

National Statistics Harmonisation Group Quarterly Meeting Agenda

This meeting was cancelled. The usual reports are attached for comment.

**Wednesday 3rd June 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 – 1120 hrs | Review of Previous Minutes and Actions | NSHG (15:1) 09 | Pete Brodie |
| 3 | 1120 – 1155 hrs | a) GSS SPSC Meeting Report | None – meeting has not taken place since Oct 14 | Pete Brodie |
| | | b) Review of NSHG Workplan | NSHG (15:2) 10 | Mark Herniman |
| | | c) Update on Business Harmonisation | Verbal – see NSHG Workplan | Palvi Shah |
| | | d) Update on Admin Data Harmonisation | Verbal – see NSHG Workplan | Becki Aquilina |
| | | e) Update on Good Practice Team Work and Harmonisation | NSHG (15:2) 11 | Martin Ralphs |
| 4 | 1155 – 1205 hrs | Admin Data Division and Admin Data Quality | Presentation - Will now be presented at Sep 15 NSHG | Jonathan Swan |
| 5 | 1205 – 1220 hrs | Electronic Data Collection | Presentation - Will now be presented at Sep 15 NSHG | Amanda Howells / Ruth James |
| 6 | 1220 – 1240 hrs | The ESS Peer Review and Implications for Harmonisation | Presentation - Will now be presented at Sep 15 NSHG | Emma Wright / Andy Bates |
| 7 | 1240 – 1315 hrs | NSHG Topic Group Updates | NSHG (15:3) 12 | Topic Group Leads |
| | | Benefits and Tax Credits | Report Received | Thomas Sims |
| | | Consumer Durables | Nothing to Report | Jana Kubascikova-Mullen |
| | | Country of Birth & Migration | Nothing to Report | Pamela Spicer |
| | | Crime & Anti Social Behaviour | Nothing to Report | Nicola White |
| | | Demographic Information | Report Received | Emily Knipe |
| | | Economic Activity | Group is without a lead | TBC |
| | | Education | Nothing to Report | Karen Wollgar |
| | | EILR | Nothing to Report | Angela Potter-Collins |
| | | Health, Disability and Carers | Group is without a lead | TBC |
| | | Housing and Tenure | New lead only just appointed | Rob Green |
| | | Income | Nothing to Report | Richard Tonkin |
| Pensions | Report Received | Tim Gibbs | | |
| 8 | 1315 – 1325 hrs | AOB | | Pete Brodie |
| 9 | 1325 – 1330 hrs | Next Meetings | <p>Wednesday 23rd September 2015, between 1100 - 1330 hrs, ONS, Drummond Gate Office, London. Followed by the Annual NSHG Workshop</p> <p>Wednesday 9th December 2016, between 1100 - 1330 hrs, ONS, Drummond Gate Office, London</p> | Pete Brodie |



Minutes of the National Statistics Harmonisation Group (NSHG) Meeting
4th March 2015
1100 to 1330 hrs
ONS, 1 Drummond Gate, London, SW1V 2QQ

Attendees:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Pete Brodie (Chair) | ONS |
| Angela Potter-Collins | ONS (via audio) |
| Ann Blake | ONS |
| Becki Aquilina | ONS |
| Emma Emery | RSS |
| Emily Knipe | ONS |
| Emma Wright | ONS |
| Jan Thomas | ONS |
| Karen Hurrell | EHRC (via audio) |
| Kirsty MacLean | NRS (via audio) |
| Lisa Walters | Welsh Gov (via audio) |
| Marie Haythornthwaite | ONS (via audio) |
| Marina Wright | ONS |
| Martin Ralphs | UKSA |
| Martin van Staveren | MRS (via audio) |
| Matthew Tranter | DfT |
| Nicola White | ONS |
| Pamela Spicer | ONS |
| Palvi Shah | ONS |
| Paul Waruszynski | ONS (via audio) |
| Pete Betts | ONS |
| Tim Gibbs | ONS (via audio) |
| Tim Vizard | ONS (via audio) |
| Thomas Sims | DWP |
| Mark Herniman (Secretariat) | ONS |

Apologies:

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Amanda Howells | ONS |
| Andy Blinston | BIS |
| David Matz | Home Office |
| Emily Poskett | DfID |
| Gerry Nicolaas | SRA |
| Jonathan Swan | ONS |
| Julia Wilson | Scot Gov |
| Karen Grierson | BIS |
| Maria Willoughby | MoJ |
| Richard Tonkin | ONS |
| Sabena Khan | DECC |
| Sarah Martin | Scot Gov |
| Tom Anderson | ONS |

1.0 Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 Pete Brodie welcomed members to the meeting, and introducing new members. These were; Amanda Howells (ONS – Electronic Data Collection) replacing Ciara Willaims, Emily Poskett (Department for International Development) replacing Frances Harper, Jonathan Swan (ONS – Admin Data programme), Martin Ralphs (ONS – Good Practice Team), Matthew Tranter (Department for Transport) replacing Samuel Dickinson, Sabena Khan (Department of Energy and Climate Change) replacing Mary Gregory and Thomas Sims (Department for Works and Pensions) replacing Caroline Smith. Pete thanked the leaving members for their contribution to the NSHG.

2.0 Review of the Minutes and Actions from the Last Meeting, NSHG (14:4) 34 – Pete Brodie

- 2.1 There were no comments arising from the minutes from the 10th December 2014 meeting and these were accepted as a true reflection of that meeting.

- 2.2 There were 13 actions from the 10th December meeting. Most of these were complete or were longer term ongoing actions. With regard to action 2, (Harmonisation Team to look at setting up a 'Harmonisation Champions' network, to improve engagement on harmonisation matters) the Chair reminded the group the NSHG members, that in accordance with the NSHG Terms of Reference, all NSHG members were actually harmonisation champions for their respective government departments. Action 2 can therefore be closed but members were reminded of this part to their role.
- 2.3 With regard to action 5 (Tim Vizard to feed back anything he becomes aware of with regard to the harmonisation of European core social variable, to the NSHG), some work is ongoing but nothing much to report back on to date. It was suggested an update on the new European framework for social statistics would be useful in the future.

ACTION No 1 – Tim Vizard to invite a colleague to a future NSHG meeting to give an update on the new European framework for social statistics.

- 2.4 Although action 12 (Hugh Mallinson to arrange for the consultation document on the future of the EHS to be sent to Emma Emery so it can be circulated via the StatsUserNet website) was complete the group were reminded to bring any future consultations to the attention of Emma Emery, so they can be posted on the RSS web site to ensure wider visibility. The meeting was informed that ONS did reply to the consultation on the future of the English Housing Survey.

3.0 Update on Harmonisation Work

- a. GSS SPSC Meeting Report, Verbal Update – Pete Brodie**
- 3.1 Pete explained there had not been a GSS SPSC meeting in January as planned. The next meeting is due to take place on 13th April 2015 and this will be reported on at the next NSHG meeting
- b. Review of the NSHG Workplan, NSHG (15:1) 01 – Mark Herniman**
- 3.2 Mark gave an update of the workplan, explaining for the benefit of new members, the workplan contains the current programme of work and includes a summary table with progress against the programme of work which is updated on a quarterly basis. There were no comments or questions from the meeting.
- c. Verbal update on Business Harmonisation – Palvi Shah**
- 3.3 Palvi gave an update on the work to date in attempting to harmonise business statistics. A very useful Business Harmonisation Workshop was held on the 26th February, jointly by the Data Collection Methodology (DCM) branch of ONS and the Harmonisation Team. There is a lot of synergy between DCM and harmonisation emerging from the need for the DCM to harmonise business survey questions in preparation for online use. The workshop was a half day event and was attended by 25 people representing the business statistics areas and 'change programmes' within ONS. Colleagues from the ONS Admin Data Division, the Virtual Microdata Laboratory and the Enterprise Architecture project also attended.
- 3.4 The first part of the workshop was around setting the scene for the proposed harmonisation of business statistics. For the second part, the workshop was divided into four syndicates tasked with discussing the following questions:
- 1) What do you think about the proposal to harmonise business statistics?
 - 2) What do you see as the priority areas?
 - 3) What do you see as opportunities, threats, enablers and blockers?
 - 4) What is the best way of taking this forward?

- 3.5 Each group then presented their findings to the rest of the workshop. In summary, it was thought the workshop went well, with encouragement and support for the proposed harmonisation of business statistics. A full report on the workshop will follow in due course but some of the points worth a mention to this group are:
- 1) In terms of concerns, these centred around the impact on time series and resources.
 - 2) It was recognised that the different areas of business statistics tend to work in silos and these need to be broken down to identify synergies between them.
 - 3) 'Quick wins' and enablers such as current 'change programmes' like Electronic Data Collection should be used to help sell the idea to other areas.
 - 4) Making the sure the 'middle ground' between social statistics and business statistics is not forgotten.
 - 5) Users can have conflicting requirements.
 - 6) Development and use within ONS of various question libraries, including the UK Data Service Variable and Question Bank and should these be integrated.
 - 7) Empowering people to think about harmonisation within their day to day roles, imbedding harmonisation into 'business as usual' activity.
 - 8) Ideas on how to take harmonisation forward in terms of process and governance and could this be achieved by a working group similar to the NSHG.
- 3.6 The next steps will be to circulate the completed workshop report to the attendees and the NSHG. A joint paper, taking forward some of the workshop actions and concrete proposals will be produced and presented to various boards including the Business Survey Change Portfolio Board (BSCP) in attempt to gain their buy-in.
- 3.7 The workshop was ONS focussed as a starting point was needed to develop the work. Future discussions will be centred on how this is taken forward across the GSS. There were no comments or questions from the meeting.

d. Verbal update on Admin Data Harmonisation – Becki Aquilina

- 3.8 Becki gave her verbal update explaining that although there is a lot going on, there is not a great deal to report back on yet. The Admin Data Division, within ONS, which was formed last year have a number of strategic aims. One of these is to be at the forefront of integrating and exploiting data from multiple sources, including admin data.
- 3.9 A programme of work titled the Admin Data Programme (ADP) has been set up across the GSS with the intent to review potential admin data sources for both social and business areas of statistics. Jonathan Swan (ONS) is leading on this work and will be giving a presentation on the ADP at the June NSHG meeting. The ADP will be represented permanently on the NSHG to feedback on the work of the ADP and will also be working with the 2021 Census programme that are looking at questions which could be replaced by data from administrative sources.

ACTION No 2 – Secretariat to write to Jonathan Swan to confirm the presentation for the June NSHG meeting.

- 3.10 There is an Admin Data Requirements Integrated Project Team (IPT) who is liaising across the GSS with data providers such as the DWP, HMRC, the Bank of England and the NHS to identify data that could be used. This work is furthest ahead with DWP and HMRC looking at what tax and benefits data might be helpful to the 2021 Census and beyond. In particular, the production of a definition for 'income' in the context of admin datasets is being looked into and a group is being set up to do this. The Harmonisation team have a presence in both the Admin Data Programme and the Admin Data Requirements Integrated Project Team and at the moment the work is still very much in its infancy, but it is hoped to report back more at future NSHG meetings.

- 3.11 User engagement was discussed and the importance of ensuring users views are considered with regard to any development with admin data. It was suggested a presentation could be provided by the Admin Data Requirements IPT at the next NSHG meeting.

ACTION No 3 - Marie Haythornthwaite to discuss with colleagues in the Admin Data Requirements Integrated Projects Team a presentation to include user engagement, to be provided at the June NSHG meeting.

- 3.12 It was also suggested, something similar could be provided for the Statistics Users Forum (SUF) meetings or a 'users needs' meeting. This was thought to be a good idea.

ACTION No 4 – Emma Emery to contact Marie Haythornthwaite to discuss a possible presentation for the SUF meetings, covering admin data developments.

e. Census update and Latest Plans, NSHG (15:1) 02 – Paul Waruszynski

- 3.13 Paul presented his update explaining it may well be the last as there is less to report on as work nears completion. Users will be able to commission further tables upon request via the Commissioned Tables Team. There were no comments or questions from the meeting.

f. Update on Good Practice Team & Harmonisation, NSHG (15:1) 03 – Martin Ralphs

- 3.14 Martin presented his update, thanking the group for inviting the Good Practice Team (GPT) as a member of the NSHG and for the opportunity to provide regular updates. Martin added the GPT reach out widely across the GSS and are keen to support harmonised approaches by promoting the NSHG and its work. The GSS Quality Champions Network, where 14 Government Departments were represented, met for the first time in January. One item that arose at the meeting was if the quality champions could combine their role and also act as the harmonisation champions. This was met with a mixed response with some being reluctant to take on the role of harmonisation champion as well. This request is now redundant as the NSHG will use its own departmental representatives as harmonisation champions, in accordance with its Terms of Reference. It was stated it will be worthwhile attempting to link in with the Quality Champions as there is some common ground with the two roles. We do, however, need to contact all NSHG departmental representatives to ensure they are still happy to engage as some members are dormant. It was also agreed the GSS Quality Champions Network should be informed of who the departmental harmonisation champions are.

ACTION No 5 – Harmonisation team to write to current NSHG departmental representatives to establish if they are happy to engage with harmonisation matters.

ACTION No 6 – Harmonisation team to inform the GSS Quality Champions Network who the departmental harmonisation champions are.

- 3.15 The GPT have also been involved with the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) and have been working on a joint survey about user engagement activities across the GSS. This is available through a link on the GSS website and should provide a good collective picture of what is going on this area. There were no further comments or questions.

4.0 Update on Scottish Census, NSHG (15:1) 04 – Kirsty MacLean

- 4.1 Kirsty presented her paper, explaining it was a brief update of where Scotland is with the scheduled releases for the 2011 Census and the planning for the 2021 Census. There were no comments or questions from the meeting.

5.0 Presentation – Census Users Consultation, NSHG (15:1) 05 – Ann Blake

5.1 Ann Blake gave a presentation explaining the circulated paper covered the background to the Census topic consultation and the plans and approach to be used. Ann explained the presentation covers a reminder of what the National Statistician's recommendation for the Census was and how the programme is set up. It also included further information on topic consultation and some work on the trial outputs. The slides were sent out in advance for those attending via audio.

Post Meeting Note: The presentation slides were added to, as a result of a question being asked during the meeting. The revised slides are at Annex B.

5.2 There was a general question with regard to user engagement and how the RSS can help with this and it was agreed that Emma Emery (RSS) and Ann Blake would discuss this in more detail outside of this meeting.

5.3 Some harmonisation issues have been identified so far. These were the UK harmonisation and the different questions asked by its Country components and secondly, the issues surrounding ethnicity and the importance to find out what needs to be done to address this. The meeting was reminded, in addition to the NSHG topic leads, there will be Census topic leads and it's important to appreciate the difference between the two. It was also confirmed the Harmonisation team have already passed on details of NSHG topic leads to the Census Transformation Programme (CTP) and it would be good if the two sets of topic groups were linked up. With regard to Census topic leads a timetable is being put together for any work they are expected to contribute to.

5.4 It was thought it was worth sharing the CTP proposition for consultation with the NSHG. A first draft of this was thought to be ready by the end of March and potentially some of this could be shared with the NSHG topic leads.

ACTION No 7 – Ann Blake to share some of the draft CTP proposition for consultation with the NSHG topic group leads, via the secretariat.

5.5 It was pointed out there may also be some opportunities for exchanges with business harmonisation as there are matters of joint interest with some of the questions that cross over with social harmonisation. The Admin Data Programme at ONS are already involved in the consultation in relation to what questions need to be asked about the possible inclusion of admin data to support the Census and any Inter-censal outputs being looked at.

5.6 There are no plans to introduce new topics for the 2021 Census, unless the user needs consultation results show there is a need for a new topic. The 2011 questions will be looked at to see if they are appropriate for the requirements of the individual topic and if they are appropriate for on-line use. The CTP Response Collection Team are currently drawing up a matrix of all 2011 questions to examine at evidence to prioritise which questions need to be looked at for use in 2021. Information from the topic consultation for user requirements will be fed into the matrix to prioritise it further so any development work on questions can begin.

5.7 Although questions on Income are high on users list of needs, it is thought such a question will not be included in the Census because past testing shows it to have a negative effect on response rates. It is however, a top priority of CTP for exploring in admin data and Income is one of the only areas in the topic consultation document where admin data will be discussed in the context of a specific topic.

5.8 A meeting has been set up to discuss UK harmonisation issues at a working group level on the 16th March 2015. Attendees will include ONS, Northern Ireland Statistical Research Association (NISRA), Welsh Government (WG) and the Scottish Government (SG). It was thought an update

from this meeting would be useful. National Records for Scotland (NRS) are also represented, as appropriate, on some of the ONS IPTs.

ACTION No 8 – Kirsty MacLean to give an update of how UK plans are shaping up, harmonisation wise at the next NSHG meeting.

5.9 ONS intend to use an on-line consultation tool called 'Citizen Space' to host the topic consultation and to collect responses. Once this tool is available in-house it will be looked at to see how best to utilise it. It was noticed that 'disability' was missing as a topic but it will be included as part of the 'health' topic.

6.0 Proposed Best Practice for Reporting on Ethnic Minorities, NSHG (15:1) 06 – Karen Hurrell & Angela Potter-Collins

6.1 Karen and Angela presented their paper explaining the proposal has come about due to a number of enquires being received to do with the term 'Black Minority Ethnic' (BME) and the fact that various departments and Local Authorities are using the term in different ways. This has meant it has become unclear what the term actually means and its relevance in its existing form. Further discussions on this have led to a strong belief it would be useful to have this harmonised, to give users guidance on its use and which groups to include. The term 'BME' is outdated and 'Ethnic Minority' should really be used instead as this covers all ethnic minority groups.

6.2 Since this paper was written the ONS Style Guide has just been re-launched and there is now a definition included which is quite simple and clear which provides a good starting point. This however, does still require some editing and further clarity. Some discussion took place around whether the UK Statistics Authority Good Practice Team might be best placed to take this forward but their remit is mainly around promoting best practice once it has been defined.

6.3 It was thought the best way to deal with this was to amend the definition in the Style Guide and have the amendment approved by sending an information paper to the GSS SPSC informing them of the amendment and the reasons behind it. It was also suggested the Digital Publishing Team at ONS could help with getting this on the Gov.UK site, as they already have established links. It was also agreed that once resolved any guidance produced should be published widely via links to the source document and also to add a notification on Stats Users Net bring it to the attention of users.

ACTION No 9 – Karen Hurrell and Angela Potter-Collins to update the paper with the new proposal, so it can be agreed by correspondence at NSHG level and then submitted to the SPSC for formal approval.

7.0 Harmonisation of Approach to Address Referencing, NSHG (15:1) 07 – Alistair Calder

7.1 Alistair was not able to be at the meeting to present the paper. The Chair explained a similar paper will also be presented to the Regional Geography Group (RGG). There were no comments from the meeting and it was thought useful to give members who were not at the meeting the opportunity to comment on the paper. The RGG will meet next on the 31st March 2015 and it would be useful to get comments on the paper no later than Friday 20th March 2015.

ACTION No 10 – NSHG members to offer any comments on the Harmonisation of Approach to Address Referencing paper (NSHG (15:1) 07), to the Secretariat no later than Friday 20th March 2015.

8.0 NHSG Topic Lead Updates, NSHG (15:1) 08 – Topic Group Leads**8.1 Benefits and Tax Credits Verbal Report – Thomas Sims**

8.1.1 Thomas presented his report adding the revised benefits and tax credits block of questions has now been in the field for nearly two years and the first Family Resource Survey (FRS) publication with the revised block will be ready in the summer. A report on this should be presented at the September NSHG meeting. 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 Spicer

8.3.1 Pamela presented her report explaining that she is only the topic lead until a permanent replacement is found, who has the time to properly commit to the role. A new lead should be confirmed by April 2015. There were no comments or questions.

8.4 Crime and Anti Social Behaviour – Nicola White

8.4.1 Nicola had nothing to report this period but added the British Crime Survey are planning to add some questions on cyber crime and have had meetings with Northern Ireland and Scotland so they can try to take the same approach. There were no comments or questions.

8.5 Demographic Information – Emily Knipe

8.5.1 Emily presented her report and asked the group if, with regard to the Gender Identity situation, the NSHG were happy for this to be taken forward by the Census. Unless the Census defines a user need for Gender Identity, then within ONS there is not a business need to take the work forward.

8.5.2 With regard to the Same Sex Marriage question the Census will have to consider how this question is to be asked in 2021 and factor in the changes since the 2011 Census. Census will not be consulting on how that is done in the topic consultation. It was suggested the NSHG topic lead is kept informed of developments and this may even lead to a question change that could be adopted as the harmonised principle, particularly as resources are very limited outside ONS to look at this at the moment.

8.6 Economic Activity – TBA

8.6.1 At the last meeting Debra reported she was no longer able to be the lead for this group. Potential new leads are being sought from within the ONS Labour Market Division and the Labour Force Survey.

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 presented her report adding it was just a base summary on the work done to date. 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. A potential lead from HSCIC has been identified who is currently considering the role.

ACTION No 11 – Secretariat to follow up with Katharine Robbins (HSCIC) to see if she has considered the topic lead role or can suggest someone else.

8.10 Housing and Tenure – Hugh Mallinson

8.10.1 Hugh was not able to be at the meeting and had nothing to report for this period. There were no comments or questions.

8.11 Income – Richard Tonkin

8.11.1 Richard was not able to be at the meeting and had nothing to report for this period. There were no comments or questions.

8.12 Pensions – Tim Gibbs

8.12.1 Tim presented his report adding that a date had now been set for the next topic group meeting. The proposed agenda will include the need for new members for the topic group, the requirement to harmonise concepts and discussions about a new type of pension called 'hybrid'. There were no comments or questions.

9.0 AOB

9.1 There were no items of AOB. The Chair thanked the group for a really useful meeting and a number of items have been suggested for possible inclusion in the next meeting.

10.0 Next Meetings

10.1 The dates of the next two meetings are:

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

Wednesday 23rd September 2015, 1100 to 1330 hrs at ONS Drummond Gate, Meeting Room 3.
This meeting will be followed by the Annual NSHG Workshop

Annexes:

- A. List of Actions
- B. Revised Census Users Consultation Presentation Slides

| ACTIONS FROM THE NSHG MEETING – 04 MARCH 2015 | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| Action No | Para | Action | Responsible | Status |
| 1 | 2.3 | Tim Vizard to invite a colleague to a future NSHG meeting to give an update on the new European framework for social statistics. | Tim Vizard | Complete |
| 2 | 3.9 | Secretariat to write to Jonathan Swan to confirm the presentation for the June NSHG meeting. | Secretariat | Complete |
| 3 | 3.11 | Marie Haythornthwaite to discuss with colleagues in the Admin Data Requirements Integrated Projects Team a presentation to include user engagement, to be provided at the June NSHG meeting. | Marie Haythornthwaite | Closed |
| 4 | 3.12 | Emma Emery to contact Marie Haythornthwaite to discuss a possible presentation for the SUF meetings, covering admin data developments. | Emma Emery | Complete |
| 5 | 3.14 | Harmonisation team to write to current NSHG departmental representatives to establish if they are happy to engage with harmonisation matters. | Harmonisation team – Palvi Shah | Complete |
| 6 | 3.14 | Harmonisation Team to inform the GSS Quality Champions Network who the departmental harmonisation champions are. | Harmonisation team – Palvi Shah | Complete |
| 7 | 5.4 | Ann Blake to share some of the draft CTP proposition for consultation with the NSHG topic group leads, via the secretariat, when they can. | Ann Blake | Ongoing – will share as and when available |
| 8 | 5.8 | Kirsty MacLean to give an update of how UK plans are shaping up, harmonisation wise at the next NSHG meeting. | Kirsty MacLean | Complete – being presented at Sep 15 NSHG meeting |
| 9 | 6.3 | Karen Hurrell and Angela Potter-Collins to update the paper with the new proposal, so it can be agreed by correspondence at NSHG level and then submitted to the SPSC for approval. | Karen Hurrell & Angela Potter-Collins | Ongoing |
| 10 | 7.1 | NSHG members to offer any comments on the Harmonisation of Approach to Address Referencing paper (NSHG (15:1) 07), to the Secretariat no later than Friday 20 th March 2015. | NSHG Members | Complete |
| 11 | 8.9.1 | Secretariat to follow up with Katharine Robbins (HSCIC) to see if she has considered the role or can suggest someone else. | Secretariat | Ongoing |



National Statistics Harmonisation Group

NSHG Work Plan – June 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 activities from the last meeting, the main items of progress being reported below.

Current Work Programme

3. **Harmonisation Web pages** – The new look Harmonisation pages have now been published on the ONS website. The Harmonised Principles have been updated as the majority of them were still titled 'Harmonised Standard'. It was previously agreed these should now be referred to as 'Harmonised Principles'. These have now each been gone through and the term has now been changed, including anywhere it appeared in the main text of the document. The A-Z of Harmonised Principles has been updated to reflect this change as well and in future will only be available in soft copy, due to the expense of printing, unless there is a specific promotional need for hard copies.
4. **Sub topic groups** – There are now twelve topic 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. A report has not been produced where the group has nothing to report for the reporting period. The current topic groups are:
 - Benefits and Tax Credits
 - Consumer Durables
 - Country of Birth/Migration and Citizenship
 - Crime and Anti Social Behaviour
 - Demographic Information
 - Economic Activity and Employment Status
 - Educational Attainment
 - Ethnicity, Identity, Language & Religion (EILR) and includes Sexual identity
 - Health, Disability and Carers (no current topic lead)
 - Housing and Tenure
 - Income
 - Pensions

Further to the change of topic lead for the Benefits and Tax Credits topic group, work is still progressing to produce the interim revised harmonised principle for this topic. The issue with the Social Fund question has been resolved and it is hoped the revised interim harmonised principle will be finalised and presented at the September NSHG meeting.

A permanent lead for the Country of Birth, Migration and Citizenship topic group is still being sought, 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 is still being investigated.

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.

There will be a change of lead for the Crime and Anti-social Behaviour topic group due to the current lead gaining promotion and a move to a different work area. The lead will, again, come from the Crime Survey for England and Wales as this is the lead survey on this topic.

Rob Green from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has replaced Hugh Mallinson as the topic lead for the Housing and Tenure topic group and the DCLG representative on the NSHG.

5. **Proposed Harmonisation Work** – Work is continuing on producing a harmonised definition for ethnic minorities (as introduced in the workplan update for the last NSHG meeting). When the proposal is finished it will be circulated around the NSHG to seek agreement and will eventually be included in the ONS Style Guide and on the ONS website for guidance.

We are still awaiting a response from the GSS SPSC with regard to how to proceed with the proposal by the ONS Measuring National Well-being programme for a fully harmonised principle for the suite of questions for Personal Well-being. 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.

6. **UK Data Service Variable and Question Bank** – Hersh Mann has taken over as manager of the VQB (replacing Jack Kneewshaw). Hersh is also a member of the NSH SG and may be contacted via the following email address: hmann@essex.ac.uk. At the request of ONS, 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 updated communication plan is almost complete and will be aligned to the Steering Group communication plan. The Statistical Training Unit within ONS has agreed to include harmonisation in some of the courses it runs and is hoping to pilot harmonisation as an e-learning course. An email has been sent to NSHG members and GSS Quality Champions to seek their assistance in promoting harmonisation within their departments. The Harmonisation Team is also seeking an agenda item for the Heads of Profession (HoPs) meeting in June in order to influence the way departments think about harmonisation and to look for ways to imbed harmonisation into departmental policy.

8. **Harmonisation Presentations/Roadshows** – Since the last meeting no roadshows/ presentations have taken place.

Future events planned are:

- Presentation to Statistical Development Group at Welsh Government - 10 June
- It is planned that Rachel Leeser from GLA, James Gillan from NISRA and Emma Emery from RSS will be presenting on harmonisation related topics to the GSS Methodology Symposium on 1 July.
- The Harmonisation Team is looking for people to present on harmonisation at the GSS Conference on 17-18 September.

9. **NSHG Steering Group** – The NSH SG last met on 4th March and the meeting was focussed on the Communication Plan, feedback from a meeting with the UK Statistics Authority, the business

workshop and the role of the Steering Group going forward. An adhoc Steering Group meeting will be held on 10th July and this meeting will be focussed on looking at the responses to the ESS Peer Review and look into ways that harmonisation may be strengthened via the Peer Review.

10. **Harmonising Business Statistics** – A joint half day workshop at ONS Newport was held on 26 February with Data Collection Methodology (DCM) colleagues working on the Electronic Data Collection (EDC) programme. There were 25 participants from business surveys and change programmes within ONS. The first half consisted of setting the scene (what is harmonisation, what has been done, what do we want to do and why) and the second half consisted of group discussions on how best to take forward the work. The workshop went well and generated lots of positive discussion. It has been decided that EDC will be the main driver for business harmonisation and harmonisation will be considered for those surveys that are 'transformed' rather than 'translated' from paper to online. The Harmonisation Team is developing a set of 'harmonisation principles' to apply to EDC and is working with the EDC Business Surveys eQ Rollout Group to embed the agreed harmonisation principles into the EDC development work.
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 finalised (added annexes on case studies and links to Statistics and Registration Service Act, Code of Practice for Official Statistics, Strategy for UK Statistics and ESS Dimensions of Quality).
13. **Harmonisation and Social Media** - The harmonisation team are still active members of StatsUserNet and the GSS blog, but are looking for suitable articles to publish. An article has been planned to promote the uploading of 2001 and 2011 Census variables onto the VQB. If members have harmonisation related work to promote or publicise please contact the harmonisation team.

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Classifications and Harmonisation Unit
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Annex A
NSHG Workplan – Review June 2014

| Term of Reference | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1. To provide strategic direction for the design, development and maintenance of common statistical frames, definitions and classification for Statistics | | | |
| Key action Step(s) | Previous reporting activities | This reporting activity | Person/area responsible |
| Research project – Administrative sources A-Z of Harmonised Principles Harmonisation Web-pages Harmonisation Strategy and Implementation Plan NSHG Workshop NSH SG Business Harmonisation | <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>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.</p> <p>The Business Statistics Harmonisation Workshop took place at ONS Newport on the 26th 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.</p> | <p>June 2015</p> <p>The A-Z of Harmonised Principles has undergone a very minor change to the way the document is indexed. It has been agreed that due to the cost of printing this will now only be available in soft format via the Harmonisation pages on the ONS website.</p> <p>The National Statistics Harmonisation Steering Group will meet on the 10th July 2015 to discuss the European Peer Review and how it can be used to promote harmonisation.</p> <p>The report from the Business Statistics Harmonisation Workshop has now been distributed to the workshop attendees and NSHG members.</p> | <p>Harmonisation Team</p> <p>NSH SG</p> <p>Harmonisation Team</p> |
| Term of Reference | | | |
| 2. To be responsible for setting harmonised principles | | | |
| Key action Step(s) | Previous reporting activities | This reporting activity | Person/area responsible |
| NSHG Topic Sub Groups NSHG workshop to identify, review and prioritise harmonised standards | <p>March 2015</p> <p>The interim revised harmonised principle for Benefits and Tax Credits has still not been finalised. All work is complete bar the Social Fund question.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A lead for the Economic Activity topic group is still being sought.</p> | <p>June 2015</p> <p>The interim revised harmonised principle for Benefits and Tax Credits should be ready for the 23rd September 2015 NSHG meeting.</p> <p>Topic leads for the Health, Disability and Carers and the Economic Activity Groups are still being sought.</p> <p>We have had a change of topic lead for the Housing and Tenure topic group (Rob Green replacing Hugh Mallinson).</p> | <p>NSHG Topic Lead</p> <p>Harmonisation Team</p> <p>NSHG</p> |

| 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>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> | <p>June 2015</p> <p>Arrangements still need to be put in place to add the 2001 and 2011 Census questions to be added to the VQB.</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>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"> - 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 <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>June 2015</p> <p>The Harmonisation Team will present to the Statistical Development Group at the Welsh Government 10th June 2015.</p> <p>Harmonisation related topics will be presented to the GSS Methodology Symposium on 1st July 2015.</p> <p>The issues with access for non GSI members of the NSHG to the NSHG meeting papers have now been resolved - these are no longer behind a password protected area of the GSS website.</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>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 & 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>June 2015</p> <p>Further work on the harmonised definition for ethnic minorities is continuing and when completed will be distributed to the NSHG for comment and agreement.</p> <p>The business Statistics Workshop took place on 26th February 2015 and was well attended. It is hoped this will help to 'kick-start' and take forward the harmonisation of business statistics.</p> | <p>NSHG Topic Lead / Karen Hurrell</p> <p>Harmonisation Team</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>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 & Subsidiarity, Metadata and Sexual Identity (2). All queries have been responded to.</p> | <p>June 2015</p> <p>There have been a steady number of queries received in the Harmonisation in-box since the last report. Topics include; Disability, Crime/Fear of Crime, Language, Health, National Identity, Ethnicity, Sexual Identity and Equality Monitoring</p> | <p>Harmonisation Team</p> |



National Statistics Harmonisation Group

Good Practice Team Update - March to May 2015

Introduction

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

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 and the GSS data 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

There is little to report for the Good Practice Team this period in respect of harmonisation. The noteworthy items are:

1. The ONS Quality Centre is now taking forward the Quality agenda for the GSS and Good Practice Team is no longer going to cover this topic area.
2. We are running two sessions on the guidance for presenting statistics in spreadsheets on 10th June (already booked up) and 6th July in London.
3. We have developed and piloted a training session called "10 things you really need to know about statistics" for the policy profession, working with the Policy Profession Support Unit. We're happy to provide more details on this to interested colleagues. The pilots took place in MoD and DfE.

Martin Ralphs
GSS Central Team/SPPC
11th May 2015

National Statistics Harmonisation Group

Combined Topic Group Report – June 2015

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

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topic Lead | Thom Sims |
| Topic Group Members | 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) |
| Reporting Period | Mar – May 2015 |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Summary Status <i>(An overview of the status of the work at this time)</i> | |
| No update for June 2015. | |
| The FRS 2013/14 report, which is the first to include the interim standards developed in 2013, is scheduled for publication in summer 2015. Analysis of the impact that the changes to the standards have had on benefit capture in the FRS is ongoing. Hopefully I will be able to present the revised questions for the NSHG's consideration at the September meeting. | |
| Progress made during this reporting period | |
| Product Name <i>(including expected completion date)</i> | Status |
| None | |
| Work planned for the next reporting period | |
| Product Name | Status |
| Analysis of the impact of the changes to the benefit standard | |
| Key Issues and Risks <i>(Summary of actual or potential problems along with risks, potential impacts and sensitivities linked to individual needs of UK nations)</i> | |
| None | |
| Other Information <i>(Any other relevant details)</i> | |
| None | |

**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
Nothing to report for this period.**

**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

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Topic Lead | Emily Knipe (ONS) |
| Topic Group Members | Nicola Haines (ONS), Davie Hay (DoH), Jos IJpelaar (NISRA), Karen Hurrell (EHRC), Laura Wilson (ONS), Tony Whiffen (Welsh Gov), Yolanda Ruiz (DCLG) |
| Reporting Period | March to May 2015 |

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Summary Status <i>(An overview of the status of the work at this time)</i> | |
| Gender Identity: This will continue to be monitored through the Census consultation work. | |
| Same-sex marriage: This will continue to be monitored through the Census consultation work. Question design for the Census will help to inform changes that need to be made to the harmonised marital status question and output. | |
| Work continues on the Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements ready for release in July. | |
| Progress made during this reporting period | |
| Product Name <i>(including expected completion date)</i> | Status |
| | |
| Work planned for the next reporting period | |
| Product Name | Status |
| | |
| Key Issues and Risks <i>(Summary of actual or potential problems along with risks, potential impacts and sensitivities linked to individual needs of UK nations)</i> | |
| | |
| Other Information <i>(Any other relevant details)</i> | |
| | |

**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 Woolgar

Nothing to report for this period

**NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report
Ethnic Group, National Identity, Language, Religion and Sexual Identity**

Angela Potter-Collins

Nothing to report for this period.

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
Rob Green

Nothing to report for this period – new topic lead only just appointed (replacing Hugh Mallinson).

NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report
Income
Richard Tonkin

Nothing to report for this period.

NSHG Topic Group Highlight Report
Pensions
Tim Gibbs

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Topic Lead | Tim Gibbs |
| Topic Group Members | Steve Dunstan(ONS) Joanna Bulman (ONS) Hazel Clarke (ONS) David Bovill (ONS) Elaine Chamberlain(ONS) Donncha Burke(DWP) Riaz Ali(DWP) Pauline Heather (DWP) James Forsyth – Harris (DWP) |
| Reporting Period | Mar- May 2015 |

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Summary Status <i>(An overview of the status of the work at this time)</i> | |
| Terms of reference Updated slightly to broaden scope. | |
| Refreshing membership list Suggestions made to add new members. | |
| Treatment of hybrids Continuing discussion from previous meetings- raising awareness of potential future need to collect information on DA schemes and opportunities to harmonise through group. Potential to extend discussion to TPR. | |
| Flexibilities questions on FRS FRS survey team presented survey questions changes designed to capture effect of pension flexibilities. Group reviewed proposal and WAS team offered to compare data to assess question suitability. | |
| Admin data sources Proposal to extend subgroup on pensions to include admin data sources. Most business surveys already included in the sub-group. Membership positive about proposal. | |
| Progress made during this reporting period | |
| Product Name <i>(including expected completion date)</i> | Status |
| | |
| Work planned for the next reporting period | |
| Product Name | Status |
| | |
| Key Issues and Risks <i>(Summary of actual or potential problems along with risks, potential impacts and sensitivities linked to individual needs of UK nations)</i> | |
| | |
| Other Information <i>(Any other relevant details)</i> | |
| | |