

If you would like to submit any papers for consideration at the quarterly NSHG meetings, please contact the [Harmonisation Team](#)

This Newsletter combines items and updates from and between NSHG meetings. It is circulated across the GSS via the GSS, ONS and StatsUserNet websites. We welcome your comments or queries, so please [CONTACT](#) us!!

Topic Group Round-Up

Benefits and Tax

Credits

The Family Resources Survey (FRS) 2013/14 report, which is the first to include the proposed interim revised harmonised questions, is scheduled for publication in the summer of 2015. Analysis of the impact due to changes in the questions on benefit capture in the FRS is ongoing. It is hoped to present the revised harmonised questions to the NSHG for consideration at the meeting in September 2015.

Demographic Information

Gender Identity and Same-Sex Marriage monitoring will continue through Census consultation work. Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements will be ready for release in July.

Other News

The *Country of Birth, Migration and Citizenship Topic Group*, the *Economic Activity Topic Group* and the *Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Topic Group* are seeking new Topic Leads. Rob Green is now the new Topic Lead for the *Housing and Tenure Topic Group*.

Pensions

Terms of Reference have been updated to broaden scope and the Group is looking to add new members. FRS team presented changes to questions designed to capture the effect of pension flexibilities. The Wealth and Assets Survey team will be comparing data to assess question suitability. The Group is also looking at ways to include Admin Data sources.

NSHG Topic Groups

- ❖ Benefits and Tax Credits
- ❖ Consumer Durables
- ❖ Country of Birth, Migration and Citizenship
- ❖ Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour
- ❖ Demographic Information
- ❖ Economic Activity
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Ethnicity, Identity, Language, Religion and Sexual Identity (EILR)
- ❖ Health, Disability and Carers
- ❖ Housing and Tenure
- ❖ Income
- ❖ Pensions

These are the current NSHG Topic Groups. These groups, led by a Topic Lead expert, are responsible for the development and maintenance of the GSS Harmonised Principles

You and Harmonisation

What are **YOUR** experiences of Harmonisation? What problems did you encounter using Harmonisation and how did you overcome them? Do you have any insights, tips, dos and don'ts, etc that could be shared with other members? We are interested in how you approached Harmonisation, and how it went for you generally. We would love to hear from you!! Please contact us [here](#) with your tales of Harmonisation, which we can then share with other members!

NSHG Terms of Reference

The NSHG's Terms of Reference (TORs) are being updated for the first time since 2011. Changes to government dept members, to NSHG governance and to the ONS directorate responsible for the Harmonisation Team have all added to the need for revision. Additional sections of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics are now also relevant to NSHG's work. Once approved, publication will then follow on the GSS website.

Harmonisation Web Pages

The new-look [Harmonisation web pages](#) are now live on the ONS website. Included are the revised and updated **Primary and Secondary Principles** and the revised and updated **A - Z of Harmonised Principles**.

Good Practice Team (GPT)

The GSS's Quality Agenda will now be taken forward by the ONS Quality Centre. The GPT will head a session in London on 6 July on guidance for presenting statistics in spreadsheets. It has also developed and piloted a training session, aimed at the policy profession, called "*10 Things You Really Need To Know About Statistics*". Contact them via their [website](#) for details!

UK Data Service VQB

The Variable and Question Bank (VQB) will now be managed by Hersh Mann. ONS has asked for Census 2001 and 2011 questions to be added. The Harmonisation Team continues to raise awareness of the VQB and encourages its use. Check it out [HERE](#).

Ethnic Minorities

Work is ongoing to produce a harmonised definition for ethnic minorities. Once agreed, it is hoped that this will be included for guidance in the ONS Style Guide and on the ONS website.

James Gillan (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency) presented on maintaining comparability between the UK's 4 Nations, outlining the Scottish Referendum's "comparability scale" and its suitability for wider use as devolution demands have increased to tailor official statistics to enable local decision making. Rachel Leeser (Greater London Authority) and Emma Emery (Royal Statistical Society) showed ways Harmonisation makes data analysis easier, the importance of understanding the use of statistics when harmonising, how any changes will impact statistics, and ensuring user views are considered throughout the harmonisation process. Papers will be available [HERE](#) in due course.

Harmonisation Research

The Harmonisation Team is currently carrying out research into which of the Primary and Secondary Harmonised Principles have gaps in their inputs and outputs, as well as whether there are gaps in the provision of Instructions to Interviewers. We are investigating reasons for why these gaps might be present. Once complete, it is hoped that this information will be passed on to Topic Groups for consideration.

Harmonising Business Statistics

Following the success of the February workshop it was decided that the ONS Electronic Data Collection (EDC) programme will be the main driver behind business statistics harmonisation. The Harmonisation Team is developing a set of 'harmonisation principles' to apply to EDC and is working with the EDC Rollout Delivery Working Group to embed the harmonisation principles into EDC development work.

Harmonising Administrative Data

The Harmonisation Team is meeting with relevant groups and is planning to assist with future feasibility studies on how to harmonise Admin Data. Work in this area is still in its infancy but ONS, the UK Statistics Authority and the Admin Data Research Network are looking at how Admin Data can be used effectively.

Harmonisation Roadshows

Steve Cooley and Andy Bates from ONS Titchfield presented a very successful roadshow to the Welsh Government's Statistical Development Group in June. For more info email Steve [HERE](#).

Other Harmonisation Work

The updated Comms Plan is nearing finalisation and will be aligned with the Steering Group Comms Plan when it is complete. The Harmonisation Team is working with NSHG members and GSS Quality Champions to build a network of 'Harmonisation Champions' across the GSS.

GSS Methodology Symposium

Harmonisation and Social Media

The Harmonisation Team is an active member of the StatsUserNet and GSS blogs. We are also looking for suitable articles to publish. If you have harmonisation related work you would like us to promote or publicise, please contact [US](#) with details. You can also visit our online [StatsUserNet](#) community where you can follow current Harmonisation discussion or start your own. Simply log in and search for '*Classifications and Harmonisation*' via the '*Communities*' tab.

Diary Dates

The next NSHG meeting is:

Wed 23rd September 2015, ONS Drummond Gate, LONDON (Followed by the NSHG Annual Workshop)

Other Dates:

Fri 10 July 2015 - NSH Steering Group Meeting, BIS Conference Centre, LONDON
Thurs 10 Sept 2015 - NSH Steering Group Meeting, ONS Drummond Gate, LONDON
Thurs 17 and Fri 18 Sept - GSS Conference, BIRMINGHAM

Further Information

If you would like to join the circulation list for this newsletter, please email us on:
harmonisation@ons.gsi.gov.uk

NSHG agendas, meeting papers and minutes are available on the GSS website [HERE](#)

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