

**GSS NATIONAL STATISTICS
HARMONISATION GROUP (NSHG)
INFORMATION NEWSLETTER, No 3**

*Produced after the 6th March 2013
quarterly NSHG meeting*

Introduction

For each meeting of the National Statistics Harmonisation Group (NSHG) an information newsletter is produced. The information in the newsletter is combined with items and updates worthy of a mention between NSHG meetings. The newsletter is circulated across the GSS via the National Statistics Harmonisation web-pages, StatNet and StatsUserNet. This is the third in a series of quarterly newsletters. If you have any comments or queries, please do [get in touch](#).

HEADLINES

NSHG Topic groups (Social Surveys)

Listed below are the current topic areas covered by the NSHG. For more detailed information on the harmonisation process, please see our web pages

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/harmonisation/harmonisation-index-page/index.html>

- Benefits and Tax Credits;
- Classifications;
- Consumer Durables;
- Country of Birth and Migration, Citizenship and Usual Place of Residence;
- Crime, Anti-social Behaviour and Social Capital;
- Demographic Information, Household Relationships (inc. Civil partnerships);
- Economic Activity to Employment Status and Occupation;
- Education;
- Ethnicity, Identify, Language and Religion and Sexual Identity(EILRS);
- Health, Disability and Carers;
- Housing and Tenure;
- Income;
- Pensions

At the last NSHG meeting just a few points were reported:

- Housing and Tenure
It was highlighted that a recent change in law has deemed squatting illegal. This has resulted in this standard needing a review. The topic lead for this area will be investigating this.
- EILRS
Ethnicity wording around Gypsy/Irish Traveller has caused some confusion. It was agreed that further rewording was required in the guidance notes and footnotes, with accompanying background information on the decision.
- Education
Stakeholders need to be evaluated as the current standards are not very detailed questions. Many people are currently using more detailed questions. It was queried whether these different levels produced significantly different results. It was recognised that there may be differences across devolved administrations.

Classifications

Work has taken place looking at providing automatic coding tools for the Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) and National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-Sec). The UK Standard Industrial Classification (UK SIC) is also to have an online look-up tool. Work on these is nearing completion and will be available soon via the Neighbourhood Statistics website (NESS) <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>,

The team is in the process of updating the SOC stakeholder list. Please contact the [harmonisation team](#) if you who wish to be a stakeholder.

The SOC 2000 Index is now a dynamic index and the first opportunity to place new index titles in will be April 2013. The SOC 2010 and the International Standard for Coding of Occupations (ISCO 08) mapping is now available on-line, as is the relationship between SOC 2000 and SOC 2010.

A revised Classification and Coding Policy has been drafted and will be presented at the next meeting of the NSHG in June.

UK Data Service Variable and question bank

The UK Data Service Variable and Question Bank highlights GSS harmonised standards (more than 13,000 harmonised variables) and has been further improved and is now out of BETA mode and fully live and operational

<http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/variables>

The question bank was developed to provide access to questionnaires from a range of major UK and cross national social surveys. Displayed in their original format, these questionnaires allow users to better understand the context in which a particular question was asked. It includes survey questionnaires, information on the survey processes and interviewer instructions, providing a greater understanding of data collection issues. It contains a survey question search tool that provides access to over 200,000 questions from more than 50 survey series across the ESDS Data Catalogue and allows users to locate survey questions and view responses and indicates if the questions are harmonised.

Harmonisation Roadshows

A Roadshow has been proposed for Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) though no date has yet been scheduled. We are always willing to discuss the possibility of presenting our processes to those who express an interest. Please contact the [harmonisation team](#) for further information.

Harmonising Business Standards

It was recognised by the NSHG that there may be some crossover of terminology and standards here, with those of social survey standards. A list of proposed topics for initial consideration has been drawn up and it is planned to form topic groups around these, with interested parties. Please email harmonisation@ons.gsi.gov.uk if you would like to be involved or informed.

Harmonising Administrative Data

Towards a Strategy is the title of a paper written by the harmonisation team. Many departments have been looking at the future uses of administrative data but not so much at harmonising standards. Discussions from the latest NSHG meeting raised questions on whether the objective was to look at harmonising administrative data in isolation or to attempt harmonising with survey data. This was noted and to be covered in the implementation plan.

Harmonisation Standards in Welsh

All harmonised standards are now to be published in Welsh on the ONS website. Translation into Welsh will be considered when developing or revising harmonised standards.

International Harmonisation Workshop

A paper was presented back in December 2012 (See Newsletter 2) to NSHG members outlining the proposal for an International Harmonisation Workshop as a forum to discuss international harmonisation topics.

It was decided not to proceed with this as a separate entity. Much work is currently taking place under the umbrella of European Statistical Service Network (ESSNET) which will encompass similar areas of work. Opportunities for discussions around international harmonisation will arise within this programme.

NSHG Steering Group

Remit of the National Statistics Harmonisation Steering Group:

The purpose of this group is to lead the strategic direction of GSS harmonisation, overseeing the development of the GSS Harmonisation work plan and acting as an interface between the GSS Statistical Policy and Standards Committee (SPSC) and the National Statistics Harmonisation Group (NSHG). The steering group will aim to raise the profile and impetus of the work of the NSHG.

Key objectives for the Harmonisation Steering Group are to:

The steering group will;

- provide strategic direction to NSHG
- provide guidance on new standards to be developed or when standards need updating
- provide guidance to the NSHG on topic group leadership and membership
- encourage and strengthen links between the NSHG and the GSS, raising the profile of the harmonisation agenda
- provide advice on an effective communication strategy for consultation across the GSS
- assist in the resolution of resource issues for harmonising standards

The steering group will report regularly to SPSC who will continue to monitor progress against the NSHG work programme and formally ratify harmonised standards

NSHG Workplan for 2013

A copy of the 2013 NSHG Workplan may be retrieved from StatNet
[http://www.knowledgenetwork.gsi.gov.uk/statnet/statnet.nsf/4bddbde9007343f98025777a004748cd/2606e8704a40b29180257b2100296059/\\$FILE/NSHG%20\(13%201\)%2002%20NSHG%20Workplan%20March%202013.pdf](http://www.knowledgenetwork.gsi.gov.uk/statnet/statnet.nsf/4bddbde9007343f98025777a004748cd/2606e8704a40b29180257b2100296059/$FILE/NSHG%20(13%201)%2002%20NSHG%20Workplan%20March%202013.pdf)

Data Collection

The ONS shall be considering mixed mode data collection for inclusion in its research on harmonisation standards.

Harmonisation of Data Markers.

A communication has been sent to stakeholders and interested parties as part of the harmonisation team's current research on the subject of data markers in social surveys. If you are interested in knowing more, or wish to contribute, please contact harmonisation@ons.gsi.gov.uk.

NSHG Workshop

The NSHG hold an annual workshop for NSHG members following one of the quarterly held NSHG meetings. The subject varies on alternate years. One year it considers new and pertinent areas around harmonisation topics. The following year it reviews current harmonised standards for any need to update or amend, given the current prevailing circumstances within that area and with consideration for revision since any previous amendment. The next NSHG workshop will be held on Wednesday 25 September 2013, 1400 - 1700 hours at ONS, Drummond gate, London.

The dates of the next two NSHG meetings are:
Wednesday 6 June 2013, 1100 to 1330 hrs at ONS Drummond Gate, Meeting Room 3 and

Wednesday 25th September 2013, 1100 to 1330 hrs at ONS Drummond Gate, Meeting Room 3. Followed by the NSHG Workshop

Please contact

Harmonisation@ons.gsi.gov.uk to submit papers or to present to the quarterly NSHG meetings.

All NSHG meeting papers and minutes are added to the GSS StatNet web pages under GSS Committees and can be accessed via the following link;

<http://www.knowledgenetwork.gsi.gov.uk/statnet/statnet.nsf/AllByUNID/2606E8704A40B29180257B2100296059?OpenDocument&area=KANN-8DBF9M>

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