

UK Statistics Authority

Business Plan

April 2016 to March 2020

About the UK Statistics Authority

The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body at arm's length from government, which reports directly to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 established the Authority with the statutory objective of “promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good”.

The public good includes:

- informing the public about social and economic matters;
- assisting in the development and evaluation of public policy; and
- regulating quality and publicly challenging the misuse of statistics.

Foreword from the Chief Executive

The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) strategy - Better Statistics, Better Decisions - sets out a vision for UK official statistics in 2020. In my introduction to the strategy I set some radical expectations - more data will be real-time; our services will be digital by default; the quality of our advice and insight will have earned us a seat at the table where the most important decisions are made. Decision-makers across the spectrum - individuals, businesses and government - will value our services as being vital to them. Confusion about statistics will be much rarer because the information base delivered as National Statistics will be accepted and used with confidence. All those working as part of the statistical system will feel they are well led and able to make a special contribution to the public good.

Our leaders will be inspiring, confident and empowering, and role models for others in their integrity, honesty, objectivity, and impartiality.

This business plan describes how we will realise the vision with a timetable for transforming the way we work and delivery of new outputs and services. The main highlights are:

- Progressive improvements to the measurement of the modern economy so that by 2020, especially in the areas of productivity, financial flows, and prices and trade, we will be providing the statistics and data decision makers need. We will be getting outstanding reviews from those who rely on economic statistics to make decisions. These improvements will build on the recommendations of recent reviews conducted by Sir Charles Bean, Dame Kate Barker and Paul Johnson. The Review of Economic Statistics by Sir Charles Bean in particular has wide reaching recommendations. We welcome the findings of the review and the business plan sets out how we will respond.
- Radically improved connections between the statistical services delivered and the policy questions facing the nation at UK level, at the levels of the nations of the UK, regions and cities. This will include producing statistics to better capture cyber-crime, levels of migration, and other key policy areas.
- A transformed approach to the collection and gathering of data to support statistical activities with all business surveys online, new approaches to social survey collection and dramatically increased use of administrative and new data sources.
- Preparation well in hand for the 2021 census with the most ambitious target in the world for online collection and a well developed complementary approach to gathering census data from administrative sources.

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- Transformed digital, technology and methodology services across all parts of the value chain including systematic upgrading of the user experience for statistics and data, efficient, innovative and secure platforms for data processing and simpler and cheaper ways for data to be collected and verified.
- A world-leading and respected framework for data ethics, privacy and security that engenders trust amongst the public and businesses.
- A transformed workforce with a strong emphasis on adaptive learning and a major strengthening of capability in economics, statistics and data science. Central to our plans will be the creation of an Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence and a Data Campus at our Newport headquarters.

The plan reflects the five core themes outlined in the UKSA strategy, starting from the experience of the user. Our success will be judged by the extent to which we are seen by users as **helpful** to Britain in making better decisions about the future. This in turn will be delivered through high quality, trusted and valued **professional** services. In the fast moving world of the data revolution we will need to be **innovative** to keep up with expectations and opportunities. We will make the space to innovate by being **efficient** in our use of time, money and other resources. All of this depends on our

investment in the knowledge, skills and experience of **capable** people and attracting the best to work with us.

We are not starting from scratch. The UK statistical system has a great tradition on which to build, a strong customer base and large numbers of dedicated and talented staff. Building on this, I have every confidence that we will deliver on our ambitious plans.

The focus of the plan is the work of the Office for National Statistics, the executive arm of UKSA. The activities of the wider Government Statistical Service (GSS) are covered by the Single Departmental Plans of each government department, although this plan includes the cross cutting elements which support the official statistics system as a whole. Annexed to this plan for completeness and ease of reference is the business plan for the UKSA's independent regulatory function. Also available, on request, is a separate note outlining how we arrived at our performance metrics and targets.

This plan will be our guide in the years ahead. Please take the time to read it and think how best you can play your part in our collective success.



John Pullinger
National Statistician and Chief Executive
UK Statistics Authority

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The most important decisions facing the UK which could be assisted through better statistics are those related to the economy and public policy. We must focus our efforts to better meet user needs, be more candid about the deficiencies in our statistics, be at the vanguard of improving statistics and help users understand our data better. Working as a single team across the Government Statistical Service, in collaboration with colleagues in other analytical professions and more widely, ONS will transform to be the heart of a system which is agile in the provision of statistics which reflect the changing nature of the economy and society in the UK. Without these changes we risk becoming irrelevant as decision makers conclude our services are no longer useful or helpful to them. This section of our plan outlines how we will develop our economic statistics, our support for public policy and our dissemination in order to meet the needs of our users better.

Performance Metrics

Feedback from key customers

Ongoing qualitative feedback

Proportion of customers satisfied with ONS performance

2015/16 Position: 90%

Target: 94%

Public Confidence in Official Statistics

2014 Position: 81%

Target: >81% in 2016

Impact of ONS statistics, analysis and advice

2015/16 Position: 70/100 (index of stakeholder, media and policy measures)

Target: Year-on-year increase

Proportion of customers who feel ONS outputs are trustworthy

2015/16 Position: 97%

Target: 98%

ONS online end user satisfaction

2015 Position: 65% positive

Target: 70% in 2016

Improved Economic Statistics

We produce, largely through ONS, key economic statistics for the UK. These include the UK National Accounts, Price Indices, Labour Market statistics and Balance of Payments. Working closely with key stakeholders such as the Bank of England, HM Treasury and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills we seek to ensure our economic statistics meet the needs of users to inform debate and decision making.

Over recent years we have made significant changes and started to meet a number of major challenges. We have made real progress in aligning the UK's economic statistics with international best practice, as set down in the 2010 European System of Accounts. But we need to continue to lift the quality of our economic statistics, as well as their relevance to the modern world, addressing important questions about productivity and other aspects of UK prosperity and performance.

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A vital part of our strategy is improving economic statistics to keep pace with the rapidly changing nature of the economy. We also need to deliver and enable greater insight into the economic statistics we produce and ensure the economic story behind these statistics is drawn out accurately and clearly.

The Review of Economic Statistics by Professor Sir Charles Bean will help shape our approach. The final report was in March 2016. Our plans reflect the findings of the review but may need to be refined as we more fully consider the implications and discuss with users.

ONS will have access to the high quality economic skills it needs.

Through the recruitment of increased numbers of economists and others with specialist skills we will create a ‘hotspot’ for analysis of economic statistics around the ONS headquarters in Newport. (2016/17 to 2019/20)

We will expand our scheme of ONS Fellowships where researchers and other experts can join ONS on a temporary basis, allowing for increased and more diverse economic capability. (2016/17)

We will create an Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence to offer the capacity for fundamental methodological and conceptual work in the sphere of economic statistics. During 2016/17 we will agree the shape of the centre and aim to recruit partner organisations.

We will engage with users and external experts to ensure economic statistics and the ‘economic story’ are easily accessible.

We will continue to produce the Economic Review as a platform for ONS to provide analysis and commentary on the UK economy, increasingly drawing out and pulling together the economic story from individual releases. (Ongoing)

Building on the success of the ONS Economic Forum we will improve our capacity to engage with users. This will include hosting regional Economic Forum events and devoting sessions to particular topics. (2016)

Alongside the Centre of Excellence, we will develop stronger links with key users and producers of statistics, including through an increased London presence (2016/17).

We will produce statistical outputs which better meet the needs of researchers and decision makers, and ensure our portfolio of economic statistics is fit for purpose to measure a modern economy.

We will provide enhanced financial accounts with the availability of full counterparty information – the ‘flow of funds’ within the economy. This work will lead to experimental outputs in 2017/18 with full implementation planned for 2021. We will follow an agile approach to development in order to allow for flexibility and the delivery of iterative improvements.

We will develop annual volume based supply and use tables and introduce ‘double deflation’ as part of the UK

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national accounts. This will begin with the delivery of supply and use tables in previous year's prices in 2018.

We will improve the measurement and understanding of 'productivity' within the UK economy. A first step will be the production of a single quarterly productivity release from April 2016.

Administrative data has the potential to improve the quality of ONS's statistics. As a first step towards the greater use of this new data source, VAT data from HMRC will be used to supplement survey data in the production of short-term economic indicators from summer 2016.

ONS will continue to work to address limitations or gaps in the current set of statistical outputs. Starting in 2016, we will:

- Build on earlier work to improve the measurement of public sector productivity and efficiency.
- Continue to develop the measurement of the so-called 'missing capitals' including human, natural, environmental and intangible capital, and explore their impact on the measurement of productivity.
- Consider how best to meet the challenge of valuing the activities of multinational enterprises and how they feed into our economic statistics.
- Provide expanded regional and local data in respect of devolution, growth and infrastructure matters so as to meet priority needs.

- Continue to develop our understanding of 'household production', including how the digital economy is changing the nature of economic activity. An article on household production will be published in the first half of 2016.
- Improve the measurement of the service sector of the economy, which accounts for around 80 per cent of GDP, by developing a richer set of service sector deflators.

Informing Public Policy

UK official statistics provide a picture of the United Kingdom, over time and space. In recent years we have given higher priority to creating policy impact and informing decision making. This change in emphasis will increase in pace over the next five years as we place official statistics at the heart of policy making and life in the UK.

We recognise statistical information needs to keep pace with a fast changing world and must respond to new policy developments. Improving our economic statistics is part of this picture but it goes much wider. Whether as a consequence of extending the UK's devolution arrangements, measuring UN sustainable development goals, producing statistics to better capture cyber-crime or levels of migration, or delivering a flexible programme of analysis to provide insight into other areas, we will need to accelerate the pace of our delivery.

Our statistics will be enhanced in scope and relevance so they are fit for purpose to

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inform public policy making, and will be recognised as such by our users.

By the end of 2016 we will have incorporated fraud and cyber crime into our crime statistics. (2016/17)

We will ensure UK official statistics support decision making at a devolved level, this will include the production of more outputs on a country, region or city basis. (2016/17 – 2019/20)

During 2016, Sustainable Development Goal indicators will be fully established by the UN. Statisticians across Government will monitor and report on progress both nationally and internationally. (2016/17)

Producers of UK official statistics will work closely with policy departments and other key decision makers as part of the evidence base for key decisions.

We will develop a coordinated and coherent approach to reporting across UK official statistics. Our approach will focus on allowing for increased knowledge and insight across themes, rather than an uncoordinated release of outputs. During 2016 we will define this revised publication model.

We will provide evidence to support the UK Government's work on its policy and manifesto commitments, including by supporting relevant groups and task forces. (2016/17 - 2019/20)

We will ensure the likely nature of the changing population in the UK over the next 25 years is set out and disseminated to policy makers, and that the pattern of the ageing of the population and the

impact of migration are well understood. (2016/17 - 2019/20)

We will actively engage with other NSIs in Europe and beyond mindful of wider UK national interests. We will work with the European Statistical System to develop statistical policy, standards and methods. The GSS will develop the UK's reputation as a statistical leader and ensure an effective approach to the UK's EU Presidency in 2017.

We will be able to react at pace to changing policy priorities, redirecting our staff and financial resources flexibly to deliver the best possible impact in a timely way.

We will develop our Public Policy Forum as a key interface between government analysts, policy makers and influencers. (2016/17)

We will produce a flexible, customer-focussed programme of statistics and analysis to help inform public policy debate and decision making. (2016/17 – 2019/20)

We will establish National Statistics teams which will be targeted at addressing specific issues of cross-cutting concern across the system of UK official statistics.

We will review the time lag between data collection and publication for all of our regular outputs, and put a plan in place to achieve widespread improvements in timeliness. (2016/17)

We will focus publication on the release of data, metadata and key headlines, moving away from traditional 'statistical bulletins'

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and static publications whenever appropriate, informed by users. (2016/17)

Dissemination

People expect a better customer experience online, having the service and advice they need at the click of a button. UK official statistics must improve web and social media channels dramatically, and find innovative ways of making our statistics more engaging, easier to understand and accessible. We need to find ways to convey quality and trustworthiness to non-specialist audiences, and we must make more of our data available in open formats.

We will significantly improve the communication of official statistics, ensuring they make the right impact to serve the public good.

The ONS website will be widely recognised as significantly improved, as demonstrated by online end user satisfaction. (2016/17)

By 2017 we will ensure greater access to our data in machine readable formats.

We will put in place improved prioritisation mechanisms to make sure we understand how we engage with users and more effectively meet their needs. (2016/17)

We will provide a modern platform for the dissemination of sub-national and small area statistics in support of emerging policy needs around devolution across the UK and within England. (2016/17)

Expert users will have increased access to micro level data in order to help develop an

in depth understanding of the underlying trends in the economy and society.

We will ensure that at least 200 ‘projects’ with good metadata are available through the Virtual Micro-data Laboratory. (2016/17)

We will significantly increase the amount of data that is available alongside our core statistical outputs. (2016/17 – 2019/20)

Strategic Risks

The world is increasingly awash with data and statistics from many different sources. In this environment there is a risk decisions could be taken on an unsound evidence base. Official statistics must keep pace with customer needs and take advantage of new data sources and analytical capability to ensure decisions are based on the best information available.

We need to ensure statisticians across Government have a ‘seat at the table’ when it comes to informing the policy debate. Our products should reflect the most important issues of the day giving insight into key areas such as jobs, the economy, healthcare, population growth and migration.

We recognise the distinctive value of the National Statistics brand. We are providers of trusted, independent statistics and should continue to provide this service to our users.

However, we must adapt and change. We need to build and utilise our skills, develop new and innovative products, and focus on supporting better decision making.

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The aim is for the National Statistics brand increasingly to be seen as offering a high quality, trustworthy and valuable view of an issue that can be accepted and used with confidence when decisions are being taken. We cannot risk losing the trust of our users due to bias, errors or losses of data. However, we will also need to work closely with users of official statistics to understand how the transformation of ONS will raise questions of discontinuity in our data. We will need to understand, explain, but accept these issues as we move to modernise methods. Performance measures of particular interest to the UK Statistics Authority Board will be timeliness, revisions, concerns about quality, misuse of statistics by public authorities and errors in releases. This section of our business plan outlines the key products and services that we will deliver, and how we will maintain professional standards.

Performance Metrics

Proportion of statistical releases free from major errors (ONS)

2015/16 Position: 99.7%

2016/17 Target: 100%

Major statistical series not designated 'National Statistics'

Target: Re-designation of 3 major series

Proportion of statistical releases within the 09:30 deadline (ONS)

2015/16 Position: 96.3%

2016/17 Target: 100%

Response rates for ONS surveys

2015/16 Position:

90% (business surveys meeting targets)

54% (LFS response rate)

2016/17 Target:

90% (business) 57% (LFS)

Significant data breaches or losses

2015/16 Position: 0

2016/17 Target: 0

Implementation of NSQR and Assessment recommendations

Better Statistics

We must continue to produce a portfolio of high quality statistics to meet the needs of our users. Although we must maintain historical outputs where they are still used, we must also continue to ensure our portfolio is up to date, which will include, on occasion, stopping outputs.

We will continue to produce a suite of timely and high quality statistics, including national accounts, price indices, labour market, public sector productivity, migration, population projections, household finances, births and deaths.

We will retain National Statistics status on our outputs and, where appropriate, regain status on those outputs de-designated. This will include, specifically, regaining NS status for Crime statistics, Statistics on UK Trade, and CPIH. (2016/17)

Wherever possible we will improve the timeliness of statistical outputs to ensure we release data as close to real time as is feasible. (2016/17 – 2019/20)

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In 2016, following on from the Johnson Review, we will develop and publish a wider range of consumer price inflation indices; these will provide more insight around inflation as experienced by different household groups. (2016/17)

We will implement redeveloped pensions, insurance and financial assets and liabilities surveys which meet the requirements of the users of economic statistics. By 2017 we will start using the redeveloped financial surveys data in the UK National Accounts and Balance of Payments. (2016/17)

We will deliver major improvements to Construction Statistics (including output, price and cost indices) providing users with world class construction data. (2016/17).

We will have improved the quality of key statistical outputs in response to recommendations made through internal or external reviews.

We will carry out National Statistics Quality Reviews to ensure the quality of key statistics, and act on recommendations for improvement. (2016/17)

Through the Methodology Advisory Service we will provide methodological advice across the GSS to ensure UK official statistics are based on sound methods. (2016/17 – 2019/20)

International Standards and Legislative Compliance

The majority of statistics produced by ONS, and across the GSS, are underpinned by domestic or European legislation, and

other international standards. We will play a leading role in the European Statistical System where it is in the UK's interests to do so; we will drive the ESS Vision 2020 and seek to shape future legislative requirements.

Production of UK National Accounts Statistics will be in line with International Standards

We will meet all the requirements of European regulations on the production of National Accounts and Balance of Payments. (2016/17)

By 2018 we will have published the results of the Purchases Survey and we will begin to use the data in the production of Supply and Use Tables within the National Accounts. (2017/18)

By 2018 we will make further use of redeveloped financial surveys data in the UK National Accounts and Balance of Payments. (2017/18)

The European regulation for Integrated European Social Statistics will be implemented, shaping the way we produce social statistics.

We will work with colleagues across Europe to define the extent of any regulation for the future of Integrated European Social Statistics. Once the implications are known we will implement these. There will be implications for ONS (for example on LFS, EU-SILC, and ICT household survey) and across UK official statistics, particularly the domains of health and education. (2016/17 – 2019/20)

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We will plan for the potential inclusion of Time Use Survey and Household Budget Survey in IESS in 2025.

The European Framework Regulation for Integrating Business Statistics will be implemented, shaping the way we produce business statistics.

Building on work already underway, during 2016/17 we will work with colleagues from across Europe to influence the development of the Framework Regulation for Integrating Business Statistics in a manner which suits the requirements of the UK. (2016/17)

We will react to the possible adoption of the Framework Regulation for Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS) by developing a programme of change to modernise our approach to business surveys. (2017/18)

Strategic Risks

We will ensure the quality of UK official statistics and the security of the data entrusted to us.

Our most significant risk in this area is the loss of public trust due to bias, errors or losses of data.

The GSS must be an exemplar in data assurance, including security and in the quality of our statistics. Any breach of confidentiality or major error in key outputs would fall short of our expectations and would damage public trust in our organisation.

Our systems for statistical processing, production and dissemination and the capability of our staff will mitigate against this risk as much as possible.

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Innovation is essential in every part of the statistical system if we are to change quickly enough to embrace the opportunities of the data revolution. This section outlines how we aim to transform over the next four years to support the development of the products our users demand, and also to improve our efficiency and productivity. Our transformation will be significant and radical; we will see the most fundamental transformation of the work of the Office for National Statistics since its inception. This will be particularly apparent in our use of technology and digital services, the way we collect and use data, our preparations for a modern Census in 2021 and the establishment of the Data Campus as an internationally renowned centre of Data Science and Data Engineering (see 'Capable').

Performance Metrics

Deliver significant progress towards modernising ONS

Deliver all activities and milestones as outlined for ONS transformation.

Proportion of business surveys available online

Target: 100% by 2019

Average processing cost per completed survey response

Target: 25% reduction by 2019 (business)
25% reduction by 2022 (social)

Reduction in reliance on surveys due to the use of administrative data sources

Potential measures will be developed over the coming year as our admin data plans take shape.

Access to data to produce National and official statistics

Current legislation provides a framework for the provision of National and other official statistics that serve the public good. Decision-makers are increasingly frustrated that better statistics and research cannot be generated on a wide range of topics ranging from aspects of the modern economy to immigration. Existing legislation needs updating to enable access to the data required to inform decision-making.

The UK Statistics Authority has been working with the Cabinet Office and other departments to explore how best to gain greater access to administrative and other datasets. This would greatly improve both the efficiency and quality of National Statistics production, and help us provide new and more informative data, while also maintaining and strengthening the safeguards we have in place to protect data.

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Current legislation makes it difficult and time consuming to gain access to the data we need. Allowing the National Statistician the right to access data held elsewhere across government and beyond would significantly reduce the administrative and financial burden on the statistical service and the millions of respondents to its surveys each year, in keeping with the data management principle of “collect once, use many times”.

The UK Statistics Authority will continue to make the case for new legislation to provide the National Statistician with access to sources of government and other data for the purposes of producing official statistics and statistical research.

We will continue the policy development between the UK Statistics Authority, the Cabinet Office and other departments setting out the benefits of a new statutory framework to secure access to sources of administrative and other data for statistical and research purposes. (2016)

Data Collection Transformation

The demand for evidence to inform decision making is growing and rapid changes in society and technology mean that more data, in richer and more complex forms, is available than ever before. We must develop our capability to integrate data sources and keep pace with advances in technology to improve outputs and meet user needs.

Over the course of recent years, the organisation has looked to re-design its data collection methods, and develop the

infrastructure to collect more data on-line however, many challenges remain.

Currently, ONS outputs remain largely produced ‘source by source’ in a series of data silos. We make some use of administrative data but not enough to reap significant benefits and we are exploring the use of Big Data but its practical use has not been significant to-date.

In the past, we have maintained multiple technologies, leading to unnecessary systems complexity, often overloaded IT staff and an increased risk of failure. In the past year, we have made significant changes to our IT development model, supporting much more targeted development against our Enterprise Architecture, although there is much still to do.

We are, for example, making good progress with delivery of an Electronic Data Collection platform for business surveys, working to ensure the architecture is widely scalable; with the scope for shared products and services across our business surveys, social surveys, the census, and potentially across Government.

Survey data collection will be digital by default with online collection across the ONS suite of business and social surveys.

Several key business surveys will transition to on-line data collection for the majority of the sample. This will include the Retail Sales Inquiry, the Monthly Wages and Salaries Survey, and the Monthly Business Survey. (2016/17)

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The first ONS household survey will be available online. (2017/18)

Online data collection tools developed by ONS will be available for potential use across Government. (2017/18)

The Labour Force Survey will be available online. (2018/19)

All business surveys will be online. (2018/19)

ONS surveys will be rationalised to ensure they are delivered efficiently.

With the aim of moving away from the ONS suite of 80 business surveys and 10 social surveys we will develop a clear view of the future state of ONS surveys. (2016/17)

ONS will change our survey methodology to allow us to modularise surveys as part of our survey rationalisation. (2017/18)

ONS surveys will begin rationalisation; utilising the benefits of online technologies and wider re-use of existing administrative sources. (2017/18)

We will work with others to rationalise surveys across Government whenever appropriate and cost effective. (2017/18)

We will use integrated data sources from a linked data store and there will be extensive use of administrative and big data in the production of official statistics.

We will pilot the use of VAT, corporation tax, benefits and income data to replace some of the ONS business survey data collection. The use of VAT data will begin in summer 2016.

We will continue to assess the use of 'scraped' internet prices, publishing a high frequency index of inflation for a subset of items in the consumer prices basket of goods and services. (2016/17)

ONS will engage with partners to develop a cross government business register providing a single definitive source of business information, to be completed during 2017. (2017/18)

Following the census test in 2017 we will test the use of linked data across address, business, and population registers. (2017/18)

Our social survey field force model will be flexible and scalable, supporting the digital and data integration approach, and providing income opportunities for ONS.

We will improve the technology the ONS field force needs to work effectively. (2016/17)

The ONS field force model will be adapted to become more responsive to changing workloads. (2016/17)

Administrative data will be used to reduce the burden of social surveys by providing replacement data for some variables. (2018/19)

Census Transformation

The decennial household and population Census of England and Wales provides the baseline for population statistics and is a vital source of data for small area, multivariate statistics. It is used for policy, planning and the allocation of resources across the public, private and third sectors.

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The next UK population census will be in 2021, beyond the scope of this plan. However, an exercise of this scale is a significant effort with a considerable lead-in time. The 2021 Census is planned around three iterations, the 2017 Census Test, 2019 Census Rehearsal and live running from 2021 to deliver the outputs and Beyond 2021 recommendations.

By 2021 all systems will be in place for a predominately online 2021 census of all households and communal establishments with special care taken to support those who are unable to complete the census online.

In order to prepare to deliver the 2021 census we will:

- Conduct a large scale test in 2017 of the critical components necessary to confirm the design of an online 2021 census. (2016/17 – 2017/18)
- Conduct a rehearsal of the full Census Target Operating Model in Spring 2019 for the 2021 Census and outputs. (2018/19)
- Select and agree contracts for suppliers of major components for the 2021 Census (e.g. Recruitment, Pay and Training). (2018 / 19)
- Publish a White Paper setting out the Government’s approach to the Census (2018/19). Agreement by Parliament of the Census Order (2019/20).

We will produce improved and expanded population statistics through increased use of administrative and survey data.

Our Census Transformation Programme will carry out an extensive programme of

research and design beginning in 2016 and leading to:

- Publication of the statistical design for improved processing to enable the increased use of administrative data for the 2021 Census (2018/19)
- Publication of proposals on enhanced outputs for the 2021 Census. (2018/19)

We will include improved processing and potential enhanced outputs in the census rehearsal to confirm benefits will be delivered (2019/20)

Our research programme will produce evidence to enable a decision about the future provision of population statistics after 2021

Produce annual research outputs in autumn of each year to show progress in the range and quality of administrative data based alternatives to the Census

Publish an annual assessment in the spring of each year on the ability to switch to an administrative data based approach in the future.

The ONS Census Transformation Programme will work with partners across ONS to maximise wider benefits from the processes, systems and skills required to deliver the census in order to contribute to wider ONS transformation.

Develop a plan for joint delivery for the 2017 Census Test. (2016/17)

Plan and build corporate and Census specific secure and stable solutions to deliver the 2017 Census Test. (2016/17 and 2017/18)

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Digital and Technology Transformation

A radical transformation is necessary. We need to rethink the way we work; how we assemble and deliver systems and services; and the roles, skills and functions that we perform to enable us to respond rapidly to our users' and our staff's expectations of digital systems, including communications.

ONS has made some recent progress with its modernisation agenda; but we continue to grapple with legacy systems, data silos, and a shortage of capability to deliver digital transformation.

We will continue to transform, at pace, to meet digital and technology challenges whilst maintaining the highest levels of quality in our statistics.

We cannot be sure what kind of new statistics will be in demand three years from now, or what kinds of devices people will be using to access the latest statistics but we do know people expect an excellent online experience, having the service and advice they need at the click of a button or touch of a screen.

We will have moved away from 'silo' applications with the provision of a small number of generic platforms covering the areas of: data collection; data collation; data analysis; and the publishing and dissemination of data and statistics.

Using the ONS Business Services Model as a framework, we will move away from the current set of siloed, tightly-coupled systems to a series of services and platforms that are shared across the

organisation and which will continue to evolve under the guidance of dedicated service managers.

This approach allows for flexibility with a small number of platforms by 2020; the initial focus being on dissemination, collection, economic statistics, registers and analysis platforms.

We will complete the process of modernising the ONS technology and data estate moving away from old and, in some cases, highly risky applications and systems.

We will deliver a modernised desktop and network infrastructure and move away from the current set of individual statistical software applications and hardware platforms to a series of generic platforms and services, allowing us to simplify our provision of new and existing products and outputs. This will be a rolling programme beginning in 2016.

Our approach will be to exploit and share existing data stores (internal and external) supported by the appropriate statistical methods rather than continuing to build data silos.

We will move away from a 'one size fits all' technology platform with a preference for 'on-premises' ownership towards a multi-service model which delivers consistent access to corporate resources and data regardless of location.

We will be an agile organisation also focused on a service driven business model - the Service Oriented Architecture (SOA)

Through fully embedding the new design and delivery model we will be able to

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deliver benefits in an accelerated and agile way. This will minimise risk and maximise value based on evidence based proofs of concept followed by rapidly paced, incremental additions to scope and functionality. (Starting in 2016)

We will adopt a reinvigorated governance structure for the approval and control of all digital and technology spend across the office, in which the responsibilities and accountabilities of all contributors are clearly identified. (2016)

Strategic Risks

Delivering the necessary innovation in data collection, dissemination and statistical

production will be challenging as resources reduce over time, but must be prioritised if official statistics are to remain relevant, change as the world changes, and deliver efficiencies.

The use of administrative data and big data should form part of a modern data collection model. However, there are risks to delivering a transformative approach when resources are stretched, and the demand for statistics and analysis remains high.

To mitigate the risk posed by the failure to innovate we must continuously seek new and innovative solutions and make full use of our spirit of curiosity to effect change.

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We will work relentlessly to ensure value for money in everything we do. Over the period of this plan our productivity will increase as technology transforms, capability expands and we reduce dependency on labour intensive processes. These productivity improvements will lead to a reduction in the cost of our existing operations by 19%. Delivering these efficiency savings will not be easy, we will need to focus our efforts on continuous improvement activities which significantly reduce the costs of our operations. We will also stop areas of work which do not demonstrate value for money and take innovative approaches including finding further sources of funding beyond our core allocations if these support our public good purpose.

Performance Metrics

Deliver our business while achieving annual efficiency savings

19% real terms reduction to core funding in 2019/20

Achieve set income target

2016/17 Target: Minimum £30m

The number of staff days lost per person across the Authority

2015/16 Position: 8.6

2016/17 Target: <8

Estimated respondent time and cost for completing ONS business surveys

Target: <£25m

Complete LEAN Six Sigma projects to improve the business processes

Target: Cash releasing benefits from LEAN

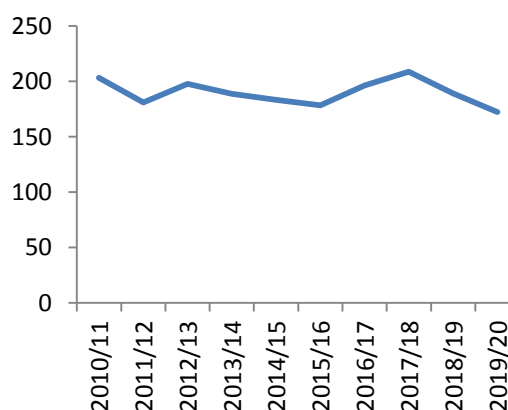
Six Sigma projects of at least £1m in 2016/17.

Our Resources

Our resources are separated into core delivery and investment (transformation), some of this investment resource is embedded across the organisation.

The tables which follow outline our settlement from the 2015 Spending Review. Staffing is measured in Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). Budgets and workforce shown are those resources the Chief Executive of the Authority is responsible for as Accounting Officer, the majority of which lie with ONS.

Chart 1: Gross Budget UK Statistics Authority (£m Real Terms 14/15 prices excl. Census)



1 Includes Resource, Capital, Income funding, excludes Depreciation
2 GDP Deflator dated 25th November 2015 per Autumn Statement

Table 1: UKSA Overall Net Settlement¹

£m	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Nominal					
Core Treasury Settlement - RDEL ²	145.4	162.3	176.2	164.6	156.7
Core Treasury Settlement - CDEL ³	8.8	10.6	14.0	13.4	7.0
Core Treasury Settlement - Total	154.2	172.8	190.3	177.9	163.7

¹Funding includes Resource (net of income), Capital but excludes Depreciation, Machinery of Government changes and CTP

²RDEL shown net of income, includes Bean Review funding of £3.6m in 2016/17 and £8.1m 2017/18

³15/16 shown post CDEL to RDEL in-year swap of £8.0m

Table 2: Census Transformation Programme Overall Settlement¹

£m	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Nominal					
Core Treasury Settlement - RDEL	19.9	35.1	55.4	92.0	103.8
Core Treasury Settlement - CDEL	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Core Treasury Settlement - Total	19.9	35.9	55.4	92.0	103.8

¹Funding includes Resource, Capital but excludes Depreciation.

Table 3: UKSA Staffing

(Full Time Equivalent)	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
FTE					
Delivery (existing operations - more efficient)	2,826	2,673	2,543	2,421	2,298
Reform (new work - meeting user needs)	72	258	303	319	328
Transform (temporary - to deliver change)	157	261	334	303	228
Total (exc CTP)	3,055	3,192	3,181	3,042	2,853
Census Transformation Programme	233	300	319	359	399
Total (inc CTP)	3,288	3,492	3,500	3,401	3,252

Efficiency and Continuous Improvement

Delivering our strategy will make new demands on UK official statistics, requiring us to seek efficiencies and demonstrate value for money while maintaining high levels of quality and assurance.

Our budget outlined above reflects the resources available to deliver our plan.

The processes and systems for the production of official statistics will be as efficient as possible, with a focused programme of continuous improvement leading to a productivity improvement of 19%.

We will regularly consult on, and action, potential cuts to ONS statistical outputs in order to prioritise the most valuable statistics and to maintain an up-to-date portfolio. (2016/17)

Our transformation programmes will yield significant efficiency savings, a digital dividend, over the next few years. We will ensure these programmes deliver the maximum possible benefit. (2016/17 – 2019/20)

We will implement the findings of our 2015 consultation of changes to statistical products, detailed in our published response, including short term reductions in survey costs to allow for transformation in the medium term. (2016/17)

We will consider the processes behind the production of our statistics, making these as efficient as possible. This will include a coordinated and targeted approach to

continuous improvement across the organisation, continuing to expand the use of Lean Six Sigma techniques to make efficiency savings. (2016/17 – 2019/20)

Efficiency plans will be delivered for back office, corporate functions, including the transition to a new Enterprise Resource Planning System during 2016/17.

Income Generation

We are committed to expanding the ways that we generate income to help support the statistical services we offer. We will seek opportunities to add value for our customers but do not detract from the trust they place in us, our independence or our role in producing official statistics.

Funding of UK official statistics will be supported by new and innovative income generation opportunities, whilst maintaining our core remit which is provided free for the public good.

We will be pro-active in bidding to deliver third-party surveys to help make the most effective use of our data collection capability. (2016/17 – 2019/20)

We will offer more paid-for expert advice and develop new analytical products for users, while maximising the numbers of customers paying for bespoke statistical analyses. (2016/17 – 2019/20)

Strategic Risks

It is clear that the public sector faces an extended period where funding from Government will reduce. In the face of this we must be prepared to make the necessary changes to our business, to be

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as efficient as can be if we are to live within a reduced budget whilst maintaining the quality of our products and services.

We must ensure we have sound financial management to enable us to use our resources effectively by deciding our priorities and matching these with budgets and people.

We will also keep our business model under review and seek opportunities for a different approach, including to the way we operate and the way we are funded, that could allow us to enhance the services we provide in the face of limited resources.

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Over the course of the past decade, the Authority has undergone a number of significant changes such as the transfer of many core functions out of London and the re-design of its delivery and regulatory functions in line with changes to legislation. These changes are now embedded within the organisation and we can move on from this legacy, taking a radical and pro-active approach to transform our workforce. At present we continue to rely on a labour intensive production approach which is costly and, with the rise of new technological and digital solutions, no longer efficient. In the past, we have struggled to recruit high quality digital skills and have often filled this gap by engaging expensive contract resources. Over the next four years we will address these issues to ensure we have the capability we need in the right place and at the right time.

Performance Metrics

Level of staff engagement (Authority)

2015/16 Position: 54%

2016/17 Target: 65%

Proportion of ONS systems and processes that are resilient

2015/16 Position: 84.5%

2016/17 Target: 90%

Share of the ONS workforce who are members of the four Government analytical professions (Statistics, Economics, Operational Research and Social Research)

2015/16 Position: 19% of total workforce

Target: 50% increase by 2019/20

Increased GSS capability in the 4 Civil Service Priority Skill areas

Recruitment and retention of the best staff across the GSS

Workforce Transformation

Over the period of this plan we intend to change the skills profile of the Authority and ONS, to expand those areas of expertise that add the greatest value to the organisation, government and wider stakeholder community and demonstrate the best use of public money. This will include building skills in statistics and economics, research and data science, digital expertise, leadership and change, and commercial competence.

We want to move from an organisation focused on statistical production to one driven by statistical analysis and public policy impact. There are examples where this transition is already taking place inside the organisation, demonstrating our ability to meet this challenge. However, in the future, we will accelerate this change in the interests of concentrating our resources where we can add the greatest value for the public good.

To underpin this change we intend to reshape the process of statistical production over the next five years to

remove our dependency on low level technology and reduce manual processes. While we are expanding our expertise across a number of areas (economics, data science, analytics and research) we are reducing the wider workforce as part of our overall transformation programme. At the same time we will also see growth in areas of development or new areas of work we introduce.

While reducing the workforce in areas that are no longer cost effective or efficient, we intend to expand our expertise to improve economic, analytic and data science capability.

In the future, attracting the best possible candidates within a competitive recruitment market will require greater pay flexibility with more opportunity to move between and beyond existing grade structures. We intend to begin work on this immediately, building on the experience of other government departments that have participated in a pay pilot exercise. To support this work, we have recently procured a new generation HR tool to integrate pay, workforce and performance data.

Our workforce will have the skills and capability that it needs to bring the maximum value to Government and our wider stakeholder community.

We will understand the capability of our staff, assess the skills base of the current workforce and generate a rich and vibrant human library. (2016/17)

Develop a programme of apprenticeships, job exchanges, rotations and secondments

to provide better learning opportunities and increase the flow of knowledge and expertise across the boundaries of the organisation. (2016/17)

Build a regional learning academy to make better use of our learning assets, achieve economies of scale, recover costs and generate income aligned with the needs of the business and with the priorities of government. (2016/17)

Review and amend the performance management process to strengthen the connection between performance, personal accountability and learning. (2016/17)

Broaden the learning platform to expand the use of technologies and accelerate the impact and tangible benefits of learning. (2016/17)

Build a learning corridor to enable individuals to transition across different but related skills areas within the business. (2016/17)

Deliver our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy the main elements of which include: representation of diverse groups at senior levels; removing barriers to recruitment and progression; focussing the efforts of organisation wide diversity networks; and launching a focused well-being strategy. (2016/17)

We will have a reshaped workforce which is smaller and has a reduced number of administrative staff but an increased number of staff with higher levels of expertise.

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Reduce those parts of the workforce engaged in activities that are no longer required or can be replicated or discharged through online and digital technology. (2016/17 – 2019/20)

Expand the use of analytical, data scientific and research skills to improve the value of our offer to Government and stakeholders and to consolidate our position across government as the lead data supplier. (2016/17 – 2017/18)

Support the delivery of ONS transformation through a modern and rigorous approach to portfolio management with a highly skilled programme and project management community. (2016/17)

Remove reliance on independent specialist contractors to reduce the cost burden on our key projects and programmes and technology platform. (2016/17)

We will have a pay and reward structure that is simple, flexible, allows us to compete with other public and private sector organisations and incentivises performance.

Improve pay and remuneration to incentivise higher levels of performance, retain our best staff and attract the best possible candidates into the business. (2016/17)

Introduce a performance related pay scheme for all staff and review non-contractual terms and conditions to ensure resources are appropriately used in the balanced interests of the individual and the organisation. (2016/17)

Review grade structure and job families to simplify career development. (2016/17)

Strengthen talent management and succession planning to produce a constant pipeline of potential and skills. (2016/17)

Implement a new enterprise resource planning application to improve management information, integrate finance and workforce systems and enable cost attribution based on activity. (2016/17)

Improving Capability

We will have set-up and grown a ‘Data Campus’ as an internationally renowned centre of Data Science and Data Engineering.

The Data Campus will bring Analysts, Data Scientists and Technologists together from across the UK Public Sector, Academia, Civil Society Organisations and Small-to-Medium Businesses, including start-ups and international collaborators.

Participants will work together to build and develop new analytical tools and techniques to help us better understand the world in which we live.

By applying data science skills to government’s and society’s big problems, we plan to extract the maximum research and public interest value from public data holdings, promoting analysis which is more relevant, timely and fit-for-purpose for the modern, global, connected world we live in and helping build the skills and capacity to manipulate and interrogate data sources of all types effectively both inside and outside the ONS.

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During 2016/17 we will establish the Data Campus with a core of well qualified professionals, we will involve a strong network of third party participants in the mission of the Campus, and we will establish data projects to begin to provide insight into key themes. (2016/17)

We will have developed a cadre of staff across the GSS that are proactive and agile, able to provide sound advice to inform the policy debate and engage with diverse stakeholders. This will include working with other analytical professions across Government.

We will build skills across the GSS in data science, big data and question testing. We will include data science competencies in recruitment and development across all analytical professions in Government. (2016/17)

Across the GSS we will implement a leadership and talent management framework for the SCS and a career pathways guide to outline routes to the senior civil service. (2016/17)

We will develop and implement an integrated plan to increase economic capability across ONS, and ensure proactively that other parts of the GSS have access to adequate economic expertise, where needed, to carry out their business. (2016/17)

We will recruit increasing numbers of staff with economic and data science skills and use this expertise to improve our

economic statistics and analyses. (2016/17 – 2019/20).

We will use partnerships with academia and other organisations to boost our skills and capability. This will include the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence which will give us greater access to academia, supporting or capability building.

We will conduct a review of the statistical profession across Government (GSS) to consider its strength, capability and capacity – including the links across analytical professions. (2017/18)

The GSS will be recognised as a centre of expertise for data science. (2017/18)

Strategic Risks

Our key risk is around the recruitment and retention of the people we need to drive a significant change in our business.

We must ensure we have sufficient technological capability and the people who are able to respond to the challenges we face.

To ensure we have the right people we need to be able to compete on the global market for scarce skills. We must also grow our own talent through a strong programme of learning and development.

Our workforce should develop to meet the needs of the future, and public sector employers must be aware of the changing nature of the workforce.

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Regulation Business Plan

Foreword from the Director General for Regulation

This Business Plan sets out a clear direction for the Authority's regulatory function. It describes our purpose and the strategic drivers that will guide our work in 2016/17.

Our plan was prepared and approved before the publication of the Review of Economic Statistics by Sir Charles Bean in March 2016. While it is consistent with the Review's recommendations for the regulatory function, there are aspects of the Review the plan does not address explicitly, most notably the proposal to create a separate regulatory office.

The opportunity to create a more distinct identity is an exciting one. The regulatory function already achieves a great deal and I am proud of what my team delivers in supporting the production of trustworthy, high quality and valuable official statistics in the UK. But statistics producers face significant challenges: reflecting a changing society in the statistics they produce, drawing on new sources of data, and disseminating statistics in new ways. In this context, I am concerned that we have not always secured the profile and impact our work deserves. As a result

we've not always been able to foster sustained improvement in the way statistics are produced and disseminated. The creation of a clearer identity and a wider scope of work can address these concerns.

My team, working with the Authority Board and engaging with external stakeholders, will develop our ambitions for this refreshed model over the summer of 2016. There is a range of ways we expect to supplement the attached business plan, including considering how to enhance our core statutory work of assessment work to provide greater focus on the quality and value of statistics; creating a clearer public voice for the regulatory function; deepening our focus on statistical methodology and on setting standards; and most significantly, developing an approach to evaluation that provides a clear view of the state of the UK's official statistics system.

We expect to communicate these changes in the autumn. In the meantime, we will implement the following plan, which itself is ambitious in driving improvement in the production of official statistics across the UK.

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

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Regulation of Official Statistics

Our aim is to ensure that official statistics serve the public good. They serve the public good when they are trustworthy, high quality, and valuable. The purpose of regulation is to ensure that official statistics meet these standards, and to provide confidence to users of statistics. The UK Statistics Authority was created by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. It has two main functions: production of official statistics; and regulation of official statistics. The regulatory function is independent of the production side, with autonomy over all regulatory decisions, separate governance through the Regulation Committee of the Board, and separate determination of resourcing and business planning. The Authority's regulatory function has been delivered through:

- **Assessment:** the core statutory power is to assess statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and if they comply in full with the Code, designate them as National Statistics.
- **Monitoring:** Reviewing issues and opportunities at a systemic level.
- **Casework:** Making public comment on the uses of official statistics, often based on complaints brought to our attention by others

Strategic Drivers

Since 2008, the regulation function has helped ensure official statistics serve the public good, and mitigated the detriment of mistrusted or misused statistics.

The Authority's public voice is powerful. Public players respect it, and do not want to fall foul of it; statistical professionals listen to it, and use our messages as a way of enhancing their influence in policymaking and operational communities. We deploy this voice when we see an opportunity to enhance the respect with which official statistics are perceived, and to enforce our principles.

However, the regulatory function needs to refresh its approach to avoid regulatory work becoming a treadmill for the Authority and statistical producers, and to ensure there is openness to emerging issues. This requirement to refresh our approach takes on added importance in the context of external scrutiny of statistical governance, notably through Sir Charles Bean's Independent Review of UK Economic Statistics which will have wide reaching implications for the assessment of UK official statistics. The full impact is still under consideration.

Our strategic drivers therefore propose focusing regulatory effort on supporting a transition of statistics from a 'collect and count' model of production to a higher value added service, while continuing to advocate the National Statistics brand, and taking stock of the code of practice. In terms of sectors, we will focus on the economy and the labour market; crime and justice; health and social care; housing statistics; and population statistics.

We will focus on 6 drivers:

- advocate and enhance the importance of the National Statistics brand

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- focus on the public value of official statistics, emphasising the need to shift from 'collect and count' to shining a light on answering key questions
- raise the profile and value of the Code, taking it out of the shadows and challenging myths about it
- promote the crucial role, voice and influence of statistical professionals at all stages of the policy and communications cycle
- improve our engagement and raise our profile with our stakeholders
- innovate in our processes and regulatory model

Key Activities 2016/17

In 2016-17, we will deliver the following main activities.

We will complete a stock take of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and make changes if necessary.

During 2016 we will work with stakeholders to consider the code in detail, this will:

- challenge the myths about the Code and emphasise the way it supports statistical professionals across Government and at all stages of the policy cycle
- enable the regulatory function to engage very widely across the GSS and beyond and to re-set expectations of how we engage and support improvement
- and, by clarifying the core components of the Code, re-affirm the value of National Statistics and encourage

producers to look critically at their National Statistics estate

We will carry out strategic reviews of cross-cutting issues or thematic groups of statistics which aim to maximise the value of official statistics to the UK public.

During 2016 we will carry out strategic reviews of:

- Housing statistics (new)
- Statistics on outcomes and destinations (new)
- Continued drive to improve Crime and justice statistics and health statistics

We will carry out formal Assessments of UK official statistics in order to assess whether official statistics comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and to designate as National Statistics.

During 2016 we will carry out 20 Assessments including: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Hospital Episode Statistics, Benefit Cap and productivity statistics.

We will develop a programme of compliance checks. These are lighter touch reviews of statistics, and are a mechanism for us to be able to spread our net much wider between assessments.

During 2016 we will carry out 30 Compliance Checks and an ongoing review of how key economic statistics are meeting Requirements set in past Assessments.

We will continue to make appropriate public interventions and carry out casework to advocate the value of official statistics.

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We will continue to use casework as a tool to respond to the way statistics are disseminated and used in the public domain. This will involve writing publicly, either in the voice of the Authority Chair or Director General for Regulation, to uphold the Code of Practice and defend the integrity of official statistics. It is inherently demand-led, but on past experience we would expect to handle around 100 cases during 2016/17.

Capability and Innovation

To deliver on our ambitions, we will adapt our regulatory model, moving towards one with greater coverage of the 1000 National Statistics, with a team that is more empowered, and with better management of change. In order to meet this challenge we need to innovate in our model and develop our capability.

We will adapt our model to be issue-led and sector-led. So instead of focussing on

discrete programmes of assessment and monitoring, we will consider emerging issues in different sectors and define interventions from our range of regulatory tools to address those issues.

In 2016-17, we will expand the business model and innovate with our current processes by:

- Developing a new compliance check tool to increase our coverage of official statistics
- Making our assessment process leaner
- Enhancing our alliance with the Authority's Good Practice Team & Quality Centre
- Bringing in subject matter experts on short term contracts
- Developing our staff capability through continued emphasis on learning and development, focussing on leadership and personal impact
- Raising our profile through more effective public communications

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