

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

**Newsletter #13**

**Meeting and Workshop 23 September 2015 Report**

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**

**Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion**

Final report from ONS Census Analysis Programme, entitled *Ethnicity and Religion of the Non-UK Born Population* was published in June 2015. Articles on ethnicity, religion and language were produced in June and July for ONS Visual to coincide with the Census consultation. Discussions are ongoing between ONS and the Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) about defining ethnic minorities.

**Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour**

Questionnaire development for 2016/17 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) has begun. No Harmonisation issues are expected. New fraud and cyber crime questions for CSEW in October 2015 will be harmonised across Scotland and Northern Ireland once successfully implemented.

**Pensions**

Pensions are raising awareness of future potential need to collect data on Defined Ambition (DA) schemes and opportunities for harmonisation. Family Resources Survey (FRS) team presented survey question changes on Flexibilities to Topic Group members.

**Demographic Information**

Census question design will inform necessary changes to harmonised marital status question and output design issues around Same Sex Marriage. This data is currently captured by the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The Population Statistics Division within ONS is currently looking into the possibility of proposing new harmonised age-bandings for outputs.

**Other News**

*Health, Disability and Carers* has a new Topic Lead, Steven Webster. *Benefits and Tax Credits* plan to have the revised Harmonised Principle ready for the December NSHG meeting.

A quote from **DAVID BEST**, new Director of the ONS Digital Services, Technology and Methodology (DTM) Directorate on the importance of the Harmonisation Programme:

*"The Harmonisation programme is a really important activity for us, not least because it offers the potential to reduce the quantity and complexity of special work we need to do to develop and test new questions. It is great to think that as this work continues, where it is possible, we may be able to respond more quickly to requests from users for question support, with a higher quality of tried and tested questions across a wider section of statistical areas. This will enable us to deliver against our goals of Helpful, Professional, Capable, Efficient and Innovative."*

**NSHG Quarterly Meeting and Workshop 23 Sept 2015**

The latest NSHG Quarterly Meeting and Workshop was a resounding success and well attended by NSHG members and some of the newly recruited Harmonisation Champions. The meeting considered various topics including the usual reports on:

- NSHG Workplan
- Business and Administrative Data Harmonisation
- Topic Group Updates

Also discussed were the new **Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) Framework** and the revised **NSHG Terms of Reference**. There were presentations on the **ESS Peer Review** and its implications for Harmonisation, and on **Admin Data Quality Assurance**.

After an excellent buffet lunch, the afternoon was given over to the annual **NSHG Workshop**. The first part of the workshop focussed on the **role and responsibilities of NSHG members and Harmonisation Champions**. In groups, workshop members discussed their role and how working with the Census Transformation Programme can benefit Harmonisation. Discussions were then fed back to the wider group. Following presentations on **how Harmonised Principles should be reviewed, possible areas for Harmonisation research and how the profile of Harmonisation could be raised**, workshop members again split into discussion groups, followed by a final feedback session. There were many useful ideas proposed by the groups, in particular, how the Harmonisation Team can better support NSHG members and Harmonisation Champions in their Harmonisation role ... look out for a plan of action coming soon!!

It was good to see many new faces at the Quarterly Meeting and Workshop, and it is hoped that this will encourage others to attend future meetings. The Quarterly Meeting and Workshop minutes are available [HERE](#).

**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 9th December 2015**,  
ONS Drummond Gate, LONDON

Other Dates:

NSH Steering Group Meeting  
**Thurs 10 December 2015**  
ONS Drummond Gate, LONDON

NSHG Meeting  
**Wed 9 March 2016**  
ONS Drummond Gate, LONDON

**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 led by a Topic Lead expert, and are responsible for the GSS Harmonised Principles.

**Harmonisation & You**

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!

**Harmonising Administrative Data**

The Harmonisation Team is talking to a range of users regarding how harmonisation uptake can be influenced. These groups include amongst others the ONS Income Admin Topic Group and the ONS Address Register Integrated Project Team. The Team attended the first ONS Health Data Linkage Workshop in July.

**Harmonising Business Statistics**

The Harmonisation Team is working with ONS Methodology colleagues to harmonise business survey questions, where possible, on the Electronic Data Collection (EDC) programme, now that the surveys' roll-out order from paper to online has been agreed. The Team now also chairs the Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS) Harmonised Variables Working Group, with its inaugural meeting on 12 Oct in ONS Newport. The Working Group will coordinate ONS business surveys' move to a harmonised set of variables in line with Eurostat requirements by 2019.

**Harmonisation Research**

The work on comparing harmonised inputs with harmonised principles is now complete. Topic Leads will be asked to provide explanations for gaps in the near future.

**Raising Harmonisation's Profile**

The Harmonisation Team had a stand at the **GSS Conference** in Birmingham on 17+18 Sept 2015 (the Team was commended for its excellent display and a photo was even tweeted!! Read the blog [HERE](#)). The Team also presented at the **Local Area Research Intelligence Association (LARIA) London Meeting** on the 29 Sept at City Hall. The Harmonisation Team's meeting with **Ed Humpherson** (Director of Regulation at the UK Stats Authority) and the **RSS Stats User Executive** on 15 Sept was very positive and discussed Harmonisation experiences, issues and priorities for users and producers. There was also a demo of the VQB and other tools, which Ed found impressive.

**UK Data Service VQB**

The Harmonisation Team has been working closely with the UK Data Service on improving the Variable and Question Bank (VQB). Adding metadata and cognitive information about each question in the VQB is under consideration. Check out the current VQB [HERE](#).

**Further Information**

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

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

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