

If you would like to submit any papers for consideration at the triannual 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

Health, Disability and Carers

The Topic Group will be looking at suitability of adult questions being used with children. Currently comparing survey questions with the Harmonised Principles.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

The Harmonised Principle questions are under review, the aim being to update them in line with the current Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW): to broaden the range of questions; to place more emphasis on anti-social behaviour-related questions. A draft revised principle is now under review by the Topic Group.

Education

The Regulated Quality Framework (RQF) has replaced the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). A desk review on education attainment across various surveys was sent to Topic Group members for comment

Demographic Information

Two proposed new harmonised principles on Age Bands were circulated to Topic Group members/key stakeholders. Comments received are awaiting review. The Topic Group is working with Census on the new Marital Status question (Same-sex marriage). A question is being prepared by Methodology for testing. Gender Identity discussions with Census could lead to analysis work.

Benefits and Tax Credits

The Questionnaire Consultation (QCon) period for the FRS 2017/18 will begin in the Summer of 2016. Policy experts and questionnaire users, as well as colleagues at NatCen and ONS, will be asked to review the existing Benefits and Tax Credits questions, and invited to advise on changes to policy/make suggestions for improvements to the existing questions.

Income

A single integrated household financial survey is being proposed by ONS for 2017, which will harmonise some Survey on Living Conditions (SLC) and Living Costs and Food Survey (LCF) income terminology. New questions and interviewer notes proposed for differences that have been identified between the two surveys.

NSHG Topic Groups

- 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 and Sexual Identity (EILR)
- Health, Disability and Carers
- Housing and Tenure
- Income
- Pensions
- Personal Well-being
- Social Capital

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 Harmonised Questions and how did you overcome them? Do you have any insights, tips, dos and don'ts, etc that could be shared with other GSS 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 GSS members!

Harmonising Administrative Data

A methodology has been developed for harmonising Admin Data which involves the Harmonisation Team analysing outputs to identify the most frequent responses; comparing these to existing social survey harmonised principles for suitability for Admin Data; the proposal of new categories for concepts if not suitable. Metadata will be used to identify the questions asked and assess which could become principle questions. The initial main focus of this work will be on Social Admin Data. Next step - identifying which variables or concepts to assess first.

Harmonising Business Statistics

The Harmonisation Team has been assessing the impact of the Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS) Harmonised Variables work. Surveys requiring changes to meet EU regulations have now been identified. A timetable for implementing these changes has been agreed with business output areas and the Electronic Data Collection (EDC) Team. A key variable, turnover, cuts across many business surveys. A workshop has initiated this work and a related project is underway, collaborating with colleagues across ONS. It will include a comparison of current survey definitions with HMRC VAT turnover data. Harmonisation is looking at how best to work with the Data Collection Transformation Programme, Economic Statistics Transformation Programme and Admin Data within ONS. Harmonisation hopes to set up a GSS Business Harmonisation Task and Finish Group, focusing on the governance of business harmonisation

A quote from **Ria Sanderson**, the new **Chair of the NSHG**, who chaired this session of the NSHG for the first time:

"I enjoyed chairing my first National Statistics Harmonisation Group meeting even though it was a quite a challenge remembering to coordinate between the various audio links and video conferencing! I was really impressed with the cross-government participation and progress that is being made on harmonisation and the enthusiasm behind the harmonisation agenda. I look forward in particular to seeing future developments in work that has started on looking at harmonising business surveys and administrative data."

NSHG Triannual Meeting 13 July 2016

The latest **National Statistics Harmonisation Group (NSHG) Triannual Meeting** took place on the 13 July with a new Chair, Ria Sanderson, and a technological leap forward! For the first time, the meeting was held as a three-way video conference (VC) with some members joining via audio. The VC was a success and will be repeated for future meetings. Items on the meeting agenda included:

- A report on the latest GSS SPSC meeting
- A review of the NSHG Workplan
- Updates on Business Harmonisation, the Harmonisation of Admin Data and on the work of the Good Practice Team with the Harmonisation Team
- A Census update

Additionally, there was a presentation on the Data Collection Transformation Programme (DCTP), an update on the NSHG Framework and reports on the progress of the Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) and the Social Survey Division (SSD). Various updates were also given from Topic Leads on the work carried out within their topic areas since the last meeting. The meeting was also informed that the hosting website for Harmonisation webpage had now changed. Harmonisation-related information and materials can now be found on the [GSS website](#). Members were also informed that the Harmonisation Handbook would soon be available, once the new Process Model had been agreed and confirmed.

NSH Steering Group

The **National Statistics Harmonisation Steering Group (NSH SG)** met on the 23 March 2016 and discussed the following:

- 2016 Key Objectives and the ESS Peer Review Recommendations
- Review of the Terms of Reference
- Horizon Planning
- 2016 NSHG Communication Plan
- UK Statistics Authority Priorities and Views. The meeting minutes can be found [HERE](#).

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. Since the last meeting the Harmonisation Team has also presented at the following:

- European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics, Madrid, June 2016
- International Conference on Establishment Surveys, Geneva, June 2016
- Census Transformation Programme Research Conference, July 2016
- GSS Methodology Symposium, July 2016

UK Data Service VQB

The UK Data Service plan using the harmonised Ethnicity principle and some LFS questions to illustrate how questions can be compared, show relationships to each other and also of changes over time. A demo of the new improved VQB is planned for the next NSH SG meeting. Once finalised, the new VQB should be available next year.

Harmonisation and Social Media

The Harmonisation Team are active on the StatsUserNet and GSS blogs. We are looking for suitable Harmonisation-related articles to publish. If you have Harmonisation-related work you want promoted or publicised, please contact [US](#) or visit our online [StatsUserNet](#) community where you can follow current Harmonisation discussions 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 November 2016,
ONS Drummond Gate, LONDON
(followed by the Annual Harmonisation Workshop)

Other Dates:

NSH Steering Group
Mon 3 October 2016
ONS Drummond Gate, LONDON

RSS Conference
Mon 5 to Thurs 8 September 2016

GSS Conference
Thurs 8 and Fri 9 September 2016

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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