initial meeting between the Commission secretariat and NSID agreed the objectives and criteria for the project, and led to the creation of a Project Initiation Document. It was agreed that rather than having a formal project management structure, ie programme chair and programme board, the project would be kept at a working level and all decisions agreed amongst the project team.

A list of 10 quality reviews was identified which met the criteria for inclusion in the evaluation. From that list four reviews were chosen. Each review had been carried out by a different Government Statistical Service department, under the auspices of different Theme Working Groups and represented a variety of review types. All reviews had been published before the end of 2002 and produced a recommendation implementation timetable. The four reviews chosen for the project were: the *Review of the Framework for Labour Market Statistics*; the *Review of Higher Education Student Statistics*; the *Review of Government Accounts and Indicators* and the *Review of Armed Forces Medical Statistics*.

Methods

The project was split into two overlapping phases. The first was carried out by NSID evaluating the *Review of the Framework for Labour Market Statistics*. The second phase was carried out by the Commission Secretariat evaluating the remaining three reviews. The main difference between the phases was a change in data collection methods, with the Commission evaluation involving face-to-face interviews, along with a web-based questionnaire. Separate reports were produced on the *Labour Market Review* evaluation and on the evaluation of the remaining three reviews.

Phase One

Those involved with the process of the *Labour Market Review* and the production of the final report were identified and met with to discuss the issues surrounding the review, to obtain background on the process and find out if there were any issues that needed to be highlighted. A list of questions was agreed that covered the objectives of the project, identified what quality improvements had taken place after implementation of the recommendations, whether the quality review process was beneficial and any issues on how the review was carried out.

The evaluation team used the lists of those contacted during the consultation phase of each quality review, dividing the lists into data users/producers and those involved in the quality review process. To ensure that the consultation included the viewpoint of both the data users and those involved with the quality review, two tables were devised to collect responses. Each differed slightly in content to mirror the different viewpoints of the two groups being questioned.

The tables were issued as attachments to an email asking for input into the project, giving a deadline and explaining why they had been contacted. Non-respondents

were chased by telephone and email once the deadline had passed to ensure they received as many responses as possible. The responses were then analysed and a report produced, showing the work carried out and the findings of the consultation.

The project team met and discussed emerging findings, as well as what lessons had been learnt during the first phase of the project.

Phase Two

The Commission secretariat started evaluating the remaining three quality reviews prior to completion of the first phase and amended the data collection methods to include face-to-face interviews and a web-based questionnaire. Interviewing stakeholders allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the quality and quality assurance issues. Key stakeholders were those who either carried out the review, were producers of the statistics or users of the statistics. The other people involved in the original review were sent a questionnaire via email. The names of these people were supplied either through the review documentation or the project manager. The interviews were tape recorded, part transcribed and analysed to establish themes in the responses.

Following completion of the two evaluation phases, the project team agreed that there was no need to evaluate any further reviews and that one report should be produced, covering all four reviews.

Findings

Four main themes emerged during the evaluation. These were: the individual quality review process, quality in a review context, the impact of the individual reviews and the implementation of the recommendations. Respondents also offered some general observations on the quality review programme and suggestions for improvement to the quality review process.

Individual quality review process

Most respondents, whether they were users, producers or reviewers, found the quality review process to be a positive experience, and felt that their views had been listened to and taken on by the review teams.

Those contacted during the three evaluations carried out in Phase Two were asked what they thought the purpose of the quality review had been and why it had taken place. Responses ranged from the assumption that the review was a routine requirement of the quality review programme instigated by ONS, to there having been a problem with data triggering the review process. The importance of the government accounts data in informing government policy was considered by some users to be sufficient reason for carrying out a review. This question was not asked during the evaluation of the review of the *Framework of Labour Market Statistics*.

There was a consensus that the scope of each review was 'reasonable' and 'sensible', but some respondents saw them as too wide, asking for too much to be covered given limited time and resources. Generally it was felt that the reviews had focused on the right topics although suggestions for alternative topics were made.

Quality in a review context

All the review reports stated that both quality assurance and quality improvements were within their remit. Respondents were asked about potential quality improvements as a consequence of the review and this led on to a discussion of what constituted quality. Quality was generally discussed in terms of quality improvement rather than quality assurance.

A range of definitions of quality had been used across the different reviews, ranging from fitness for purpose to getting the right information to the right person in the right time. Respondents were asked whether the quality review had had a direct impact on the quality of the statistics or the quality assurance process. The majority of respondents felt that the reviews had improved the quality of National Statistics. For two of the reviews, quality was judged to be good already. It was suggested that, in these two cases, substantive improvements in data quality were unlikely to result from the review, as the data were already of good quality and fit for purpose. Nevertheless, the reviews were felt to have played an important role in raising the profile of data quality as an issue in general.

Overall, the main changes that had an impact on data quality were not couched in terms of timeliness or accuracy or any of the other 'dimensions of quality' set out in the European Statistical System (ESS) model used in the present ONS guidelines. This model was around in 2002 but was much less prominent than in current guidelines. Rather they were framed in terms of clarity in data definitions, inclusion/exclusion of statistics within the NS brand, a greater focus on documentation and process and a conceptual model for statistical work.

Impact of reviews

One of the objectives of this research was to investigate whether the reviews were considered effective and provided value for money. In order to determine this, respondents were asked what they thought of the reviews' conclusions and recommendations, whether the reviews made anything worse for respondents and what the benefits of the reviews were.

The conclusions of the reviews were endorsed by the majority of respondents. A few did not endorse the conclusions – there was a sense that some conclusions did not go far enough and some were unrealistic.

All the reviews had completed implementation plans following publication of the final report. Most of the recommendations in the four reviews are now formally described as completed or closed. The closed recommendations do not specify whether they had been completed, no further action was recommended, or that responsibility for taking action on the recommendation was passed on to someone outside the quality review area. Two of the reviews followed a formal process of prioritisation for their recommendations, but there was no formal prioritisation of recommendations in the other two reports.

A common theme was that respondents considered some of the recommendations to be too ambitious. In addition, some were considered to have a greater impact than others. Impact was generally perceived in two ways, one focused on the capacity of the recommendation to result in a significant change in working practice and the other was about the profile of any change. Some respondents suggested that recommendations to set up user/discussion groups in response to problems were seen as less effective. It was felt they could be easily side-lined if they did not have high level buy-in or the resources to implement changes.

Opinions of the reviews' conclusions and recommendations had an impact on whether the review was considered effective, whether they were worth carrying out and whether they provided value for money. There was an overall sense that all of the reviews had been of benefit to National Statistics. The idea of reviewing work and striving to improve data quality was good professional practice and was something that should be carried out routinely.

Regarding the value of the reviews as a whole, they were considered to provide a good opportunity to step back and consider the issues – an opportunity to take stock. In some cases the review helped producers of the statistics to focus on what they were really there for and resulted in them being more responsive to user need.

In terms of whether the reviews were value for money there was a mixed response across the four topic areas. The *Government Accounts Review* and the *Labour Market Review* were considered too important not to have been done, and the consequent risk of failing to find something that was wrong outweighed any cost involved in doing them. There was a less clear consensus in the other two reviews.

Process of implementation

The guidelines for carrying out a quality review stipulate that an action plan must be drawn up within three months of review completion to ensure that the recommendations can be monitored. All four reviews had an action plan available on the ONS website. Not all the recommendations have been marked as completed. This might be because they were not due for completion yet or that the plans are in need of updating.

During the interviews, respondents were asked about the implementation of the recommendations and, in case some had not been implemented, why they had not. The reasons given included the fact that the recommendation was bound up with an organisational change, and lack of time and money (rather than lack of desire). Some respondents felt that this was not helped by the lack of a formal system for monitoring implementation of the recommendations.

General observations on the Quality Review Programme and suggestions for improvement to the quality review process

The effectiveness of the quality review programme in the form adopted for National Statistics was questioned by some respondents. The evaluation results suggested that, despite the provision of central guidance at the time the reviews took place, there had been a strong sense of a lack of active involvement by the National Statistics 'centre' in guiding the quality review process. It was felt that ONS could have provided more advice and support in how to do a review and that their involvement, when it came in the form of a letter from the National Statistician, was too late in the process of a review.

In one review, some respondents questioned the value of an assessment being carried out by staff internal to the work area and expressed a preference that the review be led by someone external to the work area. It was felt that this would enhance the credibility of the final report. The guidelines do suggest external involvement in quality reviews.

Lack of resources was mentioned several times by respondents. One reason given for some of the recommendations not being implemented was a lack of time and money in individual departments. Related to this there were calls for a central allocation of funds to help with the implementation of recommendations, and also calls for greater flexibility in the nature of review allowed – which would, it was suggested, be less resource intensive.

Suggestions for improvement that emerged from the evaluation included allowing mini-reviews and using peer review as a review type. These were considered to be less bureaucratic and more flexible. In addition, it was suggested that the quality review guideline notes be improved (to be more explicit) and also that the programme time horizon be reduced from five years.

Conclusions

This report has provided an evaluation of four quality reviews published in 2002 covering the economy, education, labour market and the public sector NS themes.

There have been a number of benefits coming from the quality review programme. Most respondents found the quality review process a positive experience. The individual reviews had an important role to play in quality assuring data and to a lesser extent in improving data quality. The reviews also provided the opportunity to check current working practices and implement changes if necessary.

The evaluation highlighted a number of issues concerning definitions of quality and the governance of the quality review programme. Overall the reviews evaluated had utilised a range of definitions of quality, possibly due to a lack of clear guidance on the definition of quality at the time of the review. There was a sense of a lack of involvement of the National Statistics 'centre' in guiding the quality review programme.

Since 2002, when the reviews in the evaluation were carried out, there have been a number of changes to the central guidance for the quality review programme. Further changes are planned in the form of the draft Quality Review Programme guidelines for the second quality review programme. As a consequence, many of the issues raised in the evaluation regarding guidance and governance will be addressed. The draft guidelines indicate *inter alia* that there will be greater flexibility in the quality review process, a reduction in the five year cycle and increased monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations. Overall they will mean a greater involvement of the NS 'centre' in the process of carrying out a review.

It has proved difficult to establish value for money in this evaluation. At a qualitative level, although the reviews are certainly seen as having been worthwhile undertaking, this evaluation has not attempted a formal quantification of costs and benefits. On the costs side carrying out a review can be a very lengthy and resource-intensive process involving many members of staff from the reviewer to the project board to the people who are contacted.

Annex D

Assessment of National Statistics Quality Reviews Statistics Commission, August 2005

Introduction

A programme of quality reviews of key outputs for National Statistics was first proposed in the 1999 White Paper *Building Trust in Statistics*, and then formally established in the 2000 *Framework for National Statistics*. This called for a programme of reviews that would cover all key National Statistics outputs over a period of five years. The outputs were allocated to one of twelve 'themes'. One of the early tasks for the Theme Working Groups (TWGs) was to break down all the outputs that each group was responsible for into 'chunks', which would then form the basis for a programme of quality reviews. The original plan was to conduct a quality review for each 'chunk', over the following five years, and the TWGs drew up initial five-year programmes accordingly.

This note evaluates where the quality review programme now stands in relation to its original objectives. The aim was threefold:

- to investigate why the original programme has not been met
- to investigate the variability of performance across themes
- to evaluate the requirement for a quality review programme in the Framework document.

Summary

At the time of this report, 43 reviews have been completed and published (for a full list see Table 1):

- There were 120 quality reviews scheduled.
- The Crime and Justice and Public Sector and Other TWG have completed the most reviews (seven each), while the Health and Care TWG have completed none.
- Table 2 attempts to reconcile the original list of quality reviews in the first NS work programme with the situation in 2005.

Table 1: Summary of quality reviews by theme (as at August 2005)

	Completed Quality Reviews	Due Before 2004-05 but not cancelled	Still Due			Cancelled
			2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	
Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry	2	0	0	0	0	4
Commerce, Energy and Industry	1	0	0	0	1	3
Crime and Justice	7	2	1	2	0	2
Economy	4	9	0	0	0	0
Education and Training	5	1	1	0	0	15
Health and Care	0	7	0	0	0	0
Labour Market	3	1	0	1	1	4
Natural and Built Environment	2	2	0	0	0	5
Public Sector and Other	7	0	1	0	0	5
Population and Migration	2	1	0	0	0	6
Social and Welfare	5	5	4	0	1	5
Transport, Travel and Tourism	5	1	3	0	0	1
Cross cutting/multi themed	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total	43	29	11	3	3	52

Analysis by individual theme

1. Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry

A number of the original reviews planned in the first NS Work Programme for this theme were eventually covered in a broad strategic review of farming and food statistics completed in 2004. The strategic review looked at user needs in terms of what was missing and the adequacy of extant statistics. It is a good model for other strategic reviews and with hindsight should have been conducted at the beginning of the review programme. This approach is logical for all TWGs.

Completed and published:

- Forestry Statistics – NSQR 19: released 13 December 2002
- Farming and Food Statistics (Strategic) – NSQR 34: released 28 June 2004

Cancelled:

- Fisheries Statistics: due 2003-04
- Economic and Statistical Advice: due 2004-05
- Price statistics: due 2005-06
- Pesticides Statistics: due 2004-05 (now being treated as an internal review)

In addition, three previously planned reviews (cereals, agricultural labour and horticulture) were completed but no reports were issued. In each instance, the review findings were used as inputs to the *Strategic Review of Farming and Food Statistics* (NSQR 34), which also included the recommendations and actions from these reviews.

2. Commerce, Energy and Industry

The only review to be completed for this theme was published in 2001. Since then no progress has been made regarding the other planned reviews. A review of Structural Business Statistics was cancelled in 2002 because it was thought it would overlap with Eurostat's work on harmonisation. Instead, the TWG decided on a review of Service Sector Statistics – but this review has not happened. The ONS-led *Review of Pension Statistics* belongs in this theme group but is not part of NS Quality Review Programme.

Completed and published:

- Inter-Departmental Business Register – NSQR 2: released 18 April 2001
- Review of Pensions Statistics: released 10 October 2002

Still due:

- Energy Statistics: due 2004-05. Postponed until 2007/08

Cancelled:

- Structural Business Statistics: due 2002-03
- Financial, Overseas and Other Business Statistics: due 2003-04
- Short Period Statistics: due 2004-05

3. Crime and Justice

The list of completed reviews for this theme bears little resemblance to the original list. A number of the reviews by the Home Office were already underway when the initial programme was drawn up, and they were subsequently brought under the 'NS Quality Review' banner and published a few years after they were completed.

Completed and published:

- Crime Statistics – NSQR 20: released 30 July 2003
- Efficacy of Sentencing – NSQR 21: released 30 July 2003
- Homicide Statistics – NSQR 25: released 3 December 2003

- Motoring Statistics – NSQR 26: released 3 December 2003
- Administration of Justice Statistics – NSQR 27: released 3 December 2003
- Forecasting the Prison and Probation Populations – NSQR 10: released 10 April 2002
- Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics – NSQR 29: released 10 March 2004

Still due:

- Other Administrative Sources: due 2005-06
- Review of gaps in statistics: due 2005-06

Late but not cancelled:

- Implementation of Recommendations of Completed Reviews: due 2003-04
- Administrative Sources: Corrections: due 2003-04. Postponed
- Administrative Sources: Civil Justice: due 2004-05. Postponed

Cancelled:

- Compilations and dissemination arrangements: due 2005-06
- Statistical Surveys: due 2004-05

4. Economy

A number of reviews covering parts of the National Accounts have been postponed pending completion of the National Accounts Re-engineering Project. Only four reviews have been completed, including one – STOIR – that was already near completion when the quality review programme was launched in 2000. This project will be “the key quality and methodology initiative within the Economy theme for the years 2003-04 to 2005-06”. Project aims include enabling the delivery of better quality and more reliable National Accounts and providing a better and more responsive service to key customers of the National Accounts. In order to concentrate ONS resources on this project it has been agreed that these planned reviews should be scheduled for later years, after re-engineered National Accounts systems have bedded in.

Completed and published:

- Short Term Output Indicators – NSQR 1: released 3 October 2000
- Government Accounts and Indicators – NSQR 13: released 2 October 2002

- Balance of Payments and Trade statistics – NSQR 37: released 7 September 2004
- Review of UK Regional Accounts – NSQR 43: released 24 August 2005

Late but not cancelled:

- National Accounts Re-engineering
- Income and Quarterly Balancing, including Inland Revenue Statistics
- National Accounts Deflators
- Input-output Tables, Annual Balancing (Blue Book)
- Expenditure: consumption; retail sales index; investment
- Productivity
- Distributive and Financial Transactions; balance sheets
- Producer Price Index and Corporate Services Price Index. These are not National Statistics.
- Consumer Price Indices. This is not a national statistic.

5. Education and Training

The completed reviews are mostly in the field of higher education. A large number of reviews, covering various aspects of school statistics, have been cancelled with nothing else in place. Many of the cancelled reviews were not included in the original work programme. There is a note in the published schedule which indicates that “due to resource pressures some of the original published dates for the Education and Training TWG National Statistics Quality Reviews have been revised”.

Completed and published:

- Higher Education Student Statistics – NSQR 15: released 4 November 2002
- Initial Entry Rate into Higher Education – NSQR 24: released 17 November 2003
- Review of the Measurement of Attainment of Young People – NSQR 38: released 10 September 2004
- The Review of School Workforce Statistics – NSQR 39: released 22 September 2004
- Review of School Statistics in Northern Ireland – NSQR: 41 released 11 August 2005. Not listed in previous schedules.

Still due:

- Early Years and Childcare: due 2004-05

Late but not cancelled:

- Destination of Higher Education Leavers: due 2003-04

Cancelled:

- Special Educational Needs: due 2002-03
- Gender, Ethnicity and Disability: due 2002-03
- Reliability: due 2002-03
- Performance Statistics: due 2003-04
- Pupil Level School Census: due 2003-04
- ICT in Schools/Colleges: due 2003-04
- Work Based Learning: due 2003-04
- Qualifications: due 2003-04
- Funding, Awards and Financial Support: due 2003-04
- Destination of FE School/College Leavers: due 2004-04
- Exclusion/Absence: due 2003-04
- School/LEA Expenditure: due 2003-04
- Achievement, Retention and Drop Out in post 16 training and education (other than HE): due 2003-04
- Deprivation Measures: due 2003-04
- Participation in Education, Training and Employment: due 2004-05

6. Health and Care

This theme has completed no quality reviews. The official explanation in the published ONS schedule indicates that reviews will be subject to the outcome of work on the *Framework for Health and Care Statistics* and the wide-ranging *Review of Public Health Information Sources*. Likely future reviews will include hospital episodes, personal social services, waiting, performance management and patient outcomes.

Late but not cancelled:

- Statistics relating to cancer, race equality and performance management: due 2000-01

- Audit of current statistical returns including an extensive audit of health and social service workforce: due 2000-01
- Initial internal review of Health and Safety Statistics: due 2001-02
- Health inequalities indicators and internal reviews relating to primary care and private sector statistics: due 2001-02
- Business Information needs is likely to impact on future information needs: due 2002-03
- Consultative review on public health information sources: due 2002-03
- Health and Safety Statistics: due 2003-04

7. Labour Market

The Labour Market theme has completed and published three reviews, with three still due and four cancelled. The *Review of the Framework for Labour Market Statistics* covered many subjects, although there are a few reviews on the original list that are not listed on subsequent schedules and it is not clear if the Framework review covered them in full.

Completed and published:

- Framework for Labour Market Statistics – NSQR 11: released 5 August 2002
- Labour Force Survey – NSQR 12: released 4 September 2002
- Distribution of Earnings Statistics – NSQR 14: released 10 October 2002
- Employment and Job Estimates – Emerging findings report: released 12 March 2004

Still due:

- Short Term Measures of Earnings, Labour Costs and Prices: due 2005-06
- Local Labour Market Indicators: due 2006-07
- Labour Disputes and Trade Union Membership Statistics: due 2003-04

Cancelled:

- Jobcentre Vacancy Statistics: due 2003-04
- New Deal Statistics: due 2003-04
- Claimant Count Data: due 2004-05
- Role of JSA and other Benefit Statistics in LM assessment: due 2004-05

8. Natural and Built Environment

Two reviews have been published, two are late and five have been cancelled.

Completed and published:

- Construction Statistics – NSQR 9: released 19 December 2001
- Survey of English Housing and Related Sources – NSQR 35: released 23 July 2004

Late but not cancelled:

- Land Use and Planning (including Household Projections, Numbers): due 2002-03: Postponed
- Biodiversity (formerly Wildlife including Soil, Land, Land Cover): due 2003-04

Cancelled:

- Air and Atmosphere: due 2002-03
- Dwelling Stock: due 2003-04
- Waste and Resources: due 2004-05
- Water (Inland/Marine, Quality/Resources): due 2003-04
- Housing Services: due 2004-05

9. Public Sector and Other National Statistics

This theme covers a disparate set of statistics. Apart from the Department for International Development's (DfID's) Statistical Information Systems review, the Ministry of Defence has carried out the majority of reviews within the defence statistics area. Other areas covered by the theme include: Civil Service Management Information, Fire Statistics and Defence Statistics. The Cabinet Office has announced a Strategic Review which subsumed the Civil Service Staffing Publications Review, due in 2004-05. The coherence of Public Sector Staffing was subsumed into the Review of Employment and Jobs Estimates carried out by the Labour Market TWG.

Completed and published:

- Defence Personnel Statistics – NSQR 4: released 30 August 2001
- DFID's Statistical Information Systems – NSQR 16: released 14 November 2002
- UK Defence Statistics Annual Publication – NSQR 17: released 20 November 2002

- Armed Forces Medical Statistics – NSQR 18: released 20 November 2002
- MoD Finance and Economic Statistics – NSQR 32: released 7 April 2004
- Review of Statistics on Defence Logistics – NSQR 40: released 23 September 2004
- Review of Service Pensioners' Statistics – NSQR 42: released 19 August 2005

Still due:

- Civil Service Management Information: due 2004-05

Cancelled:

- Liquor Licensing
- Civil Service Staffing Publications
- Coherence of Public Sector Staffing
- Fire statistics (this is now part of a larger project within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)
- Animal Procedures (this is being dealt with as part of other in-house work at the Home Office)

10. Population and Migration

The difference between this theme and others is that the original list has remained intact up to the present day – even though there have been cancellations, it has been possible to track every one of the reviews on the original list. To date only two reviews have been completed, the majority cancelled and not subsumed into other in house work of other theme's reviews.

Completed and published:

- Methodology for Projecting Mortality – NSQR 8: released 14 December 2001
- International Migration Statistics – NSQR 23: released 2 September 2003

Late but not cancelled:

- Control of Immigration Statistics – UK Publication (formerly Compendium Report on Immigration Control): due 2004-05

Cancelled:

- Electoral statistics: due 2002-03
- Population Projections (sub-groups): due 2002-03

- Sub-national Population Projections: due 2003-04
- Census of Population and Housing: due 2003-04
- Population sub-estimates: National & sub-national: due 2004-05
- Population Estimates of subgroups: due 2004-05

11. Social and Welfare

Like the Agriculture theme, this is an area where the review programme changed track a couple of years into the programme. There were three early reviews in 2001; the focus then switched to a more strategic approach. The status of the rest of the quality review programme is not clear – several reviews are not formally cancelled and are still due.

Completed and published:

- Income Support ⁶ – NSQR 5: released 30 November 2001
- Jobseeker's Allowance ⁶ – NSQR 6: released 30 November 2001
- Child Support Agency ⁶ – NSQR 7: released 30 November 2001
- Households Below Average Income and the Pensioners' Incomes Series – NSQR 28: released 27 February 2004
- Issues in Measuring Household Income and the Redistribution of Income ⁷ – NSQR 31: released 19 March 2004

Late but not cancelled:

- Appeals ⁸: due 2003-04
- Child Benefit: due 2003-04
- Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance / Maternity Allowance Quarterly ⁸: due 2003-04.
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit / Reduced Earnings Allowance ⁸: due 2003-04
- Retirement Pension ⁸: due 2003-04
- Distribution of Personal Wealth: due 2004-05. Postponed
- Saving Schemes and Personal Pension statistics: due 2004-05. Postponed
- Fraud and Error in Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance: due 2004-05. Postponed

⁶ These reviews were originally 'chunked together'.

⁷ This was originally two reviews: Income and Redistribution of Income.

⁸ These reviews were originally due to be led jointly by DWP and DSD in Northern Ireland. However, DWP have now decided to cover these topics within a single *Annual Report*. Therefore, DSDNI will need to re-evaluate whether they have the resource and availability to take these reviews forward.

Still due:

- Take-up of Income-Related Benefits: due 2004-05
- Individual Incomes: due 2006-07

Cancelled:

- Review of Expenditure and Food Survey (subsumed into the work on Continuous Population Survey)
- Review of General Household Survey (subsumed into the work on the Continuous Population Survey)
- Cultural statistics: due 2004-05
- Disability Living Allowance / Attendance Allowance / Carer's Allowance Quarterly⁸: due 2003-04
- Statistics Summary: due 2002-2003, will be included in the department's annual report

12. Travel, Transport and Tourism

This theme has largely stuck to the original programme. There have been five reviews published, one cancelled and four still due.

Completed and published:

- National Travel Survey – NSQR 3: released 3 May 2001
- Bus, Coach and Light Rail Statistics – NSQR 22: released 6 August 2003
- Tourism Statistics – NSQR 33: released 28 June 2004
- Road Freight Statistics – NSQR 30: released 15 March 2004
- Domestic Waterborne Freight in the UK – NSQR 36: released 7 September 2004

Late but not cancelled:

- Vehicle Licensing statistics: due in 2003-04. Postponed

Still due:

- Road Accident Statistics: due 2004-05
- Road Traffic: due 2004-05
- Maritime Statistics: due 2004-05

Cancelled:

- International Passenger Survey: due in 2004-05

Cross-Cutting and Multi-Themed Reviews

- Official Gender Statistics: due 2001-02. Cancelled
- Early Years and Childcare: due 2004-05
- Vital Statistics: Births and Deaths: due 2002-03. Cancelled (This review has been superseded by the Civil Registration Review)

Table 2: Published National Statistics Quality Review

No	NSQR Review	Publication date	Theme
1	Short-Term Output Indicators	03-Oct-00	Economy
2	The Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR)	18-Apr-01	Commerce, energy and industry
3	The National Travel Survey	03-May-01	Transport, travel and tourism
4	Defence Personnel Statistics	30-Aug-01	Public Sector and Other
5	Income Support Statistics	30-Nov-01	Social and welfare
6	Job Seeker's Allowance Statistics	30-Nov-01	Social and welfare
7	Child Support Agency Statistics	30-Nov-01	Social and welfare
8	Methodology for Projecting Mortality	14-Dec-01	Population and migration
9	Construction Statistics	19-Dec-01	Natural and built environment
10	Forecasting the Prison and Probation Populations	10-Apr-02	Crime and Justice
11	Framework for Labour Market Statistics	05-Aug-02	Labour Market
12	The Labour Force Survey	04-Sep-02	Labour Market
13	Government Accounts and Indicators	02-Oct-02	Economy
14	Distribution of Earnings	10-Oct-02	Labour Market
15	Higher Education Student Statistics	04-Nov-02	Education and Training
16	DFID's Statistical Information Systems	14-Nov-02	Public Sector and
17	United Kingdom Defence Statistics Annual Publication	20-Nov-02	Public Sector and Other
18	Armed Forces Medical Statistics	20-Nov-02	Public Sector and Other
19	Forestry Statistics	13-Dec-02	Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry
20	Crime Statistics ⁹	30-Jul-03	Crime and Justice
21	Efficacy of Sentencing ⁹	30-Jul-03	Crime and Justice
22	Bus, Coach and Light Rail Statistics	06-Aug-03	Transport, travel and tourism
23	International Migration Statistics	02-Sept-03	Population and migration
24	Initial Entry Rate into Higher Education	17-Nov-03	Education and Training
25	Homicide Statistics	03-Dec-03	Crime and Justice
26	Motoring Statistics	03-Dec-03	Crime and Justice
27	Administration of Justice Statistics	03-Dec-03	Crime and Justice
28	Households Below Average Income & The Pensioners Income	27-Feb-04	Social and welfare
29	Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics	10-Mar-04	Crime and Justice
30	Road Freight Statistics	15-Mar-04	Transport, travel and tourism
31	Measuring Household Income & the Redistribution of Income	19-Mar-04	Social and welfare
32	Ministry of Defence Finance and Economic Statistics	07-Apr-04	Public Sector and Other
33	Tourism Statistics	28-Jun-04	Transport, travel and tourism
34	Strategic Review of Farming and Food Statistics	28-Jun-04	Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry
35	Survey of English Housing and Related Sources	23-July-04	Natural and built environment

⁹ The reports were started/completed prior to the formal launch of National Statistics in June 2000; according to the Home Office they were produced in accordance with the spirit of National Statistics guidance and, as such, have been brought within the formal scope of the National Statistics Review Programme.

Table 2: Published National Statistics Quality Reviews (continued)

No	NSQR Review	Publication date	Theme
36	Domestic Waterborne Freight in the UK	07-Sept-04	Transport, travel and tourism
37	Balance of Payments and Trade Statistics	07-Sept-04	Economy
38	Measurement of Attainment of Young People	10-Sept-04	Education and Training
39	Review of School workforce Statistics	22-Sept-04	Education and Training
40	Review of Statistics on Defence Logistics	23-Sept-04	Public Sector and Other
41	Review of School Statistics in Northern Ireland	11-Aug-05	Education and Training
42	Review of Service Pensioners' Statistics	19-Aug-05	Public Sector and Other
43	Review of UK Regional Accounts	24-Aug-05	Economy

Table 3: Status of 2001 planned Quality Reviews in 2005

List of Reviews from the 2001 Work Programme	Status of reviews in 2005	
Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry		
Forestry Statistics	NSQR 19, released 13 December 2002	
Cereals Statistic	Have been completed but no review reports have been issued. In each instance review findings were used as inputs to the Strategic Review of Farming and Food Statistics	Covered in the Strategic Review of Farming and Food Statistics – NSQR 34, released 28 June 2004
Labour Statistics		
Horticulture		
Farm Business Survey and special surveys Farm Accounts/Agricultural Income		
Farm Structures		
Fisheries Statistics		
Prices		
Census & other major statistical surveys (inc. expenditure and food survey)	Cancelled: covered during the Strategic Review of Farming and Food Statistics	
Rural Statistics (in consultation with N&BE TWG)	2002 Work Programme (WP) said that it was not appropriate to review in the period 2003-04 – disappeared from subsequent WPs	
Pesticides Statistics	Cancelled: now being treated as an internal review	
Economic and Statistical Advice	Cancelled: resources will be redirected to deal with the recommendations from the Strategic Review	
Other Surveys	Cancelled due to resource issues	
Theme Operations	Cancelled due to resource issues	
Environment Statistics (in consultation with N&BE TWG)	Cancelled due to resource issues	
Commerce, Energy and Industry		
Inter-Departmental Business Register	NSQR 2, released 18 April 2001	
Structural business statistics	Cancelled	“A programme of work on Structural Business Statistics had recently been conducted with Eurostat looking at harmonisation across the UK. It was thought a review would be unlikely to throw up any new problems and therefore not the best use of resources”. TWG 25 July 2002
Financial, overseas and other business statistics	Cancelled	
Short period statistics	Cancelled	
Energy statistics	Due 2004-05, postponed until 2007/8	

Crime and Justice	
Compilations	Cancelled
Administrative sources (Police)	Not listed in latest work schedule
Administrative Sources (Criminal Justice)	Not listed in latest work schedule
Administrative Sources (Corrections)	Due 2003-04 – postponed
Administrative Sources (Drugs)	Not listed in latest work schedule
Administrative Sources (Civil Justice)	Due 2004-05 – postponed
Statistical Surveys	Cancelled
Administrative sources	Other Administrative Sources: due 2005-06
Topic areas where statistical series are missing: Statistics on offending	Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics – NSQR 29 released 10 March 2004
Performance indicators not available from existing statistical series	Review of gaps in statistics: due 2005-06
	Crime Statistics – NSQR 20, released 30 July 2003
	Efficacy of Sentencing – NSQR 21, released 30 July 2003
	Homicide Statistics – NSQR 25, released 3 December 2003
	Motoring Statistics – NSQR 26, released 3 December 2003
	Administration of Justice Statistics – NSQR 27, released 3 December 2003
	Forecasting the Prison and Probation Populations – NSQR 10, released 10th April 2002
	Implementation of Recommendations of Completed Reviews – due 2003-04, wrap up document
Economy	
Short term output indicators	NSQR 1, released 3 October 2000
Government accounts and indicators	NSQR 13, released 2 October 2002
Macro-economic regional statistics	NSQR.43 – Review of UK Regional Accounts, released 24 August 2005
Balance of Payments, including trade statistics	NSQR 37, Released 7 September 2004
Expenditure: consumption; retail sales index; investment	The National Accounts Re-engineering project will be “the key quality and methodology initiative within the Economy theme for the years 2003-04 to 2005-06”. In order to concentrate ONS resources on this project it has been agreed that these planned reviews should be scheduled to later years, after re-engineered National Accounts systems have bedded in. This also applies to the Review of National Accounts Deflators – which wasn’t one of the original reviews announced in 2001. Not all of these are national statistics.
Input-output tables, annual balancing (Blue Book)	
Income and quarterly balancing, including Inland Revenue Statistics	
Producer prices and index; trade prices; service prices	
Productivity	
Distributive and financial transactions; balance sheets	
Consumer Price Indices	
Education and Training	
Higher Education, Student statistics	Higher Education Student Statistics – NSQR 15, released 4 November 2002
	Initial Entry Rate into Higher Education – NSQR 24, released 17 November 2003

	Review of School Statistics in Northern Ireland – NSQR, 41 released 11 August 2005.
Teachers	Review of School Workforce Statistics – was due 2002-03
Pre-school	Early Years and Childcare – due 2004-05
Assessment and qualifications of children and young people	Review of the Measurement of Attainment of Young People – NSQR 38, released 10 September 2004
	Cancelled – Qualifications – due 2003-04
Special educational needs	Cancelled – was due 2002-03
Other schools	Cancelled – included in original Higher Education chunk, which was redefined to cover Higher Education and Student Statistics only
Expenditure	Cancelled – School / LEA Expenditure
Post 16 training and education other than higher education	Cancelled – Participation in Education, Training and Employment – due 2004-05
	Destination of Higher Education Leavers – was due 2003-04
	Cancelled – Achievement, Retention and Drop Out in post 16 training and education (other than HE)
	Cancelled (not in the original work programme)
	Gender, Ethnicity and Disability – due 2002-03
	Reliability – due 2002-03
	Performance Statistics – due 2003-04
	Pupil Level School Census – due 2003-04
	ICT in Schools/Colleges – due 2003-04
	Work Based Learning – due 2003-04
	Funding, Awards and Financial Support
	Destination of F.E. School/College Leavers
	Exclusion/Absence
	Deprivation Measures
Health and Care	
Cancer	Note in the 2005 schedule: “Reviews will be subject to the outcome of work on the Framework for Health and Care Statistics and the wide-ranging Review of Public Health Information Sources. Likely future reviews will include hospital episodes, personal social services, waiting, performance management and patient outcomes.”
Public Health Information Sources	
Hospital Episodes	
Personal Social Services	
Waiting	
Performance Management	
Occupational Health	
Patient Outcomes	
	Reviews still listed in 2005 review schedule
	Statistics relating to cancer, race equality and performance management – due 2000-01
	Audit of current statistical returns including an extensive audit of health and social service workforce – due 2000-01
	Initial internal review of Health and Safety Statistics – due 2001-02
	Health inequalities indicators and internal reviews relating to primary care and private sector statistics – due 2001-02

	Business Information needs is likely to impact on future information needs – due 2002-03
	Consultative review on public health information sources – due 2002-03
	Health and Safety Statistics – due 2003-04
Labour Market	
Earnings distribution, low pay and New Earnings Survey (data sources and associated products)	Distribution of Earnings Statistics – NSQR 14, released 10 October 2002
Labour Market Framework – based around a review of the National and Regional Integrated Labour Market First Releases	Framework for Labour Market Statistics – NSQR 11, released 5 August 2002
Labour Force Survey	Labour Force Survey – NSQR 12, released 4 September 2002
Local Labour Force Survey	
Quarterly & annual workforce job estimates	Employment and Job Estimates – Emerging findings report released 12 March 2004
ABI Employment; Census of employment	
Short term employment surveys	
Claimant count data	Cancelled – Claimant Count Data – due 2004-05
Vacancies and labour disputes	Cancelled – Jobcentre Vacancy Statistics – was due 2003-04
	Labour Disputes and Trade Union Membership Statistics – was due 2003-04
Labour market analysis and dissemination	Cancelled – was linked with the Labour Market Framework review, but the focus shifted
Unemployed People and Long-Term Unemployed	Cancelled – included in the New Deal ‘chunk’
People Aged 25 in GB: Monthly;	Cancelled – included in the New Deal ‘chunk’
New Deal for Lone Parents in GB: Monthly	Cancelled – New Deal Statistics – was due 2003-04
New Deal Statistics – New Deal for Young	
Local Labour Market Indicators	Local Labour Market Indicators – due 2006-07
	Cancelled – Role of JSA and other Benefit Statistics in LM assessment – due 2004-05
	Short Term Measures of Earnings, Labour Costs and Prices – due 2005-06
Natural and Built Environment	
Construction	Construction Statistics – NSQR 9, released 19 December 2001
Air and atmosphere	Cancelled – due 2002-03
Housing and People	Survey of English Housing and Related Sources – NSQR 35, released 23 July 2004
Wildlife (including soil, land, land cover)	Biodiversity (formerly Wildlife including Soil, Land, Land Cover) – was due 2003-04
Land use and Planning (incl. Household projections, numbers)	Land Use and Planning (including Household Projections, Numbers) – was due 2002-03 – postponed
Dwelling Stock	Cancelled – due 2003-04
Water (Inland and marine, quality and resources)	Cancelled – Water (Inland/Marine, Quality/Resources) – was due 2003-04
Housing services	Cancelled – Housing Services – due 2004-05
Waste and resources	Cancelled – due 2004-05

Population and Migration		
National population projections mortality methodology	Methodology for Projecting Mortality – NSQR 8, released 14 December 2001	
Migration – Internal and international	International Migration Statistics – NSQR 23, released 2 September 2003	
Vital statistics: Births, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions	Cancelled – Vital Statistics: Births and Deaths – due 2002-03 (This review has been superseded by the Civil Registration Review)	
Electoral statistics (To check reinclusion of NI)	Cancelled – due 2002-03	
Population projections for sub-groups	Cancelled – due 2002-03	
Sub-national population projections	Cancelled – due 2003-04	
Administrative statistics to support immigration control and asylum	Control of Immigration Statistics: UK publication (formerly Compendium Report on Immigration Control – due 2004-05)	
Census of population and housing	Cancelled – due 2003-04	
Population sub-estimates national and sub-national	Cancelled – due 2004-05	
Population estimates of sub-groups	Cancelled – due 2004-05	
Social and Welfare		
Income Support (DSS)	Income Support – NSQR 5, released 30 November 2001	These Reviews were originally 'chunked' together.
Jobseeker's Allowance (DSS)	Jobseeker's Allowance – NSQR 6, released 30 November 2001	
Child Support Agency (DSS)	Child Support Agency – NSQR 7, released 30 November 2001	
Child Support Agency (summary statistics) (NIDSD)	Included in NSQR 7	
Social Reporting e.g. Social Trends, Regional Trends, Social Focus	Cancelled – included as one chunk within the schedule	
Labour Force Survey Religion Report (NISRA)		
Appeals	Appeals – due 2003-04	These Reviews were originally due to be led jointly by DWP and DSD in Northern Ireland. However, DWP have now decided to cover these topics within a single Annual Report. Therefore, DSD NI will need to re-evaluate whether they have the resources and availability to take these reviews forward.
Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance Quarterly	Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance / Maternity Allowance Quarterly – due 2003-04	
Retirement Pension	Retirement Pension – due 2003-04	
Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance Quarterly	Disability Living Allowance / Attendance Allowance / Carer's Allowance Quarterly – due 2003-04	
Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit Reduced Earnings Allowance: Annual	Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit / Reduced Earnings Allowance ⁸ – due 2003-04	
Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit Reduced Earnings Allowance: Quarterly		
Child Benefit	Child Benefit – due 2003-04	
Maternity Allowance	Review to be conducted jointly between SWP and NSID, see note above regarding NI involvement	
Disability Living Allowance / Attendance Allowance	Cancelled	
Invalid Care Allowance Quarterly	Cancelled	
Family Credit	Cancelled	
Disability Working Allowance	Cancelled	

Invalidity Care Allowance (Summary Statistics) (NIDSD)	To be confirmed by NISDS
Income distribution and redistribution	Issues in Measuring Household Income and the Redistribution of Income – NSQR 31, released 19 March 2004
Redistribution of Income (ONS)	
Households Below Average Income (annual) (ONS)	Households Below Average Income and the Pensioners' Incomes Series – NSQR 28, released 27 February 2004
Pensioners Incomes (DSS)	Included in NSQR 28
Tax/Benefit Model Tables (annual) (DSS)	To be included in DWP annual report on quality reviews
Survey of Personal Incomes (IR)	Not listed in latest work schedule. No information available
Individual Incomes (DSS)	Individual Incomes – due 2006-07
Client Group Analysis Working Age (DSS)	To be included in DWP annual report on quality reviews
Client Group Analysis Population over Retirement Age (DSS), Client Group Analysis Families and Children	To be included in DWP annual report on quality reviews
Annual Abstract (DSS)	To be included in DWP annual report on quality reviews
Statistics Summary (DSS)	To be included in DWP annual report on quality reviews
Social Security Statistics (DSS)	To be included in DWP annual report on quality reviews
Social Security (Summary Statistics) (NI DSD)	To be included in DWP annual report on quality reviews
Family Resources Survey (annual) (DSS)	Cancelled (work on EFS subsumed into the Continuous Population Survey)
Take-up of Income-Related Benefits (annual) (DSS)	Take-up of Income-Related Benefits – due 2004-05
Take-up of tax credits (IR)	Not listed in latest work schedule. No information available
Working Family Tax Credit (IR)	Cancelled
Disabled Persons Tax Credit (IR)	Cancelled
Area Benefit Reviews	Subsumed into the Fraud and Error in Income Support and Jobseekers Allowance covered below
General Household Survey (ONS)	Cancelled (subsumed in to the Continuous Population Survey)
Continuous Household Survey (NI)	Not listed in latest work schedule. No information available
Scottish Household Survey (SE)	Review initiated and scoped during 2004/05
Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance, Annual	To be included in DWP annual report on quality reviews
Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit: Annual	To be included in DWP annual report on quality reviews
Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit: Quarterly	To be included in DWP annual report on quality reviews
Distribution of Personal Wealth (IR)	Distribution of Personal Wealth – due 2004-05, postponed
Saving Schemes and Personal Pension Statistics (IR)	Saving Schemes and Personal Pension statistics – due 2004-05, postponed
Cultural statistics	Cancelled – Cultural statistics – due 2004-05
Not yet chunked: NAW Outputs	
Not included in programme: Earning Top-Up (DSS) – the benefit will cease this year	
	Fraud and Error in Income Support and Jobseekers Allowance – due 2004-05
Travel, Transport and Tourism	
Road freight surveys (CSRGT, IRHS, RoRo) [UK]	Road Freight Statistics – NSQR 30, 15 March 2004
National Travel Survey [UK]	National Travel Survey – NSQR 3, released 3 May 2001
Bus and Coach surveys [GB]	Bus, Coach and Light Rail Statistics – NSQR 22, 6 August 2003
Vehicle licensing statistics [GB, NI]	Vehicle Licensing statistics – due in 2003-04, postponed

Road Accident Statistics [GB, NI]	Road Accident Statistics – due 2004-05
International passenger survey [UK]	Cancelled – due in 2004-05
Tourism Statistics [UK]	Tourism Statistics – NSQR 33, released 28 June 2004
Maritime Statistics [UK]	Maritime Statistics – due 2004-05
Road Traffic (Traffic [GB], speed and road condition surveys [E&W])	Road Traffic – due 2004-05
Domestic Waterborne Freight in the UK	Review of Domestic Waterborne Freight in the UK – NSQR 36, Released 7 September 2004
Public Sector and Other	
Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces Personnel	Defence Personnel Statistics – NSQR 4, released 30 August 2001
Ethnicity Workshop	Cancelled
Liquor Licensing	Cancelled
Fire Statistics	Cancelled – due 2003-04
Coherence of Public Sector Staffing	Cancelled – due 2002-03
Armed Forces Health Statistics	Armed Forces Medical Statistics – NSQR 18, released 20 November 2002
UK Defence Statistics	UK Defence Statistics Annual Publication – NSQR 17, released 20 November 2002
DFID outputs	DFID's Statistical Information Systems – NSQR 16, released 14 November 2002
Compendia	Postponed waiting outcome of the ONS Portfolio review exercise
Civil Service Staffing Publications	Civil Service Staffing Publications (This Review has been subsumed with another to form an overarching Strategic Review due in 2004-05)
Defence-related balance of payments statistics	MoD Finance and Economic Statistics – NSQR 32, released 7 April 2004
Civil Service Management Information	Civil Service Management Information – due 2004-05
Animal Procedure Statistics	Cancelled – due 2004-05
Defence Pensions	Review of Statistics on Defence Logistics – NSQR 40, released 23 September 2004
	Review of Service Pensioners' Statistics – NSQR 42, released 19 August 2005
Cross-Cutting Reviews	
Equality statistics (examining availability of statistics disaggregated by gender, age, ethnic background and disability)	Cancelled – Official Gender Statistics – was due 2001-02
	Early Years and Childcare – due 2004-05

