

# National Statistics Harmonisation Group Quarterly Meeting Agenda

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at 11:00 to 1330 hrs  
Meeting Room 3, at ONS, 1 Drummond Gate, London, SW1V 2QQ

	Timing	Agenda Item	Paper No	Presenter
1	1100 – 1110 hrs	Welcome and Introductions		Pete Brodie
2	1110 – 1115 hrs	Review of Previous Minutes and Actions	NSHG (14:4) 34	Pete Brodie
3	1115 – 1150 hrs	a) GSS SPSC Meeting Report	Verbal Update	Pete Brodie
		b) Review of NSHG Workplan	NSHG (15:1) 01	Mark Herniman
		c) Update on Business Harmonisation	Verbal Update	Palvi Shah
		d) Update on Admin Data Harmonisation	Verbal Update	Becki Aquilina
		e) Census Update and Latest Plans	NSHG (15:1) 02	Paul Waruszynski
		f) Update on Good Practice Team Work and Harmonisation	NSHG (15:1) 03	Martin Ralphs
4	1150 – 1200 hrs	Update on Scottish Census	NSHG (15:1) 04	Kirsty MacLean
5	1200 – 1220 hrs	Presentation - Census Users Consultation	NSHG (15:1) 05	Ann Blake
6	1220 – 1230 hrs	Proposed Best Practice for Reporting on Ethnic Minorities	NSHG (15:1) 06	Karen Hurrell / Angela Potter-Collins
7	1230 – 1240 hrs	Harmonisation of Approach to Address Referencing	NSHG (15:1) 07	Harmonisation Team for Alistair Calder
8	1240 – 1315 hrs	<b>NSHG Topic Group Updates</b>	NSHG (15:1) 08	<b>Topic Group Leads</b>
		Benefits and Tax Credits	Report Received	Thomas Sims
		Consumer Durables	Nothing to Report this Period	Jana Kubascikova-Mullen
		Country of Birth & Migration	Report Received	Pamela Spicer
		Crime & Anti Social Behaviour	Nothing to Report this Period	Nicola White
		Demographic Information	Report Received	Emily Knipe
		Economic Activity	Group is without a lead	TBC
		Education	Report Received	Karen Grierson
		EILR	Report Received	Angela Potter-Collins
		Health, Disability and Carers	Group is still without a lead	TBC
		Housing and Tenure	Nothing to Report this Period	Hugh Mallinson
		Income	Nothing to Report this Period	Richard Tonkin
		Pensions	Report Received	Tim Gibbs
9	1315 – 1325 hrs	AOB		Pete Brodie
10	1325 – 1330 hrs	Next Meetings	<p>Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015, between 1100 - 1330 hrs, ONS, Drummond Gate Office, London</p> <p>Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015, between 1100 - 1330 hrs, ONS, Drummond Gate Office, London. Followed by the NSHG Annual Workshop</p>	Pete Brodie



**Minutes of the National Statistics Harmonisation Group (NSHG) Meeting**  
**10<sup>th</sup> December 2014**  
**1100 to 1300 hrs**  
**ONS, 1 Drummond Gate, London, SW1V 2QQ**

<b>Attendees:</b>		<b>Apologies:</b>	
Pete Brodie (Chair)	ONS	Andy Blinston	BIS
David Matz	Home Office	Angela Potter-Collins	ONS
Emma Bowditch	RSS	Becki Aquilina	ONS
Hugh Mallinson	DCLG	Caroline Smith	DWP
Jan Thomas	ONS	Debra Leaker	ONS
Karina Williams	ONS (via audio)	Emily Knipe	ONS
Kirsty MacLean	NRS (via audio)	Emma Wright	ONS
Lisa Walters	Welsh Gov (via audio)	Gerry Nicolaas	SRA
Martin van Staveren	MRS (via audio)	Jana Kubascikova-Mullen	ONS
Pamela Cobb	ONS	Jo Bulman	ONS
Palvi Shah	ONS	Julia Wilson	Scot Gov
Richard Tonkin	ONS (via audio)	Karen Grierson	BIS
Samuel Dickinson	DfT	Karen Hurrell	EHRC
Sarah Martin	Scot Gov (via audio)	Marie Haythornthwaite	ONS
Steve Cooley	ONS (via audio)	Maria Willoughby	MoJ
Tim Gibbs	ONS (via audio)	Mary Gregory	DECC
Tim Vizard	ONS (via audio)	Nicola White	ONS
Mark Herniman (Secretariat)	ONS	Pam Spicer	ONS
		Paul Waruszynski	ONS
		Pete Betts	ONS
		Sarah Ravenhill	ONS
		Tom Anderson	ONS

## **1.0 Welcome and Introduction**

- 1.1 Pete Brodie welcomed members to the meeting, adding there were some new members. These were; Kirsty MacLean from National Records of Scotland – a new group to be represented on the NSHG, Samuel Dickinson from the Department for Transport (DfT) – replacing Lyndsey Melbourne, and Sarah Ravenhill from the Electronic Data Collection Team at ONS – another new group to be represented at the NSHG.
- 1.2 Pete explained that Lyndsey Melbourne from the DfT and Roger Morgan from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had left the NSHG due to changes in roles. A replacement for Lyndsey was already in place and a replacement representative for DWP was being sought. Lyndsey and Roger were thanked for their contribution to the NSHG.

## **2.0 Review of the Minutes and Actions from the Last Meeting, NSHG (14:3) 24 – Pete Brodie**

- 2.1 There were no comments arising from the minutes of the previous meeting and these were agreed as a true reflection of the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014 NSHG meeting.

- 2.2 There were 15 actions from the 18<sup>th</sup> September meeting. Actions 1, 2, 4 and 12 were not complete when the meeting papers were distributed. However, since then actions 1, 4 and 12 have been completed. With regard to Action 1, National Records of Scotland have become a member of the NSHG, represented by Kirsty MacLean. With regard to Action 4, Kirsty MacLean has agreed to present a paper at the next meeting covering an update on the 2011 Scottish Census. With regard to Action 12, the Education topic lead, Karen Grierson, has reported back stating they are not yet at a stage to request potential resources to test new questions. This action has therefore been closed.
- 2.3 Action 2 is part complete and the Secretariat will progress this with Paul Waruszynski. The remainder of the actions were all complete.

**ACTION No 1 – Secretariat to progress Action 2 from the 18 September NSHG meeting with Paul Waruszynski.**

**3.0 Update on Harmonisation Work**

**a. GSS SPSC Meeting Report, NSHG (14:4) 25 – Pete Brodie**

- 3.1 Pete presented the report on the GSS Statistical Policy and Standards Committee (SPSC) meeting that took place on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The meeting was chaired by John Pullinger, the National Statistician. Pete added the additional case studies to support the new harmonisation strategy, which were presented to the SPSC, were received well and it was agreed they were a good spread of examples that illustrate both the benefits of harmonisation and where harmonisation is not possible.
- 3.2 At the SPSC meeting some guidance was given on the role of the National Statistics Harmonisation Steering Group (NSH SG) in that it should aim to be very strategic. Some good comments were received from the National Statistician, in that the NSHG should feel empowered to lead across the GSS and that he (the National Statistician) couldn't understand why people aren't asking for harmonisation help as to him it's a 'no brainer'.
- 3.3 The NSHG welcomed the comments from the SPSC and were reminded that the previous National Statistician, Jil Matheson had indicated we should be moving into 'harmonisation by default', and it is encouraging to get this support from the top.
- 3.4 It was suggested that reasons why people are not asking for harmonisation help may be they are not aware there is help available and also may be due to resources particularly where these have been cut but the number of required outputs has remained the same. We should therefore be looking at how we offer the help and we should look at the possibility of having a 'harmonisation champions' network' so people can engage without coming to meetings. This was thought to be a good idea particularly as we are also looking at social media as an option for communicating.

**ACTION No 2 – Harmonisation Team to look at setting up a 'Harmonisation Champions' network, to improve engagement on harmonisation matters.**

- 3.5 The meeting was reminded the Harmonisation Team at ONS do meet regularly with the UK Statistics Authority, Good Practice Team. It was thought to be useful to have a standing report from the Good Practice Team presented at the NSHG meetings.

**ACTION No 3 – Harmonisation Team to contact the Good Practice Team with regard to providing a standing report on matters of interest to the NSHG.**

- 3.6 It was also suggested there maybe needs to be a change from having lots of interesting papers presented at the meetings (sharing information) to activities to enable others by demonstrating best practice and showing the benefits of harmonisation more. The meeting was also reminded there is an 'International' dimension to harmonisation and the need to sometimes harmonise at a UK and International level. Eurostat have come to the end of their 'Modernisation of Economic Trade Statistics' programme and there was supposed to have been a parallel one for social surveys. It was suggested, maybe the social and demographic side is a little bit further behind in European terms.
- 3.7 It was also stated there are sometimes pots of money available from the EU. The 'Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS)' programme has also helped with harmonisation work where they have suggested a reduction in the number of definitions of 'Turnover', for example, which will be a positive move for harmonisation. Funds may also be available from the 'Horizon 20/20', controlled by Eurostat, where they want to encourage statistical institutes to link up with academics to make joint proposals to do work. There may be an opportunity to get funding for resources through this. Any live bids for this funding should be shared so members are aware.

**ACTION No 4 – If any members of the NSHG become aware of any live bids for funding from the EU, they should be sent to the secretariat so they can be shared with the group.**

- 3.8 It was suggested there should be a link in with the Integration of European Social Statistics (IESS) and harmonisation work on European core social variables, where the National Statistical Institutes are getting together to propose current and future work. The Directors of Social Statistics meetings, within ONS are aware of this and Tim Vizard agreed to feed back anything he heard on this to the NSHG.

**ACTION No 5 – Tim Vizard to feed back to NSHG anything he becomes aware of with regard to the harmonisation of European core social variables**

**b. Review of the NSHG Workplan, NSHG (14:4) 26 – Mark Herniman**

- 3.9 Mark gave an update of the workplan, explaining for the benefit of new members the workplan contains the current programme of work and a table with progress against the programme of work which is updated on a quarterly basis. He added for next year the items reported against will be amended to reflect the revised Harmonisation Implementation Plan.
- 3.10 A question was asked with regard to the Data Markers and if the NSHG had done as much as it can with these. It was stated there were a couple of HoPs who didn't agree with aspects of the proposals but the HoPs did agree it should be published as guidance on the ONS web site.
- 3.11 The meeting was informed the Harmonisation Team have been invited to the UK Statistics Authority Monitoring and Assessment Team Workshop to do a presentation and a round the table discussion on how they can help each other. It was also suggested case studies demonstrating where harmonisation is not a good idea as well as when it is, are equally important, as there are sometimes very good reasons why harmonisation isn't always possible. This was agreed and will be included in the presentation to the UK Statistics Authority.

**ACTION No 6 – Harmonisation Team to include examples demonstrating where harmonisation is not a good idea as well as when it is, in the presentation for the UK Statistics Authority.**

**c. Census update and Latest Plans, NSHG (14:4) 27 – Paul Waruszynski**

- 3.12 Paul was not able to be at the meeting and no-one else from Census was available to present the paper. There were no comments or questions to take back to Paul.

**4.0 Proposal for Business Harmonisation Workshop, NSHG (14:4) 28 – Palvi Shah**

- 4.1 Palvi presented her paper, explaining the proposal is about having a workshop to ‘kick start’ the harmonisation work on business surveys. Since the paper was written a very positive meeting has taken place with colleagues in Data Collection Methodology (DCM) working on the Electronic Data Collection (EDC) Programme for business surveys. They are looking to move all business surveys over to EDC mode by 2018. As part of this they need to re-write some of the questions and are interested in ensuring those questions are harmonised. Therefore it is now proposed that the workshop is run jointly with DCM.
- 4.2 There were no comments from the meeting but members not at the meeting were asked to direct comments to Palvi Shah in the Harmonisation Team.

**ACTION No 7 – NSHG members to contact Palvi Shah with any comments or other suggestions for the proposal for the Business Harmonisation Workshop.****5.0 Progress on Harmonisation of Administrative Data, NSHG (14:4) 29 – Becki Aquilina**

- 5.1 Palvi Shah presented the paper as Becki was unable to attend the meeting at short notice, adding there is no proposal at this stage to form a sub-group for the harmonisation of Administrative Data but to maintain a watch on progress with this and to link in with the Integrated Project Teams (IPTs) and the various programmes going on across the GSS. Progress will be reported back as and when necessary via the NSHG.
- 5.2 A question was asked about the involvement with the IPTs and if there were going to be ‘producer’ representatives from across the GSS who may be affected by any Census developments. From the user perspective it’s important to ensure that developments take into account their needs and the impact on quality. It was thought the IPTs are a vehicle for the management of the Census and there are stakeholder engagement and user needs mechanisms within the programme.
- 5.3 It was suggested the area of administrative data is one where ONS and the GSS can actually make some serious improvements and there are many things the GSS could do to help producers with their administrative data collection and perhaps the methodology of administrative data should be harmonised as this would be a great benefit to producers. At the moment the Administrative Data Programme within ONS is producing a catalogue of what administrative data is out there. It was recognised that using administrative data would be easier if it were harmonised. It was also suggested the involvement of Local Government as well as other Government Departments would be useful. Administrative data is going to be key to the Census Transformation Programme as ONS look towards starting to produce population counts using administrative data before waiting for the 2021 Census. The NSHG used to have a representative from the Local Government Association (LGA) but after he left LGA a replacement could not be found. It was agreed to contact the LGA to see if they could find a representative, bearing in mind the work involving administrative data.

**ACTION No 8 – Secretariat to contact the LGA to find a new representative for the NSHG.**

- 5.4 The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) may be able to help as statisticians within Local Government may be members of the RSS. It was also thought this is partly about producer teams being aware of their various users, what their needs are and ensuring they provide the guidance and service required as much as possible. Local Government user needs should be taken into account with these projects as they are important producers of administrative data as well as users where the Census outputs are concerned. The RSS also has other various regional and topic related groups that could be candidates for a suitable representation.

**6.0 Harmonisation and Consistency, NSHG (14:4) 31 – Jan Thomas**

- 6.1 Jan presented her paper explaining it was a list of ideas about the objectives and outcomes of harmonisation from the user perspective that could be used in presentations to encourage the uptake of harmonisation. She added it could bring together some of the themes already discussed and any other ideas of this type of engagement/approach would be welcome.
- 6.2 It was suggested it may be helpful to draw out examples of misinterpretation of statistics in media articles where it's become high profile and response is needed from the UK Statistics Authority refuting a headline statement, particularly where the misinterpretation is due to a lack of harmonisation. Examples of how harmonisation has led to efficiencies would also be worth looking into as well. It was agreed these were both good ideas and worth looking into further.

**ACTION No 9 – Harmonisation Team to look into examples of where harmonisation has led to efficiencies, for use in future presentations.**

- 6.3 It was further suggested that examples from economic commentators and others should also be included. It was stated the benefits to rectifying inconsistencies are not just to users but sometimes to producers as well.

**7.0 Harmonisation and Social Media – Twitter, NSHG (14:4) 32 – Steven Cooley**

- 7.1 Steve presented his paper explaining harmonisation does not have a large web presence apart from the ONS website, the GSSnet web pages and StatsUserNet but it's important to engage with as many users as possible. It is hoped the use of social media such as 'Twitter' will help to develop a larger base of people to communicate and engage with. The purpose of the paper is to seek the views of the NSHG on whether social media such as 'Twitter' should be used.
- 7.2 It was suggested that many government users may not be able to engage, due to differing departmental policies on the use of social media. Despite this some government employees may well use their own personal 'Twitter' accounts for this purpose. Some discussion has taken place with the Social Media Team and harmonisation is a very broad subject that could involve a lot of different areas of GSS and having a 'harmonisation' feed would be beneficial. Although harmonisation is broad ranging and cuts across all topics, such a service would help to pick up on a whole different range of views and people. It would also be useful in engaging with users, as opposed to producers, and should be tried. The use of the new 'Stats Chat' community is also to be encouraged as it has a large and broad membership and may encourage other views and discussions. It was agreed it would be good to use a number of differing social media types.
- 7.3 The restrictions for using 'Twitter' were discussed, mainly around technical matters and the restrictions on the available characters for typing. We will need to think how we do this from a 'handling' point of view across ONS to ensure it's not just viewed as 'another Twitter account'. The target audience should also be considered and this was thought to be mainly for the benefit of 'users'.
- 7.4 Some thought should be given to the name of the feed/account so as not to turn off or discourage users from using it. It was thought the 'Harmonisation' name may work as a brand name as we have built up a good name through the roadshows but do accept it may not be the best name. The real benefits of harmonisation should be in the forefront when doing this and it's not just harmonisation for harmonisation sake. It was suggested the name should include 'Statistics' to help better with users looking for statistical related feeds.

**8.0 NMSG Topic Lead Updates, NSHG (14:4) 33 – Topic Group Leads****8.1 Benefits and Tax Credits Verbal Report – Caroline Smith**

8.1.1 Caroline was not able to be at the meeting but had submitted a report. There were no comments or questions.

**8.2 Consumer Durables Verbal Update – Jana Kubascikova-Mullen**

8.2.1 Jana was unable to be at the meeting and had nothing to report for this period,

**8.3 Country of Birth and Migration – Pamela Cobb**

8.3.1 Pamela presented her report explaining that she is only the topic lead whilst a permanent replacement is found, who has the time to properly commit to the role. There were no comments or questions.

**8.4 Crime and Anti Social Behaviour – Nicola White**

8.4.1 Nicola was unable to be at the meeting and had nothing to report this period.

**8.5 Demographic Information – Emily Knipe**

8.5.1 Emily was unable to be at the meeting but had submitted a report. On a related topic, the meeting was advised that updated results from the Sexual Identity project have been published and review of the question is planned for 2015. It is not proposed that the wording of the question is changed but the underlying assumptions are still relevant.

**8.6 Economic Activity – Debra Leaker**

8.6.1 Debra was not able to be at the meeting and had nothing to report this period. Debra is no longer able to be the lead for this group but we do have a few names from within the ONS Labour Market Division and Labour Force Survey for potential new leads.

**8.7 Education – Karen Grierson**

8.7.1 Karen was not able to be at the meeting but had submitted a report. There were no comments or questions.

**8.8 EILR – Angela Potter-Collins**

8.8.1 Angela was unable to be at the meeting but had submitted a report. There were no comments or questions.

**8.9 Health, Disability and Carers - TBA**

8.9.1 We do not currently have a topic lead for this group, therefore a report has not been submitted. Kate Bedford from the HSCIC has put us in touch with a possible candidate who is currently considering the role. The topic was thoroughly revised in 2011. It was suggested that if the potential lead falls through that Allan Baker from Public Health England may be able to suggest potential leads.

**8.10 Housing and Tenure – Hugh Mallinson**

8.10.1 Hugh presented a verbal report on the English Housing Survey (EHS). The survey is coming to the end of its current three year contract with NatCen and a review is looking at what will happen to it. There is an ongoing need for DCLG to make administrative savings to tackle the current budget deficit. The survey currently costs £4 million a year to produce. There are a number of options looking at how to reduce costs and a consultation will open in due course, once agreement from Ministers is reached. Proposals are currently being sought to look at a cheaper form of the survey that incorporates, as much as possible, the two existing elements of the survey.

8.10.2 DCLG is still the main source of information on fuel poverty for the Department of Energy and Climate Change. The current most active areas are; Fire Safety, second homes, energy efficiency

and the private rental sector, including issues with landlords and tenants. DCLG is also the main source of statistics on overcrowding and under occupancy. One of the most substantial changes to surveys was the introduction of questions to support the Armed Forces Covenant to track housing conditions of Servicemen and ex Servicemen. Other changes were the introduction of Well-being questions and questions on shorter tenancies in the social rented sector.

- 8.10.3 It was pointed out, with the coming of the 2021 Census, any revision to the Household definition would be of interest to DCLG and this group (the NSHG) is a good way of being updated on this. Sarah Martin asked if there was any current effort to look at harmonisation of questions between the EHS and Scottish Housing Survey. Hugh agreed to look into this.

**ACTION No 10 – Hugh Mallinson to check if any harmonisation of questions is taking place between the English Housing Survey and Scottish Housing Survey and report back to the NSHG.**

- 8.10.4 A question was asked, with the proposal to review the EHS, will the users or the technical advisory group be contacted as some use the EHS data and may be able to provide business cases as to why the EHS should continue in the future. A consultation document is being prepared for this and any names of individuals how are interested can be given to Hugh to ensure they receive the consultation.

**ACTION No 11 – NSHG members are asked to send any names of individuals interested in the consultation on the EHS, to Hugh Mallinson.**

- 8.10.5 The RSS would also be interested in receiving the consultation as they would ensure its circulation via the StatsUserNet website.

**ACTION No 12 – Hugh Mallinson to arrange for the consultation document on the future of the EHS to be sent to Emma Bowditch so it can be circulated via the StatsUserNet website.**

#### 8.11 **Income – Richard Tonkin**

- 8.11.1 Richard reported there has been work going on between ONS Social Survey Division and the Department for Work and Pensions to improve the consistency of data between the Family Resources Survey and the Survey on Living Conditions which are used in conjunction to provide statistics for Eurostat and the EU SILC regulations. A guide will shortly be published covering earnings and income data sources, which explains the different concepts of different measures and the different sources. This has been a collaborative venture between ONS and a wide range of other departments and is currently undergoing quality assurance.

#### 8.12 **Integrated Household Survey – Tim Vizard**

- 8.12.1 Tim presented his report, adding this will be the last topic report from the IHS and there is not a lot to update on now. There were no comments or questions.

#### 8.13 **Pensions – Tim Gibbs**

- 8.13.1 Tim stated there was nothing to report for this period for this topic group. There were no comments or questions.

- 8.14 The Chair stated how important it was for the topic leads to report on progress of their respective groups and if there was nothing to report, this should also be done rather than just not responding to the call for reports.

**9.0 Review of the 2011 Census Questions, NSHG (14:4) 30 – Ellen Hewitt**

- 9.1 Ellen was not able to be at the meeting and paper was presented by Karina Williams from Data Collection Methodology in ONS.
- 9.2 A question was asked at if anyone in ONS has thought about the online version of the Census forms from the user's point of view and users being able to set up an online account. This would have clear benefits with any other surveys in the future that could be done online. This would be a reduction of burden on the users and also potentially gives a way of linking data. This has been thought about to some extent within ONS. A statistical population register could potentially be produced with such data.
- 9.3 Karina was reminded the ONS Classifications and Harmonisation Unit (CHU) has all the expertise for Standard Industrial Coding and Standard Occupational Coding and helped to develop the complex coding used in the last Census. This would be helpful and Karina will be in contact with CHU with regard to this in due course.
- 9.4 The paper outlines the preliminary stages of work taking place to explore the possibilities for the Census online questionnaire as this is a new concept for the Census. This research will support the next stage, which will be the development of the online questionnaire. This work will be participating in some of the IPTs mentioned earlier in the meeting.
- 9.5 From the migration statistics point of the view the last Census was a vast improvement in helping to identify migrants and there has been a whole range of outputs based on that. It would be good if there were some harmonised questions on 'year of arrival' and why people originally came to the UK. This would be useful in looking to understand complex issues such as people arriving for one purpose and ending up staying for other reasons.
- 9.6 On a related issue it was pointed out the Welsh Government are looking at those people who responded on surveys stating they do not use the internet. These people will be contacted to see what issues are stopping them getting online to complete surveys. This was thought to be an interesting issue and DCM and Welsh Government exchanged contact details during the meeting.

**10.0 AOB**

- 10.1 With regard to the promotion of harmonisation, a question was asked if there is a requirement to provide a link to harmonisation work when producing statistics as this would be useful. It was suggested producers should clearly highlight upfront in their outputs if they have used harmonised principles or not and if not why and link to the 'Harmonisation' web pages, in order to ensure it is clear how their output is different to other outputs on the same topic. The Quality and Methodology Information (QMI) reports published by business areas in ONS, provide users with a greater understanding of our statistics, their quality and the methods that are used to create them. These reports ask producers to compare their data with other similar data and explain any differences. It was felt it would be useful to share these reports with the NSHG

**ACTION No 13 – Harmonisation Team to provide a link to the QMI reports produced by business areas in ONS and circulate to NSHG membership.**

- 10.2 The Statistics User Forum Poverty Conference is taking place on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2015 and will be announced soon on StatsUserNet and various other places.

- 10.3 A large scale review of all government surveys conducted in Wales has been carried out and a decision has been made to merge them all into one large survey. A consultation is going on at the moment about the topics to be used for the survey.
- 10.4 At the September NSHG meeting an action point from the June NSHG meeting was discussed in relation to possible 'gender identity' questions. After talking to the Demographic Information topic lead and the Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion topic leads it has been agreed ONS will not be doing any further work looking at these questions.
- 10.5 Also at the September NSHG meeting, a paper from the Migration Reporting Working Group (MRWG) was submitted on the Reporting of Migration Data detailing guidance for users. It was agreed at that meeting the paper required some rework. This was done and the paper was re-submitted by correspondence, for comment by 21<sup>st</sup> November, after which the paper would be considered to be agreed by the NSHG. No comments were received and paper has been agreed.

## 11.0 Next Meetings

- 11.1 The dates of the next two meetings are:

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015, 1100 to 1330 hrs at ONS Drummond Gate, Meeting Room 3

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015, 1100 to 1330 hrs at ONS Drummond Gate, Meeting Room 3

## Annexes:

- A List of Actions

<b>ACTIONS FROM THE NSHG MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2014</b>				
<b>Action No</b>	<b>Para</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	2.3	Secretariat to progress Action 2 from the 18 September NSHG meeting with Paul Waruszynski.	Secretariat	Complete
2	3.4	Harmonisation Team to look at setting up a 'Harmonisation Champions' network, to improve engagement on harmonisation matters.	Harmonisation Team - Jan	Ongoing
3	3.5	Harmonisation Team to contact the Good Practice Team with regard to providing a standing report on matters of interest to the NSHG.	Harmonisation Team - Mark	Complete
4	3.7	If any members of the NSHG become aware of any live bids for this type of funding, they should be sent to the secretariat so they can be shared with the group.	NSHG members	Membership reminded
5	3.8	Tim Vizard to feed back anything he becomes aware of with regard to the harmonisation of European core social variable, to the NSHG.	Tim Vizard	On-going action
6	3.11	Harmonisation Team to include examples demonstrating where harmonisation is not a good idea as well as when it is, in the presentation for the UK Statistics Authority.	Harmonisation Team – Becki/Palvi	Complete
7	4.2	NSHG members are asked to contact Palvi Shah with any comments or other suggestions for the proposal for the Business Harmonisation Workshop.	NSHG members	Complete - No comments received
8	5.3	Secretariat to contact the LGA to find a new representative for the NSHG.	Secretariat	Ongoing – email sent to Chief Statistician
9	6.2	Harmonisation Team to look into examples of where harmonisation has led to efficiencies, for use in future presentations.	Harmonisation Team - Steve	Ongoing – Nothing to report yet
10	8.10.3	Hugh Mallinson to check if any harmonisation of questions is taking place between the English Housing Survey and Scottish Housing Survey and report back to the NSHG.	Hugh Mallinson	Complete
11	8.10.4	NSHG members are asked to send any names of individuals interested in the consultation on the EHS, to Hugh Mallinson.	NSHG members	Complete
12	8.10.5	Hugh Mallinson to arrange for the consultation document on the future of the EHS to be sent to Emma Bowditch so it can be circulated via the StatsUserNet website.	Hugh Mallinson	Complete
13	10.1	Harmonisation Team to provide a link to the QMI reports produced by business areas in ONS and circulate to NSHG membership.	Harmonisation Team - Steve	Complete



## National Statistics Harmonisation Group

### NSHG Work Plan – March 2015

#### Executive Summary

1. The Harmonisation programme involves the harmonisation of survey questions, concepts, classifications and outputs in order to make survey results more comparable. This paper is regularly presented to the NSHG and summarises the harmonisation initiatives currently in progress together with an overview of the current work programme.
2. **Annex A** contains a table summarising the terms of reference for the group and progress against the associated activities, the main items of progress being reported below.

#### Current Work Programme

3. **Harmonisation Web pages** – As reported in December, the ONS Harmonisation web pages have been undergoing a review to ensure the content is current and a new corporate look is being applied to them (along with other sections on the website). This work is now finished and all editorial checks have been completed. The new look Harmonisation pages have now been published on the ONS website.
4. **Sub topic groups** – At the December meeting it was agreed to remove the IHS report from the Topic Groups as it was effectively a report from just one of the many surveys. This has now been done and Timothy Vizard has agreed to keep the NSHG informed of any developments or issues, harmonisation wise, with the surveys controlled by ONS. There are now twelve sub groups reporting to the NSHG. In most cases, the work of these Topic Groups has been ongoing and the quarterly reports from these groups are presented at this meeting.
  - Benefits and Tax Credits
  - Consumer Durables
  - Country of Birth/Migration and Citizenship
  - Crime and Anti Social Behaviour
  - Demographic Information, Household Relationships to include Civil Partnership
  - Disability; to include general health and carers (no current topic lead)
  - Economic Activity and Employment Status
  - Educational Attainment
  - Ethnicity, National Identity, Language & Religion (EILR) now combined with Sexual identity
  - Housing and Tenure, including Accommodation, Type/Length of Residence, Motor Vehicles & Housing Costs and Benefits
  - Income
  - Pensions

Since the last meeting there has been a change of lead for the Benefits and Tax Credits topic group. Work is still progressing to produce the interim revised harmonised principle for this topic. It now hoped the issue with the Social Fund question will be resolved by the end of February and the revised interim harmonised principle finalised soon after.

There has been another change of lead, again on a temporary basis, for the Country of Birth, Migration and Citizenship topic group. A new lead, on a permanent basis, is needed to take the work forward to produce the new harmonised principle covering this set of questions. A potential lead (from the Health

& Social Care Information Centre) for the Disability, Health and Carers topic group has been identified and is currently considering whether they are best placed to take on the role.

A replacement lead is still being sought for the Economic Activity topic group. It has been suggested the new lead would come from either the Labour Force Survey, due to the LFS being the main measurement of employment and unemployment, or from the Labour Market Division within ONS. We would welcome any input from the membership on finding a suitable replacement.

5. **Proposed Harmonisation Work** - There is interest in producing a harmonised definition for ethnic minorities. This came out of a number of queries asking for definitions for the term 'Black, Minority Ethnic' (BME) and is currently being looked at by the NSHG topic lead for Ethnicity, Identity, Language & Religion and Karen Hurrell (EHRC). It has been agreed that a proposal covering this to explain the reason behind the proposal and to gauge support will be submitted to the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015 NSHG meeting.

The ONS Measuring National Well-being programme has now completed work on the suite of questions for Personal Well-being. These have been an interim Harmonised Principle (since Jan 2014) and now need to be made a full Harmonised Principle. Ordinarily the Harmonisation Process dictates what is required to do this but the Personal Well-being questions achieved National Statistics status in September 2014 and it is hoped that much of the process can be bypassed. The GSS SPSC have been asked to advise on this.

6. **UK Data Service Variable and Question Bank** – The VQB team have acquired additional resource to help add the business surveys to the VQB and the Annual Business Survey has now been added to the VQB; this was a mammoth task as the ABS covers 33 different industries and includes a large number of business surveys. The VQB will be used to demonstrate the differences in business survey questions at the Business harmonisation workshop on 26th February 2015. The next step is to arrange for the Census 2001 and 2011 questions to be added to the VQB. The harmonisation team continue to provide demos to raise awareness and encourage the use of the VQB.  
<http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/variables>.

7. **Raising the profile of Harmonisation and strengthening links** – The communication plan is being updated in light of the revised strategy and recently developed stakeholder analyses. The Harmonisation Team has requested a theme on harmonisation/comparability at this year's GSS Conference (date TBD) and GSS Methodology Symposium (1 July) and will be inviting statistical producers/users to present. Jacqui Jones (Chair of Steering Group) has written a blog to explain what harmonisation is about and why it is important - this has been promoted internally on Yammer (social network) and the ONS Methodology blog and externally on the GSS website and StatsUserNet.

8. **Harmonisation Presentations/Roadshows** – Since the last meeting the following roadshows/presentations have taken place:
- Statistics User Forum workshop (joint event with RSS) on 21 January
  - UK Statistics Authority Monitoring and Assessment Team learning day on 26 January
  - GSS Quality Champion Network Meeting on 27 January

Future events planned are:

- Presentation to Statistical Development Group at Welsh Government - June (date TBD)

9. **NSHG Steering Group** – The NSH SG last met on 22nd January and the meeting was focussed mainly around the Communication Plan. A draft Communication Plan has been circulated to NSH SG members for comment (by 24th February). The next meeting is planned 4th March (after this meeting) and will be the first face to face meeting. The group now has a Scottish Government representative (Sara Martin). Future meetings will be held six monthly (alternating face to face and by audio).

10. **Harmonising Business Statistics** – The Harmonisation Team is running a joint half day workshop at ONS Newport on 26 February with Data Collection Methodology (DCM) colleagues working on the Electronic Data Collection programme. There will be 30 participants from business surveys and change programmes within ONS. The first half will consist of setting the scene (what is harmonisation, what has been done, what do we want to do and why) and the second half will consist of group discussions on how best to take forward the work. After the workshop, a joint paper will be written and presented/circulated to NSHG members. The Harmonisation Team also met with business experts to discuss the findings from their research into comparing definitions of turnover across all ONS business surveys. They agreed the report identified a possible need for harmonisation.
11. **Harmonising Administrative Data** – There are a number of initiatives within ONS (BY2011 and within the Admin Data Division), UK Statistics Authority and Admin Data Research Network are looking into how administrative data may be used effectively. Work in this area is in its infancy and the harmonisation team are meeting with relevant teams and are planning to assist with future feasibility studies.
12. **Revised Harmonisation Strategy** – The strategy has been updated with the four case studies and will be re-circulated to the GSS SPSC for approval and sign-off.
13. **Harmonisation and Social Media** - The Harmonisation Team are active members of StatsUserNet and use it to disseminate newsletters and blogs that might be of interest to the wider statistical community. This was also used to promote a joint Statistics Users Forum/Harmonisation event in January, which brought together statistics users and producers to discuss the issues each face with respect to harmonisation. Notes from this event will also be published on StatsUserNet when complete. The Harmonisation Team also contributes to the news blog on the GSS website to promote harmonisation related communications at a less formal level. A Harmonisation group has also been set up on 'Yammer' as an extension of the ONS group.

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## Annex A

### NSHG Workplan – Review December 2014

<b>Term of Reference</b>			
<b>1. To provide strategic direction for the design, development and maintenance of common statistical frames, definitions and classification for Statistics</b>			
<b>Key action Step(s)</b>	<b>Previous reporting activities</b>	<b>This reporting activity</b>	<b>Person/area responsible</b>
Research project – Administrative sources A-Z of Harmonised Principles Harmonisation Web-pages Harmonisation Strategy and Implementation Plan NSHG Workshop NSH SG Business Harmonisation	December 2014  The Harmonisation landing page on the ONS Website has now been refreshed with an up to date look and a check for current/relevant information. The remainder of the Harmonisation pages, linked off this landing page are now being reviewed.  The case studies to be included with the Harmonisation Strategy have now been finalised and agreed by the GSS SPSC. These will now be appended to the Strategy and the whole document circulated to the SPSC for approval and sign-off.  NSH SG has met in September and October. TOR and strategy now agreed. A combined NSH SG and NSHG report will be submitted to GSS SPSC in future	March 2015  The whole of the Harmonisation pages have been reviewed and refreshed and are now live on the ONS website.  The National Statistics Harmonisation Steering Group met via audio on 22 Jan 15 and a formal meeting is planned for 4 Mar 15. Future meetings will be six-monthly.  The Business Statistics Harmonisation Workshop took place at ONS Newport on the 26 <sup>th</sup> February 2015. The workshop consisted of presentations from the Harmonisation and DCM Teams to set the scene followed by some syndicate sessions to discuss ideas for a way forward to harmonise business statistics.	Harmonisation Team   NSH SG   Harmonisation Team
<b>Term of Reference</b>			
<b>2. To be responsible for setting harmonised principles</b>			
<b>Key action Step(s)</b>	<b>Previous reporting activities</b>	<b>This reporting activity</b>	<b>Person/area responsible</b>
NSHG Topic Sub Groups NSHG workshop to identify, review and prioritise harmonised standards	December 2014  Revised Interim Benefits and Tax Credits Harmonised Principle is still being worked on. The social fund question has been rewritten and included for consultation for the next FRS survey.  A topic lead has been identified for the Country of Birth Migration and Citizenship Topic Group. The NSHG are still trying to identify a suitable Topic Lead for the Health, Disability and Carers Topic Group  A replacement topic lead is required for the Economic Activity topic group.	March 2015  The interim revised harmonised principle for Benefits and Tax Credits has still not been finalised. All work is complete bar the Social Fund question.  Since the last meeting another topic lead has taken on the Country of Birth Migration and Citizenship Topic Group. This will, again, only be on a temporary basis till a more permanent lead can be found.  A lead for the Economic Activity topic group is still being sought.	NSHG Topic Lead   NSHG Topic Lead   NSHG

Term of Reference			
3. To oversee the development of guidance to support the National Statistician’s Guidance on the CoP			
Key action Step(s)	Previous reporting activities	This reporting activity	Person/area responsible
UK Data Service Variable and Question Bank will support the CoP by directing survey designers towards Harmonised Principles	<p>December 2014</p> <p>The VQB team have acquired additional resource and the business surveys should be added to the VQB imminently. The harmonisation team have identified that Census questions are not available on the VQB and have also requested that they are added to the VQB. The harmonisation team continue to provide demos to raise awareness and encourage the use of the VQB.</p>	<p>March 2015</p> <p>The Annual Business Survey has now been added to the VQB. 2403 variables from 2008-13 have been added. Next step is to arrange for 2001 and 2011 Census questions to be added.</p>	Harmonisation Team
Term of Reference			
4. To be responsible for encouraging compliance to the Code of Practice			
Key action Step(s)	Previous reporting activities	This reporting activity	Person/area responsible
<p>UK Data Service Variable and Question Bank will support the CoP by directing survey designers towards Harmonised Principles</p> <p>Roadshows</p> <p>Harmonisation web-pages</p> <p>A-Z produced</p> <p>StatsUserNet community</p> <p>StatNet/GSSnet publications</p> <p>Other targeted articles (3Moons etc)</p>	<p>December 2014</p> <p>No further Roadshows are planned for the time being. The content of future roadshows will be reviewed to include the recent changes to the Harmonisation Strategy and Implementation Plan and will include some of the case studies work, to reinforce the benefits of harmonisation.</p> <p>The NSHG Terms of Reference will be fully reviewed, now the Harmonisation Strategy Implementation Plan has been agreed, to ensure it is still reflective of the Strategy.</p> <p>Work is currently going on to improve the use of the StatsUserNet community. This work includes the use of ‘blogs’ and the Stats Users Forum.</p> <p>NSHG agendas, papers and minutes are now published on the Harmonisation page on the GSSnet Website. This is now the primary method of distribution for these documents.</p>	<p>March 2015</p> <p>The Harmonisation Team have done several presentations since the last meeting. These were for;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Statistics User Forum workshop (joint event with RSS) on 21 January</li> <li>- UK Statistics Authority Monitoring and Assessment Team learning day on 26 January</li> <li>- GSS Quality Champion Network Meeting on 27 January</li> </ul> <p>The Harmonisation Team now actively use StatsUserNet to disseminate newsletters and blogs that might be of interest to the wider statistical community. The Team also contribute to the GSS website News blog and have set up a community on ‘Yammer.</p> <p>Although the NSHG meeting papers are published on the GSS website, there are issues with access for NSHG members who are not civil servants. This is being looked into.</p>	<p>Harmonisation Team</p> <p>Harmonisation Team</p> <p>NSHG Secretariat</p>

**Term of Reference**  
**5. To act as a board for new and/or cross-cutting harmonisation projects**

Key action Step(s)	Previous reporting activities	This reporting activity	Person/area responsible
<p>NSHG Topic Sub Groups                      NSHG Workshop                      Business Harmonisation Workshop                      Watching brief of Beyond 2011 administrative data and data linkage as future harmonised topic groups.                      Watching brief on future harmonisation topics: Alcoholic Consumption as part of the Health, Disability and Carers, Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETS).</p>	<p>December 2014</p> <p>The paper recently submitted to the NSHG for agreement on guidance on the use of 'Country of Birth' and 'Nationality' when looking at migration data, has been agreed by the NSHG (by correspondence).</p> <p>The Harmonisation Team is continuing to engage with ONS business data colleagues in Newport. The Harmonisation Team is planning to hold a workshop in the New Year with colleagues in Newport to kick start the business harmonisation sub-group.</p> <p>UK Statistics Authority and Admin Data Research Network are looking into how administrative data may be used effectively. Work in this area is in its infancy and the harmonisation team are meeting with relevant teams and are planning to assist with future feasibility studies.</p>	<p>March 2015</p> <p>There is interest in producing a harmonised definition for ethnic minorities. This is currently being looked at by the NSHG topic lead for Ethnicity, Identity, Language &amp; Religion and Karen Hurrell (EHRC). A proposal to gauge interest will be submitted to the March 2015 NSHG meeting.</p> <p>The ONS Measuring National Well-being Programme is seeking to have the interim Harmonised Principle for Personal Well-being, made into a full harmonised Principle, following completion of their work on the suite of questions.</p>	<p>NSHG Topic Lead / Karen Hurrell</p> <p>ONS – Measuring National Well-being Programme through the NSHG</p>

**Term of Reference**  
**6. To promote the use of harmonised standards for collecting and reporting statistics, and ensure that user needs are met**

Key action Step(s)	Previous reporting activities	This reporting activity	Person/area responsible
<p>Promote use of UK Data Service Variable and Question Bank                      Harmonisation Web-Pages                      A-Z of Harmonised Principles                      Promotional material and articles                      Harmonisation Roadshows                      Harmonisation in-box                      StatsUserNet community                      StatNet/GSSnet</p>	<p>December 2014</p> <p>The Harmonisation landing page has now been refreshed and work is currently going on to refresh the content of the remaining harmonisation pages on the ONS Website.</p>	<p>March 2015</p> <p>The whole of the Harmonisation pages have been reviewed and refreshed and are now live on the ONS website.</p> <p>There have been a number of queries received in the Harmonisation in-box. Topics of queries were; Gender/Sex, Harmonisation &amp; Subsidiarity, Metadata and Sexual Identity (2). All queries have been responded to.</p>	<p>Harmonisation Team</p> <p>Harmonisation Team</p>



## **National Statistics Harmonisation Group**

### **Census Update February 2015**

#### **Introduction**

This short paper is to update Census Analysis Working Group members on progress on the 2011 Census Outputs for England and Wales and for the UK.

#### **Summary of census releases – England and Wales**

For a complete list of 2011 Census releases for England and Wales, and for more information on these releases see the following link: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/2011-census-data-catalogue/census-data-quick-view/index.html>

#### **Summary of census releases – UK**

For a complete list of 2011 Census releases for the UK, and for more information on these releases see the following link: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/uk-census/uk-census-data-releases/index.html>

#### **Recent releases**

The following products have been released since the previous update:

##### **Microdata individual safeguarded sample (Region) – 17<sup>th</sup> December**

The first person safeguarded Microdata file has been made available, this is a 5% sample of individuals with the geography being at the Region level. This file is available via the UK Data Service.

The following [page](#) provides the latest information and a list of variables for the region sample:

##### **Small population tables – Part 1 – 18<sup>th</sup> December – Part 2 – 21<sup>st</sup> January**

The first set of the small population tables are due for release on the 18<sup>th</sup> December. These tables will provide five year age by sex counts for a total of 30 separate countries of births and ethnic groups, for each local authority, where this groups meets a threshold of 200. These tables will be made available via NOMIS.

Release pages, [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)

##### **United Nations tables – Part 1 – 18<sup>th</sup> December – Part 2 – 21<sup>st</sup> January**

A series of tables requested by the United Nations for the UK, the main geographical breakdown for these tables is the urban / rural split.

Release pages, [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)

##### **UK migration tables – 28<sup>th</sup> January**

This release contains a number of tables on migration within the UK. These tables count the numbers of people who move into and out of an area and the characteristics of these people.

[Web page](#) and [release pages](#)

**Additional LC & DC tables part 2 – 28<sup>th</sup> January**

This release contains two Detailed Characteristics tables providing data on communal establishments and one Local Characteristics table providing sex by age with ages below 25 broken down to single year of age.

The tables in this release are:

- DC4110EW - Communal establishment management and type by position in communal establishment by age
- DC4801EW1a - Communal establishment management and type by position in communal establishment by resident one year ago
- LC1117EW - Sex by single year of age 0-24, quinary ages 25-89, 90+

[Release page](#)

**Upcoming releases****Origin and Destination tables – February**

The remaining Origin and Destination secure and safeguarded tables, those for England and Wales, will be made available. In addition, geography labels and variable headings are being appended onto these and all other Origin and Destination tables released to date.

**Microdata individual safeguarded sample (Grouped LA) – February**

This file is similar to the Region safeguarded file mentioned above. The main difference is the level of geography, this file will be at a lower level, which is Local Authorities. However, only Local Authorities that reach a population threshold of 120,000 will be included on their own. Any Local Authorities below this threshold will be grouped so the group passes the threshold. There will be some amendments to the detail of the variables to account for the lower level in the geography.

Paul Waruszynski  
2011 Census (ONS)  
February 2015



## National Statistics Harmonisation Group

### Good Practice Team Update - February 2015

#### **Introduction**

This paper provides a short update on Good Practice Team activities relating to harmonisation and quality assurance.

The Good Practice Team was set up in 2013 to work across GSS departments in promoting good practice in the production and dissemination of statistics. Our priority areas at present are communication of statistical information, working with users, the GSS data strategy and promoting the GSS quality strategy. We are keen to support harmonised approaches and raise awareness of resources with GSS colleagues. The team is happy to work with the Committee to disseminate information across the GSS and feed back issues that colleagues raise with us.

#### **Note on recent activities**

1. The inaugural meeting of the GSS Quality Champion Network took place on 27 January 2015 in London, facilitated by the Good Practice Team. This event saw quality champions from 14 different departments get together to discuss and promote statistical quality. The group discussed the different quality management tools within departments, as well as looking at best practice across the GSS. It was a successful day with talks from ONS's Quality Centre, Continuous Improvement Zone and Harmonisation Unit. The group agreed to a series of regular meetings and committed to share resources and best practice in the newly created website community group.
2. The team has worked with Full Fact and GSS statisticians to produce a set of guidance on the use of spreadsheets for presenting statistical data, published on the GSS website in December 2014 <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/statistics/presentation-and-dissemination/releasing-statistics-spreadsheets/>. This followed on from an initial piece of work by Full Fact to develop guidance for producers of spreadsheets. The guidance draws on the work of ONS Harmonisation Unit to include information about harmonisation of symbols in tables.
3. We are hosting a series of GSS workshops in departments across the country on effective data visualisation for charts and tables, following a collaboration with ONS Data Visualisation Centre to produce a half-day version of their training materials. We have also produced an accompanying set of guidance <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/statistics/presentation-and-dissemination/effective-graphs-tables-official-statistics/> and are working with departments to syndicate this training internally.
4. The team has regular trilateral meetings with ONS Harmonisation Unit and Quality Centre to share information and exchange ideas to ensure joined up working. These have proved to be a valuable resource in coordinating our efforts.
5. The team has regular meetings with the Royal Statistical Society around user engagement issues. This could be an opportunity to promote harmonisation work or to raise awareness.

**Martin Ralphs**  
**GSS Central Team/SPPC**  
**29<sup>th</sup> January 2015**



## **National Statistics Harmonisation Group**

### **Scotland's Census Update - February 2015**

#### **2011 Census**

##### **Final set of scheduled standard table released 29 January 2015**

Release 3N of data from Scotland's Census is now available on the Scotland's Census website via the [Census Data Explorer](#). The latest release is the fourteenth, and final set of results from Release 3 of Scotland's 2011 Census. It provides further data from national to local level, most relating to Population & Households, Housing & Accommodation and Transport.

##### **Further specialised products from NRS**

Further specialised products of census data, including statistics on workplace population, travel to study flows and census microdata are planned for publication in the spring.

- Microdata  
Further information on the detailed content and access arrangements for these files will be provided by March 2015.
- Origin destination / flow data: migration and travel to work / place of study  
Scotland-specific tables on travel to study flows is planned for publication in Spring 2015.
- Alternative population bases  
Workplace and daytime bases will be provided in Spring 2015.

Further details on these and other planned releases can be found on the Outputs Prospectus page of [Scotland's Census website](#)

#### **2021 Census**

National Records of Scotland are planning for a census in 2021 which will be primarily online, offering alternative modes of completion where necessary. It will make best use of technology and administrative data in its design, building on the approach used successfully in the 2011 Census.

Work is currently on-going to define and scope out the detail of the programme, including programme structure and an associated resourcing plan. Governance arrangements for the programme are also being considered, particularly in relation to governance for statistics in NRS and in Scotland more widely. NRS are in contact with relevant colleagues across the UK and plans are being put in place to work collaboratively on 2021 research and development going forward.



## National Statistics Harmonisation Group

### Census Transformation Programme topic consultation: Plans and approach

#### **Issue**

The plans and approach for the Census Transformation Programme (CTP) topic consultation.

#### **Action**

The National Statistics Harmonisation Group are asked to note the plans and approach for the CTP topic consultation and provide feedback.

#### **Background**

The objective of the User Needs IPT is to collect a body of evidence to inform the Census Transformation Programme so that we can fulfill our Users' Needs. The CTP topic consultation will be a key initial stage in collecting this evidence.

The topic consultation for the 2011 Census ran from May to August 2005. Over 2000 responses were received, and the response to the consultation was published in March 2006. The responses were analysed using a structured set of evaluation criteria, and this approach was considered a success as it allowed ONS to provide clear justifications when decisions were challenged.

It is our intention to conduct the CTP topic consultation using a similar approach.

This paper considers the guiding principles for the CTP topic consultation, an outline structure for the consultation document, the tool we intend to use for the CTP consultation and the key milestones for the coming year.

#### **Guiding principles**

The key principle that will guide the content of the topic consultation is minimal change to content and burden from the 2011 Census. Our initial view will be informed by our evaluation of the success of the 2011 topics and questions, as well as evidence about user requirements from recent consultations for Beyond 2011 and more widely across ONS. It will also be informed by our plans for using administrative data.

The consultation will be aimed at understanding users' needs for information at topic level. It is not a consultation on the questions to be included, although we will need to consider evaluation of how well questions worked in 2011.

We will consider where change from 2011 is needed to address three types of issue:

- New or emerging policy requirements that cannot or are unlikely to be addressed through the use of administrative data.
- To meet the requirements of changes in international guidelines (eg around the labour market topic) and in legislation.
- Where questions didn't work well in 2011, particularly taking account of the need for them to work online with a range of devices, and where they didn't support users' requirements for outputs.

The evaluation criteria used for the 2011 consultation will be developed for the CTP topic consultation as appropriate to take account of the need to consider the primarily online nature of the 2021 Census and to inform priorities for trial outputs using administrative data sources.

#### **Outline of consultation document**

At a high level we are planning to structure the consultation document around the headings below.

- Introduction
- Context
  - o 2021 Census design
  - o Plans for administrative data

- o Output and enumeration bases
- Initial view on each topic
- Evaluation criteria
- Outputs and dissemination
  - o Dissemination
  - o Disclosure control
  - o Geography

A list of the topics to be included is provided at Annex A. This list is provisional and as we draft the material and explore the boundaries between the topics this may evolve slightly.

The outputs and dissemination sections will be brief statements of our current thinking. We will note any initial views on those high level principles, and we plan to follow up with more specific consultation as appropriate.

### **Consultation tool**

We intend to use Citizen Space, an online consultation tool approved by GDS, to host the consultation and collect the responses.

### **Plan**

The high level plan for the consultation is set out below. The timetable is challenging, but achievable.

Initial draft of consultation content	31 March 2015
Consultation starts	Late May/Early June
Consultation ends	8 weeks after start (end July)
Publish consultation response	winter 2015/16

**Ann Blake**  
**ONS Census Transformation Programme**  
**February 2015**

### **Annex A – Provisional list of topics on which an initial view will be provided**

- Basic demographics and household composition
- Housing
- Ethnicity & national identity
- Language
- Religion
- Education
- Health
- NS-SEC
- Labour Market
- Carers
- Travel
- Migration and nationality
- Income
- Sexual identity
- Operational requirements



## **National Statistics Harmonisation Group**

### **Proposal to develop harmonised principles for reporting statistics on 'ethnic minorities'** **March 2015**

#### **Introduction**

It is evident from enquiries to the ONS and the EHRC that there is uncertainty with regard to reporting statistics on 'ethnic minorities' and in particular to overarching terms, such as BME, BAME etc. For example, a recent email to the EHRC queried the definition of BME and quoted examples of clearly different definitions in current usage with some organisations defining this as all non-white groups, while others included white minorities within the definition.

Although it is best to describe ethnic groups separately and to avoid combining ethnic groups in this way, it is often necessary, for example where survey samples are too small to permit more detailed analysis. There is clearly a demand for guidance on best practice to achieve a more harmonised approach.

#### **Issues for Discussion**

It is proposed to develop harmonised principles to encourage best practice in reporting on 'ethnic minorities' for inclusion within the existing harmonised principles relating to ethnic group. NSHG is invited to discuss this proposal and to agree the following next steps.

#### **Next Steps**

- ONS and EHRC to draw together information on terms currently in use in relation to 'ethnic minorities' and produce draft guidance for incorporation into the existing principles relating to ethnic group.
- Consult key stakeholders on the draft guidance. Stakeholders will include:
  - Scottish Government/ GROS
  - Welsh Assembly Government
  - Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister/ NISRA
  - Data Standards Working Group
  - Other government departments
  - Academic
- Bring proposed guidance back to NSHG later in the year for discussion and, if agreed, submission to SPSC for approval.

**Author Name**  
**Division/Directorate/OGD**  
**Date**

**Karen Hurrell & Angela Potter-Collins**  
**EHRC & ONS**  
**February 2015**



## National Statistics Harmonisation Group

### Harmonisation of approach to address referencing Proposal for Working Group – and request for notes of interest

#### **Introduction**

Address level referencing and linking of data is increasingly important in the production of statistics and in maintaining administrative datasets across the GSS.

ONS is now researching options for the address register to be used to underpin the 2021 Census, other ONS statistics and data linking projects in future. The register will cover residential, business and communal property such as universities, prisons and caravan parks.

The core of this register is all but certain to be the National Address Gazetteer (AddressBase) being maintained on behalf of Government by Geoplace and Ordnance Survey but this will be supplemented by address level intelligence to assist in data collection, follow-up, estimation and modelling.

There is real potential for linking up of experience and better harmonisation of approach across the GSS and potentially more widely across government. ONS proposes to establish and lead a group to investigate options for further harmonisation – and invites notes of interest in this work.

#### **Issues for Discussion**

A de facto national standard for addressing exists, and is available to all public sector bodies, in the form of the National Address Gazetteer (NAG) and the UPRN (Unique Property Reference Number) which provides a unique ID for every address. The UPRN has recently been released as opendata and provides real potential for easy linking up across departments, and more widely. Nonetheless practice varies and there has been little discussion within the GSS of options for harmonisation.

ONS have been heavily involved in address referencing for the past 10 years and propose taking the lead on setting up a GSS working group in this area. The scope of this group would be discussed at the first meeting but is likely to include:

- 1) Sharing experience in use of address lists, referencing and matching.
- 2) Options for harmonisation on :
  - use of standard address lists and common coding for attributes;
  - options for embedding the use of the UPRN or other common codes when systems are redeveloped;
  - identification of common approaches to address level matching (and potentially common tools);
  - Identification of a common approach on complex and communal address types.
- 3) Discussion with Government Digital Services on how addressing standards should be reflected in the digital infrastructure.

## Actions / Next Steps

Members are asked to :

- 1) Comment on the proposal to establish a cross GSS group on addressing;
- 2) Provide notes of interest and points of contact for such a group;

We are particularly looking for :

- Departments who make significant use of residential, business or communal addresses for referencing or targeting of resources;
- Those involved in address linking or matching;
- Those with an interest in, or responsibility for, particular types of communal addresses.

Contact : [alistair.calder@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:alistair.calder@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

A paper similar to this one will be provided to the GSS Regional and Geography Committee – again inviting comment or appropriate contacts.

It is has not yet been agreed how and where an address working group should best report – but advice on scope & governance will be sought from the GSS Statistical Policy and Standards Committee.

**Alistair Calder**  
**Head of Census Methodology and Address Register**  
**Office for National Statistics**

[alistair.calder@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:alistair.calder@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

**23 February 2015**

**National Statistics Harmonisation Group**

**Combined Topic Group Report – March 2015**

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report  
Benefits and Tax Credits  
Thomas Sims**

<b>Topic Lead</b>	Thom Sims (DWP)
<b>Topic Group Members</b>	Alice Jefferd (ONS); Alissa Goodman (IoE); Bob Watson (ONS); Charlotte Turner (CLG contractor); Chris Cousins (DWP); David Feeman (ONS); Debra Leaker (ONS); Donncha Burke (DWP); Giles Horsfield (ONS); Hugh Mallinson (CLG); Jane Carr (DWP); Jenny Collins (CLG); Joanna Littlechild (DWP); Jonathan Knight (ONS); Kris Simpson (ONS); Laura Keyse (ONS); Lucy Chandler (ONS); Mark Herniman (DWP); Mike Bielby (HMRC); Noah Uhrig (Uni. Of Essex); Rachel Councell (DWP); Riaz Ali (DWP); Richard Tonkin (ONS); Roger Morgan (DWP); Sarah Levy (ONS); Simon Clay (DWP); Stephanie Yow (DWP); Steve Dunstan (ONS); Suzanne Cooper (CLG); Tracy Lane (ONS); Valerie Christian (DWP)
<b>Reporting Period</b>	February 2015

<b>Summary Status</b> <i>(An overview of the status of the work at this time)</i>	
<p>The revised Social Fund items (the final area of Benefit / Tax Credit questions still in need of revision) will be included in the FRS 2015/16 questionnaire, which will be in the field from April 2015. This version of the Social Fund section has been developed with the aid of policy experts and the consortium undertaking the field work and has been live in the current round of questionnaire consultation; the items will be finalised by the end of February.</p> <p>With the exception of the Social Fund items, the current interim standard for Benefits and Tax Credits has now been on the FRS questionnaire for almost two years.</p>	
<b>Progress made during this reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b> <i>(including expected completion date)</i>	<b>Status</b>
The revised Social Fund items have been considered as part of the FRS questionnaire consultation	
<b>Work planned for the next reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
<p>The revised Social Fund items will be finalised and in the field.</p> <p>Analysis of the impact that the new Benefits and Tax Credit standard have had on under-reporting of benefit receipt in the FRS.</p>	
<b>Key Issues and Risks</b> <i>(Summary of actual or potential problems along with risks, potential impacts and sensitivities linked to individual needs of UK nations)</i>	
None	
<b>Other Information</b> <i>(Any other relevant details)</i>	

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report**  
**Consumer Durables**  
**Jana Kubascikova-Mullen**  
 Nothing to report for this period.

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report**  
**Country of Birth and Migration**  
**Pamela Spicer**

<b>Topic Lead</b>	Pamela Spicer (ONS) - on temporary basis
<b>Topic Group Members</b>	Sian Bradford - ONS Katharine Thorpe – Home Office David Matz – Home Office Ian Shipley – Welsh Government Jon Burton – University of Essex Lyndsey Melbourne – Department for Transport Kanak Ghosh - ONS
<b>Reporting Period</b>	December 2014 – February 2015

<b>Summary Status</b> <i>(An overview of the status of the work at this time)</i>	
There has been no work on this topic group since December 2013.	
<b>Progress made during this reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b> <i>(including expected completion date)</i>	<b>Status</b>
Target Concepts definitions	Completed. 34 out of 35 definitions have been approved. The only one yet to be formally approved is the country groupings. ONS consulted on this in 2014, and is publishing tables using proposed new country groupings in November 2014. This last concept will be added and completed as soon as work resumes.
<b>Work planned for the next reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
Agree Harmonised questions	Planned and incomplete.
<b>Key Issues and Risks</b> <i>(Summary of actual or potential problems along with risks, potential impacts and sensitivities linked to individual needs of UK nations)</i>	
A new topic lead is needed for the group to take forward the remaining products in this work plan.	
<b>Other Information</b> <i>(Any other relevant details)</i>	

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report**  
**Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour**  
**Nicola White**  
 Nothing to report for this period.

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report**  
**Demographic information**  
**Emily Knipe**

<b>Topic Lead</b>	Emily Knipe (ONS)
<b>Topic Group Members</b>	Nicola Haines, Vital Statistics Output Branch, Office for National Statistics Davie Hay, Department of Health Jos Ijpelaar, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency Emily Knipe, Population Statistics Division, Office for National Statistics (Topic Lead) Karen Hurrell, Equality and Human Rights Commission Laura Wilson, Social Survey Division, Office for National Statistics Tony Whiffen, Welsh Government Yolanda Ruiz, Department for Communities and Local Government
<b>Reporting Period</b>	December to February 2014

<b>Summary Status</b> <i>(An overview of the status of the work at this time)</i>	
<p>Gender Identity: I am not sure if how this topic would be taken forward was discussed at the last meeting. No further work has been done on this by the Demographic topic lead. A customer query has been submitted to the Demographic topic lead concerning 'Non-binary Genders'. The query questioned whether ONS has any intention to collect information on people who do not fit into the Male and Female categories. The query was forwarded to 'Census Topics' (Ann Blake) who is working on the 2021 Census questions for her team to build a knowledge base of what topic areas will be of interest for the next Census. As questions for the next Census are consulted on some work/ research on the position of ONS with regard to this may arise.</p> <p>Same-sex marriage: The questions have not been developed further due to a lack of resource and time constraints on the demographic topic lead. The development of these questions remains on the work plan but has a low priority compared to regular outputs.</p>	
<b>Progress made during this reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b> <i>(including expected completion date)</i>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Work planned for the next reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Key Issues and Risks</b> <i>(Summary of actual or potential problems along with risks, potential impacts and sensitivities linked to individual needs of UK nations)</i>	
<b>Other Information</b> <i>(Any other relevant details)</i>	
Work continues to be delayed due to the prioritisation of a new annual output.	

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report**  
**Economic Activity**  
**Lead TBC**

The Harmonisation team is in the process of finding a new Topic Lead for this group.

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report  
Educational Attainment  
Karen Grierson**

<b>Topic Lead</b>	Karen Grierson (BIS)
<b>Topic Group Members</b>	Andy Blinston, Tony Clarke, Michael Greer, Rachel Lloyd, Debra Leaker, Matthew Bollington, Jane Carr
<b>Reporting Period</b>	December 2014 to February 2015 (inc)

<b>Summary Status</b> <i>(An overview of the status of the work at this time)</i>	
The desk review is still being updated based on feedback from the Topic Group. There has been a delay in finalising the report due to resource constraints.	
<b>Progress made during this reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b> <i>(including expected completion date)</i>	<b>Status</b>
Desk review of existing methods for qualifications capture	In progress
Identification of potential resources	In progress
Desk review of other related questions – e.g. age left full time education	Not started
<b>Work planned for the next reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
Desk review of existing methods for qualifications capture	
Identification of potential resources	
Desk review of other related questions – e.g. age left full time education	
<b>Key Issues and Risks</b> <i>(Summary of actual or potential problems along with risks, potential impacts and sensitivities linked to individual needs of UK nations)</i>	
Lack of resource to test new questions developed for a simplified approach.	
<b>Other Information</b> <i>(Any other relevant details)</i>	

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report  
Ethnic Group, National Identity, Language, Religion and Sexual Identity  
Angela Potter-Collins**

<b>Topic Lead</b>	Angela Potter-Collins
<b>Topic Group Members</b>	
<b>Reporting Period</b>	December 2014 – March 2014

<b>Summary Status</b> <i>(An overview of the status of the work at this time)</i>	
<p>Religion infographic detailing the ‘Other’ write-ins was published on the 16<sup>th</sup> December. Census analysis programme due to come to an end (end of March). Currently working on final stories.</p> <p>With the EHRC, proposing best practice on reporting on ethnic minorities (paper to NSHG).</p> <p>A quality assurance role across the office in relation to EILR outputs continues to be provided.</p> <p>Advice also continues outside of the office. Attended the Ethnicity Advisory Strand Committee for the Understanding Society. Peer reviewed the Muslim Council of Britain’s report on the Census.</p>	
<b>Progress made during this reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b> <i>(including expected completion date)</i>	<b>Status</b>

As above	Complete
<b>Work planned for the next reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
As above	Ongoing
<b>Key Issues and Risks</b> <i>(Summary of actual or potential problems along with risks, potential impacts and sensitivities linked to individual needs of UK nations)</i>	
None	
<b>Other Information</b> <i>(Any other relevant details)</i>	

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report  
Health, Disability and Carers  
TBC**

The Harmonisation team is still in the process of finding a new Topic Lead for this group.

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report  
Housing & Tenure  
Hugh Mallinson**

Nothing to report for this period.

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report  
Income**

**Richard Tonkin**

Nothing to report for this period.

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report  
Pensions  
Tim Gibbs**

<b>Topic Lead</b>	Tim Gibbs (ONS)
<b>Topic Group Members</b>	
<b>Reporting Period</b>	December 2014 to February 2015 (inc)

<b>Summary Status</b> <i>(An overview of the status of the work at this time)</i>	
Membership list is being refreshed – surveys have been contacted to achieve this.	
A meeting is planned for mid to end March.	
<b>Progress made during this reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b> <i>(including expected completion date)</i>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Work planned for the next reporting period</b>	
<b>Product Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Key Issues and Risks</b> <i>(Summary of actual or potential problems along with risks, potential impacts and sensitivities linked to individual needs of UK nations)</i>	
<b>Other Information</b> <i>(Any other relevant details)</i>	