

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

Newsletter #14

9 December 2015 Meeting 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

The Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion group has been revising the Ethnic Minority definition in the ONS Style Guide due to uncertainties regarding reporting statistics on 'ethnic minorities' and the use of some overarching terms.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

The Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Topic Group is continuing their work on questionnaire development for the 2016/17 Crime Survey for England

Pensions

The implementation of the policy on Defined Ambitions pensions has been postponed, which means no changes to survey questions for the time being. The Pension Regulator and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have been contacted following the agreement at the last NSHG meeting that the sub-group on pensions may approach administrative data sources to participate in the group.

Demographic Information

The Topic Group is looking to propose a new harmonised principle for age bands following some queries. The work on Gender Identity and Same Sex Marriage is progressing with Census continuing to inform any changes that need to be made in the future.

Benefits and Tax Credits

Following the introduction of new benefits such as Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments, changes to existing benefits and the removal of defunct benefits, a revised Benefits and Tax Credits Harmonised Principle was presented to the NSHG meeting for approval. It is hoped to present to the GSS SPSC in Jan 2016.

Income

The Income team is starting to look at the harmonisation of the income variables in the Living Costs and Food Survey, and also the Survey on Living Conditions as part of the preparation for ONS data collection modernisation.

A quote from **Jacqui Jones**, outgoing Chair of the National Statistics Harmonisation Steering Group (NSH SG):

"Making Harmonisation part of the GSS voice. For the past year I have had the pleasure of chairing the NSH SG. One of the key areas of concern was raising the profile of harmonisation across the GSS. Great strides have been made in presenting to Heads of Profession and discussing harmonisation with the UK Stats Authority Monitoring and Assessment Team. Also the European Statistical System Peer Review recommended improving the focus on Harmonisation. We are gaining momentum in raising Harmonisation's profile, and this will increase in importance as we use more non-survey data. Unfortunately, I shall not be around for the next couple of years as I will be on secondment to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Therefore I am hoping that this momentum will continue and that Harmonisation will become a permanent part of the GSS voice!"

NSHG Quarterly Meeting 9 December 2015

The latest **National Statistics Harmonisation Group (NSHG) Quarterly Meeting** took place on the 9 December and was well attended by NSHG members. Items on the agenda included:

*a report from the last GSS Statistical Policy and Standards Committee (SPSC) meeting
a review of the NSHG work plan
an update on Administrative Data and Harmonisation and
an update on the harmonisation work being carried out by the Good Practice Team (GPT).*

There were also presentations on the progress of the proposed Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) Framework; a revised Ethnic Minorities definition and plans for the harmonisation of 2021 Census Topics. The new revised principle for Benefits and Tax Credits was also presented for approval by NSHG members.

The Harmonisation Team also did a presentation of the work they have been doing following the last NSHG Workshop in September. Since the Workshop Topic Leads have been asked for their opinions regarding their roles and responsibilities, as well as those of NSHG members, Harmonisation Champions and the Harmonisation Team. They were also asked to comment on the communication process between these groups. All Topic Leads were involved and gave invaluable feedback. This feedback has been used to help simplify and update the roles and responsibilities document and to look at new ways of communicating across the different roles. The Team is now looking at the Harmonisation process itself to see if it can be simplified, speeded up and made clearer to reduce the burden on Topic Leads when introducing a new principle or revising existing ones. This work is being approached in an AGILE way.

Harmonisation and Social Media

The Harmonisation Team is an active member of the StatsUserNet and GSS blogs. We also look 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 9 March 2015,
ONS Drummond Gate, LONDON

Other Dates:

NSHG Meeting
Wed 8 June 2016 (TBC)
ONS Drummond Gate, LONDON

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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NSHG Topic Groups

- Benefits and Tax Credits
- Consumer Durables
- Country of Birth, Migration and Citizenship
- Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour
- Demographic Information
- Economic Activity
- Educational Attainment
- 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

Members of the Harmonisation Team are involved in promoting Harmonisation in the following Administrative Data groups and forums:

♦ Income Admin Topic Group ♦ Health Admin Topic Group ♦ Admin Data Requirements Census Integrated Project Team (IPT) ♦ Admin Data Group User Forum ♦ Admin Data Collection Census IPT ♦ Address Registers Census IPT

Harmonising Business Statistics

The inaugural Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS) Harmonised Variables Working Group took place in October. The group's remit is to discuss how ONS is to meet Eurostat requirements in a coordinated manner, such as coordinating across various ONS output areas, as well as being aware of other ONS programmes, such as Electronic Data Collection (EDC). The first meeting discussed and agreed the group's Terms of Reference. Further meetings will take place in the coming months.

Harmonisation Research

The Harmonisation Team recently carried out a review of the questions used in the Harmonised Principles to see if any needed updating. The results will be presented soon.

Raising Harmonisation's Profile

The Harmonisation Team has regular meetings with the UK Statistics Authority Good Practice Team, the ONS Quality Centre, ONS Data Collection Methodology, the UK Data Service and the ONS Administrative Data Division. Harmonisation Champions have now been appointed and have attended the NSHG Workshop. NSHG members have a role to play in promoting harmonisation within their departments and are encouraged to contact their GSS Harmonisation/Quality Champion to discuss ways to promote harmonisation. There has also been a rapid growth in the circulation list for the Newsletter

UK Data Service VQB

The Harmonisation Team recently demonstrated the VQB to members of the Valuation Office Agency, ONS Metadata and ONS Systems Architecture. Some issues viewing Census 2001/2011 data persist but hopefully these will be resolved soon. An analysis by the VQB team of the uptake of Harmonised Principles is currently underway and the Harmonisation Team are awaiting its results.